

Legacy Fulfilled

SON PRESERVES CLASSIC 914/6 AND FAMILY HISTORY.

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





Brumos—

a name synonymous with Porsche since Hubert Brundage drove the first Brumos Racing Porsche at Sebring in 1960. Brumos—a name synonymous with automotive excellence and professional expertise, reflective of its relationship with customers throughout the world. Brumos—a name synonymous with racing icons like Peter Gregg, Hurley Haywood, Bob Snodgrass, Don Leatherwood, and Jim Bailie. Brumos—a name forever linked to the flashy orange of their early race cars, a nod to a favorite color of Porsche.

There was none more famous than No. 59, the tangerine-liveried Porsche 914/6 driven by Gregg and Haywood to win the first IMSA Grand Touring Series race on April 18, 1971, at Virginia International Raceway (VIR). “The 914 GT was a ton of fun to drive,” Haywood said. “The engine was just under 2.5 liters rated at 242 horsepower with two Weber triple-throat carburetors. It had a dry weight of 2,098 pounds with a racing suspension, a five-speed manual transmission, and 911-type calipers.

“Rear tires were oversized and fit in the enlarged, squared-off wheel wells. The tires were Goodyear, 7.5 inches in front and 8.5 rear, on 15-inch wheels. With a stock capacity 16.4-gallon gas tank, the car ran in GTU (Grand Touring Under). In the race, the big-bore cars would run from me, but I would stay on them. Going into the corners I could brake better and eventually just wore them out. It was a giant killer.”



After the 1971 racing season, Gregg/Brumos sold the car (a common practice of the day) to Héctor Rebaque, a Mexican racer. The car was subsequently sold and resold, eventually slipping into obscurity south of the border.

David Coleman's piece, "Cloning the 90 Day Wonder," picks up the story from there. "With special permission from Joe Pendergast of the Southeast Vintage Racing Association (SVRA), (Jim) Bailie (Brumos crew chief) and his crew set about building a replica of No. 59. SVRA authorized the project because the original car could not be found, the backup car had been destroyed, and the historical significance of Brumos' first IMSA champion merited a replica.

"So, Bailie searched for a likely candidate for the project, and found it in a 914/6 that Brumos had sold

with the factory fender flare option, M471, and was still in Jacksonville. They bought the car and started to build it into a 914/6 GT."

Then the story made a 180-degree turn. Don Leatherwood, director of the Brumos Collection, explained how the GTR 914/6 of Bob's son Harris came about. "We were going to... make a clone of the original car (the lost car that won the first IMSA race at VIR), but then we found the original car in Mexico in February, 1987." In only 60 days, Jim Bailie and nine employees rebuilt the original car and made it race-ready for Bob Snodgrass to enter and win his first SVRA vintage race in West Palm Beach, Florida.

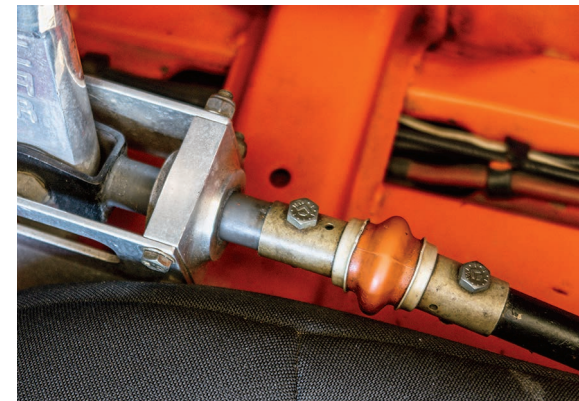
"They pushed this one, referred to as 'The Clone,' to the side, finished the original, then went back to 'The Clone' and built it for Bob and he raced it as No. 58. A

Opposite: As one would expect, racing decals abound on this GTR 914/6, but Russ Mowry's unique pinstriping identifies it as a personal favorite of Bob Snodgrass. The VIN confirms this Porsche is the real deal.



Left: Pizza-size rotors allowed this GTR 914/6 to outbrake competitors. With a little help, Hurley Haywood stands head and shoulders with Brumos' Bob Snodgrass (L) and Dan Davis (R). Below: Snodgrass racing at Sebring, circa 2004.

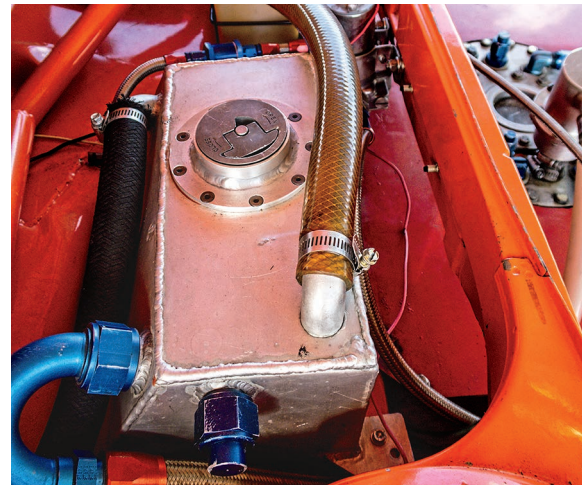




The mid-engine 2.5-liter flat six, coupled with a Hewland gearbox, sent nearly 250 hp to the fat rear tires, making competitors shudder and spectators clamp their hands over their ears.



