



Speed Bump

Slow Down For Some Automotive Tales

Photos and Article by Hal Tretbar

Take a Drive to Colossal Cave Mountain Park

The weather is great. The skies are blue and there is a faint breeze. What better time than now to take your Porsche and head to Colossal Cave Mountain Park. There are two ways to get there. The easy one is to take Old Spanish Trail from one end to the other. The best route is to discover the northeast side of Tucson first.

Old Spanish Trail starts at 8400 E. Broadway. Eighteen miles later you will reach Colossal Cave Mountain Park. Head south at the start. After winding through residential areas and passing the entrance to Saguaro National Park, you will speed your way through Rincon Valley to the hilltop parking lot.

Start early in the morning before there is much traffic. Here is my favorite Sunday drive to reach Colossal Cave:



SAR members Karma Kientzler and Hal Tretbar

Start at Broadway and Craycroft Rd. Take Craycroft north for 6 miles ... all the way up to Sunrise Drive. You will have passed Tucson Medical Center (TMC), seen Ft. Lowell Historic Park on the right side, and crossed the Rillito River before starting the uphill stretch.

Continue north on this uphill stretch on Craycroft before winding around the Catalina Mountain foothills. Two miles north and past Sunrise, the road changes its name to Kolb Rd. Stay on Kolb as it curves past Ventana Canyon Resort south until you hit Sunrise Drive. Turn left on Sunrise and follow it to the end at Sabino Canyon Rd. Take a short jaunt left past the entrance to Sabino Canyon.

Turn around at the end and head south for several miles. Two miles past Snyder Rd. you will wind around the base of Sabino Mountain on the left to end at the Kolb Road/ Sabino Canyon intersection. When you turn left ... it stays Sabino Canyon Rd. Head south past East River Rd, cross the Rillito River, past Tanque Verde Rd.



1987 Guards Red 911 Carrera Targa at the Colossal Cave Mountain Park overlook

Continue on with Udall Park on the left. Before long, you end at Kolb Rd. again. Turn left and continue south until you hit Speedway.

Take a left on Speedway and stay on it for 19 miles until you reach the end at Douglas Spring Trailhead. After 3 miles, note the stacked rock sculptures on the left. This is Tucson at its best. You travel from town to suburb, then through horse country to reach a typical Sonoran Desert landscape.

The drive becomes more interesting when Speedway passes Houghton Rd. The terrain opens and there is less traffic. Just past Tanque Verde Rd., the ‘dips’ begin. I call each of them a ‘whoop-de-do.’ Your stomach will float if you take them at speed.

After passing several nice horse ranches, you will need to slow down for the end of road cul-de-sac. Usually there are horse trailers and cars of hikers parked along the road. When you reach the “Trail Head” sign, turn left at



the entrance for a drive-by visit to the Tanque Verde Guest Ranch. Now head back from the Ranch and west on Speedway.

The Tanque Verde Guest Ranch is at the very east end of 22nd Street



Looking down on Old Spanish Trail through the Rincon Valley

After three miles turn left on Freeman Road. Follow Freeman Rd. south, past Saguaro National Park on the left, until it joins Old Spanish Trail a half mile north of the Park entrance. Continue past Saguaro Corners



The delightful Saguaro Corners Restaurant is just south of the entrance to Saguaro National Park

Restaurant with its great outdoor dining. Soon there is a road sign saying it is still 10 miles to Colossal Cave Mountain Park. However, at three miles south of the Saguaro Park entrance you meet Valencia Rd. Turn left to continue on the Trail.

You are now in Rincon Valley. Zip past the Rincon Valley Market on the right. Go on along past numerous new housing areas. The famous Rocking K Ranch is on the left. It still offers trail rides, but a lot of its extensive acreage is being developed for a new community of homes and businesses. Further down the road is the small Rocking K cemetery on a hill to the right.

As you proceed along, the countryside opens out with marvelous views of the mountains and Rincon Peak. Your butt will be tickled when you drive over the many cattle guards at speed.

When you reach the Entrance Gate, there is a very rough road off to the right that takes you to camping places. Go on up the hill to the parking lot for Colossal Cave Mountain Park. It is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The views are marvelous in all directions. The entrance to the cave is down some stairs on the south side.

Tickets to the cave entrance are available in the large stone Visitor Center built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934. Reservations are required for the Guided Classic Cave Tours. Call 520-647-7275. They start at 12:30, 1:30 and 3:00 p.m. An adult ticket is \$14. Facemasks are required.



The Colossal Cave Visitors Center and Gift Shop

When we head back home, it is 18 miles all the way on Old Spanish Trail. When you get to Valencia Rd., remember to turn right, *sharply*, to stay on the Trail. When you pass the Saguaro National Park entrance, stay left on the Trail as it winds for several miles through various neighborhoods.

After you pass Houghton Rd., check out the new Northwest Hospital under construction. Next is the angular intersection of 22nd St. and Harrison Rd. Continue across on Old Spanish Trail until you are back to Broadway.

If you really want this to be a round trip, go left for four miles, passing Kolb Rd., to end the tour at Craycroft and Broadway.

I think your Porsche family will thank you for the fun of driving around the east and south sides of our interesting city: Tucson.

