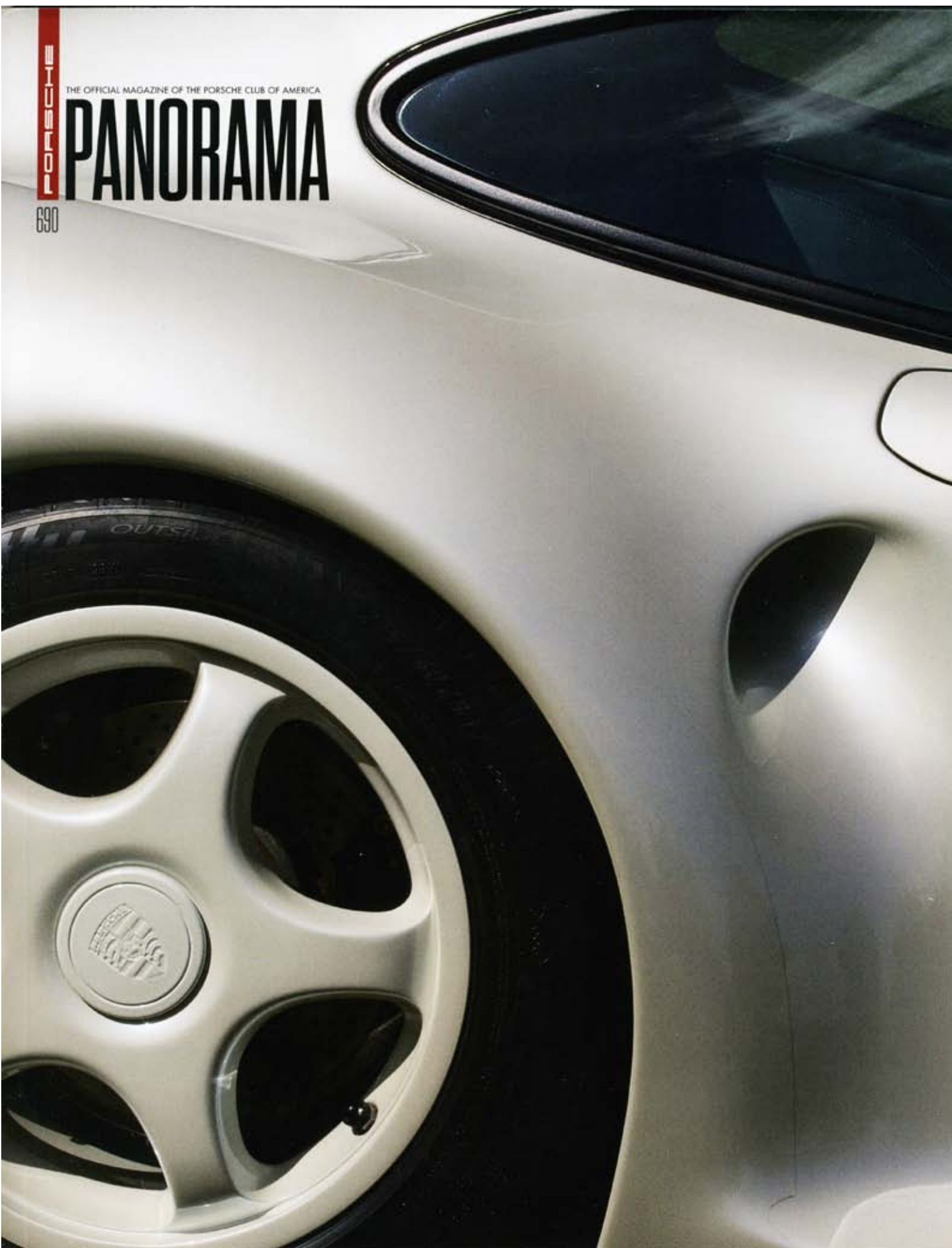


Heart

photos and story by Sean Cridland
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