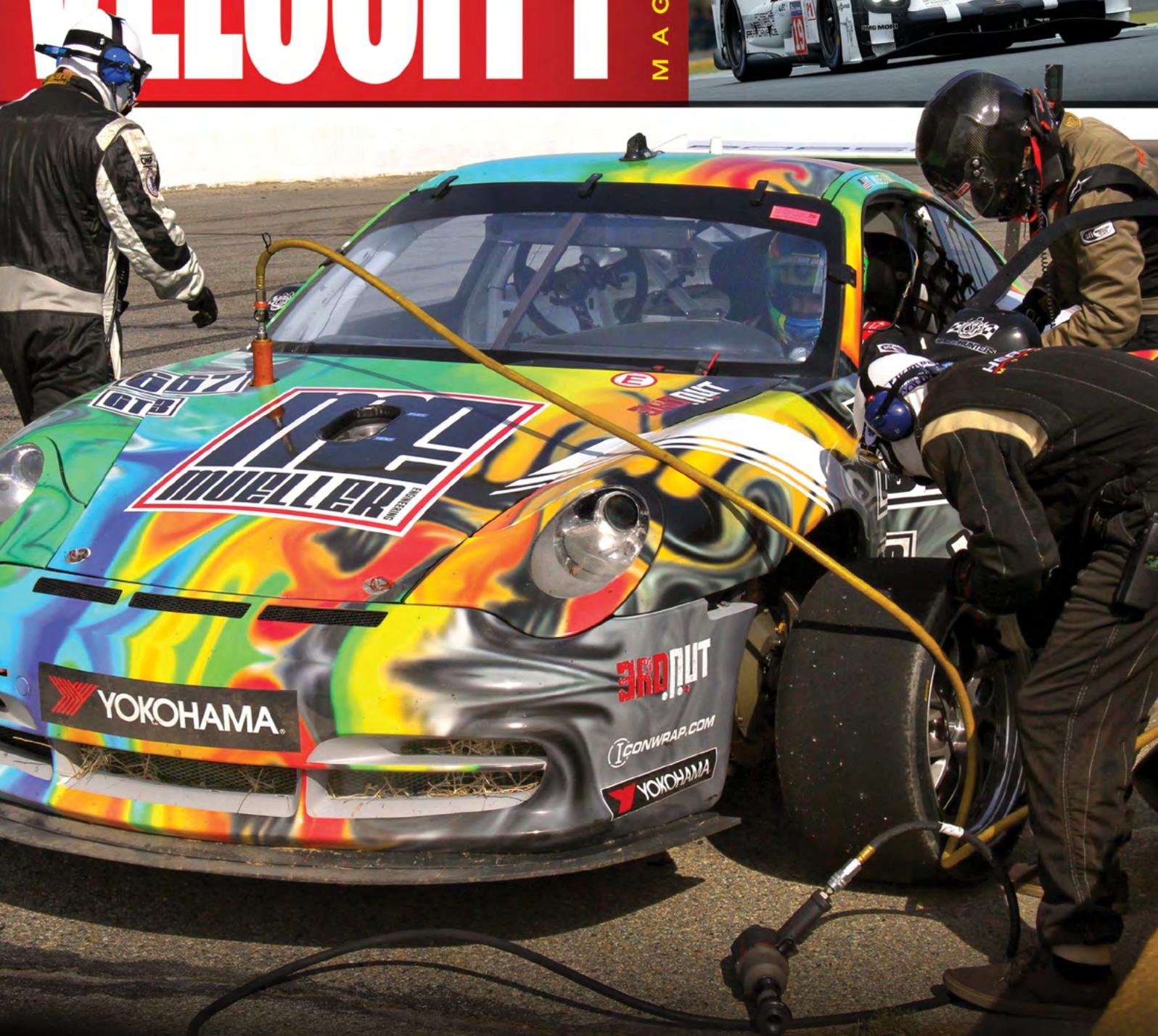


VELOCITY

MAGAZINE



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ON THE COVER: Team HRG pit stop at the Tribute to Le Mans

BOTTOM: Nathan Johnson followed closely by Anders Hainer — Photography by Alain Jamar



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GABRIEL ALAN PHOTOGRAPHY



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- Spring Mountain Motorsports Ranch
- The Streets of Willow Springs
- Willow Springs Motorsports Park



GABRIEL HEAD

I've always had a passion for cars and photography. It started as a hobby while I worked as a track safety technician over the past ten years. Taking pictures of beautiful, fast cars developed rapidly into an obsession! Encouraged by friends and family, this has led to me pursuing a career in automotive photography.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY ANDREW D. WEYMAN

For most of my adult life (and all of my adolescence), I've been a bit of an outsider. I lived by the joke that I wouldn't want to be a member of any organization that would want me as a member. That is, until I joined the Porsche Owners Club.

Since becoming a member of the POC, a lot has changed for me. I've learned how much I don't know about driving and cars. Actually, I take that back. I still don't know how much I don't know because I have no way of knowing. That being said, I've learned a lot and there's still a lot I don't know. Sorry, I can't quantify it. I haven't learned how to do that. Yet.

I've made lots of friends and this is quite unusual for me. In the past, I've joked that the only friends I have are my wife's friends and they just put up with me. For the most part, that's true. Come to think of it, at most track events I'm greeted by, "Is Terry here?" or, "Where's Terry?" She's so smart, beautiful, full of energy and fun to be with. I understand why people gravitate to her. Still, I've made friends in the POC and a few of them don't know Terry. I take pride in that and consider it to be a victory for me.

I enjoy sharing the experience of racing with others and I'm somewhat surprised at the reactions I get. *Me: Last weekend I raced with the POC and it was an absolute blast!—Them: Isn't it dangerous? Me: Well, it can be, but the safety equipment we use is really great.—Them: Aren't you scared? Me: Sometimes, but mostly I feel the excitement of endorphins rushing through my body and the thrill of pushing myself beyond my comfort zone.—Them: How fast do you go? Me: As fast as I can.*

Sometimes, I'm met with "Well, it's not for me." But there are times I hear, "I'd like to try that" and those are the times when my pulse quickens. I go on and on about our club and the experience of racing. I've discovered how much I enjoy introducing drivers to the on-track experience and club atmosphere of the POC. I love instructing new members at PDS events. It fills me with joy.

Most of my professional life has been dedicated to creative pursuits like writing, producing and directing. My career doesn't offer many opportunities to work with my hands other than keyboarding and occasionally moving a prop or set piece (yes, I know, union violation). I really look forward to prepping for track events. Tires, brake pads, rotors, oil changes, nut and bolt checks, and so on have all become newfound pleasures for me. I love working on my car prior to getting it to the track and having to clean grease from under my fingernails. As a matter of fact, I've even toyed with the idea of enrolling in a few courses about mechanics and car repair.

I never saw myself serving on the Board of Directors let alone as President for the past three years. I've volunteered to perform many tasks for the club and was awarded a Service points Championship a few years ago. Because I'm in a leadership role in my work, the furthest thing from my mind was taking on more responsibilities. Who new that they could be so rewarding?

I could go on and on about how much I love being a member of the POC. Changes, challenges, and Championship Points have become a big part of my life. I hope you enjoy all our club has to offer and volunteer to help wherever help is needed. The more you give, the more you get.

See you at the track!

VELOCITY

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EDITOR'S NOTE BY NANCY JAMAR

This issue brings together all the best the club has to offer: great event coverage, perspectives on the sport, its challenges and rewards, and superb content that broadens the scope of your publication.

Along with coverage from the Tribute and several other events (including mixing it up with other marques at The Streets) *Velocity* launches three new features in this issue. One you see directly across the page. *Director's Cut*, a glimpse into the world of automotive content production, will feature a snapshot from Robert Dalrymple, who will be sending us postcards from the edge for each issue. Next, we take a tour of Pasadena's Art Center automotive design program via *Car Culture*, where we learn about the long standing tradition of California- bred designers and the impact they have had on the concepts and designs of the marque we love. Lastly, *Bucket List* takes us on a trip to Nurburgring's 24 hour contest, as seen firsthand through the eyes of Kevin Erlich.

As you move through the magazine this issue, you'll get perspectives on everything from the superb training new drivers receive from the POC, to what it is like collaborating with a professional driver in an endurance race.

And if the magazine feels heftier in hand, that's because it is. With a compact publishing schedule of just two issue this year, your board of directors has added eight pages of content to this issue, and we hope you will enjoy turning each and every page.

Our thanks go out to everyone who contributed to this issue and made it quite possibly the best ever.

DIRECTOR'S CUT PIKES PEAK INTERNATIONAL HILL CLIMB



Television producer Robert Dalrymple (left) with professional driver Rhys Millen on the set of their most recent adventure — Pikes Peak Summit, Colorado.

NEW PRODUCTS

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Porsche Classic is reproducing the dashboard of the early 911, years 1969 to 1975. The fluted texture and tactile feel, gloss and degree of black are identical to the original. Extensive testing assured 100 percent fit precision and quality even under harsh climate conditions. The dashboard also contains the loudspeaker cover, and can be installed by removing the windshield.

The new part can be ordered from any Porsche dealer. To facilitate care and restoration of classic vehicles, Porsche is building its international dealership and service network to around 100 Porsche Classic partners over the next several years. This allows Porsche to integrate maintenance and preserve the value of both new and old cars into an innovative service concept.

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SAFETY, SAFETY, SAFETY.

BY ANDREW D. WEYMAN

Question: How can racing be made safer?

Answer: The Stand 21 Safety Foundation's 4th Annual RACING GOES SAFER Seminar at the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach presented on Saturday, April 18th, 2015 from 9am-noon at the Long Beach Convention Center.

Safety, safety, safety. You hear about it all the time. As a driver you accept that racing can be a dangerous sport, but how can you mitigate the chances of a catastrophic crash? You rely on the cocoon of strength and integrity provided by the powerful machine surrounding you, but what about the variable of your most vulnerable and valuable asset? I'm referring to you, the driver. The seminar focused on all aspects of safety, and I hope you'll be able to takeaway a few meaningful lessons after reading this.

Yves Morizot, President of the Stand 21 Safety Foundation is obsessed with safety. Hey, let's face it, the more of us out on the track, the more potential customers for Stand 21! But the Safety Foundation is a lot more than that. It is truly dedicated to making racing safer for all of us. The seminar panel consisted of a diverse group of experts from various areas of motorsport. When I was contacted to be a panelist representing the Porsche Owners Club, I was both very flattered and a little bit intimidated.

Don Taylor, Secretary of the Foundation, introduced Yves to the crowd of over 100 attendees from all disciplines of motorsport. Yves, known for his ability to talk passionately about any subject at hand, did not disappoint. He was informative, entertaining (and sometimes difficult to understand) as he moved seamlessly from English to French. All part of his charm. Don displayed his skill in wrangling Yves and skillfully

transitioned to the first speaker, Larry Dixon.

Larry is a three-time NHRA Top Fuel Champion who refers to himself as a "stunt guy." It's hard to believe that he first used a HANS device in 2001. He survived a crash at 300 mph during a Memphis competition in 2000 when he sustained forces of 109g and significant injuries. He was lucky. Better prepared in Gainesville in 2015, use of his 7-point harness, the addition of side panels on the vehicle frame and improved roll cage padding kept him better protected as he traveled 400 feet after the nose of his dragster disintegrated. Check out his crashes on YouTube. His use of safety equipment speaks for itself.

