

DECISION! Buy or Build

W. E. "Ike" Eichelberger



Most people in our region by now have seen or heard of the Porsche-Keil. The introduction of this variable wedge shaped, Porsche powered race car was the culmination of a great concentration of effort that started in November of 1968. The three individuals expending this effort were Bob Buck, the innovator and designer, Joe Hunt, the builder and finisher, and I had the responsibility for the mechanical end. Thus, the Porsche-Keil racing team includes the above mentioned persons plus three very understanding and patient wives; Martha Buck, Jean Hunt and Romie Eichelberger.

The events that led to the undertaking of this project may be of interest, especially to those of you that have had thoughts of building your own modified racing car. I had campaigned for 5 seasons in a Porsche Speedster, class EP. During the '67/'68 winter layoff, I decided to move into the modified racing category. I really wanted a Porsche 906 but after much frustrating searching, I concluded that a 906 was out of my financial reach. The compromise was an Elva-Porsche, circa '64, that was potentially competitive. The '68 season was also a lesson in frustration while campaigning this car. VIR National - broken axle; Cumberland National - Corvette wiped out the nose; Central Car. VIR National - fire, bad oil leak and ignition loss; Gobbins Go VIR - FIRE!

Bob Buck, then a final year student at the N. C. State School of Design, had repaired the extensive fiber glass damage incurred at Cumberland. I had also helped Bob rebuild his street Porsche at one time, so that our association was established long before the Porsche-Keil project was conceived.

Near the end of the '68 season, I was very unhappy with the Elva-Porsche venture. One thing I knew for certain -- a change was going to be made! At that point, I had to make the decision: buy or build. I must give a lot of credit to Romie