

A LONG, STRANGE TRIP

THIS M491 BEAUTY
CHANGED HANDS
NINE TIMES IN
30,000 MILES
BEFORE FINDING
ITS FOREVER HOME.

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“The one thing that always puts a smile on my face is the iconic look of its wide body,”

said Hank Weil, Shenandoah Region member and owner of this Chiffon White 1985 Turbo-Look Carrera. “It gets lots of attention when shown at PCA events, or if I am just driving to the grocery or hardware store.” ❖ Iconic? Yes, and unique. This coupe was one of 213 Turbo-Look Carreras manufactured for the U.S. in 1985 and the only one produced in creamy Chiffon White with a dark green leather interior. ❖ Unique? Yes, and special— \$20,000 more special than a base Carrera coupe. The M491 Performance Option added \$11,760 to the bottom line. Paint-to-sample cost another \$1,200, and the green leather interior was an extra \$1,760. Then the little stuff—steering wheel with a raised hub, Monterey radio and cassette, limited-slip differential, power door locks, sport seats, automatic heating control, cruise control, electric sunroof, and, of course, an alarm system. That all adds up to about \$45,500 in today’s money.

Not only is this Porsche interesting, its path to the Weil garage was also interesting—and as convoluted as North Carolina’s Tail of the Dragon. There were twists, turns, and unexpected surprises. It entwined dealers, collectors, PCNA executives, flippers, and friends. In all, it has had nine owners in five states.

Knowing that his Turbo-Look 911 had numerous previous owners, Hank set about documenting its lineage, a task soon found easier said than done. He is a stickler for detail, although one could call his passion something else. Excessive compulsive, perhaps. But Hank was relentless with his search. It brings to mind a line from the Grateful Dead: “What a long, strange trip it’s been.”

WHEN STEWART COLEMAN, president of Southern States Leasing, sat down to spec his new Carrera in late 1984, could he have foreseen the impact of his choices? Maybe. After all, he was a car guy. His wife Gay recalled, “I could be walking down the street and would hear a *beep, beep*. There would be Stewart, waving at me, driv-

ing another new car. It was impossible for me to keep up with him and his cars.”

Stewart had an eye for the unusual. As his friend Henry Wilkinson recalled, “Stewart was drawn to great cars with unusual colors. It didn’t surprise me a bit that he would order that Chiffon White and green car with all the bells and whistles.” Henry is a fair judge of good cars and great people. His 1967 911S was an Amelia Island Concours winner and the subject of a feature story in *Panorama* (“Presurrection,” August 2016). “Stewart was a good guy, a great racer, and my best friend ever.”

Completed on March 5, 1985, the coupe was shipped to Autohaus of Asheville, where it was titled to Southern States Leasing Corporation on May 17, 1985. An odometer reading of 40 miles was recorded on the document. The car was subsequently sold on March 21, 1987 with 3,906 miles showing on the odometer. The reason for the sale?

“Stewart grew interested in sailing,” said Gay. “As I recall, he sold that car and bought a sailboat. But he



always had cars—Porsches, Corvettes, you name it.”

RR “Rocky” Quintana was the second owner of this Turbo-Look coupe. “I’ve had over 40 Porsches and Ferraris,” Rocky reminisced while relaxing with a Cuban Cohiba cigar on the back porch of his home in Charleston, South Carolina. “And yet I remember that one. It was special. Beautiful.” But Rocky didn’t hold onto his cars long. “A year at the most,” he said, before moving on to something else.

The next owner was Max Mayer. Little could be found about Max’s ownership, other than at the time he lived in the Birmingham, Alabama area. Max sold the car to Peter Granat in July 1989.

Peter recalled the details: “My wife Marilyn and I were driving from Kansas City to Florida for a little vacation. While passing through Birmingham, we stopped—for lunch or something—and as I always did, scanned the Sunday classifieds for cars. There was this ad for a white Carrera. I called the owner and made arrangements to run out to see it.” One thing led to another,

