The San Diego Region of Packards International Motor Car Club conducted its biggest, longest and most elaborate driving tour ever September 22nd to 26th. Known as the 2016 California Lincoln Highway Classic Car Driving Tour, it started in San Diego and went through San Francisco, Sacramento, Reno, Sacramento, San Francisco, and back to San Diego. Since the tour followed different generations of the Lincoln Highway between San Francisco and Reno, we never drove on the same road twice between those cities. If you started in San Diego, the full distance driven was 1,784 miles.

All together 17 vehicles participated in the tour. The oldest was a 1925 Lincoln Model L Brunn and the newest a 2016 Jeep Wrangler, representing a 91 year span in the age of participating vehicles. Nine were pre-1968 classics and five of those were Packards, 1932 through 1949. Among the participating vehicles were two pickup trucks towing rescue trailers; one truck/trailer combo was provided by the San Diego Region (actually by Steve Ross [truck] and Tom O’Hara [trailer] with Paul Santy as our esteemed driver). Fortunately, there was never a need to place any of the participating cars on either trailer for the dreaded Ride of Shame back to the hotel. We nonetheless had a vehicle that became disabled and needed significant repair to proceed. Ironically, that vehicle was our Official Tour Rescue Trailer. More on that later.

**Classic Cars on the Tour**

1. 1925 Lincoln Model L Brunn - Owner: Ron & Sandy Hansen (PI SoCal) / Driver: Arnold Schmidt
2. 1932 Packard Model 902 4-Door Sedan – Owner/Driver: Curtis Buck (PI SoCal & LHA²)
3. 1939 Packard Super Eight touring Sedan – Owner/Driver: Steve Ross (PI San Diego & LHA)
4. 1941 Packard Club Coupe – Owner/Driver: Jay Johnson (PI SoCal & LHA)
5. 1941 Packard Model 1670 5-Passenger Sedan – Owner: Ron & Sandy Hansen (PI SoCal) / Driver: Jose Fernandez
6. 1949 Packard Deluxe Eight Sedan – Owner/Driver: QT Freytag (PI NorCal & LHA)
8. 1961 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud II – Owner: Ron & Sandy Hansen (PI SoCal) / Driver: Bill Godinez

**NOTE:** More information and photos are can be seen at [www.packardsandiego.com/lincolnhighwaytour](http://www.packardsandiego.com/lincolnhighwaytour)

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¹ For varying reasons, three Packards stayed home and were replaced on the tour by their owners' Brand-X cars. They were: 1934 Packard 5-Passenger Sedan owned by Richard & Karen Schauer (PI San Diego); 1949 Packard Standard Eight Sedan owned by Ken & Sandy Ruminer (PI SoCal); 1955 Clipper Custom Touring Sedan owned by Mark & Sydney Burnside (PI San Diego & LHA). We missed seeing those Packards on the tour, but we were delighted to have their owners able to join us.

² LHA = Member of the Lincoln Highway Association
Tour Management
Tour Director: Mark Burnside, PI San Diego & LHA
Assistant Tour Director: Steve Ross, PI San Diego & LHA
Tour Guide: Paul Gilger, LHA, Former Chair of Mapping Committee.
Official Tour Photographer: Neil Rodrigues, LHA
Rescue Vehicle Driver: Paul Santy, PI San Diego
Tour Hostess: Sally Burnside

Caravan from San Diego to San Francisco
The tour began San Diego on the morning of Wednesday September 22 with a caravan that stopped at PI Headquarters in Santa Ana to join up with PI SoCal members. In our SD to SF group were Curtis Buck, Mark Burnside, Sally Burnside, Jay Johnson, Steve Ross, and Paul Santy. After a scenic drive up US 101, we stopped for the night in Paso Robles and continued on to San Francisco on Thursday.

Welcome Dinner Thursday September 22nd
The tour officially began at Sapore Italiano Ristorante in Burlingame, CA. Upon arrival, every tour participant received their official tour welcome bag with name badge, mechanical pencil (for checking off driving instructions), bottle of water, and snacks for the road. In our private upstairs dining room, tour participants got acquainted over a glass of fine Italian wine and authentic Italian antipasti, followed by truly superb pasta cuisine. After dinner, each attendee introduced him- or herself and told us about themselves and their involvement with the Lincoln Highway. Almost everyone on the tour was either a member of Packards International or the Lincoln Highway Association (or both).

