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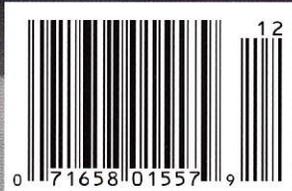
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Wake-Up Time

After a 25-year nap, this potent 914-6 racer roars back to life.

STORY BY PETER LINSKY
PHOTOS BY PETER LINSKY, DENNIS GRAY AND AS CREDITED

In 1970, it was clear to Josef “Jo” Hoppen, competition director for the Porsche-Audi Division of Volkswagen of America, that the new 914-6 had the potential to be a great on-track weapon. The battle that then ensued between the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) and Porsche-Audi of America over allowing the “Six” to run at its greatest potential would prove frustrating.

After the new 2.0-liter 911 had crushed everything in its path in 1966, the SCCA’s Competition Board bumped it up a class for the following season, and it still proved almost unbeatable. Nobody was going to give Porsche an inch. The company needed to race both the four-cylinder 914 and the new “Six” in America to demon-

strate that both were really Porsches and that the “Sixes” were worth their greater asking price, nearly that of a base 911T.

Hoppen’s plan was to support privateers who wanted to race the 914 and establish a full, factory-backed effort for the six-cylinder variant. As that plan took shape, Hoppen lobbied the SCCA to allow the 914-6 to run in C-Production with the factory’s “GT” package (M471), which the factory had homologated on March 1, 1970.

That package consisted of steel fender flares, wider wheels, larger tires and brakes, a lightweight fiberglass hood and rear deck lid, various chassis reinforcements, and what was essentially a 906 engine. The SCCA balked, claiming that not enough such cars had been built, even though

M471 kits were to be available from dealers after May 1971. It soon became clear that Porsche’s new mid-engined two-seater would have to swim upstream in America.

Hoppen arranged to have half-a-dozen new Sixes shipped to the U.S. for racing. Two went to Porsche-Audi Southeast in Florida for Peter Gregg and Pete Harrison; two were sent to Bob Hindson’s Porsche-Audi Midwest in Kansas City for Bob Hansen and Kendall Noah, and the West Coast would be served by Richie Ginther, who directed VW-Pacific’s racing effort for drivers Alan Johnson and Milt Minter. Each team was to receive \$50,000 from Volkswagen of America.

Then, in-house politics reared its ugly head; Ginther reportedly demanded three



times that amount, arguing that he had to invest hundreds of hours of development to make the new cars competitive under the SCCA's tight grip. Whether that was true or not is a matter of speculation, as Sixes were already being raced in Europe with some success, albeit with that legal-there-but-not-legal-here GT package.

While Hoppen was trying to coax more cash out of Zuffenhausen, Ginther started working on the cars sent to Los Angeles. Those cars would have a resounding impact on Porsche's U.S. amateur racing community, as evidenced by the 914-6 seen here, serial number 914 043 1513.

Competition Machine

According to its Certificate of

Authenticity, this Six was delivered in Signal Orange over black leatherette. Its first owner is unknown, but it was likely delivered by Don Wester Porsche in Monterey, California, or another dealer in that area, because around 1974 or 1975, it wound up on a used car lot on Monterey's Del Monte Avenue. That's where Michael Pineau of Los Osos, now a resident of San Luis Obispo, enters the picture.

Recalls Pineau's brother-in-law Vasek Polak, Jr., the pair were heading out to Laguna Seca for one of the first Monterey Historic Automobile Race weekends when the bright orange 914 caught their eye, and they stopped for a closer look.

"On the way to Laguna, we stopped and Michael made the guy an offer," says Polak.

"In the evening when we went back, we stopped again and they did the deal! I think the very next weekend was Thanksgiving. My wife and I got invited to their then-Los Osos house and to my utter disbelief, by the time we arrived for dinner Michael had already hacked off the windshield frame and had that awesome windscreen coming..."

That "awesome windscreen," today familiar to anyone who has ever seen photographs of the Richie Ginther-prepared 914-6s set up for SCCA racing, was to become a "must-have" for anyone racing either form of 914. 914s had to run open-topped because the removable fiberglass roof was deemed "unsafe."