Mike Hurst, Technical Manager of the SFI Foundation, spoke specifically about the importance of appropriate undergarments. Mike was involved with significant testing of cotton and polyester shirts while worn under driving suits. While wearing an SFI 3.2/5 driving suit, it takes a mere 10.8 seconds to sustain second degree burns. With a Nomex undershirt, you are protected for 16 seconds. Polyester or cotton shirts and underwear will stick to the skin when heat-stressed. Peeling them off means peeling off your skin with them. Ouch. In short, wear Nomex undergarments. They'll save your skin. Also to be considered are Nomex bras for women drivers. The fabrics and under wires used in conventional bras can be extremely dangerous. Women can be custom fit for Nomex bras and they are highly recommended. Mike mentioned there are no statistics to support the belief that balaclavas covering the mouth are better than those that don't but it is widely accepted that they most likely offer better protection for the lungs.

Mike also touched upon fraudulent labeling of FIA and SFI rated garments. It is a huge problem.

Be sure to buy from a reputable source. Lastly, proper alignment of harnesses is critical. Properly installed, three-inch webbing breaks at 10,000 lbs. Three-inch webbing that is out-of-alignment breaks at 2,500lbs. That is a huge difference when involved in an on-track incident.

Dr. Edward Potkanowicz, Assistant Professor of Exercise Physiology at Ohio Northern University, addressed the challenge of human thermal regulation. In other words, heat stress. The heat of competition is the stress that you, as a driver, experience. The hotter you get, the faster you get hot. Dr. Potkanowicz covered the many effects of heat on driver performance including the functioning of the cardiovascular system, energy metabolism, as well as psychomotor and cognitive processes. Pre-event hydration is critical. Consuming beverages that contain salt or eating salted snacks help the body to retain water. Whenever possible, hydrate during the event. Post-event, replace electrolyte loss and be sure to rehydrate. A good indicator of proper hydration is clear urine. Dr. Potkanowicz distributed urine color charts to be used as a reference guide to keep track of hydration. Additionally, it has been shown that wearing long underwear helps keep you cooler. Make sure it's Nomex!

Ed Becker, Executive Director and Chief Engineer of the Snell Memorial Foundation discussed crash helmet standards. The Foundation was formed in 1957 in memory of Pete Snell, who died in a crash while wearing the standard helmet of that time, little more than a leather cap and goggles. He stressed that a safe helmet should provide proper head protection, taking into account impact (load spreading and stopping distance), flame resistance, visual field, frontal head restraint (e.g. HANS), fit comfort, and operational utility

(communication, ventilation). Be sure to keep your helmet liner in good condition and replace your HANS tether after significant on-track contact. Replace your helmet following an incident involving impact. Protect your helmet from being dropped. Most approved helmets can maintain their integrity after a fall but it's also possible to compromise the helmet's strength. Replace your helmet after five years of use. The difference between SA 2010 and SA 2015 helmets is very slight. For most applications, SA 2010 is acceptable and bargains can be had on SA 2010 models. Mr. Becker closed by saying that racing is dangerous and there are no guarantees.

Hector Cademartori pointed out that drivers are required to follow FIA safety rules for the La Carrera Panamericana Race. The race is run on public roads and weaves through many remote locations. It's been run since 1988 and usually has about 100 drivers competing for a podium finish. Five safety cars drive among the racers to spot trouble. Helicopters patrol the more remote mountainous areas and are outfitted to perform medical services if required.

Martin Christensen, off-road racer and owner of All German Motorsports, started out riding motorcycles and went on to race cars. He pointed out that something as simple as the proper location of a mounted fire extinguisher or a fuel cutoff switch can make a huge difference in keeping a driver safer. The fire pull placement should be accessible to both the off-road driver and the navigator. It's also a good idea to practice getting out of your racecar to simulate an emergency escape. Practice taking one deep breath and getting out of your car before you need to inhale again. Plan to stay in your car after a crash unless it's on fire. Mr. Christensen also demonstrated proper helmet removal after an incident involving impact and possible injury. Using the new, unique to Stand 21 Lid Lifter balaclava with side-pull design, he was able to remove a helmet without any stress to the wearer's head, neck, or spine. It is fully SFI and FIA approved and in stock at Stand 21 in Costa Mesa. I highly suggest purchasing one when your current balaclava needs replacement.

Indy driver Oriel Servia, now driving in Formula E, shared that he was involved in a 2001 crash at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. He was not wearing a HANS device and was very, very lucky. Upon impact, he heard a crack in his neck and had an intense headache that progressively got worse. It turned out that being tied too tightly to the body board during aerial evacuation caused his intensifying headache. He recovered quickly and is grateful for his HANS every time he gets behind the wheel of his racecar.

"Nitro" Joe Powell brought a unique perspective to the seminar. Both funny car driver and track EMSC, he's seen it all. He drives a 200mph funny car, and his EMS team have provided emergency medical and fire suppression services for multiple racing organizations. Noting that most significant injuries occur on track rental days, more structured organizations like the POC enjoy safer on-track events. He, too, emphasized staying in your car after a crash, unless the vehicle is on fire. Request that EMTs stay with you awhile after an incident, even if you choose to say that you're okay. Stay fit, healthy, and use the best safety equipment available.

Dr. Jacques Dallaire focused on prime performance and distracted driving. Dr. Dallaire specializes in using the mind to maximize performance. How you think and process information influences how you drive. Make fewer mistakes and you won't have to rely on your safety equipment. Your best driving performance is a combination of your skill set and your mindset. Your results are dependent upon your talent, skills, experience, commitment and effort as well as factors you cannot control, i.e. equipment, regulations, weather and competitors. Stay focused on the process, not those things out of your control. The mind can only process one thought at a time. Multi-tasking is a shift in processing. Imagery travels the same neural pathways as actual movement. Your dominant thought determines your emotions and performance. The key isn't to focus more; it's to focus correctly. Remain in control. Ask yourself, what are your qualities when you do your best work? Use those qualities on the track.



Over half a century ago, Yves Morizot established Stand 21 in the city of Dijon, France. His vision made Stand 21 the world leader in head to toe, made-to-measure racing gear. With 150 employees worldwide, Stand 21 products are hand crafted within its own factories, exceeding the most rigorous safety and medical standards required by the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile.

I had the opportunity to address the crowd and share my passion for the POC. Making the points that we focus on driver development and racing, I stressed our safety record and various levels of competition: Performance Driving Series, Time Attack and Club Racing. The Porsche Owners Club prides itself on providing a safe, fun experience on the track. Our corner workers and safety crews are top-notch pros. We are constantly reviewing and revising our safety requirements. Technological safety systems integrated into newer cars are becoming more sophisticated with every model year. They are designed to keep occupants safer. Keep in mind that even with all that science and technology, the one big variable is you, the driver. Bring your best game. Stay focused on your performance. Be sure your safety equipment is in good repair and up-to-date. You are responsible for your safety and that of your fellow competitors. Look out for one another, put your foot on the throttle and have a great time! ●





Membership in Club Spring Mountain is available at different levels, the most general of which requires a one time initiation fee of \$15,000, a monthly fee of \$200, and a day-use fee of \$60. This “Classic Membership” grants a minimum of 10 available track days a month including three weekends.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The Orange race is on with drivers Jim Steedman, Michael Takaki, Kip Waterhouse, Jerry Hoffman, Blake Troester, John Heldman (using his door as a braking device), Paul Young and Steve Vandecar. Chris Vivolo at speed. John Gordon with Tom Mueller all over his rearview mirror. Brett Gaviglio flying low.

SPRING MOUNTAIN MOTORSPORTS RANCH COUNTRY CLUB RACING POC STYLE

BY KEVIN ROUSH | GABRIEL ALAN PHOTOGRAPHY

It had been three years since the POC last visited this private, yet fairly accessible—and I should add—newly expanded facility at the southern end of Pahrump, Nevada. This newly facility boasts over six miles of racing circuit, with over 50 different configurations possible. For our event we ran the Hunt Course (the expansion allows a sizable track for the members to enjoy at the same time) choosing to run it without “The Bowl.” Thus, many POC members returning to Spring Mountain Motorsports Ranch would have driven only a tiny percentage of this configuration. The Hunt Course, contrary to its relatively low average speed, proved hard on brakes as many folks discovered. It was very smooth, matching what one would hope for in new pavement, and contrary to the appearance of the track map, was fun to drive and even more challenging and exciting to race.

Upon arrival, POC drivers and friends were shown a warm welcome by SMMR track workers, and after a relatively easy tow, all things considered. The drive even offered some interesting “Badlands” type geology/topography if one took the lonely highway north out of Baker, a sight many miss flying into Las Vegas. Friday evening was beautiful, and we were blessed with mild midday temperatures as well, reaching only the mid 70s while it was reportedly blazing back in southern California. Friday’s activities were mostly centered around unloading, barbecuing for the many who camped in the paddock, and perhaps enjoying one’s

favorite adult beverage. This always assists in washing down some of the competitors’ stories of performance in events gone by. These were unusual circumstances (not the stories), as most often we have a Friday test day associated with a new or far-off venue. Thus drivers (who did not test at the PCA event two weeks prior) would have to get up to speed very fast—both car setup and driver, as qualifying was coming rapidly as Session 3.

This weekend, in addition to the 62 Cup Racers signed up, the POC also conducted a Racers Clinic for 18 aspiring drivers, directed by David Gardner with assistance from Mike

Monsalve, Marty Mehterian, and Dwain Dement. When time permitted, they worked on developing the next generation of POC racers. Adding the 19 Lotus Cup Racers running in their own sessions and races, and a resurgent time attack group of 38 cars made for a very full schedule of goings on at this event.

The most entertaining battles to watch at this new venue were in the GT4 class. Comprised of a dozen cars, it had its own split start within the Red group. Michael Monsalve, Bob Mueller, Blair Boyce and Kevin Keegan mixed it up side by side for much of the first several laps of each

of the races. On a couple occasions, cars that were running third or fourth would get clean runs out of sections behind drivers going side by side, and would get by both ahead, to the lead. Monsalve was able to do just that in Saturday’s race 1 and Sunday’s race 3, and then focused on the job at hand and essentially sailed off into the sunset while others dived it up behind him (sometimes falling off the circuit). Boyce managed a win in Sunday’s race 2, once he knocked all the gravel out of the car from a race 1 adventure. And Bob Mueller—though showing amazing pace the last few events—could only manage another third, though he would later

POLL SAYS: “WE CAN’T WAIT TO GO BACK”...



be moved up to second for Race 3 when Keegan's car was found to be non-compliant. There were too many good battles to list, but amazingly, not a single touch between any of these four drivers.

The same could be said for a great race in the Saturday Race 1 Orange Group, where we were entertained by several GT5 and R6 cars all running in a pack, which would encounter groups of engaged BSR cars. One awesome battle between a non-qualifying Jerry Hoffman who came from near last and was one of five GT5 cars racing, Regan Steedman, Paul Young, and a couple BSR cars lasted for several laps with Vandcar ultimately cruising to the victory in GT5, Hoffman making it all the way up to second with his new-found pace in GT5, and Regan finishing third. Other noteworthy performances were in the six

competitor 3.2 Spec class now known as SCR, with Jim Steedman taking his first pole in the class and essentially running off and leaving the field. On Sunday Steedman would again earn the pole and lead every lap, far out in front along with a charging Gaviglio (returning from a GT4 sojourn Saturday), but Steedman fell off the circuit (while perhaps high-fiving himself...I meant to ask) on the last lap, but still managed a second place, just ahead of Kip Waterhouse. Ironically, for Race 3 Sunday, Steedman would do the exact same thing from the pole; in the same turn on the last lap while leading, but this time falling all the way to fifth, Gaviglio thanking him for the clear path. In GT5, Vandcar recovered from a poor Race 2 finish, and held off the GT5 pole-sitting Hoffman (who mis-shifted at the start) and who put over 3.5 seconds on the second place car in qualifying. Yet, this demonstrates why we run the races, as

Vandcar would ultimately beat his best Race 2 and qualifying time by over two seconds, holding Hoffman off and finishing in the mix with the top SCR cars, where the best of GT5 often settle in.

