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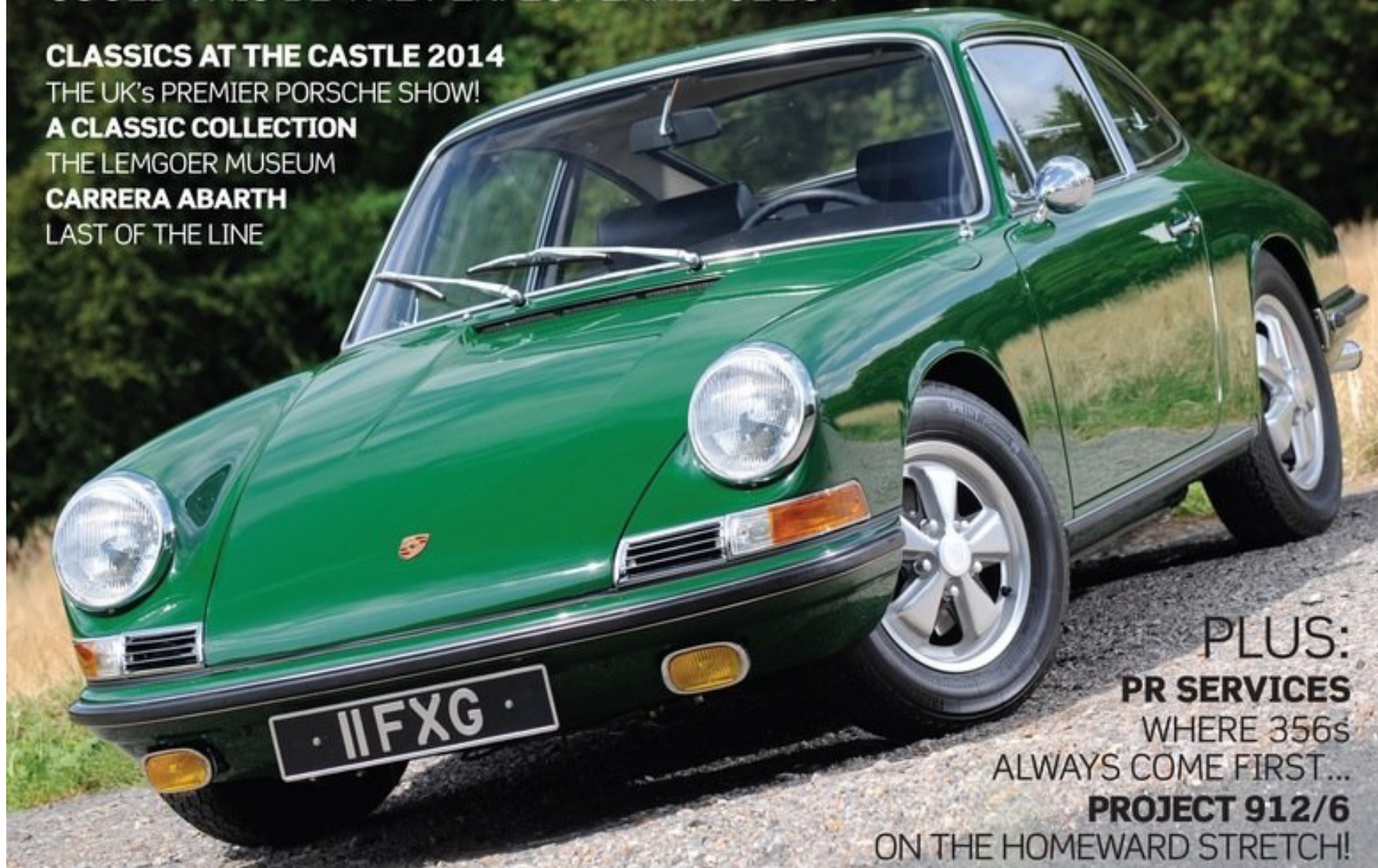
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‘S’ FOR SPECIAL

Quite possibly the nicest, most accurately-detailed early 911S, this Irish Green coupé has set standards in restoration that will be hard to match

Words: Keith Seume
Photos: Michael Ward, with Tim Morris and Randy Kemperman

It's all too easy to get carried away with superlatives. You don't have to look far to see words like 'iconic' or 'seminal' bandied around in car magazines, frequently out of context and all too often applied to cars that are neither worthy of veneration nor have had any major influence on future trends.

