

Triple Crown

WHETHER A CONCOURS QUEEN,
AN OUTLAW, OR A SURVIVOR,
THESE 356S ARE ALL WINNERS.

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PHOTOS BY **MICHAEL ALAN ROSS**

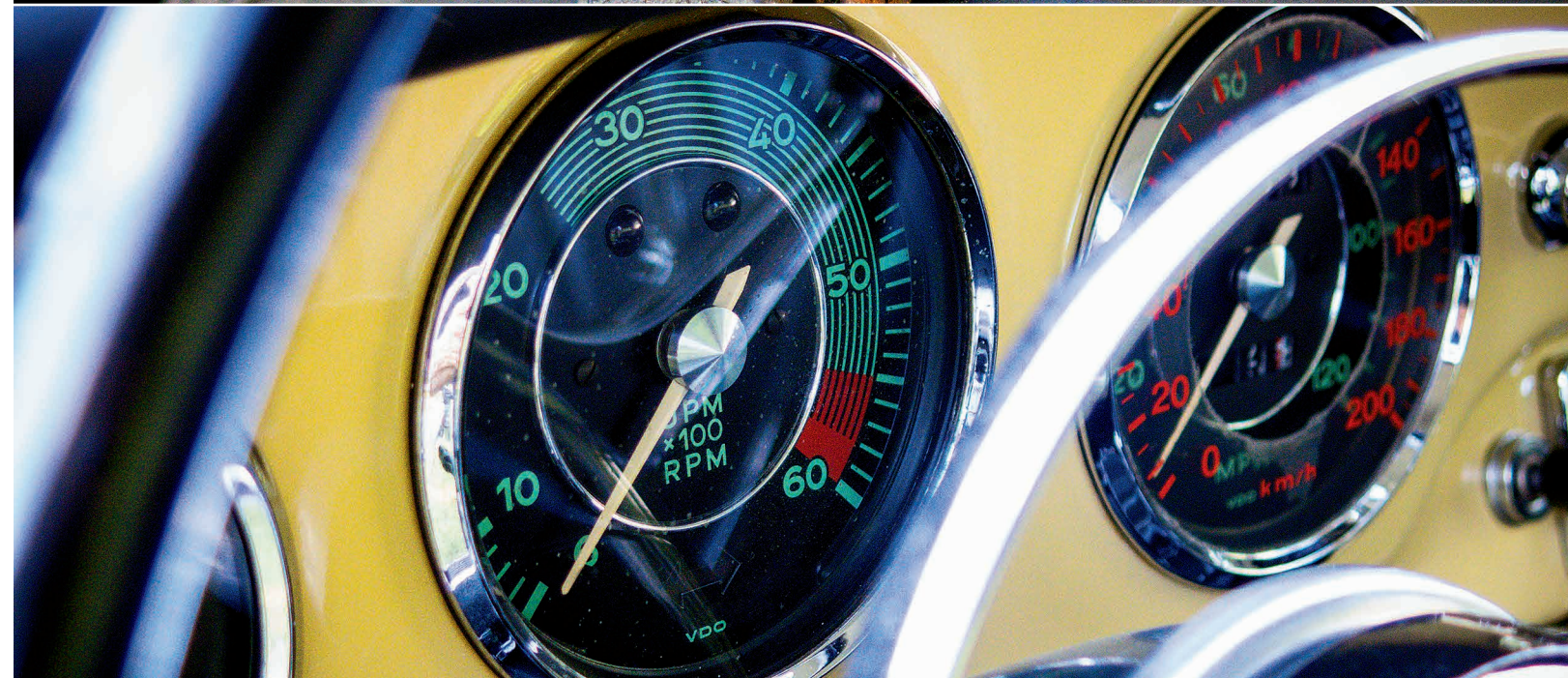
AT FIRST GLANCE, they appear strikingly similar. Sure, they differ in color: one a pale yellow, another bright red, the third dull silver. But these three Porsche 356s share a genetic strand, with the same gentle lines and soft contours. Nearly 80,000 356s were produced between 1950 and 1965, and it has been more than 50 years since the last 356 drove off the assembly line. Many have been lost, wrecked, or rusted away in fields and junkyards, but a precious number remain with us.

