

Garland Spink, 1351 Lilliere Dr., Carpinteria, Calif. 93013. Ph 805/684-3213.

- 904 GTS. Brand new, estate closing forced 8 months storage. Competition exhaust still taped inside car. Only brand new 904 in existence for street or track. \$6750. Dave Morgan, 1018 First National Bldg., Tulsa, Okla. Ph 918/LU 7-6727.
- Dismantling 1961 Coupe. Four complete brakes, \$125. Doors without interior panels, \$40 each. Type 741 from...

It's a Keeper

A LONG AND
WINDING ROAD:
HOW 904099
ENDED UP
IN KANSAS CITY.

STORY BY **DAVID MATHEWS**
PHOTOS BY **MICHAEL ALAN ROSS**

A CLASSIFIED AD placed more than 50 years ago in *Panorama* set into motion the story you're about to read—a story that follows a Metallic Silver 904 Carrera GTS from its purchase by an eccentric Oklahoma feed mill owner at a dealership in Stuttgart to a Hollywood movie star, by way of a world-class Corvette road racer and successful insurance executive. And that was in its first year. The path from the Oklahoma Panhandle to Southern California to Northern New Jersey and then to Kansas City in the nine years that followed had more twists and turns than the Green Hell that is the Nürburgring.

Clyde B. McNeill, who as a young Air Force captain shuttled B-25 bombers and fighter planes to WWII's European theater, managed his family's flour mill and grain elevator in Thomas, Oklahoma. He owned farms throughout Custer County, bred and raced thoroughbred horses, and ran a local radio station. Clyde was an entrepreneur and a character.

"It was at a time when the economy was churning and getting better," recalled Ben Chambers, Clyde's right-hand man in the 1960s. "Clyde did quite well. He didn't make many mistakes. He had nine country elevators and owned 5,500 acres of farmland. He



was a thrifty guy....Never caught him with much cash in his pocket, but he had a lot of assets. A mover and a shaker, he was an interesting guy to work for.”

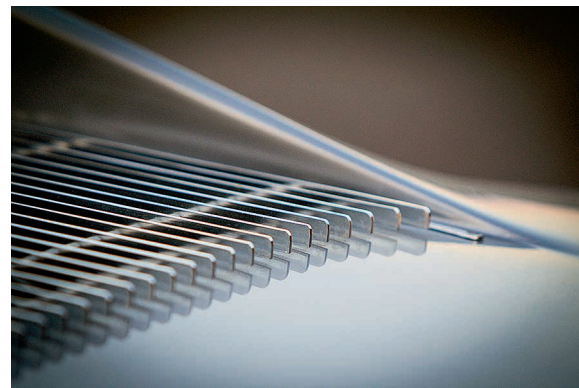
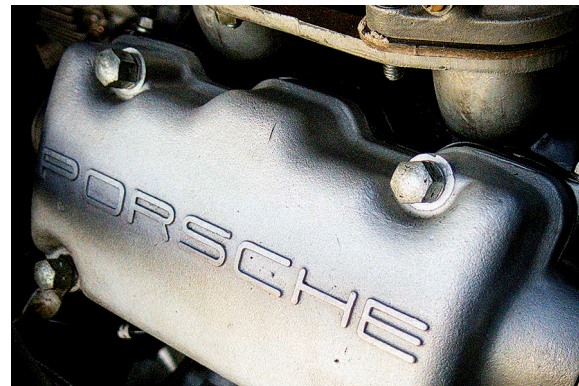
In early fall of 1965, Clyde took his wife, Patsy, to Germany, ostensibly for vacation. “But Clyde couldn’t help himself,” continued Ben. “He got into various deals when he went places.” Clyde recognized an opportunity when it came knocking. Back in Oklahoma there was the Western Equipment farm implement dealer and the Thomas Ford dealership, but there was no place nearby where someone could buy a Porsche—or any German car for that matter. Considering his hometown’s booming economy and those silos full of cash, Clyde aimed to change that.

Ironically, Clyde was not a sports car enthusiast. “He

DETAILS ABOUT WHAT happened next are fuzzy. One source related that the 904 was sold to Tulsa-based Skelly Oil Company, to be used as a pace car at the Tulsa Speedway. Possible? Yes, but improbable. In the 1960s, the Tulsa Speedway was a dirt track, best suited for modified and late-model race cars.

