



Item: **Fast Lane #7 in 2022 Petergram (#101 since inception)**

Date: **Saturday, February 12th 2022**

From: Peter Sontag writing in NYC, on DELTA 2930 on the way back to TPA and completing it in our office in Oldsmar, Florida

To: Our Fast Lane Travel **Customer Family** and Friends at home in **Australia, Canada, Europe, Iceland, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa** and in the **USA!**

Subject: **PORSCHE Rentals; Tours Updates; and born before 1950?**

I. **Regarding my 100th Petergram last week. Frank Watkins** (an 8-Trip Gold Star Alumni) **writes:** "Peter - congrats on your 100th Petergram. These informative, humorous, and thoughtful weekly emails were most helpful in keeping the Fast Lane Travel family together, informed and up to date during the COVID mess. They were another example of Fast Lane's vision: **It's our business to do pleasure!** I eagerly look forward to the next 100 Petergrams! Frank Watkins. **My response:** Thank you Frank, I'll be working on the next 100 just as cheerfully. 😊

II. **2022 PCA Spring TREFFEN News & UPDATE: Last Friday I sent this e-mail below to the 2022 PCA Spring Treffen Participants.** Please note that this trip has been moved **5 . . . yes five times** because of the Pandemic! Can you imagine the cost involved? This means booking hotels, restaurants, busses, guides etc. five times, cancelling five times and, finally, conducting it Sunday, May 1st to Saturday, May 7th 2022. So, in case you are wondering, what else can possibly happen? I had to send out this notice below (read on, **there is good news at the end**):

Dear 2022 PCA Spring TREFFEN Team Participants:

*After a two-year hiatus, we once again, will definitely have a spectacular **PCA Spring Treffen** with everyone who is currently registered (21 participants) plus, probably another 6 or 8 participants who have said that they are coming. Virtually everyone has their flights booked and we are planning on a wonderful trip. As in any of our **PORSCHE** tours there are some elements we cannot control. One of them is the Porsche rental availability.*



For the last two years we have all survived barrages of daily COVID mortality statistics: airlines cancelling hundreds of flights; Europe being "closed"; oppressive pandemic travel restrictions implemented; cruise lines going bankrupt, and Fast Lane having to deal with close to 90%, customers' cancellations, re-bookings, and cancellations

again. We only survived the last two years of virtually zero revenues, thanks to the support, encouragement, and generosity of some of our amazing loyal customers.

Furthermore, the PORSCHE Factory had to severely reduce their production due to COVID workers' absences and/or the unavailability of vehicle components. Then the Factory was completely closed. You may recall in my January 15th Petergram # 04 in 2022 (#98 Petergram since inception) where I reported that **PORSCHE, AG** has created the new Factory Department: **Nachbesserungs Abteilung**. That's where thousands of "finished" Porsches are stored and waiting for parts. I had also mentioned previously, in order for Porsche to meet the demands of the "new car buyers" they reduced their production allocation to the rental car fleets, like **AVIS**, for example, by 75% last year and apparently even much further this year.

This morning, I received a call from Germany, as I do on most mornings. That call underscored that COVID not only has impacted Fast Lane severely, but also our "product" providers have been hammered. Thus, I was informed that, most likely, **AVIS will not be able to get rental Porsches** from **PORSCHE Finance AG** for the **Spring PCA Treffen and Twelve Alpine Passes** program. But I was also encouraged that "everything could change (for the positive) in the next few weeks." Welcome to my world. We currently have 21 participants registered. We need 12 cars in Stuttgart on Wednesday, May 4th.

So, here are the options. No matter what, we will enjoy the full program of the "nothing-like-you-ever-have-experienced" **Spring Oktoberfest**; the **PORSCHE Factory** tour; the **PORSCHE** and **Mercedes Museums** visits; the **Goodie Stores** at the **PORSCHE Museum** and across the street at the **PORSCHE Zentrum** and the spectacular shopping in Stuttgart.