Mark, Paul, Steve and Sally then gave the group instructions and previews about what would take place on the tour. (Note: We were in an Italian restaurant, so everyone talked using their hands.)

Earlier in the week, all drivers were emailed a 32-page document containing detailed driving instructions for all the official 656 miles of the tour. Everyone printed them out and brought them along. Paul explained over dessert the job of the navigator and the need to pay attention to the instructions – particularly if you wanted to stay true to the Lincoln Highway as you drove it. If you mess up and lose track, the only alternative is to enter the address of the next stop into your GPS cell phone, head straight there wait for everyone else to show.
Day One – San Francisco to Sacramento – 189 miles
Our first full day of the tour started bright and early: We all had to be at the Western Terminus of the Lincoln Highway at 7:00 am (yes, in the morning). That was definitely the biggest challenge of the whole tour. The early birds posed for a picture next to the marker.

Next, it was park all of the cars so tour photographer Neil could take a nice panoramic picture of all participants and their magnificent driving machines. In the background is the Legion of Honor, a three-quarter-scale replica of the Palais de la Légion d'Honneur also known as the Hôtel de Salm in Paris, France:
The driving portion of our tour was now officially under way as we headed to our first stop, the Blackhawk Museum in Danville, CA. The Blackhawk is a high-end car museum with many rare specialty “one-off” cars, including designer cars from the twenties and thirties. The curator of museum invited all of the classic cars in our group to park in the courtyard immediately in front of the museum entrance. Our lineup of classic cars certainly presented a quality showing that was worthy of being in the museum courtyard. We were given tours by two of the museum docents; on the left below is a replica of the first Mercedes Benz, built in 1886. On the right is the only Packard that was present in the museum that day: a beautifully restored 1932 Dual Cowl Phaeton.

After viewing the Blackhawk collection, we strolled over to the nearby Fieldhouse Sports Grill for lunch before hitting the road again.
Our next stop of the day was the Duarte Garage & Lincoln Highway Museum in Livermore, a car repair garage roadside on the early Lincoln Highway, now converted to a wonderful museum with many displays and artifacts regarding the history of the garage.

After the Duarte Garage, we stopped at the historic Summit Garage in Altamont Pass. Between 1906 and 1920 cars used to come up the hill from Oakland and get overheated. The garage owner towed them to the summit, which made a good business.
The historic Banta Inn in Banta, CA was our next stop. Originally built as a two story saloon/sporting house in 1879, the inn has continued operating as a saloon to this day.

Upon arrival in Sacramento, we enjoyed talking about the day over salad and a great selection of various German sausages, at the LowBrau Restaurant in downtown Sacramento. It was quite a feast; nobody went to the hotel hungry that night.

Day Two - Sacramento to Reno - 173 miles

This morning we get a break as we have only 49 miles before our first stop, the El Dorado County Museum which opens at 10:00 am. We get a nice leisurely morning; quite a change from yesterday.

The museum has an impressive collection of all sorts of local El Dorado County memorabilia that was donated to museum over the past 150 years. Everything from covered wagons to military uniforms to a working player piano is there to see and touch.
Our next stop, Strawberry Lodge, which was originally built in 1858 and served as a crude stage stop and feed station for horses, later expanded to accommodations for travelers.

After Strawberry Lodge we climbed to Echo Summit Lodge, a large mountain lodge in the Sierra Nevada (elevation 7,365 feet) commanding a superb view of Lake Tahoe and surrounding mountains, on the Pacific Crest Trail.

Being faithful to the Lincoln Highway, we drove down the original alignment of highway, following every hairpin turn and switchback very carefully. To the left you see Steve Ross and Jay Johnson reliving days of old in their pre-war Packards.

