

THE FLYING LADY



The vast prairies and hill country of Texas have been covered in bluebonnets since before any man set eyes upon them. Native Americans revered them and created folk tales around them. Early Spanish settlers gathered their seeds and planted them around homes and missions. As Texas historian Jack Maguire wrote, "It's not only the state flower but also a kind of floral trademark almost as well known to outsiders as cowboy boots and the Stetson hat. The bluebonnet is to Texas what the shamrock is to Ireland, the cherry blossom to Japan, the lily to France, the rose to England and the tulip to Holland." Of course, Texas in the twenty-first century is much more than bluebonnets, cowboys, oilmen, and astronauts. It is a huge, diverse, vibrant state with the country's second-largest economy, four distinct geographies, three separate climates, and two of the top 10 metro areas in the nation. But for seven days in April, the hustle and bustle of the modern world was forgotten as three score Rolls-Royce and Bentley enthusiasts and their motorcars plowed a winding path along the old highways and byways of Texas; to rediscover a simpler time and forge new and lasting friendships.



Driving shoes, Texas style.

DAY 0: Reunion and Acquaintance

College Station, the home of Texas A&M University, served as the launch pad for the tour. Hosts Sneed and Anne Adams and their team of volunteers greeted participants as they arrived from all corners of

2007 Spring Tour

**Scenic Vistas and Historic Landmarks
Along 700 Miles of Texas' Finest
Vintage Two-Lane Highways**

John Sweney (TX)



The famous bluebonnets of Texas are a fitting backdrop to the state flag proudly flown on the bonnet of a Rolls-Royce.

Photos by Steve Krazer, Anne Adams, Dale Clark

the country. Peg and Perry Hirsch drove their GTC the entire 1,583 miles from California. From the other direction, Richard Proctor and his lovely mother Mildred logged 1,523 miles from Maryland. The courtesy meeting room served as reunion central for regular RROC tour participants. Old friends greeted each other and introduced themselves to those who would soon become new friends. This is, after all, Texas—the land where no one's a stranger! By this time, Lawrence Smith noted that his check engine light had come on in his 2005 Bentley GT. Ever the helpful mechanic, Sneed Adams suggested that he stop and start 12 times to clear the computer and save the trip to the dealer for repair. Lawrence figured he would have to go anyway, noting, "I have put a lot of miles on my new car, mostly going back and forth from Wichita to the nearest dealer in Dallas!" Rick Barrett had car troubles, too, on the trip to Texas with a failed wheel bearing on his 1961 Silver Cloud II.

As the sun started to sit low in the sky, the group motored to the Briarcrest Country Club for a welcome reception and dinner. The cars were lined up for the first collective glimpse of the "field" as a whole, ranging from Michael Coup's 1932 P II to brand new modern beauties like the Hirsch's 2007 GTC;

from "personal" cars like John Sweney and Mike Stargel's 1988 Bentley Continental to stately limousines like Dale and Maria Teresa Clark's 1962 P V. Everyone assembled for a big group photo in front of the clubhouse, each wearing a new custom tour shirt with embroidered Texas wildflowers.

After sufficient opportunity for "lubrication" and bacon-wrapped shrimp in a private reception room, the group migrated to a beautiful room for dinner. Host Sneed Adams concluded with helpful instructions for Texas highways: "Avoid running over cow pies; they will make your car smell like a barnyard. Beware of tractors pulling farm equipment; they usually spatter mud, and note the unique Texas highway signs: *FM* means farm-to-market road, *RM* means ranch-to-market road, and *OK* means you've gone too far."



Anne and Sneed Adams take a break from running the Spring Tour for a quick photo-op with their 1953 R Type, B361TO.



Rick & Sandy Barrett



Richard Cravener (l), Todd Anders, Ron & Reva Money, and Michael Coup at Lillian Farms.

