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917s WEREN'T THE ONLY PORSCHEs BLUE AND ORANGE WAS AFTER

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PETER LINSKY





It's pretty easy to decipher the moniker 911T/R. Put simply, it's a base Porsche T coupe stripped to the bone and built up to factory rally and racing — or *renn* — specs. A relatively small number were constructed in 1968; estimates range from a dozen to 20, and only a few unmolested examples have been accounted for.

While factory 911T/Rs are described as purpose-built lightweights with more powerful engines, usually to 911S specs for rally purposes, other examples were converted at the distributor level. That's the case with Californian Stephen Childs' unique 911. Chassis number 11820421 left the factory as a Tangerine 911T, one of 928 T coupes built in Porsche's A-series that model year. The car was ordered with a five-speed transmission, a limited-slip differential, 911S instruments, an outside mirror, a 100-liter fuel tank, leatherette sport seats, an auxiliary heater, standard steel wheels, and skinny 165R15 Dunlops.

The car was ordered by Sweden's Porsche distributor, Scania-Vabis, which intended to rally it in Scandinavia and Northern Europe. Prior to delivery, the 911 was registered with the FIA as a Group 4 Touring Car and assigned Homologation number 577 on November 30, 1967. Its factory Kardex, dated December 12, 1967, indicates 11820421 was delivered to Scania-Vabis in Södertälje ten days later, where the company quickly began prepping it for competition. It was assigned Swedish registration BB2276.

The car's first event, as a Group 3 entry in the Swedish KAK Rally January 4-7, 1968, ended in retirement after the car, driven by Åke Andersson and S-O Svedburg, went off the road, center-punching a tree with the front end and damaging the steering. With the car repaired, the duo then tackled the always treacherous Rallye Monte Carlo the week of January 20-27, where the pair finished an excellent fifth in Group 3 and 12th overall after covering more than 5,400 kilometers in seven days. Vic Elford and David Stone won the event overall in their factory-backed 911, the first of three consecutive Porsche victories at the Monte.

According to documentation that came with the car, Scania-Vabis tested the 911 as a circuit racer next, with Anders Sigurdson running in the Premier Race's Under Two-Liter category at Anderstorp's Scandinavian Raceway in June of 1968. The Tangerine T sat quietly throughout the 1969 season, but was pressed back into service in 1970, when Jan Lundgårdh drove it in the European Group 5/6 Championship races at Anderstorp in early June. Later that same month, at the

Nypremiär circuit, Lundgårdh was again at the wheel and ran in a consolidated up-to-three-liter class. At the Danish Grand Prix weekend in August at Jyllandsringen in Silkeborg, he finished 24th, 25th, and 22nd on aggregate against much faster Group 5 and 6 opposition. The last race of the year was in September at the Kinnekulering in Götene. There, Lundgårdh managed a credible sixth overall in the up-to-three-liter category.

As the 1970 season came to an end, Gulf Oil came knocking. Already widely known from its sponsorship of John Wyer's hugely successful Porsche 917 12-cylinder prototypes, Gulf was looking for a way to get its name before the public on production-based machinery. Scania-Vabis' little orange 911 rally car seemed the perfect vehicle, so to speak. Gulf wanted to take aim at some major events in rally-happy Sweden, and offered to finance conversion of the car.

After the orange T was stripped to an empty shell, widened factory steel wheel arches — possibly prototypes for later versions, says Childs — were welded in place, a roll bar was installed, and the body was repainted in that instantly recognizable shade of Gulf Blue with orange

