

Adventures of a Visitor from Argentina

by Kim Ziffra

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2026, started as a normal morning at the Crankin' A's Model A Ford club's garage at the Pioneer Settlement in Barberville, Florida. It was "Tinker Tuesday," and we had about 20 people already there drinking coffee, eating pastries, and talking about the past week's events and what we had on the agenda for that morning.

The temperature was quite cold for Florida, so we had all the doors of our building closed and the heat cranked up. I realized I had forgotten something from my car, so I went outside to retrieve it. When I turned around to return to the garage, an unfamiliar Model A was pulling into our parking area.

The arriving Model A was covered in stickers and emblems, and a foreign flag was flying from the luggage rack.

I was immediately drawn to it. Aside from all the adornments, I noticed the driver was sitting behind the steering wheel on what's usually the passenger side.

The driver hopped out and introduced himself as Cristian from Argentina and handed me a sticker. On the sticker



was a photo of his Model A and the outline of North and South America. I knew there had to be an interesting story.

While he was getting his car settled, I rounded up all the guys from inside the garage and told them we had a visitor. They headed outside and gathered around his car, inundating him with questions.

I wanted to share our experience in getting to know Cristian Delaporte and tell a small part of his story and how he ended up hanging out with us for the next three weeks. I asked him some questions, and here is what he told me:

What inspired you to make this trip?

"Almost twenty years ago, there was a 'regularity rally' in Catamarca, a city about 145 miles from Tucumán, where I live. I wanted to drive there in my red 1929 Ford Model A Phaeton. (A regularity rally is similar to the Great Race in the USA).

I spoke with several friends and even a mechanic who specialized in repairing Ford Model A cars. They all told me I was crazy. But my father, a French immigrant who arrived in Argentina in 1951, reminded me that the first car he ever bought was a Ford Model A Phaeton, which he cut up and converted into a pickup truck.



Cristian Delaporte's '30 Fordor has earned its name, "The Adventurer."

The unfamiliar Model A pulling into our parking area was covered with stickers and emblems.



Cristian Delaporte with "The Adventurer," his 1930 right hand-drive Fordor, at the Crankin' A's clubhouse in Florida.

He started his life in Argentina as a blacksmith, making small iron windows and iron garden chairs and tables. He would load his work onto his truck and drive all the way to Tartagal, in the province of Salta, about 360 miles away.

So how could I not drive 145 miles to Catamarca, plus another 75 miles during the rally, and then 145 miles back?

I made the trip to Catamarca with my son Georges and my father-in-law, Pablo Sanna. Not only did we complete the journey without any problems, but we also won first place in the regularity rally. (As I have gotten to know Cristian the past few weeks, I am not surprised he took first place!)

That trip was the beginning of a series of increasingly longer challenges. After that original trip I made many additional trips all around South America, which prepared me to expand my horizons. Ever since I have dreamed of driving to and around North America.

About 13 years ago, my son Georges came to study at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) at Daytona Beach, Florida. This was it. I finally had a reason to fulfill my dream of driving there from Tucumán, Argentina, in a Ford Model A."

When did you begin your South America to North America journey?

"We were going to start our trip on January 15, 2019, for which I had been working and trying to finish restoring a 1930 Ford Model A Tudor. But on December 19, 2018, I bought a 1929 Fordor De Luxe, and decided we would make the trip in this one, since it was in better condition.

Although it was in better condition, it was a car that had never traveled more than 10 miles, and now we were planning a 17,000-mile trip. That delayed us by a month, and with my wife, Mirra Sanna, by my side, we finally departed on February 16, 2019, at 5:00 a.m."

Where did you start, and what was your route?

"Our trip began in front of the Casa Histórica

(Historical House), the site where Argentina's Declaration of Independence was signed on July 9, 1816, an emblematic location in our city of Tucumán.

Our itinerary was very specific, indicating the cities we would connect each day, with information on distances, road type, and travel times. But as we traveled, we added destinations and new goals, each one more distant and ambitious than the last.

