

Immersion Therapy

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Some folks have it bad. The "Car Bug". I do and I freely admit it. I am hooked on the adrenaline rush offered by driving a well-engineered car that offers a visceral driving experience.

In the spring of 2010 Porsche announced a car, the GT2RS that was met with mixed responses. The previous iteration, the GT2 with no RS suffix, was a heck of a car but misunderstood as reflected in resale prices tumbling in jaw-dropping fashion on pre-owned cars. Fish nor fowl, the car could not be neatly pigeonholed as to exactly what its reason for being was. Porsche fixed the problem by adding an RS to the model designation and some Motorsport derived engineering to the car. The mixed breed became a thoroughbred. I found myself very interested in "The Beast " and in May 2010 I placed my deposit with the dealer I had bought other Porsche's from previously.





Porsche had some other interesting twists up its sleeve as well- In the US all GT2RS's (about 130 cars out of 500 total numbered production worldwide) were to be ordered during a several week long period in late August/early September. Dealers were to presell all cars destined for US delivery and obtain signed buyers orders. A prospective buyer had better decide early and decisively they want to buy one of these!



Time passed and buyers were advised of the opportunity to experience a "group delivery event" at either an east or west coast location. To do so would allow taking possession, if desired, weeks ahead of the official release date of the car if delivered by the dealer.

While such an experience was



In December I learned the event was to be held at a decommissioned Marine base, El Toro Field, located near Irvine CA. We would have the opportunity to drive a variety of Porsche cars as well as our own GT2RS. Porsche Sport Driving School instructors would be there as well as Product Designers and



In January Porsche released more information and I learned we would be hosted at the St Regis in Dana Point CA. A very comfortable and luxurious facility! As well our event date was disclosed as Feb 4th and 5th. But, I was having second thoughts! There was some confusion in my mind as to exactly what changes had been made to the car vs. the GT3RS and the GT2? Having ordered the car without seeing it in person and without all the technical details I was having doubts that the car may not be as special as Porsche would like us to believe, and that this may be just marketing-led, yet another version of the 911, a "part-bin exercise" if you will. I was not alone as Internet boards were anxious to hear more of the engineering details of the car and no one had clear definitive answers. I wrote to my dealer seeking clarification and a few weeks later received a reply from Germany, assuring me that the cars engineering details were unique and specifically identified many of

changes. The reply went a long way toward assuaging my concerns however I was still a little bit apprehensive about my early commitment.

As time passed with increasing excitement of the delivery date approaching and the anticipation, I was getting more nervous by the day. With less than a week before delivery date, there were indications that my car actually hadn't left Germany with all the others destined for US! However, thanks to the power of the internet and Porsche enthusiasts everywhere, a photo appeared on the message boards of two GT2 RS vehicles flown over by plane waiting at the airport for customs inspection, and I knew from a dealer email received the day before that the red one was mine! Porsche was going out of their way to ensure the owners of these special vehicles have the experience of their lives. I was able to have a sneak-peek of my car as it was flown in to LAX in order to meet the delivery event schedule.



On Feb 1 detailed information was released of what would be occurring at the Driving Experience event. Very exciting! On Feb 4 my wife and I drove to our local airport only to find that due to severe east coast winter storms our flight into Orange County airport was not possible! Some quick scrambling and soon we were re-booked into LAX instead. We would arrive in time make the evening reception.

Arriving at the St Regis we were totally wowed the beauty of the property. I picked up our Porsche welcome bag, which contained goodies including a FLIP video camera from the event check-in ladies. We freshened up and headed down to the reception. After picking up drinks at the bar I immediately walked over to introduce myself to the one man who is easy to recognize: Mr. Andreas Preuninger, "Project Manager High Performance Cars".



by

As an active participant in various car forums I was looking forward to exchanging information with Andreas about various issues. I felt compelled to use the opportunity to give voice on behalf of many Porsche owning friends, acquaintances and track mates. Mr.