Fortunately, lunch was only a few miles down the road, at the Brothers Bar & Grill Sports Bar, formerly a bad-ass biker bar, but now a very pleasant place to enjoy lunch on their outdoor patio.
The Trailer: Episode 1
Over lunch, Paul commented that the rescue trailer was making unusual noises while on the road, and when he checked it out after parking for the lunch stop, noticed an odor of burning rubber. Ruh-roh. After lunch, Paul, Steve, Richard, Sally, and Mark went out to check on said rescue trailer. It didn't take the crew very long to discover that the left rear wheel was coming off the axle. The fender was the only thing keeping the wheel from leaving the trailer completely. Mark pulled out his floor jack and Paul had the wheel off the drum and the drum off the axle in short order. The problem: The cotter pin that keeps the hub nut from loosening was gone. The nut had come completely off the axle and was rattling around inside the cap. The worst part was that the inner bearing and seal were ground to smithereens. With no replacement parts readily available the crew made the decision to reinstall the drum but leave the wheel off and continue on to Reno with only 3 wheels on the trailer. Lotsa crossed fingers here that we didn't have a breakdown that would need to take a ride on trailer. Episode 2 of the continuing trailer saga coming up in Day 3 report.

Our afternoon stop was the Bowers Mansion where we took a tour back in time to Nevada's Heyday and saw how Comstock millionaires Eilley and Sandy Bowers lived the posh life in Washoe Valley. Tour participants were treated to a fascinating tour by a very knowledgeable docent.
Finally, it was time to head to our last stop of the day: the National Auto Museum where we would dine on prime rib and salmon among cars that were once part of the famous Harrah collection.
Day Three - Reno to Sacramento to - 147 miles

The Trailer: Episode 2
Our 3-wheel trailer made it Reno and nobody broke down. Hooray! Late the previous night, the mechanics from our "Valencia Group" took over our trailer repair project and quickly determined what parts were necessary to get the trailer back on the road. Bright and early the next morning, Steve and Paul headed to AutoZone (open at 7:00 am on Sunday morning!) and came back with a new bearing and seal - just what the doctors ordered. It was like watching a pit crew at work and, in a matter of minutes, our rescue trailer was ready to roll. Thank you Bill Godinez, Mike & Jake Hogan, and Jose Fernandez! You guys came through in fine fashion. Paul Santy and Steve Ross are now very happy.

Now that we are all roadworthy again, our first stop is the Verdi Inn & Casino in Verdi-Mogul, Nevada, which was a dinner house that never opened. There was a dispute between the developer and the county over parking spaces that resulted in it never opening. It was a remodel after a fire, so it may be that they ran out of money to handle the conflict with the county.

Our morning stop today is the Donner Memorial State Park and Lincoln Highway Display just outside of Truckee, CA. It is dedicated to the memory of the Donner Party that spent the winter of 1846–47 snowbound in the Sierra Nevadas. Few survived.

Our last stop before lunch is the Donner Memorial Rainbow Bridge opened in 1928-29 and rebuilt in 1996. The opening of this bridge allowed a realignment of the Lincoln Highway to provide a shorter route between Reno and Sacramento. The view of Donner Lake from the nearby vista parking area is spectacular.

Pictured to the left is Dennis Larson and his 2016 Jeep Wrangler.
Back on the road again. Lunch time is fast approaching and it’s time to head over to Donner Ski Ranch for lunch.

The gang’s all here. With the Rainbow Bridge in the background. Left to right: Paul Santy, Bill von Tagen, Herb Cygan, Dennis Larson, Jose Fernandez, Paul Gilger, Sally Burnside, Mark Burnside, Steve Ross, Sandy Hansen, Carla Cole, Julie Hogan, Jane Cygan, Mike Hogan, Jake Hogan, Bill Godinez

Driving on the bridge: Steve Ross in this 1939 Packard Super Eight

Neil’s rear-view mirror shot of Sandy Hansen, Mike & Julie Hogan, and Jake Hogan in their 1941 Packard 5-passenger sedan.
After lunch we head for the Forest Gift Shop and Orange Juice Stand. These interesting stone buildings are the remains of the Forest Gift Shop which supplied tourists with locally supplied souvenirs. Next door, the fruit stand sold ice-cold orange juice, fruit, and orange candles. Both were built in 1938 but went out of business when I-80 opened.

Next up is quite a number of miles of very curvy Lincoln Highway that crossed back and forth over I-80 at least 7 times.
Next stop: the Lincoln Highway monument on Ophir Road. This memorial to the Lincoln and Highway 40 was designed by our Tour Guide, Paul Gilger. (BTW: he's also a well-known architect. Need proof? Click here.)

