

"THE ACCIDENTAL 911" - Excellence September 2011 Issue 194

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1967 Porsche 911S offered by Road Scholars of Raleigh, NC

Paul Risinger is well into his 70s, and he's been restoring show-winning automobiles for as long as he can remember – including Bugattis, a Facel Vega, Jaguars and other British sports cars, several BMWs, a few early American cars, and of course Porsches - at least half a dozen to date. He's also given lectures on restoration, judging, and show preparation. For a non-professional, that's a substantial list of accomplishments. The work is easier if the car is close at hand, as in the case of this fine 1967 911S. Owned by Paul and his wife Shirley from new, the Sand Beige over beige vinylcoupe has appeared in more than 80 Concours, accruing an amazing number of class wins.

306758S joined the family by an accident of fate. The Risingers had taken factory delivery of a new '66 911 – driven it across Europe for a month, and then had it shipped home to California. Because the Risingers had noted a few warranty issues, they immediately made an appointment to have the problems corrected and have the car tuned for American-quality gasoline. They drove it over to Vasek Polak's dealership in Hermosa Beach to meet the factory rep. Risinger says that Porsche thought there were too many warranty complaints coming in, so it required a Technical Representative to sign off in person on any item that would cost more than \$50.00 to resolve. Risinger arrived at the appointed time, but there was no sign of the rep. Risinger says the car was parked next to the very busy and noisy shop, and he was chatting with the shop foreman. "When we walked out to see the problem, the car was gone." Because the factory rep had stopped for lunch and thus had missed the appointment by an hour and a half, Polak and Risinger felt that Porsche should provide an immediate replacement for the stolen car. Polak called Germany and spoke directly to Ferry Porsche, while Risinger talked to the factory's export manager. After some strongly-worded conversations,

Porsche said it would call back the next day. Says Paul, “They said we could have the next ‘67 911S coupe in the country that was in Shirley's colors of beige and tan.” The next day, however, the factory called again, wanting to make other arrangements. Polak, says Risinger, was suspicious and made another call to the factory. It seemed that there was a special group of cars en route to the US, and one might fit the bill. Polak got Porsche to commit to releasing one of the cars if it hadn't been put to use by a certain time. As it turned out, the car was available and was shipped to the West coast by air and delivered to the Risingers on January 21st. Risinger believes - but cannot prove - that his new car was among a batch intended for C/Production SCCA racing, as Polak's new C/Prod car arrived at the same time. Dieter Schofnen - a German mechanic brought over by Vasek to help with his race cars - drove the new 911S and described it as having the smoothest engine at top end that he had ever experienced, suggesting it might have received some special attention at the factory. Risinger's coupe has a modest list of options: Tinted glass, a gasoline heater, and an outside driver's mirror. Paul ordered a right-side mirror and headrests; Polak gave him a radio.

The little beige S served as the Risingers' daily driver around southern California for the next 10 years, accumulating some 68,000 miles. At that point, 1980, Paul had the engine properly overhauled. Schofnen had become the Risinger's mechanic at Polak, and the Risingers followed him when he set up his own shop in Lomita. “I decided to restore the car in 1987,” says Paul, “and it was useless to spend money on the car piecemeal and not have an aim for the car. It wasn't fair to it or my pocketbook. So, at that point we started the restoration seriously and I determined I wanted to show the car. I did not know much about Concours, but determined I wanted to do it.”

The project would take more than two years. Risinger and his family had moved north to the Bay area, found garages to store their growing auto collection, and joined the Golden Gate Region of the PCA. At Ken's SportTech in Campbell, California, the 911's suspension was overhauled and refinished to fresh-from-the-factory spec. The 911's engine was cleaned and the carbs taken off for overhaul, and the oil tank was cleaned and refinished. The muffler and heat exchangers were cleaned up, but both exchangers were eventually replaced because of a dent caused by a trailer tie-down. The transaxle was cleaned and some plating redone along with the replacement of the plastic bushings in the shift linkage.

