

*Coastal*aire

March 2026

*California Central Coast Region
Porsche Club of America
<https://ccc.pca.org>*

Cover Story



SpaceX Launch
Vandenberg AFB
January 24, 2025

Photograph
by
CCCR Member
Richard Majernik
of Guadelupe

California Central Coast Region of the Porsche Club of America

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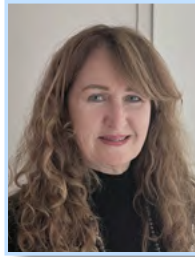
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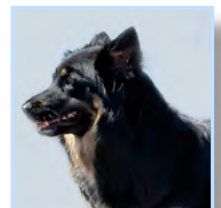
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Kenzie Jennings



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Club Information

- 2 Member Services
- 3 Board of Directors
- 6 Prez's Corner
- 7 Editor's Wind
- 8 New Members
- 9 Anniversaries
- 10 Events Calendar
- 38 Advertising Pricing
- 39 Advertiser Information

PCA / Zone 8 News

- 39 Zone 8 Staff - Officers

12

Valentines Day

16

*Hunter Ranch Tour and
Cars and Coffee*

20

2026 Lit Meet

24

Autocross 2026

28

Drivers Education 2026

32

Consumer Reports Porsche

34

The Guys Run Pahrump



The Prez's Corner

Joseph Shubitowski • President

It's almost time for March Madness where I spend way too much time on the couch watching my bracket fall apart on the first weekend of the Tournament! It is also the time when the rain starts to dwindle and the flowers start to appear on the Carrizo Plain, and we start to get serious about great drives, getting back to the track, and even another 4WD adventure!!

I must apologize for missing the past few events as I messed up my back and found out yesterday that it's not in the best of shape. Getting in and out of my 993 is somewhat tortuous, long drives in any vehicle are difficult, and just standing around at Porsche San Luis Obispo Cars & Coffee talking with you all is wearing. My path forward has yet to be determined, but I am lucky that our CCCR Board is handling driving tours and track events with excellence as usual, so if I am sidelined for a while it will just be a blip on the radar.

We have a couple of fun Drive 'N Dines in March to celebrate St. Patrick's Day at Pappy McGregors in Paso Robles, and belated Chinese New Year celebration at the China Gourmet in Paso Robles. That is quickly followed by Porsche San Luis Obispo Cars & Coffee at the end of the month, and then we start April with our upcoming family friendly Norgrove Railway event, an elegant dinner at Dresser Winery, and then both Autocross and Drivers Education track events.



Autocross Director, Fred Herr, is mapping out a new 4WD adventure for us. This time it will be on the fire roads in the Santa Barbara mountains. My goal is to be ambulatory enough to participate!!

2026 also means we are having CCCR Board of Directors elections. We would love to have YOU on the Board or participating in a committee that helps to plan events and/or track days. CCCR – like our parent PCA organization – cannot function without folks who volunteer their time and talents to making sure that everyone has a fun time with their Porsches and with their friends. Everyone is busy, I get it, but when folks come up to you and thank you for the hard work and for the fun they are having, it makes it worth it. Think about it.....email anyone on the Board or talk to us at an event.

Hope to see you at an event soon!

Let's Drive!

Joe



The Editor's Wind

Chuck Jennings

When I first joined PCA and became an active member in CCCR, our crest (or badge) had been in use for several years. It had been taken for granted as essentially a permanent identity of our club. Not long after I became President, we decided to pursue embroidering it on jackets and shirts. The local embroidering service advised us that it was overly complex for that application, and my design sense agreed. Its longitudinal and latitudinal lines were not necessary, and they created awkward misalignments with other details in the overall symbolism. Hence, with the approval of the CCCR Board of Directors, I set out to simplify it. We adopted the new design and have been using it for about ten years.

About two years ago we were sternly informed by a PCA "official" that we were in "violation" of strict Porsche protocols that limited the display of the Porsche badge without their specific certified approval. This seemed contrary to the fact that our crest was on display in the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart.

And so, again, with the CCCR Board of Directors' direction, I put together a few new variants that we hoped didn't require an *Act of Porsche* for our continued and unrestricted use. In the new concept I wanted to represent our region with the most familiar and iconic local symbols. I concluded that between Santa Ynez and San Miguel, the most fabled and historic landmarks are likely Morro Rock and the El Camino Real. The CCCR Board of Directors approved of the variant seen to the right.

