SPEEDSTER

A PORSCHE'S STORY



ALEX, EDMUND & CHRIS VON ALLMEN

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Speedster - A Porsche's Story

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ORIGINS



A Need for Speed

The vehicle's RPM meter pinned past the redline and the MG's motor was whining. Filled with adrenaline the driver was trying to lose a pursuing patrol car on a Kentucky country road and the cops were not amused. They began firing warning shots over the car's roof.



The Driveway

But the driver was able to give the cops the slip by ducking into a narrow gravel driveway and then into a garage. Feeling a bit smug that he had dodged certain jail time, the driver closed the garage door and walked away.



The Fire

A few hours later the car which was overheated from its race with the law, erupted a fuel leak and caught fire. The garage and home were engulfed in flames. Meet Frank, my owner…and my driver in this story. He remained unscathed by the chase scene but the car and garage died in the fire that day.



Hello My Name is Ferdinand

Guten Tag, mein Name ist Ferdinand III. I'm a Porsche 356 Speedster that was hand assembled in 1959 in Gmund, Austria. I'm a sleek two seater ivory colored convertible with curvy lines and a rich red leather interior. I sometimes go topless.

I was the first Porsche delivered to Greece.



James Dean & Steve McQueen

I am the last of the true 356 Speedsters. We were brought to Southern California to be raced. And Hollywood picked up on them. Actors James Dean and Steve McQueen both owned 356s. McQueen even raced Porsches.

Even rockstar Janis Joplin owned one. “Oh Lord… won’t you buy me a Mercedes Benz… my friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends.”



Frank

The young man sitting on me is Frank. My owner was a young electrical engineer. Frank was an ex-Marine CIA operative based in Athens and Cyprus. I'm not sure what he actually did

for a living because I didn’t have the right top secret clearance. This is our story…

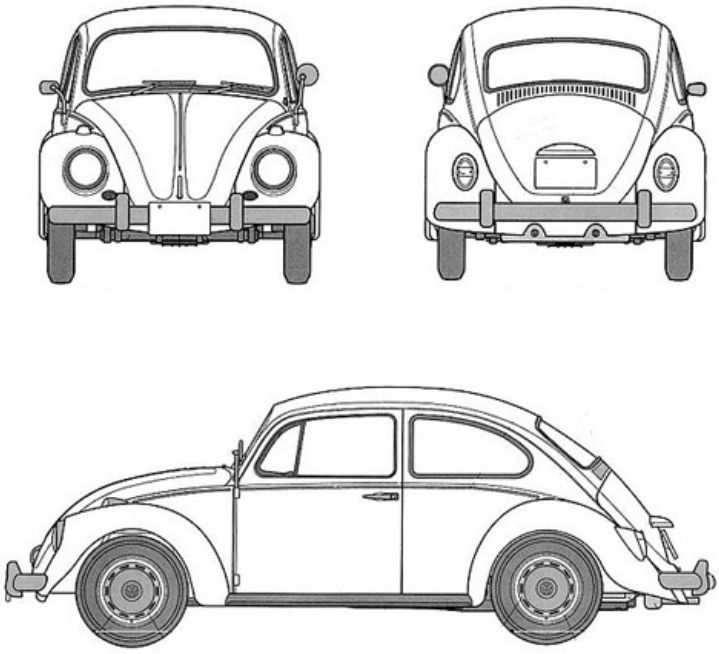


Ferdinand “Ferry” Porsche

You could say that my father was Ferry Porsche and my grandfather was Ferdinand Porsche, Sr. In an interview, Ferry admitted "...I had always driven very speedy cars. I had an Alfa Romeo, BMW, and Volkswagen Cabriolet with a supercharged engine. I saw that if you had enough power in a small car, it is more fun to drive than if you have a big car which is also overpowered.

He created the Porsche prototype with the idea of making a lighter two-seater car with more horsepower. We would be built in Carinthia (Gmünd)".

Ferry championed the 356. Like our cousins, the Volkswagen Beetles, we are four-cylinder, air-cooled, rear-engine, rear-wheel-drive cars with pan and body construction. My chassis was a completely new design by Erwin Komenda.



The Best Selling Volkswagen Beetle

Ferdinand Porsche Senior was the chief designer at the company that would later become Mercedes-Benz. His claim to fame was designing the Volkswagen Beetle…or people's car. The bug would go on to sell over 21 million units between 1938 and 2003.



Dreaming in DC

Frank writes “It all started in the fall of 1956 as I was driving in my 55’ blue Volkswagen, which was inherited from my father who had died the year before. I was in my first job after college in Washington, DC.

Washington turned out to be a young man's paradise, and my love of sports cars took me to Marlboro Race Track where the AC Bristols, MG's and Jaguars were regularly trounced by a Porsche 350 Spider driven by Bob Holbert.

After one race, emboldened by the courage of a 12 pack of Becks, (I always drank German Beer to go with the car) I made some track laps in the Volkswagen. The lady I was with thought this was the end, and pawed the ceiling like a cat being taken through a drive-in carwash. That settled it, I had to have a Porsche. Not a coupe, but an all the way sexy convertible."



Bob Holbert - Racing Rockstar

Back in the fifties, Bob Holbert was a racing rockstar. He started racing MGs in 1953 but switched to racing Porsches after becoming one of the first authorized Porsche dealers in 1954.

In 1957 he won the opening race at the Virginia International

Raceway and took four SCCA National Championships. In 1961 he finished fifth overall and first in class at Le Mans driving a Porsche Spyder with Masten Gregory.

Holbert would later race Cobras for the legendary Carroll Shelby. He won the first United States Road Racing Championship in 1963. He and frequent co-driver Dave McDonald won the GT Class at Sebring in 1964.



