



# 0mg12

A ZANZIBAR RED 996 GT2  
SCRATCHES THE PORSCHE ITCH  
FOR ONE PCA FAMILY.

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



**The new Porsche GT2** —a slimmed-down, steroid-enhanced, rear-wheel-drive über-Turbo—made quite an impression at its February 2001 introduction. Comments ranged from banal (“There’s sufficient power for drifting,” said *Auto Motor und Sport*) to boisterous (“No recreational pharmaceutical substance can deliver the hit this car does beginning at around four grand,” enthused *Motor Trend*).

With 462 hp at 5700 rpm and 457 lb-ft of torque at 3500 rpm, the 996 GT2 was a step outside Porsche’s Turbo paradigm. “The entire philosophy of this car is different from the Turbo’s. It’s for the driver who wants to be able to take his car to its absolute limits on his own,” explained GT2 project manager Hartmut Kristen.

Here’s a more earthy description: the GT2 grabbed that paradigm and tore it into little bitty pieces, reaching 60 mph from rest in less than four seconds and topping out at 196 mph. All of which led to this decidedly colorful assessment from *Car and Driver*: “Look, schmuck, I’m not your mom. You’re on your own here.”

For those enthusiasts who had the guts and the cash to step up to the plate, the 996 GT2 was, well, satisfying. Bill Stover, who’s been a Silver Sage Region member since 1978 and a car guy for longer than that, was one of those enthusiasts.

An articulate, soft-spoken gentleman, Bill was accommodating and patient as he shared his story with us at last summer’s Parade. He parked his car “just so” for beauty shots at various locations and answered our questions for more than two hours. He did all of that after a full day of autocrossing followed by a do-it-yourself car wash and interior vacuum, a quick shower, a change of clothes, and a cold soda, knowing full well that he and his wife, Laura, faced an 875-mile drive later that evening to make an important business meeting scheduled for the next day.

**WHEN ASKED ABOUT** his Porsche history, Bill was effusive. “I’ve had ten Porsches. I was first able to afford a Fiat X1/9, then a Datsun 280Z, and then the 1973 2.0-liter 914, in what most friends referred to as puke green. Ultimately, my wife enlisted the services of Patrick Motorsports to turn it into a track car—juiced 3.2-liter engine, 915 transmission, Fuel Safe fuel cell, dry sump oil cooling system, etc., all wrapped in bright yellow with bold red graphics—as a birthday present.

“Onward a few years with an overseas assignment in Sydney, Australia, and I had a dream of taking European delivery of a Porsche on the way back to the U.S.,” continued Bill. “The U.S. dealer was able to coordinate a long-distance order to our specifications, a 944. After a bit of European touring the car was delivered to the States, and my drive back to Boise yielded my last ticket—knock on wood—for somewhat excessive speed through Oregon’s eastern desert. The 944 was a daily driver and an autocross car, and I raced it up the last PCA authorized hillclimb—the Bogus Basin Bacchanalia.”

Bill wasn’t done yet. “In 1993, Porsche introduced the Boxster concept car at the Detroit auto show. We fell in love with the retro look, and on a visit to my mom in Bend, Oregon, we met Jim Scott—the first, last, and best salesperson on earth. Carrera Motors took our deposit on a Boxster. But before we left the showroom, a white RS America sitting there found a new home as well.

“When it came time to order [a Porsche] with a little more performance, we narrowed our choice to a special-order, triple black Twin Turbo with carbon fiber and red stitching. One night at about 11:00, after 30-plus hours of sitting in a conference room and negotiating an acquisition, my phone rang. It was Jim Scott from Carrera Motors, who started the conversation with, ‘Don’t worry. I already talked with Laura and got her okay. Porsche may build a last run of air-cooled twin turbos. Are you interested in a Turbo S?’ You can guess the answer.

“About the same time, our oft-delayed decision to go with a Boxster became a matching, special-order Boxster S with the full factory aero kit. We know of no other one like it in the U.S. We drove the two cars in tandem to the Sacramento Parade in 2000. Laura drove the Boxster





S with one son, and I drove the Turbo S with my other son. It was a special family memory.”

