This Saturday, May 6th, German native Thomas Trissl is hosting the fourth annual Über Region Fest in Florence, Alabama. Über Region Fest is one of the largest Porsche only car festivals in the Southeast. Last year’s event attracted more than 200 Porsche cars in the Car Show, leading to over 250 Porsche cars from throughout the decades on display. Click here for more information on the event.

Thomas Trissl came to the US in 1996 to start his American dream after his first visit in 1981 had intrigued him. Things didn’t quite work out in Atlanta, Georgia, so he decided to visit the town of Florence in Alabama. Like me you might wonder why Florence? Thomas’ father was in the floor business in Germany and had used vinyl tiles that were made in Florence by Robbins. When he arrived to Florence he learned that the company had foreclosed. Thomas saw an opportunity and started Centiva with 5 employees and the luxury vinyl tiles were reborn. He knew early on that he had to adapt to the cultural differences if he wanted to be successful. He established Centiva’s manufacturing at a time when the industry norm was movement to overseas production but developed the business for 17 years before selling the company to flooring-powerhouse Tarkett. The company employed 155 people when it was acquired by Tarkett in 2010/11.

Once again Thomas Trissl turned to the family’s flooring installation business experience in Germany. They had used Schönox subflooring products for decades. Schönox was founded over 120 years ago in Germany and is active in over 20 countries worldwide. In 2012, Thomas becomes the principal of Schönox’s first location in the United States. The location in Florence is responsible for marketing, branding and distribution of subflooring. Subflooring products are everything from moisture remedies, leveling, water proofing and much more. There has been a shift in flooring moving from carpet to more resilient top flooring which means better subflooring. Schönox and Thomas Trissl share a commitment to the flooring industry and the relationships that make things happen. There is a clear difference between making a statement and delivering on a promise. Schönox has built its brand name internationally by delivering on its promises on a daily basis. Similarly, Thomas has built his reputation by valuing each relationship as a partnership and an opportunity for businesses to grow together. The Florence based company has grown from 3 employees to 60+. It seems Thomas’ German thinking combined with the American way works. He points out that it is not the product that makes the success but the people and there is a lot of people focus in the company. Thomas loves the American entrepreneurial spirit but will never forget his German roots.

And talking about German roots, that brings us back to the upcoming Porsche Festival. When Thomas Trissl sold Centiva he started Trissl Sports Cars that collects, sells and exports Porsches. His love for Porsches turned into a business where they specialize in finding Porsches from 1965 to 1998 that had air cooled motors. Trissl Sports Cars restores them to their original beauty and resells. Most of the business happens online. The show room has 60+ cars. Thomas Trissl still has his Porsche that he brought to the United States from Germany – a 1993 Turbo 3.6. The festival was started 4 years ago and Thomas did it in hopes to attract people to come visit Florence. He is very supportive of the Florence community as they have supported him and his businesses. The festival is benefitting the [St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital](https://www.stjude.org/about-st-jude/why-support-st-jude.html?sc_id=us-mm-support) and the City of Florence Police Department. This is a way to pay back to the community by attracting visitors for a fun weekend.