

velocity

P O R S C H E O W N E R S C L U B

**Regan
Steedman
Makes
History At
Laguna**



**Women
of the POC**



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EDITOR'S NOTE

JOHN ARMSTRONG



What's different about our cover? Beyond the fact that the car is pink?

If you guessed that this is the first time a female driver has ever graced the cover of *Velocity*, you'd be wrong. Carolyn Pappas was on the cover with her 914/6

race car "Bubba" a few years back when she was Member of the Year.

But if you figured that the photo is an homage to the first female driver in POC history to win a Cup Race, then we applaud your perspicacity. Regan Steedman is on a roll in her recently transformed GT5 Boxster, having won both Green races outright at Laguna Seca, followed by a pair of class triumphs at ACS.

Regan's not the only female driver commanding attention in the club. Terry Davis in her article gives historical and current perspective on the prominent women of the POC -- both at the Cup racing level and behind the scenes. And Rochelle Booth introduces us to a few of the really young ladies making their marks in the PDS class.

Cathy Robson, our talented Photo Editor whose dedication to immortalizing the POC in pictures is

unrivaled, graces the issue with her article about a typical day of shooting at the track.

The foregoing compels us to declare that hereafter this be known as The Women's Issue.

There are other revelations between these covers. In our continuing series about member-owned Porsche shops, Andrew Weyman and I introduce you (as if introductions were necessary) to two of the finest: Loren Beggs' *911 Design* and Nick Richards/Michael Essa's *GSR*.

And our favorite guy to be jealous of, Michael Harley, describes his ride in the mind-boggling 918 Spyder prototype -- in Nürburgring.

Don't think we're neglecting racing in this issue. Chet Kolley gives his account of the blisteringly hot weekend at Auto Club Speedway. My article reports on the Laguna Seca contests and fundraiser for the Juvenile Diabetes Relief Fund.

Speaking of JDRF, I have a colleague, Kevin Wehrenberg, whose son Charlie was born with Type 1 Diabetes. Now seven years old, the boy has had to endure twelve finger pricks daily -- and a 3/4-inch insulin pump needle inserted into his buttocks every third day -- his entire life. Kevin has served on the board of the LA Chapter of JDRF for several years and is now president-elect. He thinks he's pretty tough, but when I informed him that the POC had just raised \$30,000 for JDRF for the third year in a row, his eyes brimmed.

On the Cover:
Regan Steedman leads the pack down the Corkscrew en route to victory.

Photo: Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

MIKE TAKAKI



Another year has passed. When I was a kid, I used to complain to my parents about being bored with nothing to do and time passing so slowly. They used to tell me that when I got older I would see just how quickly time flies. Well, there are still 60

seconds to the minute, 60 minutes to the hour, 24 hours in a day, and 365 days in the year by my measurements. Yet, looking back at the year, I acknowledge my parents were right. Time does move faster as you get older. If only driving a race car worked the same way.

We had a good year. Attendance at our events was good and we didn't have a lot of carnage on the track. This was especially true at the Laguna Fundraiser where there was no carnage at all this year. This is a remarkable testament to the quality of driving in the POC. It starts from having a great program with great people, moves to the efforts of the Chief Driving Instructors and all the driving instructors, and culminates in the individual

driving talent exhibited by our members. We as members need to get the word out to everyone we know and tell them what a great organization the POC is. Think about it. There is nothing like the POC anywhere: three levels of competition, three levels of instruction, and some of the best drivers in club racing on the west coast and probably across the country. Many of our members, both men and women, have moved on to higher levels of competition. A read of this issue will tell you that women long ago discovered the POC, and they are excelling in the sport.

Speaking of the magazine, I think you would all agree *Velocity* has been outstanding this year, and kudos need to go to John Armstrong, our editor.

The Board's thoughts are turning toward activities for 2013. We had a planning meeting in November to come up with a vision for the club. Lots of new ideas emerged. There may be some reworking of the PDS program and maybe some tweaking of the Time Trialing events. By the time you read this, the new version of the website should be up and running, or close. I know, I know, it's about time. New committees should be already working and things should be humming along. This is the way it is with the POC. Lots of great people doing great things.

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Women of the POC



Regan Steedman after her first race win at Laguna.

Photo by Eric Oviatt

“So, Regan Steedman, how does it feel to be 23 years old and the first woman to win a Cup Race with the POC?”

“Cool,” was her quite casual response. It was Sunday, August 26, 2012 around noon at Laguna Seca. And I posed the question before Ms. Steedman broke her own record later that day by winning for a second time. I guess that’s worth a double “Cool.”

Regan’s nonchalant reaction was a surprise to me. I thought she would express greater “pride” about beating the big boys. Not quite what I had expected when I thought about an article on women and the POC. I had it all figured out in my head... I would interview the old-timers first. You know, the trailblazers, the hard-core female drivers who broke through the testosterone-filled wall of the Good Old Boys Club. The women who got their hands greasy, were good with power tools, slugged back beers, and spat with the best of them. You know, the women’s libbers – like me. And then I would work my way to the young’uns who had it a lot easier but were still libbers at heart going mano a mano with the men and wanting to score points for estrogen!

Well...

What I found were women who are competitive and courageous – although they may not recognize it – but aren’t looking to make gender statements. Women who originally came with an interest in cars and women who had none to begin with but whose interest grew along with their curiosity, their knowledge, and their skill. Every woman and girl has her own story, her own reason for being here. What they all do share is an excitement and joy in the thrill of the ride and an appreciation of their successes.

I found very early in my investigation that no woman is an island and that behind almost every POC woman is at least one good man. It’s just a fact that women don’t generally wander into auto racing on their own. They first come with husbands, fathers, or male friends. This was no more apparent than in my conversation with Carolyn Rouzier and her best fan, husband Neal. He admits that it was he who got her hooked, and he playfully bemoans the loss of his car to her. They have shared the club and one vehicle since 1988. Together they filled me in on their history.

When they joined, the club was still running slaloms on coned courses in rented parking lots. This was a pre-racing POC in the ‘90s. Everybody drove street cars, and all you needed was a helmet to participate. When the club graduated to big tracks they added a racing suit and a 5-point harness

– no roll bars yet. Carolyn said it was on one of those big tracks that she caught the bug. She joined the POC Board, and she and Neal were Laguna Seca event masters for 12 years.

I asked Carolyn if there was any discrimination. She told me that when she first came in the women were separate. They didn’t run with the men. There was the “Women’s” run group.

Carolyn enjoyed instructing women on the track. She wanted them to be comfortable in the cars and not be intimidated, especially if they had been “dragged” by their husbands. She spoke to me with longing for the simplicity of that time. On Fridays before events they would meet at a given tech station, get their cars teched for the weekend, and then sit around drinking beer and talking cars. All these years later she and Neal still use the same car, still try to make as many events as possible, and are still married. “Barely,” smirks Neal.

Carolyn Rouzier is respectfully and fondly referred to as “old Carolyn” by

And she learned to drive. “Cup School was two of the most memorable weekends of my life,” she tells me.

“Was it scary?” I ask.

“What you learn prepares you. You develop a sixth sense. It is scary but if you are not scared, you’re not sensible. And it is exhilarating! I’d rather do things that scare me than have a life where you don’t do anything.” She then wells up a little and shares quietly, “I think my mother would be proud. She passed away 15 years ago and never got to see me race.” And then she quickly adds with a smile, “She’d get a perverse kick out of it.”

I ask her a girlie question... Hair and makeup? “Once the helmet goes on it’s helmet to hat all day.” You won’t see her bareheaded between sessions. “And a little mascara and blush. I’m still a girl,” she chortles. “But usually I have sweated it all off by the end of the day.”

Mary Anne Melnik always did like quick cars. In 1996 she bought herself a Nissan Twin Turbo with her first paycheck

What I found were women who are competitive and courageous – although they may not recognize it – but aren’t looking to make gender statements.

Carolyn Pappas, current POC Board member. About 12 years ago, “young Carolyn” tells me, she accepted a friend’s invitation to go to the track. “It was probably stupid,” Carolyn, who is single, thought, “but if nothing else there’ll be lotsa guys!” She was smitten – not by anyone in particular but with the energy, the camaraderie, and the fun. She felt welcome.

It was a couple of years before Carolyn could afford her own car, and during those years she offered her services as “pit b---,” she discloses with a laugh. And in doing so, she fostered long-term supportive relationships. “I don’t have a trailer or a tow vehicle, but somehow I always get my car to the track,” she says gratefully. Carolyn admits she is not car savvy. “I can change tires, check my oil, and make good cookies. Damn good cookies.” There is rarely a track event where she does not arrive packing beer and her now-famous cookies, which to this day assure her valuable track support.

as an emergency room doctor. She met her husband Jeff when a mutual friend invited them both to a weekend rally. “Jeff had a killer 930 Porsche Turbo – about 650 horsepower,” said Mary Anne. She was afraid he would kill them both. “We gotta learn how to drive this thing,” she told him, with a subtle emphasis on the *we*. The first time she was allowed to drive it, she got a speeding ticket.

Jeff joined the POC in 1999 and dragged her out to the track one day. Not one to sit around and watch, after that first day she went to the track store, bought a helmet, and never looked back. She was hooked. They shared Jeff’s car, and although they thought they would never get out of the Yellow run group, they both ended up with Racer’s licenses. That was after they “chopped and maimed” Jeff’s beautiful street car for the track.

The car story is actually quite a long one. In a nutshell: The killer 930 was

Women of the POC

stolen, along with their trailer and all their gear. Determined not to miss an event, they purchased new suits, gloves, helmets, etc., plus a new car. Now that's dedication, commitment, and a little bit of crazy. When the stolen car was found three months later Jeff commandeered it and Mary Anne kept the new one. Twelve years and several cars later both Mary Anne and Jeff share a competitive spirit and a passion for driving fast – in their own, separate race cars.

Mary Anne sees the clear influences of nature and nurture in women racers. She believes that if a woman has grown up with a father or family member that loved cars and took her to the track as a child – in short, if she was “raised a grease monkey” – then this early environmental exposure accounts for her desire to be in a race car. “When it comes to us less fortunate souls who did not have this early nurturing,” Mary Anne states, “I believe that genetics takes a more active role. Why else would we strap ourselves in a car and go 160 miles an hour around a race track? Let's remember that most women find this hobby rather curious when coming from the same gender. I find it unusual myself and thus figured my passion and addiction must be in my wiring.” Thank you, doctor.

Mary Anne takes her driving very seriously. She carries a big notebook and plans out her work for the weekend, mapping out the skills she wants to work on and strictly preparing herself physically and mentally before going out on the track. She also admits to being scared: “It's always scary if you put yourself out there beyond your comfort zone, and in order to get better you have to go beyond your comfort zone.” Mary Anne proudly tells me that her first race was a Tribute race, and since she was the only one in her class, she won!

Mary Anne and Jeff both feel that the POC is a huge part of their lives, and gratefully they have given a lot back to the club. Jeff served on the Board and was VP of Motorsports for two terms. Among other volunteer efforts, Mary Anne worked on the Laguna Seca auction for several years. She can also be seen with her camera shooting away at events.

In 2001 Jackie Ginsburg bought herself a Boxster S, and a friend took her to an event at Buttonwillow. She found it fascinating to drive on the track. That same friend introduced her to the POC, which led to her purchasing a dedicated race car – a petrol blue '78 911 SC – which led to her Short Track license, which led to her Time Trial license, which led to Cup School and a Racer's license – all in about two years. An active volunteer, she and Mary Anne Melnik did a great job on



Top: Mary Anne Melnik in her 996 Twin Turbo.

Photo: Cathy Robson/Virtual Access Photo

Top right: Carolyn Pappas

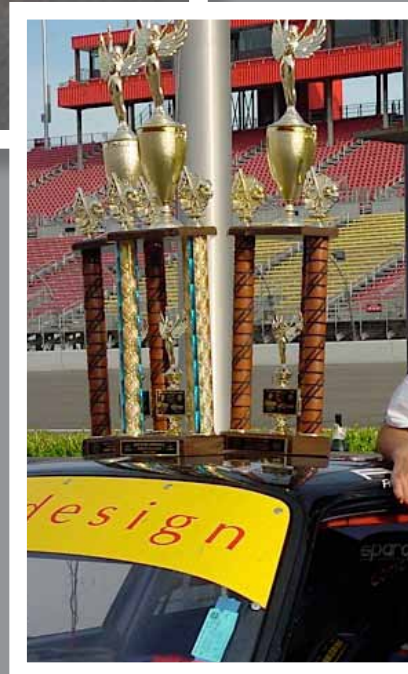
Photo: Cathy Robson/Virtual Access Photo

Above: Carolyn Rouzier

Photo: Cathy Robson/Virtual Access Photo

Right: Mary Anne and Jeff Melnik celebrate a class win at '04 Tribute.

