



PORSCHE PANORAMA

DECEMBER 2011

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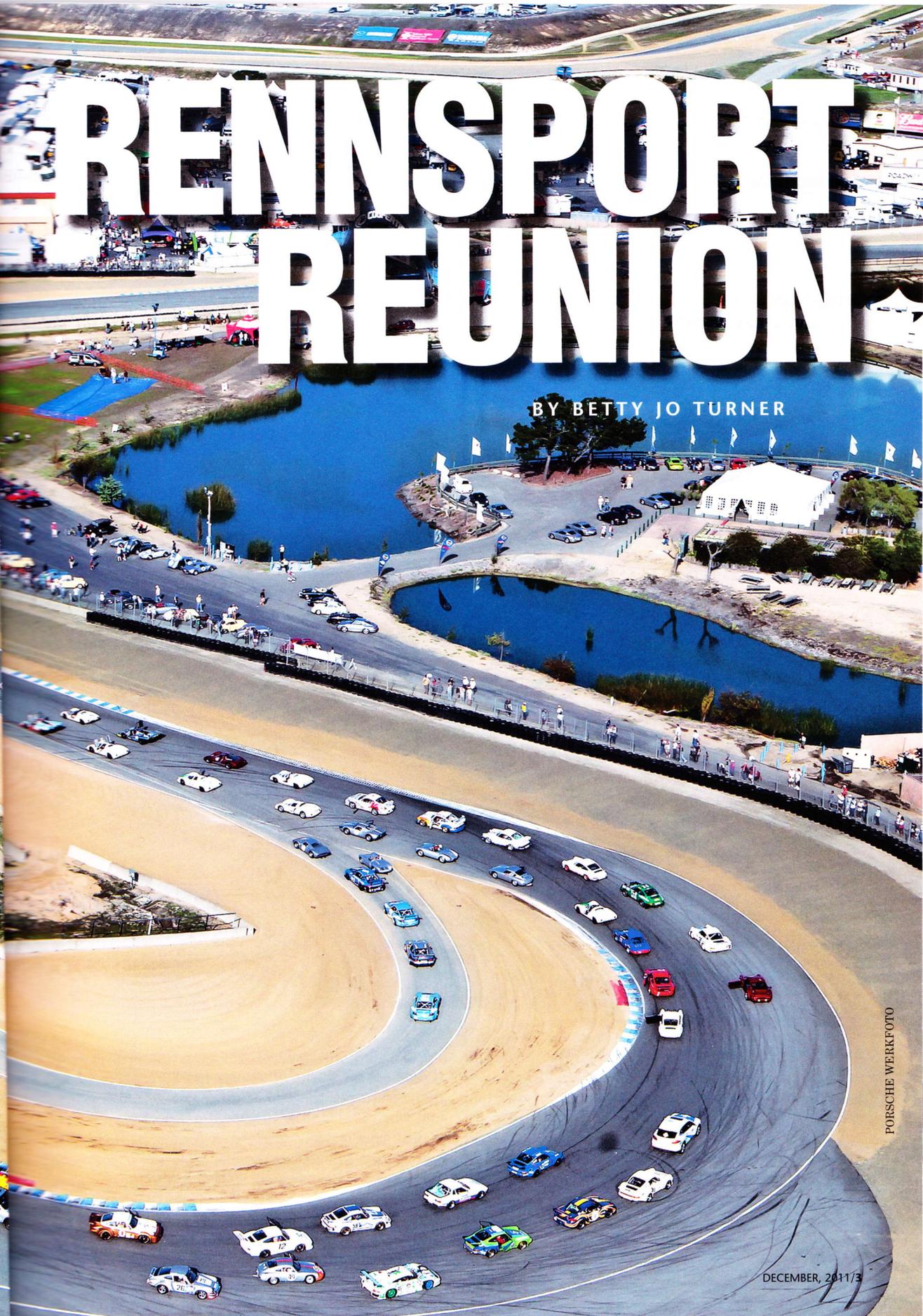
How many ways are there to say sensory overload? Cognitive collapse. Maybe just settle for stunned dumb. As in unable to absorb one more detail, one more sound, one more Porsche. It happened over and over on the weekend they called Rennsport Reunion IV, a Porsche Camelot that occurs once every three or four years, with all the complexity of a homecoming and coronation combined. Where the heroes of Porsche's legendary history, the cars themselves, the engineers who created the cars, and the men who drove them to glory gather to relive the best moments of a long and storied past.

