Chapter 10

The Restorer

A bottom-up restoration — from floor to roof-top — of a Porsche 956 or 962 is a time-consuming and exacting job that can take anything from 1,200 to 1,500 man hours, estimates Trevor Crisp of Katana Limited, the leading Group C restoration specialist based in Buckingham, not far from Silverstone. In terms of time from start to finish, that is up to 12 months, although there may be downtime if any elusive parts are awaited.

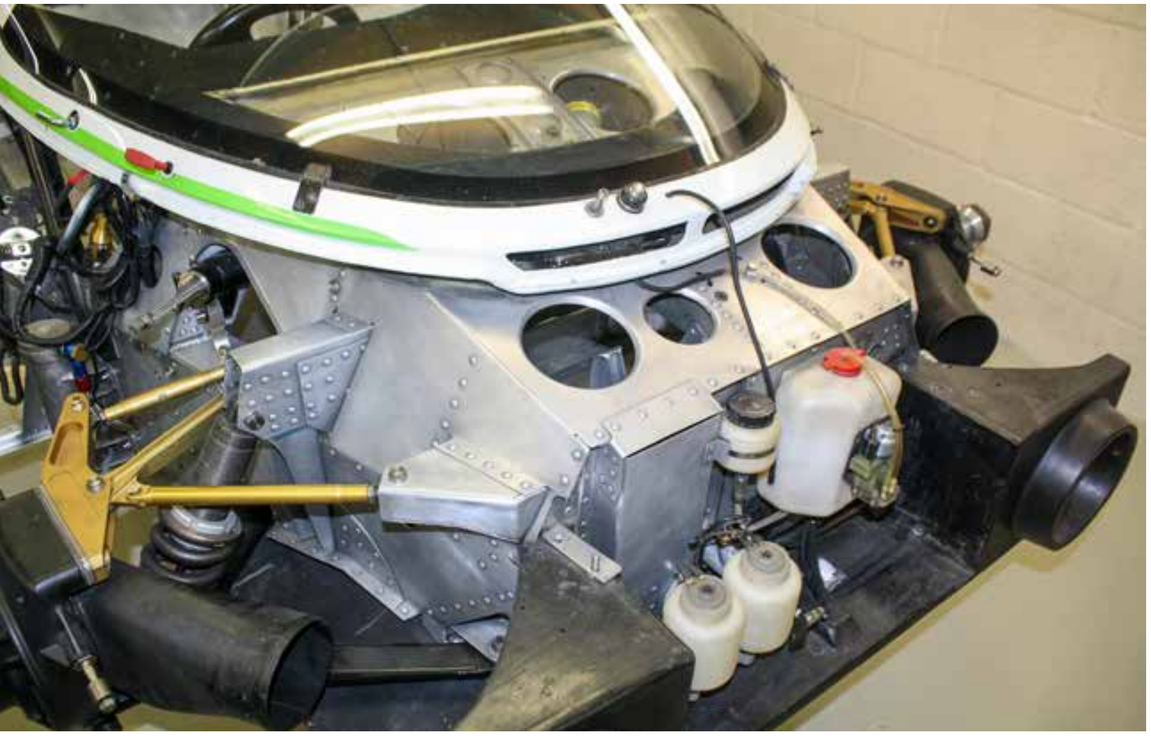
A lot of detective work is involved, as Weissach was always modifying parts and some other teams, such as Kremer, reused chassis numbers on multiple occasions.

In 1984, Weissach built just five 1983 factory-specification 956s for selected customer teams (wrongly labelled '956B' by some), and John Fitzpatrick Racing took delivery of 956 114 that February. The car went on to contest 27 races, the most of any JFR chassis, and took a win at the Norisring DRM and five other podium finishes, two of them second places in the WEC Nürburgring and Mosport 1,000Kms races. It was crashed only once, lightly by Emilo de Villota in the Brands Hatch 1,000Kms warm-up in 1986, so remains remarkably original.

One of Crisp's most recent restorations at the time of writing was 956 114, which came to Katana in December 2017 largely in its original 1984 specification, when it ran in Skoal Bandit colours. The owner, avid collector Henry Pearman, wanted as much as possible of the car's original finish and patina retained, and decided that it should be presented exactly as for its first race, the 1984 Monza 1,000Kms.

