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Classic PORSCHE

Editor: Keith Seume Tel: 01208 872924
classicporsche@chpltd.com

Contributors: Robert Barrie, Antony Fraser,
Kieron Fennelly, Jayson Fong,
Alex Grant, Paul Knight,
Karl Ludvigsen, Delwyn Mallett,
Andy Tipping

Studio Manager Peter Simpson

Group Advertisement Manager
James Stainer Tel: 01883 731152
james.stainer@chpltd.com

Production
Liz Smith Tel: 01883 731150
ads@chpltd.com

Accounts: Bev Brown
Administration: Sandra Househam
Subscriptions: Debi Stuart
debi.stuart@chpltd.com
Tel: 01883 731150 Fax: 01883 740361

Managing Director: Clive Househam

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I have to confess to being somebody with little patience when it comes to projects. Over the past 40+ years, I have built (or been involved with the building of) several project cars, from drag race VWs to my current Porsche. Most took no longer than a year to complete, the exception being *El Chucho*, my '912/6', which took more than four years to reach fruition.

For me, that seemed like an eternity and I admit there were times when I felt like walking away from everything. Surely nothing could be worth that amount of effort?

“HIS TENACITY SHOULD SERVE AS INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US...”

So how on earth did Ralph Whitehead keep his spirits up while building his wonderful hot-rod 911 (above)? My project's four-year timespan was nothing in comparison – Ralph's rebuild took two decades from start to finish! OK, so life and a new family brought things to a halt on more than one occasion, but he never gave up and stuck rigidly to his plan to build a car quite unlike any other.

And now it's finished, Ralph plans to enjoy it to the full – his journey may have been long but what a destination! His tenacity should serve as inspiration to all of us who feel like throwing in the towel when the winter nights draw in and the temperature in the garage begins to fall.

Keith Seume
Editor, *Classic Porsche*
classicporsche@chpltd.com

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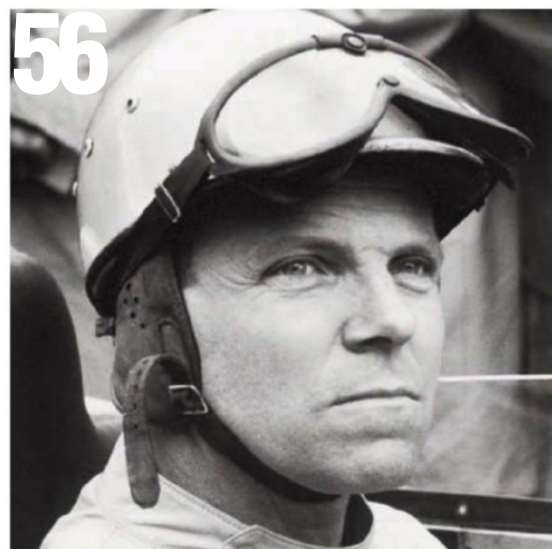
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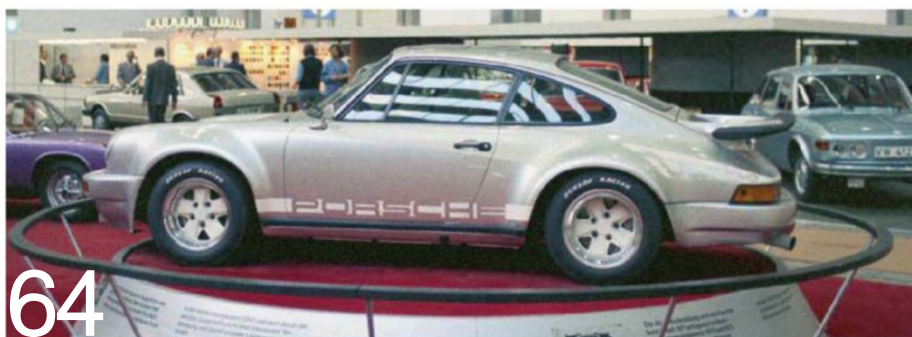
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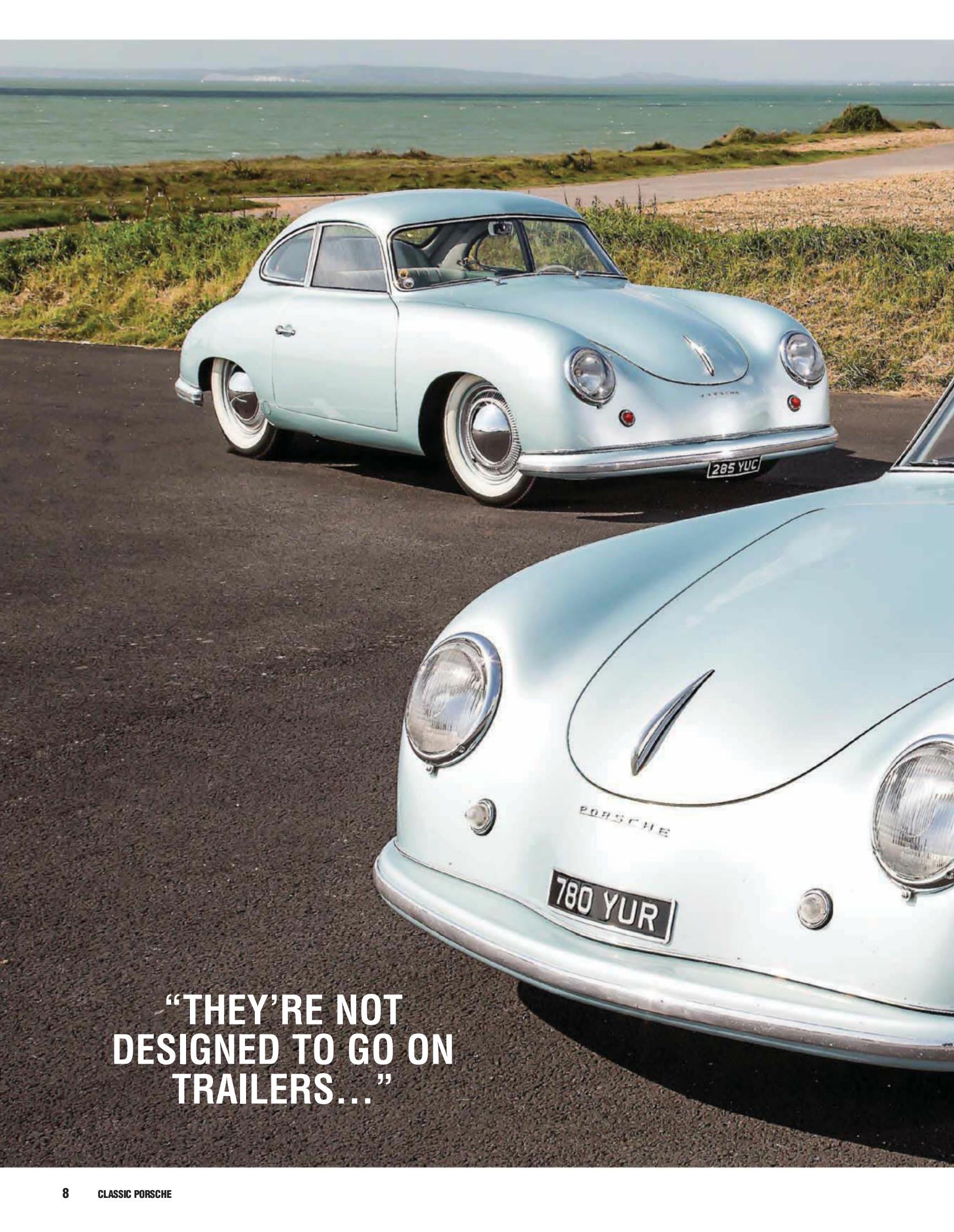
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PORSCHE



**“THEY’RE NOT
DESIGNED TO GO ON
TRAILERS...”**

BACK TO LIFE

For Jon Devereux, reviving the earliest 356s has never been a process aimed at creating museum pieces; even the rarest cars were built to be driven

Words: Alex Grant Photos: Andy Tipping





A few years ago we were driving the Coupé down to Murano for the 356 International, and we got caught in a snowstorm going over Innsbruck,' Jon Devereux recalls, with surprising calm. 'It was fine – it was a bit hectic because the wipers couldn't

cope so we were looking through a slot as the snow built up on the windscreen, and on three and a half-inch crossply tyres, you always have to be aware. But I wouldn't put these cars on a trailer, they're not designed to go on trailers.'

Against a backdrop of escalating values, Jon's vision of classic Porsche ownership is a little different to most. A love not only of owning the earliest cars in the company's history,

but of the process of reviving and using them as they were built to be used. But he's hardly a typical 356 owner; Jon spent years in the air-cooled Volkswagen scene, known for his Small Car Specialties workshop near Bournemouth, and more recently he's gone back to his roots. The 356B he'd bought and restored as a 20-year-old in 1972 laid the

“THIS WAS A TURNING POINT FOR THE 356...”

foundations for an enviable collection of early 356s today; a Pre-A Speedster, '50 and '53 coupés in stages of restoration, and these matching '52s.

This was a turning point for the 356. The Model 52 (as the car was often referred to in internal

memoranda), built between March and October of that year, bridged a gap, combining the body bumpers, rectangular tail-lights and inboard indicators of the first 356s with the cleaner design of the single-piece bent

Above: Like the Cabriolet, the coupé was originally finished in Fish Silver Grey, but Jon preferred the look of Radium Green – a hard colour to photograph!

Below left: Light grey interior of the coupé contrasts with the green dashboard. Petri 'banjo' wheel is a great finishing touch

Below right: Rare Telefunken ID 51/52 push-button radio features in Jon's coupé





Above: Cabriolet was sourced via the TheSamba.com website as a disassembled project in Oregon. It had last been on the road in 1971

Below left: Cabriolet interior is finished in tan leather and looks sumptuous. Upholstery is the handiwork of Ferrari specialist Robbie O'Rourke

Below right: Cabriolet also has a Telefunken radio, this time an IA 50 model

windshield used on the late Pre-A versions.

'I didn't specifically want a Model 52, but I wanted a body bumper car as that's the purest of the pure,' Jon explains. 'It's as close to a Gmünd as possible, and I'm not going to find one of those. The purity of the shape – the coupé particularly – is just perfect. Historically, it's quite an important car.'

It's also worth travelling for. Jon uncovered the coupé in California back in 2009; it was a work in progress but instilled enough confidence for his partner, Amanda, to book flights while he was on the phone to the seller: 'The previous owner had a good list of everything that was missing – which was quite a lot of it – but it was a nice, rust-free California car. He also told me it had been raced, I have no evidence of that, but it was a bit battered on the corners, had the later transmission, and the bumpers had been taken off and lost years ago. So it's possible, but they've all been raced – haven't they?'

Slowed by post-credit crunch shipping delays, the brush-painted primed shell and its myriad boxes of parts arrived

in the UK in early 2010 and Jon dismantled everything, systematically reassembling what he had to get an accurate picture of what was missing. Those missing pieces of the jigsaw come in from all over the world, including a trip to Classic Parts in Saarbrücken to collect a 1500cc engine, then hunting down the early synchromesh transmission – introduced in 1952 – to go with it.

'The engine was expensive and worn out – it had thrown a big end, so needed to be rebuilt. It's not so much difficult to track down parts for these cars, but they're bloomin' expensive if you can find them! So if you wanted the rectangular rear lights then original ones are \$800–900 a pop. Things like steering wheels are \$2500–3000 dollars.'

By comparison, the Cabriolet may have looked like an easier job; again found as a disassembled project car on TheSamba.com, but this time in south Oregon. 'It had been taken off the road in 1971 – the chap I bought it from had no idea why. But it had been through several people, notable Porsche people, and nobody had got stuck into it – frightened of it, I guess. There was a guy called Tom Birch



**“BUT THEY’RE 65 YEARS
OLD...WHAT DO YOU
EXPECT?”**





Above left: Accessory VDO interior mirror in the coupé incorporates clock

Above right: Coupé was lacking its 1500cc engine when found, a replacement unit in need of a rebuild being supplied by Classic Parts in Saarbrücken

Below left: There's not a lot of luggage space under the bonnet of a Pre-A, most of the available space being taken up by the tank and spare wheel

Below right: Both cars feature these desirable and hard to find 'turbo ring' aluminium wheel trims



(who runs the 356 Split Registry in California), and the Aase Brothers had it at some point. So it had been trailered here, there and everywhere and nobody had done anything with it, other than starting it, as it was in hundreds of bits and the bottom third of the door had been replaced.

'Once I got it back here and really got into the car, I found out how good it was; it was very straight, and remarkably clean and rust-free, but it wanted the engine and transmission rebuilt. It had a crash 'box in it and, in taking that apart, I found the crownwheel had a couple of teeth missing – I guess that's why it was taken off the road in the 1970s. So I sourced one of those and that transmission is in the car now, whining beautifully,' he smiles.

Soft-top aside, it's a point of separation between the two cars: 'Having a crash transmission does take the edge off the driving pleasure a bit – Amanda disagrees, but for me it's slow and you're always going to get a crunch, no matter how much double declutching you do. And it's noisy; first and second gears are straight-cut, third and fourth are helical so they're quieter, but you always get the diff groaning and they make a bit of noise. But they are 65 years old... What do you expect?'

While there's a couple of years between the two builds, the process was the same. Jon assembled both cars to test-

fit parts and make sure they were complete, before stripping them down to shells ready for paint. It's a process he's picky about, the colour matched using a spectrograph-analysed swatch from Willhoit in California to get it as correct as possible, and layered over the 356's curves by Ross Packard Paintwork in New Milton.

Even so, it's an interpretation to Jon's taste rather than a direct restoration: 'Both of them were originally Fish Silver Grey, but it's a very uninteresting, dull, boring silver, and made from the metallic particles of ground-up fish scales – so it's almost impossible to replicate. Radium Green is an original colour for the year, but not original to either car. It's a great colour for the shape, and the quality is exceptionally good. Much better than it should be, probably.'

Each has its own identity inside. The Coupé's re-assembled interior finished in green leather with matching box weave carpet, while the Cabriolet's beige seats are coded to its fabric hood, a 'masterpiece of stitching' which Jon says took research to find someone capable of recreating. Robbie O'Rourke may be best known for restoring Ferraris, but what's here is faithful recreation of what the car left the factory with.

And not for the sake of creating a museum piece. After a year-long restoration, Jon ran-in the Coupé's engine with a





return trip to the 2011 356 International in Vaals, in the Netherlands, and that's been just the start. Between them, the cars have toured most of Europe, from Portugal and Italy up to Sweden, regardless of the weather and never on a trailer. For Jon and Amanda, driving them is the whole point.

'The Pre-A cars, from '53 to '55, were not the same car as what I call the Pre-Pre-A, from '50 to '52,' he says. 'It's an early effort at a GT, but it's a bit like the difference between a 356 and an early 911. There's half the length of suspension travel, so they tend to be a bit firm, but once you're on the motorway they're equivalent, I would say. A bit noisier as you have the earlier transmission, and you have to plan braking but you drive accordingly, but if you've got it in a slide, they're quite controllable on crossplies, and they will go on to 90-95mph. It's good fun.'

For the most part, there's been no need to tamper with Porsche's original engineering. Though, with a view to making the cars better suited to long-distance use, both run

transistorised distributors from 123ignition, while multigrade Valvoline racing oil cuts consumption in half and reduces running temperatures, too. The 356 may be durable, but there's room for a little modern technology to keep it happy.

'If Meccano made a car, it would have been a 356 or a Beetle. There's that Germanic approach to a problem in manufacture and design, and it's really appealing for an engineer like me. I take great pleasure in working on those cars; I know their foibles, what makes them work properly. But I'm not in it for the trophies, I've done that; if I've driven a thousand miles then I'd just as soon get to the bar than start polishing

the car. If there are flies stuck to the front because we've done more than 50mph, so be it.'

Perhaps that's the most appropriate way to honour the engineering Jon loves. Once built to offer luxurious Continent-crossing ability, the 356 may have become a sought-after classic, but appreciating these cars for their visual appeal would seem to be missing a trick. **CP**

Above: Built by Reutter, the Cabriolet strikes quite a dash out on the road. Its aerodynamic styling must have stopped people dead in their tracks back in 1952

"IF MECCANO MADE A CAR, IT WOULD BE A 356..."

Below left and right: Jon is a great believer in driving his cars, despite their age and value. The two Porsches have taken him all over Europe on trips to a variety of early Porsche events



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Porsche Cars Great Britain has announced the launch of the Porsche Classic Register. With over 70 per cent of all Porsche cars ever made still on the road today, classic Porsche models are part of their history and heritage. The Porsche Classic Register says it aims to welcome classic Porsche owners back to the Porsche family. Sometimes, as cars move from owner to owner they can get lost. 'We want to welcome them home to the Porsche family building stronger relationships with owners across the spectrum of Porsche model series, where Centres are able to demonstrate their enthusiasm for older Porsche cars with equal passion and levels of knowledge as with current sports cars.'

The register offers numerous exclusive benefits to members, each one with a view to helping owners look after their pride and joy just that little bit better. These include a membership pack, which includes a key ring, membership card and a window sticker, a pair of complimentary

Porsche Classic number plate surrounds, a minimum of 15 per cent discount on the recommended retail price (RRP) of Porsche Classic Genuine Parts purchased for the registered vehicle from the Porsche Centre it is signed up with, and two issues of *Originale* magazine per membership year. In addition, there are also the following benefits: four complimentary wash and vacuums at a participating Porsche Centre per membership year for the registered vehicle, two complimentary complete or partial refills of tyres using nitrogen per membership year for the registered vehicle and a complimentary 1-litre top-up bottle of Porsche Classic motor oil or other oil (where Porsche Classic motor oil cannot be used – eg, transaxle models) provided at each service. There will also be no £10 joining fee to pay when joining the Porsche Club Great Britain, while customers will be contacted with news, details of events and other promotions.

To qualify for membership of the Porsche Classic Register – and take advantage of all the benefits – customers simply need to bring their classic Porsche to their nearest Porsche Centre for a minimum of an oil change service. Upon completion of the oil change service, customers will be eligible to join the Porsche Classic Register and will then receive their membership pack. What's more, if customers have brought their classic Porsche into their nearest Centre in the last six months for the minimum of an oil change service, they automatically qualify for membership. They simply need to contact their Porsche Centre to sign up.

For further information customers should contact their nearest Porsche Centre or visit porsche.co.uk/classicregister

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Colourlock Leather Fresh comes in 30ml, 150ml and 1-litre sizes. The 150ml amount is usually sufficient to treat a complete car interior. It's easy to apply and will soon have you sitting pretty again.

For further information, send an e-mail to info@colourlock.com or visit the website at colourlock.com

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It's been a long time coming but, as we know in the world of restoration, the best things come to those who wait! Alan Drayson tells us 'I am very excited to announce the launch of Canford Classic Motoratus, premium clothing and accessories inspired by the culture of classic Porsches. We are particularly fired up about the stunning reversible T-75R Jacket. It's made with the original Porsche seat covering for a 1975 911S that we are currently restoring!' The range of clothing consists of the aforementioned jacket, T-shirts and driving gloves. Prices range from £45 for the Tees to £495 for the stylish jacket. Get your hands on these and other cool driving gear by visiting motoratus.com.



NEW FROM DANSK

It seems that hardly a month passes than Dansk releases yet another 'must have' repair part for classic Porsches – and this month is no different!

First up is the complete rear engine panel to fit both F- and G-model Porsche 911s, although strictly speaking this is the correct part for the G-series cars, as the curve of the F-model is slightly different. An accurate replacement panel for the F-models is now being developed.

Then there's what Dansk refers to as the 'Banana-style sports exhaust', which is available in the well-known SSI quality. With a great sound and finish, it will go perfectly with your SSI heat exchangers and heater control boxes. Available for F-series cars (92.210SSI + 92.211SSI) as well as the G-series (92.201SSI).

Finally (for now!), how about adding a little 'bling' to your 911, whether it's an older F-series, a G-series or a later 964? These chrome-plated wiper arms will brighten up your car no end and are available in both left and right format.

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We've just received from Dougal Crawley of Longstone Tyres this release about the classic Borrani knock-on (or is it knock-off?) wheels to suit all Porsche 356s:

'The Borrani Turbo Sprint RW2959 wheel, designed to fit the Porsche 356A and B equipped with drum brakes and RW4067 for the 356C with disc brakes, is finally available once more. This Borrani re-release has been manufactured using the original drawings and offers every 356 owner a sporty and elegant alternative.

'The RW2959 4.5Jx15 Turbo Sprint (shown here) uses the Rudge 52 centre-lock system with integral hubs, being held on by a two-eared spinner and new special light alloy brake drums to accept the Rudge hubs. The RW4067 wheel and hub kit is designed for the disc-braked 356C.

'The Turbo Sprint wheel is supplied as standard with a light alloy rim and a silver painted centre but is also available, upon request, with a 5-inch or 5.5-inch-wide rim and in a variety of custom colours.'

Personally, we can't think of anything cooler than running a 356 on a set of these wheels! **Check with ruoteborrani.com or longstonetyres.co.uk**



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DELWYN MALLETT

HAVING FINALLY LOST ALL GRASP OF HIS SENSES, OUR MAN MALLETT CONTEMPLATES FITTING A SUPERCHARGER TO HIS PRE-A 356. CLEARLY HE HAS TOO MUCH TIME ON HIS HANDS

Many would describe Delwyn Mallett as a serial car collector – one with eclectic tastes at that. His Porsche treasures include a pair of 356 Speedsters, a Le Mans-inspired Pre-A coupé and a 1973 Carrera RS. Some of them even work...



I am the first to admit that my current Porsche venture may be an exercise in mechanical futility. Way-back-when, in 1923, renowned mountaineer George Mallory was asked by a *New York Times* reporter why he so much wanted to climb Mount Everest, he responded with the words that are so often used to justify an endeavour that appears to have little point, 'Because it's there'. That's all I can say in defence of my assembling of a Judson-supercharged 356 engine: 'Because the bits were there.' Having said that, there was obviously a degree of premeditation involved as the 'bits' didn't simply materialise as if by magic in the back of my garage.

It all started when I was just commencing my fascination with all things Porsche – the actual date eludes me but it predated ownership of my first Porsche, circa 1967. At the time, as I knew no one with a Porsche, I thought it wise to brush up on the subject and I sought out a book.

