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PRIETA POST

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Blue Lakes Tour

Contributed by Johnny Musser

It is very nice to awaken to a beautiful sunny October day that makes living in Northern California and getting together with friends to drive our Porsches such a great experience. Kathy and I were enjoying the drive from Santa Cruz to Dublin, using the GPS to find the address of the start location. All of a sudden Kathy is telling me that the GPS is sending us a different way than the instructions from our tour leaders, the Reeds and Bennetts. With great confidence, I told her that our navigation device would know the most efficient way to get there. After winding around through back streets for an extra 10 minutes we did finally arrive. Apparently the computers really are plotting against us.

I had hoped to arrive early, not late, since John Reed had told me that his CB wasn't working and wanted to use one of the LPR loaners. When we tried to hook up the loaner CB we found that it was the cigarette lighter that was bad, not John's CB. The thought of a tour without John's golden voice entertaining us during the drive was unthinkable, so while the driver's meeting was going on, I rushed over to Safeway and purchased batteries. We got the batteries loaded and the CB working just as the group that John was leading was ready to leave. We had 21 cars and went in two groups so that it was easier to keep together.

We left Dublin and got onto I-680 and transited north across the Benicia-Martinez bridge until we got to some two-lane roads that are much nicer to drive in our Porsches. We left the freeway and drove through beautiful hills with Oak trees covered with Spanish Moss gently waving in the breeze, and deciduous trees with their leaves turning golden. This part of the tour made you realize what a special time of the year fall is in Northern California. The green and golden trees, golden hills, blue lakes and great driving roads winding over the hills and through the valleys were magnificent. Kathy and I weren't the only ones enjoying the drive. There were many comments on the CB about what a beautiful day and drive it was. We drove through Wooden Valley, north on highway 121

past Lake Hennessey and then north on the Silverado Trail through the Napa Valley until we arrived at Calistoga for our lunch stop. We were on our own for lunch and a large group ended up at the Hydro Bar and Grill which had a great selection of delicious sandwiches and salads. We sat with George Jansen, who told us that he was there without Virginia because she was getting ready to leave the next day for



Spain and Portugal. After we ate we had time to walk around town and visit the many interesting shops.

After lunch and shopping we left Calistoga and continued north on Hwy 29 through vineyards with red and gold leaves and purple grapes waiting to be picked and turned into wine. At Middletown we turned onto Hwy 175 through Forest Lake and Cobb and then onto Loch Lomond Rd and Seigler Canyon Rd which ran up one canyon and back down the other side until we were back on Hwy 29. We were no longer in wine country but now traveled through farm country near Clear Lake. There were many apple and walnut orchards with trees ready to be harvested. Soon we were at our destination the Lodge at Blue Lakes.

I must mention the roads on the tour. The Bennetts and Reeds not only found great winding roads over mountains and through canyons but they were all very smooth and



most seemed to have been recently repaved. I don't recall a drive with that many miles of smooth fun roads. My hat is off to our leaders for a great job of route selection.

After we checked in to our rooms we all migrated to the back deck of the hotel for the usual LPR pre-dinner (and in this case pre-boat ride) gathering. The lake is crystal clear, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile wide. It is surrounded by pine

trees and was a beautiful setting for our gathering. I didn't get to talk to everyone at the gathering because we had to split into two groups to find enough shade so that no one melted in the afternoon sun. When our group headed for the shade we did manage to snag enough hors d'oeuvres to go with the wine we were sharing to make the time very enjoyable. Soon it was time to put away the food and get on the boats for our ride around the lake.

We had the use of three electric boats for an hour sailing around the lake. On our boat we had Barry and Suzette Pangrle, Justin and Julia Gross (with Luigi her service dog), John and Angie Reed, Debbie Bennett and our esteemed captain for the trip, Leslie Orlando. As we were getting ready to leave, our hosts at the Lodge Peter and Maryann Schmid, gave each group a bottle of champagne for the cruise. It



was beautiful, with the sun setting behind the hills and the shadows of the pine trees lengthening across the lake and a made it a very relaxing trip around the lake.

After the cruise we went to the event room for a buffet dinner with beef, chicken, salad vegetables, dessert and we shared some great wine. We had a nice time talking to the people at our table: Peter and Jacqueline Ridgway, Don and Leslie Orlando and Barry and Suzette Pangrle. After dinner I talked with Jennifer Bryant, Vince and Christine Vincent, and Ken and June Iles about what a great day it had been and how much fun it was to be a member of the "Good Times Region".

The next morning we were up early (at least early for me) for a great breakfast. There were eggs cooked to order, bacon, toast, bagels, and secret recipe French toast. We kept running out of the French toast and every time that a new batch was brought out there was a rush to get some of it.



We were sitting with Rudi and Joanna Herz and it took Rudi three tries to get some for Joanna. Kevin and Dede Seward were at our table and it turns out that Kevin really is an early riser and had gone fishing. He said that the fish were biting and he had hooked a couple but, not having a net, they got off as he tried to get them on to the dock.

At 10 a.m., after we checked out and loaded up the cars, we took a group photograph with the owners of

the Lodge Peter and Maryann Schmid. They did a great job of making our stay go smoothly resulting in a very pleasant experience. The meals were very good, (I still want the recipe for the French toast) the boat ride beautiful, and the champagne a nice surprise. After the group photo we were on our way to lunch at the Coppola Winery in Healdsburg. We drove west on Hwy 20 from Blue Lakes to Hwy 101 and then south on 101.

Then it was west on the Booneville Ukiah Rd for 20 miles of beautiful scenery and great Porsche driving. At Booneville the Bryants and Mitchells decided that they wanted to stay and explore the town while the rest of the group went south on Hwy 128 for more fun driving until we got back on Hwy 101 at Cloverdale. From there it was a short trip to the winery. At Coppola it is easy to forget



that it is a winery. They have a giant swimming pool, two restaurants, a retail souvenir store, a movie memorabilia gallery, bocce ball courts and yes, even a tasting room. Half of the group stayed to have lunch and the rest of us headed for home. It had been another great Reed/Bennett tour with great roads, beautiful scenery, good food and most importantly great people spending the weekend together.