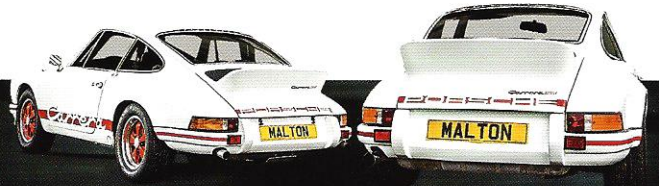


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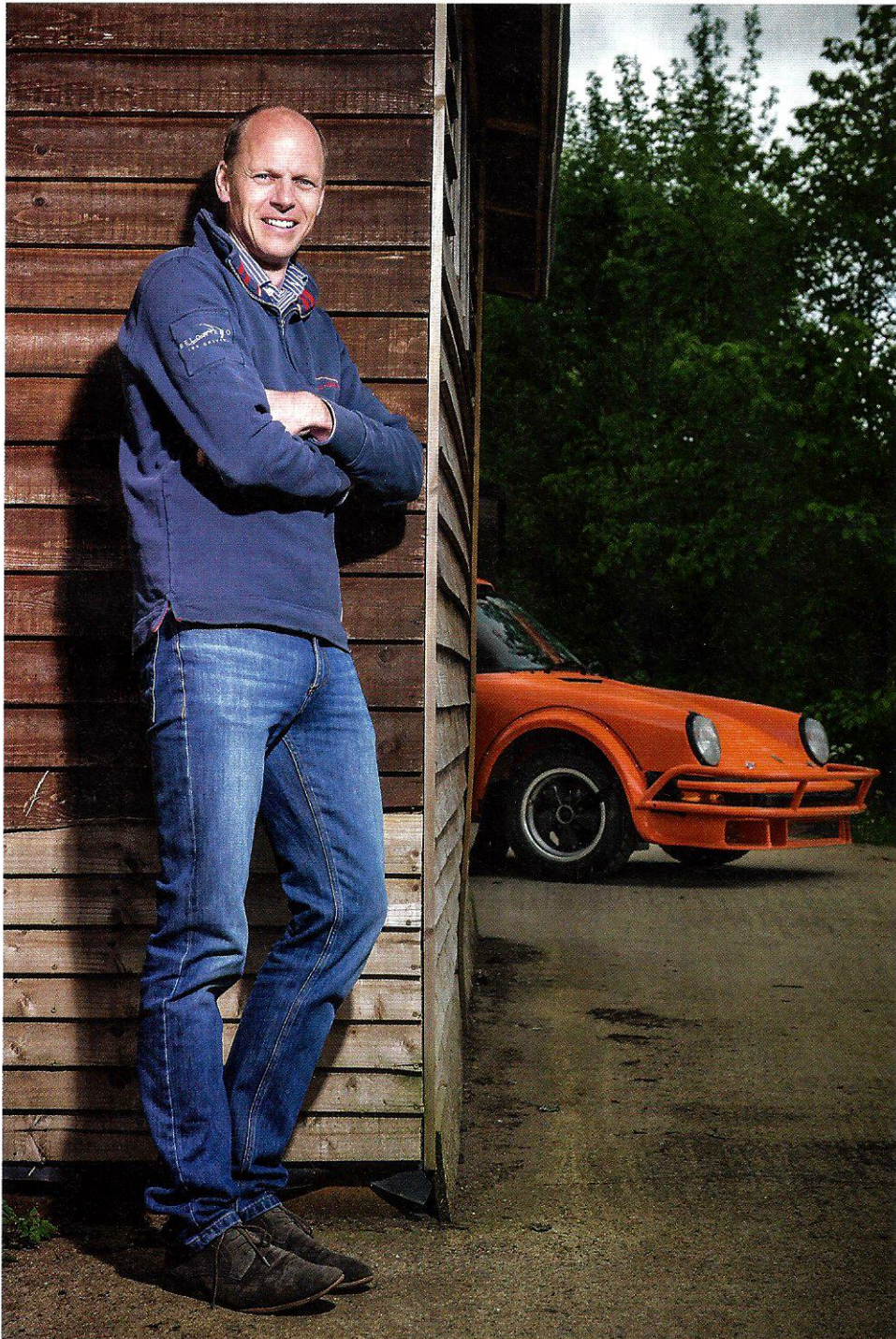
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On *Safari*

The name 'Tuthill' has become synonymous with competition 911s, and with one event in particular. Richard Tuthill explains his ongoing love affair with East Africa and the Safari Rally...

