

OUTTA MY WAY!

HOW A 1972 911E BECAME A BAD-TO-THE-BONE RALLY CAR.

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White is the most popular automobile color in the world.

White has higher resale value. White is luxurious and understated. White doesn't show nicks, scratches, or road rash. White is safer and easier to see in traffic. White is the people's choice—boringly beautiful white. ❖ Vic Rola's numbers-matching 1972 911E is white, but it is anything but boring. It has two broad red stripes stretching from the front bumper to the windshield cowl, and the rear center bumper panel is a matching red. Two black tailpipes jut purposefully from beneath that red panel. The car sports Hella rally lights on the hood and Cibie foglights mounted through the front grilles. This 911E is not luxurious, understated, or boring. Rather, it is in-your-face impolite. Impudent. No please; no thank you. Rather, *Outta my way! I'm right behind you and I'm comin' around!*

It's just the way Vic Rola, a 42-year member of PCA, Zone 3 Representative, and Smoky Mountain Region member, likes it. Vic knows Porsches and knows what he likes. He's had his share of them, beginning with an inordinate fixation on 914s—five of them altogether. This is his third 911, and he drives a 2006 Cayenne S to haul people and stuff.

Purchased 13 years ago, this 911E was meek back then. Normal. Although a previous owner (Vic is the fourth) lowered its stance a bit for the occasional autocross, it was basically the same car that came from the factory in 1972. In fact, Vic entered the car in preservation class at the 2003 Parade in Tampa, Florida, garnering a second in class. But by the 50th Anniversary Parade in 2005, Vic's car was showing the ravages of time. "It developed a Leonardo da Vinci finish—checkered and crackled. In the concours that year, we came in eighth out of seven cars," Vic says with a grin.

After that dismal showing, Vic and his late wife Carol

decided to transform their 911E into something special. That they were starting out with a rare early 911 made their decision both easier and more difficult. Should they focus on originality or throw caution to the wind and do something crazy?

THE 1972 MODEL 911 was unique for several reasons. Porsche relocated the dry sump oil tank from behind the right rear wheel to ahead of it. Likely, the tank was moved to enhance the balance of the car—less weight at the rear of an already tail-happy puppy. Also unique was the one-year-only right rear fender oil fill access. Why the relocation of the oil tank lasted only one year is left for Porsche pundits to decide; some say it had to do with side-impact safety concerns, but there is also the supposition that bone-headed gas station attendants pumped gas down the oil filler tube a little too often.

It was a good year for technical advances as well, as the 1972 911 benefited from a more powerful 2.4-liter

Opposite: Stirring up the dust. Above, clockwise: R Gruppe means fast company; steelies and rally lights add a bit of sassiness; the gas filler door is unique to the 1972 model; the steering wheel was an eBay find.



engine, a bored and stroked version of the earlier 2.2-liter. With Bosch mechanical fuel injection (MFI), the 911E generated 185 horsepower. Weighing less than 2,400 pounds, it had startling performance. Coupled with the new and significantly improved 915 transmission, the 911E could scoot from 0-60 mph in less than seven seconds. And it made a pretty good noise, too.

So this car had a great platform. Now what? Vic and Carol decided to re-create their car into a bad-to-the-bone rally car. More a slow metamorphosis than a spontaneous transfiguration, changes came slowly, in dribbles and drabs, bits and pieces. And through eBay. The Momo Prototipo steering wheel, the first of many purchases, was nabbed for a mere \$100. That same steering wheel is currently advertised at a buy-it-now price of \$3,000. Bright lights came next, then the roll bar, then the, well, you get the idea.

Vic took the car to Air Cooled Classics in Knoxville, Tennessee to do the body preparation and paint work.

Adding the broad red stripes was Vic's idea—in honor of his Polish parents. He also added a PRDA (Polish Racing Drivers of America) decal on the right rear window. Ed Mayo, owner of Mayo Performance in Euless, Texas, rehabbed the MFI. Vic kept the 2.4-liter engine stock—well, close to stock—but beefed up the suspension with externally adjustable Koni shocks.

As one walks around Vic's 911E, the details that make the car become readily apparent. The dead pedal, the thin rubber floor mats, and the rally clock wind one back to a simpler time, when lightweight was the right weight and superfluous things like cupholders were unthinkable. No GPS—that's what a co-driver and a clipboard are for. Red, four-point Schroth seatbelts hold the driver tight against worn leather seats. Vic swapped the Fuchs for the six-inch steelsies you see here. Offered by the factory as performance wheels, they were purportedly more durable than the alloys when it came to the rigors of rally competition. Filling the wheel wells are

205/50-15 tires, and rear mud flaps are in place to complement the old-school, retro look.

