

McQUEEN'S MACHINES The Cars and Bikes of a Hollywood Icon

By Matt Stone
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The name Steve McQueen means many things to many people. Actor, racer, collector, scoundrel, icon...Steve was all of these and then some. Many books and articles have been published on a myriad of subjects with McQueen as the focal point. No matter who you are his life certainly has probably had an affect on you good or bad. The one constant that seems to have always played a role in his life was machinery. He loved cars and motorcycles to the point of involving them in nearly all his professional projects as well as becoming accomplished in a wide variety of competition aboard two and four wheeled vehicles.

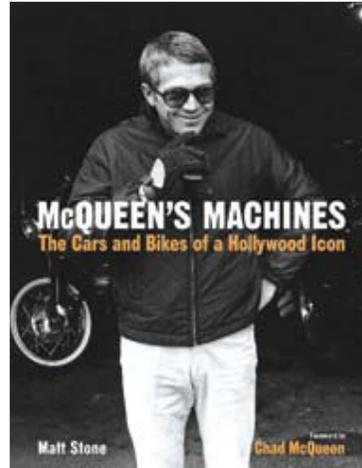
If you have ever watched the Barratt-Jackson Collector Car Auctions during the dead of winter, you have undoubtedly seen and heard commentator Matt Stone bestow some of his automotive knowledge on camera. Stone is also a Chief Class Judge at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. For me the credential list can stop there. He's already over qualified in my book, but this southern California native has a long list of qualifications as a consummate authority on things automotive.

How does this all tie in to a local Porsche club newsletter?

McQueen loved Porsches. He could and did drive many of the finest cars available but Porsches played a distinguished and constant role in his personal and professional life. He raced a 1958 356 Speedster with Rudge knockoffs in the

late 1950's and a decade later he made one of the finest motorsports movies ever, featuring 908's, 917's and one of the loveliest 911's I have ever seen. I can watch the opening scene to the movie LeMans over and over indefinitely. The gorgeous 1970 911S motoring through the French country side is truly memorable! The movie is well worth renting if you've never had the pleasure. The machines are the stars in this film and the actors are there to display them properly. The passion for sports cars that McQueen bestowed on this film carried through his daily life from very early on until his death in 1980.

Matt Stone focuses on the cars the star loved. There are lots of photos showing the actor driving and standing by the machines. Where ever possible Stone has tracked several of the cars down to photograph them in their current state and in many cases to drive them! He has also provided the history of each vehicle and some nice McQueen stories to complement the photos. This hardback is well laid out and thoughtfully organized.



It takes us through the stars automotive history chronologically with generous helpings of period photos.

What really makes this book stand out is how the author portrays McQueen's life by examining the cars. Stone focuses on what made the cars distinctive. He lets us know the background for each of the vehicles...what McQueen was doing at the time, who

he was influenced by, what movie he was working on, who he was married to. There is deep background on several of these machines that has been carefully researched through interviews with friends and family. This gives the cars a sort of life of their own so that they are more than merely the collectable vehicles shown in the photos.

Stone had substantial support from McQueen's son Chad as well as several wives and many friends. Chad, who still owns and drives at least three of his fathers Porsches, even wrote the forward. He also related many of his childhood memories (and photos) of some of the cars on movie sets or merely in family driveway. Neile McQueen Toffel, Steve's most influential wife supported this work by providing lots of memories and photos

that really authenticate the biography Stone has produced. This lends a personal touch to a very enthusiastic book about a consummate automotive aficionado.

McQueen's Machines is a great read and fun to just leaf through and enjoy the photos. I give it four stars.

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