For those 356s that are still around, there are three distinct schools of thought regarding their ownership and care. First, there are the concours queens. These are cars that have morphed into works of art to be admired from a polite distance. Repainted, replated, and restored to better than new condition, they are precisely displayed, pampered, and polished. They are too nice and too perfect to drive.

Next are the Outlaws. Tossing tradition to the curb, these are hot rods with juiced motors, beefy brakes, stiff suspensions, roll bars, and rally lights. They are tidy little canyon carvers that have been customized to their owners' specifications.

And finally, there are the survivors that carry the bumps and bruises of life on the road—the scrapes from garage doors, the stains from spilled ketchup and french fries, the memories of screaming kids bouncing on the rear jump seats, and scars from events such as gymkhanas, hill climbs, and road rallies. The ones that are what they are, with no improvements and no apologies.

The words and images that follow provide a closer look at the differences and the similarities of three such examples that we encountered at this year's Parade. We'll hear from their owners as they share their visions, the reasons they chose the path they did, and the process each undertook to get there.





CHICAGO REGION MEMBER Ed Leed—tall, slender, face flushed, hair disheveled, pastel yellow polo shirt still clingy from a humid day under the Missouri sun—rested his arm on the roof of his Porsche. With the competition complete and a score posted, it was time to relax. Although exhausted and eager for a refreshing shower, a dry shirt, and a cold drink, Ed was still willing to share his time and his story.

“Our Champagne Yellow 1964 356 SC was built on May 11, 1964,” he told us. “Deb and I bought the car for \$3,300 on June 29, 1973. The original owner, a man from Park Ridge, Illinois, picked it up at the factory during a PCA Treffen.” With the preciseness of an engineer, Ed recites pertinent details, facts, and figures. After buying their car, the Leeds joined PCA and participated in every event the club offered. “We showed the car at concours events, autocrossed, rallied, and DE’d it for the next five years.”

Their introduction to concours competition was, well, harsh. “Before our very first event, Potter’s Picnic, we washed the car and entered it in the concours. We came in ninth out of ten. We were dumbfounded by those crazy people who made us raise the antenna and open the gas door and all the rest of that stupid stuff. But we learned.”

Then a new interest entered their lives. Focused on serious track time, Ed yearned to trade his penny loafers for racing shoes. He wanted a Porsche that better fit those needs. “We bought a 1969 911E coupe in 1977 and began spending less and less time driving the 356. Our 911 is a street car with a roll cage and a fuel cell, so it qualified for vintage racing. I’ve been racing since 1985.”

After a while, Ed simply parked his 356; it gathered dust in the garage until late 2014. Values of Porsche 356s had skyrocketed, reaching the point where Ed and Deb considered selling it. There were cash buyers clamoring for it, and they stood to make a handsome profit.

They also looked at other options. They could just get it running—a survivor, as it were—without a major investment of time or money and keep it as is, a car that had been part of the family for 45 years. Or they could do something creative. The Outlaw movement was building steam. It might be cool to modify, twist, and contort it a bit, and turn it into a plaything. A third option was to go the traditional route, returning the car to its former glory. It was complete, numbers-matching and all, a car with which Ed and Deb scored a concours win at the 1976 PCA Parade in Brainerd, Minnesota. A sentimental sweetie. What would they do?

“We decided to restore it,” said Ed. “My vision was to make this car look as it did when it came from the factory.”

Although the 356 SC had been stored for more than 30 years, time had not been kind to the old tub. They started taking it apart in December 2014. A thorough inspection of the shell and its underpinnings indicated the need to replace the rocker panels and the longitudinals. They were able to salvage the original floor pans and battery box.

“We arranged to drop it off at Colfax Car Craft in Palatine, Illinois in January 2015,” explained Ed. “Colfax is a one-man shop. Jim Rudnick, the owner, is a true craftsman—86 years old when he started the project. He did the body and paint work, taking it down to bare

Fresh from concours competition, the Leeds’ 1964 SC meets their goal of making it look as if it just left the factory—and then some. There’s no lint in the door pockets on this Zuffenhausen winner.