'All the bodywork was showing all the history from its previous life, a

■ Katana owner Trevor Crisp, here with 962 007, has been working on Group C Porsches since the 1990s, and knows them better than anyone. *Author*



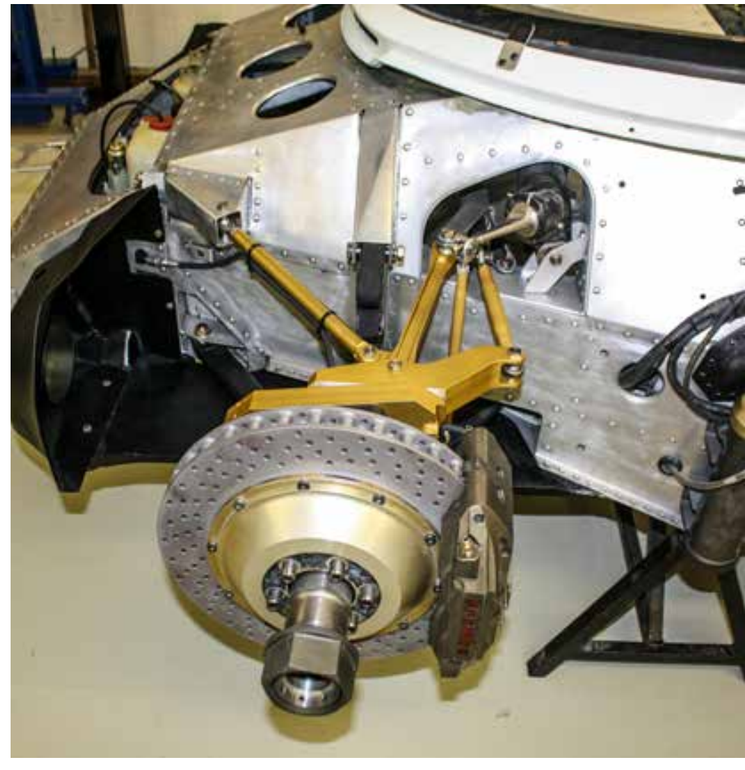
bit beaten about and chipped,' says Trevor. 'It was the same with all the components on the car. A car is only original-looking once, so this restoration was at the preservation end of the spectrum rather than the concours type. If there are any areas that need repair, we'll do this sympathetically so we don't take away the originality.'

A case in point on 956 114 concerns repairs made after Le Mans in 1984, when Philippe Streiff ran over debris. After the race, the team riveted a circular plate over the hole punched in the floor. During its recent restoration, other damage to the floor and cross member was found, so Trevor called in John Thompson to replace the cross member. Crisp: 'We just put in a section of rear floor to allow access to the cross member — common practice in period — but stopped it short of that hole: it's part of the car's history.'

Similarly, the battery carrier was punched into the driver's side by the front wheel when Emilio de Villota hit the pit wall at Brands Hatch in 1986; the original repair is still there.

'We go through the whole car, starting with the chassis,' continues Trevor. 'These cars have a hard time over the years. Everything is stripped off the chassis, then it's jet-washed to get rid of any oil or residue in the seams. We check all suspension pick-up points, engine and gearbox

■ Comparison views of 956 114 (upper) and 962 007 (lower): the nosebox access holes to the pedal box are further forward of the windscreen on a 962C.
Author



■ Comparison views of 956 114 (upper) and 962 007 (lower): the front suspension on a 962C is cranked forward to move the front axle centre line ahead of the pedal box. On each car, note the air jack to the right.
Author

■ Cockpit and underfloor views of 956 114, showing the circular repair under the dash after Philippe Streiff ran over Aston Martin crash debris at Le Mans in 1984.
Author

frame mountings, as these are welded aluminium fabrications, and crack-test them in situ. If we find any cracked aluminium welds, we repair them.

'Once we're happy with the chassis, the whole thing will be scrupulously cleaned by hand and finished using fine abrasive pads to achieve a uniform natural-looking finish. Many cars, especially from America, arrive polished to death, which to me looks completely wrong. Needless to say, they never leave us looking that way.'

Katana then goes through the suspension, stripping everything to the base components, and again all parts is crack-tested. The use of eddy current testing (ECT), an electromagnetic procedure, enables a component to be crack-tested without stripping the original paint from it — especially useful on wheels and wishbones.

