

Dream on wheels



Owner of financial management firm heads Porsche 356 owners group

By Will Richards
Photos by Jim Carchidi

As a high school student, Mike Davis dreamed of owning a Porsche. While his Pompano Beach High School classmates would show off their AMCs and Plymouths in the parking lot, Davis would run a few blocks away to gawk at the cars on a nearby Porsche dealer's lot.

Although a Porsche 911 is a bit out of a reach for a teenager working after school at Winn-Dixie, Davis could still dream and admire the design of the German automobile.

The founder and chief executive officer of Resource Consulting Group — a 22-year-old financial management company with \$800 million in assets now under management — would buy a Volkswagen off that lot, but the dream would stay unfulfilled for 32 years until Davis bought a red 1990 Porsche 911 in 2002. Two years later, Davis drove his prized possession at Daytona International Speedway at the Rennsport Reunion II, a celebration of the racing history of

Porsche. The event coincided with the 40th anniversary of the Porsche 911 and included models from 1964-2004. The Daytona chapter of the Porsche Club of America asked Davis to drive his 911 as the 1990 representative.

It was while at the racetrack that Davis found his true car love: a Porsche 356, the original model viewed as a pure race car and the vehicle of choice of James Dean and Janis Joplin.

Although Davis would join the 356 Registry, a 36-year-old Stillwater, Minn.-based nonprofit for Porsche 356 admirers, it would still be another two years before he mounted his search for his own Porsche first production model. He scoured the Internet, but the cars he found required spending more money on restoration than the car was worth.



Of the 78,000 Porsche 356s made from 1948-1965, about 60 percent are still around in some condition, according to Registry 356. The cars can run from \$5,000 for a model that will be used mostly for parts to \$250,000 for a Porsche 356 Speedster, with a four-cam Carrera engine.

Davis' search turned up a car in Huntsville, Ala., that was listed on the 356 Registry's Web site. He hired Dennis Frick, a Pennsylvania-based car restoration expert considered one of the top Porsche restorers, to check on his find. Frick's 100-point inspection concluded that the car was in good condition. Trusting that analysis and Frick's restoration skills, Davis bought the car without ever seeing it and had it transported to Pennsylvania to update an earlier car restoration.

When completed, Davis and his wife, Terry, picked up the car and took it on a 500-mile test run through the hills of Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Davis now has two 356s in his car collection: the 1965 ruby red Cabriolet he purchased in Alabama and a 1964 356 SC Sunroof Coupe originally owned by German crooner Peter Alexander.

The two cars have won 14 car pageant awards.

Davis' interest in Porsches doesn't end with his own cars, however. He often embarks on pilgrimages to museums, car collections and drives, and in January

was elected president of the 356 Florida Owners Group, a branch of the national group. The Florida group has 230 members who get together to visit car festivals, museums and other events appealing to car enthusiasts.

Delving into the nitty-gritty details of his clients' portfolios is the same quality he carries over to his Porsche 356s. Davis said it's fun to take the same approach in perfecting the details of his 356s, and he has even hunted for 1960's decals for his oil canister.

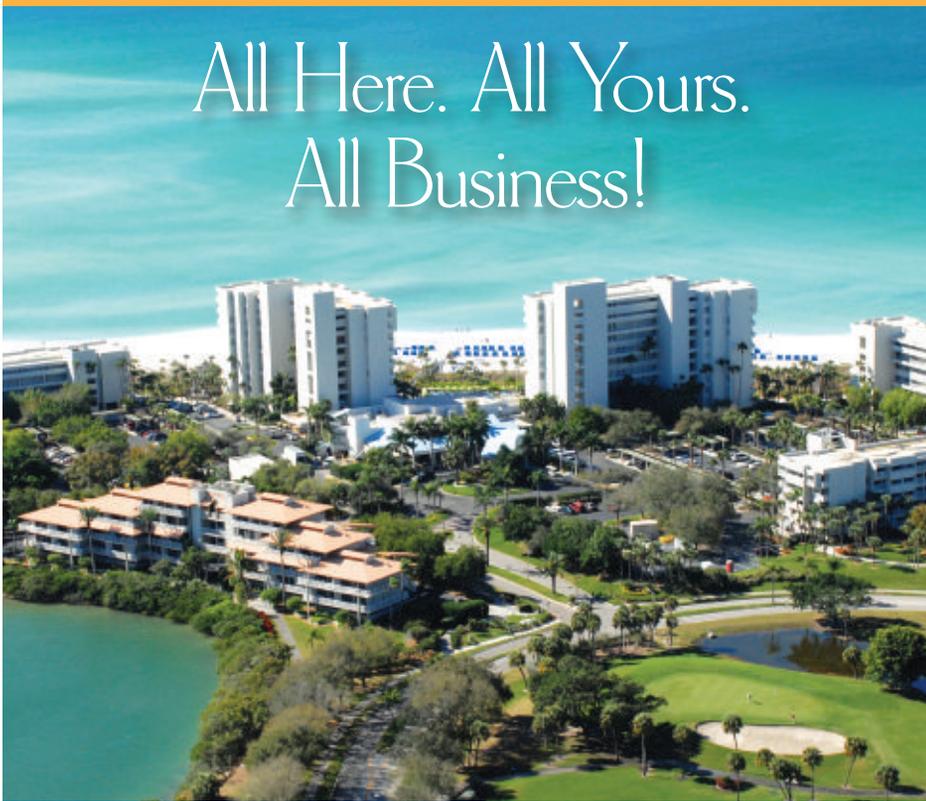
Davis' goals during his two-year term as president of members include scheduling more activities to bring the group together across the state. This year, the group will travel to the Florida Crown Region 50th anniversary road rally in Jacksonville and appear in the 8th annual Winter Park Concours d'Elegance exotic car show, set for Nov. 6-7.

As for whether he'll add another Porsche to his collection, Davis said he's content to drive the cars he has. After all, he said, when you've finally found your dream car, why would you want more?

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