Story: Martyn Morgan-Jones Photography: Andy Morgan

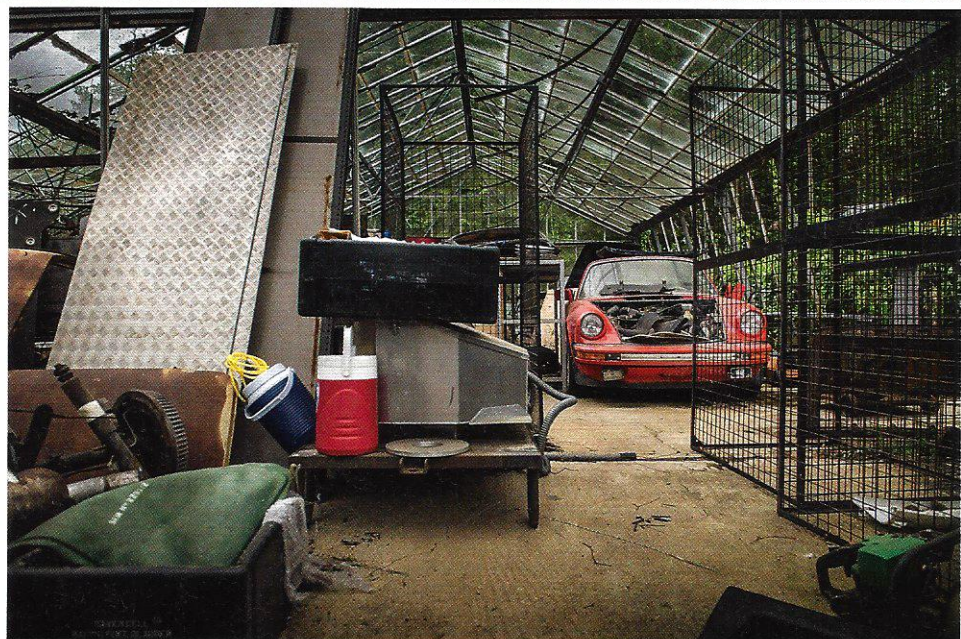
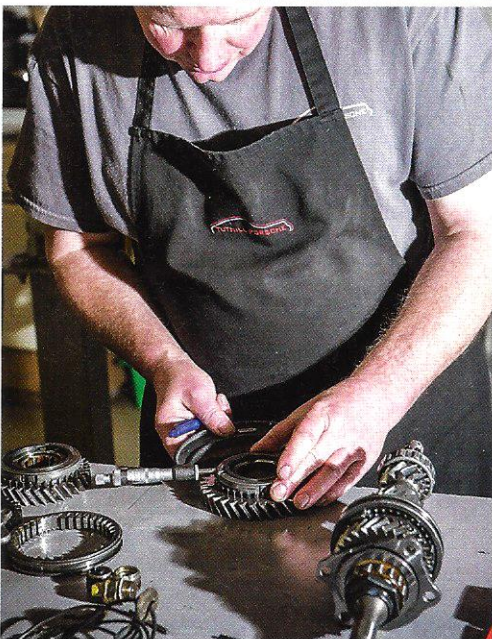


Often referred to as the 'Cradle of Humankind', East Africa, home to the legendary Safari Rally, is a truly special place, blessed with an oft-mesmerising landscape; punctuated with regions that have either been slowly massaged into gentle, benign forms, or violently reconfigured due to the actions of conflicting, visceral, forces. Factor in the rich and vibrant palette, the diverse culture, the abundant and varied wildlife, and it's easy to appreciate why this magical although, sadly, troubled part of the world enthral visitors.

Richard Tuthill, director of globally-renowned Porsche specialist Tuthill Porsche, is one of many to have fallen under its spell. What's more, it's something of a family trait: "Dad has always adored this part of the world," explains Richard smiling. "And endurance rallying. He competed in the 1980 Marlboro Safari Rally in a Saab 95 V4 and took the whole family with him. I was only seven years old at the time, but I have this amazing and enduring memory of my first time in East Africa, Kenya in particular. The colours, the sights, sounds and smells. Like dad, I've been in love with the country ever since."

In love... and, in more recent times, deeply involved too, although the Tuthill's motorsport's lineage can be traced back to humbler, more modest roots. "Dad was originally a farmer," mentions Richard smiling. "But he also owned a garage. Just a general garage, with sales, servicing and repairs. However, because he competed in motorsport, and prepared his cars well, the garage, and the excellent services it provided, became well known. His participation in the 1980 Safari helped raise its profile, although this wasn't dad's first endurance rally. Prior to this he'd competed in the 1977 London-Sydney Marathon Rally driving a Beetle. In fact, he'd campaigned Beetles for many years."