Other noteworthy action was in the GT3 class with eight racers fighting it out; Rob Phillips earned his first pole and won his first race in GT3 Saturday. Then Phillips nearly repeated the feat in Sunday's Race 2, from pole all the way to final lap, until he became distracted by a driver going off ahead of him in the eastern fast right (which proved tough to get everything possible out of) furthest from the paddock, and followed him off. John Gordon, who brought out his long-time-in-the-making new car for its first weekend, was gracious and thanked him for the free Yokohama rear tire and victory just ahead of Duane Selby, Phillips ultimately completing the podium.

The novelty of electronic corner workers/flagging was an interesting change for the majority of racers here, and most drivers gave it a thumbs up. The only real shortcoming may have been that there was no one to see or report the gravel on the track that was frequently there (particularly after one of Sunday's Lotus Cup races, which made for a messy start to the following Red group race).

Saturday's dinner setting along the white sand and palm tree rimmed Spring Mountain lake gave everyone a chance to get together, unwind, and share stories of fantastic racing, with many looking forward to racing on Sunday. The sunset that evening was spectacular, and POC members I polled were very pleased with the event, which we hope to see on the calendar again next season. ●



CLOCKWISE TOP LEFT: Marco Gerace running a modified 1970 911E in GT1. Vali Predescu good looking 2006 Boxster. Loren Beggs in GTC-5 earning a best time of 02:05.000. Bob Mueller, one of the top contenders in GT4.



Spring Mountain Motorsports Ranch

A PRIVATE OASIS OF SPEED NESTLED IN THE ARID SPRING MOUNTAINS

BY JONATHAN ELFALAN

As we arrive at the entrance to Spring Mountain, two large, mechanically operated wrought iron gates swing open in grandiose fashion. Budding palm trees flanking the entry lend a resort-like ambiance to the facility.

The extensive details and amenities that underscore Spring Mountain's vision of a car enthusiast's Eden are almost as impressive as the rate at which it has grown. Californian John Morris, one of the two founders I met that day, reflects his own multifaceted nature in the development of this top-notch facility. Having made his success through real estate website design, Morris was bitten by the motorsports bug in 2002 when he attended a couple of Skip Barber racing schools. Through contacts he made while SCCA racing, he eventually came to acquire Spring Mountain Motorsports Ranch with his business partner Brad Rambo in 2004.

Since then, what was once a modest 2.2-mile track with some permanent tent facilities has expanded to include an 1.5-mile loop (with a configurable kart track) and a conglomeration of buildings that comprises 56 private rental garages, an exotic car dealership, indoor gun range and racquetball courts, service bays for the track's dedicated school cars (which include Chevrolet Corvette ZR1s and Radicals) and a member-exclusive clubhouse replete with workout room, pool and full spa services. Moreover, construction of two 13-unit condominium buildings has already begun, and there's a 79-room hotel planned. Over the next three years, we're also told to expect an additional three miles of track (for a six plus mile road course), a nine acre lake (that's right, a lake), as well as restaurants and gas stations to ensure that you'll never have to leave once you've arrived.

For a true enthusiast, though, all this glitz would be for naught if the track itself were

uninspiring. I found Spring Mountain's full 3.5-mile road course to be quite the contrary. The fresh tires mounted just the day before got up to temperature quickly in the Nevada summer heat as I entered the track's "Radical Loop" at speed. This entry point drops you right into the most dramatic elevation change, one of Morris' own designs, and is enough to get you airborne given enough speed. The off-camber sweepers, hairpins and high-speed chicanes—90 percent of which are blind—wouldn't be nearly as fun if not for the generous desert runoff areas the location affords. In the R8, this track's rhythm and character become instantly addicting. With each lap comes a small leap of faith, my brain second-guessing the previous lap's visual references, while the Quattro all-wheel-drive system delivers foolish levels of cornering confidence. If not for the cross-country journey ahead, I would've worn these tires to the cords.

Membership at Club Spring Mountain comes in at different levels, the most general of which requires a one-time initiation fee of \$15,000, a monthly fee of \$200, and a day-use fee of \$60. This "Classic Membership" grants a minimum of 10 available track days a month including three weekends.

Wrapping up the day at Spring Mountain, I had a chance to chat candidly with a few of the members who had nothing but great things to say about their experiences with the club and the very friendly and approachable John Morris—who himself relished every opportunity that day to race (er, beat up on) other members in a Radical SR3. The allure of Spring Mountain has already drawn its fair share of high profile clients. But as it turns out, it's also a great leveling plane once you're belted in and the outside world disappears. ●

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Tribute to LE MANS

PRESENTED BY



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX SLUITER AND ALAIN JAMAR

The sixteen teams that kept the Tribute tradition alive!

85 Team McDreamy	Monsalve - Baron - Dalrymple	GTC-5	178 Cheat'in Bastards	Buwalda - Thacker - Waterhouse	SCR
69 Werks II	Bieker - Rodriguez	GT1	29 Tru Speed	Haacker - Slavik	GT1
667 Race Rocket	Mueller - Palmer	GT3	96 Fear the Fork	Momeyer - Kravig	BSR
299 Ace in the Hole	Long - Gaviglio - Boyce	GT3	27 Two Broke Racers	Gardner - Craig	GT4
101 Speed Gallery	Aspesi - Hainer - Segal	GT3	698 Nine by Six	Skinner - Stone - Weyman	BSR
838 Me Myself and I	Kemper	GT3	45 Three Blind Mice	Gokbudak - Neville - Gokbudak	R6
3 The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly	Alacron - Takaki - Elliott	SCR	21	Mehterian	GT6
160 996-986-996	Phillips - Gordon - Johnson	SCR	19 Vision Motorsports	Knop - Selby - Dement	GT3



We were to be racing among legends, and we had the coolest guy on the planet showing up to jump in the 299 car.



THE PROFESSIONALS

TEAMING UP WITH PORSCHE FACTORY DRIVER PATRICK LONG

BY BRETT GAVIGLIO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX SLUITER, BRETT GAVIGLIO, CALIPHOTOGRAPHY AND ALAIN JAMAR



Brett Gaviglio

Ross Bentley once said, “There are moments like this for everyone who drives on a track, life-changing moments that triggered the burning desire to go back again and again.” The 2015 Porsche Owners Club Tribute to Le Mans weekend at Willow Springs International Raceway was filled with those moments where we met and raced with our heroes, confronted challenges and conquered our demons living closer to the edge. Lots of quick laps, great racing and laughs.

On a beautiful clear and cool southern California Saturday in May, Porsche’s only current American factory racing driver strode up with his yellow helmet in hand near turn 1. Patrick Long, 33 years old and participating in his 12th 24 hours of Le Mans

this year, found car #299 with Blair Boyce nearby, and casually commented, “Hi Blair, when do I go out on track?” The fresh GT3 stickers were being placed on the 1972 AASE air-cooled 256 horsepower car as Long approached. Our pit crew all knew he was coming. However, the club officials didn’t know of Long’s attendance until just a few minutes before. We had to “keep a low profile until race day.” Our team entry form for the three hour Tribute to Le Mans had Blair, myself and Father Guido Sarducci listed as our driver lineup. Laurie Taylor and John Gordon were a bit taken aback by the names on the entry form. When Laurie questioned the Sarducci entry, I replied that he was a fellow Italian and drove like the wind!

Running in a multi-hour endurance race allows a single car and multiple drivers just like the real Le Mans, and one of those can be a pro as long as you run unlimited class. We found out 10 days before the race there would be at least two other cars running GT3 Unlimited, and they too, had pro drivers. A 1972 Porsche with no turbo was not ever going to be up in the GT1 or GT2 classes that traditionally win the tribute overall. But in GT3 we could have some fun if there was someone to race. We were armed with the knowledge that Rick Knoop, two time competitor at Le Mans, was running in Dwain Dement’s Vision Motorsports 380 horsepower Turbo “grocery getter” as GT3. And a bit of research revealed Knoop was the American equivalent of Patrick Long in the late 70s,

as Porsche pushed and succeeded at conquering Le Mans. Knoop was Porsche’s only American factory driver then, as Long is today. Our other GT3 competitor had a hard charging 20 year old at its helm. Tyler Palmer, who had just this year taken third in Pirelli’s world championship, found himself invited back for a seat in Tom Mueller’s HRG powered 335 horsepower paddle-shifted and air-jacked 996 cup car know as the ‘Race Rocket.’ The Rocket name owing to Mueller’s propulsion design experience at Space X; Mueller was employee #1 at the company, which just this past year became the first private commercial company to dock with the international space station.

About two weeks before the race, we had hatched a plan to

pit old tech vs new tech as soon we confirmed the GT3 unlimited competition would be there. Wouldn’t it be artful to drop all the weight out of the ‘72, chip it up to max horsepower and go run with the modern cup cars? Could it be, that the old light weight way might be just as good—if not better—than new, super powerful cars under the skillful hands of some of the worlds best? The only problem with the idea was, Blair was in Italy and his ‘72 was in pieces, and Boyce didn’t know the state of his car. Upon Blair’s return we had eight days to put the car together, find a bigger gas tank (thanks Bradley Pierce), dyno the car, pull all the weight possible, corner balance it and test it. We thought we could get #299 down to 2250 lbs and up to 270 horsepower to the

wheels... Best laid plans...we got to 2400 lbs and chipped it up to 256 horsepower. The fact that we were going to be outgunned by around 10% power to weight only came to the fore as we sat on the floor at Vision Motorsports bolting on bumpers and wings before the car went on the dyno. Once on the dyno, the big bad grocery getter did pull after pull with that turbo sounding like a black hole of a vacuum cleaner sucking in all the air in the garage and shooting it at the wall. At one point I looked up from the bumper and said to Blair, “I think we might be in trouble,” but I couldn’t keep from smiling every large every time they lit the candle on that turbo. Message sent. Rick Knoop’s colorfully painted helmet sat on a cart just next to us. Knoop had placed 6th in the 1978 Le Mans in a 935 turbo; clearly

he can drive a turbo well. What a challenge this would be! We were to be racing among legends, and we had the coolest guy on the planet showing up to jump in the 299 car.

A lot transpired in the short time leading up to the moment Patrick Long arrived at our turn 1 camp area at Willow Springs Saturday morning. Long brought along a few friends including Dennis AASE, Magnus Walker, and Helmut to hang out. I pulled in from instructing Dan Prince in the green PDS group, and there were all these famous guys sitting in lawn chairs in front of the motorhome facing our race cars. Chatting with this group and going over our cars with them was very special. I had a sense of something special, being one of a

greater Porsche family where we are all racers and see that flat six in all its perfection no matter how its cooled...and it’s cool. A man who has lived in that feeling for some time now, racer/collector and all around great guy Magnus Walker said going over our cars, “I’m down with OPP...other peoples Porsches.”

We weren’t exactly prepared to be the center of the track social scene, and though Blair Boyce qualified us 4th with a 1:25.1, there were so many people coming by we lost track of time. We barely got #299 to grid before it closed. Patrick Long started, but I’m certain he was caught in the art of the air cooled old car vs new car moment as well. Long took his time, smiled and looked like The Fonz, so cool and collected ▶



CLOCKWISE TOP LEFT: Cars leave the pre-grid while last minute adjustments are made for car 299's first driver. The 299 pit crew at work. Starter Bud Tanner in discussion with Porsche driver Patrick Long. The entire "Ace in The Hole" Team posing for posterity. A few weeks later, Patrick Long on the 24 Hours of Le Mans podium with Patrick Dempsey and Marco Seefried: their Proton team car finished third in the GT Class (Photo courtesy of PCNA). — Photography by **Alain Jamar** and **CalPhotography**

as the officials sent the rest of the cars out before us. Patrick was looking for a DFL start—it was a club race after all—the green flag dropped sitting 20th and in lap 1 he is 8th; by the end of the second lap Long has made it up to Knoop's bumper exiting turn 9. The GT3 dance with our lightweight 72 making headway in corners only to see the heavier more powerful turbo speed past up the straights and chase down the 996 Race Rocket. With all three GT3 cars dicing it out in a row, this effort on #299 all was starting to look like a great idea! What ensued was some of the best racing that could be seen between cars that were only matched for power to weight (sort of), but had completely different technology in the 911 layout. No TV camera crews, no grandstands, and here we were just a few of us watching legends duke it out!

