



Blubell

HOW ONE HIGH-MILEAGE 911S TARGA
WAS GIVEN A NEW LEASE ON LIFE.

STORY BY **DOUG NELSON** PHOTOS BY **RICH CHENET**

LIFE IS SHORT. And precious. During our unknown period of time here, some people strive to go out and experience as much of what the world offers as they can. Others choose to keep things closer, finding objects they love, holding onto them dearly, and preserving them so they can be passed on. Jim Montgomery was a man who embraced both ends of this spectrum.

Jim was born in Princeville, Illinois on January 7, 1934. As a young boy, he was introduced to music by his mother, who taught him to play the piano and organ. When he became a teenager, he joined the Princeville High School marching band, playing mostly brass instruments. After college he moved to Florida, where his first job was with the Daytona Beach Life Saving Corps. He went on to become a fireman with the Daytona Beach Fire Department for many years.



During this time, Jim found more things he loved, including history, art, travel, and ballroom dancing. Along the way, he made many friends and married his wife, Muriel. He enjoyed long-distance running, ocean kayaking, canoeing, rafting, and horseshoes.

There was one other thing that Jim loved, and that was Porsches. It is truly an unforgettable day when one takes delivery of a brand-new factory-ordered Porsche, and April 21, 1972, was such a day for Jim. He was 38 years old when he drove his new 1972 Porsche 911S Targa from Brumos Porsche in Jacksonville, Florida down the coast to his home in Daytona Beach.

Jim's new Porsche was painted in Gemini Blue Metallic and had a five-speed manual transmission, Recaro sport seats, tinted glass, and a Blaupunkt Frankfurt radio with an electric antenna; the cost was \$11,806.74. Jim was no stranger to the Porsche marque, having previously owned a 1968 912 ("Rosie") and a 1970 911S ("Sunshine"), but as it turned out, the 1972 911S Targa was something special.

Because of its stunning Gemini Blue paint, Jim named his new Porsche "Blubell," and he ordered a custom license plate soon after delivery to let everyone else on the road know, too. He proceeded to roll Blubell's odometer over 651,000 miles, or the equivalent of 26.14 times around the world—if there were an actual road tracing the equator. Much of this mileage was accrued during Jim's first 30 years with Blubell, when he averaged more than 20,000 miles per year.

JIM AND BLUBELL traveled the highways and byways of the U.S. over the years—sometimes going beyond its borders—in search of brass instruments to add to his collection (which numbered in the hundreds), to participate in long-distance running and marathon events, and to attend four Olympic Games.

The first visit to the Olympics

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was in the summer of 1972—in Munich. Jim and Muriel had Blubell booked on one of the cargo decks of Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth 2* ocean liner, and they sailed across the Atlantic to Europe. After the Games, they explored several countries before returning to the States, again on the *QE2*. Three more Olympic Games—Montreal in 1976, Los Angeles in 1984, and Atlanta in 1996—were eventually checked off the bucket list.

Jim would drive far and wide to pursue his passions, and Muriel joined him on many a road trip, as she loved to ride along. Blubell delivered them safely to every destination, sipped tank after tank of premium fuel, and was very well cared for with regular service and maintenance. The car also received four full engine rebuilds along the way.

Fortunately, in his first year of ownership, Jim met Porsche repair shop owner/mechanic David Glenn. David's shop was conveniently located in Daytona Beach, and over the years Jim and David (and Blubell) became close friends.

DAVID GREW UP in Daytona Beach. As a teenager, he was lucky enough

to work at the local Porsche dealership. Right out of high school in 1971, he started his own Porsche repair shop while attending junior college. The Daytona 24-hour race was always special for David, and he would camp overnight at the speedway every year to see and hear the latest cars and mingle with the teams. "I will never forget the sound of the Porsche 917 running against the 512 Ferraris," he says.

Early on, David met the famous master craftsman and Porsche engineer Valentin Schaffer, and they became good friends. In 1985, David's dream of working in Germany came true. "I was hoping to get a position in the Porsche race department, but it wasn't possible at the time," remembers David. So he decided to settle in Munich. "I called Ruf Automobile and interviewed with Alois, and I started working there three days later."

David built engines at Ruf, including the first series for the twin-turbocharged CTR engine that powered the legendary Yellowbird. However, he decided to move back to the States in 1991 with his wife and two daughters, who were born in Germany.

