



Temecula Olive Oil Factory Tour Saturday November 10th

By Richard Schauer

Four Packards, from the far left end is the Woolsey's '35 Limo, the Schauer's '34 Touring Sedan, "Evelyn" Phil Pizzuto's '39 Touring Sedan, and Brian Wagner's 1940 Touring Sedan.



Saturday November 10 could not have been a more perfect day to fire up our Packards and go on a tour. The route to the Temecula Olive Oil Factory took us over familiar territory up old Hwy 395 to Temecula and then east 18 miles to tiny Aguanga (blink and you miss it), a whistle stop on Hwy 79. Many times Karen and I drove on Hwy 371 north through Anza on the way to Idyllwild or Palm Desert, but we had no idea what treasure lay nestled just off the road at Aguanga. The Temecula Olive Oil Company should be added to anyone's "must see" list of things to do in the greater San Diego area.

Making the trip were Jim and Catherine Woolsey in their beautiful 1935 12 Limo, Past President Phil Pizzuto navigating recently restored Evelyn, and Brian Wagner tooling along comfortably in his stunning 1940 touring sedan. Karen and I drove the '34 so there were four Packards in total on the tour. Also attending were Rick and Lynn Carlson from Lake Elsinore, Ron Steffey and daughter Jennifer, and Mike and Tana Campana who came as our guests. Driving tours have declined in popularity with our club, but there remains a core of committed members who look forward to them. We will continue to schedule driving tours in the future.



The group getting the scoop on olive growing



Not everyone is paying attention. Umm, something on the ground here

How many know that the vast majority of extra virgin olive oil we buy comes from Spain, or from Spain by way of Italy? How many realize that most of that olive oil is fermented...spoiled fruit? How many are aware that the growing California olive oil business now represents a little over 5% of the total market, and is increasing? These are a few of the many things we learned during the hour and a half long tour. Our docent, Tom, along with his wife, are the owners of the grove. How



Inside the processing room

many know the difference between a grove and an orchard? Answer: a grove is comprised of trees that are green year round, while an orchard consists of deciduous trees. So many things we learned thanks to Tom. Plus, the land in and around Aguanga has a rich and varied history. Did you know the Mission Olive tree variety is so named because the friars brought the tree over from Spain in the 1700's, and through experimentation and grafting developed the perfect, drought tolerant



Inside the processing room

tree? The tour took us through the 32 acre experimental grove where 36 varieties of olive trees are growing, and then to the building where olives are crushed (it sounds like popcorn popping) and oils and other precious juices extracted. We returned to the starting point where everyone sat down for the tasting. There is so much to remember it is impossible to relate it all here, but if you choose to take the tour, you should bring a notepad to record the wealth of information about what olive oil and blend combinations are good for which food groups. One that interested us is turkey prepared with bacon strips under the skin and basted with basil olive oil! We must try that.

The tasting of the oil, a tradition going back thousands of years.
Jennifer and Ron Steffey with Karen Schauer



After the tour everyone turned west 3 miles to the Stagecoach Inn for lunch. Not an "Inn" in the true sense, this roadside bar/diner is so named because the Butterfield Stage once had a depot there. The food was respectable but the service was slow. So much time was eaten up (pun intended) with lunch that time ran out for a trip to a winery. All but four cars headed for home with lots of nice memories of the day.



Lunch was finally served, and everyone dined and then bid farewell.

