

# **Porsche Panorama**

## **Volume 714**

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*Beauty is only skin deep.*  
—attributed to Sir Thomas Overbury, 1613

*Oh, the places you'll go.*  
—Dr. Seuss, 1960

**THE TWO FAMILIAR QUOTES ABOVE** appear to be unrelated to each other, but both are appropriate for the car in this story, a 1974 Porsche 911 Carrera RSR, chassis number 9114609057, one of 98 RSRs produced in 1974 and one of only eight that were Light Yellow.

The car was purchased by Denver Porsche dealer and racer Bob Hagestad and flown from Germany to New York's LaGuardia Airport, where it was picked up by Hagestad's team manager and head mechanic, Al Lager, and then trailered back to Denver, where Lager would prep the car for the coming season's Trans-Am and IMSA series events. But, as with so many interesting stories, it really started several years earlier.

Hagestad dabbled in SCCA racing in the 1960s, first in a 356 Super 90 and then in a 904, with which he had some success in 1964. After that season, he took a break from competition and dedicated himself to the family dealership in Denver. But in 1973—with the business going well—he attended a sales meeting where Porsche+Audi racing director Jo Hoppen was pitching the 1973 Carrera RSR. Hoppen was encouraging dealers to buy one for display purposes. Hagestad bit. But instead of parking it on the showroom floor, he decided to race his car in the Trans-Am series.

# The Places It Went

AFTER ITS RACING CAREER, THIS 1974 911 RSR TURNED INTO GREASED LIGHTNING.

STORY BY SEAN CRIDLAND PHOTOS BY LEONARD TURNER, SUSAN DAVENPORT, SEAN CRIDLAND & THE AL LAGER COLLECTION

Date	Place	Position	Prize
4/16/74	Lead Atlanta 1 hr Georgia	DNF	125
4/16/74	Lead Atlanta 200mi California	7th	700
5/11/74	Atlanta 4 hr California	4th	900
5/11/74	Atlanta 4 hr Ohio	DNF	200
6/1/74	Mid-Ohio 1 hr New York	DNF	200
6/1/74	Mid-Ohio 1 hr New York	7th	1400
7/1/74	Watkins Glen 1 hr New York	8th	700
7/1/74	Watkins Glen 200mi Wisconsin	8th	200
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Connecticut	5th	800
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	5th	800
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	7th	700
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	10-24	400
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	11th	700
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	5th	1000
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	8th	700
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	14th	400
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	4-2	725
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	9th	700
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	12th	400
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	10th	300
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	6th	1000
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	6th	900
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	6th	80
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	8th	60
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	10th	10
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	3rd	1000
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	3rd	1000
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	4th	1000
7/1/74	Rockingham 200mi Michigan	DNF	



Porsche dealer Bob Hagestad's team was a regular fixture on the SCCA Trans-Am and IMSA scenes of the early 1970s, scoring points and occasionally stealing podium spots from the bigger teams.



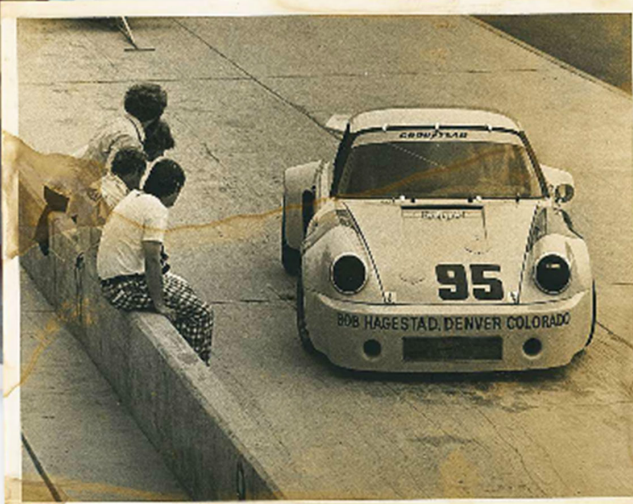
RSR #9114609057 as it looked when Al Lager and his wife Susan brought it through customs at New York's LaGuardia Airport only minutes after it was unloaded from a Lufthansa cargo plane.



