

A light blue 1973.5 Volvo 911T is parked on a gravel surface in front of a large, weathered wooden barn. The car is shown from a rear three-quarter view, highlighting its sleek design and distinctive five-spoke alloy wheels. The barn's wooden structure and the overcast sky provide a rustic and atmospheric background.

# RESURRECTION

A 1973.5 911T EMERGES 33 YEARS AFTER IT WAS HIDDEN  
IN THE SHADOW OF ONE OF AMERICA'S BUSIEST AIRPORTS.

STORY BY **DAVID MATHEWS** PHOTOS BY **RICH CHENET** AND **THE AUTHOR**





## He stepped from autumn light into shadows,

with dry leaves and litter swirling about his feet. Cool air brushed his face. The silhouette in this dark place was indistinct yet familiar. It beckoned. ❖ He moved a step closer and gently pulled back the frayed and tattered canvas. Bits of dirt and debris, accumulated from years of solitude, gathered and then spilled to the ground around his feet. An aroma of worn leather, stale gasoline, and old motor oil filled the air. He gazed at dull paint, smudged chrome, and sagging tires. ❖ He smiled. “Hello, old friend. It’s been a few years, hasn’t it?”



A reunion in some dilapidated barn along a deserted county road in the middle of nowhere? No, it occurred at an anonymous self-storage unit in the shadow of one of the world’s busiest airports, Chicago O’Hare International. And there was more—this car was no dilapidated beater a wrecker-pull away from a salvage yard. It was a silver 911T with 35,000 miles on its odometer. Intriguing, isn’t it?

**MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.** Spring 1973. Terry and Carol French, mid-30s professionals, were living in the Land of 10,000 Lakes. Their old BMW

sedan had served them well, but now that summer was near they yearned for something sportier. An avid car enthusiast, Terry was fascinated by the glowing automotive reviews given to Porsche’s 911. He considered it ideal for long weekend getaways or spur-of-the-moment drives on narrow country roads. Because the Frenches lived in downtown Minneapolis, they enjoyed the benefit of public transportation for daily commutes. A fun car like the 911 perfectly complemented their lifestyle.

The couple visited Metropolitan Porsche-Audi in Maplewood, Minnesota to see and drive a new 911. It

was what they expected—wonderful. They decided then and there that their next car would be a Porsche. The only problem was that the dealership did not have exactly the car they wanted, a lower-priced 911T in silver with a black interior. Their only choice was to order the car directly from the factory.

The delay was frustrating, but the wait was worth it. In October they took delivery of a sexy Silver Metallic 1973.5 911T with black leatherette. Their car benefited from Porsche’s mid-year change to Bosch’s new Continuous Injection System (CIS), the first of its kind in production use. Options included metallic paint (\$262), a five-speed transmission (\$165), the Appearance Group (\$191), and tinted glass (\$142). Including shipping, the total cost of their new car was \$8,821.50.

**Dust and flat tires reflect a 33-year interment.**  
**Below: The original window sticker lists the options and standard features on Terry and Carol French’s 911T.**

PORSCHE + AUDI		
MAKE	MODEL	YEAR
PORSCHE	911T	1973
VEHICLE NO.	9113102135	BODY TYPE 911T COUPE
DISTRIBUTOR NAME & ADDRESS	DEALER NAME & ADDRESS	
V W NORTHWESTAL DIST 3737 LAKE-COOK RD OVERFIELD ILLINOIS	METROPOLITAN P/A INC 2700 N HWY 61 MAPLEWOOD MN	
PORT OF ENTRY	METHOD OF TRANSP.	AUX. TRANSPORTATION CHARGE
BALTIMORE	TRUCKED	101.50
REPORTER'S SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE WITHOUT ACCESSORIES AT PORT OF ENTRY:		7,960.00
5-SPEED TRANSMISSION		165.00
SILVER METALLIC PAINT		262.00
APPEARANCE GROUP		191.00
TINTED GLASS, ALL AROUND		142.00
RADIAL TIRES		N.C.
FRESH AIR HEATING & VENTILATION		N.C.
LEATHERETTE COV., STEERING WHEEL		N.C.
ELECTRIC HEATED REAR WINDOW		N.C.
MECHANICAL FUEL INJECTION		N.C.
4-WHEEL VENTILATED DISC BRAKES		N.C.
3-SPEED WINDSHIELD WIPERS		N.C.
HIGH CAPACITY DISCH. IGNITION		N.C.
UNDERCOATING		N.C.
RUBBER BUMPERETTES, F & R		N.C.





**TERRY AND CAROL** immediately joined the Nord Stern Region of the Porsche Club of America. More than anything, except driving of course, they enjoyed the camaraderie.