Partnered by Tony Showell, Francis Tuthill battled through to complete the London-Sydney, a gruelling 30,000km event, in 36th place. Having discharged its duties well, the Beetle, which is still in the family's possession, made way for other Beetles and other cars, including the aforementioned Saab and a 911 Carrera 3.0; a car that happened to catch the eye of a certain David Richards. At the time, Richards, who'd



recently co-driven Ari Vatanen to the 1981 World Rally Championship title, was making the transition from active participation in motorsport, to establishing his motorsport consultancy. Crucially, he was in the throes of bringing Rothmans and Porsche together, a move that would not only lead to the creation of Prodrive in 1984; it would also mark the Tuthill's first association with the 911 in rallying.

"David, who knew dad through rallying, asked to buy the Carrera 3.0," tells Richard. "He said he was pitching an idea to Rothmans and was planning to mock up a 911 rally car in Rothman's colours. Dad agreed to sell David the Carrera, but with the proviso that Tuthills would do the bodywork and paint. The car looked great, the pitch was successful, and Rothmans and Porsche got together. The rest is history. Our

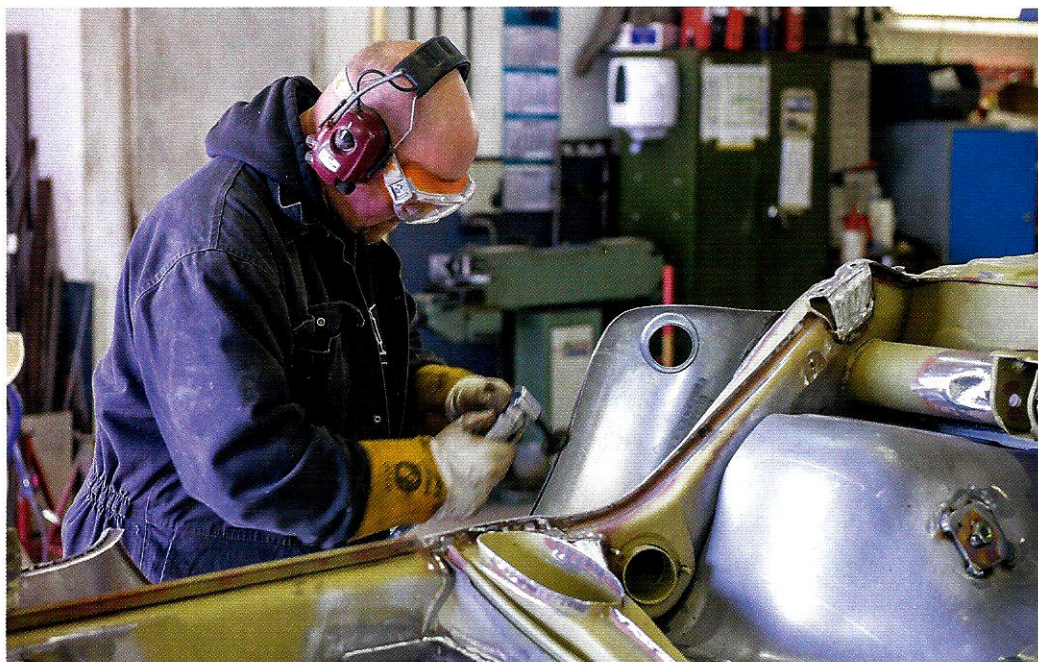
part in the success of this venture wasn't overlooked either. We were subsequently given the preparation work for the Coleman and Toivonen 911s, and went on to repair the accident damage and do the paintwork on all of Prodrive's 6R4s, BMW M3s and Subarus (Legacy and Impreza), up until the company started to focus on the WRC. Dad was still competing too."

Still competing on a global stage. In 1993, former London-Sydney competitor Nick Brittan set up a company to concentrate on endurance rallies, beginning with the 25th anniversary re-run of the original 1968 Marathon. One of the first people to sign up for it was Francis Tuthill.

"Dad rang his old mate and navigator Tony Showell and they hatched a plan to build a 911 for the event, and one for a client," remarks Richard. "As it transpired, dad and Tony won. That win

marks the big break in terms of our involvement with historic Porsche rallying, as it resulted in a number of people contacting Tuthills to build 911 rally cars. Mind you, we'd had some previous experience of this, as we'd been involved with a small number of 911 owners, including Beatty Crawford whose rally Porsche 911 we'd rebuilt."

