

Battle of the Titans

Three Pikes Peak Legends Go Head to Head
Porsche Panorama
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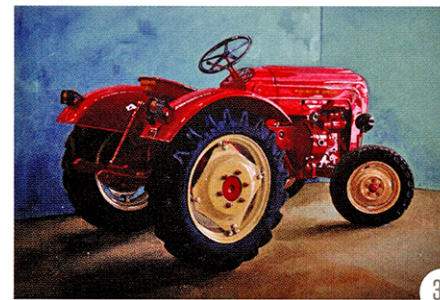




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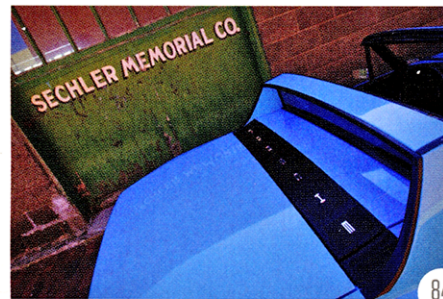
98



32



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84



44



74

DEPARTMENTS

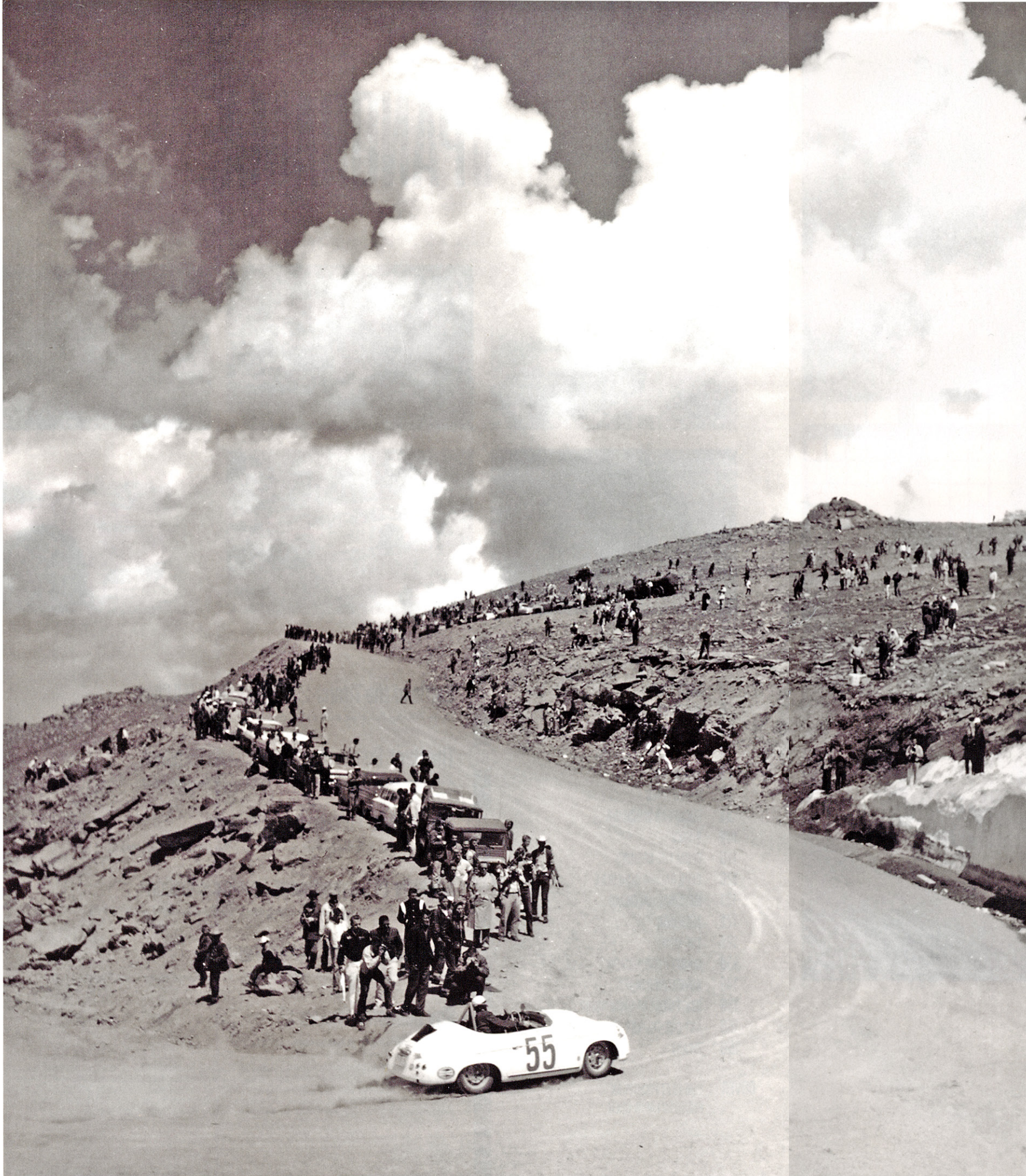
- 4 BACK STORY
- 8 EDITOR'S NOTE
- 12 ON THE GRID
- 18 LETTERS
- 22 STREET TALK
- 32 SPEED LINES
- 34 EUROPEAN WINDOWS
- 106 BOOKS
- 110 FROM THE REGIONS
- 120 CLUB RACING SCHEDULE
- 121 NATIONAL CALENDAR
- 122 TECH Q&A
- 128 THE MART
- 138 MARKET DASHBOARD
- 146 ADVERTISER INDEX
- 158 STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP
- 158 ANY QUESTIONS?
- 160 ZWART

COVER 935-19 AT PIKES PEAK
PHOTO BY LARRY CHEN

FEATURES

- 44 Battle of the Titans** 2020 Pikes Peak Hill Climb
Three 700-hp Porsches race to the clouds.
- 64 The Hunt** Gemini Blue Metallic M491 911 coupe
A decades-long dream of owning an M491 coupe becomes reality.
- 74 Slip 'n Slide** Porsche Ice Experience
Finland's far north is the perfect place to learn the physics of car control.
- 84 A Matter of Commitment** Heroic restoration
40 years and counting: one man's long-term relationship with his 1973 914.
- 98 Top-Notch Treffen** Making memories
The Greenbrier in West Virginia hosted PCA's first national event since March.
- 102 Spy Collector** Chapter 12
One last cliffhanger in our graphic series.