It would take a great Porsche motorsport romantic to conceive such a plot. Someone with massive passion for the history and the cars, but most of all with a deep connection to the drivers and engineers who have created the legend. Such was Bob Carlson, the late Porsche Cars North America public relations manager, who invented Rennsport Reunion, bringing the Porsche race community together for the first time at Lime Rock, Connecticut, in the summer of 2001.

Porsche management may not have "gotten" it the first time around (*"We're going to spend how much money? Doing*

A family gathering—Rennsport Reunion filled Laguna Seca with the sights and sounds of racing Porsches. Cayman Island, on the right, was the site of PCA's Hospitality Center.

Reveling in the chaos of a homecoming for every great race car Porsche ever built



RENNSPORT REUNION

BY BETTY JO TURNER

PORSCHÉ WERKFOTO

DECEMBER, 2011/3

PORSCHE PANORAMA

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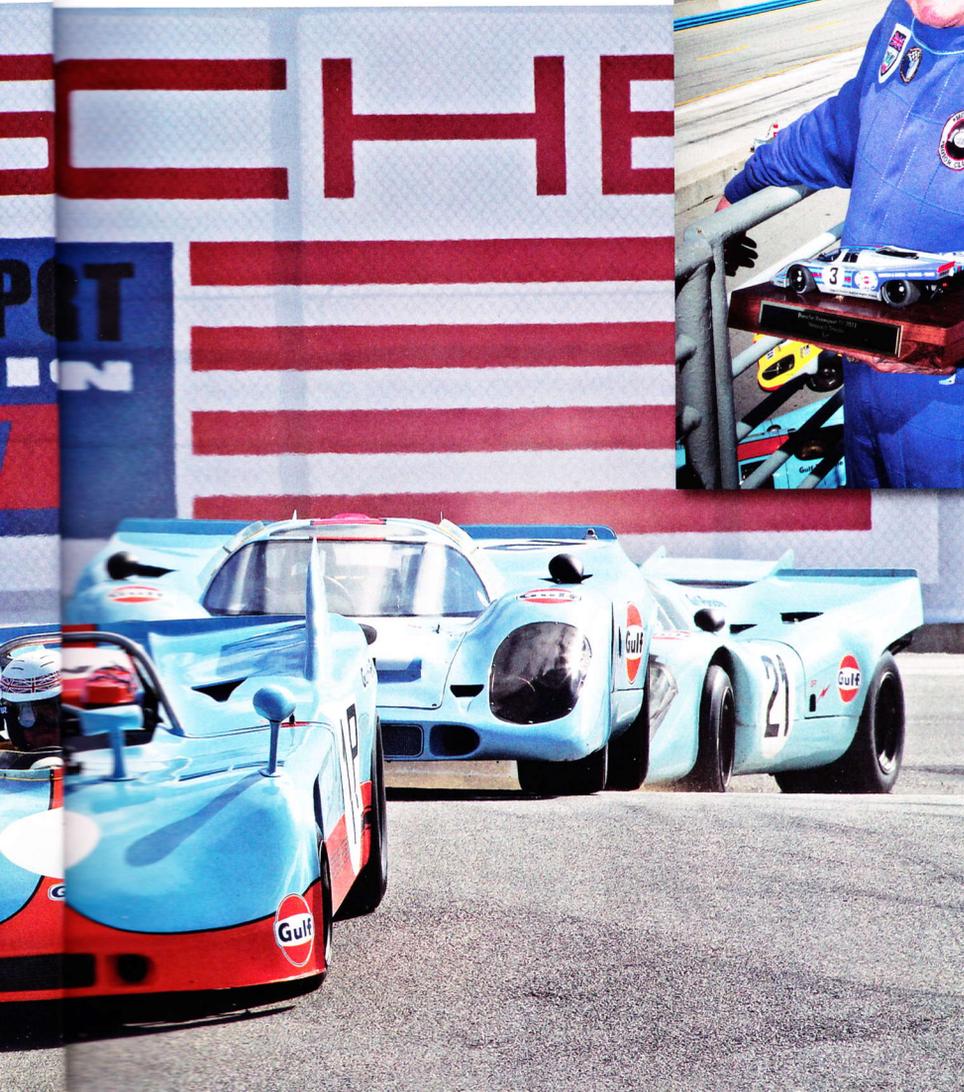
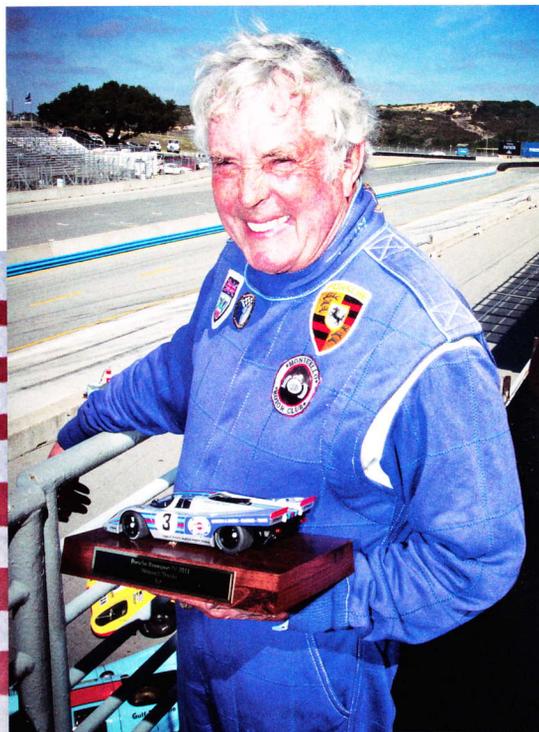
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PORSCHE WERKFOTOS