By 5:05 on Saturday night, the sun was getting low and winds were gusting across turn 9 at 30 miles per hour. Standing at the hot pit wall was deafening as the cars motored up the straight at full scream, dust everywhere carrying the palpable sense of excitement and grit as the race unfolded. It had been over an hour since the start and I was shaking with excitement, knee bouncing. "Ten minutes," Blair Boyce said. That's the time Patrick Long would bring car #299 in and I would get to take over the car for a stint, barely a year out of racers clinic. We were sitting P3 overall and Boyce could perceive my nervous energy, feeling ready to puke in my helmet. Boyce looked through my visor and calmly said, "Just go out and have fun, run consistent laps. You'll do fine." It was this snapshot from the race and a moment I will never forget: having to snap out of

it and get down to business. Long, having done this seemingly all his life, commented a couple hours before the race, "All you need to do is a stint that will get us in with enough fuel to get home to the end." "Even better if you can get in if you see there may be a full course yellow coming out." Focused on my teammates' sage advice, I jumped in the car, followed team orders and cranked out consistent laps for a bit. Lap 19 came, and just as I ducked in, the pits closed, full course yellow, still P3. A short stint, but mission accomplished. We got fuel in for the end, ready for the much faster owner of #299 to take the helm.

Boyce went out on two fresh tires, and began bumping off 1:26 laps and moving us into a firm P2. The grocery getter had a mechanical, smog equipment sensors had shut it down. Race Rocket had served a

stop and go penalty, and there we were in front of the Werks GT1 car when the unthinkable happened. Our #299 was just one lap off the overall lead from a 997 cup car entry ("Team McDreamy"), driven by Mike Monsalve/Doug Baron/Robert Dalrymple. The bolts so carefully placed on the right hand wing strut just Thursday had worked themselves free. The wing which was firmly attached on the drivers side was also completely free with the support and downforce pressing it into the fender on the passenger side. Thus it appeared to be leaning into turn 9 as he went through, Boyce continued to turn 1:26 times with a rear wing half on, only losing about a half a second on average to the cup car running in P1. In the pits, We discussed the wing situation and Long lead the team with these words: "Don't panic, act like it's situation normal.



That wing isn't going anywhere." It wasn't. As a precaution, I grabbed Rob Tachavski's bicycle with a nearly flat front tire and hauled buns to the trailer in turn 1 looking for tools, ready for a wing repair if needed. By lap 100 the race stewards had seen enough of the floppy wing and black flagged #299. Despite an impassioned plea from Long, the stewards decided it was a safety issue. I rolled in on the bike with a flat front tire, allen wrenches, and pliers as the car came to a stop in pit box 5. Steve Thiel got to work, and seconds later wing was off and #299 moved out downforce free to complete the remaining few minutes. Boyce recounted the moments

after leaving for lap 101: "I went into turn 2 (a right hand 100mph uphill bend) and the car pitched completely sideways like I was driving on ice! The outside edge of the track came up fast as I backed in out of control. Car did the same thing in turn eight (130 mph 5th gear corner). And then I thought to myself, is my life worth this? Maybe I should just park it? Then I re-learned how to drive the car, adapted, trailed braked a lot and made it work. I don't think I'd like to do that again. Like never." We finished P4 overall, just 20 seconds behind the GT3 Race Rocket in a 1972 Porsche. Not bad for an air-cooled 43 year old car with a missing wing. ●

TOP TO BOTTOM: Tyler Palmer making a move on the TruSpeed GT1 Porsche of Tom Haacker. Vision Motorsports' Dwain Dement driving the "Grocery Getter" 996 Turbo. The "nine by six" Boxster team with drivers Mike Skinner, Tom Stone, and Andrew Weyman. — Photography by **Alain Jamar** and **CalPhotography**



Planning is Just a Fancy Word for Preconceived Ideas...

BY MIKE SKINNER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY CALIPHOTOGRAPHY AND ALAIN JAMAR

The Porsche Owner's Club (POC) annual Tribute to Le Mans event was held at Willow Springs International Raceway May 16-17th, 2015. Hold on just a sec. It wasn't just "held"—it was achieved with prodigious success across the board despite a seemingly unlim-

ited barrage of obstacles, both real and imagined, any one of which could have stood in the way of a successful event.

Before I continue, however, I should admit to a recent omission. Andrew Weyman, our fearless and dedicated POC President, interviewed me for *Velocity*. And one of the questions was something to the effect of "what have you learned from writing articles for *Velocity*?" I made up some good-sounding stuff, but I forgot to mention that one of the things I learned was how to use an on-line thesaurus (see paragraphs preceding and following).

One of the great things about POC, and there are many, is that there is literally something for everyone to do. Sure, drivers drive. Crews, well, crew. Stewards and marshals,

along with fire and safety, keep us safe and on schedule. But walk through the paddock at the next event and marvel at the goings-on. I took a few laps around the paddock and grid on my bike and just quietly looked around. There wasn't anybody that was doing nothing! Family members were supporting drivers and others with cameras, bags of water, wrangling young-uns and 50 other things. The fantastic staff at WSIR diner was whipping together food orders non-stop. Everyone heard their food order number get yelled out at the same time we heard Dwain give the instructor/student pairings at the driver's meeting (pretty remarkable when you think of it; I call it managed chaos). Pit crews and support personnel ran

endlessly with radios, tires, fuel, helmets, schedules, protein bars and bags of Doritos. Drivers that

weren't driving in the enduro volunteered their time as pit marshals and a variety of other commitments. And let's not forget the BBQ team, whose timing was impeccable in serving the starving masses at the conclusion of the enduro. Needless to say it "took a village"—a lot of work in advance of the event to pull it all together and make it happen. The point is, no matter who you are or what your age, there is something for everyone that wants to support or participate in our fine club. On this point, my thanks go out to the entire POC Board and staff, especially John Gordon, for their

time, energy and dedication to what fulfills our passion. I could go on and on...

My own experience with the enduro goes something like this: think, plan, un-plan, re-think, make a call, make 12 calls, text Eric, order some equipment, pay some bills, text Eric 72 more times, and then make breakfast before I go to work. That was a year ago.

At last year's Tribute someone's car broke on a team that was perfect for me, except for one problem: I didn't have my license yet. So I made it a goal to find a team for

this year's Tribute (and I earned my license!). During the winter I made a list of team possibilities (which at the time I thought would result in a "plan"). Most of those "plans" fell through for one reason or another. In the spring I reassessed. Yes, I decided, no matter what, I'm running the Tribute this year. I made some new plans. Most of those plans fell through for one reason or another. As Spring Mountain came around and I felt good that a team was coming together, my car broke. That didn't help the situation, and it set back "the plan". My car broke again at Cal Speedway, a further set back to "the plan." ▶

Still, I answered the club questionnaire regarding my interest in participating in the Enduro. And then I pre-registered with my deposit. “No matter what” means no matter what, even though all of Mike’s little plans seemed not to fit the grand plan. At one point I even thought I would just run all three hours by myself. I thought I might call my team “Mike, He, and Himself.” Then I decided, nah, that’s crazy...who would run all three hours by himself?

Most of the time I compete with Regan Steedman in GT5, unsuccessfully, I might add. So I thought it would be just awesome for the Princess to team up with the Princess so I hit her up about getting a team together. Sadly she had already committed to a girl-band concert that weekend. It was the first time I found myself hoping that someone would unexpectedly land in rehab (the girl-band singer I mean, not Regan).

You know what they say: luck is what happens when willingness and preparation intersect. I got pretty lucky. Friday afternoon at the event I was still on the lookout for a team. And then it happened. Alex started telling me about a team member’s car that had broken the previous day, and before he could even finish his sentence (and since I can barely understand him anyway), I turned on my heels and marched the 20 feet over to Andrew’s pit. “Hey, Andrew, Alex was telling me...” I started out. Cutting to the chase with, “Welcome aboard!” Andrew sealed the deal. I thought, man, this is just great! Finally, a plan! Oh, the planning was just getting started.

Somewhere along the way I decided that having a “strategy” sounded less permanent than having a “plan.” So Andrew Weyman, Tom Stone and I huddled and worked up a strategy Friday afternoon. Andrew submitted the paperwork. Over the last year I have tended to be a strong qualifier, but my starts need improvement. Once I get going I can stalk and make safe and solid passes. So, I would qualify, Tom would start, Andrew drive the middle, and I would close. As the qualifier, I felt humility on one hand and pressure on the other. I prepared well for the session, and set the qualifying time on the second lap of the qualifying session. Even though I knew I should sit on that time and head to the pits, I kept going another few laps (something else I need to work on).

During the day we met with Track Marshal Chris Thompson. Chris and I started in POC around the same time and he’s been a good friend the entire time. Chris reviewed



the penalties with us, discussed driver order, verified the penalty box location, confirmed the staging area and compared notes with Wendy Skinner (our team-side penalty timer, camera starter and all-around cool lady).

We fell behind a few laps after the first sting. But I don’t know anyone in POC that’s not willing to give it 11/10ths until the checkered flag waves, and that was definitely our attitude. And there’s a good reason why racers have that attitude—you never know what the “plan” is. It turns out, our main competitors had a mechanical at the beginning of their third stint, which conveniently put them behind a few laps. Imagine my surprise when I reached turn 1 to see Kurt Gokbudak coming on track! Kurt and I had about 65 minutes straight of hard, nose-to-tail and side-by-side racing. This won’t come as any shock to anyone, but at that point I could have cared less about all of the “plans” that might or might not happen. I was racing someone that I know and trust, and that’s really the only thing that mattered to me anymore. Andrew, Tom and I finished 13 out of a field of 16. The main lesson I learned was that the only plan that really mattered was to plan on racing—the rest would take care of itself.

Well, it turns out there is someone that has the patience, skill, endurance and perseverance to go it alone. No, he’s not crazy—just committed. Drake Kemper, one of many POC racers that have gone on to pro racing, turned up with the relay team “Me, Myself and I.” And, like everyone, Drake had a plan...er, I mean, strategy. Drake brought three cars: a GT4, a BSR, and a GT3. The strategy was to drive each car for roughly equal time. At least that was the idea.

He needed every bit of all three cars! During Friday’s testing the GT4 steering felt twitchy and didn’t want to turn. Drake added, rather unuphemistically, that the car possessed the charm and precision of a schizophrenic cat with razor blades for feet. Gee, sounds so charming. No big deal though—still two cars in the stable. So Drake figured he’d just run the GT3, BSR, and the GT3 again in the race. After all, who wants to herd cats all day? So let’s give the ol’ BSR a practice run shall we? Seems the BSR was having a little problem with the oil/air separator; or maybe it just needed a new set of plugs. Hmmmm... what to do. Still one car left in the stable. Maybe let’s take the GT3 out for practice while the BSR is being looked after.

LEFT PAGE TOP, TO BOTTOM: Tru-Speed crew fixing a broken belt. Fe Justin Jason crew of One for Marty Mehterian, Marthys Party Team. Communication between HRG crew members Ted Segal at left and Kerry Dunn at right help the Race Rocket team of Tom Mueller and Tyler Palmer secure first in the GT3 class. 911 Design owner and part time refueller Loren Begg adding one more Tribute trophy to his already impressive collection.