Preuninger and I had the opportunity to spend the entirety of the cocktail reception talking and we were seated together at dinner as well, so there were many hours of conversation. It was a highlight of my Porsche ownership to have this one-to-one experience. My fear of finding Andreas to be a Public Relations hack was replaced by a respect founded on the facts that he is an engineer by training and an undeniable high performance super-enthusiast! As we

talked about the GT2 RS and Porsche, it became very clear how passionate he is about making the Porsche GT cars (GT2/GT3) the highest performing vehicles they produce for the street and track.

The following day, we boarded buses for transport to the El Toro Field and were ushered into an enclosed (event tent) presentation area with seating and a silver GT2RS placed front and center. After milling about for a few minutes we seated ourselves and the Event was on! After some introductory words Mr. Preuninger was introduced and he began an intricate and detailed presentation on the engineering and development of the GT2RS, which lasted about 90 minutes! Towards the end I was a bit aggravated by the background sound of what I thought was an idling freight train nearby.

After some closing words, we were led outside to see two huge Porsche banners attached to two sections of rolling fence, which were then slowly rolled apart from the middle.

Revealing seventeen idling GT2RS's! Oh's, ah's and camera clicks were followed by an exhortation from someone to "go find your car!" Which we all did, some of us in a state of partial shock from the spectacle of it all! The cars had the owners name on the driver side windows in small vinyl lettering which was a nice touch and allowed us to know who's car was who's.

Everyone located their car quickly and

there was various poking about, examination of interiors and exteriors, and some revving of engines. It was also a unique opportunity to see a wide variety of option and color combinations live, in-the-flesh which was also a lot of fun.

As I started examining my car, the details of the exterior, interior and engine were exactly what I was hoping for; the usual 911 silhouette dressed in carbon fiber, the wide body commanding the road even when standing still... I opened the front trunk

just to complete my tour of the car, and invited Andreas to write a personal note on the inside of the lid. I suggested some of the verbiage and we all laughed as he penned the words.

Cars were turned off and we were split into three

groups to continue with the event. One group being sent to enjoy an Autocross set up by PSDS instructors in a Boxster Spyder and Carerras, another group enjoyed Acceleration/Braking exercises and slalom in Carerras, and the third group to have their GT2RS features explained by a German delivery specialist.



We broke for lunch and the entire group then was able to drive track sessions in Turbos, experiencing PDK Launch Control starts as often as we liked. This was also the chance to first drive the track area where later we were to have our first GT2RS drives in our own cars. It might seem to be torture to have our own cars parked next to us but not be able to drive them but it was huge fun to experience the various driving exercises with the ever professional and always awesome Porsche Sport Driving School instructors in the passenger seats.

About mid-afternoon we were joined by a PSDS instructor in our own GT2RS and allowed to drive the track as we wished. Well, as long as we adhered to a strictly enforced 100mph speed limit! Other than that we could accelerate, brake and corner as vigorously (or not) as we cared to. As an owner of a 2010 GT3RS, I did not have very high expectations of great differences in handling. Boy was I wrong. The GT2RS is truly race-borne and -bred, it handles like a track scalpel. Power delivery is linear and once the turbos spool up, it pulls like a freight train.

Porsche also broke out their silver GT2RS car in which we were welcomed to ride with a PSDS instructor as he did "hot laps". No speed limits this time and I saw 165+mph before we had to brake for the corners! Huge fun, and the car was just solid as a

rock at speed.

Owners got their fill of driving their own cars and riding in the PCNA GT2RS and as things wound down a bit we were perked by the raucous exhaust of a Porsche Cup car pulling into the "pit" area piloted by none other than Hurley Haywood.



Cass Whitehead, Lead Instructor at the PSDS got our attention and announced that a Cup car driving course would soon be offered at PSDS and this was their first car and whoever wanted to could hop in the passenger seat and ride for a lap!