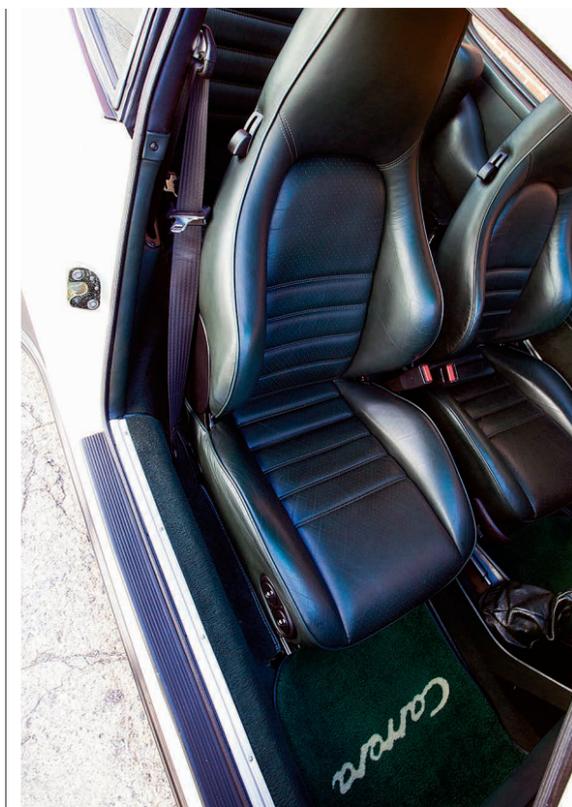
Max and Peter agreed on a price, and Peter arranged to wire the money. He became the fourth owner of the Chiffon White Carrera.

If you look in the dictionary for the definition of “gearhead” you will find a photo of Peter Granat next to the description. An attorney by trade, he still managed to find time to dabble in cars. Legendary in the Kansas City area, Peter was said to have bought and sold more than 300 cars in his heyday. “They called me the second largest dealer in Kansas City,” he claimed.

When the Carrera arrived in Kansas City, Peter gave it a close inspection. “It was very, very nice—definitely concours quality. I got to work on it just tending to little things,” he said. “I didn’t keep the car long, maybe long enough for a concours or two, but that brings us to another story.”

You see, Richard Strickland, the car’s fifth owner, lived in Peter’s neighborhood. He and Peter were friends, and he was hot for a Porsche. “Richard wanted to buy a Porsche for around \$10,000. But when he

Despite the car's journey through five states and nine owners, the complete tool kit, air compressor, and shop towels have remained intact. Details such as these add provenance to the Weils' M491.



saw my car parked on the driveway, well..." It did not take long for a transaction to be made. In November 1989, Richard and Peter consummated a deal—"not for \$10,000," according to Peter—and the car moved down the street to Richard's garage.

Richard kept the Turbo-Look coupe for nearly 15 years. He participated in Kansas City Region concours events, did some autocrossing, and even took it to St. Louis for a two-day Driver Education session. But one high-speed event was enough for Richard. "I thought it was too hard on the car. It was simply too nice to beat on," he said.

As with nearly all of this Porsche's previous owners, Richard regretted selling the car. "You always think, well, there will be another car just as nice, but..."

Richard's wife even tried to talk him out of selling it. "She asked me if I really wanted to sell it and that I should think about it. But my mind was made up. Oh, well." Asked if he currently owns a Porsche, Richard replied that he was BP: between Porsches. "But tell the current owner if he ever wants to sell that Turbo-Look, he should give me a call."

Russel French, another Porsche guy in the neighborhood, became the Carrera's sixth owner in February 2004. "Actually, my son intended to buy the car,"

recalled Russel, "so I just tagged along." However, when it was time for the negotiations to begin, Russel's son backed away. "I told him if he didn't buy the car, I would. And I did."

Russel installed a short shift in the car during his ownership, but improving performance wasn't the reason; it was practical. "I'm short, so I had to move the seat ahead quite a bit," he told us. "But when I did that, shifting to second gear would jam the shifter into the seat." Recurring back problems forced him to sell. "It would take me a week to recover after driving it. But I loved that car. And that color combination...wow! My back is better now. If that guy ever wants to sell it, I'd buy that car back in a heartbeat."

AFTER 19 YEARS in the Kansas City Region, the Turbo-Look experienced a change of scenery. Jack Bair served as club coordinator for Porsche Cars North America (PCNA) during the first decade of the millennium. He had an eye for unique models, and over the years owned quite a few of them. "I saw the car advertised in *Porsche Panorama* in 2006," he recalled. "I had no doubt that I could route myself through Kansas City to personally see the car."

Ironically, this wasn't the first time Jack was inter-

ested in this particular Turbo-Look. "I purchased the car from Russel French, but I nearly purchased it from Richard Strickland. My extensive travel while working for Porsche delayed my decision because I could not get to Kansas City to see the car."

