

Golden West TSD Rally

“Okay, here we go”, I thought to myself, as we rolled off the ferry to start our trek south. Bart and I had been campaigning PCC this year, and we were off, at 8:00 a.m., to Round #3 – Golden West, organized by Peter Soper, and run on road in and around the host town of Yreka California. It’s a long haul down, which takes about 12 hours, including lunch and gas stops. The I-5 down isn’t very scenic but it does get you there in good time, with us arriving there just before 8:00 p.m. In 2004 Phil Wild and I stayed in the host hotel, which was a little rough, so I decided to upgrade to the Best Western in town. We had a delightful room overlooking the river, in a quiet corner. We then headed over to rally HQ in order to say “Hi” to Pete and participate in the traditional meet and greet. Most teams were already there, or drifted in over the next hour or so. Then we broke up into various groups to get dinner and drinks. Our posse headed over for food at Casa Ramos, where we ate Tamales, enchiladas & fajitas and drank Corona’s. Then it was off to bed, after a long, fun day.

A scheduled late start on Saturday allowed us to sleep in a bit before heading down for our complimentary hotel breakfast, which we enjoyed in the sun, sitting by the pool. We headed to Rally HQ and said “Hi” to the newcomers who arrived this morning. Then we did a simple “self tech” which entailed everything we tech for in BC, but there we simply checked them off ourselves, and handed it in. Then Pete did the prerequisite Driver’s Meeting, and we headed off. After some entrants in 2004 complained about the modified Monte format, Pete set up the 2005 rally to be a straight forward TSD. So, we figured we’d at least have a fighting chance. Everyone was in good spirits as we lined up for the first regularity.

Boy, were we ever wrong. At the first open control, where you stop to get your time in, we were handed a DIY checkpoint log sheet. (DIY stands for Do It Yourself). Well now, what the heck WAS this, and how do you apply it? We waited a while and tried to figure it out, as cars stacked up behind us. We finally decided we had to leave. Frustrated, pissed off, and disillusioned over the next few miles, Bart tried in vain to figure it out, until we both just decided, what the heck, we’d run it as a tour rally, with timing thrown out the window.

As we made our way through Reg #1, and Reg #2, with no more stress since we didn’t care about the timing anymore, in an event that cost a lot to come to in both money and time, Bart started to come to some understanding of how the DIY controls work. This was reinforced with the help of some seasoned teams at the first break.

Once we got into the swing of things it actually became fun! The roads are superb in this area of Northern California and southern Oregon.

They vary from straight flat ranch roads to hilly, twisty mining tracks, to soft and silty ash covered forest roads, particularly so around Mt. Shasta. Pete kept the best roads from 2004’s inaugural event, chucked the crappy stuff, and added a bunch of new roads. The car, our Toyota Corolla GTS, was a blast to drive, now having a limited slip differential in the rear, giving us true 2wd. It hooked up incredibly and I managed a spirited drive all day.

We all stopped for a dinner break, then off again for the night stages which Pete always throws at us. In one of those regs we had to go way up the side of a mountain, which overlooked town, and then down the front side right into Yreka.

Well damn. On the way down, we lost our sensor! In Canada we would try to limp through, but with our stock odo in kilometers and the instructions in miles, in the dark, it was simply not feasible. We limped into town, not even sure of the turns we needed to make to get there, and decided that we could not go on, we just had to stop to fix the sensor, with the hope that we could salvage Sunday. We radioed in from the hotel, so that Sweep would know we were out for Day 1.

Thank God for hams and their radios! We spent the next hour pulling the wheel and checking all the connections. Bart finally found the problem. By using the brakes so much on the downhill, we ‘toasted’ the magnets. Literally toasted them, heating them to the point where they lost their magnetism. Only one still worked at 50%, the other not at all. We screwed the sensor as close as possible, re-factored on the odometer

sections, and then we packed it in for the night.

Sunday proved to be pretty uneventful. We enjoyed a nice big breakfast with Satch and Russ, at the Purple Plum restaurant, before heading out into the backcountry for another full day of rallying. The roads were just as spectacular, fast and fun, and Pete even threw in some awesome paved TSD sections, which were wickedly fun, especially with gravel rally tires! All in all, it was a fantastic event, well organized, on spectacular roads. We now joke between teams, that each year Pete will throw a different timing/scoring format at us. “Golden West”, the always-changing rally! We had fun, met some new friends, partied with old friends, and enjoyed a superb event. It was great to see Peter and Tim Ryce from Vancouver make the trek down and they did very well indeed! I’d like to strongly encourage everyone to come out for Pete’s rally. I realize it is a long haul for some, but it’s well worth the drive. I’ll be back again next year. But maybe we’ll bring a laptop and Sat. phone to help with the time!

*Glyn Trafford
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