RIGHT PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Race Marshall Don Matz. Carolyn Pappas. Race Marshall Chris Thompson. Mark Hergesheimer and Brynn Oviatt’s catering service open for business. — Photography by **Alain Jamar**

To make a long story endless, the BSR just didn't have a good day, and after much "sorting out," the motor blew during final practice, tearing a piston in two. It wasn't what you would want to call optimum conditions, but when race time rolled around, Drake was down to figuring out how to minimize the handling and grip issues of the GT4 stint and somehow maximize the GT3 drive time utilizing its fuel capacity in all its awesome beaucoup-ness.

So, 37 minutes and one corded left-rear tire later, Drake was forced into an early ride in the GT4, making for an extra long GT4 stint (not extra short as Drake had hoped would be the case). Not exactly according to the re-planned plan. But, racers race. One front-left corded tire later in the GT4, it was back to the GT3 until the very last drop of fuel ignited. Eenie, meenie, minie... what cars have I got left?

Drake, in his well-worn and passive-aggressive GT4, finished the last 22 minutes of the POC Tribute to Le Mans Relay Class to finish in second place, proving rather unequivocally that anything is possible given enough patience, skill, endurance and perseverance. Well done, Drake! ●



Top: A very happy Drake Kemper celebrating his second place finish in the relay class.
Bottom: Werks II duo of Galen Bieker and Robert Rodriguez took first in GT1. — CaliPhotography



1998



Steve Alarcon, Robert Dalrymple and Steve Velasquez.

I still have vivid memories of the first Tribute to Le Mans in 1994, the brainchild of Dave Bouzaglou. It seemed like we were breaking new ground with an endurance race that started in the daylight and ended in the deep darkness of Rosamond, California. Twenty years later, I love the idea and tradition of driving on a team with good friends in a unique race that has its own history and flair.



That same year, Porsche celebrated its 50th Anniversary by winning the 24 Hours of Le Mans for the last time in that century, and would not prevail again until this year.

Coming Full Circle

2015

BY ROBERT DALRYMPLE PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALAIN JAMAR AND CALIPHOTOGRAPHY



2015 Tribute to Le Mans overall winners: Mike Monsalve, Robert Dalrymple and Doug Baron. — CaliPhotography

In a way, I've come full circle. On a Saturday evening in 1998, I drove my modified 3.6 930 Turbo at Willow Springs Raceway, where myself, Steve Alarcon and Steve Velasquez won our first Tribute to Le Mans in Car 85. What I remember most is driving into the winner's circle, opening the sunroof, turning up the music on my car stereo and celebrating with my co-drivers, and then driving home in the same car. As in any sport where technology changes significantly and drivers become more and more competitive, long gone are the days of having the simple pleasure of driving your car to the track, racing it and then driving home. The POC Tribute to Le Mans morphed into a high stakes, big budget racing event that

attracted pro drivers like Bill Auberlen, Anthony Lazzaro, Cort Wagner, Kelly Collins, James Sofronas and Tommy Kendall.

For four years, I produced a TV special on the POC Tribute races, from 2001 to 2004 on Speed. It was the only club race on television during that time. For several years, the Tribute was staged at California Speedway and then three years ago, the event returned to its roots at Willow Springs. At the end of 2013, I bought Patrick Dempsey's Cup Car that he had campaigned in the American Le Mans series. Along with Kevin Rousch and Mike Monsalve, we ran last year's Tribute to Le Mans race as "Team Number 85 Returns," and we had the closest finish in the event's

history, beating out the HRG team of Eric Oviatt and Kevin Wilson by less than two seconds. It was an exhilarating finish for the fans.

This year, Mike Monsalve and I were intent on defending our win. We added one of my oldest friends to our "Three Stooges" lineup, the highly accomplished, four time Tribute-winning Doug Baron. As racers in the POC know, Mike Monsalve, a past Driver of the Year, races regularly in slalom and big track events. Mike was the perfect guy to qualify the car and put us on pole with a time of 1:21:6. Loren Beggs and 911 Design did a masterful job of preparing the car again this year. ▶

It's the endorphin release of just finishing the race and knowing that we depended on one another to stay out of trouble. It's the exhilarating feeling of knowing we pushed it as hard as we could.



Robert Dalrymple driving the 2015 Tribute to Le Mans overall winning Porsche. — Photography by *Alain Jamar*

The Tribute to Le Mans is the one POC tradition that has endured for twenty years.



911 Design crew at work refueling while Robert helps Mike out of the car. — Caliphotography

Throughout the race, the car and my new MEGA-Line paddle shift system worked flawlessly. Mike drove a phenomenal first stint, which allowed me to essentially cruise with the mission of not screwing up my shift. With Doug Baron cast in the hero's role, we knew if anyone challenged us, he was the guy who would dig deep to keep us in first. We led from the drop of the green flag to the checkered flag, but what was most satisfying was working as a team with Loren Beggs' crew to prepare for the race. We enjoyed each other's company over the course of qualifying and the race itself. In the end, that is what draws us to the POC Tribute every year: friends working together, exchanging barbs, and bonding with each other in the hopes of doing well. It's the endorphin release of just finishing the race and knowing we depended on one another to stay out of trouble. It's the exhilarating feeling of knowing we pushed it as hard as we could.

I miss the fact that we do not drive at night anymore, because there is a beauty in the transition of sunlight into darkness and all the challenges that brings. The Tribute to Le Mans is the one POC tradition that has endured for twenty years. I hope that drivers continue to see this event not only as a race, but as a life experience in friendship and in personal endeavor, and that the POC tradition of The Tribute continues to flourish.

The race was a team effort and as such I asked my co-drivers Mike Monsalve and Doug Baron to also add their perspectives of our race.

Doug Baron — I can't begin to say what a pleasure it was to drive for Team McDreamy this year. I have been running the Tribute to Le Mans every year since its inception, and have been a proud recipient of five Tribute wins. I've always driven with cars prepared by 911 Design, and I can definitely say that this year's car was the best prepared. I have seen the Tribute go from a small club race to a nationally recognized endurance classic, with drivers ranging from club racing enthusiasts to racing professionals.

Robert and I have been friends for more than twenty years, and to get the opportunity to finally drive with him was something I have always looked forward to. Mike Monsalve did a superb job of qualifying the car, and provided us excellent feedback so we could refine the already superb setup. Robert driving second gave me the opportunity to prepare myself for the final leg and allowed me to get in a car that was ready for the final stint of the race.

All the cars were well prepared, but Robert's car seemed so easy to drive! It will always stand as a high point of my driving career with the Porsche Owners Club. I hope that

the POC can continue to thrive and offer this tremendous race for many years to come and that I will be able to continue driving in it as long as it lasts.

Mike Monsalve — After qualifying the Team McDreamy car on the pole in 1:21:6, my strategy was to turn a few fast laps and try to pull a quick, comfortable lead. Shortly after, I worked into a steady pace that slowly increased our lead while still saving the tires. Soon after, with a 30 second lead, the track went double yellow. So, time to start again, and the strategy was identical. Toward the end of my stint, with a 30 second lead rebuilt, I was told via radio, "If you have any tires left, use them—we are bringing you in within a few laps." So, I pushed what the car had left. However, those few laps turned into another 12 as they decided to keep me in the car. Driving those last few laps in my 1.5 hour stint was not fun—I could almost feel those cords unraveling. I suppose I was not alone out there with bad tires, as we had a nice lead when I handed over the car to Robert.

Toward the end, Robert and I were back and forth at timing and scoring, calculating our position. We soon realized we had this one and the excitement started to grow during the closing laps driven by Doug Baron. Back to back wins in Robert's car #85 was an awesome experience. ●

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Auto Club Speedway, March 2007
(didn't win, again)

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THE PATH TO RUNS THROUGH Weissach Pasadena

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY KEVIN EHRlich

If you want to see where iconic Porsches come from, open your map and find locations in Germany like Stuttgart, Zuffenhausen, Weissach, Leipzig or even the more obscure motorsport center of Flacht. These are places of pilgrimage for enthusiasts who want to see where new Porsches are born and future Porsches are developed.

But if you want to know where the people come from who design the icons, your gaze should point to Pasadena, California.



ART CENTER STUDENT GALLERY — There is perhaps no better way to become acquainted with Art Center than through the high caliber work of its students. The gallery offers a glance at projects created by students in each of Art Center's disciplines.

Most automobile manufacturers have felt the influence of a single small school tucked behind a residential neighborhood in the hills above the Rose Bowl. Porsche is no different. It is proudly a German company, but many of its designs over the past few decades have been guided by the vision of students and alumni of the Art Center College of Design.

The Art Center plays a major role in transportation design and competes with the best design schools globally. At present, over 20 various design studios across the southern California landscape benefit from the strong environment for design that Art Center has cultivated since the establishment of its transportation design program in 1948.

The Art Center attracts students from many backgrounds, geographies and skills. The Transportation Design program at Art Center doesn't just teach car design. Its students learn design concepts that can be applied in a wide variety of automotive, aviation and marine applications. Some students specialize in exteriors, others interiors, and some do both. Some students go on to specialize in production car designs and others focus on concept car designs. Some go on to work for manufacturers and others for independent design studios. Some don't even end up in conventional transportation fields—graduates have been working on amusement

park rides at Walt Disney Imagineering for years. Graduates also populate design staff of the studios and manufacturers around the world alongside students doing internships. The Pasadena faculty is comprised primarily of full time design professionals that come to Art Center to teach. This emphasis on bringing active practitioners into the classroom is a hallmark of Art Center. In fact, the transportation design program has only three active full time faculty producing about 30 graduates each year.

Manufacturers regularly sponsor design projects for a full term,

which gives students the experience of working on a project from concept to sketches to fifth-scale models. Often staff from the sponsor company—many Art Center alumni themselves—are in the classroom along the way. The manufacturer obtains access to new and creative energy, and can potentially identify students for full time positions in the future.

Beyond the classroom, students often do an internship or two with different studios before graduation. The real-world feedback and experience is crucial in translating the academic concepts into an effective professional role. After all, a design for an automotive manufacturer is less valuable if it can't be put into production and sold to customers.

This emphasis of bringing active practitioners into the classroom is a hallmark of Art Center.



HOW DOES ALL THIS RELATE TO PORSCHE, YOU ASK?

The Porsche Boxster (986) traces its roots back to the Tokyo Auto show in October 1991. Porsche's design chief, Harm Lagaay attended and saw the market for two seater sportscars was taking hold with models like the Mazda Miata MX-5 gaining popularity. Lagaay convinced Porsche that a new two seater cabriolet could capitalize on this wave. Work started on a proposal in February 1992, and the concept was approved in June 1992 (approved over a four door sedan concept proposal—which indicates just how long a Panamera type car had been contemplated).

Various designs were considered, but the vision put forward by American designer and Art Center graduate Grant Larson provided the direction. Larson was 34 years old at the time and had only recently joined Porsche. Larson had graduated from Art Center in 1986, and took a job with Audi's design studio in Germany before moving to Porsche in 1989.

Design work on the Boxster concept was completed by August 1992, and the concept car was unveiled in January 1993 at the Detroit Auto Show. The Boxster

was an unexpected sensation and gave Porsche a real boost at a time when sales were struggling. In fact, little fanfare preceded the concept car. Very few journalists even knew that Porsche was going to have a concept car, and the Porsche Cars North America team wrote its press release without ever having seen the car.

At the same time, Porsche was working on the next evolution of the 911 family. The air-cooled 993 would be succeeded by the water-cooled 996. Larson worked closely with the 996 design team because of his experience with the Boxster. Porsche was so short of development funds at the time that the decision was made to economize by making the front of both cars as identical as possible.