Pineau had seen Alan Johnson's car, liked its set-up, and decided to duplicate

it. In addition to removing the windshield and the rear glass, the doors were gutted, a taller SCCA-legal roll bar was installed, and Pineau repainted the body a glossy black. "I thought it would look cool, and it did," he says. "It had never been shunted as long as I owned it." Then he mounted his new "Ginther" windscreen.

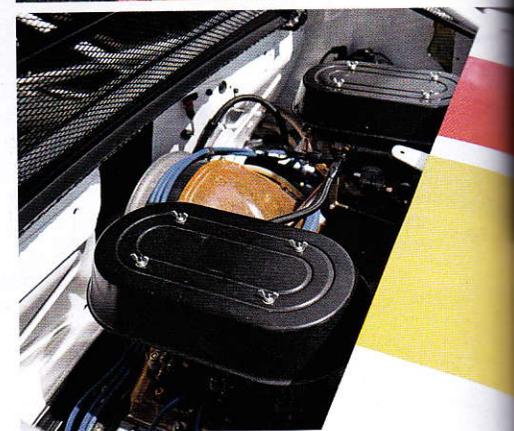
"I had Fred Hall, who owned Precision Engineering in San Luis Obispo, do the motor and mechanical set-up on the car," continues Pineau. "My mechanic at the track was Andy Jensen who is now a partner at Gunnar Racing in Florida." After a driving school or two, Pineau ran a couple of regional SCCA races in early 1976, then decided to part with the car. "Before I got into formula cars, I had (the Porsche) for a very short period of time. I was never a production car guy except for the 914-6," he says.

Pineau's engine builder, Fred Hall, found a buyer, and off the car went. Pineau hadn't kept old records and didn't remember the name of the guy he sold it to. After puzzling over signatures in the car's SCCA logbook and with help from NorCal Region archivist Gary Horstkorta, we finally figured out that the name was that of Tom Douglas, who drove the car in Regional and National events in northern and southern California, notching several competitive finishes including a class win at Laguna Seca in 1978.

Its next owner, Steve George of Portland, Oregon, bought it the following year largely disassembled and without an engine. A set of GT flares had been installed during Thomas's ownership. On the car's arrival at Porsche specialist Motorsports International, George received the welcome news that owners Wayne Ditsworth and Bill Shores would sponsor the project and prepare and maintain a race engine for him.

The logbooks show only a few entries under George's name, the first being a race at Portland on September 21, 1979. George next ran in June 1980, entering the annual Rose Cup races. After some other West Coast Regionals, George and his crew decided to venture outside their comfort zone, hauling the car east to Brainerd, Minnesota, where he recalls scoring a C-Production win. George's racing wound down because of the time required away from his business, so the following December, he put the car up for sale.

This 914-6 was then acquired by Paul Aragon, who raced it through the 1981 through 1983 seasons, winning the 1981 Oregon Region C-Production title. Aragon recalls the car having a fully cross-braced roll cage which extended out to the shock towers at all four corners, "but the front hoop was at dashboard height—just above the knees. I later added a front roll hoop above helmet level and connected it to the





Clockwise from left: This 914-6's carbureted 3.0-liter flat-six develops 302 hp. A fully triangulated roll cage ties into the suspension points. This car also has one of the cleanest interiors you'll ever see in a serious Porsche race car. Most competitors see this view of the Tiplady/Schroeder 914-6.

back hoop." The car was in need of a freshening, so he gave it a new coat of paint.

In 1982, the SCCA combined C-Production into the new GT2 category, which permitted substantial upgrades including a larger engine and coilover suspension. "I couldn't afford those modifications," says Aragon, "so I sold the car to Rick Eppinger," who was just starting to race. At that point, the car still had its original torsion bar suspension but was running a Ken Newland-built 2.4-liter flat-six engine. Aragon continued to race the car in Northwest SCCA National events while Eppinger obtained his racing license and drove the car in Regionals.

