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# Giant Killer

RETIRED IN 1971 AND UNMOLESTED SINCE,  
THIS VINTAGE PORSCHE 914/6 GT IS BACK IN THE HUNT.

STORY BY **TED WEST** PHOTOS BY **RICH CHENET**



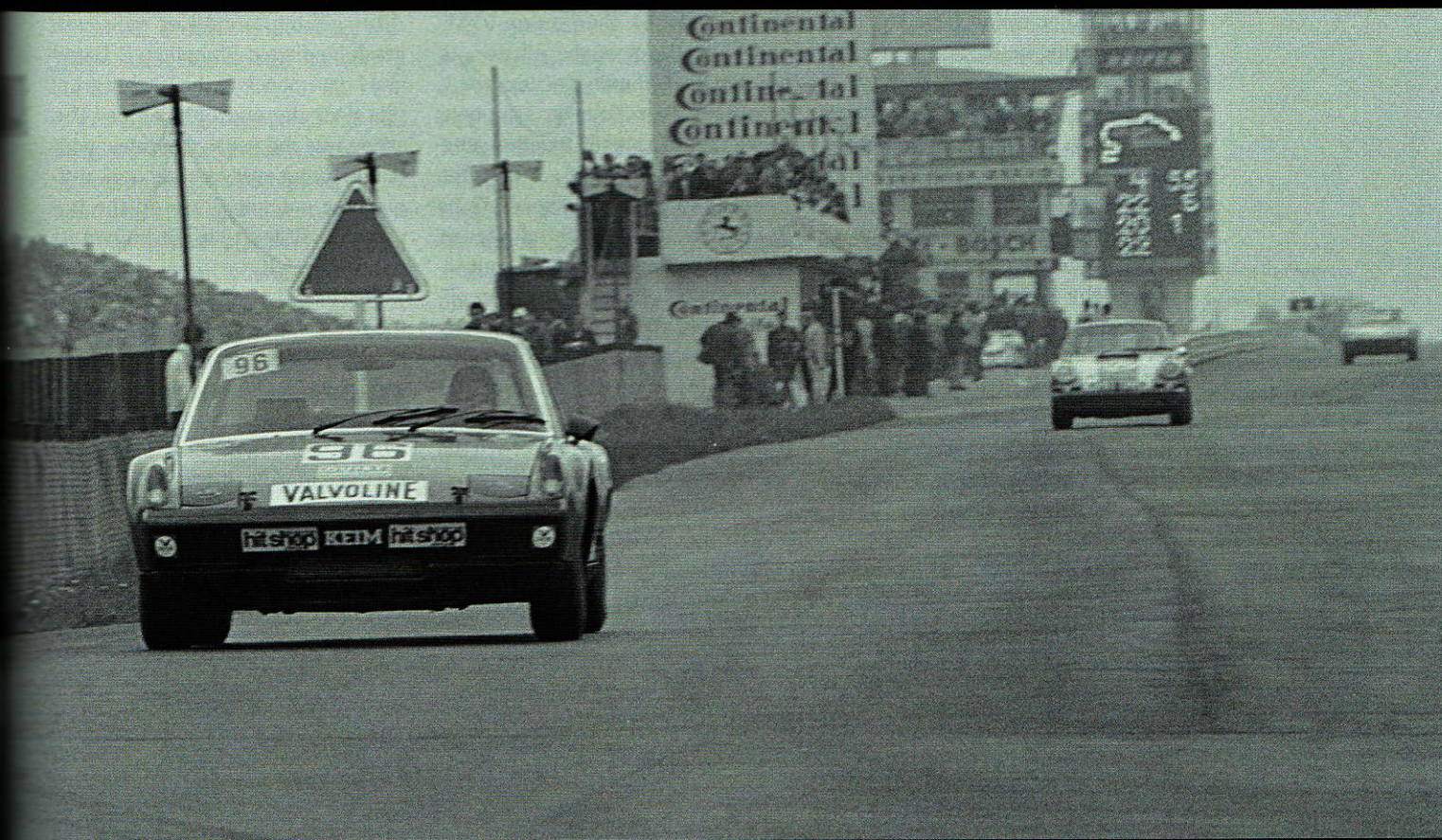


# It can happen

if you have the good fortune to live a decade or three longer than you really deserve. You come upon a beloved old watch, a book from long ago, perhaps a precious old car you'd forgotten, and it brings everything to a complete halt. It happened to me a while back at Steve Limbert's busy Aircooled Racing shop in Wellsville, Pennsylvania—a haven of wonderful ongoing Porsche projects deep in the idyllic rolling hills just north of Gettysburg—when the sight of a historic racing Porsche was like getting a clout in the head and seeing stars.

