

Vintage Motorsport

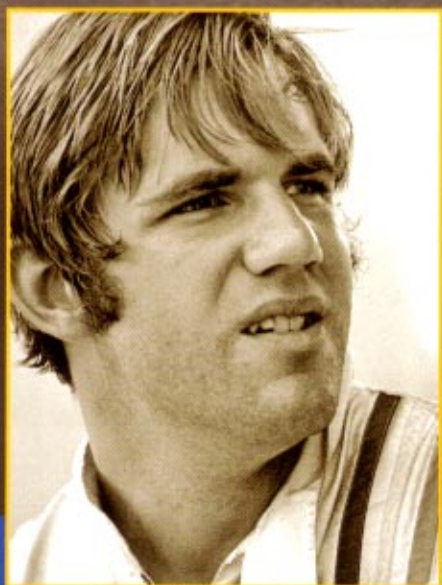
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RENNSPORT REUNION

*The Essential Trip
to Mecca for the
Porsche Faithful*



JOE HUFFAKER-
From Indy to IMSA

GREAT VINTAGE GARAGES
Joe MacPherson

EVENT COVERAGE
Rolex Festival at Lime Rock
SVRA Zippo at the Glen
CSRG Charity Challenge

LOST LAPS:
Cotati
Raceway
Part 2

◀ **SAM POSEY AND THE 1969 DAN GURNEY 200**

Rennsport III celebrated the awesome Porsche 917s and 956/962s.



Excellence Was Achieved

From giant-killers to giants, Rennsport III had everything for Porsche people.
STORY BY B.S. LEVY. PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD PRINCE.

Held every three years, Rennsport is the essential Trip to Mecca for the Porsche faithful. It's a race meet, a stunning historical retrospective, a race and street car concours, a chance to meet heroes, a high social occasion, a schmooze fest and a celebration of immense stature and significance all rolled

into one. And where better to host it than at the track where much of that history was made (including 20 outright wins and countless GT class victories at the Rolex 24)? And where, moreover, there is ample space for large fields to sort themselves out on the tri-oval and ample first class facilities to host a gathering of this magnitude and variety.

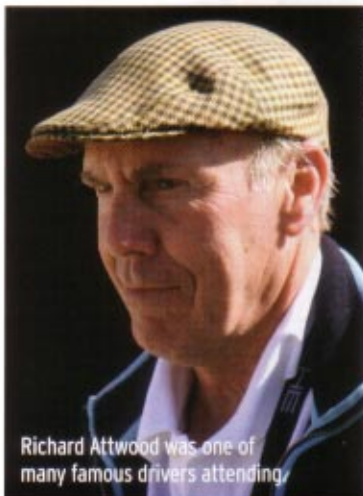
With the track silent on a postcard-perfect Saturday afternoon, 54 years of Porsche motorsports history gleamed and glistened in Daytona's pit lane—shapes, types, configurations and color schemes familiar to every avid enthusiast—surrounded by a happily enraptured beehive swarm of Porsche owners, racers, fans, friends, addicts, fanatics and all-purpose appreciators from across the country and around the globe. At the far end of the line in its authentic Carrera Panamericana livery sat the small, blunt, dull silver little 550 with its strange, aerodynamic removable hardtop—serial #001 and the first purpose-built Porsche racing car ever, that must have looked like something beamed down from outer space when it first appeared in international competition at Le Mans in 1953. Setting the standard for generations of Porsche racers to follow, its air-cooled, VW-derived flat-4 sat behind the driver, the suspension was fully independent (albeit by the infamous, love-it-or-hate-it



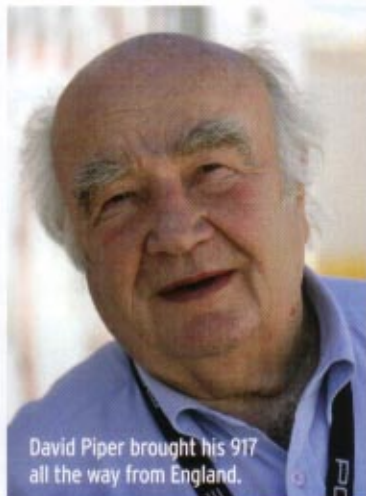
Great racing steeds each, a 962, RS Spyder and 917/10.

