

PORSCHE

PANORAMA

DECEMBER 2007



*A Porsche village springs to life
where time has no meaning*



LEONARD TURNER

Rennsport Reunion

BY BETTY JO TURNER



PORSCHE PANORAMA

PORSCHE PANORAMA
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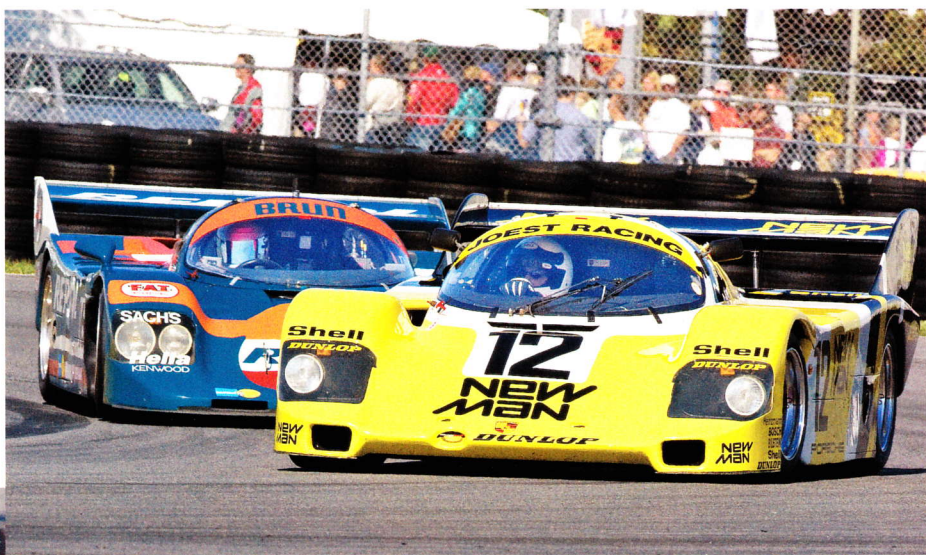


PCA president and announcer Prescott Kelly talks with Rennsport organizer Bob Carlson. Carlson has been the driving force behind all three Rennsport Reunions.

The speed yellow, 1100-horsepower 917/30, like the one that Mark Donohue made famous back in 1973, comes roaring off the track and into its place of honor; the thrumming of its monster engine rattling the windows in Daytona's new 500 Club lounge above the winners' circle. Right behind it, diminutive alongside the huge Can-Am Porsche, comes the silver 908/3 that finished second, gleaming in its Martini colors. The pair has just engaged in the kind of epic duel that Formula One can only dream about, exchanging the lead two and sometimes three times a lap. Filling the final spot in a now cramped victory lane is a sky blue and Gulf orange 917K, third and only slightly distant from the melee which had taken place at the front. There the racing Porsches sit, as Jim Torres, Phil Daigrepoint and Chris MacAllister climb to the podium, the cars now silent and almost too pristine to be real—917/30, 908/3, 917K.

Unreal? No, magical. Where but at a Rennsport Reunion, could such scenario play itself out? Cars that never faced each other on the tracks of the past, driven with passion by those who are now their protectors. A Porsche Camelot where once and future Porsche race cars are joined by the men who drove them to glory. Knights in sweaty driving suits. Brief and shining—a weekend when it all comes together again. Improbable. Unbelievable. And as real as the unforgiving walls that rim Daytona's high banking—no more yielding now than when the 917s first appeared here nearly four decades ago.

The inspired vision of PCNA's Bob Carlson, every three years Rennsport Reunion calls the Porsche motorsport community, past and present, together. A village springs to life where time has no meaning. Under brightly colored tents in Daytona's Fan Zone, book sellers hawk their wares alongside model merchants. Automotive art galleries and racing gear shops vie for



