



Audi Club SoCal



High Performance Driving School
Buttonwillow Raceway Park
December 2-4, 2022

Learn a New Track

A Trackside Talk
by Bill Vogel

Presented by
TOYO
TIRES®



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Learn a New Track - Strategies

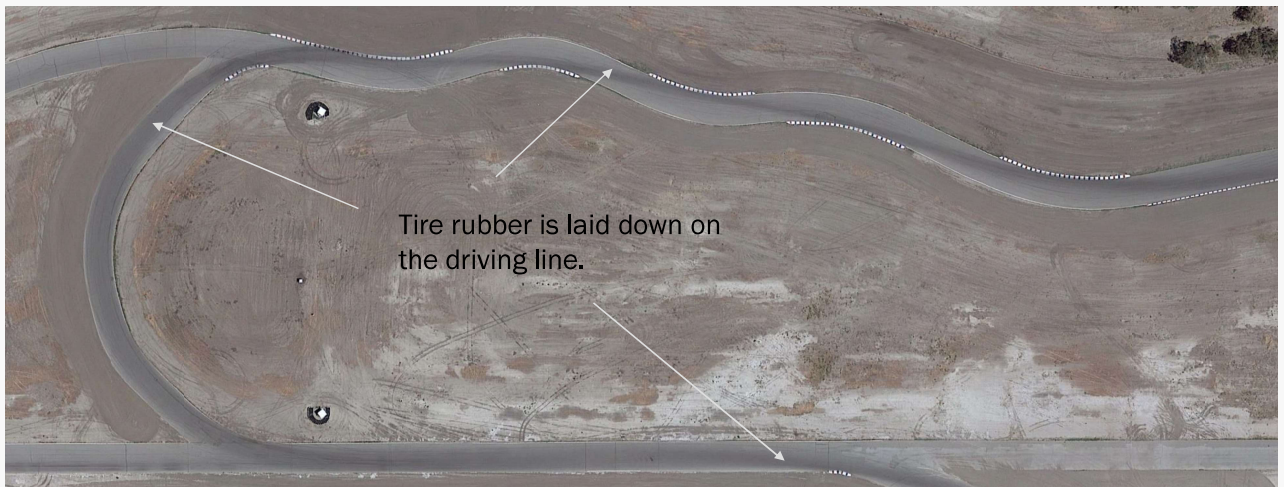
- Visiting a new track can be a thrilling, humbling, and even hilarious experience as we rediscover what it is like to be a beginner all over again!
- We'll review some strategies for learning a new track.
- Many of these techniques are ones our instructors already use with their First-Time students (A-Group).
 - *A First-Timer is also learning a new track - for the very first time!*

Do your Homework

- Print out a track map.
- Find video(s) of the configuration and direction you will be driving.
 - *look on YouTube, Vimeo, or the track's website.*
- Play the video while referring to the map.
 - *you can use slow motion and stop action to study the details.*
 - *it's not too early to start taking notes on your track map.*
- Video has some limitations so keep an open mind...
 - *video is good at showing the lefts-and-rights but not very good at showing elevation changes.*
 - *Throttle application can give clues to elevation changes and grip so listen as well as look.*
 - *just because a video is posted online doesn't necessarily mean it shows good driving!*

Do your Homework

- Study a written track description if you can find one online.
- Study a satellite view online. You can often see the driving line.





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Ask for Help

- Find a driver who is experienced at that track.
 - *Ask if they will share their in-car video with you.*
 - *Ask if they will let you follow them for a couple of laps.*
 - *Ask them to give you a ride in their car.*
 - *Don't be afraid to ask. They will soon be sharing the track with you!*
- Attend a track day before your own as a non-driving guest.
 - *Watch the track from the perimeter.*
 - *Ask for rides with some of the drivers.*



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Take it Easy

- Drive your first laps at 5/10ths max.
- Don't rush into corners too fast.
- Keep your brain clear-of-fear so you can focus on learning the flow of the track.
- Speed without Drama equals Fun!



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Leave Shifting out of it

- Just leave the car in third gear for those first laps.
- Trying to establish shift points just distracts you from the primary task of learning the shape of the track.



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Go Brakeless

- Minimize braking as much as reasonably possible during these initial laps.
- This will force you to find and drive wide, flowing lines.
- This knowledge will make you a much smoother driver as you learn the track and gain confidence.