Lager jumped at the opportunity to run Hagestad's team and went through every nut and bolt between races to be sure the car performed reliably. The car had a nearly perfect finishing record over three years of racing.



After the car arrived in Denver, Lager lightened it considerably and then installed a large-capacity fuel cell for enduros.

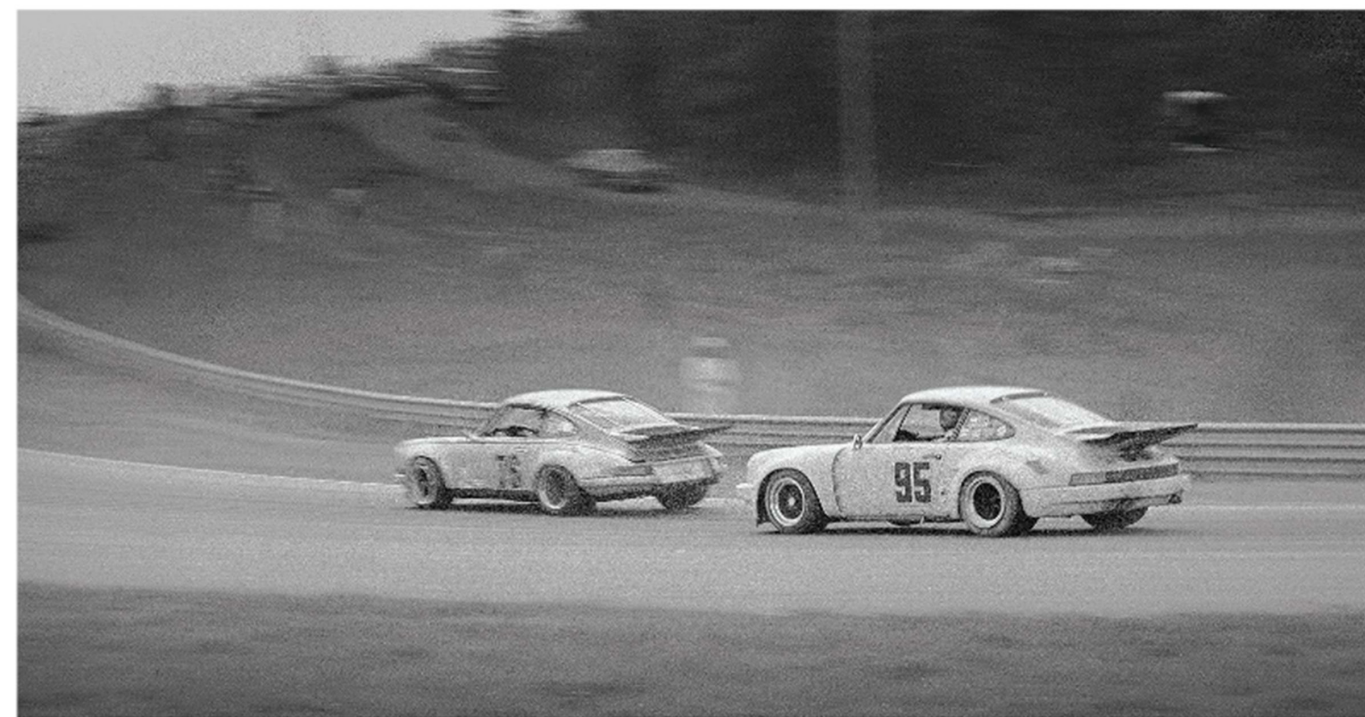


Hagestad hired local Porsche racer and independent mechanic Al Lager to be the sole employee of Bob Hagestad Racing. Lager jumped at the opportunity. Lager's wife, Susan, would take care of timing and scoring, logistics, and public relations. She would also record their adventures. It was a learning experience for both.

