

CLASSIC DRIVER

This '69 Porsche 911 has a naughty little secret

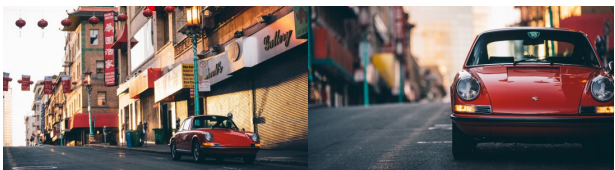
Lead
It's not only the Tangerine Orange paintwork that gives this Porsche 911E 2.2 a 'colourful' aura. It was bought new by one of the Mitchell brothers, a San Francisco-based dynasty that revolutionised adult entertainment in the 1970s – but came to a bitter end...

A self-congratulatory symbol of success



James Mitchell purchased the Porsche 911E (a 1970 model-year, so 2.2-litre car) on 24 December 1969, as a self-congratulatory Christmas present to himself. In the previous months, he and his brother Artie had opened the O'Farrell Theatre: an adult cinema-come-film studio located in San Francisco's Tenderloin district. The notorious Mitchell brothers' *global* success came in 1972, with their groundbreaking skin-flick 'Behind The Green Door' – which grossed \$25m after its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival. However, within months of its opening back in 1969, the theatre had already become a *local* hero to some, and the 'dirty' cash was beginning to stack up. Inevitably, the area's authority figures eventually began to take exception, one of which was San Francisco's Mayor Dianne Feinstein (now a senior U.S. Senator), who initiated several raids and lawsuits. In a conniving retort, the Mitchells simply emblazoned her personal phone number across the theatre's awning.

A colourful past



As you might expect, the Mitchell brothers were colourful characters, so the car's Tangerine Orange hue couldn't have been more appropriate. However, 'appropriate' is probably the last term you'd use to describe its duties during James Mitchell's year-long ownership period. According to porn folklore, the car was used in a scene in one of the brothers' many hardcore films, the same fate met by another of their toys, a yacht named 'Bottom Feeder'.

Leaving the Mitchell mark





Luckily, the car's vinyl upholstery (officially called 'Kunstleder') had wipe-clean properties – but that wasn't to stop Mitchell leaving a mark on the car, so to speak. When the next owner bought it in 1970, he found notes in the glovebox pertaining to outstanding warrants for James' arrest. Earlier, during the transaction, the 911E's new custodian had been sent to a live set to view the car – and cheekily offered his amateur acting services in return for a discount. With no shortage of willing male volunteers, Mitchell declined, and they shook hands at the asking price. Figuratively, we hope.

Celebrity stripper



After purchasing the car, the buyer noticed some ill-fitting componentry inside the car, and remembered a tale he was told at his behind-the-scenes 'viewing'. On the return leg of a round trip to attend a party in Tijuana, James – by this point a local celebrity – had been recognised by customs officials, who proceeded to strip the Porsche's interior back to the bulkheads. Let's just say the Mitchells were supposedly also famous for following the white lines, and we're not talking road markings. In subsequent ownership, the car was to enjoy a gentler, more wholesome life – unlike the Mitchells, as it turned out. On 27 February 1991, James stormed into Artie's house, and shot him dead with a .22 rifle he had inherited from their father.

Fussing over Fuchs



After serving three years for involuntary manslaughter, James died of a heart attack in 2007. Meanwhile, the Porsche spent many years nestling in the desert-dry climate of Reno, Nevada, before being discovered by current owner Ian Fitz-Simon, whose California-based company Exact 10 conducted a sympathetic restoration. The 911 retains the majority of its original parts – right down to the original wheel weights and unused toolkit – and the attention to detail is nothing short of stunning. It's now up for sale awaiting the next adventure, and we challenge you to make it more intriguing than its first.

Photos: © David Bush for Classic Driver / Associated Press

Gallery

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