Photo courtesy of Mary Anne Melnik.



the charity auction at Laguna Seca, and that led to her time serving on the POC Board.

Jackie was able to turn her hobby into her work when she was offered the job of marketing manager at Werks II. Currently, her car engine is in pieces in the mechanic's shop, and she is hoping to get it put together so she can get back on the track. Kinda like the shoemaker's kid who needs shoes.

Jackie Liu is sitting behind the registration desk at Auto Club Speedway when I manage to talk with her. She was running autocross with the PCA before her mechanic brought her to the POC five years ago. Last year Jackie was on hiatus from driving due to a house remodel. Not an uncommon theme, especially in these tough economic times. Most people have to prioritize and budget their play time. Competitive driving is expensive. During that time she still came to the track, supported her guy Ron (whom she met racing), and volunteered.

Jackie, an architect, designed cars as a kid. Now she designs buildings and is one of those drivers who is happy to drive exclusively in the Performance Driving Series. She concedes that she is neither a motorhead nor a fan of high speeds on the big tracks, and since they are only able to tow one car, she gets to drive PDS and Time Trials and he gets to Cup race. She is competitive and in the past has done very well in her class. Like so many others, she enjoys not only the driving but also the people.

Newer members to the club, Rochelle Booth and Lorelei Jungwirth came with their husbands. When I spoke with both of these women they were at racetracks getting some seat time.

Lorelei's husband Peter has a contagious passion for driving, and she now feels "a high school-like excitement," with their suitcases always packed and ready for any opportunity to hit the track. She is very proud to have just gotten her PDS license and admits to being fearful at high speeds. For now, she is content to take it slow. We'll see.

Rochelle, an accountant, loves cars, loves to win, and admits to being "too competitive." At 15 she was street racing in her Camaro Z28. It was she who brought her husband Craig to the track after gifting him with driving lessons. Although she is adamant that she doesn't feel any discrimination as a female, she also takes great pleasure in being a woman and winning her class.

I spoke with Regan Steedman and 17-year-old India Favell together.

Young'uns. Both were introduced to driving by their dads. Regan, 14 years old

at the time and playing competitive softball, saw this as an opportunity to spend quality time with her dad Jim when he built himself a 914 and took up the sport after a layoff. That is, "When my mom let him go back," she states.

Jim confesses, "Her move from softball to racing was actually a self-serving act on my part. I didn't want to suffer through the withdrawals that I had seen so many dads experience when their daughters gave up sports or headed off to college. My solution was to buy her a 914 on her 16th birthday and to take her to the track with me."

When he presented her with the car, he told her, "If you want to keep it, you need to drive it." And so, she did. Having natural talent, a competitive spirit, a willingness to work hard, an ability to focus on detail, and plenty of practice, she has indeed grown over the past eight years.

"Did you ever feel discrimination because you're a girl in the POC?" I ask.

"No," she responds unequivocally. "Honestly, I've been around so long, and they've seen me grow." She notes that when she drives with other clubs she does feel a reaction to her petite size and hot pink car. "But it only lasts a lap or two on the track," she adds with a twinkle.

Regan says she doesn't feel competitive with her dad. Recently, she has competed wheel-to-wheel with the driver who has stolen her attention away from daddy, Eric Oviatt. She smartly adds that instead of feeling competitive with Eric, she'd like to be more like him. "He's a better driver," she admits, smiling.

She mentions that she has learned patience and discipline within the sport. And when I ask about her goals, she says she would love to take it to the next step. India? NASCAR? These seem doable to me.

Regan shows a wisdom, grace, and attitude beyond her years. Her willingness to act as a role model for both girls and boys is admirable. She shows this side in her support and encouragement of India who quite obviously already looks up to her.

India admits to not having done anything like this before but also readily claims an innate talent and a desire to be as good as Regan. "It looks fun," she gushes. "Winning is fun!"

I spoke with calm, cool, and collected 24-year-old Alicia Trigeiro, who was in her first Time Trial event at Auto Club Speedway under triple-digit temps. She and her 22-year-old sister Julia alternate going to events and sharing a car with their dad Greg.

Although Alicia is competitive, for now she is content to work on improving her



skills. She has no desire to rubberneck and check the time sheets to see whom she has to beat. The only one she feels competitive with is her sister, and she says that they each seem to have different strengths that allow them to shine on different tracks. Well, I do look at the time sheets, and since we were driving in the same run group I happen to notice that her times improved quite dramatically, while mine... not so much. This must be one of her tracks.

The younger female drivers don't see themselves as breaking barriers. They are naturally competitive and would not be here if they were not. This kind of activity by its nature does exclude the faint of heart, but they don't even see themselves as courageous, and they don't want to be singled out due to gender. Most agree, young and old, that once you put the helmet on you are not a male or female – you are a driver.

I started off this article with my query to Regan regarding her reaction to her first win, and I was taken aback by her casual retort. When questioned a month later, having had the time to truly reflect on her accomplishment, her response had greater depth.

Laguna Seca was a lot of firsts for her. First pole position and first number one finish. She admitted to the adrenaline rush that started with hearing her name announced as pole-sitter. "Knowing that I had qualified before every other person on grid was one of the greatest feelings," she said, and it did not leave until she passed out in her hotel that night.

She divulged that it didn't even cross her mind at the time that she was the first woman to win a POC race. She didn't even care. But it finally hit her: "Now, the feeling of being the first woman to win a race is very rewarding and humbling. A lot of hard work, dedication, and support have gone into that win. There are great women that currently do and have raced in the POC, and to be the first one is a feeling I can not describe. I hope that this is a moment where other females out there, young or old, think, 'I can do this too!'" Ahhh...women's lib lives on.

I think it may also be interesting to see if these young women continue to drive as their lives become more complicated with career, marriage, and children. We have father drivers who have young children, but our female drivers either have grown children or no children. Gender roles may affect this equation in the future, but only time will tell.

It is not possible to do an article on POC women without covering the woman who has been involved for almost 20 years and has never driven a car on a track, the one and only Laurie Taylor. In 1993 she was



Above: Laurie Taylor and Sister Katherine (Katie James).

Right: Author Terry Davis.

Photos: Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo.



introduced to the POC by her then boyfriend, a past club president. Although she had no interest in driving, it is no surprise that she did find her way to the registration desk and for the next three years worked as a volunteer, looking for ways to streamline the process. The boyfriend left the club, but the club kept Laurie, and she eventually became Administrator – the club's only salaried employee. With her calm, patient, non-judgmental and understanding personality, and her heart that can contain the entire membership, Laurie is truly the POC mother.


Laurie feels that women have come a long way within the club. Early on there were a few female members who came with more attitude than skill, which unfortunately hurt the rest of the female membership. She feels they made it harder for women to gain acceptance and respect overall. Laurie is especially supportive of the female drivers. I, for one, have felt and appreciated that support and encouragement. When asked about the current crop of female members Laurie speaks very enthusiastically: "They are absolutely terrific. We have a lot more families in the club now and a lot more kids driving, and it makes them better drivers. The family that drives together, stays together!" she exclaims. Spoken like a true mother.

We cannot forget the other women behind the scenes. What would *Velocity* look like without the photographic talents of Cathy Robson? What would a track day be without our Race Steward Katie James and her stellar crew? And the wives, girlfriends, mothers and

daughters who, event after event, lug all the comfortable accoutrements to the loud, hot, cold, windy, dusty, dirty, greasy tracks just to support their loved ones? They take pleasure in the joy that is contagious, and they memorialize the successes -- and the mishaps -- on camera. We also need to mention the devoted wives and mothers who hold down the home fort and schlep kids to all their sport and social obligations. The drivers are so lucky to have this understanding and support. It is indeed a family affair.

Neal Rouzier tells me that no less than 100 guys over the last 20 years have come up to him and said, "God, I wish my wife did this, too!" Neal says that it's Carolyn he focuses on now, and he does everything he can for her because she gets such a thrill out of it. I know my husband Andrew feels that way. He is more proud of my little successes than I am. He is so happy to share this with me.

Carolyn Pappas sees driving as a metaphor for life: "Always look farther down the road." Will she know when that road ends? "When I stop feeling the joy and excitement when I see my car Bubba, and I stop doing the happy dance, then I'll know it's time" But she's nowhere near that time.

And me? Well, I am still a women's libber – although I am less sure what that really means. And I am still working on turning my fear into excitement, and I do see myself and all the women I spoke to as courageous, daring, and exciting. And when I see myself through my husband's eyes, I'm a damn good driver! And I now know that yes, indeed, once the helmet goes on you're not a man or a woman – you are a driver. Cool! 

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First and Foremost, Laguna Seca

Words: John Armstrong



Can there be any doubt about it? Our annual sojourn to Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca is the highlight of the POC calendar. There are several reasons why we love it so: the track layout, with its renowned Corkscrew; the asphalt, smooth as a baby's bottom; our enormously successful charity fundraiser for the Juvenile Diabetes Relief Fund; and this year in particular, the foggy mornings and low-70s highs on the Monterey peninsula that give respite from the sweltering, year-long summer we've endured in the southland.

At Friday's Drivers Meeting led by eventmaster Drew Waterhouse, it's quickly apparent that we'll have another hit Laguna Seca weekend. One hundred eleven drivers have registered—a solid turnout -- and that means money will be made for JDRF. Practice Friday is a gas as we all limber up and use the rest of the rubber on our old tires. When the track goes cold, the donating begins with the \$20 track walk. Our customary guide, POC Chief Driving Instructor Marty Mehterian, is joined this time by pro driver Kelly Collins. Kelly's participation is a coup for the club, since he is Chief Instructor at the Skip Barber Racing School here.

It's always amazing to walk the track. The camber, you realize when it's underfoot, is much greater than you thought. You can go faster through Turn 5. The Corkscrew is so steep it's an effort to walk back up, and Kelly informs that it drops 60 feet in 360 feet of track. One of his favorite spots to pass is right after Turn 8, below the Corkscrew, on the inside. Many are still gathering their wits after the drop, but there is a lot of grip there as the car compresses. He urges us to hit an early apex in Turn 9

and get to full throttle on the track out. It's one of the fastest turns on the course (along with Turn 4), and if you get to the inside of 10 before the other guy, you're obviously in very good shape. At every track out, do hit the edges of the blue and white rumble strips, but don't linger because they get bigger and farther apart towards the end, and they'll slow you down -- except in Turn 5, where they're just paint, and you can go all the way up them. The whole walk is full of such revelations, the most sobering of which is those red apex bumps won't simply bend a wheel, they can total a car's suspension.

Saturday morning's Drivers Meeting, in which flags, sound levels, and track entrance/exit are again explained, is a focused but amusing affair. Track steward Katie James, urging everyone to pay attention to the surface flag, remarks, "We practice Darwinism. The slow squirrels get weeded out."

Dave Jansen shakes the furled black flag at the group: "How many of you went to Catholic school?"

Carolyn Pappas, the club's liaison with JDRF, explains that parade laps at lunch will sell for \$20 per person. "If you take a passenger, you need two seats. You can't just tie in with a rope." The auction dinner is \$20, and there will be a \$20 wine tasting. "Tasting," she admonishes, "not just gulping, gulping." Her parting shot: "You guys have fun and spend lots of money."

I talk to a couple of drivers after the meeting. They are psyched. Carl Tofflemire, who had a little fire in his new Cup car on Friday, shrugs it off as a "barbeque." Rob Tachovsky is sort of



The Corkscrew collects its toll from Jan Sussman.
Photo by Ryan Holst

glowing. He tells me that everything has come together for him during Friday's practice.

In the Red qualifying, Jesse Menczer wins pole in 1:31.226. And then his transmission breaks while driving in to the paddock. Rival Dan Aspesi, whose own engine blew on Friday, qualifies #2 in a car borrowed from his customer Brandon Griffith.

As the cars grid up for the race, we also find Jesse in a borrowed car. It's time trialer Jeff Stahl's nearly identical car, conveniently set up by BRR with the same specs as Jesse's.

Jesse heads for the #1 position on the starting grid, but is quickly disabused of that notion by the course marshals, who send him to the back to start DFL. Dan handily wins the overall race (and his GT2 class) by 14 seconds, but second place goes to Jesse. Amazingly, in a 12-lap race, Jesse manages to pass 20 other cars.

