

Well, I was writing about my misadventures with the new Cabrio with the funny Tiptronic tranny, when a part broke and put it into the wall, and out of commission for a month. Thankfully, after all was said and done, State Farm did the right thing, so I guess I'll accept the possibility that the prior owner had damaged the car in some way, perhaps not even known to him. That at least lets me sleep at night, though I check things VERY carefully now.

I had one absurd problem in the repair; the radio could not be made to operate after the shop had removed power while they worked on the car. So the repair had to add another \$430, and when the replacement arrived, it had the wrong connectors. It took another week to get that resolved, so I finally have the car back to original condition, \$6500 and two months later. But I'm not sure the coded radios can have the desired effect since, like the Doomsday Machine in Dr. Strangelove, there is no external indication that the radio won't work if removed from the power. So far, the only effect has been to force me to buy a new radio. Hmmmm...

I got the car back the Wednesday before we were to leave for Parade. On Friday afternoon, we set off with rig and car trailer to Poughkeepsie for my Mother-In-Law's 70th birthday dinner, then departed at 11 PM for Mt. Tremblant. Rain the whole way, terrified my wife, and I got there at 8 AM having not slept in the prior 24 hours, only to work tech all day, but that's another story. Parade had its share of mistakes; they all do, and some were really bad; such as the meal quality and some of the speakers. PCA ought to require those guys to take a Dale Carnegie or something. But the entire week was more than vindicated with the two days I spent driving at St Jovitte, and was capped by Lynne & I taking 1st & 2nd in Late 911 Tech Quiz, Ladies and Men respectively. The trophies are beautiful polished green granite with broken edges, some cast aluminum polished loons in a swimming position, and a polished cast aluminum pine tree towering above them, with an etched logo and description on the back of the tree. That Lynne scored only 2/3 my points for a better trophy is only a little frustrating. I thought it was a pretty fair test. The final banquet was definitely the best, but I suspect we were not alone in looking back fondly to the Parades where every meal wasn't in the same tent.

Sacramento next year conflicts with 48 Hours, so I don't yet know what I'll do. I want Jess to drive, maybe more than she wants, but I also want her to do what's best for her, and that causes another conflict as well. So, who knows. Maybe I'll go to 48 Hours, then fly to Sacramento for the party, and work the rally or something. At this point, no one knows what the venue for the 2001 Parade will be, a very unusual circumstance.

As I said, I had only just gotten the car a week before, and it still was missing the stone guard decal from the left rear fender, and of course the radio, but the shop had done a great job. I was nervous at first, but soon it was obvious that the car was definitely up to the task. So I started to fly.

If you remember, I drove the Glen by putting the car in D and shifting with the loud pedal in the turns. The problem with St. Jovitte is the car would JUST shift up at the braking point, but slide in the turns too much to depend on maintaining grip during the downshift. What to do... Well, use another Tip Manual Mode feature. One of the neat capabilities, that is for everyone except autocrossers, is the tranny will upshift if you reach 300 RPM below redline and haven't lifted. But you can also pull it down a gear before you actually get the revs low enough, so it will drop in only when it is safe to do so. That allowed me to pull it down as I started the braking, which would give the added advantage of rear axle engine braking, leaving me in the exact gear I wanted to reapply power. And since it was wet for much of the time, and the track was rough and slippery, I was able to balance the car well by "vectoring" with abrupt throttle lift followed by re-squeezing on power, and the power was essentially full from the apex to the next braking point, so no shifting losses occurred.

There were a couple of places where a fifth gear would have made a huge difference, but I did OK for what I had. And as I have observed before; however modest your ride, talent gets the most possible from it, so learn to drive well instead of spending all your cash trying to modify the car. You need a baseline, even if it is wrong, so long as it is consistent, before you can hope to know whether you have improved.

Anyway, I just loved the track and ran both days, and I had the opportunity to meet new friends and try new things with the car. I met one couple who helped me a lot by her driving the Cabrio back to the parking area while I drove the rig, rather than having to strap it up in the downpour. Because Rennsport were to run the Club Race the next day, and THOSE guys tend to get carried away with tow rigs, they needed every square inch of parking they could get. So I just wanted to get away from the mess without becoming a monsoon sponge. Louise was reluctant to even try, until I told her it was an automatic, as I found out she can't drive a stick. I expect Peter will be teaching her soon on his '89 944 Turbo, because she was positively BEAMING when she got out. But I suggested they rent a cheap Toyota and learn on that clutch before subjecting her to a Porsche clutch, and vice-versa. If you can find the time to make the 7 hour journey from Syracuse to St Jovitte, it is an excellent technical track, with loads of elevation change and blind curves with very late apexes, which are excellent for learning. I followed that up with a weekend at Watkins Glen with NNJR in August. Sometime between 48 Hours and that weekend the track had removed large patches of tarvia and planted concrete patches at the corners. See John's article about same in a prior REDLINE. Net result was a new set of driving parameters, and it helped that we were all forced to be circumspect with the last day being very wet, and the track treacherous. Many of the hot shoes didn't even bother to start their cars that day. But the wet is the best time to learn, as the car is more prone to sliding, and learning to control a car while it slides is the essence of driving rapidly and safely.

Once the weather cleared, we were presented with some of the most exhilarating track time imaginable. But at a price. After having seen only minimal wear on the Toyo's which came with the car at St Jovitte, I was amazed at the wear in just two days at the Glen, and I wasn't alone. The concrete patches are VERY abrasive in the dry, and scrubbed unevenly, especially on the inside right rear tire, which tends to toe out and leave excess negative camber at full stop, which it sees much of the time in right turns. My 340 lb. and the soft springing of the Cabrio, combined with its excellent torque, saw to that. So I'll be experimenting with camber and toe adjustments before I submit to new springs, swaybars, etc. to stiffen the car.

Another wear item I had not expected was brake pads. Having eaten the OEM set at the Niagara event, which were new when I bought the car, I expected the Cool Carbons would last the season, based on experience with my Targa, where they last two. But there is a major difference between the cars structurally, besides the added energy they must dissipate; the 993 has cross-drilled rotors. That effectively leaves a sharp cutting edge at each hole which simply results in milling of the pad material. Their purpose is ostensibly to release gasses trapped between the pad and rotor, but they are a mighty broach indeed. So I will be looking for undrilled rotors, ideally with milled slots and chamfered edges to minimize the contact angle at the rub point in hopes of reducing that wear. A \$325 set of brake pads for every two driver's ed events is a little pricey. But they sure do work well. And there is NO equation by which I can justify the costs of track driving without the best brakes money can buy. Period. I've boiled the brakes twice at the Glen, and it ain't pretty.

I'll be doing my last Driver Ed at Mosport in late Sept., though you probably will read this later. Mosport has even more elevation change than either St Jovitte or the Glen, and is also a very diverse and technical track. My favorite turn is the scariest one; turn two, which drops throughout and is a "double apex" turn, meaning you set one arc starting from the track center at the top of the hill (because it is very difficult to come back from the off-camber of the roadway

crowns, just as with turn four), then drop the left wheels into the drainage ditch along the left, like a bowling ball gutter, then carry out to mid track about 3/2 downhill, where you set a different arc to finish at the bottom to avoid a Winklehock (into the wall) at exit. I also love turns 5a & b, as they reward proper sliding and braking at the entry. A real fun track, and it will be interesting to see what the best method of Tip exercise will be there. I'll keep you posted.