The early 1970s was a transitional time for American racing. The heady era of the 1960s SCCA Can-Am and Trans-Am series was waning. Detroit automobile manufacturers were struggling with emissions control technologies and the OPEC oil embargo and its aftershocks. With American factory involvement in racing all but dead, racing offered new opportunities for independents, providing they could find a reasonably cost-effective car that could run an entire season with a minimum of maintenance and parts. Porsche stepped into that role with the Carrera RS and then the RSR.

Though well-backed drivers like Peter Gregg, Hurley Haywood, Al Holbert, and George Follmer were dominant, the turnkey race car approach offered by Porsche meant that many privateer teams had a chance to reach the podium and garner points in both the SCCA Trans-Am and IMSA GT series. They might even steal a win.

A Porsche RSR was available to anyone willing to pay \$28,000. How



you did after that depended on your willingness to spend money on development, spares, personnel, and travel expenses. Like most independents of the period, Hagestad kept a tight rein on his budget, but he got his money's worth from Lager, who saw the opportunity as a chance to prove himself in the racing world.

"Al was never satisfied with the cars, even from delivery," says Hagestad. "He would immediately disassemble the engines and transmissions and go through everything to see what was strong and what he could improve upon."

According to Lager, he always built his engines to factory spec, except for installing solid tensioners and titanium valve-spring retainers, as well as raising the compression by "just a tick." Whatever he did worked. The Hagestad team had great reliability, never blowing up an engine in the four years Lager was with the team.

**HAVING SUSAN LAGER** as a part of the team was an added value. Susan learned the science of timing and scoring from the legendary Judy Stropus, who by this time was work-

ing for Brumos. Susan would deal with race officials to ensure the team got the best possible pit and paddock positions, handle media duties, and—inadvertently—help with intel and development.

With Lager running the car, Susan would cruise the pit lane during testing, practice, and qualifying, taking photos with her Instamatic camera just for fun. But when Lager looked at them, he realized that she had managed to gather some valuable information. Looking at the photos after one of the races during the 1973 season, Lager noticed that Peter Gregg's team had an entirely different engine case than the one in the Hagestad car.

Lager decided to call the factory to ask them about it. "Oh, you mean the three-liter engine," they said. "Yeah, the three-liter engine. I'd like to order the parts for the three-liter engine," Lager quickly bluffed. By the last race at Daytona, he quietly had the new engine assembled, tuned, and in the car. Together, he and Hagestad would give Gregg a little surprise.

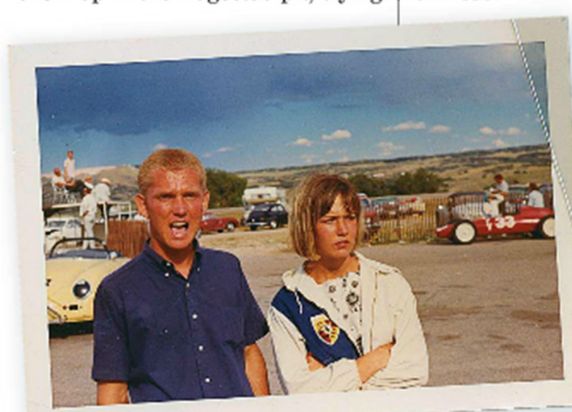
For the final race of 1973, Gregg was already running the 14-inch-

wide rear wheels that would be common on the 1974 version of the RSR. Meanwhile, Hagestad's car was running with the narrower 11-inch wheels. Lager had also learned to tape up all the seams and openings of the car during qualifying and had Hagestad run with the windows up. The difference in aerodynamics, along with the new 3.0-liter engine, meant Hagestad was able to drive by Gregg on the oval. Gregg had the grip to pull away on the infield section, but he certainly wasn't used to having anyone drive by him.

When the cars came back in after practice, it didn't take long for the curly-haired Brumos principal to show up in the Hagestad pit, trying

The Hagestad 911 RSR chases the Stone/Downs version at Road Atlanta, 1974.