The next two months took Jack nowhere close to Missouri, so he sought help from friends in Kansas City. "I had worked with Connie Waldrop, a member of the Parade selection committee in charge of site and facilities. I knew her and her husband pretty well, so I called them. They knew the car. Their response was, 'Buy it; you won't be disappointed.'"

Jack had another problem. He had limited garage space, and with his constant Porsche-related travel, he was seldom home. He shared his dilemma with Alex Smith, a longtime friend and fellow PCNA associate. Alex volunteered to store the car at his home in Richmond, Virginia if Jack made the purchase. Jack retained visiting rights.

"I believe it was several weeks before I could get to Richmond," said Jack. "When I saw it, I was amazed. This was an unmolested, totally original, wide body. I remember marveling at the condition of the car. It was virtually brand new. Often, cars are described better than they really are. That Turbo-Look was one of the very

The dark green interior, also a special order in 1985, adds unique contrast to the paint-to-sample exterior.

9 OWNERS IN 30,000 MILES

- 1 Stewart Coleman
- 2 "Rocky" Quintana
- 3 Max Mayer
- 4 Peter Granat
- 5 Richard Strickland
- 6 Russel French
- 7 Jack Bair
- 8 Weldon Scrogam
- 9 Hank & Jolly Weil
(below)



few cars I've owned that far exceeded my expectations." Jack's ownership was fraught with challenge—he rarely saw his car. The Carrera remained with Alex while Jack traveled around the country. It was a very good deal for Alex, not so much for Jack.

"I remember getting a call from Weldon Scrogam, owner of G&W Motorwerkes, Ltd., wanting to buy it from me," said Jack. Weldon purchased the car in March 2010, with Alex serving as intermediary. "I could never get additional garage space at my home," said Jack. "It was the perfect bad storm for me. I wish that I had it back."

HANK AND JOLLY WEIL, the car's ninth and current owners, had been friends with Weldon and Phyllis Scrogam for more than 15 years. During a visit in April 2010, the Weils got a look at Weldon's newest acquisition—a beautiful, M491-spec'd coupe glowing in the showroom of G&W. The wheels began to turn. "It was love at first sight. I made the bold decision to sell our 2007 997 and buy the white coupe," said Hank.

A deal was soon made. "Weldon transported the Turbo-Look to Chicago in his two-car trailer, along with his Porsche Indy car he intended to show in the Heritage & Historic Display at the 2010 PCA Parade at St. Charles, Illinois. We put the Turbo-Look Carrera in the H&H Display, also," said Hank.

Hank and Jolly spent the next several years

preparing their M491 for serious concours competition. Readyng a car for top-level concours takes more than Turtle Wax, Windex, and a whisk broom. Their target: the 2013 season.

Together with Gene Derbick, a Porsche Gold Technician at one of Illinois' most prestigious dealerships, Hank and Jolly took what was already a pristine car to another level entirely. They virtually disassembled the car and put it back together with new parts, renewed parts, NOS parts—nothing was overlooked.

"We detailed the engine, replaced all seals, and removed the short throw shifter and replaced it with an OEM shift," said Gene. "Hank repaired or replaced anything that showed the least bit of wear. He was phenomenally meticulous, even went so far as adding little dots of paint to nuts, bolts, and fasteners. We replaced transmission synchros and wheel bearings, refurbished the air-conditioner..." Nothing was left to chance.

What was it like to compete against Hank and Jolly's car? John Diwik, a good friend and a friendly (is there such a thing?) concours competitor, described it this way: "Hank never missed a thing. His Turbo-Look is special. The car looked like it was made yesterday."

Hank's concours achievements validated all the effort. With this car, the Weils won the Chicago Region's overall BMOCC concours trophy in 2013, notching five consecutive first place finishes in their region concours competition. Never in the long history of the Chicago

A Bargain Turbo (Look)

SOME AUTOMOTIVE DESIGNS so influence and excite that they establish new paradigms in styling. If the shape of Porsche's earliest 356 sketched the future of sports cars, then the 930 Turbo gave that sketch razor-sharp focus. The 930 was a World Wrestling Federation brawler, a monster with bulky shoulders, a massive footprint, an enormous backside, and a significant attitude—with ample muscle to back up its brag. The 930 became the machine of dreams for many a Porsche fan.

