

Twice as nice: is the perfect Porsche road-trip a car each?

18/03/2025 Much more than a car brand, Porsche is a lifestyle – with a global community brought together, regardless of nationality, by a mutual passion. Meet the dedicated German couple who are the living embodiment of this ethos as they rack up thousands of kilometres – and forge lifelong friendships – across the United States.

For many Porsche enthusiasts, a road trip is that rarest of things – a fleeting few days away from the routine of daily life. But for German couple Christian and Ortrun Hartinger, the road trip *is* the routine. Having driven extensively around Germany and Europe since they met in 2010, over the past three years the couple have turned their attention to the US, driving more than 160,000 kilometres (100,000 miles) there from behind the wheel of their own 911 models.

The Hartingers came to the Porsche brand in very different ways. Christian grew up in Bavaria in the 1970s and remembers the familiar sight of the original 911 Turbo while playing Top Trumps as a small boy. In the 1980s he would visit the Frankfurt Motor Show each year, transfixed by the Porsche stand and the ever-evolving outline of the 911.

Ortrun, by contrast, was born in East Germany, where a Porsche was for many decades as unfamiliar as it was unaffordable. “Growing up, we did not have cars like Porsche,” she explains. “We only had Trabants and Wartburgs and that was it. When I was very small, I was always playing in the street on these sandy hills left by the builders constructing houses. And one day I found a small toy car in the sand that had been left there by another kid. And it was a Porsche. It must’ve been an F-Model back then. I fell in love with the shape and took it home and said to my mother: ‘When I’m a grown up I will buy this car.’ She told me I would never be able to because it was a car from the West and we were not allowed them. But I didn’t understand that and told myself that someday I would have that car! And I kept the 911 in my mind forever.”

The road trips begin

When the wall came down, Ortrun was finally able to fulfil her promise. She bought the first of many 911 models and eventually joining her local Porsche Club, where she met Christian for the first time. And so began the road trips.

What is unusual, but admirable, about the Hartingers’ adventures is that they always take two cars. “From the very beginning, we have always driven together in two cars,” says Christian. “Starting in Germany and then around Europe. Both of us love to drive, and love to drive Porsche, so we always did our tours with two cars. There was never the option to go with just one.”

From the European mainland to the United States of America

Having explored much of the European mainland, meeting fellow enthusiasts wherever they went, the Hartingers were encouraged by a friend and fellow Porsche owner in Germany to attend the Porsche Club of America’s annual Porsche Parade in Palm Springs. “We both wanted to be a part of it and I thought we could simply rent a Porsche each there,” Christian says. “But Ortrun said we either do it with our own cars or not at all!”

So began the complex process of importing two cars for the purpose – in this instance two 911 GT3 RS models (997) – which were shipped to Florida in November 2020 ahead of an adventure that would cross the entire of the southern states, taking in such historic and scenic sights as Pikes Peak, Monument Valley and the Bonneville Salt Flats. Despite the arrival of the Covid pandemic, which resulted in the cars being put into storage for ten months and the Porsche Parade in Palm Springs being postponed, the couple managed to drive some 29,000 kilometres in their GT3 models, meeting members of America’s enthusiastic and welcoming Porsche community wherever they went.

A second road trip began in 2023, this time with a newly acquired Jade Green 911 Speedster (991) taking the place of one of the GT cars. The cars were shipped from Hamburg again, arriving in Florida in mid-June ahead of spirited dash to Palm Springs in California for the eagerly awaited PCA parade. The following few weeks would see the Hartingers return to Pikes Peak in Colorado before attending

Monterey Car Week and Rennsport Reunion 7 at Laguna Seca in California.

Flying home to Germany at irregular intervals for work – Christian is an architect and Ortrun a pharmacist – the couple extended this journey into 2024, returning to Florida in time for the 24 Hours of Daytona before their cars once again made the long journey back to Europe.

Rare 911 Turbo Targa in action

But there would be a third act for the Hartingers in the US, beginning towards the end of last year and featuring yet another very special car. Because some months earlier, the couple had bought a rare 911 Turbo Targa, and decided it should go to Porsche Classic for restoration.

It was in 2024 that Porsche unveiled the first car to be customised post-production through the Sonderwunsch programme – a Carrera GT that was treated to a mix of factory restoration, new vehicle production and Porsche Exclusive design. The Hartingers' Targa was put through the same programme, with a nut and bolt restoration that blended refurbished originals parts where possible with remanufactured items where necessary. The car was repainted in striking Amazon Green Metallic and upholstered with a unique Lemon Yellow interior.

"There were times when the people at Porsche Classic were saying, 'Oh, no Mrs Hartinger, think about it. Maybe it's too colourful', Christian laughs. "But in the end they said 'OK, let's do it!' And when we picked it up, everyone was saying 'Wow! It's a great colour!"

The odometer reset to zero, the Hartingers returned to the US in the summer of 2024. Joining the Targa was Ortrun's black 911 Turbo (997), offering the couple two very different, if equally compelling, cars with which to undertake another unforgettable road trip.

Their latest excursion has already taken in Luft 10 at Universal Studios in Los Angles, 000 Magazine's Turbo 50 event at the Summit Skywalker Ranch near San Francisco, Yosemite National Park and Death Valley. At every stop they have met and been welcomed by the country's vast community of Porsche enthusiasts.

"They have been more than welcoming," Ortrun says. "We have had invitations to stay with people we'd never met before. Some even offered to let us stay when they weren't at home, which was unbelievable. Everybody is so friendly and just happy to see the cars."

"The Porsche community in America feels like a family," Christian adds. "And this is the reason we didn't stop after one road trip. Or the second. And now we're on the third …"

At the time of writing, the Hartingers have racked up around 170,000 trouble-free kilometres on their US road trips, criss-crossing the continent, shortening the spaces between the country's many and varied groups of Porsche enthusiasts. When the odometer will stop moving is still anybody's guess.

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