Made in Gmund, Austria

Gmund is a picturesque town in Southeastern Austria bordering on the Alps. Picture the movie “Sound of Music”. On a hill above the old town are the ruins of Gmünd Castle, dating from the mid 13th century.

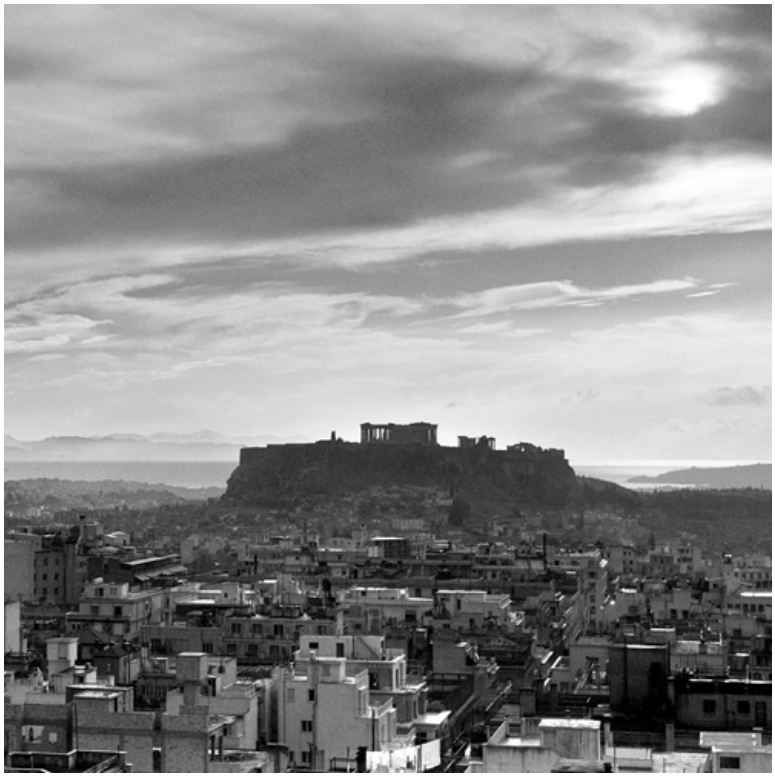


Ferry Porsche in Gmund

From 1944 on, Porsche's engineering was headquartered in Gmünd, in a former sawmill, to avoid the Allied bombing raids in Stuttgart. This was where Erwin Komenda, designed and built the first prototype Porsche 356 sports car. And this was where I, and other 356's were made by hand.



ATHENS



A Young Engineer in Athens

In 1958, Frank was reassigned by the CIA to work in Athens and Cyprus, Greece. He had an epiphany. He soon realized that he could acquire a European car in Europe for less that it would cost in the United States. He wanted a sports car - something that went fast.

He may have felt that a Porsche would be fun to drive, and that it would add to a “playboy” image. He had made friends at the Athens Sailing Club and many of these Greek aristocrats, including his friend Phanas, were driving Mercedes Benzes…

A Porsche would be unique and it might have the side benefit of attracting beautiful Greek women. A Porsche Speedster was normally $4200 in the US but could be had for a mere $2,800 in Europe. Frank only grossed $4,000 yearly back then, but he was good at saving, usually banking at least $200 per month.

By the fall of 1958, Frank had barely saved the $2,800 but went to the Porsche dealer in Athens, bellied up to the counter and told him “I want to order”.

They had never sold one before, I was the first.

“The Speedster had been replaced by the Convertible D with roll up windows! The price was now $3,200…Oops! Money in advance, please.”

“It didn’t come in the “Steingrau” color I wanted, but my friend Phanis said, “What the hell, it’s a sports car, it should be red or yellow!” Yellow or “Elfenbein”. “Elfenbein” ivory it was!



Delivered by Train

Frank writes ”In February, after four months of delicious anticipation, I received a call that the car was at the railroad depot waiting for me in a boxcar.”

“I had to see it, and it was beautiful! Porsche No. 86084 customs clearance was scheduled in two days. Hence, there

was a matter of $250 transportation fee. About $1,000 in today's money.”

The first drive in a new car is always the most exciting. It was so exciting that I did a 360 on a Greek country road north of Kifissia. The Road and Track warning was right! “Michelins break without warning.”



Penelope

I wasn't there when Frank first met Penny at a New Years Eve party in Athens on December 31st, 1958. A friend had dragged her there and she had no idea that her life might not be the same thereafter.

Frank and Penny hit it off and started dating. Here is a photo of Penny from the roof of her family's home in Kalamakiou,

Greece near Athens .. just blocks from the beach. The big white house was several stories high and featured a grand staircase. There was a small orchard in the back.

For their first date, Frank picked up Penny in his father's Volkswagen. For future dates, he took me.



Back to Cyprus

A few weeks later, Frank was back in Cyprus for a 3 month assignment. It is there that he catches the tail end of the Greek Civil War and is later drummed out of government service.

Cyprus was geostrategically important to Britain after the loss of Suez in 1956. But London came to believe that just having military bases on the island might be enough. Cyprus would be granted independence from Britain in 1960.

I am left behind in Athens while Frank is on the island.



In Athens Again

It's April 1959 and Frank is back in Athens and we are reunited again. We are taking drives all over the city.

Although there were Mercedes Benzes and Austin Healeys, there were no other Porsches in Greece. A lot of times we drove to the beach to go swimming.

The traffic in Athens was horrible…often bumper to bumper. Greeks drove fast to pass each other and they always crossed the lines. Frank lived on the opposite side of Athens from where Penny lived. He was by the mountains and Penny was by the beach.

According to Penny, “ It was getting close for Frank to end his time in Greece and go back to the States. But soon after Frank came back from the trip to Cyprus, he asked me if I wanted to marry him.

