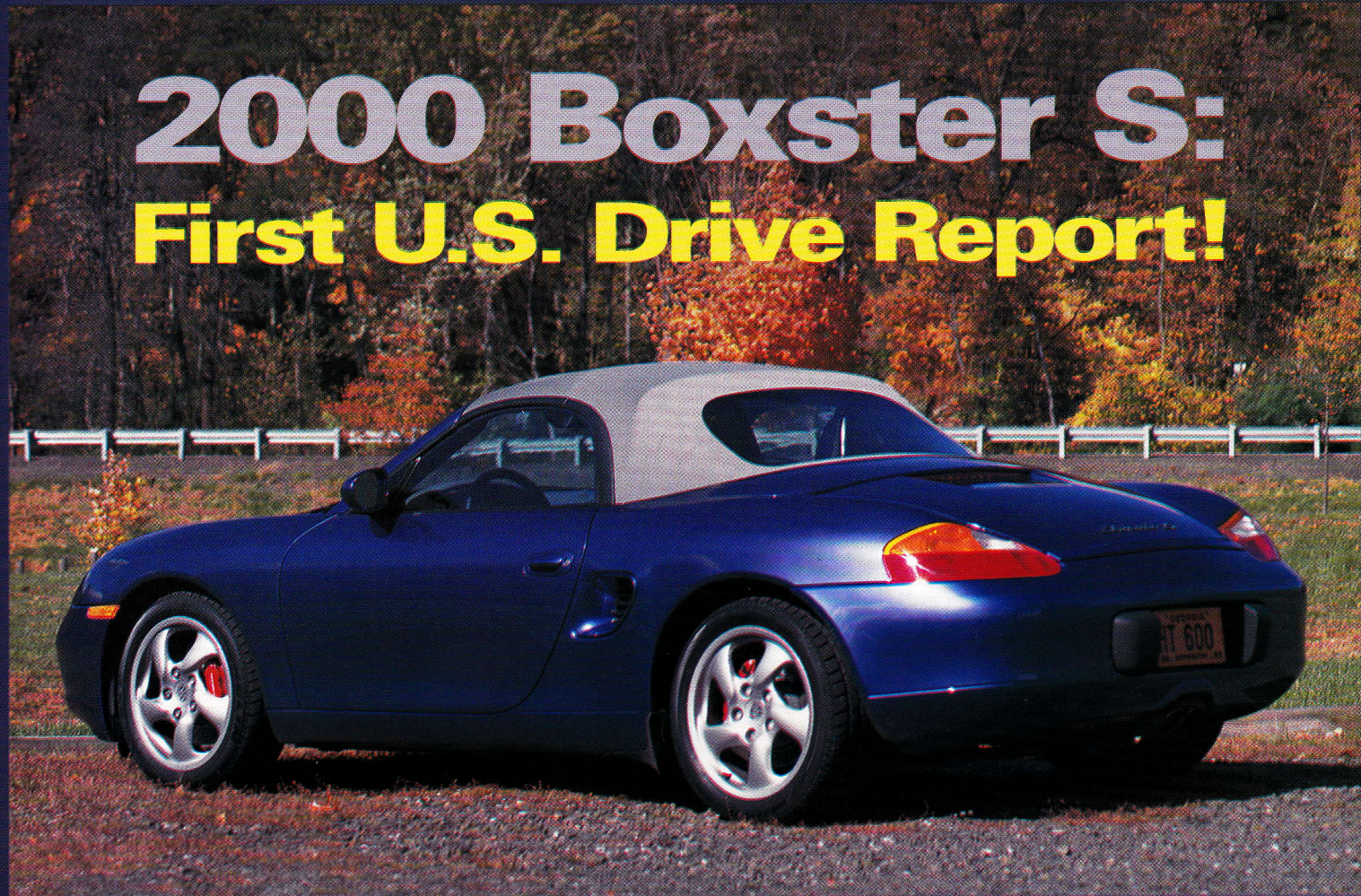
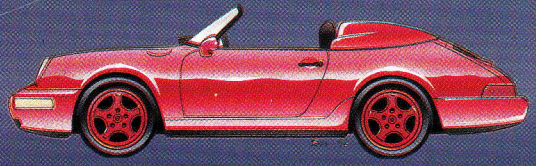


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# BACK TO SQUARE ONE

*A 914-6 GT that went from 0-196 mph and back again over the course of thirty years. Story by David Colman.*



**P**orsche's 50th Anniversary celebration at the 1998 Monterey Historics galvanized the completion of a number of long-term Porsche restoration projects that had been languishing unfinished for months, years, even decades. One such car belongs to Bill and Llew Kinst. When the Kinsts learned that Porsche would be the featured marque in 1998, they shifted the restoration of their 914-6 GT from neutral into top gear in order to participate.