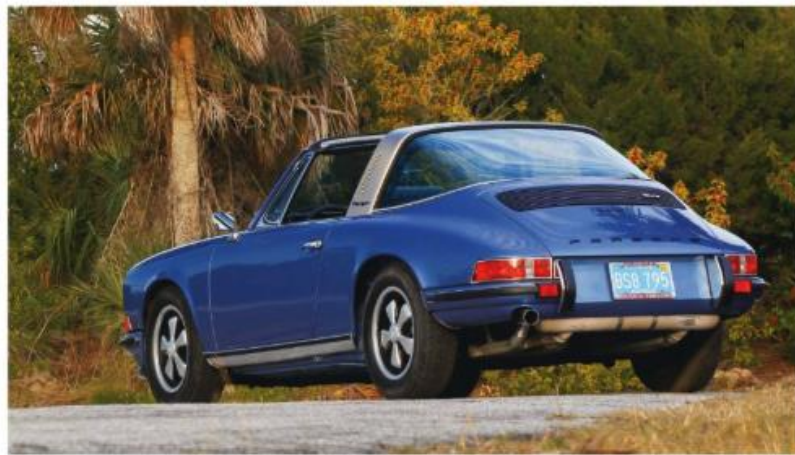
David relocated the family to West Palm Beach, Florida, where he took a position with Gunnar Racing and started building race engines for the team. In 1993, he moved back to Daytona Beach to maintain and preserve the car collection of Chapman J. Root II, grandson of Chapman J. Root, president of the Root Glass Company, the manufacturer and 1916 patent holder for the iconic Coca-Cola "contour bottle."

David also prepared and provided trackside support for Root's Porsche 962 and many of the other race cars in his collection. At the same time, David started doing project work with Alwin Springer at Porsche Motorsport North America, Brumos Porsche, Kelly Moss Motorsports, Rohr Motorsport, and Champion Porsche—and he reconnected with Jim and Blubell.

DURING THE EIGHT YEARS that David was away from Daytona Beach, Jim had taken Blubell to Brumos Porsche for scheduled service, and they did an excellent job. However, Jim, Blubell, and David were all very pleased to be reunited.

Jim and David's friendship had progressed well beyond that of standard customer/mechanic interaction; such is a common occurrence between two individuals when a Porsche is involved. The two men would hang out and chat at the workshop or other venues, after hours or on the weekend, about anything and everything.

One day, Jim popped by the shop after a very long road trip. An enormous tuba was sitting in the passenger seat and poking through the roof-



Beautiful Fuchs forged wheels and a fuel-injected 2.4-liter flat six rated at 190 hp—there's nothing wrong with that.



line where the Targa roof section fit. "Good thing I didn't order the coupe," observed Jim. This sparked a rather lengthy discussion on rare instruments.

They also helped each other when things went wrong. One time, Blubell's engine waved the white flag just before Jim was getting ready to drive cross-country to California. David's clever solution was to slip into Blubell a spare 2.0-liter engine that had been gathering dust in his parts area.

This would give him plenty of time to rebuild Blubell's 2.4-liter engine while Jim was away. Little did David know that Jim would be gone for nearly eight months. He ended up putting more than 60,000 miles on the 2.0-liter engine.



Blubell shows as if it were 1972 again, looking like a new model in a Porsche sales brochure. The restoration of this high-mileage 1972 911S took three years to complete.



"I was a bit shocked at first," recalls David. "But then I figured, well, it was for Jim and Blubell, and they're good people." Finally, David had the courage to ask Jim why he hadn't purchased another 911, insinuating that the miles were getting up there. "I like Blubell so much, I don't think I'll ever want another Porsche," replied Jim. "I'm just so attached to this car."

The years and the miles continued to accrue. Finally, in 2006, time, use, and salt caught up with Blubell, in the same way it does for most mechanical contrivances, even when they are meticulously maintained.

The car's bodywork and chassis were beginning to exponentially rust away due to traveling on salted roads in the northern states and from spending part of its life in the salt-ridden garage of Jim's Daytona Beach seafont condo. In addition, just about every interior component was heavily worn and needed to be either replaced or refreshed.