We are as guilty as anybody, I guess, having been known on the one hand to refer to the 'iconic Carrera RS', while in the next breath confessing to enjoy driving a 2.4S just as much. But sometimes you just run out of other descriptive words and get sucked inexorably back into the realms of populist writing. Sometimes no words other than the rather obvious will do. Words like 'best' and 'perfect', in fact...

OK, those are big words, not in terms of their size, but in terms of the emotions attached to them. For any car to be described as the best, it has to be indisputably proven that there are none better. For it to be perfect, it similarly needs to be shown that it is without fault in any way. Clearly, that's a big ask on both accounts. And, in truth, an impossibility...

So, what we have here is one of the best early 911s we have ever seen, and one which is as near to being perfect as anyone is likely to get. That it is a 2.0-litre 911S in that most becoming of colours, Irish Green, makes it all the more appealing.

Back in the days before the Internet, you knew when a car was good – really good – by virtue of the number of trophies it won at concours events. Cars which never showed at such gatherings rarely received the publicity they deserved and tended to remain off the public radar, often for many years.

But today that has all changed and the numerous Internet forums which exist have proved to be the arbiters on all matters pertaining to what is good or bad, correct or incorrect, accurate or inaccurate about some restoration project that someone, or some company, has slaved over for maybe years at a time. The web can be brutal, shredding people's reputations in a few key strokes, pulling apart the most fastidious of restorations in a sentence or two. Frequently, it's when there is relative silence from the pundits that you know a car is good...

When news of the restoration of this 1967 911S broke on the 'Net, the initial response was one of awe, so it was a matter of sitting back and waiting to see what the feedback from acknowledged experts in the field of early 911 restoration would be. And waiting. And... Well, of course, there was comment, that was to be expected, but the areas of the car which attracted the most attention were far smaller than anyone was used to seeing.

There was comment on the way the vinyl covering of the kneepad across the dashboard sat at one end, another



about the sealing strip on the front slam panel and how it wasn't quite correct in detail. But that was pretty much all. High praise indeed for any car that gets thrown to the wolves on an enthusiast forum these days. Maybe it *is* the best, maybe it is *almost* perfect.

The story begins on 24th October 1966 with the completion of Porsche 911S, chassis number 360438. The engine number was 960588, that of the 901/02 transmission 103583. The body was finished in 6606 Irish Green, the interior in black leatherette. The car was sold through a Porsche dealer in Hamburg to persons unknown and remained in Germany until it was purchased by an American working abroad who shipped it back to his home in Kennewick, New Jersey, in April 1977.

“High praise indeed for any car that gets thrown to the wolves on an enthusiast forum these days...”

The green 'S' had been ordered with a number of options, all of which are listed on the Certificate of Authenticity supplied by Porsche. These include Dunlop tyres (165x15), a Talbot door mirror, sunroof, 'two fittings for headrests', one leatherette headrest (right), Becker Grand Prix radio, loudspeaker, antenna and what is referred to simply as a 'warning light'.

The car remained in the USA but its condition clearly went into steady decline. In 1998, it was discovered by Randy Kamperman who, being aware of its rarity, arranged to purchase the Porsche. The 'S' was pretty complete but in a bad way. Kamperman managed to track down the correct 4.5J Fuchs wheels but the car remained largely untouched. At some point it suffered body damage – reputedly from a snow plough – while sitting outside at a bodyshop before it appeared on the radar of Bill Zilk and Tim Morris, both of Bend, Oregon.