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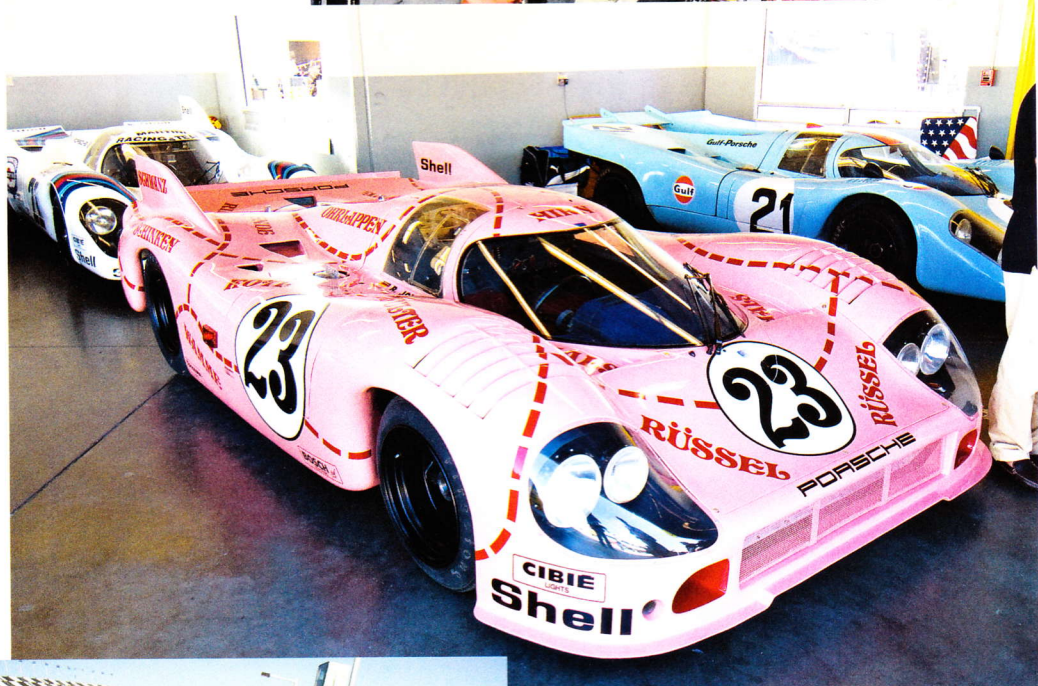
Porsche 956s (top), which never saw action in the United States, were among the featured models at RR III. Phil Dairepont's Martini 908/3 (bottom) took on a 917/30 nearly twice its size in the Weissach Cup race.

attention. A slot car track offers 10 laps for two dollars and down at the east end of the track, for three days running, enthusiasts line up for a chance to test drive a Cayman on an autocross circuit for ten bucks a lap—with proceeds from both going to Camp Boggy Creek, a Hole in the Wall camp near Daytona. On Saturday a model and memorabilia swap meet and model car concours offer diversion.

The cars of yesterday fill the garages again, alongside

their contemporary counterparts—a longtail 908 just down the way from a Penske RS Spyder; a 914 GTR not far from this year's Brumos Grand Am DP prototype. Richard Attwood, who drove a 917K to Porsche's first ever win at Le Mans in 1970, talks with Timo Bernhard, who just secured the LMP2 driver championship with the RS Spyder. Porsche's first American factory driver, Joe Buzzetta, a stalwart from the late 1960s, stands on the same pit apron with Patrick Long, today's lone

Amelia Island Concours boss Bill Warner with Dale Miller and Joe Buzzetta, whose 908 Flounder had just won Best of Show in the Rennsport Concours de Sport.



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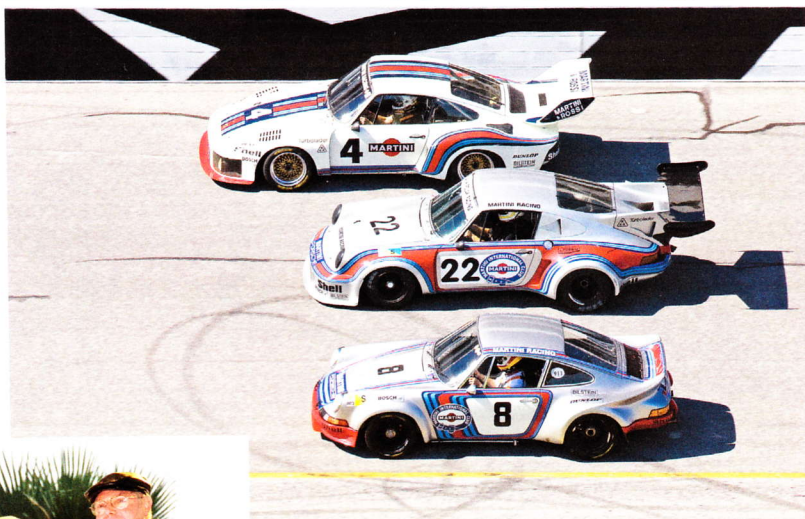
The one-of-a-kind 917/20, known universally as the "Pink Pig," was brought to Rennsport from Porsche's Museum in Stuttgart.