DAY 1: History and Hospitality

Every morning of the tour started off with a drivers' meeting in the hotel, usually the breakfast area. Most of the nights were spent at a Holiday Inn Express, so the complimentary breakfast served as a tasty start to the day. The drivers' meeting included an overview of the day to come, special instructions for difficult roads, and suggestions for alternative adventures. For some, the first stop that day was the George Bush Presidential Library in College Station. Others proceeded directly to Washington on the Brazos State Historical Park—the birthplace of Texas—and the Star of the Republic Museum. Many



Mike Stargel (l) and John Sweney

people are unaware that prior to joining the United States, Texas was a sovereign nation known as the Republic of Texas. It is the only state that actually still retains the right to secede from the union. It is this spirit of independence and self-sufficiency that survives in Texas to this day.

It was a short drive to Lillian Farms in Chappel Hill where a catered lunch was served under the trees. This quiet 230-acre bed & breakfast is the realization of a dream of innkeeper Barbara Segal. The living room of the house has a piano in one corner, and Kent Perkins seized the moment to tickle the ivories with favorite waltzes as RROC members including Dan Mouton and Beryal Potier danced away the afternoon! Most of the group left Lillian Farms and traveled in clusters on the 75 winding miles to Columbus, passing through Buckhorn, Bellville and Fayetteville on the way. There were turkey buzzards sitting along the fences, as well as cows of myriad types and colors resting among the bluebonnets. Some of the group took a side trip to Brenham and a visit to the Blue Bell Creamery, the source of Texas' own favorite ice cream, where the workers "eat all they can and sell the rest!"

in oddball atmosphere with hundreds of stuffed and mounted animals covering every square inch of the walls. Kent and Ruth Buzzi Perkins, along with the Hirschs and the Sweney-Stargels found the opportunity for photography irresistible.

DAY 2: Churches and Engines

The morning of the second day was spent checking out the famous painted churches of Texas between Columbus and Burton. From the outside, these churches look like any other Gothic church of the early 20th century, but cross the threshold and encounter a burst of color, fine statuary, exuberant murals, and inscriptions in German and Czech. The churches reflect the deep desire of early immigrants to both blend in to their new Texas surroundings and at the same time preserve the cultures of their homelands. Many consider St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Ammansville to be the most elaborate. One would never think that tiny Burton would have its own French restaurant, but it does! Although the day became just a little drizzly, everyone arrived on time to the Brazos Belle for a special lunch by chef Andre Delacroix. By this time, tour participants were starting to realize that in fact they would be eating their way through Texas! More importantly, it was clear that the meals provided a great opportunity to get to know fellow travelers, swap stories of Rolls-Royce and Bentley adventures, and forge new friendships. After lunch, the group was given a tour of the historic Burton Cotton Gin and Museum. As a special treat, volunteers "fired up" the old two-cycle Bessemer oil engine which in its day supplied the power to run all of the ginning equipment and a gristmill up until 1963. "Fired up" is an accurate term, as the starting involves a multi-person, complicated series of maneuvers involving open



SFU683 (1964 SC III) • saloon • Owner: E. Bridges

In Columbus, everyone was on their own for dinner, and there were indeed quite a few interesting places to eat. One or two groups found themselves at Jerry Mikeska's Bar-B-Q restaurant, which turned out to be a taxidermist's dream. What it lacked in food quality, it made up for

flames, explosive fuels, and perfect timing. Once underway, however, the engine roars along with its exhaust puffing out from a pipe emerging from a huge muffler a hundred feet away.

The afternoon drive included an option to stop at the Texas Wendish Heritage Museum which preserves the history of the Texas Wends (Slavic immigrants from Lusatia, an area of Eastern Germany, who came to Texas in the 1854 in search of religious liberty and the right to speak their Wendish tongue rather than the German language imposed upon them by Prussian Lords).

