

REVIEWS

EXCELLENCE WAS EXPECTED

- By Karl Ludvigsen
- 4 volumes, 2,836 pages
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AS SOMEONE WHO had two children in his 40s, I have high hopes of making it to my mid-80s, and even remaining somewhat productive in the auto journalism world. At 85, Karl Ludvigsen is clearly not satisfied with being “somewhat productive.” He’s just updated his seminal tome, *Porsche: Excellence Was Expected*, adding a full fourth volume that covers the 21st century to date, up to and including the Taycan.

The amount of time that has elapsed since the book’s last update in 2008 at first glance seems brief, but it actually represents more than 15% of the company’s history. During that time, Porsche’s financial health was secured (seemingly in perpetuity), and important cars like the Panamera, Macan, and 918 Spyder were introduced, along with two generations of the 911 (the 991 and

992) and the above-mentioned Taycan EV. Porsche also wrote several new motorsports chapters in that time as well, winning Le Mans three years in a row. So, it clearly was an appropriate time for another update.

It needs to be said at the outset that the all-new fourth volume was assembled, written, and edited with the same care as the previous iterations of *Excellence Was Expected*, full of carefully curated technical illustrations, component detail photos, press images, and original photos from the author’s collection. Few if any details are omitted—for example, there’s an entire illustrated sidebar on the operation of the 991 Targa’s power retracting roof. Chapters 27-28 are, essentially, an entire book on the 919 WEC program. Our little club comes in for a nice mention as well in the chapter about securing Porsche AG’s finances—there’s a photo of Wolfgang and Hans-Peter Porsche along with Jerry Seinfeld at the 2005 Porsche Parade in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Another thoughtful new touch for this update is on the inside covers, which feature a model timeline for both production and competi-

tion cars. There’s also an updated competition victory index. There are more than 1,000 additional pages in the updated four-volume set and, amazingly, it now has 132 chapters, up from 66 in the 2008 edition, as well as hundreds of new photos and illustrations to go with them.

In summary, the updated version of *EWE* is, well, quite excellent. It covers enough ground to have been a necessity, rather than an Apple-like cynical grab for more cash from the faithful, and it further enhances the author’s already impressive reputation, no mean feat at this stage in his career. The book remains an utter necessity for both fanatics and newcomers who wish to understand both the fundamentals and the fine details of why Porsche is one of the most admired and storied brands on the planet. —Rob Sass

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