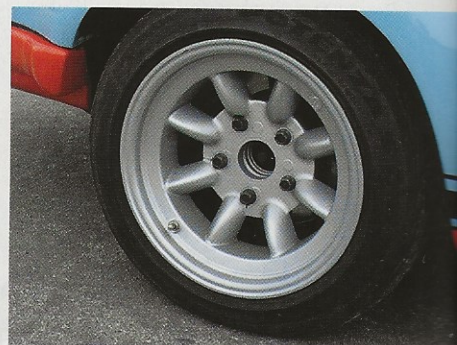
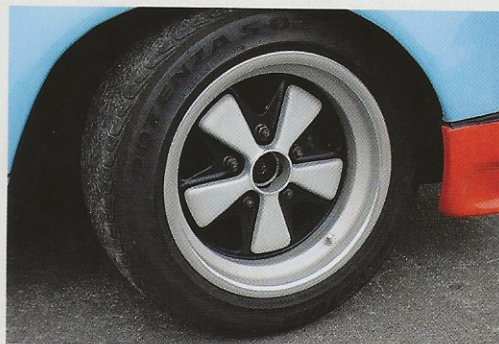
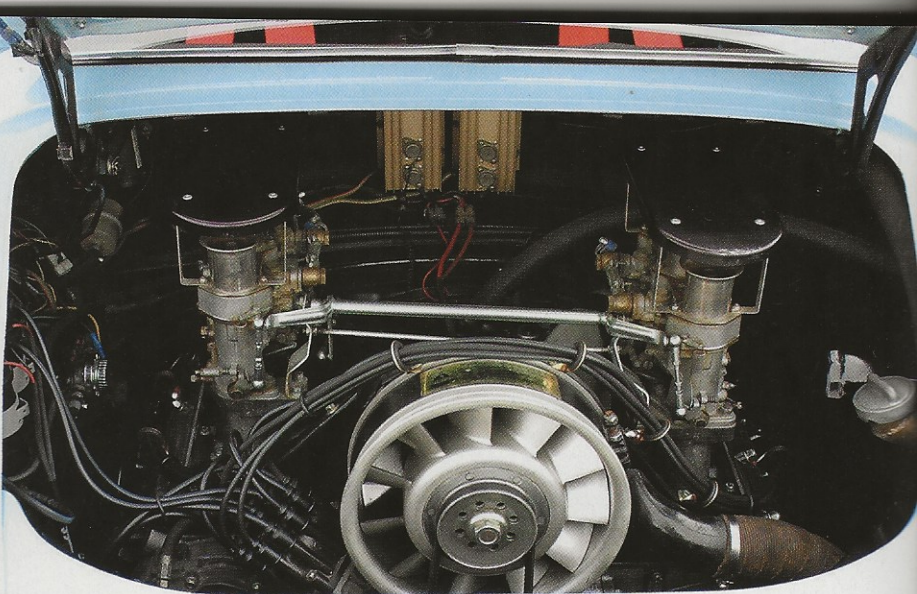


PHOTO COURTESY STEPHEN CHILDS



trim. Gulf's familiar signage was placed on the roof, front lid, and flanks along with other minor sponsor decals and the Scania-Vabis name. Along with the roll bar, the interior also received a lot of attention, with the S-V crew stripping all factory upholstery and trim before installing a pair of deeply bolstered Porsche racing seats and competition safety belts.

Interestingly, this Porsche is probably the only 911 on the planet to wear armrests and doorpulls taken from a Volvo sedan. The Scania-Vabis crew felt they would add to driver-navigator comfort. The team also mounted proper rally instrumentation and a pair of additional hood-mounted driving lights drawn from Porsche's rally kit parts list. Because the car was considerably

lightened — Childs says it weighs just over 1,800 pounds — its stock 911T solid-disc brakes were deemed adequate.

The biggest non-cosmetic changes involved the drivetrain, and Gulf Oil was willing to step up for some serious horsepower. 11820421's original 110-horse T engine, with its iron crankshaft, was pulled so a 906-based powerplant, #4080524

could take its place. The aluminum case is home to a hardened-steel crankshaft and a set of factory-supplied titanium connecting rods. Forged pistons were utilized, while the 906 parts pack included twin-plug cylinder heads containing over-size 45-mm intake and 39-mm exhaust valves as well as the requisite dual-ignition distributor. The twin Weber 46 IDA3CI triple-throat carburetors are fed from a 100-liter factory-optional rally/enduro gas tank with a short center-fill neck.

