

Porsche Panorama
Volume 722
May 2017

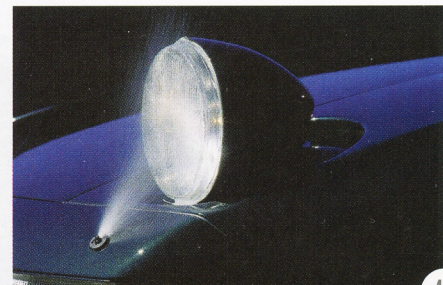




78



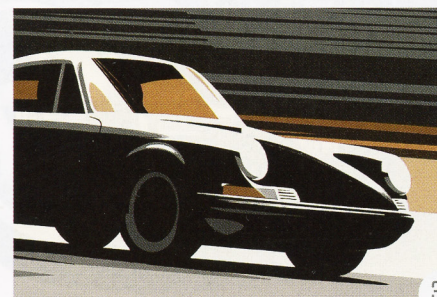
70



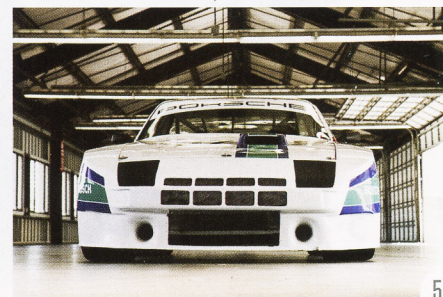
48



90



36



58

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 BACK STORY
- 6 EDITOR'S NOTE
- 10 ON THE GRID
- 16 LETTERS
- 20 STREET TALK
- 36 SPEED LINES
- 38 EUROPEAN WINDOWS
- 98 FROM THE REGIONS
- 102 NATIONAL CALENDAR
- 112 CLUB RACING SCHEDULE
- 114 TECH Q&A
- 122 THE MART
- 170 ADVERTISER INDEX
- 182 ANY QUESTIONS?
- 184 ZWART

COVER

928

Illustration by Porsche Design

FEATURES

48 928 at 40 Retrospective on a ground-breaking Porsche

It's time to recognize the 928 as the greatest GT car of its era.

56 Design Analysis The 928's design story

Once thought of as a design misstep, the 928 is aging well.

58 The Other Carrera The culmination of a teenage dream

Martin Lauber's high school passion led him to this 1981 924 Carrera GTR.

70 Endless Love And a very understanding mother

One owner's lifelong affair with a 1967 911S was made possible by a loan from his mom.

78 Time Machine A personal passion for the eclectic

Chris Runge's hand-built Frankfurt Flyers are proof that old-world craftsmanship is alive and well.

90 A Piece of Werks An embarrassment of Porsche riches

Florida two-fer: Werks Reunion and the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance.

PORSCHE PANORAMA (ISSN 0147-3565) is published monthly by the Porsche Club of America, Inc., 9689 Gerwig Lane, Suite 4C/D, Columbia, MD 21046. Periodicals postage paid at Columbia, MD, and additional offices. PCA membership dues are \$46.00 for one year, \$90.00 for two years or \$132.00 for three years. Dues include \$12.00 per year for an annual subscription to Porsche Panorama. Postmaster: Send address change to Porsche Panorama, PCA Executive Office, PO Box 6400, Columbia, MD 21045. Copyright ©2017 by the Porsche Club of America, Inc., all rights reserved. www.pca.org



TIME MACHINE

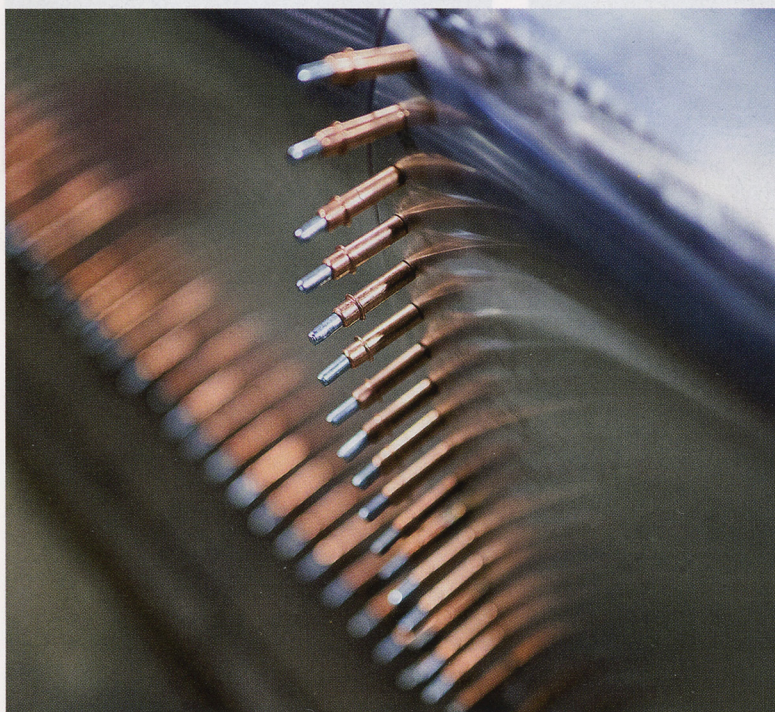
CHRIS RUNGE'S
HAND-BUILT
FRANKFURT FLYERS
ARE PROOF
THAT OLD-WORLD
AUTOMOTIVE
CRAFTSMANSHIP IS
ALIVE AND WELL.