A more plausible explanation, and one that is verifiable, involved Dave Morgan, a Tulsa businessman and Corvette hotshot. “I was, in fact still am, in the insurance business in Tulsa. I was successful, I guess, and was able to go racing as an amateur. I did well with the Chevrolet teams, running Corvettes with different co-drivers. People knew that I did that. I received a call from the bank at Utica Square [First National Bank]

The angular front clip and headlight covers contributed to a 0.34 Cd. Sliding side windows reduced weight—and the ability to deliver cool air to the driver. Opposite: A familiar sight to competitors.



would rather drive a 15-year-old pickup truck than anything fancy,” said Ben. “Anyway, he ended up meeting a guy in Germany and bought cars—Porsches, Mercedes, VW Bugs. All new. He arranged to ship the cars to Houston and then on to Weatherford, Oklahoma, where he would take delivery and then bring them to Thomas.” One of those cars was a 904 Carrera GT, serial number 904099.

As fate would have it, Clyde died before his cars reached the States. Late on October 7, 1965, Clyde was killed in a plane crash while flying from Muskogee, Oklahoma to Tulsa. In the weeks that followed, the Court of Custer County appointed Victor M. Thompson, Jr., CEO of the First National Bank of Stillwater and Clyde’s brother-in-law, executor of Clyde’s estate. There were many assets. Many deals. Much to sort through, to settle, to sell.

one day and one of the officers said, ‘Dave, we need a favor.’ He told me they’d made a loan to a farmer out in the Panhandle. They were trying to settle his estate and needed an honest person to go there, check out some cars, see what they were, and advertise and sell them, and they’d back me 100%.”

A bit of explanation: Dave Morgan was not simply a weekend warrior. He was a highly acclaimed Corvette road racer whose “co-drivers” included the legendary Delmo Johnson, Hap Sharp, and Don Yenko. Dave raced at Daytona, Sebring, and Road America. He was, and still is, the real deal.

“They knew I was honest and they didn’t know a thing about those cars, so I told them I’d be glad to help. I went to check out the cars. I thought, ‘What the heck





am I gonna do with these Porsches?’ But I told those people I would sell ‘em for them. Times were good. I had buddies who wanted Porsches, so...” Dave had a small shop where he kept the cars. The 911s sold immediately, while the 904 gathered dust.

“I called people I knew in the business. No one knew very much about the 904 Porsche. It differed so much from their ‘normal’ cars. It was stripped down, had no interior to speak of, had blue corduroy seats—and that’s the way the car was when I advertised it in *Competition Press* and *Porsche Panorama*. I’d take it out every now and then and open it up a bit. It was rough riding, even for someone used to racing cars. The plugs would foul unless you kept your foot in it to clean it out. It didn’t

“I said, ‘The only warning I have to give you is I get calls on this car and they all say they’re coming and they all got the money.’

“The caller responded, ‘I’ll send my man in, and if the car is as you say it is, I’ll pay your price.’

“I replied, ‘The first man with the cash gets it.’

“So a man shows up and takes a look at the car. I let him start it up, but I didn’t let him drive it. So then I get a call back from the fella, and he says to me, ‘I want the car.’

“I replied, ‘It still goes. The first man with the cash gets the car. You’ve got to realize, I get a lot of flaky calls and I really don’t have time to mess with this. That’s why I’m insistent on getting the money.’



have any muffling system, so it was very loud. I was kind of a target when I took it out.” Dave continued, “I didn’t get much play on it for several months.”

How did he establish an asking price for the 904? “I had a few friends on the [west] coast. [Carroll] Shelby was involved. Jim Hall and Hap Sharp—he was my best friend—we just read *Automotive News*.” Together, they came up with the price of \$6,750. Considering that a new, long-nose 911S tickled \$6,900, the 904 was bargain-priced.

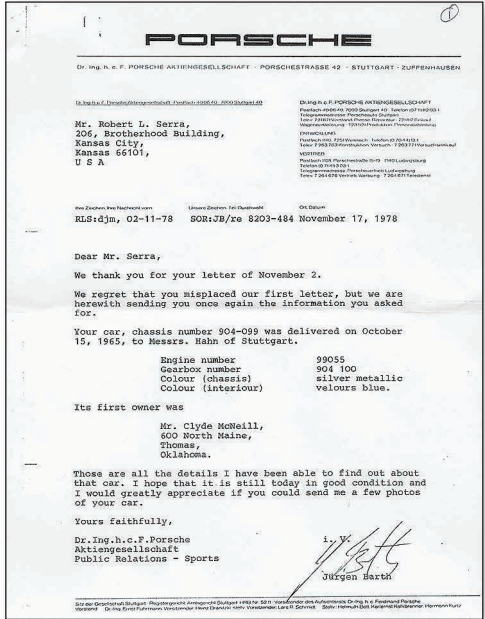
“One day I got a call from a fellow,” Dave said. “You’re the owner of a Porsche 904, right?”

