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BOXSTER

987 vs. 981 **MATCH**

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FABULOUS FIFTIES

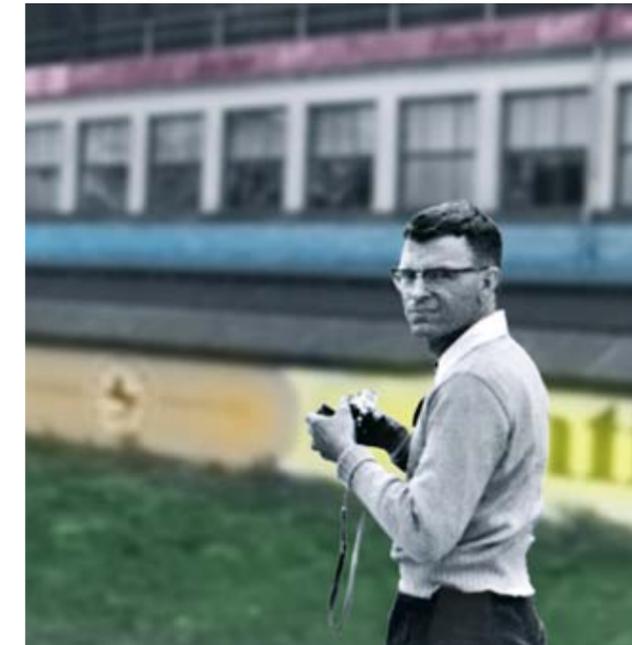
Original Photos by Don Janssen, edited by Sean Cridland
 Story by Sean Cridland

Technical details aside, any photographer will admit that capturing a great photo mostly comes from showing up and standing in the right place at the right time. As a Porsche enthusiast, American Don Janssen was one of those rare individuals who just happened to be in Europe for most of the 1950s as the Porsche legend unfolded. While working for the Army Corps of Engineers on post-WWII reconstruction, Janssen took an interest in sports cars, especially Porsches. He owned seven of them while living in Germany from 1952 to 1958, all purchased from the factory. Almost every weekend was spent either touring, rallying, or attending the great races of the era at Nurburgring, Norisring, Avus, Monza, Spa, Reims, Le Mans, and more; always ready with his camera.

Don Janssen passed away in early 2011, still a proud Porsche owner. He owned eighteen of them during his life, many 356s, several 911s of various vintages and types, a couple of 914s and a Boxster. At his

Continued on page

Right: Don Janssen at Nurburgring. **Below:** Ferry Porsche and Huschke von Hanstein greet a Treffen Rally participant in Meran.



FEATURES

- 07 THE NEW 911GT3**
Porsche has unveiled the new 2014 911GT3 with PDK.
- 14 THE PORSCHE 911 50TH ANNIVERSARY**
For five decades, the 911 has been the heart of the Porsche brand.
- 23 BOXSTER MATCH IS THE NEW BOXSTER REALLY THAT GOOD?**
We put the new Boxster against the previous generation to answer this question.
- 33 THE FABULOUS FIFTIES**
Take an artistic journey through the fabulous fifties with original photos by Don Janssen and edited by Sean Cridland.
- 43 TOP 10 BARGAIN PORSCHEs**
9 Magazine has compiled a top 10 list of the best Porsche bargains for enthusiasts.
- 54 GET READY FOR SPRING**
Spring is here, we provide some tips to prep your Porsche for the driving season.