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Back Story

In 1916, 32 years before the introduction of the first Porsche roadster, Spencer Penrose sponsored a race up 14,115-foot Pikes Peak to promote his Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs. A legendary test of skill and mechanical ingenuity, the race has taken place every year since, except during World War II, making it the second oldest continually run automobile race in the world (after the Indianapolis 500).

During the late 1950s and 1960s, its stature rose as it became part of the United States Auto Club (USAC) national championship series and drivers like Mario Andretti, Rodger Ward, and Phil Hill joined the Unser family on "America's Mountain." Though Bob Donner, Jr. was the first Porsche driver to win his class on the gravel-surfaced road, Bill Paine was the first person to throw his Porsche Speedster through the 156 corners of a road that reaches into the clouds.

Since Paine debuted the German marque on Pikes Peak, there have been several changes that have helped Porsche become a near ubiquitous presence on the winner's podium. Around the turn of the 21st century, the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit demanding that the road be paved to keep the gravel runoff from damaging the surrounding streams and vegetation. Paving began in 2002 and was completed in stages by 2012. While many lament the absence of the lurid sideways slides and giant dirt rooster tails of the past, the pavement saved the race from near financial collapse. Road-car manufacturers such as Audi, Bentley, Acura, Hyundai, and Chrysler have returned to the mountain with factory efforts not seen since the 1970s. Recent course records by Peugeot and VW have refocused global attention on a race that some people liken to the Nürburgring on a hill.

But for the Porsche faithful, it was Bill Paine's little Porsche Speedster that started the streak of victories most recently continued by the successful Porsche entries of Romain Dumas, Jeff Zwart, David Donner, and David Donohue. —Sean Cridland

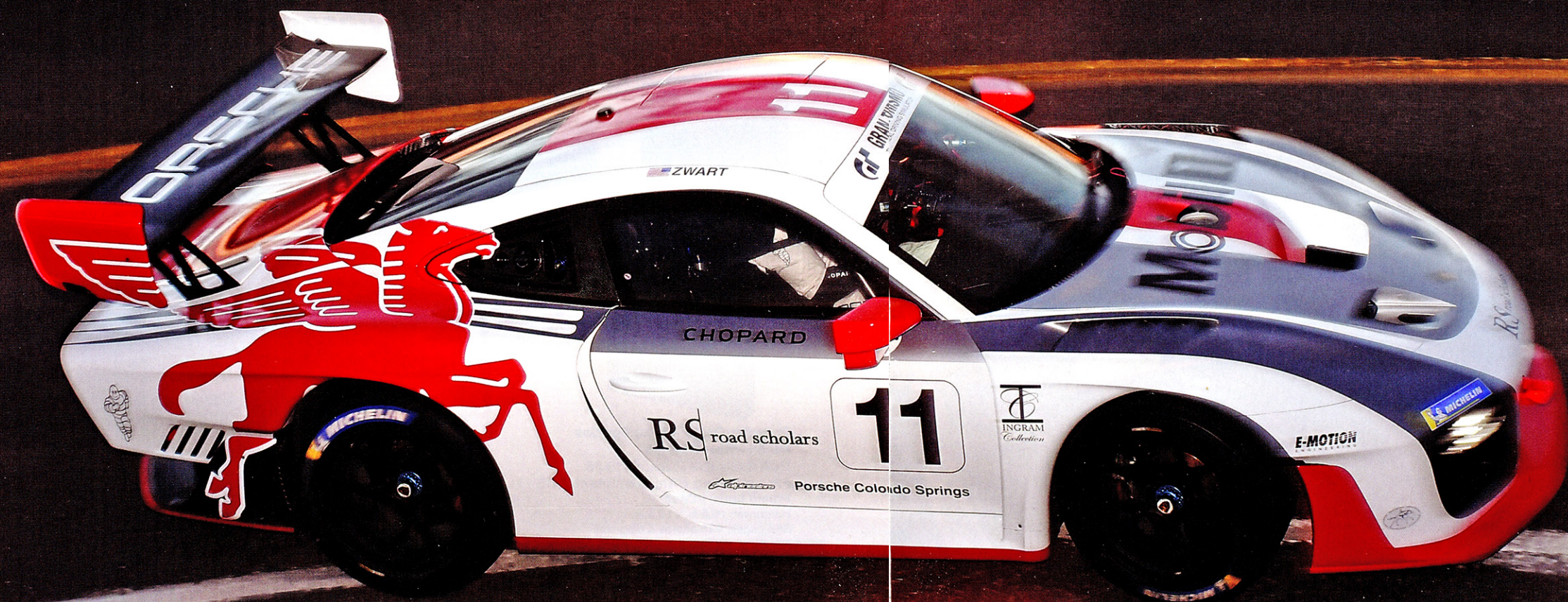
PHOTO Pikes Peak District Library

Battle of the Titans

THREE 700-HP PORSCHES—
TWO GT2 RS CLUBSPORTS AND A 935-19—TACKLE PIKES PEAK.

STORY BY SEAN CRIDLAND & CSABA CSERE

PHOTOS BY RUPERT BERRINGTON, LARRY CHEN & MARC URBANO/PCNA





There's no door-to-door racing on Pikes Peak.