You may have noticed the new logo periodically in the Coastalaire, on emails and on our website. We are gradually testing it for its general appeal and appropriateness. If you wish to express your opinion, you can email me at concourschuck@gmail.com.

Chuck



PCA-CCCR New Members • January

Welcome New Members

Alex Carapeti Arroyo Grande	2022 911 Turbo S
Gary Charbonneau San Luis Obispo	2025 718 Boxter S
Sean Christie San Luis Obispo	2021 Cayenne Coupe
Darren Gennuso Avila Beach	2026 911 Carrera
David Raphael Nunez Atascadero	2004 Carrera 4S
John Russell Pataye Templeton	2021 911 Turbo S
Eva Shaw Pismo Beach	2021 Cayenne
Clayton Skinner Atascadero	2021 Macan

Say Hi! to Tyler Garver
son of David Garver

SERVICE MANAGER
PORSCHE SLO



CCCR PCA Membership

Primary Members	551
Affiliate Members	335
Total Regional	886



National Primary	111,842
National Total	169,677

<https://ccc.pca.org>

PCA-CCCR Anniversaries

“Kit”

1 Year

Servet Fidan
Amanda Lathrop
Jeff Hacker
Edgar Mendoza
Dave Krause
Maximillian Faulkner
Paul Allen
Craig Eisenberg
Kami Griffin
Jerry Hsu

2 Years

Tom Diaz
Richard Wright
Chris Isler
Shannon Hoover
Deron Luessen
Jame Murtaugh

3 Years

Eric Morley
Gary Boyle
Ethan Lawton

4 Years

Bruce Smith
Chris Gann
Travis Ellis
John Borroel
Jon Harris
Richard Rivoir
Lance Lyon

5 Years

Cole Gibson
Brian Donnelly

6 Years

Stanley Schulte
Alain Neel
Brian Granger
Sondra Amandola
Geoff Gray
Russle Sidwell

7 Years

Gil Igleheart
Brandi Colombo

8 Years

Claudio Baserga

9 Years

Geoff Straw
Mike Dirkes
Tim Calabretta

10 Years

Jack Moyer
Steve DuBow
Urs Gretener
Bruce Monroy

11 Years

Nicholas Taylor

12 Years

Jjoe Dervin
harry Murphy

13 Years

John Larson

15 Years

Quint Stevens
Richard Wolfe

18 Years

John Cliff

17 Years

Rich Morgantini

16 Years

Stuart Marshall
Laurie Neumann
Eric Barkley

19 Years

Marc Englert
William Romano

20 Years

Sanja Brewer

21 Years

Roy Coffman

24 Years

Sean Connolly
Maurice Heagren

26 Years

Martin Howell

27 Years

Brian Louw

28 Years

Terrance DeGroot
John Eskelin

29 Years

Ken Cooper

30 Years

James Collins

31 Years

Charles Stevenson
Sandy Keefer

33 Years

Robert Clucas

34 Years

Lawernce Thomas

36 Years

Doug Hendry

45 Years

Hampton Miller

46 Years

Richard Berg



31 Years
Robert “Kit” Kitamura

CCCR Events Calendar

Activities Directors • Joe Kuntze



March 14 • Pappy McGregor's • First, a Saint Patrick Day celebration! Who isn't Irish on St. Paddy's Day? We will meet up at Porsche SLO at 9:00 am for a drive up to the **Paso Robles Town Square** where we will feast on corned beef and cabbage (btw, this is an Irish American thing, people in Ireland have no idea) at **Pappy McGregor's** on the square. This event is strictly limited to 30 participants so sign up early!

March 21 • China Gourmet: Return to the Middle Kingdom • We will meet up at Porsche SLO at 9:00 am for a drive over the coastal range and the Adelaide appellation to wind up at **China Gourmet**. This is our third year visiting Jackie's outstanding Hong Kong style establishment, and it is a true value. Bring an appetite

April 11 • Norgrove Winery and Railroad • We have contracted with the **Norgrove Winery** to visit their fantastic venue. We will meet at the winery and (depending on response) either have a picnic or a food truck. Wine will be available for purchase, and the small scale railroad will be running. **This is a kid friendly event.**

April 11 • Autocross Academy • Santa Maria Airport Want to learn better driving skills? Want to experience your Porsche's incredible potential? Want to find out just what autocross is about? See more information on page 26.

