



Blue Shark



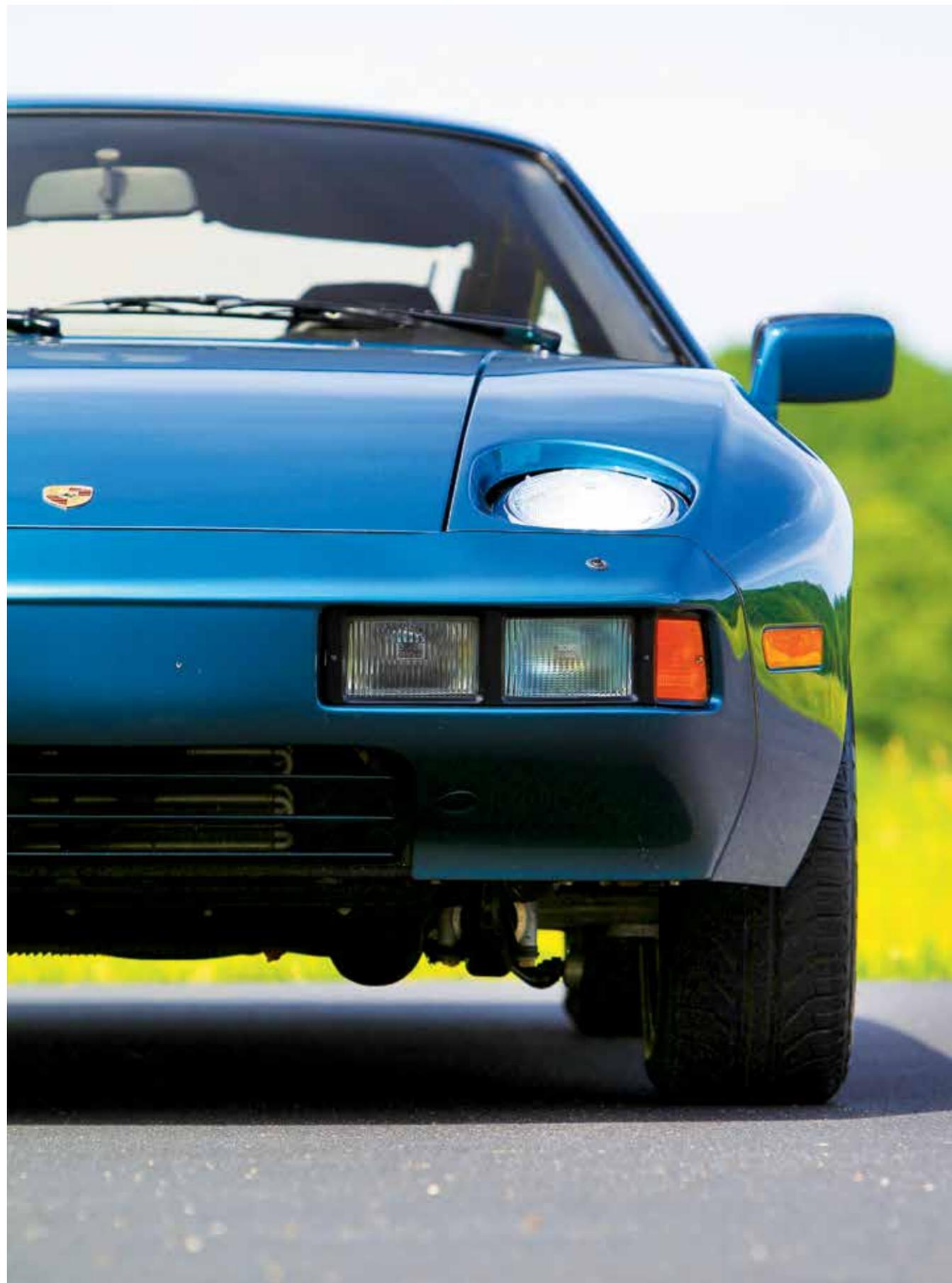
A TRUE BLUE AMERICAN MUSCLE FAN BOUGHT THIS 1978 928 NEW— AND STILL OWNS IT TODAY.

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Slipping through a sea of green, the 928's iridescent blue silhouette shimmers in the sunlight. Angular, with a sharp edge to its nose and a slight slope to its back, it draws nearer, gliding over the contours and undulations in its path. Its movement is mesmerizing, hypnotic. Then, with surprising suddenness, it's upon you.

