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Duncan's first dance with Porsche

Pablo Deferrari

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He threw two left hooks.

A light one to the gut distracted me; then he slammed the big one upstairs. The kid got me good.

"How many miles did you say it had?" I asked.

"Like 19,200," Duncan said.

"And how old are you again?"

"18."

Vintage Porsches with low mileage aren't a surprise. Vintage Porsches with low mileage owned by 18-year-olds — hell, you just don't come across the two often. That was a punch that had me kissing the canvas.

My first thought is why.



What motivates a teen to be so moony with an old Porsche? I can understand if it's a 911; that flat-six honey's appeal is legendary. But when the Porsche is a 944, *that* raises eyebrows. It's not the model most would use to identify the marque or as a choice pin-up that gets tacked on the wall. This isn't the 1980s anymore.

So how then could a Porsche that had fallen slightly out of swank with the glossies cast such an impression on an admirer about half its age? It's an answer drunk on emotion:

"My dad wanted to test drive the 944 we went to look at, so I sat in the passenger seat and when he mashed the gas around that turn, I said... *whoa* — I *like* this!" he said.

"Yep, I heard that one before; same thing happened to a guy three times your age. You know, I —" he interrupted my thought and started laying down some more soul.

"There's no electro-help junk, you know? No traction control, anti-lock brakes, none of that, just an unfiltered drive that depends on your skills."

As the conversation thickened, it became clear that Duncan's motoring palette is a pretty sophisticated one. The speck of grit in the oyster was the countless hours he had spent playing the video game "Need for Speed." He always chose the Porsche because no one else did — those pixelated Porsches became his and his alone to discover and get intimate with.

That test drive with his pops at the controls was the love smack. The 944 he'd been saving hard to buy a few years before the state of New Jersey printed his driver's license said yes when he proposed — the two became an inseparable couple.

Dressed in a shade of LM8U Platinum Metallic, his 1984 944 is a preservation miracle. How preserved? Well, the service book and digits on the odo suggest it should be approaching its *first* timing belt/balance shaft belt service; that's how fresh this old girl is.

Lots of the original goodies that have been shed three times over by other 944s of the same vintage are intact. Shift boot, Blaupunkt Bremen SQR 46, motor mounts, power steering lines and rack, brake pads and discs, and rubber-centered clutch are as they left the factory. Meanwhile, the nearly period-correct BBS RZ's and MOMO Prototipo steering wheel separates this one from her littermates.

Rather than respect the sick low mileage and put the '44 on ice, Duncan followed the Doc's orders and *drove* it. Within a year, he'd rolled the odometer nearly 40,000 more miles. He takes her out every day making up for lost mileage that should've racked up in that decade of decadence.



"Friends with BMWs and hype cars like that are blown away when I take 'em for a drive. They're like 'What?! This is a *four* cylinder?!' They're amazed at how punchy the 944 is, how tight it feels, and how it blasts around the curves."

"Beautiful, baby, beautiful. Let 'em go and spread that love around," I said.

"Yeah, and I love to drive it barefoot, too. There's something about feeling what the car is doing through the pedals."

We hit common dirt right there. I had never spoken to anyone else who appreciates a drive hanging 10. To feel the throttle cable glide inside its casing, grooves in the brake discs, and throw-out bearing whirr under the balls of your feet is tantric. Every one of the props he dishes out for his fo'fo' cements the fact that this kid's Porsche passion isn't a passing fad. Hell no; it has bored a hole in his soul and built a tight nest.

Statistics moan that Duncan's generation has been avoiding cars like a communicable disease. He tells me that out of around 1,000 students in his graduating class, around 96 percent couldn't be bothered with four wheels let alone getting a driver's license.

Consider that for a moment.

Right, now think about the choices of rubber young drivers who even *care* to drive have today: Subaru, VWs, Minis, Hondas, Mazdas, Toyotas and a heave of domestic/depreciated Euro-lux brand for good measure. When you consider all those second-hand choices that suit modern needs for around 15 to 20 grand, only the thick couldn't see that a vintage Porsche in that price range shouldn't even make sense for so-called millennials.

Kids with impeccable tastes in vintage Stuttgart metal like Duncan are completely off the radar, but they're out there. Rarer still is the fact that he's getting dirty learning how to work on the thing himself.

When hearing of future generations taking a shine to old Porsches — especially the water-cooled ones — I bellow out a "hell yeah!" and beat the air with a closed fist. Young'uns like him get a hat tip from collectors like me knowing that there will be someone who can appreciate these old girls and step up to stewardship when we cease to draw breath.

Keep on keepin' on, Duncan. Hell, I may even will out my collection to ya.



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About the Author



A dyed-in-the wool, air-cooled 911 junkie, Pablo Deferrari doesn't discriminate against other Porsches. Want further proof? He's in love with Porsche's early water-cooled models and is dedicated to the celebration of the 924, 928, 944 and 968 series. Pablo is one car away from having all four of these models in his own collection: the 924.

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