"We'd head out into the country, a long line of us, just driving," recalls Terry. "Then we'd stop at some restaurant and fill its parking lot, talking and checking out each other's cars before going in for a bite to eat."

Did Terry dabble with autocrosses or gymkhanas? "I didn't do any racing or anything like that," he says. "We just enjoyed those spirited drives and the club's social events."

What about the Porsche stood out in Terry's mind? "I loved the look. Its shape was unlike anything else on the road," he remembers. "Passersby would wave and point. It was always like that. Another thing

was the way it handled—so agile. It seemed to hug the road. And lastly, it was quick. Great acceleration. It was breathtaking. Passing other cars on the highway was easy."

Although Minnesota was a great place to live, both of the Frenches yearned for a greater business challenge. Terry coupled his strong engineering background with a budding interest in technology and finance. Carol's expertise was in advertising and copywriting. In 1978, they began to search for opportunities outside the Twin Cities.

After considering offers in New York City, they decided to move to Chicago. They found a condo in the John Hancock Building, close to work and an abundance of city life. What Chicago did not have in abundance was reasonable parking and

deserted back roads. Their decision to move did not include the 911.

"We thought we'd sell the Porsche to someone who would enjoy it as much as we did," says Terry.

Offering the car for sale locally brought a response virtually overnight. "A guy called and said he wanted it," says Terry. "He said he would be over the next day to pay for it. Sure enough, the man showed up, cash in hand. But when the time came to make the deal, I simply could not part with my Porsche. I told him I wouldn't sell. He was upset, and I didn't blame him. But I could not sell my Porsche."

The 911 went into storage in Minneapolis when Terry and Carol headed to Chicago. They immersed themselves in their new jobs and their new lives but could not forget the fun they had with their car.

**THEY DECIDED TO BRING** the Porsche to Chicago early in 1980, but parking was limited and expensive in the city, so they looked elsewhere for storage. They found that place in Des Plaines, Illinois, about 20 miles northwest of downtown Chicago.

Their hope to once again enjoy their 911 evaporated—no time, no twisty roads, and too much traffic. But they decided that Terry should treat himself to one final drive, this time a *long* one, before parking the Porsche. Natives of Washington State, Terry and Carol had fond memories of the majestic Pacific Northwest. They wanted to drive their Porsche on Highway 1, a scenic route they'd heard so much about.

Terry embarked on a cross-country road trip from Minneapolis to Carmel, California and then on to

San Francisco. Unable to make the entire trip because of work commitments, Carol flew out a few days later to rendezvous with Terry. "It was an unforgettable experience," says Terry. "The dips and turns, the mountains, and the Pacific Ocean, all right there."

The 4,000-mile trip lasted one week, plenty of windshield time. Did it become tiresome?

"Somewhere out in one of the western states, Utah or Nevada, I decided to open it up a bit," recalls Terry. "With no traffic visible for miles, I pushed that pedal down, and away we went. I got 'er up to 120 or 130 and just held it there for a while. I'd never driven that fast in that car—or any car, for that matter. It was a blast."

Terry parked the Porsche in late

1980, a year notable for the U.S. Olympic ice hockey team's "Miracle on Ice" and the launch of CNN. Terry and Carol did not plan such a long interment—33 years, to be exact. It just worked out that way. During those three decades, they often considered pulling the car from storage, returning it to drivable condition, and enjoying it once again, but that never happened.

"The streets in Chicago were congested, the parking expensive, and the upkeep necessary for a sports car only occasionally driven seemed outrageous," says Terry. "We'd visit our Porsche every few years or so, reminisce about our drives, and then return to the hustle and bustle of the city—by taxi or train."

True urbanites, the Frenches do not own a car. Their 911 was the last

**Opposite and above: From headrests to seat rails, the 911's interior is as it was when it left the showroom in Minneapolis.**





car they purchased. “We don’t need a car in the city,” they say. “If we need to travel someplace, we rent a car or take public transportation.”

One thing that they did not allow to lapse was their PCA membership. In 2013, Terry received recognition for 40 years of continuous membership. “I like to read about the latest new stuff and stories about older cars,” he explains.

**AFTER RETIRING FROM** successful careers, Terry and Carol continued to live in their Chicago condo, enjoying the cultural offerings of the city and the freedom to travel abroad. Occasionally, they discussed what to do with their old Porsche. Friends and relatives urged them to either use it or sell it. Terry scanned *Panorama’s* classified ads, noticing that the value of old Porsches like his had increased dramatically. The cost of simply storing the car had also risen significantly.

“Rent at that place was running \$260 per month,” says Terry.

