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*A new look at the puzzling questions
that surround the competition versions
of Porsche's mid-engined roadster*

LEONARD TURNER



*For the 1970 running
of the 86-hour Marathon
de la Route, three 914/6 GTs,
fitted with two-liter, 160-hp
911S motors, finished one-two-
three. Owned today by Miles
Collier, this is the 914/6 GT
that finished third.*

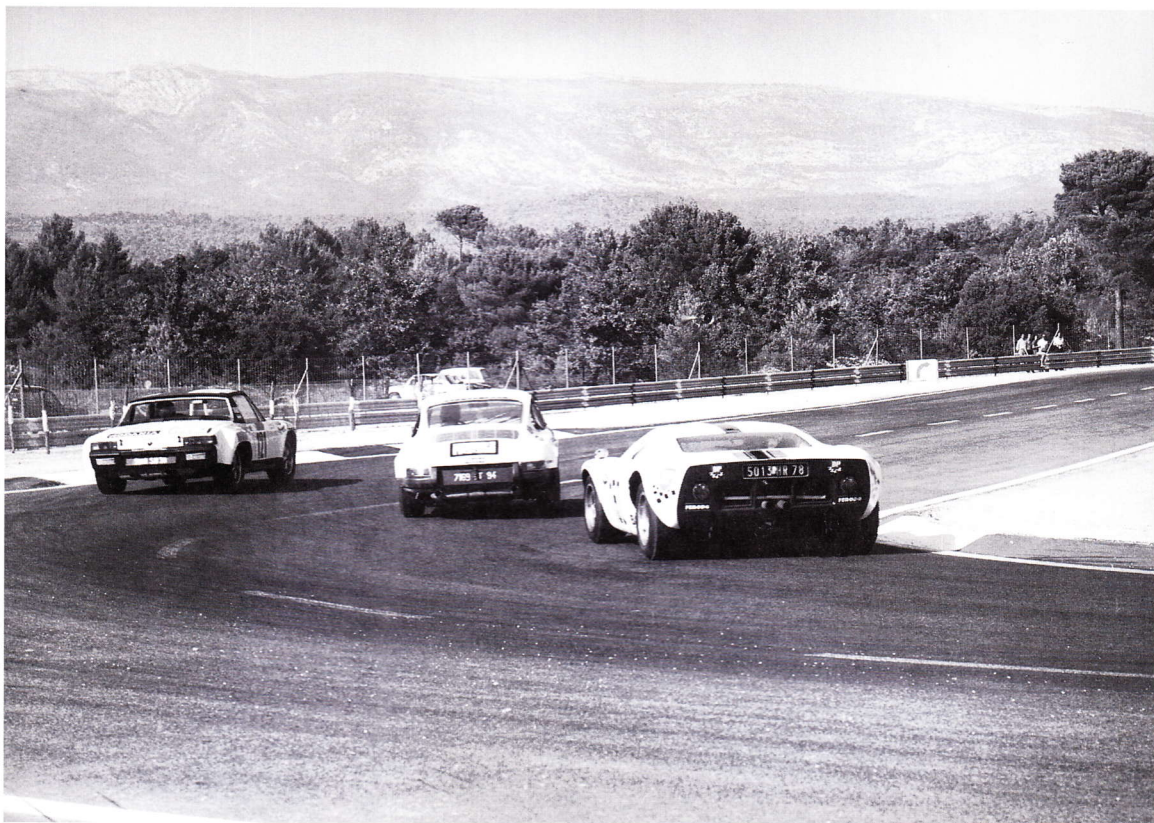


Exploring the 914/6 GT Mysteries

BY KERRY MORSE

Over the past few years a number of books relating to specific Porsche race cars have been published. There are titles such as: *956-962, Carrera RS, 356 & RS Spyder*, among others. One notable exception is the 914/6 GT and, if this story is any indication, don't expect to see a book hitting the shelves any time in the near future.

Perhaps the following will set the proper mood: You are in Weissach. It is lunch time. As you start to drive away from the *Kundensport* (Customer Racing) office, you spot an engineer who was a mechanic in the late '60s-early '70s. You roll the window down and call out: "Werner, what parts did you use on the center hand brake for the 914/6 GT?"



On a closed circuit stage of the 1970 Tour de France, 914/6 GT 0457 with a 911ST and a Ford France-entered GT-40. Note the rear fender flares on the 914/6 GT.

“We never built one.”

Yes you did — no we didn’t — yes you did — no we didn’t.

“Werner, I have a photo of you working on it.”

Pause.

“Oh, *that* project.”

Looking back, it isn’t all that hard to understand the orphan status that the GT project was held to by a number of people. The early 1970s were a time of rapid change within the company. Internal problems with the Piëch and Porsche families which resulted in a change in the management structure at Porsche and the founding of a new holding company which included part ownership of VW-Porsche in Ludwigsburg were major concerns.

