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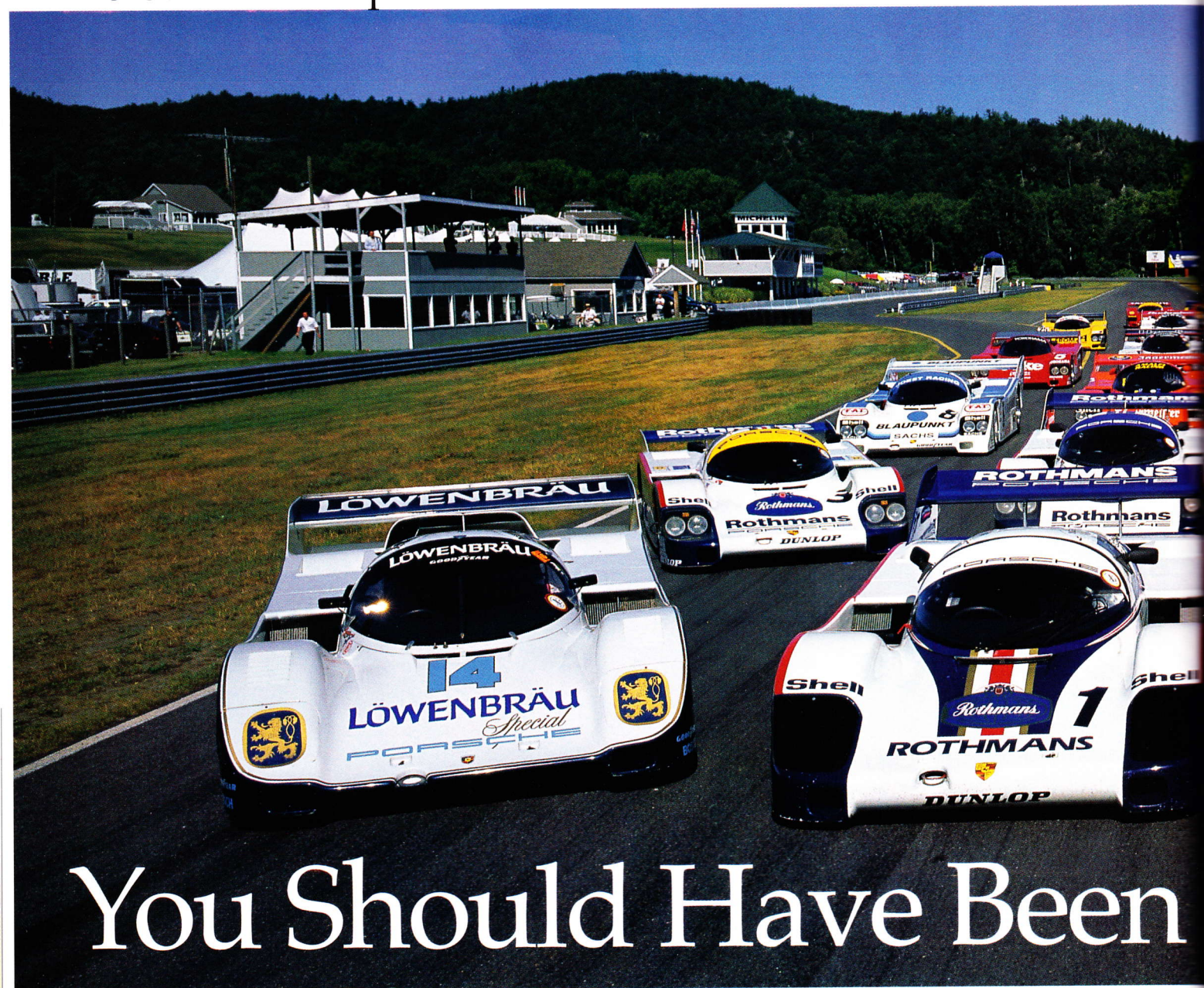
PLUS Rennsport Reunion, Derek Bell

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Porsche's Rennsport Reunion



You Should Have Been

It's about 100° F with the humidity hovering somewhere between steam bath and Bombay in the monsoon season. I'm wearing black Nomex over my street clothes and I've just put on a full-face helmet, blinking to get the salt stinging out of my eyes. But I'm grinning like an idiot because I'm about to get into a 2001 911 Carrera 4 with Hurley Haywood for some hot laps around Lime Rock Park, a jewel of a race track located in northwest Connecticut.

