

CALLING 911 HAS A SPECIAL MEANING AT ALVARADO

FASCINATION

DRIVING A HISTORIC 911 TARGA THROUGH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA IS THE FAVORITE PASTIME OF HUGH LAURIE, THE BRITISH ACTOR PLAYING TV DOCTOR GREGORY HOUSE. BUT THIS PASSION FOR PORSCHE IS EASILY TOPPED BY THE TOP DOCTORS OF ALVARADO HOSPITAL IN SAN DIEGO: YOU JUST HAVE TO CHECK OUT THE PARKING LOT—AND YOU CAN COUNT FOR YOURSELF. ONE, TWO, THREE...

By
Lawrence Dietz

Photos by
Michael Grecco



DR. AFSHIN BAHADOR

Dr. Bahador's specialty is gynecologic oncology; he has been named "Top Doctor" by *San Diego Magazine*. He drives a 2009 Carrera with PDK. "I was looking for a car to deliver the ultimate driving experience and performance," he says. (Sorry, BMW.) "I perform ultra-delicate surgery in areas of the body that demand precision. My Porsche, I feel, makes me a better driver. I feel as though I am one with the machine. And while it is highly exhilarating to drive, I always feel safe."



DR. SCOTT LEARY

A spine fellowship-trained neurosurgeon and member of the Surgery Supervisory Committee, Dr. Leary drives a 2010 911 GT3, which he credits with helping him save a patient's life. Called at 3 a.m. to operate on a patient suffering an acute brain hemorrhage, he made it to the hospital very quickly and the patient's life was saved. "I deal in a precise environment where there is no room for error," Dr. Leary says, "and I demand the same of my car."



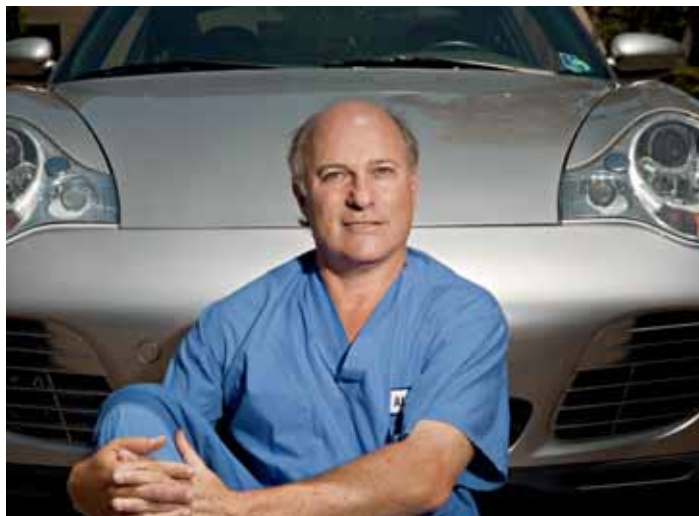
Dr. Pedram Salimpour, a pediatrician and the president of the medical company that owns and operates Alvarado Hospital in San Diego, looked out at a doctor's parking lot at Alvarado and saw the hospital's success measured in automotive terms: there was a group of Alvarado's top doctors parking their cars on their way into the hospital. All of the cars were Porsches. That really got Pedram Salimpour's attention. As he looked at Alvarado's top doctors and their cars, what he saw was a direct connection between their brilliance as doctors, and Porsche's brilliance as an automobile manufacturer.

Pedram Salimpour has been in love with Porsches since he was seven years old and received a toy Porsche as a present. What gives the gift significance is that it came from the father of a patient of Pedram's father, Ralph, who was himself a pediatrician—in Iran.

Not too many years later, Dr. Ralph Salimpour decided that he had to flee Iran after the 1979 Revolution, taking with him his wife and children. The story of his ability to begin medical practice again is another tribute to the opportunities afforded by the West, and particularly the United States. ▶

DR. KEVIN RAPEPORT

Dr. Rapeport practices interventional cardiology. He drives a 40th Anniversary Edition 911, and is quick to point out that it was no. 24 in that edition. "You can clearly trust this car," Dr. Rapeport says, "just as you can trust an expert doctor in his or her specialty." While it is his "everyday" car, "it's not just transportation. There's the sound of the engine, and, crucially, reliability. When I have to rush to the hospital because someone has had a heart attack, I must have a reliable car."



