

# Vintage Rallying



by Rich Taylor

## The Vintage Rally Scene

I attended Bob Bondurant's driving school at Ontario Motor Speedway in October of 1972, a happy advertising trade-out that went along with my promotion to Managing Editor of *Car and Driver*. The \$25-million oval/road course in the California mayonnaise fields had opened just two years before. Like a cathedral, it hushed all conversation as you drove through a dark tunnel under the track and emerged inside a vast oval. Bondurant was using the infield road course and Porsche 914s as his school cars. I have to admit



photo by Jean Constantine

### David E. Davis.

that I hadn't thought of Ontario Motor Speedway or Bondurant in years, or my time at *Car and Driver*, for that matter. But David E. Davis, Jr. came on our Texas 1000 vintage rally in November. In many ways, *Car and Driver* is David E. Davis, Jr. and David E. is still a larger-than-life embodiment of the first literate American car magazine. David E. is also one of the world's great raconteurs. If

you want to sit around with a glass of single-malt scotch and listen to someone tell hilarious stories, most somehow related to cars, racing, driving or shooting birds, David E. would be my premier pick.

Sitting around with our glasses of single-malt scotch in the lobby of the Hyatt Hill Country Resort, the talk logically turned to Texas, which got us to Carroll Shelby, which got us to Bondurant, Ontario Motor Speedway and Porsche. David E. was always a great Porsche fan. I reminded him of his June, 1977 Porsche 928 road test that talked mostly about drinking single-malt scotch with Dr. Ernst Fuhrmann, the head of Porsche and Tony Lapine, the Porsche stylist who put psychedelic seat upholstery in a luxury sports car. That article also predicted that the modern, front-engine/rear-drive 928 would soon replace the old-fashioned, rear-engine 911.

But here we were in San Antonio, more than 30 years after that wrong-headed prediction, ready in the morning to buckle David E. and his pal Larry Crane into only the second Porsche V-8 model, the Panamera, so they can rally 1200 miles around our beloved Texas Hill Country. It all worked out terrifically. The weather was fantastic, the roads and hotels first-rate. David E. and Larry enjoyed the Panamera for the first two days of the rally, but I think they were even happier when they switched to a 911 Carrera Cabriolet for the last two days in order to get a direct comparison between the newest Porsche model and the now legendary rear-engine car.

The Panamera is arguably the best sports sedan on the 2010 market, both more satisfying to drive and more luxurious than a big BMW or Mercedes-Benz S class. But the 911 Carrera remains, as it has been for decades, the ultimate sports car. As an old *Motor Trend* quizzing road test might have put it, "They're both good cars. You'll have to decide which one best suits your needs."

Texas 1000 this year presented a vast array of cars, suited to almost any need. My long-time navigator Patricia Gobble and I drove my not-quite-finished 1957 Chevy station wagon, a fifties-style hot rod that successfully completed its first run right out of my Minisport restoration shop. As one of the guys said, "Who ever thought an old Chevy station wagon could be so cool!"

At another extreme were Richard Procter and Ron Hetherington, driving Richard's delectable 1936 Delahaye 135S Le Mans racer. Richard came all the way from Cheshire, England to experience



photo by Jean Constantine

## The 2009 Texas1000 Vintage Rallies event entries were diverse.

the Texas Hill Country. Of course, we gave him our Vintage Spirit Award.

Jack Bramm Ruben traveled from Maastricht, Nederland to share the Jaguar C-type race car of well-known Dallas collector John Ridings Lee. More typical entries included an MG-TD, Triumph TR-3, Porsche 356, Jaguar XKE, Shelby GT-350R vintage racer, Corvette Stingray B-production racer, two Ferrari 330 GTCs, a whole raft of assorted Ferraris and another group of assorted Porsches.

One of those Porsches was a Carrera S driven by Don Weber and Bud Lyon. Bud and his wife Thelma drove their D-type Jaguar on the very first New England 1000. Jean and I organized in 1993. We've been friends ever since. Health problems have slowed Bud down lately, but he was determined to come on our Texas 1000 again this year.

David E. and Larry Crane are writing a biography of Bud, a remarkable man who has been stunningly successful in a variety of disparate careers. "Bud's Book" will no doubt be like one of David E.'s after-dinner conversations, hilariously ranging over a dazzling variety of topics. One chapter promises to be about Bud and Thelma returning to their hometown of San Antonio on the Texas 1000. From there, David E. will no doubt gracefully segue into stories about Bud Lyon that involve shooting birds in Texas, Carroll Shelby, Bob Bondurant, Porsche and, who knows, maybe even Rich and Jean Taylor. Single-malt scotch will somehow be involved.

*Ed: This is a new monthly column on the vintage rally scene and the many stories that Rich Taylor has acquired in years of being involved in racing, rallying, partying and writing for car magazines, great newspapers including the New York Times and managing various businesses.*

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