“Yes sir,” I said.

“Is it as represented?”

“Yes sir. It’s a factory car that’s never been raced. It’s not damaged.”

“The man said, ‘Well, I’m interested in the car. And if it’s as you represent it, I want to buy the car. And I’ll buy it this weekend.’



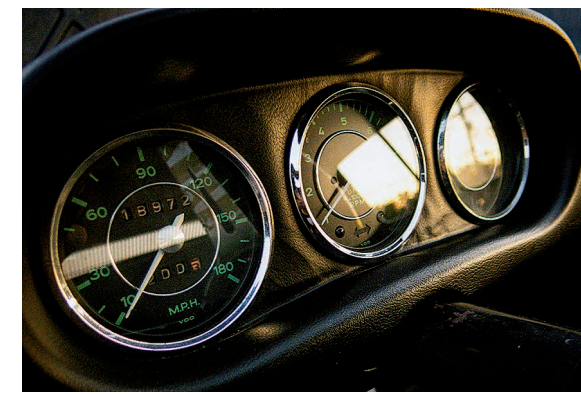
Respected Porsche racer Jürgen Barth validated 904099’s pedigree. Air scoops replaced the prototype’s finned intakes to provide greater cooling. A Talbot mirror enhances the 904’s silhouette.



"The man replied, 'Well, you don't know me. My name is Robert Redford and I am the star in a movie called *Barefoot in the Park*. You don't have to worry about me. I'm very rich.'

"I replied, 'Well, that's a good story, but just send me the money.'"

Did Dave know who Robert Redford was? "No, I had no idea," he claimed. Marlene, Dave's fiancée at the time and now his wife for the past 50 years, interjected. "When I heard who David was talking to, I nearly fainted. David learned very quickly who Robert Redford was. He was drop-dead gorgeous." Dave continued, "And that's the way it happened—short and sweet. The check was good."



ONCE AGAIN, the ownership trail became hazy. According to Jerry Pantis, author of *The Porsche 904, 906 & 910 in the Americas*, Redford actually brokered the purchase of 904099 for Harrison Perry Cohn, the son of Columbia Pictures mogul Harry Cohn. Redford, who owned 904012 at the time, was rumored to have done some old-fashioned back roads racing with Cohn in the months that followed. Perhaps with a deferential nod to the son of his boss, Redford swapped the engine in his car, a slightly hotter version of the four-cam, with the engine original to 904099 so that Cohn would have a horsepower advantage in those good-natured street contests. Whether the engine swap benefited either Cohn or Redford is open to conjecture.

The car changed hands two more times before Milton

McWilliams purchased it in the winter of 1973. Milton, a dyed-in-the-wool Porsche guy and a member of PCA's Northern New Jersey Region, had lusted after a 904 for several years. When he saw that 904099 was available, he made a hasty, ambitious, and some would say reckless, decision. He and his teenage son would fly to sunny California, buy the 904, and drive it back to New Jersey. A real bonding experience, right?

Kevin, Milton's oldest son, remembered it well. "Dad and I flew to California in a 747. We picked up the car at Merlin Olsen Porsche-Audi. I got several autographed photos of Merlin from when he played [professional football] for the Rams."