"A lot of people told us a 914 had zero chance of being selected," says Llew. "But we decided to try anyway." Despite the naysayers, the Kinsts did

their best to ensure that their example of Porsche's fastest 914-6 — the GT racing version — would be included in the festivities.

Some might think it a stretch for the Monterey Historics to include any 914, since it was the stepchild of Porsche's stormy relationship with Volkswagen. Yet the 914 has enjoyed an undeniably successful history in sprint and endurance racing. In the end, five Porsche 914-6s would take their rightful place at the big Monterey banquet and the Kinsts' car would be one of those chosen.

"You never know what Steve Earle's going to pick," says Llew of the event's

founder. "It's like he's casting a play, where he says to himself, 'I need this car and that one for my recreation of what once was.'" To sweeten the application, the Kinsts nominated former World Endurance Racing Champion Bob Garretson to pilot their car during the Historics. Surely a driver of Garretson's stature would add allure to the 914-6's portfolio. Not only that, but Garretson had actually practiced in a 914-6 GT test mule at the Targa Florio back in 1971.

"As it turns out, we didn't need Bob Garretson to gain acceptance, but it was nice to have him drive our car," says Bill Kinst, who took as high praise

Garretson's comment that this particular GT was "the best set-up 914-6 I've ever driven." Says Bill: "That really meant a lot to me, because he's driven a number of these cars, and it confirmed that we did the job right."

Since the Kinsts believe in restoring vintage Porsches to original specification, they insisted on using a 2.0-liter race engine in their GT. However, they found their engine choice was in the minority at Laguna Seca, where 2.5 liters seemed to be the minimum upgrade for 1970-71 Porsche 914-6s — despite the fact that the factory delivered none that way!

The irony of the situation is that the 914-6 that got blown off at Laguna (while turning 1-minute, 51-second laps) by the other 914-6 GTs may have once been the fastest 914

GTs turned out by Porsche exclusively for racing and rallying, estimates put the number at either 32 (Brett Johnson) or 47 (Kerry Morse). This car appears to be one of the rare factory-built cars. According to a June 8, 1995 letter from Jurgen Barth to Llew Kinst, this chassis was originally sold to a Porsche dealership that immediately transferred the title to Kremer Racing. The letter reads: "The car with chassis number 914 043 0653 is an original 914-6 GT completed by the Porsche factory to be sold to a German Porsche dealer. Our files unfortunately do not reveal any information whatsoever as to which races this car participated in."

But according to the ONS (Oberste Nationale Sportkommission) log book that survived with the car, the Kremer

with a 911S. By the end of the 1972 season, their 914-6 GT had outlived its usefulness, even as a rental ride for aspiring racers.

It was just then, in October of 1972, that American aerospace engineer and Porsche enthusiast Harold Von Keszycki happened to spot the 914 in the back of Kremer Racing's shop in Cologne. An ardent Speedster competitor, Von K, as he is known, was on a parts hunt in Europe to sustain his racing 356. But when he saw the 914-6, he made the Kremers an offer and they accepted.

"I got the car for a good price," says Von K, who then continued on his parts buying spree. When he returned to Kremer at the end of his trip, he was surprised to find that the 914 had already been shipped off ahead of him. He later determined from a source at the Porsche factory that while he was touring Europe, the Kremers had found themselves short one race car on a race weekend. They decided to press the pre-sold 914-6 into last minute service and, of course, the car was wrecked in the race.

After repairing the GT, the Kremers apparently shipped it to America before Von K could examine it again. Despite this subterfuge, Von K was happy enough with his new purchase to begin racing it immediately in America. He entered it in lieu of his Speedster at Porsche Club of America, Porsche Owners Club, and Sports Car Club of America events in Southern California. But the 914-6 GT, with its tired 2.0-liter engine, wasn't fast enough to entertain him for long. Ever the tinkerer, Von K began to dismantle the 914 and rebuild it into his idea of a true track scorcher.

Out came the 1991-cc 906 specification engine (SN 906 156) and 901 gearbox. In went a later model 911 engine case supplied with squirter jets and flat-topped Venolia pistons that reduced the compression ratio to 6.5:1. Induction chores fell to a turbocharger which Von K plumbed himself using aerospace equipment purchased second hand from military-spec supply houses. He continued to use the original GT's twin-plug ignition system.

