



# Peas

# ina

# Pod

AN EARLY EXAMPLE OF PAINT TO SAMPLE INSPIRED THIS 356'S COLOR.

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**DONOVAN AAKHUS'S 1962** 356 1600S Coupe started life Heron Grey. To be clear, there was not a darn thing wrong with Heron Grey. It was perfectly fine for those owners who want an under-the-radar look. Aakhus just didn't happen to be one of those people. He liked a bit of flash. A touch of color. Like eye-popping yellowish-green, a color that smacked you on the back and shouted, "Hey, look at me!" How did it become a colorful fashionista and celebrity at the Porsche Experience Center in Los Angeles? Well...





"I grew up in Newport Beach, California," Aakhus began, "with Porsches all around the neighborhood. I always dreamed of owning one. After high school, my folks bought a new VW Beetle so that I could get back and forth to college. During my senior year, I talked my folks into letting me buy a four-year-old Heron Grey over red leatherette Porsche—this one here. I sold the Bug for \$1,200 and bought the Porsche for \$2,300." Finally a Porsche owner, Aakhus used the 356 as his daily driver. All was well until he was wowed by a Lime Green Porsche driving around the neighborhood. "I drove down to Chick Iverson's Porsche/VW dealership in Newport Beach to find out from my friend, Gary Emory, who owned that car," Aakhus said.

Aakhus and Emory have been friends for more than 50 years, each starting their careers literally on the ground

because that was more involved. So, I had a green car with a red interior and white painted parts. The car looked like a martini olive until 1972, when I returned from Vietnam and I could afford to finish it properly. I had the dash painted, and replaced the red leatherette with tan Naugahyde." (A more recent rehab, a bare-metal repaint that took place during the COVID pandemic, removed all trace of road rash and parking lot dings from the past 50 years.)

Aakhus drove his olive-green coupe daily, including seven round trips to Randolph Air Force Base near San Antonio while still in the service. "I also drove to the family cabin in Big Bear," he said. "I put chains on the car and snow skis on the back. All through my ownership, the car has been a runner, not like some cars that sat neglected in storage for 20 years and then resurrected.



level—sweeping floors. Aakhus's floor belonged to his dad's garage door business. Emory swept floors for his dad at Chick Iverson. When Aakhus owned his Beetle, he bought accessories from Emory, who'd transitioned to Iverson's parts department. "When I asked Gary who owned the Porsche, he told me it belonged to another Newport Beach resident, Vic Matloff," Aakhus said. "I drove to Vic's home and introduced myself. Vic was a very friendly guy, at that time a United Airlines pilot and former Air Force fighter pilot in the Korean War. (Aakhus followed a similar path, becoming a combat pilot during the Vietnam War era and later a commercial pilot for Western Airlines.) "I basically asked his permission to 'copy' the color of his car for mine. He said, 'Of course.'"

They took the cars to Becker's Bug House in Orange, California, which specialized in painting VWs and Porsches. "The year was 1966," Aakhus said. "They painted the exterior of the car, not the interior or dash

"I didn't drive on divided interstate freeways, but on Route 66 or some other beautiful 356-type road. I would not bypass towns, but drove through and stayed in them. I would get up early from the roadside motel, then drive to the next town and get breakfast at a local café. Sometimes I would just get five hours of sleep in the car off the road.

"Most of the people I encountered had never seen a 'Porschee,' let alone that color. All were enthralled with my story. Sometimes I would pull off to a local drive-in for lunch, but usually pressed on to the next town for dinner at the local diner and more stories. Even though the Vietnam War was going on, all the people liked me because I was on my journey to become a pilot. The common thread to all of this was the smell of freshly cut grass. I would drive 65-70 mph with windows down to keep cool on those country roads, smelling that wonderful cut grass. What a time it was!"