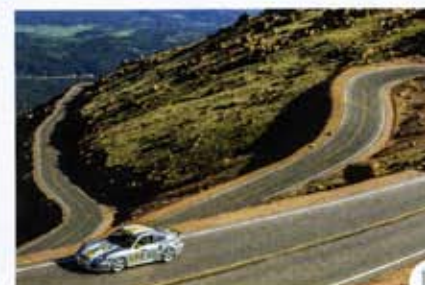
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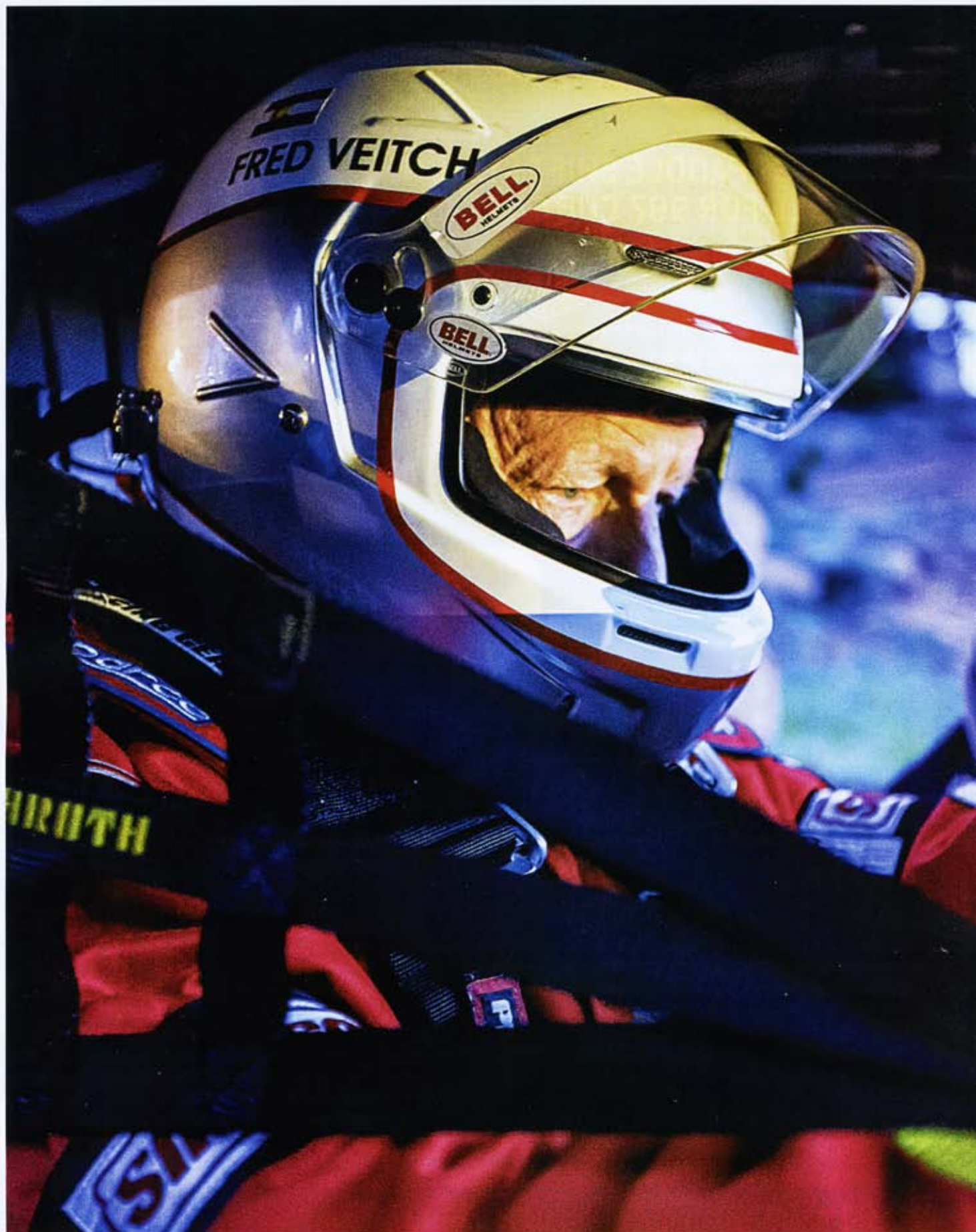
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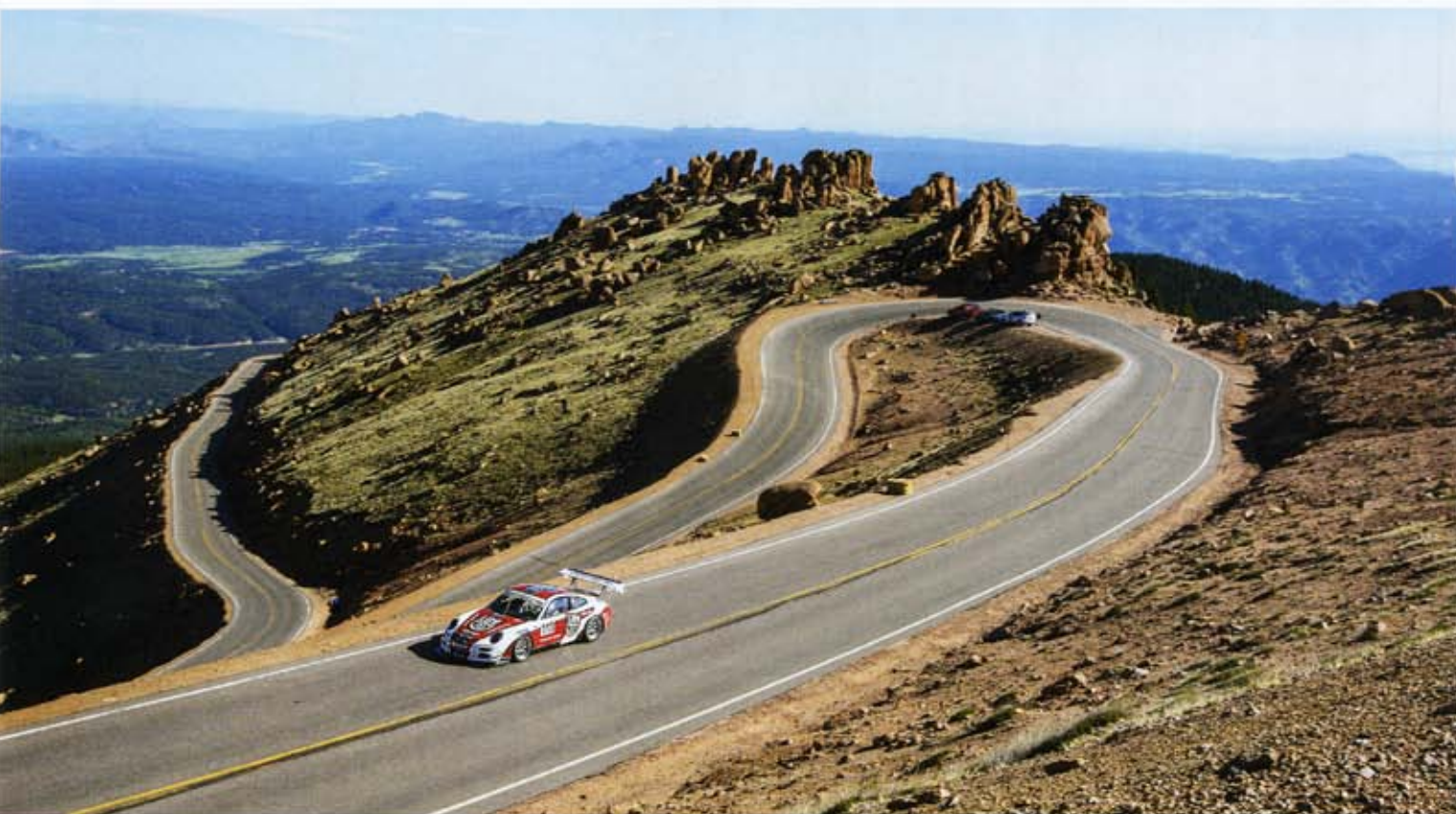


