

Porsche - Origin of the Species with Foreword by Jerry Seinfeld

By Karl Ludvigsen, Jerry Seinfeld

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Porsche - Origin of the Species is the latest Porsche heritage book by renowned automotive historian Karl Ludvigsen.

Within Jerry Seinfeld's renowned Porsche collection resides an unassuming yet extraordinary piece of Porsche history: Porsche Gmund coupe 356/2-040. Captured exclusively for this book in a series of evocative portraits by acclaimed automotive photographer Michael Furman, 040's unsullied originality conveys with startling immediacy the combination of artistry, innovation and determination that went into its improbable creation. This cornerstone of the Seinfeld collection serves as the inspiration for **Porsche - Origin of the Species**, an in-depth exploration by the eminent automotive historian Karl Ludvigsen into the specific influences and circumstances that brought forth the first Porsche-badged sports cars.

How and when did the people of the Porsche firm find themselves in a sawmill in Gmund? What was the influence on the 356 of the cars and engines built by Porsche before and during the war? How and why was the first 356 shaped as it was? What was the real relationship between the tube-framed Type 356 roadster and the first 356/2 coupes? Questions like these deserve answers because the resulting DNA is so powerful, so robust, that it still influences the shape and style of Porsches well into the twenty-first century.

Karl Ludvigsen, author of the award-winning **Porsche: Excellence Was Expected** and **Ferdinand Porsche Genesis of Genius**, tackles these questions and more in **Porsche - Origin of the Species**. The saga that emerges encompasses mechanical revelations, human drama and the turmoil of world war. **Porsche - Origin of the Species** will appeal to all car enthusiasts who are eager to know what events really ignited the spark from which all other Porsches evolved.

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Editorial Review

Review

BOOK OF THE MONTH ... Ludvigsen's writing style is a captivating joy to read, plus the main text is accompanied by fascinating panels including Robert Cumberford on styling, Miles Collier on preservation and Alex Finigan on ownership. --Classic & Sports Car

It is a fascinating read and one that we would put in the Top 10 of Porsche books. At 356 pages, with a great deal of unseen archive material, and some genuine revelations, its asking price seems a genuine bargain. -- 911 & Porsche World

THE BOOK OF THE YEAR!...This book is quite possibly the best book published this year and we are certain it will appeal to all enthusiasts who are eager to know what events really ignited the spark from which all other Porsches evolved. --Classic Porsche Magazine

Already respected for his many automotive books, Karl Ludvigsen reaches higher yet with his new work, "Porsche - Origin of the Species." While one of his previous Porsche epics, "Excellence Was Expected," was considered the definitive history of the marque, his latest volume is crammed with new material, including first-time accounts of missing links in Porsche's evolution...much more than just a coffee-table decoration...definitely a keeper for Porschephiles and all car enthusiasts. --The New York Times

Such an immense and varied body of research is presented in as clear and concise a body of writing as I have lately encountered. Factor in the truly fine reproduction of photos, quality of paper and binding, great choice of type faces - and what we have is ample proof that books are in fact not a dying media. A splendid read by any calculation! --Porsche 356 Registry Magazine

From the Author

Porsche has many claims to uniqueness as a car maker. Here are a few of them:

- * Throughout its life its auto manufacturing has been sister to a powerful product-engineering business with customers in all parts of the world.
- * It has been a dedicated independent producer, in significant volume, of high-performance sports cars. In the 21st Century this image has been debased by its four-door adventures, but these too have sporting profiles.
- * Until it hit the business buffers in 2009, Porsche was owned and controlled by powerful families that traced their origins to one iconic pioneer. No other car maker of substance could make that claim.
- * Thanks to its steady production over the years of customer-friendly competition cars, Porsche can claim more victories and more championships than any other major marque.

For this author, however, one of Porsche's most fascinating characteristics is its powerful genetic makeup. It has been my privilege and pleasure to follow--in real time--the evolution of Porsche cars from the beginnings of 1948 to the present day. Over these years the pure Porsche, in the person of the 356 as it morphed into the 911, has staunchly represented the most robust bloodline in the motor industry.

Famously the 911 shrugged off all attempts to make it obsolete. In the late 1970s its sales refused to fall below the rate of 25 cars per day that then-chief Ernst Fuhrmann set as the minimum for production viability. When in 1981 new Porsche boss Peter Schutz asked, "What is the product we are making our money with?" he was told it wasn't the 928, whose volumes were too small. Neither was it the 924, which was made dealers happy but left little profit margin for Porsche. It was the long-neglected 911, which Schutz gave the kiss of

life.

Another crisis was surmounted in the early 1990s with the launch of the Type 993. With its predecessor the 964, said new chief engineer Ulrich Bez, the management board "had come to the conclusion that the 911 was at its end." But instead of obliging them with something completely new, Bez created a new 911 in the shape of the 993, the last of the air-cooled Porsches.

"This was a car to decide whether or not Porsche had a future," said later chief Wendelin Wiedeking. "That was a very decisive car for Porsche," added engineer Volker Berkefeld. "It had to be good. Thank God it was good!" In model year 1996, with the cancellation of the 968 and 928 and the Boxster not yet launched, the 993 was the only car that Porsche could offer its network and its customers. Produced on Monday, July 15th, 1996, Porsche's millionth car was a 911 Carrera from the 993 range.

Many forecast disaster for the 911 Carrera's transition to water-cooled power with the new Type 996 of the 1998 model year. Surely this would be more effete, less charismatic. But Porsche's engineers confounded the critics, creating a new 911 that was a fabulous basis for the development that still continues.