I lean over and shout through my face shield, "Go for it. You can't scare me!" Haywood just looks back with an expression that says, "Wanna bet?" The car, the tires, and Haywood are

already up to operating temperature from giving other automotive pencil pushers thrill rides and now it's my turn to see this 1.53-mile track the way it was meant to be seen. Haywood talks me around the track as we pull a four-wheel drift through Big Bend: "Turn One is a long, sweeping turn, you sorta wanna be on the edge of the concrete (with your left wheels). Right about at the three-quarter point, you put the power on."

I watch Haywood make tiny sawing motions with the steering wheel as we claw our way across the huge concrete patch that sits on the "line" through this turn. We rocket toward the only left

handers on the course, slowed slightly by a lift of the throttle and a light tap on the brakes. "Two is very deceptive," shouts Haywood. "You gotta keep on the inside. If you get it too far on the outside, you just slip off the track." My head whacks the door pillar as we make the left-right transition. Happily, we did not fall off. Better yet, Haywood has the bit between his teeth and we are drifting again, this time toward No Name Straight.

"You've got a fast switchback, then you're back on the power through a little set of esses to the uphill," roars Haywood. I glance over and see triple digits on the speedo. I hear what I



There

Porsche Cars North America throws a party at Lime Rock Park to celebrate the marque's racing heritage. The result was one big weekend. Story and photos by Dom Miliano.

hope is only my inner voice say *brake*, *brake*, *BRAKE!* But Hurley has other plans. "You've gotta be real careful on the uphill. Light tap on the brakes and back on the power. With all-wheel-drive, it's totally flat-out over the hump at the top. In a normal car, you gotta sorta time it with the lift of the power." My stomach suddenly moves north of its normal spot in my anatomy as we clear the top of the hill. But this time, my inner voice says *Yeeeeeha!*

No time to celebrate, Hurley is pushing it again. "And then you are back on the power through West Bend. Underneath the downhill bridge, it's very fast, very tricky. If you miss it just a little

bit, you will be in the trees." But we didn't miss it — not once. And he did this lap after lap, cranking off one-minute runs in a box-stock street car, even with my (considerable) added weight in the passenger's seat for ballast. And that was my introduction to the inaugural Rennsport Reunion — Porsche Cars North America's celebration of the great racing history of Porsche.

Porsche Paradise?

The best part was that there were to be several more days of total immersion in Porsche's *Rennsport* (German for Racing) history. Wandering around Lime Rock's paddock area left me with sen-

sory overload from the sheer number of outstanding cars parked willy-nilly around the infield area. The Rennsport Reunion's Master of Ceremonies, Brian Redman, said it was the largest collection of racing Porsches anywhere.