Loren Beggs takes third overall and first in GTC-4. The real battle of the Red Race, though, is in GT3, which has become a super-competitive class. Eric Oviatt defeats perennial contender John Gordon by more than six seconds in his super-Boxster project car. This is the first race for the car since Eric converted it from a BSR car over a period of many months, and Friday was the first testing day. The car felt great right out of the box. As Eric explains, "We installed a larger 3.6-liter engine, new ECU, new transmission, new suspension, new brakes, new wheels, new tires, new wing, new bumpers, and the list goes on. The chassis, seat, steering wheel, and suspension sub-frames were about the only items carried over."

"The car needed virtually nothing but fuel and tires," Eric continues. "We didn't have to make any suspension set-up changes, any tire pressure adjustments, or any repairs during the weekend. The time and engineering that went into the car on paper beforehand really worked as planned."

In GT1 Carl Tofflemire, and not his car, catches fire, and he defeats Jeff Melnik by more than 13 seconds.

In the Saturday Orange qualifier, Rob Tachovsky in his V3/R5 car wins his first pole ever in 1:38.097 when 2011 Driver of the Year Mike Monsalve is sidelined by a broken axle. Monsalve manages to get that repaired, only to discover that he also has a bad right rear wheel bearing. It is amazing to watch the camaraderie in the club as Vali Predescu and Jeff Erickson work tirelessly to get Monsalve on the track by race-time. It's especially impressive to see that they have brought all the parts and tools necessary for this big job.

Rob tells me that in 2011 he finished fourth in class at Laguna and his goal is to beat one of the guys from the previous year: Monsalve, Steve Alarcon, or Athan Aronis. With Aronis absent this weekend and Monsalve starting DFL, his prospects are bright.

“It didn't even cross my mind that I was the first woman to win a POC race. At that point I didn't even care. I was just excited to start my first pole and finish my first race at the top.”

"I knew Monsalve would be the big bad wolf coming from the back," recalls Rob. "I got a great start, gapping the field by almost a second. And then it happened, a full course caution. Eddie Marseilles had passed Alarcon and was just behind in second, with Alarcon in third, and Monsalve lurking in the not-so-distant past..."

The yellow is the result of Dave Bruder's car breaking at the Corkscrew.

"Lap after lap we were under full caution," Rob continues. "They couldn't get the car off the track at the bottom of the Corkscrew in time, and that is how it ended." Maybe not the way Rob intended to earn his first race victory in the POC, but a win is a win.

The timing is perfect for Rob's glory: "We only live a little over an hour from the track. I always invite about 100 people, and no one ever shows up. This time about 25 family and friends made the trip, motivated by the wine tasting at the fundraiser, I'm sure. It was great to have my wife Tracie and our two kids Kylee, 11, and Jerett, 10, there. Jerett was a US Grand National Champion at seven years old in kid karts, and I hope he joins POC some day racing against Dan Aspesi's kids, along with Drew's boy. That would be fun to watch. My daughter is my biggest fan and is the most amazing pit crew around."

In other Saturday Orange Race classes, Vali Predescu continues his season-long domination in GT4 despite being outqualified by Steve Vandecar. Francesco Tedeschi takes R6 handily, and Keith Hulley edges Rick Mills for the R7 win.

The big story is in the Green Cup Race. Regan Steedman, who has been improving every race in the BSR class, shows up with her Boxster considerably lightened and sporting a set of v710 Kumhos. It has become a GT5 car. Regan, who is five feet tall and tips the scales at under 100 pounds, is nervous because, “Last year I left Laguna Seca with a car that unfortunately didn’t leave as it came. I had buried it into the tire wall at the bottom of the Corkscrew. It was the first time that I had come across a section of a track that I was not comfortable with.”

No stranger to offs, last year Regan won the club’s annual John Deere Award, which is given to the driver who does the most plowing. The year before, her dad Jim won. No driver covets the award, but in the Steedmans it was indicative of their innate aggressiveness and willingness to test the limits. This season both father and daughter have been consistently strong performers – and finishers.

On Friday she regained her confidence, slowly. “The first few laps I did this year I was about five seconds off (all in the Corkscrew) my pace from last year. After that first session I realized that it wasn’t the

track or my line that needed to be changed. It was my confidence. As the first session got going lap after lap I hit the Corkscrew harder and harder until I was not only running my last year’s pace, but exceeding it. After my second practice session I had a feeling that I was going to have a great race.”

Eric Oviatt, who has been working with Regan all season on car and mental preparation, tells me, “We had started planting the idea of an overall pole position in her head on Friday afternoon when she was topping the time sheets. She came out on Saturday really determined to make it happen.”

And then she actually does it, qualifying on pole with a time of 1:44.418. It’s her first pole in the three years she’s had a Cup racing license. BSR drivers Dave Potter and Darin Kajioka both qualify less than half a second behind her, and four other drivers qualify in the 1:45-range.

It looks to be a super-tight race. But Potter’s car fails him after one lap, and Regan simply goes on a tear. Driving fast and clean, little by little she moves away from the pack. At the checkered flag, she’s all alone, finishing five seconds ahead of Mark Foley.

Regan Steedman has just become the first woman in POC history ever to win a race.

Foley takes first in the very tight BSR field of 16. Rounding out the BSR podium are Darin Kajioka and Leland McCarthy. Almost unnoticed in the shadow of Regan’s achievement, another woman Carolyn Pappas wins the GT6 class. It’s a remarkable victory in its own right -- she has defeated the distinguished Marty Mehterian.

As Regan pulls into the paddock, a small crowd (the only kind we ever get) is waiting: her proud dad Jim, Mark and Laurie Hergesheimer, and Eric Oviatt. She gets smothered in hugs.

Regan later says, “It didn’t even cross my mind that I was the first woman to win a POC race. At that point I didn’t even care. I was just excited to start my first pole and finish my first race at the top. That has been my goal since I started in 2006. Now, the feeling of being the first woman to win a race is very rewarding and humbling. A lot of hard work, dedication, and support have gone into that win.”

And according to Eric, “We’ve all known that she has that great determination in the races, and this was just a matter of time. She has obvious driving talent, and the



Drivers meeting in the morning fog.
Photo: John Armstrong

Rob Tachovsky hugs daughter Kylee after notching his first career win.



Photo: John Armstrong



car control in the heat of battle is great, but now her strategy and knowledge of what the car is doing during varying conditions is starting to take her to the next level.”

The Saturday night trackside festivities under the big tent are a blast. There's a fine buffet dinner, and the wineries' samplings are top drawer. Drew Waterhouse, with exuberance nonpareil, presides over an auction featuring a hundred or so items donated by club members and sponsors. Porsche Cars North America tops the donors with a couple of free high performance driving classes at their Birmingham school.

When the overall take is tallied, the POC has raised \$30,000 for JDRC. Pretty incredible.

While the rest of us are gulping wine, Bruce Todd, principle of BRR, drives three hours roundtrip to his shop, drops a transmission out of a spare car, and gets it back to the track at 5 a.m. Crew chief Brian Smith spends all morning installing the gearbox in Menczer's car, and the car is finished in time for Jesse to qualify for Sunday's Red Race. But Aspesi takes the pole anyway, edging Menczer for the honor by .144 second. Drew qualifies third. As the race begins, Jesse, who figures he has a little less wing than Dan and will be faster in the straights, decides to go for broke on still-cold tires in the down-bending first turn. He just gets around Dan on the outside, then takes the inside into Turn 2.

After that, Jesse is never challenged, and he wins the overall race and GT2 by seven seconds. Aspesi takes second and Waterhouse, third. Loren Beggs again takes fourth overall (first in GTC-4). In GT3, Eric Oviatt finishes four-and-a-half seconds ahead of John Gordon, who nips Duane Selby in a photo finish. The GT1 crown goes to Jeff Melnik, who repays Tofflemire by



Jesse Menczer (left) starts to close the door on polesitter Dan Aspesi (right) in Turn 1 on Sunday.
Photo: Jussi Pekka Mantere



Regan Steedman emerges from her car after becoming the first woman ever to win a POC race.
Photo: John Armstrong

beating him by 17 seconds. Geoff Steinbach slips into second, ahead of Tofflemire.

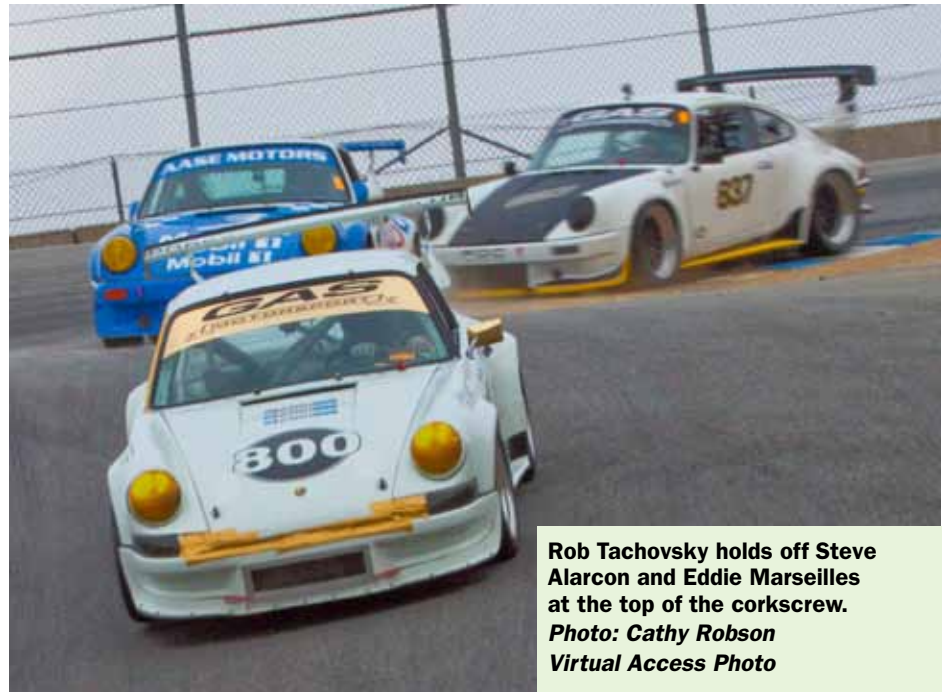
In the Sunday Orange Race qualifier, Monsalve, the mild-mannered assassin, rebounds with exhaust barrel blazing. He takes the pole in 1:36.956. Tachovsky takes off-pole .3 second behind – and that's a full second faster than his Saturday qualifying time. Tachovsky decides to consult with Kevin Roush for a little pre-race pep talk: "He told me to haul ass around Turn 2, drag race him to Turn 3, and he will have to lift, allowing me to take the lead. I did and it worked sure enough, just like the plan... now what? We hadn't talked about anything further.

"Lap three, he tucked in behind me at 11 and got a great run, passing me just before 2. I followed him for a couple of laps, and coming into 2 I faked a pass to the outside and dove to the inside. I thought I had cleared him, but I had really run him two wheels off into the dirt on the exit of 2. After that, he drag-raced me to 3, and that's when he retook the lead.

"My tires started getting a little greasy from pushing so hard, and I had a catch coming out of 2 the next time around, saved a big tank slapper out of 5, and then lost it coming out of 5 on the following lap. Dropped two wheels off and snap-hooked it into the kitty litter on the inside of 5. Game over. It was the greatest time!"

Alarcon takes second overall (and in V3/R5), and Vali Predescu drives his GT4 car to third overall (and his second GT4 victory of the weekend), followed by Eddie Marseille (V3/R5), Steve Vandecar (GT4), and Jim Steedman (V3/R5). It's apparent that the GT4 and V3/R5 classes are a great mix for the Orange Race. Brad Keegan takes R6 as his rival Tedeschi for some reason gets bumped up a class to GT4 for Sunday's battle. And once again Keith Hulley emerges on top in R7.

Sunday's Green Race is set to be a thriller, with everyone excited to see if Regan can achieve another historic victory. In the qualifier, she beats her pole-winning time from the day before with a 1:44.401, but qualifies third behind Drake Kemper, a newly licensed up-and-comer in BSR who stakes a 1:43.780, and Mark Foley. The race gets underway, and Drake holds his lead for seven laps, while right behind him Mark and Regan jockey for second. In lap five, Regan sneaks past Mark going into Turn 5. In lap eight in the Corkscrew, Drake misses his downshift into second gear and spins. Regan passes him, Foley passes, and so does Nathan Johnson. Drake battles back from his mistake, passes Nate on the inside at Turn 5, then goes after Mark. The two engage in close combat for three laps



Rob Tachovsky holds off Steve Alarcon and Eddie Marseilles at the top of the corkscrew.
Photo: Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo

before Drake finally gets by on the inside at Turn 6. But Regan is long gone by this time, and she wins the Orange Race by more than five seconds. The first female race winner in club history has struck again! Drake picks up his first-ever BSR win, with Mark and Nate, respectively, completing the BSR podium.