Heart

ONE VERY COMMITTED PCA
MEMBER AND HIS 996 TURBO
TRIUMPH AT PIKES PEAK.

STORY & PHOTOS BY SEAN CRIDLAND





Opposite, top: Jeff Zwart negotiates Double Cut in his twin-turbo 997 GT3 Cup. Zwart dominated Time Attack 1 in practice but suffered agonizing fuel-pump issues in the race. Above: The third time was the charm for Porsche factory driver Romain Dumas as he overwhelmed all comers in 2014 with his turbocharged Norma-Honda prototype (above). Left, from left to right: Drivers Romain Dumas, Vincent Beltoise, Fred Veitch, Jean-Jacques Bally, Peter Koch, Chris Lennon, Robert Prilika, and Jeff Zwart.

Competing

in the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb is not for the weak of spirit. Climbing this hill requires the highest level of preparation for both driver and car. Each faces unique physical challenges: A driver must negotiate 156 corners while climbing 4,720 vertical feet in just 12.42 miles, and the car must work optimally through microclimates ranging from full summer to full winter—through several bars of change in air pressure. Pikes Peak offers a multitude of technical challenges, including unforgiving “run-off areas” with trees, boulders, deep troughs, and empty sky. Merely to finish is no mean feat.

To win—to place one's name on a list that includes Unser, Donner, Andretti, Millen, Vasholtz, Zwart, and Loeb—Pikes Peak demands one essential element more, that intangible quality called “heart.”

Porsche factory driver Romain Dumas has that. In 2012, he had what he described as the “worst day of his racing career.” A crash stopped the race and caused Dumas to run later, in wet conditions. He would lose the overall win to Rhys Millen by just 0.018 second, and was so emotional he threatened never to return. When

he did return in 2013, his effort was thwarted by mysterious mechanical gremlins, the kind that can plague the best of cars. Dumas hasn't given up, though. Something to do with heart, and the allure of Pikes Peak.

More determined, he entered two cars this year: his own Norma-Honda prototype for an assault on the overall win and his 2012 GT3 RSR, entered in Time Attack 1 for young Vincent Beltoise. The effort paid off. Though Dumas did not set a record, his time of 9:05.00 was good enough to earn him the coveted Western-style

belt buckle for 2014's overall win. Can a big belt buckle be as coveted as a Rolex Daytona? To those who know what it means, yes.

Perennial Pikes Peak racer Jeff Zwart has seen and experienced it all—crashes, mechanical problems, bad luck with the weather, and multiple victories. In 2010, he won his class in a 997 GT3 Cup. On dirt. In 2011, he beat his previous time by more than 20 seconds in a street-legal 997 GT2 RS that he drove to the race from Los Angeles and then back again! He missed 2012's race



Above: Robert Prilika looked fast in practice, but stiff suspension and large frost heaves near the summit combined to bounce him into a pile of boulders. With broken suspension, he was out.

due to professional obligations, but he was back in 2013 with a "hybrid" car. He took his GT3 Cup race car and added two turbochargers, along with a few more tricks.

The mountain was not impressed, and squelched Zwart's effort with severe weather. He managed third place behind Paul Dallenbach's overall winner, a Hyundai, and the GT3 Cup of David Donner, who drove a fierce race to record the fastest-ever Porsche run on the hill.

Zwart was back in the same fire-breathing GT3 Cup for 2014, this time with tweaks to the suspension and transmission. He dominated the timing charts in practice and qualifying, but he was stymied in the race yet again, this time by a fuel pump. He finished second in Time Attack 1 to newcomer Beltoise, nephew of the legendary French Formula 1 driver Jean-Pierre Beltoise.

The Frenchman arrived with an easy, likable manner, viewing this year's race as a learning experience.

As Zwart's fuel pump failed, Beltoise's methodical approach to a very steep learning curve resulted in the class win using the same 911 that Dumas drove here two years ago.

Vintage Porsche racer Chris Lennon has shown his grit, too, through more than his share of mechanical issues in the last couple of years, battling back for some excellent finishes. This year it was another second in class, which was frustrating after taking more than a minute off his previous best time.

IF ANY OF THIS YEAR'S competitors showed the ability to turn character into success, it was long-time PCA member Fred Veitch. He won Time Attack 2 in a story that could star Prometheus, the crafty Titan god of forethought, and Cinderella, who met adversity with determination and good cheer.

Veitch grew up in Southern California but has spent his entire adult life in Colorado Springs as a suc-

cessful businessman and community leader. His fascination with cars and with Porsches began early on.

Back when old racing cars were just old racing cars—rather than lucrative investments—the six-foot, four-inch Veitch owned a 906 that he not only tracked but drove on the street. The lithe Porsche prototype was so small that Veitch had to remove the door and drive with his head sticking out the roof!