We originally planned to leave Tucumán directly for La Quiaca, the northernmost city in Argentina. Then we would cross the Salar de Uyuni in Bolivia and from there head to Peru. But in Patacamaya, 60 miles before reaching La Paz, we decided to change course toward northern Chile, to the city of Arica.

To do this, we had to cross the Andes Mountains, reaching an altitude of over 15,350 feet, which is very high for a naturally aspirated engine like the one in the Ford Model A, as it can lose about 40 to 45 percent of its power at that height. But we had no problems, not even with the snow that fell at one point along the way.

From there, we would enter Peru, traveling along the Coastal Route through Nazca, Lima, Chiclaya, Piura, and Sullana until we reached Alamor, the border with Ecuador.

From there, we continued through Arenillas to the city of Cuenca along incredible mountain roads. From there, we continued our journey to Ambato,

BOLIVIA

CHILE

PERU

ECUADOR



Cristian Delaporte, Mirra Sanna, and "The Adventurer," with their new friends from the Crankin' A's.

Pujili, and finally arrived in Quito, the capital of Ecuador.

Our journey continued into Colombia, passing through the cities of Pasto, Popayán, and Medellín until we reached the Caribbean Sea in the historic city of Cartagena de Indias.

From there, due to the Darién Gap, through which there is no road, and given Costa Rica's refusal to allow us entry because the car's steering wheel was on the right, we

shipped the 'Adventurer' in a container to the port of Santo Tomás de Castilla in Guatemala.

That process took us a month, but our journey continued through Guatemala via Morales, Poptún, Flores, and Melchor de Mencos to enter Belize.

There, we traveled through San Ignacio Cristo Rey, Belmopan (the capital of Belize), Hattieville, and Sand Hill until we reached the Mexican border. From there, we went to Chetumal and Cancún. From there, we returned to Argentina for a time.

MEXICO We flew back to Cancún, Mexico, from Tucumán, Argentina, to continue our trip, and that's where the plans began to change. This was in January 2020, when we traveled the entire Gulf Coast

from Cancun to Miami, Florida, and then to Daytona Beach. We left the 'Adventurer' at my son's home and returned to Argentina for the second time at the end of January 2020. Just a few days later, the COVID-19 pandemic began. Then came what we call the economic pandemic, which prevented us from resuming our trip until March 2024.

GEORGIA **NORTH CAROLINA** **SOUTH CAROLINA** **VIRGINIA** That's when we restarted our adventure. We picked up where we left off in Daytona Beach, Florida, traveling along the East Coast of the U.S., through Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia,

all the way to Washington, D.C. From there, we headed to Philadelphia and New York.

We continued to Niagara Falls, Detroit, and Chicago. It was obviously impossible for us to not travel the entire length of the 'Mother Road,' Route 66, passing through incredible places and cities. In Gallup, New Mexico,



Cristian Delaporte and "The Adventurer" during their visit to Washington, D.C.

we decided to take a detour to explore the magnificent Monument Valley.

Then we returned to Route 66 to continue toward Las Vegas and finish in Santa Monica, Calif., facing the majestic Pacific Ocean.

I think I get more tired trying to remember all the places we passed through than I did trying to make the journey in our Ford Model A, 'The Adventurer.' We arrived in Los Angeles and left our car there to return once again to Argentina.

The most challenging part was yet to come: the longest journey, the most hostile climate, the most deserted route, and the greatest sacrifices.

On July 14, 2024, the date commemorating the Independence of France, the country of origin of my parents, Nicole and Paul Delaporte, we began our journey from Los Angeles to the northernmost tip of Alaska, Prudhoe Bay, a round trip totaling 8,664 miles.

We arrived back in Los Angeles on August 22 after 39 days of a grueling journey.

We returned to Argentina again, almost without the desire to drive a Ford Model A again. We were exhausted, physically and mentally.

But some time later, the burning desire for a new challenge once more began to stir in our hearts.