Crawford, a renowned co-driver, enjoyed great success, partly because of his undoubted skill, and partly because he employed the services of top drivers such as Walter Rohl, Stig Blomquist and Bjorn Waldegård. It was actually thanks to Crawford that Waldegård would forge a special association with the Tuthill family, and Richard in particular. "I met Björn in 1991, I was just 17. Having passed my driving test one week earlier, dad booked a ferry, put me in Crawford's rally 911, and told me to drive it to Jyvaskyla: the start



"We have become inextricably linked with the Safari. It's such a major part of our working life"

of the historic 1000 Lakes Rally, where I was to meet Bjorn. I met Bjorn, he jumped in and we meandered along the high street where he proceeded to check the seating position and test the steering and brakes. Even this low-speed and short-lived run was an enormous privilege. The following year I looked after the 911 he drove in Killarney – he won! And, I was undeniably the luckiest guy in the world to co-drive for him in Ypres during 1996. Bjorn, who sadly died last year, and is hugely missed, drove for us on many occasions and won the 2011 Safari Historic in one of our 911s of course. This was the first-ever Porsche win on the Safari, some 40 years after he'd first attempted the feat."

In the early '90s, the period when Richard and the Tuthills began forging a relationship with Bjorn and classic rallying, the sport was in its embryonic stage. "Back then, and for quite some time afterwards, the regulations and the clientele were rather different," recalls Richard. "So too was our business strategy. If you were lucky, and if he liked you, dad would agree to build you a car. Then, usually around six months later, the car would be collected. Yes, we did a bit of on-event servicing and some driver/team support,

but it was a casual arrangement. It's important to remember that the rally scene was different back then. People tended to do their own things"

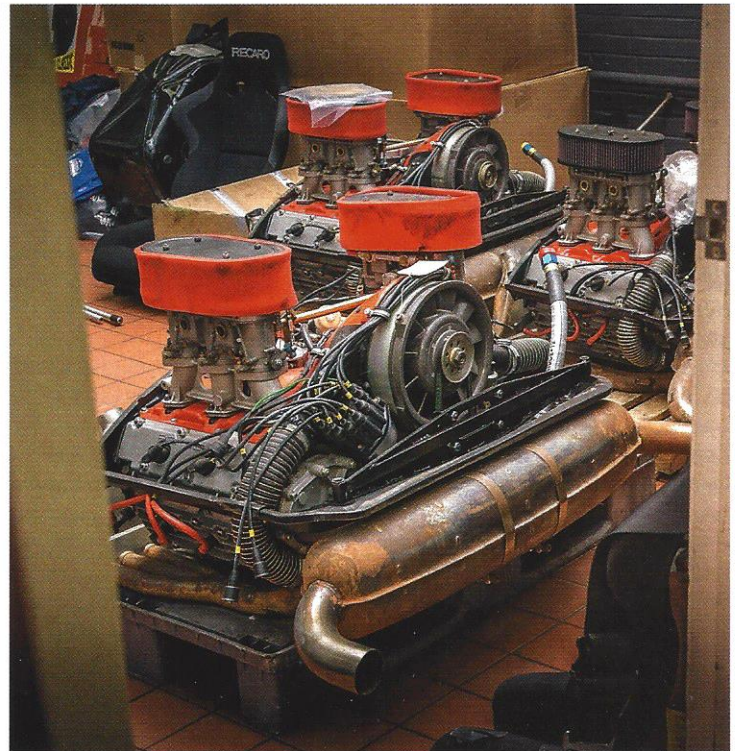
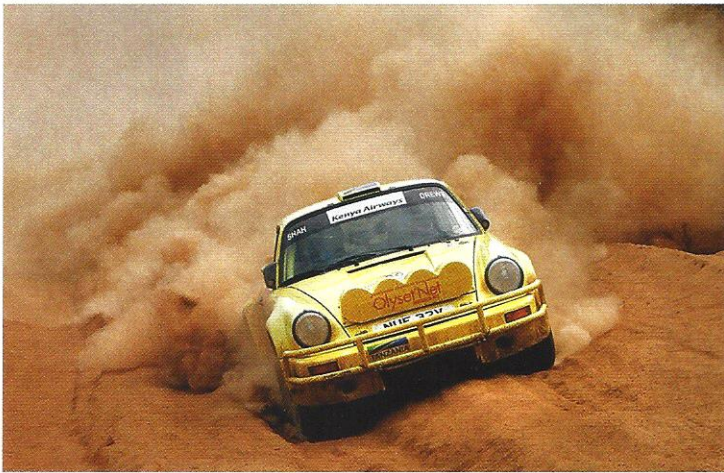
This somewhat 'laissez faire' approach is markedly different to how the company operates now and how it has been operating since just before the Millennium. "From around the late '90s the sport began changing, becoming more competitive and strictly regulated," Richard elaborates. "Along with the changes, we were finding that there was a new breed of driver on the scene. These drivers simply didn't want to be involved in the 'nuts and bolts' of the car, and many wouldn't know how use a spanner if the opportunity presented itself! Which is why we have championed the 'arrive and drive' format. We offer bespoke packages, tailored to each individual's particular needs/aims, and we ring-fence the price. Essentially, we prepare and supply the car, run it on the event and handle every detail, right down to the minutiae."

