

**JAN TEGLER finds the 2006  
Colorado Grand made memorable by its...**

# CHALLENGE, CHARM & CHARITY

**Photography by the author**



Sherman Wolf has thousands of miles on his priceless Ferrari 212 barchetta (top) and has been photographed (by the editor) doing important work on at least two occasions. Terry and Noel Hefty's Maserati 200S didn't need work, but it could have used some heat.

Twenty-four miles south of Grand Junction, Colorado, Highway 141 couldn't seem to make up its mind. A quarter-mile straightaway led to a left-hand sweeper. Then it was back to the right, turning more sharply in a decreasing-radius bend. Just when another downshift seemed inevitable the road opened, arrow-straight for half a mile until the next twist. On-camber, off-camber, right and left, between scarlet cliffs, wide open, hard braking – the kind of road you and I dream about.

At 9:47 a.m. on September 20, 2006, we felt very fortunate. We were there. Fifty yards ahead, a crimson 1957 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint Veloce Lightweight clung to the tail of a magnificent black Alfa Romeo Tipo 8C 2900. Beyond, a fiery red 1956 Maserati 200S and a racing green 1955 Jaguar D-type were pulling away. To watch the Sprint Veloce hunker down in the corners with the 2900 leaning but holding on, to hear the high-pitched drone of the Giulietta and the V-8 growl from its elegant Italian cousin – it was magic. To our rear, a black 1959 Ferrari 250 GT was dropping back.

And yet, no one is being timed. No regularity tests await cars and drivers. No prizes can be won. The Grand is simply driving, over some of the best roads, through some of the most spectacular scenery anywhere, with some of the finest automobiles ever created. But there's more to than it that. Even as the story unfolded before us, we realized that driving is but one aspect of the Colorado Grand. Seated comfortably alongside the publisher of this magazine on that sunny morning, tucked in among more than 80 vintage beauties, we understood. This event combines the best of automotive culture – challenge, charm and charity.

To my left, James Lopez is grinning because right now he is knee-deep in the challenge.

Bob Sutherland understood the fundamentals of the automotive culture. As the story in last year's Jan/Feb issue related, he was the driving force, together with a group of fellow Colorado enthusiasts, who created this event in 1989

bringing the purity of driving together with the fellowship of shared enthusiasm. They took inspiration from the legendary Mille Miglia, choosing a distance of 1000 miles. At their disposal was their collective knowledge of some the most engaging, breathtaking roads the Rockies have to offer, highways familiar to some Coloradans but less known to outsiders.

Competition frequently leads to complexity so the Grand's founders simply did away with it. Drivers are unfettered, at liberty to enjoy the roads, the countryside and two other important ingredients – their fellow participants and western hospitality. Without the imperatives of competition, one can mingle with one group of cars in the morning and



drive in company with others in the afternoon. Something of interest along the route? Stop and see it. Someone of interest? Wave hello or pull over for chat. Egos are kept in check. Warmth and friendliness are on display. And not just among the “Granders”.

Without competition, each of the event’s four days is broken naturally into two stages, before lunch and after. “Lunch” is more than merely food and a chance to unlimber. It’s a meeting place for Granders – to renew relationships, to make new acquaintances, to discuss the morning’s driving and the fun being had behind the wheel. Lunch is also where the Colorado Grand meets Colorado. Each year four small towns enthusiastically receive the rally, turning

out to mix with the Granders and offer delicious western hospitality. Schoolchildren emerge early from their classrooms along with townspeople to walk among the rolling museum. Locally prepared food, much of it homemade, fills groaning picnic tables. A buffalo burger in Walden, lasagna in Meeker, exquisite homemade pies in Ridgway, all served with a smile. It’s part of the experience.

The conviviality continues in the evening at the conclusion of each day’s driving. The Grand’s founders made sure there would be ample time for relaxing and socializing at cocktail parties, dinners and anywhere groups Granders gathered to regale each other. It’s a combination that’s hard to beat.