In the late 1970s, Veitch led a breakaway faction of PCAers to form the Alpine Mountain Region, which remains an avid group of track junkies. He was PCA's first National Safety Chair and is a fixture at track and concours events around the country. As if he needed another hobby, Veitch is an avid cyclist, racing his bicycle in senior events and training with several generations of Olympic and professional athletes. Still, there was something he needed to do.

Though he lived in the shadow of Pikes Peak, Veitch considered the Hill



Climb to be the stuff of madmen and myths, the realm of racing legends and crazy people. But after spending some time around Zwart's team, he began to see the mountain's challenge in a new light—as something he thought possible, even for himself as a 64-year-old Pikes Peak rookie.

For 2012, Veitch got together with his friends at Porsche of Colorado Springs and decided to join the other madmen. He wanted to have fun doing it, but he and his cohorts had pragmatic expectations: Make it to the top without embarrassing themselves. They'd call themselves C.A.R., for Cheap-Ass Racing.

Along with Porsche of Colorado Springs service manager Dave Pettiti, Veitch came up with a plan. Their objective was maximum enjoyment for minimal expense. Since the 996 Turbo is one of the best Porsche performance values, they would buy one, remove the interior, install the required safety equipment, race the car, reinstall its interior, and sell it.

Never conceiving of themselves as any kind of challenge for a class win, they'd have a great time hanging out with the cars and stars at a legendary and unique event in the world of motorsports. Of course, we all know how that goes. PCAers know it as "the slippery slope" story, and Veitch and company slid. Fast.

Their 2012 effort was deemed a success. Fred ended up sixth in class, the same class as several of the top racers, including overall winner Rhys Millen driving a 900-hp, purpose-built racer that looked like a Hyundai Elantra. Veitch was running a production 996 on street tires with heat, A/C, and a stereo.

Hanging out with Monster Tajima, Paul Dallenbach, Greg Tracy, Romain Dumas, et al. was intoxicating and emboldening. Of course, it would lead to a second effort for 2013. For their second attempt, Veitch and Pettiti studied the improvements they could make to the 996 Turbo without spending a fortune. Minor

suspension modifications followed, and they bought Hoosier racing tires. They would stick to their light-hearted "what, me worry?" approach, insisting they were just participating, not challenging—even if their hopes were now a bit higher.

The mountain wasn't so kind on their second go. On the first weekend of early testing, a course marshal's mistake released Veitch for descent back down the Hill just as Millen was roaring up in his 900-hp Hyundai. They missed each other by a playing card's thickness at one of the fastest—and most precipitous—sections of the course.

Both men were visibly shaken by the near miss.

Then, just a week later, Veitch exceeded his enthusiasm and pitched the 996 off the side with a rookie's mistake: too fast on a cold surface with cold tires. Luckily, it was in a section where there were few boulders and trees. Veitch was humbled but healthy. The car had some dam-

Above: Vincent Beltoise, driving the same car Dumas drove to second place overall in 2012, looked at his effort as a learning experience for next year's effort...until Zwart had problems. The French rookie was in place for the win, by just one second.



Above: PCA's Chris Lennon persevered through a variety of engine woes during testing and practice to take over a minute off his previous best time. He finished a strong second in the Vintage class.

age but was fixable. A lot of people pitched in to put him back in the game, even flying parts in, but race day brought an unfixable problem.

Pikes Peak's most formidable and unpredictable challenge remains the weather. Veitch drove through sprinkles in the lower section. He encountered heavy rain just as he came into the steep, precipitous Ws, where the biggest cliffs and tightest switchbacks test even the bravest of drivers. Then came sleet, hail, and snow in the fast bends and long straights of the upper section. Ground fog and cloud banks were present at the final summit, where a mistake can mean a plunge over the side and a long way down. He would face it all on slicks. At one point, Veitch tested his brakes and got...nothing. It was a harrowing run, but he made it to the top without incident. He was admittedly unnerved by the challenge.

So many near misses would be enough for anyone to accept defeat. Pikes Peak will do that to you. But

neither Veitch nor Petitti are lightweight. They're quick studies and have the commitment it takes. So, with consultation and approval from Veitch's wife, Linda, as well as their crew and sponsors, they decided to make one last run in 2014.

Theirs would be a decidedly more systematic and dedicated effort in 2014. With any luck, good weather, and a dry surface, they knew they could do well. In keeping with his determined character, Veitch went on a carefully monitored program that focused his mind and saw him lose 82 pounds from his large frame. In search of crisper handling while taking into account the bumpy top section, suspension and tire changes were tested at nearby Pikes Peak International Raceway.