Harris Snodgrass continues the family legacy with his dad's tangerine GTR 914/6 roadster. Low, loud and brash, this beautiful piece of Porsche history commands attention.



few years later, we made a roadster out of it, cut the top off, put that cowl on it, changed the suspension, changed the pick-up points, had four-way-adjustable Penske (shock absorbers) all around. We ran a 2.5-liter motor instead of a 2.0-liter. We installed the Hewland gearbox because it was so much easier to change, had more gear ratios, was tougher than the 901 (original transmission) and was easier to service at the track. Fabcar made the bell housing for us. We made three (race cars). Bob's was the first, then we made two for Bert Roberts. One of them ended up being John Schneider's car."

But this GTR 914/6, No. 58, was the best. "After a big crash in Savannah, they rebuilt the car (the original 59) and realized it wasn't smart to continue racing it at that level, and that's when this roadster became a focus of creating something special," Harris said. "There were

a couple of other 914/6s that were built around that time by the same crew, and most of those cars are still around today. This roadster was definitely the pinnacle of them all with my dad wanting a really trick car."

Little touches made this GTR 914/6 special. The floorpan was modified to accommodate a seat position that would work for Bob, who was 6-foot-4. The shifter knob was bigger to fit Bob's big right hand. It was rumored that Haywood, a bit smaller in stature, used a pillow on the racing seat to improve his field of vision.

An unusual feature of Harris' GTR 914/6 is the pinstriping. Pinstriping? That's found on Harley-Davidson choppers and 1932 Ford hot rods, not Porsche race cars. But wait a minute. Remember this car was built for Bob Snodgrass, a fan of motorcycles, hot rods, and...pinstriping.

Russ Mowry, a well-known pinstripe artist on the

East Coast, recalled, "I was working in a little shop in Holly Hill, Florida, just north of Daytona Beach, striping a bike. Some guy walks in, white sneakers and white shirt, and stood there a minute. I looked up and saw the watch on his wrist. I knew he was not some random biker guy. I said, 'Who the hell are you and what do you want?' 'I'm Bob Snodgrass. I want you to stripe my Gold Wing out there.'

"Well, I striped his bike and that's how it all began. A few weeks later I moved back to New Jersey. Then I got a call from Don Leatherwood. He said Bob wanted me to stripe an Ariel Square Four. I told him I would, so he shipped up the fenders and the tank and I did it. After that, I got a call from Bob. He said he wanted me to come down to his car dealership in Jacksonville, Florida. Said he sold Mercedes-Benz, Lexus, and Porsches. Said he had about 30 or 40 he wanted me to stripe. Nothing outlandish, just some simple contour lines. So I went down, met Bob, striped his cars. Then he said he had something special for me to do. That was his orange race car.

"Bob was just a great guy. He treated me like his best friend. He introduced me to famous people, great drivers, and always told them I was the best pinstriper in the United States. He was a good friend."

"The Clone" rivaled the original 59 in racing success. No. 58 won the HSR Championship and several enduros. Haywood drove it to a class win at the Monterey Histories in 1998.

After a successful vintage racing venture, the roadster was retired in 2006, became part of the Brumos Collection for several years, and finally transferred to Harris's custodianship in 2019, a tradition passed from father to son. ●

Haywood's Helmet Helps Unknown Driver

BOB SNODGRASS was well known for his eye for talent, both on and off the track. He cultivated ambition and rewarded initiative. One of his favorite quips was, "Pay peanuts and you get monkeys." Stories abound how Snodgrass helped employees achieve their goals, while at the same time becoming better people.

Ray Shaffer, former Porsche Classic market development manager at Porsche Cars North America, began working for Brumos Porsche in Jacksonville, Florida, in the late 1990s, first as a salesperson, then sales manager, and ultimately general manager. Shaffer also was an aspiring race car driver who grabbed seat time whenever and wherever he could.

So it came as no surprise to anyone, other than perhaps Shaffer, when Snodgrass offered him a seat in his GTR 914/6 at the 10th Annual 914 Tribute Reunion in October, 2001. As Shaffer recalled, "I went up to that race to see the Brumos guys race. Neither Bob nor Hurley were going to race in the afternoon, so Bob asked if I wanted to take his place. Of course I said yes, but I didn't have a helmet, nor was I familiar with the shifting of the GTR. Bob told me to go to the transporter and find a helmet that fit. I chose Hurley's helmet. So that I could familiarize myself with the shift pattern of the car, Bob 'arranged' with the track officials to allow two pace laps rather than one."

Shaffer gridded at the rear of the field, but when the green flag fell he began reeling in, then passing, other drivers. "That car was awesome and I was a decent driver, but I think when others in the field saw that orange GTR and Hurley's brightly colored helmet barely poking above the Ginther windshield, they may have accepted what they figured was inevitable," he said.

Shaffer won first in class that day, the result of Snodgrass's generosity, his ability, the car's capability, and, just maybe, a famous racer's distinctive helmet.