Somehow I stumbled over a slim volume entitled *Porsche Guide by Sloniger*, published in 1958 in New York at the reasonable price of \$1.95 (I still have it, in mint condition.) My copy was secondhand and I'd be surprised if it set me back more than a few bob. (Shillings, for the benefit of you callow youths reading this.) Jerry Sloniger would, of course, become one of the most prolific producers of books about Porsche.

Having absorbed the differences between various models – not many as this, remember, was written in

1958 and the model line had not progressed beyond the 'A' – I moved on to the chapter entitled, 'Something Extra – Bolting On Extra Power'.

Given that I didn't yet own a Porsche, this was a somewhat academic and indeed optimistic exercise. However, an extended description of the substantial 'free' horsepower to be gained by bolting on a Judson supercharger both impressed and intrigued me. Superchargers conjured up images of the pre-war battles between Auto-Union and Mercedes and, shortly after becoming a Porsche owner, the hunt was on for a *Kompressor*.

The VW version of the Judson supercharger was introduced only two years before Sloniger wrote his guide and, with the passing of time and a little more knowledge, it's become apparent that his description of the Judson in relation to a Porsche engine was purely theoretical and probably extrapolated from Judson's VW fact sheets.

Sloniger's lack of hands-on familiarity with the Judson can be surmised by the fact that the illustration in the *Porsche Guide* shows the supercharger, with carburettor attached, rotated through 90 degrees, turning the downdraft carburettor into a sidedraft!

The VW motor was designed with a built-in 'governor' in the form of

restricted breathing, limiting its revs and allowing it to run more-or-less flat-out for extended periods. When the Porsche engineers embarked on their 'own brand' sports car using the same engine, they immediately liberated extra horsepower by modifying the cylinder heads with twin ports, twin carburettors and larger valves. Porsche's mods upped their first 1100cc version to 40bhp, and 44bhp in the 1300cc engine, compared to the Beetle's 30bhp.

The Judson brothers introduced their supercharger in the late 1940s, initially for the hot rodder's favourite, the Ford flathead V8, followed by a version for the

MG TD. In 1956 they introduced a Judson for the horsepower-anaemic Beetle, which they claimed would increase the VW's horsepower by up to 50 per cent. Contemporary road tests certainly indicated significant gains in horsepower, better acceleration times and an average top speed increase of 8mph. There is even a contemporary report that Judson was bench-testing an application for the Porsche, but I can find no further evidence that this led anywhere. Did they abandon the mission? And if so why?

My worry is that fitting the Judson requires losing one of the Porsche's carbs and I'm unsure if the blower will actually blow enough air through the system to compensate. (Editor Seume's idea of fitting TWO Judsons is amusing and intriguing but, of course, totally impractical.)

Courtesy of Steve Kerti, the engine is up and running on a test rig – and certainly seems to run OK – but fitting it into the back of my '52 356 might be a challenge. Not only is the

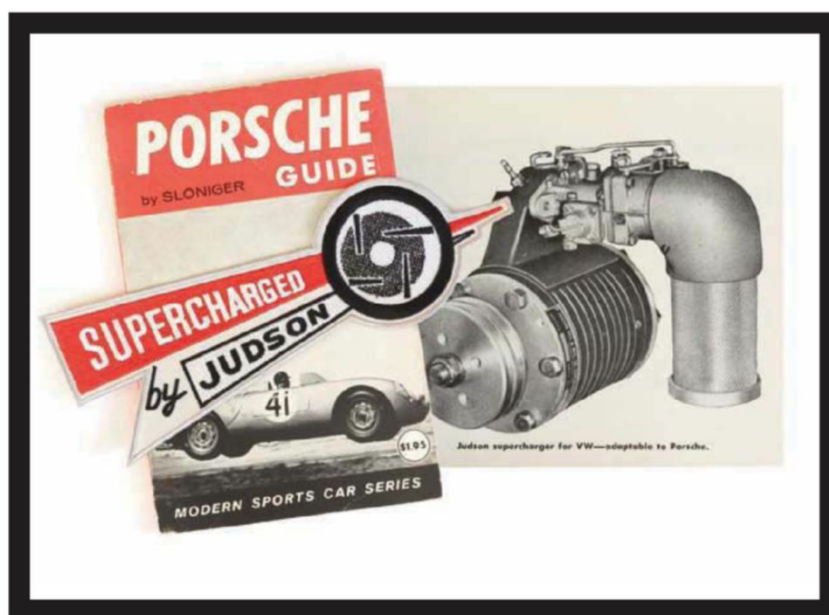
combined assembly taller but room also has to be found for the 'oiler'.

This is a quite large bottle device that drip-feeds a fluid that goes by the name 'Marvel Mystery Oil' into the body of the Judson to lubricate its whirly bits. Another downside is that the Judson adds 17lbs just where you don't want it on an early Porsche – another reason for avoiding the Seume route.

Sloniger ends his section on the Judson with some words of caution, 'There is always the possibility that you will install a supercharger and find that you aren't getting what you expected.' As I'm expecting less than what I started with anything over the factory quoted output, however small, would be a bonus.

Sloniger issues another word of warning (there's rather a lot in the book) which, having failed to heed, may just be waiting for me a few miles down the road – 'Before adding too many new 'wonder parts' remember that every item added is one more thing that could go bad at the critical moment.' When those parts are not 'new' but pushing 60-years old one suspects that the critical moment might only be a few revs away. Time will tell. **CP**

PS. If anyone who happens to be reading this has fitted a Judson to a Porsche 356 engine, please get in touch!



As if he didn't have enough to worry about, Mallett contemplates installing a Judson...

“THIS WAS A SOMEWHAT ACADEMIC EXERCISE...”



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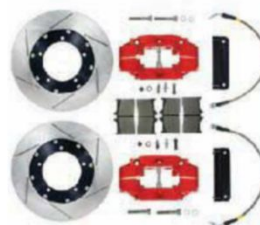
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ROBERT BARRIE

BY THEIR VERY NATURE, CLASSIC CAR ENTHUSIASTS TEND TO BE HOARDERS BUT, SAYS ROBERT, MAYBE THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR A LITTLE 'DECLUTTERING' THE JAPANESE WAY...

Robert Barrie is a classic Porsche enthusiast through and through. As well as competing in historic events with a variety of early Porsches and organising track days, he's also a purveyor of fine classic automobiles



We need to talk about decluttering. It's the new word for getting rid of stuff. I recently bought some books on the subject. I'll give them away as presents, of course. The idea is that modern life encourages us to acquire things beyond the point at which they bring us pleasure. If we're not careful, they make us unhappy. The answer is to get rid. Experience the simplicity of owning almost nothing. Lose your possessions and find yourself.

Marie Kondo's *The Life-changing Magic of Tidying*, isn't about stuffing more items into already-full cupboards and drawers, it's about chucking them and their contents out. Fumio Sasaki's *Goodbye Things* is written by a minimalist author with a tiny number of shirts, trousers and socks and, so he tells us, not much else. James Wallman's book is called *Stuffocation*. You get the idea.

We can all agree that old cars are fun, and come with an irreducible amount of clutter attached, but have some of us taken things too far? It starts with the cars themselves.

It's not uncommon to find fellow enthusiasts with five or more of them. Sometimes they are very similar. Do we need several cars that are more or less the same? I wonder.

Our hobby can take up serious amounts of time, space and money. We find ourselves filling in SORN declarations, charging up flat batteries and pumping up flat tyres. Are we still having fun? The financial consequences of collecting old cars have been hidden by rising prices. The more you accumulated the more brilliant you appeared to be. Now prices have stopped rising, the costs may become clearer. Some will choose to carry on regardless, and good luck to them, but others may decide it's time to draw a line.

It's not just the cars, of course. If you have some old cars you probably have some old car parts. Or a lot. You never know when that bit might come in handy. Actually, I do – it almost certainly won't. How does your garage look these days? Is it a bit full? Hard to get in and out? A number of cars end up in long-term storage. It's really no life for them. To paraphrase Kondo, when you put your garage in order your life will change dramatically.

We all have bookshelves, and possibly bookcases, full of old car books. Many haven't been read. Kondo says their purpose was to teach us that we didn't need them. We reply that it's good to have them anyway. Just in case.

Then there are the event tickets, programmes and trophies we have tucked away somewhere, or everywhere.

We mustn't be too hard on ourselves, though. Not all of these items need to be discarded. They are more space- and time-efficient than our cars and, like our cars, some of them may still, in Kondo's phrase, spark joy. But do we really need them all? Including the broken, the incomplete and the ones that aren't quite right? Almost certainly not. How, then, do we start decluttering?

The most urgent suggestion, from Fumio Sasaki, is to throw something away right now. As he says, put this magazine down and just do it. Ideally,

don't throw the magazine itself away, of course. Not yet, anyway. Hone your skills on something else.

Kondo's method is more systematic and organised. Discard stuff one category at a time, she instructs, and move quickly through the categories. Sasaki says anything covered in dust has to go. You can see what he means. No-one can have used it, or possibly even gone near it, for months. Ouch.

That applies to some of our cars, parts, books and more. A more positive suggestion is to take pictures of the things we discard. Let the items go and keep the images and, through them, the memories. In the digital age, they don't take up any room. Sasaki doubts we will look at them again, but I am not so sure. A well-taken picture can spark joy. More than once.

Some further points should be made. First, discarding stuff needn't always mean throwing it away. That does sound

wasteful, particularly when it might have a value to someone else. There are internet-based auction sites and other means by which we can share scarce and useful things with others. There is a pleasure in helping fellow enthusiasts find what they have been looking for. We may sometimes be buyers ourselves. There's less need for us to keep things if they are more readily available.

Second, there are times when clutter has a value. It's reassuring to have a full history file with an old car. It's nearly always interesting, too. Well done to the owners who, for reasons best known to themselves, have kept maintenance records and pictures. Even then, we don't need every receipt for every tank of petrol. It's quite rare, in my experience, to come across a history file that wouldn't benefit from a little bit of decluttering, as well as the life-changing magic of tidying. **CP**



It's easy to accumulate 'stuff', including those projects which we promise we'll get round to one day...

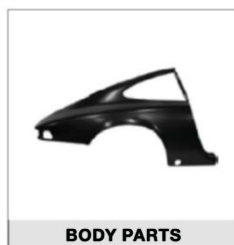
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ZAGATO CORRECTION

The article about a Porsche 'continuation' by Zagato in your last issue (*Continuation Coupé*, issue #48) raises some issues that your readers should know about. They are as follows:

It states that the 356 Carrera GTL 'Abarth' cars were bodied by Zagato. This is incorrect. While the prototype was made for Abarth by a small workshop to Scaglione's design, the production series was bodied by Turin's Rocco Motto.

In the revival of the open-bodied roadster built by Zagato for Claude Storez, no mention is made of the initiative of American car racer and collector Herb Wetanson. It was he who commissioned Zagato to build a replica of the Storez car in 2012. I hope that Herb is getting a commission on the eight other cars that Zagato has made!

Zagato is challenging reality in its designation of its coupé version as a 'Sanction II' vehicle. That term refers to a continuation of an existing model by its original manufacturer. To base such a designation on a drawing found in the files is extremely cheeky. Yes, it's a great-looking car but not a 'Sanction II' version of anything.

Karl Ludvigsen, Bury St Edmunds

Keith Seume replies: Thanks for the correction, Karl. It looks like everyone is getting in on the 'sanction' bandwagon – all I know is that I'd love to have one of the new Zagato-bodied 356s in my garage. Well, a man can dream...

CLASSIC TYRE CHOICE

I have to first of all say how much I enjoy reading your magazine. I have read it from issue #2 (I missed the first issue, and have been searching for it ever since) and like the mix of Porsches, and the obvious enthusiasm with which it is written. Well done to all concerned.

I have a question for you. Recently I acquired my second Porsche, a 1968 911 which I found on the local Craigslist website. It is in reasonably good condition considering it has been sitting outside for several months (years, most likely), fortunately in a dry climate. The interior was toast, the sun having done its worst, and the paint was none too good, but I have managed to carry out a 'rolling restoration' which has meant that I have been able to enjoy the car while bringing it back to life.

My question now that she's on the road is what tyres do you recommend? I realise that they are a matter of personal choice but as the car was wearing some rather oversized nondescript American radials (General, or some such!), I need to fit something a little more in keeping with the car's character

and performance. In the USA, tyre choice for early cars appears to be quite limited but I am in the fortunate position of being able to have parts shipped over from Europe at no cost (I am in the military), so have begun to look at European tyres.

Do you have any personal preferences, based on personal experience? I'd welcome any suggestions you can offer.

Mike Johnson, via E-mail

Keith Seume replies: Glad you like the magazine, Mike. Keep scouring eBay for that elusive first issue! When it comes to tyres for early 911s, we are quite

spoiled for choice right now, with Pirelli offering a fine selection of remakes of their classic radials – regular contributor Steve Wright opted to use Pirelli CN36s on his 2.2 911S, while I am currently using Blockley radials, with which I am very pleased. You might like to take a look at the feature we ran in issue #42 entitled 'Retro Rubber', which looked at the classic tyres currently available from Pirelli.



When is a 'Sanction II' not a 'Sanction II'? When it's not strictly-speaking a continuation of an existing series, says contributor Karl Ludvigsen...

"I HOPE THAT HERB IS GETTING A COMMISSION..."

GULF MIX

I enjoyed the article about the Gulf cars and in particular seeing the variations of colour schemes in issue #47 (*A Touch of Blue and Orange*, page 48).

In common with Delwyn Mallett, I share a background in graphics, so I recognised the information on colours he suggested for fans of the blue and orange.

Sadly, they're unusable today as P030 is the mark for ICI Autocolor, a long discontinued range of cellulose paint. The constituent parts no longer exist, so even with that formula the colours are impossible to mix.

Mike Fairholme, via E-mail

Keith Seume replies: Poor Mallett is now tearing out what little is left of his hair. Just when he thought he'd cracked it...

FIRST EDITION REPRINT?

Along with many other readers (well, I presume this to be the case), I missed the first issue of the magazine. Can you tell me if you have any plans to reprint it? I am sure there would be a big demand for such an item. Every time I look at my bookshelf, there is this gap where #1 should be...

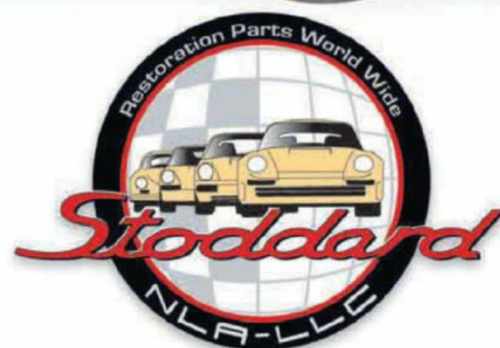
Kevin Ashlock, via E-mail

Keith Seume replies: Sadly, the costs of reprinting the issue are prohibitive. As with Mike Johnson above, all we can suggest is scouring eBay...



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**“I WANTED IT TO LOOK
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THE LONG GAME

It took 20 years for Ralph Whitehead's custom 1970 911E to reach the road – but giving up was never part of the plan

Words: Alex Grant Photos: Andy Tipping





Ralph Whitehead is more patient than most. Not only because this custom 911E took almost two decades to see through – without giving up or changing direction in the meantime – but because when he drove it to the MOT station under its

own steam last year, it was the first time he'd driven it, full stop.

'My circumstances changed almost as soon as I bought it, because a few weeks after I got it home, we found out my wife was pregnant,' he explains. 'I managed to

keep the project going for a couple of years, then it went on hold. But it was always in my mind to finish it, and I've stuck with my original concept, which is surprising considering the length of time involved.'

“OWNERSHIP CAME RALPH'S WAY IN 1997...”

After a string of modified air-cooled Volkswagens, Porsche ownership came Ralph's way in 1997. Not that you'd recognise much of what's here today from the way it was when it last changed hands. Like a lot of early 911s, it hadn't escaped the excesses of 1980s Porsche tuning; imported

from Belgium in 1982, one of its previous owners had built it as a track car before taking it off the road at the end of the decade. By the time Ralph found it, some eight years since its last tax disc had expired, it was a part-finished project wearing flared arches and a glassfibre rear spoiler, its

bare interior home to nothing but boxes and bags of parts. This was a blank canvas.

'The plan was never to do a straight restoration – I wanted it to look like a 1970s custom or hot rod. But the

Above: American hot rod influence is clear, with the scallop paintjob over the Turkis Blue. Ralph planned the look from day one...

Below left: Neil Melliard was responsible for the classic hand-applied pinstriping

Below right: Rare American Racing Torq Thrusts took some tracking down but are the perfect choice for the car





Above: Race seats are from BF Torino and feature Simpson harnesses. Wood '917-style' shift knob and Momo wheel suit the style

shell itself is pretty much standard, I knew I didn't want big arches or crazy modifications. This looked ideal – it didn't seem too badly rusted, just a little tired, and as it was partially stripped I thought it couldn't hide much. Actually, it was a little worse than I expected.'

Ralph may have been an experienced welder, but his expanding fixings and tools business, plus a growing family, were already starting to leave him time-poor. So the 911, and a cabin full of secondhand panels picked up from the Husborne Crawley autojumble, started their journey to recovery in the hands of Porsche-trained panel beater Tim Carter instead of being handled as a DIY job.

This turned out to be a wise move. Rust hadn't completely taken hold, but Tim wound up repairing or replacing sections of the sills, floorpan, inner wings, slam panel and one of the A-pillars before the coupé was structurally sound – paid in kind by Ralph building him a double garage. It's a thorough job, stone-chipped and phosphate-coated anywhere the British climate can sneak into, and with its new doors, wings and decklid aligned

to millimetre precision, it was ready for paint.

While it's more reinterpretation than a restoration, it's very much built with Porsche's own style in mind. So, while the factory Albert Blue was never going to cut it, the more vivid Turkis Blue it's wearing today is straight off the 1970 colour chart. When it emerged from the paint booth at Concept Classics in Dorking, it had gone through almost a complete revival in just over two years, despite commitments stacking up elsewhere.

Which must have made it a wrench not to take it those last nine yards. But, with a second child on the way, and the resulting need for a bigger house and mortgage, life finally got the better of the build and it stalled completely. Never enough for it to move on, but enough to leave it as a rolling shell, carefully transported between lockups, barns and garages while Ralph bided his time and kept an eye out for the missing pieces of the puzzle.

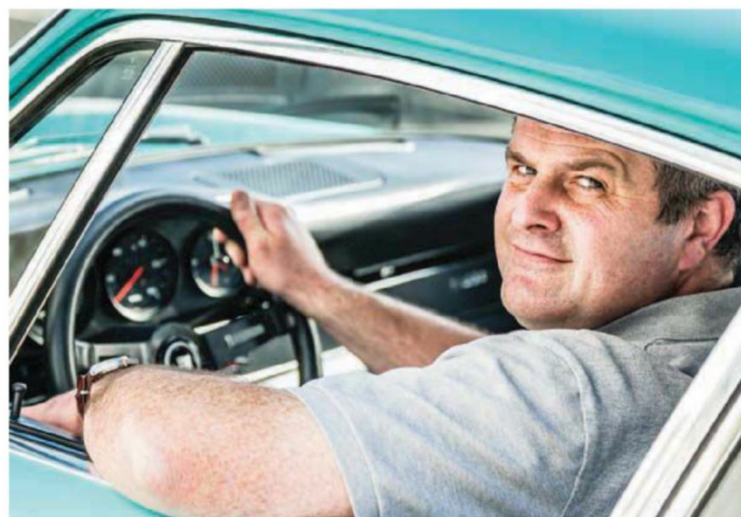
It took until 2013 – 12 years since its last shot of progress – before the project got moving again, he says: 'I had bought some hefty bits over the years, and Tim had just taken on a

Below left to right: RS-style door cards and pull-straps feature alongside a modified S/T-style roll-bar, which now carries a harness bar in place of a diagonal brace. Momo wheel wears its patina with pride



**“IT TAKES VISUAL CUES
FROM THE HOT ROD
SCENE...”**





Above left and right: You can't blame Ralph for wanting to sit and stare at his car after all those years, but driving it is the greatest fun

new workshop, so we could move it down there and work on it as and when time allowed. I wasn't in a situation where I could throw money at it and tell him to get the car done – he'd do a day here and there, and I'd help him whenever I could.'

Luckily, the groundwork laid all those years earlier had survived its extended hibernation rather well. The body had only collected a couple of light dents and scratches from its time in storage and, with a little more time on his hands, Ralph could pick up where he left off, stripping redundant brackets and old paint from the cabin ready for the finishing touches. The details that make this one unique.

There's no vinyl here, the Turkis Blue is offset by hand-masked scallops in a rich white Metalflake, pinstriped by Neil Melliard at Prosign – a name better known for hot rods than classic Porsches. Hints of his influence aren't limited to the paint, either, Neil giving the 911R twin-pod rear lamps a layer of engine-turned gold leaf as a nod to the scene that had inspired the overall look.

'If anything, I wanted a wilder paint job when I first got the car, but I've toned it down to what it is today,' explains Ralph. 'You won't see anything similar, especially in this country, and as far as I know the central scallop is unique to this car. The paint has lasted brilliantly, it's only been hand

polished since it came out of storage.'

You'd forgive him for tweaking those original plans to get it moving again, but that's not what happened. Instead, time in storage enabled him to find exactly what he wanted, without causing delays elsewhere. Parts like the 7Jx15-inch American Racing Torq Thrust wheels – three of them turned up in Holland, but completing the set meant importing another five from Colorado. Rising prices have helped, though, as one of those full sets changed hands for the cost of all eight.

While it takes visual cues from the hot rod scene, there's a healthy dose of Sports Purpose woven into the entire build. Its lightweight carpets and Wevo door pulls are a nod to the Carrera RS, but Ralph stamped his own identity on the interior with a re-engineered S/T-style rollover bar, swapping the diagonal brace for a horizontal harness bar and modifying the main hoop to get it more upright and tighter against the roofline for more space. The BF Torino bucket seats and harnesses are period-correct, and even the roof-mounted rear-view mirror seems right at home, despite being transplanted from an earlier 911.