American on Porsche's factory team. Hurley Haywood, the most successful endurance driver of them all, nearly covers the distance between them with a career that includes five outright victories at Daytona, three at Le Mans and two at Sebring.

They're all here. Legendary drivers in a group that includes Derek Bell, Vic Elford, Brian Redman, Vern Schuppan, Kees Nierop, Bruce Leven, George Drolson, John O'Steen, Dick Barber, Denise McCluggage, Elliott Forbes Robinson, Rick Bye, David Donohue, David Murry, Darren Law, Chip Robinson, George Follmer, David Hobbs, John Morton, Sam Posey, Tony Adamowicz, Jürgen Barth, John Paul, Jr., Gijs van Lennep, David Piper, Willi Kauhsen, Jonathan

Porsche 917s as far as the eye can see lined up on the pit apron for the Concours de Sport. Rennsport presented the largest collection of 917s ever gathered in one place.

A study in racing 911 development (bottom to top): "Mary Stuart" RSR, Turbo RSR and 935.



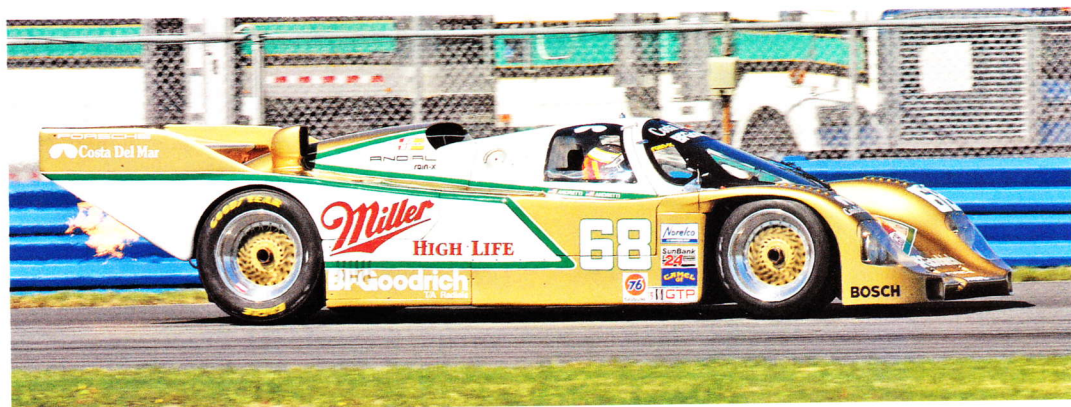
David Donohue (left) accepts a remembrance honoring the Porsche racing accomplishments of his late father, Mark. Presenting the award are Brian Redman, whose Intercontinental Events organized the racing portion of Rennsport, and Bob Carlson.

Williams, Jim Busby, Michael Keyser, Charlie Kemp, Gérard Larrousse, Rudi Lins, Jackie Oliver, Scooter Patrick and Andy Lally.

At the heart of the spectacle are more than 350 splendid Porsche race cars in staggering variety.

Early Spyderys in silver profusion, a kaleidoscopic array of 911 racers, 356s beginning with Brett Johnson's 1951 coupe. Virtually all of Porsche's fiberglass-bodied race cars from the years between 1966 and 1971, when designs flew off Weissach drawing boards like cloud-to-ground lightning, are here—906, 910, 907, 908, 917. Exotic sub species are represented as well: a Bobsy-Porsche and a 1962 Porsche Dolphin that came all the way from the United Kingdom, not to mention the Fuhrmann four-cam Carrera-powered Lotus 23 that was an early weapon of Can-Am champion George Follmer.

