

His love to the 356 A was stronger

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21/02/2017 Andrew Gunn had sold it: his first, hard-earned Porsche 356 A, just because he wanted to drive in the open air. He regretted it bitterly and got his coupé CEO 356 back.

On the way to my interview with Andrew Gunn, I experience for the first time what a heaven on earth Andrew has made for himself here. We are driving up a steep mountain road, between lush, green grass and apple blossom. It is the first spring day in South Africa. In the valley below, the sun is getting stronger, warming the land. But on the road leading us upwards, we are driving straight into the low-hanging clouds which hide the mountain above. As we pass the large, cast-iron gates of the Iona vineyard in thick fog, you could almost imagine we were in the Scottish Highlands.

Andrew Gunn is a winemaker, art collector and Porsche lover. I am meeting him in the middle of what he loves – surrounded by his family, a farm that touches the sky, and beautiful works of art in simple surroundings. As I get to know Andrew better, I gain an insight into the valuable experiences of his life, shaped by hard work, staying power and the rewards of a daring balancing act. The tasting room of the

Iona Wine Farm where we are sitting is a beautiful place full of cheerful calm, with terracotta tiles and daylight filling the room. On one side, we can see the vineyards disappearing down the mountainside. My gaze falls as if through a frame on the proud sculpture of a one-man band. Pieces from Andrew's collection of contemporary art decorate the walls of the tasting room. And at the end of the room, in weak sunlight, stands Andrew's first love: a 1958 Porsche 356A in Silver Metallic (paint code 5606) with the number plate CEO 356.

Andrew's love affair with the 356 A began in 1969

The car has been beautifully restored, but the mud in the wheel housings indicates that we are not dealing with a museum piece here. This car is driven. Andrew's love affair with the 356A began in 1969. When he was studying civil engineering at university, Andrew fell in love with the beautiful lines of the 356. Although there were only a handful of Porsches in South Africa at that time, Andrew was able to raise the purchase price for a used 356A through his holiday job. The sum of 675 South African rand (340 British pounds at the time) sufficed to switch the ownership and the nineteen-year-old civil engineering student was the proud owner of one of the most beautiful German cars of all time. But the naysayers predicted that Andrew would not complete his studies – young men, Porsche and the responsibilities of a university degree, they didn't fit together. And they were right. Andrew broke off his studies; he felt he would be better supported in a job than at the university. But five years later he returned and completed his degree. Despite Porsche.

In the early 1970s, open-top British sportscars were enjoying great popularity. It was the heyday of the Austin, the MG, the Triumph and the Alfa Romeo. When he came across a stunning Austin-Healey 3000, the young Andrew could not resist the temptation of open-air driving, the carefree lifestyle and the fantastic sound of the three-litre machine. However, he could not keep both cars. So he sold the 356, but always wished himself back with this very Porsche. After he had returned to university and completed his course of study, Andrew was determined to find his first love again. It was still in the possession of the person he had sold it to, but it was in a woeful state. It looked as if someone had painted the body with a paintbrush and, following a major engine failure, a VW engine had been installed. The original handsome upholstery had been replaced with red fur covers. The sight was enough to break Andrew's heart. But although the owner was quite obviously unfit for this car, he did not want to sell it back to Andrew. He, however, did not give up – and finally succeeded: The owner was persuaded to allow Andrew to restore car to its original condition and for that to become co-owner.

It all looks like a little piece of heaven

As Andrew tells the astonishing story of this early phase of his time as holder of the vehicle, the sun breaks through the clouds. Now the gorgeous curves of the 356 A shine in the bright daylight. To me, it all looks like a little piece of heaven. We are sitting within touching distance of one of the most legendary vehicles in automotive history, while looking out over the gentle hills of Andrew's vineyard, surrounded by unique contemporary artworks from his collection. The sculpture of the one-man band,

which overlooks the expanses of Andrew's farm, illustrates just how this exceptional man has orchestrated his existence and has found the perfect balance and the perfect rhythm both in life and in nature. But Andrew is also someone who beats the drum and sets the tempo. In the years following his first car purchases, many a Porsche passed over Andrew's driveway – from a 356 B to a 1600 Super Speedster, to the lightweight RS models of the 80s and 90s. Although he does not see himself as a collector, in the 1980s and 1990s he owned some of the rarest Porsches in South Africa. With his preference for racing vehicles, Andrew also became a well-respected driver on the South African motor racing scene. During these years, he was the president of the South African Porsche Club.

After a highly successful career as a civil engineer, in 1997 Andrew decided on a change of pace and to take his life in a new direction. He had always had a love of nature, and so he took the leap into farming in the Western Cape. With hard work and staying power, Andrew brought new life to a run-down apple orchard and built up one of the most prestigious vineyards in South Africa. It is thanks to the altitude, the soil and the cool weather that Andrew is able to harvest unique grapes in his much cooler vineyards high in the mountains of Elgin. It is hardly surprising that the red cuvée has been given the name "One Man Band". The label bears an artistic representation of the sculpture that watches over Andrew's wine farm – a symbol of the perfect balance to be found in the fruits of his labour.

Photo albums documenting Andrew's love affairs with Porsche

At the beginning of this year, Andrew took delivery of a 991 GT3 RS, the newest incarnation from Porsche of a legend that saw the light of day in 1948. Andrew's eyes start to light up when he talks about spending time behind the wheel of the GT3 RS. As if transported back in time to the age of 19, he relives his early memories of the 356 A. He raves about the precision of the steering and the chassis as if we were back in 1969 and a young Andrew was sitting behind the wheel of the "A". The 991 with a strength of 500 hp bears the number plate CEO 911, but it is quite clear that the emotions it evokes can never reach the levels of the "Lady" CEO 356. His first great love basks in the light of the sun a metre away from us as we look through the pages of the photo albums documenting Andrew's love affairs with Porsche over the past 47 years.

One particular chapter is recalled by two or three newer photos in one of the albums. They show a Becker radio, Andrew and his friend Arthur. The question mark in my mind gets even bigger when, on seeing the picture, Andrew gives a big laugh and starts telling a little story. The Becker Safari radio is a gift from a good friend, fellow farmer and Porsche collector Arthur Pillman, the first Porsche owner in South Africa. Many years ago when Arthur resigned from his job, his boss at the time predicted that his farm would have no success. But it turned out not to be so, and his former boss's parting shot became a distant memory. Several years later, when the importer Lindsay Saker received a licence to sell Porsches in South Africa, Arthur was already in possession of a Porsche which he had imported from Switzerland some time before.

Lindsay Saker asked Arthur if the company could use his car for the grand launch. And so Arthur lent the car to Saker. At the event, he happened to meet his former boss. The latter proudly revealed to him that

he was going to buy this new car and become the first Porsche owner in South Africa. Arthur explained to him that this was unfortunately impossible, as the car already belonged to him. A story like that, you couldn't make it up. Arthur became a good friend of Andrew's, and for his 50th birthday gave him the Becker Safari radio from his first Porsche. It serves as a reminder of the importance of believing in yourself.

The curvaceous 356 will always remain Andrew's first love

Andrew snaps the album shut. It has got late. For him one thing is clear: The 991 will probably soon give way to a new love, one with a bit more horsepower and other modern benefits. But the curvaceous 356 will always remain Andrew's first love. And nothing will ever change that. It is as beautiful and timeless as the other artworks that Andrew surrounds himself with, and ages like the wine that he grows. Separation? Never again!

Link Collection

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https://newsroom.porsche.com/en/history/porsche-history-356-a-1600-super-andrew-gunn-portrait-13287.html

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