It's not all for looks – most of the chassis is 'S'-spec or better, running Koni struts and aluminium calipers at the front, and a 16mm rear anti-roll bar to go with its mild power

Opposite: What appear to be engine-turned rear light housings are in fact turned silver leaf, courtesy of the talented Neil Melliard

Below: Original engine is long gone, making way for a later 2.4-litre 911E motor, producing a useful 165bhp





increase. The original engine had long since been removed, even back in 1997, but Ralph was able to swap a few boxes of 912 parts for a later 2.4-litre 911E engine, nudging performance up to 165bhp without adding a complicated conversion into the project.

While it's only recently that it's been united with the rest of the car, most of the hard work was done back in the early stages of the project. The engine made the return journey to Jez Parsons at Carrera Performance almost 15 years after he'd first rebuilt it, getting a health check and some new seals and gaskets to keep the fluids where they should be, before getting paired with a refurbished transmission from Transend. Whenever time allows, there's nothing mechanical to get in the way.

Even so, careful planning couldn't save him from hold-ups during reassembly. Having been disassembled decades previously and moved around as a collection of boxes, there was no way to tell what was missing until it was coming back together.

'You think you've got everything, then when you start

assembling the car you realise what you don't,' Ralph laughs. 'That's why it's taken three or four years – suddenly we'd be doing something and realise we hadn't got this or that. We went through everything.'

That much is obvious. Overseen not only by its owner, but with the involvement and friendship of Tim and Jez all the way through the build, piecing this car together over 20 years means nothing has been rushed, nor have any corners been cut along the way. Which is a suitable reward for long-running patience, though Ralph admits it's been surreal getting behind

"YOU WON'T SEE ANYTHING SIMILAR IN THIS COUNTRY"

the wheel at last.

'I've had it so long now it's been really strange taking it out, and I'm still getting used to it,' he tells me. 'I've pushed it around, loaded it on and off trailers, but I knew I had to stay with it. My daughter is 20 now – she wasn't around when I started. My son is 16, and for him it's always been there. He's getting into cars and says I can't ever sell it, and it should be left to him. It's taken longer than I'd expected, but it's turned out exactly how I wanted.' **CP**

Above: Did you notice the pinstripe along the sill? Or the little detailing at the end of the stripes on the sill and bumper? Very cool...

Below left: Close up of those 911R-style tail lights and that superb striping

Below right: Ralph runs a 944 Turbo aluminium space-saver wheel as a spare





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THE MIDDLE WAY

With so many early Porsches undergoing restoration prior to being tucked away as an investment, it came as a refreshing change to learn that the owner of this 911E wanted it restored so he could use it on a regular basis...

Words: Kieron Fennelly Photos: Antony Fraser



Over the years, Oxfordshire-based Tuthill has become very much a specialist in pre-impact bumper 911s and usually the staff can quickly distinguish the wheat from the chaff. So when Vimal Tilakapala presented his 1973 2.4E for service and refurbishment, the firm could immediately see the potential.

It was a slightly tatty dark blue, but what really appealed to Tuthill was that the owner had bought it to use regularly and wanted to be able to continue doing so. Many ground-up restorations simply end up shut away in storage afterwards,

emerging only occasionally, if at all. This 2.4E was not to be a concours project, but destined for regular use – just as Porsche intended.

Owner Vimal has been a 911 fan for twenty years: 'I bought a 996 when they were new and owned a series of 996s and 997s: I really got into them and traded them in every two years to enjoy the next phase. Finally I had the 997 Turbo, but by then my first child had been born, so I wasn't getting enough use out of what was a marvellous car. I sold it and began to look around for an older 911 – one I hadn't experienced – for occasional use.'



Above: Once Albert Blue, Vimal Tilakapala's 911E has been the subject of an extensive yet sympathetic restoration by the Tuthill team. The end result looks superb. 'Lipped' 911S front valance was a popular option

He came across a 3.2 coupé: 'I had always admired the air-cooled cars and, when I saw this one, I fell in love with it. It's the mechanical interaction, the noise, the archaic switchgear of the older 911s that is irresistible, though – it took me a cold winter before understanding how to operate the heating properly! After driving modern 911s, I was also fascinated to discover what an earlier 911 was like, to see where the thinking came from.' So enamoured of air-cooled 911s was he that he sought out a 993 for his stable, as well.

Vimal now began to think in terms of a much earlier 911 and one he would use regularly. After a long search he found

a blue 2.4 911E in Scotland which seemed to fit the bill. Bodily it was not perfect, but it was a matching numbers car with a traceable lineage, its seventh owner Mike Burtwhistle having owned it from 1987 to 1998, before buying it back from its eighth owner in 2012. Burtwhistle then had the engine rebuilt by a known marque specialist as part of a planned restoration.

'I managed to persuade him to sell it to me and spent two days driving it back to London. I envisaged using this 2.4 as my daily commute across London and indeed for a couple of years I did just that. It was an old Porsche and, as it was far



from pristine, I didn't regard it as special or rare, but I began to feel it would be worth spending some money on it to keep it going reliably. The history showed that the car had originally been metallic green, and I decided to restore that colour especially as the existing Albert Blue paint, a respray which dated from 2010, had been badly done.'

Vimal took his 2.4 to Tuthill's Oxfordshire premises at the beginning of what would turn out to be a longer project than he originally imagined because, as the work progressed, he decided to do more and more work to refurbish an already eminently usable 911. Paul Green of Tuthill takes up the story:

'Vimal wanted to restore the original metallic green which I thought was a particularly successful colour which did mean, though, a certain amount of dismantling. As we stripped the 'shell there was evidence of patching which clearly had been done many years before to pass the

MOT. In fact the extent of any corrosion we found was not serious and the metal was quite strong, if uneven-looking, though in a part of the car where it would always be completely hidden.'

However, on seeing this Vimal decided that he would have new metal fitted. So Tuthill carried out significant work, fitting new floors, inner and outer sills, both A-posts and the

passenger seat well, though none of these strictly needed replacement. Various body panels were changed, too, although as a matter of principle, Tuthill always endeavours to retain as much as possible of a car's originality. The rear wings were left in situ, though Paul suspects these were not original. Panels often present a difficulty, he says. 'Today

you can obtain good quality replacements and it is more cost effective in terms of saving labour to fit these instead of patching, though we try to guide the customer, given the

Above: Metallic green paintwork looks striking in the autumn sunshine. Fuchs wheels didn't require any refurbishing and are shod with 185/70 tyres

"I DIDN'T REGARD IT AS SPECIAL OR RARE..."

Below, left and right: Two badges that say all that needs to be said... The 911E is less 'peaky' to drive than its 'S' sibling, and is regarded by many enthusiasts as the best all-rounder



Right: 1973 911E runs the stronger Type 915 gearbox, easily identified by its more conventional shift-pattern, compared to the older 'dog-leg' 901 transmission

Far right: 150mph 'silver dot' speedometer and tach red-lined at 6800rpm...



value of the car, whether to retain original metal or replace it.'

Vimal steadily became more ambitious. He opted, for example, for a new wiring loom and a new windscreen when both the existing items were entirely servicable. That said, new wires and new glass obviously look nicer with shiny new paint than the originals. The replacement loom came from Dutch supplier Kroon; a decision to replace the rear screen as well allowed a working screen defroster to be incorporated, the old one evidently having expired at some time in the past.

'Fitting a new windscreen allowed us to reinstall the correct rear view mirror,' observes Paul. On the other hand, both parties agreed that the Fuchs wheels which had undergone a competent refurbishment at some point required no attention.

For the cabin, the 2.4 E has received a selective renewal programme. The sports seats have been reupholstered by a specialist who also fitted new carpets and Tuthill replaced the headlining; the dash and instruments, as well as the steering wheel, stalks and controls, are all original and the dash top, though not perfect, was good enough to leave – Vimal was clear that he did not want an over-restored car as so often

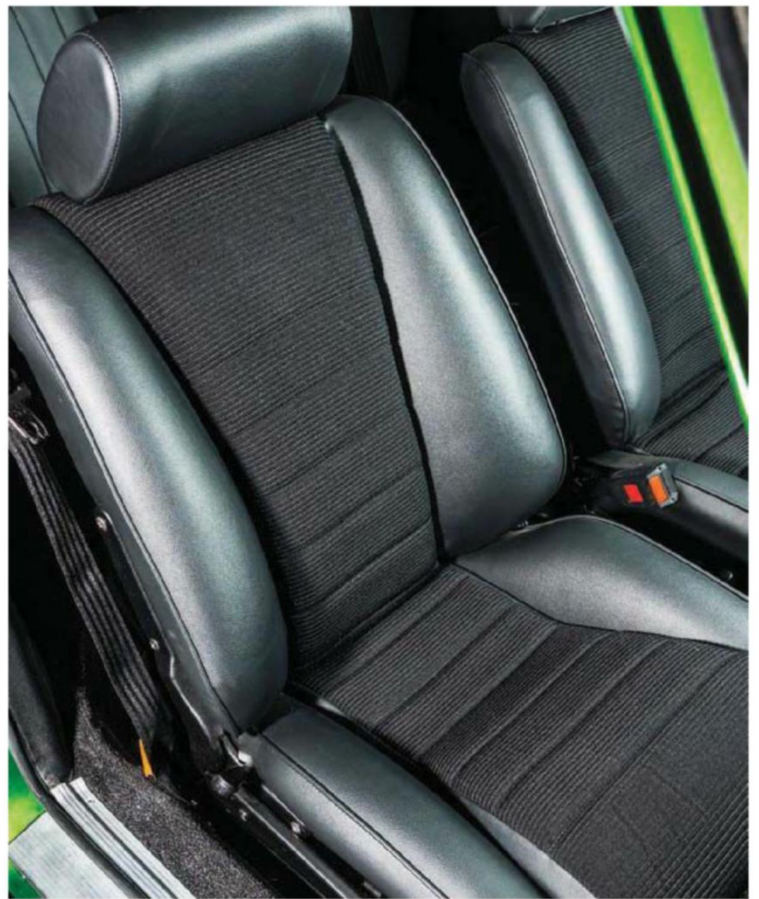
happens. By the same measure, the door furniture is all original, but the internal latch mechanisms have evidently had a 'seeing to' because there is none of the soggyiness that can make it a fiddle to open an older 911s' doors from the inside. Tuthill sourced the correct covers for the inertia reel seat belts and advised Vimal to opt for the 'modern' version of the Blaupunkt Frankfurt radio, which exactly replicates the original yet has Bluetooth and other connectivity.

Mechanically, at first sight there did not appear to be a great deal to do on a 911, which had recently undergone a major overhaul and which was running well. However, when examining the oil at the outset, Tuthill discerned signs of bearing swarf, which meant that, at some point, and probably sooner rather than later, the engine would have to be stripped: 'I admit this was a bit of a blow, but I didn't want to risk a suspect engine, recent rebuild or not. This is not just my everyday 911, but one I intend to keep for ever,' observes Vimal.

As a matter of course, new brake discs and pads were fitted all round, and replacement wheel bearings and new trackrod ends tightened up the steering of a car that already handled correctly.

Below: A previous rebuild had included the addition of 'S' cams and over-sized cylinders and pistons, giving a new capacity of 2397cc. The Tuthill rebuild included the use of ARP rod bolts





After the findings of oil analysis, the engine was rebuilt anew, though once again reusing as many parts as possible. Dismantling revealed that the 2.4 had 'S' cams and a bore of 85mm rather than the standard 84mm, raising its cubic capacity to 2397cc. According to Paul Green, this kind of aftermarket modification is not uncommon and neither is the compression ratio on this engine, which was measured at 10.7:1, rather higher than the stock 2.4 911E's 8.1:1.

Tuthill uses race valve springs and ARP rod bolts systematically in its rebuilds: long competition experience with these components has proved that they are more robust than the stock Porsche

items. The standard exhaust and silencer were again in good condition so left untouched, the silencer simply refreshed with a coat of paint. And while the standard 915-series five-speed transaxle was in a dismantled state, in the interest of

longevity Tuthill fitted a new crown wheel and pinion.

On the road this 2.4 E is a model of smoothness. Its willingness, that distinctly 911 keen-ness to get on with it, is to be expected; more surprising is this 2.4 E's tractability: if you insist, it will even pull from 1700rpm on a soft throttle opening, though this is hardly the forte of the flat-six.

That is at the other end of the rev range and this 2.4 does not disappoint, rushing once fully warmed up to its red line in the intermediate gears. Here in its first incarnation, the 915 gearbox is a delight to use and a major factor in the pleasure of driving this 2.4.

Ride, too, is impressive: on its factory suspension and standard 185/70-profile tyres,

the 2.4 proves remarkably comfortable. Driver and passenger are well insulated from the roughness of the edges of some of these Oxfordshire lanes and the 911 feels well damped; the steering is light and responsive and its feedback and

Above: Interior trim, complete with desirable sports seats, required the attention of a local trim specialist. The steering wheel, gauges and dashtop, though, remain untouched

“ON THE ROAD, THE 911E IS A MODEL OF SMOOTHNESS...”

Below left: Porsche had plenty to shout about by the time the 2.4 911 arrived...

Right: Such an iconic sight – a 911 with the tail squatting hard while accelerating out of a favourite corner







the acute connection the driver feels with the road are a large part of what makes these early 911s so exhilarating. It is easy to see why, *passé* paintwork aside, this 2.4 appealed so strongly to Vimal. Indeed, so powerful were his withdrawal symptoms on having to give the car up to Tuthill, that he purchased a 2.2 911S, which he now enjoys for high days and holidays!

'Tuthill helped me find it – it's a completely restored car and quite lovely, though in contrast to the 2.4 E it is extremely revvy, a very different 911. My E is much *torquier* and quite beautiful to drive, so more practical in London traffic on my commute, which can take 40 minutes.'

Clearly for Vimal the journey has become as important, if not more so than the destination: 'Porsches are always very special. It's very distinctive, an emotional connection on a certain level.' **CP**



The 2.4 represented the second enlargement of the production flat six which, between 1969 and 1977, expanded its capacity in six stages from 1991cc to 3299cc, if you include the 3.3 turbo engine. Whereas the first step, 2195cc (the 2.2) was achieved by increasing the bore from 80 to 84mm, the next step to 2341cc, or 2.4 as Porsche always referred to it, came by lengthening the stroke to 70.4mm. Competition experience with the ST had shown there was plenty of meat to push the bore out further, but increasing the stroke improved the engine's thermal efficiency and so lowered NOx emissions; the less oversquare configuration also contributed more torque lower in the rev range, making the 'S' version in particular easier to drive in traffic.

Porsche also took the radical step of reducing the compression ratio by 10 per cent, in the case of the E from 9.1:1 of the 2.2 to 8.0:1. This enabled 911s to run on 91 RON rather than 98. If the Americans were worrying about smog, the European authorities were fretting about lead content in petrol, so the 2.4 managed to kill – or at least head off – two regulatory birds with one stone. It was also the last flat-six which directly involved Ferdinand Piëch in its design.

All three 2.4 engines produced significantly more torque and Porsche abandoned the original dogleg 901 gearbox for the conventionally-patterned, but stronger 915; reducing the compression caused no loss of performance: Jeff Daniels observed that in his Autocar days, their standard 165bhp staff 2.4 E would record a 7.5 second 0–60 day after day; a couple of years earlier Autocar road testers had been astounded to record a 0–60 time of 6.4seconds for another 2.4 E. Daniels adds though that the economy of the smaller flat-sixes was never their strong point, the longterm 2.4 managing only 18mpg.

It's hard to imagine anything more rewarding than taking to the byways of Oxfordshire in a classic Porsche – especially one as striking as this 911E



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**“THE TARGET WAS TO
OFFER A CAR FOR
UNDER \$3000...”**

THE SURVIVOR

Everybody dreams of finding an early Porsche that's not been messed around with and requires little or no restoration. Ritchie King came across just such a Speedster and couldn't resist adding it to his collection

Words: Delwyn Mallett Photos: Paul Knight





As is generally well known, the Porsche Speedster was designed specifically for the American market. The first car, finished in red as it happens (the other options were white or blue), landed in New York in September 1954 and by the time production ceased in 1958 the Zuffenhausen factory had completed a total of 4154. Of those it is thought that probably less than a handful were delivered with a full-width bench seat – indeed it is quite possible that our featured car was the only one.

To those who know him, it should come as no surprise that something so unusual would end up in the personal collection of Ritchie King, long time sniffer-out of rare Porsche items and proprietor of Karmann Konnektion.

The Speedster was a reluctant answer to pressure from Porsche's US importer, super-salesman Max Hoffman, to produce a 'budget' roadster to compete with the significantly cheaper, mainly British, competition. The target was to offer a car for under \$3000. Hoffman, a keen weekend racer, also specified that it should be as light as possible and easily transformable into a track car to satisfy the rapidly expanding amateur racing scene promoted by the Sports

Car Club of America (SCCA).

Hoffman was based on the East Coast, in New York, but the Los Angeles-based West Coast distributor John von Neumann was, if anything, even more of a racing enthusiast and was also agitating for a lighter, sportier, 356 (he had, after all, chopped the roof off the ex-factory Le Mans aluminium-bodied 'Gmünd' coupé to make his own roadster...) for his competition-minded customers. Plus, of course, southern California had the perfect climate for year-round, top-down motoring.

After making a false start in 1953 with the far too expensive to produce, aluminium-clad 'America Roadster', of which only 16 were constructed, Porsche had a rethink. Rather than making an entire bespoke body, as they did with the 'America', they modified a standard Cabriolet body by cutting off the screen surround and fabricating a new welded-in dash.

A new panel extended the rear deck forward over the space formerly occupied by the heavy Cabriolet roof, and the line of the door tops was also subtly altered, acquiring a downward incline. The final defining touch that provides so much of the car's visual appeal and put the 'speed' in

Above: US-spec 'towel-rail' bumpers frequently get consigned to the corner of the garage, but help give Ritchie's Speedster a true period, unmolested look

Below left: Amazingly, the hood frame is all original, as is the hood itself, apart from a replacement rear 'screen'

Below right: Extension to the fuel tap on-off valve is a useful period addition





Above: An unusual (unique?) choice for a Speedster, the split-back bench seat is original to the car. To retrim or to leave alone – that's the dilemma facing the owner

Above right: Woodrim steering wheel shows signs of many years (and miles) of wear, but who'd want to change it?



Speedster was the exquisitely proportioned, perfectly curved and raked, chrome-framed windscreen.

As requested by Hoffman, the 'screen could be removed for racing, the surround held in position by short side pillars that bolt through the body. In practice, however, removing and replacing the screen was not a five-minute job and racers tended either to leave the screen in position or, after removing the chrome frame, replaced the glass with a low but still full-width Perspex screen utilising the short side pillars. Eventually many racing Speedsters dispensed with even the Perspex screen and used a tiny 'Spyder' aero screen over the instrument binnacle.

In pursuit of both 'lightness' and 'cheapness' all 356 luxuries, of which in fact there were few, were jettisoned. The doors were devoid of wind-up windows, replaced by canvas and plastic drop-in sidescreens, door trim panels had no pockets and the dash lacked a glovebox. The multi-layered and heavily padded Cabriolet roof was replaced by the Speedster's most controversial feature – its single-layer, claustrophobia inducing, boy-scout-bivouac of a roof.

Erected, vision to sides and rear is severely restricted to the point of danger, and on the move it threatens to self-destruct at speeds approaching 70 mph. It did, however, possess the virtue of being so easy to erect that it could be pulled up single-handedly from the driver's seat if a squall threatened – unlike the Heath Robinson affairs of most British sports cars of the day, which required dismantling and a lot of running around erecting frames and popping fasteners. By contrast, the lightweight bucket seats were a treat, holding the driver firmly and far more

comfortable than their skimpy appearance suggests.

Having said that, in well-upholstered America, the bucket seats, today so much a part of the Speedster's mythology, did not meet with universal approval and not all Speedsters were delivered with buckets as a matter of course. The bare-bones \$2995 Speedster could be spec'd up to a certain extent by consulting the Accessories Catalogue, and in the 1957 edition you will find that the coupé seats could be yours for an additional \$28.60. Leather headrests were \$13.50 but for two-dollars less you could have them in leatherette or a mixture of leatherette and corduroy. The bench seat, with recliner mechanism, panned out at \$26.20 – but the

Speedster is, after all, a lightweight sports car where comfort is not a priority, which makes the choice of a bench seat all the more puzzling.

As I mentioned in my column in last month's *Classic Porsche* (if you've already read it, forgive me for repeating myself here),

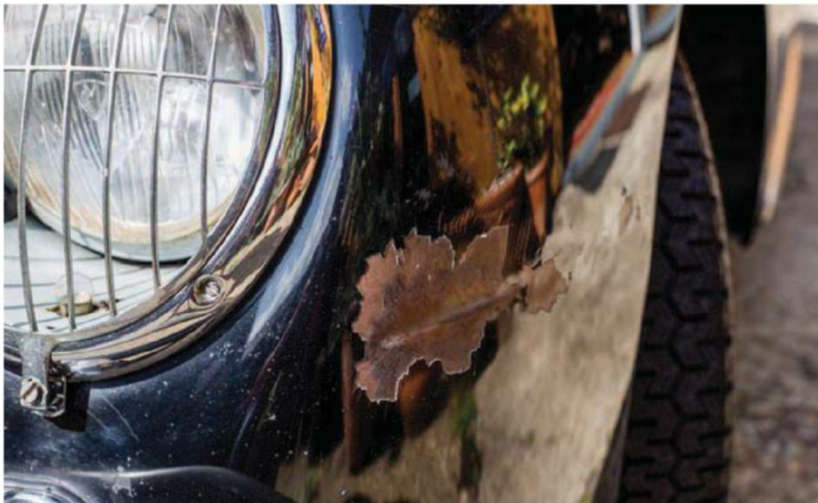
the bench seat is a hefty affair, a kind of Siamese-twin arrangement of two ordinary seats joined at the hip. The bench does as promised, spanning the width of the cockpit, but the backs are quite separate allowing a different rake for driver and a single passenger.

