

MONTEREY WEEK : "Porsche 356 Radar Report"- Donna Dreher

Pure curiosity, at some point, has the best of an overactive mind. A journey to the famed Monterey Week has been an essential destination for quite some time. Despite the 2017 year being Ferrari's "Year of the Prancing Horse", there were many notable Porsches, specifically 356/550 types appearing at many of the week's events.

Runge Special

Upon arrival at the WERKS Reunion, a very interesting Runge Special was being loaded onto an open trailer tethered to a '57 Chevy station wagon. Ted Long, owner/driver and veteran racer whose passion for sports car racing was cultivated by his father many decades ago. While a mere 16 years old in 1951, he participated in the La Carrera Panamericana as his father's navigator. He began racing "jalopies", hot rods and dragsters at quintessential California courses and strips such as Willow Springs, Santa Ana airstrip, and Sagus (nighttime drag racing!).

Commissioned by Mr. Long in 2014 from coachbuilder extraordinaire Chris Runge, #FF003 is truly a hand built machine. The mid-engine steel chassis was fabricated by long time custom car builder and racer Chuck Beck (of the famed "Beck Spyder"). The vehicle is powered by an early 1950s 36 HP 1450cc VW fitted with a Porsche 912 crank, Okrasa dual port heads and Isky 2J cam built by Tom Bruch. Mr. Bruch is known for setting numerous land speed records with a Carrera Speedster powered by his modified 36HP "BRUCHRASA" VW engine at the Bonneville Salt Flats back in the 1960s. All of the aluminum body panels have been handcrafted by Chris Runge, fitted to handmade wood bucks at his workshop in Minnesota.

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Mr. Runge obviously draws inspiration from lines of the post WWII streamliners and Glockler racers that were built by C. H. Weidenhausen in the late 1940s and early 1950s, keeping alive many of the skills used to produce those period vehicles. The Runge #FF003 is a unique and exceptional replica example and was definitely a standout among the field.

Sauter Roadster

Passing a field of Porsches as far as the eye can register, instantly recognizable was former owner Ray Knight's Sauter roadster. New owner, Phil White purchased the 1951 Roadster several years ago. This notable race-prepped roadster was built in Stuttgart, modified by Heinrich Sauter in partner with Hans Klenk Karosserie while working with the Porsche factory specifically lightening it for racing purposes.

Significant features include an external gas filler, unique suicide doors and air ducts positioned anterior to the brakes in front of the wheel well and also behind the driver seat to deliver air to the carburetors.



The Sauter Roadster with chassis #10359, weighing in at about 1350 pounds, went on to be the first 1500cc Porsche with Type 528 engine to race Nurburgring. Design wise, it inevitably influenced many factory production models continuing into the 1950s.

1953 America Coupe

A 1953 pre-A bent window coupe was catching a fair amount of attention at WERKS as well. The car, with an original factory color of "Pasha Red", was sporting a nicely worn patina of a 1972 repaint in Safari Beige that caught the late afternoon light just right. David Green from Santa Barbara explained that what originally attracted him the coupe was to the opportunity to own and maintain a true survivor.

Originally purchased in 1953 from McAfee Motors in Los Angeles by Gordon Sheldon, it remained in the same family for the following 63 yrs. Mr. Sheldon and wife Lois quickly took to the "Porsche Life" and became the 27th member of the Porsche Owners' Club of Southern California. Note the front cast aluminum badge depicting number 27. Essentially in storage since 1974 awaiting a rebuild that never transpired, Mr. Green acquired the vehicle in 2016 and rescued it from storage in Palm Springs.

Mr. Green rebuilt all mechanical systems to original spec. The interior seats are restored with a lush original-like deep burnt amber thick corduroy upholstery. All dash knobs, switches, radio, instruments, glass, corduroy door panels, floor mats, tool kit, wheels + spare tire are all original. Also preserved are the engine, transmission and all body metal which, by any estimation was quite a noble project undertaking that has produced a unique 356 example.

