It’s hard to resist any gathering where Porsches might be present, with the anticipation of seeing row after row of magnificent machinery and the various stamps of personalization each owner has carefully installed on his or her prized possession. Whether the car is pristine or has rock chips, a dirty windshield, or rubber chunks in the fender wells, chances are it is well loved. However, there are certain cars that stand out in these rows of Porsches. Around them gather the usual cadre of PCA members, as well as the young hipsters, cameras in hand. There seems to be a veritable buzz encapsulating these Porsches. Later, those same cars are likely to be heavily posted on Instagram, Facebook, and various forums. So what is it about these particular cars?
Often, it has to do with their vibrant paint color—Auratium Green, Gulf Blue, Viper Green, Tangerine, Continental Orange, Jade Green, Arrow Blue, Leaf Green, Mint Green, Rubystone, Signal Green, Signal Yellow, Maritime Blue, Riviera Blue, Aubergine, Chartreuse. Like moths to a flame, we seem drawn to these over-the-top period colors, even if we might not be brave enough to have picked one of them for ourselves.

Marketers know that color has a tremendous impact on how we emotionally respond to a product, and marketing is all about creating a passionate reaction. We know that blue connotes safety and security, red sex and daring, yellow happiness and joy, silver technological superiority and elegance. Is it surprising that sports cars in bright, primary colors are more apt to be featured in advertising?

If that’s the case for sports cars, how do automakers market a vehicle like a minivan? The class leaders Toyota and Honda advertise their wares in safe shades of silver and gray. Chrysler is trying to get back in the game, and you will note it is featuring the new Chrysler Pacifica in Red Pearl and promoting it as a van for cool families. Whether or not this approach is working, it goes to show the power of color in something as mundane as the much-maligned family minivan.

When you log on to Porsche.com, you will see that the promotional photos of the 718 and 911 series of cars are in Lava Orange, Miami Blue, and Racing Yellow. Check out a Panamera or a Cayenne and you will find more neutral shades of black, Volcano Gray, and Night Blue Metallic.

In today’s automotive climate, the neutral colors are dominant: white, black, gray, and silver. In fact, according to Axalta Coatings Systems’ latest 2016 survey, those four colors accounted for 73% of all cars sold in North America. Red comes up a distant fifth place at 10%, and blue is trending upward at 8%. Those six colors account for 91% of all new cars sold. The greens, yellows, oranges, and purples account for an increasingly small sliver of the market.

This trend holds true for Porsche as well. On Porsche’s online car configurator, you will find that Porsche offers a total of 25 unique colors across all models, although each model has fewer choices than that. Among the neutral colors are white, White Metallic, black, Black Metallic, Volcano Grey, Agate Grey, Meteor Silver.

In years past, buyers spent hours poring over these small paint sample cards making tough color choices. For some reason, these old sample cards seem to hold great charm.
Porsche colors:
- Jade Green/ Hall Green, Color Code 227 1972-1975 911
- Martini Blue, Color Code 388 1991-1993 928 & 911
- Continental Orange, Color Code 107 1976-1978 928 & 911
- Lime Green, Color Code 236 1972-1973 911
- Tellow Yellow, Color Code 106 1976-1980 911/912

Here are the five favorite Porsche colors:
- Slate Grey, Rhodium Silver, GT Silver, and Chalk. There are also various reds and blues, such as Guards Red, Carmine Red, Burgundy Red, Graphite Blue, Night Blue, Miami Blue, Biscay Blue, and Moonlight Blue. Arguably, there are only three really daring colors offered: Lava Orange, Miami Blue, and Racing Yellow.

While it continues to collectible Porsches, the color story is the polar opposite. Bright, fun, daring, and unique colors are all the rage, and rarity is the Holy Grail. That’s because, whether we are talking artwork, stamps, coins, or Porsches, an item that is scarce is more desirable than one that is plentiful in the early days of Porsche, the color palette was more daring than that of today. That is likely a factor of both the time period and the fact that Porsche was a small sports car company that didn’t have to take the same approach.