Milton and 15-year-old Kevin made it to Palm Springs



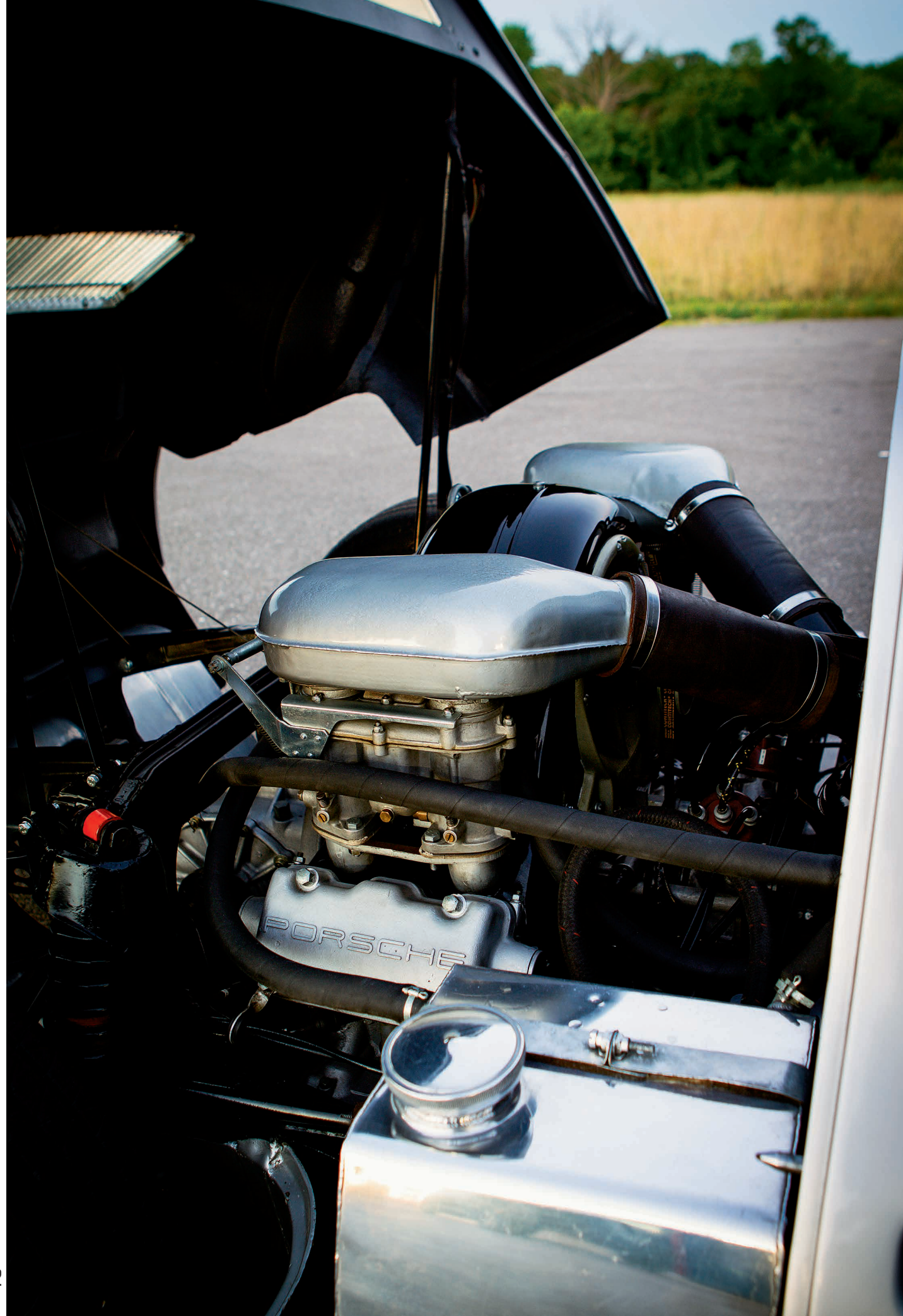
Opposite: A thin steering wheel and corduroy seats characterize the 904's spartan interior. **Left:** At 7200 rpm, this 904 makes some noise. Adjustable pedals allowed drivers a modicum of comfort.

the first day. The next morning, the car battery was dead. A jump start got them back on their way. They spent the second night in Las Cruces, New Mexico, a distance of 650 miles.

"Dad let me drive in New Mexico," said Kevin. "I had 'er over 110 mph a few times."

Reality struck on the third day. "We got as far as Abilene, Texas. Then we ran into snow and ice," continued Kevin. "We stopped at a gas station/bowling alley/motel. It was so cold the bathroom toilet bowl broke because it froze over. We stayed there for two days."

Milton and Kevin found an auto parts store where they bought some windshield de-icer and a battery. The clerk checked the car and discovered it had a dead short...somewhere. He had a friend who could help.



The clerk directed Milton to the home/garage of Shay Nichols and her husband; she was a nationally known Pro-Stock drag racer at the time. “We were welcomed into their home. One of their team took me to the nearest airport [DFW] and put me on a plane home so I wouldn’t miss any more school. Shay’s mechanic found and repaired the short, changed the oil, replaced points and plugs, and got Dad on his way.”

