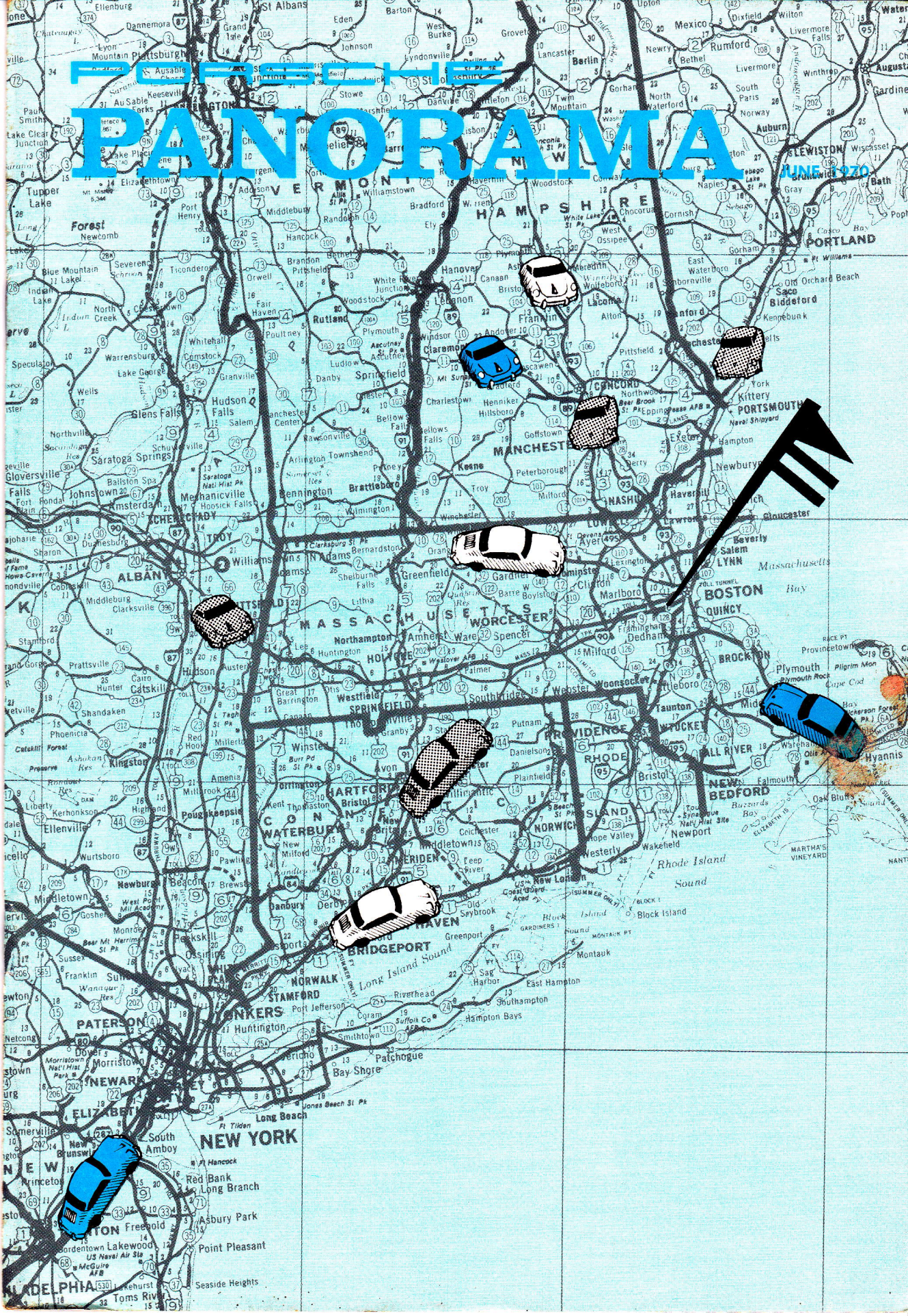
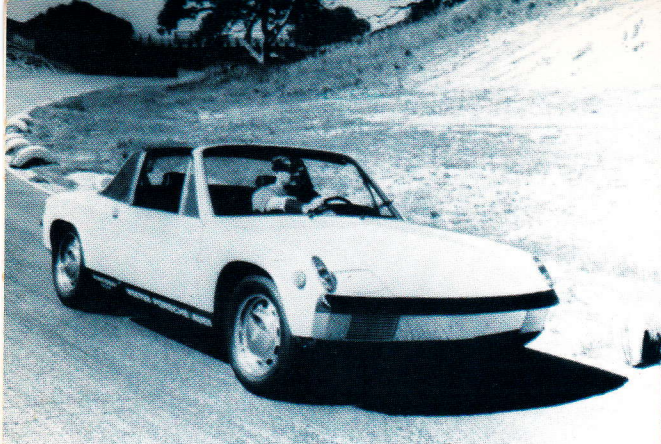