STORY BY **SEAN CRIDLAND**
PHOTOS BY **KRIS CLEWELL**



What started out

as an expression of personal passion for Minnesotan Chris Runge has grown into a cottage industry already looking for a bigger work space. You may not be familiar with Runge's hand-built, Glöckler-inspired Frankfurt Flyers, but with five cars built, three currently in the works, and orders for three more after that, your odds of seeing one in real life are getting better by the day. If you do run into one, you'll surely be drawn in, as the Flyer is a car that commands attention wherever it goes.



Runge can't remember a time when he didn't like things with wheels. At the age of six he was already crafting his own soapbox racers. He graduated quickly from gravity-powered karts to those that make noise and go faster. At first, there were the American iron engines his dad and uncles loved working on. Later came air-cooled VWs and Porsches—lots of them. Now 36, he figures he's owned about his age in cars.

"My dad would store cars and farm equipment for clients during the harsh Minnesota winters in one of our barns," Runge tells us. "When I was six years old, a guy brought over a yellow Porsche 914, and that was it for

me. I didn't know anything about it, but I was struck by how its mid-engine layout made it look almost the same from the front and the back. When nobody was around, I'd sneak into the barn by myself to sit in it and pretend I was racing. I loved everything about it and can still remember how it smelled and that solid click the door made when it closed and latched."

It wasn't too long after he and his mom found a first-edition copy of Karl Ludvigsen's *Excellence Was Expected* in a Minneapolis used-book store that his fascination became an obsession. "I was lucky to grow up with parents who gave each of their children a plat-

form to fulfill their dreams," says Runge. "They were so encouraging, but they also taught us the value of hard work and following things through to completion."

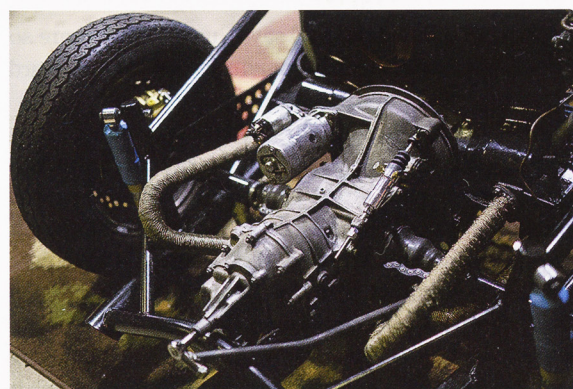
Reading and looking through *Excellence Was Expected*, young Runge was instantly captivated by the Glöckler race cars of the early 1950s. There was just something about the form, the simplicity, and the hand-made aesthetic that grabbed—and kept—his attention. He still has scrapbooks of drawings his mom kept from his childhood. But whereas most kids might simply doodle the time away, Runge was thinking more in terms of something that could be built and driven. Perhaps it

Scores of Cleco fasteners holding dozens of square feet of hand-formed aluminum over a solid chassis, combined with the raspy roar of a well-tuned 356 engine, will bring a smile to any enthusiast's face.





Although his first chassis was based on a scavenged Formula Vee, Runge has since progressed to self-designed two-seaters. With every iteration, he's learned to make them stiffer and stronger with better handling while maintaining the "contemporary vintage racer" concept.



was in his genes: The Runge family name can be traced to the 13th-century wheelwrights of medieval Germany.

