



An Auto Tour on Rte. 66

Victorville to Barstow

The front page of this brochure is an outline of the road you will be traveling between The California Route 66 Museum in Victorville and The Route 66 Mother Road Museum in Barstow. Your mileage may be slightly different.

This cover page contains highlights and mileage and is printed in larger type to make it easier for *the navigator* to read to the driver. "L" or "R" in the mileage column means the site is on the right or left side of the road. The inside pages contain additional points of interest and additional details with photos.

NOTE: Some of the places discussed are private residences. Please respect the owners' rights to privacy.

Mile North from Victorville	Description and information on what you will see	Mile South from Barstow
0	Set your odometer to "0" as you leave the museum in Victorville.	35.9
1.9 L	Emma Jean's Café, home of the Brian Burger.	34.0 R
2.9	Steel Truss Bridge; built in 1930, it spans the Mojave River.	33.0
5.4 R	Riverside Cement Company and underpass. The underpass was built to eliminate dangerous on-grade crossings.	30.5 L
7.1 L	The Iron Hog Saloon and McClintock's BBQ. This was the Case Farm Equipment dealership in the 1930's and 40's. The same family has owned the building since 1944.	28.8 R
11.1 L	Potapov's Service station and auto court constructed around 1931 by Spanish-American War veteran, Guy Wadsworth, was torn down on Monday September 10, 2007.	24.8 R
11.3 L	Bottle sculptures <i>similar</i> to Hulaville; although <u>not</u> connected in any way to Hulaville. Hulaville used to be located on the west side of I-15 near Hesperia. The late owner of Hulaville created bottle statues as a tribute to his carney days.	24.6 R
12.1 L	Sagebrush Inn was a true roadhouse because it was located beyond city limits, which allowed it to take advantage of more liberal laws on alcohol.	23.8 R
13.9 L	Polly Gas Station sign. The prices on the sign are from the 1950's. When the I-15 freeway was built many gas stations went out of business.	22 R
15.0 R	Burden's store and Post Office was originally built in 1926 when the highway had just been graded by the state.	20.9 L
29.8 R	The Do Drop Inn, says the "Kitchen is open."	6.1 L
35.3	<u>From Victorville & Rte 66:</u> Turn <u>Left</u> on to First Street. The Route 66 Mother Road Museum is over the bridge in the old Harvey House. <u>From Barstow to Victorville:</u> Set your odometer to "0" and turn <u>Left</u> as you leave the museum. Turn <u>Right</u> on to Route 66.	.6

Details & Additional Points of Interest between Victorville and Barstow

Mile North from Victorville		<p>Victorville, CA - Settlers arrived in the Victorville area around 1860. The city was named after Jacob Nash Victor, a railroad engineer and construction superintendent for the California Southern Railroad (Santa Fe Railroad), and is the home of The California Route 66 Museum.</p> <p>Victorville's western flair was a favorite place to film some of Hollywood's old "B" westerns because the dude ranches and apple orchards in the area gave the town a country feel.</p> <p>From Victorville to Barstow, Rte 66 runs parallel to the Mojave River, although only a narrow stream of the Mojave River can be seen from Route 66 as you cross the 1930 steel truss bridge near Oro Grande. Because the river flows both above and below ground, sometimes the only indication the river exists is the ribbon of green trees and agriculture paralleling the west side of this stretch of Route 66.</p>	Mile South from Barstow
1.9 L		Emma Jean's Café and Truck Stop - Home of the Brian Burger.	34.0 R
2.9		Steel Truss Bridge - This 1930 steel truss bridge spans the Mojave River. Notice the ornate rails; something that you don't find in new bridge construction. From this point you can see a small stream of water under the bridge. You can see the green trees a short distance from the road that indicates the river is parallel to Route 66.	33.0
5.4 R		<p>Riverside Cement Company - Because on-grade railroad crossings were the site of many fatal accidents between automobiles and trains, they were eventually replaced with railroad underpasses. Although the times have changed, vehicles are still involved in many fatal accidents at this underpass because they are speeding and miss the curve.</p> <p>The Riverside Cement Company, which had its origins around 1907, is still in operation. Limestone quarries eventually replaced the gold mines. By 1900 the demand for cement for construction projects in Southern California became the impetus for cement manufacturing in Oro Grande and Victorville.</p>	 30.5 L
		Town of Oro Grande - Oro Grande means "coarse gold" which was a type of gold ore mined from the Oro Grande mine. In the <u>San Bernardino County Place Names</u> by Lewis Garrett, Garrett says Edward L. Doheny owned The Oro Grand Mine. Doheny, who later went on to make millions in oil, built the 55-room Greystone Manor in Beverly Hills (now a Beverly Hills City Park). (1)	
7.1 L		<p>Iron Hog Saloon & McClintocks BBQ - The same family has owned this establishment since 1944. It was the former Case Farm Equipment dealership during the 1930's and early 1940's, and is now home to The Iron Hog Saloon. The building, built around 1931, was a biker bar called the Lost Hawk before it became the Iron Hog Saloon.</p> <p>The building was seen in the movie Erin Brockovich. Julia Roberts (as Erin Brockovich) stopped at a roadhouse after spending the day in the Hinckley area working on her case against Pacific Gas & Electric (PG & E). This is where Julia Roberts met the PG & E employee who had the "proof" because his job was to shred certain incriminating PG & E documents.</p>	28.8 R
7.8 L		<p>La Delta - near Robinson Road is now a private residence. (Please respect the owners right to privacy.) The original owner of La Delta was the Oro Grand town constable, Theodore Simon "Pinky" Ruiz, who named it Pinky's Service Station. By July 1931 Mr. Ruiz sold it to Mr. & Mrs. Alva Dickens who remodeled it and built several cabins for the tourist travel. By October 1932 Mr. & Mrs. Dickens moved, and left their legacy in the name La Delta. By 1937 Mr. & Mrs. Burge became the owners. Mr. Burge, a former Greyhound Bus Company employee and his wife operated it as a way-stop where they served short orders and all kinds of drinks, but not beer, yet. When someone wanted to catch the bus, Mrs. Burge would hang a red bandana on a nail to flag down the bus. A water tower can be seen from Route 66. The gas station and store that were located closer to Route 66 were destroyed years ago.</p> <p>A 1930's auto court, the precursor to motels, is still in existence at La Delta. This is a good example of how the auto courts from 1920-1935 evolved into today's modern motels. The World War I era brought the auto camps, which were primitive spots to pull off to the side of the road, cook a meal, and possibly pitch a tent. Water was not always available. At times cities attempted to promote business within their city limits by offering auto camps, but that practice did not last long due to sanitation and other problems. (2)</p>	28.1 R

