

# Book Reviews for Porschephiles

by Bruce Herrington, Orange Coast Region

## PORSCHE — ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

by Karl Ludvigsen, forward by Jerry Seinfeld, Bentley Publishers, Boston, Ma

This is an awesome book, from the publishing sense. The dust jacket shows front and rear views of Porsche 356/2-40, and the end papers inside show side views of this same car (owned by Jerry Seinfeld). In a throwback to *the glory days* of book publishing, and in acknowledgment of the fact that this tome is not one that will ever get read from front to back in a single sitting, a ribbon bookmark is bound into the volume. Like all Ludvigsen books, this one contains a lot of words as well as pictures. It is a large book, despite using relatively small type – keep your reading glasses handy.

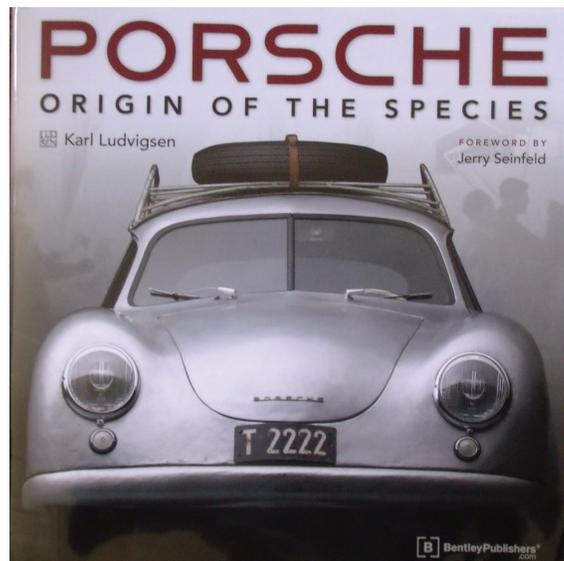
Considering the breadth and depth of Professor Porsche's design accomplishments, to try to describe just how the Porsche sports car came about is a challenge to hind-sight. Whether or not Ludvigsen was or was not successful in meeting that challenge, this book is a *must have* for any true enthusiast of Porsche history, particularly one of the 356 crowd. It contains a comprehensive description of the automotive work of the Porsche Design Office, culminating with the work on the 356/2. Beyond that model, Porsches became Ferry's babies.

Taken as a whole, *Origin* tells you much more than you ever wanted to know about Porsche automotive designs. But if you have any particular interest in a Porsche sports car design element, you will probably find some fascinating antecedents described in this book. Even radiator placement for a sports car was the subject of a design study in the late '30s, and development of war time VW engines with individual cylinder heads is described. Bevel gear driven overhead cam shafts, vertical split crank cases, etc., all appear in various degrees of sophistication at various stages in this book.

Many interesting tidbits are presented, including the significant role played by the original *English Patient* (who in life survived the death he suffered in the movie) in marketing some of the very first 356/2 cars. There is also a great deal of coverage of the business (and geographic) life of Profes-

sor Porsche and his extended clan of family members and dedicated staffers.

Professor Porsche has been accused of being a *designer's designer*, one who designed for the sake of designing, with little consideration for practicality or a cost-effective/marketable product. The description given of the evolution of Piero Dusio's Cisitalia program lends credence to that contention.

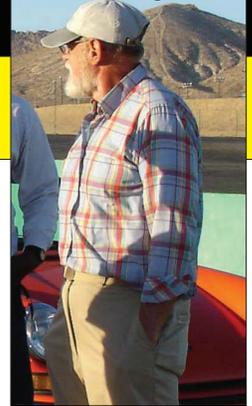


ponents using -40 as a *mule*. The other presents life-size copies, without translation, of 40 pages of the owners manual provided with the Gmünd cars. There is also a comprehensive index of seven, 3-column pages.

The developments which lead to the Porsche Sports car form a long, complicated story, a chronology of events, political, commercial, engineering/design, and even tax law, which contributed to the genesis of the Porsche sports car. Somewhat buried in this narration is the critical role played by Ferry in making Porsche a car production company, not just an engineering/design firm.

*Origin* might be available at your favorite bookseller's, and is currently available for \$85 at Amazon books.

Bruce Herrington



In addition to the foreword by Jerry Seinfeld, *Origin* contains contemporary commentaries by observers of Porsche car history, inserted at various points in the narrative.

An incredible amount of information and photographs are provided on the late '40s cars. Text and illustrations comprise 285 of the 344, 10-1/2 x 10-1/2 heavyweight bond pages. The remainder are mostly two appendices, courtesy of Jerry Seinfeld: one presents copies of original German research reports (along with English translations) of tests of brake and clutch components