Singled out as featured models were the 917, as mentioned above, the first car to win Le Mans outright for Porsche; and the 956/962, celebrating its 25th anniversary. The largest group of Porsche 917 models ever assembled in one place, some 16 in all, gathered for the occasion. In its brief time on the motorsport stage, between 1969 and 1973, the big Porsche startled the racing world into looking at Porsche in a totally



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Porsche 962-HR7 is owned today by Paul Thieme. In Sunday's Mulsanne Cup race, factory driver Patrick Long put it in the winner's circle once again.

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Honorary co-grand marshal Betty Jo Turner, editor of PORSCHE PANORAMA, outlines the links between PCA and Porsche motorsport in her opening remarks.

PAUL GREGOR



PCA Executive Director Vu Nguyen tries his hand at the Cayman autocross which ran for three days on the infield at the east end of the track.

different way. From the Gulf-Wyer and Salzburg 917Ks, to the wildly painted longtail "hippy car," Can-Am PA Spyder and awesome 917/30, they came.

From the museum, Porsche brought four rare examples. The 1971 Le Mans winner, a finned white 917K in Martini colors, had a secret weapon when it went to the Sarthe that year. Under its conventional bodywork, a new magnesium frame had replaced the usual aluminum tubes. Up against three longtail versions, which were quicker on the Mulsanne, and two other 917Ks, Gijs van Lennep and Helmut Marko brought it home ahead of the pack, bringing Porsche its second Le Mans triumph.

Klaus Bischoff, director of Porsche's museum, brought two other 1971 917s: a longtail from 1971, pur-

pose built for the Mulsanne and capable of 240 mph on the 3.5 mile straight; and the bizarrely painted 917/20 known as the Pink Pig, the only car of its kind. The result of an attempt to achieve the terminal velocity of a longtail design in a short tail configuration, the 917/20 was driven by Reinhold Joest and Willi Kauhsen at Le Mans in 1971.

The fourth museum car, perhaps the rarest of all, is a race car that never started a race. An experimental 917 Spyder, essentially identical to the 917 PA Spyder with which Jo Siffert contested the 1969 Can-Am championship, but fitted with a normally aspirated 16-cylinder engine, it was created as Porsche searched for the right powerplant for the Can-Am. Ultimately, of course, the choice was to turbocharge the 917's 12-

Brett Johnson's racing 1951 356 coupe was the oldest Porsche at Rennsport Reunion.



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VU NGUYEN



VU NGUYEN

At the PCA hospitality center, PCA historian Ellen Beck interviews past PCA national president Chuck Stoddard for her oral archive project.

PCA presented a historic exhibition of member owned cars representing every year and model of Porsche production.

cylinder engine. In one of Rennsport's many unusual juxtapositions, Siffert's PA Spyder and the 16-cylinder prototype were together in the same place for the first time since July of 1969. Now part of the Collier Museum collection, the PA Spyder never went home to Weissach while the 16-cylinder car until now had never left Germany.

In honor of its 25th anniversary, some 25 956 and 962 models came to Daytona, including the first 956 ever built resplendent in its blue and white Rothmans livery and bearing the number one. This is the car that ushered in the 956/962 era at Silverstone in May of 1982 with Derek Bell and Jacky Ickx doing the honors.

After a full day of practice and touring laps on Fri-



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day and again on Saturday morning, it was time to show off all the noteworthy Porsche race cars in a paced exhibition. For an hour, the great cars circulated the track, driven in many cases by those who had first taken them to the finish line. In the meantime, Bill Warner, the genius behind the Amelia Island Concours, began to assemble cars for the invitational Concours de Sport. All afternoon long crowds thronged pit lane to walk among the best of the best, chosen not only for their beauty but for their significance. How to choose best of show from among a group that included the red and white 1970 Le Mans winning 917K, the 917/30 with which Mark Donohue claimed the 1973 Can-Am championship, the ex-Follmer Porsche powered Lotus 23 and the very first Group C Porsche, 956-001?


