



# Porsche Club

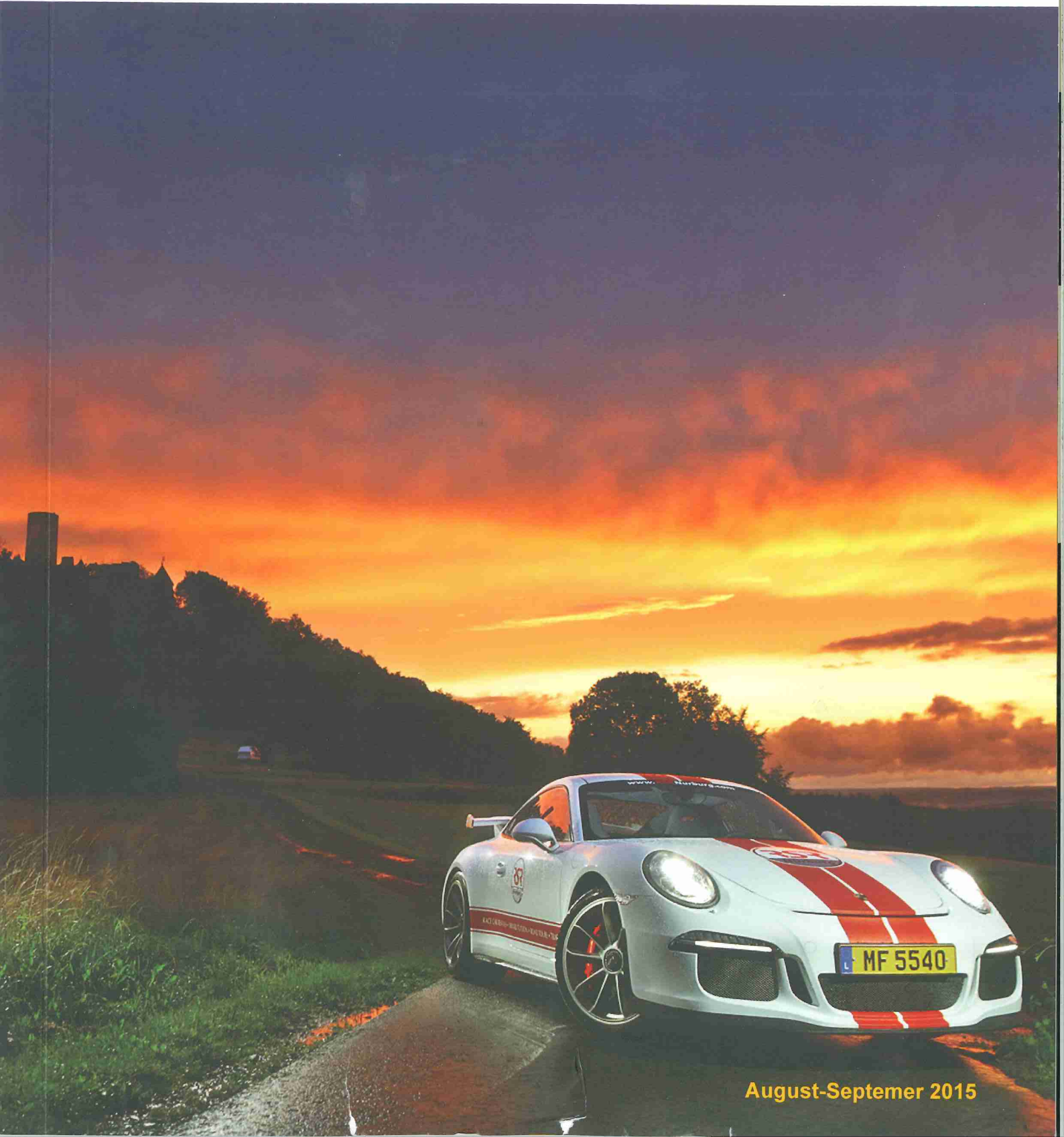
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## PORSCHE NEWS

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# The lure of the ring - Part 2

Article By Rob Thomson exclusive for Porsche Club Qld



If you have read part 1 you are now probably wondering how much it costs to visit the Nurburgring and how I came to find it and race there. First of all there are the flights, you can easily justify this as a holiday to the better half, after all to experience the Nurburgring you can do it in a day, depending on how that goes it may become an obsession which is what happened to me. Later in the article I will give a brief run-down of the costs, first I have to explain some more about this epic place and how I found it.