JUNE 1970



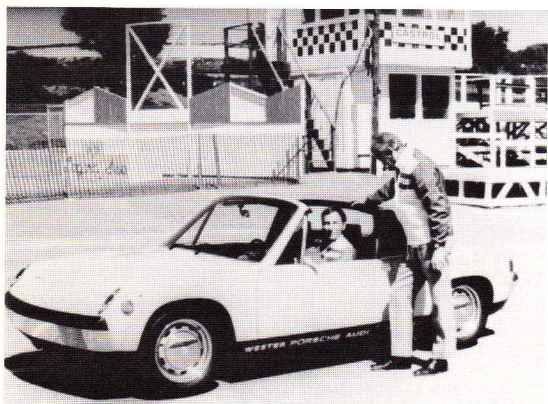


Roadtesting the 914/6

BOB RASSA
National Membership Chairman

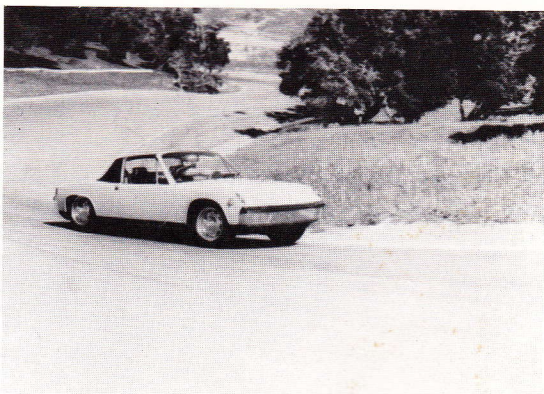
Ever since the 914 was announced, with its radical mid-engine design approach, the populace eagerly awaited its arrival—confident in the knowledge that the builder of the finest automobiles in the world would not disappoint the world. And when the 914 arrived, indeed we were not disappointed. In the January PANO we commented that the new 914 (Porsche—yes, Speedster—NO!) is pretty much what we hoped it would be, with the exception that it was a little down in the horsepower department. But, safe with the knowledge that the same car with the famous 911 6-cylinder engine would soon be available, we eagerly awaited ITS arrival, again with confidence.

And the 914/6 has finally arrived, and once again we've had an excellent opportunity to "wing it out" and see if the 2-liter engine has imparted all of its Porsche charm to the 914 as we hoped. We took a yellow one with about 400 miles on it (the car was only a few days old) and spent the day 2800 miles from home at Laguna Seca racetrack,



central California near Monterey. We received these terrific arrangements through the efforts of Lou Marable, PCA Executive Vice President, and the generosity of Don Wester, Porsche racing-pro-turned-dealer. Lou interceded for PANO with Don and was given the car for a day, and then Lou turned around and arranged for Laguna Seca track for the day—for our exclusive use, no less. By the time I had made the trek from East to West coast, all we had to do was load the camera and pick up the car.

Laguna Seca is a very interesting track, and a bit difficult to learn in one short day, although we weren't out there to set any lap records. Starting at the pit straight, we take turn 1 over a small rise with full throttle and tiny left wheel twitch and continue to accelerate down the straight towards turn 2, negotiating a slight jog in the process. Turn 2 is tricky, easy to underestimate and lose it in the grass, but we learned this part OK and continue around turn 2 to the left and accelerated up the hill under the CASTROL bridge. Turn 3 is again to the left just past the crest of the hill, and after a slight descent we again accelerate up a steeper hill to turn 4, short to the right, just after cresting the hill, and take a short straight into turn 5—it's really getting exciting now—5 is a slight left lead-



ing into the downhill ess; we round the first turn in the ess (6A) to the left and punch hard on the accelerator, setting us down firmly in the seat, and whip around 6B to the right; down a short straight stretch we see 7 to the left, a slightly downhill sweeper, and the grandstands and pits are now in sight, dead ahead. A short straight leads us into turn 8, a 90 degree sweeping right—we're back on level ground again—and then a 180 swing to the left, kind of tight at the end, bringing us into the pit straight, and we're all set to go it again! and again, and again, until we know the 914/6 inside and out.

