

In the Werks:

Story by Sean Cridland

Photos by Sean Cridland and Richard Baron

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IN THE Werks

WERKS REUNION IS ONLY TWO YEARS OLD, BUT IT IS ALREADY A PREMIER EVENT DURING MONTEREY'S ANNUAL CAR WEEK.

STORY BY **SEAN CRIDLAND** PHOTOS BY **THE AUTHOR** AND **RICHARD M. BARON**

IN JUST ITS SECOND YEAR, Werks Reunion was a highlight of the 2015 Monterey Car Week. Put on by the Porsche Club of America, the event invites members of other Porsche clubs and groups—as well as individual owners—to display their cars alongside those of PCA members.

Held at Carmel Valley's Rancho Cañada Golf Club, the event is free to spectators and this year put nearly 800 Porsches on the grass—with many more parked outside the gates along Carmel Valley Road. Inside the gates, Porsches and Porsche people from around the country and the globe roamed the fairways and greens of the golf club.

Former Indy 500 winner and two-time Indycar champion Bobby Rahal was on hand with son Graham's Viper Green 918 Spyder. Endurance racing legend Hurley Haywood was seen strolling the grounds, as was Porsche factory driver Patrick Long, who was fresh from a shakedown drive in the Gulf-liveried 917K that was on display.

"It was much softer than I expected—a lot more pitch and roll," said Long when he was asked what it was like to drive. "Of course, I was always mindful that I was driving a recent restoration of what's now a \$20 million car."

Long loved his experience in the





① All Porsche years and models were represented. ② A contrast of concepts—new and old. ③ Beauty of form emerges from stark simplicity. ④ Turbo tails, all in a row. ⑤ Graham Rahal's recently delivered Viper Green 918. ⑥ Bobby Rahal drove the 918 to Werks Reunion.



legendary race car, but when he was asked to compare it to a modern GT-class 911, he responded that "modern GT cars are much better." While nothing can ever match the visceral experience of driving—or even hearing—Porsche's 917K in action, it is mind-boggling to think that drivers of today's 911 race cars experience performance that is equal to or even better than the 917K's while traveling in relative comfort.

Throughout the day, PCA National President Caren Cooper cruised the grounds to welcome attendees, and was even seen helping fit apparel at the PCA booth. Past National President Manny Alban acted as the emcee throughout the day, interviewing a number of celebrities and Porsche experts. Perhaps the most popular was Klaus Bischoff of Porsche AG's Rolling Museum. Bischoff started working for Porsche as a factory race mechanic in 1968 and has held a number of positions over the

years since then—including his current role as an on-site museum curator at events.

Bischoff discussed the restoration of the Gulf-Wyer 917K that won the 1971 Spa 1000km in the hands of Pedro Rodriguez and Jackie Oliver. Onlookers could get close to the famous racer, which was towed onto the field on an open trailer in 1970s style and was displayed along with a period VW pickup truck in Porsche service trim.

THE 2015 WERKS REUNION commemorated 40 years of the 911 Turbo, but it offered a wide range of interesting cars with interesting stories. One was the "preservation" 1967 911 that long-time PCAer John Straub chose to keep in "as found" condition. The Light Ivory coupe has a worn interior, decidedly wrinkled paint, and a fair amount of oxidation showing—but don't let that mislead you.

The car is mechanically sound, and John is doggedly determined to keep it in its current state. He carries a large kit of cleaning tools and products. Monique, his wife, is an artist who laughingly expresses her amusement at how much time John spends keeping the car "as is."

When socks go missing, Monique knows her husband has commandeered them for his cleaning kit. Of course, there's more to the story: John cuts them into "sock portions" for specific needs. There are full socks, half socks, and quarter socks. Presumably, there are socks of different fibers, too. His scrupulous efforts have paid off. He has won several awards with the car, and you can almost always find photographers clustered around it.

Longtime PCA member George Vaccaro built his own little pavilion to document his purchase of a Slate Gray 912 at the factory in June of 1967. He drove the gray coupe all

The 1971 Spa 1000km-winning 917K was on hand. Fresh from a full restoration and recently sorted by Patrick Long at Willow Springs, it was hitched to a period-correct VW service van.