Clockwise from bottom left, this group: Lee Schumacher and his courageous daughter Molly in the family Jag XK120. A memorable scene was this ongoing challenge between John and Heather Morzart’s 2900cc 8C Alfa Spider and Stanley and Justin Bauer’s 1300cc Alfa Sprint Veloce. Gerry and Nancy (Thunderbird) and Tom and Martha (Porsche 356) Sutterfield



also played en route. The MOTORS (Colorado Highway Patrol officers) are how The Grand exists. Wayne and Graceia Golomb (above) brought the famous Pinin Farina Ferrari 375MM that Roberto Rossellini had commissioned for his married mistress, Ingrid Bergman – she never took possession.

Without the freedom to drive the classic racing and sports cars that comprise the Colorado Grand as they were meant to be driven, the event would be little more than a tour. But how to do this on public roads safely and responsibly? Sutherland knew how. Or rather, he knew who to go to. Sergeant Larry Tolar, now retired, was one of the pioneers of the Colorado State Patrol's (CSP) motorcycle patrol force, commonly known as, "the Motors". Perhaps the Motors could help Granders safely and responsibly navigate the roads of the Rockies at speeds which would otherwise be prohibited?

The colorful Sergeant and the passionate founder placed a proposal before the state patrol that would have the Motors escort the Colorado Grand. In return, the Grand would give something back. An agreement was reached and the Colorado Grand was born. Today that agreement (which must be renewed each year) is a bond between the Colorado Grand and the CSP – one from which both benefit in the most positive way.

Traditionally, Granders are invited, with a core of loyal enthusiasts who return each September. But new participants are along every year. There are no set starting times but each day about 80 cars from the 1920s to the 1960s can be found on the road by 9 a.m. along a route that varies each year but always provides sporting and visual delights with the beginning and ending in Vail. A traditional rally routebook contains pace notes which guide participants and directions including changes of course, mile markers, mileage between turning points and the day's stages. Directions are accompanied by fascinating, often humorous, descriptions of points of interest, noting the history of landmarks, towns, geography and oddities along the way.

This year's field made the eyes pop. The historical caravan included more than 20 Ferraris, 12 Mercedes Benz 300SLs (Gullwings and Roadsters), 10 Jaguars, 9 Alfa Romeos, 6 Porsches, 4 Bugattis and Maseratis, and an assortment of other marques - Abarth, Allard, Aston Martin, Austin Healey, Bentley, BMW, BoCar, Chevrolet, Cunningham, Delage, Delahaye, Devin, Edwards, Fiat, Ford, MD Nardi, MG, Morgan, OSCA, Pegaso, Shelby and Talbot-Lago. One-off specials and million dollar dreamboats were plentiful.

We can only give you a tiny taste of the fun had by those of us fortunate enough to cruise through the Aspen-yellowed mountains. One word characterizes the Colorado Grand and the people who make it what it is – charm

Ten-thousand feet up on top of Lizard Head Pass, 50

miles north of Durango, things got a bit blurry for Morris Whelford. He and co-driver Mark Donaldson couldn't see a thing through the windshield of their 1957 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint Veloce Lightweight. They were caught in a fast-moving snowstorm that enveloped us on Day Three. On Day One, the event began under sunny skies with the thermometer registering 25 degrees. Those in open sports and racing cars took it on with gusto. Even those who could have raised a roof over their heads didn't. But Day Three was proving a bit tougher.

While the nearly 200 participants consumed homemade pies at lunch in Ridgway, just south of Ralph Lauren's 13,000-acre Double RL Ranch, the temperature dropped precipitously, and clouds rolled in from the west. Back on the road, first rain, then sleet, then full-on snow pelted the multi-million-dollar convoy. Picture Jaguar XK 120 roadsters, Ferrari 250s, Mercedes Gullwings and Maserati racing



Clockwise from above, this page: Hospitality and home made pies as a thank you to the Colorado Grand for years of valuable donations. Bill Pope and Ronnie Collins in Fiat 2-liter V-8 by Zagato. A grand, and much appreciated car show arrives in the village of Ridgway.



cars slithering sideways up the grades.

Atop Lizard Head Pass, Whelford and Donaldson pulled to a stop, no longer able to navigate. Steve Meyer and Jan Johnson in the same vintage Giulietta Spider, pulled in front of them. It was a fortuitous pairing. As Whelford's Alfa had recently been on track, racing in a vintage event, its windshield-wipers had been removed and no one had thought to refit them for the Grand. Under the helpful eye of Motors Sergeant Tim Keeton, the Italian sports car crews quickly took the passenger side wiper from Meyer's car and fit it to Whelford's mount in a perfect example of the camaraderie and sporting spirit of the Colorado Grand.