A very young Al and Susan Lager were frequent participants in Colorado SCCA events with their own 356.





to find out what was going on. After some hemming and hawing, Lager eventually admitted that he'd built a 3.0-liter engine for Hagestad's RSR. They were running the same power output as Gregg's car, but with the older, narrower body. Of course

they'd be able to go faster in a straight line.

After that, says Lager, he and Gregg became good friends, always talking at the races—and keeping an eye on each other to see what kind of tricks they were coming up with. As a result, Susan Lager wasn't quite as welcome around the Brumos pits with her little camera as she once had been.

**A STRONG FINISH** to the 1973 season gave Hagestad the confidence and enthusiasm to order a new RSR. That's what brought Al and Susan to New York in early January of 1974. They were to pick up the new car, which, ironically, was on the same plane as Gregg's new RSR. Racers being racers, Gregg's guys played a prank on Lager, locking the keys in the yellow car. As they drove off, waving and giggling, Lager and several Lufthansa freight handlers were left trying to figure out how to get into the Porsche.

Back in Denver, Lager removed everything that was not essential and cut out anything he could get away with. A full roll cage and the big 32-gallon fuel cell were added. Lager learned during that first year that improving balance was the most important part of changing the handling characteristics of the RSR. By getting the weight as low as possible—he says he got the car down to about

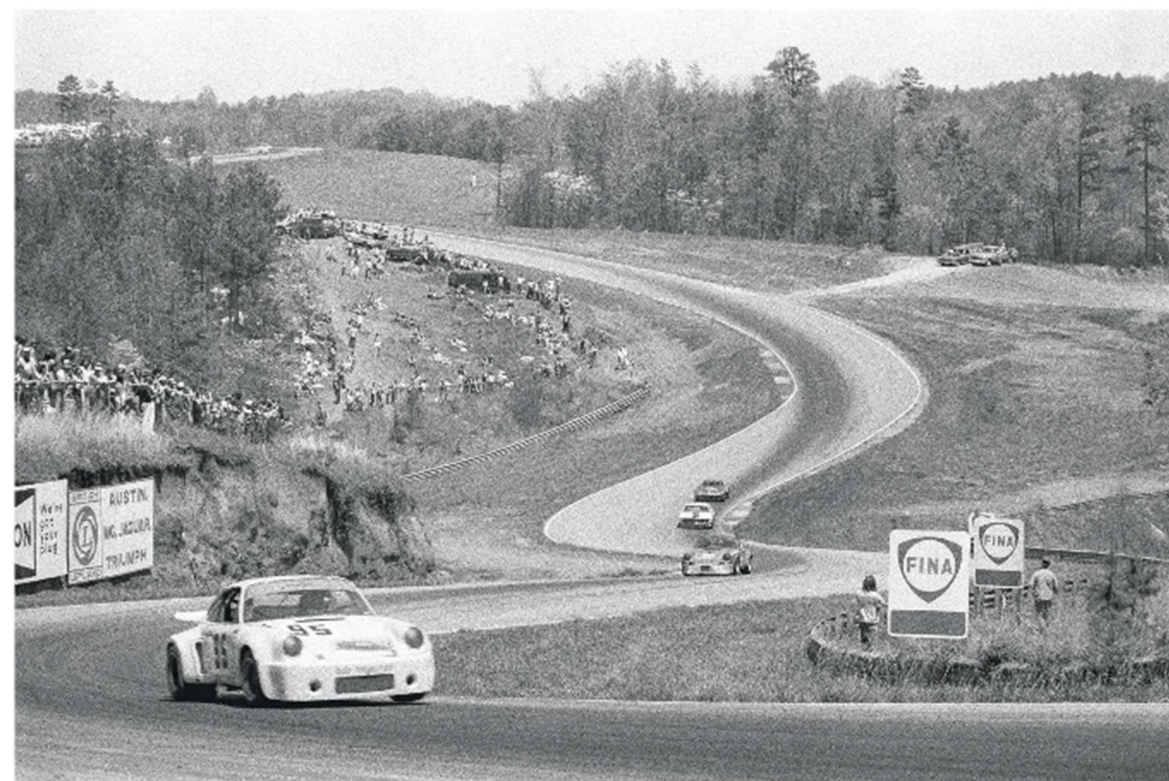
1,800 pounds—he could then strategically ballast the car to bring it back up to its regulated racing weight.