what?"), but enthusiasts who saw Roger Penske at the wheel of Mark Donohue's 917/30 or Jacky Ickx demonstrating the 935 "Baby" got it in a big way and when it was time to plan Rennsport II, a bigger facility was needed. Rennsport Reunions II and III were staged in the expansive facilities of Daytona International Speedway in 2004 and 2007, on the track where Porsche has scored 22 overall 24-hour victories from the incredible one-two-three finish of the longtail 907s in 1968, through the dominance of the blue and

*We had been driving
like madmen...*



*Brian Redman (908/3)
leads Bruce Canepa's
917K into the Corkscrew
with Chris McAllister
(#21) close behind.
Redman is no stranger to
the 908/3—he won the 1970
Targa Florio in a 908/3 he
shared with Jo Siffert.*

orange Gulf 917s of 1970 and '71, the multiple 935 and 962 triumphs, the TRG 911 GT3 RSR surprise of 2009, to the Action Express Cayenne powered DP triumph of 2010.

Without Carlson, who lost his battle with cancer a year after Rennsport III, would there be another? Could it be the same? He would be pleased with the answer to this question. Rennsport IV moved to the Monterey Peninsula and its iconic track at Laguna Seca and proved that his vision was 20-20 and endur-

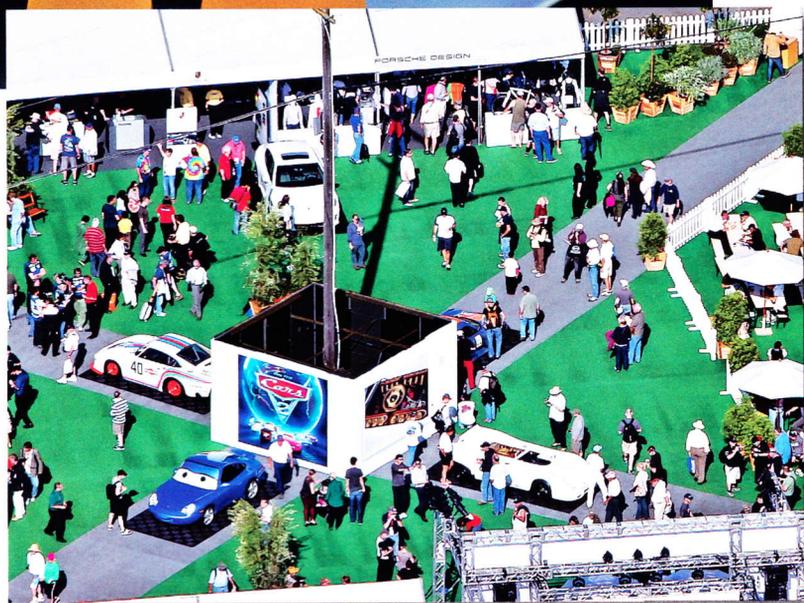
ing. RR4 was a Porsche homecoming on steroids. No question that Porsche management gets it now. The dollars that flowed freely to create this year's total immersion in Porscheness are a staggering consideration on their own.