One man had been the talisman for the 911's development, indeed for the continuity of the Porsche bloodline from the very beginning. He of course was Ferry Porsche. Ferry was in rude good health at the launch of the Boxster, the car that harked back to his original roadster of 1948. He was more fragile when he turned 88 years of age in September of 1997, when the new 996-based 911 Carrera was displayed for the first time at the Frankfurt Show.

On March 27, 1998 Ferry Porsche died. The man who had served for so many decades as Porsche's "ideal customer" was no more. He was no longer available to motivate his team, to provide the touchstone that would determine whether a new-car proposal lived or died. Though he later had regrets about moving upstairs from the management board when all family members withdrew from Porsche management in 1972, Ferry had done his job well. Subtly, his views reinforced by the deep respect he commanded throughout the company and the Porsche world, Ferry guided the evolution of the model that was at the heart of Porsche's powerful appeal.

The contribution of Ferry Porsche notwithstanding, the durability of the 356/911 concept has been unique in an industry that prides itself on being forward-looking. No other car maker can claim anything comparable. Chevrolet's Corvette is still with us after more than a half-century, however with sharp changes in styling and engineering that have vitiated any genetic continuity. Ferrari has remained true to its high-performance principles but with widely disparate designs. Both Jaguar and Aston Martin have struggled in the 21st century to reanimate DNA from their successful pasts.

Only Morgan can point to a consistency of design that's comparable to that of the 356/911, dating from the introduction of its first four-wheeled model at the end of 1935. Using engines made by major auto companies, Morgan survives as a niche producer at three-figure annual volumes. Exemplary though its continuity has been, Morgan can't be seen as a challenger to the potency of the Porsche DNA.

What has been the secret of the species Porsche? What has given it such strong survivability? Indeed it has been adaptable as well, elements of its strain being incorporated in such sharply differing models as the Cayenne and Panamera, making them visibly and identifiably members of the extended Porsche family. In part we can credit the continuity of Porsche's styling chiefs, from Erwin Komenda and Butzi Porsche through Tony Lapine and Harm Lagaay, not to mention such key interpreters as Dick Soderberg, Wolfgang Möbius, Pinky Lai and Grant Larson.

Yet these men and others had to have something to work with, some starting point that could be identified as the origin of the species Porsche. Divining that origin is the purpose of this book. We know what the first Porsches looked like, the 356 variants of 1948 that established the lineage. But why did they look the way they did? What underpinned their design? What are the roots of the DNA that caused the 356 to be born with a configuration that departed so radically from the sports-car status quo?

I invite you to join me as we turn back the clock to the late 1930s and the 1940s when the Porsche sports-car DNA was created. That's how far back we need to go to grasp the influences, the ideas, the men and the machinery that made up the Type 356. Some of the saga will be familiar but much will be new even to the

most seriously shriven Porsche fanatic. It begins before World War 2 when the Porsche men created the car the world knew as the Volkswagen. Crude and humble though it was, it gave them plenty of ideas.

From the Inside Flap

We know what the first Porsche looks like, the Type 356 of 1948 that established the lineage. But why did it look the way it did? What underpinned its design? What are the roots of the DNA that caused the 356 to be born with a shape and style that departed so radically from the sports-car status quo? A DNA that still guides the design of the Porsches of the 21st century?

"It has been my privilege and pleasure to follow--in real time--the evolution of Porsche cars from the beginnings of 1948 to the present day," says author Karl Ludvigsen. "One of Porsche's most fascinating characteristics is its powerful genetic makeup. Over these years the pure Porsche, in the person of the 356 as it morphed into the 911, has staunchly represented the most robust bloodline in the motor industry.

"I invite you to join me," Ludvigsen continues, "as we turn back the clock to the late 1930s and the 1940s when the Porsche sports-car DNA was created. That's how far our time machine needs to go to show the influences, ideas, men and machinery that make up the genus Porsche. Some of the saga will be familiar but much will be new even to the most devoutly shriven Porsche fanatic."

If anything the author understates the revelations in his definitive story of the birth of the Porsche car.

Reminding us of the magnificent Auto Union racers designed by Ferdinand Porsche, he shows the astonishing road-car versions that were designed and part-built--including a five-passenger model. Clearly sorted for the first time are the VW-based cars that Porsche designed during the 1930s and the radical ten-cylinder coupe planned to be the first "Porsche".

Wartime advances not only aided the Third Reich's campaigns but also produced powerful versions of the VW engine that inspired work on the 356. Ludvigsen explains how and why Porsche's engineers were forced to move to Austria, including Ferdinand Porsche's successful negotiations with Albert Speer, who tried to block their emigration.

The reader looks over the shoulders of the men and women who forged the productive relationship with Italy's Cisitalia after the war, in parallel with the vital Swiss contacts that led to car production in Austria. Revealed for the first time is the Type 352 that the Swiss hoped to build in that neutral nation. And the Cisitalia relationship gives birth to the Type 370, a sensational racing coupe that's one of the missing links in the creation of the 356.

Each page of this surprising book reveals intimate details of the 356 creators. Ferry Porsche, Karl Rabe and Erwin Komenda have starring roles as do Louise and Anton Piëch. Fabled adventurer Laszlo Asmasy, immortalized as the "English Patient", has more than a walk-on role. Leading stylists, designers and executives give their perspectives on the Type 356 and its significance.

At the heart of Porsche Species are superb images of one of the most treasured survivors of the era, 356/2-040 owned by actor-comedian Jerry Seinfeld, Porsche enthusiast par excellence. His enthusiasm shines through in the pages of this book, which was inspired by Seinfeld's passion for Porsches. Printed in lavish full-color and richly illustrated, it will appeal to all car enthusiasts who are eager to know what really happened at the turning points of history.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Greg Wilson:

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