REGULARS

- 07 NEWS**
- 13 EXHAUST NOTES**
- 18 HOT PRODUCTS**
- 57 OVERDRIVE**
- 58 LIFESTYLE**

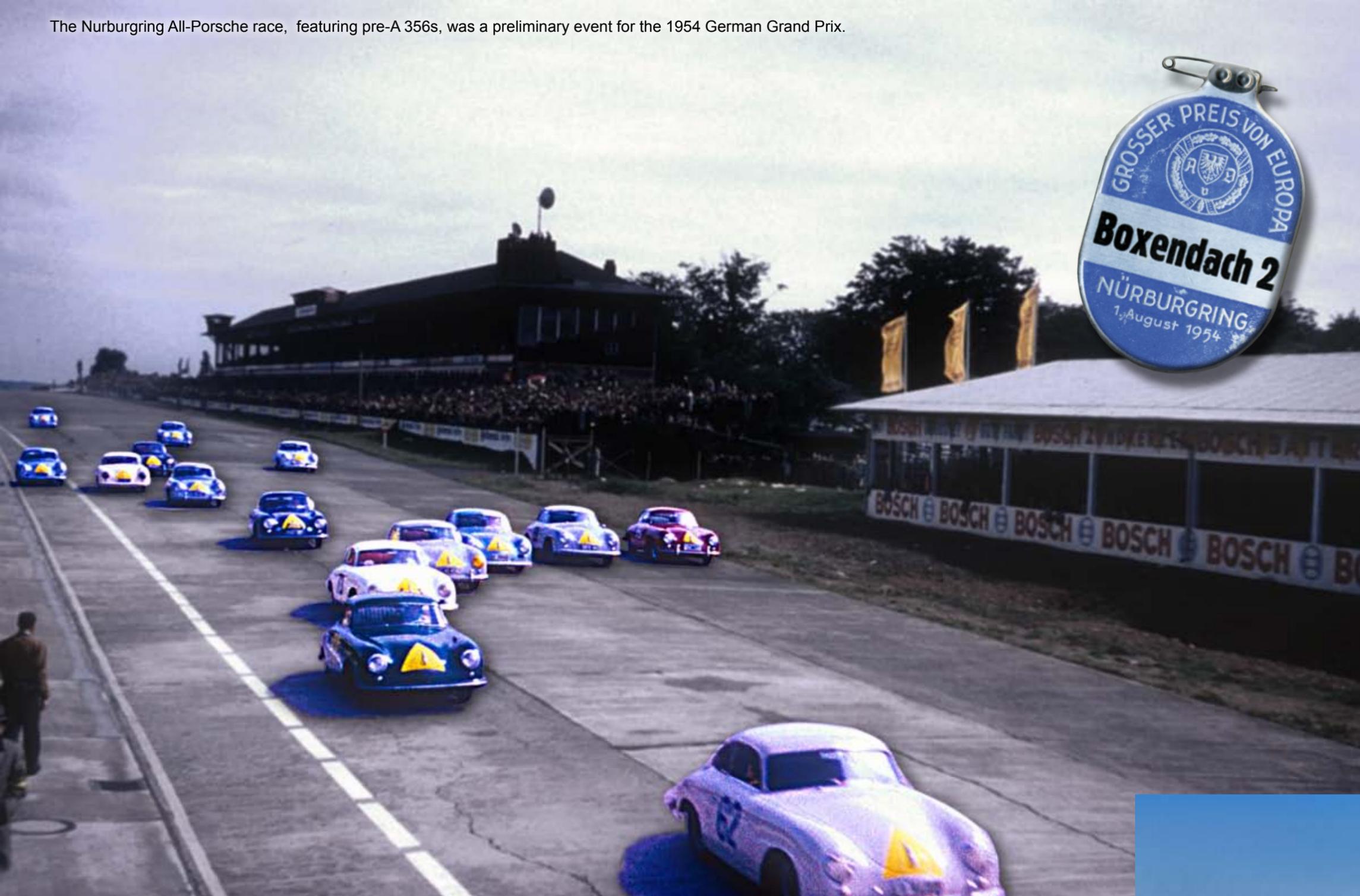
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Above: Just as American newspapers highlight the significance of ball-sports, European papers of the 1950s featured front-page coverage of all the major motor-sports events. Below: The Mille Miglia started the cars individually. With the slower cars going first, that meant starting before dawn. Here the Porsche 356 Super 1300 driven by Fernando Wissel and M. Valsecchi takes the limelight before a tough day. It would finish 71st out of 182 still running. 365 started the event. Right: A Parade of Porsches through the streets of Meran, Italy during the 1957 Treffen Rally, led by a late pre-A.



The Nurburgring All-Porsche race, featuring pre-A 356s, was a preliminary event for the 1954 German Grand Prix.



passing, his two cars were a 40th Anniversary Ferry Porsche edition and a 2006 Club Coupe. Though he lived a bachelor's life -- in sparsely decorated, neatly maintained quarters -- his memorabilia from his many great adventures was always meticulously cared for and prominently displayed.

Try to imagine: buying a Porsche included a probable discussion with Ferry Porsche and Huschke von Hanstein; attending races you were likely to be watching Moss, Ascari, Fangio, Brooks, Collins, Hermann, and von Trips and maybe mingling with them before and after the event; rallies toured through and over the Rhineland, the forests of the Ardennes, and into the Alps; and social events -- though modest by today's standards -- were splashed with the kind of glamour only found in post-war Europe when people felt the obligation to live life at its fullest and most vibrant.

In early 2006, Janssen allowed me to scan his photos, slides, and memorabilia from that era. Upon his death, the collection passed into the hands of his nephews who have granted me permission to share them for this article. While all the photos are well composed, time has taken its toll on the clarity and resolution of the images. Therefore, for this feature, I chose to digitally alter many of them to draw out the action or to bring various personalities or events to the foreground. As I worked on each photo and started researching its contents, my amazement and respect for Mr. Janssen's participation and omnipresence during the dawn of Porsche culture increased dramatically. The images you see here are only those that are Porsche-themed and do not include many of the other great cars, drivers and personalities he knew and recorded during his travels. Most of us can only dream about how much fun it must have been to bask in the glow of all that history. It was, after all, the fabulous fifties.