Only what I saw weren't stars.





ERIC DELLA FAILLE PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION / REVS INSTITUTE

Fifty years fell away like sheets of snow off a steep roof, and I smelled it all again: the sharp aroma of multiple trackside campfires in the Eifel Forest. After a morning rain, the air was so humid that, despite the coolness, it was almost sweaty. Echoing through the trees were hordes of long-haired German hippie campers, already deep into their 10 a.m. pilsner, all chanting at the top of their lungs the international anthem of the day, Gary DeCarlo's "Nuh-nuh-nahh-nahh...nuh-nuh-nahh-nahh...hey-hey-hey...GOO-OD-BYE!"

That morning, my friend F. David Stone and I had driven out from the pits to the Nürburgring's famed Flugplatz—literally, "flight place"—where we would watch the 1970

World Manufacturer's Championship cars catch air. Again and again, racers leaped over the ridge at full chat like short, fat kangaroos. At the apogee, with suspension in full droop, the cars would bang down, digging hard to the next bend.

Every shape and size of race car shot into view—Porsche 911s, 910s, and 908/2s, as well as Alfas, Lolas, Chevrons, the nimble new factory Porsche 908/3s, the massive and cumbersome five-liter Ferrari 512S—and a raging Conda Green 1970 914/6 GT, #96, the exact same 9140430691 that slammed me to a halt in Steve Limbert's shop.

It all came back in a swoon: May 1970, Saturday morning practice at the ADAC 1000 Kilometers.

It was the first year of Porsche's world-beating 917K—but not this gray weekend at the Nürburgring. Instead of the big five-liter car, Porsche brought four of its brutally purposeful little 908/3 Spiders for John Wyer's Gulf Racing Team and Porsche Salzburg.

I, an altogether hysterical 27 years old, had been assigned by *Road & Track* editor James T. Crow to crusade from one European racing circuit to the next every second weekend, chronicling the wars between Ferrari and Porsche. The 917K and Ferrari's 512S were the fastest "sports cars" ever, often faster than contemporary F1 cars. In two weeks, on Le Mans' three-mile Mulsanne Straight, they would achieve 248 mph!

**Now wearing #19, this 914/6 GT debuted at the Nürburgring ADAC 1000K on May 31, 1970 as the #96 car. Starting 41st, it placed 23rd overall and fifth in FIA Group 4 GT. It went on to score nine GT2 wins and three GT overall wins in the 1970 ADAC Championship.**



**SEEING THE CONDA GREEN** 914/6 GT now, another vision from the past came soaring in. It was of a Friday morning in January before the 1970 24 Hours of Daytona. That rainy morning in the pit area parking lot, Jo Hoppen of Porsche-Audi presented to the racing press Porsche's brand-new 914 and 914/6. We were invited to enjoy ourselves puttering around the parking lot in the unusual new VW-Porsche. But this was Daytona International Raceway, and we didn't want to putter around no steenkin' parking lot.

So the great Pete Lyons, poet laureate of the Can-Am, and I availed

ourselves of two Signal Orange cars, one a 914, the other a 914/6, and headed out of the pit area to the rain-soaked infield access roads below the Turn Four banking near the tunnel. We pieced together a figure-eight racetrack of sorts on the deserted roads and swapped off the 914 and 914/6 every ten minutes or so. For 45 minutes we raced our idiot heads off, sliding around on opposite lock, dervishing off onto the rain-saturated Bermuda grass, having the devil's own good time—no harm, no foul. If you tried that today, it would be the shortest route to the Volusia County jail.

Then another vision flared: After getting our fill of race cars crash-landing at Flugplatz, F. David and I drove back to the Nürburgring pits near the end of practice. The scene was the usual shambles, with teams trying every tuning option to produce quicker times on the impossibly difficult circuit known as the Green Hell.

We hadn't been back in the pits for fifteen minutes, when suddenly all activity stopped. No race cars passed. Conversation ceased. Groups of three and four men and women stood in silent circles, moving not a muscle. It was suffocating.





Only the breeze was audible.

On the endless, undulating, top-speed straightaway that concludes each long Nordschleife lap, the Dutch AAW Porsche 908/2, far and away the fastest privateer Porsche all season long, had caught air under its nose at full speed. It rose, did a half somersault, and landed flat on its top. Brilliant young Finn Hans Laine, who was surely destined for a front-line factory-team ride, was trapped in the upside-down car. It burst into flame, blazing so furiously that when the emergency crews arrived, they could get nowhere near. In any case, it was eternally too late.