One did not need Terry’s financial acumen to see that selling the 911 made fiscal sense, but could he reconcile it emotionally? Not having been driven in more than 30 years, his 911 would require an investment of time and money just to get running. Terry began to look for restoration shops that could do the rehabilitation. Then it occurred to him to check with the local PCA region for a recommendation. He contacted Cindy Jacisin, who at the time was Chicago Region President.

“Pat Yanahan is your guy,” she told Terry.

**A RECOGNIZED EXPERT** when it comes to old Porsches and a PCA National Concours judge specializing in all things 356, Pat knows his way around early 911s as well. He has restored, renewed, and rehabilitated many national show winners and has sources for NOS parts and professional advice that extends to Stuttgart and back. Better yet, Pat lives in a Chicago suburb not far



from Des Plaines. Terry decided to give him a call.

“I was skeptical as I traveled out to see Terry’s car,” says Pat. “After hearing how long the 911 had been sitting, I was expecting rust and rodents. But after Terry opened the garage door and I looked beyond the four flat tires, I realized that storage locker was not a tomb but a time capsule.”

Pat expected a ratty interior, a delaminated dash, and a sagging headliner. He found something en-

tirely different. “Holy Batman,” quips Pat. “The interior was absolutely virgin.” The spare tire had never been on the ground, and the unopened tool kit was still secured with a fabric tie. Another feature grabbed Pat’s attention.

“I’ve seen many old, original cars, but Terry’s was the first I encountered that came with several cans of Metallic Silver paint supplied by the factory,” says Pat. “This paint, to be used for a touch-up at port if the car was scraped or dam-

aged during shipment, had never been opened. Usually stuff like that was discarded before the car was sent to the dealer.”

After Pat made a quick inspection of the Porsche, Terry asked him the million-dollar question.

“How much would it cost to restore it?”

“That depends on what you want.”

“Like we first saw it in 1973.”

“That could run close to \$20,000.”

“Why would I spend \$20,000 on a car only worth \$20,000?”

“Put a one in front of that \$20,000,” replied Pat. “\$120,000. You have the real McCoy here.”

**THE 911 WAS FLAT-BEDDED** to Pat’s shop in November 2013. Disassembly and inspection began immediately. Pat’s team of helpers, all PCA members and all seriously afflicted concours enthusiasts, divided the labor according to each one’s expertise. Attention to detail, large and small, made this project special. The team’s goal was to groom the car to

**Opposite: The complete tool kit and cans of factory touch-up paint are dream finds for any concours preservationist.**





**Above: Fittings, clamps, bolts, and snaps glow from hours of elbow grease and Simple Green.**

compete in the Preservation class in PCA concours competition. Their mantra: 100 percent original, 100 percent safe, and *primum non nocere* (first, do no harm).

Because Terry and Carol had not foreseen such a lengthy storage, they had done nothing to prepare for the hibernation. They drove their 911T into the storage unit and parked it. Period. They'd meant no harm, of course, but the fluids, fresh in 1980, were now the color and consistency of apple butter, and the gaskets and seals were as dry as day-old toast.

The engine and transmission were removed, disassembled, and thoroughly cleaned. The transmission gears and synchros were fine—no repair or replacement was necessary. Pat attributed that to Terry and

Carol's gentle handling in years past. Engine bearings, rings, and pistons were measured, mitered, and found to be in excellent condition. Terry and Pat decided to have the heads redone, the valves reground, the guides replaced, and the rear main seal replaced while the engine was apart. Wally Werner, owner of Werner Machine, Ltd., did the machining.

"It's unlikely the engine will ever require another rebuild," says Pat.

The fuel system, however, was a can of worms. The fuel distributor was shot. Pat sent out the part for rebuild, but when it was returned and installed, it leaked. Pat returned it to the same vendor for a redo—and the second attempt also ended in failure. Because the 911 had the earliest CIS manufactured, a replacement was simply not to be found

anywhere in the United States.

Pat reached out to his sources in Zuffenhausen, and, yes, the factory did have a new fuel distributor available, but at the cost of 2,000 euros (about \$2,500). Tapping his network, Pat ultimately purchased a replacement from Bengt Nilsson, a member of the Early 911S Registry in Sweden. The total cost, including shipping, was \$200.

Kirt Shore, Area Central After Sales Manager for Porsche Cars North America, and Hank Weil, longtime member of both PCA and the 356 Registry, pitched in to find a NOS master brake cylinder, fuel pump, and other scarce parts for Terry's car. The brake system was flushed and completely renewed. The calipers were rebuilt and cadmium-plated by Partsklassik in Flag-

staff, Arizona. A local Napa store resurfaced the rotors.