**WHEN PORSCHE ANNOUNCED** the 996-platformed GT2, the Stovers reached for the phone to call Jim Scott. “It was a street-legal, adjustable suspension, performance beast,” said Bill. And the look? “Definitely the profile of the car, the balance of its lines, front to back. Laura and I were thrilled with the design,” he recalled. “We loved the profile of the car.”

No strangers to the custom order process, the Stovers sorted through the options list. Of course, they wanted lots of carbon fiber, lots of leather, tasteful touches of aluminum, painted backs for the sport seats, and deviating stitching throughout the interior. Having

We wondered what people say about the car when the Stovers are out someplace with the GT2, a Porsche event for example, and whether they are aware of how rare it is.

“People are drawn to the color,” said Bill. “Wherever we’re at, we most often hear comments about the color. Just this week [PCA Parade week in Osage Beach], a police officer stopped me and said, ‘This is a car I’ve been watching for...looking at...all week, all because of the color.’ The color draws people to it.”

When asked about maintaining the GT2—after all, it’s a complicated car, a virtual race car—Bill replied: “All of our work has been done either at the Boise dealership or the one in Bend, Oregon, or now in Austin, Texas. It has required virtually no maintenance other than chang-



owned a stable of Porsches, most of which were white or black, they chose Zanzibar Red from the dealer’s swatch. The color was striking, different, and appropriate. The name came from the red soil that skimmed the top of certain coral formations along the shores of that East African archipelago.

“Laura and I agreed—well, this is either going to be absolutely gorgeous, or we’re going to hate it. It was a commitment. We ordered it for a factory delivery. My wife could not make the trip, but when I first saw it there in Stuttgart, I knew we made the right decision.

“Of the 20 or so cars that were delivered during those two days, ours was probably the flashiest,” Bill fondly recalled. “I think many of the people in the delivery area, employees as well as customers, appreciated the uniqueness of the car as well as the color. Coincidentally, the numbers on the German plates matched my birth date. Must have been a little magic to that.”

ing tires regularly. Mileage on a set of rears? Sadly, it is not double digits. [Said with a laugh.] Remember, this is a rear-drive car, and those tires get a workout.”

**JUST HOW MUCH** of a workout have Bill and Laura given the GT2? “Well, I’ve not reached top end in it,” Bill said. “After picking up the car, I was mindful of the break-in recommendations—modulating the rpms, changing gears, etc. The factory suggested a limit of 155 mph, so I did drive 155 mph. I don’t think I’ve driven over 165. Idaho has some great open roads with visibility good enough to ensure safety. One thing that is noticeable is how stable the car is. The aerodynamics become very apparent at speeds over 100 mph. It feels significantly more solid—planted.

“We are fans of higher performance vehicles, so we do enjoy getting it out on the open road,” continued Bill. “The car now has about 24,000 miles on it. Laura drives

**Bold in mind, body, and soul, nothing is subtle with this GT2. From its carbon-fiber trim and painted seatbacks to its deviating interior stitching, Bill and Laura Stover’s GT2 makes a strong statement.**

the car frequently, although she doesn't autocross it. We do rallies together; I drive and she navigates.

"She has as much, if not more, seat time in the GT2 as I do. During this three-legged trip to Parade [Boise, Idaho to Austin, Texas and Lake of the Ozarks], Laura managed over 65% of the driving, despite a broken radius in her right [shifting] hand. Keep in mind that our GT2 is a street-legal performance car—minimal sound-deadening, rear drive, and twin turbos. Many folks would not consider it the ideal long-distance tourer."

The Stovers have attended several Parades, including Portland in 2006, San Diego in 2007, and Spokane in 2017. But the 2018 Parade in Lake of the Ozarks was special because of family history.

"My father and mother spent a number of years in

because of some towing capacity. We were watching the Macans at the autocross today, and they were really impressive. One of those could be our next Porsche," Bill enthused.

That might have to wait, though, as Bill says the GT2 is in his garage to stay. "I won't sell this car; it's just too special. Besides, my son has his eye on it. When younger, Will built an R/C [radio controlled] car that matched this car identically. He's already laid claim to the GT2 when Dad and Mom are no longer capable of driving it. It's gonna have plenty of miles on it before we turn it loose. But...that new GT2 RS does look interesting."

