



## EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

### The 944 that defeated fascism

By Pablo Deferrari

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I've been quietly observing an interesting phenomenon. It seems that a handful of Porsche owners are so devoted to one model that an ugly truth tends to rear its head — snobbery.

You see, I was one of those guys. I've had a long passion with 911s, so much so that at one point I didn't even think any other Porsche would be worthy of my consideration. Then something magical happened, I met my future wife, and she had a 944S. Here's where my education began.

When the 944 came out 1982, I was 10. By default, this should have been the Porsche I lusted after like lots of my friends did. Even though I began to mature along with its evolution from the start — through the Turbo versions and finally the 968 — I wasn't warming up to it.

It had the engine in the wrong place, didn't have the smooth curves or pretty eyes, or the intoxicating sound of an air-cooled flat six. It just seemed, well, bland and safe, nothing to stir the soul. A car parked in your driveway reminding you that you couldn't quite afford a 911. I was a teenager on the verge of getting a driver's license when I had these cruel thoughts. I was on a bad path.

My wife Diane has loved Porsches for a long time. She's taken a shine to the 944 series and thinks that the 968 Cabriolet is one of the most beautiful, timeless-looking cars that rolled out of Zuffenhausen.

Diane doesn't have fascist tendencies about her passions like I do. She'll never try to cram her ideologies down your gullet, or mercilessly insist you try her methods or how her point of view is superior. I do, I must admit, but her approach on such matters has had a great effect on me. I've sort of toned it down from Mussolini to about say, I don't know, J. Edgar Hoover peppered with very limited amounts of Gandhi. How a high-class, high-quality 944 lover like her fell for a feral, dyed-in-the-wool 911 guy like me is anyone's guess.

I began to take a very deep interest in her 944. It was like taking a shine to a woman who didn't possess supermodel looks, but yet there was some sort of subtle beauty, an inexplicable magnetism that completely drew you in. The car had graceful flanks, a timeless design that promised to age gracefully, and it resembled a powerful phallus on wheels; eerily similar to a Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona. I was slowly falling in love.

The drive was as superb as her looks. She had elegantly long legs, never got winded and didn't possess the abrasive, go-for-the-carotid nature of the 911. Her engine was smooth, yet possessed loads of silky strength with the ability to shove you back into your seat when pushed — and she did it all with complete grace. Now, I'm not certain about how your choice



Diane's first Porsche, a 1987 944S. This car made me a lover of 944s to an obsessive degree. These are truly fantastic machines with loads of rich Porsche history behind them. If you haven't driven a 944, do yourself a favor, sample a well sorted one — you'll be impressed.

in a car personifies and becomes an extension of you, but this one was my wife rendered in metal and rubber.

Why didn't I try this one before? No, it wasn't air-cooled. It didn't possess the oh-mercy-I'm-going-to-die quality when taking a tight turn in the rain and the twit in front of you suddenly decides to brake, causing you to swap ends. No, she told you exactly what she was going to do — no surprises.

She had heat that worked, a delicious-sounding engine whine, and enough room in her boot to bring home the four cases of beer I needed to change the plugs and oil in the 911. Best of all, the 944S felt as comfortable as wearing my favorite tattered jeans stained with Porsche grease.

I'm still discovering all of the little subtleties she's been slowly letting me in on, and I have to say, I'm very impressed. So much so that I began to devour books, magazine articles, whatever I could get my hands on that would reveal anything about its origins and evolution. This obsession has made me as well versed in 924/944/968 history as I am with 911s.

Diane has had the 944 for 16 years now. Durable as an anvil, practical, nary a complaint, and now I look forward to driving it as much as the 911. Have I become soft in the head? Hardly. Has age caught up with me? For sure.

You see, it's how a palate becomes sophisticated. You must always be open to trying something a little different than what you've been accustomed to. And not just sample it; but live with it, see it and experience it differently every day until you've committed yourself to either love it or hate every fiber of its being. At the very least you've tried.

I wasn't converted through fascist tactics. Diane didn't utter a peep about how sweet this old girl was — she let me discover it.

*A dyed-in-the wool, air-cooled 911 junkie, Pablo Deferrari doesn't discriminate against other Porsches. He is fascinated by the company, the people behind these great machines and how every model's existence had unmistakable DNA from the model before it. The stories behind each car and how they all in some way saved Porsche from the brink of extinction every time are inspiring. Contact Pablo at [porschepatina@gmail.com](mailto:porschepatina@gmail.com) or visit his website, [www.patina9.com](http://www.patina9.com).*

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