

COLLECTOR'S EDITION



PURE PERFORMANCE

MODERN PORSCHE SPORTS CARS

996 AND 997 911, 986 BOXSTER
AND 987 BOXSTER AND CAYMAN



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WELCOME

There are few car companies as committed to performance as Porsche, and *Modern Porsche Sports Cars* is committed to celebrating some of the Stuttgart-based manufacturer's most exciting machines.

We begin with the 996, the first water-cooled incarnation of the 911, and the driver-focused GT3. We take a look at what the 996 GT3 is like to drive today, and then we bring you an in-depth guide to buying one of these awesome machines. Of course, you can't talk about the 996 without discussing the sensational Turbo, and so not only do we have a buying guide to this amazing performance car, but we also get up close and personal with the absolutely spectacular and incredibly rare RUF RTurbo.

Joining the 996 in representing the 911 here is the 997, and once again, we can't possibly talk about this generation without taking a look at the GT3, and we pitch it against its predecessor to see which offers the most thrilling driving experience. Once again, we couldn't possibly ignore the Turbo, and so we've got a modified 997.2 version for you to enjoy, plus a detailed buying guide to this

performance powerhouse. We also get behind the wheel of RPM Technik's fully fettled 997 CSR and take a look back at the exclusive and highly desirable 997 Sport Classic and Speedster models.

Finally, we bring you two of the more affordable models, the Boxster and the Cayman. As the 986 Boxster recently celebrated its 25th anniversary, we take this opportunity to look back at the history and origin of the model, and we also have a buying guide for this extremely popular offering from Stuttgart. And then, for the 987 generation that followed, we see how the sporty Boxster S stacks up against its hardtop Cayman S counterpart and bring you a comprehensive buying guide to this most dynamic of Porsche duos.

The 911, Boxster and Cayman represent three very different Porsche experiences, but each one is dedicated to delivering the ultimate driving experience, and this special magazine celebrates everything amazing about these sensational cars. Welcome to *Modern Porsche Sports Cars* ■

ELIZABETH DE LATOUR EDITOR





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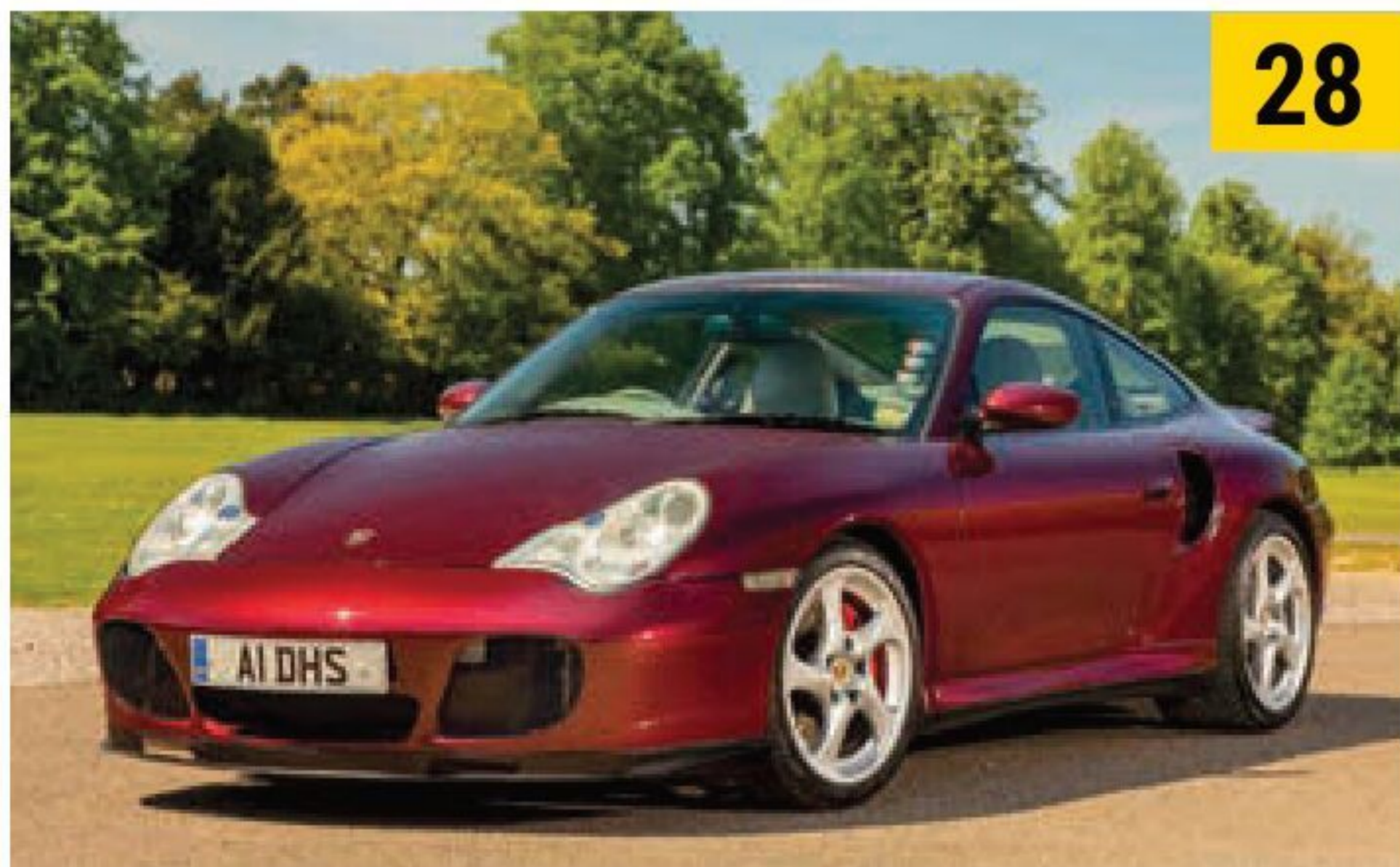
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MODERN PORSCHE SPORTS CARS

996 AND 997 911, 986 BOXSTER AND 987 BOXSTER AND CAYMAN

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COMBAT- READY

*We pit the legendary 996 GT3 against its awesome 997 counterpart
in the ultimate clash of the high-revving NA titans*

Words SIMON JACKSON / Photos MALCOLM GRIFFITHS



Difficult as it might be to admit, the current or prospective 911 GT3 owner is likely not to be the kind of fellow who visits a track each and every month. Nor might this person be someone dashing down twisting A roads at three-figure speeds on the way to work five mornings per week. Porsche is acutely aware of these facts, and so it has developed the water-cooled GT3 accordingly over the years with a conflicting duality of purpose at the forefront of its mind.

Though you might not think it at first, a GT3 has two distinct jobs to perform, both equally

important and yet in strong opposition to one another. Most obvious it must first and foremost be a focused and accomplished car on circuit, a model far more capable than a Carrera at speed, as progressive as possible, yet requiring just enough taming to keep those of a track-proficient nature entertained. Secondly, it has to be a competent road car, one which enjoys being pushed along apace yet that is also a willing companion on a boring low-speed commuter route. Fulfilling these criteria is where nearly all road cars with sporting intentions have to compromise their ability on track, in order to

retain any level of usability and comfort on the road.

At Porsche though 'compromise' is a bit of a dirty word, and so hereby bending the laws of automotive psychics, it has somehow given birth to, and subsequently further finessed, a 911 which is good at both tasks despite the fact they do not complement one another in the slightest. Ultimately no matter how many models Porsche creates aimed at filling each and every conceivable motoring niche, any track-orientated 911 must also be a useable road car and you might argue that a GT3, the →



“A GT3 HAS TWO DISTINCT JOBS TO PERFORM, BOTH EQUALLY IMPORTANT”

first rung on the ladder to more hardcore and adventurous GT machinery, is more so than most. For me, it is this duality of purpose that sets the GT3 apart from other 911s, and yet in the back of my mind sits a rule of thumb: the more contemporary the version of GT3, the better it is at both jobs at either end of our spectrum. To my mind, then, a 991 GT3 should offer a better package than a 997 GT3, and a 997 GT3 should be a better all-rounder than a 996 GT3, but is that truly the case? To best understand the evolution of these 911s, it seemed sensible to put under the microscope both the very first incarnation, the 996 and its replacement, the 997, each of which might be the one 911 to do it all; track, road and (dare I say it) investment.

To give the 996 the best possible chance of taking on its more modern counterpart, the car you see before you here is a second-generation example, a Clubsport model at that (factory order code M003 providing roll-cage, harnesses and fire extinguisher), which means it's in fine

trim so far as 996s go. The second-generation 996 GT3 uses the same 3.6-litre flat-six engine as its first-generation counterpart (with the same compression ratio of 11.7:1), both derived from the engine used in the GT1 Le Mans car, yet in this instance bored-out a further 200cc and without turbochargers. All six pistons are lighter and stronger than in the older car, aiding the saving of 288 grams from the power unit's overall weight. Also in diet trim are the mill's connecting rods, new forging technology in part allowing Porsche to save two kilos in weight from their mass. This Clubsport version does not, like its forebear, boast a lightened flywheel (for Porsche deemed it unnecessary). But re-profiled and lighter valves and tappets, re-profiled camshafts, fresh VarioCam technology and new ME7.8 engine management combine to result in what was, at launch, the most powerful normally-aspirated 911 engine ever at 381hp. It'll deliver 284lb ft torque at 5000rpm, and it'll rev to more than 8000rpm – magical.

Translating all that power and torque onto the road are wider 8.5 and 11x18" wheels, and though larger in size, they are lighter than those wheels found on the first-generation car by one kilo. Behind them sit larger brakes; the discs are 350mm at the front (20mm bigger than those on the Mk1), 330mm at the back, the calipers are six-pots at the front, four-pots out back. The

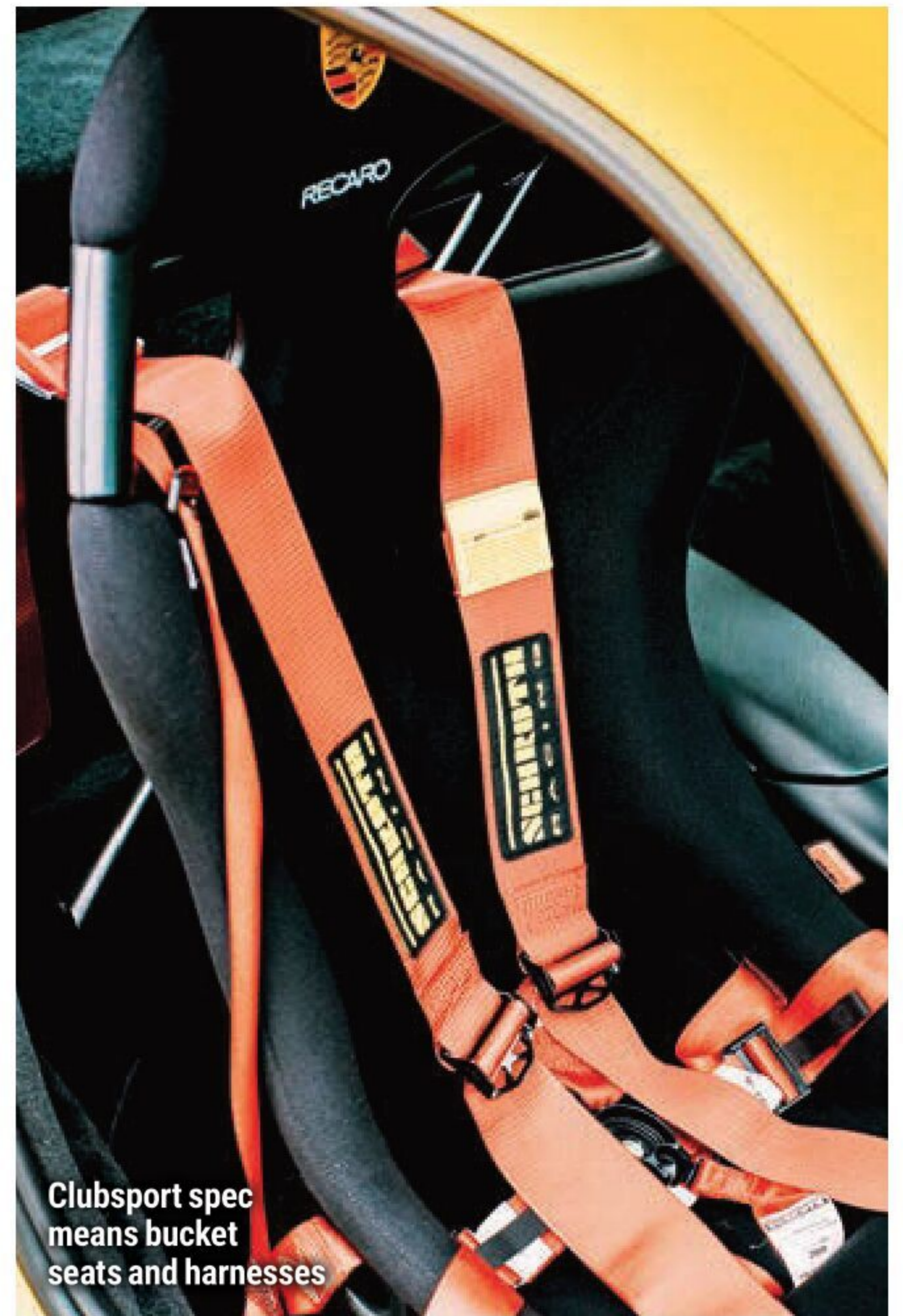
gearbox too came under the knife, third, fourth and fifth gears of the available six receiving new steel synchros aiding reliability and promoting an accurate and tight throw.