Aragon says the car was reasonably competitive, but relates one instance when it was thoroughly outclassed: The June 1982 Rose Cup Races at Portland

International Raceway (PIR), when it rained during Saturday qualifying for Sunday's Big-Bore Production contest. The bulk of the grid was made up of big American Trans-Am cars, which were using the race as a warm-up for their own event. Because of the wet pavement, the Camaros, Mustangs, and Corvettes couldn't put their power down.

"Seattle's Scott Taylor qualified on the pole in his 914-6 and I had the outside of the front row in my car," says Aragon. "Unfortunately, Sunday was warm and sunny and we had the dubious honor of knowing that all the V8 ground-pounders behind us were going to eat us for lunch. We looked pretty cool on the parade lap and as we went through the west end of the track, all the Porsche Club members on Porsche Hill were going nuts." Realizing

that they would create a moving chicane down the long straight into Turn One, Aragon and Scott agreed that they'd simply move over after taking the green flag.

As the V8s roared past, "...we ended up getting to Turn One in about 12th and 13th!" continues Aragon. "Scott and I were laughing afterwards about setting a track record for being passed by the most cars on the first lap before reaching Turn One!" Aragon and Eppinger ended the year co-driving in the Cascade Sports Car Club Six-Hour Enduro at PIR, where the car dropped out after its 901 gearbox broke.

In 1985, Eppinger traded the little black racer to Ric Tiplady for a 1962 356B Super 90 coupe. Tiplady recalls racing the Six the next spring pretty much as he had acquired it. Tiplady secured modest sponsorships from German Formula, a local Porsche service shop, and Carrera Motors, the Porsche dealer in Bend, Oregon. Tiplady was third in that year's Rose Cup Regional race, and although he finished second in the 1986 season GT2 standings with a 2.5-liter engine, remembers his mechanic, Jeff

Clockwise from left: Rick Tiplady hugs the curbing around Turn 10 at Portland (courtesy of Tiplady). Refueling and a driver change at the 1989 Six Hours of the Cascades (courtesy of Tiplady). Steve George leads a 911 at PIR (courtesy of George). Paul Aragon picked up Pepsi sponsorship in 1981 (credit Mike Fleming).

Gamroth, declaring “We gotta get faster!” Gamroth, a brilliant Porsche technician and talented race driver who would go on to crew for Alex Job Racing, examined all possible routes to making the car quicker and more stable.

Between the 1986 and 1987 seasons, Tiplady had begun a search for serious financial backing. That would come from Wes Aplanalp, owner of a fast-growing chain of optical stores in the Northwest. The optometrist had been persuaded to sponsor David Schroeder, an experienced National-level driver, who had entered an IMSA GTO-category Corvette in the 1986 Rose Cup. With the company’s name, Binyon Optical, splashed over the Corvette’s flanks, Aplanalp was pleasantly surprised to see the name appear in media coverage of the race weekend. Thus, when Tiplady gave him a call, Aplanalp again pulled out his checkbook. Tiplady had already repainted the car white and picked up additional backing from another independent Porsche shop, Marque Motors.

The large cash infusion from Aplanalp saw the car undergo further development. Gamroth prepared a fresh 2.8-liter engine for 1988, and it was decided to revert to a “closed” cockpit design. “We had been getting faster and faster and with that, more unstable at high speeds,” says Tiplady. “At the end of old Turn One at PIR, any debris in the cockpit would swirl around in a little tornado. Jeff talked to a bunch of people and determined re-topping it would greatly improve aerodynamics. It did!” Schroeder, who had extensive Porsche experience, was soon sharing the Six with Tiplady—David running in National races and Ric driving in Regionals. Gamroth also took some turns.

The car was second overall in the 1988 Rose Cup to Monte Shelton’s famous 934, “Old Blue,” but after Tiplady and co-drivers Schroeder and Joe Hermes limped to an overall win in the 1988 Six Hours of the Cascades with only fourth and fifth gears remaining in the overstressed gearbox, they knew the 901 had to go. Tiplady recalls that the car had to be push-started after every pit-stop and driver swap. “It just wasn’t strong enough to handle the 2.8-liter engine.” Still, the car had performed well enough that it finished in 13th place in the 1988 American Porsche Cup competition, earning a spot on a factory commemorative poster, and the driv-

ers an invitation to the factory’s celebration. Over the following winter, Gamroth installed a reinforced 915 gearbox along with a proper linkage, and that resolved the problem.