Without bumpers, this 1963 356B reveals the contour Gary Myers was seeking when he chose to turn it into an Outlaw. A rare, wood Nardi steering wheel adds a touch of class to the interior.



metal.” An old-school guy, Jim has no lift at his shop. He used jack stands.

Colfax had the car until March 2016. After the bodywork was completed, Ed transported his 356 to Addison Interiors in Addison, Illinois. “They did the carpet, the dash top, and the headliner. The dashboard retained the original factory paint. We didn’t have to replace the front seats,” said Ed. “One of our Chicago Region members, Pat Yanahan, refurbished those seats. He has a magic way of treating the leather and bringing it back to life. The original door panels and rear side panels needed to be re-dyed.” Streamwood Plating in Streamwood, Illinois, re-chromed the window frames, door handles, hood handle, and headlight rings.

Fischer Motors in Lake Barrington, Illinois, freshened the car’s mechanicals. Peter Fischer and his son Rick determined the engine did not need a complete rebuild, but they re-ground the valves and replaced the valve guides and rings. The suspension was sound and the transmission was solid, having been rebuilt in the mid-’70s.

After the subcontracting work was complete, Ed, Deb, and fellow PCA member Paul Masanek reassembled the car. “I reinstalled the brakes, worked on the undercarriage, and painted the suspension parts,” said Ed. “Paul installed the gas tank, the weather stripping, and did all of the electrical work—lights, horn, stuff like that. He also applied fresh undercoating over the bare metal. All the work on this car was done within 30 miles of our home.”

Today, the Leeds’ 356 SC is as pretty as when it first motored down the street and into Stuttgart’s countryside, although it now spends most of its days in a garage or on a trailer, having been driven only 12 miles in the past two years. It has gained notoriety on the PCA concours circuit during that time, achieving Zuffenhausen status (295+ points) in both the 2016 and 2018 Parades and Best in Show at a Chicago Region concours in 2017. It also did well in Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA) competition, achieving an AACA First Junior Award and First Place National Award in 2017.

What’s next? What about Ed and Deb’s 911E? “That’s my next project,” said Ed. “Deb may not agree with that.”

PEACHTREE REGION MEMBERS Gary and Connie Myers took a different path with their Signal Red 1963 356B. Their car flaunts edginess. No country club for this one; it would not have been nominated, let alone pass the vetting process. Their bad boy is more at home with Atlanta’s burger and shake crowd.

It was not always a tub with an attitude, though. Gary purchased his car in 2006 after having coveted 356s for years. “The car had been partially restored to a classic 356 look, but there was a lot of work yet to be done: trim work, detail work, door handles, bumper strips. I think the previous owner just got tired of working on it,” said Gary.

Having consummated the purchase, Gary arranged to transport the car from Hollywood, California to Mississippi, where he lived at the time. Once in the Magnolia State, issues became apparent. Gary discovered the original Normal engine had been replaced by a 1600 Super in a past life, and it made unhealthy grunts, coughs, and rattles.

In 2008, Gary shipped the car to Foreign Automotive in Marshfield, Wisconsin. Mike Manicke, the owner of Foreign Automotive and a personal friend of Gary’s brother, Bill (also a 356 owner), rebuilt the engine to healthier specs—larger pistons and cylinders, a hotter cam, 40mm Weber IDF carburetors, an auxiliary oil cooler, and full-flow oil system. Also installed was a thermostatically controlled electric fan that provided additional engine cooling.

Those performance modifications increased the horsepower from 75 to 115 and the displacement to 1,720 cubic centimeters. A Dansk stainless steel exhaust helped the engine exhale, as well as adding bark to the bite. No more clatter; no more wheeze. When this engine cleared its throat, bystanders noticed.

With more juice under the right pedal, Gary wanted to improve his car’s stopping power. More go demanded more slow. “Because 1963 was the last year for drum brakes, we retrofitted disc brakes on the front. Keeping the drum brakes on the back, we installed a dual circuit master cylinder. It stops now.”