By now, Rick Barrett had returned from his side trip to Austin to recover his Cloud with new wheel bearings installed. Dinner in Bastrop was at the elegant ColoVista Country Club, with a majestic view overlooking the Colorado River. On this night, Sharon Galvan hosted the first of several door prize drawings in which a name was pulled from the hat for Texas-themed giveaways. At one point, Sharon announced the next door prize was a Texas cookbook. "Oh! I want that," cried Betty Berg as she raised her hand. Not missing a beat, Ruth Buzzi Perkins erupted with, "No! I want that!" Ruthie arose

from her table, glared at Betty; Betty arose, glared at Ruthie. They circled each other, glaring, sizing each other up, as the room erupted in laughter as they found themselves in the middle of an impromptu Laugh-In comedy sketch that could only end one way. The moment Sandy

Barrett won the cookbook and went to collect it, Ruthie and Betty pounced! Of course, purses flailed, recalling Ruthie's best-known comedy character, Gladys Ormphby. All ended well, but neither Betty nor Ruthie wrestled the cookbook from Sandy! (Was it mentioned that there was an open bar that evening?)

DAY 3: Hill Country and Barbecue

The third day marked the transition from the flat lands of eastern Texas to the hill country. From Bastrop, the group traveled the old Texas highways through Smithville and Rosansky to Rockne, named after—you guessed it—Knut Rockne, then onward to the city of Lockhart. In Lockhart, many members stopped to enjoy the town square, frozen in time from a simpler era, with a courthouse and City Hall so typical of small Texas towns. Surrounding the square was a coffee shop which somehow accommodated the unexpected deluge of Rolls-Royce and Bentley owners, as well as several gift shops and a western wear and leather shop. Kelly Kyle and Hal Caudell picked out some genuine matching west-

ern shirts for the "Texas Dinner" later in the tour.

Lunch was at the famous Salt Lick Restaurant in Driftwood, known for generous portions of genuine Texas barbecue, served family style on picnic benches in the old ranch building. From Driftwood, groups took several routes to Austin. Some traveled more directly, while others took a winding path through the hill country and Pedernales Falls State Park. This route, with some portions of the road literally crossing through active streams provided many with the first opportunity to "ford" their Rolls-Royce or Bentley!

Once settled into Austin, members were free to have dinner on their own, although the principal group activity of the evening included helping Richard Cravener unlock his 1981 Corniche which somehow had the keys locked inside. Lesson for the day: a large group of well-intentioned friends with coat hangers cannot accomplish in three hours what a trained locksmith can do in 10 minutes!



SAC-06252 (1982 SSpirit) • saloon • Owner: T. Anders



Ruth Buzzi Perkins and Eddy Bridges



SWA48 (1955 SC I) Freestone & Webb saloon • Owner: D. Galvan



LSGE126 (1958 SC I) • saloon • Owner: R. Taylor



PBV-59527 (1997 Turbo R) • saloon • Owner: R. James



B336PJ (1965 S 3) • saloon • Owner: S. Krazer

As the evening waned, members gathered in the common room of the hotel to recount the day and share stories. These informal gatherings make RROC tours very special, as they bring together good friends from all walks of life, young and old, each happy to learn something new, see a different viewpoint, or offer a personal insight.

DAY 4: Caverns and Campfires

Although a tour of the LBJ Library in Austin was an option, virtually all members chose instead to take a tour of the Texas Governor's Mansion. The working residence is currently occupied by the state's chief executive, Rick Perry, and his family. The tour bus left the hotel with plenty of time to spare—so much time in fact that the bus drove around Austin for an hour just to take in the sights. Visitors did not see the governor this day, but did see where the first family takes its meals, where a former governor had pounded nails in the banister to keep his kids from sliding down, and where a future president, George W. Bush, left behind a family heirloom, a pair of candlesticks. Many walked next door to the beautifully restored Texas State Capitol

building with its grand rotunda and open, airy public spaces. Beryal Potier planted herself at the head of a grand oak table in a committee room and proclaimed herself the chairman of the moment. "This meeting is called to order!" As in the real committee meetings, no one paid any attention!