**Opposite: Details such as the silhouettes of jet aircraft and his helmet proudly displaying his call sign "Sweet Pea" reflect Aakhus's connection with his military past. Above: The eye-catching color stands out while he's driving past a field.**





**GETTING BACK TO** the reason for the coupe's color, how did Vic Matloff's Porsche come to be painted that spectacular green? In this case, it's not what you know, it's who you know. Aakhus said that Matloff regularly flew to and from Europe while with United. This helped Matloff to regularly purchase a new Porsche from the Munich dealer at the lower exchange rate, ship it to the U.S., and drive it for a year. Then when the new models came out, he would order a new one and sell his one-year-old Porsche in the U.S.—for a profit. When the 1965 model became available, Matloff decided to have it painted the color of his wife's favorite neck scarf—1960s Psychedelic Green. Porsche agreed and that was that.

"The chrome wheels and window trim are original," Aakhus said. "I bought the chrome luggage rack after I bought the car, using it on my trips. Strapped a couple of suitcases on it. Even rigged up a way to haul my ten-speed bicycle on the car." The personal touches reflect Aakhus's bent toward the "outlaw" look. "Early on, I took off the front hood handle, like some people do, to give it a cleaner line," he said.

"I had two straight-pipe trumpet exhausts, reminiscent of the single-trumpet exhaust of the 550 Spyder. Those Maltese Cross torsion bar covers are pretty rare. I bought them from Gary back in the day. I also bought

those headrests from him." As for the mechanical upkeep, any major project received professional attention; Aakhus did (and still does) the regular maintenance himself. Oil changes, tune-ups, and valve adjustments all fall in his bailiwick. "I enjoy getting my hands dirty," he said of the care he gives his car.

The Morning Shift, a regular event at the Porsche Experience Center Los Angeles (PECLA), featured Paint-to-Sample (PTS) cars in April 2019. The event sounded like the perfect venue for Aakhus's coupe, so he decided to attend. While in line to enter, he was corralled by the director of marketing to park near the front door. "I felt like a king, kind of special," Aakhus said. "Then, a few months ago, PECLA highlighted 356s at The Morning Shift. I drove up there and parked with other 356 owners." Lightning struck again. A PECLA marketing person began taking photos of his car and the grille badges. One thing led to another.

"I was asked to display my car in their 75th Anniversary of Porsche Display, but there was a minor glitch: I planned to go to Hawaii in a few days," Aakhus said. No problem. PECLA welcomed Sweet Pea for a more extended stay in the gallery while Aakhus was away. It was a star attraction for six weeks.

"Sweet Pea's color, and her story," Aakhus said, "has

**Opposite: Original chrome wheels, trim, and luggage rack complement the psychedelic green exterior of Aakhus's coupe. The color was an homage to his friend's wife's neck scarf. Left: Personal touches add an outlaw feel.**







The ultra-sanitary engine and engine bay. The Chick Iverson license plate surround reflects Donovan's early connection with the Emory clan.

generated so many connections with people I never would have known. People like to talk. I like to talk. I met Lori Schutz over the phone a while back to discuss some 356 Registry issue. One thing led to another. She invited me to show Sweet Pea in the Historic Display. When I was a commercial pilot, I'd walk back into the cabin and chat with people. Before 9-11, you could do that. People like to talk and like to connect." ●



PORSCHE

## Paint to Sample Takes Some Green

"Individualization is at the core of Porsche. Customers have been making special requests to personalize their cars since our earliest model, the 356," said Kjell Gruner, president and CEO of Porsche Cars North America in an article in Porsche Newsroom in 2021.

There always will be those owners: owners who yearn for something uniquely different from Guards Red, like Rubystone Red, or Maritime Blue, rather than icy bluish Polar Silver.

Exclusivity comes at a price. Paint-to-Sample colors run from \$11,500 to nearly \$13,000 for sports cars and GT models. For unique color requests, Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur offers

Paint to Sample Plus (PTS+) on all models except the Cayenne. For PTS+, customers provide a color sample to their dealer that is then sent to Porsche AG, where it is tested for quality and durability. Feasibility evaluation can take up to a year. The price tag runs from \$23,000-\$26,000 for most models.

Testing is just the first step. If and when the color choice is accepted, the paint process proceeds with body/chassis preparation that includes degreasing and phosphate coating to inhibit rust and corrosion. The primer color depends on the final top color. After the primer, Porsche applies the color and clearcoats before baking/curing at approximately 400 degrees Fahrenheit.