Whelford's take on the episode and the Grand? "We made it hard on ourselves by forgetting some windscreen wipers. But we had more laughs than you can imagine and the little car didn't miss a beat. It was a fantastic week, lots of great people, stunning scenery, lovely motor cars. It's a

combination of good choosing by the organizers of what type of car they want on the event, not too many cars, not too few. Everyone enters into it with a great spirit. The roads are wonderful and the organization of the event is fantastic. I don't think they can better it."

One morning we found ourselves behind Lee Schumacher's gorgeous 1950 Jaguar XK 120 on a long straightaway. It was a marvelous sight. This was Schumacher's sixth year running the Grand. He first saw it while riding a motorcycle near Carbondale, Colorado and determined to learn just what they was going on and get involved himself. Now, he says he wouldn't miss it because, "It's a combination of the most fabulous cars. You'd have to go to several museums to see what's here. It rolls and that part is huge for me. People are enjoying them in the way they were meant to be enjoyed. I also find the people so continuously inviting and friendly. They want to share their

cars with you, show them to you and have you help turn a wrench with them. Great cars and great people make this rally what it is. Last year we drove through a raging snowstorm on Red Mountain Pass in the same car – no heat, no windows and it was great. My wife's still talking about it."

Schumacher shared the experience with his children this year, accompanied by his son Michael – yes, Michael Schumacher, but not that one – in the latter half of the rally, and with his daughter Molly through the first stages. Such pairings are not infrequent and the bonds built between families sharing an enthusiasm for motoring are also part of the Colorado Grand experience.

Alessandra Schwartz knows the feeling well. Her connection with the Grand is particularly special. Her first year running the rally was 1997 with her father Harlan. The senior Schwartz had driven the white the Jaguar XK 120 that he purchased new in 1954 in the Grand the year before and

The show included Mike and Alex Barber's 1956 Ferrari 250GT (39) and the 250GT Tour d'France of Jim Patterson and Doug Kannapell. The 250GT SWB driven by Ferrari wizard Bert Skidmore (below) and Mark Leonard had GTO-like power.



Left: A gullwing gathering at the brief stop, includes the coupes of Ron Johnson and Barry Konier (50), Elliot Dolon and Michael Bobko (48), and Bill and Alisa Kling

(105). Terri Henning and Susan Snodgrass endured race car accommodations and exposure in their very fast Devin SS.

Dean Melling / Ian Cutler  
Jag XKSS awaits with dry,  
cold seats and Dennis and  
Natalie Machul secure  
"luggage" in their Alfa 8C.



(Center above) Elad and Raphael Shraga brought fond memories to the editor with this 1955 Lancia B20 Series four. It was a winter adventure for Malcom Welford and Mark Donaldson in the Alfa 750 Sprint Veloce in the rear until Steve Meyer and Jan shared a windshield wiper from their Giulietta Spider.



invited his daughter to join him the following year. "Before the event, I didn't know a lot about cars and thought, 'What am I gonna talk about?' But lo and behold, everyone was very down to earth. There are a lot of wonderful people here and I managed to form friendships that I never foresaw."

Alessandra and her father returned every year until 2003 when they ran an alternate event. In 2004, the two paired in her father's 1932 Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 in the Mille Miglia. Tragedy struck on the stage from Siena to Florence when an accident took the life of Harlan Schwartz. Alessandra fractured her right arm but was otherwise uninjured. Despite the traumatic experience, she returned to the Colorado Grand in 2004 to present a memorial award in honor of her father.