I said that I needed to tell my parents. I told my mom first because I didn't want to tell my father. My mother went ahead and told my father. He had people research Frank’s family before he gave his blessing for me to marry him.

My father wanted me to marry a Greek ship owner from Chios. He felt that he was a good match for me. He was upset that Frank and I might be leaving Greece.

I had an engagement party and invited Frank’s friends too. But we didn’t have a wedding reception.”



A Greek Wedding

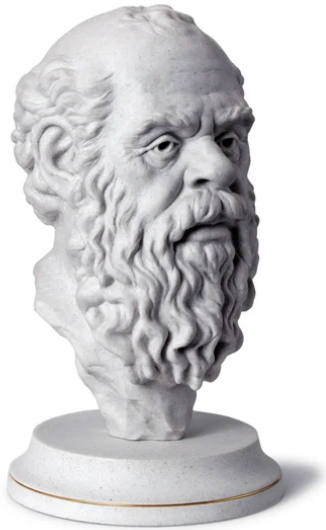
The Greek wedding was on August 29th, 1959. It was a gala event. Frank looked sharply dressed in a white tuxedo and Penny looked stunningly beautiful in her wedding dress. The honeymoon is spent on the island of Rhodes. This is the same place where actor and director James Darren and his wife Evy spend their honeymoon a few months later.

EUROPEAN ROAD TRIP



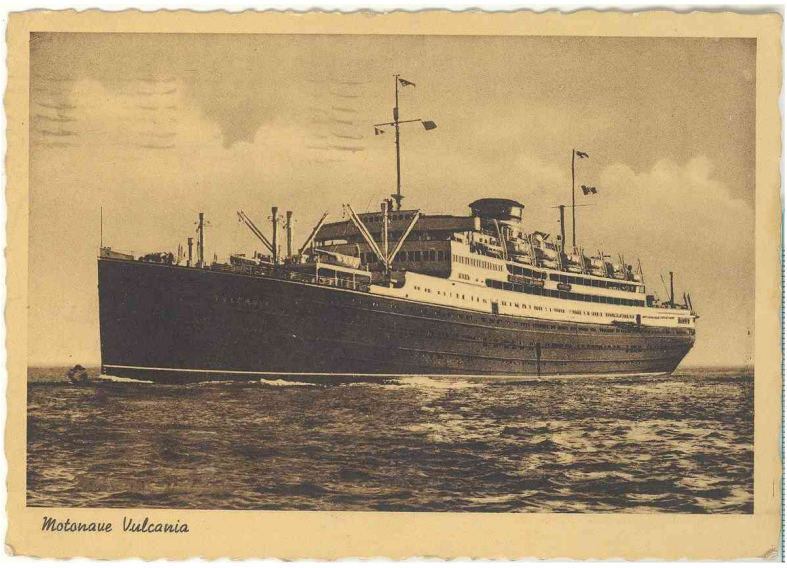
European Road Trip

Penny and Frank took me for a road trip. Frank writes, “I put the car on the “Vulcania” to go to Bari, (Brindisi) Italy. Every cubic centimeter of the car was packed. There was no room for anything else.



A Bust of Socrates

At that point my Father-in-law gave me four bottles of homemade Brandy. One of my wife's girlfriends, whom I always called "Crazy Nitsa", presented me with a plaster bust of Socrates. I gave the statue of the famous philosopher to a very astonished Italian customs agent upon arrival in Bari. (Brindisi)



The MS Vulcania

We drove West of Athens to Piraeus and boarded the MS Vulcania for a short voyage across the Ionian to Brindisi.

Launched in 1926, the MS Vulcania was an ocean liner that normally sailed from Trieste to Naples to New York City and back to Trieste. It is considered one of the most successful passenger ships ever built. During her career she carried more passengers than any other Italian flagship.



Brindisi, Italy

Brindisi is a historic port on the heel of Italy’s boot on the Adriatic.

We spent some time there and then drove 300 plus kilometers across the Peninsula to the picturesque town of Sorrento where we witnessed views of Mount Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples.



Positano and Amalfi Coast

Soon we were driving the Italian Positano curves. And we were going really fast. Frank wanted to take the curbs fast. But Penny was pregnant and became nauseous. She was on the verge of throwing up.



Pompei, Italy

On the way to Naples, we made our way up to Pompei that had been covered by the volcanic ash of Mount Vesuvius. At the archeological site there were bodies of people frozen in their last moments in time.



Naples, Italy

We continued up the peninsula through Naples and then to Rome. Naples was a medieval city with a castle and a rich Hellenistic culture. The city was filled with multistory concrete domiciles.



Rome

Rome was …well Rome. It was the heart of a once great empire, rich in history and home to the Coliseum, St. Peter's Basilica and flocks of pigeons. We zipped around the city and I felt like a time machine transporting a young couple back to an era of emperors and gladiators.

From Rome, we drove up through Florence, Genoa, Milan, Lake Como and into Switzerland.



Milano

We drove north to Milano. Milan is the second largest city in Italy, behind Rome, and along with London, Paris and New York is recognized as one of the world’s fashion capitals.



Lake Como, Italy

After Milan, we drove up past Lake Como which was in the Italian Alps. We traversed the North side of the lake before entering Switzerland.



Wilderswil, Switzerland

Over the Swiss Alps we journeyed to a small hamlet near Interlaken named Wilderswil. Frank's great grandfather was born here and had emigrated to the United States to start a new life.

We found a place to stay the night by the railway station.



Alps View from Interlaken

The view of the Swiss Alps from Interlaken was stunning. We were able to see the peaks of the Jungfrau, Eiger and Monch. There three mountains are represented on Frank's family crest.



Bern, Switzerland

From Interlaken we drove to Bern and past the famous clock tower where Einstein had postulated his theory of relativity on a train.