April 12 • Autocross • Santa Maria Airport • This will be our first autocross event of 2026, Put on your soft tires and your helmet and join us for Teststrecke #75. See more information on page 24.

April 18 • Dresser Winery • It is my birthday (close anyway) so we will have a catered dinner at Dresser Winery. Cory is famous for his big bold red wines and CCCR President and enophile, Joseph Shubitski, has pronounced them to be "darn good wines." We will eat at the winery which features an authentic Tuscan estate with magnificent views of The Dresser Ranch area (including my humble abode). Bon Appetite

May 1 • A Day at the Track • DE chief and track guru Bob Bruington has offered us the opportunity to spend a day at Buttonwillow. We will meet up in Santa Margarita for a great drive over Hwys 58 and 33 to the track. Once there, we can enjoy some lunch and have the opportunity for some hot laps. Who knows, we may unearth the next Lewis Hamilton?

May 23 • Poker Rally • It's been a while since we've had a poker rally. This rally will take us through South San Luis Obispo County and Baywood. Drivers and navigators will depart Porsche SLO with a list of destinations to pickup playing cards. At the final destination poker hands will be revealed and winners awarded prizes, including a free lunch at the High Street Deli. Watch for more information.

Please Take Notice!

Changes to this calendar may occur anytime between this publication and the event. Updates are made via email! Be sure to read your emails from CCCR.

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A Buona Tavola Valentines

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A Buona Tavola Valentines

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Hunter Ranch Tour and Lunch

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Cars and Coffee



Cars and Coffee

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2026 Lit Meet Weekend

Another Lit Meet Weekend has passed, and although I was only there for a few days, it was another spectacular weekend!

This year, things kicked off on Wednesday, Feb. 25 with an open house at Magnus Walker's place. In the event you have not heard, Magnus will be auctioning off some of his cars, and other items, through RM Sotheby's from March 18-25, 2026. Unfortunately, I was not there. But this is not about that.

Again, on Thursday, Feb. 26, Sierra Madre Collection once more held their open house. Also holding open houses on Thursday were Benton Performance, in Anaheim, PMO Induction in Anaheim. They share space with EMPI, more about that later... Scott's Independent, also in Anaheim, and Redline Weber in Brea also had open houses on Thursday. Alas, I was not at any of these this year.

Finally, we get to Friday, Feb. 27. I got on the road a bit before 9 AM. Heading east on Highway 46, somewhere in the vicinity of Kecks Corner, I drove through a swarm of itty-bitty flying insects. They sure made a mess of leading edges of my car. Sorry, I am getting off track here. My first stop was in Hawthorne at Porsche South Bay. They have not held an open house there now for several years, but I like stopping in there anyway. In years past I have been able to pick up the latest copy of Porsche Classic's "Originale" catalog. Turns out the one I got this year is #10, which I already have a copy. I will try to remember to bring it with me to the next club event, so if you would like a copy of it, let me know.



My next stop was at Wilhoit Auto Restoration in Long Beach. In years past, they have had on display 356 engines with twin plug ignition that they have developed. Apparently, they have discovered a way to make similar amounts of horsepower without the second spark plug per cylinder, so there were no twin plug engines on display this year.

My next stop was at Callas Rennsport in Torrance. Callas Rennsport is about 17 miles away, and it took me about an hour and 15 minutes to get there.



I did not get on the freeway, as I had my fill of the 405 trying to get into Hawthorne. Needless to say, there was a LOT of traffic in the middle of the day in LA. Following my stop in Torrance, I made my way to Hermosa Beach where I was spending the night.

by Alfred Abken



Also holding open houses on Friday were Technica Racewire in Cerritos, 911 Design, in Montclair (they did the drivetrain swap in my car in 2014). Traffic being what it is in So. Cal. kind of precluded me from attempting to get up there. Loren Beggs no longer owns the company. He sold it a couple years ago. It would have been nice to see how things are going there, but it just was not in the cards for me Friday. Other open houses on Friday were at The Parts Shop in Huntington Beach, Wholesale California, in Costa Mesa, Scientific Automotive in Pasadena, and Classy Cars Cosmetic Restoration, in Costa Mesa.

For several years now, the organizers have offered bus tours to some of the shops which would save dealing with the traffic as a driver, but so far, I have not availed myself of this option.