My friend David Weir, an American racing a 911T on the Nürburg-rung that day, saw the remains of the car hours later. So little remained that it fit inside a VW van.

Seeing the Conda Green 914/6 GT again, that memory, too, rushed back. It was the motor racing of the era: heroic, gorgeous, and unspeakably cold. Since the darkness of that time, thanks to the courageous objections of Jackie Stewart, we have come a very long way indeed.

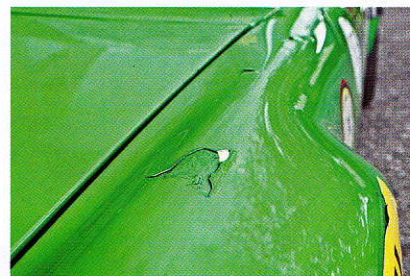
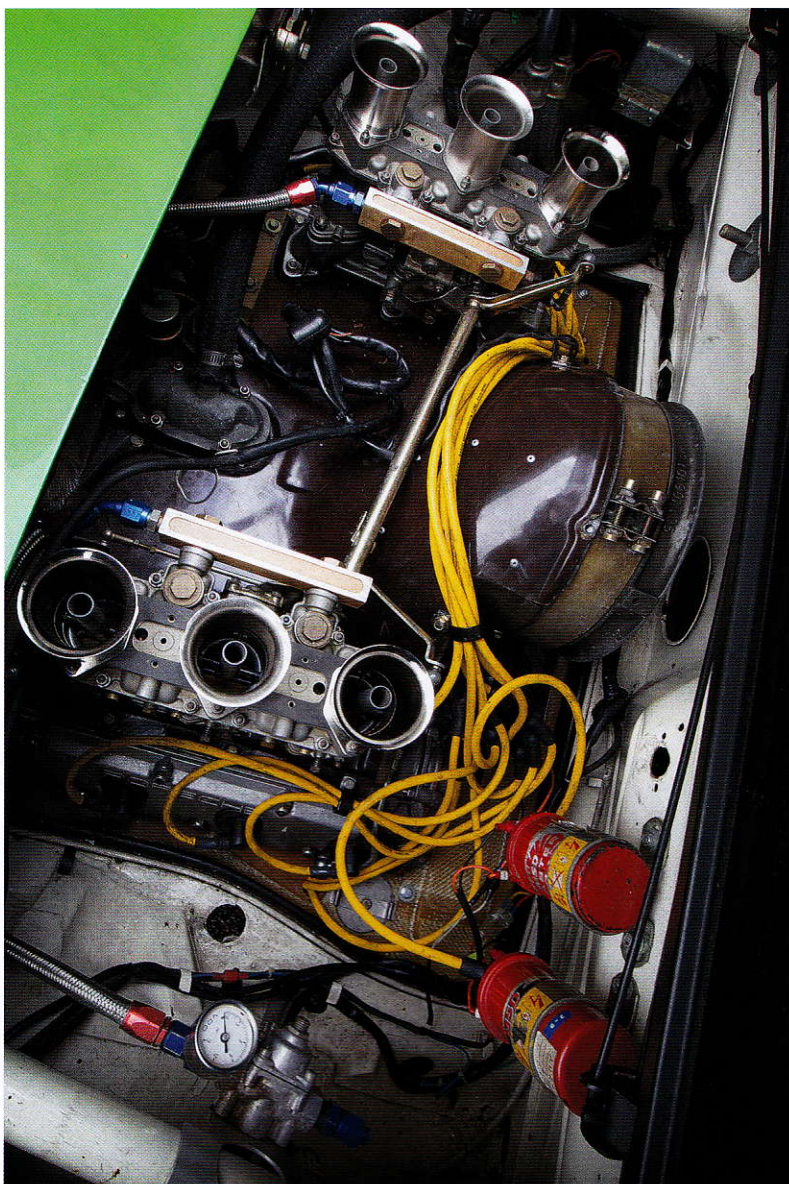
**THE REASON 0691** had such a fierce impact on me is that I hadn't seen or thought of it since its 1971 re-

tirement. The 917Ks and 908/3s, of course, have been a constant since that time, always present at vintage racing and Rennsport Reunions. But this Conda Green car was far more private—a rare, vivid memory straight from the source.

Every imaginable thing has already been said, good, bad, and indifferent, about the star-crossed 914 and its lineage. It's been called misunderstood, a misbegotten middle-European military utility vehicle, the darling of all who appreciate true balance, goodness, and virtue.