If a car is not likely to be used in anger, the Bilstein shock absorbers will be sent off for dyno-testing; if they are functioning correctly,

■ Monocoque of 956 114, repaired after the battery carrier was punched into the side at Brands Hatch in 1986.
Author

■ Rear bulkhead of 956 114 awaiting the engine; the vertical turbo intercoolers and angled radiators for cooling the cylinder heads show well; the triangulated spaceframe cradle carries the powertrain and suspension.
Author

The Restorer

■ Titanium rear anti-roll bar (near photo) assembly costs £5,500 to make today. Aluminium oil pump drive off rear transmission (far photo) is frangible if debris gets in; a steel one would cause more damage.
Author

■ Standard on all 956s, a transmission spool (near photo) locked the rear axle; a differential could instead be fitted, making handling easier in the rain. A maze of pipes and wiring (far photo) for fuel pumps.
Author

■ Although Porsche did not stamp numbers on its chassis, it did on its engines (near photo), as seen on 935 83, and on its gearboxes (far photo).
Author

and there are no leaks, they will be left alone. For a car that will be raced, more modern shock absorbers will be substituted as the period Bilsteins are non-adjustable.

'If anything is suspect, we replace it,' says Trevor. 'If we're restoring one of Henry's cars, we use parts from his ex-Schuppan stock. If it's someone else's car, we try to source the parts from elsewhere, but the problem now is that people want silly money even for parts in average condition. Often it makes more sense to reverse-engineer whatever we need, then make extras to put into stock.

'A lot of these parts aren't cheap. For example, a complete titanium rear roll-bar assembly retails at £5,500; we made a batch of five last year that are now all sold. There are very few major steel parts; apart from motor and gearbox, there are just the front wishbones, front roll bar, roll cage, and rear wishbones and rocker assemblies. Everything else is aluminium, magnesium or titanium.'

One example of Porsche's engineering excellence is the fact that every single main suspension bolt and spacer is made from titanium, whereas all other manufacturers of Group C cars used off-the-shelf items. Katana has a machine shop that can reproduce all such titanium items, and over the years the company has built up a full set of technical drawings.

'The flat-six engines go to Xtec Engineering in Walsall, where Paul Knapton specialises in high-performance rebuilds,' continues Trevor. 'There they are totally rebuilt and refinished as they were originally, and then dyno-tested to ensure they are giving the expected 630bhp — in this case for the 2.65-litre 935 79 that will be refitted to 956 114 — before returning to us.'

Gearbox specialists either no longer wish to support these Group C Porsches or lack the experience to rebuild their gearboxes to the required standard, so Katana now rebuilds them in-house; parts for the five-speed transmissions are also getting harder to find. So, Trevor says, 'We made up the required tooling, and now do it all here. The transmissions are well-built and sturdy, and as long as the cars have been looked after well, they're usually OK. But if a car has been raced on a limited budget, you are likely to have problems.'

The turbochargers go to an experienced outside specialist who has been rebuilding them for over

■ The splined power take-off between clutch and gearbox allows quick and easy clutch replacement in situ.
Author

■ Rebuilt by Xtec Engineering, the engine goes back into 956 114, with Katana's Pohl de Visser connecting the intercooler piping; the gearbox spacer casing completes the load-bearing cradle.
Author

■ Used for the first time by the factory at Kyalami in 1982, the Bosch Motronic engine management system became standard wear on both factory and customer cars. This unit is a 1988 MP1.7.
Author

■ Rear suspension detail free of brake-cooling pipes; note upper/lower wishbones and rocker arms before shock absorbers and springs are fitted.
Author

30 years. 'They're sent off as a matter of course; they do have leakage issues and often debris damage. Waste gates get rebuilt in-house; we find that a lot of people seem to completely ignore these for some reason. They are often totally worn, needing new guides with a recut on the valve seats, along with new diaphragms and springs. The valves used to be lubricated with an aluminium-based anti-slip paste similar to copper-slip, which over time led to the valves becoming completely seized in their guides, leading to the inevitable over-boost!'

Water radiators, oil coolers and intercoolers are sent to a specialist to be sonically cleaned and pressure-tested. 'The early intercoolers contain a water pre-cooler core [banned by 1989] and we are now seeing a number of failures here. Originally the engines used a basic gauze filter on the turbo intake, rather than the K&N type, which resulted in the water core basically being sand-blasted from the inside, coupled with corrosion from within the core due to some early anti-freeze becoming corrosive.