I ask dad Jim Steedman what it feels like to watch his daughter race so successfully. "It's like an intense adrenaline rush from start to finish," he tells me. "I know what she's doing in that car, and it just makes me smile. Her wins at Laguna Seca are very exciting to her mother and me. But I can't say that we're surprised. She is fast, she is confident, and she doesn't like giving it up."

Thirty drivers run in the White Time Trial group this weekend. Under Steve Radenbaugh's management, the new policy allowing passing anywhere on the track with a point-by is working, and all the drivers get plenty of clean laps in the practice sessions. In Time Trial competition, Jesse Menczer takes Fastest Time of the Day both Saturday, with his Red Race qualifying time of 1:31.226, and Sunday, with a 1:32.332. Because he actually competes in the two-lap format Sunday, that time goes down as a new GT2 course record. Craig Ames tops the always-tough NP crowd on Saturday with a record-breaking 1:37.876, only to have Fred Chin eclipse the day-old record Sunday in 1:37.439. Other record-setters are Kevin Roush in V3 with a 1:35.2 on Saturday, Mark Bray, who breaks the G1 record twice (his best is a 1:52.387), and Allan Slocum who does the same in LS (with a 1:54.895 best). Finally, Paul Young, Jr. breaks the GT5 record with a 1:45.991

Other standout Time Trial-only performers include Geoff Stahl, who takes second in GT2 twice (after Menczer), with a best of 1:34.529, Garry Grant, who posts a best of 1:36.6 to win GT1 twice, Robert Todd in VO with a 1:36.394 win, Jay Barton with two wins in NI, and Chet Kolley, who wins CSX twice.

By any metrics the weekend has been outstanding. Just like last year, we've brought in a good haul for JDRE. And unlike last year, nobody has wrecked; nobody has been DQ'd for sound. It has been a weekend of memorable firsts. Seven time trialers have set records, five Cup racers have won their first overall or class victories, and one petite 23-year-old in a pink Boxster has engraved her name in the POC annals.

As I drive down the 101 South quietly celebrating the fact that my car is intact after a weekend of racing, I'm jolted out of my reverie by a THWAP! I quickly look in my rear-view mirrors, fearful that the car has just fallen off the trailer. Instead, I glimpse the trailer's left fender launch directly into 60 mph traffic. Cars swerve to avoid the careening missile. Miraculously there's no pile-up. I pull to the side of the highway and wait for someone to stop and pummel me. When the coast is clear, I assess what has happened. One of the trailer tires has exploded, and the steel belts have unraveled so violently that they've blown the fender clamps completely off. I run back and retrieve the fender from the center median, toss it in the pickup, jack up the trailer, put on the spare, and head back down the road.

Add that to the list of firsts. **■**

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GT3

911 DESIGN

Words: John Armstrong Photos: Cathy Robson/Virtual Access Photo

It was 5:30 in the morning on a Sunday when Loren Beggs got the call from the alarm company: "Your burglar alarm and your fire alarm have gone off."

He quickly dressed and drove over to 911 Design, the Porsche service and maintenance business he'd carefully nurtured for two decades. He arrived in time to witness a disaster. "The fire department was there, the door was cut open, smoke was coming out of the shop," he recalls, "and that was that." There were 25 cars in the shop. The fire destroyed five and damaged several others, including race cars owned by POC members, and both of Loren's personal race cars. Investigators afterwards determined that the fire had been caused by a car that a customer had left at

the shop Friday afternoon. Unbeknownst to Loren, the car had been improperly wired by another shop. In the wee hours of Sunday morning, it had self-ignited.

But Loren, a thorough and careful man, had a good insurance policy in place. The first thing he did was make sure that all his customers received full value for their cars.

After that, Loren pondered the future. The shop was in ruins, but he had insurance money. "I thought, well why not try to make something out of this?"

Long before owning a Porsche, I had a mental image that Porsche shops were as orderly as hospitals. White-gloved technicians in spotless white coats worked on cars in environments so clean you could

eat off the floor. Having visited several Porsche shops over the last six years or so with my car, I now realize that is seldom the reality. Often garages are so overcrowded with cars that they have to move three or four just to get a car onto their lift. Old and new parts are intermingled and scattered about the premises, and oil and grime abound. Don't get me started about customers having to unload their cars on the street with traffic whizzing by their ears.

But when you drive onto the vast, uncluttered parking lot of Loren's 911 Design compound in Montclair, you instantly experience an overwhelming sense of relief as you realize that you will not be mowed down by a distracted tweeter while loosening the tie-downs on your



The luxury of spaciousness in the Inland Empire.

trailer. You gaze in amazement at the sheer size and newness of the building, replete with showroom windows and an impressive marquee that can be seen from the I-10 Freeway. The car entrance is cavernous. You drive your car straight into the heart of the shop. Nobody has to move anything. There is no clutter.

The cars inside are parked discreetly along the walls. Of course you recognize some of them immediately: Dan Davis' 800-horsepower Turbo, Gary Tolar's Cup, Doug Baron's Cup, the Melniks' Cup and 996 Twin Turbo, Loren's personal Cup and his Cayman beast. The lighting is bright, the floor is polished, and everything is gleaming. Mechanics methodically work on cars in the background.

My impression as I enter the waiting room is that the place feels like a real business. The receptionist ushers me into Loren's tidy office, and I find him calmly poring over Porsche Motorsports parts charts on his desktop computer. As he walks me through a tour of the place, he explains how it all came about, post-fire.

With the insurance money, he took advantage of the opportunity to move. He had a few criteria: "I wanted a place with fire sprinklers. I had ideas about expanding. I had ideas about having a body shop. And that's what made sense at the time."

So he went out and bought this 31,000 square foot building, installed six lifts, a state-of-the-art paint and body shop, a complete fabrication facility, and an engine dyno. (One assumes he rested on the seventh day.)

He estimates that he services and maintains 75% street cars and 25% race cars, which he thinks is a good balance. He owns the \$17,000 factory PIWIS tester for diagnosing all the cars, and he pays \$5,000 per year for the software subscription. "Other shops don't have this," he states, "and quite frankly, I don't know how they diagnose a problem when the 'check engine' light comes on."

As for trackside support, 911 Design is present at almost every POC Cup racing weekend and many PDS weekends. You can't miss the big semi-trailer with the 911 Design logo embellishing both sides, and the big white tent that shades every car, driver, mechanic, and tool chest in his flock. Loren offers race car transportation and full weekend support to his regulars, and he cheerfully welcomes the spontaneously needy.

Things have worked out well enough for him to have 12 full-time employees, all of whom receive health insurance and paid vacations. And they are loyal. Kirk Kunza, his engine specialist, has been with him 15 years. Mechanic Mike Fox has logged 20.



Hungry? You can eat off the shop floor here.



The semitrailer can transport five cars to the track.

It occurs to me that an enterprise doesn't become successful just through an insurance settlement, and I ask Loren how he built the business. As I expected, having heard the same from a number of shop-owners, he kind of fell into it because of a youthful love of Porsches.

Although his mother wouldn't let him own any dirt bikes or go-karts while he was growing up in Upland in the '60s and '70s, his father used to take him to car races. One day a Porsche caught his eye in the parking lot at Ontario Speedway, and a switch was thrown in his head. "I decided I had to own a Porsche." He was 18 when he bought his first one, a 1970 911 T.

He had barely scraped together enough money to buy the car, but he couldn't afford to maintain it. A mechanic

advised him to change the timing chain tensioners, but he didn't, and a year later the engine blew up. Loren took the lesson to heart, and he began teaching himself to work on his own Porsche.

When he turned 21, he bought a \$55,000 house in Upland with a converted two-car garage -- converted the other way. Instead of a normal kitchen, he cooked everything on a barbecue outside. He made a little money off a rental unit in the front of the house, and he started a dog-training school. He also bought the second Porsche of his life, a '75 U.S. Carrera with a whale tail.

During that time he made two discoveries that would set his life trajectory. First, someone told him that you could go to Riverside with a club, put on a helmet, and drive on the big track with your own

Porsche. "I just said, 'Wow.'" He joined the POC, was assigned an instructor, and out he went. He remembers the instructor telling him on Turn 9 that he was wide enough if he could reach out his arm and touch the wall. "It was such an overwhelming thing," he recalls.

In the early '90s the POC didn't have insurance to conduct formal races, but the club was just starting to get around that hitch by conducting "gridded practices." The term was a euphemism for a race without the checkered flag thrown at the end. Loren participated in the first of these. Thus began a twenty-five year racing career that reached a high point a couple of years ago when he and Doug Baron campaigned a Cup car in the American Le Mans series.

The second life-changing discovery occurred when he bought a 1970 911 E for \$6,000, spent \$1,000 fixing it up, and sold it a month later for \$10,000. Realizing he could make money doing this, he set up a little operation in his garage. At that time, you could buy and sell up to six vehicles a year in California without having to register as a business and pay those taxes and fees. Loren did that for three or four years. Then one day he met Kevin Roush, who was also fixing up cars and selling them. Roush had a problem with a car, Loren worked with him to solve it, and they clicked. They decided to pool their resources and rent a small building to show their cars.

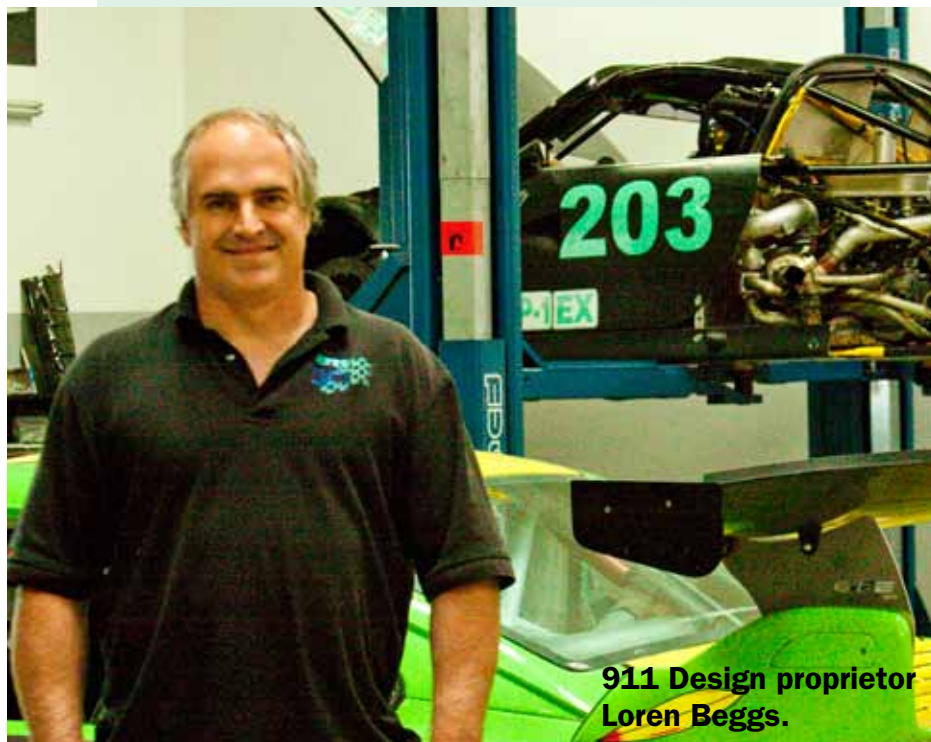
They called their business GAS, an acronym for German Auto Specialty. The company was essentially two separate businesses with separate cars that they each bought, fixed, and sold. They paid taxes together, but they kept separate checkbooks. Gradually things got a little confusing. Kevin started selling parts, Loren started servicing customers' cars, and sometimes they had trouble sorting out whose customer was whose. But their businesses thrived.

They were also developing their racing skills -- in the same '71 911 T, which they bought together as a bare shell. They installed the rollcage, gas tank, motor, and transmission, and tuned it into a race car. (POC member Jeff Steinbach still owns this car.) They would alternate run sessions, and they traded off getting to drive in the actual race each day.

After four or five years of business together, they began to feel that they were stepping on one another's toes, so they had an amicable parting of ways in 2002. Loren wound up keeping the building, and Kevin retained the name GAS and rented another building.