Runge was already on his second car by the time he got his driver's license. At 14, he and his dad fixed up a 1951 GMC pickup that he drove all over the back roads near their farm. At 16, he got a Chevy Nova and learned more about bodywork and engines. Soon, he was into air-cooled VWs and owned a series of Bugs, Karmann Ghias, and camper vans. Each one got the Runge touch and was sold for a little more than it cost. Eventually, he'd worked his way up to a 1978 911 SC Targa. From that point on, it was almost all Porsches. "Those were the days when you could buy an SC for less than \$6,000," he says. "I would buy one, fix it up, sell it, and get another." After the SCs came a series of 912s, then a 930 factory slant-nose. Every one of those cars had a story, but nothing like the 912 that landed him where he is now.

IN 2011, AFTER SPENDING several years in the Jacksonville, Florida area, Runge returned to Minnesota. He soon happened upon a Craigslist ad for a 1967 912 near Mitchell, South Dakota, home of Dakota Wesleyan University but perhaps more famous for its Corn Palace. When Runge called, he talked to an elderly woman whose recently deceased husband had owned the Porsche. He had been an aluminum fabricator, creating pieces for old race cars and experimental aircraft in the shop on their property.

Runge discovered several outbuildings, totaling about 12,000 square feet, many of which were stacked

to the ceiling with various Porsche, VW, and other automotive, airplane, and motorcycle parts. One of the barns housed a metal shop, stocked with all of the tools necessary to build a car from the ground up: hammers, bucks, English wheel, mills, and lathes, along with the metal-working books it would take to learn how to use it all.

The widow offered the whole bunch at a very good price, with one caveat: Runge had to make use of the tools, not just sell them off. For most people, that might have been a deal-breaker. For Runge, it was a dream come true. Just a few weeks previously, he'd mentioned to his wife that he'd really like to learn metal-shaping. Dream or not, the more practical-minded Mrs. Runge asked, "How will you pay for all that stuff?"

Any serious collector of Porsche stuff knows the answer to that question. There's always something you've been saving because it'll be worth something someday. Always something you have multiples of. All of it would go toward the purchase of this latest, greatest project. In addition, as much as he hated the idea of parting with it, he hadn't ridden his motorcycle in a while. He found buyers for most of his shelf stock and went off to pick up his new treasures with a large pickup truck towing a two-car covered trailer. It only took two trips, with both trailer and truck loaded to the gills each time.

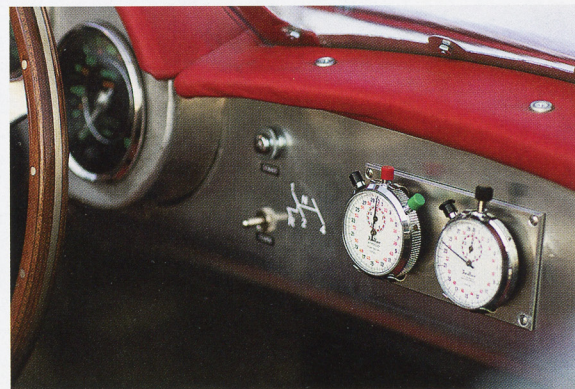
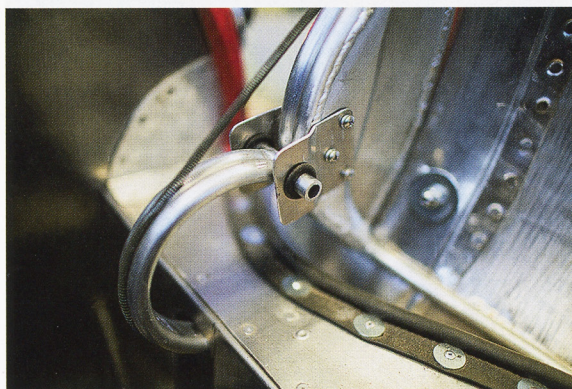
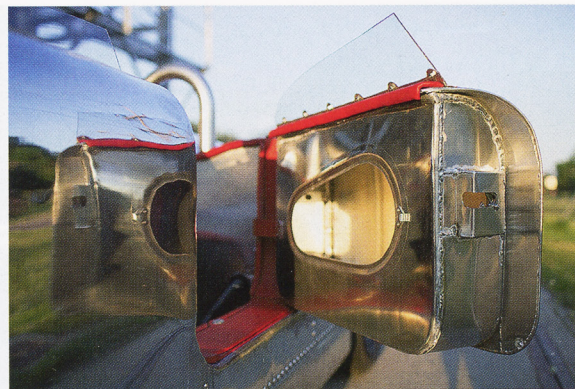
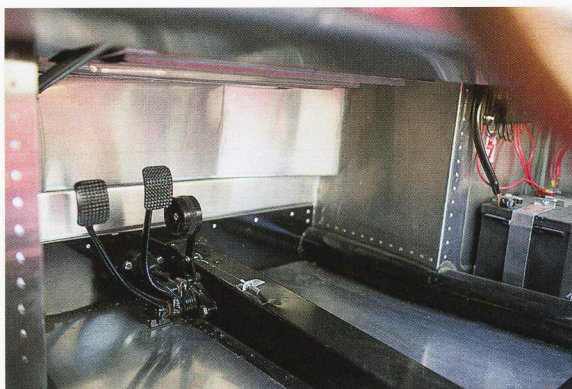
THE NEXT PART was both hard and, somehow, easy. He'd been interested in the classic aluminum-bodied race cars of the 1950s and 1960s, and had been able to closely inspect several of them in person at Brumos Porsche