The bucolic setting was enhanced by gorgeous weather and a rainbow of Porsche vibrancy.

over Europe before shipping it home to the U.S. later that summer. Vaccaro continues to drive the car, which is all original except for a small repaint on part of its hood. With just a bit of wear on the floor mats and steering wheel, it's in remarkable condition. You can tell how much he enjoys his 912 and the life it has shared with him by the wide smile on his face and the work he put into his display.

Tom Ridings brought his Olive 1973 911E, appropriately decked out with a rack and period luggage. Olive is one of those colors people either love or...not. Many Olive cars have been repainted in more popular colors, but two things have happened in recent years. Due to the values of early Porsches preserved in or restored to their original configuration, many repainted cars are being restored in their original colors. Also, some unusual colors from the 1960s and 1970s are gaining pop-

ularity. It's worth noting that at least five Olive Porsches were seen during Car Week—with Ridings' car being the most original.

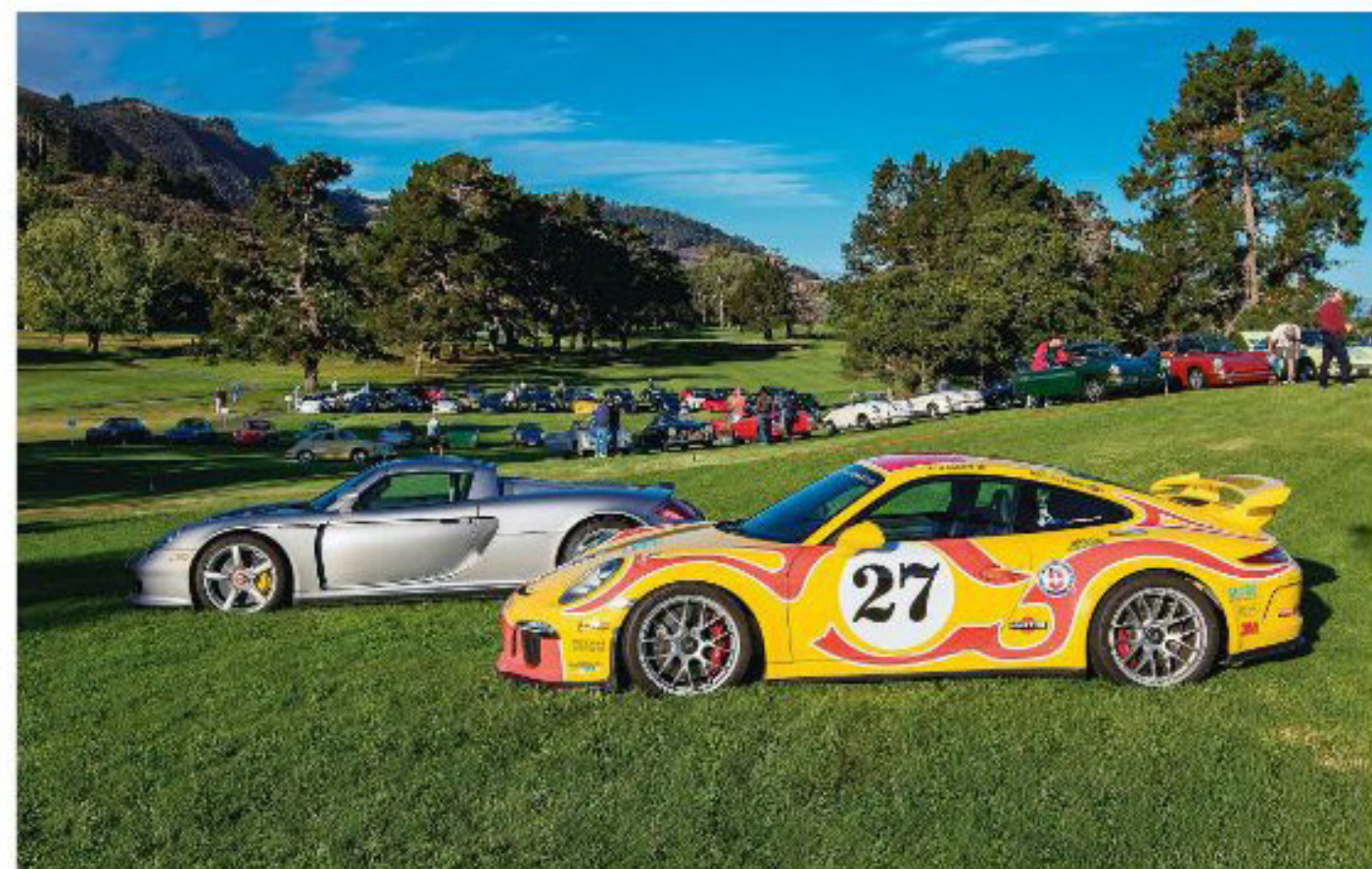
Many participants were serious about the concours aspect of Werks, but some came just to have fun. One was Paul Kramer, who brought his rally car tribute complete with extra lights, a roof rack, vintage skis, and "if-needed" studded snow tires. No, it isn't the real McCoy—but it typifies what's fun about a lot of PCAers: They're not so worried about "originality" and are far more interested in having fun. Sometimes, a change is for performance. Sometimes, it's just for show—to get a glance or a smile, or to pay tribute. And that's just fine.