Blubell was tired and used up at 651,000 miles; its time on Earth was likely to be over soon. David and Jim talked it over. "It is time to park Blubell, and I will start looking into the

most feasible way to go about bringing her back to life," said David. It would be a huge undertaking, and the costs were likely to be more than the value of the restored car.

"Blubell's drivetrain was in good shape, so I started looking for a suitable replacement 911S roller as a solution," remembers David. "But that never panned out, and Jim wasn't really keen on it, anyway."

The budget was limited, so the two friends came to an equitable agreement, with Jim and David becoming partners in Blubell's ownership. The deal was a gentleman's arrangement, whereby Jim would cover the cost of the parts and other expenses for the restoration, and David would donate his time and labor. He would also use his connections to arrange the best in additional services, with the caveat being that David would inherit Blubell from Jim should he pass away first.

BLUBELL'S RESTORATION BEGAN in the summer of 2007. At the time, David was working for Porsche Motorsport North America. He built 962, GT1, and GT3 Cup engines and traveled to sell parts and provide track-

side technical support at race events all over North America.

Consequently, he could only work on Blubell in his spare time, but as a PMNA employee he could purchase the parts for the project at a discounted price. This meant that all of the parts used in Blubell's three-year restoration project were original Porsche parts.

The first order of business was to remove and organize every part from the chassis. David and his good friend Curt Beville did the tedious work. They determined what could be refreshed and reused, and what new parts needed to be ordered.

Next, they stripped Blubell's undercoating with an aircraft stripper, and then the entire chassis went to the sandblaster along with very precise instructions. Meanwhile, the entire interior was sent to Germany, where David's friend, Hans Scupin, would do a complete refurbish. Scupin had done work for Ruf in the past, so David was well-acquainted with his perfectionism. David and Curt also cut out sections of floor panels from a donor 911 chassis to ensure the fitment would be perfect.

Only one of Blubell's original



An open Targa top is the perfect way to enjoy the scenery—and to admire the work done to restore the interior of this 651,000-mile car.

front fenders and one door could be used in the restoration. All the other sheetmetal panels (inner and outer rockers, hood, decklid, front clip, rear quarters, etc.) were purchased new from Porsche.

In order to fit the new panels perfectly, David brought Ernst Hennings over from Germany. Another friend of David's, Hennings had worked as a *Spengler* (a skilled auto body metal craftsman) at a large Munich auto dealership. He did the expert panel fitment and the lead work with his own supply of lead, which he brought with him.

Unfortunately, Hennings only had three weeks available to work on the project. After doing a lot of poking around, David found a talented local automotive body man,

Tony Moiso, to complete the final body preparation. Once finished, the entire chassis, along with the rotisserie, was transported 250 miles to Tim Douglas in Fort Myers, Florida to re-create Blubell's factory Gemini Blue Metallic paintwork.

In the meantime, David had completely refreshed the entire drivetrain yet again. Once the chassis and the interior were back at David's shop, he and Curt began to carefully reassemble Blubell to showroom/show quality condition.

THE EXTENSIVE RESTORATION work was finally finished in October of 2010. With Blubell's odometer reset to zero, Jim proudly drove the car 72 miles south to the show grounds in Winter Park, Florida for the 2010

Winter Park Concours d'Elegance. As luck would have it, Blubell won first place in the Porsche 911 division. After the victory, Jim and David considered showing Blubell again at some future events, and a few weeks later they firmed up plans for the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance on March 13, 2011.

Sadly, it was not to be. On February 26, 2011, Jim passed away in his sleep at the age of 77. At the time, Jim had been the adoring keeper of Blubell for nearly 39 years. Both were lean, fit, energetic, and loved to run long distances. They were a perfect match.

Blubell, Jim's faithful travel companion, was bequeathed to David in his last will and testament, as the two gentlemen had agreed upon several years before. David soon made the decision to retire Blubell from the road, more or less. "She isn't driven much at all now," says David. "She's done more than enough miles for several lifetimes."

As a tribute to Jim, David showed Blubell at the 2013 Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, where she was greeted by Porsche fans who were astonished to hear the story and the fact that the car had covered an unbelievable 651,000 miles.

