

## **TT West 2018 - A Grizzly Drive - September 9-14**

TT West is not a race. We make sure that message is clear to all participants. Yet there are now two of us heading to the same spot in the road. I saw the intense look and desperation in his eyes so I hit the brakes to give him a clear path. The bull elk leaped across the road about 10 yards in front of me, heading for the tree cover on the other side. It was the fourth day of TT West, a day when all the TT West participants were freestyling to explore Yellowstone National Park on their own.

Sales of the Audi TT in the USA started with the limited edition Neiman Marcus TT offered in their 1998 Christmas catalog which was sold as a 2000 model year car. Since then, the US has seen the Mk 1 (2000-2006), Mk 2 (2008-2015) and Mk 3 (2016+) offered as a coupe and roadster in base, TTS (debut in 2009), and TTRS (debut in 2012) configurations. It has been featured in several movies ranging from the great chase scene in "Mission Impossible 2" to the "Legally Blond 2" spoof that featured a baby blue TT roadster which did nothing to dispel the myth that the TT is a "hairstylist's car". To this day, more TT West drivers own a Mk 1 roadster than any other model. Because of the age of the TT fleet, this was the first year that TT West participants were required to perform an ACNA high performance driving event inspection prior to the drive to help verify that the cars can survive the trip.

TT West began in 2001 when some SoCal friends decided to organize a road trip to Lake Tahoe with their new TTs. They had so much fun it became an annual event. TT West is usually a multi-state group drive covering 800 to 1000 miles in five days, with an optional extra one day drive. We try to blend challenging roads with stops at historical sites along the way. Participants have come from across the USA from Hawaii to Florida. We are still waiting for our first Alaska participant but we have had drivers from Canada attend.

The 2018 edition of TT West covered 850+ miles through Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. It began Sunday September 9 in Boise with an optional event starting downtown and going up Bogus Basin Drive to the Bogus Basin ski resort. The drive was 16 miles of fun climbing 3400' via almost continuous twisties and hairpins. Once there, some of us rested in sun and suds while others tried the summer attractions at the summit that included a coaster ride, riding tubes down the ski slope, and scenic chair lift rides. The evening ended with a drive down the mountain to a fabulous outdoor BBQ hosted by TT West participants Anne Aastum and Bob Koeberlein.

The first official day began with a welcome and registration at the Audi Boise dealership. Most of us took advantage of their free car wash offer to scrape off several layers of bugs accumulated on our pilgrimage to Boise. Then we attacked the Sawtooth Mountains, stopping at the historic gold mining town of Idaho City before ending the day in Sun Valley.

The second day was mostly flat land interspersed with sweeping turns as we traveled to West Yellowstone, Montana. Our feature stop was the Craters of the Moon National Monument. Craters encompass the largest lava field in the lower 48. It has a volcanic eruption every 2,000 years and it's been 2,000 years since the last eruption. We felt lucky to escape before our TTs were toasted.

Wednesday we traveled a circle route from West Yellowstone. We traveled north on Rt 191 which follows the Gallatin River featured in the movie "A River Runs Through It." We stopped in Bozeman Montana to tour the Museum of the Rockies which exhibits dinosaur fossils unearthed in Montana. We then visited the Montana Grizzly Encounter that holds

rescued grizzly bears. From there we drove to the north entrance of Yellowstone National Park, through Yellowstone, and back to the village of West Yellowstone.

As mentioned previously, Thursday was a day of independent exploration of Yellowstone. Yellowstone includes the Yellowstone Caldera, a supervolcano that geologists tell us is overdue for an eruption but we escaped certain death yet again.

Our final day began with a tour of Yellowstone's Geysers Basin that includes Old Faithful. Our next stops were Colter Bay and then lunch at the Jackson Lake Lodge. Both had fantastic views of the Grand Teton mountain range. We then traversed Grand Teton National Park and finished in Jackson, Wyoming with a final farewell dinner.