The latter is an unusual installation, as one must open the front trunklid to refuel. Childs says the Scania-Vabis team engineers did not want to cut an access hole in the lid because it would both expose the fuel filler to damage in case the car left the road and because an opening would allow the mud and grit typically splashed up on dirt and gravel rally sections to enter the front compartment.

A set of exhaust headers empty into a factory "rally" exhaust with two straight-through pipes and a third, capped-off outlet to be used on the street. Childs says the special muffler is distinctly different from factory dual-outlet sport mufflers and surprisingly quiet even in straight-through mode. The engine's estimated

235 horsepower — even more potent than the 210 hp of the 911R's Typ 901/22 engine — is fed through a Sachs clutch and then an airport gearset.

To fill out those widened fenders, the S-V shops tossed the original steel wheels and mounted a pair of 15x8 Fuchs alloys up front. Wider Fuchs with the correct offset for the rear were not yet available, so the solution was a pair of 15x9-inch British Minilite alloy rims, which the car wears to this day. While the Minilites on Child's T/R are original, they are not a matched pair; he points out that one wheel has the valve stem on the outer face of the rim while the other wheel's valve stem pokes through towards the center of the wheel between the spokes, where it is better protected from road damage and not as sensitive to rotational forces. Using wide Minilites on the rear end of T/Rs, S-T lightweights, and other modified 911 and 914 racing cars of the period appears to have been widespread; there are many photographs of various competition Porsches similarly equipped. Currently, the tires are modern 205/55ZR15s up front and 225/50ZR15s at the rear, obviously non-original sizes.

Scania-Vabis' newly upgraded 911T/R was ready to race again by the following

May 2. Lundgårdh ran in the Group 4 under-three-liter category at Linköping's Mantörp Park. The car ran the following weekend at Anderstorp's Scandinavian Raceway, scoring another sixth in Group 4. The team traveled to Germany's famed Hockenheim circuit in July and ran in the under-two-liter GT class. Then it was back to Sweden's Västskulloppe course at Falkenbergsbanan, where Lundgårdh finished 14th, 13th, and 10th in the Group 2 and 4 heat races — for a respectable aggregate ninth place.

For the 1972 season, Lennart Winkvist took over the competitive driving chores for Scania-Vabis. At the end of April, the car appeared at the Knutstorp Ring club race at Kågeröd. In June, it was back to Mantörp Park for a Group 4 contest. July 16 found the team back at Västskulloppe, where Winkvist finished seventh in the Group 4 category. August 20 was another Group 4 event at the Kinnekulle Ring, followed by a ninth in Group 4 at the September season finale at Knutstorp.

The little blue T/R, by now outclassed by newer and faster cars, ran just three races in 1973, with Winkvist driving at Knutstorp and Mantörp Park. Its last known competition for the Scania-Vabis



WHEN I LEARNED 11820421 had a 2.0-liter engine and Weber 46IDA carbs, I wasn't expecting it to be too tractable on the winding roads near Steven Childs' home in the Sierra Nevada foothills. I was expecting a high-strung race motor. I was wrong.

This 2.0 pulls cleanly in every gear, and from as little as 2500 rpm. Once you're into higher revs, it packs far more punch than you'd expect from 2.0 liters. The car's light weight (it feels *very* light), airport gears, and modern tires with short sidewalls probably deserve the credit for the strong acceleration, but the big-carb/small-motor combo defies

logic, so smoothly does this tiny six pull. I can't recall too many flat sixes that sound better than this one, either. Part of it is the induction through those big 46s, but the other part is the trick rally muffler trailing this 2.0. Back to back against Childs' 605-hp Carrera GT, this humble 911 shouldn't hold up in the aural or straightline fun stakes. But it does.

