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The dirty truth about Porsche ownership

Pablo Deferrari

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My Porsche took one on the chin with grace.

"Jeez ... you drive that thing like a Passat."

It took me about a second and a half to process that comment. My only reaction to it was why a Passat?

"Well," I said "I bought the thing to drive it."

My friend Matt Mariani had seen my 911 dirty and knew from the stories I've written about Porsche ownership that I was of the eccentric, carefree flavor. He gets it, but I think he's a closet perfectionist who irons and folds his socks when everyone's asleep.

"But they're going up in value, aren't you ..."

"So?" I rolled my eyes and cut him off in mid-sentence because I knew where this chat was going, and I wasn't interested.

A filthy Porsche — especially one of particular value or interest — grabs my interest by the throat. A filthy Porsche of the same caliber in the dead of winter grabs my interest by the throat with one hand and slaps it across the face with the other. Wow! I sit up and lurch forward straining to hear my own questions whisper through my lips.

Where has it been? Where is it going? And the owner, what's he like? Surely we have a mutual understanding of such enlightened thinking.

A coat of grime on a Porsche is the preface of a story, but the scratches, dings, scrapes or dents make for a story peppered with dog-eared pages.

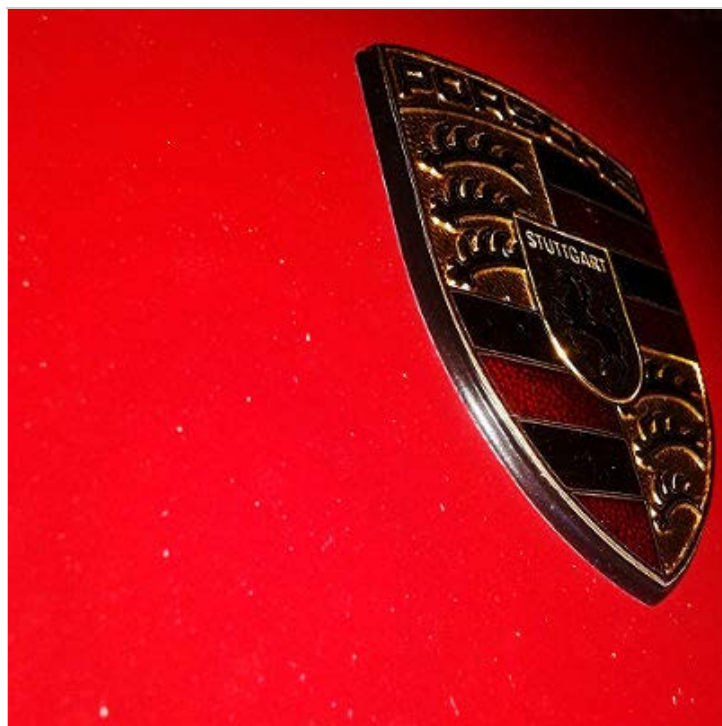
There was a time when I gave a damn about appearance. Immaculate, polished, groomed ... young. I was presenting an aristocratic façade to a world I knew little about. This pretentiousness, this cheap holiness dyed into my personality was a vain attempt at preparing myself for the world to take me seriously.

Age and experience sours such innocence.

I'd been around, understood that endurance was more important than truth and began developing contempt for society's expectations. Middle age brings a less malleable personality.

My guard slowly began to drop. Appearance was no longer important because it simply didn't matter. Resigning to this attitude directed my focus to more practical sensibilities. The residue of this devil-may-care behavior is what was being left behind. I was in perfect frame of mind to understand how to enjoy a Porsche for what it was and not the image or status it would project.

The 911 is my daily. For nearly a decade we've battled traffic, pock-marked roads, 11-hour trips, countless



A few pimples on the nose.

commutes, stupidity, careless drivers, heat, hurricanes, rain, snow, ice and each other.



8 a.m. commute — heading upstream with the rest of 'em.

She's never neglected, but she's not pampered either. She's driven with vigor, passion and desire. No second thoughts or regards for weather conditions; I simply jumped in, fired her up and took off. An attitude like this doesn't develop overnight, though; it took some conditioning and lots of introspection.

In the beginning of our relationship, the fastidiousness of having everything *just so* began to surface again. Perfection, preservation, sanctity; I approached the tango with timidity and a little bit of fear clothed in uncertainty. I was sure that part of me was shed with the old skin, but it wasn't — the pigment of that stubborn stain bled deep.

I swore never to waste an entire day pampering another old girl with exotic cremes and conditioners, luxurious cloths and a gentle hand again. Here I was, right back to where I'd been nearly 20 years ago — fussing over preservation when more selfish affairs waited.

I began driving her more. Every few days led to every other day then, like sliding from third gear to fourth, we

were together every day sharing a routine and piling on the miles and ravages of time. It felt good, this familiarity; it would soften the jab to the gut when the inevitable scratch or ding was discovered.

Then they came.

Chin scrapes, bruised bumperettes, a ding, a chip, dog nail scratches on the hood, countless busted wheels, and two hard kicks in the rear ruining the polyurethane but sparing the metal. I had to accept the consequences of daily driving during peak commuting times, squeezed tight like sardines swimming in the same direction. The crowded parking lots, maneuvering around obstacles, irreverent drivers, and mastering her behavior in the elements.

I was becoming more comfortable and desensitized with each wound.

Lavish baths in rich foam followed by sensual massages of exotic waxes and extracts became less frequent and inconsistent. Neglect of the skin was the byproduct of daily use. The weekend schedule that had been set aside for such pampering instead became labor-intensive days of scheduled maintenance and unexpected repairs. This was far more important than glowing skin since components wore at a faster rate, oils, fluids and filters absorbed toxins within a few weeks, and the occasional bruises needed tending.



Another weekend in dry dock; life on Northeast roads is rough.

Beauty is like comfort. Once you get used to it, you stop paying attention. I couldn't fall into this thinking that promised to creep in slowly and silently like age. In between the scheduled physicals, an entire weekend would be spent with monastic intensity on pampering her skin and more intimate areas like hides and carpets that often take as much abuse as the dress she wears.

A slow hand and keen eye picked up the tiniest cosmetic imperfections; it's the only way to know precisely where immediate attention was needed. Washing, drying and waxing became a tantric affair; the results would leave the most jaded perfectionists amazed. I was witnessing what seemed like a snake shedding its old and battered skin exposing a new one. The paint turned back to glass, but with a few etched specks here and there.

This was a testament to the quality offered by a Marque who knew how to make a durable product. Clearly, these machines were made to endure such a life. Once the scab-ridden plastic and rubber pieces were relieved from duty and replaced by fresh ones, the 911 was rejuvenated to near perfection.

Then, the cycle starts all over again.

Thrust back into the battlefield of indifference, aggression and carelessness, we soldier on. What may seem like a sinister game of chasing one's tail is in fact a feverishly loyal relationship comfortable with routine developing a bond and intimacy that intensified with age. Monetary value becomes a meaningless concept that can only skew and choke the experience ridiculing the purpose of this machine's existence.



Wash, rinse, wax, repeat.

The mundane experience of swallowing the same tarmac twice a day always feels fresh and much anticipated. Her sensual lines, the way she purrs, her growl, her scent, the entirety of her personality never gets old. No other Porsche left me with such yearning that thrusts me of bed each day looking forward to what others consider the drudgery of getting there and back.

The trenches breed inseparable relationships.

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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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