

Route 66 Grand Canyon Tour - August 20-22nd, 2010

Mark Ware

Participated in Bloomington Gold Tours – Route 66 run August 20-22nd. The 3 day run began in Kingman, AZ and ended at the Grand Canyon following old Route 66.



Day 1 - Kingman, AZ

The rendezvous began with fellow Vette enthusiasts in Kingman on a hot Friday afternoon at the Powerhouse Visitor Center. Here I met up with our old friends Dwayne and Cindy Bublitz who, as some of you know, sponsor the annual event. This year, the event started with registration and an overnight stay in Kingman, before hitting old Route 66 the next morning.



The evening included a blackjack run between local drive-ins and dinner on your own. I met up with some folks and ate at a local Mexican/Seafood joint. The food was actually pretty good though we all had a bit of trepidation ordering seafood from a Mexican joint in the middle of the desert. I decided on the Chimichunga and watched as servers delivered Lobster tail on plates with re-fried beans – kind of strange... right?

Day 2 – Cruise to Williams, AZ

Next morning spoke with a couple of guys over breakfast, John and Louis, who told me a story of the significance of this trip to them.

Turns out that... They've been friends since 6. They are both 66 years old. They are traveling on Route 66... in an 06' C6. John is 6'6". Louis is 5'6". Ha! Another interesting fact is that Louis Connole Sr. is the father of the owner/supplier of Vertical Doors Inc., which is the door customization company that did the wing doors for our very own Channing Licon.



After breakfast we assembled at the Powerhouse Visitor Center. A walk-through tour was offered for the on-site Route 66 Museum at a reduced rate for the group. Across the street, the old steam railroad engine #3759 that was donated by Santa Fe was prominently displayed – a reminder of the influence the railroad played in the great migration west. There was music and an MC as the Vettes gathered for the first day's run. Today we would travel 131 miles to Williams, AZ.



With our trusty police escort in place, we left Kingman. The tour group encouraged optional stops in historical Route 66 towns like Hackberry, Valentine, and Peach Springs, although the tour's official stop would be in Seligman, AZ. Some folks stopped along the way others stayed with the pack, with the tour regrouping in Seligman.

About six cars were the first to arrive, meeting up at the famous Snow Cap Drive-in where we all dispersed for lunch and some tourist fare. What's this...? Mustangs? Lot's of them. Looks like they're on a tour as well – headed the opposite direction. Apropos don't you think?

A large group of us ended up at a local joint across from the Road Kill Café, which many eyed with curiosity, but quickly dismissed after seeing their loose gravel parking lot. Sounded interesting enough though – I wonder what was on the menu!

I had lunch with Dave Stevens from *Bondurant* (performance driving school) and his wife Kelly.

We talked about the programs that the school offered. Dave mentioned that they were looking to replace all of their C6 Coupes with Grand Sports later this year. The food was wonderful and was worth the wait even though I was scolded by the waitress twice for asking for a menu and refill of my drink. Oh well...

We left the restaurant to find that a passing afternoon shower had spotted our cars. OMG! Although many pondered bringing out their clean-up kits, time prevailed as our schedule to re-group forced the issue. The group departed town and a few miles out each car slowed for a photo. Smile!



Williams, AZ

The scenic 43 miles to Williams went quick. As we made our way to higher elevation the hot weather gave way to puffy clouds threatening to do more car spotting. We all dispersed to our hotels where, in spite of the threat, restored luster to our cars.

After a little rest we all descended to Main Street (Route 66) for Cruise Night where the town had reserved a special parking to display our cars. The town was hoppin' that Saturday night with a 'carnival like' atmosphere. There were the usual tourist shops, restaurants and bars with live music.

Still hanging with Dave and Kelly, we completed the Poker Walk (which none of us won), then went to the trailer to check out the photos that were snapped outside of Seligman. We were able to get T-shirts or a plaque with the photo for about \$25.00. I decided on the T-shirt - I knew it was my car but couldn't really make out the driver! We all thought this was funny but didn't get an answer when I asked if I could get a discount for the 'missing' driver!

We moved on and came upon a crowd on 2nd Street to find an old western gunfight in progress. As we watched our attention was drawn away as the wafting smell of barbecue reminded us of how hungry we were. So off to dinner we went.



Grand Canyon Run

Staging for the Grand Canyon Tour began at 8:00 am on Sunday morning with the National Anthem and prize announcements. At the head of the pack were two 2007 Indy 500 Convertible Pace cars (two of the 500 replicas made). We left promptly at 9:00 am and made the final 55 mile segment of the trip stopping at the Tusayan IMAX Theatre to view the *Hidden Secrets of the Grand Canyon*.



The official tour ended here with optional destinations to view the Grand Canyon from the south rim. Dave, Kelly and I continued on to the Grand Canyon village in our Z06's. On this day, the canyon's splendor was accented by distant showers and sleek rays of sun through the clouds. It was a cool departure from my previous

visit. We walked a good distance of the village, had a chat with a fellow Vetter who had seen our tour badges, then called it a trip.

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