On December 3, 2024, we began the challenge of connecting the Santa Monica Pier on the Pacific coast with the Daytona Beach Pier on the Atlantic coast. We called this leg 'Crossing the Two Oceans,' which we had already done, but from east to west.

We arrived in Daytona Beach on December 13, 2024, in just 10 days and 2,651 miles. Not too bad considering we averaged about 44 mph with our three-speed transmission.

Since then, 'The Adventurer' has lived in Daytona Beach, waiting for new dreams, new horizons, new challenges...



In Chicago, at the start of "The Adventurer" driving Route 66.



"The Adventurer" in New York City.

body, and an assortment of screws, nuts, and washers. We carried several inner tubes, jerry cans of gasoline, radiator coolant, engine oil, a battery charger, an electric pump, and even the spacers for the front and rear leaf springs ... lots of tools ... all the necessary tools "except for the one I was going to need ..."

What problems did you have along the way?

"During the first part of our trip we didn't have any major problems, just a lot of flat tires, one water pump, five exhaust gaskets, two cylinder head gaskets, one burnt valve, two fan belts, two sets of points, a front cross member, a rear cross member, and cleaning the carburetor a couple of times. These were probably all the problems we had on that part of our trip.

But the Los Angeles to Prudhoe Bay and return to Los Angeles leg was the worst. This was mainly because there were two Ford A's, since we made that journey together with Miriam Teixeira Amoretti and Fabiano Remor, natives of Curitiba, Brazil, and friends of ours for years.

During that part of the trip, here are some of the



From Argentina, "The Adventurer" traversed Alaska.

What supplies did you take?

"We traveled with one carry-on each and a few loose, warm jackets. We also brought some basic food items like crackers, coffee, water (always), and some canned goods.

We didn't carry many spare parts: gasket sets, a water pump, a fan belt, light bulbs, points, a condenser, a

distributor cap and

problems we encountered between our two Ford Model A's. In addition to normal gasket and fan belt replacement, points, fluid leaks and changes, and brake adjustments, we also experienced bent/broken rims and a lost exhaust pipe on the Dalton Highway. Plus, a spare tire carrier, horn, battery bracket, radiator, accelerator terminal, alternator, turn signal and flasher, radiator, and windshield all broke.

Among our difficulties this leg of our journey:

- Neither Model A had working brake lights.
- We had more than 45 flat tires and patched them all. We bought 29 inner tubes during the whole trip. We damaged an air compressor from so much use.
- Valente's fuel gauge malfunctioned; Fabiano had to adjust it.
- Valente's engine seized. It was impossible to repair in Anchorage, so we simply bought another one and installed it.
- We were carrying excess weight because the seized engine is in Valente's back seat.
- A U-joint broke in the middle of nowhere, 320 kilometers from Whitehorse, the nearest city.
- The driveshaft bearing and the speedometer gear broke at Continental Junction. It's not even on the maps. Satellites didn't detect any human life within a 500 kilometer radius.
- The steering pitman arm came loose.
- The front bumper came loose.
- We crashed and broke a sign.
- They wouldn't let Cristian back into the U.S., claiming he only had four days left before his visa expired.
- We almost hit a bear that ran across the road. It did not use the crosswalk!
- I had no cell service at times.
- Fabiano had to abandon his car in Canada ... in a village of 50 people. Let's hope the car's still there!

"It doesn't seem real, but it was 100 percent true, believe me. Now you'll understand our physical and psychological stress after finishing this 8,664-mile stretch."

Did you know anyone along the way, prior to setting out on your journey?

"I didn't know more than five people personally, but hundreds through a WhatsApp chat we have with about 300 friends from the 'Ford A Latino Americano' group. They all knew me and always supported me from afar. And of course, in Daytona, my son Georges Delaporte was waiting for us."

Did you have a favorite place that you visited?

"Yes ... all of them.

Perhaps the most exciting places were Cancun,

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chili. This year's theme was Hawaiian dishes. The food was amazing, complete with a "lean pig" carved ham. Everyone came dressed in their finest Hawaiian outfits, complete with colorful leis. Recipe winners were Connie Koentopp, Karen Rowe, and Candi Hoover.