Inside this Clubsport car, you'll find a conspicuous roll-cage in the back, fixed back bucket seats and racing harnesses, all of which highlight its motorsport credentials. Ahead of the driver though it's largely a familiar landscape for anyone jumping out of a 996 Carrera. And, although once cranked into life there is an air of the purposeful about the engine note and idle, on the move, it does not suggest anything other than utter refinement. The engine's linear power delivery is somewhat friendly too at low speeds, matching steering feel which is communicative yet not prone to translating every crease in the bitumen. Gear changes are tighter than those found in a Carrera, certainly of a more positive nature anyway, yet in comparison with later 'boxes arguably a little too long in throw albeit satisfying nonetheless.

Plant the throttle pedal from any low speed and you'll initially be left wondering what all the fuss is about, yet as the engine takes a deep breath and your speed rises, the 996 GT3 comes to life. Below 3000rpm you might argue this car feels a touch lazy, but after that point, it begins to come on song and by the time the rev needle →



3.6-litre engine makes 381hp and revs to over 8000rpm



Clubsport spec means bucket seats and harnesses



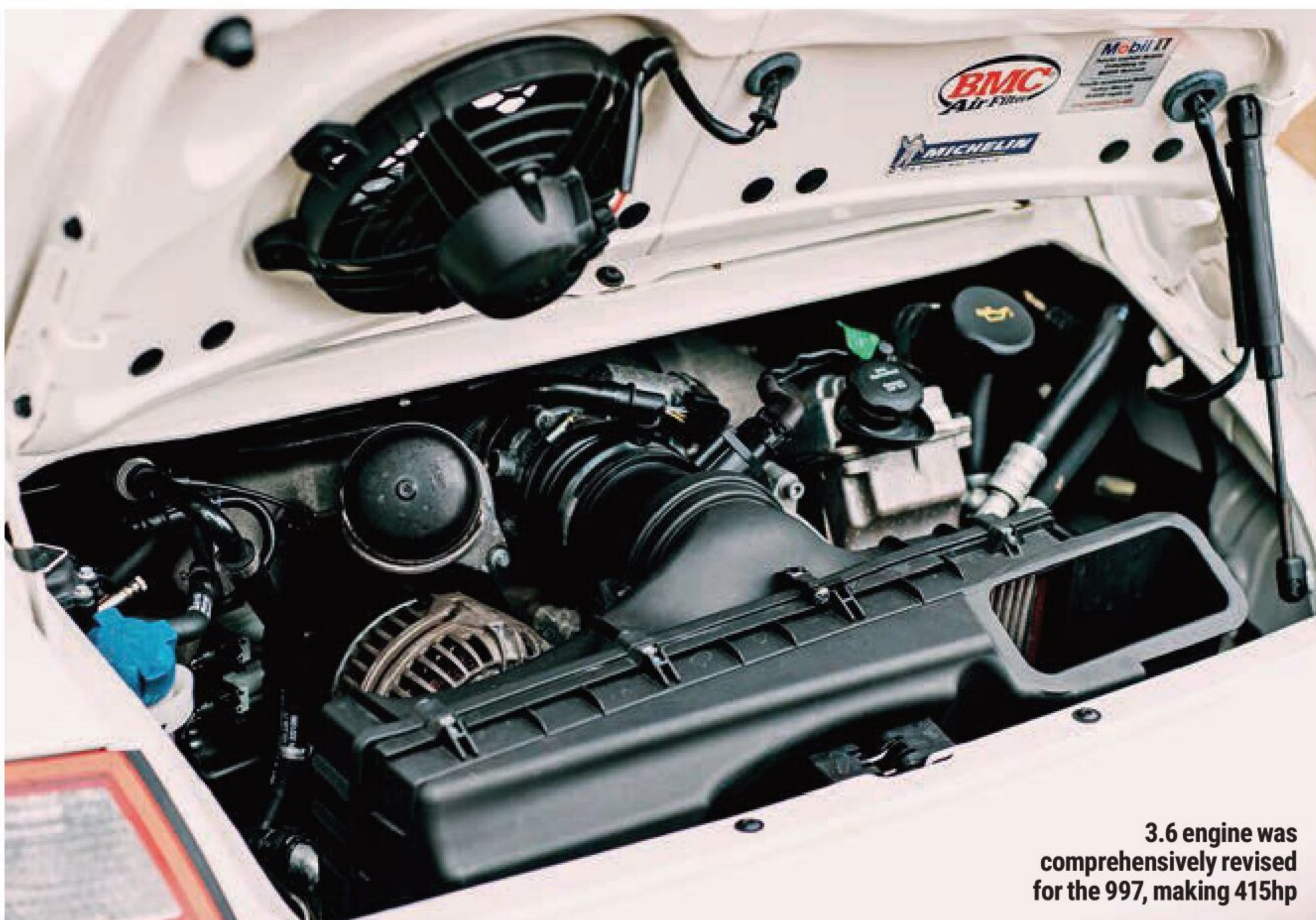
More upright wing on the 996.2 GT3



Lightweight 18s

Both cars are intensely thrilling to drive





3.6 engine was comprehensively revised for the 997, making 415hp



Alcantara additions in the 997's cabin



Optional bucket seats

points to 5000rpm the engine note has reached full tenor. That spine-tingling engine note sticks around, as does the oncoming power, all the way to the redline somewhere near 8000rpm. That Porsche has always maintained this engine is good for a reliable 10,000rpm is entirely believable. Its book numbers for both 0-62mph (4.5-secs) and 100mph (14.3-secs), and its 190mph top speed are more likely to be conservative than optimistic. But for me, this car is not about its low or high-speed characteristics, but about that middle ground. Keep the 996 GT3 there, on the boil, and it rewards with a throaty roar and useable, drivable torque. Take it off the road and onto the track, which is not something we had the luxury of in the case of this story, and it has historically been described as delivering that slight understeer for which 911s are well known. But, thanks in part to its 40% locking differential, oversteer is controllable via the throttle and a pleasure to play with should you feel so confident. However, as we would all

discover, there was room for improvement in this recipe – enter the 997 GT3.

With all the obvious generational differences between the 996 and 997 taken as givens, the advent of the 997 GT3 brought still further differences between it and the preceding generation model. Though running a 3.6-litre engine taking its architecture from the GT1 like its forebear, this 997 GT3 version of the power unit was almost entirely new in comparison with its 996 counterpart. In fact, and almost unbelievably, only the engine's crankcase was carried over to the 997, the rest was modified extensively in order to raise its power output to 415hp. Porsche once again looked to the engine's internals to make its gains, the pistons were reduced in size by one millimetre and reshaped,

saving 30 grams in weight, while longer yet thinner connecting rods saved a further 150 grams. The crankshaft was redesigned again, saving 600 grams, and a new exhaust system was developed, it also ran a new compression ratio of 12.0:1 – all factors in helping to find the increases in power Porsche was looking for. A further refined version of the VarioCam technology, this time from the 996 GT3 RS, could be found here too. A new variable intake manifold aided and controlled the torque curve for the better, producing 298lb ft at 5500rpm (the redline was once again north of 8000rpm). Not only was this the most powerful naturally aspirated 911 at the time, but it was also the most powerful naturally aspirated engine in a production car – period. A grand summary →

“ITS BOOK NUMBERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE CONSERVATIVE THAN OPTIMISTIC”

Both of these cars are modern masterpieces and there's no wrong choice here





“AS IT MAKES ITS WAY UP TO 8000RPM ITS CHARACTERISTIC YOWL IS INFECTIOUS...”

for a rather special engine. Porsche’s official performance figures were, again, conservative at 4.6-seconds to 62mph and 8.7-seconds to 100mph.

The chassis of course was burgeoning equally with new additions, chiefly the new GT3 used Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) for the first time, but far from being lifted directly from the Carrera, the system was specially tuned in true GT3 fashion. So rather than mollifying this performance-orientated 911, even in its softest possible setting, there was little ‘soft’ about it, relatively speaking. Though the numbers and facts supported an agreement for the 997 being a far better GT3, it came in for criticism through further additions over the 996 GT3 seen as nannying or plain unwanted. Alongside PASM, these were Traction Control and satellite navigation (with telephone module), but these nods to usability served mainly to neatly balance the GT3’s duality better than ever, this was both a useable road car and a rather

handy track car too.

As you would expect stepping inside this later 911 presents a more contemporaneous vista, its driving position is, for me, more adjustable and better suited to the job at hand. But then I have an odd theory that all post-2005 German cars have better driving positions than their older counterparts! Starting this GT3 delivers a slightly more gruff and purposeful engine note than that audible in the older of these two 911s. Like the 996 though it’s equally easy to manoeuvre at low speeds, perhaps a touch more refined around town, but if anything it lacks the 996’s urgency once you push the right pedal to the floor. That’s clearly a perceptual thing, for that car gives away more than 30hp to this one and a good chunk of torque too, but all the same, it feels less aggressive. As it smoothly makes its way up to and past 8000rpm its characteristic yowl is infectious, begging you to back off the throttle, then get back on it, and vice versa.

With PASM switched to its most aggressive setting the nose might bob about in certain circumstances, but ultimately that’s not a setting for the road and is one best reserved for track use. With it switched back it’s compliant, the steering is sublime in its directness and its feel, on the road at least, not obviously lacking in comparison with that of the 996. Just like the 996, this GT3 is happiest being kept in its

midrange, medium speed corners are a delight, but it is easier in this newer car to be travelling quicker than you realise. You have been warned. The gearbox is tighter and shorter in throw in comparison with the 996. Of course, we did not take the 997 on track, but those who have typically placed its handling traits a notch above that of the 996. This more modern 911 is, I would conclude, easier to drive on the road in that it feels that bit more assisted (not necessarily in a bad way) in its weightings.

