

# PLAYERS RUN

Los Angeles, CA to Denver, CO  
June 6 to 11, 2006

**STORY** COLUM WOOD WITH FILES FROM CREATIVE FISSION  
**PHOTOS** CREATIVE FISSION

**T**he summer is too long and the open roads of America too much fun for there to be only one wild and crazy car rally each year. And because supply meets de-

demand, and America has no shortage of wealthy adventure seekers, the Players Run gives entrants a high speed journey, a whole lot of partying and a week-long trip they will never forget.

"This was the most emotionally draining experience of my life," says Steve Brazell, Chief Creative Officer of Creative Fission, the company contracted to videotape the wild adventure. Brazell, also a car enthusiast and thrill seeker, did more than just document the experience, he lived it, alongside the other Players, in his 2005 Dodge Viper SRT-10.

This poker run has wealthy entrants drive from one locale to another, with the quest for the best poker hand at the end of the week a distant second place purpose to





the high speed shenanigans and all night parties. "It is an overwhelming experience," says Brazell, "if you are going to own a high-end car, if you don't do a road rally, you will never drive it like it's meant to be driven."

The 2006 Players Run saw several dozen participants travel from LA to Denver in a few short days. Here is how it went down:

## TUESDAY, JUNE 6TH ARRIVAL IN LOS ANGELES

The drivers arrive on the Sunset Strip and check their cars into a secured underground garage. The drivers get their VIP passes and goody bags, and more importantly for the organizers, sign waivers. (This is no Sunday drive). Brazell is surprised by his initial impressions. "I thought they would all be snooty," he says of the other participants, "but they were all approachable and really nice people." He realizes early on that these aren't just 'car guys' but thrill seekers, a bond which makes them all closer friends. "They aren't concerned with putting 1,000 miles on their car. They realize that the cars are there for you to enjoy."



**1. One of the world's greatest exotics, a stunning blue McLaren F1.**

**2. Elvis, a trailer park and the America Lambo (an original SVR, number 24 of only 36).**

**3. Reza Mota takes a rest on the hood of his ultra-luxurious cruiser, how sacrilegious.**

**4. One of a pair of Carrera GTs, resting in the picturesque scenery at Kolob Fingers in Zion National Park.**



Burning through the California desert and snaking up the Rocky Mountains, these Players mean business.



## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7TH LOS ANGELES TO LAS VEGAS

Come morning many of the Players have donned costumes – several as Elvis – as is the custom at such rallies.

At 10 am all the exotics exit the garage, with tires spinning and engines roaring, putting on a show for the crowd. The event has only been officially on the road for a few minutes and already things are descending into chaos. The driver of the America Diablo – Roy Cats of Catsexotics – rear-ends a Porsche, and confesses that he was distracted by a pretty girl walking by.

All the cars then meet on the Sunset Strip where a police escort takes them to the California Speedway for their first poker card. “We had the best time at the Speedway,” says Brazell, “every [exotic car] owner should do at least one track day in their life.”

With only a brief instruction and a lot of horsepower, several of the high priced cars wind up off the track and in the sand. It is already three pm, and Vegas isn't getting any closer, so now the race really begins and the teams test their luck on real roads.

The convoy encounters some heavy rain along the way, a particular problem for the roofless Shelby Cobra team, who don goggles and decide to push through. As

early as five pm and as late as seven pm, the teams arrive in Vegas to pick up their second poker card, many having incurred mild to wild speeding tickets.

As can be expected in Vegas, the party rages all night long, as the Players stir it up at Mix.

## THURSDAY, JUNE 8TH LAS VEGAS TO SALT LAKE CITY

With hangovers aplenty, the official start time for the second day of the rally is noon. Day two means car number two for the Porsche 959 team. With a full semi trailer following them every step of the way, they pull out a stunning GT2. The groups all have to stop at Kolob Canyon in Zion National Park to pick up their third poker card. Tickets come fast and furious for the group: the F430 team landing a \$1,100 fine, while the Lambo team gets busted for doing 178 mph. The team in the Rolls Royce Phantom get caught for speeding twice in a very short period of time, a move which results in both men going to jail.

With more rain on the last leg before SLC, the Cobra team (after having just fixed their car) have to pull out the goggles again, meeting the rest of the group at the Hotel Monaco in Salt Lake City.

## FRIDAY, JUNE 9TH SALT LAKE CITY TO ASPEN

A police escort is generously provided for (or forced upon) the Players from Hotel Monaco to the I-15 South. After a full night of rain, Mr. X (who prefers to remain anonymous) with his cargo hold worth of exotics, decides to delay the unveiling of his most prized possession and instead continues on with the GT2.

Early on the F430 and SL55 teams get clocked at over 150 in a 55 zone and both parties wind up in jail, delaying their arrival in Aspen until almost midnight.

The group makes a pit stop at Moab, Utah for their fourth card and the race to Aspen begins. A Carrera GT gets pulled over doing 130 in a 40 zone but the officer decides to participate in some photography rather than give out any tickets.