Panache came with a price, however. The deep-breathing Turbo, with its 260-hp (Euro spec) engine, commanded a \$20,000 premium over its normally aspirated sibling. And for mere mortals, driv-

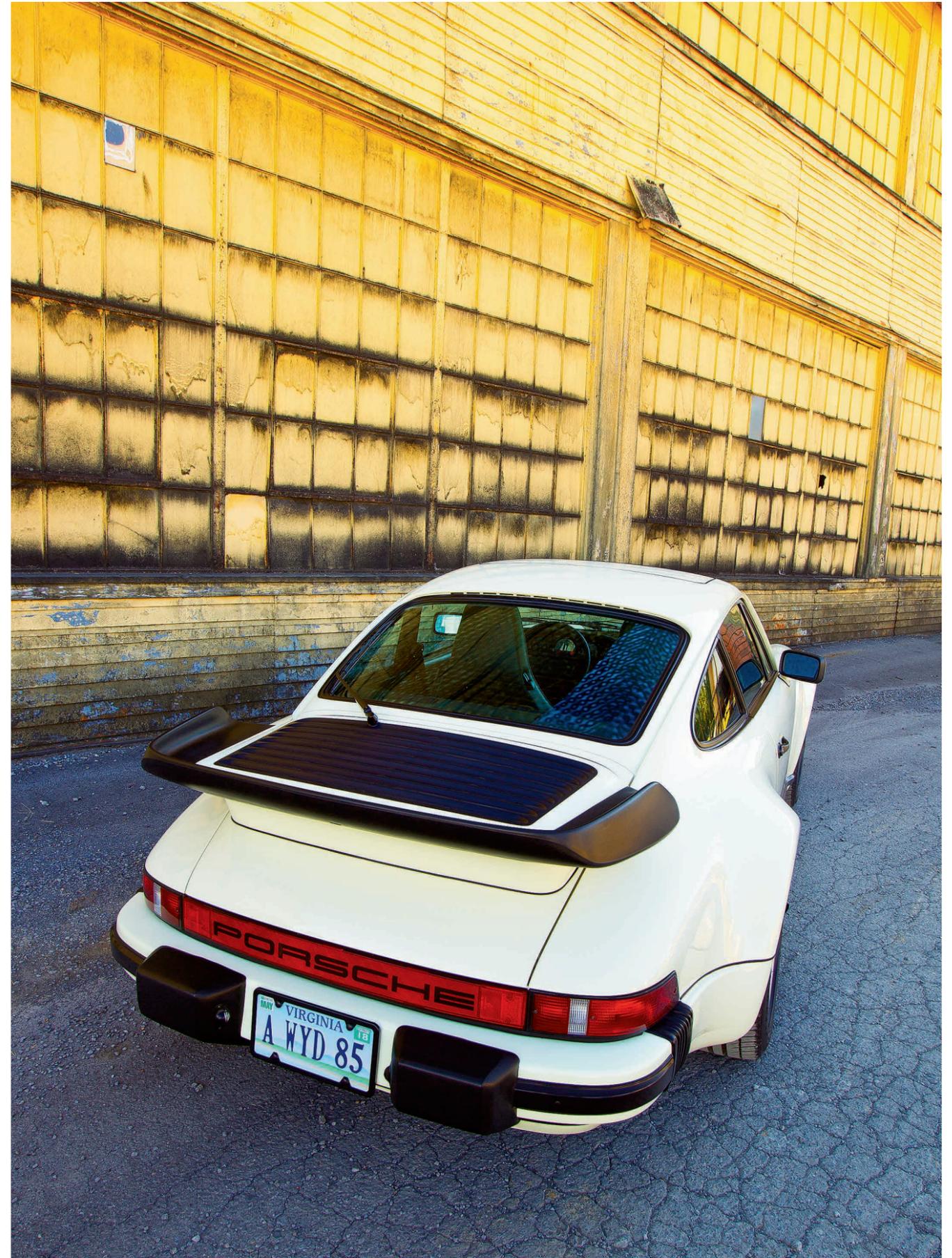
ing the darn thing could be not only tricky, thanks to rather pronounced turbo lag, but also hazardous to one's health. Because the beast was tail heavy, it also tended to be tail happy. If the unsuspecting driver abruptly stopped gassing and started braking at an inopportune time, direction reversal was unnervingly commonplace.

