



Nov 2, 2023

Riding the Dragon Tail

Last weekend, I joined this year's Tail of the Dragon Rennsport Porsche Fall Rally 2023 with my son Marvin and a group of friends. Organized independently for Porsche enthusiasts from across North America, the event brings together a passionate community for a three-day driving experience on the winding roads of the Smoky Mountains. Although not officially affiliated with Porsche, it has earned a reputation among participants as the "Super Bowl" of Porsche driving events.

Roughly 300 Porsches participated, tackling daily routes of about 250 miles. The undisputed highlight is the legendary Tail of the Dragon, an 11-mile stretch with an astonishing 318 curves. It is a public road, but during the rally, it becomes something far more: a proving ground for precision, discipline, and driving skill.

Participants are grouped into three categories, Cruising, Touring, and Extreme, based on experience and confidence. Each group typically consists of about twenty cars, led by an experienced leader who sets the pace. Communication is handled via small FM radios, which are essential in an area with virtually no cell service. The final car, known as the sweeper, maintains contact with the leader, ensuring the group stays together and alerts the leader to any delays or slower traffic.

On the first day, I rode as a passenger in a Cayman GTS driven by Adisson, one of the Touring group leaders, an ICU nurse by profession and a highly skilled rally driver by passion. Having grown up in Germany, just 50 miles from the Nürburgring, and having spent countless hours on that legendary circuit, I assumed the Dragon would be familiar territory.

I was mistaken.

The intensity, rhythm, and sheer technical demands of the Dragon are unlike anything I had experienced, even on a racetrack. Adisson's precision through the curves, often at speeds far exceeding posted limits, was both exhilarating and humbling. The road demands absolute focus, with every turn flowing immediately into the next, leaving no margin for hesitation. Videos of the Dragon capture the scenery, but not the sensation, the speed, or the adrenaline.

This was my first time attending the rally, and it exceeded every expectation. Perfect weather, vibrant fall colors at their peak, exceptional driving, and, most importantly, a remarkable group of people who share a deep passion for these cars and for the driving experience.

My sincere thanks to the Rennsport team for organizing such a professional and unforgettable event. A special acknowledgment to Adisson. Your driving made this an experience I will never forget.

A truly memorable weekend.