And now the difficult bit – choosing between these two. For us, this is not an easy decision, but it can be largely settled based on intentions. If you could only have one 911 and it was required to do it all; daily driver, fast road fun with the occasional track day, then the 997 is the victor here for it is the most capable car in each of individual discipline. If however, your GT3 is to be a second car, a vehicle not intended for everyday use but one you would still like to be able to perform all of the aforementioned tasks occasionally, then the 996 is the 911 for you. Ultimately though, given the duality of the 996 and 997 GT3, both are entirely capable of being used regularly without issue. The 996 and 997 GT3 perform an astonishing balancing act without compromise, they are both exceptional track cars and highly useable road-going vehicles. They are Porsche to the core ■

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BUYING GUIDE

911 GT3 996

Delivering the ultimate in driver focus and thrills, the first-gen 911 GT3 is a modern motoring legend, and still surprisingly reasonably priced

Words DANIEL BEVIS / Photos MARC URBANO, PORSCHE

The Porsche 911, in all its various guises and generations, is a bit of a genre chameleon. In base Carrera form, it's the archetypal sports car; the RS models are unparalleled track cars; the Turbo models are fully-fledged supercars. With this guide, we're looking at what is arguably the bloodline's finest example of tactility and tractability – the supremely poised 996-generation GT3.

HISTORY

There has been a broad range of factory road-

racers built over the generations by numerous manufacturers, with varying degrees of success. For the most part, it stands to reason that remixing a successful road car as a track-ready proposition while still maintaining everyday legality must lead to a whole load of compromises; after all, race cars don't need things like headlights or stringent emissions testing or door locks, and they also don't need to be comfortable on potholed roads or easy to parallel park. Road cars have a huge amount of effort put into meeting NVH (noise, vibration and harshness) parameters, whereas race cars

don't bother with any fripperies like sound deadening or carpets. So a road-legal race car must be pretty horrible on the day-to-day, right? Well, yes and no. In the case of the Renaultsport Megane R26.R or – to take the idea to extremes – the Ford RS200, you wouldn't really want to take it on any long motorway journeys. But what Porsche achieved with the 996-generation 911 GT3 was something else: a car informed by racing that was utterly scintillating on the road.

Group GT3, for the uninitiated, is a set of regulations from the FIA within the grand tourer racing oeuvre: in GT3, cars are based



Considering its iconic status, the 996 GT3 is surprisingly affordable



GT3 used the wider C4/Turbo body for reasons of track and tyre width

on mass-production models with balance-of-power formulae ensuring that all entrants have similar power-to-weight ratios – a GT3 race car will typically weigh between 1200-1300kg and produce 500-600hp. Naturally, there must be road-going homologation cars in the showrooms, and that's where the 911 GT3 came in.

As you might imagine, quite a lot of weight-saving happened. The rear seats could be deleted on demand, the window glass was thinner... but it's worth noting that it was no stripped-out exercise in austerity – it had a full dash, comfy seats and carpets, and buyers could even request air-conditioning and a stereo as no-cost options. Also, rather than use the lighter and narrower bodysell of the Carrera 2, the GT3 utilised the wide-hipped and marginally weightier layout of the Carrera 4 and Turbo, for reasons of track and tyre width.

The engine was the real party piece, the GT3 receiving its own bespoke motor rather than the 3.4-litre M96 of other 911s in the range. The flat-six developed for this model displaced 3.6-litres, taking the aluminium seven-main-bearing crankcase previously found in the 964/993 and imbuing it with a forged and plasma-nitrided steel crankshaft, aluminium pistons, and hydraulically-controlled VarioCam. Offering a peak of 360hp at 7200rpm, the engine was essentially in the same state of tune as the

R and Cup track cars. Transmission-wise it used the regular 911 G50 gearbox, but with lower ratios in first through fourth, with a dual-mass flywheel... unless you went for the Clubsport option, in which case you got a single-mass with a race clutch.

What's Clubsport? Well, the GT3 came in two states of trim – Comfort and Clubsport. As the name suggests, Comfort had the aforementioned creature comforts, whereas Clubsport was a little more hardcore: in addition to the single-mass flywheel and aggressive clutch, it came with a rear roll-cage, fire extinguisher and lighter bucket seats.

A crucial facelift arrived for 2003, with the GT3 entering its Phase 2 evolution. This incorporated some significant engine work – the 3.6 was given lighter pistons and rods, smaller-diameter tappets and revised VarioCam geometry. The upshot was a peak of 381hp at 7400rpm, while its ability to meet Euro 4 and EPA standards made the 996.2 GT3 the first factory-tuned 911 to be allowed on sale in the USA. Visual identifiers were the revised front spoiler and refreshed design for the headlights and rear lights. Naturally, we can't talk about the GT3 without referencing its hedonistic stablemate, the GT3 RS. This, launched in a strictly limited run in 2004, took the GT3 platform and turned everything up to 11 (or

911 GT3 996

ENGINE	3.6-litre flat-six
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed manual
MAX POWER	360hp @ 7200rpm (381hp @ 7400rpm)
MAX TORQUE	273lb ft (284) @ 5000rpm
0-62MPH	4.8 (4.5) seconds
TOP SPEED	187mph (190)
(figures in brackets denote 996.2)	

down to a decimal point, depending on which way you look at it). It was 50kg lighter thanks to its carbon fibre bonnet, Lexan windows and carbon rear quarters; the cabin was slathered in Alcantara and sported lightweight race buckets, while the exterior had distinctive and vivid side stripes. The engine was officially the same as in the regular GT3, although in reality its Cup-spec manifolds unofficially added a further 15-20hp. The suspension was fully adjustable, and the aggression was undeniable.

So is the 996 GT3 a true polymath – a focused track car that's also a friendly road car? Not quite. Of course, there are compromises; it's such a remarkable performance machine on track, and that necessarily means that it's harsher on the road – the suspension stiffer, the clutch →

The 996 GT3 is still a sensational performance machine



heavier, the electronic aids largely absent. But what it is, and undeniably so, is a beautifully engineered and wonderfully engaging performance car.

WHAT TO PAY?

It's possible to find early GT3s for around the £50k mark, but the real sweet spot appears to be in the region of £65-75,000. Within this price bracket, you'll be looking at tidy examples of the facelifted model, with reasonable mileage and proper history. There doesn't appear to be a significant price differential between Comfort and Clubsport specs, presumably because their different respective focus attracts such different buyers. Outstanding examples of the GT3 can top £100k.

The GT3 RS is seeing some truly remarkable prices in today's market. We have seen examples approaching £200k, although these are collector-grade and, in reality, the sort of super-low-

"RESEARCH, ASK QUESTIONS, FASTIDIOUSLY INSPECT, AND BUYING WELL WILL BE REWARDED: THE 996 GT3 IS ONE OF THE FINEST PERFORMANCE CARS EVER MADE"

mileage cars that will have values dented if you intend to actually drive them. Honest and usable GT3 RSs look to be around £140-150,000 – and being so rare and desirable, don't expect there to be any room for haggling.

OUR CHOICE

It's tempting to swagger in and say 'Yes, we'll take the GT3 RS', but that wouldn't actually be our first choice. Yes, it's an outstanding and formidable machine, and undoubtedly one of the all-time greats... but with the price difference between the GT3 and the GT3 RS

being what it is, you have to weigh up whether the heightened visceral thrills of the more hardcore model are equal to the extra cost. We'd take a Comfort-spec post-facelift GT3, vividly finished in yellow, and enjoy it every day. It might take a careful scouring of the classifieds and a fair bit of patience, but (whisper it) we'd even be tempted to hold out for a car that had been specced from new with the stereo and air-con, so we could enjoy some proper European road trips with it.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

EXTERIOR

In most cases, when buying a used car, the advice would always be to try to avoid examples that have been used extensively on track. That's not really the case with the GT3 however, as that's really what these cars were designed for. What is essential, then, is to check that it's always been maintained regularly and correctly to keep those jewel-like mechanicals in tip-top order.

Checking the panel gaps for evidence of accident damage is an important starting point. It's well within the realms of possibility that a GT3 will have kissed the Armco at some point, and this needn't be a deal-breaker – you just need to know how extensive the damage was and how (and by whom) it was repaired. Scuffs around the door handles are common, and you'll probably find stone chips across



Clubsport model came with single-piece bucket seats



18" Sport Design wheels by BBS

Porsche Museum



the front bumper and wing mirrors. Rust isn't an issue with 996s as a rule; the only common place you might find it is around the door latch mechanism on the B-pillar – if it gets misaligned, the door rubs away the paint and it can rot if left unchecked. Check the headlights for condensation, as this can cause them to corrode internally.

INTERIOR

When it comes to the interior, make sure you know what you're looking at: Comfort-spec cars will have heavily-bolstered sport seats, and may or may not have a rear bench. Optional factory-fit stereo and air-con may also be present. With a Clubsport, you should find non-reclining bucket seats with harness holes and a rear roll-cage. Check that no warning lights are illuminated on the dash; the airbag light is a common fault and is most likely caused by a worn connector in the seatbelt buckle. And if the car's fitted with air-con, check that it's working – the condenser is positioned in a vulnerable spot and is prone to damage from stones and so on.

Buying a low-mileage example isn't necessarily the most desirable way to go, as irregular use can sometimes be more damaging than heightened usage wear – the key metric is how it's been looked after rather than how much it's been driven.

ENGINE & GEARBOX

If a GT3 sees regular track use, the limited-slip differential may be worn out after a couple of seasons' use – and if you're looking at a Clubsport, the single-mass flywheel will be a bit rattly at idle, that's just what they do. The engine, despite its highly-strung nature, should be unproblematic if it's been correctly looked after – and in terms of routine servicing, it →



Facelift 996.2 GT3 featured redesigned headlights and a revised rear wing (above)



3.6-litre engine was a high-revving masterpiece



Standard bucket seats and Alcantara interior elements



GT3 RS featured bold decals and colour-matched wheels

shouldn't be more expensive than a regular 996 to keep it ticking.

CHASSIS

Naturally, you'll be checking the chassis for evidence of accident damage, and equally important is to try to get the measure of the owner if possible: you can gain so much reassurance from learning that the car's been owned by someone who is mechanically sympathetic. As an extension of this, history is vital with these cars, proving that the whole back-story is legit and it's been looked after by the right people.

These cars are very sensitive to geometry settings and the adjustable suspension can

go out of balance – if a GT3 feels unsettled or wayward on a test drive, it could well be the hardware settings at fault rather than a specific problem with the car; again, it's something to interrogate the seller about, to see how au fait they are with setting up their GT3 correctly.

VERDICT

The GT3 is an unusual car as a buying proposition. Something that was ostensibly designed to be thrashed and have its neck wrung on track should, objectively, be the sort of thing you want to steer well clear of... but of course it's not quite that simple. Yes, these cars will likely have had a hard life, but that's precisely what they're engineered for, and if they've

been properly looked after then they'll keep on coming back for more.

A fair bit of water has passed under the bridge since these iconic road-racers first appeared on the scene, so of course, combing painstakingly through the history is vital to ensure you've got a good one. And given the values of these cars, it's increasingly unlikely that they'll be spotted on track on a regular basis. So what are you buying the GT3 for – the performance prowess, or the kudos of having the rare model? Either way has its merits, but make sure you're entering the process with your eyes open.

Research, ask questions, fastidiously inspect, and buying well will be rewarded: the 996 GT3 is one of the finest performance cars ever made ■



The RS costs upwards of £140,000, but it's the ultimate version of the GT3

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CHAPTER AND VERSE

Marking the beginning of a new era for RUF sports car production, the 996-based RTurbo was the first turbocharged, water-cooled 911 to roll out of Pfaffenhausen. None come as well regarded as the 550hp, all-wheel-drive, narrow-bodied factory press car...