The Good NEWS, we have solutions:

Option #1: For the two-day **Bavarian Alps & Austrian Mountain Passes Drive AVIS** will rent us BMW 3's or Mercedes C-Class vehicles. More good news is that there will be a price reduction in the trip costs reflecting the lesser costs of renting another brand. **Trust me, you'll still enjoy the high-speed Autobahn experience.**

Option #2: We have another Porsche Rental Company in the area of Stuttgart – but they only have six Macans.

Option #3: We are also negotiating on getting the Porsches directly from the PORSCHE Factory's own executive rental fleet or their "Drive Program," but there'll be a cost increase. Probably around \$800 to \$1,200 per person. If we get cars from them, you'll also need to get an **International Driver's License** at your local AAA or on-line.

Option #4: Just yesterday, coincidentally, I was contacted by **Tesla Germany** to see if we are interested in offering our programs with Tesla Model 3's with 650 hp and blinding acceleration of 0 – 60 in 2.6 seconds. I responded affirmatively and am currently in the process of obtaining those details to see if that is even feasible. I was worried about the range and was informed that Tesla has high-speed charging stations all over Europe that will fully charge a car in 30 minutes.

Option #5: This week we have contacted three other luxury car rental companies in Europe, but their Porsches are dispersed like 2 in Barcelona; 3 in Munich; 1 in Basel; 2 in

Zürich; etc. Trying to get them all to Stuttgart on Wednesday, May 4th is very costly and virtually impossible.

Let's just say we are on this 24/7 at the moment. **Stay tuned**, we will have more information for you by the end of next week or sooner as to which option(s) are available to you. The most probable outcome is that you'll have a choice of more than one of the options in that we, in all likelihood, will be able to employ a combination of what's available. We'll handle the logistics with aplomb and your understanding and support. All other elements are in place, including the Factory and Museum visits on Friday, May 6th followed by the Cannstatter Frühlingsfest – THE most awesome Oktoberfest in the Spring – better than in the fall.

We are determined to continue our now 48-year tradition by implementing the fulfillment of our philosophy: "It's our business to do pleasure!" More to follow soon. All the best, Peter



The new PORSCHE Museum



Service at the Cannstatter Frühlingsfest



The Mercedes Museum



Stuttgart is a wonderful city, beautiful parks, nothing like Detroit 🤔

Here are the initial responses from the folks who have patiently waited to come on the TREFFEN. I very much appreciate their support, understanding and determination that nothing will get us down!

A. From a couple in GA: Peter, Kim and I are very excited about the trip. I'm sure the cars will work out. If you tell me Germany ran out of beer, now that is a different story. We're ready to roll.

B. From a couple in NC: Peter- Toby and I are looking forward to Spring Treffen regardless of what we end up driving. I am sure that you have plenty of issues and crises to deal with in the best of times. I can hardly imagine what you are going through in these difficult times. Thank you for all of your efforts to make our tour a success. Thanks, John and Toby.

C. From a couple in FL: Hi Peter, I wish I could be as upbeat as Kimberly and Pete - but this is definitely a bucket list Porsche trip for me, and I became queasy when you mentioned BMW 3 series, Mercedes C-Class and Tesla (gasp no exhaust sound). I definitely understand the issue of securing Porsches and appreciate all your and the entire Fast Lane Travel team's efforts. I cc'd you in an email to Allyn, let's set up a call for when you return from NY. Safe travels, Mary. **My Response:** Thank you Mary for your understanding and I certainly share your concerns. You are giving me the opportunity and impetus to share some of the key planning issues we face every year. There are at least **ten elements** of organizing and managing PORSCHE Tours **Fast Lane cannot control:**