I found out about this mysterious place about 10 years ago, a racing friend sent me a video of a guy called Hans-Joachim Stuck, a legend of the Nurburgring and Le Mans winner. The video was a lap of the track, he suggested on my upcoming trip that I check out the track and I decided I would. I took my 2 year old son and then wife there, got lost getting there, hired a Porsche 997 Carrera S and did 3 laps without a clue of what I was doing on a tourist day.

I sort of knew I shouldn't take the hire car there

but because the agreement was in German I trusted my track driving skills and the Porsche driver I was following. Let's just say it worked out ok and I don't recommend this!

After 3 laps I had the buzz that you only get from something extraordinary, something that makes you feel alive and knowing you are mortal, the people that know how to drive this track are the locals, some of them are crazy and talented. From that day forward I knew I had to come back and race the track.

I would guess that I am driving the track still about 95% of what I would on any other track, that is simple common sense and a lack of track time. But when I say lack of track time it doesn't really make sense until you drive the track and that each lap is over 22km's.

Over the 10 years I estimate I have done about 550 laps as a driver and about 200 as a passenger giving tuition. That's over 100 hours on track, the most I have spent on any track including Bathurst. Sabine Schmitz has

done well over 30,000 laps. She's a pretty good driver and very obliging (ask Jason Herman from Porsche Centre Brisbane, he's still proud she slapped him on the butt before posing for a selfie). When I first met her it was a blur, not from the speed but the schnapps and beer we consumed 2 days before 1<sup>st</sup> practice. It was my first 24 hour race and I was telling her I was well prepared with 100 laps, she promptly laughed and jokingly warned me I might still die. Not to be phased I am still glad the crap car we had that 1<sup>st</sup> year crashed without me in it, it was the first time I was scared to drive a race car.

This place takes a lifetime to learn. The best way to be competent is to use the services of a company that knows the place, for me that is RSR Nurburg. Owned and operated by Ron Simons and his experienced team you can hire a well sorted and track prepared car from a Renault Twingo to a McLaren or GT3 RS.

1 lap in a Clio will cost just 99 Euro, 4 laps in a Cayman S is 1099 Euro and the GT3 Porsche is 2499 Euro. It can sound expensive but as a



race car driver it's great value, these cars are subject to track driving and to ensure safety they are well maintained. It's a lot cheaper than taking your own car over.

There are lots of other packages, local road tours, First timer packages, tuition, track days, the list goes on. There's also the added attraction of Spa Francorchamps being only an hour or so away, one of my top 3 circuits in the world.

Ron Simons is a great friend and he pointed me in the right direction to race there, not only have I enjoyed racing there but I have many friends that work there and race there from all over the world, it is like a brotherhood. It's also a beautiful part of Europe so when we are not on track there is a lot of fine culture to soak up with the octane smell lingering. The local driver pubs, authentic German food and wine is abundant, it's now like a second home for me.

After 10 years of learning the place will bring the ultimate experience in 2016 for any car

lover and especially Porsche lovers. A bespoke trip experiencing the culture, myth and cars around Nurburgring and Spa will be organised for a strictly limited few. It's still in the concept stage but I can confirm that the experience will include the Cayman S, GTS, GT4, 991 GT3 and GT3 RS at both Spa and Nurburgring, hot laps and racing. Porsche News will feature the event as soon as it's finalised in the coming months, put September 2016 in the diary with a big happy face, this is one experience that you won't want to miss out on.

I hope with these articles I have Lured you to experience the Nurburgring or if you have been there before you have reflected the same as I do each time the place pops up in my Facebook news feed, jealous of my friends that are there while I am here working for the next escape from reality.

It's not a place, it's really a place for therapy, that's my justification and I am sticking to it!

Rob Thomson.