The Boxster project set Larson's course for a long and successful tenure with Porsche. He has worked on a variety of models, including the Carrera GT, 911 Speedster, the Boxster Spyder and various iterations of the 997.

Another Art Center graduate had a very impactful, but much different Porsche experience. Jason Hill graduated from Art Center in 1990 and joined the



Since 1989, Grant Larson (pictured at right) has been designing cars for Porsche. As an Exterior Designer, he has been responsible for such bold and breakthrough designs as the original Boxster and Panamera. Grant also led designs for the Carrera GT, the 911 type 997 Carrera and Turbo, the most recent 911 Speedster, Boxster Spyder, and 911 Sport Classic.



PORSCHE BOXSTER CONCEPT

TOM HAREZLAK



newly established Mercedes-Benz design studio in Irvine. His first job at Mercedes Benz was designing a small two-passenger battery vehicle to meet California emissions requirements. (Concepts from that project would find their way into the now familiar Smartcar.)

After four years, he joined the nearby Samsung Motors studio in Huntington Beach as a senior designer, intending to help Samsung develop a business

Despite some of the PR bells and whistles at the time, the Carrera GT was always intended for production, so the design of the showcar needed to anticipate the needs of a production car. There have been exceptions, but Jason notes that, "Porsche generally doesn't do concept cars for non-production reasons." Others in Weissach, including Grant Larson, put the final touches on the car for production.

The story of the Carrera GT is well known—a supercar designed

PORSCHE MACAN CONCEPT

JULIEN BILODEAU



exporting cars from South Korea. Economic troubles in Asia put an end to those plans and Porsche bought out the studio in 1999.

Early on, Porsche design chief Harm Lagaay had requested a proposal for a halo supercar to make use of the stillborn LMP race car's 10 cylinder engine. Jason's design was the basis for the Carrera GT. The Huntington Beach design team put together the 2000 Paris Carrera GT show car with about 15 members, including six or seven other Art Center alumni. The project took about two years—one for the basic design and one to refine the design into the showcar.

around a race-bred engine. The car was intentionally designed to make the most efficient and effective package to support the engine. Jason explains that, "Porsche is an engineering company that also knows good design and style. Good design is a respect for good engineering."

As an example, Jason points to the car's wheelbase. The engineers had established a wheelbase in the packaging specifications, but the designers sought a longer wheelbase. Getting together, the teams figured out that the engineers had set a minimum but not mandatory dimension. The intersection of engineering and design determined

PORSCHE CARRERA GT

JASON HILL



an optimal solution with a wheelbase slightly longer than the minimum that met both objectives. Design and engineering were speaking a common language with a common goal.

Jason left Porsche shortly after the Carrera GT project to start his own design studio—Design by 11—and is presently serving as faculty at Art Center. The Porsche design studio in Huntington Beach was closed in April 2005 when the company consolidated design work in a studio at Zell am See in Austria.

From a different and more recent perspective, Art Center graduate Tom Harezlak did an internship with Porsche in Weissach in 2013 after internships with Fisker and Ford. Tom started out studying engineering at Purdue University with the objective of becoming involved in car development, before realizing the design aspect and moving to Art Center.

Tom always was enamored of Porsche cars and the company's philosophy, and was able to

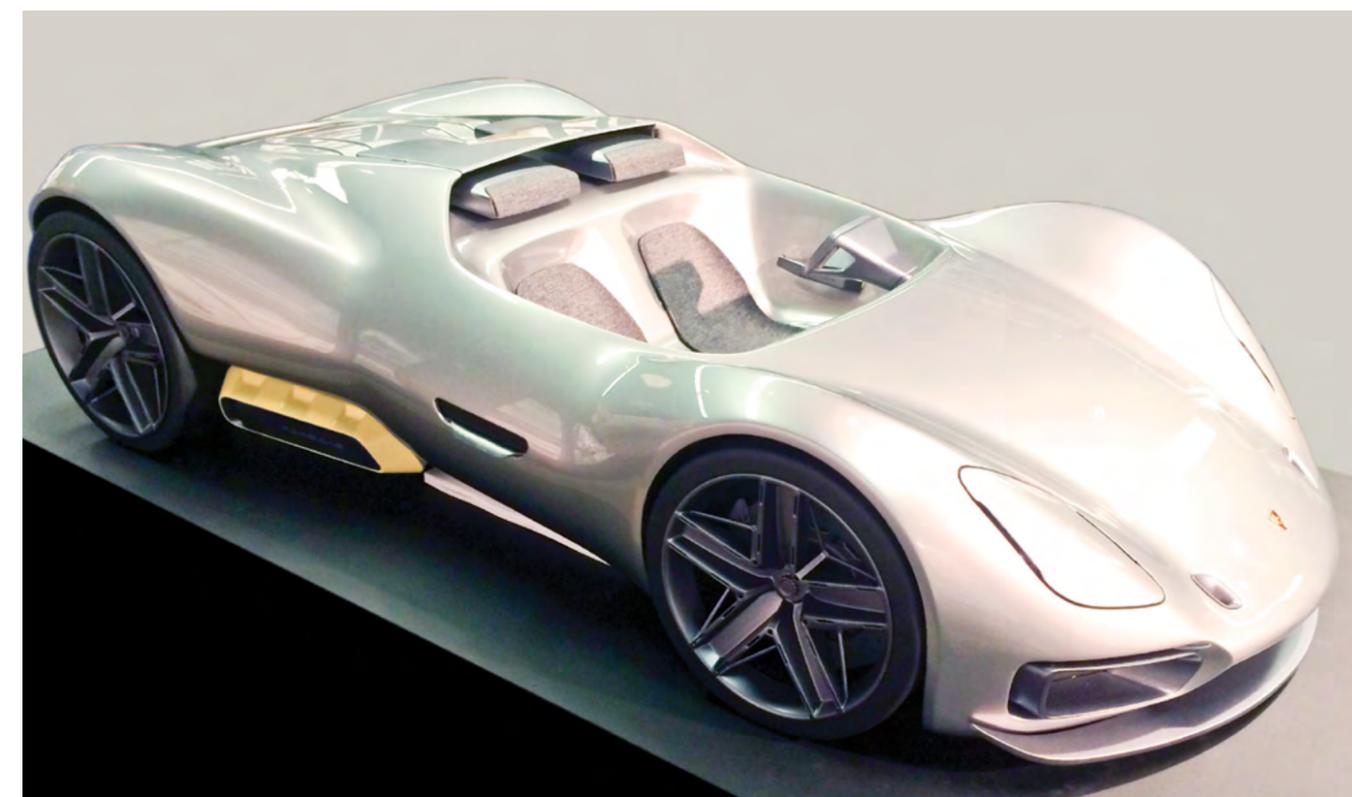
assemble a sketch portfolio and get the attention of the right people to get an internship offer. In Weissach, Tom worked in the Porsche Advanced Design studio which has dozens of staff focusing on road cars. English is the common language, as Porsche draws expertise from around the world.

Several months into his internship, Tom developed a thesis project under the watchful eye of Porsche design staff, eventually known as the 903 concept. The concept is reminiscent of the 718 race cars, with a fresh shape and an emphasis on simplicity. The concept was intended to address objectives of sport and efficiency through reduced parts count and means to capture and conserve energy. The concept envisioned 3-D printing and the car's body serving as the engine block, seats, cooling system, and other key components. While the concept has strength of vision, Tom spent the most time on the shape and proportions. It is an interesting demonstration of current thinking from an Art Center student with influence and guidance directly from Weissach. ▶



PORSCHE 903 CONCEPT

TOM HAREZLAK



“Good design is a respect for good engineering”.

After his internship at Porsche, Tom returned to Art Center to finish his studies and graduate. Following graduation, he did a stint at BMW Designworks in California and is now on the full time design staff with Ferrari.

While in Weissach, Tom worked with another recent Art Center alum. In 2012, Art Center student Julien Bilodeau put together a 911 concept study. His concept caught the eye of Mitja Borkert of the Porsche Advanced Design Studio who was visiting Art Center. That encounter paved the way to an internship in Weissach. After the internship and a senior thesis project at Porsche to satisfy remaining coursework requirements, Julien graduated from Art Center and started as an exterior designer at Porsche in May 2013.

Among the various objectives of an internship program, Tom notes that one reason Porsche utilizes interns is to get a steady stream of fresh perspective. Tom says that interns “May not be versed in all the things ‘you can’t do’ in modern cars,” and that can lead in interesting directions. While Tom and Julien had



knowledge and respect for the brand, some very successful Art Center students have done well precisely because they haven't been burdened by history. As Jason Hill says, “Porsche already has the 911. They don't need another 911. They're looking for what's next.”

There are many Art Center alumni who have had a role at Porsche over the years. Each has brought their own fresh perspective, and some have gone on to new adventures. Regardless, a steady stream of Art Center students and alumni seem to find their way to Porsche in one form or another.

Art Center graduate Benjamin Dimson has been with the California Mercedes design studio since 1991. He has worked on

everything from S-class, C-class and SLK designs to Maybach designs. However, after graduating from Art Center in 1980, he worked in Weissach as an exterior designer on projects like the 944 Turbo, 928 S4, 964, and 959. He then spent three years in Porsche's style group, working on projects such as the 964 Speedster and Panamericana show car.

1993 Art Center graduate Harkan Saracoglu spent several years with Ford in Cologne before moving to Porsche. During a stint of almost 15 years with Porsche, Harkan was involved in exterior design duties for various iterations of the 997 (including the GT2 and GT2 RS) and the 987 Boxster and Cayman. More recently, Harkan was involved in the design of the

918 Spyder and RSR showcars and the eventual 918 production car. In 2012, Harkan made a major change to join Chery Motors, the state-owned Chinese car manufacturer, and head up its design studio.

Freeman Thomas, these days better known as the Director of Strategic Design for Ford in North America, also has roots with Porsche. After graduating from Art Center, he worked at Porsche from 1983 through 1987. He went on to play a major role in designing the modern version of the Volkswagen Beetle and the original Audi TT concept car. Freeman's Porsche sympathies manifested in the founding of the R Gruppe Porsche group that makes creative performance modifications to early Porsches with little use for originality or boring cars.

To be sure, any concept or road-going production model at any car company will involve a large team. Any car manufacturer will have its own look and feel and styling attributes that make their products unique. It is no accident, however, that the best-known additions to the Porsche family tree in recent history have been touched by talent that was developed at the modest Pasadena campus of Art Center. ●

Thanks to Stewart Reed, Jason Hill and Tom Harezlak for their generous assistance. Any errors in the article are solely the responsibility of the author.

WHADD'YA MEAN, IT'S NOT A P-CAR?

BY **NEALSON LAWRENCE** THE MUSTANG KID

After being away at college in North Carolina for a year, returning to The Streets with the club I started driving with three years ago was a very exciting day for me. Despite the heat, turnout was great, and people brought all sorts of cars out, from full on purpose-built race cars to weekend warriors, daily-drivers, and everything in between. It was great to see my track-mates and friends, but what

made the paddock environment very exciting to me was the turnout of non-Porsche cars to accompany me in the “black sheep” category. Some of the non-Porsche cars to attend the event included Mazda MX-5 Miatas, Cadillac CTS-V wagon, a couple BMW M-Series cars, a Datsun 240-z, Audi R8, Lotus Exige (Lotus Cup), and my very own '02 Ford Mustang GT. Please excuse me if I missed a few. ▶

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CALIPHOTOGRAPHY**



The Mustang Kid got some speed.

PORSCHE 918 SPYDER CONCEPT

HARKAN SARACOGLU



“Can we receive instruction and participate in track events even with a non-Porsche marque?” This was readily answered by Don Matz with a decisive, “Yes, we welcome everyone,” and boy, he was not kidding!