A tour around Runge's shop reveals the single-minded genius that emerged from the imagination of a kid with a sketchbook.



Besides engineering chassis and shaping bodies, Runge also designs, patterns, and sews custom interiors for comfort and driving efficiency. This one features dual rally stopwatches.



when he lived in the Jacksonville area. Seeing the hand-made, aluminum-bodied Porsches was an inspiration and a call to action. As he rubbed his hands over the ever-so-subtle hammer marks made decades ago by German craftsmen, he could almost feel the pounding and hear the never-ending shop banter.

Though many of his contemporaries might consider that kind of craftsmanship as archaic, too labor-intensive, or simply not worth the time, Runge had grown up in rural Minnesota with people who never looked sideways at a project because it was difficult or because it would take time. Even so, until that fateful trip to South Dakota, he says, "I never imagined that I'd actually build my own car..."

Once he got everything home and set up in his small, 1,200-square-foot shop, he started thinking about how to do it. He dug out his copy of *Excellence Was Expected* to review the section about the Glöcklers and their coachbuilder, C. H. Weidenhausen. Somehow, the process made sense to Runge. Then he dug through his childhood drawings to settle on a shape. Next, he set about locating an appropriate-size chassis for the car he wanted to build.

After looking through more photos, dreaming, sketching, and dreaming some more, he figured that a Formula Vee might be a good foundation for his first car. Nice short wheelbase, about the length of the early Glöcklers, and a solid yet inexpensive foundation for his first attempt as a *Karosserier*, never mind that it was a single-seater. Essentially, so were the first Glöcklers. And, since he had sold

his motorcycle for the project, he thought why not replace it with what was essentially a four-wheeled motorcycle?

He quickly sourced a Formula Vee in Virginia at a good price, brought it home, and set to work chopping up the frame, rebuilding the roll cage, and shaping his body buck directly on the frame, piece by piece. Using marine-grade one-inch plywood, he built it from front to back, creating the right side first, getting it to look just the way he wanted, and then mirroring those pieces for the left. Although its nose and tail had some bold, pronounced curves, he made a point of keeping the sides simple, almost slab-sided, making it a little easier to build. His intention was to create what might be thought of as a "missing Glöckler."

It was a steep learning curve. "By the time I had finished the nose and worked my way back to the tail, I was getting better and better at bending and stretching, but I was also learning a lot about the metals," explains Runge. "I started with a fairly stiff grade of aluminum. I didn't know there were other grades of aluminum that are more suitable for shaping."

For that reason, after he finished, he went back and cut the nose off the car and remade it. "I had learned how to get better symmetry from my panels and how to better match left and right," he says. What had started out as a trial run became more of an exercise in perfection. "It turned out I was more picky than I thought I was. But when you get into it, you realize that if you're going to be driving it, you're going to be thinking about it every time you get behind the wheel. I figured I should make it right before I drove it."

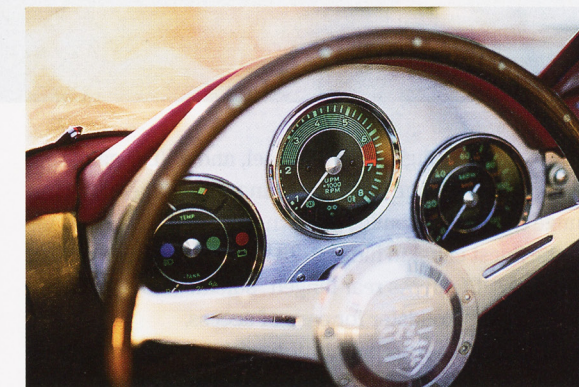




has also rebodied a vintage race car known as the HB-Cosworth special for a client in Germany.