Always confident in his engine-building skills, Lager admitted to learning the finer points of tuning a racing suspension only when he was running against the likes of Gregg and Holbert. Hagestad tells the story of their first race together, after which some of the fans were talking about the car's inside front wheel being almost a foot in the air through some of the corners.

Lager began having weekly chats with Porsche factory representatives to learn more about engine and suspension tuning and the proper gearing for each course. Eventually, the car was set up so that Hagestad needed only very minor amounts of negative camber to drive quickly and smoothly through the corners. Less camber and smoother driving meant less tire wear and better grip, cutting costs and time during pit stops.

Hagestad drove solo for most of his races in the RSR. For the longer events, though, Jo Hoppen would place Porsche "favored" drivers with the various independents. Hagestad co-drove with Skip Barber—founder of the Barber Racing School—for several events, though he thinks Barber was harder on the car than he was, sometimes resulting in a loss of places. But they did finish an excellent third at the 1,000-kilometer race in Mexico City.

During 1975 and 1976, Lager continued to develop the car, dialing it in more and more at every race. Hagestad's co-drivers for those years were Hurley Haywood, Al Holbert, and Denver ski shop owner Jerry Jolly. Because Hagestad would be busy with his business concerns in Denver, he usually didn't get to the track until the night before qualifying. If there were testing days prior to that, Lager would set up the car and drive it himself for tuning feedback. Or, in those much more relaxed and friendlier days, he'd find other drivers, including Holbert, Haywood, Elliott Forbes-Robinson,



and others, to do a few laps in the car and offer their impressions. One time in particular was both humorous and ego-building for Lager.

Jim Busby and his team had been at Road Atlanta testing for a full week, renting the track at considerable expense. Lager drove in from Denver for the normal pre-event test day, but Hagestad hadn't yet arrived. Along came Haywood, who was anxious to know how Busby had progressed. He approached Lager.

"Is Bob here yet?" he asked, hinting that he wanted to use Hagestad's car to challenge Busby's testing time. Lager was reluctant to let Haywood go off with something to prove, but he eventually relented. Within a few laps, Haywood beat Busby's time with a car fresh off the trailer and pulled back in, satisfied he would be competitive that week.

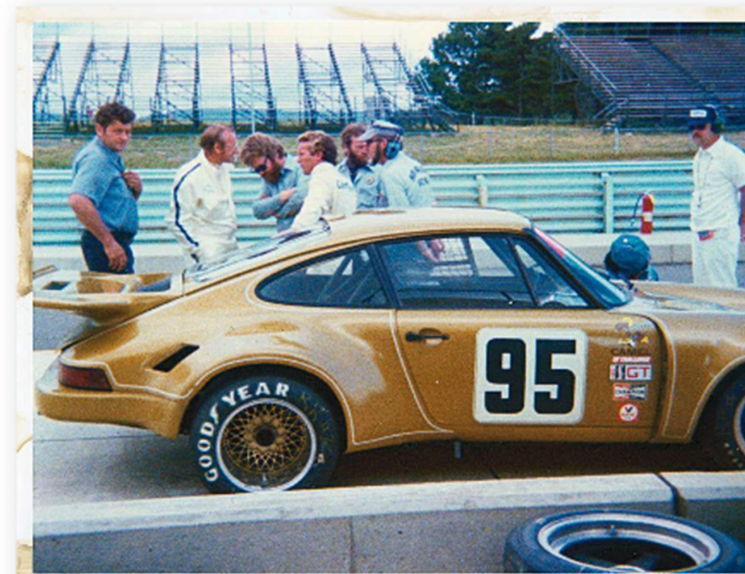
"Bob always had good equipment. He wasn't afraid to spend what he needed to keep the car competitive," reminisces Haywood about the times he drove for Hagestad. "He was a good driver, too. Almost all the cars were owned by

gentleman drivers in that era. Some of them weren't very good and you'd work hard to get positions, only to see them slip away during the owner's stint. But Bob was very good at maintaining pace and keeping the car on the track. And his team was very good at preparing the car."