The nod was given to Joe Buzzetta's 908 Spyder and therein lies a tale. PANORAMA was at Daytona in 1969 when Porsche brought five longtail 908 coupes to defend their one-two-three triumph of the previous year. They also brought their ten top drivers, men like Redman, Elford, Siffert, Attwood, Stommelen—and Buzzetta. Elford and Redman took the pole and things looked good going in, but through the long 24 hours the sleek 908 coupes dropped one by one. PANORAMA's reporters, camping out in a 356 parked just under the leader board, would wake for a moment, roll the win-

dow down and look up in the dark to discover increasingly discouraging news. No longtail 908s finished that race, Buzzetta's car gone in the ninth hour. Late that year, the 908 he drove was converted at the factory into a "Flounder" 908 spyder and sold to a private German team. Today it belongs to Joe Buzzetta, who brought it to Rennsport. Hard to imagine more significance than that—the perfect combination of man and machine. After all, it's not just the cars, it's the people.

And as the race cars and their drivers answered the call, so did members of the Porsche Club of America. By the hundreds they came, to see, to touch, to work. Headquartered in a superb new facility facing Lake Lloyd in the center of the infield, PCA offered hospitality to all Porsche owners. For three days, some 177 members, wearing coveted red worker shirts, parked cars, manned gates, passed out water and provided security. No beating of the bushes for labor here. There were another 50 on the waiting list to work. It's the PCA way.

Headed by Jennifer Barrows of Florida Citrus Region and Danny Shields of Suncoast, PCA volunteers kept the hospitality flowing. They supervised the track touring laps that, along with the Cayman autocross, driver autograph session and slot car racing, helped raise nearly \$22,000 for Camp Boggy Creek. PCA Club Racing personnel provided scrutineering

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for all the cars on track over the weekend. Club members managed the model-specific Porsche corrals where the car count on Saturday topped 600, arranged a show-within-a-show featuring 52 member cars representing the full span of Porsche model variations from 356 to 911 GT3.

And hosted a sold-out dinner for nearly 500 people on Saturday night in the 500 Club. Jürgen Barth, Gérard Larrousse and Willi Kauhsen were honored guests at the dinner and charmed their audience as they argued in good fun over the way things really happened back in the day. Barth, long Porsche's customer racing boss, was the go-to driver when things got tough on the track. His 1977 Le Mans win when he nursed an ailing 936 to the finish is a highlight of a long and distinguished career. Gérard Larrousse, who shared the 1971 Sebring 917 victory with Vic Elford and won the Nürburgring 1000K for Porsche, went on to manage the Renault Formula One team in the mid-1980s. Kauhsen, who spent some time in the "hippie car" with Larrousse, was Porsche's factory test driver on the Can-Am project.

The racing, organized by Brian Redman's Intercontinental Events, allowed a place for every Porsche racing model in five groups for the Gmünd Cup, Eifel Trophy, Weissach Cup, Mulsanne Cup and Continental Trophy.

Coming home first in the Weissach Cup was Californian Jim Torres in his 917/30. Winning the Continental group was Dublin, Georgia's Leh Keen in his 996-based racer. Josh Vargo of Cordova, Tennessee, took the small bore Gmünd group with a 1972 911ST. In the Eifel Cup for 911s and front-engined Porsches, Eric Lux (Buffalo, NY) led the way with his 1975 911 RSR. The fastest group on the track, the Mulsanne Trophy event for 956, 962, 934 and 935 racers, was won by Patrick Long, driving the Miller 962-HR7 belonging to Paul Thieme of Marquette, Michigan. It was Patrick's first drive in a 962; his usual duties have him behind the wheel of an RS Spyder or Daytona Prototype.

Throughout the races and the weekend, veteran Rennsport announcers Prescott Kelly and Dale Miller kept the record crowd, estimated at nearly double that of the 2004 Rennsport, informed and entertained. Too soon the last trophy was awarded, the transporters began to load up and head toward the exits. The last souvenirs were purchased as the Porsche village evaporated and the magic began to leak out of the afternoon.

But it's a tradition now. Rennsport IV already looms on the far horizon, a new Camelot in the making. When it's time, if you love Porsches, come from wherever you are. ☘