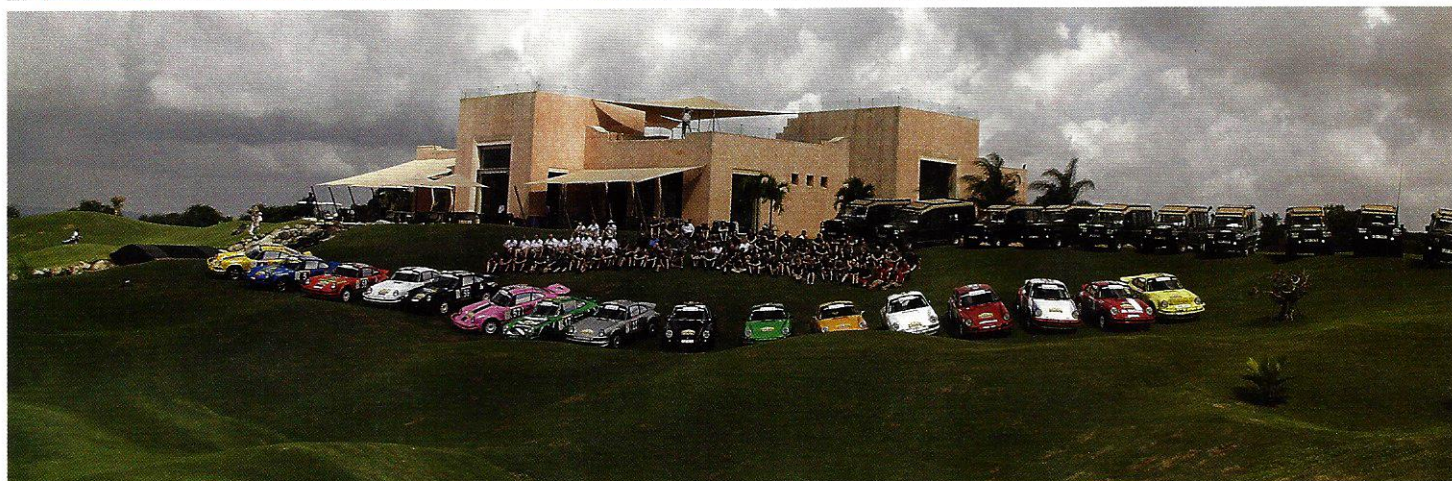
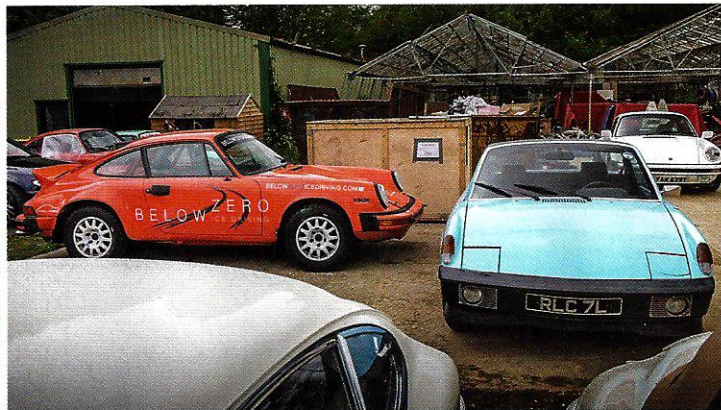
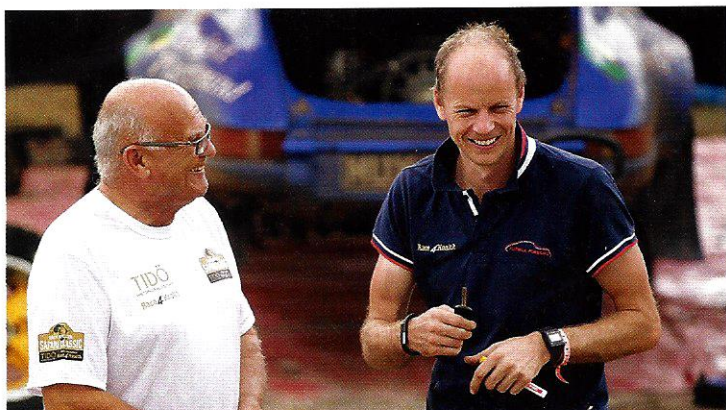
It's this attention to detail, the sublime quality of the car and its preparation, the calibre of the staff it employs, along with Tuthill Porsche's desire and drive to achieve the very best results that truly sets this company apart. And, although

he's extremely modest about what he has achieved, and what he has done for the sport, it's Richard who deserves much of the credit.