Haywood is not one for loose

compliments. He and Hagestad won their class at the 1975 FIA Watkins Glen Six Hours, placing fifth overall as the first non-prototype finisher.

In 1976, the turbocharged Porsche 934 was the car to have, which meant that Lager had to push his skills and imagination even further to keep the RSR competitive. Though



Finishing seventh in both heats at Road Atlanta in 1975 might not seem like much, unless you consider that the first six places were taken by Peter Gregg, Al Holbert, Hurley Haywood, John Greenwood, Michael Keyser, and George Dyer.

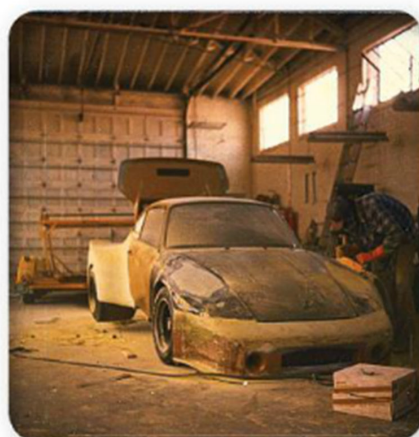
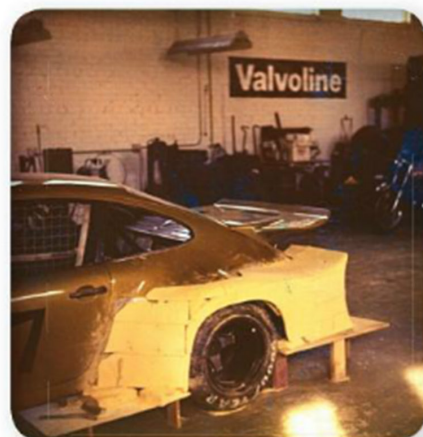
Hurley Haywood chats with Hagestad, Lager, and the crew before the 1975 Watkins Glen Six Hours. The RSR took the class victory and finished fifth overall behind the prototypes and ahead of the Posey/Redman BMW 3.0 CSL.



In its second and third seasons, the RSR was painted to match its tow car, a bronze GMC utility vehicle. Additional black taping was added at Daytona to help improve aerodynamics. Right: The RSR (still painted yellow) at Road Atlanta in 1974.







In 1978, new owner Bill Jackson had Lager "re-image" the car in the spirit of the 935s that were dominating the racing scene, though with a more hot-rod-like appearance. The yellow RSR reemerged as "Greased Lightning."

the turbo cars were penalized with a higher weight, they also had a boost knob on the dash that would allow them to use up to 600 hp for short bursts, easily negating any trick Lager might have up his sleeve.

At Pocono, traditionally a horsepower track, Lager removed all the ballast. In the race, the order was Haywood, Holbert, and Follmer, all in turbos, then Hagestad's normally aspirated car running very close behind. Everyone else was far behind. After the race, it didn't take long for legendary tech inspector John Timanus to find his way to the Hagestad pit box. Though no fines or penalties were assessed, he warned Lager: "Don't ever show up this light again."

The end result was that, within the year, if teams didn't have a 934 or if problems didn't befall the teams that did, they couldn't be competitive. So that was the end of 9114609057's career—or was it?

**LAGER AND HAGESTAD** went their separate ways in 1977. Hagestad got a 934 and moved to George Dyer's team. Despite a successful year, Lager grew weary of the road life of a racing mechanic. He returned to Denver and in 1978 was reacquainted with the RSR he'd picked up at LaGuardia four years earlier.