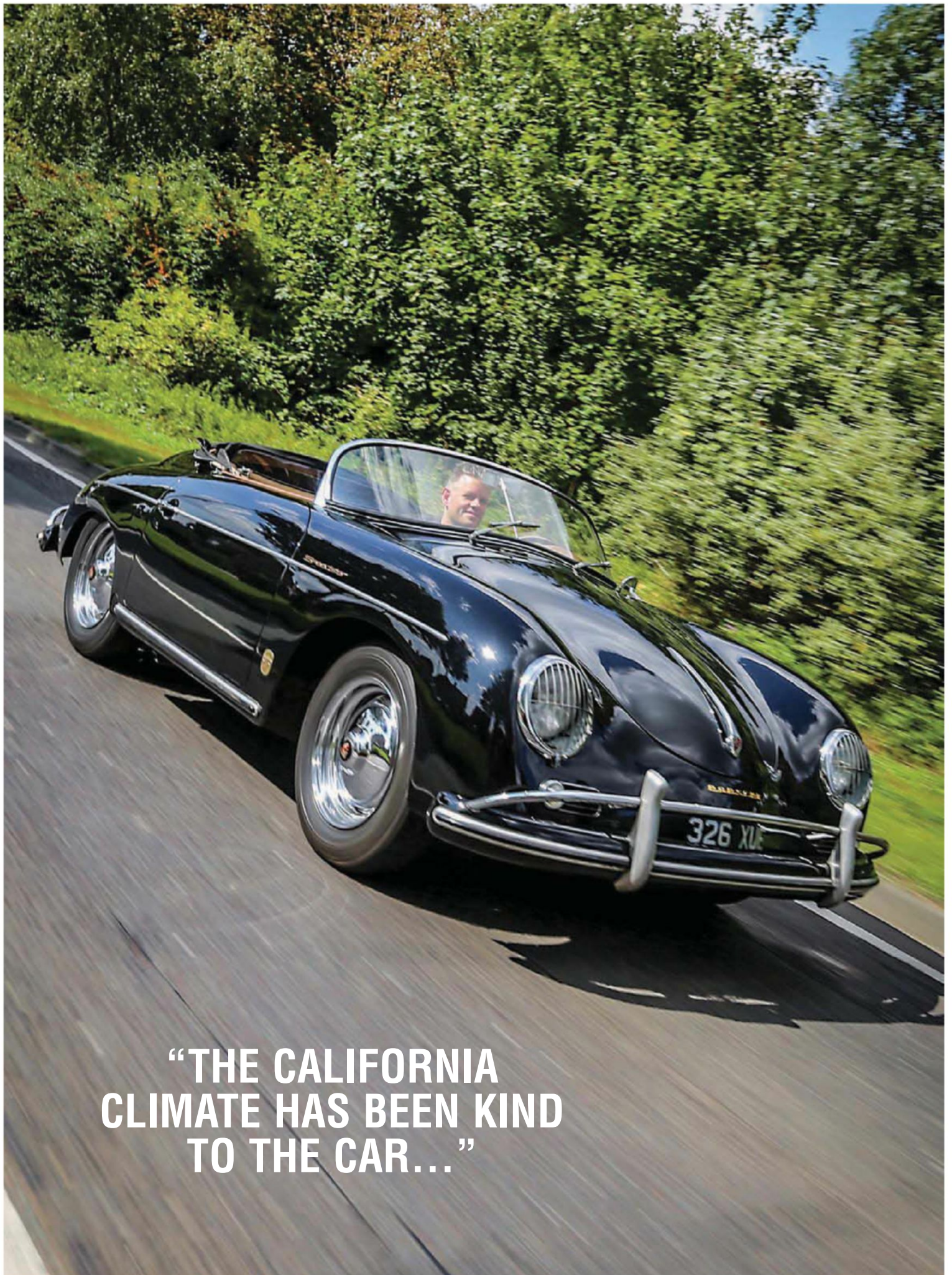
However, as the objective of the seat is presumably to accommodate a third passenger, he or she will be inconvenienced by the presence of a gap between the seat backs and the proximity of the inner reclining mechanisms at coccyx level. Legs will also have to be splayed either side of the central tunnel and gear changing will invariably result in a potentially embarrassing familiarity between driver's hand and passenger's nether regions – particularly in second and top gears.

“ALL 356 LUXURIES...WERE JETTISONED...”

Below left: Carrying the scars of a life well lived, the Speedster is far from being a concours queen – and is all the better for it

Below right: Original body plates are still in place, as attached 61 years ago





“THE CALIFORNIA
CLIMATE HAS BEEN KIND
TO THE CAR...”



Above left: Replica 'black plate' licence plates may not be 100 per cent UK-legal but suit the car perfectly!

Above right: Original US-spec towel-rail bumpers required the use of taller cast-aluminium overriders

The rake of the backrests will also have to be mutually agreed between driver and outer passenger if the inboard passenger desires equal support for both shoulder blades. The seat also required the addition of a hefty external cable stretching from the driver's release lever to the one on the far side of the car to facilitate fore and aft adjustment.

As not every Speedster customer intended to go racing but just liked the car's sporty look, many succumbed to the promise of a softer ride offered by the more luxuriously upholstered coupé seats. Steve McQueen's first new car and soon-to-be 'racer', a black 1958 'Super' Speedster, was delivered with coupé seats and also the heavier – and expensive – chromed Rudge knock-off wheels. He even had a radio fitted. Perhaps racing was not on his mind when he bought it but he soon jettisoned the bumpers, fitted a cut down screen – and Speedster buckets – and hit the tracks.

Given that in 1959 Richie's Dad had the first 356 S90 B coupé in England, followed in 1963 by the first SC, his own journey to a fascination with all things Porsche was not as direct as one might imagine.

Having left school with, by his own admission, little in the way of qualifications he eventually took a three-month Government course in sheet metal and welding and got into the burgeoning Hot Rodding scene. Invited to France in 1980 to perform a 'chop' on a '49 Mercury, he discovered a group of Cal-Look VW enthusiasts and was smitten, and a rusty VW Karmann Ghia soon arrived. Richie's welding skills saw the Ghia transformed into a 'half hot rod, half Cal-Look, Moon-disc'd special' and set him down the VW restoration and parts supply path. Karmann Konnection came into being in the mid-1980s supplying parts, and restoring and modifying Volkswagens.

Inevitably Richie's interest in Ferdinand Porsche's 'people's car' led to him acquiring an early example of

its iteration as a sports car in the shape of a 1952 356 coupé. A quarter of a century ago the UK classic Porsche restoration scene was far from what it is today and seeking parts for the car Richie headed to the United States on a mission to 'track down the pre-A guys' – making friendships that would eventually see him becoming a dedicated and knowledgeable Porsche enthusiast, and Karmann Konnection eventually metamorphosing from Beetle specialists into specialists in early Porsches..

Richie's personal collection of Zuffenhausen's output has also expanded since then and currently includes a '51 coupé, '58 Coupé, a '58 Carrera, a '58 Speedster and Roadster as well as a brace of early 911s from 1965 and '68. He also has one of the Stuttgart hot rod 'hybrids', a Mercedes 500 E powered by a Porsche V8, a collaboration between the two Stuttgart brands. Richie's wife Angela, not to be outdone, also has her own '58 Speedster.

A decade ago Richie parted with his then current Speedster and immediately regretted it, and began looking for a replacement. Richie spotted that one of his Los Angeles contacts, Bob Campbell of 356 Services, was offering a somewhat unusual variant and a deal was struck.

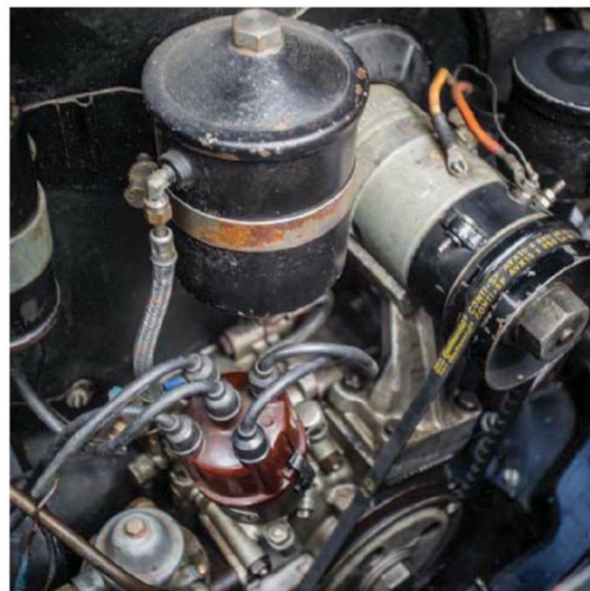
Built in October 1956, the 1600 'Normal' Speedster was imported to the West Coast via von Neumann's Hollywood-based Competition Motors and delivered to its first owner, in Pasadena, in 1957.

The California climate has been kind to the car and although repainted in the 1970s it has never been restored and is rust-free, the engine however is not a 'matching number' – a current fetish that I fail to understand given that the mating of body and engine at the factory was a random affair – but a period correct substitute.

The exposed metalwork of the roof frame, which usually takes a bashing, still carries the original beige paint

Below left: The engine is not the original to the car but is of the correct vintage

Below right: It looks right at home, being unrestored and bearing the scars of a hundred oil changes and many years of servicing





and the fabric of the roof is also original apart from a replacement plastic rear 'window'. US-spec cars required sealed-beam headlamps and some owners, as here, chose to replace the clear non-fluted outer lens with the racier so-called 'Speedster' slotted cast metal grilles that follow the contour of the original outer glass.

It also carries the US-spec tubular bumper over-riders adopted in attempt to protect the curvaceous and vulnerable bodywork from the unsolicited caresses of the homegrown Detroit iron.

The car also came with an October 1956 edition of the driver's handbook and its original service book. Previous owners include an obligatory Hollywood producer – who, one can only speculate in light of recent scandals, may have indulged the 'casting couch' dimensions of the seat.

One past owner of note was Bruce Meyer, renowned car connoisseur, collector, and lifelong enthusiast, who bought Steve McQueen's aforementioned Speedster from him in the

late sixties and then, seven-years later, after persistent requests from the star, in a gentlemanly move sold it back. (McQueen's son, Chad, now owns it.)

It's surprising that in the ensuing 60-years the Speedster has managed to retain its unusual seat as the temptation to fit Speedster buckets must surely have crossed the minds of

more than one of its subsequent owners, particularly as the leather began to deteriorate. As you can see from the photographs of the interior, the seat is not in good shape – in fact it's taken a severe thrashing – and therein lies a dilemma: preserve or restore?

Ritchie has kept it that way as he sees it

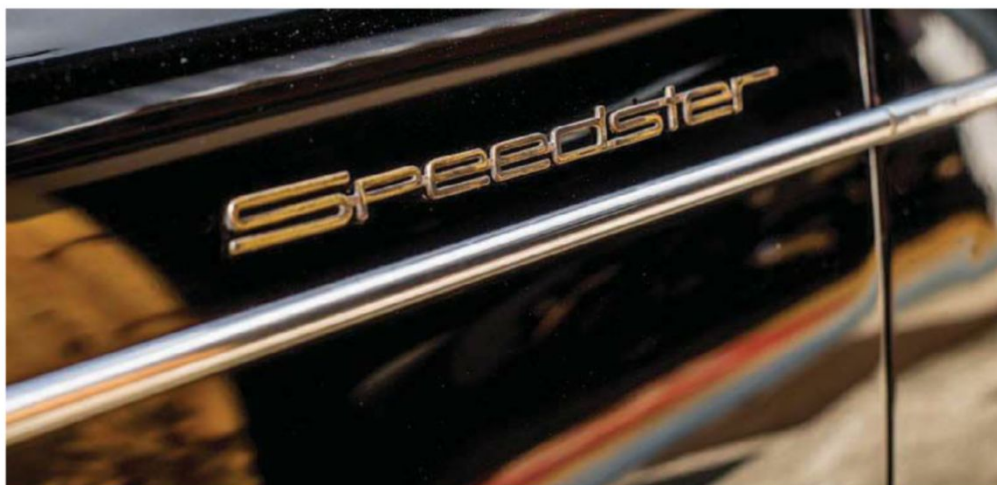
as an essential part of the car's history but also admits that these days classics are as much for showing as going and his solution would be to put the seat to one side 'as is' and fit buckets for regular use, and refitting the bench seat for special occasions as an undoubted conversation starter. Barnfind fans will love it. **CP**

Above: Such a handsome profile – the Speedster was a hit right from the beginning, and it doesn't take much to see why...

“ONE PAST OWNER OF NOTE WAS BRUCE MEYER...”

Below left: Speedster side trim was unique to the model, but could be applied to other models on request

Below right: Period rally badge adds to the flavour...



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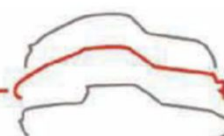


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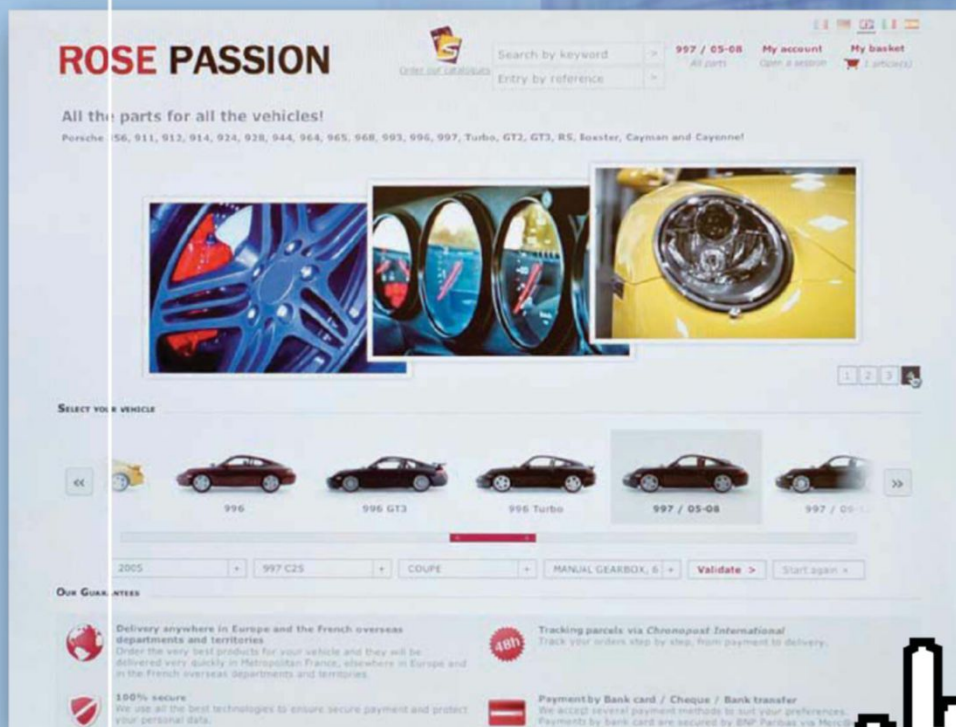
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THE RACING WRITER

Paul Frère would have been 100 this year. *Classic Porsche* looks back at the career of one of the greatest auto writers of the twentieth century who was also an acknowledged, indeed at one time *the* acknowledged, Porsche journalist

Words: Kieron Fennelly Photos: Porsche Archiv

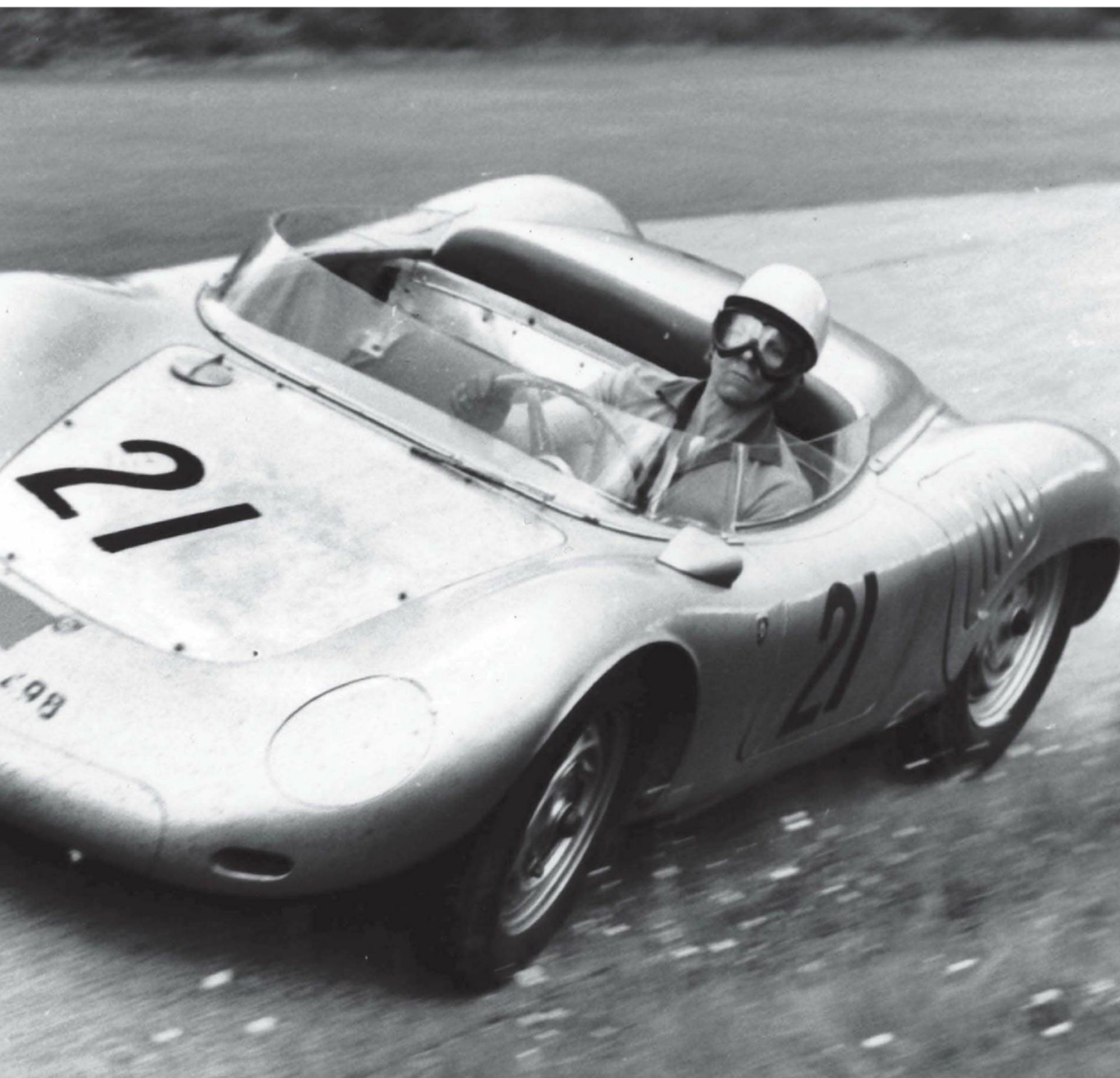
“THERE WAS, NATURALLY, FAR MORE TO PAUL FRÈRE THAN A SEMINAL BOOK...”

The Belgian is perhaps best remembered for his definitive work, *The Porsche 911 Story*, now a classic of automotive history. First published in 1976, when it comprised 180 pages, he added chapters regularly in the intervening decades as each new 911 variant appeared and he kept it going right up to the introduction of the 997. Such an institution had the by now 500-page work become that publisher Haynes felt constrained to continue publishing it after Frère's death, calling in no lesser writer than racing driver and journalist Tony Dron to produce the ninth edition.

There was, naturally, far more to Paul Frère though than a seminal book (and a dozen or so other books, in fact). A journalist for 60 years and a top flight racing driver in the

1950s, he was a true polyglot. As often happens with bright people from small countries, Frère always looked beyond boundaries and he also retained the vital journalist's curiosity which sustained his writing far into old age. From the 1960s he had regular columns in *Road & Track* and *Motor* and, in later years, in *Flat 6* and the Japanese auto journal *Car Graphic*. He devoured the motoring press in four or five languages, and tested new models as often as he could.

Frère's upbringing had much to do with his outlook: he was born in Le Havre where his father was working for the Belgian government, exiled there during the First World War. Subsequently, as his father's job moved, the young Paul was schooled initially in Paris, and then in Berlin and Vienna. The latter postings endowed him with his bilingualism; his



Above: Paul Frère driving a Porsche 718 RSK in the Nürburgring 1000km in June 1958. He shared with Harry Schell, finishing in seventh place overall

engineering studies at university in Brussels were orientated towards management rather than pure science, but Frère, already fascinated by cars and motor sport, could think only of a future in automotive.

His father had owned a succession of interesting vehicles and the young Paul was fascinated by automobiles from the very beginning. In his short, but compelling autobiography *My Life of Cars* he recounts his first visit to Spa in 1926, talks of the adventures of family motoring in twenties Europe and describes his early driving experiences in his grandfather's car:

'It was a 1935 Buick A Sedan and I found every excuse to borrow it. It had independent front suspension, very soft springing and considerable final oversteer. One of the roads linking Hoeilaart to Brussels curved (and still does) through

the Soignes forest and in those days of sparse traffic was a wonderful training ground, especially in the wet. There I readily learned how to control a car.'

This is vintage Frère, and to acquire the English which he would later deploy so effectively, in his teens he was billeted on a British family in Felixstowe for several summers where he became devoted to the *Autocar* and *The Motor*. After graduating, he wrote a technical comparison between front and rear drive handling characteristics, a subject that had always fascinated him ever since he had begun driving his family's cars at way below the legal age limit.

The surrender of Belgium in 1940 only days before he was due to be called to arms meant that the war years held nothing worse than marking time until 1945. Yet he wasted



little of the opportunity that this privileged existence presented, working away at rebuilding engines, devouring everything written on auto engineering he could find, making contacts and writing the comparative thesis on the handling of front- and rear-wheel drive cars, which was published when hostilities ended in Belgium's *La Vie Automobile*. Thus in 1946 began Frère's career as a journalist. A brief foray into motorcycle racing just after the war was followed by his first competitive motor race: third in class at the Spa 24 hours in 1948 with Jacques Swaters in a 1936 ex-Le Mans MG.

During these years, Frère worked successively for the Belgian Chrysler importer, next for General Motors, where he produced manuals and catalogues, and then as service manager for the Brussels Jaguar distributor. One day a customer came to complain that his new XK120 was not performing properly, so Frère took it to Spa and promptly reeled off three laps that were so fast that the Belgian motor racing establishment took notice.

