



fall of 1963, I was a 28-year-old USAF first lieutenant,” recalled Handley in an earlier interview:

“... and my wife Solvejg and I were living just outside Evreux, France. We knew that we would be returning to the states in the coming spring. We wanted to take advantage of the great currency exchange rate that existed those days in Europe [\$1 US = 4 DM.] At that time the Jaguar E-Type had just hit the market and was all the rage among the sports car aficionados. To make it even more tempting for overseas servicemen, there were some absolutely fantastic bargains [\$3,450] if the Jag was purchased and delivered through a particular dealership in Athens, Greece. Accordingly, we decided on an E-Type coupe and placed a \$500 down payment with the Athens dealer to get the order started.

However, as beautiful as the original E-Jag was, I could not help but reflect on the horror stories about the trials and tribulations of Jaguar maintenance and reliability. So, one Sunday afternoon as I was browsing through my copy of *Road & Track*, I came across a Porsche ad that showed a partial cut-away of the 1964 Porsche 356C. It started me thinking that of all the Porsche owners I knew, I never heard one of them utter a single negative comment about his car. So I asked myself, ‘Since, you are only a few hours away from Stuttgart where you could immediately pick up the exact replica of the car you are now ogling in this magazine, why on earth would you want to go through the hassle of importing a documented maintenance nightmare all the way from Athens?’ I passed my Jaguar order to a friend... I took the train to Stuttgart where I paid just under \$3,250 for my Ruby Red 356C. From

# THREE’S A CHARMER

A Trio of Remarkable Owners Have Made This 356’s Story a Memorable One

By David Mathews

Photographs by Josh Zuelke

Change is inevitable over a span of five-plus decades, whether you’re talking about cars, houses, or marriages. It’s rare that an automobile remains “owned since new,” that the family home- stead stays in the family, or that “I do” doesn’t change to “I don’t.”

Sports cars live a restless life. Of course some owners strive to keep their cars original, sometimes even more original than original. Change is cataclysmic, alterations abhorrent. The thread count of a replacement square-weave carpet had better match the square weave that ol’ Hans wove back in the day.

Despite the clamor for originality from some quarters, most sports cars do experience enhancements and personalization as

ownership changes—a little more juice under the pedal; a creature comfort or two; an artistic expression in line with the new owner’s personality.

Greg Lehman’s 1964 coupe was no different. What started out as a bone stock, factory-delivered C coupe morphed from a sporty touring car to a daily driver, to a winning SCCA E Production race car, to a long-term barn resident, to a concours contender, and finally (or at least at present) to a sassy, Outlaw-ish charmer. Greg’s C has had quite a story.

The late Air Force colonel Phil Handley was the C’s first owner. Handley picked it up in Stuttgart on October 22, 1963. Handley’s history with the car was described in “Favorite Cars and Fighter Planes,” in the January/February 1995 issue of the *356 Registry*. The 356 was actually Handley’s second choice. Sort of. “In the

**Above:** Greg Lehman’s mildly modified coupe is just as at home today on the lakeshore as it was alongside an F-4 fighter or at a racetrack.



the moment I drove it away from the factory, I knew that there really was something special about this car.

A duty rotation brought Phil and Solveig to Lockbourne Air Force Base near Columbus, Ohio, with an impending transfer to Williams Air Force Base in Maricopa County, Arizona, on the horizon. Mindful of the Arizona heat, Phil bought a white Alfa Spider Veloce and placed an ad in *Road & Track* offering his tub for sale. “I received a call from a young lawyer who came with his wife to see the car,” he said. “In almost no time it was gone.”

James Graham was that young lawyer. James began, “I used it for everyday transportation from the fall of ’65 to the summer of ’68. A benefit of buying the car from an Air Force fighter pilot was the car was meticulously maintained, by the book, a practice that the original owner demanded to be followed. “[Handley] made a

X tires, Blaupunkt AM-FM radio. White with red interior, 26,000 miles. Never raced or wrecked. \$2750. Devenport, 3502 Princeton, Midland, Tex.

