



It is an incomparable experience, rhapsodizes the Porsche owner, when one acquires one's first Porsche and that original euphoria is still fresh; when the 911 fan who has just entered adulthood empties his savings account to buy an inexpensive, used entry model that promises—with respect to mileage and condition—a carefree life. When, after numerous viewings and test drives, the picture clears and one knows which 911 it will be, the trip to the bank becomes an unforgettable experience with weak knees, trembling hands, and a shaky voice. The older lady at the bank counter inquires if everything is okay. And as it is more than okay, the young man answers: yes, super. With the money in the old satchel, which also served as a faithful companion during his student days, the young man looks forward excitedly to the evening appointment when the disappointingly thin paper envelope with—lets say—20,000 deutsche marks will be exchanged for a white Porsche 911 with 165 hp, build year 1977. The sales contract is signed, the vehicle registration documents exchanged, and then the keys, too. A brief handshake and then the young man—who has the feeling that his entire childhood and youth has been leading up to this moment—walks to the white 911, unmistakable among the miscellaneous selection of parked cars. He opens the door and sits down. He is nauseous, he beams, he can't believe it. It feels like a miracle; he is frightened of waking up to discover it was only a dream. He sticks the key into the ignition to the left. He summons all his strength and turns it. The six-cylinder boxer springs to life with a roar, the engine howling with every downward thrust on the gas pedal. This is now yours! The 911. The car is put into first gear, carefully maneuvered out of the parking space, and then, all too quickly, the most beautiful hundred meters in a car are over.

The first time is a never to be repeated experience. Driving is still wonderful, but never as earth shaking as the first time. This sounds pathetic, and it is. Porsche fans divide their friends into two categories, those who can understand such an absurd feeling for an expensive heap of steel and technology, and the rest, to whom they conceal their love for a sports car under a mantle of self-irony and detachment. These fans would never betray their 911, as long as it still triggers these feelings—which are experienced all the more intensely when it comes to looking for a new model.

This reactivates the primordial longing and memory of that first quest—without completely recapturing its excitement. With every further 911, the process becomes more rational and routine, although the falling in love moment remains, not least because a Porsche, even as a used sports car, is an expensive pleasure. The genuinely rich can't really appreciate that sense of happiness experienced when a Porsche, purchased with hard-earned savings, becomes the fulfillment of a larger-than-life dream. For the parvenu, the social climber, and the ambitious the Porsche is a symbol of having arrived in that world, which since his earliest

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« The moment where the love affair with Porsche begins. In this case, the object of desire is a 912 1.6 coupe from 1965.

childhood, he has naively imagined to be a happy and beautiful place. One which, in contrast to the barren world of his parents, is about fun, happiness, and the audacity of transgression—not the ambition that deforms people's characters in the process of assimilation, as opposed to setting them free.

The first time is unique. However, if one really looks inside oneself, every time is a different first time. For over 40 years Udo Lindenberg has succeeded in conserving the Eros of the maiden voyage. "Every time you climb in it as if it was the first time, like on stage. And each time you lift off, like under the concert spotlights. A pleasure, a kick, which from the very first encounter is a new, unique experience each time." According to the popular wisdom of the Porsche driver, a Ferrari is a lover, but a 911 is like a wife. The idea of eternal fidelity, engendered by the 911's long production runs, also promotes ideas of monogamy among its users. In 2013 the 911 also celebrated a type of golden wedding anniversary with its most seasoned customers. The erotic fantasy that the first time—though it is not possible to recapture its virginal excitement—can be kept alive by magical means over years and decades, lends an aspect of the product's solidity to this loyalty built on enthusiasm. In the fast paced modern age with its lack of commitment, as signaled by the "anything goes" mentality, the vow of fidelity as a consequence of a fulfilled first time is the exception as opposed to the rule. Thus all additional journeys remain emotionally coupled to the excitement of that first event. Formulated a little more narcissistically, remaining faithful to the 911 throughout the continuum from love at first sight to shared happiness in old age also requires a high degree of self-fidelity. The 911 as the image of its owner combines the permanence of the object and its seductive power with the permanence of the erotic imperative and the desire to be seduced. That is why this book remains an incomprehensible labor of love for some less horsepower obsessed readers. It is the cultural history of a romance.