'Water pipes are all solid aluminium with aircraft-spec Wiggins connectors, rather than your usual rubber hoses and jubilee clips. We now use a waterless coolant to eliminate any further corrosion, which can be a major problem with the original cast-iron water pump impellors. All other fuel, oil and water-bleed lines are Aeroquip Nitrile braided hoses, which have a lifespan of about 10 years, and we use Teflon braided hose for the brakes, clutch and air-jack lines.'

Fuel cells are changed as a matter of course as their life span is only five years — even if 956 114, when it arrived, still had its original fuel cell from 1984! High-pressure fuel pumps will be tested for flow rate and current draw, then rebuilt if necessary. The low-pressure Bosch 'lift' pumps date back to the 917 days and often leak.

'We have worked out how to completely rebuild these pumps,' adds Trevor, 'by changing the six O-rings, which require the electrical connections to the motor de/re-soldering. It's fiddly and time-consuming but we have no choice as they are no longer available.

'Other people generally replace most of the Nitrile fuel hoses when necessary, but there are four tiny ones between the fuel rails and the regulators that have a unique crimped-on fitting at one end. The number of original examples of these I have seen on running cars is rather frightening.'

Wheels and tyres come under scrutiny. While the factory mainly used Speedline wheels, customer cars were generally supplied with BBS. They were 16-inch diameter to start with on both the 956 and early IMSA 962 cars; this increased to 17-inch, with a few 956s even sporting 19-inch rears. The first customer 962Cs came with 17-inch wheels all round but later ones had 19-inch rears, which allowed the use of narrower rims without reducing the rubber footprint. This allowed the under-body tunnels to be widened for more downforce. For Le Mans, with the long-tail bodywork, 17-inch wheels were used all round.

To keep 956 114 truly original, it once again has a set of Momo wheels. It was a Momo that broke up at the exceptionally rough and bumpy Mosport circuit in 1984, putting Rupert Keegan's 962 105 off the road in practice, ending its Canadian weekend; that prompted the team to change back to original-equipment BBS rims.

'Brakes are thoroughly checked,' says Trevor, 'especially if sprint discs are fitted. These have a lot of lightening holes and they tend to crack a lot. I get new ones custom-made in France, at huge cost, but you cannot tell them from the originals.

'The original brake calipers are magnesium. There are eight of those, two per wheel, and they can crack around the bleed nipples as the material is too thin. So they're taken apart very, very carefully; you can spend two days just getting them apart. Then they're crack-tested, and fitted with new seals and pistons if required. They're one of the horror areas on these early cars.'

Moving into the cockpit, a car receives a new fire extinguisher system as a matter of course and, if it is to be raced, a new set of seat belts too. Otherwise, the original belts are retained: 'A new set of belts doesn't work if you're trying to make everything look original and in period.'

The roll cages, aluminium for the 956, steel for the 962C, are usually fine — 'if there's a problem there, then you've had a very big accident' — and the pedal assembly is all crack-tested and master cylinder seals replaced. Then Katana cleans and checks all the instruments for any electrical malfunctions, and makes sure that the gauges are working. All wiring looms are removed and thoroughly cleaned, and inspected for damage to wires and terminals. Then all is retaped to look as good as new.

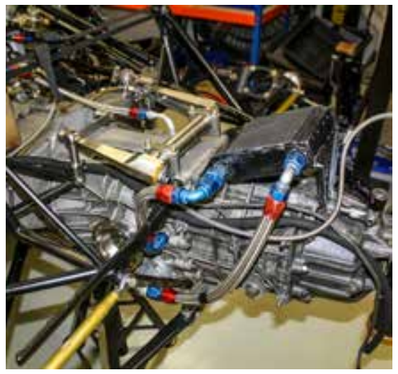
'Factory Porsches had a cluster of four small red lights on the dash directly in front of the driver,' continues Trevor. 'These were operated by integral sensors in the Speedline magnesium wheels to illuminate should tyre pressure fall. No customer cars had these fitted, although, interestingly, the wiring is there for them.'

Bodywork is next in a restoration, although with 956 114 nothing was necessary beyond adjustment all of the fixings to make sure everything fits properly and securely, especially where quick-release pip-pins are used and holes have enlarged, otherwise there is the risk of a pin falling out.

