

# A Grand Adventure

This isn't a stuffy event with people fretting over stone chips or whining about inclement weather

by Colin Comer



Comer, Wegner and TdF 1321GT somewhere in Colorado

**A**s it nestles between races and other set-in-stone commitments, driving the Colorado Grand in mid-September has been a nearly impossible dream for me.

And the trip gets tougher when you add the logistics involved with actually getting a car ready and to Colorado.

So when I was offered an “arrive and drive” co-driver’s spot in friend and SCMer Roger Morrison’s 289 Cobra for the 2012 Grand, I jumped at it.

I’m a veteran of numerous other rallies, but I didn’t know what to expect, other than 1,000 miles of seat time through one of the most beautiful areas of Colorado. Boy, was I wrong. The Grand is a whole hell of a lot more than that.

What makes the Grand a spectacular event is hard to put into words. The roster of cars is phenomenal — from Allard J2s to 250 Testa Rossas and everything in between. The Grand garage in Vail takes one’s breath away — and it isn’t just the altitude at work.

## Grunge and good people

So what is better than seeing the cars? Seeing them get driven through whatever Mother Nature throws at them — over some of the most challenging roads you can imagine — for four days. And don’t dare attempt to clean your car during the event, as that is strictly against the rules. And I love that.

The most important ingredient, however, is the people. From every Colorado Grand Board member,

every volunteer, and every participant — without exception — the passion these people have for cars, driving, and just plain having fun is clearly cranked up to 11.

This isn’t a stuffy event with people fretting over stone chips or whining about inclement weather; in fact, they seem to enjoy such things. And, of much comfort to a simple Midwestern kid like me, casual is the name of the game. The cars are as much of a fashion statement as anybody needs to make. This is good when you are gapping ignition points — possibly in the rain while standing in cow manure — and loving every minute of it.

So, this year, when my buddy Chuck Wegner asked me if I wanted to be his co-driver for the 2013 Colorado Grand, I was in.

## An old friend comes along

Things got even better when Chuck brought my former 1959 Ferrari 250 TdF s/n 1321, the 1st in GT and 3rd Overall Winner at Le Mans in 1959. For over three decades, this car was owned by my great friend and mentor Bob Des Marais. Bob was a man’s man. He was unconventional, happy to shun indoor plumbing for the nearest tree, always full of great advice, had a seldom PG-rated sense of humor — and he helped me immeasurably in both business and life.

When Bob was diagnosed with cancer a few years back, he decided we should finally do some trading for the TdF. In the end, my GT40 and a bunch of gas money went to Bob, and the TdF to me.

Bob passed away, and a funny thing happened. I sat in the TdF and couldn’t bring myself to drive Bob’s car without Bob. So I traded the TdF off to another friend who intended to sell it. Long story short, the TdF was still in my garage, and Chuck says over dinner, “I’m looking for a great TdF.” We drive to my garage, Chuck falls in love with 1321, and a few years later we’re blasting through Colorado in it.

Publisher Martin, who was driving Phil Shires’ 1960 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spider Veloce on the Grand, asked me to write about what it feels like to sell a car that later appreciates substantially — and what it is like to take a profit and move on. The profit, in this case, was small and meant little. I simply sold the TdF knowing I wasn’t the right guy to own Bob’s car, as much as I had wanted to for many years.

I certainly couldn’t have hoped for a better outcome than having it go to Chuck. Why? Because after four days and 1,000 miles of seeing what old 1321 could do — plus plenty of off-color jokes and a few restroom-free pit stops along the way — I think there might just be hope for Chuck yet.

Add to that how great the Colorado Grand is — and that I’m pretty sure old Bob was with us — and I feel pretty damn good about how this Ferrari trade turned out. Because sometimes, swapping cars has nothing at all to do with financial gain. ♦

## Details

**Plan Ahead:** The 2014 Colorado Grand — the 26th anniversary of the event — will run in September. The field is limited to 85 sports or racing cars built before 1961

**Where:** Six days of fantastic roads through the Colorado Rockies. The trip often starts and ends in Vail, CO

**Cost:** \$6,000 for two drivers and one car. Proceeds from the event go to Colorado charities, including the Colorado State Patrol Family Foundation. Total donations now exceed \$3.6 million

**More:** [www.coloradogrand.org](http://www.coloradogrand.org)