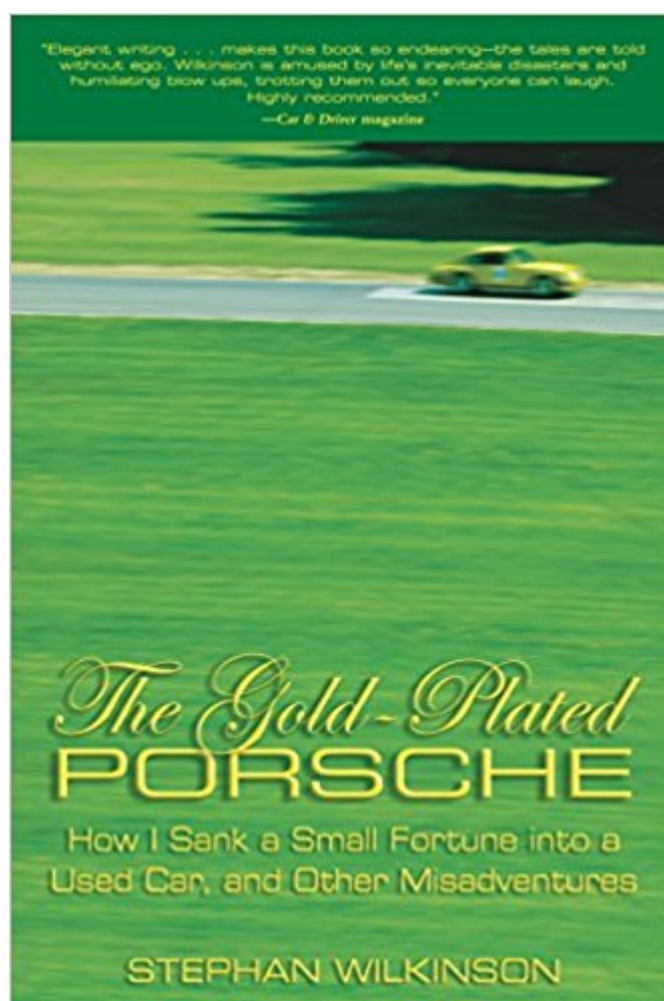


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# The Gold-Plated Porsche: How I Sank A Small Fortune Into A Used Car, And Other Misadventures



## Synopsis

"This isn't a book about Porsche restoration. It's about Wilkinson's colorful life. That, along with elegant writing, is what makes this book so endearing--the tales are told without ego. This is less a tale about a machine than a tale about a man enjoying a machine."--Car and Driver

Stephan Wilkinson was looking for something to do. So he bought an old, run-down Porsche and over the next two years tore it apart and rebuilt it in a garage behind his house. The project cost him a small fortune, and it started him thinking about many other things. Quirky, cool, entertaining, and opinionated, *The Gold-Plated Porsche* captures Wilkinson's inspired digressions on his various other careers and misadventures. As he recounts his own personal history, Wilkinson also waxes eloquent on the history of Porsche, American engineering and culture, status, and all things mechanical.

## Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Lyons Press (September 1, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1592287921

ISBN-13: 978-1592287925

Product Dimensions: 9 x 6.1 x 0.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 69 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,022,510 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #72 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Antiques Care & Reference > Care & Restoration](#) #452 in [Books > Engineering & Transportation > Automotive > Classic Cars](#) #787 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Environmentalists & Naturalists](#)

## Customer Reviews

Wilkinson's spunky and entertaining memoir is a yarn-spinning and wise-cracking romp over the author's many occupations, hobbies, blunders and idiosyncrasies. Bored after finishing an addition on his house and building an airplane, Wilkinson, automotive editor at *Condé Nast Traveler*, turns his antsy, irrepressible need to tinker on a well-used 1983 Porsche 911 and two years and \$60,000 later, he has a car worth far more in hard-earned experience than blue-book value. Among other misadventures, Wilkinson recounts how he spent his undergraduate years at Harvard under the hood of a 1936 Ford Phaeton; his ill-fated tenure as the editor of *Car and Driver*

magazine; his small-plane reconnaissance missions over Kansas for the leader of the American Indian Movement; and a stint as a teenage merchant marine in South Asia, where he survived two typhoons, helmed a 10,000-ton freighter and witnessed a drowning off the docks in Saigon. The author also offers up philosophical musings on the manias of car aficionados, the weirdness of German engineering and the importance of crankshaft-to-bearing clearances and proper torquing technique. Although there is a good deal of shop talk and automotive jargon, it is a testament to Wilkinson's writing skills that he can make his description of the unbolting of a transaxle as engaging as his stories about crashing test cars and absconding with the company jet to visit his girlfriend. The author's nerdy enthusiasm and sassy wit will be irresistible to both the technically disinclined and the die-hard gear head. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

