

Porsche in Paradise

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03/06/2021 Life's a beach for the enviable islanders of PCA Hawaii.

With its sprawling capital Honolulu and famous Pearl Harbour marine base, the island of Oahu is the economic and cultural centre of Hawaii. But move away from the bustling south, and as members of Porsche Club of America's local fraternity will attest, it's also something of a haven for drivers.

Despite measuring a modest 64 kilometres by 42 kilometres, Oahu is an island of outstanding natural beauty, accessed by colourful boulevards, fabulous coastal roads and even challenging alpine passes. And when dusk falls, the H-3 highway over the Ko'olau Mountains becomes a place of pilgrimage for Porsche fans. Alongside tight bends and spectacular elevations, the interstate also offers the 1.5-km Tetsuo Harano Tunnel.

Records confirm that the first Porsche was registered on Oahu back in 1952, when Porsche had only just established itself in Stuttgart. A meeting of local enthusiasts took place to set up a club in the

autumn of 1958 – almost one year before the island group became the 50th US state. Rufus Longmeyer, the proud owner of a brand-new 356 Super Coupé, issued an invitation to his villa on Kalama Beach and 11 participants drove to that first meeting in a variety of cars, including four Speedsters and a 550 Spyder.

Back then there was a Volkswagen dealer in Honolulu who took care of the small number of Porsche drivers on the island. Most customers ordered vehicles either from John von Neumann in Los Angeles or dealt directly with Germany. But Ted Fukuda, an air-force pilot and founding member of the PCA Hawaii, collected his 1957-model silver 1600 Super Coupé from the factory personally. He then had it shipped to New York after first touring round Germany and drove the car the whole way to Los Angeles before shipping it once again on the final leg to Honolulu.

Hawaii's enthusiasts became an official chapter of the Porsche Club of America in 1959, the club having been founded in Washington D.C. just four years earlier. Club races were organised on a regular basis with disused airfields making the perfect setting. Colourful characters were in plentiful supply, such as amateur racer Loretta Richards with her 550 Spyder and pastor Joe Dizon, who bought a damaged Speedster for just 300 dollars. "No-one wanted the Speedster. They said you must be crazy to drive a car like that without any protection from the wind and rain. But I just loved the design," he said at the time. His love was rewarded a few years later when he was able to buy himself a new house with the money he made from selling the car.

Today the club is very active, with President Ellen Liddle in charge of some 160 members. "We try to organise an event once a month," she says. "Our programme includes everything from the annual Concours d'Elégance and excursions to the other islands through to charity events." Reliable weather is a bonus for PCA Hawaii, but so is a sense of inclusivity on the island that sees members from all walks of life welcomed, from property investors and bank managers through to construction workers. "We are proud that our members come from a wide variety of social backgrounds," Liddle says.

Frank Dao is a good example. Born in Vietnam, he was brought to the US as a child in one of the last transports. He became a Porsche fan after watching the 1980s classic 'Risky Business', which features Tom Cruise in a 928. "As a 20-year-old, I thought to myself: 'You absolutely have to have something like that one day'," Dao remembers. And now the former refugee has a show condition 1986 928 S with 98,000 kilometres on the clock and daily drives a new 911 Turbo S.

For fellow member Mike Davis, an early Boxster started his journey before he invested in a rare single model year 912E. "Porsche was my first love at high school," Davis reflects, "and I soon knew that I had to have something air-cooled in the garage." Surprisingly, his is not the only 912E on the island, for another Mike, Mike Merino, also owns one that has been passed down through the generations.

"The Porsche 912 has been owned by my family for almost 50 years," Merino explains. "My father was a typical Waikiki boy. He always had a surfboard mounted on the rear." And today, Merino junior continues the long-held family tradition of driving his beloved car to the beach on Sundays – the perfect setting for a Hawaiian air-cooled heirloom.

Info

Text first published in the Porsche Klassik Magazine, No. 19.

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Consumption data

911 Turbo S (Predecessor model)

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

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