1. **Pandemic** - while Europe seems a lot safer than North America, based on the reports from the fall trips, the media is driving us crazy. Based on recent news reports things are easing up. So, we are full steam ahead with the trips. Nevertheless, the cancellations are off the charts – it's been horrendous trying to stay in business.
2. **Weather** – although we plan the trips, based on about 50-years' experience, during the weeks where we have the highest probability of sunny days, occasionally there might be rain or even snow. The good news, in about 200 PORSCHE Trips we have had less than 10% rainy days. It's been a sunny experience.
3. **Traffic** – again, based on about 50-years' experience, I know that on a Wednesday afternoon there is the least amount of traffic on the fabulous no-speed limit sections between Ulm to Memmingen on the A-7 South and to stay off the A-8 East of Ulm because there is construction and tons of truck traffic from Eastern Europe. The country doesn't shut down because we're there on vacation. Of course, you are getting the benefit of local knowledge.
4. Participants' **Driving Ability and Comfort:** Everyone must attend the mandatory Drivers' Briefing before you get your car key. People can't wait to get on the Autobahn. A few folks freak out at our normal cruising speed of 120 mph. Although after a couple of days all of the participants become a well-honed driving team. Fun with safety is the key ground rule.
5. **Drivers from outside the EU.** Within the EU we need to watch out for less skilled drivers from Eastern European Countries, like Hungary, Romania, Czech Republic, Russia etc. Plus, Swiss drivers coming into the EU tend to be more righteous, like driving slowly in the Fast Lane. And, for some reason most slow

RV's or little cars pulling big camper trailers are from Holland. It's always a challenge to get around them. We try to avoid driving during school breaks.

6. **Factory Tours** – while PORSCHE AG is wonderfully generous to us North American PORSCHE lovers by providing us with the privilege of rare dates for a Factory visit. It's not like Disney World where you buy a ticket and get in. Don't expect to go to Stuttgart and get into the Factory. We plan our visitation dates at least a year in advance, and then on the day we are there, there might still be a change. They may have a new model run and they don't want you to see it, so you may not see the production line and instead you'll see the leather shop or engine assembly. That's why absolutely no photos are allowed on the Factory premises. The rumor in Stuttgart is that the Factory Manager is God (no, actually, God reports to the Factory Manager 😊). They are not there to entertain us – it's a factory making PORSCHEs.

7. **Local Conditions** – Germany has lots of holidays. For example, we don't want to be on any Autobahn the day after October 3rd. Or I can't get you into any Museum on a Monday – they are all closed. Or we definitely need to be back in Stuttgart, gassed up by 4:00 pm after a trip. Or when we attend the incredibly fun **Frühlingsfest** or the **Cannstatter Volksfest**, even though we have reserved and paid for non-refundable seats at 85.00 Euros each for a 5:00 pm seating, if we are 15 minutes late, they give them away. We must be punctual. Again, you are getting the benefit of local knowledge.

8. **Availability of PORSCHEs** – While over the years we've had tremendous success with rentals, there are never guarantees. In 1984 there was a last-minute metal workers' strike; in 1986 flights were cancelled due to terrorism; in 1997 the Factory couldn't deliver the new cars that were ordered. You know what happened on 9/11/2001. As I mentioned, we have other sources of PORSCHEs but it's not a slam dunk.

9. **Hotels:** Many properties have been closed. Others have changed their modus operandi in that they have raised prices to make up for the last two years' losses. Furthermore, there is reduced availability because customers from Europe and other countries now want to travel. Hotels prefer them because they are consistent repeat customers vs. Americans who are sporadic. Lastly, because of this spike in demand many properties insist on non-refundable deposits to secure space.

10. **Currency:** The exchange rate fluctuates. It's been fairly consistent lately at roughly \$1.20/€. It's been as high as \$1.86/€ in the past. The US Government's Fiscal Policies may have an impact on the cost of the trip between planning and kick off.

Not to worry, we have years of experience dealing with these issues. To keep you always fully informed, I just wanted to outline all the planning elements. Based on my daily interaction with Germany . . . in German, of course 😊 . . . we are confident that we will be able to get you your PORSCHE, it may not be from our regular source: **AVIS**. In the meanwhile, please get your International driver's license, which will be required by other PORSCHE rental providers. See you in Stuttgart.

2022 Fall Fast Lane European Tours Program. Based on the current forecasts it seems that by fall the car rental issues should be resolved either because based on our Spring Treffen Experience we now know what to expect or that we'll have rental PORSCHEs organized. We are working diligently to get us back to "normal" so you can enjoy our European Tours again as we have organized and conducted them since 1975! Please remember that all of our planned PORSCHE Tours (or other luxury vehicle, if you like) are a function of the number of participants to cover the fixed cost of the operation. So please register as early as possible to help us in the planning and implementation. The Executives at PORSCHE AG in Stuttgart always point out to me that guests from Japan, South Africa, even China and other countries come in greater numbers than from North America!

