

Our First Time

By Malcolm Royalty

First times are special, sometimes awkward, but always memorable. We are not speaking of sex, but our first CARavan! It was all that and more. If you include lovely accommodations, fine dining (lobster, lobster, lobster), supportive and friendly club members, beautiful countryside and well-planned activities, then our first time was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience.



By the time we had rolled along about ten miles of scenic country roads, we had all but forgotten about the hubcap that had flown off the previous day, only to be immediately smashed right before our eyes by a car of the 21st century. One week earlier, when we had Frank, our 1937 Cadillac (come-on, everybody names their Classic) loaded onto the carrier. He was in perfect shape—all shined and tuned for the trip. After some obvious abuse from an irresponsible carrier, Frank had a little trouble getting going on the first day (possible generator problem, battery issues, voltage regulator malfunction, etc.). >>>



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After a lot of attention from several club members, including a Car Whisperer and the Trouble Truck team, we were on our way the next day. Wow, this is fantastic and Frank purred along through green hills, thick woods and past old-fashioned gas pumps and mom & pop grocery stores. We got some deviled eggs as a snack at one because the teenager working the register and everything else at the little store told us, “They are delicious, my mother made them this morning.” They were.

Occasionally, we would see or even follow a fellow CARavaner, remarking about the charm of their vehicle. You can get totally immersed in the cars and the roads, and you realize you are part of something very unique and special. But it’s important to heed the repeated advice, “be sure to leave ahead of the Trouble Truck.” We felt secure buzzing along at about 60 mph, keeping a keen ear to the Caddy’s noises, hiccups and burps.

Do you know the difference between an adventure and an ordeal? Attitude! We knew only a few club members attending this adventure, but we were pleased to find welcoming and helpful car addicts, stepping up to aid us with our initial mishaps. Although we were embarrassed to start the CARavan off “on the wrong foot,” we were quickly reassured that this was not uncommon. And there were certainly other CARavaners enduring their own adventuresome trials. Our troubles led us to make lasting friends, later to become zip-line partners and fun dinner companions.

We were told lots of “war stories” of the others’ trying experiences and laughed at the inconvenience they caused. Meals were sparked with tales of the day’s adventures and discoveries. The outstanding cars on the CARavan and those in the exquisite car collections we visited, were discussed and reviewed over drinks and dinners.

Favorites were declared, argued and relished. Everyone enthusiastically participated. We were pampered and most of us were happily relinquishing control—we even saw some cell phones firmly stowed away!

In fact, all the meals, daily routes, accommodations, museums, and car collections were superbly planned—all we had to do was show up and enjoy. There was a lovely boat ride on Lake Winnepesaukee. Lighthouses, cog railways, historical sights—we saw them all. And along the way, we had a masterfully prepared tour book with instructions, information, maps, highlights, suggestions and more history. Talk about turn-key!

There is not space for us to mention Bar Harbor, Colonel Buck’s Cursed Tomb in Bucksport, Bill Ruger’s East of Eden Estate (remarkable collection), or Bob and Sandra Bahre’s delightful lunch and unique and super fun collection. These were just a few of the exciting things we saw. All of our travels and stops were more than special. We are convinced they were “one-offs,” unusual vortex things that can never be repeated in the same way. Now ... a little poetic license. ‘Twas the worst of times, ‘Twas the BEST of times. Our first time was so much more than expected, or financed. You really must go! Count us in for the next one and we will see you there, and always remember to leave before the Trouble Truck.



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