

6. Reportagen

Porsche Club of America

The Road to Thunderhill



Racing driver careers all follow more or less the same path. One devotes one's life to motor sport, one starts off riding go-carts, then proceeds to racing cars and finally lands in a factory team which has the technical and financial resources to ensure victory.

But this is not the only possible career path, as the Lost'N Spaced team demonstrated during the 25-hour Thunderhill race in December of last year. The long-distance race is still very much in its infancy and has attracted a good number of factory teams and some well-known racers such as Derek Hill and Bobby Bonduant Jr. as well as teams from the magazines "Car and Driver" and "Road & Track". What sort of a chance did a Lost'N Spaced team, with a Porsche 911 from 1974 and a mileage of 178,000 there?

But let's start at the very beginning. Captain of the team, Masuo Robinson, acquired his first Porsche, a 1986 Carrera, in November 1992 and used the vehicle in the Autocross, i.e. during a time trial on a course pegged with pylons. Starting in 1998, he gained experience at Clubsport events

organised by the Porsche Club of America during wheel-on-wheel duels with other racing drivers. In 2000, he recruited the first – and most important – member for his team: he married Louise Sousour. Together with her, he used a modified 1970's Porsche 911 from then in motoring.

It was Pete Smith who won Robinson for long-distance races. The basis for this was a dismantled 1974 Porsche 911 which Louise bought and Masuo re-assembled. But we will come back to that later. The first time Pete and Masuo took part in a long-distance race together was at the Thunderhill race in 2003 with a Porsche 944. They were not particularly successful but they reached the finishing line and Robinson coined the motto: what matters in a long-distance race is not winning but finishing the race.

In 2004, the above-mentioned 1974 Porsche 911 was used – up to then, Masuo and Louise had used the vehicle on the street, in the Autocross and during time trials. With a 3.2-litre engine, which they rebored to cater for 3.6 litres and a diverse range of borrowed parts to improve the driving

performance, they got down to business. Apart from changing the brake pads, there were no problems in the race and they finished in second position.

An article about their performance in this race appeared in the magazine "The Nugget" and drew the attention of the television channel ESPN-2 to the Lost'N Spaced team who then wanted to follow the team in 2005. This meant the team had to find extra time for interviews and filming but could also gain some sponsors as a result. This was naturally great news "but the most important sponsor is Louise", Masuo never had any doubts about that.

A mere three months before the major race, preparations could begin on the 911 which had already been used the previous year. In particular, the chassis was completely redesigned and brakes from the 911 Turbo were mounted on the front axle and Boxster brakes were mounted on the rear axle. Robinson also decided to use the five-gear transmission system from his 1986 Carrera in the 1974 Porsche 911 as it would enhance the vehicle's performance. A great deal of work was invested in the petrol supply system.



After a lot of toing and froing, they reached their goal: no more additional pit stops for re-fuelling were required as the switch-over from one driver to another and the fuelling stops occurred simultaneously and it took no longer to fuel the vehicle than it did to change drivers.

The team consisted of a total of four pilots: Robinson, Smith and their racing driver colleagues Neil Jackson and Rich Walton. Everything was perfect – they could now start racing!

On 4 December, 2005, the starter's flag was waved and with an ear-shattering roar, a total of 58 vehicles got on their way. The Lost'N Spaced team entered the race from the twelfth starting place as this was the place which it had achieved in the qualifying round. Things got off to a dramatic start, right from the word go. Shortly before they changed drivers for the first time, Rich informed the team at the pit that the brakes were fading and the vehicle trembling. Initially, nothing unusual was discovered during the pitstop but just before Masuo drove off, Peter discovered (by chance) that the rear axle nut was missing from one side of the car. A more detailed inspection revealed that the input shaft was broken. Masuo could quite easily have lost the wheel.



Would that put an end to racing? No. The very well prepared team not only had a spare engine on hand but a complete vehicle to act as a spare parts carrier. The input shaft was very quickly removed from the spare vehicle but the wheel hub had to be changed as well because the gearing on the spare part did not fit the new vehicle. Unbelievable though it may sound, the Porsche was on its way again within 20 minutes – in place 39.

The next incident was equally unpleasant. When the car drove off after the next pit stop, the mats which are designed to soak up fuel which leaks out remained attached to the hot front tyres and got wrapped around the wheels. This caused the left brake line to be bent and squashed.

However, as night was falling, the team had fought its way up to 10th place and had even reached 5th place when the race was at halfway point. And at break of dawn, the Porsche Crew overtook the lead in the 516th round. But it was a short-lived joy: the oil temperature suddenly started to rise and this can have fatal consequences for an engine without a water cooling function as the oil plays an important role as cooler here. And as if that wasn't enough, unpleasant, metallic sounds were heard in the transmission.