This brings us to Saturday, Feb. 28th. The 42nd edition of the Lit & Toy Los Angeles Show by Stoddard. This is in a couple of the ballrooms of the L A Airport Hilton Hotel near LAX. Last year it did not seem to get really crowded.



This year there seemed to be a more “normal” turnout of people. For several of the past few years, my sister has accompanied me. This year she could not make the trip south, so I did not have the ability to wander around and check out what all the vendors were offering for sale. I did manage to lighten my load a bit, and it was a good show for me. As luck would have it, my table was next to Sean Cridland, and I was able to buy a copy of his latest book, “DOUBLE CHAMPION Peter Gregg’s 1973 IMSA GT and SCCA Trans-Am Seasons”. I look forward to finding the time to sit down and read it.

Other open houses on Saturday were held at Emory Motorsports in North Hollywood. I did not go this year. I have attended in the past, and it is a remarkable place to visit. It is well worth a visit if you ever get the chance. However, the open house was from 3:00-7:00 PM, and it makes getting to O C where I was spending the night rather tedious.

2026 Lit Meet Weekend

Pelican Parts, in Harbor City also held their open house on Saturday as well as European Collectibles, Carparc USA LLC, California Porsches, Honest Engine, Joe Anselmo Motorsports, all in Costa Mesa, and Göritz SIXFIX in Fountain Valley.



The final event of the weekend, the 356 Club of Southern California held their All Porsche swap meet at EMPI in Anaheim. In addition to vendors spread around the parking lot of the building, this year there were also vendors set up inside of their enormous warehouse. I got there early, did a quick walk through, and got on my way home. Two stand out vendors I spoke with made the trip special for me. While I was at European Collectibles Saturday afternoon, I was speaking with a couple people that mentioned there was someone at the Lit Meet that are reproducing the 904 with flat 6 engines. Andy Palmer and Jo Lewis are from England and are responsible for this venture. They were only traveling with a model of a 904, but if you would like more info about owning one of these, check out: www.palmer-lewis.co.uk

by Alfred Abken

The other vehicle there that stopped me in my tracks was an early 356 coupe from Vintage Motorcars of California, Inc. They are in Hawaiian Gardens. If you are intrigued, and would like more info, they are on the web at: VINTAGEMOTORCARSINC.COM



I did not recognize the engine in the car. Turns out it was a Subaru engine(!) Geoff Straw might have recognized it, although it was not turbocharged. Turns out the body was a fiberglass reproduction body, so you don't need to be too disturbed by their choice of engine.

And so concluded another fabulous Lit Meet weekend for me. For L A, traffic was not too bad getting out of town Sunday morning. I was sure glad to get back in SLO County though.





Autocross2026



Sat - 4/11/2026 AX - Academy
Sun - 4/12/2026 AX 75
Sat - 5/16/2026 AX 76
Sun - 5/17/2026 AX - Ladies Only
Sat - 6/13/2026 AX 77
Sat - 7/18/2026 AX 78
Sat - 8/29/2026 AX 79
Sat - 10/17/2026 AX 80



Details and Registration at
MotorsportReg.com
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Autocross Director @ 805-720-2070

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2026 AX Season Preview

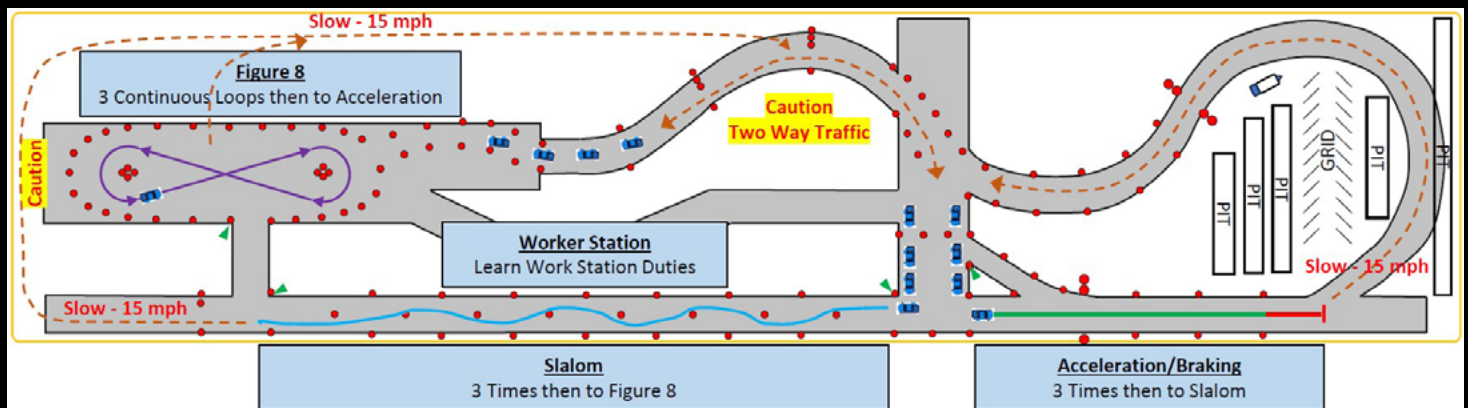
It feels like we just concluded the 2025 season, yet here we are just a month away from starting up again. I'm sure for the competitors it has felt like an eternity. We have an exciting year ahead with six AX competitions, an AX Academy and our 2nd Annual Ladies Only AX. See full schedule below. Registration is done on www.motorsportreg.com. Registration opens first for PCA members about 4 weeks out from the event; 2 weeks out registration will open to non-PCA. Our AX events sell out, so as a PCA member take advantage of the two week head start you get to register.