Words **DAN FURR** / Photos **DAN SHERWOOD**



Back in 1977, when Commodore was unveiling its PET all-in-one home computer and the world was having its ears beaten into submission by the Sex Pistols, Alois Ruf Jr was busying himself with the launch of Turbo Number One, the first of many Porsche-based production cars to roll out of RUF's Pfaffenhausen workshop. Modelled on the ground-breaking 930 (911 Turbo), wearing

Carrera RS 3.0 bodywork and dressed in dark green paint, Turbo Number One was a 930 on steroids – engine displacement was increased to 3.3 litres (well in advance of Porsche applying the same update to the 930), developing 303hp at 5500rpm, with 304 lb ft torque coming on song at 4000rpm. Rolling on bespoke RUF rims and uprated Bilstein suspension, this mean green speed machine also upped the ante when it came to luxury – over standard 930 interior

specification, Turbo Number One boasted additional air-conditioning, a heated rear-view mirror, lashings of dark green leather (including a perforated headlining) and trick footwell illumination only extinguishing when the driver's seat belt was locked into place and the ignition key was in its barrel.

Transferring power to the road via a Getrag five-speed transmission 12 years before Porsche would get around to doing the same with the



930, Turbo Number One despatched the zero to 62mph dash in 5.1 seconds. Despite the extra gear ratio, refined suspension and the introduction of an 80% limited-slip differential, however, RUF's creation was still a handful, its nose being lighter than that of the 930 and relying on super-subtle movements of the driver's right foot to ensure corners were navigated start-to-finish without incident. Only four units were built.

Based on the 911 SC and featuring a naturally aspirated flat-six with 3.2-litres of displacement (long before Porsche introduced the Carrera 3.2), 1978's RUF SCR preceded Alois' next take on the 930: the RUF BTR. Presented in 1983, the 190mph bruiser was powered by a 369hp force-fed powerplant. The BTR was a far more rounded RUF than Turbo Number One and provided a taste of what was to follow with the now legendary twin-turbocharged CTR

'Yellowbird' of 1987, dubbed the world's fastest production sports car and capable of outrunning the era's most famous supercars, including the Ferrari Testarossa, the same manufacturer's F40, the Lamborghini Countach and, worryingly for Porsche, the 959. Indeed, the CTR was the car that elevated the RUF name to the global stage, not least thanks to a highly publicised (though unofficial) record Nordschleife lap time, held for many years. It was also the →

model that served to herald a further decade of development work on Porsche's air-cooled 911 platform before the arrival of the 996-generation Neunelfer and its water-cooled flat-six.

At this stage of our story, those of you with an untrained eye might be wondering how what appears to be a modified 911 managed to be crowned the world's fastest production sports car. In short, this status is made possible by RUF's classification as a manufacturer by the German government. In essence, RUF takes unmarked Porsche bodies, which are then used to build entirely new cars. Free of Porsche chassis numbers, RUF vehicles are assembled using the Pfaffenhausen concern's own parts and materials. Granted, many of them are based on Porsche factory designs, but the level of redevelopment and bespoke engineering work involved in the build of each RUF ensures the company's cars stand alone, despite their oh-so-familiar silhouettes.

Of course, those already in possession of a Porsche can approach Alois and his team of talented technicians with a request for a conversion to RUF specification. However, it's fair to say the company's bare chassis builds are the headline event, as demonstrated by the achievements of the 993-based CTR2 and eclipsing the earlier CTR's status as the world's fastest production sports car. With a recorded top speed of 217mph, the CTR2 outperformed both the Ferrari F50 and mighty Jaguar XJ220. In fact, the world would have to wait until three years after CTR2 production ended for the record to finally be broken – the McLaren F1 reached a top speed of 241mph in 1998, making the CTR2 the second-fastest production car of the decade and one of the most important non-Porsche 911s ever assembled.

To have rewritten history once was impressive enough, but twice? Even Porschephiles were amazed, but was RUF's ability to constantly push boundaries about to come to an abrupt end with the discontinuation of air-cooled engines in response to newly introduced strict emissions legislation in many key Porsche sales territories? The RUF 3400 S of

1998 put paid to such worries.

Built on the then-new 986 Boxster platform, the 3400 S – incidentally, the first RUF that wasn't a 911 – was Alois' reaction to the new roadster and its 996 stablemate sharing many of the same components. Sure, the Boxster is a mid-engined two-seater with a 2.5-litre beating heart, but the same-age 911's rear-mounted 3.4-litre lump represents a straightforward swap. Reading between the lines, Porsche doing the same would have been a disaster from a marketing perspective at a time when the company was trying to re-establish itself as a profitable concern after years of avoiding bankruptcy – to have blessed the Boxster with 911-esque power would have made the significant price difference between the two models difficult to justify, especially when the Boxster's mid-engine layout would have likely shone a light on how it had the potential to outhandle a 911. RUF, of course, had no such anxiety, which is why Alois wasted no time in fitting the flagship Porsche's flat-six in place of the Boxster's standard 2.5.

With a light engine tune (amounting to just 10 extra ponies, but bags of extra torque), the 3400 S conquered the standard sprint to



Interior features RUF steering wheel, gear knob, pedals and mats

A FAMILY AFFAIR

In 1939, Alois Ruf Sr opened Auto RUF, a general, all-vehicle service garage. Far from the Porsches RUF is associated with today, the first vehicle Alois built was a tourist bus. Surfing the rise of the travel age, the people carrier proved popular enough for a separate RUF bus company to be established in the late 1950s. Watching the steady expansion of his father's business was sports car fan, Alois Jr, who was allowed to service and repair Porsches from the company's premises as the 1960s drew to a close. He took control of the family business in 1974 and immediately drew up plans to reinvent the 911.



R Turbo features quad exhaust tips and larger rear spoiler



Bespoke RUF gauges with green details



GT3 bucket seats and Schroth harnesses

62mph in 5.2 seconds, almost two seconds quicker than a standard Boxster. Once again, Bilstein suspension, a bespoke RUF six-speed transmission and striking RUF five-spokes formed part of the package, but what Porscheheads were really interested in was what Alois could do with the new 911 platform.

Their queries were answered with 2000's RUF RGT, a 385hp GT3-based build offered for sale in North America, where Porsche had elected not to ship the standard GT3 for fear of it becoming a flop in the face of tight speed restrictions on the nation's public highways. Again, Alois had no such worries and, recognising untapped sales potential, successfully marketed the RGT to a wanting audience. Moreover, where the GT3 was only available to buy in two-wheel-drive configuration, RGT buyers could option all-wheel drive. There was a 395hp lightweight RGT RS model on offer too, though the cost proved so prohibitively expensive that only two were produced. Nevertheless, the RGT proved RUF was more than capable of manipulating the 996 platform, though the company was still to answer questions concerning its plan to reinvent the period's 911 Turbo, which was unveiled at the highly anticipated 1999 Frankfurt Auto Show and released for sale in the USA at the same time as the RGT.

It didn't take long for RUF to once again wipe the smile from the faces of Porsche's marketing men. Launched in 2001, the RTurbo not only comprehensively outperformed the 996 Turbo, it was available in every 911 configuration:

“WAS RUF'S ABILITY TO CONSTANTLY PUSH BOUNDARIES ABOUT TO END?”

cabriolet, coupé, wide-body, narrow-body, two-wheel drive, four-wheel drive, manual or Tiptronic, though the standard build of a four-wheel drive, wide-hipped, manual coupé was the only way of failing to attract extra cost, despite the narrow-body featuring wider front wings to accommodate extra radiators and oil coolers! Typically built from a blank Porsche shell, each RTurbo was equipped with a development of the 3.6-litre 'Mezger' flat-six derived from the 1998 911 GT1 Le Mans-winning race car and was kitted-out with modified KKK turbochargers, GT3 mounts, a revised intake system, an overhauled valvetrain, a bespoke exhaust (with bypass valve), a modified VarioCam system and altered ECU software. Offered with a stonking 520hp and 546lb ft torque, the RTurbo was also equipped with a heavy-duty GT2 transaxle.

The push-in-your-seat torque of this 144hp-per-litre lout kicks in at 3500rpm, propelling the car's occupants to 62mph from a standing start in just 3.7 seconds, topping out at 214mph. Keeping the car on the straight and narrow (literally) is RUF's time-served choice of Bilstein adjustable dampers and stiffer springs, dropping the ride height by 30mm. Carbon- →

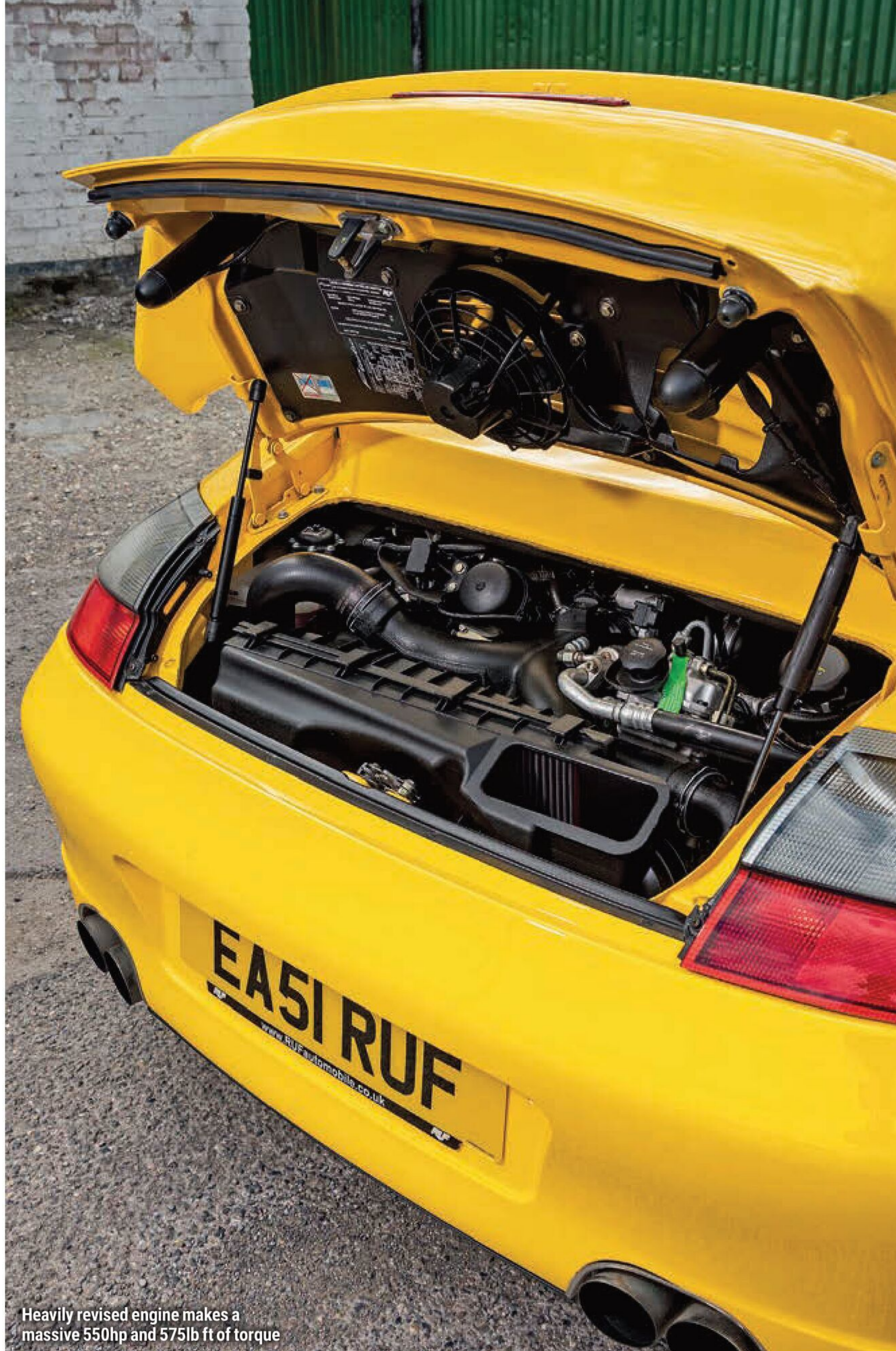
ceramic brakes were a sensible addition to the RTurbo's options list, while optimised airflow was achieved by a modified front bumper design and intakes moved from Porsche's preferred lower rear quarters to the top of the rear wheel arches, making them nearer to each turbocharger's corresponding intercooler. But wait, there's more! Much more, in fact.

