

ONE MAN'S Perfect 911

ACCUMOTO'S
CUSTOM-BUILT
FLAGSHIP.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KRIS CLEWELL



Writing about Porsches is difficult.

Over the decades it's nearly all been said, and metaphored. New clichés have been made, forgotten, rediscovered, and discarded. After 50-plus years of development and many evolutions of the 911, we've built a pedestal so high that it's difficult to reach with words. How does a writer emote on something that's been loved more than any other German automobile (or anything German other than beer, for that matter)? How do you take decades of nostalgia, wrap it up, and apply it to such great heights? Oddly enough, I was pondering just this dilemma while walking the paddock at Road America. That's when I saw a slew of colorful liveries stacked together overlooking the Moraine Sweep just after Turn 3 and met Mark White.

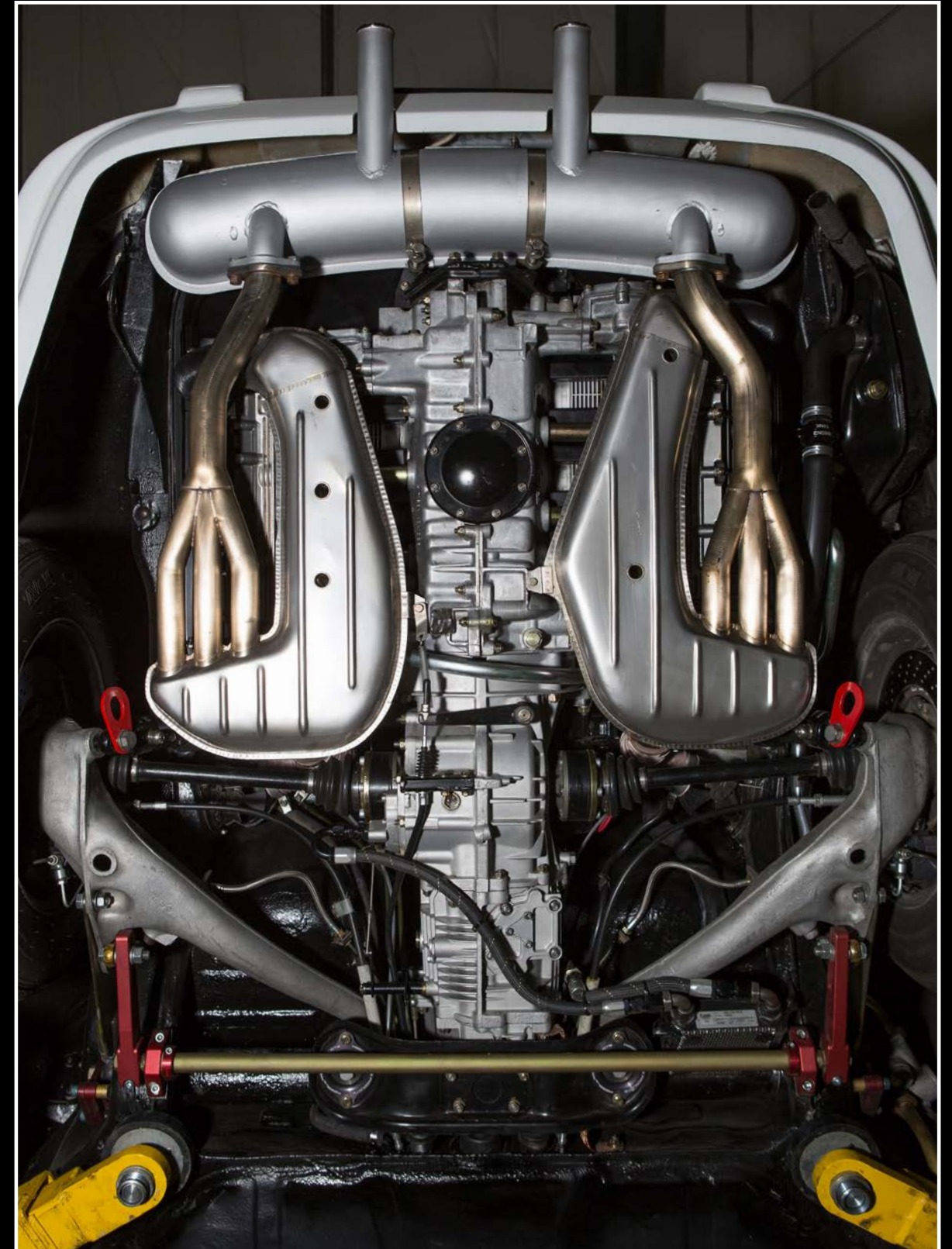


Through the decades, we have seen many Porsches abused by poor taste. In the 1980s, colors like Signal Yellow and Aubergine were cheaply sprayed over with Guards Red. Tails were slapped on. Aftermarket companies rushed to push out products that took a 911 that was "not cool" to one that was. Many of these cars would be extremely valuable today, although it would cost upwards of six figures to strip them of regrettable decisions.

