



# MOTORSCIENCE OF AUCKLAND

*Peter Booth and his team are Porsche specialists*

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMIEN O'CARROLL

**PETER BOOTH OF** Motorscience, is known in Porsche circles as a man who knows what he is doing. He has had more than 20 years experience working on Stuttgart's finest, in New Zealand, Australia and the UK.

But his first job was at South Auckland Motors — a Ford dealer — where one of the mechanics raced an old Lola Formula Ford.

"I started working on the Lola, so my holidays were spent up and down the country with no money. In Timaru a bloke called Allan Ladyman, said 'would you like to get paid for this?'"

"He gave me a phone number for Joe Stimola who owned Stimola Race Prep in the USA. I finished my apprenticeship in November and rang Joe who said I had a job and three weeks later I was in New York.

"I had three years there. We ran Formula Atlantic and Super Vee up and down the east coast. Joe was a big Italian guy who was real hospitable and a real racer! He started with Chip Ganassi back when he was doing Formula Fords."

"One day we were out at Bridgehampton, with a guy testing an S2000 sports car. One lap he didn't come around. We had a big transporter, but his road car happened to be a brand new Porsche 930.

"We jumped in it and found he had just spun off and got stuck in the sand. He was okay, but the 930 was just so good we kept on going for another three or four laps!

When Peter returned to New Zealand he went to work at Continental Car Services, with the idea of working on Porsches.

"I did a tie-rod end on a 924 and that was it with Porsche! The established mechanics who had been there for a long time worked on the Ferraris and Porsches... so I got to know a lot about Fiats and Lancias..."

Peter moved to Australia and took a job at the Porsche dealership in Sydney, which was also a Ferrari and Volvo dealership. Peter started with Volvo and lasted seven weeks before he went to see the service manager and said, quite nicely according to him, that if he couldn't work on Porsches he was going to leave.

It happened and I was full-time on Porsches," Peter laughs.

After a couple of years, he went to London and joined the main Porsche dealer — AFN Ltd, a company formed in 1927 from the ashes of Frazer Nash and was the UK Porsche importer from 1956 AFN became a Porsche factory operation in 1965.

"They raced a 928 and we started to combine some single seater racing with Porsche events."

After two years he returned to New Zealand and Continental Car Services again — but that was the early 90s and the volume wasn't there. Again, I was back to Fiats... so I left to start my own business."

"I sub-leased some space out in Mt Wellington. But there was just me, and it started to get too big!

"One of our customers wanted to buy a new car, so I rang up Richard Giltrap at the importers and he asked if I wanted to work for them.

"I went there as assistant service manager/shop foreman — it was a nice little workshop."

It was at Giltraps that Peter had a stab at the legendary 24 hour race at Le Mans.

"Bill Farmer was racing his GT2 internationally and I rebuilt the motor in Auckland instead of it sending it back to Germany. That worked for him at Daytona, so I ended up being part of the crew when they did Le Mans. That was a nice finish to racing for me. You've got to have full-stops in your life."

Another full-stop came when Porsche increased its identity in New Zealand.

"We moved to a bigger new workshop, which was fine, but it wasn't quite the same for me. So I had a chat with Richard and he really understood how I was feeling. The Giltraps were very good people to work for.

"I had no idea what I would do, but I handed my notice in. "I had been doing work for Ray Williams on his race cars for a long time and he had a little lock-up on Marua Road with a single hoist, so I started there! I knew a guy who owned a building on Monmouth Street behind Giltraps, so off we went!"

So Motorscience was born in the building right behind Giltrap's European Motor Distributors HQ which is also the home of their Porsche dealership!

Last year they moved to the current premises a few streets away, in Brisbane Street.

Although his last stab at international motor racing was the 1992 Le Mans experience, Peter hasn't left motor racing all together.

"About 2/3rds of our business is road work — the rest is racing. We do Bill Fulford's Lighting Direct cars and some of the Bridgestone series cars. We've been doing the Dempsey Wood cars this year.

Each car that has work

done on it at Motorscience has its own "photo album" on the office computer showing the work done.

Peter and his wife Maggie now employ two staff, Paul McCabe and Paul Reynolds, both with extensive Porsche experience.

"We do work on other cars, but we specialise in Porsche," says Peter.

It's pretty clear that when it comes to Porsches, Peter Booth and Motorscience can do more than most... ■

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