With a full body restoration, however, the time involved becomes true to the 'how long is a piece of string?' analogy, especially if the appearance is to

■ Adam Giles and Pohl de Visser connect the water-cooled cylinder head pipework; the cylinders themselves would not be water-cooled until the 3-litre 962s came along.
Author

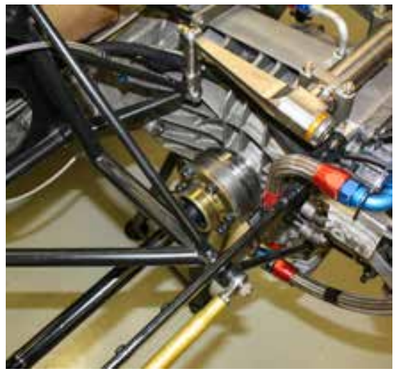
■ Attention to detail is Katana's trademark; only the best-quality nuts, bolts, washers and screws are used, many titanium as in period.
Author



■ Even the gearbox has its own oil cooler, piped up with Aeroquip hoses; note the rear anti-roll bar fitted in place atop the transmission housing
Author

■ Rear suspension detail showing triangulated rocker arms, awaiting the spring/damper unit to be connected to the anti-roll bar and bottom wishbones.
Author

■ The front brakes use twin calipers to slow the car down from the high straight-line speeds achieved at Le Mans; note the all-important pad-retaining clips.
Author



■ Driveshaft detail and Aeroquip oil-cooler piping to the gearbox; Porsche fabricated most components in-house, although others copied.
Author

be changed from sprint to Le Mans configuration, and total restoration time can rise to 2,000 man hours. If a car has been updated in period to the 28cm rear underbody maximum height of 1988 but the owner wants to backdate it to previous full-height specification, this is a major operation involving the entire floor section.

'The original body fit on most prototypes of this era was average, to say the least,' says Trevor. 'Each panel was individually fitted to a particular car, so a piece from one car will very rarely fit another without substantial work.'

Once Katana is happy with the body fit, the panels are all levelled, using as little additional material as possible, before the panel gaps are trimmed or filled to give a consistent finish.

'Regarding the original livery, we have a guy called Andy Bell who is the only person I trust. It's a long process, starting with finding as many period images as possible; we always build cars to a specific race specification and livery. While Andy researches the various logos and fonts, I measure the car and supply a list of the sizes I think they should be — which is right about 95 per cent of the time! Andy will then visit to fit them: he's as fussy as I am about the accuracy of decals, and sometimes we'll cock up a bit, but we keep redoing it until it looks absolutely correct.'

The decals might be Rothmans, Canon or Skoal Bandit, or something tricky with stripes running around the car, like the Victor Computer ex-Fitzpatrick 962-112.

'With 956 114, its Skoal Bandit decals were put on a very long time ago, so I went through it all to check everything for accuracy, then we renewed anything that was missing or incorrect. But the trouble is, once you start putting on new stickers, they stand out from the old, so you have to do it sympathetically. If there's something really wrong, something that was never on the car, then, yes, we'll remove it. Basically it would be easier to take all the stickers off and start again — but on 956 114 Henry wanted to keep them.'

■ The engine and gearbox are now plumbed in, but await turbochargers and rear springs; rear frame supports bodywork.
Author

■ Now the turbochargers, rear suspension springs and underbody have been fitted, so the engine is ready to run; note the cooling ducts to the rear brakes.
Author

■ Detail of the turbocharger and intercooler, with stubby exhaust pipes exiting body side; these were vulnerable to side collisions.
Author

■ Rear suspension detail showing shock absorbers, coil springs and titanium anti-roll bar.
Author

■ Front suspension with shock absorbers and coil springs now mounted; twin-caliper ventilated disc brakes require massive ducts for cool air.
Author

Doors, windows, headlight covers and windscreen all need attention too. If a car is being repainted, it will receive new headlight covers and door windows, whereas if the original paint is being retained those items will only be replaced if they are badly broken. Katana has moulds for the door windows and headlight covers for both sprint and Le Mans versions of the 956, and both 1.2 and 1.7 versions of the 962C.

Windscreens, which are heated, have to be specially made as they are no longer available, and 956/962C screens have a double curvature at the top that makes them extremely difficult to manufacture correctly.