Let's take a moment to flash back three years ago to the Long Beach Grand Prix and the Porsche Owner's Club booth, where my dad and I talked about the club with Don Matz. The biggest question my dad and I had was, “Can we receive instruction and participate in track events even with a non-Porsche marque?” Don supplied an answer fast: “Yes, we welcome everyone!” And boy, he was not kidding! I remember feeling intimidated coming to the track with my Mustang, about as non-Porsche a car as you can get. After the drivers' meeting, though, that feeling of intimidation went right away. The club welcomed me with cheery smiles and a warmth that may even beat the southern hospitality I've found at my new college home. My dad and I chose to run with the Porsche Owner's Club because of their demonstrated reputation for safety and organization, as well as superior instruction, and I am very glad I decided to go with the POC. The instruction I received was insightful and the club kept pushing me to become a better and better driver. As I recall, the only non-Porsche cars in the paddock at my first event were me and one other Audi, and maybe a BMW or two.

My dad and I chose to run with the Porsche Owner's Club because of their demonstrated reputation for safety, organization, and superior instruction, and I am very pleased with our choice.



Coming back to the Streets to drive with the POC was like coming home. The Mustang and I were still welcomed with those warm, cheery smiles, and as I mentioned, I was pleasantly surprised to see not only the familiar Porsche models, but the multitude of non-Porsches listed above. I was also very pleased to see the club had set up mandatory classroom instruction sessions for new PDS drivers to help them understand track safety, basic car handling dynamics, and driving techniques. I hope they all felt as welcomed as I did three years ago, and learned as much as I did from the great instruction I received from

LEFT PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM:
Sandy Isaac in his Classic Datsun 240Z.
Chris Campbell's Porsche 914-6. Michael and Chris Weir sharing a Lotus Exige Cup.

RIGHT PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM:
Karen Robinson piloting her Audi R8.
Jerry Hoffman's red on red early 911 cooling off.

the club. Personally, I enjoy diversity in cars on track with me. It adds a little bit of extra excitement, as you get to see the strong and weak points of certain types of cars and this can sometimes incentivize you to go just a little bit faster, creating a bit of a friendly manufacturers' rivalry. At the end of the day, however, the club's main goal is to make sure you have a fun and safe day out on the track, while promoting and appreciating the storied Porsche marque.

Being a part of the club and around all those Porsches must have had an effect because my dad ended up buying a Porsche just a little after a year of running with the club. It's a 2002 Porsche Boxster S, and we've taken it to a few track events with the POC, even though the main track car I've been working on and honing my driving skills in is the Mustang. And, as a driver driving a non-Porsche car at these events, I can definitely say I feel very safe and confident with the great majority of the people with whom I share the track. I have graduated from the Performance Driving Series to the Time Trial Series (Time

Attack, now) and have licenses for both series. I feel the POC has given me a solid foundation on which to build the driving skills necessary to be a competitive, safe, and aware driver, no matter what organization with which I might drive.

This past Saturday at the Streets was a great refresher for me, and a great way to kick off my summer of high performance driving. The camaraderie surrounding the group, and the friendships I've formed driving with the club (despite driving a non-Porsche marque), make coming back to POC events very rewarding for my dad and me. I love driving with the POC and plan to continue running with them until I can no longer drive! My plan is to one day (when I'm out of college) own a Porsche of my own and Cup Race with the POC. For the time being, however, I will continue to track the good ol' Stang, and I hope to see other marques in this great club; I am proud to have joined and am happy they've allowed me to be a small part of their Porsche community. ●



TOP TO BOTTOM: Lyle Tonelli working in PDS. Steve Rajcic making his way through the Streets. Jan Weir using some brute downforce coming through a turn. Justin Daily's paint job hints at his on-track game face.

R A N D O M L Y P R O F I L E D M E M B E R

Mike Skinner

BY ANDREW D. WEYMAN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX SLUITER

Andrew D. Weyman: Being a racer demands a lot of focus, concentration and hard work. What's your "real job," and how long have you been at it?

Mike Skinner: I have been a health-care IT professional and manager for 30 years. When I was 19, I went to work for Ross Perot. On my first day they told me I had to wear a tie to work every single day, and I could wear any color of tie I wanted as long as it was red. For the younger POC members who don't know who Ross Perot is, ask someone like Will Marcy—he can tell you.

ADW: What can you tell me about your track car?

MS: It's a 1999 HRG-built and numbered fully race-prepped Boxster 2.5 GT5, #698. I'm always curious what's behind a permanent car number. In my case I talked Wendy into marrying me in June 1998.

ADW: How long have you been a member of the POC?

MS: Two and a half years.

ADW: You're a Cup Racer. How else do you participate in the POC?

MS: Beside being a Cup Racer, I'm an Instructor, a *Velocity* contributing writer and photographer.

ADW: You've written several articles for *Velocity*. What's that experience been like?

MS: Writing for *Velocity* adds discipline to my overall racing experience by giving me a structured way to think about my experiences, behavior, contributions and desired areas for improvement—both on the track and in the pits. Writing for *Velocity* also gives me a stronger sense of the club's community.

ADW: How many POC track events have you attended?

MS: Um...all of them? Ok, maybe I missed a handful in 2.5 years.

ADW: What tracks have you driven?

MS: Willow Springs, The Streets of Willow, Auto Club Speedway roval, Auto Club Speedway infield, Buttonwillow (both directions), and Chuckwalla (both directions). I missed Laguna last

year because we were in Cannes. That was a real "quality problem" to have. So, I really want to drive Laguna, Miller, and COTA—and then go from there.

ADW: What's your favorite track?

MS: Chuckwalla, counter-clockwise.

ADW: The 2015 Tribute to Le Mans was your first endurance race. What was it like?

MS: It was like being on vacation in a far away land, and knowing that eventually I would have to get back on the plane—I just didn't want it to be over! This year's Tribute reminded me that "plans" are really just "mental guidelines." At just about every point during the weekend something happened that produced a change in circumstance. And that change in circumstance produced a different decision. And that decision resulted in a new scenario that I hadn't contemplated. And so on, and so on. That's racing! It was an awesome experience in many different ways. I learned about being a team member, endurance driving (and preparation). I also improved my situational awareness skills under "red" conditions sharing the track with very fast cars traveling at truly astonishing closing speeds.



ORIGINALLY FROM CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, AND 51 YEARS YOUNG, MIKE SKINNER IS A RESIDENT OF WEST HILLS, CALIFORNIA. HIS RIDE OF CHOICE IS HIS 2004 PORSCHE 996 GT3, AND FOR THE TRACK, HIS BLUE GT5 BOXSTER RACER NUMBER 698.

ADW: What do you enjoy most about driving with the POC?

MS: First and foremost, the constant attention to safety. Next, the camaraderie and family. And then it just gets down to going fast!

ADW: What's the greatest lesson you've learned while on the track?

MS: Expect the unexpected. "Expect" really means "be prepared to adjust." That can mean anything from a tire surprise to a car pointed the wrong direction in a high-speed sweeper. Oh, and everything in between.

ADW: What are your driving goals?

MS: To be able to leave the track every weekend and honestly say that I gave it my best.

ADW: What are the driving techniques you are working on?

MS: Situational awareness is the technique I work on most. And although situational awareness is part of many different skills and techniques, I'm also working hard on qualifying strategy and starts. Recently I've also been working harder on anticipating success-

ful passing opportunities—and not driving a line that indicates a passing attempt, especially if I'm not within striking distance (which puts even more distance to the car in front of me by giving up time driving the slower line).

ADW: Do you have any hobbies other than racing? If so, how might they relate to driving?

MS: Snowboarding. Maybe it's a reach, but I do find myself identifying where the apex is for a particular 'turn'—and what the likely outcome is with a late apex or early apex. And it's a lot cheaper.

I've also practiced Bikram Yoga several times per week for 10 years. If you aren't familiar with Bikram Yoga I can just tell you that there are no creepy candles or music involved. Among other benefits, Bikram Yoga improves my breathing and helps to identify "fight or flight" instincts—and how to persevere in these situations to stay safe and focused.

ADW: What tips can you offer to new drivers?

MS: From my own experiences I can offer



Mike and Wendy Skinner at the track.

two important tips. First, find a way to turn off the world when you get in a racecar. Nothing going on in our lives has any place inside a racecar. Second, ask questions—lots of them. Ask the same question of at least three different drivers. If you have an idea that you think might be a good one—run it by someone. If you have what you think is a really good idea, run it by 10 people. ●

TIME ATTACK 11 - 12 — CUP RACES 9 - 4 - 11 - 12

ONCE UPON A TIME AT A TRACK CALLED

Buttonwillow...

BY ANDREW WEYMAN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALAIN JAMAR AND CALIPHOTOGRAPHY



The Boxster transmission now lovingly called, "Tranny."

I love Buttonwillow Raceway Park and had been looking forward to this event for a long time. The track is fast, technical and challenging. But I had no idea about the unusual challenges I would face during the weekend of The Luau on Lerdo Highway.



POC President Andrew Weyman beat the odds to finish at Buttonwillow. — CaliPhotography

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I headed out to the track from my home in Malibu early Friday morning with a planned stop at my garage in Northridge to pick up my car and trailer. Traffic was cooperating and I arrived at the track late morning, ready for practice in the afternoon. After all, I hadn't driven Buttonwillow in the clock-wise direction for a long time. Practice, practice, practice!

Well, my plans were thwarted when, one lap into my second practice session, I shifted into fourth gear and the shifter vibrated like an adult novelty on steroids. The transmission I had been relying on for countless hours of track time had finally given up. Now what?

I had been transporting a re-built transmission in my trailer for more than a year. A few weeks ago, in an effort to tidy up the mess of parts and tools that had grown to resemble an obstacle course inside my trailer,

I off-loaded the transmission into my garage. The trailer was less crowded, but the very thing I now needed was a two-hour drive away (each direction).

Determined to race, I roamed the paddock to find someone who had the tools and time to change out the transmission for me. I know just enough about fixing cars to be dangerous. I also know when to ask for help and I wasn't about to drive four hours to get the spare gearbox if I couldn't find someone to install it.

Dwain Dement was nearby and I explained my predicament. He wanted to help me out but he didn't have the manpower and tools to do it. He recommended that I check with Vali Predescu. I did and without hesitation, Vali said, "Absolutely! Go get the re-built transmission. We'll start on it right away and finish the job tomorrow morning." Off to Northridge!



LEFT PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Gunter Enz running his new 997 in GT2. Michael Monsalve, on his way to a class win. Duane Selby, sporting new livery, and fast as usual. **RIGHT PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:** Alex Bermudez winning the weekend's three BSR class races. Kevin Wilson's car proving its potential. John Gordon catching some air in the esses. — Photography by **Alain Jamar** and **CaliPhotography**





With a smile on his face, Vali said, “Go get it. You’ll race tomorrow.” I’ve done crazier things...

An hour and forty-four minutes later (I drove a bit fast), I was reminded that transmissions are heavy. Getting the spare into my truck by myself meant intense determination, using my legs along with my abs, and a few colorful words. Back to Buttonwillow!

An hour and fifty-three minutes later I arrived at the track to see my car sitting up on jack stands, the broken gearbox sitting on the ground nearby and very little activity in the paddock. Luckily, Joel Silverstein and Ron Rosenblum hadn’t left for their hotel and they offered to help. We off-loaded the rebuilt transmission (also known as the answer to my prayers) and I dragged my dirty,

sweaty, exhausted self to Bakersfield to check in at the Holiday Inn.

I arrived at the track on Saturday morning to see Steve Parker under my car and my replacement transmission almost installed. It was ready for the second Orange group session and I was back on the track! I needed the practice and it was a fantastic opportunity to work on braking less, getting on the throttle sooner and finding the fastest line through Cotton Corners. I love this track!