No bumper-to-bumper. No wheel-to-wheel. Every driver runs alone, his own race, against no one other than the clock and the mountain. But if they did run in groups up the 12.42-mile, 156-corner road to the clouds, this year's race would have been a hum-dinger, with the top four cars finishing within two seconds of one another and the top six finishers within ten seconds. As NASCAR announcer Darrell Waltrip would say, "Boogity, boogity, boogity, boys; let's go racin'!"



GOING INTO THIS YEAR'S RACE,

which was moved back a couple of months to late August due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a trio of Porsche pilots were hungry for victory, driving some of the most beautiful, most sophisticated, and fastest Porsches ever to run the hill. Topping the list was eight-time Pikes Peak winner and Hall of Fame member Jeff Zwart, who announced in April that he would be driving the modern version of Porsche's 935. Based on the GT2 RS, the modern 935 is one of the wildest limited-run production cars Porsche has ever created. Remi-

niscent of the 935/78 Moby Dick, the pairing of this car with Peak-master Zwart was a PR juggernaut, creating a flurry of activity on every social media platform and web-based automotive news service.

To say that David Donner grew up on Pikes Peak is no exaggeration. His grandfather, Bob Sr., jump-started the race after it paused for World War II. Bob Jr. was the first to drive a Porsche to a class victory on the mountain and did it three times, in 1960, 1961, and 1962. David's late brother Bob III won a class victory in 1989. Coming into the 2020

race, David already had six Pikes Peak trophies to his name: three for King of the Mountain (fastest overall time) and class wins. In early summer 2020 Donner had no plans to compete in this year's race, but then a deal to drive a Porsche GT2 RS Clubsport—or, as Porsche describes it, "the most powerful, non-street-legal, GT customer sports car we've ever built"—came together unexpectedly in July.

Also driving a GT2 RS Clubsport on Pikes Peak was David Donohue, son of the legendary racing driver Mark Donohue. Though Donohue is

This year's top Time Attack challengers—David Donner, Jeff Zwart, and David Donohue—represent 17 Pikes Peak wins. Only Donner has the coveted King of the Hill title, which he claimed in 1991, 2002, and 2005.

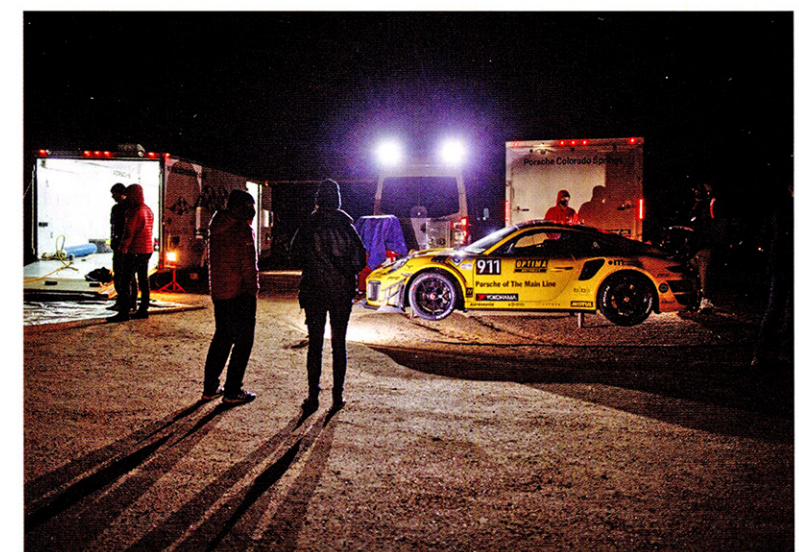
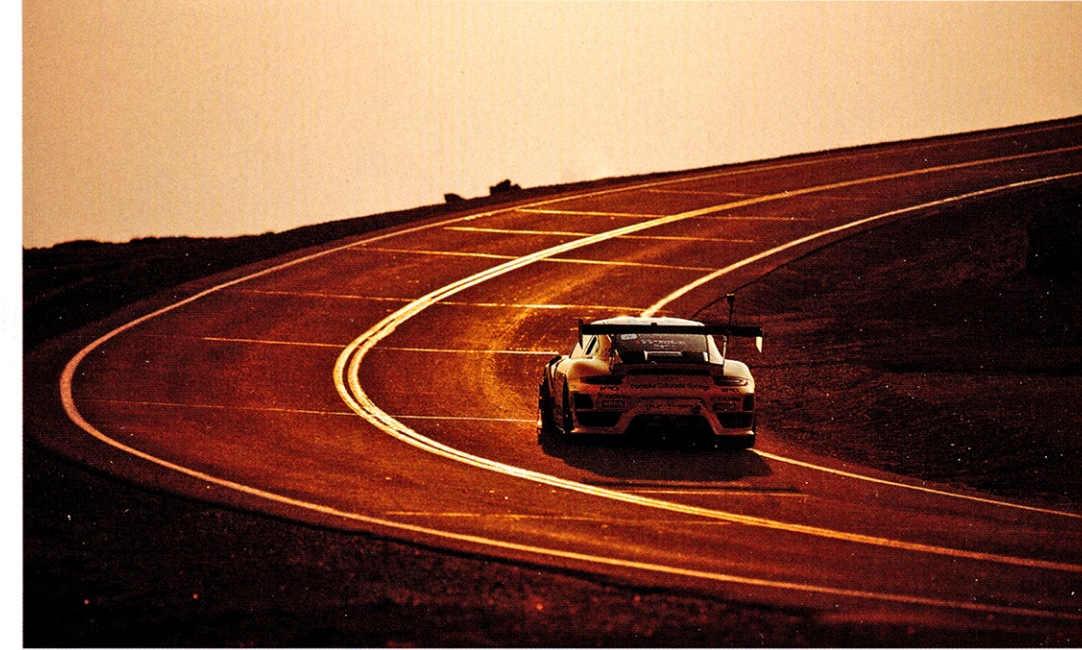


not yet a Pikes Peak Hall of Fame member, he has won the Time Attack 1 class two of the last four years, driving Porsches each time. His path to the 2020 hill climb was even stranger than Donner's. He'd been entered earlier in the year but had to withdraw due to a variety of factors. Then, in June, another opportunity came along and he re-entered the race, but with a bare-bones crew. Had the race kept to its original schedule, neither Donner nor Donohue would have participated.

