



Eastern Swing

Dispatches from a Trio of 356-Friendly Events

By Kobus Reyneke

Correspondent Kobus Reyneke had a busy September and October, attending three events across the state of New York. Fortunately for us he has shared his experiences here. — PB

Watkins Glen Grand Prix Festival

This event has been on my bucket list for many years. Finally, the stars lined up for my buddy and I to travel the three hours west to find out what it's all about. We were not disappointed.

Several events were held during the weekend of September 6–9, but the Friday concours, followed by the 1948–1952 Watkins Glen street race reenactment, is really special. Watkins Glen hosted the first post-WWII road race on October 2, 1948. The 6.6-mile circuit ran through the village streets, starting and ending in front of the Schuyler County Courthouse. According to the event website:

... to close the public roads for the event, it was necessary to have permits from six governmental entities: the state, county, village, Town of Reading, Town of Dix, and the New York State Parks Commission. It was also necessary to have a permit from the New York Central Railroad to stop the trains during the race, as the course crossed the tracks.

Newly refurbished with sparkling sidewalks, checkered pedestrian crossings, and bars galore, Watkins Glen was the perfect host to hundreds of spectacular cars and many thousands of spectators.

Happy hour at the Seneca Lodge is a mandatory stop according to racers and veteran spectators. We found lots of cool cars outside and a lively scene within.

The racing on Saturday and Sunday was as good as it gets. With the Lime Rock Historic Festival occurring the weekend before, I expected to see many of the same cars, but few seemed to race both events. The track



Above: The Seneca Lodge is a popular watering hole. Below: 356s in the spectator parking area.



Vic Skirmants tore it up on the track and in the pits, yet took a moment to meet the author.

is in amazing shape, with recently upgraded track and facilities. Drivers tell me it's one of their favorite tracks, and I can see why. Except for NASCAR, all races run the long course that includes the dogleg. Wooded backdrops make for fantastic photo opportunities.

Only two 356s raced, but the infield was packed with amazing cars, including a beehive Carrera parked next to a newer A. They both participated in the track parade, with their drivers and passengers displaying broad smiles.

The Bridge

When I first heard of "The Bridge" in Bridgehampton on Long Island, New York, I immediately thought of the vintage race that I attended on the old Bridgehampton Race Circuit roughly 30 years ago. Little did I know that ex-Wall Streeter Bob Rubin had replaced the track with a world class, members-only golf course, with an accompanying out-of-reach initiation fee of more than \$1 million.

The iconic setting overlooking Long Island sound is hallowed ground for auto racing, as it was once one of the country's most legendary and challenging tracks. Thankfully Rubin, a car enthusiast, had thoughtfully preserved the track's straight, including its weathered Chevron bridge. His one regret is that he didn't preserve the entire track.

The Bridge is a one-day, invitation-only event that was held on September 14. Rubin, Jeffrey Einhorn, and luxury brand consultant Shamin Abas have curated the event to precision, surpassing the Quail in many ways. The event is primarily focused on vehicles from 1957–1974 that raced, or would have been eligible to race, at the Bridgehampton Race Circuit during its glory years. Spread across two greens, the entire 18th-hole fairway and the grounds around the stunning modern clubhouse, 250 hand-picked cars provided endless photo opportunities until sunset. Add gourmet food, wine, and beer and it is the ultimate lawn party for car lovers. No cost was spared, and it was all free for invitees. (Rumor has it a limited number of tickets will be sold for 2020.)

Upon an invitation to display our 1959 Porsche 356A cabriolet, my wife Susie and I accepted with enthusiasm and booked a hotel for

A personal highlight was meeting Vic Skirmants and his wife Barbara. As many of you know, Vic specializes in rebuilding 356 gearboxes; I'm happy to say my car's restorer, Gaswerks Garage, sent mine to Vic for a total rebuild. I've put almost 5,000 miles on it since, and it still runs like a dream. Vic's race car ran into a gearbox issue and had to swap boxes between races, but Vic made it back onto the track to set a blistering pace.

the weekend. Anyone who knows the New York metro area steers clear of the afternoon traffic on the Long Island Expressway, but we had no choice. Our three-hour drive on Friday became four hours of torture. The owner's reception that evening made us quickly forget the trek, though. Beautiful cars surrounded the clubhouse, a fantastic jazz band provided just the right atmosphere, the food and drink were amazing, good friends were everywhere, and the spectacular sunset added the icing to the cake.

Saturday's weather forecast looked promising. While Susie stayed in bed, I sneaked out well before sunrise for dawn-light photo opportunities as the cars arrived for display. A beautiful sunrise signaled that a great day was in store for the lucky attendees.