'It doesn't just wrap around the aperture, but also curves back at the top, which is extremely difficult to get right,' says Trevor. 'Back in 2000 we spent £10,000 on tooling to make new screens and developed a computer-controlled programme to bend them with heat jets in the right places at the right time during the process. Other people offer screens but the fit is appalling and invariably they don't have any top curvature. If we have to replace one, it will be because it's badly cracked; if it has just chips or minor cracks, we will have it professionally repaired.'

'Then it's a short journey to Superchips, also in Buckingham, where the car goes onto their rolling road,' adds Trevor. 'Ian Sandford at Superchips used to work for Richard Lloyd back in the GTi Engineering days, so it's a small world. As well as the motor, this gives us a chance to check the transmission; the last thing you want to do is get to the circuit and find there is a problem with the gearbox.'

Does Trevor miss his charges after spending the best part of a year restoring — or preserving

■ Deep driver's seat – all Group C Porsches were right-hand drive – has five-point safety harness; sportscars were, and remain, two-seaters by definition, even if only a dummy passenger seat was fitted.
Author

■ As the restoration of 956 114 nears completion, sidepods and door are added.
Author

■ The 956 came with a lockable driver's door, using a lock straight off the Volkswagen production line – not easy to use in a hurry.
Author

■ The 956 had a standard 911 ignition switch and key to start the engine; these red keys are scarce today.
Author

■ The 956 had a purpose-designed door pull handle, utilising 928 latches and painted red to catch the attention of marshals or rescue crews should the car be in trouble.
Author

■ The underbody venturi tunnels that give the 956 its ground effects are neatly packaged either side of the engine and gearbox.
Author

— them? 'Group C cars have been my working life for 30 years now, and I could never imagine doing anything else. But no, I don't get sentimental. As soon as I've finished one, there's another one waiting.'

A wealth of experience

Acknowledged as one of today's premier Group C car restorers, Trevor Crisp learned his trade as an engineer on Norwegian Martin Schanche's Lucky Strike C2 Argo team in 1988, engineering for the world rallycross champion and Will Hoy.

His skills soon caught the attention of Britons Richard Piper and Patrick Capon, whose PC Automotive Spice C2 team he joined in 1989, with markedly more success. Running only selected world championship races, Piper and Olindo Iacobelli took three thirds at Dijon, Jarama and Spa, and a second at the Nürburgring. Those results were precursors to the big one: sharing the car with Mike Youles, they won C2 at the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1990, the final year for the category.

By now former Le Mans winner Vern Schuppan was converting Porsche 962s into road cars, and Crisp joined him at High Wycombe, at the old Tiga factory, developing and engineering them to meet type approval.

'With TWR now doing its XJR-15 road car and McLaren the F1,' recalls Trevor, 'it seemed to be a good market to be going into as Vern was planning two types of car with a production run of 50. To me it was a good career move with Group C on the decline, and I would be in from the very start.

'Vern was racing in Japan, but of all a sudden there were going to be new cars to build for the 1991 Le Mans 24 Hours [where Vern was showcasing his 962CR supercar prototype], and I got drafted over to the race team to build two completely new 962-based cars, with different bodywork — everything.'

Designated TS-02C and TS-03C, the two new cars had chassis by Advanced Composites and Japanese sponsorship from 0123 Art Sports. TS-02C, to be driven by Eje Elgh/Roland Ratzenberger/Will Hoy, used the aero package developed by Jochen Dauer for the infamous 1991 Daytona shoot-out between the Unser and Andretti families. TS-03C, for James Weaver/Hurley Haywood/Wayne Taylor, was schemed by Aston Martin designer Max Boxstrom (and later reworked by Ralph Bellamy).

While Elgh qualified TS-02C 37th, the Boxstrom car was deemed undriveable because, says Crisp, 'It had little downforce and was basically trying to take off.' A pair of Porsche mechanics had meanwhile been quietly working on the team's spare 962 146 in a corner and, given the situation with TS-03C, it was duly pressed into service, qualifying 33rd — so this became their race car. It went on to finish 13th, delayed by a raft of niggling problems, including trouble with door hinges, while TS-02C went out with head-gasket failure after 14 hours.