American International Racing in Burbank concocted an IMSA-style body for the heavily modified 914 chassis that allowed Von K to use 15-inch-wide BBS wheels in the rear to harness the turbocharged engine's 550 horsepower. Von K changed the

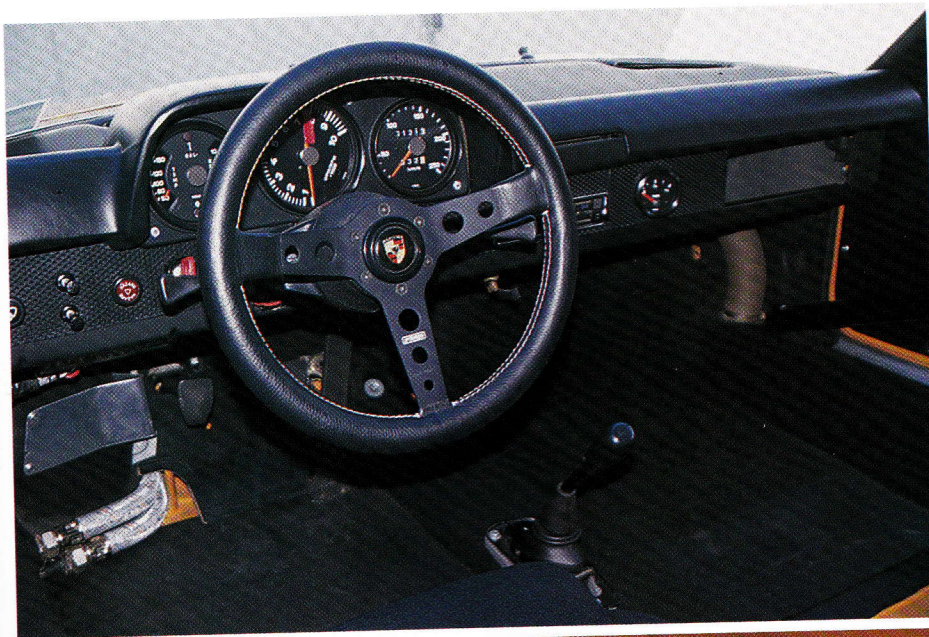


in the world! In the late seventies, this very car, propelled by a 2.1-liter intercooled and turbocharged motor, ran through the traps on the back straight at Riverside at 196 mph. But now, with a former World Champion at the helm, it was having a tough time staying abreast of the supposedly "vintage" competition at Laguna Seca. Why? Because Llew has spent the better part of a decade diligently detuning this car back to its original specification.

Let's start at the beginning, back in 1970, when Porsche first built this 914-6 GT, serial number 914 043 0653, strictly for racing. Though some controversy will always cloud the exact number of factory-constructed

brothers of Cologne first raced it as a Group 4 car at Zolder on March 27, 1971. Next, they ran it at the Freiburg Hillclimb on May 8, followed by the Sixth International ADAC 300-km race on June 12. After events at the Norrisring and Diepholtz, the Kremers entered the Hessen Grand Prix on August 21, 1971. They concluded the year with an event at Hockenheim. The last entry in the book notes an entry at Diepholtz for July 15-16, 1972.

The ONS dossier notes that the car was driven by a pilot named "Therrier" on six different occasions, though no results are recorded. Llew says the car never raced at Le Mans. In 1971, the Kremers won the Porsche Cup, albeit