When the car returned to Mississippi, Gary began working on details like rubber stripping, door handles, and light lenses. Initially his plan was to create a sleeper, a wolf in sheep’s clothing. But a trip to Florida changed his direction.

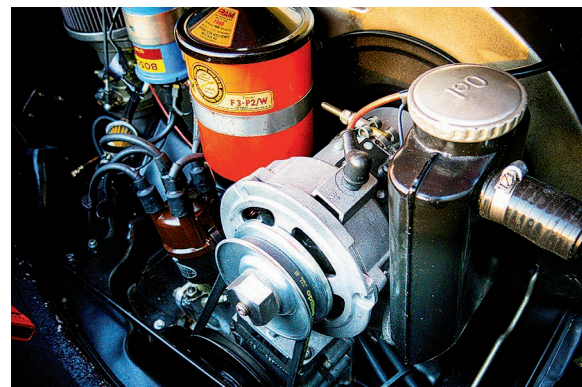
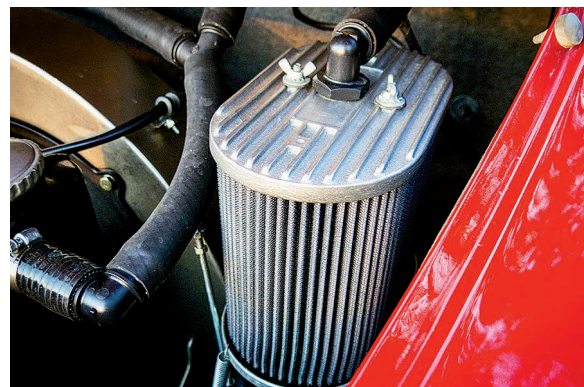
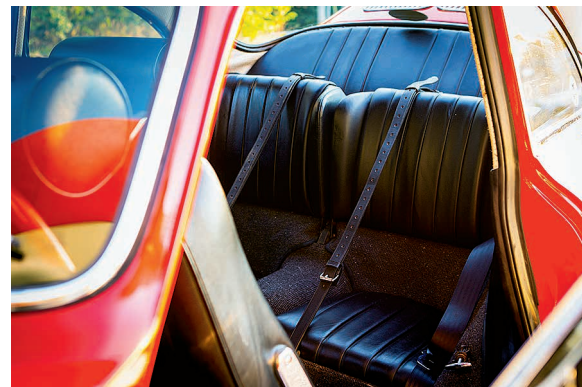
“During the 2018 Werks Reunion at Amelia Island, Rod Emory gave a 20-minute impassioned speech about Porsche and how, over the years, they [the company] experimented with different looks and different technologies,” explained Gary. “Doing the Outlaw thing was not as bad as some people might think. Preserving a 356 was great—you know, a piece of history and all. If people want to do that, well and good. But Rod encouraged his audience to have fun with their cars. If they wanted to do something different, they should go ahead and do it. 356s were made for fun.”

Rod’s talk got Gary thinking. In that epiphanic moment, he decided that owning a wolf in wolf’s clothing suited him better. Why not remake his car into something unique? “When I returned home, I took off the bumpers to see what it looked like,” he said. “After I pulled the front bumper, I thought, wow, that’s the silhouette Porsche intended.” Wheels turned, gears meshed, a vision formed. No soft, fuzzy wool for Gary. He decided to go all in.

Pulling off the bumpers was a mixed blessing. The car looked cool, but the holes in the body (the fender mounts) didn’t. “The holes in the front were no prob-



Details matter, be they in the trunk or in the engine compartment. A modern 55-amp alternator keeps all lights burning brightly. A transistorized radio with Bluetooth? Really?



lem,” said Gary. “I wanted Marchal driving lights with amber lenses. I bought some stainless steel stock, fabricating, hammering, and buffing the mounts myself because I couldn’t find anything suitable for less than \$200. I’d already put lower foglights on the car. I wanted the look of a vintage rally car.”