But if you saw the brand-new 0691 I saw in the Eifel in 1970, you'd

**Space limitations in 0691's "hell hole" dictated Weber carburetors instead of fuel injection for the 220-hp Type 901/36 flat six.**





have had no doubt whatever. With its green fenders flared in anger and the twin-plug Type 901/36 1991cc flat six grumbling threateningly over in the far corner of the pits, you'd take a stroll over, straying momentarily from the mighty Ferrari 512s and the blunt fury of the 908/3s, to appreciate this car more closely.

The 914/6 GT's blaring growl was pleasingly familiar for one reason—it made the same authoritative snarl as the unbeatable Porsche 906 from years ago. No wonder. Except for its Weber carburetion in place of Bosch fuel injection (the tight 914 “hell-hole” engine room allowed scant ac-

commodation for fuel injection) and steel connecting rods in place of the Carrera 6's elite titanium rods, this magnesium-cased engine was good for a stout 220 horsepower. In the feather-light 914/6 GT chassis, it was a potent combination.

If you wonder what that translates to in on-track pace, it's a car that says “get back!” In 1971, near the end of its racing career, 0691, with another 914/6 GT driven by Peter Gregg and Hurley Haywood, regularly diced with the rorty, best-of-its-breed Dave Heinz/Don Yenke IMSA GT Corvette for the race lead, winning as often as not. Here was a 914 to revere!

**BUT PERHAPS INEVITABLY**, the 914/6 GT was treated from the beginning like a second-class citizen. While factory GT racing efforts were devoted to making the 911 the best it could be, 914/6 GTs were farmed out to be raced by select enthusiast German Porsche dealers. Accordingly, 0691, which was assembled in Zuffenhausen in February 1970 and was one of 10 or 15 FIA Group 4 GT cars, was plucked out of the 914/6 production line, furnished with a Type 901/36 engine (640 0295), and painted Light Ivory.

The car was delivered to Autohaus Max Moritz in Reutlingen, where it





would be fully modified to race-ready GT specifications during March and April. All of the modification parts were supplied directly by Porsche to produce the promised 220 horsepower. The chassis was fitted with 908 front brakes and wheel flares. It underwent numerous other detail modifications, retaining its stock fuel tank as well as an auxiliary tank, bringing it up to endurance-racing fuel capacity. It was built to satisfy FIA homologation specification #625.

Moritz also gave it a full roll cage, the same one it bears today. A fully triangulated, substantial-looking structure, this roll cage is construct-

ed not of steel but, as was commonplace in Europe at the time, of light (and, alas, forbiddingly crushable) aluminum. Fortunately, in two intense seasons of international professional racing, the roll cage's integrity was never tested. During its conversion process, Moritz gave 0691 its trademark Conda Green.

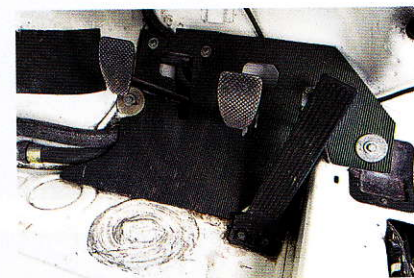
The car's first race was the aforementioned 1970 Nürburgring 1000 Kilometers. One of four 914/6 GTs entered, it was driven by sponsor Autohaus Max Moritz's Gerhard Quist and Dietrich Krumm. And interestingly, notes on the other three Nürburgring 914/6 GTs indicate

their roll cages were not only not steel—they had none at all!

As this was the 914/6 GT's baptism of fire, and because the cars were still under development, Quist and Krumm soldiered on unspectacularly, finishing fifth in the GT class behind the other three 914/6s. The GT class victory was secured, as the natural order would have it, by a 911. And not incidentally, the overall victors were Kurt Ahrens and Vic Elford in a Porsche-Salzburg 908/3.

Development continued on the racing package and lessons were learned. After the Nürburgring, Autohaus Max Moritz raced the Con-