Not content with his team's mind-blowing autobahn stormer's performance, Alois developed a 550hp RTurbo package, making use of titanium connecting rods, higher-profile camshafts and a new map, combining to develop 575lb ft torque and allowing the host RUF to hit 218mph. This was most definitely a new RUF for a new era of sports car production, but in an increasingly crowded marketplace, Alois needed a bold way of announcing the fact. The solution, he determined, was to dress a 550hp four-wheel drive RTurbo coupé in Yellowbird-aping Blütengelb and film it completing a flying lap of a deserted Nürburgring with RUF test driver, Stefan Roser, at the wheel.

The resulting footage, mercifully free of background music, can be viewed on YouTube. It's both mesmerising and jaw-dropping, such is the graceful way the brightly coloured RTurbo slides sideways around corners and flies like a rocket along straights. This is no lightweight race car, either. No, like most RUFs, the RTurbo was designed to be as comfortable and civilised as a top-end Volkswagen around town (to this end, air-conditioning and other creature comforts were standard equipment, pushing dry weight to 1540kg), but capable of coming alive at the track. And as Roser ably demonstrates in the fantastic footage posted online, the RTurbo does just that when given permission to attack the asphalt.

Most sports car buyers with half an ounce of common sense about them know the promoted claim of "former factory press car" means the machine in question should probably be given a wide berth — contrary to the seller suggesting this makes the offering more desirable, the fact of the matter is a car handed over to heavy-footed journalists ends up on the receiving end of much abuse. Truth be told, many motoring hacks simply don't treat loan cars with any degree of sympathy, instead considering the poor four-wheeler as an all-terrain vehicle and kicking its teeth in at every available opportunity. Fortunately, Porsche and RUF cars are designed to withstand hard driving by those lucky enough to find themselves behind the wheel, which is why marque enthusiast, Jayesh Patel, had no hesitation in buying the very RTurbo Rosen battled around the Green Hell.

Built in 2002 from a blank 996 Carrera narrow body and subsequently featured on the cover of Porsche and RUF Sports Cars (a reference book documenting the production models of both manufacturers), this particular



Heavily revised engine makes a massive 550hp and 575lb ft of torque



RTurbo didn't make its way to the UK until 2019, as Jayesh explains. "The car was assembled for the purposes of being a RUF company demonstrator, before going on to form part of a private collection of sports cars owned by Gérard Lopez, an entrepreneur-investor in many motorsport concerns, including Lotus F1," he reveals. "Lopez became a significant shareholder in RUF through one of his capital venture companies and, considering he owns what many consider to be one of the very best private car collections in the world, an RTurbo was the perfect addition to his fast fleet."

If you're going to own any RTurbo, this is the

one to have. "I've been lucky enough to be in possession of a number of 911s over the years, including a 997, a 930, a Carrera 3.2, various 964s and a Tiptronic-equipped 993 which I've owned twice," Jayesh continues. "One of the highlights was a 964 Turbo converted to RUF BTR 3.8 specification, but I always wondered what it would be like to own a production RUF. When a friend told me he was thinking of selling his RTurbo, and that it was the company's famous press car, I knew I had to add my name to the yellow beast's logbook!"

Kept in exceptionally good condition despite having covered almost 30,000 miles in the

hands of previous owners, this custard-coloured modern classic was kept by RUF until September 2007, when it was released into the wild, complete with a fully rebuilt engine. Inside, GT3 buckets paired with Schroth Racing multi-point harnesses keep both occupants (there's no rear seating) firmly in place, while RUF-branded lightweight pedals, short shifter, steering wheel and dash clocks provide cause-and-effect as far as driver input is concerned.

"Look closely and you'll see the roll cage," Jayesh smiles. It is, perhaps, one of the RTurbo's most impressive features – recognising not every buyer has the skill of Roser, RUF →



"THIS 550HP CUSTARD-COLOURED MODERN CLASSIC WAS KEPT BY RUF UNTIL 2007, WHEN IT WAS RELEASED INTO THE WILD, COMPLETE WITH A FULLY REBUILT ENGINE"





Front bumper was redesigned for optimised airflow

identified the need to increase safety by wrapping the cockpit in a custom cage. Where most add-on tube work is readily identifiable, however, the RTurbo's kit is neatly wrapped in black Alcantara and perfectly blended into the rest of the car's cabin, making the metalwork almost invisible.

Another benefit of the masked material is increased rigidity, though don't go thinking the RTurbo is likely to shake your fillings free – this is a surprisingly comfortable car offering confidence at every turn. The turbochargers are smart and punchy, not threatening to smack you in the back with delayed boost like the 911 Turbos of old, while the four-wheel-drive system and enhanced chassis allow far more of the RTurbo's capabilities to be explored by those not possessing Roser's considerable talents. "With no electronic driver aids, like ESP or traction control, the two-wheel-drive RTurbo must be incredibly twitchy," Jayesh grins. "The four-wheel-drive variant, however, feels supremely planted. It's clear RUF doesn't approach build of its production cars with the idea of improving on only performance over the base model Porsche in mind. The preciseness of steering, braking and handling is miles ahead of the game. You

can put your foot down, the car flies and you have total confidence that you're not going to lose the back end."

It's a very different drive to the 996 Turbo. With approximately 300 updates applied by RUF over Porsche's standard specification, this should hardly come as a surprise, especially when so many of the RTurbo's components are the result of model-specific engineering projects in Pfaffenhausen. Even the 550hp, instant-access torque of the motor powering Jayesh's not-so-mellow yellow monster was subject to regular redevelopment at RUF, with a range-topping 590hp variant offered before model discontinuation in 2005. Not that the example displayed on the pages before you is left wanting.

The thrilling crackle of the engine signals the availability of all that power relatively low in the rev range, with showtime opening when those sharp snail-shaped hp boosters wake up. Grip is spectacular, while the suspension, though dated by today's standards, does an excellent job of keeping the body in check when cornering hard. Feedback through the perfectly weighted steering is sublime, another quality confirming the RTurbo's ability to deliver totally usable

power in spades and, dare we say it, far more convincingly than many far newer sports cars. Make no mistake, this is an utterly spectacular machine. Why, then, is Jayesh selling it?!

"I have to admit," he sighs, "it's just too modern for me. Forgetting the fact I feel a car like this needs to be in the hands of someone who can get the very best out of it, and notwithstanding my lack of track day experience, I just find myself far more at home in the hot seat of an air-cooled 911. That said, owning a RUF production car is likely to be a once in a lifetime experience, and though I'm glad I was lucky enough to achieve this ambition with none other than the factory RTurbo press car, it's time for someone else to enjoy time behind the wheel of this iconic 911."

Widespread modern acceptance of modified Porsche sports cars in any form makes the RTurbo arguably a more desirable proposition today than it was at the time of launch. This extraordinary example, complete with its rich provenance, is a truly special car, which represents the beginning of RUF's adventures building water-cooled, turbocharged 911s capable of beating Porsche at its own game, a story that has yet to run its course ■

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BUYING GUIDE 911 TURBO 996

Epic pace, reasonable price and awesome all-weather performance make the 996 Turbo a hugely appealing machine

Words **DANIEL BEVIS** / Photos **TOM GIDDEN**

In turbocharged form, the 996 transcended its perceived 'bitsa' roots (at least in the eyes of those cynics who were suspicious of the aesthetic Boxster connection) to become a truly phenomenal performance car. And with the ensuing X50 upgrade, Cabriolet variant and ultimate Turbo S spec, this was a hot Porsche that just kept on getting hotter.

HISTORY

Forced induction has gone hand-in-hand with top-tier 911s since the introduction of the 911

Turbo (930) in 1975. If you're interested in Filofaxes, red braces, and pastel-hued suits with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows, then well done – you've successfully completed the Big Bumper Course of Porsche 930 Clichés! The 930 is an iconic thing, and rightly so – back in the go-go '80s, it was one of the holy trinity of bedroom wall poster cars, alongside the Ferrari F40 and the Lamborghini Countach; its unique hook was that in this company at least, it was punching above its weight: a tweaked sports car alongside a pair of supercars. Porsche had been turbocharging race cars since the 1960s

and was well-versed in forced induction, but that wasn't to say buyers were in for an easy ride – initial road tests highlighted the car's demanding style, thanks to its short wheelbase and marked turbo lag, and this was all exactly as it should be. Phenomenal performance shouldn't be too easily accessible, you have to work for the rewards.

This risk/reward matrix came to be a defining feature of turbocharged 911s forever after. The subsequent 964 Turbo, while markedly friendlier, was still a bit of a handful, as was the 993 Turbo that followed it in 1995. So all

You can pick up a 996 Turbo for around £30k these days, making it an incredible performance bargain



eyes were on Porsche in 2001 when the mooted Turbo variant of the 996-generation finally broke cover. There was much chatter about this platform even with the forced induction, given that this was the first era of 911s to have water-cooled engines. The fact that much of the front end of the car was shared with the cheaper Boxster did little to appease the purists, although those with an open mind found the 996 to be just as beguilingly tactile and entertaining as its numerous air-cooled forebears. And the 996 Turbo? Well that turned out to be something truly special.

A significant part of this success can be attributed to its frankly astonishing motor, which was directly derived from the Le Mans-winning 911 GT1 race car. This twin- →

911 TURBO 996

ENGINE 3.6-litre twin-turbo flat-six

TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or five-speed Tiptronic

MAX POWER 420hp @ 6000rpm

MAX TORQUE 415lb ft @ 2700-4600rpm

0-62MPH 4.2 seconds (4.9)

TOP SPEED 189mph (185)

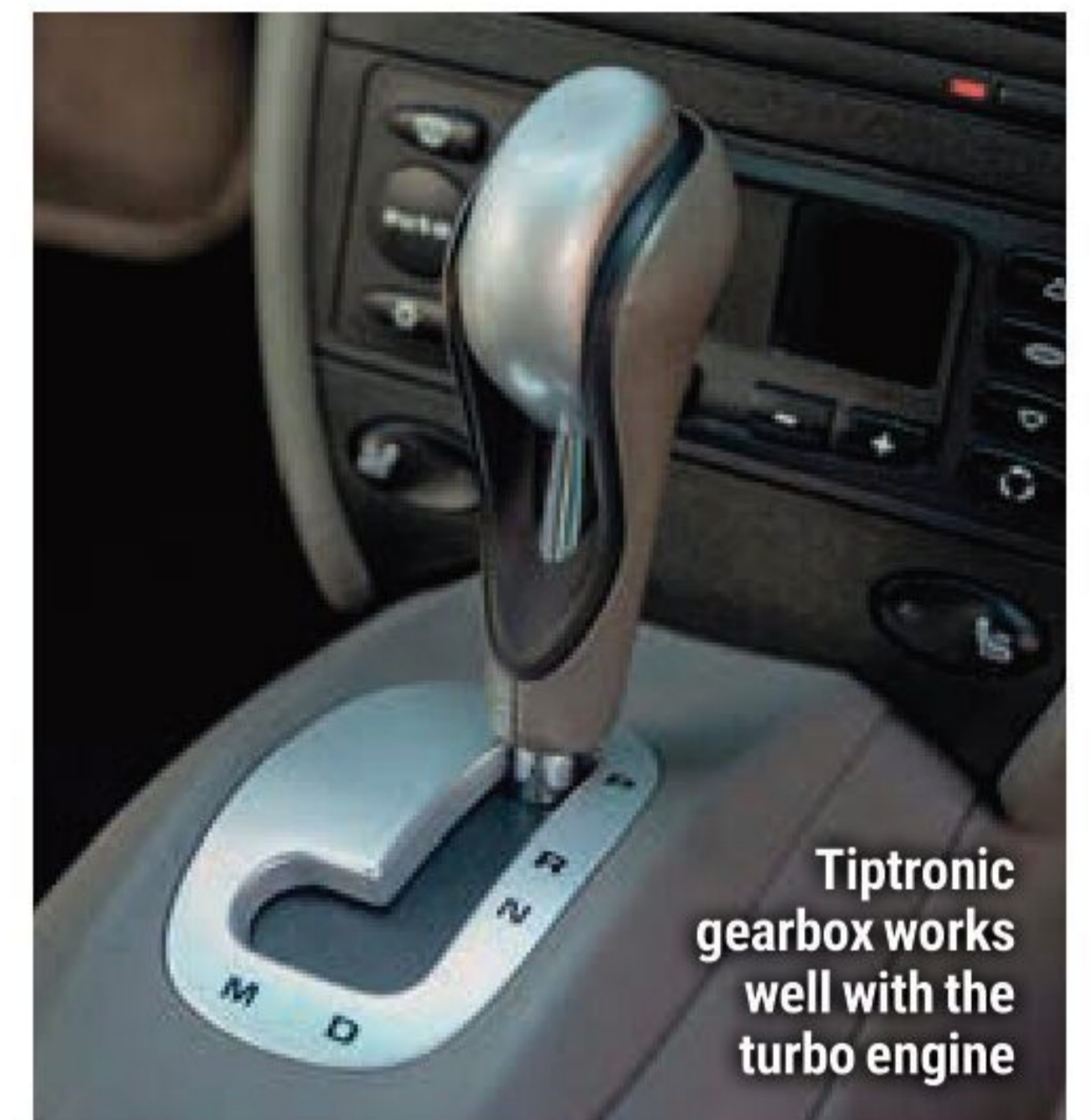
(figures in brackets refer to Tiptronic model)



