

Miata Color Tour
October 14, 2023

Talk about a blustery day! When the alarm rattled at 7:00, all I could think was, “Am I nuts to leave a warm bed and venture out for a two hour rainy ride on I 94 to Baraboo?” But then: friends, a creative drive, new vistas..Miata joy, motivated. And joyful it was to see our crew, one by one, enter the Ski Hi Fruit store north Baraboo, with wet parkas and wide smiles. We shopped and gabbed and packed our car trunks with apples, cheese curds, cider, donuts and more. Hank gave the rundown of the drive to come while Laura passed out lunch vouchers and had us sign in as we stayed dry in the spacious Fruit barn-store. By 11:00, the fresh country air was dry and crisp as we embarked on leg 1, a beautiful series of curved roads, hidden vales, and valleys that tumbled one into another. Magical. Colors were mixed, strong in spots and stretches, most spectacular when the sun peaked out and the sky turned powder blue with white fluffy clouds. Up some steep hills and gliding down again brought happiness and awareness that this is a special time with wonderful friends who share the love of adventure and the discovery of seldom seen vistas. We were so lucky to be here. One of my favorite roads, Hoot Owl, took me back to The Legend of Sleepy Hollow where I could picture Ichabod Crane trying to outrun the Headless Horseman, how eerily delightful! Before long, we were at Hillsboro Brewery for a tasty though lengthy lunch due to order scrambles. Laura had prearranged for our order picks, but the restaurant still had confusions during the serving. Nonetheless, all got “fed and watered,” tee, hee, in due time, so we were ready for leg 2 in good shape.

By 1:40 we were revving up again and onto Hwy. 33 (gorgeous) passing by the swirling landscape of alternate rows of shorn yellow corn and low green soy plants, a tribute to the Packers? Perhaps. The beautifully patterned crops made this city dweller jealous to not have these views daily. Once onto Irish Spring Road, we arrived at the Scenic Valley Bulk Foods and Bakery. Run by some very talented Amish, the stores proved to be a gluten free haven where I personally bought the best chocolate chip cookies I’ve had since becoming gf. There were a variety of stock items from flours to jams to spices and pork and beans, etc. The adjacent bakery featured pies, breads, cakes, cookies and some, as I said, were gluten free. What a find! As we waited for everyone to finish shopping, I took some amazing photos of the panorama showcasing colorful trees and a wide expanse of miles of open lands without any sign of civilization. Amazing. In fact parts of Irish Spring Road had no power lines, a clue as to the residents who live without electrical supplies. Peppered along the way were multiple discrete shops/homes selling eggs, quilts, furniture and more. We came to the Old Country Cheese Shop on County D near Cashton for another delightful stop to view hand-made Amish crafts including wooden baskets, bread and cheese boards, bird houses, and more. Of course, the cheeses and delicious ice cream rounded out the wants of everyone. The owner apologized for having run out of their cheese curds by the time we arrived, saying they had been so very busy all morning. Obviously, there are plenty of appreciative customers who know their way through the labyrinth of tricky roads in these parts. Thank goodness Hank and Laura were great guides who knew exactly where to go. We also passed Wildcat Mountain State Park on Hwy 33 which is worth a visit in and of itself. Really, there was so much to take in, that it was a wonder that the Netzingers could pack it all in with such expertise to create a ride that was timed and paced so well.

Leg 3 took us to views again that said, "Move over, New England and Smoky Mountains; central Wisconsin has you beat."

After many more curving and hilly miles, we arrived in Wisconsin Dells at the River's Edge Pub and Grub for a delicious and well served dinner. Drinks and food were great as usual and the friendly staff capped a perfect day. What started as an iffy weather day ended as a positively wonderful experience. So many thanks go to Hank and Laura Netzing again for their painstaking preparation and expert delivery of this memorable fall drive. Great culmination of the 2023 drive season. Also, thanks to Greg and Cindy Garnett for sweeping up and keeping us together. Great day for everybody!

Patty Kobus