Our AX events are held at the Santa Maria, CA (SMX) airport. The surface we run on was built by Porsche Germany for the unveiling of the 991 generation 911 back in 2012. It is an open and safe environment, perfect for learning car control. Never been but I'm curious? Do a few searches on YouTube and you'll find lots of in car videos to give you a preview.

Our goal is to make this an easy, comfortable and safe way for you to get out and drive fast. Beginner or Advanced, you will learn something new and be safer on the open roads. Curious about joining High Performance Driver's Education track days but hesitant to take that step, give AX a try. AX will teach you the car control skills you'll use on the big track but at a slower and more manageable speed for beginners.

The season will open with our annual AX Academy scheduled for Saturday April 11th. The Academy is limited to just 30 students. While any experience level will learn from this, it is really intended for the novice autocrosser/driver. If you've never done AX, never done any high performance driving and want to safely get into the sport, this is the Academy for you. Expect 1.5 hours of classroom instruction followed by hours of on track driving with one on one coaching. We go through several exercises focusing on specific skill sets followed by runs of a full AX course. Focus is on Safety, Solid Fundamentals, Fun and then Speed. You will leave the academy having learned more about your capability as a driver, areas for improvement and of what your vehicle is capable.

This is an example of a typical Autocross Academy practice course.





Autocross2026

Our 2nd Annual Ladies Only AX is scheduled for Sunday May 17th. All driver entrants will be ladies only, however we will have our usual AX staff/volunteers there to work the course, run timing and provide driving instruction when needed. The emphasis of the Ladies Only AX will be on creating a non-intimidating environment with a focus on just having fun, safely. This will be similar to a regular AX event however this will not have car classes, no points awarded and no official results; just good fun. We will still count hit cones (2 sec penalty) and give timed results for each lap.

You want to attend the Academy, the Ladies Only event or you're ready to jump straight into the AX competitions, but what's needed to participate? First, a working car helps a lot. We are a Porsche club but we open our events to all makes. Vehicles need to be in good working condition with no leaks, nothing falling off, working seat belts and no cracked glass. Tires must be no older than 5 years old. Speaking of safety, you'll need a Helmet with a SNELL 2020 or newer rating **OR** you can rent one of ours. If you have any questions about the events, equipment needed, vehicles, etc., please reach out. I'm here to get you out and enjoying your car.

Contact me at Fred-PCA-CCCR-AX@comcast.



Volunteers will be needed for both the Academy and Ladies Only events. We will need volunteer workers (Cones, Grid, Starter, etc.) and instructors. If you are one of our regulars, please consider volunteering for these special events.

2026 CCCR PCA AX Schedule:

- Sat - 4/11/2026 AX - Academy
- Sun - 4/12/2026 AX #75
- Sat - 5/16/2026 AX #76
- Sun - 5/17/2026 AX - Ladies Only
- Sat - 6/13/2026 AX #77
- Sat - 7/18/2026 AX #78
- Sat - 8/29/2026 AX #79
- Sat - 10/17/2026 AX #80



Ladies Only of 2025



Academy Classroom
2025

Drivers Education 2026

Bob Bruington Drivers Ed Director

California Central Coast Region Now the only PCA Region to Host Drivers Education at **Laguna Seca** in 2026! Registration is Now Open!!