Take the Park in the Paddock—a village green created out of thin air and outdoor carpet in the paddock area right behind the pits. Around the periphery were Porsches shops offering Driver Selection merchandise and information about the Porsche Sport Driving



PORSCHE WERKFOTO

Dr. Wolfgang Porsche and Hans Herrmann take a parade lap in a Carrera Panamerica 550 Spyder.



Park in the Paddock was a magnet for Porsche fans—Porsche museum cars were joined by Sally Carrera while an authentic biergarten provided savory ambience.

An incredible collection of mind-boggling and crazy-expensive cars.

School. At the center was a display of rare Porsches. Unusual ones. Sally Carrera and the 16-cylinder 917 spyder that never ran. The one-off 1977 935/2.0 “Baby” and the 918 RSR concept car from this year’s Detroit Auto Show. There was a biergarten where Germany’s national beverage was served along with

brats and other authentic fare. Opposite the biergarten was a stage with a couple of cars hiding under silver silk covers. On Friday at noon, they pulled the covers off and revealed the new 911, aka 991, to a throng of avid spectators.

In the long series of garages under the pit suites, to honor the fact that Rennsport IV emphasized the 911 and the debut of its newest incarnation, Porsche created a museum of racing versions of the iconic Porsche, beginning with the 1964 911 with which Jack Ryan scored a class win at Daytona in 1966 (igniting the ire of Porsche race boss Huschke von Hanstein) and concluding with the GT3 R Hybrid that has surprised the racing world with its audacious energy recovery



The Group 7 race for PCA Club Racing cars was won by Loren Beggs (#203). In the winners circle he is flanked by Jeff Gamroth (right) who finished second and Alex Welch (third).



PORSCHERWERKFOTOS

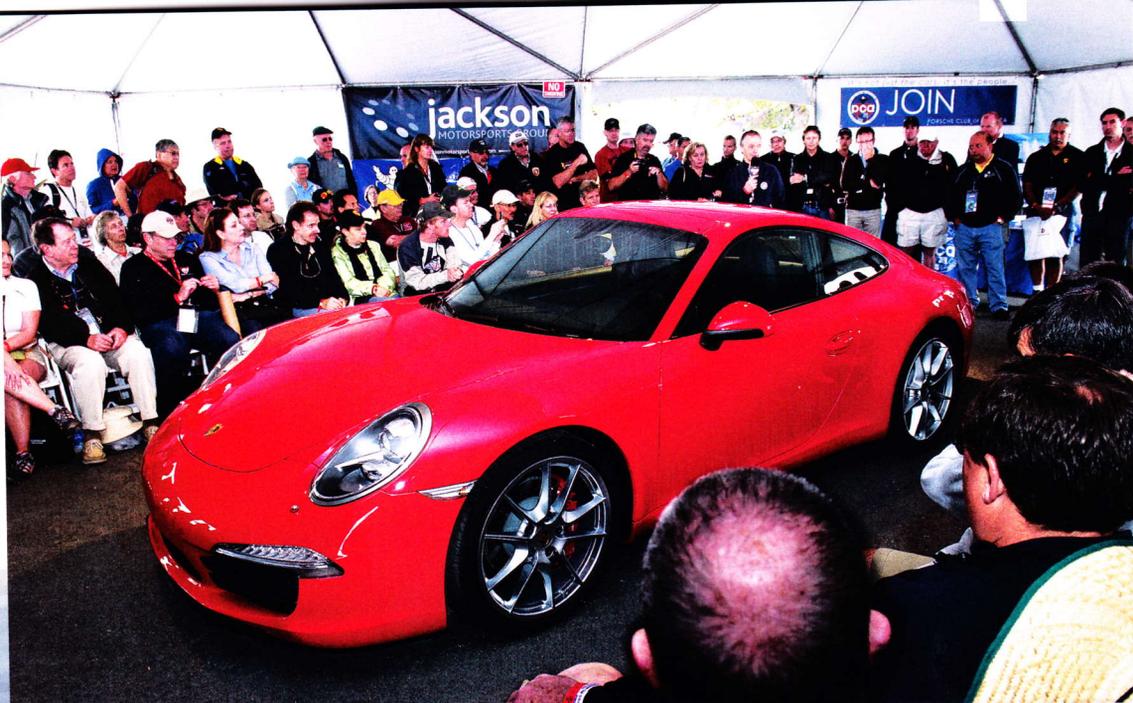
system that provides horsepower on demand.