1964 PORSCHE C coupe. Absolutely immaculate. Ruby red, black interior, Blaupunkt AM-FM, headrest, SPs, luggage rack, fitted luggage, factory shop manuals, brake pucks, etc. \$3450. Capt. Philip W. Handley, 4946 Sutherland Dr., Columbus, Ohio. 43207.

PORSCHE Spyder 550-RS, No. 0081. Excellent condition throughout. Few miles since major over-

1. Trip meter shows miles driven since oil change and new filter. (Air filters are changed 24,000)

2. Car is well greased.

3. Change grease in rear-end/transmission at 21,500 miles.

4. Repack wheel-bearings at 24,000 miles.

5. Rotate tires at 24,000 miles. I suggest 27 psi front and 30 psi rear for best handling with "SP" tires.

6. Windscreen washer lines need blowing out with compressed air.

7. Although the brakes have plenty of puck left, I would suggest installing the new pucks as the old ones could be getting "glazed" or "road worn".

8. Some as "7" for pints.

9. Change plugs after about 500-1000 more miles.

Philip W. Handley  
4946 Sutherland Dr. 431-3887

very detailed list on how to care and maintain the car. We spent the day together and I maintained the car that way..."

“[The Ruby Red coupe] was the catalyst for my involvement in a variety of competitive activities, starting with rallies and gymkhanas, progressing to autocrossing and concours competition. In 1968, I earned an SCCA novice competition license and drove the car in two drivers’ schools and two regional races. It was factory stock except for a Bursch exhaust system, roll bar, and required safety equipment. I simply drove it to the racetrack, removed the muffler, and bolted on a straight pipe. During the winter of 1968–69, we installed an SC engine I purchased from a Lutheran minister in State College, Pennsylvania. I sold the original C engine. We set the car up for autocrossing. I won the 1969 E Production championship in the Ohio Valley Region SCCA, then put it away while I pursued other interests. It sat in a barn for the next 18 years.”

**Left:** The *Road & Track* classified ad that enticed James Graham to become the second owner of this Ruby Red coupe. **Bottom left:** Col. Handley’s handwritten instructions for the care and maintenance of the car.

**Below:** Graham with his bumperless E Production racecar, a proven winner before nearly two decades of hibernation.



Tartan plaid seats (with matching face mask) liven up the black interior.

Stored but not forgotten. In 1987, the East Coast Holiday was to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, less than 200 miles from home. Again, the bug bit. “I was able to start the car and drive to Indianapolis,” James said. “Seeing all those beautiful 356s started the juices flowing again. Mike Robbins rebuilt the engine for me in 1988 and Ed Pim applied a fantastic new Glasurit paint job just before the Toronto Holiday [in 1994]. My wife and I completed the reassembly of the car the night before we left for Toronto. Our car received the first-place award in the 356C closed class.”

A new owner, the third, entered the picture in 2017. Northern Illinois resident Greg Lehman began looking for his tub like many do—classified ads and internet sites. A friend suggested he join the Porsche 356 Registry and his local affiliate, the Midwest 356 Club. Greg noticed an online ad in the Registry for an intriguing Ruby Red coupe, an ad that ran for several consecutive months. Unable to withstand the temptation a month longer, Greg made the call. Yes, the car was available. Yes, Greg was interested. And yes, despite being the dead of winter, Greg and his dog Ginger definitely wanted to check it out, up close and personal. It was love at first sight. In early May, five months later, Greg, Ginger, and a few other friends caravanned to Columbus, Ohio, to claim the car.

“April showers bring May flowers,” or so the saying goes. But there are exceptions, and that May weekend was exceptional. Torrential rain pummeled the group, and one of them swore he



saw Noah herding animals into a big boat. “Two days before my planned trip I called James and asked how effective the windshield wipers were,” recalled Greg. “He suggested I pick up some Rain-X.”