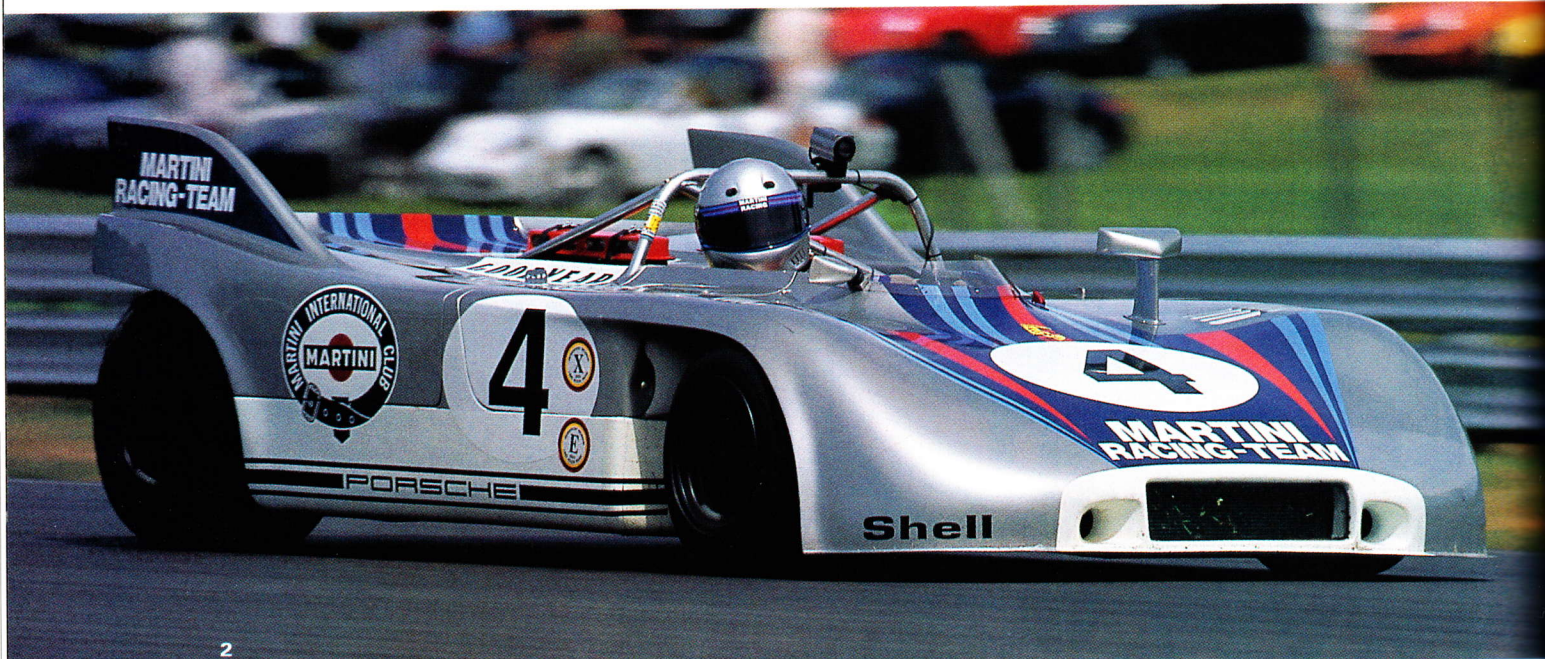
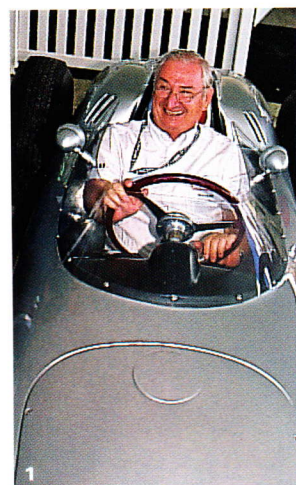
It was hard to refute that claim, what with 904s to the left, 962s to the right, 935s and 908s at every turn, and a flock of 917s, 906s, and 910s sprinkled in for good measure. Under a big white PCNA tent was a group of Porsche Factory Museum cars. In all, the factory brought ten of their own race cars, including a 718 Formula 2 car, a rare 356 racer, a 904/8, a 917/30, a 935 "Baby," a 936, a 956, a Porsche-TRW WSC Spyder, a GT1

Evo street model, and a 911 GT1-98.

Looking around, I spotted the friendly face of factory Porsche race driver David Murry chatting away with former Racing Director Manfred Jantke, the man who managed Porsche's motorsports department from 1972 to 1982. I eavesdropped on them as they talked about Porsche and racing. Deftly, Murry steered the conversation to the car they were standing next to, the ex-Mark Donohue 917/30 — the car Murry would be driving later in the week during one of Friday's historic races. David had stars in his eyes at the prospect of being allowed to drive this monster and

I could tell he wanted every nugget of information Jantke could provide.

"This is the car that *invented* the turbo lag!" said Jantke with a laugh and his typical German frankness. Jantke patted the rear wing of the over 1100-hp race car and Murry just kept on smiling. Suddenly, the conversation had to move outside of the tent because of the roar of an unmuffled race engine being warmed up by Klaus Bischoff, keeper of the flame at the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart and the man responsible for making sure that the factory cars all run in tip-top shape. He and his crew were making the rounds from 718 to 904 and



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1) Norbert Singer chuckles at the Formula 2 car's simplicity. There's little doubt that his mind is already racing to rectify that.

2) A 908/3 in stunning Martini colors.