Somewhere else on the premises, in a locked garage in a secret location, there was another exhibit but nothing about it was public. No way to get in unless you happened to be one of the people who has given Porsche a deposit on the \$845,000 918 Spyder, the AWD V8 hybrid supercar due in late 2013. Prospective owners were brought to Rennsport to see a pre-production example of the car enshrined on a glowing platform. Dr. Frank-Steffen Walliser, the Porsche engineer in charge of the 918 project, was there to show the car and to hear customer reactions. "It was an unusual and very interesting circumstance, where

PCA Club Racing shines in two race groups

we could get feedback from customers before the car is finalized," he said.

Some of the most interesting activity took place on Cayman Island, where PCA Vice President Ruben Ledesma and his team provided a warm PCA backdrop to the on-track activities. With Jennifer Bar-



LEONARD TURNER

Less than 24 hours after its North American debut, a 991 was rolled into the PCA Hospitality Center where August Achleitner, the engineer in charge of its development, presented a technical walk-around.



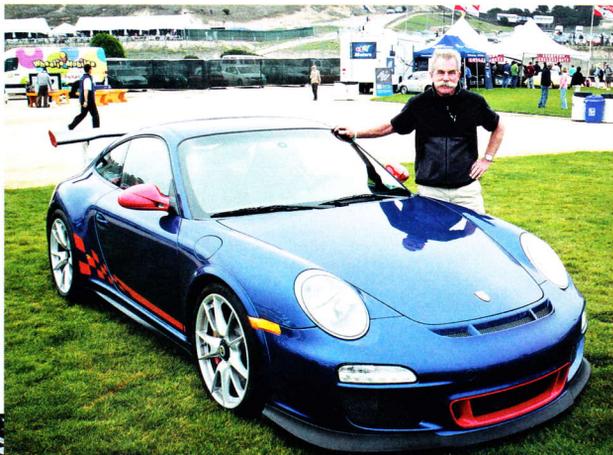
Chairman of the Porsche AG Supervisory Board Dr. Wolfgang Porsche spoke to a standing room only crowd of PCAers.

Wrap your mind around the idea of any other automobile company doing this.

rows acting as utility outfielder, Ruben and company welcomed the Porsche world. Imagine 1300 Porsches arranged in model specific corrals. Mike Souza, David Bunch and their crew created a virtual Persian carpet of Porsches. Sharon Neidel kept nearly 250 volunteers on task, while Tom Provasi assembled an impressive generational display of 911s to underline the year of

the 911 at Rennsport. How about a 1974 911 coupe with nearly 700,000 one-owner miles on the clock. Or a 1974 Carrera that had just been reconstituted from boxes of parts and driven from British Columbia to be part of the celebration. Or the owner of a 2010 GT3 RS driving it from Pennsylvania to be part of the exhibit. "He drove the farthest for the display," says Provasi, "and I'm sure he had a sore backside after driving a GT3 that far."