Milton continued his trip east, arriving home several days later in need of a shower, a shave, and a good night’s sleep. And his solo stint behind the wheel? Well, the weather remained frigid. Milton bought a Coleman tent heater and set it on the passenger-side floor to keep warm. A Tennessee state trooper pulled him over, just

would take the 904 for a joy ride. He did this several times that I know of.”

Milton sold the 904 in March 1975. As Lake described it, “He [Milton] didn’t race it. He just liked driving it around. He always was a Porsche guy. His first Porsche was a 1959A coupe. I still have it today. Dad also bought a 1961 Super 90 Roadster that he used for gymkhanas, but he kept that for only a short time. He sold it when I was born. They needed a ‘family’ car.

“Despite being very active in the Northern New Jersey Region in the 1960s [Milton served as Region President in



Opposite: The business end of the 904—the 180-hp four-cam. Above: Ten-year-old Mic McWilliams in his dad’s 904. Left: Ultra-light gas tank. Luggage compartment had room for a briefcase.

to check the car out. Then there was a near catastrophe when Milton dozed off and ran onto, and then off, a gravel shoulder before waking up in the nick of time. You know, the normal stuff one encounters when driving a 904 cross-country during the winter.

Once home, the car was an instant hit with Milton’s sons. Lake “Mic” McWilliams, named after the famous Porsche race driver Lake Underwood, was ten years old when Milton bought the car. “Dad sometimes took me to school in the car. It was the coolest thing ever for a ten-year-old. Can you imagine what the other kids thought? The car was so loud. I could barely see over the dashboard.”

Kevin was the typical teenage son of a dad with a hot car. “Sometimes when my parents would go out, Kevin

1964], he drifted away from Porsche and into other things during the mid-’70s. And the 904 was kind of impractical. Dad paid \$10,000 for the car and sold it for \$12,000. He was pretty happy with that.” As with many former owners of rare Porsches, hindsight is 20/20.

WHAT WAS IT about the Porsche Carrera GTS that was the siren song to Kansas City resident Robert Serra? “I started reading about the history of Porsche and the various models. I got stuck on this one. I liked the design, the story of the car, how Butzi Porsche designed the car and brought it to production, the car’s racing history—it seemed like a very interesting car.”

“I put an ad in *Panorama* in 1975,” Robert continued. “A man responded and sent me pictures. It was

904 History

IT WAS 1963. Competitors in the 2.0-liter GT racing class threatened Porsche's dominance, after the company's championships in 1961 and 1962. Abarth had developed its Simca 2000. Alfa Romeo was banking on its new Giulia TZ. Huschke von Hanstein, Porsche's race director, pleaded for a lighter, faster 2.0-liter to keep Porsche in front of the pack. Ferry Porsche liked the idea of developing a new GT car that could be sold to the private sector to defray production costs.

At the time, Butzi Porsche was the 28-year-old head of Porsche's design department. Fresh off his success penning the 901, he was eager to contribute to the development of this new GT car. Butzi looked to the hand-formed aluminum-bodied, tube-framed 718 racing coupe for inspiration. The mid-engine configuration, a proven winner on the racing circuit, was his to massage. He would style a car that would be competitive and attractive to the general public—at least to buyers of the 100 cars needed for FIA production homologation.

Within months, Butzi produced a full-size clay model of what was internally called the 904. It bore a striking similarity to the 718 coupe, most obviously from the front. The sharp, angular front clip stretched well beyond the front axle. The windshield curved gracefully to the

A-pillar. The side windows followed the flow of the roof line that was smoother and more shapely than its predecessor. The rear fender wells arched higher. Its rear tail was sculpted with a slight upward flick, perhaps to add a bit of insult to certain Italian competitors. In late winter 1963, Butzi's design group presented the project to technical director Hans Tomala, the team leader. Tomala planned to modify the 901 six-cylinder engine to increase its power and extensively use glass-reinforced plastic (GRP) body panels for weight reduction.

Tomala subcontracted the body and chassis construction. Modified brake assemblies came from the 356C, and the wheels, similar to the 356C design, were manufactured with lighter alloy rims riveted to steel centers. The suspension and steering assemblies were race-tuned. The boxed ladder frame weighed less than 200 pounds but was stiffer than its 718 predecessor. The GRP body weighed 180 pounds. Joined with the chassis, the total assembly was nearly twice as rigid as traditional tube-framed cars.