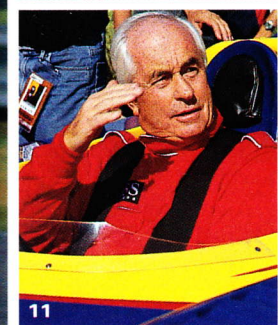
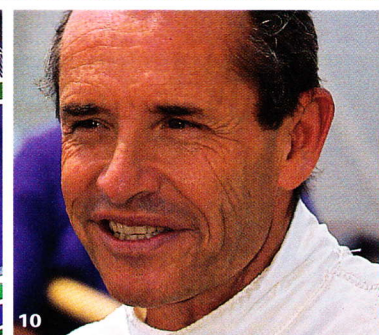
3) Brumos Porsche's hot-shoe Hurley Haywood did his best to spook author Dom Miliano, but failed.

4) Brumos' 914-4 roadster wears the famous livery of its big brother, the #59 914-6 that Peter Gregg and Hurley Haywood took to 1971's IMSA GT title.

5) Some of the cars in the large Brumos Racing tent included (l-r) a 911 RSR, a 917/10, a 964 Turbo, and a 935.

6) The 935 was a crowd favorite at the Rennsport Reunion. Here, an ex-Rolf Stommelen car spits fire from its exhaust in fine 935 style.





7) Just one of so many people who worked behind the scenes to make the Rennsport Reunion possible.

8) PCNA's Fred Schwab in a Brumos 550.

9) The scope of cars at Rennsport was fantastic, as this paisley 917 proves in all its purple-and-green glory.

10) Jacky Ickx showed he still knows the fast way around a race track.

11) Roger Penske warmed a lot of hearts when he took to the track in the famous 1100-hp 917/30 he used to campaign with the late Mark Donohue.

12) Two 917 giants: The 917/30 (left) that dominated the Can-Am series in 1973 and a 917K (right) identical to the one that brought Porsche its first overall victory at Le Mans in 1970.

so on with typical German precision. I watched and thought to myself that it actually looked choreographed, so exact were the movements of each team member.

First, they removed the engine cover with great care. Next a *whirrr, whirrr, whirrr*, and then, explosively, a *waappa, waaaaaappa, waappa, wappa, wappa*, followed by a deep-throated purr. Bischoff sat like an emperor in the driver's seat, Porsche hat askew, inspecting the gauges as his mechanics scrutinized oil lines or looked and listened for problems. When each was satisfied that his piece of the puzzle was as it should be, he stood at attention waiting for a signal from the great man.

With the slightest of head movements, a half nod or a smile and a wink, the motor would fall dead silent until the whole process started again. Standing next to me, watching intently,

were Norbert Singer, the Wizard of Weissach and father of the 962, and Alwin Springer, the Porsche racing genius and President of Porsche Motorsport North America.

Backing out of the tent, I nearly bumped into a man standing next to the huge Brumos display. He had a far-away look in his eyes. Asking his name and sticking my microphone in his face for a comment, Jim Foster looked up and said, "Unbelievable. That's it. That's all I'm going to say. I thought I was pretty jaded, but this is unbelievable." We both had to jump aside to avoid getting run over because one of the historic groups was being called to the false grid and we were in the way.

I rushed up to the top of the hill that overlooks the esses so I could get a good view of the next race — one that included nearly a dozen 935s. From a fan's perspective, Lime Rock Park is an

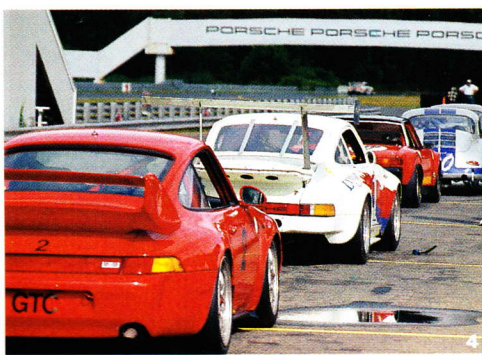
absolutely great place to watch a race. Just make sure that you head for "The Hill" early to ensure that you get a prime spot. For drivers, Lime Rock rewards smooth inputs and cars that handle well, but has no tolerance for ham-fisted drivers or an ill-handling steed. In short, it's a Porsche track.