As for the personalized license plate—R\_THX—that adorns the Stovers' GT2? "My oldest son, Will, the one who autocrossed this car, and still loves it, was in the Ma-



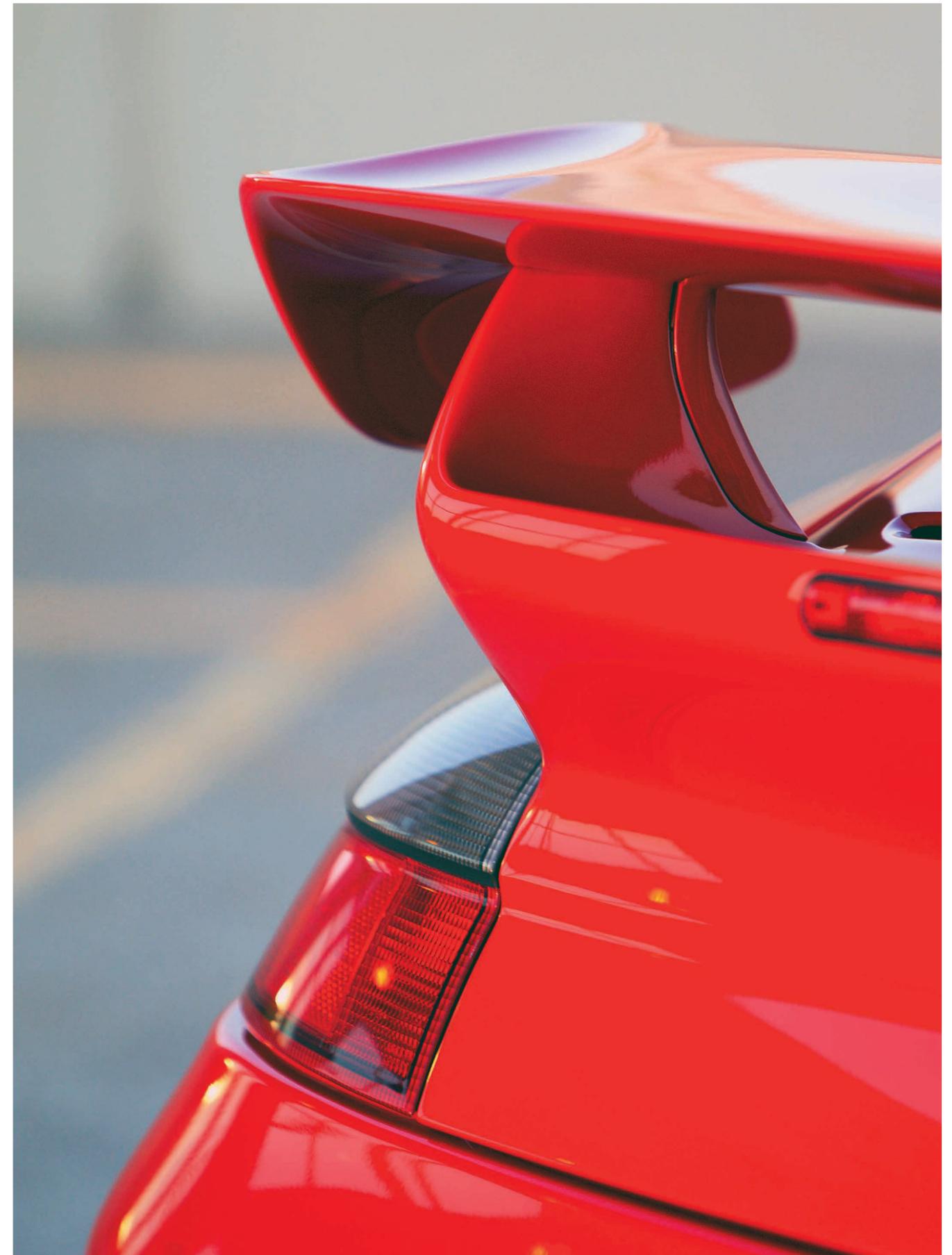
this part of the country," said Bill. "My dad is buried in Kansas City. We didn't know if we still had relatives in the area, but just north of here is the town of Stover, Missouri. When Laura and I were returning from the Clydesdale Tour, we stopped in Stover, visited the town clerk and the post office, and took a photo of the car in front of a Stover, Missouri road sign. It was just another of those special things." Asked if he would like to be honorary mayor of Stover, Bill responded with a chuckle, "Well, not mayor, but maybe the treasurer."