Sean Reardon created the PCA Hospitality Center that welcomed Porsche owners all weekend and it was fully utilized. Presentations brought PCAers back to the Center every few hours. Wrap your mind around the idea of any other automobile company doing these



William Gast drove his 2010 911 GT3 RS across the country from Pennsylvania to show it in the generational 911 display organized by PCA.



More than 1300 Porsches were arranged in model specific corrals manned by Porsche Club of America volunteers.

things: On Saturday morning a 991, less than 24 hours after its North American debut, was rolled into the tent and August Achleitner, the engineer in charge of its development, along with Porsche designers Grant Larson and Tony Hatter, did a technical walk-around, staying to take questions from salivating club members.

Larson and Hatter remained afterward to meet with Andy Kish, the son of Francie and Phil Kish, PCAers who have contributed to the club for decades. Francie, chairman of the Traverse City Parade in 1989, is currently the national Parade facilities manager. Andy, who grew up in PCA, is a budding designer himself and the chance to show his work to a pair of Porsche experts took all the air out of his mother's lungs.

Later that afternoon Dr. Wolfgang Porsche, chair-

man of the Supervisory Board of Porsche AG, arrived with Detlev von Platen, the CEO of Porsche Cars North America, and the great Hans Herrmann, the man who gave Porsche its first victory at Le Mans. Questions bubbled from the rapt audience. Asked if Porsche will build a model between the top of the 911 line and the 918 Spyder, Dr. Porsche answered with an emphatic monosyllable. "No."

Then, of course, there was the racing. PCA's Club Race Chairman Brian Henderson and his Club Racing staff ran two of the eight on-track groups—Group 7 exclusively for PCA Club Racers and Group 8, the Rennsport Reunion Cup, for 911 Cup cars. In Group 7, Loren Beggs and his GTP1 911 edged out Jeff Gamroth. Winning the Group 8 Cup car race on Saturday

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was Rich Walton, while Cooper MacNeil nipped Walton to finish first on Sunday.

Six of the eight groups were run under vintage racing rules, but there must be something about the Laguna Seca track or the fact that the starting grids included names like Jürgen Barth, Gijs van Lennep and Brian Redman that pushed things a bit beyond the gentlemanly norm of historic competition. Redman's race group, the Weissach Cup for prototype racers from the 906 through 917s, was hotly contested with the chief protagonists being Redman himself

aboard a Gulf 908/3 and Bruce Canepa in a 917K, also in Gulf blue and orange.

"I thought when we finished on Saturday," said Redman, "that we had been driving like madmen. I told Bruce we had to back off on Sunday, make a good show for the crowd but....and then I told Bruce something I've never said in my life. In my life! I told him, 'You can win.'"

It was probably a good idea; it has after all been several decades since Brian won the Targa Florio in a 908/3. The cars are splendidly taken care of, but they aren't new. As it happened, Canepa was unable to finish on Sunday, Redman won and we'll never know if the two drivers ever fostered any real intention of backing off.

When the racing was over on Saturday afternoon, the cars came back to the pit apron for a Concours de Sport, a low key competition intended mainly to get all the cars in one place so that fans could walk through an incredible collection of mind-boggling and crazy-expensive cars. Grand Marshal Norbert Singer (guaranteed to know every car in the field from inside out), Leonard Turner and I had the privilege of choosing Best in Show. Take it from me; it's not as easy as it sounds. Try choosing from a group that includes

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some of the greatest Porsche race cars of all time. The Year of the 911 led us to Brad Hook's 1973 911 RSR, resplendent in Martini colors. Singer circled the car, looking for the little signs of authenticity. They were all there and we had a Best in Show you can read about elsewhere in this issue. There was a burst of applause at the gritty snarl of the normally aspirated engine as Brad and Pam brought the RSR through the crowd up to the ceremony at the start-finish line.

The full throttle Porsche weekend ended on Sunday with the final race. As the transporters packed up and Porsches lined the dusty roads leading away from the track, the enchantment leaked out of the afternoon. But not before one last benediction. "Bob would have been thrilled to see this," said Debbie Carlson. The evening before, she had been presented with a Rolex watch in honor of both Bob and her own stalwart support of the things he believed in. She said that she hoped Bob's legacy, the magic that we know as Rennsport Reunion, would continue. The chances seem better now than ever.