In keeping with Porsche's "lighter is faster" mantra, extraneous parts were jettisoned and others were lightened. The windows and headlights were affixed with plastic screws. The lightweight seats, fiberglass and "upholstered" in blue cor-

duroy, simply rested in indentations in the floor. Safety belts secured both driver and seat to the car.

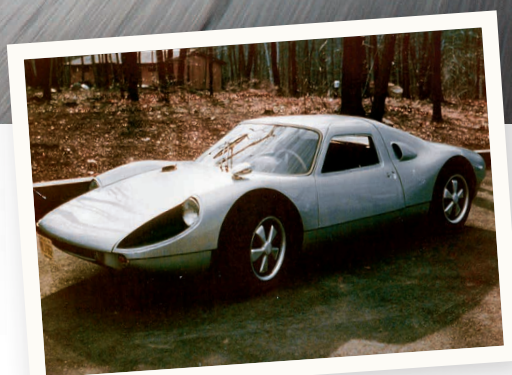
FIA GT rules required a passenger seat and a storage area for luggage. Once again, Porsche got creative, making the passenger seat smaller than the driver's seat. The luggage compartment? Basically, a mail slot above the tailpipes, just large enough for a briefcase. Insulation and sound deadening? You've got to be kidding. This crash diet resulted in a curb weight of 1,540 pounds, according to several period automotive publications.

Development and production delays with the six-cylinder engine nixed plans to use it in the 904, at least initially. Tomala chose the race-proven, Fuhrmann four-cam Carrera engine for the first run of 100 cars. Hans Mezger joined the team, not only to make the Type 587/2 faster for racing, but also more durable and reliable for street use. The result: 587/3, a 2.0-liter with larger intake and exhaust valves, a modified cam profile, new pistons and cylinders, stronger connecting rods, larger inlets and outlets for the oil cooler—the improvements went on and on. In race trim, the new engine produced 180 net hp at 7200 rpm with unmuffled exhaust (155 hp with street mufflers).

On November 26, 1963, nine months after Butzi completed his clay model, 904 Carrera GTS prototypes were introduced to automotive journalists at the Solitude racing circuit near Stuttgart. It was an immediate hit, with 69 cars reserved by salivating buyers in the following two weeks. Delivery included a jack, spare tire, spare fan belt, and 20 tools in the tool kit, all snuggled next to the 29-gallon alloy fuel tank. Buyers could choose one of four gear sets—from low ratio for hill climbing to a higher ratio set for long-legged tracks like Le Mans. A Webasto gasoline heater was one of few options offered.



□ 904, must be in good to exc. cond., complete & easily restorable. Please send price & photo if available. Have pristine 1969 912 & 1958 Speedster. Might trade one or both. Robert L. Serra, 617 552-1111, Kansas City, Mo.



missing the headlight covers. It had Fuchs wheels on it—7x15-inch alloys, not the original wheels [alloy outer rims with steel centers]. My friend Dick Kibling [a well-known racer at that time] was going back to Virginia for a visit. I showed him pictures of the car and talked to him about it. He said if I wanted to send the money with him, he would take his open trailer. I gave him several cashier's checks in different denominations. The owner wanted \$12,000, but Dick was going to try to bargain a bit. It didn't work. The guy was firm on \$12,000."

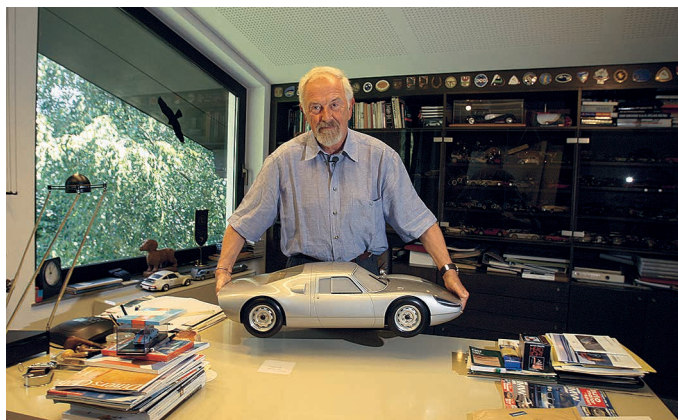
On the return trip, Dick called Robert twice to tell him that people along the way stopped him and asked to buy the car. Once back in Kansas City, Robert began to return the 904 to its former glory. The Fuchs wheels were nice but not original. The headlight covers were missing. The louvered, aluminum belly pan beneath the

engine was gone, as was the stock muffler shield. And then, of course, there were the nicks and chips and scratches that came from ten years of rambunctious driving and teenage misbehavior.