For the 1989 Enduro, Tiplady invited Paul Aragon to co-drive. Gamroth plugged in a 2.0-liter single-plug engine from his 1967 911S street car, which dropped the Six into the lower P2 category, and again it proved strong enough to go the distance, taking both overall and Under-two-liter honors. Aragon recalls that U2 competitors unsuccessfully protested the car because it was “too fast.” Noted Aragon, this 914-6 was the last production-based car to win this grueling all-comers endurance race, which attracts tough closed-wheel competition from across the West.

1970 914-6 GT2 Race Car Specs

Drive	Rear-wheel drive
Layout	Mid-engine
Wheelbase	96.4 inches
Engine	3.0-liter flat-six
Transmission	5-speed manual
Horsepower	302 hp
Torque	240 lb-ft
Weight	1,900 lbs
Power-to-Weight	6.3 lbs/hp
0-60 mph	5.0 seconds (est.)
Top Speed	137 mph
Base MSRP	\$6,000 (1970)

The car wound up the season by claiming the Oregon Region’s 1989 GT2 championship, reprising its 1988 title. The ride-sharing arrangement came to an end in 1990 when Tiplady was promoted at work and transferred to Irvine, California. He put the car up for sale in a classified ad: “Full spec GT-2 Nat’l SCCA racer, 7 poles in last 7 starts w/5 wins, lap rec. holder at Portland & Seattle, winner 6 Hours of Cascade 10/87, state of art Mazda/Nissan killer, w/exc. vintage history. Full enclosed trailer.” No takers appeared, so 1513 was put into storage, where it remained until last year.

Refreshed Racer

By 2015, Tiplady had returned to Oregon, ready to get back into racing. It was time to bring his old car back to life.

Schroeder offered to buy a half-interest in the car, and it was handed over to Mike Gent at Gent Restorations in Sherwood, Oregon. After nearly a year of intensive effort, it emerged as a testament to expert craftsmanship and thoughtful attention to detail. Concours-clean from top to bottom in carefully restored, period-correct AIR fiberglass, this old Six debuted at the 2016 Portland Vintage Festival.

Today the car runs a 3.0-liter endurance engine built by Gordon Ledbetter at Oregon Rennsport Systems. The 930/25 case contains a cross-drilled crank, 98-mm JE pistons on Carrillo rods, and Webcam camshafts nudging the valves. The twin-plug heads are ported and polished. A pair of 50-mm PMO triple-choke carburetors feed the fuel, and exhaust gasses depart via 1/75-inch headers and megaphones.

Schroeder says this very healthy engine develops just over 300 hp and 240 lb-ft of torque. The car wears restored Fuchs or Compomotive alloy wheels, 15 x 7-inches up front and 15 x 8-inches out back, shod all around with 23.5-inch diameter Goodyear Blue Streaks. The suspension is coilover and the brakes were borrowed from an early 911 Turbo (930) and have proven more than sufficient in a chassis that weighs less than a ton.

After the SCCA snubbed Hoppen’s efforts to run the Six in C-Production with the GT package, frustrated Six owners had nowhere else to go—until IMSA’s John Bishop saw an opportunity to attract a new and very loyal community of racers and their fans. With the creation of his Over-and-Under GT program, Bishop opened the door wide for Porsche, and while there’s no question that his hospitality was abused on occasion as various Porsche teams looked for ways over, under, and around some rules, this partnership proved a smashing success.

To be fair, Porsche did find success in the SCCA’s various professional series with the U2 Trans-Am, Can-Am, and amateur Showroom Stock categories. Some might say that Porsche’s inability to compete in all but SCCA’s smallest production classes gave birth to Porsche Club Racing, which thrives today. Given its disappointing sales numbers—just 3,352 units in all—the 914-6 was initially criticized as a commercial failure, but once given a place to compete, it proved to be a brilliant platform. ■