Serious driving opportunities followed: victory at Spa in an Oldsmobile 88 led to Frère's first single-seater outing in an HWM and fifth in the 1952 Belgian GP. The following year, again in an HWM, he beat Peter Collins's identical car at a very wet Nürburgring in an epic dice watched by, amongst others, Huschke von Hanstein, the Porsche team manager: an invitation to drive in the works team at Le Mans ensued and marked the start of the most fruitful relationship of Frère's automotive life.

'I first saw a Porsche at the 1949 Geneva show, and frankly, this sports version of the Beetle did not impress me,' he remarked later. However, the methodical approach of the little Austrian firm, which was steadily developing its cars through competition, attracted him.

'I always preferred long distance events like Le Mans to shorter races and I admired the endurance qualities of the Porsche.' Driving a 550, he finished fifteenth at Le Mans in 1953 and in 1958 with Edgar Barth was to finish fourth there in a Porsche RSK.

By 1954, Frère's talents were widely recognised and he enjoyed works drives in the next few years with Gordini, Aston Martin, Jaguar and Ferrari. His journalism was always his priority, though, and with family commitments as well (his

three small daughters were in school at this stage) he was usually content to be reserve driver. However, if his racing ambitions, like the man himself, were modest, he was an effective and reliable competitor.

His last Formula 1 Grand Prix was at Spa in 1956, a race he had gone to intending to cover it for the press. However, at the last moment he substituted for Luigi Musso and secured second place for Ferrari in the process. After that, he more or less abandoned single-seaters, concentrating on endurance racing, until, after two more fourths and another second (where he had finished in 1955) he finally won Le Mans, sharing a Ferrari with Olivier Gendebien, in 1960.

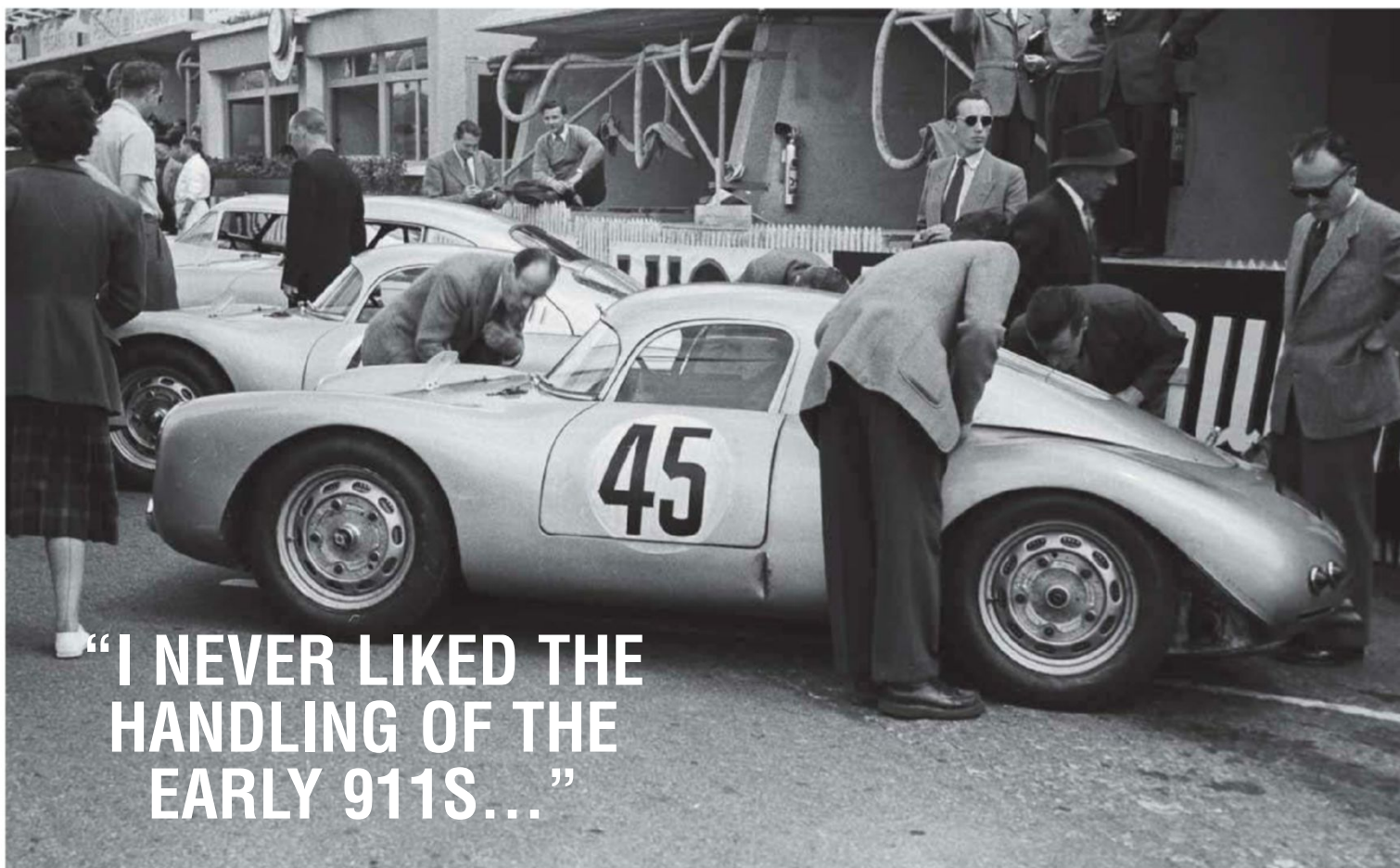
He now devoted himself to his columns in the motoring press where, thanks to his motor racing achievements, his international reputation was firmly established. His *European Diary* appeared in *Road & Track* in 1961 and in the (now long defunct) *Motor* and he was a regular road tester for several magazines. He had also started to write books and his manual *Competition Driving*, published in 1964, was long regarded as one of the standard texts on the subject.

An enthusiast with eclectic tastes, Frère owned many

Above: 1958 Le Mans, Edgar Barth (sitting on the car) and Paul Frère (at the wheel) with 718 RSK (#718-003). Together they finished fourth overall and fifth in Index of Performance

Below: 1953 Le Mans, from left to right: Helmut Glöckler, Hans Klauser, Ferry Porsche, unknown, Werner Enz, Hubert Mimler, Hans Herrmann, Willy Enz, Bruno Trostmann, Richard von Frankenberg, Paul Frère, Rolf Wütherich and Eberhard Storz





“I NEVER LIKED THE HANDLING OF THE EARLY 911S...”

Above: Le Mans in 1953, Paul Frère shared with fellow journalist Richard von Frankenburg, finishing 15th overall in 550 coupé #550-02

interesting cars: his first Porsche was a 356A which was followed by a 356B, which he rated below the A as it proved less reliable. However, he was not tempted by the new 911 when it appeared.

‘I never liked the handling of the early 911s,’ he said. ‘They were designed to understeer, but the balance of the previous 356 had been altered by the heavier engine making the transition to oversteer sudden and unpredictable. And it varied from car to car.’

He acknowledged that lengthening the wheelbase in 1969 and other modifications marked the beginning of the solution, but during this period his own transport was a Fiat 2300 Coupé followed by an Alpina-tuned BMW 2002 tii. This was a typical Frère car: a 160bhp pre-production example pressed upon him by Alpina boss Burkhard Bovensiepen, it weighed only 950kg and went like a proverbial rocket. Although it desperately needed a fifth gear, Frère was sufficiently impressed to buy it and only stopped using it when he had the chance to acquire a prototype 911.

This was to be the first of his long series of 911s: a special 1972 2.4 Carrera belonging to Paul Hensler, who was

in charge of 911 development, it had non-standard 7-inch rear rims, the ducktail subsequently made famous by the RS and was rated at 190bhp.

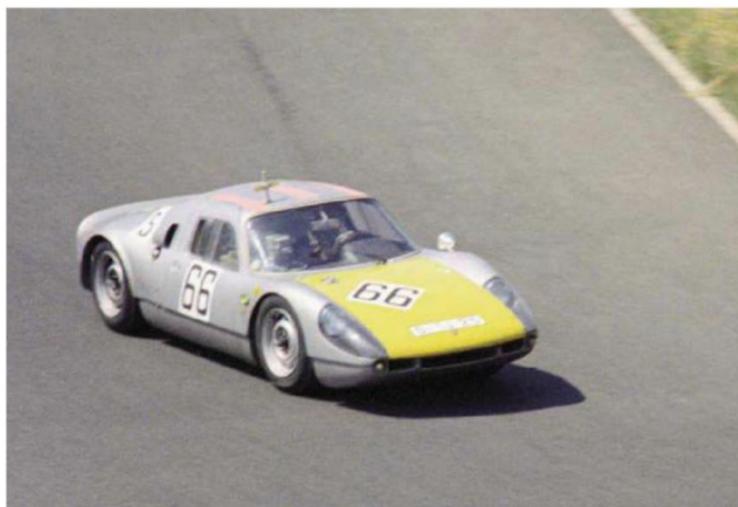
‘And it absolutely loved to rev!’ recalled Frère. Until this point his interest in the road going Porsche had been largely professional, but with this 2.4 he caught the virus and 911s would remain his personal car until the end of his life.

The advent of emissions legislation would soon spell the end of mechanical fuel injection and, as one of the company’s unofficial guinea pigs, after a year, Frère’s car was fitted instead with a 2.7 engine with K-Jetronic fuel injection, ‘but it was then much less willing.’ That car was stolen in Italy and its successor, a 3.0 Carrera, was potent enough, but suffered an uneven-ness at low rpm which Frère attributed to a mismatch between the valve timing and the injection set up. Amazingly, this car too suffered the same fate as its predecessor, vanishing in Brussels six years later.

In 1983 Frère acquired another ‘factory special’, a 3.0 SC which was effectively a pre-production Carrera 3.2. This he kept for ten years and 70,000 trouble-free miles – ‘this is the best performing Porsche I’ve ever had,’ he said before

Below left: Frère waits on the startline at Spa in 1959

Below right: June 1966 and the ADAC 1000 km race at the Nürburgring, Paul Frère and Rainer Günzler drove this Porsche 904 as part of the first live broadcast carried out by the ZDF television company



passing it on to one of his three daughters; today it is driven by a grandson.

He was less impressed with the 964, though he was careful not to say so in print at the time and graduated directly to the 993 Carrera. Driving this latest 911 at high speed in the Alps on a road he knew well, he aquaplaned, crashing heavily and writing the car off, injuring himself into the bargain; its red 993 replacement remained with him until he died and was subsequently purchased by his friend Alois Ruf.

Frère, who was acquainted with a vast number of people in the motor industry, had got to know this most famous of the Porsche tuners in the 1970s. He was always fascinated by Ruf's ability seemingly to stay one step ahead of Zuffenhausen. In the mid 1980s Frère's influence allowed *Road & Track* to organise speed trials on the 8.7km straight at VW's proving ground at Ehra Lessien. Here he and Phil Hill clocked 304Km/h in Ruf's Yellow Bird in 1987, improving that to 311Km/h two years later and effectively sealing the Yellow Bird legend.

In 1975, the British publisher Patrick Stephens approached him to write a history of the development of the 911, which was then 12 years old and already a minor phenomenon. Given his racing and testing experience of the previous two decades and his close connection with developments at Weissach, Paul Frère was an obvious candidate to write the *Porsche 911 Story*.

'I wrote it first in English then sat down and wrote it again in German and later in French as publishers in Germany and France were attracted by the sales of the English version,' he said afterwards.

Less a bedside book than a work of reference, Frère deals in turn with aspects of the car, the engines, the running gear, the body, rather than producing a chronological analysis of each model. It is thus not a book that can be easily browsed, but when the required information is finally tracked down, the writing is detailed and authoritative.

Ever the road tester, Frère compiles with characteristic

thoroughness acceleration figures for virtually every version of the 911, often supplementing his own measurements with the results obtained by *Auto Motor und Sport*. Virtually no facet of the car went without investigation or commentary of some sort.

After an innings of 12 years, it might have been expected that the 911 would be replaced by the 928. The opposite occurred of course and the 911 simply evolved, obliging Frère to add chapters as new models emerged. Intriguingly and rather charmingly, in his introduction to the sixth edition, (1998), he states that 'this will be the last edition of this book' as the air cooled engine had reached the end of its life, 'and by the time you read this, dear reader, its successor will have been announced.'

That successor, the 996, was, however, so clearly a car in the 911 tradition that Frère felt he had to add a further section and his introduction to the seventh edition (2002) makes no reference to last or final versions. Indeed, within a few years, he was compiling an eighth edition to include the 997, but at 87 he was visibly, if understandably, slowing down and his chapter on the 997 is thin and relies much more on Porsche press releases than his previous chapters.

Frère's view of Porsche's decline in the eighties and renaissance in the following decade was conventional: 'Sixty per cent of sales were to the US and when the dollar lost so much value, the market dried up. This brought into focus the shortcoming of the 911 3.2: it was expensive to build and increasingly old fashioned.'

If he was shocked at the sudden departure in 1988 of Helmuth Bott, the technical supremo who bestrode Porsche engineering for 20 years, his observations typically were cloaked in his usual diplomatic phrasing: 'Until now Bott operated as one would in a much smaller business. The atmosphere will probably change with the coming of a much younger and more management-orientated successor.'

That successor was the ambitious Ulrich Bez, who had left Porsche in 1982 and gone to BMW, piqued at not being

Below: Ready for live outside broadcast, Porsche 904 (#904 009) at the 1000km race at the Nürburgring in 1966. The car was registered by ZdF Wiesbaden. Left to right: Huschke von Hanstein, Rainer Günzler, Günter Klass and Paul Frère





Above left: An acclaimed journalist, an accomplished racing driver – few could match Frère's achievements



Above right: In esteemed company at the Targa Florio – from left to right (at back): Ferdinand Piëch, Helmuth Bott, Peter Falk, from left to right (foreground): Pedro Rodriguez, Richard Attwood, Paul Frère

appointed to director of research. Bez had been headhunted to replace Bott, and in his wake and the earlier departure of CEO Peter Schutz, other senior Porsche men were put out to grass, notably design chief Tony Lapine.

But if Bez cancelled development programmes and upset a lot of established routines, as Frère put it, introducing 'systems and procedures that were unpopular internally,' he also restricted journalist access: this hit Frère, acknowledged house reporter and company historian, quite hard.

For 15 years he had enjoyed privileged access to Weissach which had given him first insight into many developments. Friendly with Paul Hensler from the outset, he had also relied on Fritz Bezner, in the 1970s Bott's assistant and, through the 1980s, chief of the 911 development programme. But when Bez arrived, Bezner was pushed sideways and both he and Hensler became less influential.

Though he continued his association with Weissach, the

experience caused Frère to turn increasingly to his contacts at Honda and Mazda where he felt more appreciated. He was careful never to lose his sense of balance though, acknowledging readily that by bringing Japanese methods to manufacturing and production, new CEO Wendelin Wiedeking masterminded Porsche's transition in to the powerhouse it would subsequently become.

He never lost his feel for Porsche either, commenting in his column in *Flat 6* in 2007 that the 911's only significant competitor would be the (then new) Audi RS8 'and Porsche will react by remaining what it is: agile, compact and as light as possible – not an autobahn monster.'

Paul Frère's openness and seeming lack of ego personified his native Belgium – he had no axe to grind and as such was welcomed everywhere. A private man, he surprised close friends when he left Ninette, the mother of his three children, for Suzanne whom he later married.

With 911 Carrera RSR 2.8 (prototype 3.0) in 1973 at Weissach, from left: Paul Frère, Helmuth Bott, Manfred Jantke, Norbert Singer





He rarely spoke about this but when 25 years later the American journalist John Lamm was talking to him wistfully about his own recent separation, Frère said confidentially, 'If there is a beautiful woman involved, it has to be done.' He surprised Lamm in other ways, too. At dinner with him and Phil Hill on an earlier occasion, he said Ferrari should have paired Hill, not him, Paul Frère, with Gendebien for Le Mans in 1960, 'Then Phil could have claimed four wins!'

He got on well with the Germans, the French thought of him as one of their own and the British, Americans and the Japanese appreciated him because he spoke English. In retrospect, it is easy to see why he fitted in so well at Porsche. The Germans respected his erudition and appreciated the fact that he was always prepared, that he clearly understood their engineering concepts and could explain them to laymen.

They allowed him the rare privilege of circuit testing cars like the latest 908, which gave Frère the journalist some very exclusive copy. He repaid their trust with his discretion: his years close to Porsche meant that he was a party to many secrets, but old school to the end, Frère was always loyal and thoroughly deserved Ferry Porsche's compliment in the 1998 edition of the 911 Story that he was 'not only a faithful companion of our company over all those years, we also

appreciate him as a friend of our family.'

He was respected among journalists, too, and being made a Friend of the Guild of Motoring Writers in 1960 was one of several such honours. A seat at the front was always reserved at Porsche press conferences for Frère.

Like journalist Richard von Frankenberg who started *Christophorus* (and who co-drove the 550 with Frère at Le Mans in 1953), Frère died as a result of injuries from a road accident, though in his case, some time after the event. Friends and colleagues all used to comment on how fast Frère drove everywhere, especially after speed limits and social attitudes made this more difficult. Perhaps he had overestimated his reflexes when his rental car was in a huge collision near the Nürburgring in September 2006.

At 89, he made a slow, partial recovery from complex injuries which could have been fatal for someone even twenty years younger. Though painfully frail he continued writing during 2007 and still managed to attend the Brussels motorshow and generally make himself available.

A Monaco resident in later life, he was hospitalised in Nice after the accident and amazed at the pilgrimage of visitors he received, mostly people he had never met, but who obviously knew of him. He died in February 2008, a month after his 91st birthday. **CP**

Top left: At the celebration of 'Car of the Year' in 1978 for the Porsche 928, alongside Prince Rainier of Monaco

Above left: With development engineer Horst Marchart

Above: At celebrations to mark 30 years of the 911 in Ludwigsburg, 1993

Below left: Frère felt the 3.2 Carrera was too costly to build, and old fashioned...

Below right: At the presentation of Porsche's carbon ceramic brakes in Vizzola, Italy in 2000. On the left is Porsche driver Dieter Röscheisen





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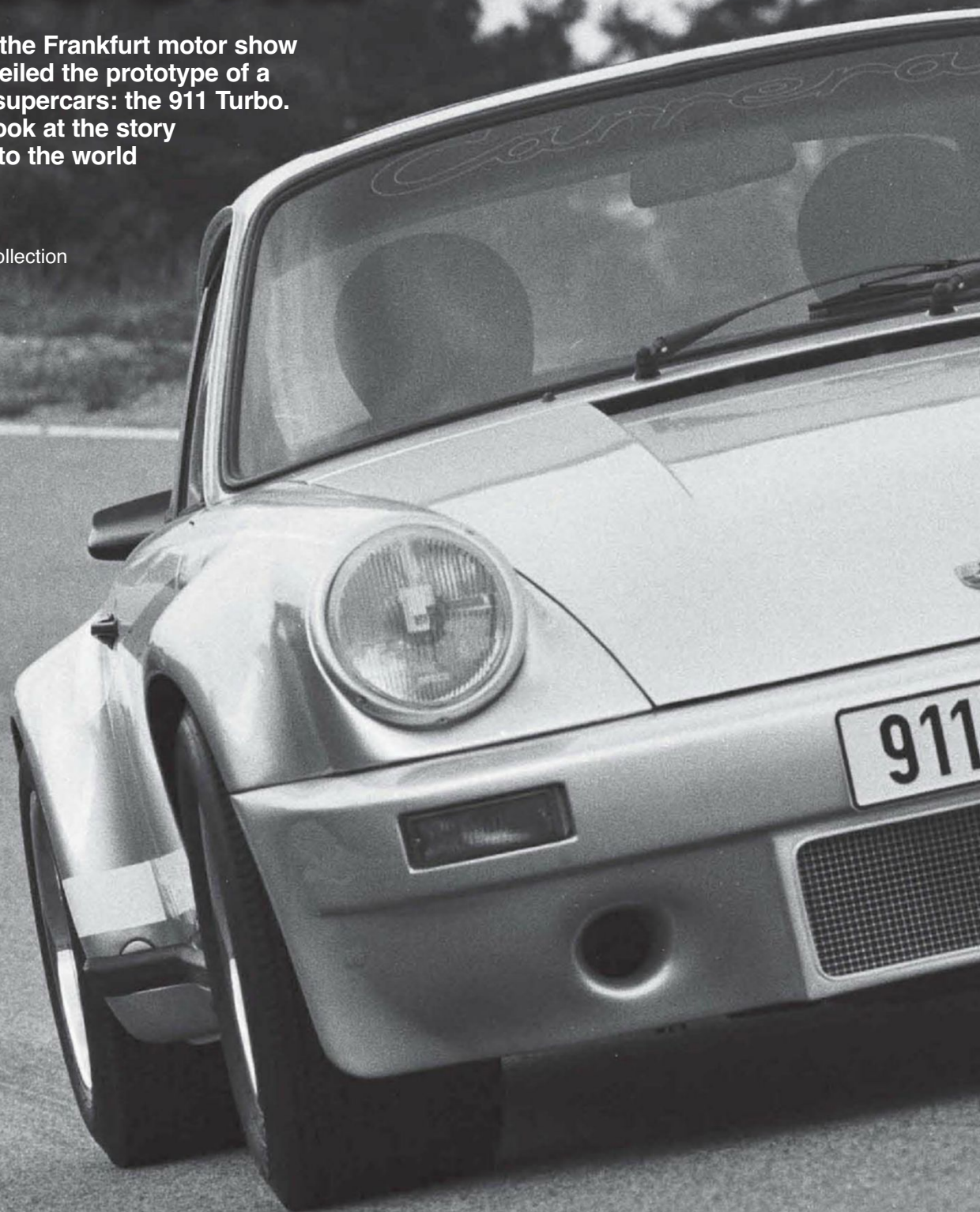
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PORSCHE UNDER PRESSURE

In 1973, Porsche brought the Frankfurt motor show to a standstill when it unveiled the prototype of a new breed of production supercars: the 911 Turbo. *Classic Porsche* takes a look at the story behind Porsche's foray into the world of turbo technology

Words: Keith Seume

Photos: Porsche Archiv and KS collection





Turbo – the very word conjures up an image of power, be it in the form of Porsche's muscle-bound, wide-arched 930 coupé or the mighty 917 Can-Am racers driven to victory by the likes of Mark Donohue and George Fullmer. Today it seems just about every other car on the road is turbocharged, be it a tiny TDI-badged hatchback or a Tarmac-shredding supercar. But it hasn't always been that way.