With only 44 entries for this year's race and no major manufacturers shooting for the record claimed by VW in 2018, many pundits speculated that Porsche might take the top three overall places. But there were two entries that had the potential to rain on the Porsche party.

Ten-time Pikes Peak winner Paul Dallenbach, son of legendary Indy-Car racer Wally Dallenbach, Sr. and brother of former Trans-Am champion Wally Dallenbach, Jr., was back in his lightweight, high-powered, big-winged Dallenbach Special. Also, Clint Vahsholtz was again driving his own giant-winged open-wheel car, one of the oddest, ugliest, and fastest racing cars ever pitched up the mountain. To call Vahsholtz a dark horse for the win would be to ignore the 23 class wins he has amassed on the hill. Another point for consideration: both Dallenbach's and Vahsholtz's rides weigh just a little more than half of what the aforementioned Porsches weigh—with the same or more power and several times the downforce.

DONOHUE STOLE THE SHOW in qualifying, setting a time of 3:55.942 on the lower portion of the course and beating Donner to the first starting position by just under four seconds. Zwart was nine seconds behind Donner, with Vahsholtz, Dallenbach, and another veteran, Layne Schranz, in between. Not to make excuses, but right after setting his time, Zwart drove straight to his dentist's office for a root canal. The



During pre-race testing, competitors arrive on the mountain at 4:00 and start running at first light. Donohue, in his yellow GT2 RS Clubsport, was the early favorite after setting blistering times in early August.



Jeff Zwart negotiates the Ws, a high-altitude series of switchbacks and hairpin corners where nothing but a thin steel ribbon separates competitors from a long plunge into the abyss.

Porsches looked to be in a strong position for an overall win, if the wing cars didn't spoil the party.

Donohue said of his aggressive approach: "I just don't have the experience that these other guys do on this mountain. I've driven the course either in a real car or in a game-simulator enough times to know the road, but when I get to the starting line, I want to know what the car can do, so I've been pushing to be sure my simulations are accurate on race day."

For Donner, it was matter of learning the car. He was taken aback

by how easy the GT2 RS Clubsport was to prepare and drive. "Usually we're spending hours and hours in the shop trying to get the setup just right, and even then the cars can be very hard to drive," he explained. "With the GT2, we did some basic setup. Other than that, we just check the fluid levels and tire pressures. It's faster than any Porsche I've ever driven here, including my GT3R racer. I love this car!"

Regarding the 935, Zwart echoed Donner's comments. "It's disconcertingly easy to drive. It generates more g-forces than any car I've ever

driven, including my GT3 Turbo!" Explaining some of the disparity in times between himself and Donohue, Zwart explained, "I'm looking at the mountain differently. It's been five or six years since I raced here last, and I've needed to re-evaluate my skills, test the limits of the car, and relearn the mountain and incorporate all three in my approach to a race run."

Meanwhile, Zwart was coaching the Pikes Peak Challenge class for the Cayman GT4 Clubsports and told them, "If you don't go faster on your next run, it's because you drove too

liams, who is well known in the world of the X Games, won the class with a very respectable 10:52.622. Kathryn Mead, the only female competitor in the race, drove her Cayman to a third-place class finish at 11:36.345. She was later honored as Pikes Peak Rookie of the Year.

After the Caymans, pole sitter Donohue rolled into the starting box. When the starter waved the green flag, the GT2 RS Clubsport took off like a bullet, without a hint of wheel-

spin. With the course conspicuously absent of spectators, the Porsche's turbo engine echoed through the alpine canyons as it fought its way through corners called Hansen's and Horseshoe. After topping its rev counter at the Picnic Ground straight, it climbed toward the Brown Bush hairpin, where its low-end grunt was tested. Up it climbed, snaking its way toward Ski Area and flying through the halfway point at Glen Cove. Times from the bottom

(continued on page 55)

The Mobil 1 sponsorship logo on Zwart's car reached back to his earliest years on the mountain. The 935's tail is reminiscent of the Moby Dick 935 of the late 1970s.



fast the previous time to learn anything." He also spent a considerable amount of time working with Joey Seely of E-Motion engineering to get his suspension settings right for the heavily heaved pavement on the upper, fastest, portion of the course.

ON RACE DAY, the Exhibition class cars took the green flag shortly after 9:00 a.m., blowing off some of the dust on the road. Then came the Porsche Pikes Peak Trophy by Yokohama for the Caymans. All the drivers showed marked progress through the week, and Blake Wil-