Rennsport V looms on the far horizon. When it's time, if you love Porsches, come from wherever you are. 🍀



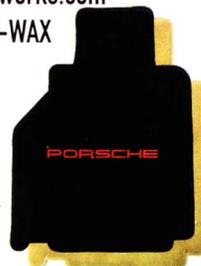
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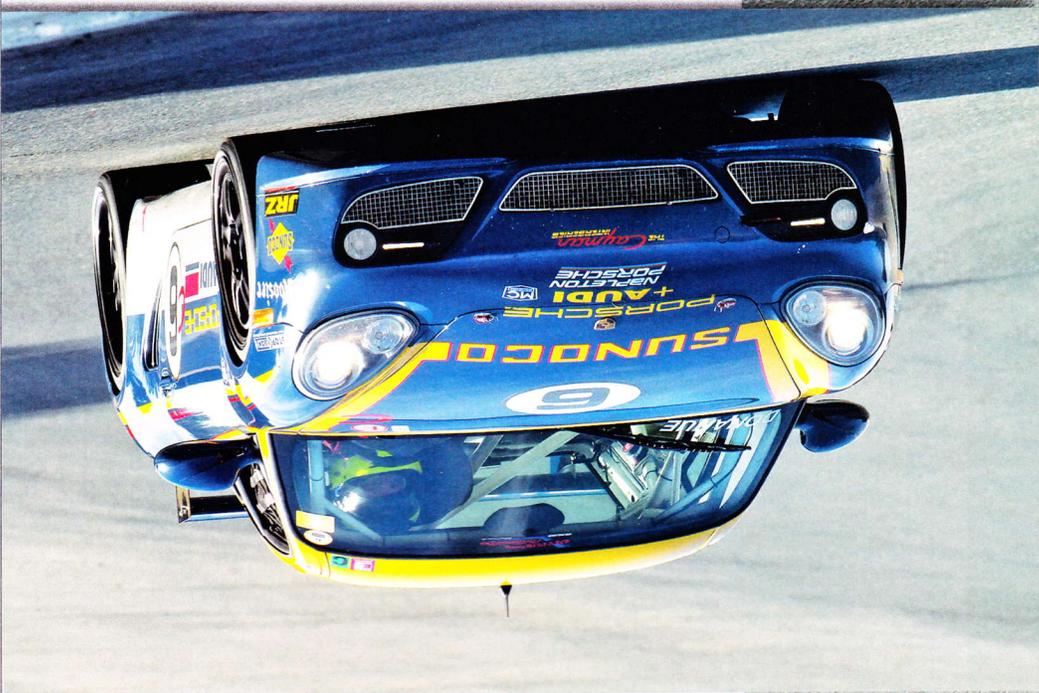
BY SAM SMITH

A pair of 906s—Jeff Zwart leads Wade Carter through the hairpin. Later in the weekend, Zwart put Patrick Long in the 906. Said Long, "It was one of the best things I've ever done. It was like being in a movie."

PORSCHE WERKFOTOS



David Donohue hammers his way through the Cayman Intersties held in a car painted in the Sunoco livery of his father's 917/30.



Pitch-perfect noise that is immediately recognizable as Porsche and nothing else.

I have now been to two Rennsport Reunions—one each at Daytona and Laguna. Despite the wonder of seeing 917s hammering across Daytona's nearly vertical banking, Laguna was the better party. The track is wider and less intimidating than the Florida tri-oval; subsequently, more guys went for it, charging harder and sliding their cars more. The paddock is bigger, so more room to stroll aimlessly and gawp. The Corkscrew is... well, the Corkscrew, which is to say an impossibly excellent place from which to watch racing cars do their thing. (Pop over the hill with a bang; blast, tear, thunder; *pound* down into the valley below. An unfettered wall of sound, with one of the best spectator sightlines in all of racing.) And everything was howling, yowling, and ripping, this pitch-perfect noise that is immediately recognizable as Porsche and nothing else.