A. As I mentioned above, we look forward to the **PCA Spring PORSCHE TREFFEN**, Mon. May 2nd to Sat. May 7th.

B. The **German Romantic Castles PORSCHE FEST** is a repeat of last year's Tour. We are again including Berlin, Hamburg, the PORSCHE Factory in Leipzig and their legendary Racetrack.

C. The **12 Alpine Passes**, **PCA Fall TREFFEN**, and **Beautiful Swiss Alps** and the **Dolomites** (Italy) all look good. I'll be following up with everybody before the end of the month.

D. The **Tuscany PORSCHE Fest**, Mon. Oct. 3rd to Sat. Oct. 15th is **SOLD OUT**. Consequently, I have planned a **second Tuscany PORSCHE Fest**, Wed. Oct. 12th to Sun. Oct. 23rd – this second tour is filling up rapidly. In fact, a wonderful Florida, 5-trips gold star, couple, Mark & Eileen, are bringing 8 couples on this trip. Thank you Mark & Eileen – you'll definitely get the presidential suite.

E. Lastly, we are planning another luxurious **AMA River Cruise from Nuremberg to Vienna**, plus Budapest, if you'd like to extend it, from Sat. Dec. 3rd to Sun. Dec. 11th. I am starting this trip with a couple days first in **Stuttgart** to experience the Christmas Markets, especially the Schlossplatz Market and I am planning a special PORSCHE program. Then a bullet train ride to Nuremberg. The cruise itself starts in Nuremberg on Monday, December 5th 2022. All in all, we are planning to visit 10 Christmas markets, including Nuremberg, Passau, Salzburg (Austria), Český Krumlov (Czech Republic), the monastery city of Melk, Vienna and Budapest (Hungary).

III. 2022 USA Tours: By popular demand I am offering the wonderful and hugely successful **Carolinas PORSCHE Fest** again, Tue. Sep. 20th to Thu. Sep. 29th. Don't miss this trip – **SIGN UP NOW** – We'll start at the **PORSCHE Track in Atlanta**, drive to the German Village of Helen, GA. From there Highlands, NC; the awesome **Tail of the Dragon** and **Cherochala Skyway**; The **Biltmore Inn**, Asheville, NC; **Blue Ridge Parkway**; and the **Greenbrier** in White Sulfur Springs, WV. It's spectacular; luxurious and a wonderful experience. Check it out on our website

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouAqK9ApcLg&t=69s> Secondly, for the folks West of the Mississippi – you must join us on the **Romantic Wild West PORSCHE Fest** from Sat. Oct. 29th to Tue. Nov. 8th – It was by far THE most fun and successful PORSCHE Fest last year – **DON'T MISS THIS** wonderful Experience.



2022 Fast Lane PORSCHE Trips in Current Planning V-101						
From	From	To	To	PORSCHE Tour	Highlight	pp Dble
Mon	2-May	Sat	7-May	PCA SpringPORSCHE TREFFEN in Stuttgart	+Spring Beerfest	\$ 5,998
Tue	31-May	Thu	9-Jun	Twelve Alpine Passes PORSCHE Fest	Alpine Driving	\$ 12,998
Sun	5-Jun	Mon	13-Jun	The 90th 24-Hours of Le Mans Luxury Tour	Pit Pass, "50-yard line"	\$ 18,498
Sat	27-Aug	Thu	8-Sep	German Romantic Castles - Baltic Sea	Huge Success in '21	\$ 16,598
Sun	11-Sep	Sat	17-Sep	Original PCA Fall PORSCHE TREFFEN Stuttgart	Factory & Museum	\$ 6,498
Tue	20-Sep	Thu	29-Sep	USA Carolinas Fall Colors - Tail of the Dragon	Huge Success in '20	\$ 11,698
Tue	20-Sep	Sat	1-Oct	Swiss Alps & the Italian Dolomites	in design	\$ 15,698
Wed	21-Sep	Sat	1-Oct	Come Home to two Peters' Austria	NEW Luxury Experience	in design
Mon	3-Oct	Sat	15-Oct	Tuscany PORSCHE Fest & Interlpen	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
Wed	12-Oct	Sun	23-Oct	Tuscany PORSCHE Fest #2	Register ASAP, selling out	\$ 15,498
Sat	29-Oct	Tue	8-Nov	USA Romantic Wild West - fabulous sunsets	Huge Success in '21	\$ 11,998
Fri	2-Dec	Mon	12-Dec	Stuttgart X-Mas Market & Cruise to Vienna/Budapest	10 Christmas Markets	from \$5,200