Despite this being "vintage" racing, I could see from my elevated vantage point that the on-track action was intense. The faster cars were all lapping in the mid-50 second range — a good time with the track's chicane in place. I watched with glee as the 935s passed and re-passed each other like it was 1979 and the IMSA championship was on the line. Suddenly, three of these

rare, valuable, and expensive cars were side by side, diving for the apex at the entrance to Big Bend — a right hander barely wide enough for one car.

I almost couldn't watch as the three 935s went in hot, all vying for the same small patch of pavement. Alas, only two cars came out; contact sent number three off into the weeds, bodywork all askew. Somewhere behind me, I heard a fan say, "He wrote a check his talent couldn't cash!" And I got to thinking that pretty soon someone *would* be writing a check to pay for that liberal dose of the red mist. Unfortunately, that wasn't the only accident of the weekend.

A number of historic Porsches were damaged when drivers became a little



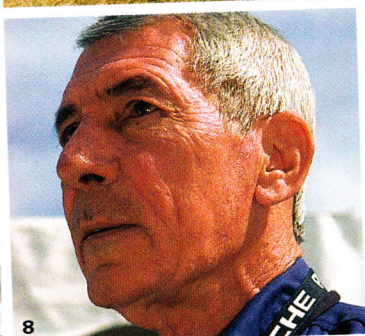
1) Frank Gallogly's Martini & Rossi 917K wakes up in a mist.

2) One of the most enthusiastic Rennsport participants was Mike Amalfitano, seen here driving his 917 Spyder with its rare tail section.

3) Alwin Springer (center) answers a tough tech question while a rumor that Porsche is headed for Le Mans distracts Klaus Bischoff (left) and Norbert Singer.

4) Club racers of every stripe were present at Rennsport. Here a 993 RS/CS, 911, 914, and 356 line up for some action.

5) Amalfi Racing's pair of Jägermeister racing Porsches wowed the crowd and put on a grand show.



6) Sunday's concours crowd enjoyed stunning race cars and the world's most interesting Porsche transporter.

7) Bruce Canepa's 917/10.

8) Vic Elford enjoying the sun and sounds.

9) Gunnar Racing's pretty 962-based "966" in Sunoco livery.

10) This pair of Porsche 906s delighted fans and judges alike.

11) A blue-coated judge takes in a 906's engine compartment. Concours judges caught without blue coats voted last.

12) The line for autographs was long, but well worth the wait.

too exuberant, but no one was hit harder than Brumos. Their stunning display included a pristine 550, a black RSK, a Copenhagen 962, and an Ecurie 911 RSR along with a 917/10, 935, 964 Turbo, and no less than four 914s in Brumos livery. The tent remained a crowd favorite all weekend, though two of their birds, a 914-4 roadster and the 962, would leave the track in serious disarray. The crashed 914 was the result of a spinning 911 that left driver P.L. Newman nowhere to go. Going airborne at the top of the hill, something Haywood had thought enough of to warn me about, caught PCNA President Freb Schwab off guard and sent the 962 spinning off track. Fortunately, neither driver was injured. The cars, however, were another story.

Everyone had a favorite race that weekend and mine involved one of the most successful Porsche drivers of his era — Jacky Ickx. He looked fit and trim in his period pure white Nomex overalls and signature blue Bell helmet. Ickx eased into the Porsche 718 Formula 2 car for what looked to be a race featuring a melange of every type of race car at the track. I saw 917s mixed in with 908/2s, 906s, and 910s.

When the cars came around for their warm-up laps, on the pole sat Jacky Ickx! Here he was, leading the pack in a car that had a four-cylinder engine pumping out fewer than half of the horsepower of most of the other Porsches in the group. Add to that the fact that it was shod with skinny, treaded sixties-style tires and you would



This 908, enshrined in Japan for 30 years, is unbelievably original.

have thought that a 908, 910, or 917 could have easily passed him going into the first turn. But Ickx still has the magic! For three or four laps, he held the lead ahead of this group of monster-motor cars — not by blocking, but by coming down the diving turn with so much speed that they could not out-accelerate him down the main straightaway. It wasn't until slower traffic balked Ickx that he finally got passed.