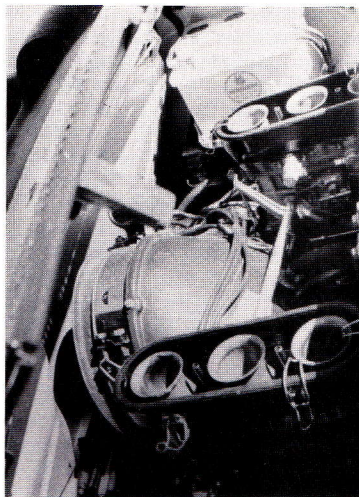
Some basics about the car, as a starter. The "appearance group" option (vinyl-covered roll bar, chrome bumpers) is standard on the /6, and you get an oil temperature gauge with no absolute markings, just a green zone. You also get real Porsche wheels, 5½" x 15 (grey; chrome optional at \$135) larger disc brakes from the 911T, a slightly higher fifth gear (22:29, as opposed to 22:31 on the 4 cyl), the electric windshield washer instead of the foot-squirt on the 4, a larger alternator (770 watts instead of 700 watts), and, of course, the 1991cc 6-cylinder engine with the dual triple-throat carbs, producing 110 hp DIN (125 SAE) at 5800 rpm. The engine is basically the same one used in the 1969 911T, albeit detuned slightly. The red-line is at 6300 rpm, which we felt was a bit low.

We didn't mention fog lights, because there aren't any. Despite several photographs of the car with fog lights mounted in the horn grills, these are not available in the USA because they are "too low." The appearance group option price was to include these on the 4 cyl, but we understand from Porsche Audi that this price will be lowered by a certain amount to compensate for the lack of fog lights. There have been several cars received in the states with these lights, however, and if you shop you may be lucky enough to find one. If not, the fact that they exist in Stuttgart means that the light and the grills are available in somebody's black market and could probably be had for a little effort. Further enticement is the fact that I noticed an unused wire under the bumper on each side, which I surmised to be the harness for the lights.

We also didn't mention the alloy wheels that were shown in early publicity photographs, because these are not available yet either. It seems that there is a production problem which causes cracks, but this is expected to be eliminated shortly. For the time being, however, the 911 series 15 inch alloy wheels will fit on the 6, and EMPI makes some alloy wheels for Volkswagen that will fit perfectly on the 4-cyl.

Roger Chaney, PCA National Technical Chairman, has asked us to tell you about a service tip he has developed for the car. He recommends that when you go to set the timing, change the distributor points (or do other distributor work), or remove or replace the fanbelt, you should really make things easy for yourself and cut an access hole in the firewall immediately behind the passenger's seat. You can then cover it up with a slightly larger piece of aluminum or sheet metal, using sheet metal screws. After looking at the location of these items, we agree wholeheartedly with Roger.

Turning from the objective to the subjective, let us say that the 914/6 was as much fun to drive as we hoped it would be. The additional power makes



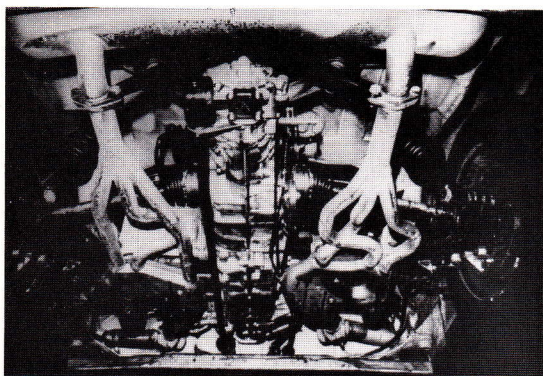
the car a much better balanced machine than it is with the smaller engine. The car feels smaller than a 911, but just about as heavy. A quick check on the facts revealed that the 914/6 is actually 22 pounds HEAVIER than a 911S. Well, this should make it faster than a 912 and slower than a 911, which is precisely what we noted. The 0 to 60 times were on the order of 10 seconds. We did not run any quarter-mile times, but our estimate would be about 82 mph with an elapsed time of 17.4 seconds.