Note: The cruise starts in Nuremberg on Monday, December 5th 2022.

IV. Fast Lane Website: We are currently re-designing our website, so not all trips may be posted yet – please be patient. By next week we should be finished with the revisions. In the meanwhile, just shoot me an e-mail as to which trip you are planning to choose to enjoy some luxury and fun driving? Thank you very much.

VI. My Final Thoughts: The Special Group ... Born Between 1930 - 1950.

Today, they range in ages from 72 to 92. Are you or do you know someone "still here"? Interesting Facts for you . . .

- You are the smallest group of children born since the early 1900s.
- You are the last generation, climbing out of the depression, who can remember the winds of war and the impact of a world at war which rattled the structure of our daily lives for years.
- You are the last to remember ration books for everything from gas to sugar to shoes to stoves.
- You saved tin foil and poured fat into tin cans.
- You saw cars up on blocks because tires weren't available.
- You can remember milk being delivered to your house early in the morning and placed in the "milk box" on the porch.
- You are the last to see the gold stars in the front windows of grieving neighbors whose sons died in the War.
- You saw the 'boys' home from the war, build their little houses.
- You are the last generation who spent childhood without television; instead, you imagined what you heard on the radio.

- With no TV until the 50's, you spent your childhood "playing outside".
- There was no little league. There was no city playground for kids.
- The lack of television in your early years meant, that you had little real understanding of what the world was like.
- On Saturday afternoons, the movies gave you newsreels sandwiched in between westerns and cartoons.
- Telephones were one to a house, often shared (party lines) and hung on the wall in the kitchen (no cares about privacy).
- Typewriters were driven by pounding fingers, throwing the carriage, and changing the ribbon.
- SOFTWARE, INTERNET, FACEBOOK and GOOGLE were words that did not exist.
- Newspapers and magazines were written for adults and the news was broadcast on your radio in the evening. As you grew up, the country was exploding with growth.
- The Government gave returning Veterans the means to get an education and spurred colleges to grow. Loans fanned a housing boom, but 25% down was the rule.
- Pent up demand coupled with new installment payment plans opened many factories for work.
- New highways would bring jobs and mobility.
- The Veterans joined civic clubs and became active in politics.
- The radio network expanded from 3 stations to thousands.
- Your parents were suddenly free from the confines of the depression and the war, and they threw themselves into exploring opportunities they had never imagined.
- You weren't neglected, but you weren't today's all-consuming family focus. They were glad you played by yourselves until the streetlights came on. They were busy discovering the post war world.
- You entered a world of overflowing plenty and opportunity; a world where you were welcomed, enjoyed yourselves and felt secure in your future though depression poverty was deeply remembered.

- Polio was still acripler.
- You came of age in the 50's and 60's.
- You are the last generation to experience an interlude when there were no threats to our homeland. The second world war was over, and the cold war, terrorism, global warming, and perpetual economic insecurity had yet to haunt life with unease.
- Only your generation can remember both a time of great war, and a time when our world was secure and full of bright promise and plenty.
- You grew up at the best possible time, a time when the world was getting better . . .
- You are "The Last Ones" . . .
- More than 99 % of you are either retired or deceased, and you feel privileged to have lived in the best of times!

Please stay safe, healthy, get both of your inoculations and booster shots, wear

your masks inside in public and don't hug strangers. Look forward to the great times we will have together again on the MANY fabulous PORSCHE tours in 2022. Please register for one of our **USA PORSCHE Tours** – we all need to get out now and have some fun! All the best to you, Peter