"Although I'd done some work for dad in previous years, it wasn't until 2003 when I became intimately involved with the business and the Safari Rally," reminisces Richard. "Mike Kirkland decided to reintroduce the Safari Rally in 2003, as 'The East African Safari Classic', a bi-annual event for classic cars. I'd been driving in the North American Rally Championship but didn't have a drive for 2003. As it happened, dad had been approached by Stuart Rolt, a super chap and a very good driver, and chairman of the BRDC for many years with a view to building him a 911 for the Safari, but only if I'd train him and also navigate him on the event. Which I did. We finished third. Frédéric Dor, in another of our 911s, finished second. The rally was fantastic, and a life-changing experience."

Not only life-changing, the Safari would soon become a huge part of the company's rallying portfolio. "We have become inextricably linked with the Safari. It's such a major part of our working life," enthuses Richard. "It's a real buzz and a proper adventure. Despite what some





*"I don't think I'll ever tire
of the event despite the
colossal organisation required"*

people may think, the Classic Safari is a proper mission, sharply-focused, and extremely gruelling. Stig Blomquist, who finished second in 2011 and 2013 in a Tuthill 911, told me that it's just as demanding as the original WRC Safari was but with the opportunity for a little more sleep! Every second counts and the incredibly demanding nature of the event really brings us together as a team. Nothing else matters. We work incredibly hard, but we have fun too. It's mega. Plus, we must be doing something right, as every two years we manage to convince up to 70 professionals, drawn from around the globe, to come and work for us."

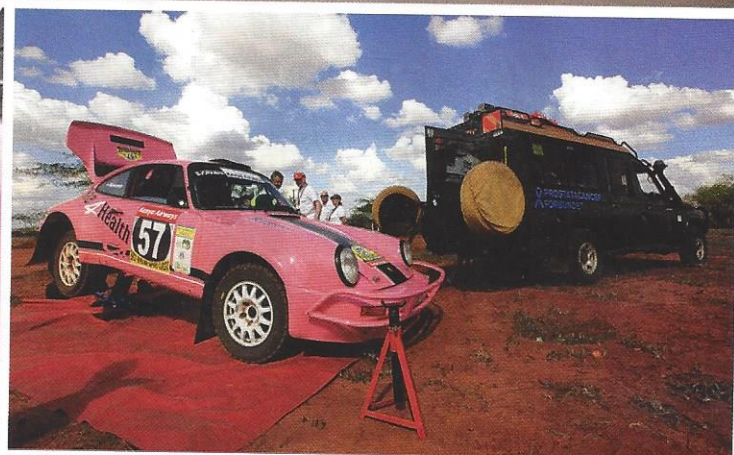
It's this symbiotic relationship with the Safari which, in many ways, has helped define the company. As has the relationship it has forged

with the marvellous, hugely-capable and charismatic Porsche 911. Over the years, Francis Tuthill Ltd., and, more recently, Tuthill Porsche have become bywords for excellence in terms of classic 911 competition preparation and general service.

"The 911, particularly the classic 911, is at the very core of our business," Richard articulates. "Obviously, we are biased, but there really is no better car from that period, certainly for classic rallying, especially endurance events. It has a strong monocoque bodyshell, superb traction, good brakes, terrific reliability, and great speed. In FIA terms/years, we are dealing with cars from 1965 through to 1985. In Safari terms we focus on 1973 to 1977. As for the optimum base car, that's either the 3.0RS or RSR, or the 2.8RSR.

Deliberately, we build a very generic car. For example, we built a 911 that won the Tour Britannia and then went on to compete in Kenya. Our Safari cars are simply FIA cars with some additions. When they come back from the Safari they can be returned to FIA-spec within a matter of days."

The 911 has, of course, steadily, yet significantly, evolved over the years. As has the way Tuthill Porsche builds and prepares its 911s. Decades of Porsche experience, countless events, along with feedback from club competitors, world champions, and industry experts alike, ensures that Tuthill's 911 rally cars are undeniably fit for purpose and devastatingly effective. They are also refreshingly simple... albeit in a supremely well-engineered way.



Which translates into podium places and event wins, including that Safari win: a win that you won't find listed on Porsche's motorsports' CV, however hard you look.