In today’s fast-paced world, we are inundated with a veritable landslide of information and images. Which car is more likely to be remembered by others, the black 928 or the Arrow Blue 928? If you are trying to wow the concours judges, according to the rules, color should have no impact in reality, having an Aurantium Green Speedster is a sure trump card over a Signal Red one.

Porsche favorites:
- **Conformity:** Not everyone wants to make a loud statement. You can’t be shy if you’re going to drive a Lava Orange Porsche.
- **Compromise:** Cars are usually purchased by a couple, and nearly everyone can compromise with their partner on silver, gray, white, or black. Nobody compromises on Speed Yellow or Mint Green.

So, if collectors today want early cars in a bright “jellybean” shade, why don’t people buy new Porsches in the more daring Miami Blue, Racing Yellow, or Lava Orange? Why do so many of us pack a neutral color? There are many great reasons:

- **Memorable:** In today’s fast-paced world, we are inundated with a veritable landslide of information and images. Which car is more likely to be remembered by others, the black 928 or the Arrow Blue 928? If you are trying to wow the concours judges, according to the rules, color should have no impact in reality, having an Aurantium Green Speedster is a sure trump card over a Signal Red one.
- **Safety:** In the early 1970s, Porsche actually pointed out that its sports cars should only be sold in bright colors, as it was believed the colors made them safer due to increased visibility. In fact, the legend is that they discontinued the colors Slate Grey and Sand Beige for this very reason! In today’s world of smartphone-focused drivers, maybe a Continental Orange 911 SC is better than a Silver Metallic one?

**WHAT ABOUT PAINT TO SAMPLE?**

One of the unique things about Porsche is that it has been known for its commitment to actually listen to and respond to its customers. Nothing is better evidence of that than the Paint to Sample (PTS) program. Since the 356 era, Porsche has allowed its customers to specify a color that is not listed in the standard palette. This could have been something as simple as requesting a color only available on the 928 for your 911, or picking a historic 356 color for your 996.

More unusual are the truly rare, one-off colors specified for a Porsche family member, VIP client, or just a regular customer lucky enough to specify that his new 911 should match his wife’s Ferrari Dino.

The current Paint to Sample program is a bit unusual in the automotive world, does not allow the truly unlimited choices it once did. Currently, Porsche maintains an approved list of PTS choices, which primarily consists of historic Porsche colors. In fact, the interesting thing is that on modern Porsches, some of the PTS shades are more common than some of the lesser-chosen standard palette choices. The bright jellybean choices have permeated the majority of the PTS GT cars, such as the GT3, GT3 RS, and GT4.

As a general rule, PTS Porsches will trade for a premium. So if you get the chance to purchase a car in one of these shades, you will generally be rewarded when it comes time to sell. Not to mention, you’ll have a great story to tell at the next Cars and Coffee when you explain that your car was manufactured in the school colors of the original owner’s alma mater.

**FIND YOUR NEUTRAL!**

When buying an old Porsche, it is a direct reflection of that. When buying a new Porsche, it is a direct reflection of that. Prior to the mid-1980s, a Porsche owner was literally like Viper Green or Signal Yellow. They could pull off an outrageous color or all the rage, and rarity is the Holy Grail. That’s why don’t people buy new Porsches with a lot of neutral-colored new Porsches, or would you be willing to bet your fortune by having a dozen new Miami Blue cars on the lot? I would bet you might be more comfortable stock them in Agate Grey.

**THE VALUE OF A NEUTRAL**

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Which one speaks to you? A colorful array of various Porsche hues over the generations.

- Certain rare colors are currently in vogue; those colors will trade at a significant premium versus more standard colors on that model. The premium will depend on the relative rarity of the given color.
- Certain rare colors are still not currently in vogue. As a general rule, the majority of the currently in vogue colors are single-stage, primary colors (think M&Ms and Skittles).
- One of the best metrics for understanding how much of a premium the market might support for a given color is to do with its rarity. Is it a one-year-only color? Was the color a significant extra cost when new? Is it a truly unique Paint to Sample color?
- When doing a broad-based search, can you find many cars in this particular shade, or does your search turn up little information?
- Some special colors have historical significance: the Porsche family cars in green, the Le Mans 917 in Gulf Blue, a Jägermeister Orange 934. Buying an old car is a nod to nostalgia and a look backward.