Porsche swing axles in back) and it was light, solid, intelligently engineered, carefully built, conservatively radical, indecently quick and even more indecently reliable. As factory entries, sister car 002 and 001 finished first and second in the Sports 1500 class in their debut race at Le Mans in June, then went on to repeat the performance in privateer hands at the grueling, arduous Carrera Panamericana in November. And that was the other unique thing about Porsche: from the very beginning, motorsport was a philosophical passion, core business and genuine profit center rather than simply a marketing tool to illuminate the aura of the clunkers on the showroom floor. If you had the mind and the money (and Porsche thought you'd know what to do with it!), they'd sell you—right over the counter—the very best and latest of what they'd tried and proven on the factory cars.

Aided by the development of the type 547 4-cam engine that first tested publicly during practice for the Nürburgring 1000km in August of '53, those first two 550s evolved into an entire generation of 550A, RSK, RS60 and RS61 "giant killers" that not only won their displacement classes with numbing regularity, but also harried, threatened and sometimes outright beat the "big cars" from Ferrari, Maserati, Jaguar, Aston Martin and the rest. Edgar Barth and Wolfgang Seidel finally pulled it off at the notoriously tough and tortuous Targa Florio in May of 1959, leading an astounding 1-2-3-4 Porsche sweep and victory in both the Sports and the Grand Touring classes. And this after the leading RSK of Bonnier/von Trips had retired with one lap to go! Porsche's amazing "giant killers" did so well during the '59 season that they were in the running for the outright Manufacturer's Championship (right alongside the 3.0-liter cars from Ferrari and Aston Martin) up to the last



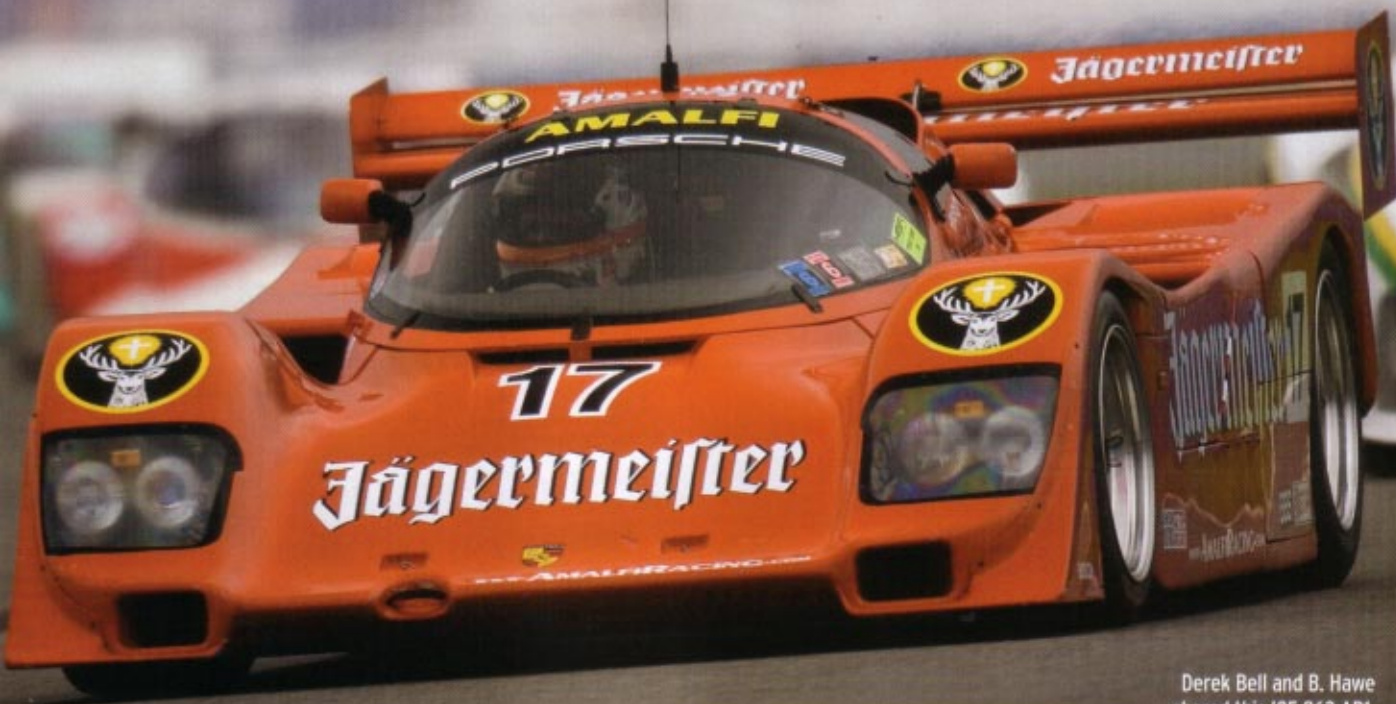
Richard Attwood was one of many famous drivers attending.