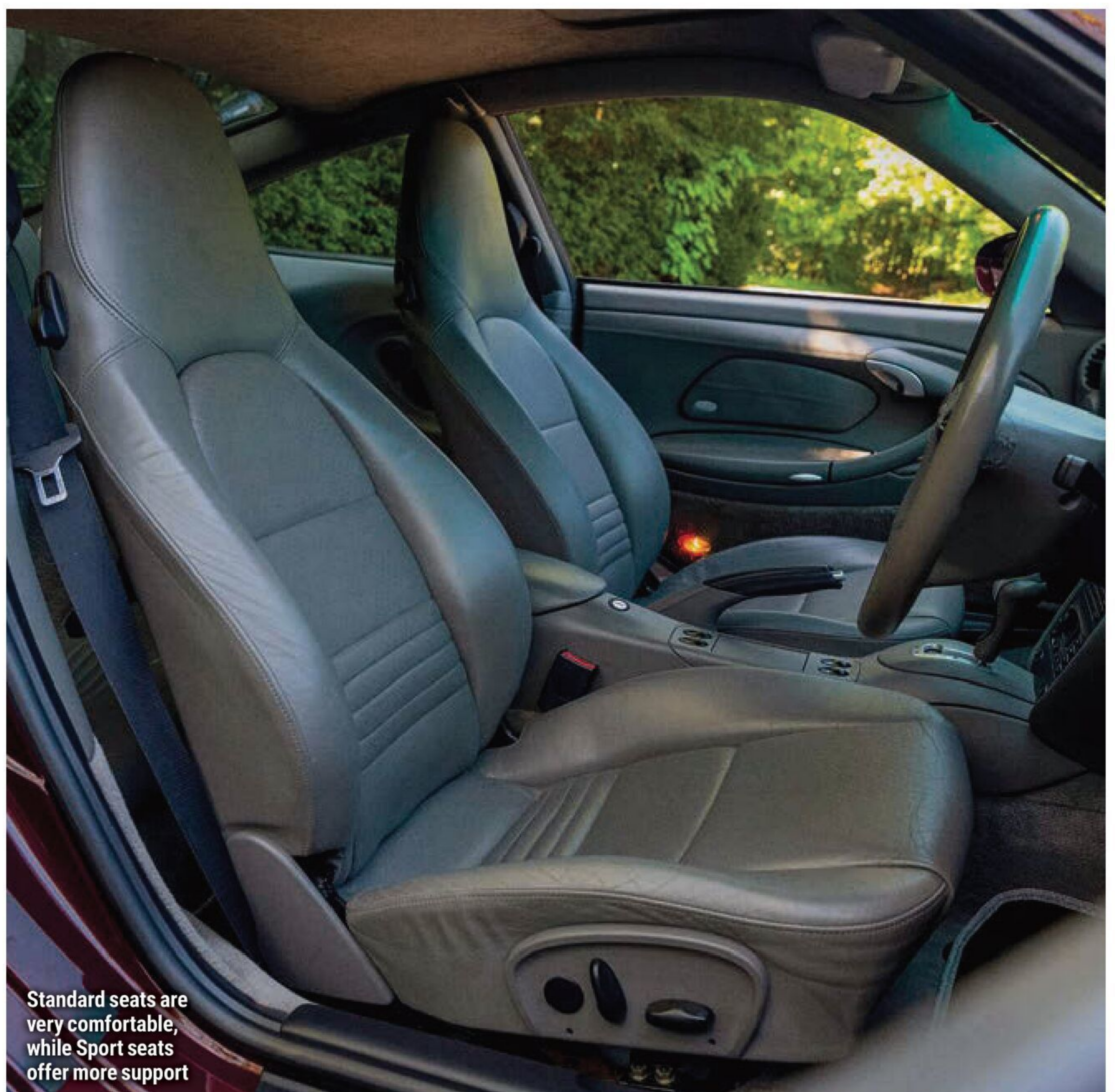
996 Turbo interior is well built and solid



Classic five-gauge cluster



Tiptronic gearbox works well with the turbo engine



Standard seats are very comfortable, while Sport seats offer more support



“IT SEEMS ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE THAT THIS MODEL WENT OFF SALE 17 YEARS AGO – IT’S NOW A MODERN-CLASSIC, AND IT WON’T BE THAT LONG UNTIL IT’S CLASSIC-CLASSIC”

turbocharged and intercooled 3.6-litre flat-six produced a brutal 420hp and 415lb ft, featured VarioCam Plus (with two-stage lift on the intake side), and made all the right noises. This was mated to an intelligent and advanced drivetrain and chassis package, featuring all-wheel-drive, stability management, and the option of either a six-speed manual or a five-speed Tiptronic transmission.

The visual drama was ramped up more than a little too: noticeably broader-hipped than the regular Carreras, the wide-body Turbo is distinguishable by its fixed rear wing and copious vents for the various extra radiators, as well as the 18” wheels and bi-xenon headlights.

An important and popular upgrade arrived in 2002, in the form of the X50 package; this brought in larger K24 turbos, a quad-tail exhaust system and a revised ECU to bring peak power up to 450hp. There were a few non-power upgrades at this stage too, including rain-sensing wipers, optional Bose audio, central cup-holders and a glovebox.

A Turbo Cabriolet arrived in 2004, which was good news for enthusiasts as there hadn’t been such a thing since the era of the 930 – there was no Turbo Cabriolet variant of the 964 or 993. And the final flourish of the oeuvre was the Turbo S of 2005: available in either coupé or cabriolet form, this was effectively an X50-equipped

Turbo which also benefited from ceramic-composite brakes (PCCB) and some interior upgrades including aluminium-faced dials and a six-CD changer.

WHAT TO PAY?

There’s a large amount of variety in the pricing on today’s market, but of course, this is a positive thing as there are (in relative terms) plenty of cars to choose from. So it’s not a case of mulling over the pros and cons of a small pool of cars; if you’re dead-set on a manual X50 then you shouldn’t have to ‘settle’ for a Tiptronic non-X50, for example.

£30,000 looks to be the 996 Turbo entry point – there are Turbos on sale for less than this, but you get what you pay for. There are X50s at this price, and rising to £40,000 will find you a clean one with acceptable miles and decent history. At £50k you’ll be looking at really nice examples with low mileage, and a little north of this is where you’ll find the later Turbo S, capping at about £55k. Cabriolets command a premium over their tin-top brethren, with the lowest-priced starting at £45,000 and the best breaking through the £60k mark.

OUR CHOICE

Any 996 Turbo is a fun 996 Turbo, so the decision-making process here is really dictated





Air intakes in the rear arches make the Turbo easy to distinguish



Active wing rams can fail, so make sure it raises and lowers correctly



by personal preference. We'd probably go for a coupé; while the Turbo Cabriolet is a formidable and supremely desirable thing, you do pay a sizeable premium for having the wind in your hair, and that extra outlay could be better channelled into finding exactly the spec you want in coupé form. There are a lot of silver 996s so we'd prefer a different colour – black suits them well, or if you're really lucky you might find one in Orient Red, which looks absolutely stunning. We'll have a manual please, with the X50 pack – that seems to be the best balance of value and performance.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

EXTERIOR

There are a few things to look out for that you'd likely find with any 996 – stone chips across the nose and the mirrors are common, as is condensation inside the headlights and potential corrosion around the door latch inside the B-pillar if it's misaligned... although you shouldn't be finding body corrosion anywhere else, as a rule. →



996 Turbo has plenty of presence



Despite being over 20 years old, the 996 Turbo is still a seriously rapid machine, even by modern standards

The front bumper's various intake apertures have mesh grilles inside them to keep debris out, and these can become clogged if left unchecked – and if they get damaged by stone strikes or what-have-you, they can let leaves and slush and so on into the condenser and radiators behind.

A key part of the Turbo's visual appeal, as well as its impressive aerodynamics, is that large fixed rear wing, which has a secondary active wing within it that rises on hydraulic rams above 75mph. It's worth checking that this is working properly, as the rams have been known to fail and it can be expensive to remedy. Before shelling out to replace the whole mechanism, it's worth having a try at disassembling, re-greasing and reassembling to see if this fixes it. If you're looking at a Cabriolet, carefully check the condition of the roof and make sure that its electrical raising and lowering system is working as it should. These Cabriolets came as standard with a hard-top, so make sure that comes with the car too.

INTERIOR

As befits a top-of-the-range model, there was plenty of standard kit in the cabin. All Turbos got leather trim and air-conditioning, with an electric sunroof offered as a no-cost option. Porsche Communication Management was an option, and this sat-nav was once very desirable, although to be honest, it's sufficiently aged now as to be more of a take-it-or-leave-it thing. In terms of seats, there are two types you're likely to find: the standard seats are electric memory

items but aren't hugely supportive; the other option was Sport seats, which are far more supportive but aren't electrically adjustable. Bolster wear is something to look out for, as are scratched and scuffed plastics across the dash, but in general, the interior is pretty hard-wearing.

ENGINE & GEARBOX

When it comes to the drivetrain, it's imperative that you interrogate the history (and ideally the owner) – because while these engines are generally robust and reliable, they can go wrong in quite expensive ways. Regular servicing is the key – Porsche recommend oil changes every 12k miles, but conscientious owners will have done it at closer to 6k. The IMS issues suffered by naturally-aspirated 996s aren't something to be afraid of with a Turbo, but make sure there are no evident oil leaks anywhere. Rattly exhausts aren't uncommon, and it's usually just a heat shield that's worked its way loose rather than being an actual exhaust failure. Check that the engine temperature is normal and that the air-con works, as the radiators and condenser in the nose are vulnerable to damage. Check the clutch operation carefully too – the clutch is servo-assisted so it's not always obvious when it's worn.

CHASSIS

Have a good look at the brake discs on both sides, as they can crack on the inside while looking fine from outside, and they're expensive to

replace. And bear in mind that if you're looking at a car with PCCB, while Porsche did claim that those discs would last 150,000 miles, that's probably nonsense... and they can cost well over £1000 per corner to renew. Think twice about cars with creaking suspension bushes at the front, because the bushes are bonded to the suspension arms so it's a bigger job than you'd think. And these cars are sensitive to having the correct geometry settings – uneven tyre wear will be the most obvious clue to things being out of true.