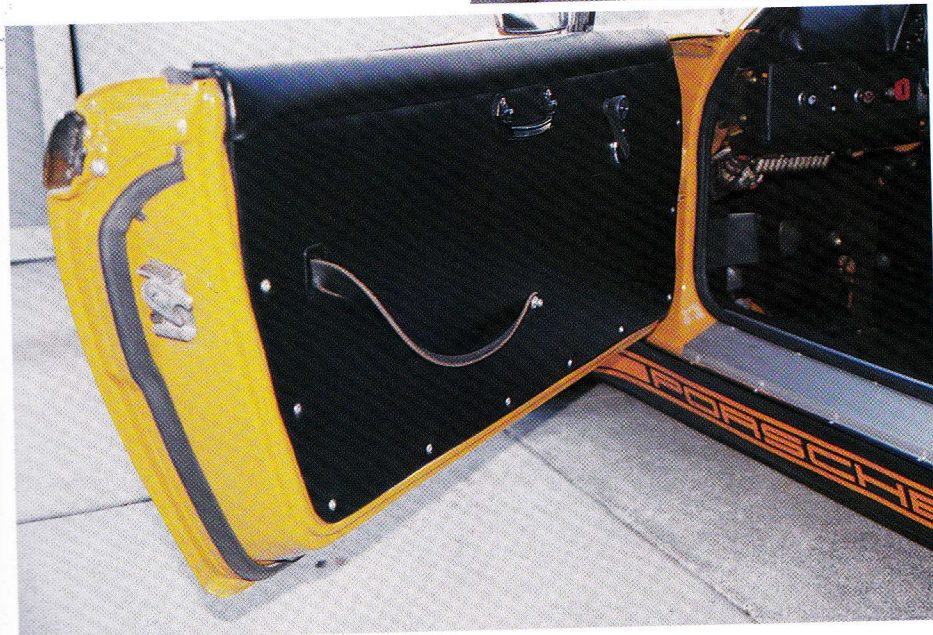
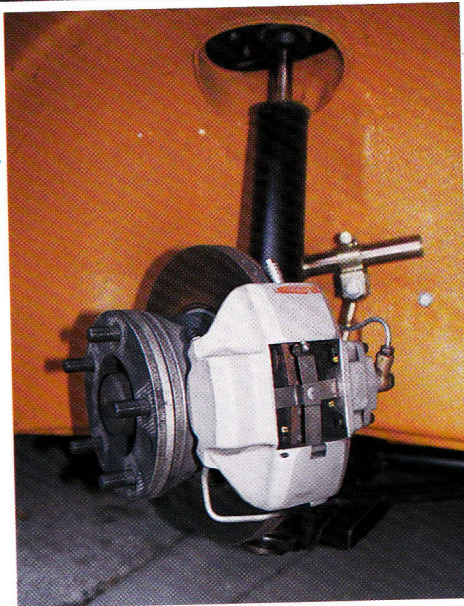


■ **Opposite, left**—Kinst's 914-6 GT hiding under 200-mph bodywork from the days of Von K's racing modifications. A restoration to 1970 specs was finished in 1998.

■ **Above**—Returning the car to its GT specifications involved finding many original GT interior trim bits.

■ **Right**—Front brakes used 908 calipers, which the Kinsts found at a local swap meet.

■ **Right, below**—Simple door panel with plastic pull strap. 914-6 GTs were, like all of the racing Porsches of the day, spartan at best inside.



car's color from Signal Orange to yellow. All body panels were mounted with Dzus fasteners for quick release work at the track.

The GT's original 908 front brakes and vented 911S rear rotors were removed and replaced with 12x1.1-inch rotors and Hurst/Airheart brakes at each corner. Instead of the 901 gearbox, Von K installed a 915 gearbox that had its own oil circulation system. It squirted oil directly on the ring-and-pinion gear.

Anyone who saw this bright yellow apparition at a track event in the seventies will never forget the sight of its twin-snorkel, F5000-style airboxes, the width of its twin side radiators, nor the stretch of its enormous rear wing. Borrowed from a Huey helicopter, the end-plated wing slung itself off tail struts like a huge wedge of cheese.

Von K managed to preserve some of the original GT's protective coloration, however. He carried over the light blue half-bumper panels of the original Kremer paint scheme. Other than this concession to the past, Von K's 914-6 Turbo looked nothing like the 914-6 GT the Kremers had bought in Germany and raced across Europe for two years. But in the days before vintage racing, when originality became all-important, old 914 race cars were nothing more than experiments in progress.

According to 1977 IMSA GTU champion Walt Maas, Von K's 914-6 Turbo was so quick on the straights that its ability to cover ground was uncanny. During an IMSA race at Riverside, Maas recalls checking his mirrors as he entered the back straight and seeing Von K's 914 about half a mile behind him. He thought to himself, *there is no way he can catch me before we get to turn nine.*

But even before Maas reached the kink of the long back straight in his Garretson-prepared 914-6, Von K had swept by him going at least 20 mph faster! Unfortunately, that kind of euphoria was short-lived for Von K, because the car rarely lasted for more than three laps in most races. In that sense, it turned out to be the perfect time trial/solo car — good for one lap at a time.

