



Porsche with a Passion

BEING A PORSCHE CLUB MEMBER, DR RODWIN BAHADUR IS NATURALLY SMITTEN BY THE SLEEK CURVES OF THE CAR. LEONG WONG STEERS THE CONVERSATION TO ITS WONDERS...

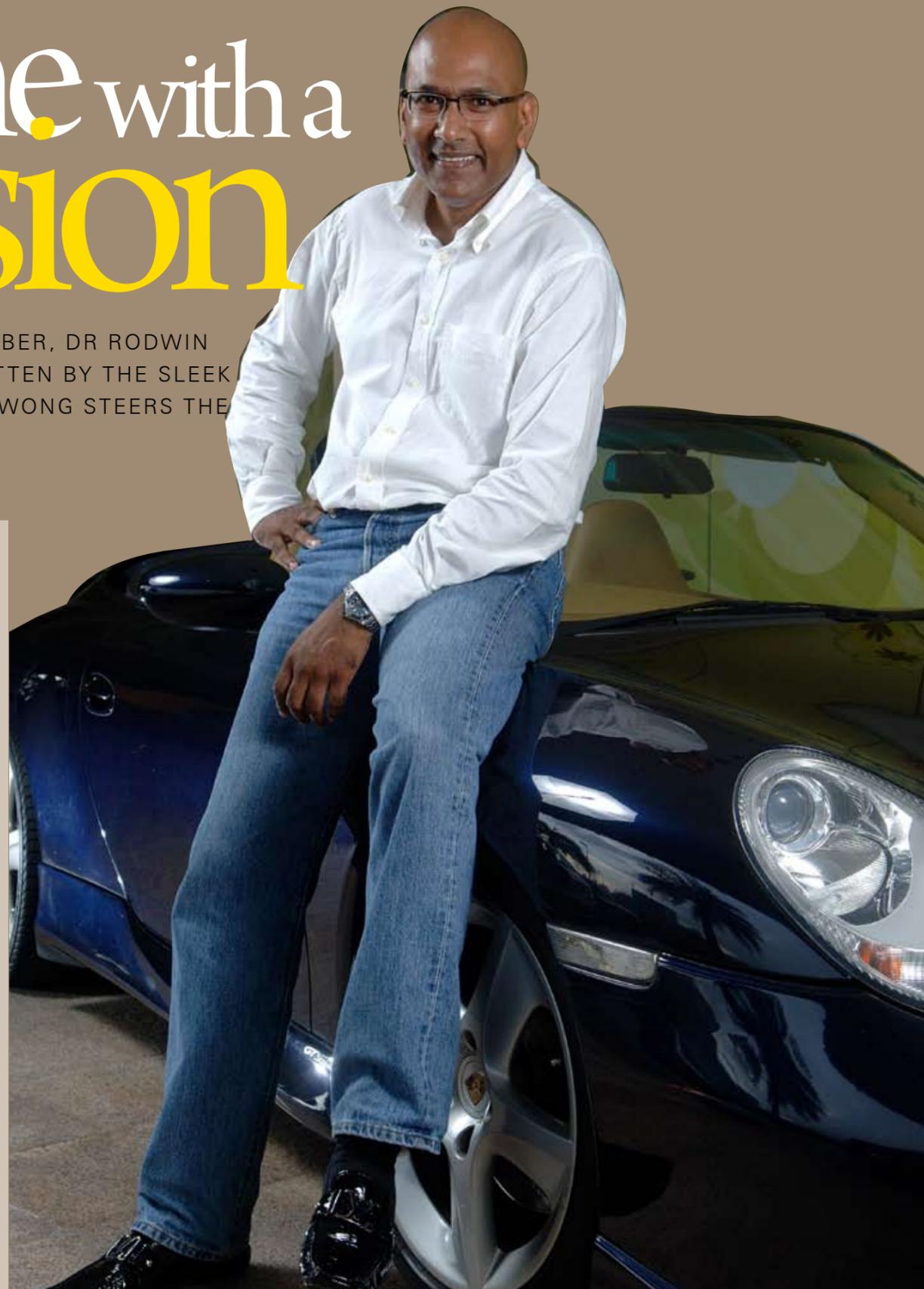
The most distinctive feature about the Porsche is its shape and the placement of the car's engine in the rear. Over the years, from its very first 356 model to today's 911, there have been only two revolutionary changes in its shape.

Those who love the car (and there is a great number of them!) are most inclined to know it inside and out. Dr. Rodwin Bahadur, the founder and CEO of an international business consulting firm, People Equation, is one such person.

He has been a member of the Porsche Club Malaysia (PCM) since 2005 and is also a committee member. He shares his sentiments with Prestige.