I wondered about the Swiss fascination with time. Frank sported a perpetual Omega watch that was made in the nearby Swiss village of La Chaux-de-Fonds. It was the waterproof ‘Seamaster” watch that sailors wore.



Lausanne, Switzerland

We met Penny's mother Anna in Switzerland who was visiting Lausanne at the time. Lausanne was one the shores of Lac Leman, North of Geneva. Because of its proximity to France, most of the people spoke French.



Dijon, France

Our next major destination was Paris…the City of Lights. We headed across the French border toward Dijon…land of mustard. Pass the Grey Poupon please!

And we continued though the French countryside past Chablis where the grapes of the white wine are grown.



The Arc de' Triomphe

Paris is a marvel. We zoomed past Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre museum and drove down the Champs de Elysee. The Arc de Triomphe lay at avenue's end encompassed by a great roundabout radiating a dozen avenues.

The Great Arc, which was completed in 1836, greeted Allied soldiers at the Liberation of Paris in 1944 at the end of World War II.



The Ferry at Calais

After spending a few days in Paris, we were on our way to Calais. Calais overlooks the Strait of Dover, the narrowest point in the English Channel, which is only 34 km (21 mi) wide here, and is the closest French town to England.

We found a place to stay the night in Calais. The hotel was full of mosquitoes. So Frank and Penny spent all night swatting at the bugs with pillows. His new bride was not impressed.

We loaded me onto a ferry to cross over to Dover. It's a good thing I don't get seasick. Years later, in 1994, the Channel Tunnel better known as the Chunnel opened up carrying millions of people under the water from France to England.



London

It was about a 130 kilometer drive from Dover to London. We stayed in London for a few days and were able to see Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, Tower Bridge and other sights.

Frank found a club in the middle of the city where he had to become a member to stay. So he became a member.

While in London, Frank and Penny visited her uncle Stratis in the financial district. Stratis gave the newlyweds a gracious wedding gift of $1000. Penny was freezing and bought herself a warm coat with part of the money her uncle had given her in London.



COMING TO AMERICA



The SS United States

It is in London that we boarded the SS United States for our transatlantic journey back to the states. The ship was one of the fastest in the world and held the world record for Atlantic transit - 3 days, 12 hours, and 12 minutes, a record that remains unbroken today.

It was built to easily convert to a military transport and quickly take US soldiers to places of conflict around the world.

We passed Lady Liberty and Ellis Island filled with the dreams of a new life together.

We arrived in New York harbor but there was a delay in unloading me because of a dock worker strike. Finally, I was allowed to disembark. It was scary because there was just rubber and a net around my wheels. Penny and I were concerned that I would fall.

Penny remembers New York being freezing cold. She had grown up mostly in Greece and was not used to the weather. She was thankful to have the coat she purchased in London!



Washington, DC

Frank took his new bride to Washington DC to resign his position with the CIA. Penny was a foreigner and so he gave up his clearance. Penny remembers walking around for hours, no restaurants or stores in sight, while she waited for Frank to finish his business.



The Belle of Louisville

Frank and Penny drove me from New York to Louisville. We ended up landing at Frank's mother Grace's house adjacent to the family Dairy farm off Chamberlain Lane.

We spent several weeks at Grace's while we looked for a new place to stay.



Cherokee Park, Louisville

The young couple moved to the Highlands area in Louisville. The Highlands is an older neighborhood on the East side of Louisville bordering Cherokee Park. It is filled with classic brownstone homes.

Frank and Penny initially rented a place off Glenmary Avenue before moving to another place off Everett.

This is where Alex and Edmund would be born.



Everett Avenue, Louisville

We settled in a rented house on Everett near Cherokee Parkway. I remember zipping down that street and sometimes Penny was at the wheel.

Frank would buy a Renault for Penny to drive.



The Young Family

Alex was born on April 11th, 1960. Edmund was born on May 17th, 1962. Frank created a makeshift back seat for the two brothers to sit on.



Alex at the Wheel

During their time in Louisville, Frank and Penny met Ed and Pam Hessel. They had a young son too, Edward Jr, and shared an interest in sports cars. Their daughter Page would be born a few years later. Ed would later acquire his own Porsche and headed up the Louisville Porsche Club chapter.

BACK TO EUROPE



Back to Greece

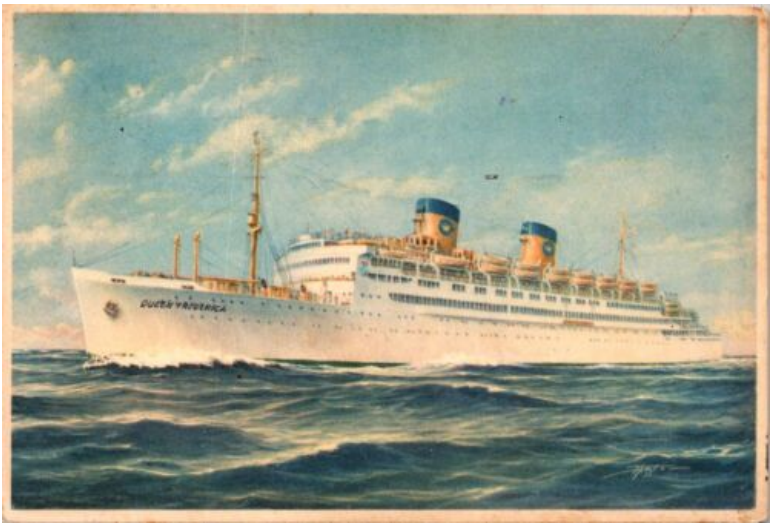
We remained in Louisville until Frank got a job offer to help build a plant in Kavala, Greece. In July 1964, we repacked and retraced our trip to New York. Now with the addition of two young boys, we sailed to Greece on the Queen Frederika.