A deal was struck, with Zilk acquiring the car in a deal

brokered by Morris. 'I never had ownership of the car,' says Tim Morris, of German Master Tech in Bend, 'just stewardship. My role was brokering the deal for Bill, overseeing the restoration as the "general contractor" and then brokering its future sale on completion.'

Morris, who has over 30 years' experience in the German car field, founded German Master Tech in 2005. Since then, it has gained an impressive reputation for its work on not only Porsches but also classic BMWs (a marque about which Morris has considerable knowledge). He's a shrewd person, who keeps an eye on the market: 'In 2008,' he says, 'after a run of mostly long-wheelbase early 911s and just a few SWB cars, I looked at the market and came to the conclusion that 911 collectors had been

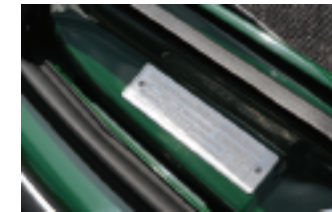
focusing principally on the LWB early 911Ss.

'To me this broke one of the cardinal rules of collecting: "First, last and fastest!" The SWB 911s seemed to be languishing in relative obscurity – even the 911S. I put together a portfolio of four 1967 911Ss to restore, which has now grown to a total of seven – it seems that for once I predicted a market!' he laughs.

When delivered to the Oregon workshop, the green 'S' was dismantled to the last nut and bolt. 'It was decided that this restoration would require a complete strip down as the bodywork demanded extensive repair,' recalls Morris. So began the process of tearing the car apart and cataloguing every step of the way, noting details, bagging parts to keep them together and photographing anything that might not be so obvious when it came to reassembly.

'It appeared that at some point the car had suffered body damage to all four corners, with certain metalwork replaced at some point in the car's turbulent history.

You'd be hard pressed to find a SWB 'S' as nice as this. Engine (opposite page) was rebuilt by Jeff Gamroth of Rothsport Racing in Tualitin, Oregon



Clearly,' says Tim Morris, 'it was going to need substantial repair and panel replacement to bring it back to factory-like condition. For this purpose, we acquired a nice original 1967 912 to use as a panel donor.'

Morris's role as, to use his own words, 'general contractor', meant that it was his decision on what work to carry out in-house, and what to sub-contract. Refreshingly, Morris is not shy to give others credit for their work, as opposed to many resto shops who claim to do all their own work, yet in reality rely on outside assistance for a substantial part of the work.

The bodywork and paint – all of which took a total of two years – was subcontracted to Steve McGhehey at Redstone Restorations in Sister, Oregon. The Irish Green paintwork has been refinished using classic single-stage materials, rather than modern synthetics which can make cars look 'over-restored', while great attention was turned to duplicating the original factory-applied undercoating.

The engine and transmission proved to be the original for the car – a real bonus when it comes to the final value of any restoration – and these were sent out to Jeff Gamroth of Rothsport Racing in Tualitin, Oregon, for a complete rebuild. The original Weber IDS carburettors were retained and refitted once they had been

dismantled and lovingly restored to what we have to say looks better than new. 'Works of art' is the expression that comes to mind here.

One of the key roles of anyone who project manages a rebuild like this is to make sure the various individual components are sent off to the experts early on, so that (hopefully!) they all start trickling back in at the right time as the rebuild process commences. The suspension and brake systems on the car, for example, needed to be totally rebuilt, and that meant reducing them to their component parts, assessing what could be reused, what needed refurbishing and what needed to be replaced. Then, and only then, could the myriad nuts, bolts, brackets and washers be sent away for cadmium or zinc plating.

This was a task handled by Queen City Plating, a highly-respected business run by Richard Frisch in San Diego, California. Yes, that's right – San Diego. Hardly local but Tim Morris was redetermined to only use the very best, and Queen City's reputation is second to none. It will come as no surprise, then, that they were also given the job of replating the 911's chrome-work.