GREG HUBER IS A GUY with an appetite for fast old cars, the aptitude to get them running, and the patience to keep them running. An early bloomer, Greg bought his first car, a '55 Chevy, when he was 15. He enlisted the help of his older brother Ron and family friend Mike Marasco to trailer it home.

Within weeks, Greg had replaced the Chevy's anemic 265-cubic-inch engine with a healthier 348 from a salvage-yard donor. He bolted it to a Positraction 3.73 rear end.



Still not satisfied with the snap at the back of his neck, Greg sold the 348 and bought a 327 he could *really* juice. He added all manner of go-fast components with names like Edelbrock and Isky. Now barely street-able, the '55 would do the quarter mile in twelve seconds flat.

Unfortunately, in a bit of Saturday-night theatrics, Greg flipped the Chevy during a trophy run, wrecking his car, breaking his ankle, and mashing a few vertebrae. Undeterred, he bought another '55 Chevy, transplanted a 350-cubic-inch engine with 375 horsepower, and went looking for more trouble.

Throughout high school and into college, Greg hung out at speed shops and the local Chevy dealership, learning from and then working alongside the best mechanics in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky. Working two and sometimes three part-time jobs, he squirreled away enough money to support his hot-rod habit. He even found time to restore a '56 Corvette.

"It was a total frame-off restoration," says Greg. "For a while, the body of that Corvette rested on the picnic table in my parents' backyard. All of it was original except for the engine and drivetrain. I installed a 370-horsepower, 350-cubic-inch engine, a T10 four-speed transmission, and a twelve-bolt Camaro rear axle with 4.88 gears. It was fast, it was black, and several guys around town were hot for it. I sold that Corvette for \$3,000 cash."

You might conclude that Greg was an American iron junkie with a bent toward Chevys. Up to a point, you'd be right—but a ride in a friend's Porsche 356 SC changed all that.

"I was surprised how that car handled," recalls Greg. "The steering was so tight. It loved curves."

GREG'S CAR CRAVINGS began to have a distinct German flavor. Greg found, rehabilitated, and sold a 1968 912 coupe in the early 1970s. He later acquired a 1968 912 "Soft Window" Targa that he still owns. Then

he found a Light Ivory 1973 911S in Florida. It was a high-mileage car, but it was in great condition. He bought it for \$8,000.

"That 911S was quite a car!" says Greg enthusiastically. "It made great noise. It stopped, it turned, and it went like the devil. On the way back home, I was 'temporarily delayed' by one of Georgia's finest—excessive speed. Oh, well."

Once a car nut, always a car nut. Greg soon developed an itch for something new but struggled to find

the rear bumper of Porsche's new 911 SC produced 172 horsepower. The Mercedes-Benz SL450 cranked out 180 hp, and BMW's 635 CSi boasted 219 hp. If so inclined, a well-heeled sophisticate could choose a Ferrari 400 with 335 prancing horses ready to be unleashed. The choice between American doodads and European techno-craftsmanship was really no choice at all. But which car would Greg choose?

In the 1970s, enthusiast magazines were the go-to resource for

Opposite: Low, lean, and luxurious, the 928 caused quite a stir at the Geneva Motor Show. Below: The Pasha cloth dates the 928, but in many ways the interior was ahead of its time.

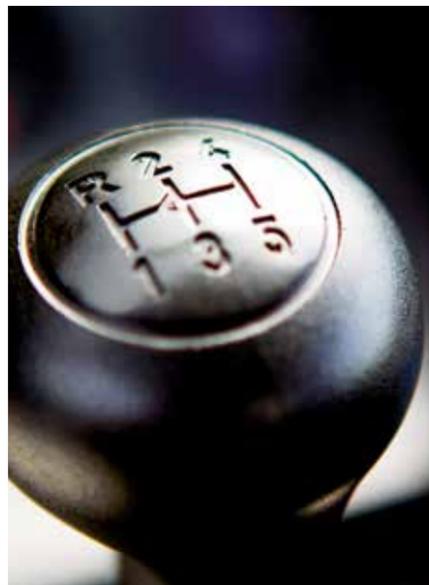


a car that would scratch it. Back to Chevys? Another something from the Motherland? Frankly, it was not a good time for American automobiles. Muscle cars had grown fat and wheezy. Oil embargoes, emissions issues, and strangling government regulations had forced the Big Three to compensate for the lack of serious horsepower by offering gaudy paint schemes, fake air scoops, and chrome badging. The Ford Mustang II King Cobra topped out at 139 horsepower. Chevy and Chrysler offered more or less the same kind of performance.