Mile North from Victorville		Mile South from Barstow
11.1 L	<p align="center">Potapov's Service Station and Auto Court – Was torn down on Monday September 10, 2007.</p> <p>Although Bill Potapov (p'-TOP-off) and his family came to the area in 1943; the buildings were in existence some years prior to their arrival because they appear to be Guy Wadsworth's style of rock buildings. Bill sold Douglas gasoline, a popular brand at that time. He also had quite a collection of car radios, spare tires, bumpers, etc. all over the place. Since this was before credit cards, he requested people leave something as collateral to pay for gasoline or other services.</p>	24.8 R
11.3 L	<p>Bottle Sculptures - This is a private residence. We don't know anything about these sculptures, except they have <u>no</u> connection to the old Hulaville. Folks who remember Hulaville or Mahan's Half Acre find these bottle sculptures similar. The original Hulaville located on the west side of I-15 near Hesperia, was an eclectic collection of bottle sculptures and fake grave markers dedicated to some of Miles Mahan's carnival friends. Look for Mahan's hula dancer in the Victorville Route 66 Museum.</p>	24.6 R
12.1 L	<p>Sagebrush Inn - was a true roadhouse because it was located beyond city limits, which allowed it to take advantage of milder laws regarding alcoholic beverages. George and Elizabeth (Bessie) Sibert moved here in May 1931. Their business began with a service station, and by October 1934 George built an addition onto it. The addition included a bar/café and dance floor, plus a small storage area. When a reporter for the local paper referred to it as the Sage Brush Inn, from that point on, that's what it was called. While it was rumored to be a brothel, there does not seem to be any evidence of that. Bessie was known to be very protective of the younger woman waitresses, but if the older ones wanted to earn a few extra dollars on the side, she was not going to stand in their way. (4)</p>	 <p>23.8 R</p>
13.3 R	<p>Old Filling Station -Notice the signs that are similar to the old Burma Shave signs.</p>	22.6 L
15.0 R	<p>Burden's Store & Post Office built in early 1926, around the time the state graded the highway, but before the road was paved. Burden's burned the same year it was built and was re-built using bricks. The brick walls have become popular for tagger art (graffiti). (5)</p>	20.9 L
17 to 25	<p>The National Old Trails Highway -This stretch of the National Old Trails Road, the forerunner to Route 66, is what you would have seen 80 years ago if you were driving your 1922 automobile down this section. Picture yourself driving your Model T along this section after the road had just been paved. The road and the surrounding countryside have changed very little in the last 80 years.</p>	11-19
25.3 L	<p>Hinkley Road - The town of Hinkley was made famous in the movie Erin Brokovich.</p>	10.6 R
29.7 and 29.8 R	<p>Remains of the Bar-Len Drive In Theater - is in the field just immediately south and adjacent to the Do-Drop Inn. Look for the short pole sticking up; that is where the screen was. Get out to wander and you will see concrete pilings that anchored the screen, and the dirt mounds the cars parked on. As you walk the field imagine children playing on the playground anxiously awaiting darkness and the start of the movie. The Do Drop Inn, the sign says the "kitchen is open."</p>	 <p>6.1 and 6.2 L</p>
35.3	<p>Barstow - named for William Barstow Strong, the president of the Santa Fe Railroad. His middle name was used because a railroad station named Strong already existed in Kansas. Barstow is home to the Casa del Desierto Harvey House and the Route 66 Mother Road Museum. Fred Harvey brought fine dining to the railroads from the late 1800's into the mid 1900's. Before Fred Harvey, dining on the railroads was, to put it mildly, an adventure. Many times patrons paid for meals they were unable to eat because the train was leaving the station. Others ate their meals and got food poisoning, much to the dismay of their fellow passengers. Fred Harvey brought not only fine dining at reasonable prices, but also good service and the famous Harvey Girl waitresses.</p>	 <p>.6</p>