After informing the pit of these faults, Rich was told to reduce the gearshift speed from 6,300/min to 5,000/min. But that was no help. A detailed inspection was performed later on and revealed that the main oil lead was squashed. However, there was no time for this diagnosis during the race and so the team decided to remain in the race. The tension was indescribable. Would the car pull through?

Yes, it pulled through. Neither the engine nor the transmission in its stricken state let the four drivers in the lurch. In joy and jubilation, the team was the first to cross the finishing line and then had a lap of honour to look forward to. When the race was over, an inspection of the vehicle revealed that the bearing on the main transmission shaft was in the process of disintegrating into minute pieces of metal. But apparently, the Porsche was every bit as ambitious as its drivers. And there are still people who claim that cars don't have a soul of their own!

After showering themselves with champagne, one thing was clear for the joyous team: they will be returning to Thunderhill again in 2006.

Source:
Article by John Celona in the March 2006 issue of "The Nugget" published by the Porsche Club of America

Porsche Club Japan

Two reasons to celebrate



This year's parade organised by the Porsche Club Japan had two anniversaries to celebrate: 20 years of Porsche Club Japan and the 10th Porsche Parade. No wonder, the event, which lasted from 26 to 28 May, has become a new highlight in the history of the Club. The sheer number of participants was larger than ever before: 410 Porsche fans came to the Suzuka racetrack and exactly 231 Porsches were counted – three of which were Carrera GTs.

The varied programme of events started on Friday with free driving on the racetrack. In the evening, everyone gathered in the recently built VIP Lounge for the Welcome Party. Also in attendance were representatives of the Porsche Club Coordination. Things really got into swing on Saturday. The diverse range of driving events on this day included taxi trips with Cayman S and Cayenne Turbo provided by Porsche Japan. Particularly popular

were tickets for a quick round on the passenger seat of a Porsche Cup car, which were all sold out within ten minutes.

Equally popular was the idea that the members of the Porsche Club Japan should serve culinary specialities typical of their own part of the country. Which meant there was something there to suit everyone's taste, in the truest sense of the word. The children more than enjoyed themselves with remote-controlled model cars while a large number of the adults indulged themselves with an article from the Porsche Design Drivers' Selection or the Club Shop. A dinner party was held in the evening. After a glass of Porsche sparkling wine, the participants poured into the Sakura Hall. Among them was Dr. Wolfgang Porsche, who, to everyone's delight, was wearing the yellow Club jacket which he had received from the Club. In the course of the evening, he congratulated the



Club on behalf of Porsche AG on their anniversary and presented them with a diorama of historical Porsche models.

Of course, a festival like this would not be complete without the traditional Kagamibiraki. This involves shattering the cover of a container filled with Japanese rice wine with a wooden hammer. Afterwards, everyone – including the President of the Porsche Club Japan – raised their glasses in a toast.

The next day was devoted exclusively to the parade. Nothing could dampen anyone's spirits, not even the clouds which had spread far and wide over Suzuka but which disappeared just in time for the big event. The sight of over 200 Porsches lining up in a queue was impressive in itself, and this alone took over 40 minutes. The parade represented the culmination of this magnificent event, and before going their separate ways, everyone promised that they would be back again next year.

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Porsche Club Chile Sports driving experience



The Porsche Club Chile organised its first driver training event in May. This event brought 16 Porsche drivers and their co-pilots to the Autodromo Pacifico Sport in Santo Domingo. They all enjoyed the curves in the motor-racing circuit and the excellent atmosphere, both on the racetrack as well as at mealtimes in the Rocas Golf Club of Santo Domingo.

The two directors, Eduardo Costabal and Jorge Charbin, deserve a special word of thanks for being so committed to this event. Eduardo Costabal made contact with the three professional pilots who gave us an impressive demonstration of what lies hidden beneath the surface of our cars. Jorge Charbin directed the event and ensured that everything went like clockwork. The members of our PR department had fortunately succeeded in winning sponsorship from Starbucks Café and Michelin.

If you wish to view the photos of our driver training event, you can find them under:
www.porscheclubchile.com

Preparations for the next event are already underway.

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Porsche Club Francorchamps Porsche Francorchamps Days 2006



There is always room for further improvement. The popular Porsche Francorchamps Days, held for the sixth time from 5 to 7 May this year, gave ample proof of this. The rain early in the week initially deflated the enthusiasm of the organisational team. But rumours that this event enjoyed the favour of the weather gods proved correct. On the first day, it was dry and sunny. It was not until evening time (6.05 pm to be exact) that a deluge of rain started pouring down on the racetrack as if the marks left behind by the first races had to be cleaned away for the coming days.