Despite the inclement weather, Greg considered the trip successful. In addition to the beautiful 356 coupe, Greg gained a friend. “Jim and I spent the day together. We changed the oil and



Sealing the deal and cementing a friendship, Graham and Lehman enjoyed some camaraderie after a day of greasing and wrenching.

greased the car. We replaced the tires and a worn fan belt. A great meal completed the day.”

Weather the next day was just as miserable—driving rain and thunderstorms. “James was right. The wipers were ineffective, but Rain-X did its job. At 60 mph, rain would just pool into bigger and bigger droplets. But at 70 mph, those droplets would swoosh right off the windshield. That 1.6-liter flat four just purred along at 3,200 rpm. Somewhere around Champaign, Illinois, the storm broke and sunshine poked through the clouds. It was truly an epic trip.”



Once home, Greg pored over the paperwork included with the sale. Tucked inside the Driver's Manual was a folded piece of paper, yellowed at the edges—the handwritten list of maintenance items Phil Handley had written for James to follow. The checklist typified a fighter pilot's attention to detail. In addition to a mountain of paperwork, the original set of tartan plaid luggage and the tool kit were part of the deal.

Inspired by the Emory Outlaw movement, Greg uniquely personalized his coupe to fit his taste. Bronze-colored Mahle Gas Burners mark each corner, mounted with 195/65R-15 Michelins.



A James Constas-built, custom Sebring-style exhaust and Mahle Gas Burner wheels set the coupe apart in its current iteration.



Marchal “Fantastic” front fog lights, typical of period Ferraris, and a late '50s glass rear fog light, wired to serve as an auxiliary tail-light, brighten the rear end. Why Marchal rather than Bosch? The car was originally delivered by a dealer in France, so Greg thought it was the honorable thing to do. A Sebring exhaust, crafted by James Constas, juts from beneath the rear bumper.

The interior's just as funky as the exterior. Tartan plaid Speedster-style seats and a rare Emory Outlaw shift knob, one of 250 made in 2007, add to the bad boy feel of Greg's car. The engine

compartment shines with a chrome filler cap, canister cover, generator pulley, and air cleaner covers, like those Southern California boys would have done in the '60s.

Although 356 purists may cringe at Greg's modifications, one can rest assured that he has retained all the factory parts... seats, wheels, the whole shebang. Well almost. Greg would love to reunite the original engine, 711003, with his chassis number, 215789, for numbers-matching value. Help in that regard would be appreciated. **356**



## COL. PHILIP HANDLEY

It would be a travesty not to mention the heroic achievement of the late Colonel Philip Handley, this 1964 C coupe's first owner. A career fighter pilot with 275 combat missions during two tours in Southeast Asia, Handley was recognized as “the first fighter pilot to get a supersonic air-to-air gun kill,” according to an article on the website Fighter Pilot University, which recounts the dogfight.

On June 2, 1972, Handley, together with three other F-4 fighter pilots, was providing cover during a search and rescue mission for a downed US pilot near Hanoi, North Vietnam. During that mission, Handley and his wingman were ambushed by two North Vietnamese MiG 19s, twin-engine, supersonic, Russian-built fighters. Handley's wingman was low on fuel, so he, “... zoomed high to save gas and stay in the area for support, while Handley lit his burners and turned hard, down and into the pursuing MiGs.

Almost five miles behind his adversary, Handley quickly fired both his AIM-7 Sparrow radar missiles. One simply dropped away from his jet, the other went stupid and climbed harmlessly into the sky. Now going supersonic, over 900 miles per hour, he flew a large barrel roll to stay behind the MiGs and try using his heat-seeking AIM-4 Falcon missiles. Once more both missiles failed. Handley's last chance was his 20mm cannon. Closing rapidly on the MiG and traveling at Mach 1.2, Handley unleashed a three second burst from the Phantom's 20mm cannon and hurled more than 300 rounds in front of the MiG's flight path. Flying into the stream of bullets, the MiG was hit multiple times and exploded into a fireball.”

Handley reunited with his wingman and returned to their base, where they were notified that the downed pilot had been rescued.