The World’s Fair in New York

In 1964, the New York World’s fair was going on. The international theme was symbolized by a 12-story-high, stainless-steel model of the Earth called the Unisphere.

Walt Disney was heavily involved in the fair's design and it would become the inspiration for EPCOT in Orlando.



The Queen Frederika

The Queen Frederika departed New York Harbor and eventually landed in Piraeus harbor near Athens.

Originally commissioned in 1927 as the SS Malolo, the ship operated as a troop transport during World War II.

In 1965, the ship was purchased by the Chandris Line and renamed after the Greek queen.



Venice, Italy

As a plant engineer for the new fertilizer company in Kavala, Frank's first assignment was to visit Saint-Avold, France to see a similar manufacturing plant that was being constructed.

I was put on a ship named the Agamemnon to travel to Venice, Italy. By sailing to Venice, we cut the distance of our drive in half.



St Gotthard's Pass, Switzerland

The journey took us over St Gotthard's Pass in Switzerland. Frank recalls the drive as “sheer hell”. The clutch was about gone and the valves desperately needed grinding.



Saint-Avold France

Saint-Avold was a picturesque town in Northern France near the German border with several industrial operations outside the downtown area. Frank visited the manufacturing plant on the outskirts of town to learn all he could for his next assignment.

Near Saint-Avold there was the Lorraine American Cemetery and Memorial honoring the American soldiers who fought and died in both World Wars. It is one of the largest final resting places for American soldiers outside the United States.



Stuttgart, Germany

Frank writes “The sojourn in Europe lasted for four months and ended in Stuttgart where I was able to get a much needed engine overhaul at “Autohaus Hähnchen” under the Prussian guidance of Herr Fedelmeyer. I remember him asking me if all I did was “Put gas in and go like Hell.”



Munich, Germany

From Stuttgart we drove to Munich and then on to Venice where we boarded the Agamemnon ship for Athens.

Back in Athens, it was on to Kavala in Northern Greece where Frank worked starting the new factory.



Kavala, Greece

Kavala is a city in Northern Greece and is the principal sea port of eastern Macedonia.

Kavala is on the shores of the Aegean Sea. Built in the 7th century BC, it became part of Alexander the Great’s kingdom.

It was also known as Rome's Neapolis or port city for Philippi, before being fought over by Byzantines, crusaders and Ottomans. Its Byzantine castle stands as a reminder of the clash of empires.



Church of St. Nicholas

Kavala was the first place in Europe where St Paul landed on his mission to convert the gentiles to Christianity. The Church of St Nicholas has a mural commemorating his arrival.



Philippi, Macedonia

Ever hear of Paul's letter to the Philippians? The small town of Philippi was just 18 kilometers North of Kavala. We took an excursion to Philippi to walk in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul.



Phosphoric Fertilizers Factory

Frank was a plant engineer for Phosphoric Fertilizers Industry S.A. (PFI). The plant was founded in 1961 by the Commercial Bank Group of Greece and began operating in 1965 at Nea Karvali in Kavala.

Frank drove me to work every day. I did not run at peak performance because I was only given low test gasoline.





Penny and the Optimist Sailboat

Frank had a love of all things nautical. And it wasn't long before he crafted an Optimist wooden sailboat. The Optimist was mostly intended for young people and is one of the most popular dinghies in the world.



The Porsche “Truck”

No trailer, no truck .. no problem. I became the carrier of choice to haul the Optimist to the water. Frank would position the back of the boat on my rack and lean the front on my convertible top. He would use bungee cords to hold the boat in place.



The Keiki Carcass

Much to my chagrin, I would soon realize that I would have competition for Frank's attention. Frank found an old Keiki Greek fishing boat for sale. They stripped the boat down to a carcass. It was a mere shell of a boat.

Frank was able to talk a number of his fellow workers into helping him to reconstruct the boat. Frank put hours of time into his new mistress. Penny was not very amused because he spent hours after his workday working on the Keiki.



The Keiki in Kavala

The boat was restored to a good condition. It provided hours of enjoyment for Frank and his family as they sailed the Agean. The family took trips to Thassos and even fished off of the side of the boat. It was common for the kids to catch large sardines and me carrying them home to cook.

One time, Penny caught an octopus while fishing near a rocky area. Initially she thought she had snagged a piece of scrap Aluminum.

Unfortunately, the Keiki was severely damaged a few years later in Athens when its moorings became loose during a

storm. I had nothing to do with this. Penny's brothers took the Keiki out for a cruise but didn't moor it well upon return. The wind was very hard, and it rammed several of the neighboring boats. Spiro, Penny's father, was not pleased.



Palio Beach Near Kavala

Many weekdays and weekends were spent at Palio beach. The waters were very clear and the kids could see sea urchins 10 to 15 feet below the surface.

Alex and Edmund befriended a young boy named Atrias… who would later start a well known restaurant in Athens.



Thessaloniki

Once the plant was up and running, Frank decided to leave Kavala. Alex was turning six and Frank thought it was time for him to return to the United States to start elementary school.

The drive from Kavala to Athens is over 650 kilometers. The drive took us along the coast and through Thessaloniki…the second largest city in Greece.

The Apostle Paul spent time here as well. Remember his letter to the Thesolonians in the New Testament.



Marathon, Greece

On the way we passed Marathon, Greece. In a nod to Greek history, the first marathon commemorated the run of the soldier Pheidippides from a battlefield to Athens in 490 B.C.

According to legend, Pheidippides ran approximately 25 miles to announce the defeat of the Persians to Athenians and then keeled over and died from exhaustion.