When Von K eventually tired of the 914's longevity disabilities in 1988, he decided to sell it to Bill and Llew Kinst. The Kinsts, long-time Porsche enthusiasts, weren't quite sure what they were buying, but felt confident it was some-

thing good. It was. The first thing Llew noticed was the carpeting on the fire-wall, which matched samples of GT carpeting he had previously observed. The rear window was made of Plexiglas rather than safety glass, another sure tip-off of GT ancestry. The dash still contained a fuel gauge instrument, located in the area normally reserved for the radio and angled toward the driver's eyes. This was also typical GT practice.

"As we stripped the car," says Llew, "we kept discovering more and more GT pieces." The Kinsts also found original factory oil cooler lines routed behind

indeed an ex-factory race car, he and his father dedicated themselves to the task of restoring the 914 to its original condition as raced by the Kremers. For this task, he located two factory documents which proved invaluable.

The first was a list of factory racing parts for the 914-6 and the 911S. This compendium of part numbers and descriptions indicated everything the factory made available for these cars at the time they were raced. The catalogue covers everything from racing gear ratios to manually-activated pop-up headlamps for the 914. The other book is the "Information

spectre of the Porsche Anniversary Historics began to loom on the horizon, the Kinsts put the restoration into overdrive, enlisting help from friends Lorin Guy, Mark McLaughlin, and Ernie Mendicki.

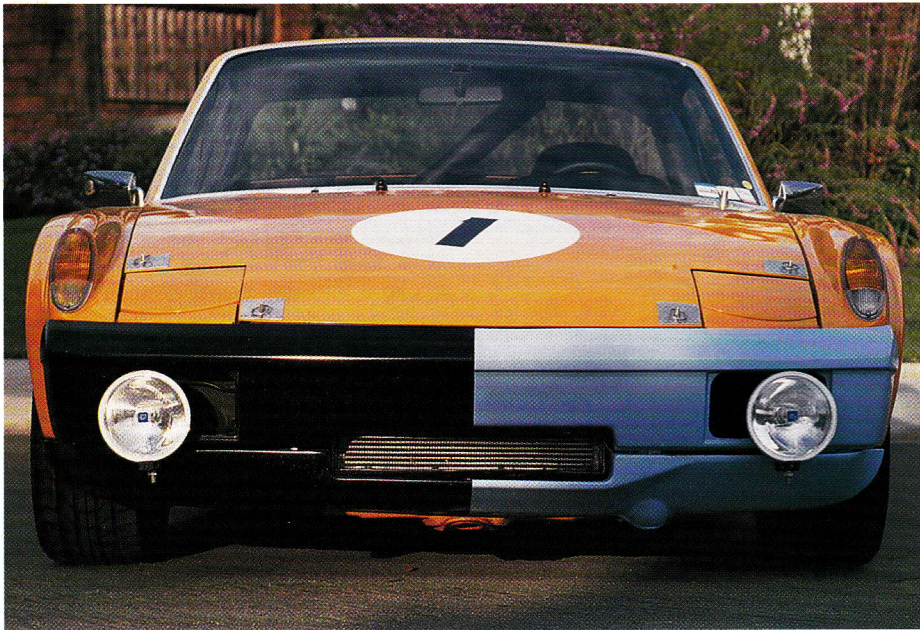
Together, this crew of dedicated Porsche enthusiasts pooled resources to complete a car that had been languishing, in one form or another, for nearly two decades. Von K's modifications to the rear compartment and his tube-frame roll cage made restoration of the existing chassis very difficult. Compounding the problem was poorly-repaired accident damage that the Kinsts unearthed when they stripped the chassis to bare metal.

"The windshield pillar on the right side collapsed and had been poorly repaired," explains Llew. "It was as if the car had been involved in a soft roll-over." Between the crash damage and the holes Von K had drilled to attach his cage and other aerospace goodies, the rear clip of the car was virtually useless for rebuilding. The Kinsts decided to remove it entirely and replace the damaged goods with a sound 914 rear clip.

Though they attempted to do as much of the work themselves as possible, the Kinsts knew when they were better off turning certain chores over to specialists. Thus, they decided to farm out the chassis setup to Porsche expert Roger Hamlin at Sears Point Raceway. Hamlin built a roll bar to authentic GT specifications, then turned his attention to straightening the chassis, which he found to be warped. He did his setup work on a chassis surfacing plate borrowed from Huffaker Engineering. The Kinsts left the final choice of shocks, spring rates, and anti-roll bars to 914 specialist Mark McLaughlin, who has been autocrossing these cars with great success since they were new.