The racing department had been very successful, with Porsche now occupying the top slots in sports car racing, but the financial costs of the push from class-winning 906 to the leader-of-the-pack 917 had been staggering. The 911 still enjoyed its role as the GT car to have and development continued with the new ST model. The ST was made available in three variations with the M471 option being the most popular. This was a lightened S with extensive removal of inner and outer trim. The M491 and 494 were the real

option boxes to check off on the order form, however, involving extensive use of alloy, fiberglass and plexiglass with motors in some STs coming close to 2.5 liters.

Pressure was put on to quickly develop the 914/6 into a car that could share that role. Already suffering mixed reviews by the world motoring press, the GT project was handled with the same mixed enthusiasm by Weissach. Drivers included. Time would prove to be a great healer in the case of the GT project. On balance, the car was very well thought out and had the project been pursued, greater glory would have almost certainly followed.

For a number of years a basic lack of information on the GT has turned into guesswork, followed by myths later accepted as fact. Some of them are: (1) There were only 11 GTs built by the factory. (2) All except one were painted orange. (3) If it didn’t have a 100-liter fuel tank, no GT. (4) The car that finished sixth overall at Le Mans in 1970 was built by Sonauto. (5) The largest motor was a two-liter flat six.

I know that this is about to bring a following storm, but a total of 47 914/6 GT models were produced and delivered ex-factory. A number of years ago while researching the GT project, I was given a copy of an in-

ternal list of all the chassis numbers and the customers that received these cars. I was allowed a copy because of proof I needed regarding one particular chassis number.

Checking the list of numbers against the production records in Ludwigsburg will not make much sense. Almost all of the cards will list the 47 cars as normal production cars. Nor were all 47 built the same. The infamous M471 option was broadly interpreted by the factory and the final customer. Fourteen of this special group of cars were used exclusively as works entries. Several used the stock fuel tank instead of the large, suitcase-sized 100-liter tank. Some had reinforcing plates on the chassis, others didn't. Some had roll bars, etc. A number of 914/6 GTs had the single plug motor instead of the accepted twin plug 906 type. The list goes on and on.

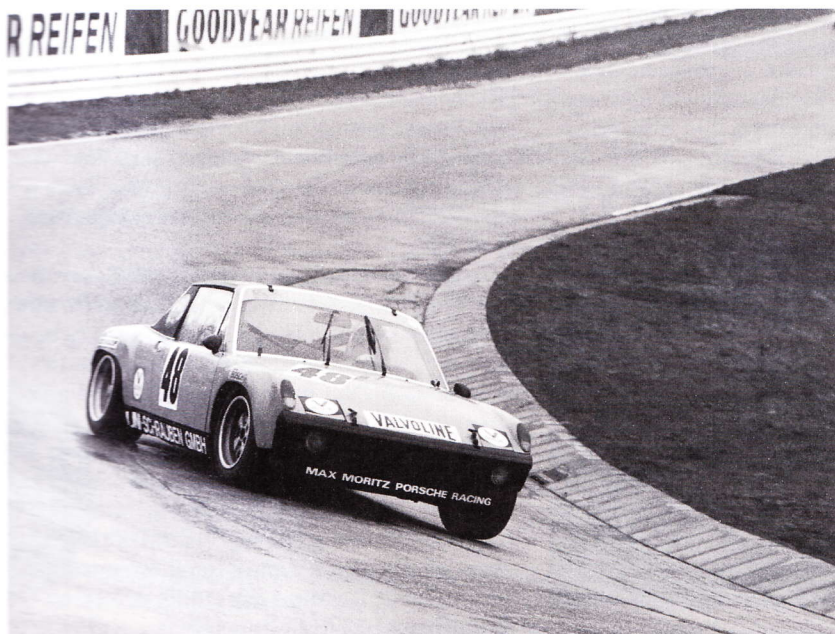
The fact that the company produced a total number of 400 kits to convert a normal 914/6 to a GT really muddies the picture. No records have been found as to which cars were converted or who their customers were. In many cases today you can find a car that has more GT parts on it than the original 47. Is this helping? No, I didn't think it would.

Most people are aware of the two 914s built with 908 motors. Both were road-going cars that were an exercise to see if it could be done. One was a birthday gift to Ferry Porsche, while the second belonged to his nephew and then chief of the racing department, Ferdinand Piëch.



PORSCHERWERKFOTOS

Ernst Strähle (foreground) does battle with one of the Max Moritz cars. An example of the wide variation in 914/6 GT models, the Moritz car has a roll bar while the Strähle car does not.



This 914/6 was built to GT specifications and campaigned successfully by Reutlingen Porsche dealer Max Moritz, here at the Eifelrennen races at the Nürburgring in 1975.

At the end of a rally stage on the Tour de France, 0457 is parked for the day. A close look at this photo reveals how hastily completed 0457 was.