As has always been the case, rapid laps were completed in the Fun, Sport and Racing categories. The spectators had the opportunity to admire more than 3,000 different Porsches over the course of the weekend. Following on in last year's footsteps, an attempt was once again made at a new record for driving as many Porsches as possible

on the race circuit simultaneously. And once again we met with success: with 662 Porsches, we outdid last year's result by four cars.

A quick look at the statistics of previous get-togethers shows that apart from the French and Belgian fans, most Porsche fans at this event come from Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany. The Top 5 of the most dominant Clubs is as follows: 1. Porsche Club Francorchamps, 2. Club Porsche Genève, 3. Club 911.net, 4. Flat Club Nord – Tourcoing, 5. Porsche Club España. And exactly 73 percent of all participants are members of a Porsche Club.

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Porsche Club Seetal Luzern

Porsche weekend in Lusatia



Martin Kammerbauer and groundsman Heinz Arnold did a wonderful job of organising the event and deserve a huge thank-you for what they achieved. And we would also like to take this chance to thank the sponsors for their generous support, once again.

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In late May, the Porsche Club Seetal Luzern organised a two-day driver training event on the EuroSpeedway Lusatia ring in Klettwitz – and managed to attract a large number of visitors. Once everyone had arrived in the Parkhotel Branitz in Cottbus, the programme of events started, offering participants the opportunity to get to know the most beautiful parts of this region of East Germany.

However, first things first: a bus trip to the German capital of Berlin. Naturally, we could not explore this bustling metropolis in all its diversity in a single day but at least we got an impression of the place and had a chance to breathe Berlin air. The following day, a trip to Dresden was on the cards and allowed us to gaze in awe at the Frauenkirche, now fully restored and glistening brightly in the sun. Sunday was a free day and those who had not seen their fill used it to visit the city of Cottbus or Park Branitz with its castle

in the vicinity of the hotel.

On Monday and Tuesday we then had the opportunity to become familiar with using the many happy horsepowers of our beautiful vehicles. The drivers were divided into two groups. Overseen by groundsman Heinz Arnold, the “racing drivers” got to know the ideal line with the braking, turning and apex points under the guidance of an instructor from the Porsche ClubSL racing team. The 4.5-kilometre long GP EuroSpeedway track was new for us and was a welcome alternative to what we were used to. Driving skill and very good vehicle control were required in order to achieve good times. To put it simply, there were ideal conditions for sampling the driving dynamics of our Porsches in full and gaining even more driving practice. As the saying goes, “Practice makes perfect”.

Porsche Club Holland

FAB 50 Tour



The Porsche Club Holland celebrated its 50th anniversary with a three-day excursion to Leipzig and Berlin. On 28 May, 40 Porsches arrived at the brand new Porsche Centre Gelderland in Heteren. Representatives from the Dutch Porsche importer and the directors of the Porsche Centre Gelderland welcomed the participants and gave each one of them a special FAB 50 polo shirt as well as a rally sticker for his vehicle.

Everyone then embarked on the trip to Leipzig, where a hotel had been booked right in the centre for them. The next day, a visit to the Porsche plant in Leipzig was on the cards. After an interesting tour through the production facilities, they all settled down to a relaxing lunch in the visitor's restaurant. Then it was time for everyone's heart to start throbbing. As a special surprise, each person had the chance to act as a Porsche instructor's copilot and chase along the test track in a Cayenne Turbo. It's hard to say what was more impressive: the driving skill of the instructors or the fantastic driving properties of the Cayenne

on asphalt.

On the very same day, the Porsche platoon headed Berlin, and went on a sight-seeing tour of the city the following day. The highlight of the day and the crowning glory of this trip was the Gala Dinner in Berlin's Palace Hotel which was also attended by Mathias Menner from Porsche AG's global Club Coordination. This event also saw Club member Ton van Heuzen receiving a special honour. In recognition of his 50-year membership of the Porsche Club Holland and 50 years as a Porsche driver – during which time he covered over 1.4 million kilometres with a wide range of different Porsche models – the Club and Porsche AG presented him with some gifts.

Ton van Heuzen still feels very much at home in the Club because friendship and passion for Porsche are top on the list of priorities for the Porsche Club Holland. To mark the Club's 50-year anniversary, a special Club Logo was created and will be used by the Club this coming year.



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Porsche Club Monasteria

Anniversary celebratory trip



The Porsche Club Monasteria celebrated its 30th anniversary with a trip to the moated castles in Münsterland. Held on 6 and 7 May, the tour was not just about visiting the tourist attractions and enjoying the scenery but also about solving various tasks. But first things first. The participants started off by meeting in the Porsche Centre Münster, where they met the guest of honour Ilse Nädele, President of the Porsche Club Germany.