Upon the return to the hotel, everyone loaded up their cars for the drive towards Lake Buchanan. Two thirds of the way to Lake Buchanan, most members stopped by the Longhorn Caverns State Park. This had to be one of the most memorable stops for the 40 or so RROC adventurers who traveled down to the caverns for a 90-minute 1½ mile roundtrip hike underground. This natural wonder was created by the flow of an underground river over thousands of years as the water dissolved and cut through the limestone bedrock. Fossil records show that many Ice Age animals once occupied the cave. In more recent times, the cave was used by the Commanche Indians, as a Civil War gunpowder warehouse, and as a Prohibition-era speakeasy complete with dance floor, dining room and bar. In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps cleaned out and expanded the caverns

for public use. Today, the caverns host concerts, weddings and dinner events. Part of the cavern tour included walking through a section less than five feet high; Mike Stargel commented, "It's a good thing we all learned 'Walk Like a Duck' in kindergarten!" With the spelunking over, all members reunited at the Canyon of the Eagles Lodge on Lake Buchanan near Burnet. As the sunset settled over the lake, Cathie Mouton set up her table in the flagstone courtyard to serve her special mango punch. Others brought drinks, too, as the resort has no beer, wine, or liquor permit, and shared with everyone before the crowd went inside for a great dinner. At dinner, this writer offered an April 19th toast to the brave colonists who fired the first shots of the American Revolutionary War in Lexington and Concord. Sharon Galvan hosted another door prize drawing and, no, Ruth Buzzi didn't win a cookbook this time either!

After dinner, the resort management built a fire in the grand outdoor fireplace in the courtyard, and soon a circle was formed around the fire. The recipe for good times includes mango punch, a hearty dinner, and a circle of friends.



LCEL77 (1965 SC III) • lwb saloon • Owner: V. Frost



SBX98 (1961 P V) • James Young limousine • Owner: D. Clark



CR5-27260 (2005 GT) • coupe • Owner: L. Smith



DR7-43928 (2007 GTC) • dhc • Owner: P. Hirsch

Gazing into the night sky, the group concluded that those were not eagles circling overhead, but turkey buzzards. No matter; they are quite remarkable as well! Before long, one member after another took their turn to stand before the fire and relate a poem, a joke or a story of encounters with their motorcar. It was clear that a new RROC tour tradition was born: Story Night. A second new tradition: What's said on Story Night is never repeated outside of Story Night!

DAY 5: Vineyards and Vittles

From the Canyon of the Eagles Lodge to the Fall Creek Vineyards in Tow is just about a mile and a half as the turkey buzzard flies. But very few RR/Bs can traverse a lake and fewer still can fly. The drive around the lake is 36 miles. Fall Creek Vineyards offered the perfect setting for a spring lunch in the shade of the arbors on the winery patio. Of course, a tour of the winery was a must, especially with a glass of wine included. RROC members

learned that the vineyards in many parts of Texas had been devastated by a fungus in recent years and Fall Creek had not been spared. While there is a five-acre test planting at Fall Creek of a disease resistant grapevine, most of the grapes used in the winery are shipped in from growers in California and elsewhere. Winemaking, of course, is an art as well as a science, and the vineyard owners, Ed and Susan Auler, are arguably the first family of Texas wines.

The 63-mile afternoon drive to Fredericksburg took everyone through Llano, and while some stayed on the main road, many traveled the long route through Enchanted Rock State Park to see its massive dome of pink granite. In Fredericksburg, the our tour officially merged with the RROC Texas Region Spring Meet, hosted by Phillip Reese. The tour hotel for the final two nights was the comfortable Hangar Hotel, built on the grounds of the Fredericksburg airstrip.

This newly built hotel has the appearance of a World War II hangar and the decor of the romantic 1940s, including period replica phones and furnishings. All cars and members participating in either the tour or the meet converged at the Hoffman Haus bed & breakfast for drinks in the garden followed by dinner in the Great Hall that included smoked Texas quail sausage, Axis venison enchiladas and praline mousse pie. That was possibly the most "Texan" of all the meals on the tour. All RROC members and their guests were urged to dress up like a native Texan who owns the King Ranch! Awards were presented for best outfits: Doug Handel for his authentic sidearms and Beryal Potier for her festive cowgirl outfit. Regional meet participants Bill Stroman and Margaret Smith were also recognized for their outfits. Honorable mentions went to Kelly Kyle and Hal Caudell, Ron and Reva Money, and Bob and Donna Wright who each showed up in matching outfits.



Dale & Maria Teresa Clark at the 1950/60s dinner dance.