VERDICT

The 996 Turbo was a truly formidable proposition when it was launched, taking the platform of the undisputed king of the sports car genre and imbuing it with genuine supercar performance. This was no uncompromising track machine either, it came lavishly equipped (relatively speaking), and despite the 996 as a whole receiving a lukewarm response from the die-hards who were angry about having a water-cooled 911 with a Boxster nose, the Turbo did much to reframe perceptions. And they sold like hotcakes, so there's plenty of choice on the market today.

It seems almost unbelievable that this model went off sale 17 years ago – it's now a modern-classic, and it won't be that long until it's classic-classic. Which makes the values today seem really quite reasonable. Under £40k for a hysterically quick Porsche whose value will inevitably rise? It makes a lot of sense ■



**986 & 987 3.2 – 3.7 / 987 3.4 – 3.9 / 996 3.4 – 3.7
996 3.6 – 3.9 / 997 3.6 – 3.9 / 997 3.8 – 4.1
CAPACITY CONVERSIONS**

Build slots available from March



Independent Porsche specialist RPM Technik has been in the business of creating tailored vehicles for some time now.

Though the Hertfordshire specialist can perform a range of services, from a simple oil change to selling you your next Porsche, it is perhaps its CSR range of bespoke, modular, vehicles which is the most interesting facet of its business model. Neatly summarising what 'CSR' stands for is a little tricky, but I'll have a bash all the same. In a nutshell, it involves taking a standard Porsche vehicle and pushing its envelope to new realms, essentially unlocking a car's latent potential in order to create a more honed driving machine. The first CSR was a 986 Boxster – a bit of a toe in the water in some ways. Since that time RPM Technik has evolved the CSR concept to reach entirely new levels, it has also taken the premise in a number of different directions.

Many CSRs that have come before, both demonstrator and customer vehicles, have admittedly been based on 911s – the 996 being a firm favourite, but these offerings are not strictly limited to Porsche's rear-engined icon. Despite each having been designed to emphasize its credentials as a performance Porsche first and foremost, not all have been track-focused offerings either. In that regard, the CSR Retro springs to mind – a 996 tweaked primarily for fast road fun with more of a nod to comfort over circuit priorities. However, this CSR is

unashamedly biased towards track use, in fact without doubt the 996 you see here – the 996 CSR EVO – is the most track-focused CSR yet.

This 996 CSR EVO is chassis 22 of 29 CSR cars either built or currently in build to date by the dedicated CSR division of RPM Technik, and it moves the CSR story on a stage. Using as its basis a 2002 second-generation 996 Carrera 2, the new 911 CSR EVO has received a host of tweaks aimed squarely at drivers who regularly visit the track. This contrasts slightly with previous CSRs which, while highly competent on track, struck a certain balance between road and track use.

"It is still a road car but it has the potential to be a lot more hardcore than anything that has come before it, however, it still needs to be a daily driver – that's a box every CSR has to tick," explains RPM Technik's Darren Anderson. "You could still use it as your daily driver, but with the strengthened coilover suspension you can run Cup tyres on it – the envelope is bigger with a further range of adjustment on offer to be able to go that little bit harder and faster."

In a bid to lend this latest CSR a massive injection of further credibility, it has been finessed in partnership with former BTCC and Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion, Tim Harvey – more on that shortly. Although Darren is tentative in drawing the comparison, there's every reason to see this car as a genuine GT3 alternative – one with more adjustability on offer and benefiting from the fact that a →

Honed in collaboration with former BTCC and Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion, Tim Harvey, RPM Technik's 996 CSR EVO is the most track-focused CSR yet. We drive this GT3 alternative on road and track...

Words SIMON JACKSON / Photos MALCOLM GRIFFITHS

ROAD &



TRACK



CSR EVO feels very much at home on the road

“THERE’S EVERY REASON TO SEE THIS CAR AS A GENUINE GT3 ALTERNATIVE...”

Carrera is not anywhere near as rare as a GT 911 – in short, you’d not be scared to drive it on circuit. On paper alone the 996 CSR EVO’s specification is enough to excite, delivering at its heart a free-revving 350hp normally aspirated engine. The Carrera’s original 3.6-litre M96 power unit has been breathed upon in key areas both to ensure durability and to increase performance. Officially termed a ‘CSR Protection & Power Pack’, in essence, the engine has been rebuilt and thoroughly refreshed to strengthen it with a large focus on the top end. Bottom end works include an IMS bearing upgrade, the fitment of a deep sump, and there’s also been the introduction of Evans Waterless Coolant.

“The EVO benefits from our Stage 1 power pack” Darren explains. “It has seen the engine have its cylinder heads rebuilt, machined,

ported and polished and with high-lift cams fitted – we’ve done a number of engine preservation tweaks to this car but these modifications also help us with improved power and power delivery,”

Furthering that free-flowing cause is a bespoke centre-exit exhaust system. It’s a stunning setup that not only looks superbly engineered but sounds immense too. Cleverly, the system allows for the removal of its tailpipes to fit silencers to facilitate track use.

In addition to the engine comes a well-thought-through chassis arrangement. A clever mechanical limited-slip differential is key, this being the first CSR to run such a setup. The differential can be fully adjusted, allowing owners to customise its setup to suit their driving style, with different plates or ramp angles on offer. Darren explains that that’s something you can’t do with rival aftermarket differential solutions, and it highlights the entire build ethos of this car – its adjustability and focus. Further adding to the car’s drivability on track come three-way adjustable KW Clubsport coilovers, and they’re set with an exclusive CSR geometry and ride

height. The EVO is also fitted with an adjustable lightweight anti-roll bar, adjustable lower arms, together with poly bushes throughout. In each corner sit lightweight 18” OZ wheels shod in this instance with Michelin Pilot Sport tyres, though more circuit bias Michelin Cup 2 tyres are also offered. Behind them sit four-piston brake calipers, working with CSR floating discs up front and high-performance pads and brake fluid all-round.

Distinctive respray aside (it’s VWG Merlin Purple, by the way) the exterior of this 996 CSR EVO might look tame on first inspection, but actually, there’s quite a bit going on here. A lightweight carbon bonnet replaces the original nose, a matching lightweight carbon deck lid boasts the now-signature CSR ducktail spoiler, the use of weight-saving materials contributing to a 45kg saving over the weight of a stock 996 Carrera (1370kg). Underneath the ducktail comes a redesigned rear bumper section, wrapping neatly around the twin-exit exhaust tailpipes, while around the front a unique CSR bumper features a splitter and a functional central vent directing air to a newly installed third radiator. Bespoke CSR mounts and ducting have been

carefully engineered to ensure all air entering the third radiator is directed out through the bumper vent. This creates increased downforce and ensures lower running temperatures which translates to a happier, more powerful engine.

Further weight saving has been undertaken in the cabin, which now looks far more purposeful than the inners of most Carreras. Dominating the inside are a pair of Recaro Pole Position fixed-back bucket seats with both harnesses for track use, and the original seatbelts for road driving. Where the rear seats once were now sits a harness bar to which the harnesses are attached, another RPM Technik development. Cleverly this bit of kit can also be fitted to cars that retain their rear seats. Over and around all this sits a colour-coded rear four-point roll-cage. Oh, and if you've been staring at the centre console wondering what's different there's more than just a spot of colour-coding going on. Some of the buttons have been relocated or removed, smoothing and simplifying the overall look of the dash. A taller gear lever has been combined with a short-shift kit to ensure that gear changes are as easy and slick as possible, when your hands are not busy on the deeply dished steering wheel, of course.

All of these changes have been designed to deliver a car with character, a unique mechanical personality distinct from your common or garden 996 – this thing screams 'fun'. And that's a point that was driven home to me when I mentioned it to former BTCC and Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion, Tim Harvey. A double Carrera Cup GB champion, Tim still holds the record for the most victories since the championship's inception in 2003, plus he retains the highest number of outright wins (36) and podium finishes (107) too. His record of fastest laps in the series (29) is trumped only by 2012 / 2013 champion Michael Meadows with 30. So the point is that he knows a thing or two about how track-biased 911s should drive, and how to set them up! "Have you driven it? It's good fun, isn't it!" Tim smiles when I mention the car. "RPM Technik doesn't build a bad car – they're always good straight out the box." Indeed I have driven it, and fun it most certainly is.

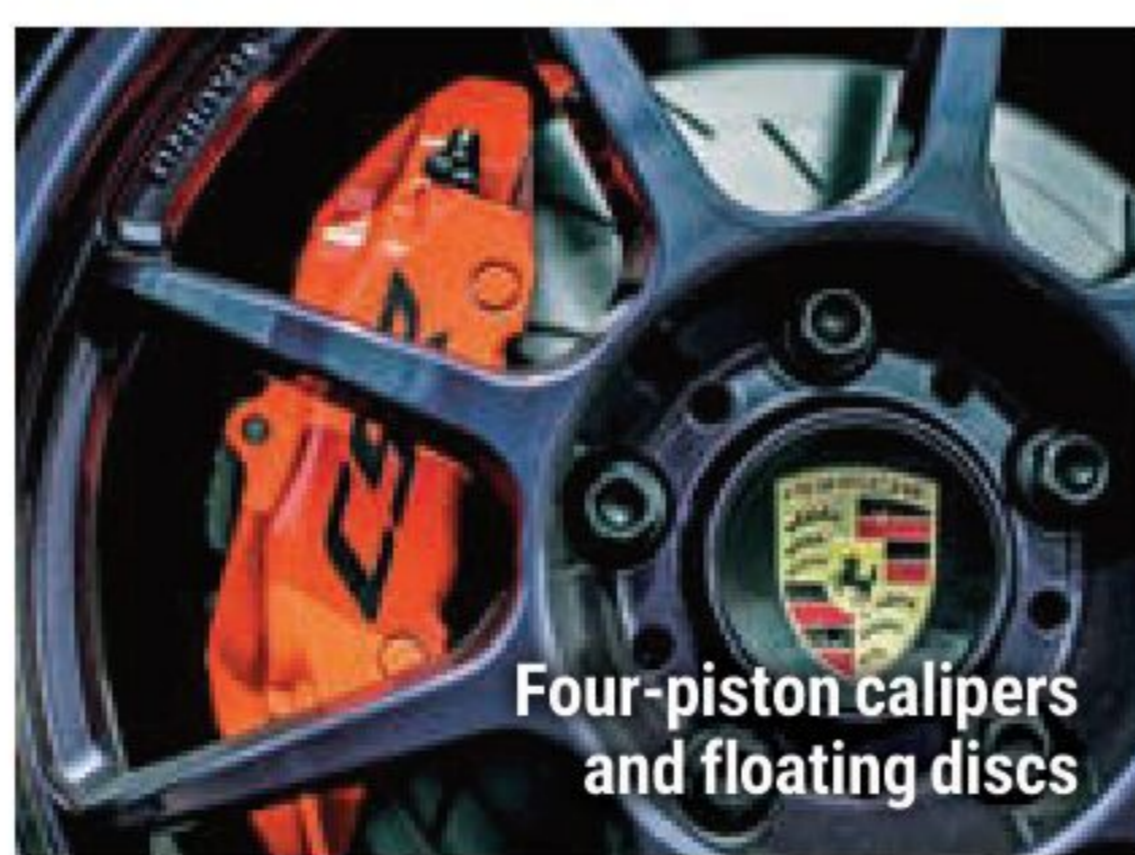
I meet Darren and the car at Silverstone on what I presume is a simple track day. What this transpires to be is an open pit lane day on the full Grand Prix circuit hosted by Gold Track, organisers of professional race track events. As I arrive a McLaren P1 trundles in behind me and as we navigate our way to the National pits I can't help but notice the place is strewn with professional race car transporters, littered with expensive track machines in addition to road-going exotica from GT Porsches and Lamborghinis to Radicals and Caterhams. I have my (motorbike) crash helmet on the back seat but other than that I feel somewhat unprepared and, in terms of driving talent, way out of my



This is one seriously entertaining car



Reworked 3.6-litre M96 makes 350hp



Four-piston calipers and floating discs



Bespoke centre-exit exhaust



Lightweight carbon bonnet



CSR EVO excels on track

depth. The sense of foreboding is exaggerated when I spot Olympian turned endurance driver Chris Hoy in the paddock (he drives a 991 GT3 incidentally) and a bunch of familiar old racers turned tutors or team principals. For now, though, I don't need to worry about holding up the pros on track, I'm off to drive the CSR EVO on the road.

