

Brunch at Karls, or where have all the good roads gone?

by Jim Heimer, inventor of the compass

It used to be, in the good old days – like three years ago – that when you wanted to stretch your Porsche's legs on some good ole Texas roads, why ya just headed a little bit north of the city, turned west, and let 'er rip. Ahem. Some good ole boy has gone and built subdivisions smack dab in the middle of those pleasant drives in the country. Ask me how I know. Ask me about the recent Meet Drive Eat Drive Lone Star Region Event to Karl's on the Riverbend.

The planning was theoretically meticulous. Advanced mapping software was used to select and time the route. There would be a pleasant morning drive of about 85 miles requiring just under 2 hours on the road. Then we would stop at Karl's on the Riverbend for their renowned Sunday brunch (best to go easy on the bottomless Mimosa) before continuing on for another two hours to points south. All in all, it was a carefully prepared plan.

And it all started out so well – about two-dozen LSR'ers driving 13 Porsches met at the Arboretum parking lot at the ridiculously early hour of 9 am on Sunday, June 25th. After the traditional filling out of the liability forms, a drivers briefing about what, optimistically, we thought was going to happen, we all started off and immediately ran into construction on 610 that required a scenic detour on the well traveled (by us) Woodway - West Loop - Post Oak – West Loop - San Felipe - 610 circular tour of the underneath of the 610 construction project from several perspectives. Surprisingly, we ended up all together headed north on 290

for our rendezvous with two other Porsches at the Spring Cypress exit, and we actually found them waiting. From that point on things went rapidly downhill (had there been any hills around) as we had planned to follow House-Hahl road on a tree lined winding path to the southwest. However, after resolving some confusion about which was House-Hahl (not a household name) road (when did they extend Fry road south of 290 anyway?), we discovered that someone had built a subdivision smack dab on top of House-Hahl road, thus rendering it impassable. You know you are in trouble, when you are lost before you really get started.

Fortunately we had the services of Lynn Friedman and her husband, who have bicycled this area and thus were able to get us routed around this and several other subdivisions that had suddenly sprouted up, probably in the week before, but by the time we had connected with our original route at the intersection of Katy Hockley and 529, it was clear that we wouldn't make the



restaurant in time for our 11:00 am reservation. Abandoning all hope of a

pleasant country drive, Karl's at the Riverbend was plugged into the trusty GPS, fastest route selected, and off we went into Katy, then south on 1463 to approach Karl's from the north, arriving right on time. What genius!



Karl's has the appearance of an old house, which it probably is (and which I could demonstrate, had I remembered to snap a photo of something other than the parking lot). We were seated on the enclosed porch (that would be "Porsches on the porch" – should be able to do something with that) overlooking a grassy slope down to Jones Creek (also un-photographed, but it really was nice).

We dug right into Karl's buffet, which sported everything from the usual salads (lettuce and stuff like that) to more exotic combinations (duck and apple salad is one of my favorites). Then there were the hot dishes – bacon, sausage, eggs benedict or eggs and omelets cooked to order, roast beef from the carvery, and – for the more adventurous, pepper venison stew with spaetzle, and various potatoes and vegetables. Some of us even had room for dessert – that would have been your choice of several mousses, apple strudel with cream sauce, cheesecake, and more . . . and more . . . and more.

After a decent interval and a few words of praise for the benefits of being a) an LSR member and b) reasonably well fed, a few stalwart survivors embarked on the afternoon part of the perilous journey.

But, true to form, the subdivision monster had struck and converted the enticingly named Plantation Road into Faux-Plantations-on-Quarter-Acre-Lots Road that blended smoothly into State-Correctional-Facility-Do-Not-Enter-Vehicles-Subject-to-Search-Do-Not-Pick-Up-Hitchhikers Road. Once again abandoning all semblance of a plan, the even fewer stalwart survivors headed south on 762 and finally, finally reached the nirvana of well-paved country roads. All five or six of us.

So for those of you who are enticed by this story, the moral is to beat feet directly to Karl's on either I-10 or 59 (I know, it isn't pretty) from whence you can proceed south or north to the restaurant, then drop down



into the dotted circular area on the map at the left.

Here the roads are smooth two-laners with minimum traffic and enough room to get around the occasional pickup truck on the longish straight stretches. You can crank up the speed (judiciously, of course, and with full regard for the local speed limits – huh),

take those straights and the sweeping turns that interrupt them, then gear down for the sharp turns that connect the straight bits together. There are two alternatives – the inner loop down 36 from Guy, or the outer loop that kicks north then southwest toward Newgulf.

If you want to try the planned morning drive, then I suggest either starting at the white arrow (Katy Hockley Road and 529) then proceed west, or catch 1489 off of I-10. The white dotted path is the track we ended

up taking – the subdivision tour – and it weren't much fun!

A full route description (of the original route, so make allowances) is on the web site at <http://www.lsrpca.com/Rally/rally.html#events>.

Good touring and bon appetit!

