

CLASSIC DRIVER

Porsche Rennsport Reunion IV: Review



Few manufacturers can claim to have as pure a strain of racing genes in their DNA as Porsche.

Doubters just need to refer to the latest 'lab results' on display during the Porsche Rennsport Reunion IV held October 14-16 at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. Nearly 400 cars - snarling 550 Spyders, early 911s emitting an ear-splitting bark, fire-belching 935s, growling 917s, the muted grumble of 962s and the growl of recent Cup cars, provided noisy and colorful lessons of Porsche's racing history to more than 15,000 spectators who themselves filled the Porsche Corral parking area with over 1300 examples of Porsche road machines.





Besides the legendary race cars on hand, the driver line-up qualified as a motorsports hall of fame roll call and included Hurley Haywood, Hans Hermann, Jochen Mass, Derek Bell and George Follmer, just to name a few.



It was Mass who offered the most succinct view of the event when he said, "It is quite remarkable that one manufacturer, not even that old, can fill a paddock as large as Laguna Seca with race cars, not just of one type but a variety of cars, many from the vast number of its racing customers."





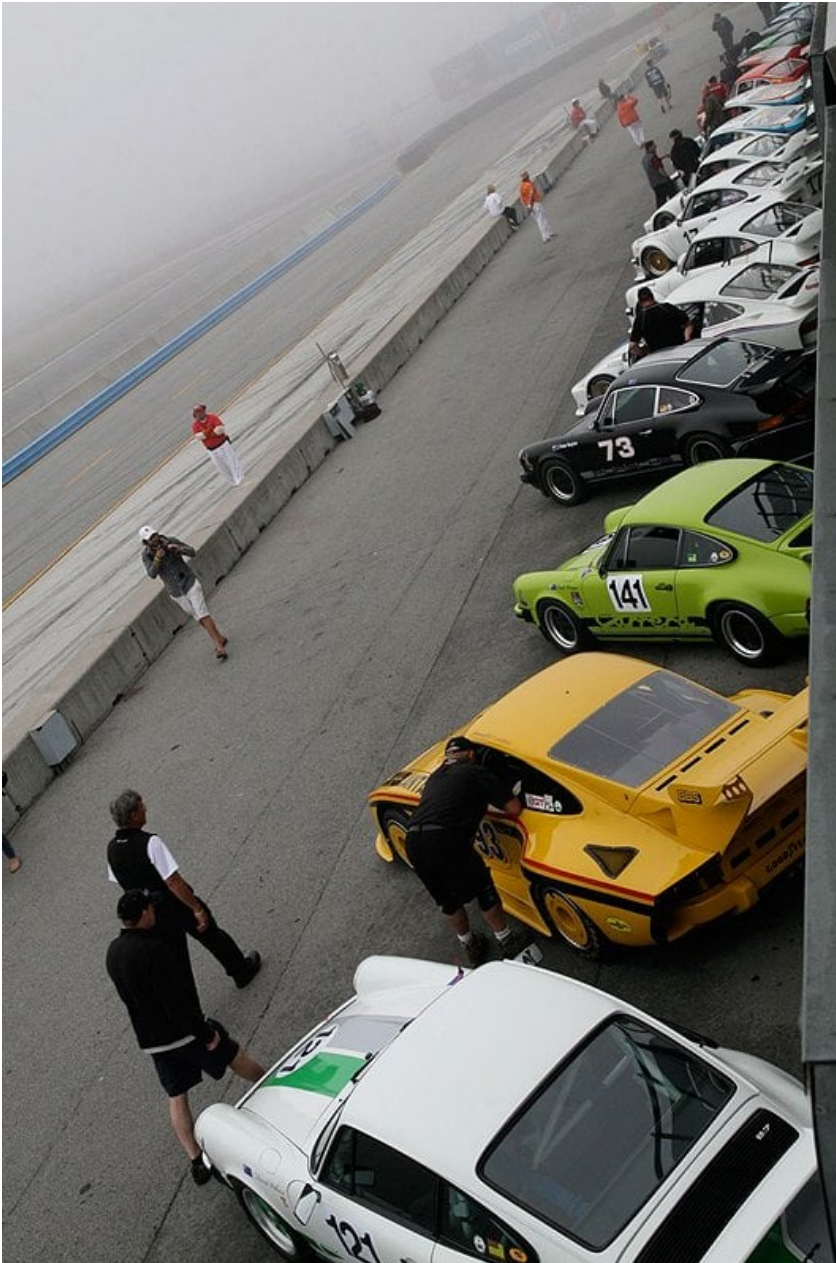
As its title implies, this was the fourth edition of an event that was conceived and nurtured by Porsche North America's late and much beloved Public Relations chief Bob Carlson. Carlson understood the importance of racing at Porsche and organized the first Rennsport Reunion in 2001 at Lime Rock. That spawned additional events in 2004 and 2007 at Daytona. When Carlson died in 2008, Bruce Canepa, former 935 and 962 racer whose interests include a highly respected race car restoration shop, pushed for a West Coast event at his home track of Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca.



Brian Redman, who worked closely with Carlson on past events, pitched in to put on this year's event which, thanks to the large number of West Coast Porsche enthusiasts and the beautiful surroundings of California's Central Coast was the largest ever.

Those enthusiast racer/collectors along with the Porsche Museum, Brumos Racing, and the Collier Museum and more provided a dazzling array of Porsche racing machinery.





RR IV celebrated the racing evolution of the quintessential Porsche - the 911. This was highlighted by a special display of 14 historic 911 race cars in a timeline stretching from a 1964 901 racer to the GT3R Hybrid. Other notable 911 derivatives were the event's poster stars, Al Holbert's dark blue RSR and the equally iconic Martini-liveried 935/78 Moby Dick.

Fittingly, the man whose engineering genius was behind Moby Dick and every Porsche racer from the 917 through the nineties, Norbert Singer was honored as Grand Marshal.



With a cast of drivers such as David Donohue, Patrick Long and Andrew Davis (who are writing contemporary Porsche racing history) on hand to experience the legendary cars, you can bet on many more Rennsport Reunions to follow.

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