Our own CCCR, has two Drivers Education events ready for your registration. The first is Buttonwillow on **May 1st**. The Buttonwillow event will be a busy day. Besides the **DE**, we will have an organized drive to the track from Paso Robles and lunch arranged with a **Parade Lap** during the noon time break. You and your guests will drive your car following a PCA instructor around the track at speeds not to exceed 70mph. We have run the Parade Laps at most of our DE events with great success. This is so safe, helmets or safety equipment are not needed. We will also have a **Track Experience** program available for those who would like to experience the track at speed. You will be a passenger in a PCA Instructor's car for one 25 minute session at track speed. This is a fantastic way to see what it is like to experience a DE in a safe and very fun manner. Many of the past participants have decided to join as DE drivers after seeing how much fun it is. Golden Gate Region will hold a two day DE following our event, register for a day with CCCR, then an additional one or two days with GGR.

Our second DE of the year will be at the famous Laguna Seca Raceway on June 29th. California Central Coast Region is the only PCA Region to have a track day at Laguna Seca for 2026! We will have the full DE plus the Parade Laps and the Track Experience programs. Dropping down blind the three story elevation change at the Cork Screw is a sensation everyone should experience at track speeds or controlled speed. We had over 35 cars in the last Laguna Seca Parade Lap. We will limit the cars this time out to 25 cars, 35 were just too many.

Here are the links to register for these events:

CCCR Buttonwillow DE 5/1/26

<https://www.motorsportreg.com/events/cccr-buttonwillow-de-5-1-26-raceway-pca-california-central-coast-536790>

CCCR Drive to Buttonwillow and Parade Lap

<https://www.motorsportreg.com/events/cccr-drive-to-buttonwillow-parade-lap-raceway-pca-california-central-coast-866006>

CCCR Laguna Seca DE June 29th 2026

<https://www.motorsportreg.com/events/cccr-laguna-seca-de-june-29th-2026-weather-tech-raceway-pca-california-493269>

CCCR Laguna Seca Parade Lap and Track Experience

<https://www.motorsportreg.com/events/cccr-laguna-seca-parade-lap-track-experience-weather-tech-raceway-pca-889589>

PCA-GGR HPDE 3: Duel in the Desert

<https://www.motorsportreg.com/events/pca-ggr-hpde-3-duel-in-desert-buttonwillow-raceway-golden-gate-track-events-995336>

Don't procrastinate! These events fill very quickly! You might miss out!

The prices have sky rocketed for track rentals this year, way too many clubs vying for the same track, of course, the tracks are taking advantage of that. We have lowered our prices this year even with the increase in the track rental. To do so, we started a Sponsorship Program to support the Drivers Education and Autocross events to make our track events affordable. You can see the advertisements for our current supporters on this and the following pages. Look forward to them featured in future Coastalaire issues. Please support these fantastic businesses when you are able.

You can see our Driver Education Supporters here:

<https://ccc.pca.org/driver-education/track-sponsors/>

If you want more information about our track programs, how they work, costs, requirements, please contact me at Aircooled911sc@gmail.com. How about "Can I do this"? Let's talk.