Jon Pendleton

Walla Walla Sweet As: Things are popping with spring coming. Everyone looks forward to our safety inspection day at Hoffmans (with a life!). All will be ready for the annual "dust off the cobwebs" tour for lunch in Weston. The MAFCA National Convention has 275 registrations. It's going to be a real hoot! We hear a Burtz engine and a muffler will be auctioned off. The club

members are gearing up for upcoming shows and tour as well.

Debbie Setbel

WISCONSIN

Great Lake As: An early summer has enabled us to enjoy many local tours. A trip to the Cudahy Train Depot historical site, a tour around beautiful Lake Geneva, and a scenic ride to attend Model A Day in Clinton, Wisconsin, were some of our enjoyable tours. We also have three local parades coming up in July, but enjoying the friendship of our fellow club members is the best reason for our success.

Gary Zebren

Wisconsin Chapter: This is one busy club. At our January banquet we were serenaded as we feasted on delicious fare. Well earned longevity and volunteer awards were distributed. Special honors went to our longest member, Jan Klager, a member since 1956 — 69 years ago! Indoor meets included bingo and an ice cream social. The



last week in February we celebrated 60 years of hosting successful swap meets with special gifts and drawings.

Karen Schwachen

Send Chapter News to: The Restorer,
MAFCANews@gmail.com
 or mail to 5074 Plumstead Drive,
 Colorado Springs, CO 80900
 Send up to 75 words about your club's most recent activities. Deadline for the July/August issue: **May 20**

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Daytona Beach, New York, Niagara Falls, Detroit, Chicago, Monument Valley, Las Vegas, the Santa Monica Pier ... but my favorite was undoubtedly Prudhoe Bay."

What and where did you eat? Where did you sleep?

"We didn't usually have lunch because we were driving the 'Adventurer.' For dinner, we typically ate at a restaurant or purchased food at supermarkets and ate it at the hotel or in the car.

On the LA to-Alaska-to-LA leg, Miriam often cooked for us. There were several of us, so it was worth it. We also had several barbecues on that leg. Several times, friends invited us to lunch or dinner at their homes or restaurants.

During most of the trip, we slept in hotels — not luxury hotels, but roadside or city hotels.

We slept in tents both on the way to and from Coldfoot, Alaska, a town of 34 inhabitants inside the Arctic Circle and only 242 miles from Prudhoe Bay. I confess that I have never felt so cold in my life, nor do I think I ever will again. Not even when I went into the Beaufort Sea (off the coast of Prudhoe Bay) wearing

only swim trunks, with temperatures of 34 degrees Fahrenheit and icebergs in sight, did I feel as cold as I did in Coldfoot."

What will be your best memories?

"All of them, although the excitement I felt upon arriving in Prudhoe Bay was the greatest. Mirta and I always say, 'It doesn't matter how many miles we traveled,



Both Model A's drove not just to Alaska, but on to Prudhoe Bay!

what matters is the number of friends the road gave us along with our Ford Model A, 'The Adventurer.'"

— Cristian Delaporte, Tucumán, Argentina

We, the Crankin A's, truly enjoyed spending time with Cristian the past three weeks and warmly welcomed him as our newest club member, expanding our international membership. He taught us a lot about being on the road with our Model A's and how helpful the Model A community is all around the world.

Cristian and Mirta are heading back to Argentina, and the "Adventurer" will be resting at their son's home here in Daytona Beach until its next journey. We look forward to Cristian's return later this year, and we are confident he will have more stories to share with the Crankin A's back in the U.S. ☺

Kim Ziffra of New Smyrna, Florida, belongs to the Crankin A's Model A Restorers Club, which is based in Daytona Beach, Florida. She and her husband, Fred, enjoy traveling in a 1930 Sport Coupe and a 1930 Tudor.

If you have any comments or questions for Cristian, here is the contact information:

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