**SINCE THEY'VE OWNED** so many different Porsches, we were interested in the Stovers' views on the four-door models and how they fit into the Porsche family of vehicles. "I think a four-door model might be the first Porsche younger families purchase. It could get them involved. The Panamera holds no interest for me, but the Macan, especially the Macan Turbo, is appealing, in part

rine Corps for quite some time. He served as helicopter crew chief for *Marine One* and had the honor of being crew chief on President Obama's last 'lift'—his departure from the Capitol. Will's service made our family really appreciate his commitment and the service of all men and women in the military. Our plates represent our thanks, and special recognition of our son's service."

Final thoughts? "Silver Sage is a great region, with lots of enthusiasm and support," said Bill. "We are now getting quite a few younger members, which is great. Everyone needs a balance in life. We all work hard and we need something to channel our passion. My wife has been incredibly supportive. I...we... have been very fortunate."

"The only Porsches we still own are the 914 [the first] and this car [the GT2]. Nearly 18 years have passed, and I think it is still the most beautifully designed car Porsche ever built." ●





# More Is Better

PERFECTION IS a relative thing. Just ask Adam about the Garden of Eden. If good is pretty good, and better is, well, better than that, then how about best? How much better than better is best?

Back in 2001, enthusiasts with a hankering for something better than a standard 320-hp 996 could plop down some additional cash for the new and improved Hans Mezger-designed Turbo. At 415 hp, this all-wheel-drive cruiser was like a shot of espresso from the neighborhood Starbucks—a nice jolt. Those who wanted a double shot could opt for the X-50 package, an \$18,000 factory upgrade that would bump the horsepower to 450.

And for those who were unrestrained from either common sense or cash flow, Alois Ruf Jr. was more than happy to oblige, taking a good thing and making it awesome. Significant tweaking included changes in camshafts, turbochargers, intercoolers, and exhaust routing. The water-cooled RUF RTurbo generated 520 horsepower at 6000 rpm, could accelerate from 0 to 100 mph in less than eight seconds, reach a top speed north of 200

mph, and still maintain a modicum of decorum when driven to the local mini-mart for a loaf of bread and a gallon of milk.

The bad news for RUF is that it could only produce two cars a month, a dilemma for all those well-heeled types who believed that patience was not what it was cracked up to be. Opportunity was knocking on Porsche's front door, and Weissach responded.

Looking back at the twin-turbo 993 race car that was sold in street form in minuscule numbers, Porsche thought, why not? But with the 996 platform, the intent was to design a road car that could be modified for the track, not the other way around. Porsche put the Turbo on a fitness regimen that would bring a smile to any CrossFit gym manager.

First, the weight. They got rid of the front drive axle. Who needs all-wheel drive when you've got 12-inch-wide hollow-spoke alloys and racer bits on the rear? And those rear seats—gone. They were puny anyway. What about the brakes? Ceramic was way lighter than steel, very effective, and the yellow cal-

ipers looked pretty cool. There was certainly no need for a sunroof or a spare tire. The result: A net loss of 220 pounds.

Then came suspension changes. Porsche raided the GT3 parts bin. Front MacPherson struts were repositioned, pivot points hard-bushed rather than rubber-bushed, anti-roll bars were made adjustable, and the car was lowered nearly one inch from the Turbo's original stance. Porsche Stability Management and traction control were jettisoned.

Aerodynamically, the GT2 was given a unique front fascia that included huge air intakes, a larger splitter, and a distinctive vent set near the base of the hood to help cool the central radiator. The fixed rear wing mounting structure incorporated scoops that fed air into the K24 turbochargers.

The result was 457 lb-ft of torque that came on at 3500 rpm and lingered to 4500 rpm, plus 462 hp—a dozen more horses than the fabled 959—enough to rattle the dental fillings of those drivers brave enough to test the limits of this car. —DM

  
 To see videos of The White Collection, go to:  
[PCA.org/news/zanzibar-gt2](http://PCA.org/news/zanzibar-gt2)

A stunning color for a stunning car: Zanzibar Red is actually a dark metallic orange with a hint of copper in it. It is inexplicably rare.