BACK TO AMERICA…AGAIN



The TSS Olympia

After the long drive we were back in Athens at Penny's parents' home. We did visit the Acropolis and other Greek ruins while we were there.

We boarded the TSS Olympia in Piraeus. The Olympia was built in 1953 for transatlantic crossings. It was a midsized ship that would be later converted to be utilized for Caribbean cruises.

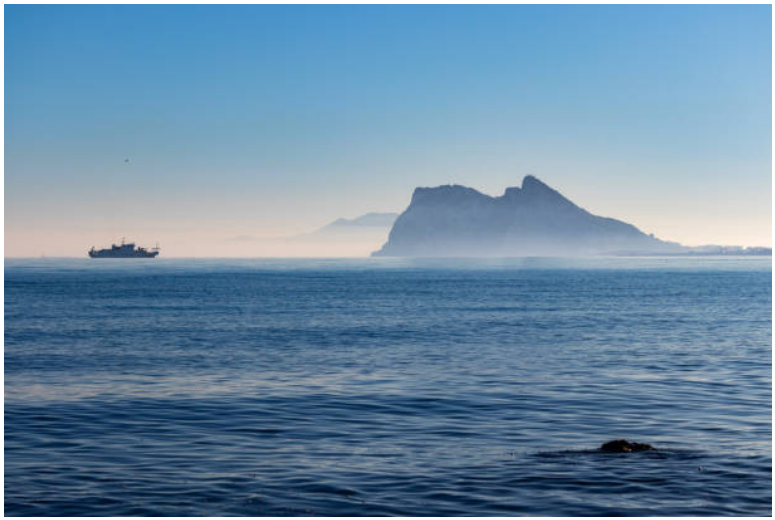


The Corinth Canal

Alex remembers playing on the deck, eating his first grapefruit in the dining room and marveling at the walls of the Corinth Canal.

A short cut to Italy was through the Corinth Canal. The canal is about four miles long and is a passage just 80 feet wide. It was built during a time when ships were a bit smaller than the Ocean faring Vulcania. The walls of the canal were very steep and many ships needed a tugboat escort to keep them from scraping their sides.

Unfortunately, my cargohold was not a room with a view.



The Rock of Gibraltar

We passed by the Rock of Gibraltar and straits of Gibraltar before entering the open seas of the North Atlantic. In the middle of the ocean we encountered a storm that rocked our ship furiously. This gave St Gotthard's Pass a run for the money. Pass the Dramamine!

On the voyage, Alex and Edmund made friends with other children who were also heading back from Greece to New York.



TSS Olympia in New York Harbor

Upon arrival, it seemed like it took forever for me to be unloaded from the Olympia. I wondered why there was always an issue. It took hours to be reunited with my family.

We drove from New York City to Louisville and down the familiar country roads to Grandmother Grace's. At least this time I had high grade gasoline for the journey.

Frank and family ended up staying at a house on the tail end of his grandfather's 200 acre farm. It was less than half a mile from Grace's house. There was a one-car garage where I stayed.



River Road

Frank ended up taking an engineering job with a ceramics manufacturer near downtown Louisville. I became his “daily driver” accompanying him on the scenic River Road that parallelled the Ohio River.



Porsche Club Pig Award

Frank joined the Louisville Porsche Club. The club held events for the whole family. There were picnics complete with Bratwursts and beer. These PCA events were an opportunity to clean, run, and showcase your car.

Ed Hessell, one of the founders of the chapter, had purchased a beautiful red 62 cabriolet. He nicknamed him “the General”.

In contrast, I was winning a “Porky Pig Award” reserved for the worst showing at these events. During one event, Edmund fell into a lake and Penny made him undress and wear a towel.

Not realizing that judges were coming by to inspect the cars, I was being used as a hanger to drape his drying wet clothes.

It was that event where I won the Pig Award for the third time in a row. That broke both mine and Frank's hearts. Some people even put dirt in their cars so we wouldn't win again but the award was ours to keep.



Giulia the Alfa Romeo

Frank found Giulia, a new car to love. Guilia was a red 1968 Alfa Romeo GTV. The “V” was for “veloce”. That meant “fast” in Italian.

Giulia was the new star in the family and took center stage. She was an Italian beauty like Sophia Loren or Gina Lollabrgida.



Out of Service in 1972

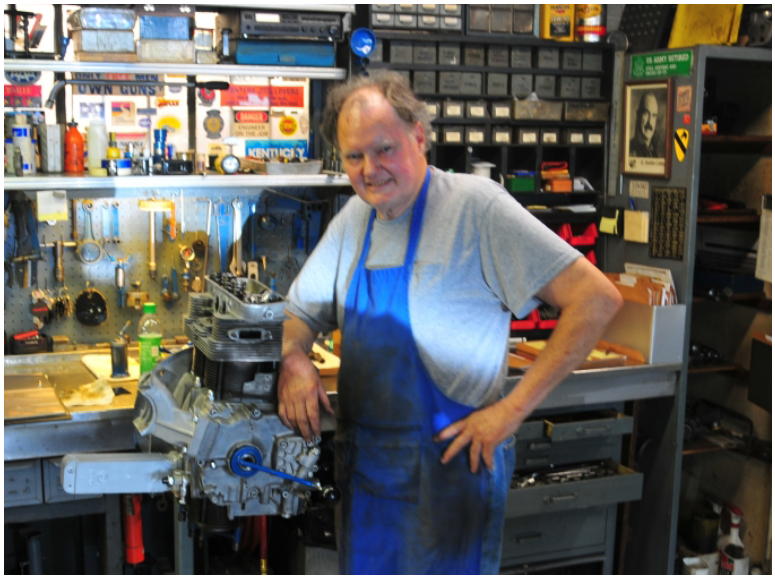
Frank parked me on the side of the house. I was officially retired from service. There were holes in my convertible top and my body. Louisville weather was not kind. Water seeped in and I began to rust even more. Mice colonized by my engine.