Thank You,
Bob Bruington





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Drivers Education 2026

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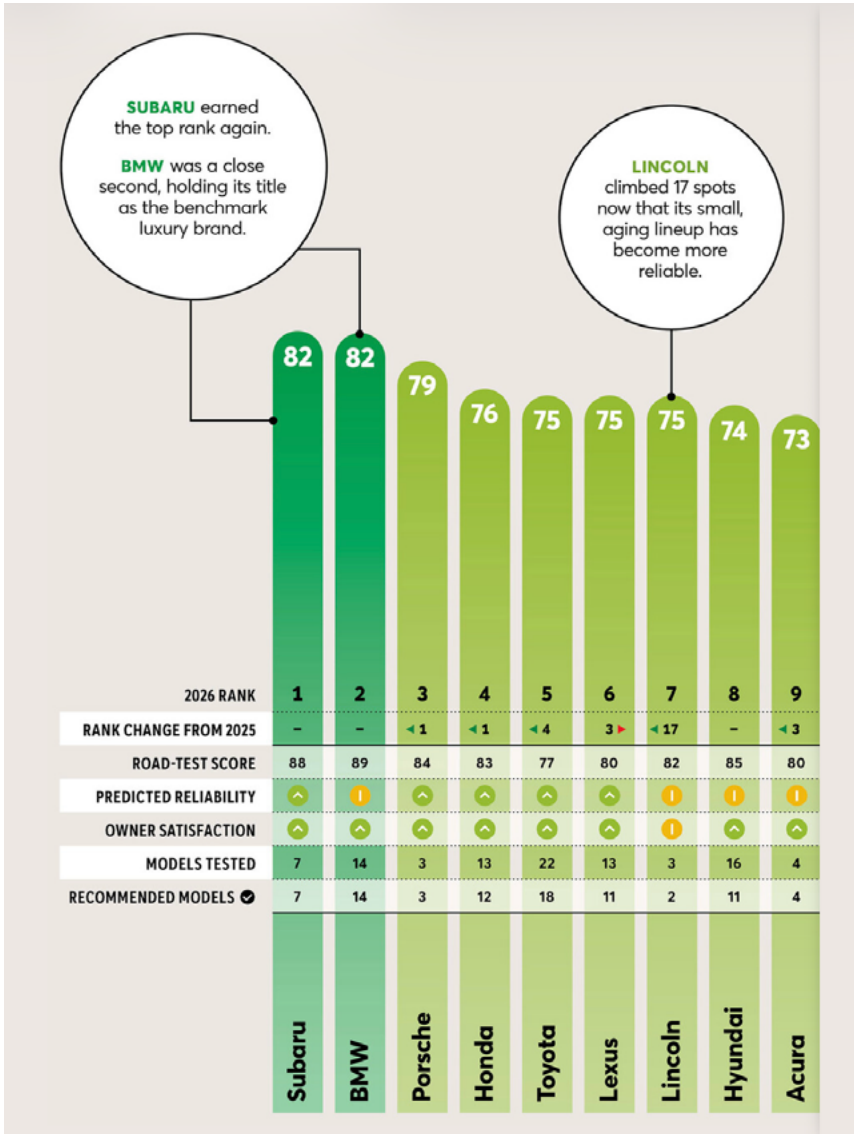
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Consumer Reports Rates 31 Automakers

by Chuck Jennings



HOW WE RANK CAR BRANDS: The Overall Score for individual models is based on four key factors: the road test, reliability, owner satisfaction, and safety. For the road-test score, we put vehicles through more than 50 tests. Predicted reliability ratings are based on problems reported by members from 20 possible trouble areas in CR's Auto Surveys.

Recently, as I do almost daily, I was surfing news articles on my iPhone, and I came across this article on Consumer Reports in which they offered a SPECIAL BUYING GUIDE: BRAND THAT MAKE THE BEST CARS written by Jeff S. Bartlett and Anita Lam. They ranked thirty-one automakers of which had at least two models. (I was surprised that they tested twenty-two models by Toyota and only three Porsche models.) The criteria included safety, driving test scores, reliability and survey results.

The chart here at the left shows only the top nine automakers. (The entire chart seemed a bit much. But it was interesting that Jeep was ranked last. Why do we see so many on the road?) Porsche was ranked third after Subaru and BMW. If I read the chart correctly, it appears that Porsche advanced one place from last year's rankings.

I was also surprised to note that Porsche's Road-Test Score was lower than Subaru's, BMW's and Hyundai's. But then, if the three Porsche models were a GT2, a GT3 and a GT4 in the RS suite, perhaps the ride felt a little less . . . whatever.

Fifty different Road-Tests for each vehicle? Who was driving? What was the criteria?

Although Hyundai scored higher than Porsche on the Road-Test Score, five Hyundai models were not recommended.

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PCA History Book

Updated for 2026, the Porsche Club of America History Book is online now. Inside, you'll find a comprehensive look at the club's journey, detailed sections on key milestones, a showcase of events, and prominent National Awards, complete with descriptions and past winners.

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PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA

The Guys Run Pahrump

What makes a great track experience? Is it a perfectly sorted car operating predictably and reliably? Great weather? First-class facilities? Easy access? Or is it simply the track itself?

Do you prefer long, high-speed straightaways or tight, technical sections? Elevation changes? Off-camber turns? Blind crests that make you question your life choices?

For me, it starts with a great group of friends. The social aspect of our sport is at least half the fun. The other half? A challenging layout, a well-maintained surface, clean restrooms (hugely underrated), and a safely run, well-organized event.