Once the major surgery had been completed, Llew and Bill pieced the GT back together. They were able to locate some exceptionally useful material for their project at the annual Golden Gate Region swap meet at Carlsen Porsche in Palo Alto. There, they found the aforementioned factory booklets on parts and installation techniques. They also stumbled across an unused set of 908 front calipers of the sort Porsche bolted on their factory 914-6 GTs.

With the help of Ernie Mendicki, whom the younger Kinst calls a "master metalworker," the voluptuous origi-



the rocker panels, and GT sheetmetal in the front valance for an oil cooler. Finally, after removing all of the braided fuel lines and the fuel cell Von K had installed in the front trunk, the original GT-style strut tower brace still remained. The factory installed this brace to replace the production partition that normally strengthened the 914's front shock towers. Porsche removed the stock partition to make room for a 100-liter endurance racing gas tank.

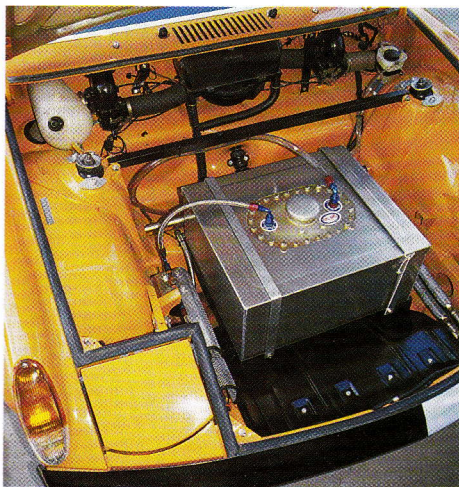
The Kinsts were fairly sure they had purchased a real, factory-built 914-6 GT, but the best confirmation of all came from Jurgen Barth at Porsche AG, who provided them with the letter stating that their 914-6 was indeed a factory-built GT. The Kinsts tried to develop further leads on their car's history through Kremer, but struck out.

"They weren't very helpful because this car was nothing but an old hammer to them," observes Llew. Once he had determined that the 914 was

Regarding Porsche Vehicles Used For Sport Purposes (911S and 914/6)." This one proved even more helpful than the parts list because it outlines just how all those parts are to be installed. It covers preparation techniques for virtually every aspect of these cars.

With the information culled from these manuals, they assembled as many original GT parts as they could find. In the late eighties, some of the necessary items could still be located at Kerry Morse's shop. From Morse, the Kinsts secured proper, original front and rear decklids made from fiberglass and reinforced underneath with balsa wood strips. They also purchased oil cooler parts, valance panels, and an original set of steel GT fender flares.

Because he was also involved in remodeling his house at the time, Llew did little besides accumulate parts for the GT for the first five years he and his father owned the car. But once the



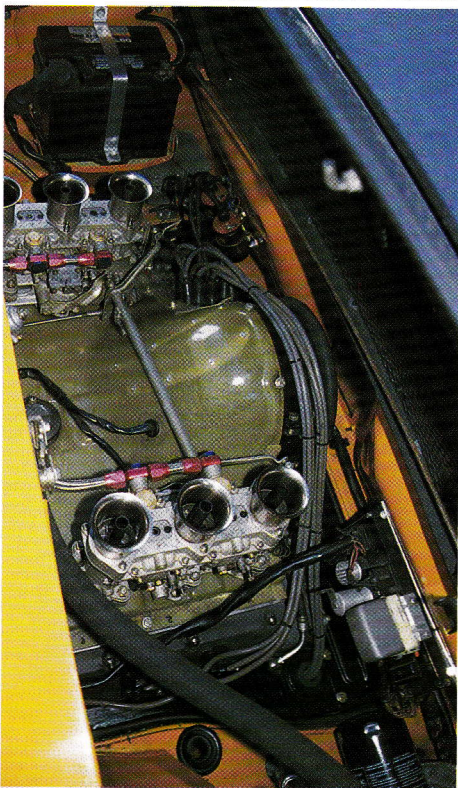
■ **Opposite, left**—The Kremers painted the front bumper of their 914-6 GT in two colors to help identify their car, and to link it to the factory 914-6 GT race cars.

■ **Above**—Large fuel cell is far from original, but also far safer.

■ **Above, right**—Restoring the “Six” to its seventies’ appearance required significant bodywork.

■ **Right**—The Kinst’s chose to rebuild their 914-6 GT’s engine to its original 2.0-liter specs. Output is 200 hp.

■ **Below**—The Kinsts’ 914-6 now wears factory steel GT flares and proper fiberglass GT decklids.