Loren renamed his business 911 Design, the building burned in 2009, and now we're up to date.

Loren tells me what's at the heart of his car-care philosophy is a huge sense of



responsibility: "I take the fact that somebody is dropping their car off with me very seriously. It's a big deal that someone is putting their trust in me."

Kent Harmon, who had both his 993 street car and his race car damaged in the fire, told me, "I got a nice payout for both cars. The race car, though pretty badly burned up, was salvageable. The great part is that Loren's crew spent a lot of time on the race car (over and above its value) to restore it back to racing condition, on his own dime. I don't know if any other shop owner would have gone to such length to take care of a small customer like myself."

Loren and his employees have a motto: "Excellent work at a fair price. It's not excellent work at the most expensive price. It's not excellent work at the cheapest price. It's excellent work at a fair price."

Dan Davis, who has been taking his 800-horsepower turbo car to Loren for six years, says he was first attracted to 911 Design because of his need for expert support at the track: "Whenever I had a problem, which was almost always, Loren was always willing to see what he could do to help. I was also impressed with Loren's work with turbo cars. The areas where Loren's shop shines over almost any that I have seen in my 25 years racing Porsches is fabrication, engineering, engine building, and track support. And I have never seen a more competent mechanic than Kirk, who supports my car most of the time. My car is a rolling R&D exercise, and without that expertise, I would have had to give up my love affair with my damn car years ago."

Loren says his job is to guide customers' expectations with honesty and integrity. "If I tell a customer his car will be done on Tuesday, it's done on Tuesday. If I give you a quote for doing it, it's going to be that price. And if there's a problem with it when we're done, no questions asked, no pointing fingers, no f.....g around, we fix the problem."

And here's a case in point. Doug Baron, who partnered with Loren for a year of racing in the American Le Mans series, had Loren rebuild his transmission. The first time Doug took the car to the track for a POC racing weekend, he discovered right away that 2nd gear was faulty. "I expected Loren to tell me my weekend was finished. I knew that driving it would cause more damage. But Loren felt so bad he told me to go ahead and race the car. I did. In fact I raced it at two more events after that. When I got the car back to him, he rebuilt the gearbox again for free."

As we finish the tour, Loren tells me, "I'm not selling people things they don't need. I'm sorry that people's cars break, but that's how I make my living. If you're a cancer doctor, you really don't want people to get cancer, but they do, and your job is to deal with it."

His medical reference makes me realize that this shop actually doesn't quite match the image I've carried in my head of the perfect Porsche garage. But if everyone would just start wearing the white lab coats... ■

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LENSWOMAN



Words & Photos: Cathy Robson/Virtual Access Photo

Azusa, Cal. Five o'clock a.m. An early Saturday morning. Still dark... I could go back to sleep. No, can't do that. The Porsche Owners Club PDS Clinic event today at the Streets of Willow. I'm the photographer who captures the event for *Velocity* magazine, and for future marketing efforts for the club. That sounds like fun on a bright, sunny, weekend day at about 10:30 a.m., but not so much when it's so early! And, it's going to be a scorcher. Over 100 degrees expected in Rosamond.

Enough stalling, I press onward. One hour, twenty-five minutes to Willow Springs from home, provided there's no slow traffic. Load all the camera equipment, sun protection, long sleeves, ice chest, ice towels, and off I go.

I have been covering POC events photographically for about five years. I grew up around Porsches. From the time that my Dad bought his first and only P-car, a 1962 356SC in 1964, I have been around the Porsche car culture. As far back as I can remember, being a Porsche owner meant: we waved at other Porsches we saw on the roads (they were more rare then), took part in Porsche club time trials at Willow Spring or Riverside Raceway (Dad built timing

systems), competed in TSD Rallies (right first opp, left second opp), and attended Porsche Parades.

Willow Springs in the 1960s and '70s looked markedly different than it does today, and there was only one track. Dad never raced his car. He did take it on track for time trials on rare occasions, but usually we were in club support roles. As a kid, I wanted to be a participating member of the Porsche family by owning my own car when I was older. At the San Diego PCA Parade in 1977, I promised myself that one day I would have one of those cute little cars, and I would be a member of what I thought was the coolest group of people who loved their little German cars and took part in driving-oriented events. It took me over 30 years to achieve that dream, but I got there while I was still young enough to enjoy and relish the experience. Sometimes on early race-day mornings, making this drive again and getting ready to shoot photos of little cars going around the track, it helps to remind myself how I got here.

When I arrive, I can feel the same excitement and trepidation that I recognize from the assembled group. These are Porsche owners, new and seasoned, who have decided that they will take

CATHY ROBSON

their cars off the paved, public roads, and put them on track to see what Porsches, and they themselves, can do. They soon realize that these cars were purpose-built not for the 405 Freeway, but for tight, twisty turns and double apexes. The Drivers Meeting commences and the information, cautions, and learning begin.

During the semi-annual Drivers Clinics, new PDS participants drill on the skid pad and track and learn about car control, throttle steering, and their cars' track responses. Today they will get their first taste of the Porsche elixir. Tomorrow, they'll put their Clinic experience to the test with real on-track run sessions. I present my usual greeting to the assembled crowd: "Make sure you look fast out there for the magazine." And, "Be sure your numbers are big and legible. Even the greatest shot of the day won't make it into the pages of *Velocity* if we can't figure out who the driver is." Finally, "Have fun out there!"

I am always amazed at the variety of people who attend POC events. They're from all age groups and places in life: fathers,

Marty leads the walking apex drill.



Skid pad.



Arms up exit drill.

sons, brothers, husbands, wives, daughters. You never know whom you'll meet at a POC PDS event. But one thing is for sure: they have a love for their Porsches and a sense of adventure to take the adrenaline rush that only happens on track!

Troy and Margie Ewerts, husband and wife sharing a Boxster, have a friendly competition between them. Margie set the bar pretty high with a win on her first outing. Troy has been working to beat

her times since then. This pair takes on new challenges every few years. They love to compete: running marathons, kayaking at locales around the world, and now, racing their Porsche. Their experiences with the PDS and POC have been excellent. They have really learned a lot from the skid pad drill, which has improved their car control at the track and their emergency preparedness on the street. The apex exercises have helped both racers reduce lap times. Jim Steedman and Dave Gardner have worked with this team, and the Ewerts gave them both kudos for their teaching methods and knowledge.

Sometimes I see old friends in new roles. On this very hot Clinic day, Alex Bermudez was helping CDI Marty Mehterian on the track walk and the apex exercises. He remarked that the perspective from outside the car, at the track level, gives a whole different impression and understanding. You don't realize how banked the bowl at the Streets really is until you stand at the top edge and look down.

CATHY ROBSON

Elizabeth Francois in a BSR owned by brother Brian Green.



Thomas Koch moving fast down the front straight.



Students Tina Chung, two unidentified students, Elizabeth Francois and instructor Jim Steedman.

After the morning meeting, I'm off to the fencelines to begin the photographic documentation of the day. I have to consider where the sun is (I don't like shots with huge sun glare off the cars) and work around the track in concert with it, so the day starts a little slowly as I find the west-facing locations (very few at Streets), and begin to shoot. I use a Canon 50D camera body, with either a 75-300 mm lens or a 100-400 mm f/5.4 lens. My favorite shots show a group of cars lined up, coming off a turn, with the background and the wheels blurred, but the car body static, with the graphics pin-sharp. To get the shot, I use a slow shutter speed, 1/80th, and pan with the action. It sounds like it should be easy, but it takes a lot of practice and fine tuning to get the camera, lens, and operator all working as one unit to produce the desired result. I have captured many shots I love, and I have been very proud when they have appeared in *Velocity* over the past few years. Working with the new 100-400 mm lens has presented some new challenges, but it just takes more practice. POC gives me LOTS of practice!

Today, new PDS driver Tina Chung spent her first track day with her instructor Jim Steedman. She was having a great day and really enjoying her beautiful, red 997 cabriolet on track. Considering herself very lucky that she was assigned Jim, Tina said, "He was so helpful and friendly and was able to explain things in a very understandable way." She said that she was a little confused at first, but she very quickly grasped the information and was able to apply the classroom session out on the track with her instructor's help. She felt quite confident by the end of the day, and her lap times showed improvement to the point that she was "most improved" in her class.

The PDS sessions progress through the day. Red/Orange group runs its fast times. Blue group, with its student/instructor pairs, shows improvement. It's fun to watch the students come running into the Administration building to review their times from session to session and see their progress. Wonderful, also, when their instructor is with them and the high-fives and smiles are genuine and heartfelt. Porsche people are a great group. Yellow group. White run sessions. Repeat.

New father and son team, Alex and Thomas Koch, brought out their father and son Porsches – Thomas drove his GT2 while Alex did his second PDS in his 1982 SC with an awesome Martini livery. Thomas wanted 17-year-old Alex to learn about the car in a safe environment, not on the streets with other teens. They have previously worked with instructor Loren Beggs and have begun learning about braking points and how to safely test the limits of the car and their capabilities as drivers. At the Streets event, they were enjoying the braking exercises and the apex drills. They were both getting smoother, and the braking-to-acceleration transition was improving. Both drivers felt that the track walk provided a great way to learn the track -- much better than at speed -- because they could clearly see the points and apexes and discuss them with driving experts. The walking pace allowed them to focus on one lesson at a time. In the car, at speed, there is so much happening at once.

Follow the sun around the track – new cars, same old fenceline shooting locations. Sometimes it gets a little boring, and I amuse myself with observations of the cars: "Dude, the line isn't over there. It wasn't over there the last six times you tried that, either." It's more fun when I get a course marshal's radio and can listen in as the course workers conduct the race coordination. "Car one-four, green. Four off and on." Hmmm, no wonder he got the John Deere Award. Going for a repeat, I guess.

The day moves on, and soon the number of cars in the paddock starts to dwindle. The sun is lower in the western sky. I move over to shoot from the paddock onto the front straight for some individual pan shots of cars: slow shutter (maybe 1/60th this time), half-focus, pan, fire, continue to move past the shot for follow-through. And again, and again, until it's finally time to pack up the camera gear. The end of the day brings hugs from all the POC team, goodbyes, and plans for the next event, wherever it is.

My photo post-processing starts as soon as I get home. Download the CF cards, begin to assign car number keywords to the images, and search for the day's best shots for our editor. I typically shoot between 700 and 1,000 shots in a race day. It's a lot of work, but it is work I love. Shooting for POC affords me the opportunity to combine my love of photography with my life-long love of Porsche, for the ultimate high. My real jobs, paralegal in a law firm and adjunct professor, provide paychecks and professional gratification, but the creative outlet found through photography is very intoxicating.

The great team of instructors and everyone involved with the POC encourages everyone to come out and join the POC at a PDS event. Bring your Porsche or favorite track monster and share the adrenaline rush! **M**



Greg and Alicia Trigeiro.

Daughters Dads

Words: Rochelle Booth Photos: Cathy Robson/Virtual Access

In April 1984, my father was diagnosed with brain cancer. He was 42. Earlier that year, while rehearsing for a ballet performance, my partner and I were practicing a new straight arm lift. He made a mistake and dropped me on my lower back, instantly ending my career as a professional ballerina. I hadn't gone to high school or prepared for college, and I had no direction as to where I was to go with a new career, so I spent the next seven months hanging with my father: I wish we could have raced Porsches together. The closest we ever got was when I was running him back and forth to the various doctors and hospitals in my black 944. This article is dedicated to those great dads who bring their daughters out to the track. The July PDS weekend at Pomona was special. There were three dads and four daughters.

The first session is practice only. The track configuration has been changed a bit this weekend and all the drivers need to find the best line so once timing begins, they can start pushing it. The end of the sweeper has been shortened and a sharp left-right added in for an extra challenge.

I meet 22-year-old Julia Trigeiro as she gets out of a red 2003 996 Carrera after the session. She tells me she's been out to Pomona

twice with her dad Greg, who owns and also races the car. On this weekend, Julia is trying to get her PDS license, and Don Matz is her instructor. Greg got Julia started with performance driving in a BMW M3 before she even had her driver's license. "When Julia turned 15½, I taught her to drive a clutch," says Greg. "With her permit and an adult instructor in the passenger seat she started autocrossing with me with the BMW club in San Diego and later on with the PCA when I got a Porsche 944 Spec." Greg is proud of Julia because she was almost able to get close to his times in autocrossing.