The Cars

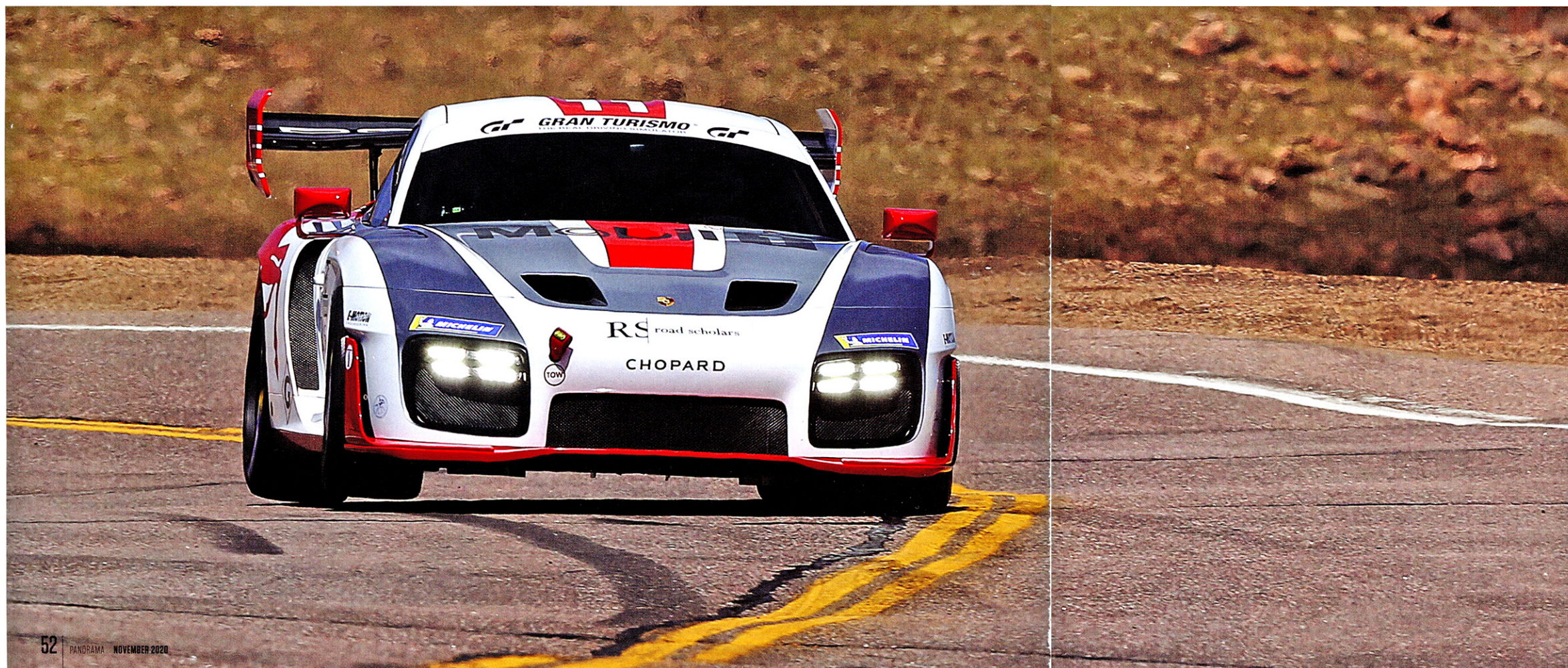
THE 911 GT2 RS is the fastest and most powerful street-legal 911 ever produced. The Clubsport is a version set up for racing in everything from PCA track days to the international GT2 class. That means the addition of a full safety cage, adjustable racing suspension, and 18-inch wheels (wider in the front) suitable for modern racing tires. Large iron brakes benefit from enlarged cooling ducts in the front lid and dual master cylinders with adjustable front/rear brake bias. A stripped interior with a Cosworth racing instrument cluster and a single Recaro Racing bucket seat shaves a few pounds, as do the carbon-fiber doors that feel virtually weightless.

Although the engine's 700-hp rating is unchanged from the street car, it probably churns out a few more ponies thanks to high-flow, 100-cell-per-inch catalytic converters, a low-restriction muffler, and enlarged intercoolers that are relocated to high-airflow locations in the rear corners of the car. Also, the reservoir for the intercooler cooling-spray system was enlarged from 1.3 to about 5.0 gallons—sufficient for a 45-minute race. A version of Porsche's seven-speed PDK transmission from the 991 911 Turbo is used with a shorter seventh gear—still good for 211 mph. Porsche announced a production run of 200 Clubsports, and as of race time a few were still available for about \$500,000.

The 935-19 was unveiled at Rennsport Reunion VI at Laguna Seca in September 2018. It is essentially a GT2 RS Clubsport with bodywork that channels the spirit of the legendary 935/78 Moby Dick Le Mans car that surfaced about 40 years ago. That car was designed with elongated bodywork to reduce drag for Le Mans, where it hit 227 mph on the Mulsanne Straight. This tribute to that model is about the same size but looks even smoother and sleeker thanks to its seven-inch-longer wheelbase. It's a stunning car, of which Porsche will build 77 examples for around \$800,000. They've all been claimed, and at least one has changed hands for roughly double that price.

Compared with the GT2 RS Clubsport, the 935 has a deeper front splitter, a longer, truncated tail section, a flatter nose, and what looks to be a larger rear wing that is mounted a bit lower and farther behind the rear wheels. The powertrains are identical in both cars, as is the suspension, but the 935 has wider wheels front and rear—an inch in front and half an inch in the rear—to better match the slightly wider body. Those wider front wheels are fitted with 29/65-18 racing tires, which are apparently available in a broader range of compounds than the standard 27/65-18s used on the Clubsport. Despite these wider tires and what is surely greater downforce on the 935, Porsche claims that the performance of the two cars is the same. Time will tell.

—Csaba Csere



Larger front openings on the GT2 RS Clubsport make for better cooling, yet sacrifice some aerodynamic efficiency. The 935-19 pays tribute to one of Porsche's most famous racers but is regarded as more of a collector's item than a track racer. Zwart's Road Scholars car is a rare exception.



(continued from page 51)

intervals had been remarkably fast, putting him on pace to smash the Time Attack record and, potentially, to fend off his challengers for the overall win. But the yellow GTR never made it to the next interval.

The mountain often plays tricks on the communication systems, so no one worried until Donohue didn't show up in the Ws, the steep hairpin corners just above the tree line. A couple of minutes went by until the yellow car was spotted by the helicopter, safely off course just above George's Corner, with no indication of damage from the air. An explanation would have to wait. David Donner was on the starting line.