The brakes are superb—as good as I expected them to be. Stops are smooth and sure, with absolutely no hints of fade, even after 6 to 8 repeat stops from 80 mph. The brakes are straight from the 911T, so it stands to reason that the braking characteristics would be very similar to the 911T. Steering is typical Porsche, employing the same rack-and-pinion unit with which we are familiar, with one minor exception. On the 911/912 series, Porsche changed to the rack-and-pinion setup from the old ZF-Ross unit used on the 356B/C series. This rack-and-pinion unit had a pre-load adjustment built in, to keep the unit tight and operating properly. Now, the unit has undergone some additional refinements that make it unnecessary to have the pre-load adjustment, and tightness between the rack and the pinion is maintained by a spring-loaded pressure plate. This is a lighter unit, and Porsche feels that it is superior to the earlier 911 "pot" steering units (yup, that's what it was called!).

Transmission action is relatively smooth, except for the gearshift lever itself. Since the connecting links are of greater length now (as opposed to the 900 series), there is a slightly greater amount of play in evidence. But it is so slight that if one were not accustomed to a 911 5-speed, one would not notice the difference. The only transmission available with the 914/6 is the 5-speed unit, by the way. We never favored the 4-speed with the 6-cylinder engine anyhow, and there are darned few around. The clutch action is nice also, with smooth precise engagements possible at all time. The clutch has also been redesigned—the pressure plate and the clutch disc are now reversed from what you are used to. In addition to being reversed (so that when you drop the engine and pull the transmission, the pressure plate stares you in the face) there are special metric "star allen" cap screws that must be removed to replace the clutch disc.

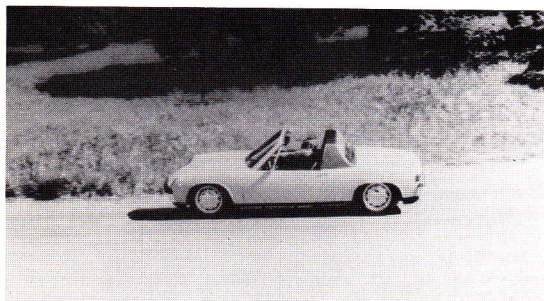
These are apparently different from any other screws on a Porsche and require a special tool, which is also (apparently) hard to get. Many dealers do not have this tool yet, and clutch changing on the 6 is going to be somewhat more of a problem than it was previously. This applies to all 1970 911 cars as well as the 914/6.

For those of you who intend to race, there is one point that will make you happy (maybe). In order to change gear ratios all you have to do is remove the rear bumper and the muffler. The rear of the transmission case can then be unbolted and slid right off *without* dropping the engine. You don't have to unbolt anything else. Just stick in a new gearset, replace the muffler (or stinger) and the bumper and you're on your way. The fellow who told us about this goody is Pete Sandholt, who works at Wester's dealership in Monterey. He is also the guy driving the car in the accompanying action photos. He spent the day with us, and helped us quite a bit with the arrangements.



Well, now for a description of the handling characteristics. Basically the handling was very similar to that of the 914/4 we tested in the January PANO. If there is much difference, we'd say that the car was closer in its handling to the 911T. Steering remained fairly neutral until pushed, then the car would drift outward ever so slightly, changing attitude towards oversteer as throttle was applied, until breakaway finally occurred. Our comment with the 4 cylinders was that there wasn't enough power to throttle-steer. Well, this has been overcome with the 6, because there's plenty of power available for good attitude control.