Jacky Ickx was so pumped when he got out of the 718 at the end of his stint that as soon as he got his helmet off, he turned to Norbert Singer and gushed, sounding not unlike Agatha Christie's legendary Belgian detective, "Eets a nice lee till car!" I asked him how he managed to keep all of those much more powerful cars at bay for so long. He replied, modestly, "Ah well, I was in zee middle of zee road." Then he gave me a quick wink.

Filling Out the Ranks

To fill out the program and keep every race fan's juices jumping, over a hundred drivers and cars from the many sports car clubs across America were invited to the Rennsport Reunion. Porsches from PCA, HSR, SVRA, and

even the Speedvision GT series filled the "B paddock." And if you thought the historic cars were exciting, you had to see these guys in action. Since they came to race, race they did. Think wheel-banging, fender-rubbing racing that's unencumbered by PCA's 13/13 rule and you might be close to what went on out there. Northeastern PCA racing stalwart Keith Peare gave me the insider's view of the event.

"This was really one of the better events I have been to," said Peare. "This and the (1998) Double Fifty are the two that I'll remember the rest of my life." And then he brought up a point that I hadn't thought about. "It was really special to be racing in front of such a large group of spectators. Everybody I talked to was very impressed."

Between races, both paddocks hummed with activity and teemed with the thousands of fans who thronged to this lovely corner of Connecticut, attracted by the cars and drivers and encouraged by a sudden, overnight break in the heat that gave us the best New England weather of the summer. I was especially pleased to see families — moms, dads, and kids — enjoying the sights and sounds that are everything I love about Porsche and sports car racing. The passing of tradition through the generations is, after all, what reunions are all about.

And these Porsche fans knew their stuff. I listened intently as Jack Ford gave a little racing history lesson to his rapt audience as they stood alongside the famous, or infamous, Porsche 908 *Langheck* (Longtail) that finished second to Jacky Ickx at the 1969 running of Le Mans. He was describing the now unthinkable "Le Mans" start where drivers would sprint across the track to their cars, jump in, and roar off at top speed without the formality of fastening their seatbelts.

"In 1969, Jacky Ickx, driving a Ford GT40, *walked* across the track in protest, buckled his seatbelts, and drove off," began Ford. "At the end of 24 hours, he won, beating this very car by only 100 yards. Could you imagine what would have happened to Jacky Ickx if he had finished second?"

Behind the Scenes

Porsche Cars of North America, prime mover and sponsor of the event, didn't neglect the fans either. Besides arranging for the presence of factory museum cars, PCNA brought in a supply of new cars and left them on display along the upper parking area for anyone to sit in and dream a little. And their marketing plot seemed to be working, as I came across a group of teens having an argument over a new Carrera. Young Ryal Jones from Queens told his friends, "I'm not going to tease myself by sitting in a Porsche 911 for no reason. There's no point! I'll sit in a regular car until I have the money to put the down payment on the Porsche 911." After a pause, he proudly added, "Then I'll just let it roll!"

Following four solid days of hot laps, things got mellow on Sunday when the squeal of tires was replaced by the swish of the polishing rag. Arrayed along the start-finish line were many of the very same cars that had strutted their stuff in wheel-to-wheel competition. Sunday's concours event was by invitation only, and while there were a lot of beautiful cars invited, the judges were instructed to focus on the cars that had been driven on the track. Therefore, some racers were wearing new battle scars, but all were lovingly presented and equally appreciated by the large crowd of admirers and an august group of judges.

First-place trophies in each category went home with Dave Coleman's remarkably original 356 Carrera Speedster, Ernest Benzien's stunning 904, Mike Amalfitano's fantastic 910 and 908/2 racers, Bruce Canepa's pure 935, Frank Gallogly's gorgeous 917K in Martini livery, Jerry Molitor's nearly perfect 962, Frank Martinelli/Jim Scott's wonderful red early 911, and Ed Mettleman's fabulous green 914-6. After a lunch-time awards ceremony, it was time to call a close to this year's Rennsport Reunion.

With a heavy heart, I watched the cars being loaded onto their trailers and transporters for the ride back to their snug garages located in all corners of the globe. I was more than a little sad that it was time to nose my own car south and home. The only consolation I had was the fact that more than once I heard Fred Schwab, PCNA's head honcho, call this the "Inaugural Rennsport Reunion."

That means first. That means there will be more. And *that* means, certainly, that I'll be there. If they're anything like this one, you'd better be there, too! ■