At 1pm, the event started and straight away, participants were confronted with the first test: driving a VW Fox into a parking space blindfolded and following instructions given by the front-seat passenger. The test was great fun because it showed just how difficult it is to keep control of a car with one's eyes closed. Everyone then drove in their Porsche through the beautiful scenery to the moated castle Hülshoff, where a guessing game was waiting for them at the castle gates.

This was rounded off by a well-deserved break with coffee and cake in the sunny castle courtyard.

The next destination was the moated castle of Nordkirchen, often called Versailles of the Münsterland. After viewing the castle, the participants had to demonstrate their driving skill in a slalom exercise. The Club members spend the evening in the open-air museum in Mühlendorf, where the Kiepenkerl gave them a guided tour of the museum. The Kiepenkerl is a historical figure, represented by a young man (or Kerl in German) whose job as a wandering merchant in bygone days brought him into the city where he would sell the goods which he carried in a large pannier (or Kiepen in German) on his back, either at the market or by going from door to door. This eventful day was rounded off with a rustic Münsterland buffet in the museum's historical mill.



On Sunday morning, it was time to say goodbye. The beautiful sight of 25 Porsche vehicles in front of the episcopal residence of Münster during the awards ceremony is a sight that all participants will treasure for a long time to come. And everyone will be reunited again at the Porsche Club Germany get-together in Munich in September.

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Porsche Club Freiburg

Spring trip to Piedmont



A spring trip which was as true to its name as this one has rarely been seen before in the Porsche Club Freiburg. Seven spotlessly clean Porsches headed off to the Piedmont in Italy in late-May. They followed a route straight through Switzerland, then via Milan and from there to Alba, exchanging the rain of Germany for an almost mid-summer-like atmosphere.

The first destination on the trip was a highlight in itself: in front of us was truffle in every imaginable size, just waiting to be handled and tested. The Club was a guest at the largest truffle processor in the Piedmont.



It was enjoyable moments like these which ran like a red thread through the entire trip. Let's take Alba as an example. A town infused with the aroma of roasted hazelnuts (this is where Ferrero was founded), a town with charm, with a copious supply of fruit and vegetables, with Dolci, Barolo, Barbaresco, Barbera, Grappa, Salami, ham and other delicacies which one always has before one's eyes, wherever one goes.

Over the next three days, the participants visited many different vineyards (some small and privately-owned; some large and well-known) as well as some outstanding guesthouses in the region.

For example, the legendary Grappa distillery Levi opened its doors to the Porsche Club Freiburg. And the weekly market in Alba offered a memorable shopping experience. It would be impossible to list all the highlights of the trip here.

On Sunday evening, everyone had returned home, feeling like they had just woken up after a magnificent dream. We are already looking forward to the next Porsche dream.

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Boxster Group

In the sign of the crane – the Lufthansa tour of the Boxster Group



When top-class German companies meet head on, the result can only be top-class, as Porsche and Lufthansa can prove. The assistance of a true insider – our pilot and organiser Oliver Antoniou – granted us access to areas not normally accessible to the public during the Lufthansa tour of the Boxster-Group in Frankfurt. After viewing the drive gear department, we also had an opportunity to view the hangars where the airplanes are serviced. We also visited the pilots' briefing area and the simulator department. Two former pilots answered every imaginable question, drawing on their rich, diverse experience in the field.

Our thirst for knowledge was unquenchable. What do the crew cabins in overseas aircraft look like and how do air stewards and stewardesses sleep on these flights? How does an airplane turbine work and how big is it? What does it feel like to sit in the pilot's seat or in the different first class areas of different types of airplanes? We could have stayed until the evening, we had

so many questions to ask. A photo shooting trip on a plane specially provided for us represented the highlight of this fascinating tour.

In the second part of the event, our organiser, Andrea Saabe, "flew" ahead into the heights of the forest in this part of Germany via the German wine route. Nature and wine were the topics to be discussed. In keeping with this, the wine museum in Deidesheim opened its doors at this late hour specially for us. The wine testing, completely in keeping with the motto wine, wine culture and lifestyle, featured a wide range of predominantly regional wines and matching local specialities and was a real treat. The wine testing also featured expert explanations about the various wines as well as information about the history and background and literary "delicacies" all revolving around wine. A relief that we could return to the hotel by foot without requiring our Porsches...

On Sunday morning, the participants went on a tour through vineyards of the surrounding area. Driving through the forest, we explored the largest, uninterrupted forest area in Germany, passing breath-catching rock formations, castles, castles in ruins and palaces. Following lunch in the Wartemberger Mühle restaurant which was praised so highly by the restaurant magazine "Feinschmecker", we all returned home.

Owing to its huge success, we are going to repeat the Lufthansa tour on 26 and 27 August, 2006. You can find more details at the following Internet address:
www.boxster-group.de.

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