After Le Mans it was back to the day job for Trevor, building the road cars. In the spring of 1992, ADA Engineering's Chris Crawford purchased the last unfinished Richard Lloyd Racing 962 RLR 202 chassis, along with all of RLR's spares stock. Trevor was drafted in 'after hours' in order to get the car finished for an assault at Le Mans for the Bells, Derek and Justin, with Tiff Needell. They finished 12th after persistent brake problems.

By late 1992, Schuppan was in difficulties with his Japanese backers, not to mention the turmoil in the world stock markets, which started to make these supercars look more like follies rather that sound investments.

'I could see that the writing was on the wall at Schuppan; staff were being laid off every week, and that's when I went to ADA full-time at Brentford. Then the 962s started coming in; we had Henry Pearman's pink RLR 201, which Porsche Cars GB owned at the time, which we recommissioned, and jury-rigged an extra set of seat belts for a charity event giving passenger rides. Then Nick Mason's RLR 200 arrived and he asked us to backdate it to its 1988 spec.'

In the spring of 1993 Vern needed to complete the last Schuppan LM road car and, without the infrastructure to build it, commissioned ADA to do so. Crisp: 'We worked day and night to get the car built as quickly as possible and managed it in a record four weeks flat.'

■ Back on its wheels after a 12-month restoration, 956 114 shows the rear bodywork fit over the venturi tunnels; note the wing-adjustment rods.
Author

■ Restored to its Le Mans 1984 livery, 956 114 sports Skoal Bandit and *Newsweek* identities, both brought to JFR by Guy Edwards.
Katana

■ All customer Porsches were delivered white; for their livery schemes teams used vinyl, which was not easy to apply over such curvaceous lines.
Author

Crawford, meanwhile, had been buying up all available 956/962 spares, convinced that one day there would be a big market for Group C cars: 'At that time nobody wanted the parts and you couldn't do anything with the cars.'

Then in 1994 ADA ran 962 RLR 202 at Le Mans again, this time for an inexperienced all-Japanese crew, funded by Japanese rock star Masahiko Kondo with co-drivers Jun Harada and female racer Tomiko Yoshikawa. 'The whole thing was a fiasco. Because Le Mans was now running to GT regulations, the ACO would only allow the engine to use tiny restrictors, and most of the ground effects were gone because there was a massive flat floor area with smaller tunnels. Imagine three amateurs driving a flat-bottomed 962 with no power, and a load of ballast as well...'

The only 962 prototype in the 69-car field, RLR 202 qualified 13th. Despite two nose-damaging offs in the first part of the race, the Japanese crew were running in the top 12 at midnight. Then Yoshikawa became stranded on the Mulsanne straight by an electrical fault, which she was eventually able to rectify thanks to trackside instructions from Trevor relayed via an interpreter. After the car resumed, a cracked cylinder head caused coolant loss, so the team parked the car in the pits to wait for the closing laps to rejoin. It took the chequered flag but was unclassified, having completed only half the winning distance.

A factory-built Dauer Porsche 962 'GT', loosely based on road-car conversions, won the race outright, finally achieving what Vern Schuppan had tried to do in 1991. After buying JFR, Jochen Dauer had turned to supercars.

More restoration work came to ADA. Trevor worked on the very first customer 956, chassis 101, which was delivered to Kremer in 1983, at the same time as JFR received its 956 102. Then Jonathan Baker brought in Tim Lee-Davey's carbon-chassis 138 car.

Le Mans 1995 saw Trevor reunited with Richard Piper, who drafted in ADA to run one of PC Automotive's two ex-TWR Jaguar XJ220s, which unfortunately failed to finish after an excursion during the night. That had upset the aerodynamics to the extent that it was undriveable. The sister car would also fail to finish due to a broken crankshaft.

ADA was also running a de Tomaso Pantera, one of whose drivers was Dominic Chappell, who in 2018 was convicted of regulatory offences in the British Home Stores pension scandal. The Pantera won the British GT championship in 1995, but on the global scene it was no match for the McLaren F1-GTR. Crisp: 'We gave it a good try, and with Andy Wallace driving we

■ Sitting on its original Momo wheels, 956 114 is ready to race; the Rizla decal is a nod to driver Rupert Keegan's sponsor.
Author

■ Showing its Le Mans sticker for 1984 with the WEC decal, 956 114 remains highly original, apart from current owner Henry Pearman's name.
Author

■ Jürgen Barth, here at Katana with Trevor Crisp and 956 114, shook down every 956 and 962 built at Weissach. *Author*

were close to winning a couple of races, but budget constraints ultimately put an end to our BPR campaign.'

