

THE LITTLE CAR THAT COULD ... AND DID!

1974 Porsche 911 with 178K miles set up for autocrossing/street driving + borrowed parts + a devoted crew of friends and drivers = 25-hour endurance racer? HUH???

Team "Lost 'N Spaced Racing" finished second in class (ES), but most surprisingly, second overall at the 25 Hours of Thunderhill endurance race, December 4 & 5, 2004. Second overall! We could not believe it and we still can't believe it. The name of our race team came from Masuo "Robinson" and Peter "Smith." Hmm. Robinson and Smith. Hey, that's Lost in Space, the television series from way back. Dr. John Robinson and Dr. Zachary Smith, along with Major Don West (Rich

Walton) and Will Robinson (Neil Jackson) made up the four drivers for the race.

The "Jupiter II" has 178,000 miles on it (not the engine/transmission). It's a 30-year old 911 that you can drive on the street (it has a license plate, interior trim, power windows and a heater that still works!) and on the track. It is truly not race ready. Certain items were needed to prepare the car for the 25-hour enduro. The car that arrived at the track utilized many borrowed parts. Our "sponsorship" to the event was provided by a coalition of friends with either their parts or their services. The race seat and shifter (Wevo) were borrowed from another racecar. The wing was borrowed as well as the fuel cell (SmartRacing Products), prototype brake calipers/rotors (Wevo-Windrush Evolutions), wheels and bumper. Spare parts were provided by Sporthaus Inc. from Reno, Nevada. Additional help was provided by StrasseUSA.com

Story: Louise Sousoures Photos: Dave Leong



Drivers Neil Jackson, Peter Smith, Masuo Robinson, Rich Walton

We went into this race with the goal of finishing. Never in our wildest dreams did we think we would finish second overall. Even more amazing was that we beat several factory sponsored teams! Just goes to show you that with determination and planning, you can accomplish anything. In true 911 spirit, we didn't have to turn a wrench the whole 25 hours, except to replace two sets of front brake pads.



Pit stop during the 25 Hours

That's it. The car ran smoothly and effortlessly throughout the entire race, the engine strong and reliable.



It was really cold that nite! From left, Peter Smith, Gary Trudeau, Jim Lane, Larry Sharp.

On a side note, it was almost a race that didn't happen. After the impressive fly-by of the Air Force, Masuo, the first driver, belted himself into the car for the start of the race. Peter Smith noticed that the key to the car was still attached to the key chain dangling from the ignition and wanted to take the key off the chain before the race. Peter did and when he reinserted the key, it wouldn't turn ... remember, 178,000 miles ... Peter finally managed to turn it over and everyone breathed a sigh of relief! The car remained in the "on" position for the duration of the event - with the exception of one brake pad change. No point in tempting fate again! We started ninth on grid. We went virtually unnoticed throughout the entire race and that's probably a good thing. Team Honda Research, with their 2004 Acura TL started sixth.

As we were on grid and knowing that their car was new, we asked them how many miles the car had. Their response was "How many miles did we put on it yesterday (testing on Friday)?" We stayed 2 laps ahead of them for the final 2 hours. Incredible racing. As luck would have it, we were pitted next to each other. We knew that Team Honda Research had two more pit stops to make.

Our crew had been keeping track of their pit stops, tire changes and when they needed to come in for fuel. Advantage to Lost 'N Spaced Racing? We needed to make a final pit stop for one right-front tire and fuel. Just as we made the decision to pit, there was a full course yellow. Peter Smith knew what to do which was to stay on track. NASA rules state that in the event of a yellow, you cannot work on the car in the pits. Once the track went green, we made our pit stop.

We were on the same lap as Team Honda Research, but we knew they had to make another pit stop. As all this was going on, we realized that we had moved into 2nd place!

Team TSR-Too, in their Radical SR3, had experienced a problem and endured a lengthy pit stop. We were able to make up the 11-lap difference and stay ahead of them to the checkered flag.

It's an incredible feeling when you can put together a team of friends who enjoy racing, put together a car from borrowed parts, run a 25-hour race and finish second overall. Just amazing.

Thanks to all!

Some interesting stats:

Car: 1974 911 with 3.6 liter engine, rebuilt transmission, power windows

Total laps: 651 (Thunderhill Raceway w/bypass configuration)

Fastest lap: 2:04:40

Stint per driver: Approximately 1 hour 45 minutes

Pit stop average time: 4.0 to 4.5 minutes

Drivers:

Masuo Robinson (Dr. John Robinson)

Peter Smith (Dr. Zachary Smith)

Rich Walton (Major Don West)

Neil Jackson (Will Robinson)

Crew:

Louise Sousoures (Maureen Robinson)

Susan Smith (Judy Robinson)

Patty Stark (Penny Robinson)

Neil Yonk (Robot)

Gary Trudeau (Anti-Matter Man)

Jim Stark

Jim Lane

Larry Sharp

Mat Lowrance (master engine builder)

Special help from RS Motorsports crew

Team photographer: David Leong



The Lost in Space Team



Lost in Space Leads the way