Tonight's dinner stop is at the California Automobile Museum in Sacramento. This a wonderful museum with motorcycles, Cars of the Stars, early green vehicles, and many true classics. Here we dined on whisky marinated trip-tip and delicious veggies while trip photographer Neil Rodrigues presented a slide show of his trip pictures on the big screen.

After dinner we once again had two docents give us very detailed tours of the vehicles on display.
Day Three - Sacramento to San Francisco - 147 miles

The final day of our Lincoln Highway Tour has us making multiple stops before we arrive at the USS Hornet Museum for our lunch stop and touring the USS Hornet Museum for the afternoon.

The California State Capitol building, photographed early in the morning on our way out of town.

Neil’s ’61 Rambler in front of the vintage El Tejon Motel with authentic period Lincoln Highway era roadside cabins.

An ice cream stop at Fentons Creamery located on the site of the Nut Tree Restaurant (now gone). Below: Mark Burnside Sally Burnside, Steve Ross, Paul Santy and Paul Gilger.

The iconic sign of the Milk Farm Restaurant (1919 - 2008), a favorite of Lincoln Highway travelers.
Out afternoon stop: The USS Hornet Museum (right), a WW II era aircraft carrier made famous when it picked up the three Apollo 11 astronauts in the Pacific after the first moon landing.

Upon arrival we enjoyed a BBQ rib lunch served in the Officer's Mess.
We were fortunate to have wonderful docents at all of the museums on this tour. Our docent Bill was no exception. He was exceptional - a very decent docent.

Paul "Buzz" Santy in the cockpit of an F-8 Crusader fighter jet (text to right of Paul's elbow reads: "LCDR ARTHUR "BUZZ" JONES)

The bridge of the Hornet. Arnold Schmidt sitting in Captain's Chair; strictly forbidden by anyone but the captain when the ship was underway.

In the Command, Control and Communications room of the USS Hornet.

Daughter & dad (Mark & Sally) in front of the quarantine trailer used by Apollo 13 astronauts when they returned from the moon in 1969.
After the fascinating tour of the USS Hornet Museum, we headed across the Bay Bridge for our Farewell Dinner at Sixto's Cantina in Burlingame.

On the deck of the carrier Hornet. Left to right: Dennis Larson, Curtis Buck, Arnold Schmidt, Joanne Young, Paul Gilger, Neil Rodrigues, Paul Santy, Jay Johnson, Sandy Ruminer, Sally Burnside, Mark Burnside, Steve Ross, Ken Ruminer. (NOTE: The taller building in the background between Paul and Neil is the new Millennium Building which has begun sinking - 6" more on one side than the other. Soon to be San Francisco's own Leaning Tower.  For info click here.)

Down in the Hornet engine room, Docent Bill explains how they found and isolated steam leaks.

Up on deck, this picture provides an idea of scale and size of the ship. That's our whole group in the lower center portion of the picture.
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By now, you have seen the names of our tour participants so many times that I needn't repeat them for these Farewell Dinner pictures. Suffice it to say that everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves, saying things like: "What an educational tour this was", "This was so much fun. When is the next one of these tours?", and (my favorite) "Wow, you San Diego Packards International guys really do it up right."

Acknowledgements

I would like extend my heartfelt gratitude to these people for their selfless contributions to making this tour the success it was:

Paul Gilger for 1) suggesting this tour 2) volunteering his time to write the driving instructions 3) being our awesome tour guide

Steve Ross for 1) making arrangements for the San Diego to San Francisco portions of the tour, 2) handling all insurance coverage required by the museums, 3) loaning the club his pickup truck to be tow vehicle for our rescue trailer

Paul Santy for volunteering eight days of his time to be our rescue vehicle driver

Neil Rodrigues for doing an extraordinary job as tour photographer (his photos were used extensively in this article)

Sally Burnside for 1) handling name tags and goodie bags 2) dealing with all special diet issues and last minute meal arrangements with restaurants 3) keeping Dad from losing it when things weren't going right 4) being a terrific tour hostess

Tom O'Hara for loaning us his trailer to serve as our rescue vehicle

The tour was fun and enjoyable because of their efforts. Thank you all!