In 1996 ADA became involved with Nissan Motorsports Europe (NME) in Didcot, initially developing their four-wheel-drive Super Touring prototype, then developing and building all of the two-wheel-drive Super Touring cars for the 1997 season.

After ADA closed in 1997, Crawford, who had been continuing to stockpile 956/962 spares, set up Group C Limited in High Wycombe, in premises formerly occupied by Schuppan's operation. Trevor went with him — and worked there for the next 15 years.

'We rebuilt a lot of cars during that time, mainly 956 and 962s, including three works Rothmans cars.

'From the connections we had made at NME we bought and restored the 1990 Blundell pole-setting Nissan R90CK-01, which had been sitting in the Le Mans museum for many years, owned by Nismo. With a historic race series looming in the form of Group C/GTP racing, we also purchased the most advanced R90CK ever made, for Charlie Agg. It had been run by Nova Engineering in Japan through to 1993, and had some major aero upgrades including a biplane wing *à la* Jaguar XJR-14, now with the designation R93CK. In early 2000 we took both cars to the HSR historic races at Daytona and finished first and third overall. Subsequently we ran Charlie in the European Group C series with great results and many wins, including the first Le Mans support race in 2004.

'Chris had over that time acquired Preston Henn's Swap Shop 956 103 and the famous 956 007, Stefan Bellof's Nordschleife lap record holder. Both cars, needless to say, were restored to perfection.'

Crawford decided to close Group C Limited in early 2012, selling all the assets to Henry Pearman. Trevor relocated the whole of the company's property — spare parts, workshop equipment — down to Eagle in Sussex, where Henry had set up a separate workshop purely for servicing his Group C cars.

'In 2013 circumstances changed somewhat,' says Crisp, 'when the new owner of the old Schuppan building in High Wycombe enquired about recommissioning his 956 101 Kenwood car to run at the 72nd Goodwood Members' meeting.

I struck a deal to set up a new workshop in the old Group C Ltd part of the building in return for a favourable rate on his projects. This coincided with Wayne Dempsey, then CEO of Pelican Parts, buying the ex-RLR 962 106B chassis, which needed a full restoration. Then I brokered a deal for him to buy 962 112, which also required complete restoration.'

This was the start of Katana, Trevor's own business, which soon relocated again, to Buckingham in 2014. Working with two mechanics, he has a 'good, steady business' that can take up to four cars for restoration at any one time. Group C Porsches are very much Katana's speciality, but the company will take on other sportscars from the era.

'Having worked on many different chassis over the years,' says Trevor, 'we know other marques and can take them on. We recently restored a Jaguar XJR-15 for a former Formula 1 principal: it turned out to be a very straightforward car, simple compared to a 962C.

'But the 956 and 962C are the cars I most enjoy working on. They're more complex than others and have superb build quality. Every part, every titanium bolt, spacer and washer, is specific to the car — there's no corner-cutting.

'There are very few steel components on the car apart from motor and gearbox internals, wishbones, rear rockers, steering rack and pinion, and front roll bar. Everything else is either magnesium, aluminium or titanium. Porsche parts were and are very expensive, but they're top quality and wouldn't let you down.'

One of the Porsches on the workshop floor as we talk is the John Fitzpatrick Racing 956 114, the team's Skoal Bandit car for 1984, its American 100's car for 1985 and its Danone car for 1986, at the end of which it was sold to Dauer. Another car in the workshop, in its Dauer Victor Computer livery, is 962 112, which started life as JFR's first car, 956 102. This is the first time these cars have been together since the end of the 1980s.

Although Trevor works on these cars every day, has he ever driven one in anger? 'No, only slowly. I helped a friend who looked after the three Shell/Dunlop 962Cs at the Daytona Rennsport meeting in 2004, and I drove one round and parked on the banking for a photo shoot. It's just like driving a road car, docile, really easy to drive, especially with the synchro gearbox. But I've never lapped in one, or even driven one remotely hard!'

■ Now owned by Wayne Dempsey of California, the ex-Fitzpatrick 962 112 received a total restoration in 2018 by Katana; the chosen livery is that of Victor Computer, as run by Jochen Dauer in 1987. *Author*