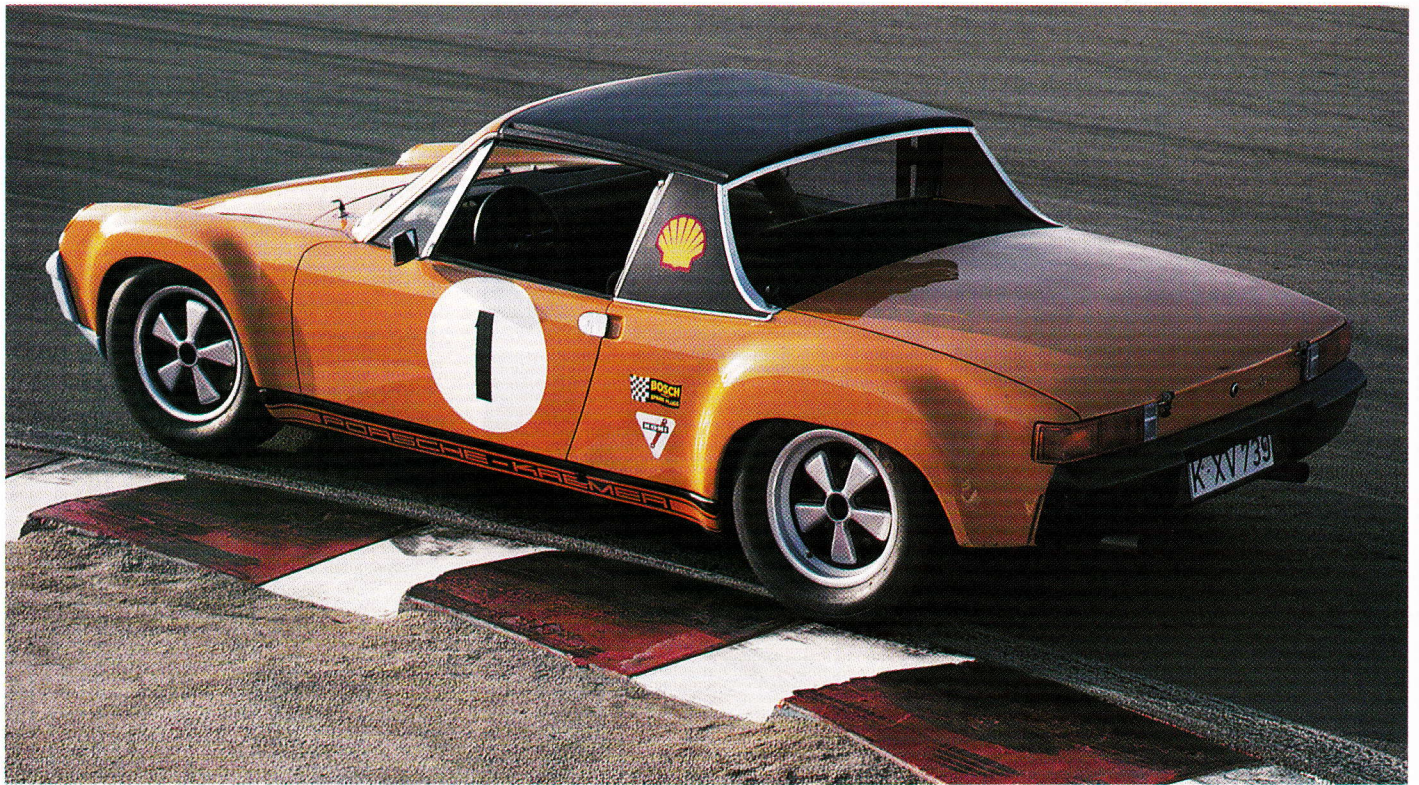


nal form of the 914-6 GT took shape once again. With Mendicki, Llew applied the steel flares over the original narrow-body fenders — just as the factory had done in the first place. Then Llew primed and painted the GT in Signal Orange Imron paint, since research indicated this was the original color of the car. Llew also decided to duplicate the half black/half light blue front bumper motif that Kremer used to emulate the look of the factory-entered 914-6 GT race cars.

The original 2.0-liter, aluminum-case engine, which Von K had saved, was sent to Jerry Woods Enterprises for a professional rebuild. The fact that Woods had once worked at Kremer as a race mechanic made the Kinsts feel right about the rebuild karma. Though they intended to use the original engine’s titanium connecting rods, Woods discouraged them from doing so. Instead, Carillo rods with Cosworth pistons were used in the rebuild. Woods also suggested they park the 46 mm Webers on the shelf in favor of 40 mm IDAs — which are much easier to tune for bottom-end torque than the bigger units. He also suggested they ditch the early, center-oiled 906 camshafts in favor of later-grind 911 cams that Woods distributes.