**A bare-bones cockpit and a sky-high 8000-rpm redline help proud Steve Limbert's 0691 beat big V8s—and a lot of 911s.**



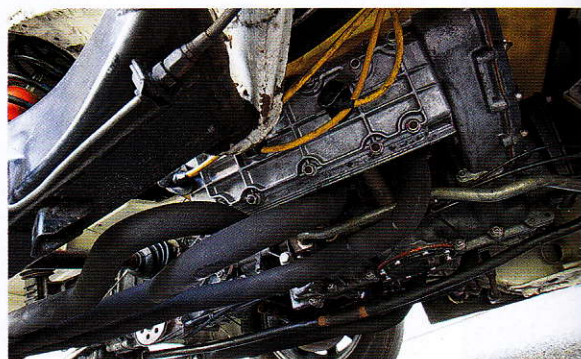
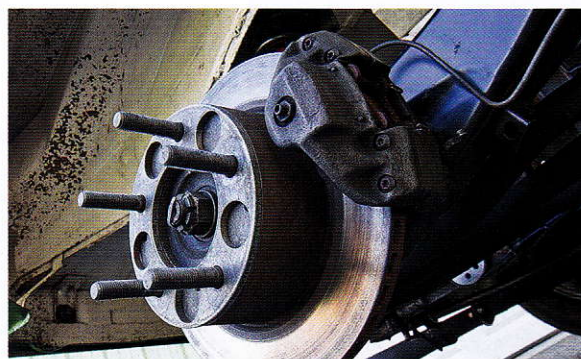
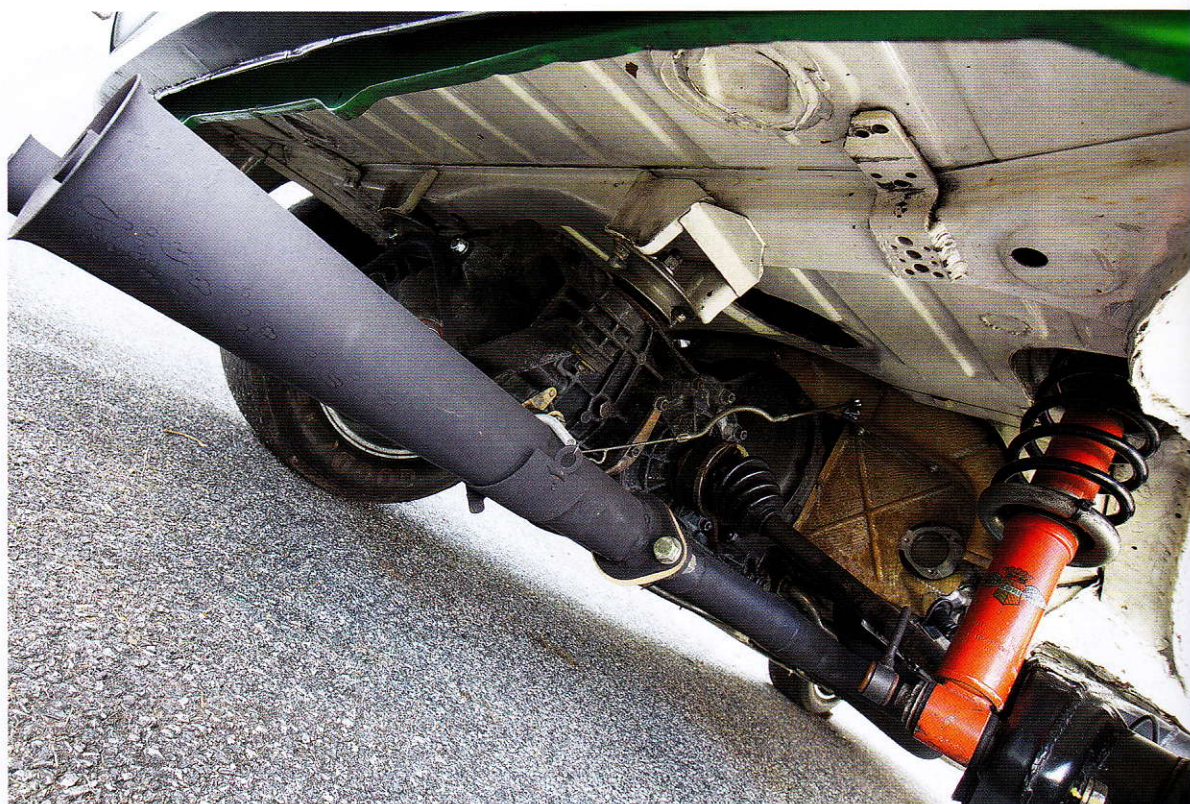


da Green car in 12 international GT events in Germany and elsewhere on the Continent throughout 1970—including two hill climbs, both of which it won. Various drivers by Quist or Krumm, the car was extremely successful, winning nine times, including three GT overall wins and six GT 2.0-liter class wins. The car set lap records at Hockenheim and Zolder and was dubbed by the German press as “Europe’s fastest GT.” It successfully clinched the 1970 International GT Trophy for Porsche.