The car on these pages is Runge FF004. It has a wheelbase of 83.5 inches, weighs 1,167 pounds, and is powered by a 1720cc 356 engine built by the late, legendary Ray Litz of Competition Engineering in Lake Isabella, California. It makes about 115 horsepower and is mounted ahead of the rear wheels. Power is transferred to the road through a Getrag transaxle. Stopping power comes from Porsche pre-A drums.

Additional features include a Singleman tonneau cover, a hidden “pistol pocket,” lightened/drilled 15-inch wheels, a leather dash package, a 100mm Blau fuel filler, an alumi-



The thousands of hours Runge spends from the first sketch to the placement of the Runge Karosserie badge is done for one simple, yet elegant, reason: pure driving pleasure.

Naturally, Runge started comparing his project with the goals of the original Glöckler craftsmen.

“They would build a car to go racing in two months, sometimes less, from virtually nothing,” explains Runge. “It took me six months.” What he thought a sluggish pace seems almost superhuman: building a car of his own design and bringing it to fruition in just half a year. Many of us have wheel-cleaning projects that take longer!

Although he built that first car solely for his own satisfaction, it didn’t take long for word to get around. Not long after starting the project, one of his friends convinced him to post a few photos on social media. Runge FF001 (the FF stands for Frankfurt Flyer, another nod to the Glöcklers) first started trending on Facebook in summer 2012.

Not long after, Runge and his dad visited a Cars and

Coffee in Minneapolis. He couldn’t believe the reception. “I didn’t realize how many people had been paying attention to the build thread online,” he says. “They parked me right at the main entrance. There were hordes of people around my little car. Everyone wanted to know all about it. Kids wanted to sit in it. Then the dads wanted to sit in it. Before the end of the day, a guy made a serious offer for me to build him one, too.”

SINCE THEN, RUNGE has built five cars, sold four, has three orders in process on the shop floor, and has three more orders awaiting materials. He’s also doubled his workforce, hiring one person to help full time. In addition, friends drop by occasionally to lend a hand. And his eight-year-old son Fin is quickly gaining an artist’s touch on the English wheel. Besides the Flyers, Runge



The original Glöcklers that are Runge's inspiration were designed and built purely for the business of racing. The purpose of the Frankfurt Flyers is on-the-road fun.



num fuel tank, a lightened flywheel, and a VDO gauge set built to look vintage but concealing a GPS speedometer. Runge designs and builds his own upholstery in-house, using the finest calfskin hides from Europe and South America. Lastly, it features rear-hinged “suicide doors” inspired by the Sauter Roadster for ease of access.

After engineering and building the first two cars by himself, Runge sought out the expertise of Chuck Beck in Atlanta for some coaching in chassis design. FF004 is the second chassis Runge built with Beck during that adventure, which included help from legendary Bonneville and 356 racer Tom Bruch along the way. Beck had already prepared two chassis, and Runge, Bruch, and Beck worked long hours for several days installing engines in the two rolling chassis.

Upon completion, Runge headed back to his Minnesota shop for body fabrication. He credits both Bruch and Beck for schooling him with some lessons that will benefit future Runge Flyers. Going forward, he'll have many more possibilities for handling improvements, options for suspension and transaxle components, and layout. And from the chassis jig he has since built, he can create a multitude of wheelbase and powerplant options.

The possibilities are numerous, but for now, Runge is almost finished with a two-seater gullwing coupe. He

also has an “RS” version of the Flyer under construction that will update styling and handling technology to something similar to racing cars of the late 1950s and early 1960s. It'll have much swoopier, rounder lines but will also take considerably more time to build.

He is debating how sophisticated he wants to go—something 911-powered is within scope—but for the time being, he's still enamored with the “missing Glöckler” approach. As he says, “There's something about the Flyer that captures the raw joy of that era.”

Rather than worry about constant updates and technology shifts, Runge is thinking more viscerally. “When I was a little kid I was fascinated with time machines,” he says. “I think the closest thing we have to time travel is our cars. You have this machine that is so connected to your senses.

“My mind is constantly working to combine the elemental experiences of sight, touch, sound, and so on in a way that connects the driver or even an onlooker to something that cannot be found in modern, computer-aided machines,” he continues. “When you're behind the wheel of a car like the Flyer, the driving experience takes you to a different place, a different era. When you get in and turn the key, it's like stepping back in time. That's what the Flyers are for.”