PORSCHER WERKFOTO



As an example of how complex the history of the 914/6 GT can be, consider the saga of chassis number 9140430457, one of the stranger projects ever to start and never be finished. Someone at Porsche with a good sense of humor thought a full race 914/8 running in the prototype groups would really get noticed. Internal notes list a number of modifications that would have to take place beyond the norm already associated with the 914/6 GT project. In late June of 1970, the engineering department delivered drawings for a 115-liter aluminum fuel cell and 11-inch rear fender flares for the 914/8 GT. Kolbenschmidt had been given the task of producing

a Fuchs-style nine-inch wheel cast in magnesium.

The plan was to have a private team with factory backing run the car. This approach should sound familiar to anyone who followed the Salzburg and Martini 917 teams of that era. Henri Balas, who was to later drive 0457, was leery of a 914 with more than 200 horsepower. In an interview published in France in 1993, he said he told factory personnel it was certain to end up in a bad crash. On this point he turned out to be correct. Balas was not without first class credentials, having run 356s to 908s with success, but it should be noted that over the years 914s with considerably more than 200 horsepower have proven themselves to be very successful competition vehicles.

In any case, work continued on 0457 over the summer of 1970; then the word came down to abandon the project. As of this writing it has yet to be determined how far it got. What is known is that 0457 showed up at Paul Ricard on September 18, 1970, for the start of the Tour de France. Entered by Sonauto (the French Porsche importer owned by the family), it had the fat 11-inch rear flares on it, a number of other one-off mods and a beefed-up injected ST prototype six stuffed in the bay instead of the originally-intended 908 motor. Also entered by Sonauto was the factory-built Le Mans car (1020) driven by Claude Ballot-Lena.

Showing the signs of a car that had never been

KEYSER SOZE



The most famous 914/6 GT of all: chassis 1020 at Le Mans in 1970 where it finished a startling sixth overall.

914 043 0019	914 043 1605
914 043 0705	914 043 2541
914 043 0709	914 043 2542
914 043 0983	914 043 2543
914 043 1640	914 143 0139
914 043 1732	914 143 0140
914 043 1621	914 143 0141

TABLE 1. 914/6 GTs raced by the factory as official entries.

completed, 0457 suffered a series of mechanical problems. The car nevertheless did finish eighth overall and was blindingly quick on several of the stages, running just behind the winning Matra Simcas. After the Tour de France, 0457 was involved in a huge crash and was repaired at Weissach before being sent back out to compete in the odd race and hill-climb. The car is now owned by Roy Walzer in Connecticut and is just completing an extensive restoration.

Taken directly from the Porsche document mentioned earlier, Tables 1 and 2 are lists of the chassis numbers built and recognized by the factory as 914/6 GTs. Table 1 includes the cars raced by the factory as official entries. Table 2 comprises cars used by the factory for experimental purposes or built and delivered to customers. By no means is this the final word on the GT project. On the contrary, it is the opening and, no doubt, volumes will follow.

The engineers from the Piëch era were always experimenting with making parts out of different materials and comparing the weights and stress factors. A number of these special parts were produced in very limited quantities and were used mostly on the works GTs. However, as with all programs, certain private teams and friends of the factory were able to later obtain some of these items. Aluminum doors and deck lids are an example, as are gearbox coolers,

914 043 0315	Losch	Luxemburg
914 043 0674	Greger	Germany
914 043 0032	Schlup	Switzerland
914 043 0181	Seiler	Switzerland
914 043 0424	Loehr & Becker	Germany
914 043 1034	Hofrichter	Germany
914 043 0653	Liedeke	Germany
914 043 0737	Gudlatt	Germany
914 043 0457	Sonauto	France
914 043 1017	Sonauto	France
914 043 1020	Sonauto	France
914 043 1569	Fernandez	Spain
914 043 1258	Mahag	Germany
914 043 1086	Naylor	USA
914 043 0985	Bocco	Switzerland
914 043 1028	Weber	Germany
914 143 0207	Gloeckler	Germany
914 143 0233	Hahn	Germany
914 143 0234	VW-Porsche Gmbh	Germany
914 143 0218	Mahag	Germany
914 143 0242	Schultz	Germany
914 143 0251	Porsche Audi	USA
914 143 0263	Porsche Audi	USA
914 143 0258	Porsche Audi	USA
914 143 0247	Mahag	Germany
914 143 0318	Mahag	Germany
914 143 0291	Mahag	Germany
914 143 0328	Raffay	Germany
914 143 0332	Bunker	USA
914 143 0373	Mahag	Germany
914 143 0418	Heiderich	Spain
914 143 0425	Porsche Audi	USA
914 143 0415	Porsche Audi	USA

TABLE 2. 914/6 GTs used by the factory for experimental purposes or built and delivered to customers.

fiberglass dash, and motor shrouding made from aluminum or fiberglass. Internal technical lists show a variety of shock and spring set-ups, larger swaybars and interior components that never showed up in the parts book and sport information guide that were published by the factory.

Of the cars listed in Table 2, a total of seven were delivered directly to the United States. Most were constructed for the German home market and many remained competitive in GT class racing into the mid-1970s. Though it may have begun life as an orphan, today the 914/6 GT is recognized around the world as a remarkable chapter in Porsche's racing history. ❁

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