DR. RAMIN RAISZADEH

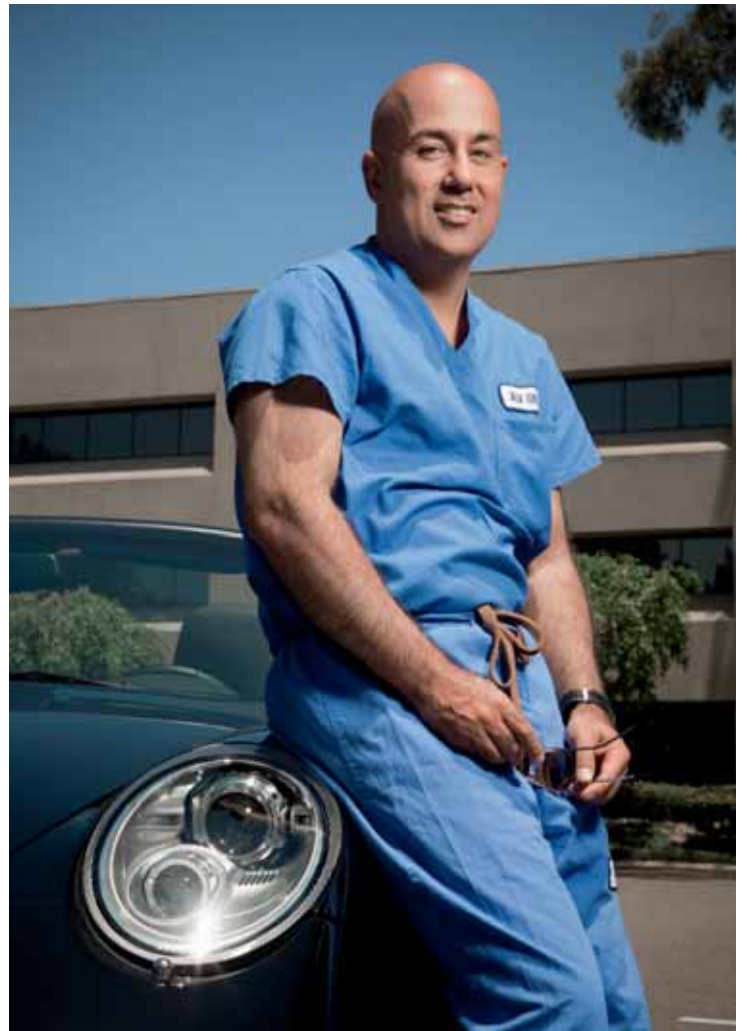
An orthopedic surgeon who specializes in adult spinal surgery, Dr. Raiszadeh drives a 2009 Carrera 4S. He admires his Porsche for "the performance, endurance, and elegance of it." Endurance? Dr. Raiszadeh performed an eighteen-hour spine surgery, "where I had to be just as precise in the eighteenth hour as the first. I chose the AWD Porsche for the control it gives you, just as I have to have control over each step of spinal surgery."





DR. PEDRAM SALIMPOUR

Dr. Salimpour, co-owner of Alvarado Hospital and a practicing pediatrician, is currently driving his third Porsche, a 2009 Carrera S. He has loved Porsches ever since he received a toy Porsche when he was seven. “The automotive precision is complemented by fun, just as my medical practice is complemented by the fun of being around the kids I treat.” He regularly drives the round-trip from Los Angeles to San Diego (500 miles a week), starting before 5 a.m. to avoid traffic jams and enjoy his Porsche.



DR. JOHN FINKENBERG

Dr. Finkenberg, chief of orthopedic surgery and an accomplished sculptor, owns a 2000 Boxster S that he and his wife drive. He likes to take it inland, where there are challenging (twisty, deserted) roads. “I loved the design, and the placement of the engine,” says Dr. Finkenberg. “The surgeries that I do are often unpredictable, but the great thing about my Porsche is that it is very predictable.”