I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE LIVED IN 10 COUNTRIES AND FOUR CONTINENTS, COULD YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND?

I was born in South America but grew up in several countries before settling in Canada at the age of 12. My family comes from generations of politicians and businessmen; as such we were involved in the economic and political arena across the South American continent. At one time it was thought that I would venture into the political scene but circumstances took me in other directions. After graduating from university in Canada, I spent the next 30 years living there before moving to Europe.



WHAT TOOK YOU IN THE DIRECTION YOU CHOSE?

After completing my engineering degree, I found a natural analytical aptitude. But though it's a respectable profession, at the time I felt it was limiting unless you choose to pursue a purely technical career path. With business genes coursing through my veins, I completed my MBA and ventured into the international business environment. Over the next 25 years, I worked in every major market in the world except Africa. My PhD was the result of my work with Nokia AB in the early 90's.

BOYS AND CARS ARE KIND OF SYNONYMOUS. WHEN DID YOU BECOME SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN CARS?

My interest came at a very young age. My father was a connoisseur of classic cars and I remember touring many museums and exhibitions with him. It was natural that I would develop an interest in cars although not expectedly in supercars.

WHEN DID YOU GET YOUR FIRST PORSCHE? WHICH MODEL WAS IT?

My first Porsche was a 924 which I bought in my early 20s. It was an entry level Porsche but provided me my first experience of the famous Porsche Design philosophy.

HAVE YOU HAD OTHER PORSCHEs?

To date, I've owned seven Porsches, I generally tend to select models based on technological development – 964s were a significant breakaway from the previous line of 911s in terms of handling, performance and design. Over the past 25 years and more, I've owned a 924, 944, 944 turbo, 911 turbo, two 964's and now a 996. I skipped the 993 but I think it is one of the best modern of Porsche designs.

WHY PORSCHE, WHAT SETS IT APART FROM THE OTHERS?

I always use the term "design philosophy" to describe the distinctness of a Porsche. Design philosophy is the timeless intention that consistently makes a Porsche a Porsche no matter what changes it undergoes externally or internally.

I have driven many supercars; Ferrari's, Lamborghini's, Maserati's amongst them and although each of these cars have their unique forte in the supercar arena, what they lack is the elemental balance of supercar performance with day-to-day drivability.

YOU HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF FOUR DIFFERENT PORSCHE CLUBS. WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND IN COMMON ABOUT THEM?

Each club has the same interests spanning the range from technical to social activities. What differs from one

club to the next is the degree of emphasis in the range. In Sweden, enthusiasts may spend several years re-building a car from scratch, doing everything by hand including the metalwork. In other clubs, members lean towards fine dining and the appreciation of tasteful wines. But no matter which club I'm with, there always exists a camaraderie fuelled by the passion that comes from owning a Porsche.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH PCM?

I've always been involved in the Porsche Clubs I've belonged to but never to this extent.

I recognised the commitment that the PCM committee has in taking the club to the next level and feel I could contribute in time and experience from my past affiliations. My contribution is primarily in communications and the website management, both of which are instrumental in servicing the existing members plus growing the membership. However, this is a small part of the efforts undertaken by the entire committee.

WHEN WAS THE PCM FOUNDED? WHO WAS THE FOUNDER?

In June 1998, a group of Porsche owner-enthusiasts agreed to set up a club for Porsche owners throughout Malaysia. A Pro-tem Committee was elected and they set to work to form the club. After a lot of hard work, the club was duly registered on 23rd December 1998 under the Societies Act 1966. Since then, it has grown from strength to strength. The club holds frequent track-days, originally at the Shah Alam Motor Racing Circuit at Batu Tiga, Shah Alam, Selangor, and later at the Sepang International Circuit. PCM was the first car club to visit the circuit even before it was officially opened.

PCM was honoured to appoint YAB Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as its patron. Tun has always been a keen motorist who enjoys driving his Porsche Cayenne, and who often takes part in club events.

CAN YOU TELL US FIVE FACTS ABOUT THE PORSCHE THAT NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT?

I can tell you three facts from my own experiences and two from Porsche... A Porsche can be reliable and temperamental in the same breath; each model offers a different experience. Your first Porsche is like your first love, you may forget the face but you'll never forget the experience – the 1986 911 turbo is probably one of the most demanding Porsches to drive. The first 911 model was actually named 901 but due to the conflict with Peugeot's numbering scheme, Porsche was forced to change to the now famous 911 numbering. The first 911 sold for an approximate of RM55,000 at today's exchange rate, quite a contrast from the starting price of RM850,000 you would have to pay today. ▶