The rear of the 356 presented bigger challenges. “On the side of the car where the bumper mounts go through the body, there’s a hole. I used red reflectors, discreet against the Signal Red exterior, to cover those holes. At the very back, there are some pretty good-sized slots where the bumper mounts fit into the frame. Some people will put a rubber plug there. I didn’t want to do that. Others use universal aftermarket lights. I tried them but didn’t like the look. Then I came across an Outlaw that used the old 356A Beehive lights.”

With a little fabrication and creativity, Gary solved his problem, in fact, gaining benefit as a bonus. “I didn’t realize they were dual-filament bulbs. It came to me to use both filaments separately. I attached one filament to a power lead so that when I turned on the lights, they [the Beehive lights] became running lights. The other filament was attached to the brake and signal lead so that when you either brake or signal, the light functioned with the stock amber light.”

Before Gary purchased the car, it had been converted from a six-volt system to 12 volts with a standard generator. But, says Gary, “I had trouble with the generator burning out the brushes when I had all the lights on. So I pulled the generator out of the car and replaced it with a 55-amp alternator, which most modern cars have.” He also replaced the radio with a transistor model with Bluetooth capability and installed a blower fan for interior ventilation and defrosting.

Additional enhancements? “I reconfigured the oil sump return hose so that when pressure builds in the oil sump, excess gases are vented to the carburetors and vaporized. High pressure causes oil leaks. After taking a long trip several years ago, I found an oily film in the engine compartment. Because of the rebuilt engine’s compression [10.5:1], oily gases were being forced out of the breather and into the compartment.” Suspension upgrades included the installation of a 17.5mm stabilizer bar in front and adjusting the stock camber compensator in back.

Was there any family resistance to Gary’s project? On the contrary, “My wife has been a really big supporter of the whole thing.... Connie got a perfect score on the interior at the concours. We took first place in our class.” One striking feature of the interior is the steering wheel, a rare, 50th anniversary Nardi that Gary found in Wisconsin.

Gary and Connie have been PCA members since 2001 and have attended ten Parades. Also members of the 356 Registry, they frequently attend 356 Registry Holidays. How do the 356 faithful view Gary’s Outlaw? “Generally,

the purists are not that accepting. However, I recently heard that one of the staunchest members of the club is building an Outlaw. I think because these cars are getting older and the owners are getting older, people are beginning to consider what can be done to keep them up to date and alive.

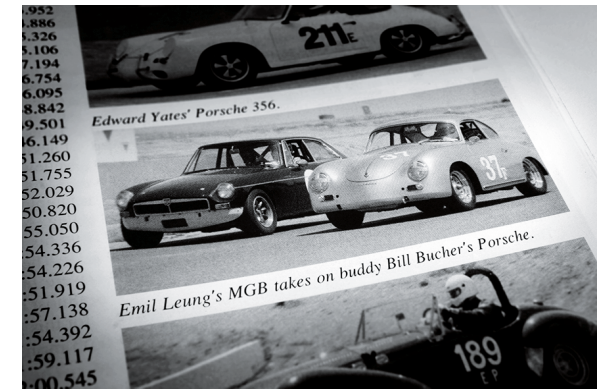
“They [356s] are very functional compared to other sports cars. It is easy to lose the ‘intention’ of these cars. I think that is what Rod Emory was getting at. Sure, they can be held, preserved ‘in time,’ but the question remains, ‘What would Porsche have done?’”

METROPOLITAN NEW YORK Region member Benjamin Abraham owns a stable of Porsches. Stable, as in thoroughbred. Thoroughbred as in sleek, fast, and pricey. So when Benjamin brought home a rather tattered 1959 356A—scraped, bumped, and bruised by miles on the road—some friends thought he’d lost his mind. And later, when he convinced his long-suffering wife, Tania, that driving their 60-year-old coupe 1,100 miles to Parade in Osage Beach, Missouri, would be a ‘fun’ thing, their friends’ suspicions appeared to be confirmed.