David plans to preserve Blubell in "low mileage," pristine condition and share her with others by continuing to attend car shows around the country. Incidentally, four years after he took ownership of the car, David regained the "Blubell" license plate from the Florida DMV. Blubell's restoration is now fully complete. 🍷

Below: David Glenn is now Blubell's owner. Bottom, left to right: David's friend Curt Bevill helped begin Blubell's extensive restoration. Blubell, completely undressed. Fresh Gemini Blue Metallic paint cures for the second time in Blubell's life.



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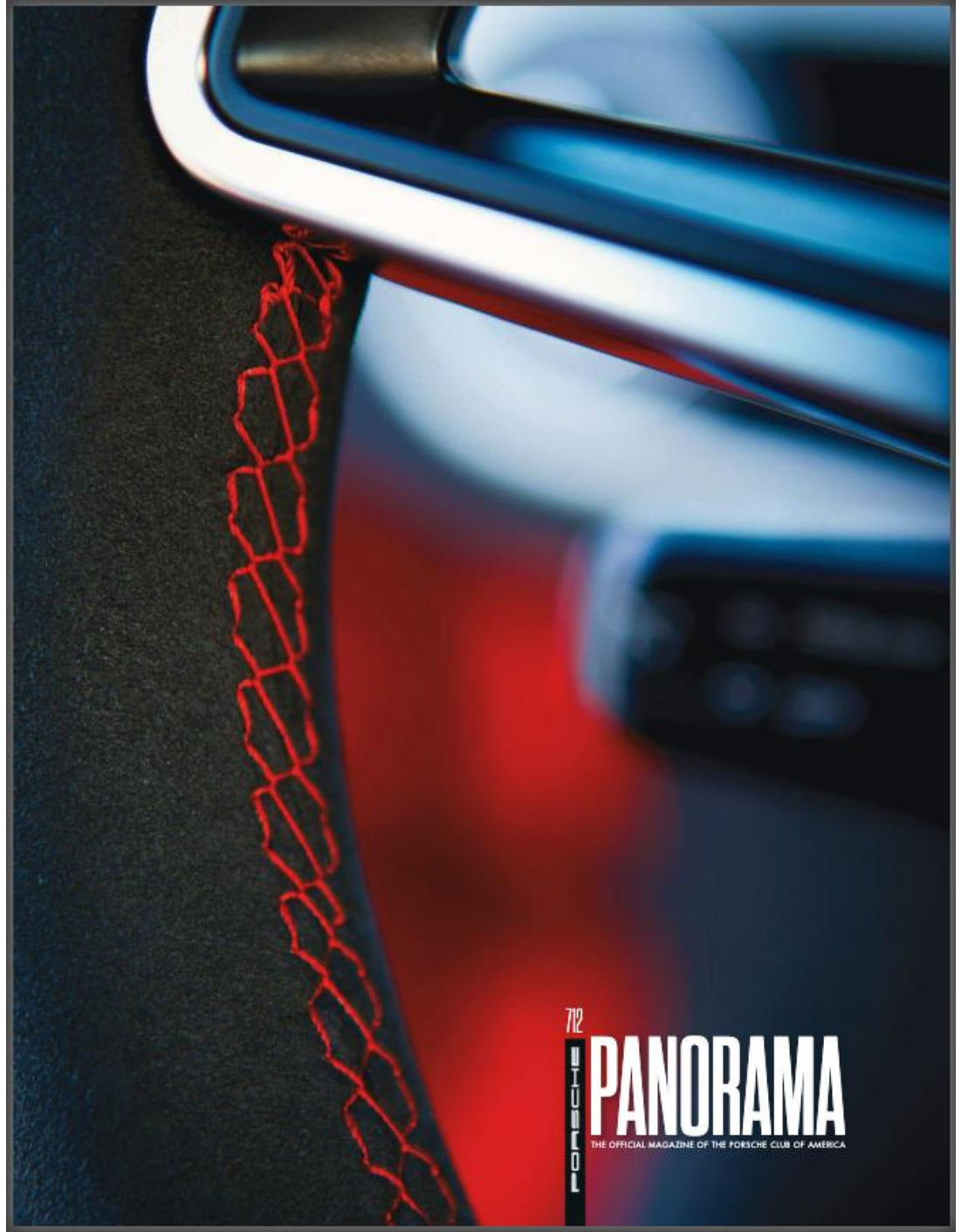
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