

A fast quartet

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07/03/2020 The Heigo-Porsche disappeared for almost three decades before it reappeared in England. It was built 40 years ago for rally racing by Dieter Röscheisen. Three further models have been built up to the present day, set up by Walter Röhrl. A first meeting.

The childhood dream of Dieter Röscheisen shines in Petrol Blue Metallic and Grand Prix White – the Heigo-Porsche 911 SC. Built by him and a few friends in 1979. The automotive master technician, who started work at Porsche in 1976 as a mechanic in the running gear test department, competed in national and international rallies in 1980 together with Klaus Hesse from the town of Kitzingen in Lower Franconia "Unfortunately the season ate up so much money that I decided to sell the Heigo-Porsche at a World Championship celebration in Regensburg," says Röscheisen, who was in his mid-twenties at the time. Walter Röhrl introduced him to the interested buyer from England.

Almost 30 years later: Röscheisen's telephone rang in November 2009. Stephen "Steve" Davies from the Midlands town of Stoke-on-Trent in England was on the other end. The tax consultant had recently

purchased a car in Sheffield. “I discovered it in a back-street garage, covered in rags,” recounts the now 69-year-old, who travelled almost 1,800 kilometres to Straubing in Lower Bavaria for the first meeting of the four Heigo-Porsche cars. 30 hours for a short joint outing. When Davies acquired the Porsche 911 SC, it was painted in Rothmans colours. “The patina of the Porsche was workshop dirt,” says the Briton and laughs. He took part in a number of events and rallies before he was asked one day in a workshop if he knew about the colour under the Rothmans livery. No. With a few paint samples, he then searched in the archives for matching vehicles. He found a match for a Porsche that had once been driven by Röhrl. He therefore rang the Bavarian, who he had known for a long time from the rally scene. Röhrl remembered Röscheisen’s Heigo-Porsche and gave Davies the phone number of his friend.

“I couldn't believe it at first that this vehicle still existed. I thought that it had been scrapped long ago,” says Röscheisen ten years after the call. Any lingering doubts were eliminated when Davies compared the holes of the former roll cage with those on Röscheisen’s old photos. “The weld seams on the window frame were unique. In 1979, we built everything on this Heigo-Porsche specifically for rallying so that jumps would not lead to excessive torsion,” explains Röscheisen. The idea for the colour combination came from Ginger Ostle, who worked in the Porsche design studio at the time: “Ginger positioned the car under a lamp, and matched the colours Petrol and White exactly to the projected shadow,” he says and follows this with an anecdote. “During a rally in Marktredwitz it was snowing heavily while I walked through the parc fermé to take a look at the vehicles. The snow line on my car exactly matched the white part of the paintwork, an unbelievably harmonious sight.”

Steve Davies decided to restore the vehicle to its original condition based on the creator’s photos. The Porsche that was lost for almost 30 years was presented in 2010 at the International Historic Motorsport Show “Race Retro” in Stoneleigh Park in Coventry, just under 30 kilometres south-east of Birmingham. “Steve told me on the phone to pack my racing clothes, and that we would drive a special stage together. That was a very emotional moment for me, because I thought that I would never see my car again,” says Röscheisen.

Details of the Heigo-Porsche 911 SC RS Evo III

Back in Germany, he visited his friend Rafael Diez, owner of a restoration workshop. There he saw a white G-model and asked Diez what he was planning to do with it. “Nothing up to now, it has been on the lifting platform for two years,” said the 51-year-old automotive master technician. What now followed was inevitable: together they developed the idea of a second Heigo-Porsche. The goal of the two men and the earlier sponsor Helmut Heilmann, Managing Director of Heigo Autotechnik, was to make the car more beautiful and better than the original ever was. This was an ambitious goal. One and a half years later, the project Heigo-Porsche II was as good as complete and only the set-up drives still had to be performed. These were done by Dieter Röscheisen and his friend Walter Röhrl, who would later also drive the vehicle in various classic rallies and events.

A jump in time. Seven years before, Röscheisen handed out a number of model cars of his originally built Heigo-Porsche. “When Dieter gave me the model car in 2005, it was clear to me that I also wanted to

have a Porsche like this one day. Extremely sporty and fun," says Klaus-Jürgen Orth, then owner of a telecommunications company in Frankfurt am Main. His business partner Udo Müller shared this wish. At the start of 2013, the two therefore officially gave Diez the order to build two Heigo-Porsche 911 SC RS Evo III for them. Licensed and set up by Röscheisen and Röhrl, the double rally world champion. The Evo III has a 3.4-litre engine and, with an output of 340 PS, delivers a whole 62 PS more than the original from 1979, which transferred 278 PS to the road thanks to mechanical injection instead of K-Jetronic. "The ducktail engine compartment lid and the Turbo extensions corresponded to the homologation for Group 4," remembers Röscheisen, who built up the then one-year-old G-model with 3.0-litre engine.

"Rafael, Dieter and I did a lot of development work, experimented with springs and dampers, and moved forward slowly," explains Röhrl, who has already driven the Heigo-Porsche replica as a lead car in the Lower Bavarian Rally, a race that is part of the German Championship. "We got a good comparison there with current rally cars. The car was really good right from the start. Without any frills. When you are sitting in it, you are the one who does everything. And then it either drives perfectly – or not," he continues. In his case, it of course handled perfectly. "The art of driving is to approach a 90-degree bend and to control the throttle precisely and sensitively so that you can drift through the bend is clean and controlled way," says Röhrl, who then demonstrates this skill in a closed-off part of a private forest owned by a good friend. The three other Heigo-Porsche owners look on in awe.

"When I drive, I am at one with myself," says Udo Müller. "The car gives me so much, driving it at the limits is just a fantastic experience," adds Klaus-Jürgen Orth while he watches the rally legend drifting. 40 years after the first idea. The childhood dream of Dieter Röscheisen that had not been scrapped performing a perfect drift. And so things come full circle: Literally.

Info

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