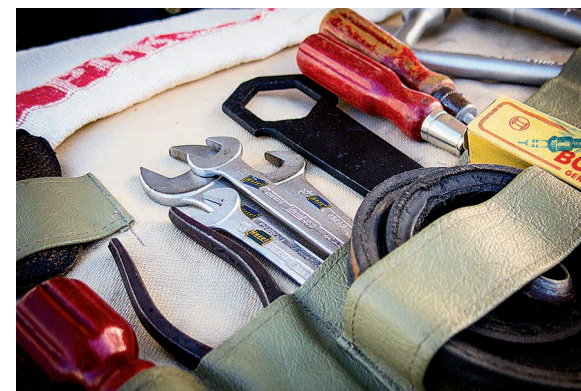
“I love the character, the style, of this car,” said Benjamin. “It has one of the most classic silhouettes of all time. Its shape is the defining essence of the Porsche brand. Form following function. So forward-thinking.” An insightful comment from a guy whose other Porsches include those with wings, scoops, bulging fenders, and massive tires. “Everything about this 356 is centered around the driver. It is so analog. There are



Dr. Gary L. Myers, professor emeritus of English, is as comfortable with a book as with a wrench.



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no distractions with this car.”

Benjamin’s desire to own a 356, and his path to ownership, was convoluted. He wanted a solid survivor, one that had spent more time on a driveway than in a garage. “When I began looking for a 356, I flew to California to look for a West Coast example, knowing there would be less issues with rust, and considering the car culture there, a car would be in better condition. I had a lead on this car, but I was unsure that it was the one I would eventually buy.”

Purchased from its second owner, Bill Bucher, this 356A required vision, imagination, and a leap of faith on Benjamin’s part. “When I first saw this car, it was without the bumpers, without the wheels, without this mirror,” recalled Benjamin. “It had a racing mirror, the roll cage, racing seats, a Nardi steering wheel, and a fire extinguishing system. Probably other people looking at this car could not see past the racing stuff. Perhaps they didn’t understand that all that equipment was simply

bolt-on, and that the car could be returned to street-ready condition. The 356A was offered with crates and boxes of parts, purported to be all the original pieces, but he [Bill Bucher] had no time to show me the parts he had, or to negotiate the price.” Faced with this take-it-or-leave-it proposition, Benjamin looked over the car one more time and decided to take it.

Risky business? Having been around the block a time or two, Benjamin recognized the need to have his newest acquisition checked by nationally recognized professionals. He chose Tony Callas, of Callas Rennsport, to evaluate the mechanicals. Ed Palmer, owner of Kundensport, did the cosmetics, the bumpers, trim pieces, etc. Ed also did a thorough check of body and undercarriage, repairing minor issues he uncovered.

The work these two did on Benjamin’s car could not be considered either restoration or renovation. The term reclamation—reclaiming what had been lost, what had been put aside—would be more apt. Returning the car

to the driver it had been for years was important to Benjamin. The dings, scrapes, and minor blemishes all told stories. They reflected its character, its bones, its history.

“This car spent time in Europe, then as a daily driver in California, then as a race car. It has lots of road rash, especially in the front of the car, and every scratch and dent has a story. Like that dent in the back of the car. The story goes that the first owner was showing off in front of an XK-E Jaguar. The Jag driver took offense and gave the 356 a little tap at the next stoplight. You’ll see it there. There are also a few scrapes from its time on the racetrack. Fortunately, it’s nothing serious, just a little rubbing. The Pegasus logos, the attaching points for the racing harness, and the bolt holes from the roll cage are there from its racing days.” Dents and details tell the story of a survivor.

This car’s first owner, Roger Munn, picked up his new 356A 1600 Super on December 17, 1958. Now 92 years old, Roger was happy to share his recollection of

the car’s early days. “I lived in Sierra Madre, a little east of Pasadena. I contacted the dealer handling Porsche and told the salesman I wanted to buy a Porsche and pick it up at the factory. He was not interested in helping me. In fact, he told me I couldn’t do it. So I wrote a letter to Dr. Ferry Porsche in Stuttgart and told him I wanted to buy a car.”

