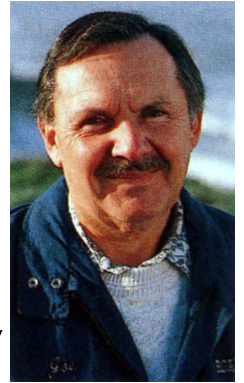


## About that 928

by Joe Rusz



Oh, that 928! I didn't realize which car you were talking about, since I have driven many Porsches over the years.

Your car was the first 928 I ever drove--in Vence, France, where Porsche held many of their intros back then. John Lamm and I shared the ride (he was the photographer on that trip and riding along), while I was the designated driver. Near the end of a long day of flying around the French countryside (in Provence), we approached one of those stupid, low stone bridges that do nothing but take up space by the side of the road. I was too far to the right and as we passed I heard a "thunk."

Now you know that car had aluminum doors, which dent when ya just look at 'em. So when John and I pulled over to the side of the road and looked, we discovered a quarter-size hole in the right passenger door. I was bummed. Imagine, putting a hole in a brand new test car!

When we got back to the Les Mas D'Artigny, a fine resort hotel in the hills above St Paul de Vence, I immediately went looking for the car wrangler who happened to be Jurgen Barth who later ran the competition department in Weissach (the Porsche R&D center). Turns out he and the mechanics were sitting in the bar, having a drink when I walked up and said, "Jurgen, I'm terribly sorry, but I have done something awful to your car. I put a hole in the door."

Without even changing his posture (he was kinda leaning on the bar) Jurgen said, "So Cho (that's "Joe" with a German accent), "have a beer!"

And that was that. His guys went out and slapped some Bondo and red paint on the door and she was good as new, provided ya didn't take any beauty shots of the passenger side of the car.

Fun times! God, how I loved that place! Leonard Turner (Porsche Panorama) and I used to play ping-pong, after getting snookered in the bar and the damn ball would roll down the stairs to the garden level, because the table was located at the top of the stairs. We spent more time running up and down those dang stairs. Of course we were a lot younger then back then (I'm 72, he's one year and a day older).

Other happenings at the Les Mas--the time Brian Bowler, who was president of Porsche Cars North America, hit some water, got onto the shoulder, and ripped the bottom off--some Carrera, I forget which one. Turns out Ed Triolo, the PR guy and an amateur racer was giving Brian some car driving tips when they came upon some water running off a cliff. I was one of the eight or ten cars that came upon the boss' car, which looked fine from alongside. They were waving, "Stop, stop," while we waved, "Hi, hi! See you at the lunch stop." It wasn't until someone noticed the pool of oil under the car, that we realized what had happened.

Then there was the time--at one of the Turbo intros--that someone figured out Porsche was at the hotel with several cars, which were locked overnight in these tiny, one car garages. In what we think was an inside job, thieves snuck in at night (the gate to the hotel was mysteriously left unlocked), grabbed the keys, which the Germans, in their Teutonic efficiency, had left in one place, and made off with six cars. One was found in a ditch nearby, but the other five were never found. Porsche had to bring in a fresh crop of Turbos for the next wave of journalists, which was us.

The factory hasn't been to that place in quite a while. Nowadays, they favor Spain, Italy and in the summer, Germany. And since I'm no longer working full time (I semi-retired in 2001) I don't get to go on many Porsche trips, unless no one else can make it. In fact, my last trip, was for the 997 with direct injection and PDK (a 2007 model, I think), which was held in the Stuttgart area and at Weissach, where they gave us scary rides.

But I did drive the brand new Turbo S while at the office two days ago. I love that car. I want one!

So aren't you glad you asked about that 928?