Don't mess with Texas—or Doug Handel!

DAY 6: Wildflowers and Poodle Skirts

The Hangar Hotel has a 1940s styled diner facing the runways, and many of the group took advantage of the convenience for a hearty Saturday morning breakfast. Then it was off for a lazy 60-mile drive around the famous Willow City Wildflower Loop. The loop is one of the most scenic in Texas when the wildflowers are in bloom. Those in the know always drive the loop counter-clockwise to take advantage of the steep downhill slopes followed by steady but gentle upgrades. Some even took advantage of the stream crossings to get some great "high water" photos!

For this day's drive, another grand RROC tradition was explored: "Car Swapping



Hal Caudell (l) and Kelly Kyle with Kelly's 1987 Corniche II (DAH-21363) MPW dhc.

Day"! Just for this morning, Michael Coup drove my car, I drove Rick Barrett's, and Rick Barrett drove Michael Coup's. Perhaps the tradition can continue with everyone throwing their keys in a bowl and driving whichever car they draw at random. Or perhaps not . . .

A free afternoon allowed plenty of time for antique shopping and museum hopping in Fredericksburg. Some zipped over to the WildSeed Farms while others traversed all the way to Luckenbach, where one's dirtiest cowboy hat is proper attire. Ladies were invited to two o'clock tea with the members of the Texas Region at a local cafe & bakery. The grand finale and farewell closing dinner, shared with the members of the Texas Region at the Inn on Barons Creek, called for tour participants to show up in their best 1950s or 1960s attire. Poodle skirts abounded. Even duck tails! Following a generous dinner of prime rib, chicken a l'orange and seafood crepes, recognition was given for all those who had helped make

the tour a grand success. Awards for best outfits went to Laura Borchert and Bill Vatter for their 1950s outfits combined with their attitude and demeanor that perfectly reflected the time. Regional meet participants Maria Teresa Clark and Phillip Reese were also recognized for their outfits. Then the music started and dancing commenced. Few young folks could keep up with John and Beryal Potier who have been dancing their hearts out

together for more than a half a century.

DAY 7: Show Time and Farewell Hugs

The wind and drizzle that started Saturday night and continued into Sunday morning threatened the Texas Region judging event at Lady Bird Johnson Park, but thankfully it pretty much dried up just in time for participants to clean off their cars and line them up. Park visitors had little trouble telling the difference between the RROC event and the Volkswagen club event in the next field. Perry Hirsch did drive his 2007 GTC over to the other event and one young VW enthusiast blurted out, "Wow! What kind of VW is that?" Not missing a beat, Perry replied, "The most expensive kind!"

Many Spring Tour participants walked away with awards in the Texas Region judging, including Vernon Frost winning "Best in Show" with his 1962 Bentley S2 Continental drophead. Alas, all good things must end. And as the last of the picnic lunch plates were cleaned

away, tour participants milled around and offered one last warm hug to old and new friends. A long time ago southwestern painter Georgia O'Keeffe once observed, "Nobody sees a flower - really - it is so small it takes time - we haven't time - and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time." And for seven days in April, three score busy people took the time to see the flowers... and to have friends!

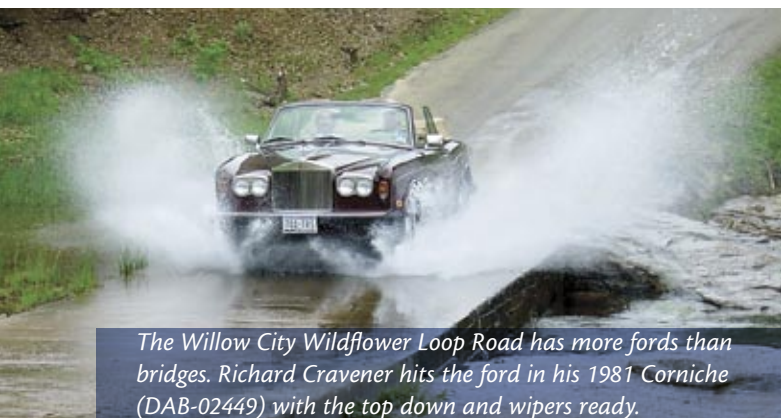
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Steve & Sue Krazer



Joy Stevens and Jim Stryker



The Willow City Wildflower Loop Road has more fords than bridges. Richard Cravener hits the ford in his 1981 Corniche (DAB-02449) with the top down and wipers ready.



