

INSTANT ATTRACTION

A DECADE AFTER FIRST SEEING A CAYMAN, MARIE QUINTANA IS AS SMITTEN AS EVER.

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





Perhaps you're **that** person —

the one chided by your doctor for high blood pressure or high cholesterol, or those few extra pounds you're carrying around. And so you do your best to change. Being the good soldier, you begin to pay more attention to calories and sodium content. When it comes time to decide on what's for dinner, you settle on something bland. Something "good for you." Low this. Low that. Yada, yada. Resolute, you stride into your favorite supermarket to shop for free-range, skinless, boneless chicken breasts—a pale but healthy choice to accompany that scoop of Uncle Ben's white rice and smattering of mixed vegetables. You stop dead in your tracks. Next to the free-range poultry is a beautiful cut of prime beef. Bright red. Intricately, enticingly marbled. You envision that steak, grilled perfectly, slightly charred, juicy pink. Like Eve's apple, the urge is too great to resist.

You simply **must** have it.

MARIE QUINTANA'S EXPERIENCE was sort of like that. Marie and her husband, Brad Sikora, are members of the Northern Ohio Region. Having developed a passion for sports cars early on with MGs and Midgets, they purchased their first Porsche, a 1984 944, in 1987. At least one Porsche has resided in their garage since.

A decade ago, Marie and Brad began looking for a replacement for Marie's Cayenne. "The only problem with that Cayenne was that it didn't have enough pedals—it was an automatic and I wanted to shift," she said. They decided to visit their local Porsche dealer, Stoddard, to find a Cayenne with a manual transmission. From there, things got complicated. "About two weeks before our appointment, I saw a little blue coupe parked in the lot of our grocery store, all by itself," recalled Marie. "I asked Brad what it was. 'A Cayman,' he replied."

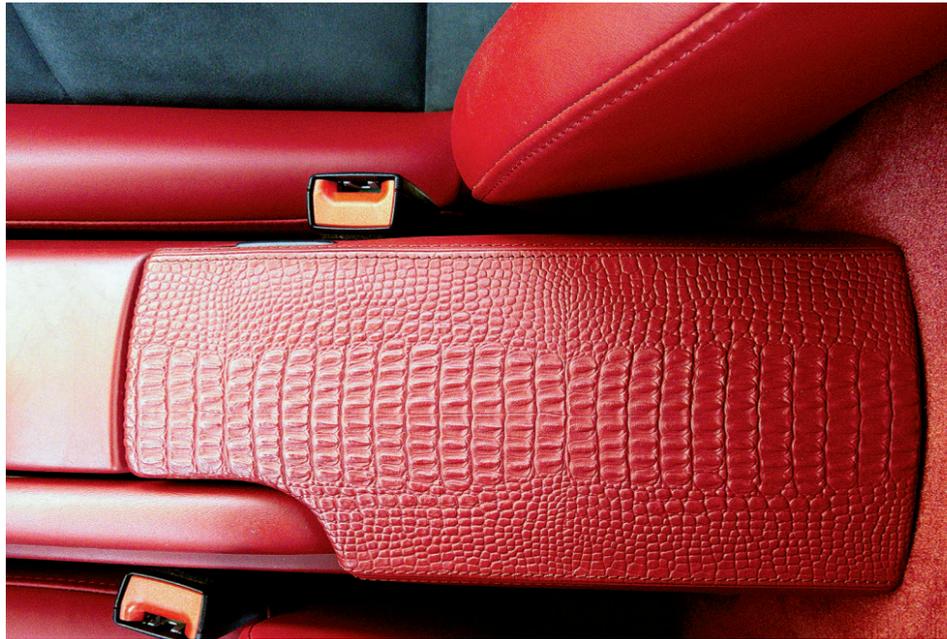
She was smitten. "To me, that car had the same look and feel of the 356 that captured my imagination years ago. It generated the same emotion. It had the same flowing curves. So when we went to the dealership, I told our sales rep that I wanted to drive a Cayman as well as a manual-transmission Cayenne. 'If you drive a Cayman,

you won't buy the Cayenne,' he said. And he was right."

Marie and Brad test-drove the Cayman S, the base Cayman, and a three-pedal Cayenne. "The smaller, sportier car was a way better fit, but we didn't buy anything that day," Marie told us. "We began to look for a used Cayman but didn't find one that had the options we wanted. So, about six or eight weeks later, we returned to the dealer to look at new ones, again driving the S and the base car." Marie and Brad decided they didn't need the extra 50 horsepower the S provided. Rather, they would option the base model the way they wanted and pocket the difference.

The six-speed option (five-speed was standard) was Marie's first choice, and then she spent the next eight weeks carefully personalizing her car before finalizing the order. "We worked closely with the dealership to pick options, and yet at times they were unsure what was available. For example, those wheels on the Cayman were available for one year only," she recalled.