I went back to pick up Susie, and by noon we had our tub parked adjacent to the 18th green. As a spoof of The Bridge logo (a bow-tied skull with bunny ears), we dressed up a skeleton with checkered bowtie and bunny ears and perched it in our cabriolet's driver's seat. It quickly became known as "the original owner," and could be seen in numerous Instagram postings.

By 1 p.m., the 250 gorgeous contemporary and vintage vehicles were in place—meticulously arranged according to detailed plans. Owners milled around, admiring the spectacle that had unfolded in front of them, without the distraction of formal judging; this was just for fun. By mid-afternoon the grounds were filled with well-heeled guests, some with dogs in tow. A few actually plodded around the golf course in high heels. People watching was almost as fun as exploring the great cars on course.



Left: Chris Turner's 356-powered Sabel racer guarded the clubhouse entrance. Right: In front of the clubhouse, together with Joe Buzzetta's 904 and a 906, Brian Aitken's hand-built Runge FF005 stood out.



Left: The 18th fairway was guarded by a 1960 Carrera GT Lightweight. **Middle:** Our silver cabriolet was grouped with an unmolested coupe that was trailered in from Nashville and a beautiful red cabriolet. **Right:** Gerry Mato's 356A Speedster being admired in front of the clubhouse by invitees.

At the top of the 18th hole, a band and a pop-up bar lured attendees into an elaborate art fair, mostly in decorated shipping containers featuring 10 carefully curated collections of work from top-tier artists. Around the clubhouse, sponsors exhibited their wares, while a jazz ensemble added just the right ambiance. Drinks flowed freely and you could even pick up a free bouquet of flowers.

Gourmet bites, from fresh tuna ceviche to lamb skewers and mini lobster rolls, were on offer from Smorgasburg vendors (Smorgasburg is an open-air food market that originated in Brooklyn) scattered around the greens. Fine wine, spirits, branded water, and ice cream rounded things off nicely.

Of course the cars were the centerpieces, ranging from a selection of Lane Museum microcars, Stuart Parr one-off design specials, American muscle cars, to some of the rarest vintage and modern European sports and racing cars. There was something for everyone.

The Porsche contingent was vast, and eight 356s were on hand. On the straight, near the iconic Chevron bridge, stood two noteworthy

356s. Both were freshly restored by Bobby Singh. Lake Underwood's historic Speedster, extensively raced during the 1960s by his father, made a triumphant homecoming. Named by the PCA as one of four "giant killer" drivers from the early days of Porsche racing in the US, Lake Sr. rubbed shoulders with greats like Briggs Cunningham in their jointly owned 904.

As the sun was setting in a blaze, the cars slowly started rolling off the fairways, along the preserved race circuit straight, and out under the Chevron bridge, providing amazing photo opportunities. It was a long but incredibly enjoyable day.

Sunday brought yet another cool event, as many of The Bridge cars attended a cars & coffee at the Bridgehampton Historical Society. The afternoon drive back to New Jersey turned into another nightmare, the Long Island Expressway packed with weekenders returning from the far reaches of Long Island. But in the final analysis, it was a small price to pay for an amazing event. We'll keep our fingers crossed for an invitation to The Bridge 2020.

Driven to America 3

Having reported on last year's event in Vol. 42-5 of this magazine (January/February 2019), I was determined not to miss DTA3, which promised to be substantially bigger and better.



The early bird catches the worm, so I began my 90-minute drive to the event in total darkness at 4:15 a.m. Set at the spectacular Fort Hill Mansion in Lloyd Harbor, New York, on the Long Island Sound, you couldn't have wished for a prettier location. Cars started rolling in at 5:30 a.m. and quickly filled in the expansive estate. Pre-dawn coffee never tasted so good, but I was on a mission to get some good photos. The forecast called for cloudy skies, but it was as if God looked kindly upon the gaggle of early-bird photographers, as the sun came out right on cue for a brief but spectacular sunrise.

A celebration of Max Hoffman's genius idea to start importing Porsches to the States, Driven to America brings together hundreds of air-cooled Porsches. Perhaps 75 water-cooled siblings showed up in support. The crowd was clearly knowledgeable and enthusiastic.

Although not as prominently displayed on the front lawn as the race cars and RSS, the 356s had the coolest spot, in front of the garages.

Judging by the enthusiastic crowds and spectacular cars, the Porsche car culture is indeed alive and thriving. This event is on a Luftgekühlt trajectory... how can they possibly top it next year? I bet they will. 356



Top: Lake Underwood (right) enjoys a laugh with Max and Shelby Imber. **Above left:** Lake's freshly restored Speedster #37 was the tub highlight. **Above right:** Matt Leonard admires his touch-up polishing job.