Donner has been there before. He's waited for cars to be cleared, and he's caused course delays. At the start, he collected his thoughts until the starter pointed, made eye contact, and waved the flag. Donner's Porsche took every line perfectly, though its driver was a shade more cautious. Eventually, the Colorado Springs local popped out above the tree line and kept a steady pace as he came over the rise at Devil's Playground and charged toward the fast upper section—Bottomless Pit, Upper Gravel, the twisty but very bumpy Boulder Park, on up to Olympic Corner, and, finally, the checkered flag. Donner's time was 9:36.559, about

(continued on page 63)

On America's Mountain, boulder-strewn run-off areas are an ever-present hazard. The slightest mistake could reduce modern race cars to thousands of carbon-fiber shards in the blink of an eye.

Setting up for Pikes Peak

ALL THREE of these cars were kept essentially stock for the race, but the bumps and grinds of the pavement required a dedicated setup. Donner's car used softer springs combined with a higher ride height because, as he put it, "This isn't the Nürburgring with a glass-smooth surface. For the same reason, we removed the brake scoops under the car to keep them from getting smashed."

Zwart's 935 follows a similar philosophy, though he had to be even more careful due to the bodywork. "Keep in mind that the front end of the 935 is a solid six to eight inches longer than the GT2 RS Clubsport, so you can pancake down on stuff if you're not careful. We also run higher than road racing height, but there's a limit to how far you can go. It's seriously bumpy up top, but that's only 10 percent of the mountain. You can't give up the other 90 percent. We've determined a ride height that allows me to just touch down at a couple of places at the top, and still works for the bottom."

Donner won't say what his mechanics did to the suspension, but he says that between his first practice session on a Friday with his car stock

and his next session on a Sunday, his mechanics worked their magic. "The proof was in the pudding. I went 10 seconds faster in that section. The same car after 14 hours spent on it. But the challenge is how do you make it quick on the bottom, which is flat and smooth, and still not fly off the road at the top, which is really bumpy at high speed. If the car bounces too much there, you will literally bounce right off the side of the mountain."

Wheel alignment is another key on Pikes Peak. Donner explains, "We've gone in a direction that's pretty close to the factory setup. The toe and everything is pretty standard. On a road course you'd probably go with more camber. But you're just not getting the g-forces you are in a road course. I know some guys go with a lot of camber, but that's an issue with braking because you don't have a lot of tire on the ground. Up here, you kind of want to be on the ground as much as you can. The Michelin tires seem to like that a lot."

These cars have large wings, which are critical at the top of the course where the speeds are high and the air is thin. But balance is crucial, accord-

ing to Zwart. "We put a little more downforce in the wing, but we can't do anything about the front. While you obviously don't want oversteer, turning a car into a corner and finding the car pushing toward the edge isn't good either."

Donner's approach to downforce favors the top of the course. "You can use a lot more downforce at that altitude because the air is so much thinner. You can notice a little downforce change [due to altitude] between bottom and top, but the speeds up top are pretty substantial. Most of the aero is set up for the top, because that's where you really need it."

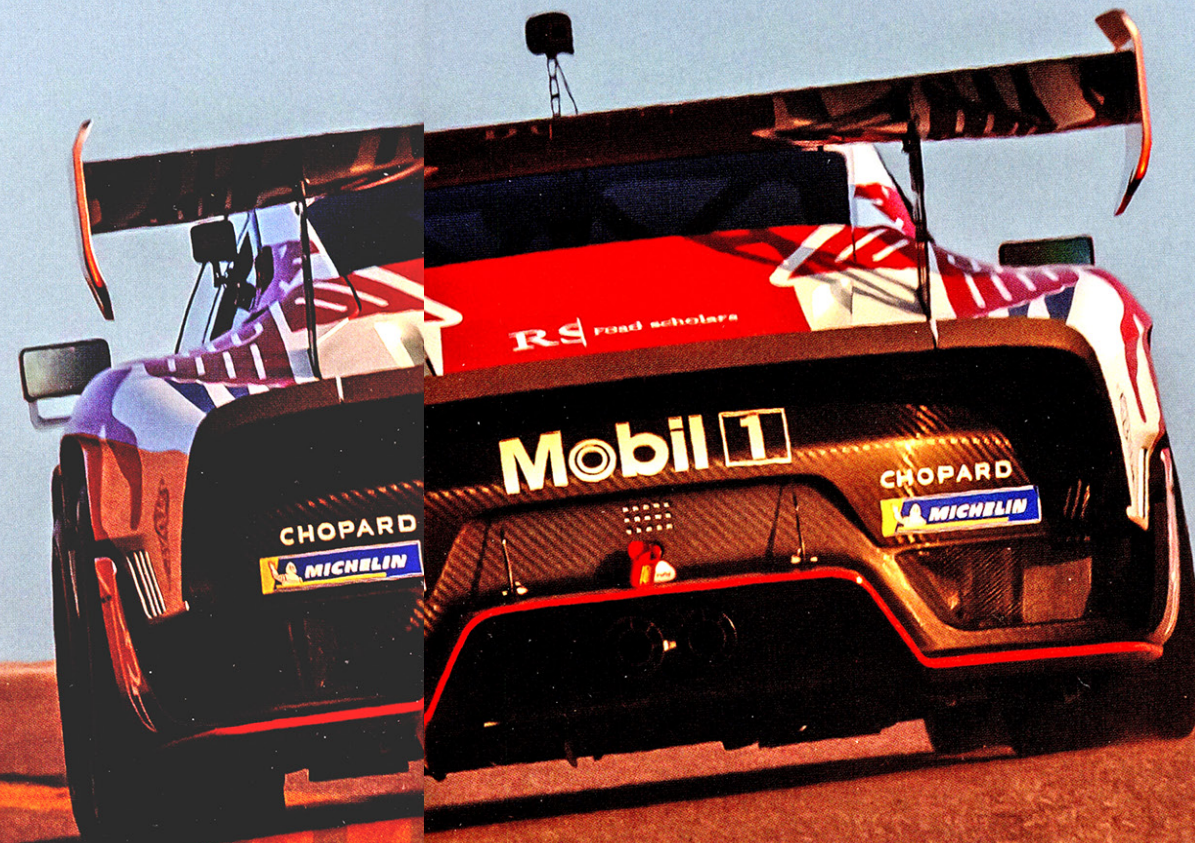
On Donohue's car, the team modified the splitter for more downforce, which allowed more rear wing to be used and maintains the car's balance.