Color was an important consideration. No black. No Guards Red. "I initially wanted a green car with a Terracotta interior, but during the time I spent deciding on colors and features, option choices changed. Neither



Marie Qunitana's artistic eye is evident in the interior detail of her Cayman. The simulated reptile hide on the center console and dash was an exclusive Cayman option.



green nor Terracotta was available, so I returned to my default car color scheme—Carrara White with a Carrera Red interior.” With the basic color combination decided, Marie began to pick and choose her other options.

“I wanted the car to be special. I’m an artist. I like things that are different, edgy. The red interior with the black accents gave me that. The white instrument dials pull the white exterior into the car. Our salesman and his sales manager really got into it. They scoured through parts catalogs looking for little things. The last option they came up with was the wheels. And then of course we needed to choose what color to paint the spokes. We considered white, but finally decided on black.” In Marie’s opinion, three interior features made a big difference—the black Alcantara seat accents, the white instrument dials, and the simulated caiman hide trim.

The order process took a couple of months, but the build took considerably longer. “We ordered the car in the spring of 2008, but it didn’t arrive until the end of October. We didn’t drive it much that winter—it was a messy one—but our Cayman was worth waiting for.”

Marie always intended her Cayman to be a driver, not a show car. “Most summers when I was working, it went

with me to the office,” she said. “But before I retired I really wasn’t able to drive the car as much as I wanted. So as the Spokane Parade [2017] approached, I told Brad I wanted a road trip. A *big* road trip. It took a while to convince him, but he finally agreed. It was wonderful. We took our time driving out there. That was our first real road trip, about 2,100 miles one way.”

Already having been bitten by the concours bug (their first national PCA competition was the 2013 Traverse City Parade), Marie and Brad competed at Spokane as well. Hours of work in the concours prep area erasing the wear and tear of those 2,100 miles culminated with a first-in-class trophy.

Marie and Brad enjoyed their Cayman in other venues as well. Time-speed-distance rallies, gimmick rallies, and driving tours were all on their dance card. Although the Cayman did not get on the autocross course, Marie volunteered for timing and scoring.

Make no mistake, though. Concours remained their abiding love. “We know how to clean a car,” remarked Marie about their concours success. It’s all about attention to detail and a division of labor. “Brad refers to me as the Department of the Interior.”



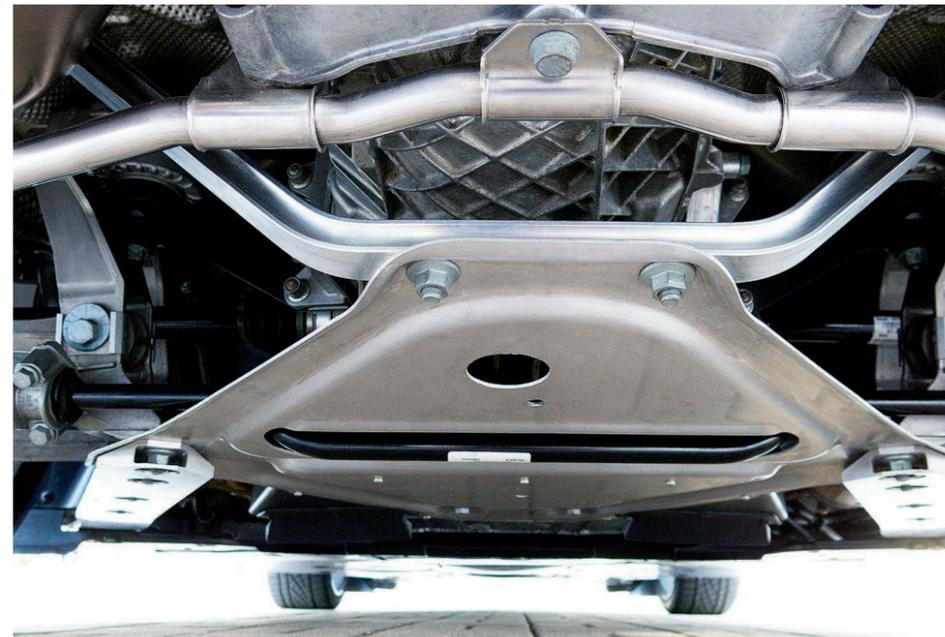
THIS PAST SUMMER, preparing for the 2019 Parade in Boca Raton was particularly challenging. They planned to compete in Preparation-Full (everything is inspected—exterior, interior, trunk, frunk, and underside). Because Brad had prior commitments, Marie worked solo on the Cayman in the garage of their Cleveland, Ohio home. “I cleaned all the interior components before I left for Boca. By the time Brad showed up [at Parade], the interior was closed.”

Wait a minute. What did Marie just say? Like any tenacious competitor and dedicated spouse, she took matters into her own hands when Brad was called out of town. Not only did she do all the interior cleaning before heading south to Boca, she made the 1,200-mile trip solo. “It was fun. I got to drive my own car. Most of the time when we are together, Brad drives. That was my trip. I could stop when I wanted, get a Starbucks when I wanted...”