The body was taken down to bare metal by Risinger and Del Sessions at Del's Autobody in San Jose. The car had never suffered any accident damage, so there was minimal body work needed. All loose or unsightly undercoating was taken off the underside, and the bottom was treated with Wurth “schutz” sealant. After the upper body shell was clean and smooth, it was carefully sprayed with Glassurit epoxy primer and then “21 Line” paint - the last of the non-water based

paints - which was allowed to cure for weeks after each coat. Clear Glassurit was sprayed over the pigmented coats “to make a little more pop to it,” says Paul. The single-piece corner light pods were all replaced, but the original outer rubber longitudinals and bumpers were retained, with the aluminum refinished with a buffer. All rubber window, door frame, and other body seals were replaced. “The secret here is to put all the rubber on along with the doors and lids *before* painting, but taped on, not glued, to make sure the fit is exactly 3mm in fit and balanced without forcing anything. Then, do it again after the epoxy coat is on, especially on the doors.” Risinger admits that “You pray a lot here,” as this is where it takes a lot of skill to fit the seals or modify them as needed. The engine area and the storage black areas were repainted by hand so as not to disturb the engine compartment insulation and to not risk overspray on the Wurth SKS type gray *schutz* on the top of the gas tank after it was re-installed.

The Risingers were determined to retain as much of the coupe’s original interior as possible, and did so, with the exception of the headliner, which was replaced under warranty because it was bleeding glue above the rear quarter windows. The seat cushions and backs were re-stuffed and all the rubber pieces replaced. The window frames were also refinished, as were the seat rails and related hardware. The floor insulation was renewed, and the seat faces, fender well, and package shelf upholstery re-dyed to match the original color. “We had been careful with the interior always and it worked out.” Paul patiently re-sewed the leather-wrapped steering wheel because the original thread was sun-damaged. “No one has ever thought that the interior was not replaced. However, the interior seat/wall material had not been available for over a decade. The original velour is still in the car along with its mats. They were simply cleaned as they were always covered. That was the only inexpensive thing about the restoration.”

The Risingers were very focused on the authenticity of all the small parts, especially fasteners, which were either replated or replaced with correct OEM bits. Says Paul, “Del Sessions taught me early when we were working that all the parts for a door, etc., were to be put in a clear plastic bag, labeled exactly as to where they came from, and if you took something out to refinish it, you left a note of exactly what was gone. That way we could always know exactly what had come off the car and replacement was easy.” That really paid off, he says; anything that was not right was replaced by going to a Porsche junk yard, or finding an old German car from that era, until they found the exact fastener required. After Paul had helped with the re-assembly, he spent countless hours over countless months going all over the car, factory parts book in hand, looking for incorrect items that might have been missed. “You hear stories that ‘Hans was sent down to the hardware store because the factory was out of a fastener’, and so on... Well, maybe that was true in the early days. Porsche also used up everything until it was gone. For them it was a good thing. For us, trying to be exact on

restoration, it can be a nightmare.” He offers some examples: “All the fasteners are correct to the year except for the oil pan nuts and the transaxle side cover nuts which are now Nylocks because the original nuts all leak. Porsche corrected this several years later.” The left door frame chrome screws had slotted heads. There were still some as late as 1967, he says...but the passenger door screws were *Phillips* head. According to the parts book, there were supposed to be no 14mm head/8mm nuts and bolts, but he found that the Hella horn bracket hardware was not only 14mm instead of 13mm, but were white instead of gold finish. Almost all things on the body were gold except some engine/transaxle parts and the seat rails. Risinger also found some 14mm bumper bolts and nuts on the driver’s side and 13mm on the passenger’s. All, according to the parts book, should have been 13mm. To avoid the near-certainty of an argument with show judges over what was original and what had been replaced, he made them the same on both sides. “I have gone to great lengths in this area to be sure it is exactly like it came.”