In early June, Veitch spent a day with David Donner, a four-time Pikes Peak winner. They drove up and down the course to study and discuss lines and surface changes. Veitch was present at every early test session,

adhering to a program set out by Petitti. Fellow racers took notice of Veitch's level of preparation. "Fred has become Mr. Pikes Peak," Zwart said at a pre-race press event.

Veitch's effort would be aided by a rules change for 2014: The Time Attack class was split in two, and cars would run based on qualifying times. That meant Veitch's mostly stock 996 Turbo would be racing against other production cars with street origins—such as Vipers, Mustangs, and Subarus—instead of the all-out race cars like Millen's Hyundai "funny car" or Zwart's turbocharged GT3 Cup. His fiercest in-class competitor would be fellow Coloradoan Prilika in a GT3 Cup. Modified 996 Turbo vs. 997 GT3 Cup? It would be interesting.

Also, a new starting procedure would give Veitch a better chance of beating the weather lottery if he qualified. Early starts usually happen in the dry; later starts are almost certain to encounter bad weather.



PRO DRIVER PRILIKA was the favorite in Time Attack 2. After the first day of official practice on the bottom third, however, Veitch was several seconds ahead of Prilika. While competitors only run a third of the course at a time during practice and qualifying—and Prilika was on very worn tires—the first day provided a real boost to Veitch's confidence.

The following day saw Prilika ahead, though not by as much as veteran watchers expected. Just five seconds separated Veitch and Prilika during qualifying on the lower section. In the middle of the course, where altitude really comes in to play, Veitch showed a slight edge. At the top of the hill, in sweeping high-speed turns, long straights, and thin air, Veitch's turbocharged flat six contributed to an advantage of just over three seconds over Prilika's normally-aspirated GT3 Cup.

Only on race day would everyone find out what happens when all of the sections are linked together.

Would the sheer speed of Prilika's GT3 Cup carry enough momentum from the bottom to win the day, or would Veitch's older Turbo provide enough of an advantage at higher altitudes to take the win? Unfortunately, it's a question that would remain unanswered.

In the last practice session, just two days before the race, Prilika's enthusiasm and track-tuned suspension got the best of him in the frost-heaved bumps near the summit. Braking just a hair too late, he lost traction and his GT3 Cup ended up parked on a pile of boulders with its nose pointing toward the sky. While its wheels and body looked okay, the suspension system could not be repaired in time for the race. Veitch was now favored for the class win.

As if on cue, race day brought clear blue skies and dry but windy conditions. Veitch was as ready as he could be. Longtime friend and Andial founder Dieter Inzenhofer was on hand. Sponsors Cam Ingram



and Kevin Watts from Road Scholars were there to assist. Mike Hammond of *Essex* magazine was present for moral support. Wife Linda hosted family, friends, sponsors, and co-workers who had come to cheer Fred on. A joyful, yet cautiously optimistic atmosphere surrounded the silver, white, and yellow #73 996 as it rolled up to the starting line for the team's third and final attempt.

Veitch was a study in concentration. Petitti was tense but comfortable. They had done all they could to prepare. As the green flags waved, the 996 Turbo roared to life and everyone cheered. Veitch disappeared around the first corner.

In/on-car video showed his run to be flawless—rock-solid stable, and *fast*...even through the bumps near the top. Though wind blew some dust onto the road, the Porsche's all-wheel-drive system and Veitch's well-rehearsed driving style kept everything in line. Fast through long sweepers on the bottom. Smooth

Above, left: Fred Veitch (in black coat) did everything he could to improve his performance for the 2014 event, including spending a day with four-time Pikes Peak winner David Donner (in red coat) to study the course. **Above:** Veitch's 996 Turbo was a model of preparation.



Top: D-Zug 935 and Bally 993 Cup were beautiful additions to the race at Pikes Peak—with style and spirit. Sadly, the cars fell short of their goals...but they'll be back.

and rhythmic through the extremely twisty, steep midsection. Scary fast on the long straights up top. The 996 Turbo seemed to pull stronger in the rarefied air between 12,000 feet and the 14,115-foot summit.