Though the Kinsts were hungry for an authentic rebuild, Woods cautioned them that dependability was not always consonant with authenticity. When Woods was done, he had prepared a 2.0-liter motor good for 200 hp on the dyno and capable of running easily to 8000 rpm. The only problem was that the motor wasn’t ready when the car was. In order to get some experience with the car while waiting for an extremely busy Woods to finish, Llew bought a cooking-spec 911E engine from his friend and fellow Golden Gate Region time trialer, Sergio Mesa.

This interim motor allowed Kinst to enter his first vintage track event with the GT — the freezing cold March HMSA run at Laguna Seca. It’s not often you see snow on the coastal peaks of Monterey, but such was the case that weekend. But aside from a broken fan belt, the GT ran superbly. In fact, the only thing that needed a rethink was the brake bias system. The crew had set the 914 up with 908 front calipers and 911S vented rear rotors, which operated from a 19-mm master cylinder and a stock 914 bias bar. But a soft brake pedal developed between sessions, necessitating a



■ Above—Bill and Llew Kinst (with a lot of help) finished their restoration in time for the 1998 Monterey Historics.

bleed each time the car took to the track. They later cured the problem by substituting an aftermarket bias bar for the factory unit.

Aby assisted by a family pit crew consisting of 914 devotee Lorin Guy, his wife Katherine, and his young son Steffen, Kinst entered the 914-6 GT at the Wine Country Classic at Sears Point International Raceway in June, 1998. "It was my first time driving in front of a crowd," says Llew of his foray to the heavily attended vintage weekend in Sonoma. By this time, Llew had been able to apply the appropriate decals to the GT, including Shell logos on the breadbasket roll bar, Koni and Bosch insignias on the flanks, and white "Porsche" decals for the rocker panels. In the pits at Sears, the Kinsts greeted Von K as the former owner came over to inspect "his" 914.

"It doesn't look anything like my car," said Von K, amazed at the transformation from monster to vintage racer. "But those decals on the rocker panels are the wrong color," continued Von K, suddenly recalling a photo of the original car in Kremer trim he had forgotten to give to the Kinsts. "The Porsche lettering should be orange."

Llew had no problem making new "Porsche" decals for the rocker panels

before the upcoming Historics at Laguna. But the engine situation was still looking grim. It appeared that the interim 911E motor would have to pinch hit for the unfinished Woods motor again. But Rich Walton, who works with Woods, reassured the Kinsts that the 2.0-liter powerplant would be ready for the big weekend. And he was right. More than a week before the Historics, the fresh motor was bolted to the 901 transmission that had been rebuilt with a Quaife differential and short gears. The airport gearset made the most of the 2.0-liter's peaky powerband. Llew drove the complete car for the first time the weekend before the Historics and it "ran like a rocket." The combination proved just as awesome to Garretson the following weekend, according to Bill Kinst: "Bob really enjoyed himself. And having a world class driver was really pleasurable for us."

Because of the irreplaceable nature of the cars involved in the Historics, body contact is frowned upon by the organizers. If you so much as touch another car, you are brought into the pits for an examination and consultation. Unfortunately, a tight passing drill up the front straight during Friday practice caused Garretson to swerve to avoid a slower Corvette just as a

faster Corvette swerved to avoid Garretson's 914. The faster Corvette nicked the 914 ever so slightly, but it was still enough to mandate the black flag visitation of both cars to the pits. But Garretson misconstrued who the black flag was being shown for and sped past the start line five times while the corner workers chatted up a storm. When he finally figured out the meatball was for him, he pitted immediately. After a brief discussion, he was on his way again.

To memorialize the gaffe, Kinst had five small black flag decals made up and applied to the driver's door of the 914 the next day. As it turned out, Garretson didn't see these either as he belted himself in for the Saturday practice session. As the 914 took to the track, the SCCA turn workers staffing the corners gawked at the black flag flag tribute, then began applauding each pass of Garretson and the 914.

For his part, Bob Garretson couldn't understand what was motivating all this newfound enthusiasm. When he finally climbed out from the GT at the end of the session, he saw the black flag decals for the first time, then doubled up laughing. As it turns out, former world champs are no more immune to a good joke at their expense than the rest of us. ■