



## 70 Years Porsche People: Stephen and Brenton Grove

14/10/2021 The Grove family has a decade young association with Porsche, and in that short time, they have squeezed more in than most can muster in a full career.

A late bloomer onto the motorsport scene, Stephen Grove, now 53, celebrated the success of his construction industry business by getting involved in motorsport.

In what innocently started behind the wheel of a 2006-spec Porsche 997 in Victorian state racing quickly turned into a full-blown Carrera Cup campaign that has seen him race at the highest level on the domestic and international scene.

And the apple hasn't fallen far from the tree, either. His son Brenton, 23, is also seeking his own success in the sport.

The father and son combination have driven together, and raced against each other. They have different career goals and they also nominate starkly different career highlights.

But if there's one product that binds them tight beyond their obvious family ties, it's their love and loyalty of Porsche.

All of the pair's significant motorsport success has come strapped tight inside the famous German brand, from taking multiple Bathurst 12 Hour class victories, to racing in the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup and even claiming a medal in the inaugural 'Motorsport Games' – racing's answer to the Olympics.

It was this feat that Stephen and Brenton achieved together that Grove Sr holds dearest.

"Our 12 Hour win together was something that was very special, but for me to win in Rome ticked a lot of boxes because I could represent my country," said Stephen.

"I'm a very patriotic Aussie, and to represent Porsche, to represent my country, to race with my son and to get a Bronze medal, if I look back at my career so far that would be the pick for me."

While Stephen's highlight was as close as he is likely to get to feeling like an Olympic hero, Brenton's golden moment wasn't necessarily an on-track result.

In 2020, after seven years of his family's toil on the track with Porsche, their loyalty was rewarded with factory support for their Bathurst 12 Hour efforts.

Along with British sportscar ace Ben Barker in their 911 GT3 R in the Pro-Am class, they took home the class crown in the once-around-the-clock mountain classic.

But it wasn't that the Grove's trophy cabinet might have required an extension that made this a career highlight for Brenton. It was the fact that Porsche had recognised their family team's worth, and backed their efforts, that he looks back on with fondness.

"For me, the biggest moment we've had as a family is winning for Porsche at the Bathurst 12 Hour in 2020," he said.

"The race was the first time we represented Porsche in the outright Class A, and we brought a car over and it was the first time we had really strong factory support.

"The way we were welcomed into the team and the Porsche family that week was really a proud moment for not only myself and Steve but a lot of the other people that had been with us on the journey through Carrera Cup.

"We were the only Porsche that won a class and to represent the factory in that way was a really special moment.

"We enjoyed it so much that we decided to go and buy a GT3 R of our own!"

Stephen says that unlike other brands, Porsche has a special touch that brings you into the fold and keeps you there.

“Porsche make you feel like you’re a part of their family,” he said.

“That’s a kind of terminology that anyone can use but it’s true – whether you are a part of their racing program or a road car customer, you are made to really feel like a part of the family. And to feel a part of a brand as iconic as Porsche is something a lot of other companies just can’t give you. It’s definitely a family feel.”

That family feel was evident for Brenton early in his exposure to motorsport. In 2013, just as his father was starting to gain a reputation as a solid, competitive Pro-Am driver in Carrera Cup Australia, the then 16-year-old was taken under the wing of Carrera Cup’s late category manager Jamey Blaikie.

In Blaikie’s typically encouraging and accomodating style, he taught Brenton the inner-workings of the Porsche racing business and says now that he learned quickly the unique ethos employed by Porsche.

“Not many people know that I actually did work experience at Porsche Cars Australia,” he explained.

“I worked at Carrera Cup for a year under Jamey Blaikie and I will be forever grateful for Jamey taking me on as a young kid.

“Essentially, I was an assistant to the category manager, and he really showed the importance Porsche places on its customers.

“I learnt everything from dealing with teams to organising schedules and organising events, basically I learnt the whole inner workings of Porsche Motorsport in Australia.

“I’ve kind of done everything with Porsche in terms of motorsport. From racing their cars, to winning in their cars, working for their categories and meeting people in Germany. That just shows the commitment Porsche has to supporting their customers and how committed they are to making sure the experience a business or a customer has with their brand is always of the highest quality.”

Among the growing collection of race cars that the team has in its Melbourne-based racing workshop, Brenton has added a new car to its fleet – a 911 Carrera S.

For Brenton, he now has the best of both worlds. A similar car that he tackles race tracks on and its road-going relation that offers the highest level of comfort and quality.

“I bought a Porsche 911 Carrera S, so essentially the car I’ve been racing for so many years, I now have a version of my own to drive around on the road as a daily driver,” he said.

“Everything about it is quality, luxury and high-end. It’s just a meticulously designed, beautiful car that

has the utmost style about it.

“This is the first road car I’ve had with Porsche, and the experience that Piero (Pellegrini) and the team at Porsche Centre Melbourne gave me was out of this world. They are such a professionally-run, really friendly and supportive team that took care of anything and everything to make sure that my experience with them was absolutely perfect.”

So, what’s next for the Grove team? Stephen confirmed that the father and son combination are taking on the all-new GT3 R into the rejuvenated Australian GT class in 2021, alongside his regular Carrera Cup duties.

“A Carrera Cup car is an extremely well-engineered and built car, it’s really good and they build a lot of them, but the GT3 R is next level, the aero and technology that goes into them is incredible and it’s a very special car,” he said.

“We are committed to the full GT season in 2021 in the GT3 R as a father-son team. I’ll do Carrera Cup myself as a separate thing for me, but Brenton and I will race together in GT World Challenge Australia. It’s the first new Porsche GT3-R into Australia, they have only built seven of them so to have one coming down to Australia is really special.”

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