**BUT AS THE VENERABLE** racing saying goes, there’s nothing as old as last

year’s race car. On December 12, 1970, Moritz sold 0691 to Forry Laucks in Massachusetts for the splendid sum of \$12,500. It would be campaigned in North America in 1971 by 1970 Daytona GTU champion Ralph Meaney. The car arrived in Boston with less than two weeks to prepare for the 1971 24 Hours of Daytona. It would be driven by a team picked by Porsche-Audi Division, composed of Steve “Yogi” Behr, North American rally champ John Buffum, and German Porsche tuner Erwin Kremer, who a decade and more later would earn fame as the premier tuner of the world-beating Porsche 935s.

With the car fresh off the plane and still adorned with all its German sponsor decals (for Autohaus Max Moritz, Tergal, Valvoline, Gummi-Reif, C.F. Keim, and Quist K.G.), Ralph Meaney and his crew had little time to do much more than Americanize its outward appearance. They affixed their own graphics and the number 19. In the rush to get the team to Florida on time, 0691 essentially raced at the 1971 24 Hours of Daytona in the same mechanical tune it had coming off the plane from Germany. Meaney also entered a second 914/6 GT, driven by himself, Bill Bean, and Gary



Big-boy Porsche 908 front brakes and King Kong 914/6 GT suspension make 0691 stop and grip.



Wright. Two other 914/6 GTs were entered at Daytona, one from Brumos Porsche for Peter Gregg/Hurley Haywood and a Sunoco-Canada car for Jacques Duval, Bob Bailey, and George Nicholas.

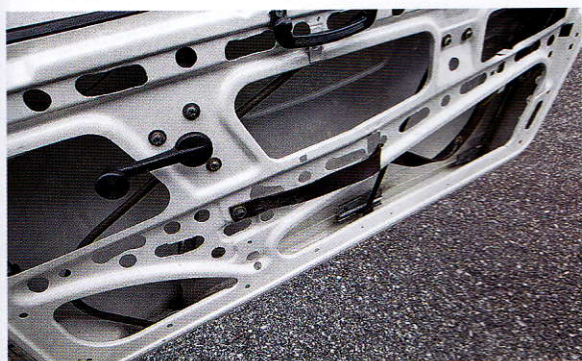
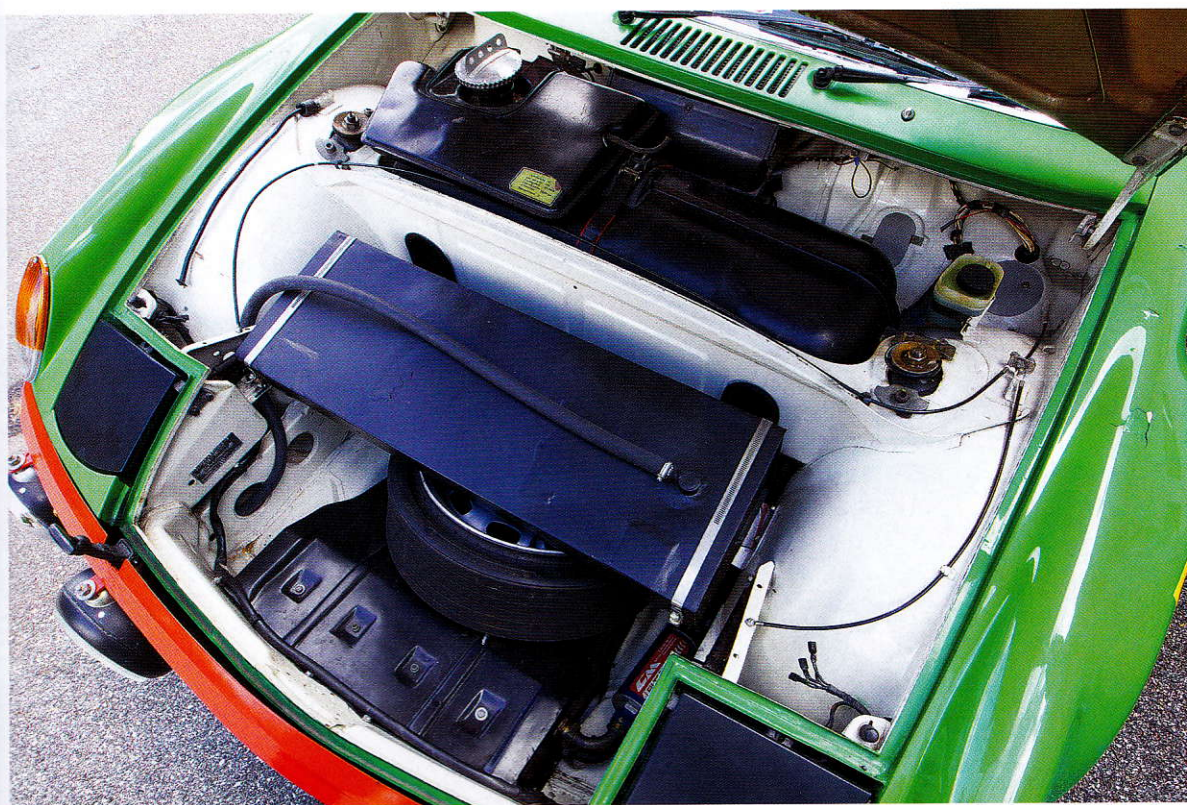
The headliners of the 1971 Daytona 24 Hours were, of course, the Porsche 917Ks and an extremely fast Penske Sunoco Ferrari 512M driven by Mark Donohue and David Hobbs. After some strategic crashing up at the front that slowed the Ferrari, the Martini-sponsored Rodriguez/Oliver 917K won. But finishing surprisingly high in the overall standings was Conda Green

