

PORSCHE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA

PANORAMA



# ICE QUEEN

Text by Sean Cridland

Photos from Valkyrie Racing  
as printed in

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NOTE: The Mid-Year Compiled Financial Statements will be published in the January 2022 issue of Porsche Panorama.

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# Ice Queen

VALKYRIE RACING'S WORLD RALLY TOUR IS SET TO CONCLUDE THIS MONTH AS RENÉE BRINKERHOFF AND HER SPECIALLY OUTFITTED 1956 356A TAKE ON ANTARCTICA.

STORY BY **SEAN CRIDLAND**  
PHOTOS COURTESY **VALKYRIE RACING**

**SINCE WE LAST** checked in with Renée Brinkerhoff ["Barrier Breaker," February 2018], the self-described former housewife has become a star of the international adventure rally scene, with stories about her carried by media outlets such as *The New York Times*, Fox News, The Drive, Hagerty, Magneto, and dozens of others. Racing in Mexico's La Carrera Panamericana in her 1956 Porsche 356A wasn't enough for Renée. She wanted to become the first person—man or woman—to race on all seven of the world's continents.

Back in 2018, Renée was embarking for Australia to race in the notoriously fast and dangerous Targa Tasmania. That event posed several challenges, not

the least of which was the brazen chauvinism displayed by several entrants toward the only woman in the race. Since then, she's battled weather, horrible roads, long distances, cultural anomalies, and mechanical calamities in three more rally/raid competitions: Peru's Caminos de los Incas, the Peking-to-Paris Motor Challenge, and the East African Safari.

Bumpy roads or not, Renée has come through it all with a smile, finishing every event. Aside from the racing, she's found a deeper wisdom that can only be gained by experiencing travel and competition at its grittiest. And now that she's raced on six of the seven continents, she's ready for her most ambitious and dangerous challenge: Antarctica.



Renée Brinkerhoff and team manager, photographer, and daughter Christina with the team's 356, now outfitted for extreme Antarctic conditions.





From top: Renée greets a Bactrian camel on the high steppes of Mongolia during the Peking-to-Paris rally. Kenyan children crowd around Brinkerhoff's Porsche, eager to learn about its features. The 2019 East African Safari was one of the wettest races on record, but Brinkerhoff's Porsche was up to the challenge.



Peru's Camino de los Incas Rally was Renée's first major non-pavement racing experience. She trained for the conditions near her home in Colorado.

Although the pandemic delayed her program by a year (she had originally planned her Antarctic expedition for December 2020), the extra time gave Brinkerhoff's team at Tuthill Porsche in Wardington, England more time to prepare and plan. The car has been completely reworked, based on a design by engineer and arctic explorer Kieron Bradley of Group Lotus. Renée's almost 70-year-old 356A can now run for extended periods in subzero temperatures, on snow and ice, with tracks replacing the rear wheels, big skis replacing the fronts, and several other original parts swapped out for more modern substitutes that are less prone to snapping in the extreme cold.

As you're reading this, her car has already traveled across the Atlantic, through the Panama Canal, then down the southern coast of

Chile, where it was to be flown on a Russian Ilyushin IL-76 cargo plane to the Union Glacier near the Vinson Massif Antarctica for a 356-mile circuit across the snow and ice before attempting an Antarctic speed record on one of the inland ice runways. In December Renée will be joining her co-driver, renowned Antarctic explorer Jason de Carteret, for the expedition. If all goes well, they'll be back in the Northern Hemisphere in time for Christmas.

**BUT FOR BRINKERHOFF**, it's not all about cars, travel, and adventure. The media exposure she's earned in the last few years has given equal attention to her charitable foundation, Valkyrie Gives. Although the racing is fun and exciting, she's made it her life's calling to help end international child trafficking. Since its inception, Valkyrie Gives has raised

more than \$500,000 to support organizations battling the problem and has contributed to the rescue of more than 1,500 victims and aided in the arrest of 600 traffickers. While

Brinkerhoff's World Rally Tour may come to a close after her Antarctica adventure, her work with several anti-trafficking organizations around the world will continue. 🌐

The 1956 356A in its current guise, ready for any and all conditions it may face in the frigid Antarctic.



To learn more about Renée's quest and Valkyrie Gives, visit [www.valkyrieracing.com](http://www.valkyrieracing.com)