David Piper brought his 917 all the way from England.

race of the season at Goodwood. The following March, a pair of RS60s finished an astounding first and second overall at Sebring (Herrmann/Gendebien, Holbert/Schechter) on a "horsepower" track known for its long, wide-open straightaways, prompting successful Porschemeister Ken Miles to call them "the best endurance racing cars in the world, regardless of capacity." Just as important, the two podium finishers at Sebring were privateer entries, the first from Jo Bonnier's stable and the second fielded by a then-little known Porsche dealership from nearby Jacksonville called Brumos. The world would be hearing more from them.

At the opposite end of Daytona's storybook pit lane stood the later, mighty giants from Porsche: multiple, historically significant examples of the monstrous, brilliant and sometimes outrageously liveried 917, 956 and 962 prototypes that steamrolled the opposition in international endurance racing for decades and the 1000+ horsepower 917/10 and 917/30



Derek Bell and B. Hawe shared this '85 962-A1.



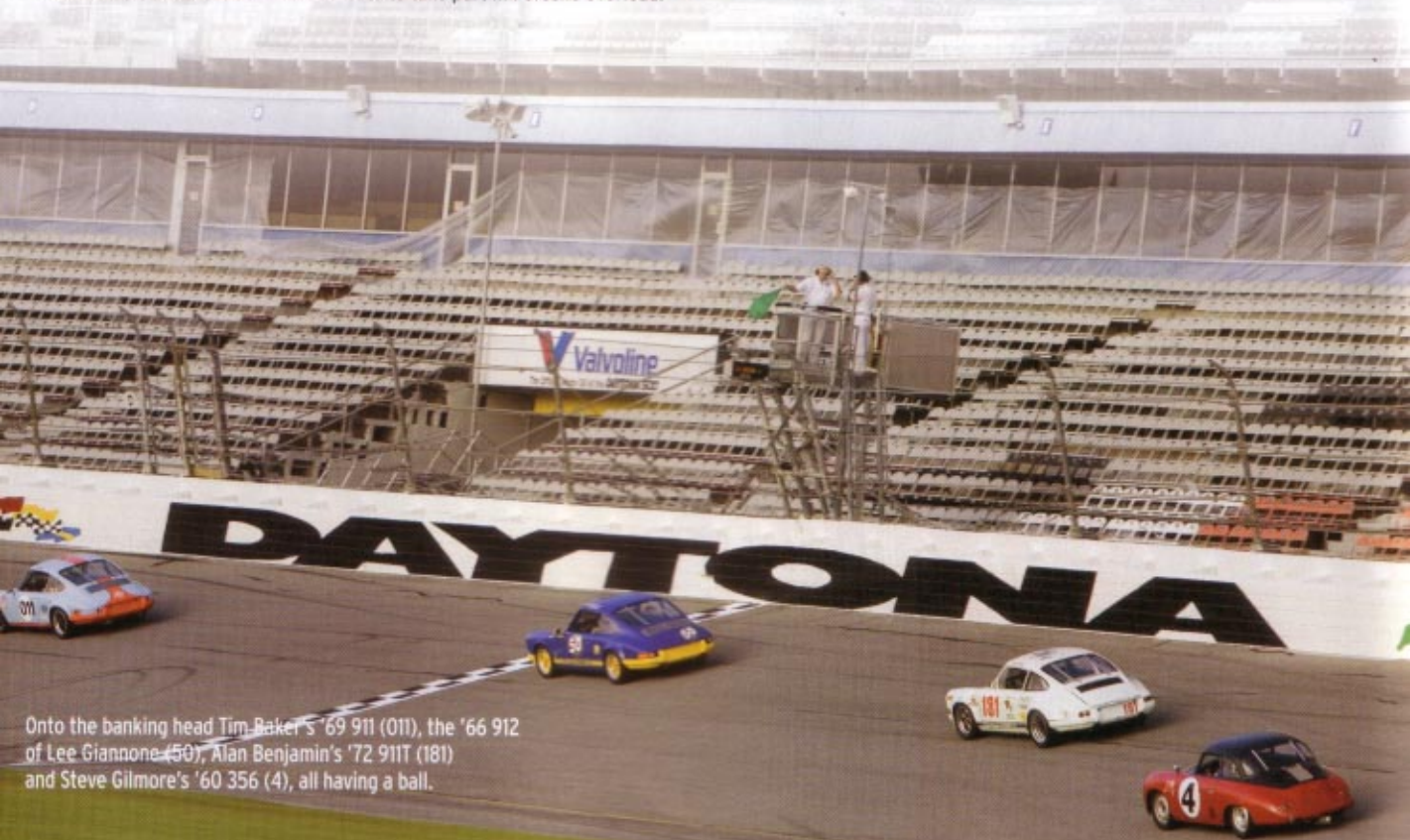
Ulrich Schumacher drove this lovely '69 908/2.