"Finding the pieces that were missing was challenging," said Robert. "[For example] it seems nearly everyone removed the stock air cleaners and put those little foam filters on them. But I found the original parts and the complete systems. Brad Ripley, now with Stoddard NLA, had a business out east, can't remember the name, that sold some 904 parts."

The story would not be complete without mentioning Steve Cousins. Steve, formerly a master mechanic at Bob Hindson Racing in Kansas City, Missouri, has been the

Top: 904099 as it is now, returned to original condition, exercising in the hills of Missouri. Above: As it was in 1975. Fuchs wheels had replaced steel/alloys, and the headlight covers were MIA.



Ferdinand Alexander "Butzi" Porsche, designer of the mid-engine 904, with a model of the car in the design studio at Zell am See (2004).



primary wrench on 099 for years. Steve worked from home on racing engines and transmissions. “Every once in a while, I’d take on a project,” said Steve. “Bob just had a bunch of work done on the car and was going to the Art of the Car Show, but the 904 broke down after a couple of blocks. He called to tell me his car was on a trailer and he wanted to bring it right over to me.” Robert said with half a laugh and a shake of his head, “I had work done in Florida by two different individuals, but...”

Steve declined to have such a valuable car at his house, so he agreed to do the work at Robert’s home. “I thought it would be something small and insignificant, but a year later we were still sorting out all the funny little things we found,” he said.

“Steve worked miracles,” Robert added. “The car ran better than it ever had; started better than ever. I was sticking with Steve.”

With the exception of the two times it was laid up in Florida, Robert has driven the 904 regularly. “Steve and I occasionally go to Porsche Club breakfasts. We’ve shown it at a couple of car shows in Kansas City. I’ve had it to several Parades. I showed it at Aspen in 1978, the Ozarks in 1983, Steamboat Springs in 1998, and Mont-Tremblant in 1999.”

Considering that Robert has owned his 904 for 43 years, what has he enjoyed most about the car? Any

particular memories? “I like the design of the car, its rarity, the complexity of the engine, and the fact that it draws admiring looks.

“I’ve been to the Porsche Museum three times, but the PCA Parades are special. I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Fuhmann in Colorado. He spent a half hour at my car. At Mont-Tremblant, Peter Porsche wanted to buy the car.”

Would Robert consider selling 099, given its present value? “I sold a ’58 Speedster in 1975 for \$8,500 and a 1969 912 for \$3,500—this one is a keeper.”



The author acknowledges these individuals for time spent corroborating details for this story: Ben Chambers, Steve Cousins, Kevin McWilliams, Lake “Mic” McWilliams, Michael McNeill, Phil McNeill, Dave and Marlene Morgan, Bill Wuesthoff, and Robert Serra, owner of 904099 for the last 43 years. Robert Redford declined to be interviewed. Technical data were drawn from Porsche: Excellence was Expected.

Racing the 904

SO WHAT was it like to drive a 904 in anger? Bill Wuesthoff, a nationally known and highly respected sports car driver in the 1950s and 1960s, remembered well. Together with co-driver Joe Buzzetta, he campaigned the newly developed 904 in the 1964 Bridgehampton Double 500. Four Carrera GTs, two Abarth Simca 2000s, an MGB, a Morgan Plus 4, and a Volvo P1800 were among those in the 2.0-liter GT field that day. Bridgehampton was the perfect track for the 904 to show its bones—a twisty 2.85-mile circuit with four significant elevation changes and a 3/4-mile straightaway that ended in a downhill, decreasing-radius blind turn. The 904s and the Abarths were similar in terms of weight and horsepower, outgunning the other competitors. Bill and Ed ruled

the day with a first-place finish in yellow number 30, a Robert Bosch-sponsored Carrera GT.

“It was loud, it was fast, and it handled great. The modern Boxster

and the Cayman handle like that—the mid-engine design, you know?” recalled Bill. “At the time, I was competing in the United States Road Racing Championship.” Bill eventu-

ally finished second overall and first in the 2.0-liter class in that series. Bill and Ed’s first-place finish that day was another nod to the 904’s dominance during that era. —DM



Porsche 904 at Bridgehampton Race Circuit, 1964 Double 500.