Turbocharging as a way to extract power from an internal combustion engine has been with us since 1905, believe it or not, when Swiss engineer Alfred Büchi took out a patent for an exhaust-driven supercharger. Ten years later, a turbocharged Liberty aero engine was dyno'd at 360bhp, compared to just 220bhp of its normally-aspirated counterpart. Pretty soon, turbocharged engines became widely accepted in aviation circles.

However, it wasn't until 1962 that the first production car powered by a turbocharged engine was launched: the 215bhp Oldsmobile Jetfire. This was followed soon after by Chevrolet's 152bhp Corvair Monza, launched in 1962 and still in production in 1966 as the 182bhp Monza Corsa. But widespread acceptance of the technology in racing circles would take a little longer.

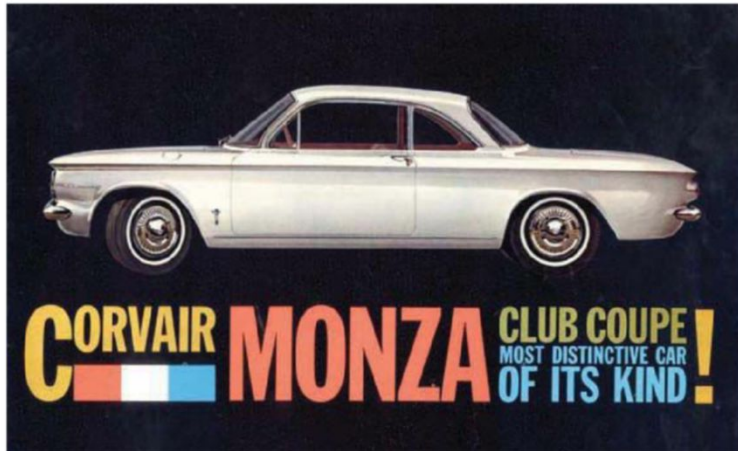
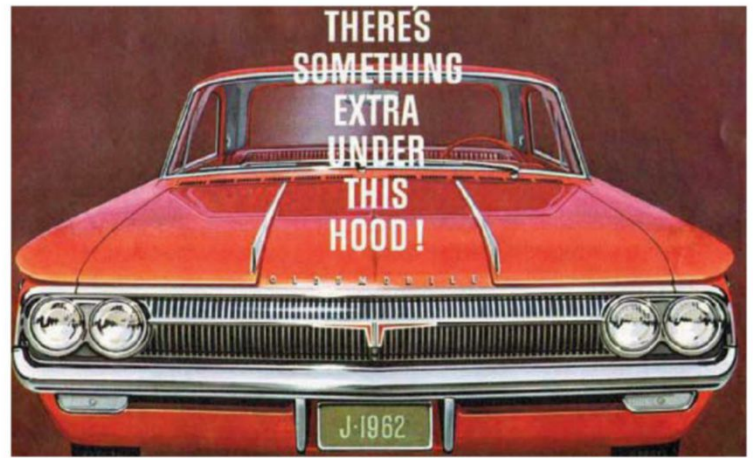
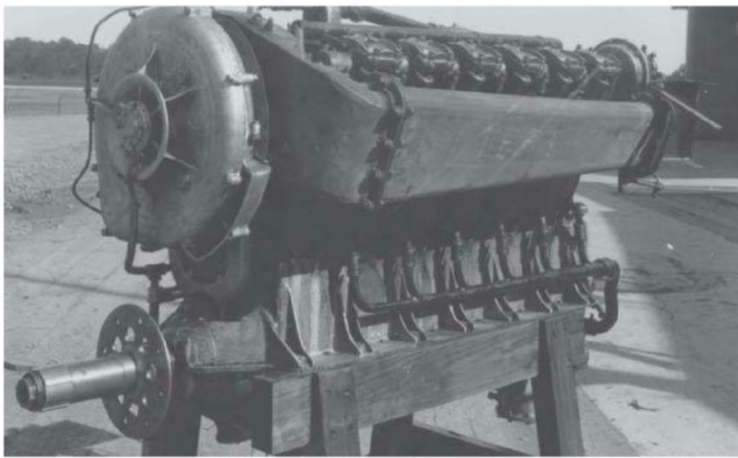
The first appearance in Can-Am of a turbocharged car was at St Jovite in 1969, when Joe Leonard finished eighth in the wedge-like McKee, using a twin-turbocharged 389ci (6375cc) iron-block Oldsmobile engine. This gave his team the confidence to develop the concept further, entering two new cars at Elkhart Lake. These amazing machines also featured a chassis from McKee, with new 455ci (7456cc) all-aluminium engines, two-speed automatic gearboxes (with hi- and low ratios, to give four speeds) – and four-wheel-drive. Sadly, the cars were plagued with brake problems and never turned a wheel in anger, a lack of finances bringing the project to a premature end. But the die had been cast: turbocharging had left its indelible mark on Can-Am, a point that had not been lost on Porsche's engineers.

Porsche had what appeared to be the perfect engine available in the form of the Type 912 (definitely not to be confused with Porsche's four-cylinder coupé...), a 630bhp 5.0-litre flat-twelve developed for the 917 endurance racers. You could be forgiven for thinking that 630bhp in a car weighing just 1638lbs would be enough to force the opposition to eat Porsche's dust, but arch-rival McLaren boasted in excess of 700bhp from its fuel-injected Chevrolet engines, and considerably less weight. Porsche needed to go one better.

There were two options available, the first being to increase the capacity of the motor, but the Type 912 engine had almost reached its limits – the 86.8mm Nikasil-coated cylinders were already tight up against each other, leaving little scope for increasing the bore. Using 90mm pistons and cylinders, the capacity could be increased to 5374cc, which saw the power output rise to 660bhp – better but still not enough to trounce the McLarens.

Porsche also investigated the concept of stretching the 12-cylinder Type 912 motor even further by adding four more cylinders – in fact, they built 10 flat-16 prototype motors, ranging in size from 6.0- to a whopping 7.2-litres. The latter produced some 880bhp on the dyno, theoretically more than enough to dispense with anything McLaren had to offer. But it was a big engine – very big – and Penske-Porsche driver Mark Donohue quipped that you could hear one end of the engine start before the other. However promising the flat-16 may have looked, its development was terminated in favour of option two...

It was clear that turbocharging was an obvious way to make significant power increases, but what made turbocharging particularly attractive in Can-Am racing was



that, unlike in virtually every other race series, there was no penalty for running a turbo- or supercharged engine. This lax ruling gave engineers carte blanche to explore the very limits of turbo technology – and explore it they did. In 1971 Porsche built a car that would turn Can-Am on its head: the 917/10 with a turbocharged Type 912 flat-12 engine, to be used in an all-aluminium space-frame chassis.

The 917/10 featured dual turbochargers, one for each bank of cylinders, supplied by the German company Eberspächer, a name more familiar today with petrol heaters used in campers and commercial vehicles. Eberspächer worked closely with the US-based AiResearch operation, which had considerable experience with race car installations through its involvement with the USAC series.

It's Hans Mezger that we can thank for steering Porsche down the turbocharging route. He saw the potential benefits of forced induction and encouraged one of his team, Valentin Schäffer, to look into turbocharging a 4.5-litre version of the Type 912 engine. Schäffer's solution was straightforward: you have two banks of cylinders, you use two turbos – just like on the McKee-Oldsmobile Can-Am engine. To limit maximum

boost, and therefore prevent the engine from overboosting and destroying itself, a single wastegate was fitted.

Early tests with the dual-blown Type 912 motor in the 917/10 chassis were 'interesting'. Jo Siffert was the test pilot and he found this first taste of turbocharging unpredictable to say the least. The turbos seemingly took an age to 'spool up', to use modern parlance, and equally as long to bleed off boost. The result was that as Siffert applied throttle exiting a corner, there was a sizeable delay before anything happened – and when the motor did come on boost, it happened very quickly. Conversely, when he lifted off the throttle at the end of the straight, the turbos continued to spin at speed, producing boost when it wasn't needed. As a consequence of this, it's said that Siffert visited the vegetation alongside the Weissach test facility on more than one occasion.

Can-Am regulations, as mentioned, were lax and placed no restrictions on engine capacity, nor did they factor in a special index for turbos. However, Porsche was not a company renowned for 'going for broke' so limited its Type 912 engine to just 1.5 bar (22psi) – still enough for 1000bhp at 7800rpm, and a massive 725lb ft of torque at 6400rpm.

Top left: Turbocharged Liberty aero engine produced 360bhp in 1915

Top right and above left: General Motors launched the turbocharged Oldsmobile Jetfire and Chevrolet Corvair Monza in 1962

Above right: BMW beat Porsche into production with its innovative 2002 Turbo

Below left: 1969 McKee Can-Am entry featured twin-turbocharged Oldsmobile aluminium-block V8 motor

Below right: Porsche's response was the twin-turbo Type 912 flat-12...



**“PEOPLE WERE
SITTING UP AND
TAKING NOTICE...”**



Above: The mighty 917/10 and 917/30 destroyed the opposition in Can-Am, ultimately bringing the series to a premature end – nobody, it seems, could beat the turbocharged Porsches...

Below left: Mark Donohue testing 917/10-003 at Paul Ricard in the south of France

Below right: Although ultimately not a great racing success, the 1974 Turbo RSR showed the way ahead

For 'normal' use, Porsche restricted boost to 1.3bar (18psi), which limited output to just under 900bhp – still almost 200bhp more than the McLarens.

In an effort to combat the effects of turbo lag, and overboost on a trailing throttle, Porsche had developed a system of air valves, some of which bled off manifold pressure when the throttle was closed, while others opened to the atmosphere when the throttle was applied at low rpm – effectively turning the car into a normally-aspirated configuration until the engine produced positive boost. The result was a car that could accelerate from 0–60mph in 2.1 seconds, 0–100mph in 3.9 seconds and 0–200mph in just 13.4 seconds!

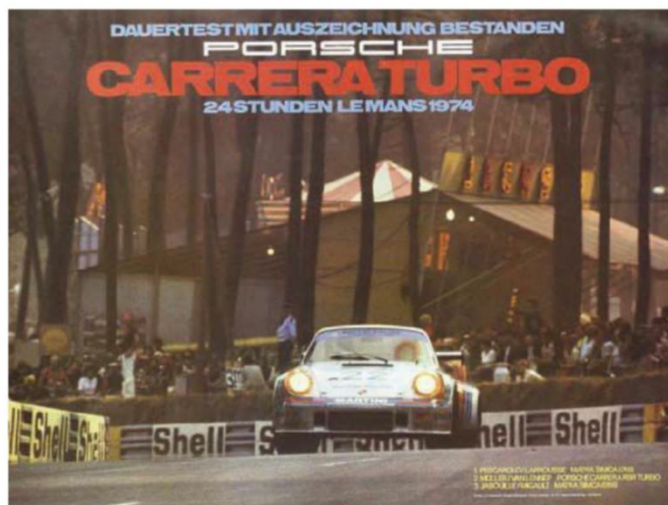
No wonder people were sitting up and taking notice when the Penske-Porsches came to the line in 1972. However, star driver Mark Donohue was injured in a crash at Road Atlanta, meaning that he was unable to capitalise on his development experience, George Follmer being brought in to take his place for much of 1972, ending the year as champion.

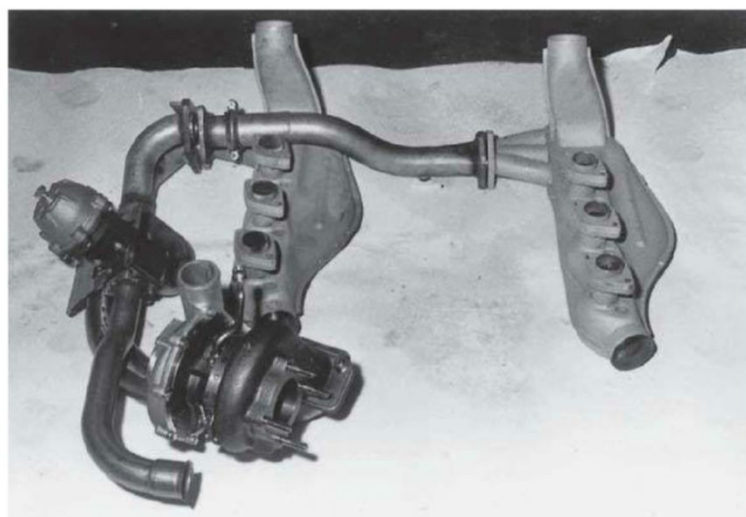
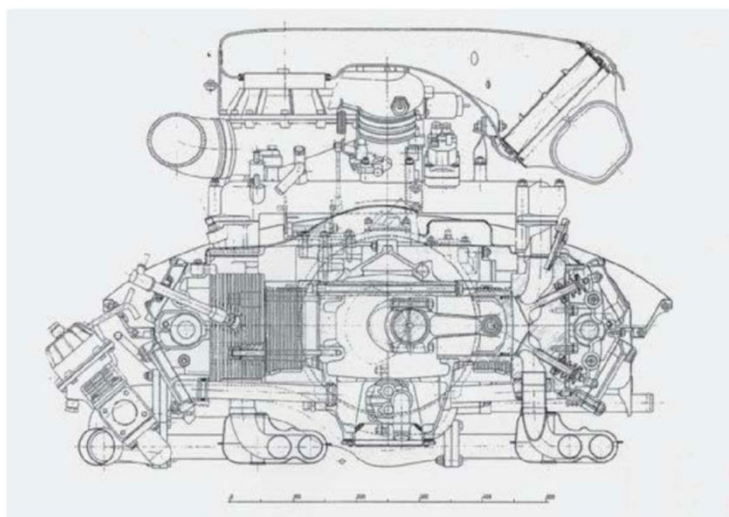
The 917/10 was clearly a massive force to be reckoned with, but Porsche had more up its sleeve for 1973. The

917/10's chassis was cut in two and experiments carried out with different extensions to alter the wheelbase. Eventually Mark Donohue felt happiest with a wheelbase of 2500mm (98.4in), which had the added benefit of allowing a larger fuel tank to be used, increasing fuel capacity from 86 gallons to a whopping 106 gallons.

Further research was carried out on aerodynamics, Porsche calling on the services of French aeronautical company, SERA. The result was a new body with a redesigned nose, which came to be referred to as the 'Paris body'. The result was a 212mph speed recorded at Paul Ricard in France. Power was up for 1973, too, the 5.4-litre engine (Type 912/52) now producing 1100bhp, with 1500+ seen on the dyno. The driver now had control of boost, too, with a large knurled knob in the cockpit allowing Donohue to to adjust the wastegate settings at will. With rivals falling by the wayside, Porsche – and Donohue – walked away with the Can-Am championship...

Porsche's domination of Can-Am was ultimately responsible for the series' demise. The organisers, SCCA, went against their agreement not to alter rules with less than





Above, left and right: 911 Turbo was an exercise in packaging, with the turbo placed low down at the left rear of the car, helping to economise on pipework and lower the centre of gravity

a year's notice and talked of limiting engines to match those used in F5000 single-seaters. That meant a limit of 3.0-litres for cars with 'race engines' (ie, non-production-based, multi-cam designs) or 5.0-litres for those with 'iron-block' production-based motors. Front-runners in Can-Am, Penske-Porsche and Shadow, both expressed their dislike and Porsche allowed Penske to opt out of its three-year contract a year early. Can-Am struggled on for one more year before SCCA pulled the plug on November 19th 1974. But the experience gained would not go to waste.

As far back as 1969, Porsche had looked into turbocharging its flat-six engine, with experimental work being carried out on a 2.0-litre 911. However, although the engine ran, it was never installed in a car (one can only imagine the results had this line of development been pursued so long ago...). The concept of turbocharging a road car was resurrected in 1972, almost certainly kicked into life, not only by the news that BMW was about to launch its 2002 Turbo, but also that Porsche's Bavarian rivals had displayed an exotic gull-winged sports car powered by a turbocharged engine, which threatened to encroach on 'their' territory.

Porsche's own experiments in 1972 were based around a

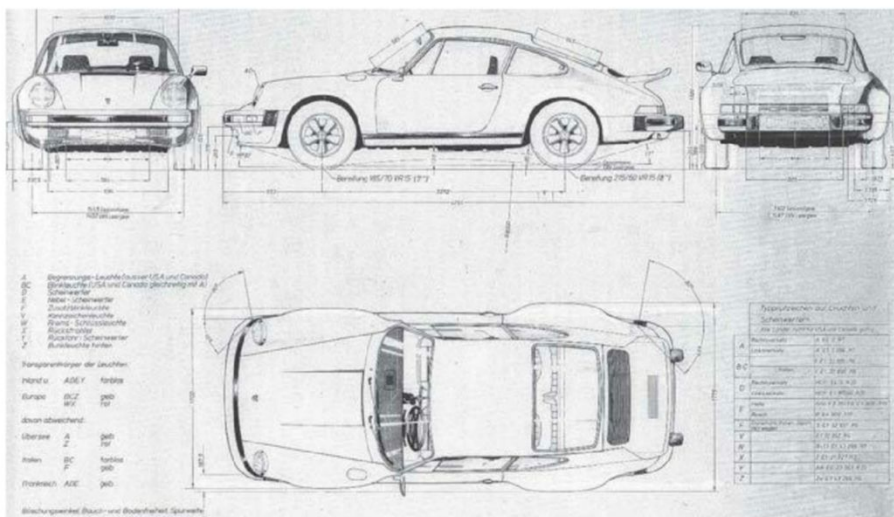
2.7-litre engine, that featured an induction system not dissimilar to that of the contemporary Can-Am motors. Dynamometer tests held early in 1973 suggested that reliability wouldn't be an issue, so the go-ahead was given to take the project to the next stage by installing a version of the engine in a road car. Initial tests at Weissach showed up two problems, neither of which was insurmountable: the chassis required further development to handle the extra horsepower, and the engine suffered from unacceptable levels of turbo lag. But power – of that there was plenty, with around 250bhp on tap.

Company chairman Ernst Fuhrmann was impressed with the initial results but, in an effort to keep costs down, insisted that any further development work revolve around the use of the new K-Jetronic fuel-injection system. With a single turbocharger located low-down to the left rear of the engine, close to the exhaust pipework and helping to keep the centre of gravity as low as possible, the prototype 911 turbo engine was one step nearer to being production-ready.

The task of taking things to the next level was entrusted to Herbert Ampferer, who in 1985 would go on to file a patent for Porsche's Varioram induction system. The biggest

Below: Prototype Turbo was first shown at the 1973 Frankfurt show, where it attracted enormous attention. The non-running show car (chassis number 9113300157) still survives, having later been converted to road-going RSR spec





Above left: Blueprint for success. Porsche's 930 was launched in 1974, turning the supercar world on its head

Above right: Ferry Porsche's sister, Louise Piëch, received a special Porsche Turbo for her 70th birthday in August 1974. Note the use of a 'narrow-body' shell

Below: The prototype 930 Turbo shared stand space with a humble VW-Porsche 914 at Frankfurt, representing opposite ends of the Porsche spectrum

problems Ampferer faced were finding a cure for the one-off switch-like nature of these early turbo installations and packaging the whole system in a way that made it suitable for production. But by summer 1973, Porsche felt it was ready to tell the world the news: a turbocharged 911 was on the horizon.

Type 930, as the new project was to be called, first saw the light of day at the 1973 Frankfurt motor show. On display was a 911 the likes of which had not been seen before, with wider front and rear wings, stretched to cover deep 15in-diameter wheels, a front air dam and a large 'whale-tail' rear spoiler. The bodywork was effectively that of the 3.0-litre RS and IROC cars, finished in a pearlescent silver. Bold 'Porsche' graphics in white along each flank left nobody in any doubt as to who had built the car, but even bolder 'Turbo' lettering over each rear wing made it clear this was no ordinary Porsche... A quick glimpse inside reinforced this as the car featured a pair of Recaro 'lollipop' seats, trimmed in plaid, with full harness seat belts for driver and passenger.

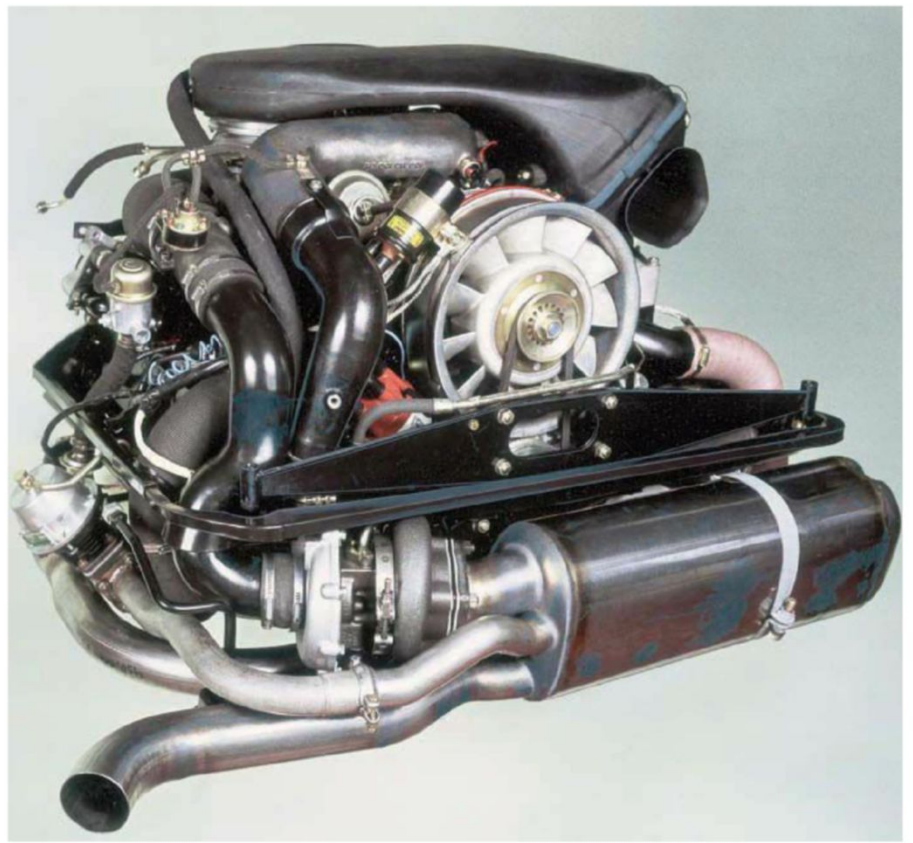
Curious visitors to the show stand enquired what lay under the rear lid. The answer was not always the same – some people appear to have been told it was a 2.1-litre

turbocharged engine producing 280bhp (presumably of the type that would appear in the forthcoming RSR Turbo) but most were informed it was a 2.7-litre engine capable of propelling the car to a top speed of over 160mph. What nobody was told, though, was that the engine was a mock-up, with a dummy induction system, incapable of running before, during or after the show.