▲ Porsche enthusiasts came from all-over to take part in Porsche overload.

juggernauts that dominated and ultimately decimated the Can-Am series in the early 1970s. And between those two bookends, early giant killers and later giants, lay the entire continuum of Porsche motorsports history—prototypes on one side, GTs on the other—and it was easy to appreciate how each type and variation represented a logical evolution, transition and progression from its predecessors to its progeny.

The night before, in a packed, open-air ceremony in the heart of the paddock, many of the famous racers who actually made all that history were called up and introduced to an appreciative, awestruck crowd. The hair was grey and thinning now, but you couldn't miss the unflinching, gunfighter eyes or the thin, measured smiles of men and women who know what they've done, know what's been risked—and lost—and are moreover satisfied that it's been worth the effort. The names were a motorsports honor roll—Redman, Bell, Elford, Haywood, Hobbs, Follmer, Mass, Attwood, Piper, Posey and dozens and dozens more—until the crowded stage seemed to sag under the weight of what they had all accomplished. It was a dark and yet telling testimony to the integrity of Porsche's commitment that so many of them were there to enjoy it. Throughout the weekend, the stars and heroes rubbed shoulders with everyone and generously made themselves available for stories, quips, questions and



Onto the banking head Tim Baker's '69 911 (011), the '66 912 of Lee Giannone (50), Alan Benjamin's '72 911T (181) and Steve Gilmore's '60 356 (4), all having a ball.

conversation, acting more like enthusiastic participants than honored guests.

The Daytona garages buzzed, bulged and bustled with famous Porsche race cars, including multiple examples of the steroid-crazed, turbocharged and occasionally tube-framed 935 "911 silhouette" cars that ruled in the late 1970s when the line between prototypes and GTs was made purposely blurry, marque icons like the infamous "pink pig" 917, the amazing 911 rallye cars, 908s from *langheck* (longtail) coupe through short-wheelbase and "flounder" and the awesome, 16-cylinder Can-Am "design exercise" that was never developed to race because it was simply never needed. Around them, the paddock overflowed with the familiar 911 and 914/6 variations that have both populated and dominated international GT classes from their introduction through the present day and legions of amateur, club-racing 356s, 911s, 914s and 944s and such eager to join the celebration and take their chance to flat-foot it around the iconic Daytona bankings and sling, slip and slide their way through the famous infield circuit.