GETTING TO WERKS EARLY is a plus. This year, if you arrived early you might have caught Jeff Zwart strolling the grounds with his iPhone, composing his photo for the back page of *Panorama*. Or you might

have seen Chad McQueen, son of Steve McQueen, working alongside well-known collector Bob Ingram to polish a stunning array of cars. They included an immaculate 550 Spyder, an Abarth Carrera, a Middle East championship-winning rally car, and a 1973 Carrera RS Monte Carlo Rally car. Just across from them, the Porsche Cars North America and Michelin pavilions featured impressive machinery, including a Le Mans-winning 911 GT1.

Of course, there are always those who get there long before the event officially begins. Volunteering is what makes a PCA event special. Anyone who has been to a Porsche Parade knows that helping out is at least half the fun and is a great way to be involved and meet people.

If you stopped by the welcome booth at Werks Reunion, you visited with former Zone 7 Representative Sharon Neidel and her 80-something mom, Shirley. The two are fixtures



- ① John Straub and his perfectly patinaed 911.
- ② Tribute cars graced the fairways.
- ③ A gaggle of 356s.
- ④ The classic Speedster dash.
- ⑤ George Vaccaro and memorabilia of his factory-delivered 912.
- ⑥ There were 911s of every color and era.





at PCA events in Zone 7, volunteering for nearly everything. Shirley isn't just there to support her daughter, either. The Neidels—headed by Shirley and her husband George—are the only two-time winners of PCA's Family of the Year award (1975 and 1985).

Diminutive in stature but large in heart, the Neidels are the kind of people who make being part of this organization rewarding and events like Werks Reunion worth coming to.

Under large shade trees at the far end of the golf course, away from all the organized "happenings," people were enjoying lavish picnics. One group enjoyed a variety of local wines, having organized its own version of a "moveable feast." Instead of the brats and kraut on offer at the main pavilion, they had stocked up on various salads, olives, and cheeses, plus wiener schmitzel and a selection of homemade desserts. It was

yet more proof that PCA events are as much about the people as the cars.

BACK AT THE MAIN PODIUM

Manny Alban was at the microphone interviewing Cam Ingram about the 550 Spyder from the Ingram Collection. Over the years, Alban has developed an interview style all his own. Ingram, whose relative youth belies his thorough knowledge of Porsche history in general and his family's collection in particular, was up to the challenge.

The Spyder in question was 550-073, originally owned by Long Island Porsche dealer Paul Sagan, who won six of the ten races he entered in the 1956 season. Before the 1957 season, Sagan lightened the car—similar to the Porsche factory hillclimb cars—and Denise McCluggage scored the car's last victory at the 1957 Watkins Glen Grand Prix ladies' race.

Authentic Spyderys make few public appearances these days, due in

part to their astronomical auction values. Having the car at "center court" gave everyone a chance to see why the Spyder was revolutionary in race car design, and how it put Porsche on the map as a competitor that could do more than just take a class win.

Awards were presented at the end of the day to those Porsches that shone brightest in the eyes of the judges. Alban and event chairs Tom and Sandy Provasi were on hand to present trophies, as was Michelin's own Bibendum. The atmosphere was carnival-like as a wall of photographers documented a slow-moving parade of Porsches.

The second Werks Reunion was a great success—an almost overwhelmingly large gathering that was well worth attending for the color, the enthusiasm, and the atmosphere. Next year's event promises to shine at least as brightly. ☼

The Ingrams brought several cars of significant history for display, including this 1973 911 Carrera RS Monte Carlo Rally entrant.

