

A promise fulfilled: the legacy of a 911 SC

25/03/2026 In the soft morning light atop an empty Georgetown car park in Malaysia on the Penang peninsula, Dev stands beside his black 1981 Porsche 911 SC, wearing a dark brown leather jacket that reflects the warmth of his story. This car represents more than just a classic Porsche – it embodies a father's wisdom, a son's determination, and a promise that shaped a career.

Born in 1976, Dev's journey with this particular 911 began long before he became its owner. When Dev was a child, his father would drive the family to Singapore, where the finest collection of Porsche cars in the region would captivate his young imagination. Whether spotted at exclusive club meetings or marina gatherings, each 911 sighting would transfix him until the car disappeared from view.

The promise of a Porsche 911 SC

In 1985, an ordinary evening at home with his mother was interrupted by an unfamiliar horn sound outside their house. Opening the gate, nine-year-old Dev found himself looking at a dark metallic grey

Porsche 911 SC, with his father grinning behind the wheel. "This is ours," his father announced – words that would keep the young boy awake that night, his mind racing with possibilities.

The 911 SC, being a 1981 model, represented the most powerful variant of its generation, boasting 204 PS compared to the earlier 180 PS versions. Aside from the practical addition of air conditioning for Malaysia's tropical climate, the car remains wonderfully original – a testament to both father and son's stewardship. Around 1988, the car underwent its most visible transformation when it was repainted from its original metallic grey to a deep, classic black – a colour that would become its defining characteristic for decades to come.

But the most pivotal moment in this car's story for Dev came in 1988 during a visit to London. Standing before the historic Lincoln's Inn, where his father had studied law in the 1960s, Dev received an offer that would shape his future: if he followed in his father's footsteps, studying at this prestigious institution and becoming a lawyer, the 911 would be his.

A four-wheeled family legacy

For Dev, who had already been inspired by his father's successful career as a criminal defence lawyer, this added incentive only strengthened his resolve. Today, he carries on both his father's professional legacy and passion for Porsche, working as a criminal defence lawyer himself – a career choice that has proven as rewarding as the 911 that helped inspire it. Years of dedication followed that offer, culminating in his graduation and him returning home in 2000. True to his word, his father presented him with the keys, but there was one more surprise – a gold badge on the glove box bearing the Porsche emblem and Dev's name, a silent but powerful acknowledgment of the torch being passed.

The car's significance in Penang's automotive landscape cannot be understated – it was only the second 911 to arrive in the state and today remains one of just two 'impact-bumper', air-cooled 911s on the island. To celebrate the car's 40th birthday in 2021, Dev treated it to a comprehensive restoration, though carefully preserving its originality. While the seats required reupholstering, the roof lining, carpets, door seals, and dashboard remained original. A new stainless steel exhaust system and the removal of unnecessary heating elements transformed the car's performance, adding power while solving persistent cooling issues.

Dev speaks of driving the 911 with the reverence of someone who truly understands its unique character. "Take a hammer, throw it up in the air – what lands down? The hammer's head," he explains, describing the rear-engine dynamics. "You never let your foot off the gas and never brake in corners; you accelerate through them." This wisdom, passed down from his father, has kept both men safe through decades of ownership.

The car has had its moments of glory – in 1998, it was among the first cars to lap the Sepang Formula One circuit during the inaugural Porsche Club Malaysia meet, with Dev's father at the wheel. But perhaps its greatest achievement is its role in binding together three aspects of family history: a father's

success, a son's ambition, and a promise kept.

The Porsche 911 SC as a timeless experience

Today, as values of classic 911 models soar past 50,000 euros, Dev is more cautious about long-distance journeys. Yet each time he drives the car, each time he rounds a corner in second or third gear, he experiences something that he insists cannot be explained – something that must be experienced. And every time he walks away from the car, he still turns around for one more look, just as he has done for nearly 40 years.

In the early morning light of Penang, this black 911 SC represents more than just a classic Porsche – it's a testament to the power of promises, the bond between a father and son, and the enduring allure of the analogue age of driving.

My First 911

This story is part of the new book My First 911. It is a photographic and literary journey into the most personal chapter of every Porsche 911 enthusiast's life: the moment they first drove, owned, or fell in love with a 911. Spanning 18 cities across four continents, the book brings together 36 personal owner stories that together form something much larger than a car book – a portrait of longing, identity, and the enduring allure of an icon.

Kai Hartmann is a German author and automotive photographer with bases in Singapore and Penang, Malaysia. For more than 15 years, Hartmann has worked with Porsche on countless projects across China and Asia Pacific – a relationship that has taken him from the frozen roads of northern China to racetracks and launch events across the region. My First 911 is his debut book and the culmination of a years-long personal documentary project, self-funded and conducted entirely through his own initiative. The book is published by Delius Klasing and is available in shops now.

Info

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