Commanding equal attention at Rennsport III were the latest iterations of the Porsche motorsports bloodline: the competitive and successful Fabcar, Riley and Crawford chassis Daytona Prototypes and Penske Racing's immaculately presented LMP2 RS Spyders, which rallied from a troubled debut at Sebring last March to win their class at every subsequent event and, in the reborn tradition of the giant killers from Porsche, score an astounding eight overall victories along the way.

Planning and organization were outstanding and impeccable throughout, and even the weatherman cooperated. Everything ran on time and as scheduled, and kudos go out to longtime friend and North American Porsche motorsports chief Bob Carlson and his people, Porsche President/CEO and staunch Rennsport believer Peter Schwarzenbauer (who must have swallowed hard a few times when approving the budget), Brian and James Redman and their hardworking family, Robin Braig of the Daytona International Speedway and his staff, Betty Jo Turner and the PCA nation and the PR folks from Kermish-Geylin for all the painstaking, behind-the-scenes planning and

PICK of the LITER > 1969 Porsche 917K #019

It looked a bit out of place among all the gleaming, perfectly pounded-out, painted and polished Porsche icons at Daytona. And its personal history wasn't much to write home about, either. DNFs, mostly. But the scruffy, lumpy, purposely un-restored 917K in Martini livery spoke volumes about how success in racing is just a tiny pinprick of light on a dark mountain of unrequited effort, aspiration and ambition, and how each weekend only the lucky, well-prepared handful enjoy the shouts, cheers, smiles, flashbulb pops and frothy shower of champagne in victory lane.

The rest gather up what's left and go home.

There will be another race. And another after that.

So it goes.

Porsche's 917 was a shrewd way to sneak an overdog through a crack in the rulebook. But the result, while promising, was an ornery and difficult machine. Drivers like Brian Redman roll their eyes telling

stories of early testing, and the 917's debut season was fraught with problems and disappointments. There were politics, too. For 1970, Porsche subcontracted its official factory effort to John Wyer's Gulf team (ironically the same team that beat them with aging GT40s at Le Mans in 1968 and '69). But there was also a "backdoor" factory effort through Porsche Salzburg (owned by family insider Louise Piëch, whose son Ferdinand ran the factory racing division) not to mention the usual Porsche privateers.

In the end, the 917 came good, and evolved (particularly through aerodynamic changes) into a brutally fast, formidable and dominant race car. But while the type's star ascended and examples proliferated, only the lucky few—as always—reached winners' circle.

So let's take a moment to remember the ones that didn't. That wound up languishing in the pits or broken by the side of the road. That fought the good fight and lost....



effort involved in making Rennsport III seem smooth, orderly, user-friendly and seamless.

Huge congratulations also go out to all the Porsche club racers on hand. In the past, I've mentioned and written about the occasionally rude and/or clueless driving I've witnessed on the part of certain PCA racers who may or may not be in a little over their heads in some of the equipment they can afford. But the on-track behavior at Rennsport III was exemplary. Even in the hugely oversubscribed Gmund (Under 2.5 production cars) and Eifel (Over 2.5 production cars) classes, good sport and keen competition were mixed with courtesy, sportsmanship and heads-up good judgment throughout the weekend. Well done!

Finally, it was fitting and proper that the entire event was dedicated to the memory of Brumos Porsche's enthusiastic and indefatigable president and CEO Bob Snodgrass, who passed away April 24 while in the midst of making plans for this year's Rennsport. Besides his well-documented success with both Porsche and Brumos, Bob did an incredible amount of good and left a lasting legacy for the entire spectrum of North American motorsports from grassroots vintage and club racing to the very uppermost levels of the business. He would have approved of the way it all came off ... even though he surely would have seen ways it could have been improved upon or done better next time. But that was Bob's way

The oldest and newest Porsche race cars, side by side.



▲ Brett Johnson's '51 Porsche pre-A 356 represented the oldest group of race cars.



Robert Tornello puts the hammer down in his ex-John Paul Jr. '82 Porsche 935.