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Start in the Middle

- We know the best line through most corners involves outside edge on corner entry, the very inside at the apex, and then back to the outside on corner exit.
- But we don't know those points on a new track! What to do?
- By starting out generally in the middle of the track, then gradually increasing your speed, you can let the layout and your own momentum show you the best line.
 - *Drive the car, not the track and the track will “come to you”.*



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Be Late everywhere

- As a “newcomer” to a track, you should late-apex every corner.
- Leaving an extra foot (or three) of road on every corner exit is slower — but will help you stay on the pavement until you learn the track.
- Don't try to use all the asphalt on the corner exit before you're completely familiar with the track configuration.
 - *Move your apex earlier only as you gain knowledge, speed and confidence.*

Be Late everywhere

- Initially it is best to take this to extremes by staying wide on corner entry until you can see your exit before you fully commit to the turn.
- This means using far less of the road than you could safely use.
- It's like driving / riding on a mountain road – this is a place where you don't want to be surprised by decreasing-radius bends ... or forced across the centerline into oncoming traffic.

Be Late everywhere: Learn a New Track with Randy Pobst





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Keep an Eye on the Exit

- Whether you're in a dive bar or trying to master a new corner, the first thing you need to know is the location of the exit.
- The number one mistake people make on track, and one of the critical mistakes made in driving generally, is rushing into corners too fast.
- To avoid this, learn each new corner in the opposite direction from which you are traveling:
 - First, figure out where you want to be on the **exit**.
 - Then, figure out where you need to **apex** in order to hit that exit marker.
 - Then, figure out where you need to **turn in**, in order to hit that apex.
 - Last, identify the **brake point** you need in order to scrub enough speed to turn-in.



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Keep an Eye on the Exit: Learn a New Track with Dion von Moltke





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Let others Pass

- You learn by letting quicker drivers through, not by keeping them behind you.
- If you're driving a fast car, and there is a knowledgeable driver in a slow car in your run group, don't use your hundred-plus horsepower advantage to pass on the front straight.
 - *Stay behind that driver and learn their lines through the bends.*



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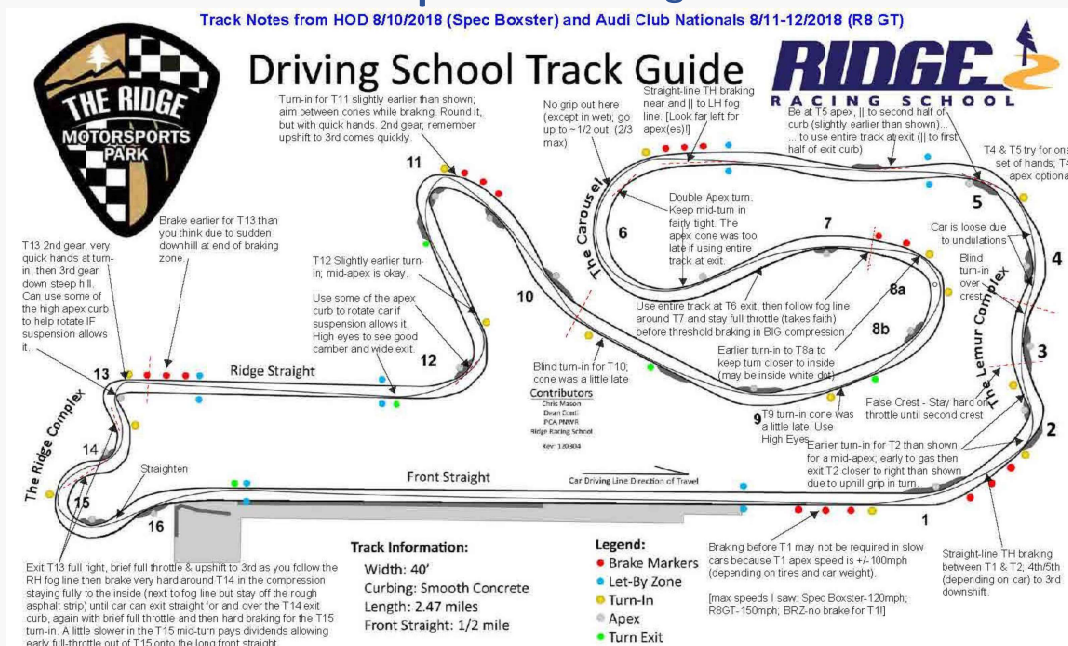


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Take Notes

- Write notes on a track map.
- Update your notes following each session.
- But I can't draw / can't find time / don't know what to put down.
 - *Just do it! Any notes are better than nothing.*
 - *Putting pencil to paper is a very effective way to test your understanding and commit things to memory.*
- The Audi Club SoCal website has track maps which are designed for making track notes.