The work was completed in late 1989, and Risinger decided to test the car’s show potential the following January by displaying it at a PCA Zone 7 Historic Event. More shows followed; the beige S became a regular in the Zone 7 Concours series in 1991, Paul winning the Gene Babow Award as rookie of the year. Over the years, he has shown the car on a regular basis, and it’s shown extremely well, from the record. The 911S continues to gather laurels at various Concours, including a second in class at the 1995 Porsche Parade, then a division win in 1996. At that point, Risinger says he made a list of all the shortcomings that had been noted by Concours judges and went to work again. “It was all small things that were needing repair either from age or use.” He also had learned some little tricks, like making sure the hubcap crests were all properly aligned when the judges came by with their clipboards.

The Risingers moved north to Washington state in late 1996 so Paul could build a dedicated “car barn” with proper lifts, work space, and storage...and of course, they continued to show their 911. The car garnered a class win at the 1999 Palo Alto Concours, capturing top score among 18 entries in two Porsche classes. Then Paul put the car away for a few years. “I wanted to show 356s for a while.”

By 2001, 306758S was starting to develop some leaks here and there, so Paul pulled out his wrenches and went to work again, intent on learning if the old 911 was still competitive on the Concours field. “Chris Powell and I redid the engine, taking it down to the cam towers, resealing what was necessary.” Axle seals also received attention; the rest of the car was left alone. Indeed, it was still a player; Paul won the Full Restoration award at the 2001 Porsche Parade in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Then after PCA began awarding special medals to the top-scoring cars at Parade, Risinger decided to take another shot. In 2007, the beige S won the Full Restoration class at the San Diego Parade, scoring 298.5 of a possible 300 points

– but due to an administrative error (*Excellence* #160), had to share the class win. Paul still took home a Gmund medal. Risinger is justifiably proud of his car: “This 911S is the first car to win the Porsche Parade Group Restoration overall twice. It also won the 911 division in 1996. In all of the Concours fields it has been on, this car has never placed less than second in class except once early on. Its run was 40 years!” Without doubt, it’s one of the finest early 911s in the world. “This car was our favorite and always has been, although we have owned many Porsches.”

Porsche built 3422 911S coupes for its 1967 model year; the Risinger's was built at almost exactly the half-way point of that run. The US version of the S was equipped with the Type 901/02 SOHC carbureted boxer six of 1991cc, developing 160hp at 6600 rpm. Torque was 132 ft/lbs at 5200 rpm. These engines were noticeably peaky and tended to foul their spark plugs idling in city traffic. The early 911S was in fact a detuned racing car that was happiest when its driver had the throttle mashed wide open.

Risinger’s car has never run on a race track, but its owner readily admits driving it hard on the open road when opportunity presented itself. “It went to redline in 5th pulling easily and every month or so on a particular steep long hill I could bring the car to 115mph before I had to shut down for a reverse-crowned short sweeper. I used it to test the tune.” Risinger notes that many of his friends with lesser cars – but even a few with Porsches – were unable to do as well.

“Its primary usage was a second car. It was for fun driving on trips, ripping around away from traffic on old airports, etc., and a work car for a while. I couldn’t bring myself to use it as a work car when my LA drive became 51 miles one-way to work. So, it was retired to fun and trips.”

The S has been well-travelled, currently showing 71,500 miles on the odometer. Risinger has taken it through the Colorado Rockies and into Death Valley without a hitch. “The engine is run monthly and the car's suspension is pushed down on each corner at the same time. The fluids are changed regularly, and all its accessories are run to make sure that the car is keeping itself alive.” The engine has been gone over three times since new, but has only received one complete overhaul; the other freshenings were aimed at keeping it in top cosmetic condition and to deal with any new leaks that emerged as the sealants broke down with age.

Paul says he's probably near the end of his restoration career. "I'm getting too old to crawl underneath cars on my back." Paul may be ready to hang up his tools, but there’s no sign that 306758S will ever stray very far from its dedicated owners.

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