Another major player in the Porsche restoration scene, Harvey Weidman in Oroville, California, was the obvious person to restore the rare 'bare' 4.5J Fuchs wheels for the

Despite the best efforts of various Internet experts, it has been hard to find fault in the restoration of the 'S'. Wheels are the handiwork of Harvey Weidman, interior by Autobahn Interiors, both located in California





Hard to think the car started out looking like this (above right) but two years of painstaking restoration resulted in the beautiful machine you see here (below). During the rebuild the 911S shared workshop space with Tim Morris's Jägermeister-liveried BMW

project. Many feel that Weidman's expertise in this field of restoration is without parallel, and few others are able to match the factory-stock finish of these early wheels to such a degree of accuracy. Now shod with Vredestein Sprint tyres ('They have the correct aspect ratio and are nicely "period-looking"', says Tim Morris), they are one of the defining features of the 911S.

The interior needed plenty of work – after all, sitting around outside had done it no favours at all. For the task of carrying out a full retrim, Morris turned to Autobahn Interiors, run by Tony Garcia and also of San Diego in California. The car's owner, Bill Zilk, wanted to use slightly later sports seats, complete with accessory headrests, these being sourced from a 1968 911. They looked right at home in the '67 and could, of course, be swapped back at any stage.

By now, it was getting time to begin the long job of reassembly. This, as anyone who has carried out a total restoration, can be what makes or breaks the deal. Rush this job, and all those hours of restorative work can be wasted as the car looks like a mishmash of parts thrown

together, as opposed to a carefully assembled recreation of the factory-fresh original. This is where German Master Tech excelled, for the standard of finish is exemplary throughout.

'It sounds so easy when you say it fast, no?' smiles Tim, before continuing with his rapid appraisal of the project schedule. 'Bodyshell delivered to assembly room. Sub-contracted parts start to trickle in. Assembly begins with taps and dies to go through all the threaded parts on the car. Next come the sound-deadening pads and the wiring: end-to-end sorting and repair of the loom, replacing what needs replacing with correct wires, using factory techniques throughout. This is followed by building up the suspension, brakes and drivetrain. Now it's time to look at the sunroof installation – that's an extra step in the process.

'After that, it's the time to install the headliner and interior, followed by building up the doors, window frames and quarter windows. Like I say, it sounds so easy...'

Once the car was back together, part of the agreement with its owner was that Tim Morris would show the car at

various concours events to act as a rolling advert for German Master Tech's skills. And it was well-received, gaining Best of Show at the High Desert PCA event in spring 2013, followed by Best of Show and Best in Class (Closed car) at the Forest Grove Concours d'Élégance, second in class at Carmel Concours on the Avenues during Monterey week, and also First in Class (PCA Early 911) in the Legends of the Autobahn show, also at Monterey.

Now DK Engineering has quite a reputation for only dealing in the very best, especially Ferraris, so when a little green 911 appeared on their books, you knew it would be special. And as you can see from the photos, it certainly is. The car now has a new owner, having been sold just before we went to press.

But what do you do with a car this perfect? Put it in a museum? That would be a crime, but then so might be

“But what do you do with a car this perfect? Put it in a museum? That would be a crime...”

It was after this impressive debut that Bruce Canepa made contact to express interest in the car on behalf of a European client. Although the car wasn't strictly speaking for sale, the sum being offered was too tempting, so the freshly-restored 911S crossed the Atlantic. That was in 2013, but the new owner recently put the car up for sale though DK Engineering in the UK.

using it on modern crowded and pot-holed roads. But you know what? Anything man has created, man can create again. We say drive it as was intended back in October 1966. Drive it until it gains a few rock chips – after all, I'm sure Tim Morris and crew can sort them out for you... **CP**

German Master Tech: www.germanmastertech.com

Accessory fog lights were fitted during the course of the restoration. Talbot mirror was recorded on the Certificate of Authenticity