Some facts and History

By 1911 the automobile had made its impact on the American way of life, and the dirt roads between towns were graded to accommodate the new mode of transportation. It did not take people long to realize that a paved road was more desirable than a graded dirt road.

1926 was a turning point for both the railroads and the automobile because the federal government established the highway numbering system, and The National Old Trails Road officially became Route 66. While rail was still the fastest way across America, the automobile and the new paved roads would soon offer Americans more freedom and flexibility. Some roads in the Mojave Desert began as wagon routes from the mines to railroad sidings or depots. Here, The National Old Trails Road runs parallel to the railroad tracks between Victorville and Barstow because it utilized wagon routes that were used during the construction of the railroad. Motorists recognized railroad tracks as a useful means of navigation because water was available at sidings and depots had a restaurant and hotel.

When The National Old Trails Road became Route 66, it brought a sigh of relief to both the state of California and San Bernardino County because this meant the federal government assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the

road and the cash-strapped state and county governments were no longer required to maintain it.

You will be traveling over a 35-mile stretch of National Old Trails Road/Route 66 that is very much as it was in 1926. This road was originally paved by following the natural contours of the land; so in this respect you will be seeing some parts of the Mojave Desert just as early motorists did almost 80 years ago. Some of the desert scenery is probably the same as it was when only Indians inhabited the area.

As of May 2002 some of the buildings discussed are still operating as a business and others may be shells of their former lives; while years from now, you may be at these sites and only see the outline of a foundation.

An important point to remember when driving this stretch of road is that at one time it was a very busy highway. It was also the lifeblood for many small towns and businesses. When the I-15 and I-40 freeways were completed it spelled the death of many of towns and businesses. So, as you drive this stretch of road, try to imagine yourself crossing the Mojave Desert between 1930 and 1960 when it was a vibrant highway filled with travelers on an adventure, and local folks going about their daily lives.

Additional Route 66 Fun Facts and Information

In Route 66 The Mother Road by Michael Wallis is an interview with Buster Burris for a section in his book called *Cajon Pass – The Gateway to Southern California*. Buster Burris, a typical character and businessman on Route 66, was born 9/26/1909 and died in August 2000. Roy's, named after Buster's father-in-law, is approximately 70 miles east of Barstow on Route 66. Buster began working there in 1938. In the 1930's the tourist cabins were built, and by 1940 the repair shop was opened. The café opened in 1945 so people would have a place to eat.

Buster was quoted in Wallis's book as saying: "The heavy highway business started about 'forty-eight. After the war my cabins were busy. We kept them rented night and day. Folks pulled over and slept in their cars when they couldn't get a room. That's how busy it was in Amboy." Buster also carried a huge supply of auto parts and they were able to change out a motor in a matter of hours. He had 90 people working full-time for him, and in the Summer his workforce sometimes soared to 120. Buster said in the late 1940's to the early 1970's the "place was a madhouse." But when the I-40 interstate opened, "everything changed," and "it was like somebody put up a gate across Route 66. The traffic just plain stopped." Buster indicated during his interview with Wallis (circa 1990) that business had improved since the 1970's due to interest on the part of motorcycle groups, travelers who believe they can make better time because there may be less state police patrolling "66", and the folks who just want to get off the interstate for awhile.

Roy's currently appears to have irregular hours, or is closed, so the place may or may not be open if you go there. Your best bet for gas, food and water is in Barstow 60+ miles to the west, Needles 60+ miles to the east or Twentynine Palms 30+ miles to the south.

Bibliography & Acknowledgements

- (1) San Bernardino County Place Names by Lewis Garrett, 1996, page 142
- (2) The Story of Sagebrush Annie & the Sagebrush Route by Richard Thompson, 2001, pages 26-28
- (3) The Story of Sagebrush Annie & the Sagebrush Route by Richard Thompson, 2001, pages 29-30
- (4) The Story of Sagebrush Annie & the Sagebrush Route by Richard Thompson, 2001, pages 13-24
- (5) The Story of Sagebrush Annie & the Sagebrush Route by Richard Thompson, 2001, pages 32-33

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- Steve & Karen Diffenbacher

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