



LIFESTYLE | CARS | MY RIDE

He Wants to Drive a Million Miles in His Porsche. He's Not That Far Off.

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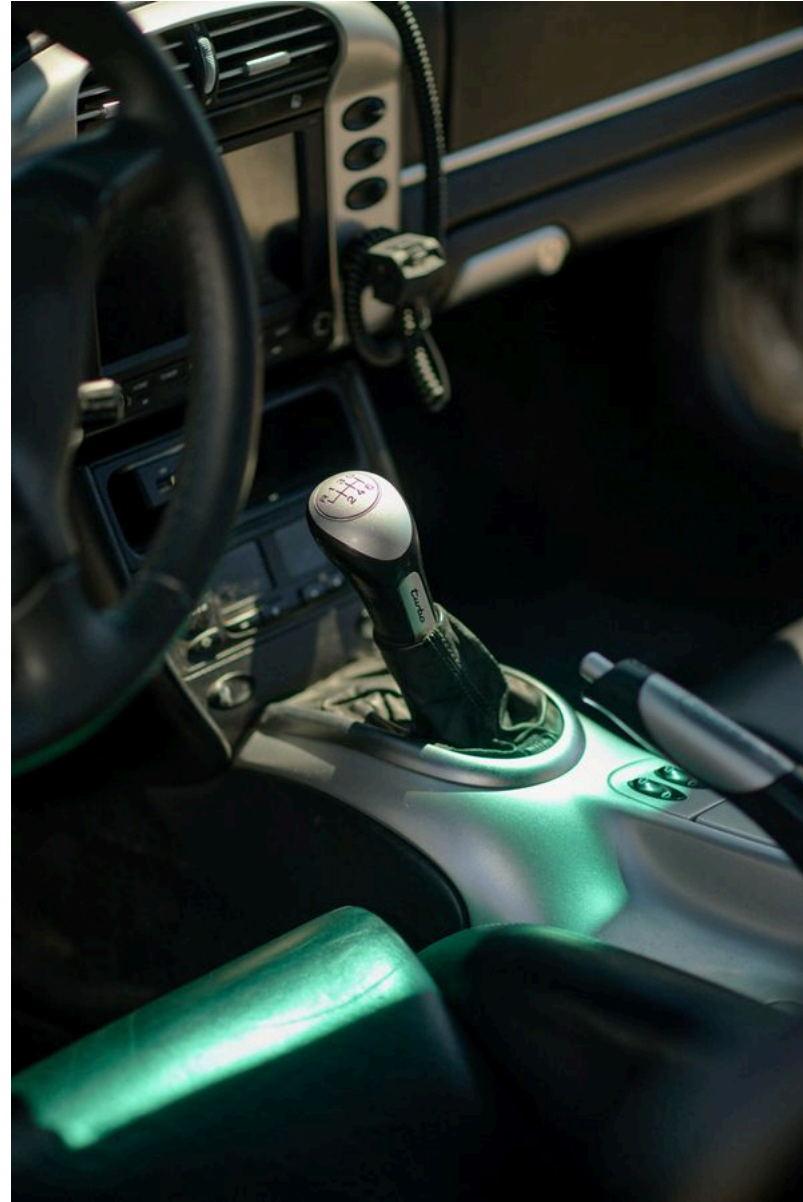
By A.J. Baime | Photographs by Philip Keith for The Wall Street Journal

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Tom "T2" Thalmann, 57, an independent consultant in the biotech industry who lives in South Kingstown, R.I., on his 2003 Porsche 911 Turbo, as told to A.J. Baime.

When I was growing up in Rhode Island, around this time of year, my parents' tax attorney used to show up at our house in





Porsche unveiled the 911 Turbo in the mid '70s and still makes the Turbo model today.

In July of 2003, there was a silver 911 Turbo at my local Porsche dealer. At that point, I was working locally, but I knew my job was going to take me up to the Boston area for commutes. I love the ocean and didn't want to leave Rhode Island, so I was going to spend long hours in my car. I walked into the dealership and asked the mechanic about the 911 Turbo.

I asked, “Have you seen anything about this car I need to worry about?” He said, “This car is bulletproof. Just change the oil. That’s all you have to do.” When I told the salesman that I wanted the 911 Turbo, he said, “Most of my clients are repeat customers and they keep trading up to the Turbo. But not you.” I was going straight for the top.



Thalmann aims to push the twin-turbo 3.6-liter flat six-cylinder engine to a million miles and beyond.

Now nearly 21 years later, this car is still my daily driver. It has over 700,000 miles, and I have calculated that I have spent 1.33 years of my life in the driver's seat going an average of 60 mph. When I am not going to work, I love the experience of getting in the car and just going. I will go out for a gallon of milk and return two hours later. I will find some restaurant and stop for a bite, and chat up some people about the car. They'll hear the mileage and go, "Wait, how many miles did you say?"



Thalman uses number 61 for racetrack driving. 'It's a random number,' he says.

The 911 Turbo is its own model with its own heritage. Porsche came out with the Turbo in the mid-'70s, basically a high-performance version of the flagship 911. The company still makes the 911 Turbo today. My car is of the 996 generation, the first liquid-cooled 911. It has all-wheel drive and a 3.6-liter twin-turbo flat six-cylinder engine. If you have never put snow tires on a 911 Turbo and taken it out in 10 inches of fluffy snow, you don't know what you're missing. It's probably one of the most capable snow cars I have ever driven.

Anyone can sit in the driver seat, take the key in your left hand, stick it in the slot and, as you're turning it to the right, the smile comes onto your face. When I sit in the car, I become part of it and it becomes part of me. It's a surreal experience, even after over 20 years. I upgraded the radio about four years ago, so now I have a touch screen, Android and Spotify. The world is at my disposal.



'When I sit in the car,' Thalmann says, 'I become part of it and it becomes part of me.'

I have made friends with some people at the Porsche factory in Germany. When I get to one million miles, my dream is to ship the car back to where it was born, let them do a restoration dance on it, and have them put it in the Porsche museum for however long they want. Then I will take delivery of my new million-mile Porsche and drive it for three months through Switzerland, Austria and Germany. I'll have it shipped back to the U.S., and I will drive it until I can't drive anymore.

Write to A.J. Baime at myride@wsj.com.