The team combined copious amounts of Simple Green, water, and elbow grease to clean everything. "Cliff Holle spent close to 50 hours scrubbing the undercarriage and suspension parts," remarks Pat. "The car had been undercoated at the factory, and we didn't want to damage or degrade that coating. I did clean the undercoating from the red plastic horn tucked inside the left front wheel well. A small detail, yes, but that red horn peeking out just looked nicer."

Because the interior had survived the exile so well, a thorough detailing was all it needed. Pat shampooed the carpet, removed the door panels, and inspected the cavities and crevices for signs of moisture damage

and rust. There was none. The exterior paint showed no cracks or crazing. After a few door dings were massaged away, Pat hand buffed and shined the car with Würth P55 combination polish. "The product is very gentle on old paint," he advises.

They replaced the old dry-rotted tires with new Michelin XWX rubber from Coker Tire. The 15-inch Fuchs wheels, straight and true with no curb rash whatsoever, were simply cleaned with Simple Green and returned to their original glow.

**THE NEXT HURDLE** was the gas tank. Stale gas and 33 years of storage combined to form a crust on the inside of the tank that rendered it unusable, so it was sent to a vendor in Wisconsin to be cleaned and restored. After the tank was returned

to Pat and the team installed it, the sounds of loud cursing began to swirl around the overhead lights and ricochet off the walls of the garage.

"Crud flaked off the bottom of the tank and immediately clogged the filter. It was a mess," says Pat.

It also caused a delay. This time, the tank was sent to A-Len, Inc., in Downers Grove, Illinois, where the tank was acid-cleaned and its interior was sprayed with a Teflon-like coating. "It's guaranteed for 30 years," remarks Pat. "Longer than we will be around."

The gas tank fiasco added seven weeks to the restoration process, but when the tank was repainted and reinstalled, the car was finally ready for its initial shakedown. The car started immediately and ran great. Pat drove it to the local Porsche deal-

**Above: The 2.4-liter flat six, with its newly developed Bosch CIS fuel injection, produced 140 horsepower and gave the 911 a top speed of 130 mph.**





**Above: The ID plate clearly documents this 911's pedigree. The purity of the car's styling, from those Fuchs alloy wheels to the ventilation ports above the rear window, attracts collectors and enthusiasts alike.**

ership for a complete inspection. The condition of the 911 amazed a shop full of technicians. It was time for the Frenches to see their Porsche.

Then disaster struck. Again.

**DROPS OF OIL** spotted the garage floor immediately below the business end of the 911. Pat could not, would not, let the car go in less than perfect condition. The engine came out and was disassembled. A defective O-ring at the front crank was the culprit. It took ten hours to pull the engine apart, 30 seconds to replace the offending O-ring, and ten more hours to put the engine back together. No leaks—perfection.

On November 13, 2014, Terry and Carol took the train to Burr Ridge to check out their car, having not seen it since the restoration began.

“Our car was like new,” says Carol. “Just like it came off the showroom floor.”

Pat pulled the 911 out of his shop and Terry climbed in. Together they

drove back in time, when the Sears Tower was new and the price of gasoline was an outrageous 55 cents a gallon. Terry's 911 ran strong and turned heads, just as it did in 1973.

Now came the moment of truth. “Terry, are you really going to sell your Porsche this time?” As tempting as it was for Terry and Carol to hang onto their beloved 911T, they decided to move forward with its sale. Traffic congestion was a bigger problem than ever. Storage was still an issue. And the sale of their classic 911T would provide the resources for more travel.

Pat Yanahan spread the word that the Porsche was available. Its provenance, low mileage, and condition drew immediate interest. John Phillips, a member of the Suncoast Florida Region, made the first call. After a bit of back and forth and a pre-purchase inspection (it passed with flying colors), the deal was done. “It was more money than I ever spent on a car, but it's worth

every penny,” says John.

John was new to the Porsche scene, but once bitten, he became as rabid as they come. “I had no interest in Porsches until 2011. A friend of mine wanted me to accompany him to look at an old Porsche,” explains John. “Once I saw that car, I was totally hooked.” What is it about older Porsches that makes them special? “Well, cars aren't made that way anymore. The sound, the smell, the handling—everything is as it should be.”

And what about Terry and Carol's 911, the Porsche now in John's garage? He thinks about it a minute as he runs his hand over the rear flank of the 911T. “Consider the uniqueness of this car, its low mileage. Think about the years it spent in solitary confinement. Think about how Pat and his buddies up in Chicago brought it back to life. And now look at her condition. My wife thinks I'm completely nuts, but I'll tell you, *this* is my love affair.” ☺