Back from the Dead

I had been just sitting there…rusting in the rain. And one sunny day I was rolled out. I had suffered much from years of neglect. But the whole family began to work on me.

They unbolted and pulled out my red seats. My convertible top, or what was left of it, was removed. They found my rusty areas and began removing them. My floor panels were gone. I was like a Flintstone mobile.



Obi Wan - Ken Daugherty

Frank knew a guy from work who loved rebuilding Porsche engines. The two gently dropped my engine and it found its way to Ken's bench. Ken was like a skilled heart surgeon. Piece by piece, he made my engine like new again.



Engine Restored 1974

Ken was able to work his magic and restore my engine to nearly new condition. The 1600 liter engine would give me 59 horsepower and a top speed of 100 miles per hour.



Chris is born in 1975

Christopher von Allmen was born September 1st, 1975. He is Alex's and Edmund's younger brother. And he would become one of my biggest fans.



Back to the Garage

My body was taken to a local Louisville body shop where it was restored as well. Much of my body was fiberglass and filler now. Penny's favorite color was yellow…so I was painted a bright Corvette Yellow. I wondered if I was the only yellow Porsche in the world.

Frank had finally built a new garage on the property. It would become my new home.



Chris and WD-40

Chris recalls," I spent pretty much every Sunday in the back of that car. And one of the things I used to do was to spray WD 40 on the motor. I'd wipe the motor and clean it up. I thought that by spraying it down and keeping the motor lubricated I was going to make the motor run better.

Everytime, I told dad (Frank) what I had done and asked him whether he thought it would make the engine run better? And he would always tell me that it did. It was something nice to say. But as I got older and learned how to actually work on cars, I realized that the WD-40 had no effect on the car.



Cunningham's for Cokes and Beers

There was a tavern on Harrods Creek near the Ohio River. Frank would often stop off there on his way home from work. Taking a drive down Wolf Pen Road to River Road and stopping off at Bus Parson's River Creek Inn (Now Cunningham's) became a weekend tradition.

Of course, it was a beer for Frank and a Coke for the kids.



Chris' Joy Ride (1989)

One afternoon, Frank and Penny took the 64 Lincoln to an antique car show. I am not sure why they didn't take me…perhaps it was because I wasn't running well at the time. The Lincoln was the same make of car that John F Kennedy rode in when he was assassinated in Dallas. It had been Frank's grandfather Emil's car.

The driving event was one of those where cars would follow each other, drive 50 to 75 miles to the country, stop, grab lunch and then return.

Chris thought that his parents would be gone for several hours… and he was bored. So he started tinkering with me. He pumped up my tires, recharged the battery, and sprayed some fluid down my carburetor. And he was able to get me running.

Understand that Chris was only 14 or 15 years old and didn't even have a driver's license. Once my engine was running, Chris had the bright idea to take me for a drive. Normally, he would take me down our private road which was in reality a big driveway. It had minimal traffic. But this day Chris and I left the property and headed down Wolf Pen Road towards the highway. He thought "what the heck…I am already here" and took the onramp to the freeway.



“A 64 Lincoln … Oh Crap!”

Chris remembers, “I'm running the car slowly. And as I'm looking at the end of the freeway near the Shelbyville Road exit, I see cars pass by going in the opposite direction. Wow there goes an old Model T Ford. And then the next car that passes me is a 64 Lincoln. That's a cool old Lincoln. And as soon as I said that, I saw a white-haired gentleman driving it and I exclaimed to myself, Oh, F—-! And here I am going down the exit ramp in a bright yellow Porsche 356 convertible, only 700 made of that year. And I hide behind the dashboard.

And Dad's head goes outside of the window and yells, “What the f— are you doing? Drive that car home right now!’

So I took the slowest route I could to get back home and was greeted by my parents.

Mom is furious! She is yelling, ‘You are never going to drive ever again in your lifetime.’ You're not getting your license for another year, and blah, blah, blah. And you can't be trusted here, so you're coming with us. And she goes inside for a minute to calm down.

Dad leans over and curiously asks ‘How did you get it started? And how did it run? And by the way, you're an idiot’.

As far as I know, Chris wasn’t grounded for life but it would be a while before he was able to drive me again.

Sometime later he was lamenting about his situation to his grandmother Grace. She was quick to tell him the story of his father eluding the police in the MG and setting their house and garage on fire. For some reason Frank never shared that story.



Frank and Penny Separate

It's 1994 and Frank and Penny are on the rocks with their marriage. They had been married for 35 years.

Chris was 19 years old and had moved out of the house. He is living in a home near River Road with several friends. Resourcefully, he is buying the home and renting the extra bedrooms to friends while attending college classes.

Frank and Penny have planned to go on a vacation to Florida but at the last minute she cancels their trip. So Frank departs for Florida by himself and is not heard from for months. Frank essentially had moved to Sarasota, Florida and rekindled a relationship with Carol.

It was thirty-five years ago that Frank and Penny had met in Athens Greece at a New Years Eve party. They have traveled Europe and raised a family with three sons.

I am laying low in the Kentucky garage. Has everyone forgotten about me?



The Graduation Incentive (1997)

I was still in the garage at Penny's house.

Chris had conversations about me with Frank and wanted to drive me every once in a while. The reality was I was just sitting there collecting dust.

Frank was frustrated that Chris wasn't close to completing his college degree. While Chris was attending college he was renting extra rooms and trading stocks and options.

Frank gave him an offer he couldn't refuse. He said “ Look Chris, I know that you love the Porsche. And I know it's something that you've always cared for. You've done that since you were a kid.

But, I really want you to graduate from college. I‘ll make you a deal. Finish college, get the paper, and the car is yours.”