"Porsche's downfall on the Safari was due to its desire to demonstrate the 911's ability/durability by running the cars with the minimum amount of maintenance and with a total reliance on factory, or factory-specified parts, such as the dampers," explains Richard. "Ultimately, given the damper technology available at the time, the aluminium arm simply could not cope with the constant hammering such components take on the Safari, and failed."

The Tuthill Porsches don't have this problem because they are equipped with

strengthened steel rear arms. They also all use much larger diameter EXE-TC WRC five-way adjustable dampers, complete with remote reservoirs. "We have reformed the Porsche front uprights to accommodate these new dampers," remarks Richard. "We use the company's dampers on the rear too. Good damping is extremely important on a car with such a rear weight bias and given the incredibly rough conditions it has to contend with. I can honestly say that these dampers have brought about the single biggest improvement in the performance of our 911s. They are so capable and so reliable. One set will do the entire Safari Rally and much more."

Along with the suspension revisions and upgrades, bodyshell preparation is another

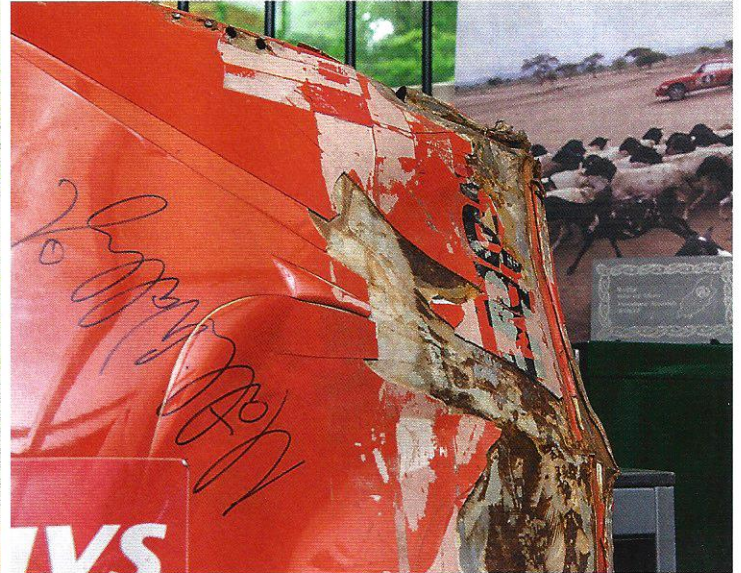
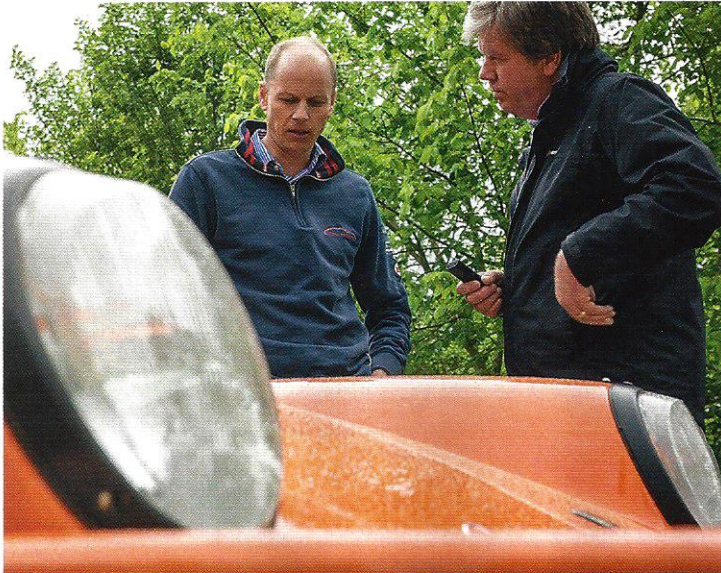
Tuthill trademark. Including full seam-welding, the preparation takes the technicians around 300 hours, with particular attention being paid to the bodyshell's Achilles' heel: the sections where the steering rack passes through the bodyshell.

"There are massive open cavities around these areas, which leads to structural weakening," expands Richard. "However, this is no longer a problem as we have laser-cut strengthening plates that beef up these areas significantly. In fact, we use around 70 laser-cut panels, varying in size from very small to quite large, in the preparation of the bodyshell."