The trend hasn't changed much over the years, as 964 cars are now being turned into vehicles that demand supercar money. Modifiers are freehanding with pneumatic hand saws to make room for flares to fit overpriced

wheels with world-record offsets and widths. Due to the increase in the early car market, good mid-year cars and SCs are being backdated to varying degrees of competency. Mid-year 911 interior/exterior color combos are some of the best, and they are disappearing. The market is diluted and dizzy with backdates.

The white 911 you see here, however, is not among the masses. Rather than put together a cliché build, Mark took his childhood dreams and adult experiences with the 911 culture and built a special car. I knew that I was looking at something unique for the first time in a few years.





IT ALL STARTED for Mark in October of 1973. As a young boy, he parked in front of the television and tuned in to ABC's *Wide World of Sports*. Streaking across the screen were the IROC series 911s. "I was ten at that time, and I was a car nut, but I didn't know I was a Porsche guy yet," recalls Mark. "I just remember seeing that broadcast for the first time. That image was burned into me."

It didn't all come right away. Mark's first Porsche was a 944 S2, and the day eventually arrived when he was able to acquire an unmolested, all-original, 38,000-mile 930. Like any good enthusiast who knows life is too short to own just one, he sold that 930 and purchased another one. Anything but unmolested, it was tuned well enough to torture even the largest of water-cooled turbo 911 egos. Still, the itch continued, and Mark renewed his search for the perfect 911.

That young lust for Porsche eventually turned into a job as head of house at Accumoto Motorsport in Waunakee, Wisconsin. Overseeing years of development has afforded him a perspective that only a shop owner can have. From track prep for clients to maintenance and custom street builds, he's been able to keep a list of what works and what doesn't, for years.

He used that knowledge as he continued his search. Finding a car that had a low enough jumping-in price to anchor the end result he hoped for was difficult. "When you're out looking at the classifieds, you're going to find similar things at the price point we were at," says Mark. "For a long time these cars were cheap, and nobody wanted one, so you never know what you're going to end up with."

Since 2004, Mark had been quietly compiling his must-have list for the 911 he didn't yet have. Undervalued and mistreated for many years, 911s that had not suffered some kind of abuse were hard to find. After months of late nights spent plowing through the classifieds, he finally landed on a standard 911 SC in April of 2012. It was in St. Louis. In less than 24 hours, he was hauling across the interstate to hand over the money and load up a Grand Prix White 1980 911 SC. It was a desirable car, and it was clean. No turbo tail. No sunroof. Unmolested. It was not, however, perfect. It had an aftermarket alarm and evidence of at least three or four stereos. At one point it had a car phone, and under the dash was an empty gun holster sistered to a tube of red lipstick.

With a lower jumping-off point than some of the early cars, it was the perfect platform for what would become the Accumoto flagship. It didn't take long for the guys to dig into the car and begin the transformation. Without the race car clock ticking aloud in their heads, they were free to relax, take their time, and build the 911 that Mark had always wanted to build.

THE VISION FOR THE EXTERIOR of the white 911 started to come to fruition early on. After disassembly, Mark decided to try out some IROC bumpers he had. They fit



Like many of the details on this car, the hood, door handles, front and rear bumpers, decklid grille, and badge are all custom items. Mark White took inspiration from motorsport and merged it with his own personal taste to create the overall look of the reborn SC.

Accumoto does as much of the interior work as possible in-house. All of the upholstery was conceived and crafted just feet from where the chassis was being assembled.



terribly. Labor to make them fit properly would have been prohibitive, so he decided time would be better spent developing his own bumpers. As Accumoto's team grew and evolved, the direction of the white 911 did as well. What seemed to be only possible contracted out was now possible in-house.

The IROC bumper was dissected, and the supports cut down to tuck it in. After a few versions and a lot of massaging, a mold was made of the new custom bumper, and the final version was created. The rear bumper itself sweeps up to meet the decklid and out to reach the flares. This was done amidst the big push to backdate cars, to make them all long hoods.

"We tried to come up with a way to capture the best things that the factory did and roll them into this car without trying to make it look like something it wasn't," says Mark. "It is an SC that is hiding in plain sight. It's right there in front of you in all of its glory, but because of the way the bumpers were sculpted and massaged, it kind of gets lost in time."