Next up was qualifying and it was going great. That is, until my newly installed transmission gnashed its gears while I was on my third lap

exiting Riverside and setting up for Phil Hill. I made it back to the paddock without 4th gear and told Vali the news. My weekend was over. No racing for me. I felt like a sad character in a children’s fairy tale.

But wait! I had another transmission in my garage. This one was out of a wreck and I had no way of knowing if it was good. For that matter, the rebuilt one didn’t perform very well. I was torn. Was it worth another trip to Northridge? With a smile on his face, Vali said, “Go get it. You’ll race tomorrow.” I’ve done crazier things...

I got back in my truck, headed to Northridge and an hour and

forty-eight minutes later, I was hoisting and cursing once again. I got the transmission into the truck and headed back to the track. “This is insane,” I told myself. “I’ve filled up my truck with more diesel fuel in two days than I have in a month.”

It was late when I arrived at the track. My car was once again sitting on jack stands with the busted gearbox on the ground. I somehow got the third transmission of the weekend out of my truck and headed to the main building to discover that the Luau was over. A few diehards were still sitting around bench racing and talking about how much they enjoyed the Luau food. Most mem-

bers had made it back to their RVs and hotel rooms for the night.

Once again, I got to the Holiday Inn, dirty, sweaty and exhausted. I’m not sure what happened after that but I made it to the track Sunday morning and found Steve Parker under my car, finishing up the installation. By the way, Steve is the last guy that should wear white a shirt at the track. I noticed that the gear oil I supplied was unopened. Vali told me there was oil in the transmission already. I had no idea what grade gear oil was in there or when it was last changed. My car was ready with just enough time prior to my qualifying session to test ▶

Red run group ready to hit the track for Saturday’s practice run. — Photography by *Alain Jamar*

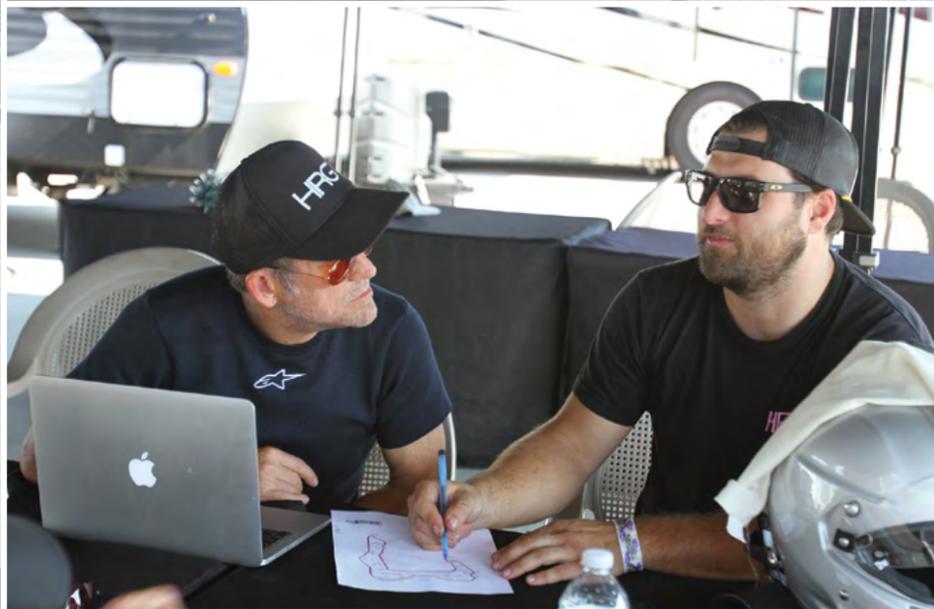
shifting through all the gears. I drove through the paddock and it seemed to shift okay. I gridded up wondering if my third and final gearbox, would get me through the races. I qualified in three laps without transmission failure and got off the track. No need to drive the car any more than necessary.

I sat on the grid prior to the first Orange race and thought that the true test was yet to come. Would my gears cooperate and make it

possible to finish at least one race? The green flag waved and the race was quickly marred by contact and lots of off-track excursions. I moved up several positions and kept away from the craziness. I drove as hard as I could while talking to my transmission and encouraging it to make it to the checkered flag. If you didn't know, it turns out that talking to your transmission is an important part of racing. I finished fourth. That's right, three transmissions

and I took home fourth place in the BSR class. I actually finished a race! The weekend was turning out to have a fairy tale ending. Sunday's second Orange race was yet another challenge for my gearbox. During the race I continued my dialogue with the transmission I now lovingly called, "Tranny." Would my sweet talking, good luck and perseverance do the trick? The answer was a resounding YES! Not one

problem shift and I ended up on the podium with a third place finish. With determination, encouragement, and help from my fellow club members, I got to race two out of three races instead of throwing in the towel. It was a fairy tale ending to a great POC weekend. And they all lived happily ever after... ●



TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: Dave Tung readying himself for competition. Newcomers Steve and John Rajcic are all smiles. Mike Skinner strategizing with Eric Oviatt. Steve Parker walking the Buttonwillow Park grounds. —Photography by **Alain Jamar**

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WELCOME TO THE GREEN HELL

BY KEVIN EHRLICH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR

The headlines for Porsche were somewhat grim heading into the 2015 edition of the Nürburgring 24 Hours. Challenging for overall honors was going to be a stretch.

The 997 GT3 R platform is at the end of its development life. Gestation of the new model has been a bit delayed. The successor 991 GT3 R car was shown in the Porsche hospitality building publicly for the first time. Following a trend already seen in the US, some customers—such as the well-known Haribo Racing team—moved from Porsche to other platforms (the Mercedes AMG SLS in this case).

The Audis have proven dominant over the past few years, and a new and much meaner looking R8 LMS was making its race debut at the Nürburgring 24 intent on continuing the trend. The BMW Z4 was making its last Nürburgring 24 appearance with factory support. Without an overall win to the Z4's credit, BMW was keen to claim top honors before moving on to the M6 program. As in past years, the Z4 was very fast but the question was fragility.

The Mercedes AMG SLS was also likely seeing its last opportunity to claim another Nürburgring 24 hour win. AMG will continue to support customers who want to race, but factory emphasis will move to the new GT race car in 2016.

Against this backdrop, only three Porsches took the grid in the top class: local legends Manthey Racing and Frikadelli Racing (“The fastest meatball in the world”) along with regular entrant Falken Racing. Of course, they weren’t racing alone. Even though a little lighter than past years, the entry covered 21 classes and about 150 cars at the green flag. There was a scattering of privateer 911 and Cayman models through the field, but the top of the grid was filled by Audi, BMW and Mercedes—with the SCG003 from American Jim Glickenhaus thrown in the mix to make its race debut.

A start at the Nürburgring 24 hours is something to behold. The starting grid is open to spectators

before the race, which results in thousands of people swarming the cars, drivers and crews. No special pass or credential required. The starting grid itself is so large that three pace cars are used to divide up the field and release each group separately.

The story of the race has been reported in detail elsewhere, but it was another Nürburgring classic. The Belgian WRT new Audi R8 LMS took top honors with a 40 second gap over the Marc VDS BMW Z4. Although they won with a German car, the victory marks the first overall win for a non-German team in many years. Team Falken claimed a very happy third place overall a lap off the lead for their best ever result. The Falken Porsche showed bruises and tape on its nose fairly early in the race from an incident in the rain.

The Manthey Racing GT3R finished 17th overall with an 11 gap to the leaders. The Frikadelli Porsche ended its race prematurely near midnight with crash damage inflicted just near the Karussell. Sadly, the car was in the lead when it encountered trouble. The overnight hours claimed many other casualties, including several top running Audis. The BMWs were, as predicted, fast and fragile. Crash damage took out at least one and another produced quite a fireball on pit lane (quickly extinguished).

As always, rain played a factor by visiting during Thursday’s evening practice and then for the first third of the race. Many cars suffered damage due to rain-related accidents and the changing conditions challenged drivers and crews on tire selection. At one point, it was pouring on the Dottinger Hohe and completely dry in the pits.

A spectacular crash and spectator death in a preliminary race several weeks before the event lead organizers to impose speed limits on two parts of the track. There was and remains considerable debate about the wisdom of speed limits on a green racing track. No question that the speed limits impacted the racing. Some cars reach terminal speed more quickly than others. Some cars lose the chance to use their top speed advantage.



Peril lurked at every slow zone, whether for speed limits or crashes or track repairs, and some cars sustained damage or had close calls as they or others failed to slow at the same rate or the same spots.

Speed limiting as the ultimate solution is still an open question and there are a range of options and opinions. The purist still struggles with the idea of any speed limit on a green race course. The Kremer

Porsche team made a simple statement by putting the universal German autobahn unrestricted speed sign on its car and on the door of its hospitality suite.

Tradition at the Nürburgring (for some of us at least) dictates a morning walk among the garages, pits and along the track to survey the retirements, the repairs in progress, and the rolling wounded. The ethos of the event to survive and finish

is an essential element of what makes the race unique. Marshals, spectators, crews and drivers all would rather see a car limp home to the finish than retire, regardless of the finishing position. Body panels are often missing and prodigious amounts of helicopter tape are used to keep loose bits together.

Tradition also was maintained in the forest camping areas alongside the track. The same people camp

in the same areas year after year. Unlike places like Le Mans where camping areas are a hundred yards from trackside, the Germans build directly adjacent to the track. The engineering is impressive. Scaffolding is pieced together to create tall viewing structures. Wood patios sport satellite television, flower boxes and artificial grass. Generators power everything from refrigerators to tv, to monster sound systems. ▶



In addition to the main event, the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland makes a regular support race appearance each year. A paddock full of Porsche 997 Cup cars is a wonderful sight and the racing is close. An indicator of the length of the track (15.2 miles), a race length covers only four laps.

If the older cars are more your style, the Classic race on Friday has an enormous range of vintage cars. Many of the cars ran in the Nürburgring 24 hours in their day. The field ranges from Mercedes and BMW sedans to Alfa Romeos, Fiats and Volkswagens. As you

might expect, Porsches are very well represented with everything from a simple early 1970s 911 to a small and nimble 904, to 911 and 935 models with monster flares and wings. The Classic race is arguably a highlight of the race weekend for many spectators. It also gives window shopping spectators a chance to wonder what type of vintage vehicle they wish they had (or regret selling previously).

Any retrospective on the Nürburgring 24 hour race will inevitably focus on the contenders for the overall race victory, but there are so many other cars, classes and slivers

of stories up and down the pit lane. There are crowd favorites that won't threaten for the overall win and yet contribute to the texture of the race.

The most compelling aspect of the Nürburgring 24 hours is that there is a vast quantity of smaller vignettes as each team and each driver have their own event. The spectator is invited to focus on the smaller battles down the order and in class. The stories of perseverance in overcoming damage or poor reliability of particular teams create reasons to pull for a particular car. The rules of the event also permit recovery of damaged cars and

encourage drivers and teams to fix and re-enter the fight which only adds to the "never say die" allure.

This year's race certainly lived up to the reputation as a classic race on the endurance racing calendar. It will be remembered for the introduction of the new Audi and the likely farewell for the factory AMG SLS, BMW Z4 and Porsche GT3R. Rumor suggested that Audi already had 50 orders for its new R8 LMS in the queue. With the introduction of the new AMG GT, BMW M6 and Porsche 991 GT3 R, a lot of people have May 28-29 circled on their 2016 calendar. ●



CLOCKWISE TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: Black Forest spectators can sit very close to where the action is. Porsche was very well represented, with everything from a simple early 911 to a small and nimble 904, to a GT3 Cup, RS, RSR and older 935 models with monster flares and wings. Fans are allowed to walk the pre-grid before the start of the race.

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