After a bit of back and forth, a deal was struck. Roger flew to Germany, went to the factory, and picked up his new Porsche. “I got the car I wanted, but it didn’t have a sunroof. The car came with a luggage rack, luggage, and the leather straps used to hold the luggage on the rack. I left the factory right at closing time, which meant I went right from the outskirts of Stuttgart to downtown, where my hotel was, with all that traffic, in my brand-new Porsche. That was an experience.”

Young Mr. Munn spent the next six weeks terrorizing other motorists on European highways, through Belgium, Holland, “and wherever I went, people crowded

Opposite: Porsche’s original SUV. Above: Service booklets and tools get regular use. Bill Bucher, the second owner of this 1959 356A, racing with VARA. Nonagenarian Roger Munn, the first owner, takes a drive down memory lane.

around my car. I gave rides whenever I could.”

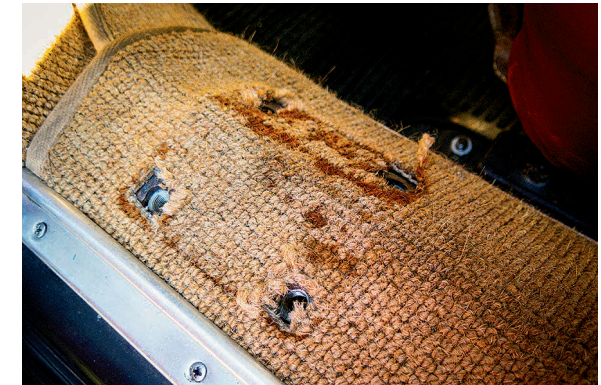
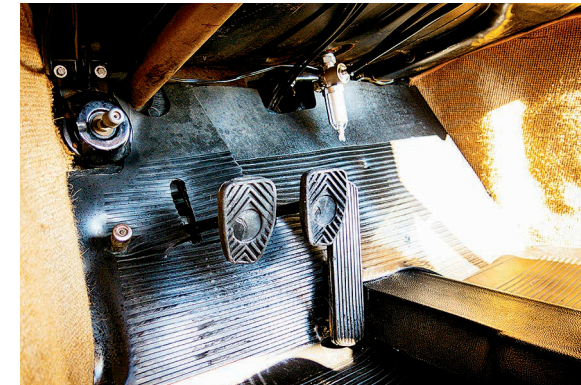
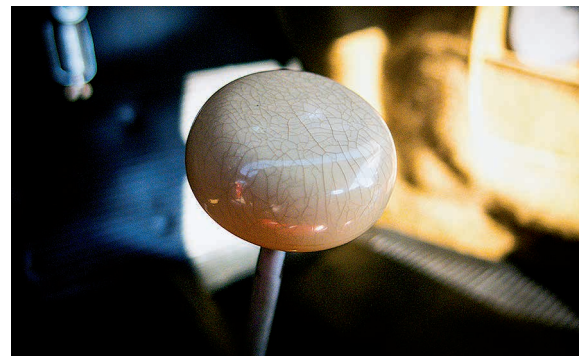
Roger eventually left his 356 with friends in Denmark, who subsequently shipped it to California. The car was in transit for a little more than two months, passing through the Panama Canal. Reunited with his 356A in California, Roger drove the wheels off his car, as one would expect. Already a member of the Four Cylinder Club of America, a club he joined when he owned an MGB, he also joined PCA. “I did those gymkhanas and rallies, some 24-hour rallies.” Roger drove the car for “thousands of miles” on “every back road in California” and owned the car for “several decades” before selling it.

The second owner, Bill Bucher, had different plans for the 356. “I drove it a little bit and entered it in some car shows, but I got the bug to race it. I ran into a friend who was racing vintage cars. He told me he planned to race at Willow Springs that weekend and suggested I come. Well, I had not taken the Porsche on a road trip yet, so I drove up to Willow Springs. Got my first taste