His sons enthusiastically followed in their father’s career footsteps, and—a parent’s dream—not only succeeded as doctors, but also bought a hospital and then worked to improve it. Since Pedram and his brother Pejman (also a pediatrician, and the company CEO) bought the hospital three years ago, they have worked to turn Alvarado into a medical facility literally on the cutting edge of technology.

The brothers’ success can be measured by the fact that Alvarado is the first hospital in the western United States to receive two gold certifications in stroke care. Alvarado has become renowned for its Advanced Spine Institute (featured on CNN), for its advanced minimally invasive cardiology program, for pioneering

the use of balloon stents to help repair sinus conditions (a leading issue in the United States for those seeking medical care), and for being home to the world’s first 3-D imaging diagnostic tool for those with sleep apnea.

Because the hospital is located in hedonistic Southern California, why shouldn’t Alvarado be home to the first hospital-based program for treating sexual disorders? Under the Salimpour brothers’ leadership, Alvarado has invested in state-of-the-art diagnostic and operating technology, allowing its doctors to recognize medical issues, see them in real time, and operate when necessary with a precision that would have been unthinkable even ten years ago. ▶



DR. BENJAMIN CAMACHO

Dr. Camacho is a cardiologist who drives a 2007 Cayenne S. "It suits my needs," he says. "It is the only car with great storage capacity that I feel comfortable and safe with, and it is very reliable." Dr. Camacho is generous with his Cayenne's use: "My sisters love to drive it. And because there is plenty of cargo room, it is the perfect car to take on long trips out of the city. I have never had a single problem with my Porsche."



DR. THOMAS TERRAMANI

A vascular surgeon who has chaired the hospital's Endo-vascular Committee, Dr. Terramani drives a 2006 Carrera S. "I've admired Porsches since I was 12 years old and a friend's brother let me ride in his Targa," he says. "In vascular surgery we use precise instruments and techniques. The Porsche duplicates that." On weekends, at 5:30 a.m., Dr. Terramani takes his Porsche up mountain roads for nearly an hour, then drives to the hospital to do his rounds, and then goes home.

DR. VINCENT GUZZETTA

A vascular surgeon, Dr. Guzzetta has served the hospital as its chief of staff and chief of surgery. His 2000 Carrera has counted 175,000 miles on its odometer since the doctor replaced his 1983 SC, which had racked up 300,000 miles. "In vascular surgery," Dr. Guzzetta says, "there must be precision in the instruments I use. The Porsche has precise steering and handling, and it is absolutely reliable." (With a total of 475,000 miles on his last two Porsches, he should know!) "It's a joy to drive it to work every day."