Julia has been driving with her dad for the last six years. He knew she would enjoy racing because of her super-competitive nature. Once Greg graduated to the bigger tracks, Julia followed. "It's really his project and I just tag along," she says. Julia's goal this weekend is to get within 10 seconds of her dad's time. "I can't compete with my dad. He's putting his car into time ranges I could never expect to achieve. I try to practice good etiquette out there. It wouldn't look good to get black-flagged when I'm trying to impress my instructor. I tend to be sloppy. So it's more about honing in on my focus: how I'm going to brake; how I'm going to accelerate while trying to be really smooth." Julia loves to push it into the corners. She

“How unique is it to spend time with your daughter at the track, breathing petrol and rubber fumes, and driving as fast as you can?”

India Favell and dad Kevin's car.



Julia Trigeiro.

Greg got Julia started with performance driving . . . before she even had her driver's license.

likes the back straight and has been trying to push back her braking zones. Julia's sister Alicia is coming out tomorrow. Julia is faster than her sister. "Ha! It's on record now. I'm faster than her!"

The first session after lunch is over, and 29-year-old Krysta Cordill gets out of her car. She's here with her dad, Jeff, who has been driving with the POC for four years. Jeff has two Porsches, and she's driving one of them, an '06 Tiptronic Boxster S. This is her fourth event, and she is trying to get her PDS license today. She's also trying to beat her dad, who drives a '98 Boxster with a manual transmission. Krysta has never been to Pomona before. "I like it. It's definitely a different course than Auto Club and Streets of Willow, with all the cones on the track. I'm worried that I'm going to hit them. I know if I focus too much on them, I will hit them." Krysta especially likes the way her car handles through the sweeper. She can feel the balance of the mid-engine and her tires gripping the pavement. She likes how hard she has to brake to go into the tight left-right before the front straight.

Jeff tells me that while riding with Krysta on the freeway several times he noticed that she was a very aggressive driver. Her brother Brandon, a Marine who flies an FA18 for the Blue Angels, saw

things a little differently. He said he was more scared riding with her on the freeway than he was landing his jet on the deck of an aircraft carrier. Jeff knew she would have a blast if she came out and drove with the POC. He figured she could hone her street skills by driving on the track.

Jeff and Krysta's first event together was Streets of Willow Springs. At that event, she beat her dad's best time. "I held the track record at Willow for the Boxster S class, and Krysta beat me by several seconds. She was faster than me. Thank you, Brad Keegan." Brad has been her only instructor.

"It's really neat for me to see her and all the nice people she has met. She is very outgoing. When we're at the track, it's all about cars and the people. She doesn't need any advice from me because her instructor has been so great." Jeff watches as his daughter comes around Turn 1 going faster than the speed of light. "I kind of cringe because I see how fast she is going. Although I'm not comfortable at that speed, I know she is." Jeff is proud of his daughter's accomplishments on and off the track. In real life she's a CPA and a financial planner.

Today, after Krysta beats Jeff by more than a second, she tells me that she enjoys the quality time at the track with her dad -- and beating his times. "Now that I've beat my dad, I will be coming out a lot more with him. It will be fun to get my license."

At the awards ceremony at the end of the day, it is announced that both Julia and Krysta have earned their licenses.

At the Sunday morning drivers meeting I notice another new young lady. It's Julia's 24-year-old big sister Alicia. I get the opportunity to speak with her after her fourth session of the day. She tells me she has been accompanying her dad to tracks since she was 16, and like Julia, she started driving autocrosses six years ago. She's been to Pomona twice before. She is trying to beat Julia's time, but hasn't quite managed to: "I am trying to be smoother. Get a good line going. Trying not to be jerky. I need to focus because I'm four seconds behind her best time. Don Matz is helping me be smooth. My times from the beginning of the day to now are 20 seconds faster."

After Don finished instructing her for the day, her dad got in the car with her to help her lower her time. Greg is also a qualified instructor with the club. Alicia confesses, "It makes me a little nervous to have my dad in the car with me when I'm racing, because he is so sick fast. And, I had

never been in the car with him except on the parade laps. I was going kind of gentle at first because I didn't remember the course from a year ago." She wants her dad to help her push it more on the straights.

Greg tells me that both his daughters are very competitive, but he doesn't try to get them to compete with him. He just really enjoys bringing them to the track as often as possible to see if they have the same passion for driving that he has. Clearly the daughters enjoy their father's hobby. In fact, the girls can't wait to talk their boyfriends into coming out and racing, so they can beat them on the track.

Greg says the POC instructors all tell him what good students his daughters are. "I guess I've always coached them in activities we've done together, so they're used to seeing the results that come, whether they're coached by me or another instructor." But he concedes, "One of my fondest memories with the Porsche Owner's Club is sitting in the passenger seat of my car with my daughters in the driver's seat,

"It makes me a little nervous to have my dad in the car with me because he is so sick fast."

instructing each of them for a run session at a PDS event."

There is one more father-daughter team here this weekend: Kevin and India Favell. India is a PDS veteran, having attended every PDS event with her dad for the last year and a half. She started in a 914, but now she drives a Boxster. Working with instructor Jim Steedman, she has improved her best time on this track by 40 seconds. He helped her beat her dad her first time at Big Willow. India has her PDS license, but she has asked Jim to instruct her today so she can try to beat her dad again. "I remember

I was really nervous my first time at this track. I had been with my dad watching him race, but I had never really been out on a track before. Then Evan Fullerton of Hergesheimer Motorsports took me out for a few lunch laps. I was like, 'Oh, man, this is so cool! I gotta do this.'"

India has been working on the line. She has been working on keeping her concentration, and she focuses on how much there is to work on other than just driving fast in the straightaways. "I need to brake later because I'm braking too much. I need to concentrate on the line and on finding the best position on the track for my car." Steedman says she can gain on her dad if she stays consistent. "Jim has been telling me to focus on my line. I will get really close to people entering the corners, and then they will get away from me coming out of the corners. I need to get more confidence to get faster onto the straights." India has a bit of work to do today. Her dad is turning a 1.39, and she is at 1.51. "Jim really wants me to get him!"

Kevin has been driving for two-and-a-half years. He started with a stock Cayman S and then upgraded to a race-prepared Boxster. Kevin didn't have to ask India to join him at the track: "It was a foregone conclusion. India decided she was going to drive, and that was it." Kevin enjoys the father-daughter time he has with India at the track. "How unique is it to spend time with your daughter at the track, breathing petrol and rubber fumes, and driving as fast as you can?"

Kevin doesn't need to encourage India to compete with him. She's a born competitor. "She has beaten me once, and I could not be more proud of her." At the track Kevin doesn't give India any pointers. "There are better drivers for her to listen to," he concedes. "The instructors that teach at the PDS are very proficient at helping their students become safer, faster drivers."

The last session is over, and the awards ceremony commences. Alicia is given her PDS license. It's been a proud weekend for Greg watching both his daughters earn their licenses. Greg himself has participated in one Racers Clinic and will take part in his second in December. "I'm getting ready to go club racing after the next Racers Clinic, and my daughters can now come and time trial with me on the same weekends in my 996 MI car."

Everyone has had a great time this weekend, especially those who have spent the time with their dads, driving fast, and learning the ultimate in car control. These young ladies are very lucky to have such great dads. **■**

*Out for a cruise in the
German countryside.*



Relishing a Ride in the 918 Spyder (that'd be in Nürburgring)

Words: Michael Harley Photos: Courtesy of Porsche Cars North America



*One of the more beautiful
backsides ever designed by
man or nature.*

PORSCHE 918 SPYDER

How I came to be strapped inside Porsche's futuristic 918 Spyder prototype in Nürburgring is an easy story to tell — especially when compared to the complicated technology that was surrounding me.

As a working automotive journalist for Autoblog, I get invited on some very sweet gigs. As a genuine Porsche guy (and POC member, of course) however, I find that most pale in comparison to the opportunities I receive from our heroes in Stuttgart. I've driven nearly all of Porsche's new models, attended GT3 Cup School, and even piloted the amazing GT3 R Hybrid race car.

When the call came, with just 72 hours notice, to pack my bags and fly to Germany to check out the new 918 Spyder, I knew it was the opportunity of a lifetime. While

I wouldn't be driving hot laps around the famed Nordschleife (the prototypes are simply too rare and I didn't bring my full race gear), a factory driver would take me on an extended E-ticket ride in the Rheinland-Pfalz countryside.

The 12-hour flight never seemed so short.

Successor to the spectacular Carrera GT, Porsche's all-new 918 Spyder is the most complex vehicle the automaker has ever designed. The hybrid gasoline-electric exotic features a race-bred 3.4-liter V8 supplemented by two electric motors drawing power from a liquid-cooled lithium-ion battery pack. It boots up like a computer, glides combustion-free like something out of a science-fiction movie, and then fires up its fuel-fed engine to blast in excess of 200 mph.

While it may be hard to swallow in advance of its arrival next year, the 918 Spyder's existence is as significant as the Le Mans Porsche 917 and as technologically groundbreaking as the 1986 Porsche 959 — it is physical proof that hybrid supercars will not only dominate, but prevail.

Porsche pulled the silk covers off its fresh mid-engine 918 Spyder concept at the 2010 Geneva Motor Show. The white sheet design promised unheard of hybrid performance and drop-dead gorgeous looks. A little more than two years later, I found myself sitting in the cockpit of a working prototype test car in the hot pits at Nürburgring — miracles do come true.

Gone are the clear polycarbonate wheel covers (molten brake dust permanently scarred the material) and the side exhaust pipes (worldwide certification proved too

*A 918 Spyder prototype beckons
in the hot pits of Nordschleife.*



The hybrid has five operating modes selectable via a steering wheel-mounted dial at the four o'clock position.

difficult), but the styling of Porsche's newest supercar remains mostly intact from what we observed in Switzerland. New additions are the top-mounted exhaust (better packaging meant more effective thermal management), vents on the front quarter panels (dumping high pressure air out of the wheel wells) and magnesium wheels. Despite its work-in-progress state, my salivary glands still went into overdrive when the grayscale Martini prototype (it goes full color when it is done) pulled up.

As mentioned, the 918 Spyder is the most technically advanced vehicle the automaker has ever screwed, welded, molded, and bonded together. To prevent brain overload, it is best digested in components.

The chassis is constructed as a carbon fiber-reinforced plastic (CFRP) monocoque

tub with aluminum crush zones on each end. At this point in development, curb weight is about 3,750 pounds with 43 percent of the mass on the front axle and 57 percent on the rear. Its center of gravity is about even with the wheels' center hubs.

The suspension is a double-wishbone design up front, with a multi-link configuration in the rear. An electro-pneumatic lift system is optional, but Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM), the automaker's adaptive suspension that acts on the twin-tube gas-pressure dampers both front and rear, is standard.

The brake, wheel, and tire package was designed to be lightweight, yet deliver impressive grip and stopping power. Porsche Ceramic Composite Brakes (PCCB), vented and perforated, are standard fitment

to each corner. The massive ceramic rotors, stolen from the Cayenne Turbo's parts bin, are clamped by custom-made six and four-piston aluminum monobloc calipers, respectively. The standard wheels are single-lug, forged aluminum. Up front are 9.5 x 20-inch wheels wearing 265/35ZR20 tires, while the rears are 12.5 x 21-inch wrapped in 325/30ZR21 rubber.

The steering to the front wheels is electrically assisted, as it is on the automaker's latest 911. Interestingly enough, and a first for Porsche, the rear wheels also have an electro-mechanical adjustment system allowing rear-axle steering of a few degrees in each direction.

The 918's combustion engine would be familiar to those in racing circles, as it is a close derivative of the powerplant found



mechanical linkage between the front and rear axles.

The combustion engine drinks premium unleaded fuel from a welded aluminum tank situated just behind the passenger compartment, while power for the electric motors is stored in a liquid-cooled lithium-ion battery, with 6.8 kWh of capacity, mid-mounted below the fuel tank to optimize weight and balance (the battery alone weighs about 660 pounds).

Air management plays a big role. A large active rear wing, retracted flush with the rear decklid when not in use, moves through several positions based on speed, driving style, and driving mode. In addition, there are aerodynamic flaps beneath the vehicle's flush underbelly in front of the front axle creating ground effect downforce. Lastly, the four horizontal slats just below each headlight bucket automatically open and close based on driving mode and vehicle thermal requirements.

Computers, microprocessors, and thermal management systems are as much of the 918 Spyder as are rubber tires. In a nutshell, there are four independent cooling circuits just for thermal management of the electric motors, transmission, and battery. There are fifty-five different control units, dozens of electric motors, and four primary black boxes, all tasked with keeping the supercar humming.