Before you read further, try to remember that in 1978, the notion of "originality" and thoughts of vintage Porsche race cars as portfolio centerpieces didn't exist. An old race car was just an old race car. Pro teams would either sell the car to an amateur team for club races, part the car out, transform it into something else, or park it out back until it was forgotten, stolen, or melted into the ground. When Hagestad got a 934 for the 1977 season, he sold the RSR to Denver-area club racer and Porsche collector Bill Jackson. The car sat for a year until Jackson and

Lager came up with an idea.

Jackson wanted to do something fun with the car. He brought in Lager and Mike Schmidt to give the car a face-lift of epic proportions. Lager came up with a radical concept very much like the car that Peter Gregg called the "Moby Dick" 935, though he says he had no idea that Gregg was doing the same thing. They piled up Styrofoam blocks next to the car and just started carving away. Once they formed the fiberglass fenders, they cut into the RSR, pasted the new ones on, painted it jet black, and embellished it with what we now call "ghost flames."

Locally, the car became known as Greased Lightning. The transformation was so clean, so complete, and so startling, that even people familiar with Hagestad's racing program had no idea that it was his old race car. For decades! It wasn't until Lager produced photos of the trans-



formation for this story that local experts were convinced.

They ran the car twice with its roughed-out, primed body at the tight, little 1.1-mile Woody Creek Raceway (now Aspen Motorsports Park), getting it dialed in mechanically and ready for its shocking 1978 Porsche Parade debut in Aspen. Memories being what they are, and depending on whom you ask, Jackson drove Greased Lightning to the fastest time, beating some stiff competition, including Bob Garretson and Dick Barbour in 935s and Alan Johnson in a 914 with an RSR engine.

The car was a shocker at the Parade Concours, too. Jackson remembers several of the more staid members of the concours fraternity gasping at their concept, not really knowing what to do with it. Lots of grumbling ensued—until the Porsche family came by. They loved it! Eventually, the car was judged, and it earned a blue ribbon with a near perfect score.

Although the gracious Rocky Mountain Region hosts excluded "home" entries from the official Parade results, RMR's newsletter from



that period shows the car earning highest honors in both the speed and concours events, a rarity at any Parade. That gave Jackson and Lager a wry smile for bucking conventional thinking, and a lot of pride for a job well done. Speaking in January

2014, Jackson remembered the car fondly, saying it was always fun to drive at local track events and that it drew lots of attention.

After owning it for about fifteen years, Jackson eventually sold the RSR to Grand-Am racer Kim Hiskey

At the 1978 Porsche Parade at Aspen/Snowmass, Greased Lightning set fast times on the track and baffled concours judges who didn't know how to interpret the car—until the Porsche family gave it their blessing.

PHOTO GREG VOLAN



After sitting in crates for several years and then traveling across the Pacific Ocean, the newly restored RSR returned to Colorado in the summer of 2013. Australian John Maher's full restoration was closely guided by many conversations with former caretaker Lager.



of Washington, who had the Greased Lightning bodywork removed and then stored everything in crates awaiting a restoration that never happened. About five years later, Australian John Maher bought it—still in crates—and shipped everything to Australia, where he spent two full years restoring the car to its original RSR shape with guidance from Lager.

When Maher was ready to let it go, Lager shepherded the RSR back to its original and current home in the Rocky Mountains, where it makes at least a trip or two a year onto the track to provide a thrill for those who drive it and for the rest of us who just get to watch, listen, and feel the sensations it peels from our souls with its raspy, metallic, 3.0-liter Porsche racing engine.

**WHICH BRINGS US** back to the two quotes from the beginning of this story. It's true that beauty may only be skin deep. From appearances, this RSR looks a lot like other RSRs. Collectors and investors may whine about originality, but a racing car's life is about use. It's about endless nights of modification and preparation and wins and losses and tragedies and good fortune. Perhaps there is an all-original, never-raced RSR out there somewhere. But what is its worth without a collection of stories, of connections to great tracks, great drivers, and the gritty efforts of people like Lager who made the cars go? Originality is nice, but it's the history of a car that tells its story and gives it worth.