Two of Janssen's favorite Porsches, a 356A Coupé and a 356A Speedster, parked outside of his apartment.



A couple snags the bikini during one of the gymkhanas.

A rally participant driving a T1 356A Carrera awaits his start in the German countryside.



One of several Porsches Janssen owned during his European years.



Richard von Frankenberg, driving his 550 RS in the Nurburgring Eifelrennen, in late May, 1955.



Though few people owned cars in post-WWII Europe, the Porsche enthusiasts were always ready to gather for a tour or a rally.



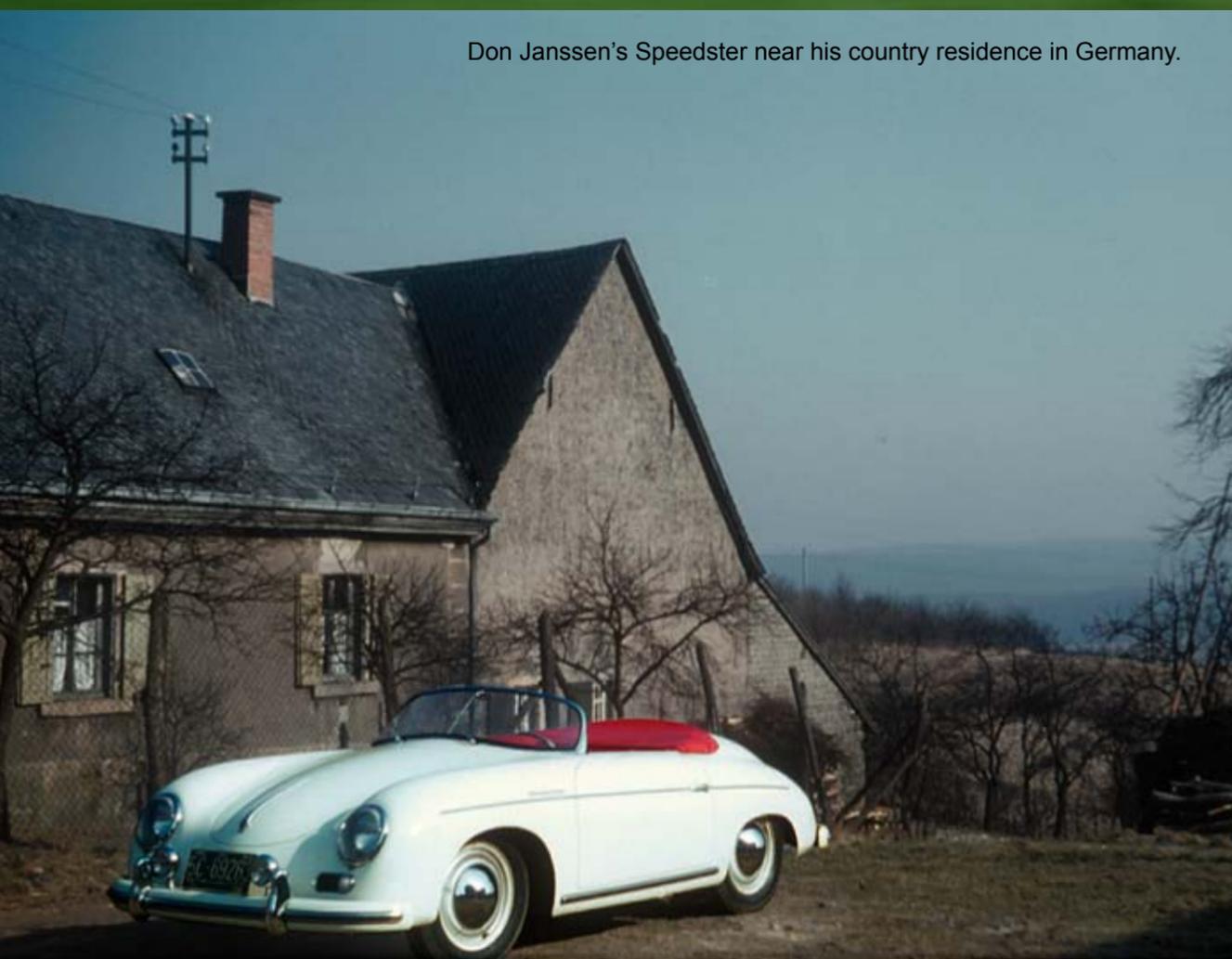
Edgar Barth was paired with Umberto Maglioli in a Porsche Spyder at Nurburgring 1957.



The start of a foggy club race at Nurburgring.



Don Janssen's Speedster near his country residence in Germany.



Legendary Belgian rallyist Gilberte Thirion and her frequent co-driver Ingeborg Polenski park their car near some admiring school-girls.