". . . this isn't a book about Porsche restoration. It's about Wilkinson's colorful life. . . . That, along with elegant writing, is what makes this book so endearing--the tales are told without ego. Wilkinson is amused by life's inevitable disasters and humiliating blow-ups, trotting them out so everyone can laugh. This is . . . less a tale about a machine than a tale about a man enjoying a machine."--Car and Driver"...fascinating and delightful. He dissects enthusiast car ownership with such clarity and spirited writing that it is refreshing. Brilliantly crafted and a great read no matter what season."--More magazine>Your Porsche book is magic. If on picking this up a reader expects a how-to manual on restoring a Porsche 911, he will be disappointed because all you give him is a how-to manual on life. The clear and colorful way you explain difficult and convoluted mechanical functions is pure John McPhee at his best. Your experiences - with cars, as a merchant seaman, as an EMS driver, building airplanes - come together in this glorious tale. Thank you for sharing it."--AutoWeek"Finding the meaning of life with a Craftsman wrench is the idea behind this book, but that doesn't get across just how entertaining it is. The writing is crisp, the narrative stays lively with a series of deliberate digressions and blended segues, and there's plenty here for everyone."--Library Journal"The Gold-Plated Porsche is the highly entertaining story of someone who seems to have been playing while everybody else was at work."--FlyingMag.com>Your Porsche book is magic. If on picking this up a reader expects a how-to manual on restoring a Porsche 911, he will be disappointed because all you give him is a how-to manual on life. The clear and colorful way you explain difficult and convoluted mechanical functions is pure John McPhee at his best. Your experiences - with cars, as a merchant seaman, as an EMS driver, building airplanes - come together in this glorious tale.

Thank you for sharing it."--AutoWeek". . . tinkering, in this memoir, is a vehicle itself, a way to take the reader on a tour of Wilkinson's life in the driver's seat... all retold at a fast clip and with plenty of pep."--Condé Nast Traveler

A great account of a man determined to build his dream car. He makes no bones about the fact that he spent way more than the car is worth, but of course he wasn't doing it as an investment, he did it for the satisfaction of rebuilding his dream car to as good as or better than new. If you can understand that, you will love this book.

Stephan Wilkerson recounts how he sunk a small fortune into rebuilding a beater 1983 Porsche 911 SC. He did most of the work himself. The book goes into his rebuild and touches on topics like how 911s are constructed and come apart, systems, issues in rebuilding it, carburetor tuning, results, other 911 topics like track driving events. It's a story not a manual. Into the tale is weaved stories from his rather eclectic work background such as editor of Car and Driver magazine, drug smuggler, writer for Flying magazine, volunteer EMT, seaman on tramp steamers, and surveillance of the FBI in a borrowed Cessna Centurion for the American Indian Movement during the Wounded Knee protests in 1973. The book is quite funny and I learned a lot about the older 911's and the mechanics of it. Even learned that you should unload your torque wrench after using it. Stephan's writing style is easy to read. I highly recommend it.

David E. Davis used to say that Tom Wolfe was one of the writing inspirations for the institution that became Car and Driver magazine, back in the day. That was when antics like comparing a Porsche Speedster to a VW Karmann Ghia or creating the Cannonball Baker Sea to Shining Sea Trophy Dash were the way to become a literary institution. Goodness knows Hot Rod magazine and the world literary never appeared juxtaposed. Wilkinson deftly moves from the Porsche to C/D to Flying to Wounded Knee, never losing a beat. Clearly some of the intricacies of tuning three barrel carbs, two sets at once, will only appeal to real gear heads. But this is the sort of stream of consciousness here and there and everywhere that makes this one a fun read. In the process he dashes a few of the sacred beliefs about Porsches, suggesting that indeed they are cars underneath the hyperbole.

Came across this book a few years ago, but was put off by the title. Thought it was about the 80's gold chain pricks who bought P cars. After seeing it recently mentioned on P car chat rooms, I

ordered it. What a great, easy, factual and entertaining read! He's right on with his 911 air/oil cooled P car facts. That was a pleasant surprise to me. Author's story is not a "posier", but a real knuckle busting car guy who allows the reader to think and learn about these unique and loved cars. The other chapters are good reads of stuff that happened to him, or he caused to happen to him. Don't we all have experiences that at the time are really stupid, dangerous, or close to fatal? The ones we survive become the best stories and age well! Great read!! Next book idea - Wilkinson and Magnus Walker team up for a book!

If you bought this book for details on his restoration, you will be disappointed. He spends maybe a total of ten pages describing the car and the rest of the book is life stories. Entertaining read, but very little actual Porsche content.

I'm a big fan of Peter Egan and am in the process of buying a 911, so I bought this book based on the title. I thought it looked kind of fun, and figured I'd learn something about restoring 911's. I figured it was an Egan-ish narrative about restoring an old 911. I will say this - it's a good read, a fun book and the author is very interested, but it's not Peter Egan. "More like Peter Egan with an edge". Just keep that in mind. The author is good, and funny, and interesting, but doesn't have the polish and finesse of Egan. I didn't get to the end and think "gee, I'd love to meet this guy some day and sit down and have a beer together..." Ok, enough about P.E. So the book is fun to read, not so much about restoring 911's so don't expect to learn how to do it. That said, the author does go off on some very interesting tangents about Porsche as a company, the history of the marquee and lots of details about specifics he encountered while doing a ground up restoration of this old car by himself. In fact the book seems like it's put together from a bunch of "tangents." The author kind of rambles... which is fine, but some of the rambling I didn't find all that interesting. I would say it's about 50% "man restoring an old 911" and 50% "man rambling about all sorts of non-related stories from his past." That about sums it up. So the bottom line is - it's a fun read, I would recommend it, but it's not so much about restoring a 911 as it is about the author's (sometimes crude) ramblings about his life.

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