0691. In fact, the car was leading its GT class with only four hours to go, with Duval/Bailey/Nicholas close behind. A last-hours duel between the two 914/6s ensued, with the Duval car ultimately capturing the lead and the GT class win. Behr/Bufum/Kremer finished second. After 24 grueling Daytona hours, these two sturdy two-liters had run flawlessly, outdistancing countless more powerful adversaries and impressively finishing seventh and eighth overall.

**THE 12 HOURS OF SEBRING** in March 1971 held great promise for Meaney and crew. Porsche-Audi

Division had assembled another stellar driving trio for the car, this time combining Behr and Buffum with Gemini V and Apollo XII astronaut Pete Conrad, just a year after Conrad had been commander of the second manned moon landing. The three were once more aligned against the Gregg/Haywood duo, the Duval Sunoco-Canada 914/6, and the second Meaney entry.

This time around, however, 0691 ran into serious mechanical problems during the 12-hour ordeal. After leading the GTU class for seven hours, a gearbox problem dropped Behr and company from 15th over-



Meeting FIA Homologation Specification #625, 0691 has an auxiliary front fuel tank.



all to finish 29th overall in the 57-car field. A paralyzing four hours was lost in the pits, in part because the team was now concentrated on trying to produce a good finish for the second, still-healthy #28 Meaney car. This effort was going brilliantly, with the 0691 drivers being transferred into the #28 car's seat. The car was running as high as tenth overall with just one hour left, but on the race's last lap, Buffum crashed, giving #28 a DNF and diminishing its result to 31st overall.

Meanwhile, repairs were made to the gearbox of 0691. At very long last, it rejoined the race and was classified as a finisher, though

in 29th place. The two-car Meaney team's valiant struggles were recognized nonetheless. Against six other strong contenders in the trouble-plagued 12 Hours, the group was awarded the Sebring Team Trophy for sportsmanship.

**ON APRIL 18, 1971**, 0691 was a charter member of the very first IMSA GT event ever run. Staged at Virginia International Raceway, this was a full 300-mile enduro, in which Ralph Meaney shared 0691's cockpit with the lighthearted "Yogi" Behr. The car raced hard, achieving a fine podium finish behind the Gregg/Haywood 914/6 GT and the fire-breathing

runner-up Corvette driven by Heinz and Yenko. A month later, Behr and Meaney drove the car to a fourth-place finish at the IMSA Piedmont 3-Hour GT enduro at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