Because of impending storms, Marie planned her trip to avoid most of the bad weather. “I don’t mind a little rain, but I didn’t want to drive through standing water. I drove only four hours the first day to get out of town before the storm arrived. The second day was the longest, 12 hours behind the wheel.”

Marie completed dressing up the Cayman’s interior before Brad’s flight touched down in Ft. Lauderdale. “By the time Brad got here, I’d cleared the interior, a ‘lock-out/tag out’ kind of thing, not to be opened again. You know, you develop a process for how you’re going to clean something as you back out of it, so that you don’t mess up anything. Brad doesn’t know my process, so when I shut the door, the interior is done. We don’t reopen it.”

From 2013 to the present, Brad and Marie honed their techniques and graciously share them with other competitors when asked. One important point is that it’s easier to prevent a problem from happening in the first place than to fix it later. “For example, we didn’t drive our Cayman off the lot until a clear bra was installed,” said Marie. “We knew it would pick up stone chips. And then after driving it a while, we recognized areas that were more susceptible to damage than others. Brad noticed that the flared fenders in front of the rear wheels caught some debris. We had a four-foot section of magnetic plastic sheet at home. Don’t know why we initially bought it, but it was white on one side. So we cut it to fit that area. It took a bit of fitting and experimenting, but



Brad and Marie’s concours mantra: protection is better than repair. Magnetic flare guards and pet-proof screen inserts sewn into the front bra keep road rash to a minimum.



Gator

THE PORSCHE CAYMAN, sibling to the Boxster that preceded it by several years, was introduced to the public in 2006. The first model available was the 295-hp, 3.4-liter Cayman S. Its name was inspired by the caiman, a reptile in the Alligatoridae family residing in the swamps of Central and South America.

Marketed as a viable, middle-ground model between the Boxster and the 911, the Cayman shared many of the Boxster's basic components but was more rigid because of its fixed roof. Also, the

S version was initially more powerful than the Boxster S, with its engine sharing the 96mm bore of the 996 Carrera and the 78mm stroke of the Boxster. It came standard with a six-speed manual transmission. In 2007, Porsche added a base model Cayman with a 247-hp, 2.7-liter engine and a five-speed manual gearbox.

Both the S and the base models received immediate praise for their superior handling and spacious 14.5-cubic-foot cargo capacity shared between the front and back storage areas. —DM

we got it right. And that plastic helps a lot. We get very few stone chips in that area now.”

The Cayman's front air intake was also prone to accumulate debris. “All sorts of buried treasure can be found deep inside that intake. So after we removed the clear bra (it had yellowed with age) and purchased a leather bra, I came up with a remedy. I bought a section of that pet-proof screen at the hardware store and sewed it into the bra opening.”

The homemade front screen and plastic flare protectors were not the only precautions Marie and Brad came up with. Take the roof rack, for example. Because they'd decided to move up a class from Street to Full, additional cleaning supplies and equipment were needed. Since Marie drove the car to Parade, it had to carry everything they needed. More room for supplies meant less room for suitcases packed with clothes and personal items.

“And less clothes meant more trips to the laundromat. So we began looking for roof systems,” explained Marie. “The car has those attachment points. We looked at Porsche Tequipment, but what we needed was unavailable or special ordered. We were running out of time so we went with Yakima. Their system arrived two weeks before I had to leave. It worked, but man oh man, the wind noise!”

In addition to the racket the roof rack created, disaster struck on the last leg of the road trip. “A bra clip came loose somewhere between Savannah, Georgia and Boca. That clip beat on the fender and wore through the paint, right to bare metal. I was just sick about it. Couldn't eat for a day and a half. And when Brad finally saw it...”

Brad seriously considered pulling the car from competition, but Marie wanted to proceed. After confer-

ring with several concours judges about whether they should attempt to repair the damage or leave it alone, they decided to clean it up the best they could and let the chips fall as they may. Marie was philosophical about it. “It could have been worse. It was just cosmetic. It could be fixed.” At the end of the day, everything worked as it was designed to work. Marie and Brad received no deduction for the paint blemish; in fact, they were rewarded for all of their hard work with another first-in-class trophy.

IS THERE A TEMPTATION to drive the Cayman less because of all the work that went into making it a full concours winner? “No, I love the car,” said Marie. “What we do now is put it up on the lift more often to clean the bottom side. Once you get the crusty stuff off, it isn't that hard to keep it clean. Brad takes the wheels off every so often, and that's when we clean the wheel wells. Maintaining something is much easier than trying to catch up. During this winter, we plan to put the car on the lift for a week to really focus on one or two specific areas. That way we stay ahead of it.”

More than a decade on, Marie Quintana is still in love with her Porsche. “I get so much pleasure from simply walking out to the parking lot and seeing my car. As I said before, the look takes me back to the shape of the 356 that got to me so long ago. Everything else about the car is icing on the cake.”

With Brad's 944 hot rod and a Macan S in their stable (“It's eager, but doesn't have enough pedals on the floor to suit me”), Marie is emphatic that there is no need to upgrade to a newer Cayman. Her attraction to the car is as strong as ever. ●

RICHARD BARON



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