The Frankfurt show car served as something of a watershed within Porsche, leading to two separate lines of development: one as a limited-production road car (Type 930), the other as a full-blown competition car (RSR Turbo). From this point on, the teams responsible concentrated on their own individual projects – both would prove to be ultimately successful in their endeavours.

There's little doubt the display car captured everyone's imagination, but Porsche couldn't promise it would be a full production model. Indeed, the initial plans were that it would serve as a way for the company to go racing in Group 4 GT competition, where there was a requirement to build a minimum of 400 examples. Once those relatively few cars had been built and sold, that was it – the 911 Turbo would have served its purpose.





But even the task of selling 400 of these cars didn't promise to be easy, for as 1973 drew to a close, so OPEC implemented a boycott of oil supplies, which turned the automotive world on its head. Without oil, there could be no petrol. Without petrol, what market would there be for a high-powered turbocharged sports car? It seemed as if the Type 930 was destined to be still-born. Even BMW had killed off its wonderful 2002 Turbo...

But Fuhrmann had other ideas. He was determined to see things through, despite on-road testing being curtailed due to the ban on Sunday driving imposed in Germany, along with speed restrictions on the autobahns and, incredibly, tracks such as the Nürburgring, Hockenheim and even Porsche's own Weissach facility. The restrictions were gradually eased, allowing Porsche to flex the Turbo's legs more often. But the matter remained of how to sell the concept to a market still reeling from the effects of OPEC's stranglehold on oil supply.

The debate centred round pricing. There were two schools of thought, one being that the 911 Turbo should be sold as a stripped-down model at a rock-bottom price. Although this may seem a strange idea now, bear in mind that a) there were people prophesying the end of performance cars as we know them due to fuel shortages and b) it would be a quick way to get rid of 400 cars so that

the factory could homologate the Grp 4 entries.

On the other side of the fence were those – Fuhrmann among them – who felt that the car deserved to be sold as a luxury item, a well-equipped range-topping model with a price tag that matched its obvious quality. Ultimately this was the winning argument and the decision was made to market the 930 accordingly. One year later, at the 1974 Paris Salon d'Auto, the production version of the 911 Turbo was shown for the first time – a well-equipped, highly-spec'd Porsche that marked the company's first venture into the world of road-going supercars.

Jürgen Barth recalls that, while working with the press department in 1976, he was tasked with driving the 911 Turbo's first 400 customers to give them instruction on how to handle this powerful new model. 'I drove each of them from the factory on a high-speed run up to Heilbronn, taking the opportunity to explain the car in detail to the new owners. This was a special service I was asked to do by the sales department.'

Looking back, it's perhaps difficult to appreciate what a monumental impact the 911 Turbo had on those involved with Porsche in the 1970s. It was in a league of its own and proved once and for all that, on track or on the street, Porsche could run with the big boys. **CP**

Top left and above left: Porsche used the 930 as the base for two of its most successful racers, the 935 (top) and the Group 4 934

Above: Original 3.0-litre motor ran without an intercooler. This was added in 1978 with the advent of the 3.3-litre engine

Below left: 'Ghost' graphics helped to emphasise the brutal look of the Turbo, accentuating the width of the rear wings on this early production model

Below: Prototype looks under-tyred from this angle. First cars were underbraked, too, with regular 911SC discs and calipers



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BUILDING THE BEUTLERS



In Switzerland Ernst and Fritz Beutler made a good living from building special bodies on both Volkswagen and Porsche chassis. Ultimately Porsche took a close interest in what the brothers were doing because it had 2+2 ambitions of its own

Words: Karl Ludvigsen Photos: Ludvigsen Collection



Above: In 1958–59 the Beutler brothers created a more rakish version of their VW-based offerings with a lengthened nose and tail. This prize-winner was Porsche-powered

The Swiss brothers Beutler stepped on the stage of Porsche-car history at the beginning of the first act, when Gmünd-built 356s were being sent to Switzerland, some as completed coupés and some as bare chassis. Importer Bernhard Blank arranged to have the chassis bodied as cabriolets by panel-beater Fritz Beutler and designer Ernst Beutler at their workshops on Gwattstrasse in Thun's southerly Dürrenast district, not far from Thun Lake.

Although they did a beautiful job in 1947–48 on half a dozen 356 cabriolets for Swiss customers, the Beutlers then left the Porsche stage, preferring bespoke coachwork for individual customers to series production, no matter how small. Relatively soon, however, they resumed activity that would lead to a renewed role in the drama of Porsche development.

'We did more four-seater than two-seater cars,' Ernst Beutler later told Randy Leffingwell. 'Our clients always asked: a coupé, nice shape, four places.' As the Volkswagen grew in popularity during the 1950s it became a Beutler staple. Bodies on the VW Beetle chassis were cleverly crafted by the Swiss to give comfortable 2+2 seating on the standard wheelbase of 94.5 inches. Wolfsburg's shield was a styling element centred on an ornamental oval at the nose that passed for a grille at first glance.

As early as 1953 a VW was Beutler-bodied as a handsome coupé that eerily foreshadowed the proportions of the Karmann-Ghia that was still two years in the future. By 1954 Beutler had evolved a four-passenger format that it exploited for several years in both coupé and cabriolet formats. While attractive verging on sporty, its style communicated a lack of pretension that appealed to the Swiss character.

The coupé's curvaceous greenhouse had C-shaped rear-quarter windows while its main body came either with or without a hint of hips above its rear wheelhouses. Lending themselves to a second colour for the roof above their high beltlines, Beutler bodies had an oval front motif that could either be an air inlet for front-engined chassis or a decorative design feature for rear-engined machines.

When fitted to a Beetle platform the result was a car of vast distinction compared to a garden-variety VW, although at SFr14,950 costing some triple a standard Beetle's SFr5555. Trim was luxurious with leather seating and upgraded instrumentation and steering wheel. In spite of some difficulty in getting platforms from VW, which wanted to protect its Karmann-Ghia, between 1953 and 1956 Beutler built 12 VW-based cars of this genre.

For performance to match a Beutler Beetle's looks a Porsche 1600 Super engine was available as a SFr3600 option, giving a top speed of 102mph. Stopping to match was available in the form of a 356A braking system for SFr1200. Before one knew it, one had the equivalent of a four-seater Porsche for a total of SFr19,750, equivalent at the time to some \$6170. With the addition of appropriate rear-deck grilles, instruments and badges the humble VW became a 'Porsche' with all the prestige that implied.

A face-lifted 'Beutler-Porsche' made its debut at Geneva in March of 1957. 'Beutler has reached a new pinnacle,' reported *Automobil Revue*. 'This year's version achieves an impression of length by the simplest means, namely increases in front and rear overhangs and the execution of both as horizontally as possible. In this bodywork, which has gained in purity of form through many detail improvements, one notes very slender windscreen posts and substantial glass area. When Porsche-powered', it continued, 'these cars achieve an attractive blend of liveliness and spaciousness.'

The Beutlers used some four dozen partial forms against which they hammered the body skins to shape, butt-welding them together to form the complete body. For material they used an alloy called Aluman, which complemented aluminum with 1.1 per cent manganese by weight to enhance its stiffness. They found that the shaping process made the skin even stronger.

The Aluman panels were 1.2mm thick, apart from the 1.5mm used for the doors, sides and rocker panels. Carrying them were steel tubular structures that also contributed to the



body-shaping and forming process. Typically two months were needed to complete a body before sending it to Lothar Lauenstein, whose paint shop was next door to the Beutler workshop. Of the new design introduced in 1957, priced at SFr20,390, five were produced.

A new German platform of interest to Beutler was introduced in 1958. This was the Auto Union 1000, an up-powered version of the Ingolstadt-built two-stroke DKW. At Geneva in March of 1959 the brothers launched a body for this model that retained the usual greenhouse while breaking with the previously bulbous lower-body lines to offer a much sharper front-end appearance and hints of tail fins with vertical rear lamps.

Seen at Thun during its creation, this much fresher Beutler look appealed strongly to a tall Stuttgart-based 22-year-old whose family name had become that of a German state: Carl, Duke of Württemberg. In 1975 he would become head of the House of Württemberg – since 1952 officially part of the unified state of Baden-Württemberg, home to Porsche – when his elder brother renounced his right of succession.

Duke Carl's interest in a cabriolet version of this new style coincided with increased involvement in the Beutlers' activities by Zuffenhausen. Since their first combined activities in 1947–48, Ferry Porsche and Erwin Komenda had

kept in touch with the brothers. Now, a decade later, they thought it was time to see if there was merit for these four-passenger models as an adjunct to the Porsche range. During a visit to Thun in December 1958 they agreed on lengthening the standard 356A chassis by 250mm, almost 10 inches, bringing the wheelbase to 92.5 inches.

Early in 1959, related Randy Leffingwell, 'Erwin Komenda returned to Thun. He brought with him some Porsche frame rails, an extension for the gearshift linkage and some modified wiring. At Beutler workers made a support to hold

the car solidly in place with a hydraulic-pump assembly to accurately open up the length.' They went to work on two chassis sent from Zuffenhausen complete with engine, suspension and steering, plus the instruments.

These first two stretched Porsche chassis went under bodies of the new style. A Swiss businessman was eager to take possession of

his coupé, which was ready early in 1959. For his part Carl of Württemberg provided a factory-fresh 356A 1600 Normal chassis, bought from a dealer in Reutlingen, to the Swiss brothers for adaptation to a soft-top. During the construction process, said Ernst Beutler, 'the Duke came to sit in the car to check that he fitted inside—because he was very tall.' In fact modifications to its roof line had to be made to accommodate his frame.

Above: The Beutler brothers deserved high marks for this pretty coupé on the Volkswagen platform in 1953. It anticipated the similar VW-based Karmann-Ghia by two years

Below left: The six cabriolets built by the Beutler brothers on Gmünd-made chassis in 1947–48 were exceptionally pretty. But that was their only Porsche-based work for the time being

Below right: Responding to customer demand, Beutler introduced this roomier two-door on the VW chassis in 1954. It was standardised for a small series of similar coupés

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Work went ahead quickly. A bill of SFr26,000 later, in May of 1959 Duke Carl had his cabriolet, metallic blue with a tan top and beige interior. Like its coupé sister, it had vertical tail lamps on muted fins that hinted of Britain's Sunbeam Alpine. Both had Carrera-style twin air-inlet grilles in the rear deck.

Under the headline 'A Four-seat Porsche' both cars were featured in *Automobil Revue* of 27 August 1959. Recapping Beutler's renewed co-operation with Porsche, the paper described their lengthened wheelbase and 'luxurious equipment'. At the front, it noted, luggage capacity had grown thanks to the trunk's more-forward placing and reshaping of the fuel tank. Weight, it stated, was 2070lb.

Although this was an increase of some 200lb over a standard Porsche, in spite of its much more elaborate design its aluminum skin allowed it to compare favourably with the 2025lb of Porsche's own effort at a four-seater, its Type 530.

Only one cloud darkened the skies of the refreshed Porsche-Beutler relationship: Komenda didn't like the design. After the good reception the new look had received, this was disappointing. But the Porsche people had only allowed their chassis to be used under the 1959-style bodies because those two cars were already nearing completion. 'We discussed the front, the bumpers, the styling,' Ernst Beutler recalled. 'They said I had to change the "mouth", to have another front and also the back, styled to integrate some original Porsche parts.'

With these changes, the Porsche men explained, Beutler could keep the original factory warranty and be sure of getting the various components it needed to build the cars. This was framed as an offer the Swiss couldn't refuse if

they wanted to keep on building 'Porsches'. The possibility was explored of selling four-seater cars through the Porsche network.

This possibility was not denied to Porsche's supplier of Spyder bodies, Wendler Karosseriebau GmbH in nearby Reutlingen. Soon enough its interpretation drove into the Werk I courtyard. Wendler stayed close to the 356A, using its front end and windscreen. Stretching the frame some 300mm ahead of the rear wheels, it built a notchback greenhouse with more angular quarter-windows. Vertical Mercedes-Benz

tail lamps capped the extended rear fenders of a prototype that remained exactly that.

Drawings of the new Komenda-influenced Beutler design were shown to clients at the March 1959 Geneva Salon. Based on 356B chassis the first two Porsche-look Beutlers left Thun in November of 1959 for Jacksonville, Florida

where they had been ordered by a freshly minted Porsche distributor for the southeast. The new model's styling and its carrying capacity appealed to the wife of Hubert Brundage, founder of Florida VW distributor Brundage Motors and, from September 1959, as BRUMOS, a Porsche distributor as well. She kept one, said researcher Marco Marinello, while the other was sold.

The Komenda-influenced Beutler-Porsche made its formal bow at Geneva in March of 1960. 'Rumours about development work by Porsche on a car in a larger-displacement category,' said *Automobil Revue*, 'have heightened interest even more in a lengthened four-seat version developed by the Beutler brothers in Thun.'

Advertised by Beutler as 'A genuine four-seater on the speedy Porsche chassis,' the new model did indeed

Above left: On the Volkswagen platform Beutler also offered power by Porsche as an option. This handsome 1957 coupé was an example as shown by its wheel discs and hood badge

Above right: Bearing a 1960 registration, this Beutler soft-top built on a stretched Porsche chassis was a handsome creation with its prominent tail lamps and rear-deck luggage rack

Below left: The greenhouse pillars of this 1959-style Beutler-bodied VW were delightfully thin. But the car's design lacked appeal to Erwin Komenda, who wanted a more Porsche-like look

Below right: That designer Ernst Beutler had flair was shown by this 1959 advertisement. But if they wanted the support offered by Porsche the brothers had to conform to Stuttgart's ideas

'ONLY ONE CLOUD DARKENED THE SKIES...'





Above: First shown in two examples at Geneva in March, 1960, the Porsche-influenced Beutlers on the 356B chassis flaunted the two-tone livery that suited their styling

resemble a stretched version of the new Type 356B Porsche. While the greenhouse was classic Beutler, with its slim pillars and generous glazing, it rested atop a body that had been Porscheified. At the rear Porsche tail lamps were next to mini-fin fender extensions while the nose, visually much longer than the original, ended in a Swiss interpretation of the 356B with side lamps and air inlets integrated.

Headlamps were vertical instead of sloping in VW/Porsche style, adding to what one observer called the new version's 'elongated character'. While the 356B bumpers and their overriders looked natural enough at the rear, the effect at the front can only be described as jarring, protruding as they did well forward of the bodywork. Pricing was a shock as well, the 1600 Normal version costing SFr25,900 and the Super priced at SFr26,900 – notable increases from the prices of previous Porsche-powered Beutlers.

'Whether these VW and Porsche versions, something special for enthusiasts, have the same driving characteristics of the originals remains an open question,' *Automobil Revue* opined. Although famed for its road tests, the paper never assessed one. No longer elegant and not yet sporty, the Porsche-look Beutler was an acquired taste. Two more were completed in May and November of 1960 with a final car leaving Thun in November 1961 to bring to five the number of

this version made. The last one, made on a pre-production T6 platform, graced Beutler's Geneva stand in March of 1962.

'Their noses are different,' said Beutler-Porsche owner Henry Walker, Jr. 'The coupés began with a higher, blunt nose, with Beutler apparently trying to increase space in the front luggage compartment, then became lower and more like a 356. The last two also have a noticeable crease from below their headlights to the front wheel well.' Survival rate of the rear-engined Beutlers is impressively high.

Demand was demonstrably less than intense for these final Porsche-ised Beutlers. The idea of selling them through Porsche's network proved infeasible when set against the Beutlers' traditional direct-selling practice, which left no margin for middlemen. Nor were Thun's production methods geared to the output pace that would be needed to satisfy even a minuscule slice of Porsche's global markets.

Like other bespoke coachbuilders, Beutler suffered from the introduction of monocoque auto bodies that lacked the separate frames on which they built so many bodies. Although carrying on, the company never wholly regained the special affection that the Swiss granted to its VW-based creations. It remained in business until 1987, when Beutler was finally shuttered. Although only enjoying a walk-on part, Beutler's role in the Porsche drama was notable. **CP**

Below: Shown at Geneva in 1962, one of the last of the Beutlers was built on a stretched Porsche 356 chassis. It completed a set of seven cars based on Porsche running gear





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AN ALADDIN'S CAVE

Above: Whatever year of Porsche you drive (or lust after) there's bound to be a model to suit. This really is an Aladdin's cave!

We head to France and drop in on Selection RS, which can only be described as the ultimate toy store for any Porsche fanatic. Whether you're a model collector, a lover of watches or simply want to turn your home into a homage to Stuttgart's finest, you need to add this store to your list

Words: Johnny Tipler Photos: Antony Fraser

You'd have to be a poker-faced Scrooge not to be inspired by the glittering contents of Bertrand Vien's temple to Porsche paraphernalia. There's everything the fan could possibly wish for here, from clothing to model cars. We're attending the grand opening of the Zuffenhausen-focussed superstore, and he has invited over 200 guests, so the adjacent car park is full of Porsches ancient and, it has to be said, mainly modern.

Being a September Saturday, doubtless many locals are using the opportunity to give their pride and joy an airing. Pride of place in the showroom are a modern 918 Spyder and a Carrera GT, whilst the yard behind the building features a collection of punters' air-cooled classics.

Based in Vesoul in the Haute-Saône region of eastern France, Bertrand has been marketing Porsche-tagged ranges of goods on-line since 2012, but earlier this year he decided to open his premises with a proper shop so customers could browse at leisure and check out the product ranges before committing to buy anything. And there's no obligation to purchase anything; it's great just to ogle the wares and maybe build a mental wish list to do the business on-line once back home.

The first display that catches my eye is a history of Porsche cars presented as 1:18 scale models, housed in a long showcase: from the earliest 356 and derivatives, right up to the very latest 991 Coupe, Turbo, GT2 and Cabriolet, and 718 Boxster and Cayman. Racing cars, too – the obligatory 917, 906, 910 and Carrera Cup cars. Bertrand is pleased

with it: 'it's a nice presentation so people can see how the company evolved, from the original 356 through the 2.7 RS and 996 GT3, and so on.'

I've never seen a display of models that's quite so specific, but in fact some models are no longer available. As Bertrand says, 'you cannot buy some of them because they have not been produced for maybe 10 years now, so those are coming from our own collection, but the ones with prices marked are the ones which are in stock. People who know the models can say, "Oh, I had this one, I remember that," and those who don't know Porsches that well can discover the extent of the model range.'

If it is scale models that interest you, Bertrand stocks a good cross-section of makers: Spark, Minichamps, Tecnomodel, Norev, Schuco, GT Spirit, Cult, AutoArt – the list goes on. While he organises his opening ceremony, we take a tour of the shelved aisles. Here's a Porsche logo'd table-lamp; and here is a clock; there's delicate crockery and a calendar, a wine cooler, Porsche bottle stops, Eau-de-Cologne, and wrist-watches branded Selection RS.

Bertrand shows us the Porsche Design 'Driver Selection Collection,' consisting of all the apparel available from the works souvenir department, as well as racks of T-shirts from the likes of Hunziker and a rather nice Jo Siffert windcheater, and as Bertrand explains, 'we present one of each item, and we have all the sizes in stock. So here we also have gloves and jackets in Martini and Gulf racing styles, plus key fobs, ties, pin badges, sunglasses, watches, driving shoes and caps.'



Above: Posters form a big part of the collection, and are a popular line

Above right: Bertrand Vien's business started small and has grown – and grown. A major on-line presence brings in a world market

Below left to right: Gulf livery is popular, for rather obvious reasons. How about this liveried desk lamp? And if watches are your thing, then Selection RS has a large range, including original Porsche items. Clothing? There's a massive range to choose from

You might wonder, not unreasonably, what would motivate someone to open such a specialised outlet in a provincial city, and indeed where your customers are going to come from. But as Kevin Costner says in *Field of Dreams*, 'Build it and they will come.' If you build it big enough, it's a destination, and people will come to see it. And the proof of the pudding is the stream of Porsches that are queuing to get in.

It's a Porsche petrolhead's dream: you could walk into the emporium and very easily spend a great deal of money on things you don't really need, like a set of kitchen knives or a Martini racing bag or leather man-bag.

We all need models of the Porsches we find inspirational for whatever reason, and Bertrand can help find the one you're missing. If you're a connoisseur you might want to just specialise in collecting one scale of model or one model

maker, rather than just collect anything and everything. Once you get into the mainstream cars, almost certainly there will be not only model collectors but people who've seen their car in here and want a model of it.