The deal gave me some hope. Even though I had been restored once already, I was still winning the Pig Award at the local Porsche Club outings. It was as if I had botched plastic surgery. I had dings and rust and my engine was unreliable.

At times, they would park the Lincoln behind me in the garage. And occasionally it would hit me.



The Dotcom Boom

The late nineties were great and Chris was riding high. He was in his last semesters of college, his stocks were doing well and he was dating Patty…whom he would later marry.



The Second Restoration Started

Flush with cash, Chris had an idea to renovate me again. He found a high end body shop that seemed up to the task of rebuilding me. The lead restorer Yan, had raced BMWs professionally and was psyched about the project.

Chris received an estimate in the $25K to $32K range to restore me. And we were off to races. The problem was when the shop started peeling back the onion they discovered there was more damage than first met the eye.

I was absolutely in horrible shape. I had no floor left. The tunnel, which normally held the shifters was gone! There was a hard electric ground next to a fuel line that was a potential fire hazard. The bottom of the doors and much of the side panels were gone.

But we proceeded.



The Bust

Chris recalls, “I was in my last semester of college, the market had crashed and I had run out of money. I was in debt and getting margin calls left and right. I was selling off stock but it was a downward spiral.

I talked my college registrar into letting me take an unheard of 27 hours. Ironically, I ended my last semester with a 3.75 GPA - my best in history.

I even got a line of credit against a car that was in boxes in my basement. That's how desperate I was. I called Edmund, told him my plight and that I was stressed to the max.

The only asset that I had of value was the Porsche…”



The Bail Out

Edmund was quick to offer a bail out. The amount Chris needed was something like $43,000 and he made sure that my creditors were paid. The good news was that Edmund wanted to continue the restoration. Chris and I were both rescued that day.



Restarting the Restoration

I had been in pieces and in storage for two years. Frank reintroduced Chris and Edmund to Ken Dougherty who had done the original engine and transmission rebuild. Ken introduced them to his nephew named Paul who would work on my body.

Ken was excited about the project and wanted to do it right this time. But, he was still upset about the first restoration…including the yellow color.

Edmund replied that he wanted to do it right too but that it need not be one-hundred percent “Concours” perfect.

Paul and Ken quickly realized that my condition was bad. They believed that the previous attempt to fix the frame was unacceptable. It was tricky because I was built on a unibody.



Finishing Out the Restoration

Paul was in charge of the restoration and Ken would provide oversight and guidance. Paul was told to view this as a side project .. which took the pressure off. That put Ken in a good mood, because Ken would oversee it. He would go and look at it and provide advice. You're dealing with an incredibly complicated car when it comes to the body, and Ken was

probably one of the foremost Porsche experts, at least as far as restorations of engines and mechanicals.

The project took two years to finish.



Born Again

At the project’s end, Edmund remarked “It is beautifully done. I am so impressed. I can see Ken's artwork, even with the electrical. You see that Ken probably had a big hand on doing the electrical on it. Everything is terminated beautifully. It's all numbered beautifully.

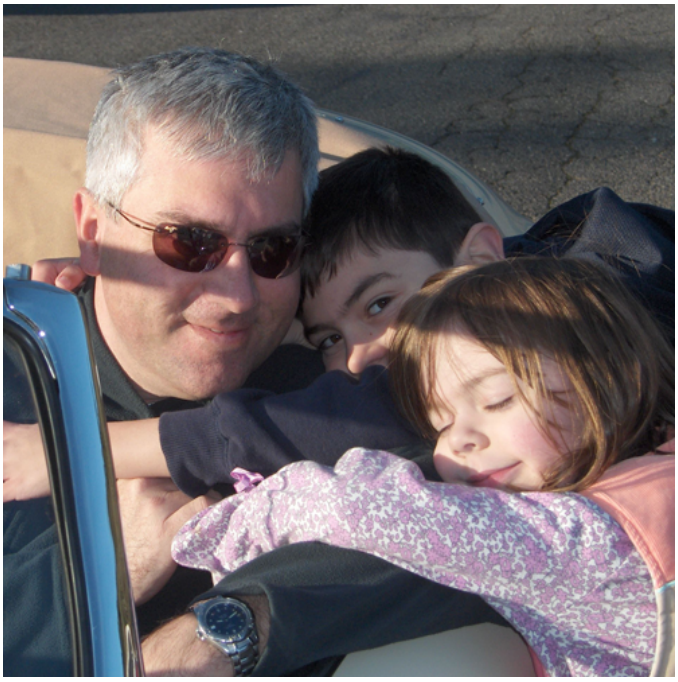
The car has nice curves and everything is tight. I'm so impressed with the finish. And now the car starts right up. It's mechanically like a Swiss watch. It works beautifully.”



Moved to Seattle

Edmund would ship me to Seattle where he worked at Microsoft as a software engineer. Even Bill Gates had a Porsche in his garage.

I was put in storage in Kirkland and later moved to his townhouse in Sammamish.



The Next Generation

Edmund has two children, Matthew and Zoe. And here they are loving me and their father. It's nice to be appreciated again.



Frank's Final Ride

Frank lived to see me restored back to original form. We were reunited in Louisville. We had driven so many miles together. We had traveled all over Europe, carrying his new wife and three sons. It was like old times when he sat in the front seat. Frank moved to Sarasota, FL, remarried for another 25 years to Carol and died July 2, 2018.



Final Thoughts

There is something beautiful about driving that car that is difficult to capture in words. At a certain speed and rpm, around 2700, everything goes away and you become one with the car. It tells you that it's really happy and it drives just wind in the air. It is smooth, it's soft, it's stable, it's balanced, and it's pure. It doesn't have any refinements to the steering, no assist. It is truly one to one.