Thanks to an advanced digital interface, the fortunate soul piloting the Spyder is able to alter the hybrid's operating mode to one of five settings via a steering wheel-mounted "map switch" dial near the four o'clock position. The choices include: E-Power, Hybrid, Race Hybrid and Hot Lap.

By default, the 918 always starts in "E-Power" mode, and all propulsion is electric (EV) for upwards of 15 miles at speeds up to 100 mph. If the driver requests higher speeds or uses the accelerator pedal's kick-down feature, the combustion engine will automatically ignite. Furthermore, once the battery's charge state drops to a minimum, the eight-cylinder engine will automatically take over primary propulsion duties.

"Hybrid" mode is engineered to maximize fuel economy and range. In this setting, the combustion engine cycles on and off as it works with the electric motors to propel the 918 down the road. "Sport Hybrid" mode is one click more aggressive, as the combustion engine runs at all times to provide primary propulsion. The twin electric motors are relegated to delivering moderate amounts of boost power for more spirited driving, and energy recuperation is done regeneratively. The battery charge state is maintained at a constant level.

The most aggressive street mode is "Race Hybrid," and fuel economy takes low

priority. The combustion engine runs at all times, both to provide propulsion to the rear wheels and to charge the battery when not under load. The electric motors are both tuned to provide boost support at their full rated power. In this configuration, the battery's charge state is fluctuating as energy is constantly consumed by the motors and replaced by the engine. Lastly, the hell-bent "Hot Lap" mode is activated by pushing the red button on the dial only while in "Race Hybrid" mode. In this full power setting, the combustion engine runs constantly and the electric motors operate at their maximum limit. As this setting is designed only to deliver a few fast laps, all of the available energy in the storage battery is depleted — the Spyder is running at ten-tenths.

Most important to many of you, and the topic that I have been putting off, is power and performance.

Add up the output from the single combustion engine and the two electric motors, and the 918 Spyder's total system power is 795 horsepower and 575 pound-feet of torque. According to Porsche, the 918 will rocket to 60 mph in about 2.8 seconds and reach a top speed in excess of 200 mph. If that doesn't raise your eyebrows, Porsche says it is also capable of a miserly 78 mpg on the highway.

Earlier in the day, Porsche had made it very clear that this was a prototype. My task was to overlook the misaligned panels, zip-tied 911 tail lamps, parts-bin exterior mirrors, and temporary headlamps and absorb the driving experience while strapped snugly into a six-point harness in the right seat. I smiled, rolled up my sleeves, and jumped in head first.

Despite a slew of intelligence-gathering hardware, including wires and boxes everywhere, the cockpit was quite comfortable. The carbon-fiber sport bucket Spyder seats are thinly disguised race equipment, lightly padded, but actually quite cozy. Our factory driver turned the key and nothing exciting happened — it was almost a letdown. As mentioned, the 918 Spyder starts in "E-Power" mode (full EV) meaning the combustion engine is just along for the ride. With the exception of a few whirling electric fans, and the sound of gravel bouncing off the insides of the wheel wells, we moved silently out of the Nürburgring pits and rolled past the automotive paparazzi hanging by the tall security gates (most were gleefully and furiously snapping our picture). We circled the roundabout at a good clip, albeit quietly, and then pointed the nose towards the German countryside.

The 918 Spyder floated at a good pace — I'd estimate about 60 mph — down the secondary roads. There were

in the race-winning RS Spyder. The 4.6-liter dry sump V8, mid-mounted in the chassis, generates 580 horsepower at 8,500 rpm (redline is 9,000 rpm) and 370 pound-feet of torque at 6,500 rpm. Mounted to the V8, actually bolted together to form a single drive unit, is a 95 kW (127 horsepower) electric motor. They send their power through a seven-speed PDK automated gearbox, rotated 180 degrees on its longitudinal axis (lowering its mass closer to the pavement), driving only the rear wheels.

But there is more to the powertrain, as the 918 Spyder is all-wheel drive. Mounted on the front axle is an 85 kW (114 horsepower) electric motor delivering power to both front wheels completely independent of the rear. Unlike Porsche's previous all-wheel drive systems, there is no

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still a few paparazzi trailing our rare bird in private vehicles, so our driver pressed the accelerator. The electric motors, providing about 240 horsepower, pushed us ahead with about the same thrust as a stock Porsche Boxster. It wasn't neck-snapping. At our higher cruise speed the electric motors were pleasantly humming as we glided across the smooth asphalt — the sound and sensation reminded me of young Luke Skywalker from Star Wars crossing the desert in his anti-gravity Landspeeder. It was eerily cool.

Still cruising in EV mode, we silently slipped through a city center, catching fleeting glances only after we passed pedestrians on the sidewalks. The suspension was unexpectedly supple and PASM nonchalantly absorbed all of the impacts (heavy battery packs actually improve the ride on most EVs).

At the far edge of town, clear of all traffic and with only a few cattle dotting the countryside, the driver switched over to "Race Hybrid" and floored the accelerator. The Porsche 918 Spyder, up to this point a flower-toting pacifist, exploded with fiery energy. Slammed into my seat, I choked on my tongue as expletives spilled out of my mouth.

In this take-no-prisoners mode, the 918 was anything but tree-hugging frugal. All four wheels ripped at the pavement with microprocessor-calculated precision as two electric motors and a combustion engine worked in tandem to launch the Spyder down the road. I've been in bloody fast cars, likely faster than this one, but on these twisty German country rural roads the 918 Spyder felt as agile as an antelope, but blazingly quick like a cheetah. Amid the crescendo of motors and engine, all I could do was giggle like a school girl.

From the passenger's seat, I watched the driver for clues. The acceleration was blistering fast, even at speed, thanks to three power sources, but the driver's hands were smooth and deliberate — not fighting torque steer or an unbalanced power delivery. I watched the steering wheel move to the right, felt firm g-forces push me into the left bolster, and then I lost my breath as the vehicle's stability control (it was in "Sport Plus" mode) made calculations and yanked the 918 out of the corner at damn-near warp speed.

The oversized ceramic brakes are assisted by aggressive regenerative braking on both axles. This industry first allows the 918 to recover about three times as much energy as a Toyota Prius during deceleration. The Spyder stopped as quickly as it went.

Running out of open real estate, our driver switched over to "Hybrid" and the pace slowed considerably as we came upon traffic. The combustion engine shut down



Strapping into the 918 Spyder at the Nordschleife circuit.

The Porsche 918 Spyder, up to this point a flower-toting pacifist, exploded with fiery energy. Slammed into my seat, I choked on my tongue as expletives spilled out of my mouth.

at lights, but hard acceleration instantly woke it back up. The 918 Spyder is still very quick in this configuration, but it is running efficiently. As "Hybrid" is the default setting, one has to assume that most drivers will keep it in "Hybrid" mode all of the time once the batteries are discharged in "E-Power" mode, and be perfectly content.

Back in the pits, I sat down in a chair to consume and absorb the data gathered during our ride. I was most impressed by the 918's propulsion system, the seamless cooperation of three independent power sources. It wasn't jerky, and it never seemed to be caught off guard. It felt polished. I was also caught totally off guard by the suspension tuning. The ride was unbelievably comfortable over broken pavement yet astonishingly adept in the corners. Less impressive was the combustion engine's exhaust note, which sounded tinny with an unpleasant hint of rattle (no worries, said Porsche, as the pipes will be tuned like a musical instrument for the finished product). All of the other bungled items, like panel gaps and missing components, naturally remain irrelevant for discussion until production.

Speaking of production, Porsche intends to start assembly next September and deliveries should follow in December. All told, the automaker will manufacture

918 units, all of them 2014 models with a base price of \$845,000 each. One significant option, not discussed above, is the Weissach package. Fitted to the vehicle I rode in (the identical vehicle that posted the Nürburgring record of 7:14), the high-performance upgrade includes additional lightweight carbon-fiber appointments, lightweight magnesium wheels, flame-resistant upholstery, racing belts, and additional aerodynamic aids. I don't know pricing, but I do know it cuts nearly 80 pounds off the curb weight. It will be a must-have for a few fortunate POC track junkies.

My ride in the amazing prototype was not just an early preview for the automaker to show off its advanced-powertrain supercar before it was fully cooked, but a mind-changing experience. I'm a diehard Porsche enthusiast, one who prefers the mechanical chunkiness of a manual gearbox and the sweet music of an air-cooled flat-six over today's increasingly isolating sports cars. Yet flying passenger in the new Spyder served as a look down the road, a wonderful taste of where sports cars are heading in the next decade. Displacement is out — hybrid is in. If the 918 is the future, this Porscheophile is emphatically on board. ▀

GSR Autosport

Words: Andrew D. Weyman

Chunks of molten tire are being flung rearward and the smoke is so thick that the driver can barely make out the next turn — yet there are no worries from behind the steering wheel. Things are going precisely as planned.

Michael Essa, principal owner of GSR Autosport, is not just an experienced race mechanic. He also happens to be a professional driver in the U.S. Formula Drift series. Depending on the particular day, Michael may find himself upgrading a client's car with a bolt-on turbocharger or flinging his custom-built BMW through a hairpin at the Formula 1 Yas Marina racetrack in Abu Dhabi. "It's all in a day's work," he jokes.

Soft-spoken, confident, and overflowing with automotive passion, Michael opened his own business (Tech Trix) in 2002 after

working for Kevin Roush at GAS. His early work was focused on V3 cars and supporting Blake Rosser's Porsche 911 GrandAm program. In 2006, Michael saw the potential in a new Spec class after indie shop Stuttgart built the first Boxster Spec Racer. Intrigued, he contacted Vali Predescu and together they built their first BSR. Their car turned out to be a couple of seconds faster than the one Stuttgart built. They have built 30 since.

A few years later, Michael met POC driver Nick Richards after he brought his BSR and BSX to the shop for work. At a December event, when the class championship was going to be determined, Nick was involved in heavy contact on track — he T-boned a car spinning across the track. "We got the pick-up truck, pulled the front of his car out as straight as we could, fixed the alignment, and got him back out

there," said Essa, recalling the event. The following day, Nick earned the pole, won the race, and sealed the BSR championship.

Already familiar with start-ups (he launched, built, and sold his own software business), Nick saw potential in Essa. "Michael is one of the most intuitive and intelligent people I have ever met. His ability to quickly comprehend complex systems constantly amazes me," comments Nick. The two became business partners and formed GSR Autosport — Nick focuses on the broader business while Michael is the hands-on mechanic. Fellow POC member and journalist for Autoblog Michael Harley partnered with the team to develop the online parts business.

Today, GSR Autosport has a team of dedicated employees in their new Orange County shop. In addition to full-service



Rich Yochum's BSR awaits its turn in the GSR shop.
Photo: Rachel Pakula.

Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, and BMW repair, the company specializes in custom builds utilizing its in-house CAD design and full fabrication capabilities. (The company was recently hand-picked to complete a custom built 911 Rally Car for eBay Motors.) In addition to renting both 911 and 986 track cars for events, GSR Autosport has also begun to market its own catalog of performance parts including aluminum radiators, suspension components, and its newest product, a performance throttle pedal for the 986/996.

Nick, Mike, and the entire GSR team are a very passionate group. Their passion for the POC is evident. "We've worked with a lot of fast POC drivers and their fast, reliable cars," Essa declared. The GSR client list includes Shawn Howard, Richard Yochum, Jeffrey Childers, Mike Holgate, and Mike Monsalve. Mike Holgate told me, "Mike Essa always gets me in and out as quickly as possible. I trust his experience. Mike has been a big help with my Boxster and now with my 996."

If GSR maintains a car, they offer excellent track support. They have the ability to support multi-car, pro-level race events at any track in North America. Additional services include driver coaching and car development. Their coaching program includes four main components: 1) traditional in-car coaching with pro-driver Michael Essa, 2) in-car video and data analysis, 3) drifting exercises in their BMW M3 practice drift car (to teach car control), and 4) karting in one of their two pro-level karts (to focus on reflexes and car control).

While offering personalized service to all clients is GSR's business model, the team also takes pride in their long-standing support of the POC. They promote club activities and are constantly encouraging new drivers — especially beginners — into the club to develop their skills. This has included sponsorship of drivers earlier on in their development, such as Regan Steedman, Joel Lepoutre, and Jason Huang. One cannot overlook GSR's generous charitable contributions. GSR Autosport has raised more than \$50,000 for children's charities over the past five years.