Despite the 930's awesome performance and intimidating appearance, Porsche ceased importing Turbos into the U.S. at the end of 1979. Restrictive emissions standards and deplorable fuel economy (estimated at 12 mpg by the EPA) were blamed for its disappearance from our domestic market. Real-deal Turbos, except gray-market versions, were as rare as hen's teeth. Prospective

owners who liked the wide-body look—but not the admission price, the Turbo's driving idiosyncrasies, or the fact that they couldn't get their hands on a new one—were looking for an alternative. In true capitalist fashion, a market, make that an aftermarket, developed. Body shops began grafting flared fenders, fat front chins, and whale tails onto normal Carreras to satisfy the Turbo wannabes.

The Germans saw an opportunity. They obviously had the cars, the parts, the technology, and the capacity. The marketing department reasoned that if independent shops could turn a profit creating wide-body conversions, Porsche could as well. And so, M491 found its way onto the options list.

Offered from 1984 through 1989, the 3.2-liter M491 provided the wide-body look of the Turbo, the factory whale tail and wrap-around front spoiler, a stiffer suspension, larger cross-drilled and ventilated rotors, four-piston aluminum calipers, and 16-inch Fuchs with wide rubber. The standard flat six remained unchanged, producing 217 horsepower. Because of the high cost and selective appeal, M491 Carreras were rare birds. Estimates of fewer than 2,000 total units have been bandied about. The M491 option added \$11,000-\$15,000 to the bottom line, depending on production year. Steep? Yes, but not as steep as the real deal. And for many, it was the ideal choice. —DM



No item was left untouched when Hank and Jolly Weil assumed stewardship of this 911 in 2010. Virtually disassembling the car, they refurbished or replaced fittings and fasteners, as well as seals and synchros.



Region had this been accomplished before. Chicago is home to a highly competitive Q-Tip crowd. Achieving first in class is an achievement. Repeating that achievement five times in one year is remarkable—a dollop of ice cream atop a five-layer cake.

Regarding his maniacal approach to concours, we wondered what was the most difficult area to get clean and keep clean. “Most definitely the undercarriage,” Hank answered. “It’s much easier if you have access to a lift, but there is still a lot of work to get those areas really clean. Many times it is easier to simply take things apart to get into a certain area. You need to follow a sequence so that you don’t go back into areas already completed.”

Other tips? Common sense. “Don’t go back inside the car to clean the inner surface of the windows after you’ve completed prepping the interior,” he advises. “And keep your garage or prep area closed up to prevent dirt and debris from blowing around.”

It’s also helpful to know and understand the concours rules. “A Parade judge cannot ask you to remove anything that requires a tool to accomplish the removal—a spare tire, for example.”

His final suggestion is that a concours competitor be mindful of his/her time. “When competing in full concours, we prep the car and then transport it to the event. It’s much easier to do the major work in your own garage and do the minor stuff on location. Some people drive to Parade, for example, and then spend four days doing major preparation on site. It comes down to how you want to allocate your time.”

WHAT IS IT about this Turbo-Look that grabs Hank and won’t let go? “The wide rear end, hence the personalized license plate [A WYD 85], and the rear spoiler. And, of course, the Fuchs wheels painted to match the body color.” Regarding those Chiffon White wheels: They were not factory painted, and no previous owner fessed up to painting them or chrome-plating the lips. Neither the Certificate of Authenticity nor the original window sticker indicates the car came from Germany that way. Hank surmised that the dealer may have added that detail, although there’s no record of the modification. Harvey Weidman, owner of Weidman Wheels, refinished the wheels in preparation for concours competition. “We decided to keep them white. I guess if I ever showed this car in Preservation Class, I would get penalized for not having black Fuchs.”

How does it drive compared to their 1994 Speedster? “It’s less refined, but the ride is great nevertheless,” replied Hank. “The air-conditioning still leaves something to be desired, but after all, you can drive it with the windows open and listen to the roar of the engine.”

And what about Jolly? “Jolly drives all of our Porsches. She’s the one who taught our children to drive a manual transmission vehicle.”

From their first 356 to their current crop of Porsches, Hank and Jolly Weil are true Porsche and PCA enthusiasts. Active members of the Shenandoah Region, Hank serves as President and advocate of the M491 PCA Register, and Jolly shares responsibilities. And, of course, they are proud to be the current custodians of a very special M491. ●