With the halfway point of the rally now come and gone, the revellers decide not to neglect any opportunities or waste any time and so most of the teams stay up all night.

## SATURDAY, JUNE 10TH ASPEN TO DENVER

With the weather finally deciding to cooperate Mr. X finally digs deep into his trailer and pulls out ... a McLaren F1. The



1. The second Carrera GT, also taking a well-deserved rest.  
2. A Vanquish S waits with the rest of the cars at the California Speedway.  
3. A Ferrari Testarossa at the California Speedway.  
4. Fresh from the Gumball, a Ferrari F430 in Moab, UT.



McLaren leads the pack out of Aspen as the Creative Fission helicopter films the parade. The group has even grown some overnight, picking up both a Gallardo and a Porsche Turbo in Aspen.

The group snakes carefully up Independence Pass to the 12,095 foot continental divide and then rips it down the back side. They then continue their scenic journey through Winter Park and over to Estes Park for the final poker card, to the hotel that inspired Stephen King's, *The Shining*.

In Winter Park, 15 teams take a lengthy lunch and then have to play catch-up on the mountainous roads. The group is joined by several bikes which challenge a particular Lamborghini for some high speed fun. The group is spotted and as one of the bikers decides not to slow for police, the authorities give chase for eight miles before catching their suspect. This stunt allows the Lambo driver to avoid prosecution.

Emerging from the wild roads and stunning scenery, the cars arrive (most of

them late) at the Broomfield Airport where a police escort is waiting to take them to the finish line in downtown Denver. With locals cheering and camera flashes aplenty the drivers shake some champagne and celebrate the official end of the gruelling high speed chase.

At the evening's black tie awards dinner the America Lambo receives best car, the Lotus drivers (also Elvis impersonators) are awarded best spirit and the Porsche Turbo Cab team is dubbed the official winner of the Poker Run, with a flush.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 11TH**  
**DEPARTURE FROM DENVER**

After a week of living above the law, the Players Run participants get ready to return to their home cities with fond memories and plenty of speeding tickets. Three Players decide to make a more permanent record of their journey, opting for Players Run tattoos.

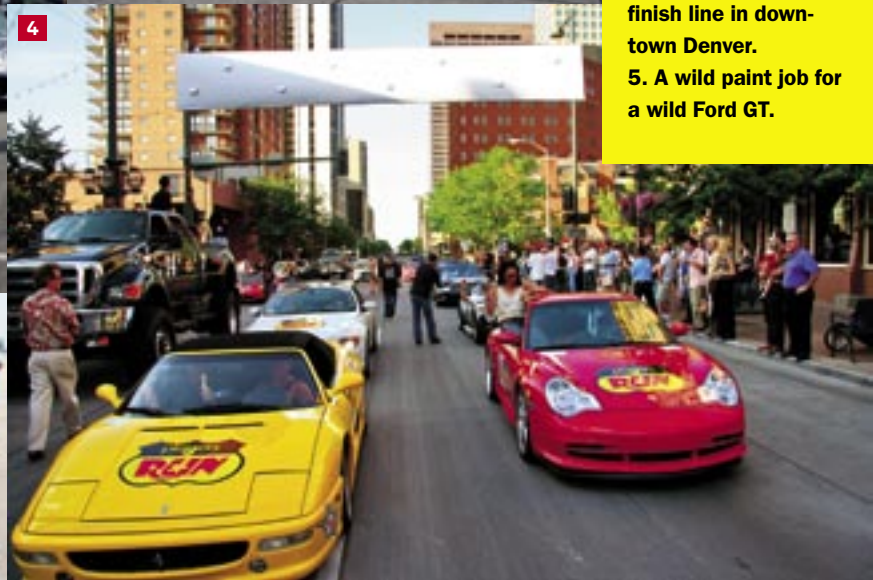
Brazell wasn't one of the inked trio, nevertheless insisting that he will never forget

his first ever Players Run. "It's dramatically different that what I thought it would be," he says. "Until now I had never driven my car near its potential. It's like, all of a sudden, there are no rules. It's almost like you are in a video game."

"I also developed some great friendships," he says, "ones that go deeper than just cars."

Brazell does admit that it's now hard to go about his life driving like a regular human being. "I almost feel like what's the point if you are only driving 40 or 80 miles an hour. It's like putting a thoroughbred in a 10 by 10 cage."

Brazell's company Creative Fission also worked hard all week long to document the wild and crazy antics of a few dozen millionaires. And so for the Players who thought the week blew by like a Gallardo at 180 mph, they will soon be able to relive it all, once one of the interested networks pick it up. And for those of us who couldn't participate, watching the insanity unfold from the comfort of our living rooms is still a great way to share in the Players Run. **MLB**



**1. A modified H2 transports an entourage from city to city.**  
**2. When their Lotus broke down in Vegas, one team rented a Ferrari to go the distance.**  
**3. 2005 SLR at the Speedway.**  
**4. Cars cross the finish line in downtown Denver.**  
**5. A wild paint job for a wild Ford GT.**