Michael Essa does best under pressure, so tossing the team's custom-built turbocharged BMW Z4R sideways into a four-wheel drift at 105 mph doesn't even raise his pulse. That same levelheaded composure has been adopted by the entire team at GSR Autosport as they embrace each new project and serve their clients. **▼**

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GSR's serene exterior gives no hint of the concerted activity within.
Photos: Courtesy of GSR Autosports



When track support is worth its weight in gold.
Photo: Courtesy of GSR Autosports





Steve Vandecar leads Ron Palmer and David Leyvas.



Bob Thacker tries to fend off Mike Monsalve.



Mark Foley leading in BSR.



Paul Young survives the heat for the Enduro win.



Jim Cullen leads Vali Predescu in a mid-pack Orange battle.

The POC Auto Club Speedway weekend at the end of September was an exercise in dealing with extreme, 100-plus degree temperatures at a favorite SoCal track. Over one hundred drivers braved the intense late summer heat in Fontana for a great weekend of racing and time trials, including a grueling one-hour enduro on Sunday afternoon. The POC was returning to ACS for the first time since the Tribute to Le Mans event and two weeks after the IndyCar Championship race at the same venue under similarly brutal conditions.

Saturday Races

In the Red Cup Race, Dan Aspesi jumped into the lead early on and took the overall honors, as well as the GT2 class title and the best lap time of 1:43.120. An early spin by Jesse Menczer put him back in the pack playing catch-up most of the race, but he clawed his way to second in GT2. Kevin Roush took the third spot in GT2. Bill Dawson came in second overall while

Sunday Races

On Sunday, we were treated to a couple of particularly exciting battles -- the GT3 contest within the Red Cup Race and the JE Pistons Enduro.

In the Red Cup Race, pole-sitter Jesse Menczer took the overall win, GT2 class win, and fastest lap of the race at 1:43.619. Dan Aspesi, Saturday's winner, took second. Early in the race Jesse and Dan traded the lead several times. Doug Baron took third overall as well as the GTC-3 class win. In GT3 we were treated to a fantastic battle between Eric Oviatt and Kevin Roush, with multiple passes. In a clinic of close, clean racing, Oviatt held off Roush by just a couple of ticks at the flag. Anyone moving up to the racing classes or planning to attend cup school would do well to watch the video of these guys. Duane Selby took the last spot on the podium in GT3, which had seven racers finish on the lead lap. Steve Vandecar won GT4 from Kip Waterhouse by less than a second; Chas Wirken won R4.

two days of practice and racing. In a really tough break, Jae Lee of 'Gang of One' lost the fire in his machine at Turn 1 on the final lap. Paul Young of 'Dead Pets Racing' took the win in his "Snickers". He looked exhausted as he climbed out of his trusty 911, but the grin on his face as he accepted the first place trophy confirmed it was well worth it. Seems like Paul is making a habit of this. Doug Baron finished second, and Nathan Johnson took third.

Time Trials

Amazingly, even with brutal heat and a pretty slick track, multiple class track records fell this weekend -- but more on that later. The Time Trial drivers had another successful weekend of "anywhere" point-by passing; we only had a couple of instances of people passing without a point-by or drivers holding up those behind unnecessarily -- so great job to everyone. Breaking the time trialers into two run groups (White & Yellow) allowed each group to have

in Fontana Packing Heat

Words: Chet Kolley Photos: Cathy Robson/Virtual Access Photo

winning the GT1 class from Dan Davis. Loren Beggs was third overall and won the GTC-4 class. Doug Baron won the GTC-3 class while finishing fourth overall. In the hotly contested GT3 class, Eric Oviatt won what became a two-car battle with Duane Selby when engine troubles forced John Gordon to drop out after one lap. Vali Predescu won GT4, and Chas Wirken won R4 in his beautiful Cayman R.

Mike Monsalve took first overall and in V3/R5 class in the Orange Cup Race after leading from the pole, and he posted fastest lap of the race at 1:50.220. Alarcon kept it close and almost reeled him in at the end, finishing just 0.156 seconds behind. Third in the race and V3/R5 was Athan Aronis. Dwain Dement in his new, blue, Boxster-based V3/R5 machine was running well and making some nice passes between Turns 4 and 5 before he dropped out from third with rising oil temperature. A total of eight V3/R5 cars finished on the lead lap in this popular and competitive class.

Regan Steedman won GT5 -- her third victory in a row; Jason Huang won CSX; Brad Keegan won JP; Mark Foley won BSR; Keith Hulley won IP; Peter Busalacchi won GSR; and Carolyn Pappas won GT6.

The usual V3/R5 suspects were running at the front of the Orange Cup Race. Mike Monsalve won his second race of the weekend as well as the class from second on the grid. Steve Alarcon took pole and finished second by 2.409 seconds while setting fast lap of the race at 1:50.665. Bob Thacker finished third overall and in the V3/R5 class. Athan Aronis, who typically runs near the front of this group, accidentally released his harness buckle and lost a couple of laps getting himself buckled back in.

Regan Steedman again won GT5, with Paul Young second; Richard Yochum won V4; Brad Keegan took another JP win, with Brent Gokbudak second. Drake Kemper won BSR, with Mark Foley second and Nathan Johnson third; Jason Huang won CSX; Keith Hulley won IP; Carolyn Pappas took GT6; and Peter Busalacchi won GSR.

By the time the field gridded up for Sunday afternoon's JE Pistons Enduro, the heat had taken its toll on cars and drivers, resulting in a slightly smaller than expected grid. However, that did not diminish the competition or excitement of the race, as ten teams took the green flag. I really have to hand it to the guys who raced for an hour in the still-100-degree heat after a full

similarly experienced drivers and capable machines. We still have about a 30-second difference in lap times between fastest and slowest in the White group, but effective gridding, a big track, and courteous drivers meant everyone had plenty of unimpeded laps.

Back to the those fast times now. On Saturday, Brandon Griffith, who set fast time of the day on both days, broke the GT2 class record by nearly seven seconds at 1:41.783! Unreal. Also on Saturday, Steve Radenbaugh set the GT4 class record at 1:54.308, and Chet Kolley set the CSX class record at 1:56.434. On Sunday in GT4, Bob Mueller broke Steve Radenbaugh's Saturday record with 1:53.074. Paul Young set a new GT5 class record at 1:57.639. Yes, that's the same Paul Young who took second in class in the Orange Cup Race and won the Enduro overall. Troy Evarts set a new LS class record at 2:02.751. Congratulations to all the new record holders and class winners.

Once again, the POC had a great weekend at Auto Club Speedway, with fine and close racing in the Cup Races, really impressive driving in the Enduro, and five new track records set by time trialers. Hopefully we'll have a bit cooler weather next time we come here. **V**

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Announcing our new schedule for 2013. Review regularly for news and updates. 2013 is going to be a great year with exciting new tracks and special events.

Date	Track	Description
Jan. 19	Old Ranch CC, Seal Beach	57th Annual Banquet
Jan. 26, 27	Streets of Willow	PDS Drivers Clinic #1, Sat. PDS #1, Sun.
Feb. 9, 10	Willow Springs Raceway	Cup Races & Time Trials #1, Sat. Cup Races & Time Trials #2, Sun.
Feb. 23, 24	Streets of Willow	PDS #2, Sat. & #3, Sun.
Mar. 2, 3	Chuckwalla Valley Raceway	Cup Races & Time Trials #3, Sat. Cup Races & Time Trials #4, Sun.
April 5, 6, 7	Auto Club Speedway	Cup Races & Time Trials #5, Sat. Cup Races & Time Trials #6, Sun. In Association with PCA and the "Festival of Speed."
May 11, 12	Buttonwillow Raceway	Cup Races & Time Trials #7, Sat. Cup Races & Time Trials #8, Sun. Racers Clinic #1.
May 18, 19	Streets of Willow	PDS #4, Sat. & #5, Sun.

Date	Track	Description
May 31, June 1, 2	Auto Club Speedway	Tribute to LeMans 4-hour ENDURO, Sat. Cup Race & Time Trial #9, Sun.
Sept. 7, 8	Streets of Willow	PDS Drivers Clinic #2, Sat. PDS #6, Sun.
Sept. 20, 21, 22	Miller Motorsports Park, Utah	Cup Races & Time Trials #10, Sat. Cup Races & Time Trials #11, Sun. In association with PCA, Intermountain Region
Oct. 12, 13	Chuckwalla Valley Raceway	Cup Races & Time Trials #12, Sat. Cup Races & Time Trials #13, Sun.
Oct. 26, 27	Auto Club Speedway	Infield Road Course. PDS #7, Sat. & #8, Sun.
Nov. 23, 24	Streets of Willow	PDS Finale #9 Sat. & #10 Sun.
Dec. 7, 8	Willow Springs Raceway	Cup Races & Time Trials #14, Sat. Cup Races & Time Trials #15, Sun. Racer Clinic #2.



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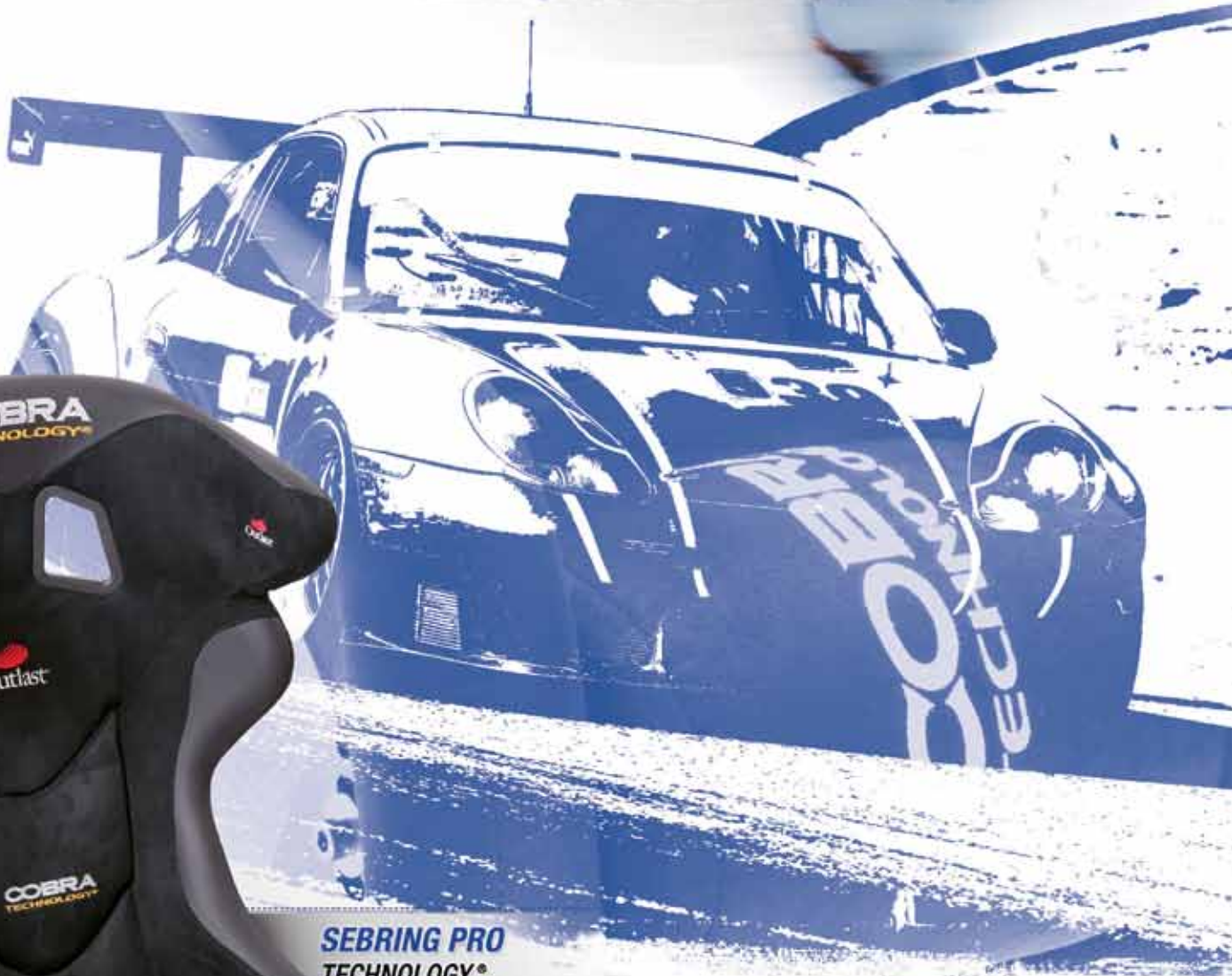


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