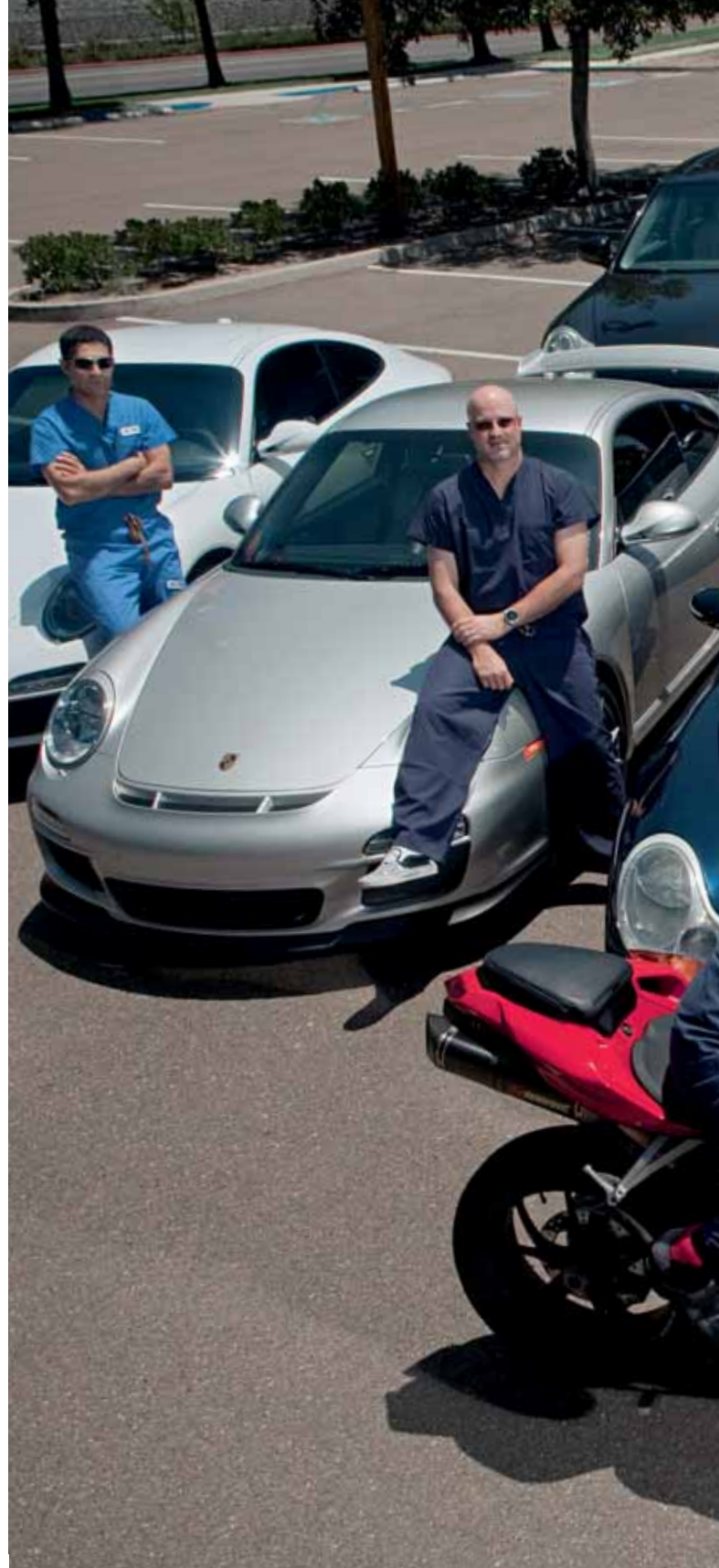
DR. FRANK STELLA

A nephrologist who practices internal medicine, Dr. Stella has served as the hospital's chief of staff. His third Porsche is a 1984 factory-look Turbo, which he has gently put 225,000 miles on. Gently? The car has its original engine and transmission, neither rebuilt. Oh, and Dr. Stella details the car himself. (It's pristine.) "As a nephrologist, an analytic specialist, we're less forgiving of mediocrity." Thus, Porsche. "This was my everyday car for 21 years; now I drive it on weekends."

And the Alvarado doctor who roared up on his Ducati 848? Dr. Robert Bei, who practices emergency medicine and owns two other Ducatis, a Multistrada 1200 and a 1965 Monza, as well as a Vespa. Looking at the fleet of Porsches being photographed, Dr. Bei said he was ready to enjoy the pleasure of owning a vehicle with four wheels, as long as it performed as well as his Ducatis. He has a specific brand of car in mind. Obviously.

Porsche heard about these top doctors and the cars they've chosen to drive and, after researching the medical advances at Alvarado Hospital, thought it would be a splendid idea to gather the doctors together for a group photograph. On the day of the shoot, two of the doctors you see in the group photo and individual shots kept rushing inside to check on patients.

Dr. Salimpour revealed that Alvarado Hospital recently ordered \$20 million dollars' worth of state-of-the-art imaging and diagnostic equipment from Siemens. He began to think out loud: Wouldn't it be cool to visit the Siemens facility in Würzburg and Porsche in Stuttgart? You could almost see him thinking about the hundred or so miles between Stuttgart and Würzburg, and how much fun it would be to make that trip in a Porsche. ◀





THERE SEEMS TO BE A DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN THE BRILLIANCE OF THE CALIFORNIAN DOCTORS AND THE BRILLIANCE OF THE GERMAN SPORTS-CAR MANUFACTURER. THE TWO-WHEELER RIDING INTO THE GROUP PICTURE IS NO MISTAKE: A DOCTOR WHO IS IN FOR A CHANGE. NO QUESTION AS TO WHICH MARQUE...