European cars fared much better. The 3.0-liter flat six just ahead of

automotive news, with *Car and Driver*, *Road & Track*, and *Motor Trend* forming a print version of the Big Three. So when Greg picked up the May 1978 issue of *Motor Trend* and came across John Christy's road test entitled "Porsche 928: The Best Porsche Ever," he took notice. Christy was respected for his unbridled enthusiasm for sports cars, his driving skill, and his insightful word-smithing. He knew cars, and his take on this new Porsche was persuasive.

THE 928 WAS UNLIKE any car previously offered by Porsche. Conceived in late 1973 as an upscale addition to



the brand as well as a probable successor to the aging 911, the 928 was agile and luxurious—and it complied with tightening emissions and noise standards. Benchmarking the best European GTs and then pushing the bar a bit higher, Porsche engineers and designers created a cruiser that blended the performance expected by the 911 faithful with the luxury features that appealed to the wine-and-cheese crowd.

The 928 was a clean-slate car that owed nothing but heritage to its predecessors. Porsche's head of design, Tony Lapine, directed his stylists to embody traditional Porsche characteristics with a wedge-shaped 2+2 body that set the standard for sports cars for years to come. The sky-facing headlights gave the car a distinctive look that resembled Lamborghini's Miura.

A mix of steel and aluminum body panels reduced weight, although the massive glass hatch added some of that weight back. The 928's aluminum 4.5-liter V8 was designed in-house and used single overhead camshafts to produce 240 hp in European trim. Choked by catalytic converters and a restrictive exhaust system, U.S.-bound 928s struggled to make 219 hp.

The 928's 0-60 time was about a second slower than that of the lighter 911 SC. However, it wasn't all about who got there quicker. The journey to cruising speed (and beyond) in the 928 was smooth, forceful, and luxurious.

As one would expect, engineering was state-of-the-art. Coil springs at all four corners, vacuum-assisted disc brakes, and power steering all were standard fare. Pirelli P7 steel-belted radial tires, chosen specifically to enhance the 928's handling, provided unworldly grip.

Britain's *Autocar* magazine said that the tires "hang on to absurd limits." Fabled racing driver Stirling Moss described the 928 driving experience as "absolutely superb. It has very good adhesion with the Pirelli P7 tires—they develop quite

strong cornering forces and give very smooth transitions."

A front-engine/rear-transaxle layout and a gearbox located ahead of the differential gave the 928 a perfect 50/50 weight distribution and refinement impossible to achieve in the air-cooled 911.

The 928's real magic, however, came from Porsche's patented Weisach axle, a system created for and initially specific to the 928. Simply described, the components of the rear suspension created a "toe out"

the 928 was "a new kind of Porsche, but it is a Porsche nonetheless."

GREG LIKED WHAT HE READ. The following week, he went to his Porsche dealer and ordered a 928. He specified Petrol Blue Metallic with a Pasha Plaid interior—a color combination he admired after seeing it on a new 911 SC. He optioned his 928 with a limited-slip differential, a right-side door mirror, a five-speed manual transmission, and 16-inch "Phone Dial" wheels. The car cost

Opposite: Greg Huber has kept his 928 pristine and complete. The medallion commemorates the 928's 1978 European Car of the Year award. Below: A Borla exhaust adds bark and bite.



condition at the rear wheels when the car was simultaneously cornering and braking or suddenly decelerating. This counteracted the normal "toe in" at the rear wheels in those conditions. The result was that in dicey situations, the new 928 resisted oversteer rather than being prone to it, as was the case with the 911.

Introduced at 1977's Geneva Motor Show, the 928 elicited shock and awe, stunning journalists and automotive enthusiasts alike. It was selected European Car of the Year, an honor never awarded to a sports car before or since.

As Christy noted in *Motor Trend*,

\$29,123, which at the time was the going price for a new three-bedroom ranch home in Midwest suburbia.

"I sold the 911S for \$10,000 so I could buy the 928," he explains, looking back nearly 40 years later. "Yeah, I know..."

Greg took delivery of his 928 in the fall of 1978. It exceeded his expectations in every area except outright acceleration. "The emissions garbage hurt performance, but man did that car handle," says Greg. "It cornered and braked perfectly. Just could have used a few more horses."