In eleven minutes and 14.834 seconds, Veitch became a Pikes Peak winner. At the bottom of the hill, his team responded with relief and jubilation. At the top, Veitch was welcomed enthusiastically by past and present Pikes Peak winners—now

as a member of their elite club.

They say it's lonely at the top, and nowhere in motorsports is that more true than Pikes Peak. Drivers must wait for several hours until the course is clear before they can drive down the hill to be reunited with their supporters and fans. When Veitch finally did, tears of joy glistened on his cheeks. With hard work, help from his friends, a great car, and more than a little heart, Fred Veitch achieved his dream. ●

Not to be...

FOR SOME Pikes Peak fans, the paving of the road to the summit has irreparably—and negatively—changed the race. Gone are the lurid slides and rooster-tails of dust and gravel, but the loss of the old has brought with it several unanticipated and interesting benefits. For Porsche fans, it means more Porsches to cheer for—including a pair of very interesting entries in 2014, even if they didn't complete their missions.

In Time Attack 1, veteran French rallyist and vintage racer Jean-Jacques Bally entered a 1995 993 Cup, beautifully hand-painted by French artist Patrick Moya. The car looked solid in practice and qualified respectably as Bally learned the course. Unfortunately, the car suffered a broken connecting rod two-thirds of the way up the course on race day. It could only limp its way to the summit.

Perhaps the most interesting car was the 935 K3 tribute entered by D-Zug for

driver Peter Koch. Its mere presence on the entry list had enthusiasts buzzing. The project had come to mind a few years earlier when the team obtained an engineless 1980 930 that had been “blinged out” with an aftermarket slantnose. Koch and partner Justin Broughton had an idea: Why not go the whole way and create a 935 K3 tribute car? The car would stick to the foundational ideas of the 1970s/1980s 935s, but it would be updated for safety, power, and handling.

The pair started with a full cage, tying all four corners together and creating a more rigid chassis. Next, they raised the suspension points to lower the car and improve geometry. They found a solid 964 engine that had already been bored to 3.8 liters and race tuned, and augmented it with new copies of the original 935 headers made from 321 stainless as well as intake manifolds for the Turbo Kraft turbochargers. They figured that 1.2 bar of boost would offer roughly 630 horsepower—which would provide plenty of high-altitude power without overstressing the engine.

The wheels were made by Forgeline to mimic original 935 K3 wheels, but in contemporary sizes and materials to be able to run contempo-

rary racing tires safely. The paint job developed after their entry had been accepted. They had to submit their choice of three numbers. The first two had already been claimed, but #41—which they had picked as a tribute to the 1979 Le Mans-winning car—was accepted. With the car still in primer, they decided to continue with the tribute theme and painted it in homage to the Le Mans winner owned today by Bruce Meyer. They substituted ivory metalflake for the real car's white paint. They call the color “Pikes Peak White” because it looks like the snow at the top.

When the car arrived in Colorado Springs for tech inspection, it immediately drew a crowd of fans and racers alike. Multiple Pikes Peak winner Jeff Zwart was one of the first to stroll over and introduce himself before poring over the car. Romain Dumas left the side of his own entry so he could get a better look and share his experiences of a recent drive in the real Moby Dick 935 with the D-Zug guys.

The car looked equally pretty lined up in the start area for its first runs on the mountain. It sounded great, too, although on the first day they realized it wasn't tuned properly for the altitude.

Still, Koch was learning the course and his times were improving—until something happened.

Pikes Peak is one of those places, like Bonneville or Le Mans, that cannot be duplicated in testing anywhere else. You can run perfectly for months on your home track, get everything exactly right, and then—whether it's the particular demands of the course or the mountain's spirit—things break that have never broken before. And that's what happened with Koch and Broughton.

Not entirely sure what they were facing, they started looking through the engine. With hopes of fixing the car before the race, they spent long days on the lift. But even with the help of engine guru Dieter Inzenhofer of Andial fame, it was not to be. Eventually, they figured out that the engine had a broken intermediate shaft. Their week was over.

When they pushed the car out for the Friday night Fan-Fest, it was still a huge hit. The friendliness and enthusiasm they encountered in fans, fellow racers, and the Colorado Porsche community was so overwhelming that they have already committed to returning to the mountain for another go in 2015. We'll be watching. —SC