All three cars ran on road racing tires: Michelins for Donner and Zwart and Yokohamas for Donohue. They all run pressures around 26-30 psi hot, as needed to balance the cars. Even though they all start with tire warmers, keeping the tires warm during the run is a challenge. "Your goal is to really try and push the bottom to get your tires up to operating temperatures," says Zwart. "We use tire warmers, but when the road surface is in

the 30s, those tire temps drop when you get to the top." However, there is some compensation in the form of a 2-psi pressure increase caused by the altitude change.

None of the teams made any internal or electronic changes to the 700-hp twin-turbocharged 3.8-liter engines or the seven-speed PDK gearboxes. However, Donohue's team did remove the muffler and catalysts, replacing them with a straight-pipe titanium exhaust, which sliced a few pounds, added a few horses, and greatly amplified the engine's sound. That said, the Porsche engine, despite being turbocharged, does not fully compensate for the thinner air at altitude. The cars' nominal 700 hp was probably down to the low 600s at the 9,390-foot starting line and down to about 575 ponies at the top. The power losses with a naturally aspirated engine are easily twice as great.

All three drivers were very satisfied with their cars. Zwart, who has driven 13 Porsches and four other cars at Pikes Peak, loves the 935. "This is the best car I've ever driven here. I couldn't imagine having a better car." —CC



Though all of the top-tiered Porsches ran close to their stock setups, each team brought a different approach to finding a balance between slower and bumpier sections versus fast and smooth ones.

Driving Pikes Peak

AT 12.42 miles long, the Pikes Peak course is only about a half mile shy of a lap on the famous Nordschleife at the Nürburgring. Yet with 156 turns, it crams two more corners into its serpentine distance. The Pikes Peak course is also a public road and, unlike even an old track like the 'Ring, it has very little run-off, as much of its surface had to be carved from the mountain. Moreover, it sees heavy traffic that does no favors to the pavement quality. Nor does the harsh weather on the mountain, where it has been known to snow at the summit during every month on the calendar.

To find out how to drive this unique course, we interviewed the drivers of the three key Porsches, who are all Pikes Peak veterans and victors.

Jeff Zwart comes from a rally background and views Pikes Peak as the ultimate rally stage. "If you laid Pikes Peak on a flat surface, that would probably be the most interesting road you could drive on. There are hairpins, switchbacks, sweeping turns. When you combine that with going up the side of a mountain, it's phenomenal. The scenery, the dynamic of it, what the car goes through."

"On Pikes Peak, it's tough to go ten-tenths. You can in certain sections, but in other sections that have 2,000-foot drop-offs you might hold back a little bit," says Donner. "If you spin it in a high-speed turn, you're probably going to go off."

ZWART: "Traditional road racing is a [course with] 9-15 turns that reoccur every minute and a half or so. At Pikes Peak, it's a new turn every time. There's not a corner worker at every turn. In the back of your mind there are thoughts like, what if the car in front of me is losing fluid, or what if there's a little gravel that wasn't there the time before? So there's always a little bit of reserve on it. And there are certainly sections that are so dangerous you give them a little bit of respect."

DONOHUE: "When you're learning Pikes Peak, it's not just the line you need to know; it's a line modified by avoiding the bad terrain. It is often very frustrating because you have to go slow because of a stupid bump in the middle of the corner."

The course also changes constantly due to weather and traffic.

DONOHUE: "They're building a new Summit House at the top and they bring up massive, massive loads of gravel. These heavy trucks are also coming down. When they're braking, that's just pushing the pavement. It's not that it's bumpy, it's that the undulations are like ramps. One of the



Because of ever-changing weather conditions and heavy road use, the Pikes Peak highway presents difficult surface conditions for racing cars that are designed for perfectly smooth circuit courses.



times we bottomed out at the top in the GT3R I drove a couple of years ago, I hit so hard we punctured the bottom of the case. Sometimes you'll see guys appear to be on the wrong side of the road, myself included, and it's to avoid the bumps that are out there."

There are also new bumps every year.

DONNER: "There's a new bump as you come to the Bottomless Pit [a medium-fast corner on the upper third]. You really have to get the car shut down before the bump, hit the bump, and exit out of the turn."

ZWART: "We have bumps like you've never seen on a road course. We have coarseness to the road surface that you never see. There are patches on the road that you'd never see on a race course."

DONOHUE: "Maybe I'm too kind, but I won't cut a corner if there's gravel. Other guys will, but if you cut a corner with gravel and you put gravel on the course and the next guy comes round and hits it and wrecks, that wreck could be catastrophic."

Although there are several practice runs before the race, they're not like practice laps on a road course.

DONNER: "During early morning practices, the light isn't great and there

can be wildlife, and temperatures are lower, it's a totally different deal."