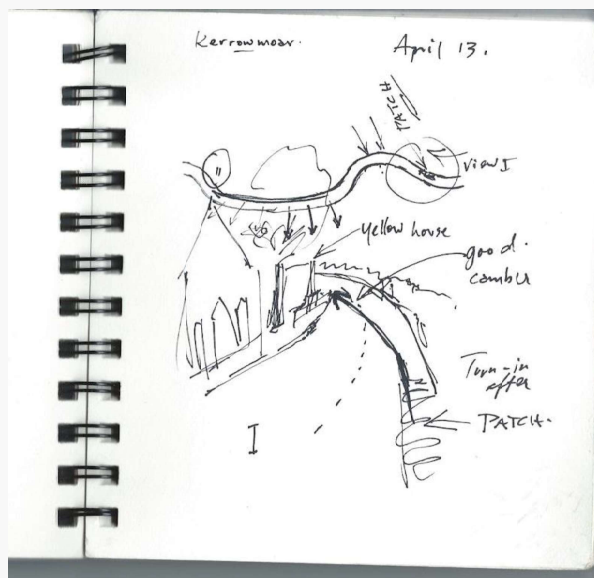
Track Notes Example: The Ridge



Can't Find a Map? Draw your own

- It's not important to have the proportions and straightaway lengths accurate.
- It *is* important to get the corners, crests and dips, shift points, passing zones, and landmarks like brake markers and curbs clear in your own mind.

A drawing in a motorcycle racer's notebook of one turn on the mountain course at the Isle of Man TT





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Choose the right References

- Speaking of landmarks, you need to find proper reference points for braking, corner entries, apexes, and exits.
- Choose landmarks that won't move on you between sessions.
 - *Cones or the corner worker's parked scooter are bad landmarks.*
 - *The second red block on the painted curb is a better landmark.*
- Reference marks on or adjacent to the driving surface are usually better than distant buildings, trees, and towers; this avoids repeatedly shifting your focus from near to distant, and back again.
- Show the references points on the track map with your notes.



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Take a Track Walk

- See if you can walk or ride a bike on the track when it is cold.
- If there is not an organized track walk, ALWAYS ask permission first!
- Look through the corners. It is also helpful to look back from corner exit.
- Pay attention to the texture of the paving, surface and height of the curbs, bumps, dips, banking, and hills and crests.
 - *Decide where the grip lives and where it goes on vacation!*
- Find reference points both on and near the track and more remote landmarks.
- You will be surprised how different the track looks compared to driving it at speed in a car.
 - *Crouch down to view from the same eye height as when driving your car.*



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Summary

- If you think about it, these strategies are at the core of the fundamentals of high-performance driving.
- We must put extra focus on the fundamentals when things are not familiar (at a new track) or become difficult as in the wet, when visibility is impaired, or we are tired.
- Do your homework
- Ask questions
- REVIEW and APPLY the Fundamentals of Performance Driving



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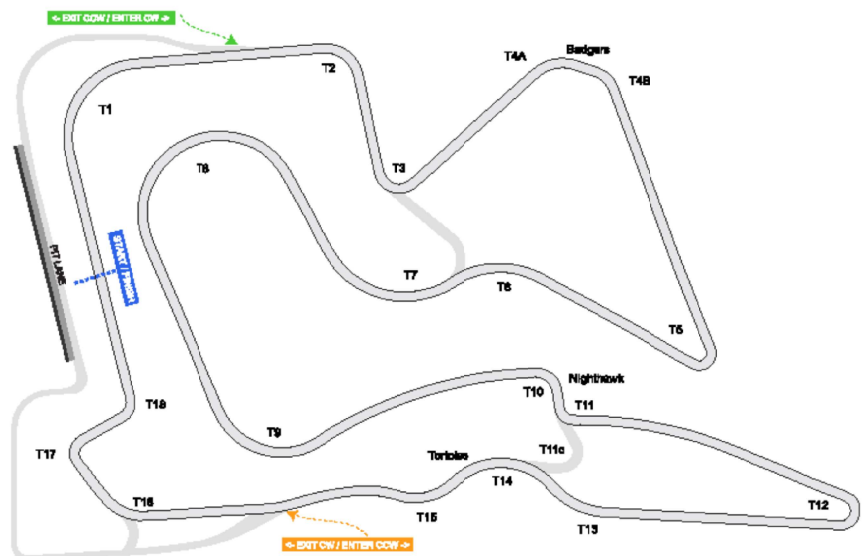


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Join us!

Spring Mountain Motor Resort
Charleston Peak North course
March 31-April 2, 2023
(weekend before Easter)

Find the Audi Club map of Charleston Peak for track notes on our website
audiclubsocal.org/spring-mountain



© Spring Mountain Motor Resort & Country Club 3/4/22

Charleston Peak
Full Course 3.23 mi
Griffith 2.76 mi (no T12)