SO, IF YOUR PORSCHE is a common color, is it doomed?

No. If we think of the stereotypical Porsche color, Guards Red comes to mind. In the 1980s, if your 911 was anything other than Guards Red you were somehow missing the boat. As a result, there are a tremendous number of Porsches from the 1980s and 1990s in this iconic shade. In fact, I personally own two Guards Red Porsches and showed them in Preservation class at the 2017 Porsche Parade. I cringed when I pulled up in my 1995 RS America and in my class of nine cars, four were Guards Red.

Here’s the good news:
- The color was popular because it was highly desired. People loved that color, so in the long run people will continue to love that color. It clearly showed the car in a great light and captured the essence of that car.
- Because there are so many of a particular model running around in a given shade, people everywhere—including collectors of the future—are developing a connection to that car. Case in point: When I was 12 years old I was a newspaper carrier, and each morning while doing my route, I would see a Bamboo Beige 911 SC in a customer’s driveway. Now, 30 years later, I want a Bamboo Beige 911 SC!
- For the same reasons people pick neutral colors for their new car, you will continue to love that color. It clearly showed the car in a great light and captured the essence of that car.
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The floodgates open—this is the golden era of wild paint schemes!

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Wild Colors of Each Decade

Within each decade you can see some basic trends emerge. While these color lists are not exhaustive, they are a sampling of the more daring colors of each era.

1950s
- Pastels are the flavor of the day.
- Aurantium Green, Lago Green Metallic, Radium Green, Adria Blue, Orange

1960s
- Greens are still popular, but a few more daring colors.
- Leaf Green, Gold Green, Olive, Sea Green, Crystal Blue, Pastel Blue, Champagne Yellow, Blood Orange

1970s
- The floodgates open—this is the golden era of wild paint schemes!
- Rose Red, Magenta, Conda Green, Daphne Green, Lime Green, Jade Green, Ravesia Green, Signal Green, Viper Green, Acid Blue, Arrow Blue, Gulf Blue, Aubergine, Royal Purple, Light Yellow, Signal Yellow, Talbot Yellow, Tangerine, Continental Orange

1980s
- Conservation returns. A few colors mix it up, but by far Porsche’s most buttoned-up color era.
- Granit Green Metallic, Glacier Blue, Minerva Blue, Lime Yellow, Bamboo Beige, Caramel Brown, Neapit Brown Metallic

1990s
- The colors come back! None of them sold in large volumes, but Porsche put them on the palette.
- Raspberry Red, Coral Red Metallic, Rubystone, Mint Green, Murano Green, Signal Green, Turquoise Blue, Riviera Blue, Horizon Blue Metallic, Iris Blue Metallic, Tahoe Blue Metallic, Amaranth Violet, Amethyst Metallic, Viola Metallic, Speed Yellow, Pastel Yellow

2000s
- A retreat from the wild options of the ’90s. A few flamboyant colors, but fairly conservative.
- Orient Red Metallic, Malachite Green, Wimblendon Green, Azure Blue Metallic, Violet Chromaflair, Feyence Yellow, Speed Yellow, Nordic Gold, Orange, Orange Metallic, Oriental, Signal Green

2010-Current
- There are a few slower-selling wild shades, but the industrial shades rule.
- Agua Blue Metallic, Racing Yellow, Miami Blue, Lava Orange, Sand Yellow, Malachite Green, Ipsoma Blue Metallic, Ultraviolet

Get a preview of PCA’s Color Wiki, where you’ll be able to look at a large selection of factory color charts and upload photos of cars in the appropriate colors, as well as paint code/formula information.

Go to: pca.org/colors

Interested in more on Porsche colors? Get a preview of PCA’s Color Wiki, where you’ll be able to look at a large selection of factory color charts and upload photos of cars in the appropriate colors, as well as paint code/formula information.