

## **TT West 2024 – Seashells and Redwoods along the California and Oregon Coast**

The only casualty of TT West 2024 happened at the start of the second day. We were driving the twisties along California State Route 1 Shoreline Highway in the Muir Woods National Monument just north of San Francisco. Suddenly, a rock jumped out onto the road and bit off a huge chunk of TT tire and spit it out causing a blowout! Fortunately, the rock's TT victim was one of the versions that had a compact spare. A quick trip back to San Francisco and \$1000 poorer for 4 new tires (because you usually can't just replace one tire on an Audi Quattro), he caught up to the group at our hotel stop for the evening.

TT West 2024 was a 950 mile 5 day trip following the Pacific coast from central California to Albany, Oregon. For most of the event, we traveled two major highways plus an additional scenic byway. The first highway was California State Route 1 which has various names including the Pacific Coast Highway and the Shoreline Highway. Going north, State Route 1 ends at the intersection of our second highway, US Route 101, called the Redwood Highway in California and the Oregon Coast Highway. The scenic route we explored was the 31 mile Avenue of the Giants, California State Route 254, which meanders through Giant Redwood forests.

Planning for driving these roads requires a lot of flexibility. The majority of these roads and their bridges were built during the Great Depression in the 1930s by the CCC Boys (Civilian Conservation Corps). 90 years of wear, the relentless erosion of Mother Nature by the ocean waves and coastal rains, and climate change have caused annual landslides that close major sections of these roads for months and sometimes years.

TT West was supposed to start in Cambria, California just a few months after California Transportation (CalTrans) repaired three 2023 landslides between Cambria and Carmel-by-the-Sea. CalTrans completed those repairs on schedule but Mother Nature added two more landslides along the route in the Spring of 2024, one of which will likely not be repaired until late 2025. We were more fortunate on our drive along Avenue of the Giants as that road had just opened from end to end for the first time in several years only a few weeks before we arrived.

On a typical day, TT West covers about 200-250 miles with at least one stop in the morning and afternoon at scenic or historical places of interest, plus a lunch break. This year we had a wide selection of wonderful beaches and light houses to choose from. For brevity, we won't list all of the ocean vista stops in this article but each had its own unique character. In addition, most of our meal and hotel stops had wonderful water views. The evenings featured impromptu gatherings by participants to unwind. TT West is known as a "gathering of friends" with about 75% of participants are veterans of past drives whose company we enjoy annually, while also making new friends of the rookies.

Adapting to road closures, TT West started Monday morning in Carmel instead of Cambria with a drive south along the Pacific Coast Highway to Big Sur and then returned to Carmel for lunch at the famous Pebble Beach Golf Course Lodge. In the afternoon we continued north along the coast, stopping at Bean Hollow State Beach and ending at the vista area at the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge. Heavy traffic for most of Monday minimized the fun factor of that drive.

Tuesday morning began by following the Shoreline Highway through the aggressive tire-eating rocks of Muir Woods on our way to visit several coastal vistas that featured the very interesting lighthouse and sea lions in Point Reyes National Seashore with its lightly traveled roads. We stayed overnight in a water-view hotel in Fort Bragg, CA.

Route 1 from Cambria to Carmel had been one of my top 5 drives in the American West but it has been replaced in my mind by the Tuesday drive. Both drives have great scenery but the Tuesday drive had far less traffic, making the drive much more enjoyable.

Wednesday we drove to Eureka CA, visiting beaches and the Avenue of the Giants through redwood forests. We spent an hour in Founder's Grove along Avenue of the Giants getting up close to these huge monster trees.

Thursday we entered the Oregon coast for more Redwood forests and beaches ending at another waterfront hotel at Coos Bay. Along the way we saw elk in the redwood meadows and whales spouting off of the beach vistas.

Friday we continued north along the Oregon coast to Newport. The morning drive included an extended stop at the most spectacular beach of our trip for wave splash action, Cape Perpetua. With names like Cook's Chasm, Thor's Well, and Devil's Churn, the waves hitting this rocky coast generated incredible splashes and spouts that exploded over 50 feet in the air! After a water view lunch in Newport, we then headed inland for our final dose of twisties through the Oregon rain forest to Albany which is just east of Corvallis and adjacent to I-5 for an easy start home.

Following the trend of recent years, most of the 2024 participants drove Mk 3 TTs. Mk 1 and Mk 2 TTs were also represented. We had coupes, roadsters (including a 20'th Anniversary Edition), base models, S models, and 4 Mk 3 TTRS coupes.

In 2025, TT West will celebrate its 25'th anniversary! It will be held in August in Colorado with a 1100+ mile drive that features a drive through Rocky Mountain National Park. Participants will get special 25'th anniversary denim jackets with the 25'th anniversary logo embroidered on the back of the jacket.

TT West is an event exclusively for Audi Club of North America members. TT West is limited to 20 cars and registration usually sells out in a few weeks. People on the TT West mailing list get a chance to register before registration is announced to the public on the ACNA Facebook site and other social media platforms. You can join the mailing list at TT <https://www.tt-west.org>