In 2005, she ran the rally behind the wheel of the car that father and daughter shared together eight years earlier, a brave step and a therapeutic one. "I felt that I had so many good memories from being in the 120 with my dad here. I didn't want to be cut off from that. I came back in 2004 and they were kind enough to let me do the memorial award for my dad. That was difficult but it helped me a great deal. I didn't want to give up the passion and questioned if I was ready but I came back to participate in 2005 with a friend and it was wonderful." Schwartz drove in the company of her cousin Daniel this year and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Mitch Katz has been in four Grands consecutively. He first learned of it from clients of his company, Premier Financial Services, well known for leasing vintage and exotic cars. Initially, Premier simply sponsored the rally but when an invitation to take part was offered Katz couldn't say no. He's been back every year as he explains, "I've done other rallies in various parts of the country that are great, but

this is a different show every year. It really doesn't matter if you're driving a \$10 thousand or a \$10 million car, everyone here is just a car person, having a good time and admiring all the other cars that are a part of this."

Katz drove a 1965 Alfa Romeo Giulia Spider this year. The car did not see the finish, owing to a breakdown but Katz himself did take the checkers – in a 2006 Mercedes-Benz. M-B USA has been a sponsor of the Grand for 11 years and their support is more than financial. Michael Kunz, manages Mercedes-Benz' Classic Center in Irvine, California and they provide a fleet of new cars for participants who suffer mechanical misfortune during the rally. Breakdowns do occur but most complete the week in their own stunners.

The Motors make it fun as well, always on hand to help out, and the smiles on their faces reveal how much they enjoy being part of it. The CSP has only 22 motorcycle officers. Nine are chosen to escort the rally each year which the officers consider prized duty. Each would gladly give up a week to be involved as Trooper Rudolph Johnson explains, "We have many special events but this is unlike any other. Each year we rotate officers to expose everyone to it. That way the experienced officers can show the new officers what this is about and how we do it. I love it."

The Motors have a wide range of skills, including herding. In this case, we're not talking about herding the participants, but rather cattle. It happened on Day One near the tiny town of Toponas. Shortly after descending Gore Pass and negotiating a series of sweeping S-curves, Colorado 134 opened up. Patches of brown on the pavement were the first clue that the pace was about to change. And it did, as car

after car braked to a halt before a wall of 750 cattle, 20 honest-to-goodness cowboys and several herding dogs. The Colorado Grand found itself in the midst of a cattle drive.


Drivers and co-drivers astonished at what they were seeing became more astonished at what they were about to do – dive in! Led by swerving Motors, who deftly cut a narrow corridor (which often closed) between the nonchalant bovines, small groups of Granders crawled through the herd. Imagine, if you will, Pebble Beach winners, battle-tested racecars with historical provenance and 2000-pound steers mingled together like college kids at an overcrowded kegger. The sights, the sounds, the smells – no one who experienced it will forget.

With the Colorado Grand you learn to expect the unexpected. That's just another part of its charm. The Grand has heart too in its 18 year tradition of giving back during which the participants and organizers of the Grand have raised more than \$2 million for over 30 charities. Funds have gone to the CSP's Family Foundation, scholarship grants are made to deserving students in the towns the event visits as the Colorado Grand proves it's a rally with warmth, excitement and character.

It culminates at the Finish Line dinner, awards and auc-

tion on the final night when, led by chairman Steve Meyer, the participants, the Motors and the organizers reflect on the week's events, honor those who have exhibited the best in spirit and perseverance and raise money for charity. No stuffy affair, it's down-to-earth fun.

Ron Jackson, the CEO and President of Girard-Perregaux North America (an eight-year sponsor of the Grand), has a special affection for the rally. Not only does his company sponsor the event, it participates. Plus, Jackson is an avid photographer who can always be found on the roads among the Granders, chronicling the rally through the lenses of his cameras. On the final night, he presents a music-driven slide show that wows the crowd. And, each year Girard-Perregaux donates two "one-of-a-kind" chronographs to that evening's auction. The proceeds from the sale of these two and of the 100 limited-edition Colorado Grand collection chronographs exceeded \$50,000 this year.

Exactly 1,173 miles went under the wheels of the Colorado Grand in 2006. From cows to camaraderie, the first-ever diversion from the planned route due to weather, 2006 will be remembered for the qualities that make the Colorado Grand so special every year – challenge, charm and charity. 

And a couple of very rare ones: (Top left) Hilary Raab and Jon Dinger in a Bugatti T-57 Atlantic and Scott Gauthier and Courtney Winant enjoying the comfort of their Jaguar XK140 Zagato coupe. Below is the stunning Girard-Perregaux Colorado Grand edition introduced this year.