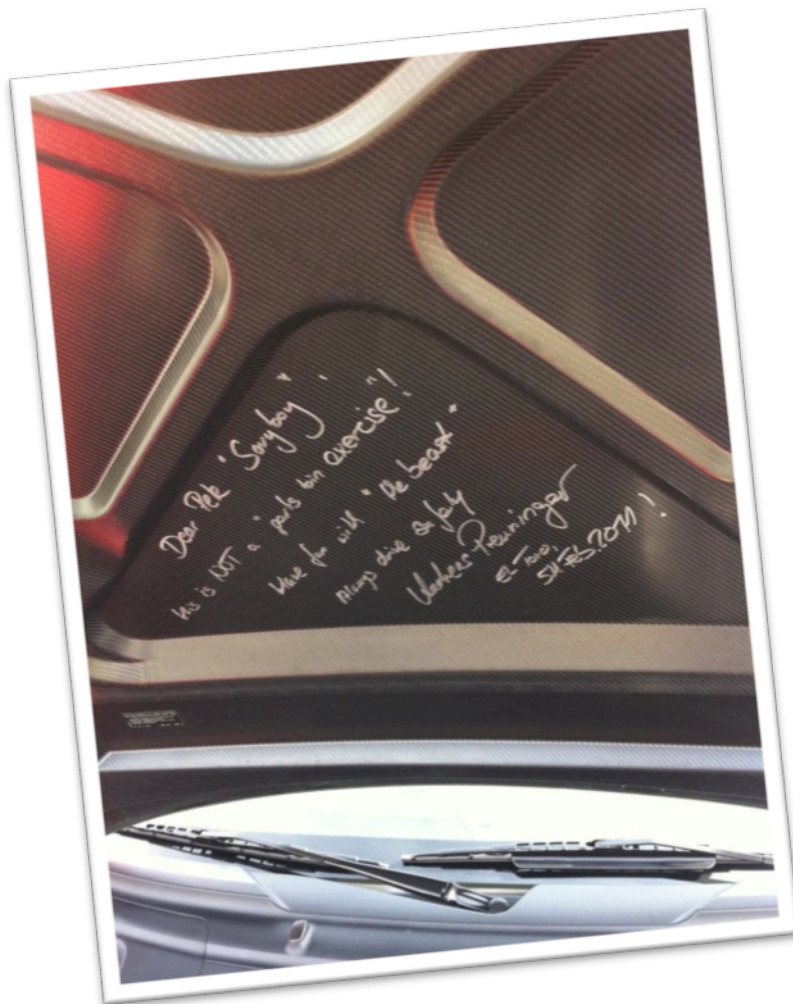
Needless to say the line was long and most everyone wanted to buckle up in the harnesses and give it a go. A loud, gut stirring thrill ride is a good way to describe the experience.

With the day winding down and everyone suffering from adrenaline, endorphin and dopamine overload, cars were processed onto car carriers for the ride to their final destinations and a brave/lucky few of us attached temp tags to the big butts and headed back to the St Regis for a cocktail reception. A fellow owner and myself drove back to the hotel together and it was very cool to be dicing back and forth with our new toys in the local traffic.

That night's cocktail reception was filled with lots of happy faces and people learning a bit more about their fellow attendees. Andreas was kind enough to accept an invitation to join my wife, another buyer and his wife and my delivering dealer Sales Manager Chris Sanner for dinner at the hotel's fine Michael Mina restaurant where we enjoyed many more hours of "Gasoline Talk".

Sunday morning arrived early and my wife and I loaded the new car with our bags for the 500+ mile drive home. Mother Nature smiled on us, and the weather, especially for this time of year, was perfect for our journey; sunny, clear and mild. Some might wonder if a 10-hour trip in Sport Buckets is a wise idea. Not to fear, they are quite comfortable even on long trips. The combination of the perfect weather, my beautiful wife sitting next to me in my dream vehicle signed by one of the most respected engineers at Porsche is an experience I will never forget; it was truly a "once in a life time" experience.

Arriving home, I remained on a very enjoyable "high" from the entire experience. Porsche made a first-class effort and they succeeded in wowing me and I confidently say, the rest of the attendees as well. The dessert sucre' was the lovely Guards Red GT2RS now parked in my garage awaiting many happy days of flogging on the track and on the road. Well done Porsche, well done!



For more of Pete's photographs, please visit his album at <http://www.gt2gt3cup.org/album.php?albumid=7>