THIS PORSCHE HAS BEEN a crowd-pleaser since the first time it was shown in rally livery. Vic Elford, 1967 European Rally Champion and winner of the 1968 Monte Carlo Rally in a 911, autographed the underside of the front hood at Rennsport Reunion II. At the 2008 Parade in Charlotte, North Carolina, Hans-Peter Porsche and human resources exec Thomas Edig, who was accompanying him, stopped to admire Vic's car, particularly the über-rare rally tag that decorates the front hood.

This tag, another internet find, was particularly noteworthy to Dr. Porsche because it touts the 1973 Int. ADAC-Rallye in Wolfsburg—home of Volkswagen. Porsche and VW were experiencing a tumultuous relationship in 2008. Dr. Porsche insisted that a photo of the rally tag be sent to a particular VW union shop steward, noting that, despite their current labor difficulties, Porsche and

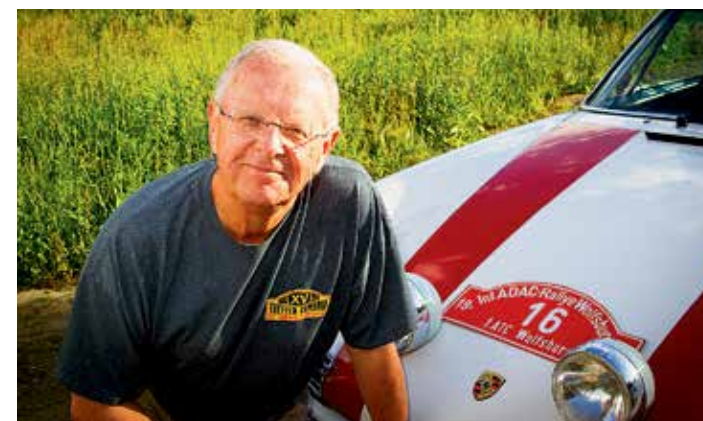
VW did share common ground—at least in 1973!

Vic and Carol did not regret making their 911E a rally tribute car; in fact, they reveled in that decision. Carol, like her husband an enthusiastic driver, frequently told Vic that the E talked to her. "Go faster," the car told her. "Go faster."

Not only is Vic a member of PCA and the Early 911S Registry, he also is one of the select few who is a member of R Gruppe (his license plate shouts it), a loosely formed organization of outlaw 911 owners. "A lot of these guys are former American iron hot rodders who gravitated toward the more nimble 911, guys who blended the California 'go fast' scene with European lightness," says Vic. This group, limited to 300 members worldwide, fawns over, sweats over, and drives the dickens out of early 911s that have been transformed into something more. Something imaginative. Something, well, like this 911E.

Vic limited his participation at the 2016 Parade to the

Opposite: Business class. Above, clockwise: Schroth belts brighten the interior; cracked shift knob reflects years of spirited use; rubber mats, dead pedal, and period-correct rally clock show this 911E is ready for action.



concours and autocross. As Zone 3 Representative, he had other obligations. But when we finally tracked him down, he could not have been more accommodating. Although his 911E may be a loudmouth, Vic is not. A soft-spoken man with an easygoing demeanor, he graciously—no, make that eagerly—embraced our suggestion to take his car on a dirt and gravel Vermont back road to pose for photos and play for a bit.

South of the Canadian border, heading out VT 118 through Montgomery Center, past Bernie's Restaurant and Bar on Main Street, we headed to our location, Vic rumbling behind us. His lights, the Cibies and Hellas, were bright in our rearview mirror. His car, low to the pavement, appeared as if it were ready to pounce. "Get outta my way," it seemed to say. "I've got business to attend to."

We settled in for the obligatory beauty shots. The camera focused in on the emblem, the rally tag, the shifter, and the all-business air-cooled six, with the background blurred to draw the eye to the important stuff. Then we moved to the mood shots, the evocative photos of clouds and barns and wheels and weeds.

Finally, the fun began, the part that Vic and Carol had envisioned when their 911E was coming together. The part where Vic kicks the rear end out a bit; where the dust swirls high behind the car; where the gravel peppers those vintage mud flaps; where the smell of rich exhaust fills the air, burns the eyes, makes the nose run.

"Okay now, Vic, that was great. This time, do you think you can—?"

"Heck yeah. Watch this!"

The dust still may not have settled on that Vermont back road. ☻

Opposite: This 911E displays a menacing allure. The 2.4-liter MFI engine was one of Porsche's best. Below: Vic Rola, consummate Porsche enthusiast, still enjoys hanging the tail out on his 911E R Gruppe hot rod.



WATCH THE VIDEO:
PCA.org/news/panorama-rola-10.16