This Porsche Carrera RSR has re-emerged as its original yellow self, but its story in the hands of Hagestad and Haywood at tracks across America, as the star of the 1978 Parade as Greased Lightning, and the journeys and restorations it's undergone since then make the car what it is. Its luster hasn't faded from use. Quite the contrary. And, as Dr. Seuss reminds us, no one, not even Hagestad or Lager, could have predicted the places it would go. ●



### Bob Hagestad 1974 Porsche RSR, Chassis 9114609057

Date	Race	Driver(s)	Position	Prize
<b>1974</b>				
4/21	Road Atlanta 6hr	Hagestad/Barber	DNF	\$125
5/12	Laguna Seca I 100mi	Hagestad	12 <sup>th</sup>	\$700
5/12	Laguna Seca II 100mi	Hagestad	9 <sup>th</sup>	—
5/19	Ontario Motor Speedway 4hr	Hagestad/Barber	4 <sup>th</sup>	\$900
6/30	Mid-Ohio 5hr	Hagestad/Barber	DNF	\$200
7/13	Watkins Glen 6hr	Hagestad/Barber	DNF (14)	\$250
7/27	Road America 200mi	Hagestad	7 <sup>th</sup>	\$1,400
9/2	Lime Rock I	Hagestad	10 <sup>th</sup>	\$700
9/2	Lime Rock II	Hagestad	8 <sup>th</sup>	—
10/20	Mexico City 1000km	Hagestad/Barber	3 <sup>rd</sup>	\$2,000
11/30	Daytona 250mi	Hagestad	5 <sup>th</sup>	\$800
<b>1975</b>				
4/20	Road Atlanta I	Hagestad	7 <sup>th</sup>	\$700
4/20	Road Atlanta II	Hagestad	7 <sup>th</sup>	—
5/4	Laguna Seca I	Hagestad	10 <sup>th</sup>	\$400
5/4	Laguna Seca II	Hagestad	24 <sup>th</sup>	—
5/10	Riverside 6hr	Hagestad/Holbert	11 <sup>th</sup>	\$700
6/1	Mid-Ohio 100mi	Hagestad	5 <sup>th</sup>	\$1,000
6/14	Mosport 100mi	Hagestad	8 <sup>th</sup>	\$700
7/12	Watkins Glen 6hr	Hagestad/Haywood	5 <sup>th</sup>	\$4,100
7/20	Mid America I	Hagestad	6 <sup>th</sup>	\$775
7/20	Mid America II	Hagestad	6 <sup>th</sup>	—
8/23	Mid-Ohio 6hr	Hagestad/Barber	8 <sup>th</sup>	\$700
11/30	Daytona 250mi	Hagestad	19 <sup>th</sup>	\$200
<b>1976</b>				
2/1	Daytona 24hr	Hagestad/Jolly	4 <sup>th</sup>	\$3,000
3/8	Sebring 12hr	Hagestad/Jolly	4 <sup>th</sup>	\$1,500
4/10	Atlanta 100mi	Hagestad	6 <sup>th</sup>	\$950
5/9	Pocono 100mi	Hagestad	4 <sup>th</sup>	\$800
5/30	Nelson Ledges 100mi	Hagestad	3 <sup>rd</sup>	\$1,000
6/6	Mid-Ohio 100mi	Hagestad	10 <sup>th</sup>	\$600
7/10	Watkins Glen 6hr	Hagestad/Jolly	9 <sup>th</sup>	\$1,600
7/17	Pueblo (SCCA ASR)	Hagestad	3 <sup>rd</sup>	—
7/25	Sears Point 100mi	Hagestad	5 <sup>th</sup>	\$1,500
8/29	Mid-Ohio 3hr	Hagestad	9 <sup>th</sup>	\$600
10/3	Laguna Seca 100mi	Hagestad	33 <sup>rd</sup>	\$150

Sources: Susan (Lager) Davenport's notes and [www.racingsportscars.com](http://www.racingsportscars.com)



Al Lager (top) and Bob Hagestad (above) have fond memories of their racing exploits in the 1970s. Lager says, "That's when I was at my best, when I was really me."