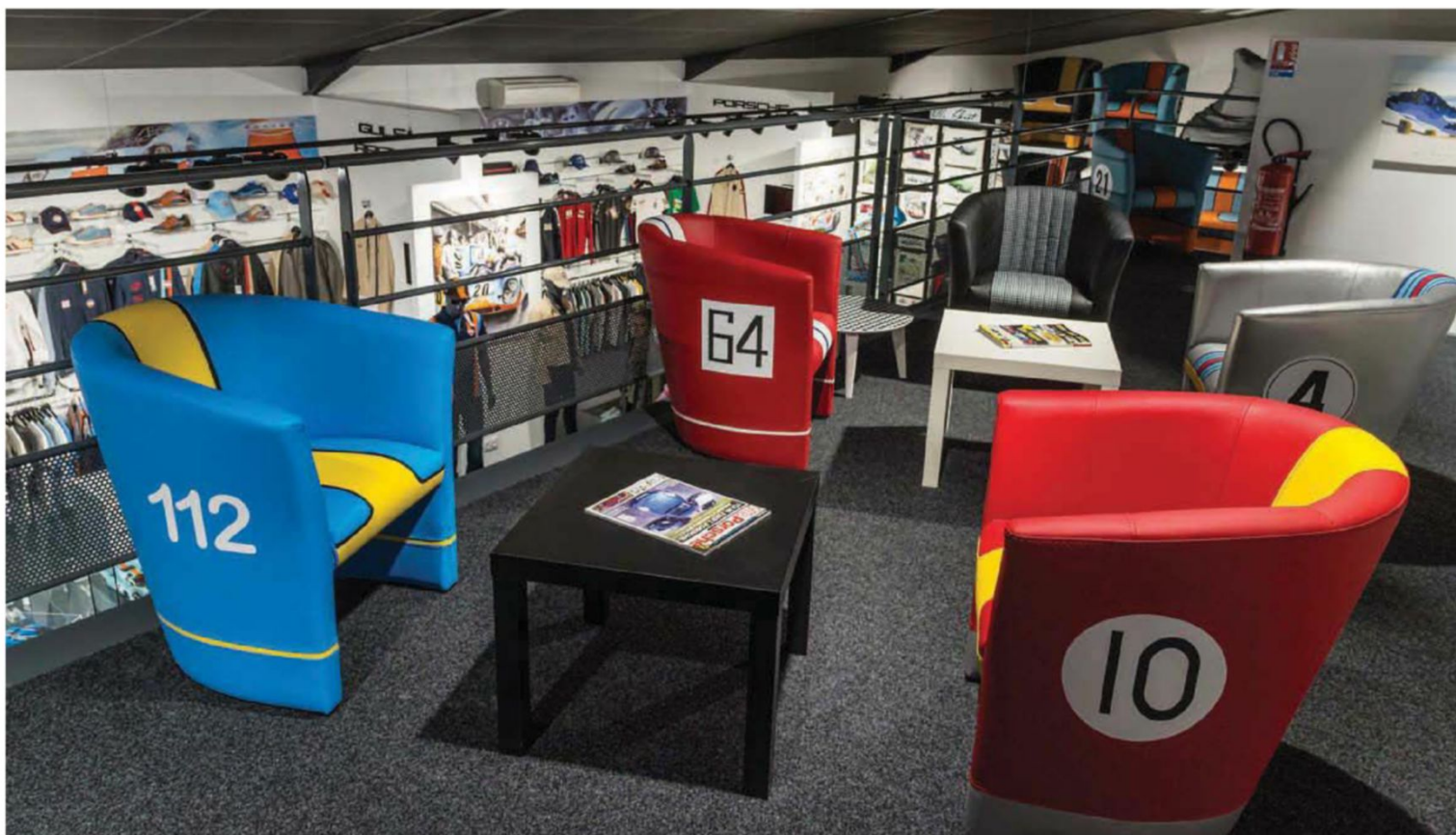
There are model kits of course, by Tamiya, Revell and Gunze Sangyo, and there's even a working model of a flat-six engine by Franzis, with all the moving parts visible.

The longer you spend wandering around the more things you catch sight of which you think, 'Aha! That's what I've always wanted – things like headlights which are clocks, and different style classic crash helmets

replicating those of famous drivers like Jo Siffert and Steve McQueen, as a tribute to the *Le Mans* film. And here's a very nice angle-poise lamp, and some great artworks by well-known Porsche exponents, such as Caroline Llong and Laurence Henry.

“FROM THE ORIGINAL 356 THROUGH THE 2.7 RS...”





Upstairs on the mezzanine deck are shelves of Porsche books – including a couple written by yours truly, I'm delighted to see – and magazines such as this one. This is a great place to relax with a brew (from the bar downstairs) and take stock of what you've just bought, or ponder what else could be on the shopping list.

The leather armchairs, which are for sale, are not only comfortable but quite spectacular, upholstered in the coloured liveries of 917 race cars. 'The seats are a big success, especially because the price is good and there is also a special offer: we sell them individually for €250, or two for €450.'

Bertrand describes how he got Selection RS off the ground: 'I had my own collection of 1:18-scale model cars, and seven years ago I found one of a 997 Turbo for a very good price and I thought, let's buy four of them, keep one for me and sell three, so I sold those, and then I found some 1:43 scale cars, and I also sold those as box sets, and gradually, month-by-month and year-by-year, our garage filled up with Porsches in little boxes.'

'Then we started sending out newsletters to our clients, and all the time I was accumulating customers' e-mail addresses in an Excel database, and soon we had 100

clients. Five years ago, we created the Selection RS website to show our range of items, but we didn't push it at all, we were quite relaxed about it, and at the time we were selling most of our stock at swap-meets, in Belgium, in the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and France.

'I was waking up every Saturday or Sunday at four or five o'clock, together with my son who was six or seven years old, and he would come with me to the swap-meets, and we had some very nice moments. It was hard work, but rewarding. Then, four years ago we decided we would try to develop the business and make Selection RS much bigger, so we started to advertise in magazines, and took on two more people to help us out.

'We increased the stock by buying in many items, and we started to sell not only model cars, but also clothing and accessories like watches, luggage, and so on. So, three years ago we suddenly had a lack of storage space because the garage was full, so we set about finding a space here in our city, and we found this building, which we divided into three sections: showroom, warehouse and dispatch. Our turnover increased quite fast, and now we sell 20 times more than when we started.'

Even though the city of Vesoul is quite small – we

Above: The 917-inspired chairs have proved to be a big hit with customers. And at €250 each, they won't break the bank...

Below left: Bertrand with his freshly-finished 912, which he originally found for sale in London nine years ago

Below right: Everywhere you look, there are surprises, like a headlamp that's now a Martini-inspired clock...





Above: Some of the models will look familiar to regular readers of Classic Porsche...

Contact:

Bertrand Vien
Selection RS
19 Rue du petit Montmarin
70000 VESOUL
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté
France
Tel: +33 384 781 859
bertrand.vien@defiem.fr
<https://selectionrs.com/en/>

Below left and right:
Whatever your particular favourite is, Bertrand is sure to have a model of a famous Porsche race car for you, be it a 550 coupé or a Gulf 917

certainly had to enlist Madame Satnav to find it – Bertrand anticipates that visitors will ‘...come from all over France, and even from Switzerland and Belgium to see the showroom.’ Endearingly, he seems slightly incredulous that it’s all taken off to such an extent: ‘Even though they said that they like it, because there are a few cars in showcases. From my point of view, I thought they could be frustrated because the space is too small, so I said we should make something bigger, and we’ve tried to make it the biggest showroom that can be found anywhere in the world with only dedicated Porsche items and memorabilia.’

There’s a synergy with Porsche as well. ‘We are still a small company, but there is no equivalent in the marketplace, and even Porsche doesn’t have the same space with so many items on display and available to order on-line. Only the Museum shop at Zuffenhausen, which is very nice and very spacious, but they have fewer items.’

‘So, there is nothing to compare with us, and it is good that we have a very good relationship with Porsche. We are very pleased with this collaboration, of course, and they try to help us, which is kind of them because they could also try to stop us. But they are shrewd, and nice enough to let us develop this business, and at the same time we have the

opportunity to sell other items created by other manufacturers like Nicolas Hunziker and so on.

There’s a neat twist to the tale: not only does Bertrand sell Porsche memorabilia, he also owns a Porsche: in pride of place amongst the air-cooled cars is an orange 912. It’s his personal toy, its restoration completed just in time for the grand opening.

It’s been a long time coming: ‘I found it on eBay nine years ago in London, and a friend checked it for me and said it looked OK, and so I bought it for £7000, which was a good price then. There were some parts missing but the guy found them, and it was running, so I drove it to the ferry at Dover. But arriving in Calais, a friend came with a trailer to pick it up because I didn’t feel confident about crossing the whole of France with it.’

‘The original colour was Bahama Yellow, and when I bought it, it was red, but my favourite colour is tangerine, so I decided I will make it tangerine. So, a friend and I dismantled the car and another friend painted it, but after it was finished I left it in my garage and didn’t touch it. And then two weeks ago I said let’s make it ready for the opening, and here we are.’ Indeed, an apt transition from one Porsche construction kit – to whole a shelf-full. **CP**



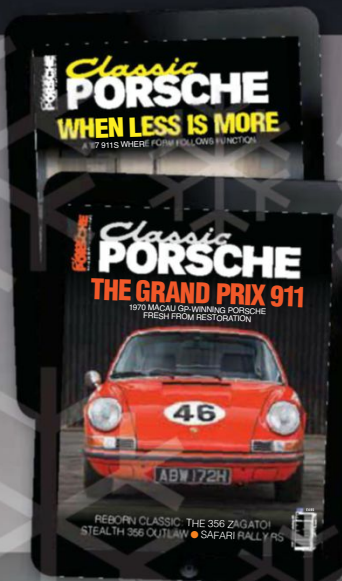


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SPA SIX HOURS

Classic Porsche's own Robert Barrie takes on the legendary Spa-Francorchamps circuit at the wheel of an early 911 while contesting the six-hour endurance race

Words: Robert Barrie Photos: Jayson Fong and Robert Barrie

“I’M SURE I SAW A
RAINBOW OVER EAU
ROUGE...”

The Six Hours of Spa-Francorchamps is one of the must-do events in historic racing. It's also become a must-win for some well-heeled competitors. Fifteen Ford GT40s entered the twenty-fifth running of the race this year and one of them won. Again. It does seem to be the tool for the job. However, there were another 100 of us on the grid with plenty to play for.

I shared an early 911 with Steve Jones, its owner, and Pascal Pandelaar, from Duel Motorsport, who ran the car with Dale Racing. The car, as with all the others in the race, is prepared to period FIA spec – which, among other things, means a 2-litre engine on Solex carburettors, a weight of just over 1000 kilos and skinny 5.5 inch wheels. We are on Avon tyres, which are reasonably grippy even if it's wet. The car is predominantly white with a green stripe, #128.

In our case, a good result will be a top thirty finish and/or a class podium. If we can't achieve either of those, I'll settle for being first of the ten 911s taking part. Actually, I am politely told at lunch on race day simply to make sure we finish. Okay, Roger, understood.

The race starts on Saturday afternoon and ends at 10.00 in the evening. Qualifying was late on Friday, by which time the circuit was

drying out from another shower. I am sure I saw a rainbow over Eau Rouge. We set a time, but the session was red flagged and ended without much opportunity to improve on it. It won't be a problem.

There are five 911s in front of us. Pascal set the fastest time of any in the light blue sister car to ours, #112. It is a steady start to our weekend and the car feels up to the job. I am optimistic there is more to come. Our strategy is simple. Steve will start and drive for just over two hours. I'll jump in and do a similar stint in the middle, leaving Pascal to do an hour and a half in the dark at the end.

We will refuel at both driver changes and change the rear tyres at the second. In this race, you need a plan and to know how and when to change it. You can gain or lose seconds on the track and minutes in the pits or at the pumps. The driving is about mechanical sympathy as well as speed. The first sign we may need to rethink is when the race is delayed. The race before us starts when it is due to finish. The Six Hours will be five-and-a-quarter hours as a result. I start to wonder if we can do it on one fuel stop.

The huge grid forms up in front of the old pit garages on the run down to Eau Rouge. We are some way up the hill towards La Source. As always, it's a bit chaotic back there. I check Steve is



Above: Robert Barrie heads a mixed bag of cars contesting the Six Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. Ford GT40s are the weapon of choice for overall victory



okay and help another 911 find its slot. Eventually, the pace car leads the field away. In due course, it comes round and into the new pit lane, the start line lights go green and the race is on.

Steve has a good start and makes up some places. A 911 comes into the pits with a problem after a few laps. They can't fix it. That's very tough. Soon, the faster cars start to come through the field. We will be lapped by them more or less continuously from now until the end.

We'll lose time if we get out of the way and more than that if we get in the way. We also need to make sure we make

our own way past slower cars. The traffic is relentless.

Steve stays out on track during the first and second safety car periods. Most of the other 911s come in to make stops. We stay out to avoid a queue at the fuel pumps. In round numbers,

it takes five minutes to refuel. If we get stuck behind another car it will take twice that long or more. The answer is to come in before everyone else or stay out until after everyone else – we choose the latter and it works.

Steve comes in after more than two hours and hands the car over to me.

He says it's slippery at the big double left at Pouhon. I drive round to the pumps, brim the tank, note how much fuel we've used, belt up and get out on track. It's taken the minimum

Above: As the event starts in the afternoon and finishes at 10.00pm, night-time racing is all part of the action-packed programme

“HE SAYS IT'S SLIPPERY AT THE BIG DOUBLE LEFT...”

Below left and right: Duel Motorsport's Pascal Pandelaar set the quickest time by a 911 at the wheel of #112, sister car to #128





Above: Prepped to meet FIA Historic regulations, the 911 runs Solex carburetors on its 2.0-litre engine. The car is owned by Steve Jones

Below left: Steve Jones drove the first stint before handing over to Robert

Below right: Jaz entry was the second 911 home, finishing just a minute behind after six hours' racing

amount of time. The car is running strongly and we start to move back up the order again. I have a lurid moment at Pouhon – Steve was right – but there's no harm done and we carry on. It starts to get dark, but it stays dry.

With an hour or so to go, the lead 911 comes into the pits. They've got a problem and their race is over. The next four of us are now running next to each other. The pit board says we are second. Then the new lead 911 also retires with a problem. The race can be cruel. We are now the lead 911 and the car is still running strongly.

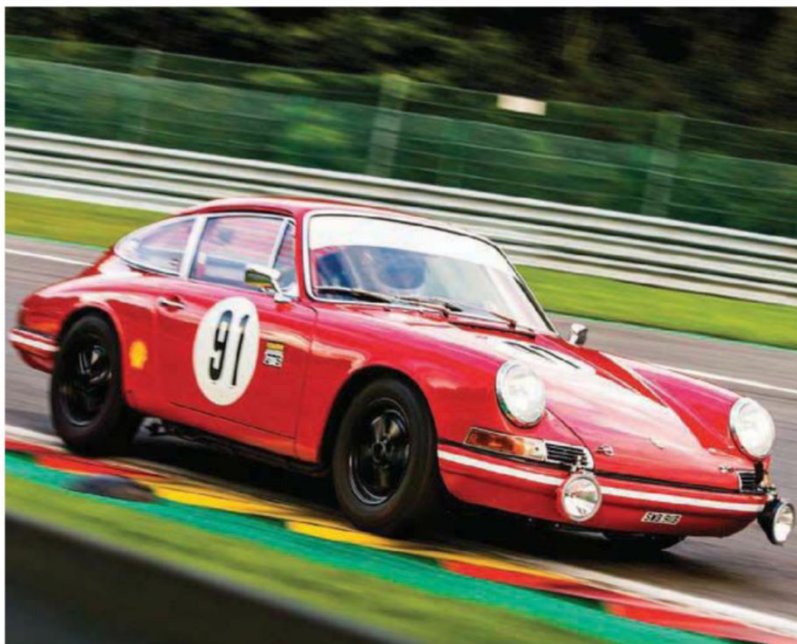
There are two further safety car periods before the pit

board says it's time to come in and hand over to Pascal. I've been in the car for almost two-and-a-half hours – the maximum allowed. It's very dark by now and hard to pick out some of the corners, particularly when a following car fills the cockpit with light. While driving, I have been working out whether we need to refuel again. I have convinced myself we don't.

There's half an hour to go as I get out and Pascal gets in. As we cross, I tell him we don't need to refuel. I say it again, just in case. The guys change the rear tyres and the car

shoots off into the night. It was right to change the tyres – the old ones are a mess. It seems everyone thinks we should have refueled, too. Steve nips to the pumps to see if Pascal

**“WE START TO MOVE
BACK UP THE ORDER
AGAIN...”**





has gone there anyway. He hasn't. Ah.

It's a long half hour to the end of the race. The timing screen confirms we are quicker than the cars behind us, but do we have enough fuel? From the other side of the circuit we hear the chequered flag is out. The race is over. It has been won by Chris Ward and Andrew Smith in a GT40. Well done to them and their team.

We think we crossed the line just ahead of their car and have another lap to go, and then our car comes past very slowly.

Surely, we can't have run out on the last lap? Thankfully not. It seems we were just behind, rather than just ahead of, the GT40 at the flag and Pascal was on a slowing down lap. Eventually, to everyone's relief, not least mine, the car appears at our garage.

We have finished just outside the top thirty and just missed a class podium – those are still realistic targets – but we are the first 911 home. Our garage has filled up and there are celebrations all round. The next car – only a minute

behind after more than five hours racing – is the red Jaz car, #91. The third 911 is the sister car to ours.

Congratulations to the 904 that finished in the top ten and also to the little 356 that punched well above its weight. You need luck to do well in the Six Hours, but you

also need more than that. We had some luck this year, but we were also well-prepared and well-organised.

Many thanks to Steve Jones, Duel Motorsport and Dale Racing for the opportunity and for their excellent support. Roll on next year! **CP**

Above: Robert drives into the gathering gloom as darkness begins to fall across the circuit. He would soon hand over to Pascal Pandelaar for the final stint

“YOU NEED LUCK TO DO WELL IN THE SIX HOURS...”

Below left: Few circuits are as spectacular as Spa...

Below right: MGB in front, GT40 coming up behind – the Six Hours has it all



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OURS CARS: KEITH SEUME

A new look for *El Chucho*'s interior as we swap the original bucket seats for some rather more comfortable recliners, now retrimmed to tie in with the overall theme. Oh, and *El Chucho* gets an identity...

Words & workshop photos: Keith Seume Lead photo: Antony Fraser

Ever since I got my project on the road, I've never really been all that happy with the seats. They looked great – Corbeau buckets trimmed in Cornish tartan and black vinyl – but their design meant that, on longer journeys, I'd tend to 'submarine', sliding slowly forward until I ended up in a position where there was little support in the small of my back. After 100 miles or so, I'd end up with back ache.

In an ideal world, I'd have splashed out on a pair of expensive replica factory sports seats, with reclining backs, but the cost just didn't match my meagre budget. So began a period of searching the internet for a suitable alternative. The seats would have to have 'classic' styling (by that I don't mean old, but traditional), have reclining backrests so I could alter the angle of the backrest to suit my driving position,

have level mountings underneath (many seats have one runner higher than the other, making fitment in an early Porsche a bit tricky) and be reasonably priced.

An obvious choice was one of the earlier Recaros fitted to Fords and the like, but all the pairs I came across were completely shot: torn, dirty and misshapen. Widening the search along the lines of 'classic sports seats' brought up an intriguing alternative, which I would never have thought of: MGF. Yes, the short-lived mid-engined British sports car.

The seats looked good, and a quick search on line showed that they were narrow enough to fit in a 911 or 912. But what about the runners? Again, the internet came to the rescue as a search for a photo of the underside of an MGF seat led me to, of all things, a forum about Mazda MX-5s (Miatas, to our US readers). Sure enough, there was a photo

Above: We've been getting plenty of miles under our belts this summer, and now thoughts are turning to sorting out the little problems which we've never got round to addressing...

Below left: Lee used the original seat panels as templates for new material

Below right: We picked up these mounting brackets from an ad on DDK. They're OK for now but need modifying



Right: The original MG headrests were impossible to recover as the material was bonded to the foam. A search on eBay turned up a pair in black leather, which have now been dyed to match the seat bolsters

Far right: The seats are far more comfortable than the Corbeaus fitted before and the Westfalia plaid inserts match the paintwork well



of an MGF seat, upside down, showing that all I'd need to do was trim off two small brackets to end up with a 'flat' base to work with. But what were the seats like in terms of comfort? I'd never even sat in one.

As it happened, one day an MGF pulled up opposite my house, so I rushed out and, much to the bemusement of the owner, asked if I could sit in the seat. It felt perfect. The search was on and eBay once again came up trumps.

For the princely sum of £180 (including delivery), I bought a pair of leather and cloth seats from a specialist dismantler. They were in almost perfect condition, with no marks, no sags and no split seams. All I needed to do now was get the patterned centres retrimmed in something to match the car.

I decided against more Cornish tartan and spent quite a bit of time at the local upholstery fabric shop in search of the ideal material, but I couldn't find anything that appealed. Then a trip to a European VW show turned up the perfect answer: Westfalia tartan, as used in older VW Campers. I bought a couple of metres (far more than I'd need, but the price was right) and came home a happy man.

A local VW enthusiast friend, Lee Lidstone, offered to retrim the seats for me as part of her learning process – she's keen to hone her skills as an upholsterer and I

was happy to give her the chance. Dismantling the seats showed how well made they are (and, yes, they were indeed made in England, as a sticker on the underside proudly exclaimed) and Lee set to, unpicking the seat trim so that she could use the original patterned centres as templates for the new material.

The end result is, I believe, pretty darned good and not at all out of place in the car. The only parts that jar at present are the knurled knobs for the reclining mechanism, so I might look into having someone machine some new ones in a more period style, along with some hinge covers.

Mounting the seats was fairly straightforward, using some new brackets bolted across the runners which, in turn, bolted to some slotted brackets I'd bought off DDK. It works, but the seats are a little too far forward at present and can't be moved back enough to accommodate a taller driver. They're fine for me, but it's something I need to address at a later date.

Finally, as he was in the area painting Lee's husband's drag race car, I asked ace pinstriper Neil Melliard if he could add a finishing touch to *El Chuchito*, in the form of a cartoon mongrel dog, and the name. Watching Neil at work is humbling – everything is done freehand, proving that the old methods are the best. No vinyl here, thank you! **CP**

Below left: Ace pinstriper Neil Melliard at work. It was fascinating watching him...

Below right: OK, I know the purists won't like it, but the hot rodder in me couldn't resist. *El Chuchito* lives!



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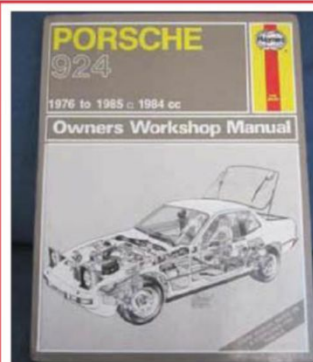


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Porsche 924 Haynes workshop manual, 1976 to 1985, hardback, vgc, £4.50. Tel: 07399 359072. C49/027



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