Its chassis is every bit as well-sorted. Tall, vintage Michelin TB5s might look right under those flared fenders, but it's hard to argue with this chassis as is. Childs tells me both the carb and suspension tuning are the result of "a lot of hours." The latter is evident in the

flat handling and light, communicative steering. Turn-in is instantaneous and its responsiveness to minor throttle inputs lets you make mid-corner adjustments few 911s will. The ride is fine on back-country roads, too. Those who have never driven an early 911 could easily be spoiled for all others by this one.

And what about the added sound deadening? It was absolutely the right call. There's still plenty of elemental here. You still hear everything, but nothing is overbearing. You get the sense it merely filters out the drumming, which is all the better to focus your attention on that fabulous screaming six. —Pete Stout



program came on the weekend of June 15 at Anderstorp's Scandinavian Raceway, where Sten Hillgard drove. Its racing days over, 11820421 was retired to be used briefly as a street car in 1975. It was then placed in storage. For the next 24 years, that's where it remained.

In 1999, the deteriorating racer was uncovered by a British sports-car broker who spotted the car's roll bar and flared fenders and paused for a closer look. The 911 was in recognizable but very rough condition, so he hauled it back late that year for buyer Chris Stewart, a longtime Porsche enthusiast, racing engineer, and driver. Stewart rebuilt the engine and its authenticity was quickly established — prompting an excited headline in the British enthusiast magazine *Classic and Sports Car*. The article was titled, somewhat inelegantly, "Porker found in field of Swedes." A repaint and detail restoration to the car's Gulf-liveried Group 3/4 rally specifications was undertaken.

It was re-registered as WGC 385F in January, 2000. The old 911 was issued new FIA documentation on April 11 by the Motor Sports Association and appeared at the Oldtimer's vintage races at the Nürburgring that October. There, it was reunited with Per Hageman, the original Scania-Vabis mechanic who prepared

and maintained the car during its early competition career, including the Rallye Monte Carlo. Its last European appearance was the Tour de Auto Invitational in early 2001, where it finished 26th overall.

Steven Childs, a former British resident and a longtime Porsche enthusiast, found the car in England, arranged its purchase in June of 2001, and brought it across the pond. He rebuilt the limited-slip differential, replaced the rocker panels, and repainted and retrimmed the car. Says Childs: "Other than these points, the competition seatbelts, the fire system, the rally timer, and other modern competition requirements, the car is original."

While the T/R was in good running order, it was still essentially a bare-bones racing car with few minor concessions to driver and navigator comfort. Childs says it was too noisy inside for regular road use. He's thus made a few compromises for the sake of practicality, adding thin black carpeting and a headliner to eliminate some of the interior resonance. "I just couldn't drive it on the street without some sound insulation, and my wife wouldn't ride with me unless it was quieter."

Childs uses his T/R as it was intended; the author spotted it moving at a good clip on the roads of central Pennsylvania during the Porsche Club of America's

50th Parade Rally. The odometer reads about 87,000 kilometers, but the true mileage is certainly greater, since the odometer was disconnected for rallies.

More recently, the Gulf Blue 911 was invited to appear at several events during the 2007 Monterey Classic Car Week. It was among the few German Racing Car Class entries in the inaugural Carmel Concours on the Avenue, followed by a guest appearance at The Quail's salute to cars that had run in the Rallye Monte Carlo. It spent the rest of the weekend displayed in the vendor area of the Monterey Historics at Laguna Seca.

While technically not a factory-built race car, 11820421 is a good example of a production vehicle converted for competition use by a Porsche distributor using factory-supplied pieces and technology. It thus follows a model established in the late 1960s by distributors across Europe and the Americas in places where Porsche was eager to build its image and sell more cars.

Among the handful of lightweight T/R coupes with more powerful engines, this little car's distinctiveness perhaps best derives from two things — its strong finish at the Monte and its sponsorship by a high-profile company synonymous with Porsche, the 1970s, and winning. ■