One venue that consistently checks all those boxes is **Spring Mountain Motor Resort and Country Club.**

Located about 1 hour west of Las Vegas in Pahrump, Spring Mountain sits on more than 300 acres of rolling Nevada desert. It offers track junkies a full buffet of automotive adrenaline. With more than six miles of combined road course and over 50 configurations, it's one of the longest and most versatile track facilities in North America. No matter your skill level, there's a layout that will both flatter and humble you—often in the same lap. It's also why General Motors sends Corvette buyers to the Ron Fellows Performance Driving School, and why the Cadillac V-Performance Academy calls Spring Mountain home. When major manufacturers trust a track to introduce customers to 600+ horsepower, that says something.



by Jeff Bartel

This past month, I made my third pilgrimage to Pahrump for an HPDE weekend hosted by the Porsche Club of America - Las Vegas Region. Four friends joined the adventure: Kevin Sullivan in his ever-evolving Cayman S track weapon; Bill Deviny in his FAW Cardinal Coupe race car (more on that later); Fred Herr and his wife Paula in their Cayman GT4; Bruce Morgenthaler, wife Sue, and their 65-pound chocolate lab, Leo, in his 911 Carrera T; and me in my Shark Blue Cayman GTS. The seven-hour drive from the Central Coast included Highway 58 through Tehachapi shortly after a snowstorm. Imagine threading your sports car through a parade of 18-wheelers shedding ice, gravel, and questionable road debris like confetti. Character-building, to say the least. The stretch from Baker toward Pahrump traces the route toward Death Valley before turning off at Shoshone. It's stark, beautiful, and remote enough to make you double-check your fuel gauge.



Accommodations in Pahrump are... limited. I checked into the Best Western, which appears to be maintaining its early-2000s aesthetic with admirable commitment. If you bring your significant other, manage expectations. This trip is about apexes, not ambiance.

The Las Vegas PCA runs a tight ship. Check-in and tech inspection were smooth, the drivers' meeting thorough, and cars were on track by 8:30 a.m. both days. As a private facility, Spring Mountain's meeting rooms and restrooms are excellent—proof that civilization can exist in the desert.

We ran the Charleston Peak (Full) configuration: a 3.23-mile, 18-turn roller coaster that feels like it was designed by someone who really enjoys blind crests. It has everything—elevation changes, off-camber sections, two proper hairpins, and short straights that reward agility over brute horsepower. You are never bored. You are rarely relaxed. Because of the longer lap, we ran four 30-minute sessions per day. By the end of each afternoon, my brain was fully saturated and my right foot needed a timeout. The track demands focus, precision, and a willingness to admit that yes, you braked too early. Again.



Performance-wise, the weekend was a success across the board. Kevin, benefiting from upgrades to his Cayman, dropped an impressive seven seconds from his previous best. Fred steadily improved and ran with the heavy hitters in the fast group. Bruce and I both recorded personal bests as well, which is always deeply satisfying—and excellent fuel for bench racing later.

The Guys Do Pahrump

by Jeff Bartell

As for Bill, those who know him know his race car has a complicated relationship with reliability. This weekend continued that tradition. To his credit, Bill remains remarkably good-natured about the ribbing he takes. And when the car was running, it was genuinely quick—fast enough to remind us all why he keeps coming back to it.



The drive home was thankfully uneventful. I was happy to see my family—and equally happy to leave that Best Western mattress in my rearview mirror. So what makes a great track weekend?



It's not just the layout, the lap times, or even that perfectly clipped apex. It's the shared stories in the paddock, the good-natured trash talk, the small victories, and the occasional mechanical drama that gives everyone something to talk about at dinner.

Spring Mountain delivers all of it.

If you've never made the trip, you should. Bring a well-prepared car, a good helmet, plenty of water—and a sense of humor. The desert will test all of them.

We'll be back next year. Hopefully with faster lap times, fewer warning lights, and perhaps—just perhaps—a different hotel.

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Ad Directory

Adara Med Spa.....	37
Baywood Inn.....	11
Bear Valley Drivers	29
CARBON KHAUS	30
California Sportscars.....	37
Happy Canyon Racing.....	29
German Auto.....	38
Giclee Print and Photo.....	38
loanDepot	11
PCA	33
Porsche San Luis Obispo.....	2
Rock Chip Armor.....	29
The Stable.....	30
The Tire Store	38
Tolosa Winery.....	7
Vintage Auto Body.....	19
Your Ad.....	??