Mark was intent about making the right decisions. He didn't want to be someone akin to those who had chopped up a 1972 911S in 1993 to make it look like a 964. Trends change, and building a timeless example of an SC that wouldn't end up being an eyesore for future enthusiasts was paramount. Mark saw the SC flares as a challenge.

"People always get wrapped up in the 9-inch and 11-inch flare on a turbo car or an RSR," proclaims Mark. "They don't realize how much flare there actually is on an SC or a Carrera." With the SC flares retained, Mark turned to his own Accumoto-designed Fuchs and came up with a custom offset and width (15x7.5 front, 15x8.5 rear) to fill up the flares and make the most out of the space constraints. The vent on the decklid and front bumper are each one-of-a-kind pieces formed on a buck from a sheet of flat aluminum. The stripes break up the starkness of the white and frame the one-off Porsche crest adorning the hood.

AN OFTEN OVERLOOKED portion of custom builds is interior coachwork. With so many aftermarket options available, it's easy to relax, order some RS carpet and door cards, grab the average prototipo, stitch in some houndstooth here and there, and call it done. While that usually ends in a pretty nice combo, it just wasn't going to be enough for this 911. With hundreds of yards of custom stitching in the interior, Mark was out to show that nothing was overlooked.

The seats are from a 996 GT3. They are completely reworked and custom stitched, and with heat and lumbar adjustments they are comfortable for long trips. Throughout the interior (and trunk) is a diamond-stitched theme that's subtle enough to be overlooked by passers-by, but appreciated by those with a discerning eye. Custom door panels and armrest sit to the driver's left. At





first, you might assume that manual windows were left to save weight, but grabbing one of the 356 window cranks is a surprise, in that there's a power window hidden within. As it turns out, the power mechanism is lighter than the original manual setup.

Instrumentation was built to spec by North Hollywood Speedometer and Clock. True to keeping the car everything 911 but leaving nothing untouched, Mark removed the horn button on the prototipo wheel in 917 spec and moved it off to the side. The trunk ties the interior in with diamond stitching, custom tool bag, and leather tie-downs.

The performance nature of the car starts to peek through with the suspension brace crossing over the tank and spare wheel. Overall, the interior is a wonderful place to be. Everything tactile belongs exactly where it is and feels exactly how it should. In a testament to



The reimagined SC sits on Avon CR6ZZ tires (215/60R15 front, 225/60R15 rear) with custom Fuchs wheels. It was no small feat getting them to tuck under the flares, but a completely custom suspension designed in conjunction with JRZ helped to make it all work.

planning and execution, it's entirely custom spec but doesn't overwhelm the experience from a driver or passenger perspective.

UNDER THE SEAMLESS EXTERIOR lies not an out-of-touch monster, but a willing participant. In the 911 hot rod world, there's an engine and suspension setup for everyone. The hard part is putting together a compromise between scooping up twisties, getting an adrenaline fix, and still having a car that can be enjoyed before you get to those twisties. While the interior fills that bill perfectly and the exterior looks the part, the Accumoto 911 has just the right mix of mechanicals.

An SC case sits at the core and offers its steadfast and unwavering reliability. Bigger, 98-mm cylinders are filled up with JE 10.3:1 compression pistons rooted to Pauter





Porsche always had great brakes from the factory, but a slight upgrade never hurts. Ducted brakes from a 930 ensure everything comes to a reasonable halt. Tarett hollow sway bars assist with weight transfer.



rods. To help with the higher compression, the engine is twin plugged, allowing more timing advance and better combustion in more extreme conditions. The heads are built with EBS racing valve springs. The engine pulls well and will wind far past levels that are copacetic to your neighbors and well-attuned law enforcement.

As in factory race cars of the past, the engine is trickled down from years of track experience. Mark and his team took their race program and translated what mattered into making the white 911 the perfect back-roads tool. Slide through the Wevo gearbox, and your ears are flooded with the signature PMO/flat six sound partnership. The amount of induction noise is directly relative to grin factor.

Best between 4000 and 7000 rpm, the custom gearing keeps you on torque anywhere your local tarmac takes you. Keeping in the vein of a seamless compromise between track and street, Mark worked with JRZ and developed a specially valved and sprung version of their RS Pro double adjustable coil-overs. Tying the front of the car together is a custom Accumoto 935-style X-brace. Tarett hollow sway bars, 935-style spring plates, and myriad other custom details give confidence-inspiring road adhesion without upsetting the passenger on long trips.

Inherent in every corner of the automotive culture, the clichés will persist. Where they go, and what happens to today's undesirable 911s, remains to be seen. What's comforting is knowing that there will always be those who think for themselves and pursue their own goals, giving us cars like the Accumoto 911. ●