These panels, which are Tuthill-designed, and the result of 30 years of development, beginning with the Rothmans Porsches, are part and parcel of why the 911 can survive the rigours of the

STIG BLOMQUIST TALKS ABOUT THE SAFARI RALLY AND THE TUTHILL 911:

"The roads and tracks used on the Classic Safari are very similar to when it was a WRC event, so the strength of the car has to be the same. I found the Tuthill 911 to be fantastic, very strong, and it didn't have one problem. I had to drive it very, very hard for seven days, so it must be good! It has great power too, and excellent torque, but the best thing is the way the suspension works. I remember chatting to Bjorn, who'd been testing a 911 with Richard in Morocco. This was before I drove the Tuthill 911, and he told me that the suspension was incredible, you could drive flat-out, however rough the conditions. I have found this to be true. Tuthill has a wonderful team too, very professional, with great people and great planning. I'm looking forward to working with them on this year's Safari, driving one of the Tuthill-prepared Race4Health 911s. Historic motorsport is getting more competitive each year, but I think a Tuthill 911, especially for the Safari, is the car to have. The team have developed it so well."



Safari Rally, and still come back for more... barring accidents of course. "Understandably, we are stuck in a specific time period with the 911, but we have always worked our utmost to protect the occupants," states Richard. "The strengthened shell helps of course. Then there's the roll-cage. Because of the regulations, the roll-cage is an evolution of the very first 911 designs, but it's very strong and made to the highest quality."

Quality is one of Tuthill's mantras, and the company works closely with specialist suppliers to ensure that the parts are designed properly, and are the very best available. Many are bespoke. That said, a good percentage of the components, because they have been proven to work well, and be reliable, are plucked straight from Porsche's parts bins. "For example, because

they have never given us any problems, and because they are very effective, we have always used standard brakes," informs Richard. "But, for this year, on the top cars we might try modern brakes. They are more cost-effective and will probably result in less pad 'knock-off'. It's not about performance, it's about safety."

The cooling system also makes extensive use of standard, factory-issue parts, save for a few minor modifications and refinements. "The inherently-reliable air-cooled nature of the car is a massive benefit," continues Richard. "The only water we have to worry about is topping up the windscreen washer fluid! For the oil cooling, we utilise two modern matrices. These are front-mounted in the space previously occupied by the batteries. All cars carry a link pipe in the event of

one cooler becoming damaged. We use Millers 10/60 synthetic oil exclusively. Millers is a great company to work with. We've had rallying clients that have driven from London to Mexico without changing oil, because they couldn't be bothered, and the engine's been absolutely fine. After the event we sent the oil for analysis and it's been found to be perfect."

With the very occasional exception, all Tuthill 911 rally cars run 3.0-litre engines, which feature a raft of standard components. "We use standard cranks, standard rods, standard rockers but competition pistons," tells Richard. "Although the engines are not particularly sensitive to fuel, some of the fuel on the Safari is of an exceptionally poor quality. To cater for this, we have designed a very precise fuel filtering system.



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This system filters the fuel as it enters the tank, and again when it's on its way into the engine. Dust is another engine killer, so the air filtration also goes through two stages, using K&N gauze filters that are sleeved with an outer foam filter. The foam filters are cleaned at the end of every day. Power outputs on the Safari engines vary between 280 and 290hp, torque is around 240lb ft at 5300rpm. Interestingly, we have won the Masters Race Series twice, using a 911 fitted with one of our rally engines! It's torque that really matters, especially on the Safari, when the car is ploughing through mud or battling acres of dusty soil."

For the most part, the gearbox is also standard. "We use the 915 five-speed gearbox," says Richard. "It's very strong and has ideal ratios.

We've refined and slightly strengthened it internally and it runs an internal cooler. The plate type LSD is manufactured to our own design. Top speed on the diff ratio we typically run is 125mph. For ease of servicing, and because the EXE-TC dampers are so good, we have switched to 6.5x15 inch rims and Dunlop 205/65/15 tyres all-round."

It's this impeccably-engineered, supremely-structured, and carefully-finessed approach, along with the massive investment in quality materials and component parts, and plenty of dialogue with manufacturers that turns a Tuthill Porsche into a winner... a Safari winner.

When we visited Tuthill Porsche, preparation and organisation for the 2015 Safari was only just getting underway, but it was obvious that this is a

company that loves what it does, relishes a challenge, and is at the top of its game. The level of expertise, preparation and workmanship eclipses that of many current WRC teams. Nonetheless, Tuthill Porsche certainly isn't resting on its laurels. Not at all; it's hell bent on winning many more. And the team are going to do their damndest to win the Safari in 2015.

"The Safari has become a way of life for us," Richard declares. "It's a once in a lifetime experience that we are fortunate to be able to have every two years. I don't think I'll ever tire of the event, despite the colossal organisation required, and the exceptional hands-on nature. If you ever have to opportunity to take part, then you should grasp that opportunity with both hands and we can make it happen for you!" ○