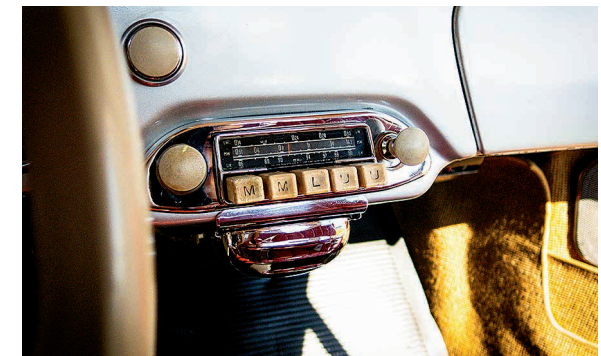
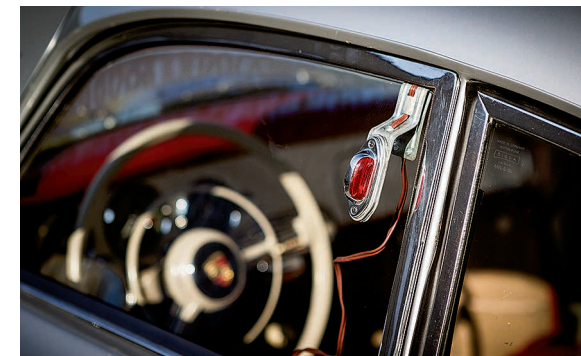
later. As Benjamin explained: “When I bought the car, it did not have the original engine. Bill had replaced it long ago, so we began to look for the original motor. We found one that was three digits off, so I bought it and had it rebuilt for the car. While I was at the shop checking out this newly rebuilt motor, another friend called to tell me he had found the original numbers-matching motor. I immediately bought it, had it verified, rebuilt, and installed in the car. The Porsche gods smiled on me that day. Now, I have a numbers-matching car.”

The thing that draws people to Benjamin’s 356A is its authenticity. It is a time machine that takes both driver and passenger back to a simpler era. “My wife loves the car. When I drive it, I get to put my arm around her, look around, and relax. Everything in my life slows down.”

It is a utilitarian sports car in every sense of the word. Before they left for Parade, Benjamin and Tania packed their belongings in the luggage delivered with the car almost 60 years ago. “As you know, space is



Opposite: Worn, original belts were replaced with period-correct, gray with blue-stitched webbing. Above: Benjamin’s 356A pre-dates this Maule M-5-235C by 17 years. Left: The tears in the carpet are from a roll cage dating to the car’s racing days.



of vintage racing. Three weeks later, I had a roll bar in the Porsche. It was actually too good to turn into a race car, but I raced it in California, Nevada, and Arizona for 12 years.”

Fortunately, Bill had the foresight to keep all the original parts that were removed during its conversion to a race car. “A piece of history? Well, I didn’t think about it that way at the time. I was a racer. I just figured that someone might want to return it to street status sometime.”

However, when Benjamin bought the coupe from Bill, the engine was not numbers-matching. That came

limited in a 356, so I strapped the luggage on the rack. We drove from Westchester County, New York, through rain in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, to Missouri. The luggage worked as designed—not a drop of water entered it. I purchased the skis and the tennis racket to complete the look. Although they didn’t come with the car, they are period correct.”

HOW DOES BENJAMIN compare his car, his ownership experience, with that of a pristine trailer queen or a modified Outlaw? “I appreciate each type: the queen, the

Outlaw, and the survivor. If my car was not numbers-matching, if it wasn’t as complete as it is, I probably would have modified it, made it faster with period-correct racing parts—a hot rod 356. If my car were complete, yet rusty and needing to be rebuilt, I probably would have gone the full restoration route, making it a mobile piece of art. But my car runs well, has all its parts, and carries with it a history that cannot be duplicated.

“After meeting the first two owners, my wife told me, ‘We will never sell this car. It will never leave us.’ It became a personal thing, a part of us. When we showed

the car to the first owner [Roger] he just stared at it, looking at it from every angle. Roger was in his upper 80s at the time. He told us there had been a vanity mirror attached to the sun visor at one time, but it had been stolen. I looked at that sun visor and saw the indentations that mirror had made so long ago. You just can’t duplicate that.”

A concours queen, an Outlaw, and a survivor. Each car is special. Each is meaningful to its owner. Each is a part of history. And, in a way, what Ferry Porsche envisioned so long ago. ●