ZWART: "All of our practices take place before 8:30, and generally we're not racing until after 8:30. It can be 30-50 degrees warmer. "If you look at race week, you get three or four runs per day, but you only practice the mountain in thirds. You've only done the whole mountain three or four times before you race. Imagine going to the Nardoschleifs only doing three or four laps, and then you race. This is where the experience comes in."

DONOHUE: "Yeah, and when you practice the middle, you start at Glen Cove from a standstill. In the race you'd be in fourth, so that first corner you come to is really different in the race. And the same thing at the top where you start in Devil's Playground in practice, and in the race that's a real high-speed corner—almost flat."

As on any road course, braking is important but can be overdone on the mountain.

DONNER: "It's not like Road America or something like that, because you're going uphill. Some people tend to over-brake the car and lose the momentum where I don't use that much brake. I also use gravity to slow the car down." At the same time, Donner appreciates the ABS on his car.

"ABS is a must-have on Pikes Peak. It lets you use maximum braking if you get into a turn a little hot."

ZWART concurs with Donner: "One of the worst things you can do at PP is over-slowng the car, because you have gravity working against you."

Donohue uses the brakes to help turn-in, but his technique varies depending on where he is on the course.

DONOHUE: "Every corner is different, so there's some corners you trail all the way to the apex. There are others where it only takes a millisecond to turn in. Some turns have flat turn-ins, some have a ramping increase in elevation at the turn-in, others the ramp doesn't happen until well around the corner. If you're trying to trail-brake into a corner where there's an elevation increase in the last third, you'll likely spin because trail-braking puts weight on the nose."

The GT2 RS and the 935 both come with PDK gearboxes, but they offer manual shifting. Is it worth trying to outsmart the transmission?

DONOHUE: "I let it go; the PDK does a better job, really. It'll shift on the red line and it's a perfect shift every time. If you try to shift manually, it doesn't shift exactly when you hit the paddle, and that can throw you

off and lose time."

DONNER sometimes likes to override the PDK's thinking. "In a fourth-gear, high-speed sweeper when you just want to breathe it, sometimes the PDK will shift down. That's when I override it. On a road course the PDK will learn the track, but here it's a little different."

Driving the mountain is obviously very different from any road course, even for those with a lot of experience.

ZWART: "Pikes Peak is a living organism. Because of where it is, near the Continental Divide, when the air moves from the west to the east it's creating its own weather, from day to day and hour to hour. There's usually a 30-degree temperature drop from the start line to the summit. That's why we say we're 'racing the mountain' not the other competitors. And the mountain is always going to win."

DONOHUE echoes these sentiments: "On race day, you're driving the whole thing for the first time. It's really like doing a one-lap qualifier in the wet. You don't get a recon lap. You don't know what's around the next corner. You leave the pits and come back into the pits, and that's your qualifier. You're driving by the seat of your pants." —CC



The heaving surface of the upper portions of the course often requires a driver to compromise between the perfect line and one that is survivable.



(continued from page 55)

13 seconds off the class record, but it was very respectable and was 17 seconds faster than his previous best time on the mountain.

While Donner was on course, Vahsholtz and Dallenbach took their starts. Vahsholtz was turning in some great intervals, about even with Donner, and then pulled out the stops on the top portion, where his giant wings and light weight gave him a distinct advantage over the heavier Porsche. Vahsholtz's time of 9:35.490 was just 1.1 seconds faster than Donner. Then Dallenbach slotted between them with a 9:36.181, just four-tenths of a second faster than Donner. Down below, Zwart was getting ready to go.

Anyone who's seen Zwart drive Pikes Peak knows that he never reveals his hand until race day. As he took off from the bottom, he was still the odds-on favorite, but his times on the lower part of the course were already seven seconds behind Donner going through Glen Cove and even further back as he came through Devil's Playground. Insiders knew he had been working on his setup for the bumps all week and, sure enough, his time through the top was five seconds faster than anyone else's, but it wasn't enough. Another winged open-wheeler driven by Cole Powelson took fourth, and Zwart's 935 clocked in at 9:43.921. That put him fifth overall, behind Donner, who had just taken his seventh Pikes Peak Time Attack 1 class win against two of the best drivers in the business, in a car he hadn't driven until just weeks before.

SEVERAL OTHER PORSCHE racers took to the mountain in various classes with several personal bests achieved, but local resident Fred Veitch's story resonated with the regulars. At the age of 71, Veitch drove his 2003 Porsche 996 TT to third in the Pikes Peak Open class with a time of 11:02.202, just one second off his Pikes Peak best. A bittersweet story, as Veitch swears this was his last year racing the



Donner presides over the Time Attack 1 podium, with second-place finisher Zwart on the left and Acura NSX driver James Robinson in third.



To see video of Jeff Zwart's run up the mountain, go to:

<https://youtu.be/chmstLL5u4>

mountain. But as he drove through pit lane on his way home after the race, everyone there waved and yelled, "See you next year, Fred!" Veitch has been "retiring" from the mountain since 2014. He says he's serious this time. Uh huh....

After all the finishers came down the mountain, a wistful Donohue made it back to the pit area. He maintained his cool, but everyone knew he was hurting. He'd worked so hard and led in every session. His interval times suggest a new class record was possible. But he carried just a hair too much speed through

the very fast right bend just after Glen Cove, got onto the dust, and lost grip. The rear end of his GT2 brushed the stone wall. Worse, the concrete slurry-lined drainage ditches are sharp and are often filled with stones of various sizes. Whether it was contacting the wall, the sharp-edged ditch, or a stone that did it, the result was the same. His left rear tire suffered a cut and, when he reached the next corner, he could feel the loss of traction. He pulled in and parked it. Race over. As they say in NASCAR, "It was just one of them racin' deals." ●

Overall winner Clint Vahsholtz in his open-wheeled Pikes Peak Special was only 1.069 second quicker than Donner's Porsche, with roughly twice the downforce and half the weight.