In my dreams, there is a place where it is almost always sunny. There are Porsches, lots of them, and each one is a different kind of perfect. I am wearing sunglasses. There is a loud and raucous and virtually unending noise.
Correction: It is not noise. That word carries a negative connotation. It is *wonderful*.
Correction, again: This place isn't a dream. For four

Grand Marshal Norbert Singer drops the flag on a race session. Singer is the only Porsche engineer to be associated with every single one of Porsche's 16 overall wins at Le Mans.



Chip Robinson, John Fitzpatrick and Marc Lieb sign autographs. They are flanked by Rudi Lins on the left and Bob Garretson on the right. All five are Porsche champions.

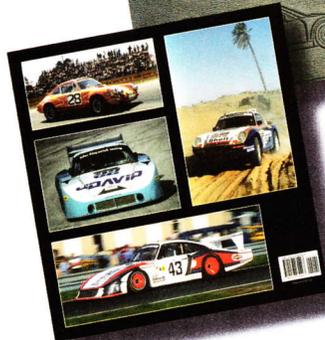
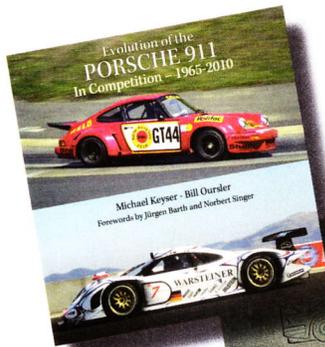


PORSCHE WERKFOTOS

Hero drivers everywhere, important and priceless cars essentially growing on trees.

A track full of priceless Stuttgart-Weissach-Zuffenhausen history. Oof. I have a sneaking suspicion that it gets better than this, but I think the only way to find out would be to set up camp on the side of the Mul-sanne Straight in the summer of 1970. Or maybe perch yourself on a rise in Sicily during the last Targa Florio.

Goosebumps. Hero drivers everywhere, important and priceless cars essentially growing on trees. I watched John Morton flog a Carrera Abarth, then watched Gijs van Lennep whale on a 917K while dogfighting with Bruce Canepa (917K) and Brian Redman (908/3). Somewhere in there, I remembered



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to breathe. It was ridiculous, the kind of impossible and yet strangely calming image that you find yourself thinking of late at night, when you can't sleep.

The moments kept coming: Watching cars disappear over Laguna's front-straight hill, wheels and wings melting into the fading California sunlight. David Donohue hammering his way through the Cayman Interseries field in a car painted in the blue-and-yellow Sunoco livery of his deceased father's 917/30. Finding out that Canepa can pedal an RS Spyder around Laguna just over seven seconds faster than he can make a Gulf-liveried 917K cover the same distance. (Qualifying times: 1:23.588 versus 1:30.848. There is a lesson in those numbers, but I am still too starry-eyed to spot it.) Watching Redman absolutely hound Canepa in the 908/3, fluid and impossibly fast—where Canepa all but threw his car into the corner; Redman bent the 908/3 in effortlessly and delicately, as if he were pulling up to the valet at a snooty restaurant. Only he was *moving*.

There a few things you should probably know, facts I picked up while strolling the paddock. Radar guns had the average long-hood 911 RSR clocking something like 105 mph in the middle of Laguna's front straight; for perspective, the average 935 was roughly 40 mph faster at the same point. Rally driver and Porsche

commercial artist Jeff Zwart is high in the running for nicest man alive. Derek Bell's son Sebastian is 12 years old; up until this year, he had never really ridden in a racing car with his dad. (His first ride was at Laguna, with Derek, in the Gulf 917K that Steve McQueen used in *Le Mans*.) Norbert Singer is quite possibly the most gentlemanly German gentleman I have ever met; virtually everyone I talked to seemed to wish he was their grandfather. A center-seat RSK looks just as funky in person as it does in pictures. 914-6 GTs are excellent. Hurley Haywood mentioned that he was "young and stupid" when he first drove the 917/10, noting that he did not miss racing cars that try to kill you.

A parting note: At one point during the weekend, Jeff Zwart let Patrick Long drive his 906. When I asked Long what it was like, he looked me in the eye and said, "It was excellent. It was one of the best things I've ever done. It was like being in a movie."

That, in a nutshell, is the Reunion. It isn't a dream. Or maybe—just maybe—it is. ☼