We noticed (as you can tell from the photographs) that the car is typically Porsche-sprung; that is, it has a soft and pliable suspension, giving rise to some precarious-looking cornering attitudes with the car heeled over almost far enough to



scrape the door handles on the road. But we exaggerate for emphasis—actually the car behaves almost exactly like the 1969 and 1970 911T and

911E, and the 1969 912 as far as body lean. Neither these cars nor the 914 series have a front (or rear, for that matter) stabilizer or anti-sway bar, and as a result the car tends to lean more than we are used to on pre-1969 cars. But on the 911 series, at least you can add one if you want to without any metalwork. All you need do is buy the parts and bolt it in. Not so with the 914 series, because not only do they not have one installed, they don't even have all the attachment points built-in. The lower attachment to the leading strut of the wishbone is there, but the attachment points to the body are not. There is a flattened dimple in the inside of each fender well up front that looks as if it were the intended spot, but unlike the 911 you will have to cut the hole yourself, reinforce it, and provide bolt holes for mounting the stabilizer bearing cap.

This also wipes out your spare tire compartment as well, because that's where the bar will cross over from left to right.

Despite the lean, we liked the handling very much. From inside the car it doesn't appear to lean as much as a 911, because the car is lower and smaller. The steering felt precise, more so than a 900 series car; and in fact the general controllability was greater than any recent Porsche we've driven.

After our day at Laguna Seca, we headed down the California Coast towards Big Sur on the beautiful coast highway, Route 1. Here the car behaved



like a true-blooded Porsche all the way. It felt completely at home on the winding, hilly road, and it was truly fun to drive, much more so than the 914/4.

Lou Marable commented that this was the first non-911 that he could climb into and feel completely natural, at ease, and confident; and in fact he stepped in and drove it exactly like his 911S—beautifully! Driving this Porsche—or any Porsche, really—is one of the greatest turn-ons I know of.

On a smooth, tricky road like this one, you are constantly alert, constantly aware of the essential rapport that you have established with your car; the unity, the oneness, the embodiment of man and machine. You see the turn approaching, and you maintain speed until the last possible moment, and then you stab the four-wheel discs at precisely the correct instant. Heel-and-toe downshifting at the same time; you are into the turn, fielding for just the right amount of lock, and when you know that you are in the ultimate line, you throttle the engine just enough to put the rear end in the right attitude, you hear those 6 powerful cylinders come to life; now that you're really well into the turn and the end is near, you accelerate out and you feel yourself being pushed down into the seat, way down, until the turn is behind you and straight road lies ahead, you watch that speedometer climb and you upshift when the engine sounds just right and you're absolutely in ecstasy. The joys of Porsche ownership are many, and this is but one.

When we arrived for lunch at a well-known restaurant perched high upon a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean and Big Sur, we parked our bright yellow 914 in the lot alongside the first



other Porsche we'd seen that day—a Tangerine 914/4. We'd bet he was surprised, but are curious to know if he realized that the yellow banana was really a 6-cylinder. We never found out, as he was gone when we returned. It was a perfect day. Big Sur is a ruggedly beautiful stretch of redwood and chaparral along Route 1, about 35 miles south of Carmel and even if you can't get a 914/6, it's a great place to visit!

The interesting part is that since we know just how many horsepower can be obtained from the 6-cylinder engine, we sit and wonder just what it will be like to push the car around with 160 or even 190 BHP, instead of the 125; or even just when the factory will start upping the horsepower as they have recently learned to do, from Detroit, no doubt. And, in fact, we almost got to find out.

Pete Sandholt, immediately upon our returning the car, set about pulling the engine and making

ready the substitute—from Japan. He completed the switch several days later, and we were determined to drive back down to Monterey and return to Laguna Seca with the car, except that car trouble in our rented American machine prevented this. So Pete took the car himself, and his comments were enthusiastic. It seems that the car had so much power that it was capable of lifting its inside front wheel for almost the entire duration of every turn! Well, drool a little, because I'm sure the factory will be bringing out hotter versions shortly.

All we can say about the car—it's great! It's what we expected, and it certainly fits our definition of a Porsche. True, some of you may have to get used to its appearance, but that was also true of the 911 series. We were pleased. And we think you will be, too.

PANORAMA wishes to thank Don Wester for lending us the car, Pete Sandholt for assisting us in the testing, and especially "Mr. PCA West," Lou Marable, for making all of the arrangements and providing us with a tremendous setting for a road test.

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