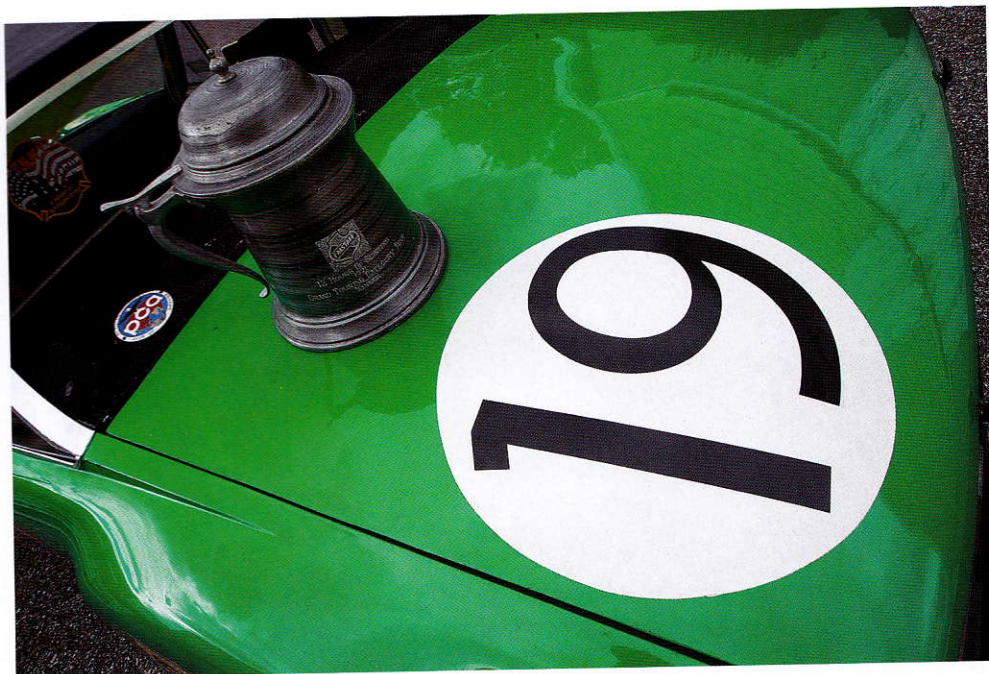
Scattered 1971 SCCA events kept Behr busy campaigning 0691 as a B-Production entrant, running in Nationals at Bridgehampton and Thompson. The car won both easily. It was so fast, indeed, that SCCA promptly reclassified it in B-Sports Racing for the August Watkins Glen National—which it won anyway.

The car's final appearance in a professional event was on September 19, 1971 at the Summit





Point IMSA GT race. Modified from 1991cc to 2380cc for this race, 0691 and Meaney were engaged in a violent, wheel-to-wheel dice with the pole-sitting Dave Heinz Corvette. A third of the way into the event, the two cars made contact in a corner, and the Corvette's heft broke a control arm on 0691. It was the only DNF the 914/6 GT suffered in its two-year international racing history. But due to reclassification, the car was no longer competitive in either FIA Group 4 or SCCA B-Sports Racing. It was time for Meaney to move on. The car was sold to Sydney Ho of Boston for \$9,000. At its retirement, it was still racing with



the original #640 0295 engine case, undamaged in nearly 200 hours of testing, practice, and 25 driven-to-the-max endurance races!

**OLD RACE CARS**, like old jokes, get no respect—for a while, anyway. But in a way, 0691 was fortunate to have a brief, very bright career followed by an abrupt halt to its competitive life. It was spared the long, demeaning, and often destructive decline many old race cars suffer. Ho painted the car black—his only sin—and sold it to Gil Meyer of North Andover, Massachusetts in 1983. Meyer won the Governor's Cup with it at the Bahamas Vintage Speedweek in December 1984. He then participated in the 1985 BMW Fall Festival at Lime Rock, took it to the 1986 Porsche Parade in Portland, Maine, and thereafter put it in storage. In 1996, he sold it to Patrick Scalli for use in Group 4 vintage racing.

Today, after a period of some years at rest in Steve Limbert's jam-packed Pennsylvania Porsche aerie, 0691 has been carefully reassembled and romanced, with its handsome vintage aluminum roll cage reinstalled. If you had the good fortune to be at Daytona a couple of days before the 24 Hours in 2018, you saw a gorgeous, blaring little Conda Green middle-European military utility vehicle raging around the

Daytona high banks, showing its tail to many a "higher-born" 911 vintage race car unused to being outpaced. The proud little green car made the very same arrogant, step-aside Carrera 6 roar that every 914's soul hears in its dreams.

And when the Daytona vintage racer lapping was over and the old race cars came down out of the banking to the pits, if you knew who you were looking at, you saw 914 maven Steve Limbert's smile boiling over with satisfaction. He knows exactly what we had seen all those long years ago at Flugplatz in 1970. Let there be no doubt of it—0691 knows full well the respect it deserves. In the golden age of the 917K—and incomparably golden it was, so golden that we even knew it at the time—Porsche was just beginning to tell the world, "Hey, you! Pay attention!"

All the while, Conda Green 914/6 GT 0691 was down in the trenches, making a holy noise. The 917s made the headlines, sure, and deserved them beyond all doubt. Yet in the purest tradition of that first diminutive 1951 Porsche coupe at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, running and running while prouder sorts fell by the wayside belching oil, 0691, all 1991 cubic centimeters of her, was driven by the same stubborn, unbending Porsche spirit—hunting dragons to slay. ●

**The 1971 12 Hours of Sebring Falstaff Grand Touring sportsmanship tankard. Prost!**