It didn't take long for that familiar itch to return.



“IN THE SUMMER OF 1981, my brother’s wife’s parents came to visit from Germany,” begins Greg. “His father-in-law was a car buff. He showed me the prices of pre-owned Porsches in Germany, where at the time you could buy a 928 for \$10,000, compared with \$20,000 in the U.S. So I went to Germany and bought a Grand Prix White 1978 928 with a silver-and-black Pasha interior.”

After importing the car, Greg applied for a one-time EPA exemption and modified the 928 to meet federal standards. That involved changing the headlights, altering the speedometer, installing “shocks” behind the front and rear bumpers, and adding reflectors on the rear fenders.

Greg moved to Tucson, Arizona in 1982, prompting him to store the Petrol Blue 928 and the 912 Targa. He drove the white 928 for the next two years. Too much work and too little leisure time eventually convinced Greg that he should consider selling the white 928. Once again, good fortune tapped him on the shoulder when he paid a visit to his then-girlfriend and her parents.

“During a conversation, I mentioned that I was thinking of selling the 928,” he says. “Within two days, her dad had it sold for \$20,000. It was a bit humorous because I believe his intentions were for me to buy a Corvette. He owned a Chevrolet dealership, and he did not want his daughter driving around in a Porsche. Little did he know that neither his daughter nor a new Corvette were in the cards for me.”

Greg remained in Arizona until 1987, when he and his wife, Barbara, whom he met while attending Arizona State University, returned to Kentucky to visit family and enjoy the Run for the Roses. Enamored with the bluegrass and the twisty roads along the Ohio River, Greg and Barbara decided that Louisville was where they wanted to live.

Establishing an electrical contracting business took time and energy. Consequently, Greg exercised his blue 928 infrequently. He still

enjoyed it, but he simply didn’t have much time for it. In 1995, he undertook another major project—building a home—on his own, by himself. Greg and Barbara favored the Frank Lloyd Wright style of architecture, so the house would have a low, pitched roof, an open floor plan, and a central chimney. Greg did all of the carpentry, electrical, plumbing, and finishing work himself, completing the project in 1998. With a nod to his automotive bent, Greg added a large garage workshop to his property.

“Barbara says the garage is as nice as her house,” chuckles Greg.

WHAT GOES AROUND finally comes around. With the new home built and his business growing, Greg began to spend a little more time with his toys. He enjoyed working on his own cars and building cars for friends. He also remedied his 928’s lack of grunt by replacing the stock exhaust with a less restrictive stainless-steel system from Borla. Not only did the car have a nice bark, it also had more bite.

“I can chirp the tires in the first three gears,” he says. Spoken like a dyed-in-the-wool hot-rodder.

Recognizing the renewed interest in Porsche’s GT model and quite frankly loving the way it drove, Greg considered a road trip to Traverse City, Michigan to enter his car in the 2013 Porsche Parade Concours. His car, with fewer than 14,000 miles at that time, was well prepared. Its Petrol Blue and Pasha Plaid combination was striking. However, a significant health issue thwarted Greg’s plans. The 928 returned to storage.

Fast forward to 2015. Although Greg was still suffering through debilitating medical treatment, the 2015 Parade in French Lick, Indiana—less than 80 miles from home—was too good to pass up. Greg called his old friend Mike, the guy who helped feed Greg’s car addiction 50 years earlier, to see if he would like to come along. Of course he did.

Greg’s Porsche is at least as striking now as it was in 1978. It’s stylish

in a menacing sort of way. Like all cars, the 928 evolved over time. Over a 17-year model run, it grew bulging fenders, a wing, and bigger tires. Engine displacement went up from 4.5 liters to 5.4 liters, while more camshafts and valves helped move the horsepower rating from 219 to 345. Along the way, the base price went from roughly \$28,500 to \$82,000. Yet this first-year model exudes purposeful simplicity.

With Mike’s help, Greg entered

Opposite: 16-inch “Phone Dial” wheels and unique headlights contribute to the 928’s classic look. Below: Greg Huber, hot-rodder turned Porsche fan. The spare tire has never touched asphalt, and the tool kit is complete.



his 928 in the 60th Porsche Parade Concours. It finished mid-pack, but that was beside the point. Enjoying the Porsche Parade was a dream come true for Greg. Enjoying it with an old friend made it even better. And being there with this 928, a car that he has owned since he was a young man, was a fitting way to honor his lifelong love of sports cars. ●