GAE45 (1934 20/25)-Hooper saloon • Owner: B. Paisley



RROC president Robin James (I) presents Sneed and Anne Adams a plaque to thank them for their leadership and hosting the 2007 Spring Tour.

Keeping with tradition, TFL has included the “normal” print coverage of this National Tour for all to enjoy in the magazine. However, a multitude of photos and tidbits always end up getting cut so as to keep the tour coverage to a more or less consistent format and length. Computer-savvy readers are invited to turn their browsers to <<http://bentleyclassic.com/07SpringTour/springtour.htm>> for more photos and links to many of the places the tour visited. In some cases there is even a YouTube video available.

PEOPLE AND CARS ON TOUR

1932 Phantom II	80MS	H.J. Mulliner saloon	Michael Coup
1934 20/25	GAE45	Hooper saloon	Bob & Marilyn Paisley
1936 25/30	GWN32	Thrupp & Maberly saloon	Doug & Josh Handel & Jessica Jumonville
1948 Silver Wraith	WGC66	Park Ward saloon	Bill & Lynn Vatter
1955 Silver Cloud I	SWA48	Freestone & Webb saloon	David & Sharon Galvan
1958 Silver Cloud I	LSGE126	saloon	Richard & Sally Taylor
1961 Silver Cloud II	LSZD385	saloon	Rick & Sandy Barrett
1961 Phantom V	5BX98	James Young limousine	Dale & Maria Teresa Clark
1964 Silver Cloud III	SFU683	saloon	Eddy & Cheri Bridges
1965 Silver Cloud III	LSJR251	saloon	Dan & Cathie Mouton
1965 Silver Cloud III	LCEL77	lwb saloon	Vernon Frost & Buddy Shurtlett
1976 Silver Shadow	SRE24751	saloon	Beryal & John Potier
1979 Silver Shadow II	SRK38161	saloon	Xavier & Alicia Bethune
1979 Silver Shadow II	SRK39372	saloon	Ron & Reva Money
1981 Corniche	DAB-02449	MPW dhc	Todd Anders & Richard Cravener
1982 Corniche	DAC-04788	MPW dhc	Bill & Laura Borchert
1982 Silver Spirit	SAC-06252	saloon	Todd Anders & Richard Cravener
1983 Silver Spur	NAD-08056	lwb saloon	Jim Stryker & Joy Stevens
1987 Corniche II	DAH-21363	MPW dhc	Kelly Kyle & Hal Caudell
1990 Silver Spur II	NAL-32495	lwb saloon	Bob & Donna Wright
1995 Flying Spur	GAS-55212	lwb saloon	Richard Proctor & Mildred Proctor
1953 R Type	B361TO	saloon	Sneed & Anne Adams
1956 S1	B27CM	saloon	Bob & Betty Berg
1961 S2 Continental	BC128LCZ	Park Ward dhc	Vernon Frost & Buddy Shurtlett
1965 S3	B36JP	saloon	Steve & Sue Krazer
1988 Continental	DBJ-23375	MPW dhc	John Sweny & Mike Stargel
1996 Turbo R	----	saloon	Jim, Janice & Emily Lobenstein
1997 Turbo R	PBV-59527	saloon	Robin James & Carl Peterson
1998 Azure	KBW-61663	dhc	Kent & Ruth Buzzi Perkins
2005 GT	CR5-28025	coupe	Dave & Carol Sjolund
2005 GT	CR5-27260	coupe	Lawrence Smith
2007 GTC	DR7-43928	dhc	Perry & Peg Hirsch



KBW-61663 (1998 Azure) • dhc • Owner: K. Perkins



SRE24751 (1976 SS) • saloon • Owner: J. Potier

Like all things Texas, the Spring Tour group shot was BIG.