For a track-oriented car, the 996 CSR EVO is remarkably comfortable from the moment you slide inside its capacious Recaro Pole Position buckets. In advance of our track session, the car has been set for circuit use so I'm expecting it to feel a little rough and on-edge on the road. As we leave Silverstone's main gates behind and get onto the quick rural back roads which surround the famous venue there's no hint of that expectation being realised. While it's apparent that the EVO has been designed to offer a stiffer ride than that of a standard Carrera, the car is not shaking me senseless – and it would be far more pliant still in 'road mode'. As we pick up the pace the responsive nature of the car begins to show its face; at idle its gravelly din is reminiscent of a GT car, and in some regards, its power delivery is too. Under 3000rpm there's little to give the game away other than a slightly more cheeky exhaust note, but as soon as the needle, which sits ahead of special CSR dials, climbs towards 4000rpm the car comes on song and its character completely changes. "You'd want to drive it on the road with the windows

down all the time," Tim Harvey commented. He's right.

As the acceleration takes on a new, far more lively purpose, the engine and exhaust notes climb in unison to a crescendo that is like no other 996 Carrera I've driven. On the road, it feels fast, very fast for a normally aspirated 996, which belies the 350hp I'm told it is producing. The chassis, even with the suspension set in this harder fashion, is confidence-inspiring – it is direct and allows you to take the car by the scruff of the neck and throw it through bends without fear of it biting back. In terms of drivability, this is an accomplished and addictive 911, begging for you to get back on the power and to fire it out of the corners. The responsive nature of the engine is utterly fantastic, the free-revving unit creamy in its power delivery, the gear changes beautiful and direct, the brakes boasting a depth of feel and bite like few Porsches of this generation – with little persuasion it will simply fly down the road. "What's nice about it is the response, it's often actually going faster than it feels – it's quick..." confirmed Mr Harvey.

This car is a joy on fast A and B roads, and yet not a monster through towns and villages with it, and to be frank, that's a real surprise. It's great fun on the faster routes and yet having said that, all the time it has you wondering what it would be like if pushed that bit harder in the right environment – like on a track.

Back at Silverstone the EVO is rolled straight from the road into the garages that used to be used by the F1 teams, and out onto the full Silverstone Grand Prix circuit. That's one of the beauties of this car, its usability on road and track without fuss. Here the 996 CSR EVO can really shine and shine it does. As we barrel down Silverstone's fast straights and deceptive, long corners, the CSR feels like an even more exciting prospect. Its howling engine note at the redline is addictive, it never feels underpowered even on the long Hanger Straight where we're watching out for those aforementioned full-blooded race cars, while in the fast corners you can really lean on the car, far more than you think you should be able to. In the slower stuff its nose tucks in, if you get too hungry on the power on the way out it'll just send a warning shot with a twitch of its tail felt through the seat of your pants. Most of the time though it's apparent that the differential is pushing you through the corners to beautiful effect. I'm no racing driver, far from it, my opportunities to get on track are too sporadic so I always feel

"YOU'D WANT TO DRIVE IT ON THE ROAD WITH THE WINDOWS DOWN ALL THE TIME"

Unique CSR front bumper features a splitter and functional centre air vent





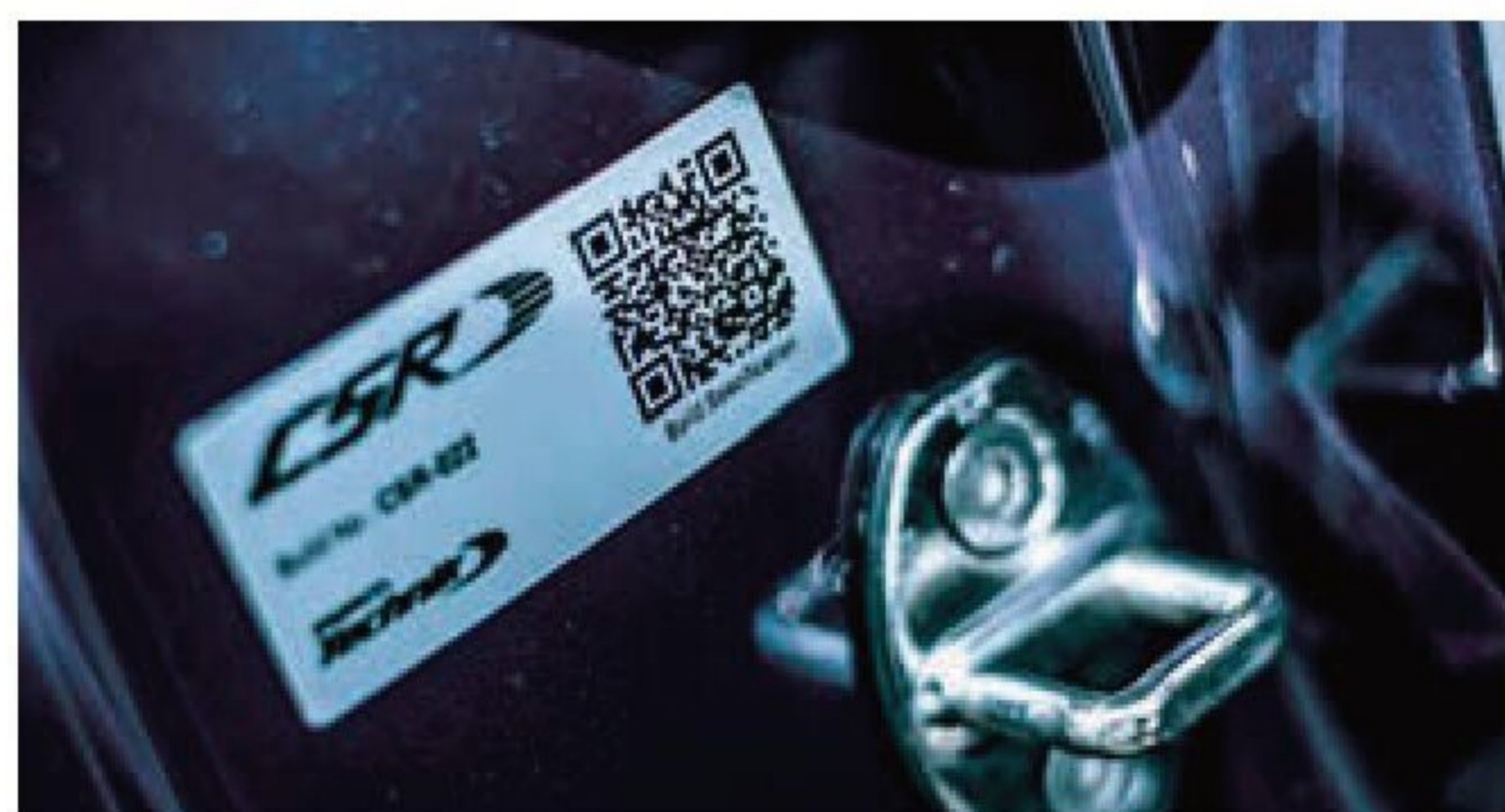
Deep-dish steering wheel and bucket seats with both harnesses and seat belts



Subtle CSR badging on the dials



Four-point rear roll-cage



like a novice when I do get let loose on a circuit, but the compliant nature of his car is one I feel I could grow in harmony with. The way in which it gently telegraphs its intentions, sending a little signal when you don't show it enough respect, is truly brilliant – even perfect for a beginner.

It's a credit to Darren and his team this car, which can clearly be all things to all people. If you're a proficient track driver, a Tim Harvey of this world, you'll enjoy pushing the 996 CSR EVO to its absolute limit on track, leaning on it through the corners and playing with its weight transfer (and that clever differential) under braking and through the turns. You'll derive hours of enjoyment via its adjustable nature, searching for the perfect setup. However, if like me you don't consider yourself a circuit expert, then there's plenty of confidence-inspiring (and safe) fun to be had in learning how to drive this latest CSR quickly. It will grow with your talents, for it can be driven in more than just one way by more than just experts. Furthermore, and although it is primarily a track tool, as we've experienced here it is proficient on the road too – surprisingly compliant and comfortable in fact, which means you could leave it set in its toughest settings all the time if you wanted to. What it certainly means is that you wouldn't need to book your EVO in at RPM Technik for

hours of fettling before and after you head to the track in it.

This particular car has been designed to showcase the complete 996 CSR EVO package, but as we've already mentioned what you see here is entirely modular, so you can pick and choose parts of the package to suit your needs and budget – the RPM Technik team will happily consult with you in order to arrive at the best options in this regard. A CSR conversion is priced between £80,000-100,000, which doesn't include the cost of the car. Given all the work that goes into creating an EVO, there would be little issue in starting with a cheaper Carrera as your base vehicle, for when it comes to a full conversion everything in sight (or out of it) is reworked or refreshed. That does admittedly put this car in a similar price bracket to that of a 996 GT3 – is this a GT3 beater? You know what, I think it might be.

You might well be more inclined to drive a well prepared CSR on track than an increasingly expensive, and rare, GT3, but moreover, this car drives like a potential GT3 alternative in its own right. In addition, it offers a level of adjustability and a trained focus that would appear to be unique – dare I say that it is potentially better than a 996 GT3 as a driving package in terms of its inherent 'road meets track' persona. The 'ultimate' 996? You know what? Just maybe... ■



he Boxster now feels almost as integral to the Porsche model range as the 911, and it's certainly not short of reference points in Stuttgart's back catalogue, but when the mid-engined roadster was launched in 1996, it was still pretty radical. It switched Porsche's affordable sports car strategy from a front-to

mid-engined layout, influenced the upcoming water-cooled 911 and, oh yes, helped save the entire company too.

The Boxster's 2021 silver anniversary was a chance to rediscover what made the 986 first-generation cars so fantastic to drive, and learn more about the 986's development first-hand from both Grant Larson, who designed the

concept and production car under the guidance of his boss Harm Lagaay, and from period R&D boss Horst Marchant who pitched the idea of an affordable mid-engined model in the first place.

Porsche found itself in a parlous situation in the late 1980s, as sales fell from around 40,000 units a year to just 15,000 in 1989. Porsche marketed cars like the 928, which was →



986 BOXSTER HISTORY

We delve deep into 986 Boxster development with candid interviews with Research and Development boss, Horst Marchant, and designer Grant Larson

Words **BEN BARRY** / Photos **PORSCHE**



ageing and expensive, and the 944 that wasn't selling so well. Before the Boxster arrived, the air-cooled 993 911 was the last man standing. The 993 should have been complemented by the 989 (a four-door 911 that foretold the Panamera), but then Horst Marchant was appointed to the board.

For Marchant, there was a neat circularity to starting the Boxster project, as he'd originally joined Porsche in 1960 during 911 development. Later he moved to external Porsche projects before eventually returning in 1988 to become head of overall vehicle development.

"Three years later [in 1991] I was appointed a board member, but before that, I had to tell the supervisory board what I wanted to do. The 928 was even above the 911 in pricing, people weren't purchasing them, and then the 989 was

even above the 928 and 911," he explains. "We had to find the way to sell at least 30,000 units a year again. My idea was to go back to the roots. We didn't have the Boxster yet, I just told the board we're going to take the 911 and come up with a new car, which will have the identical front end, and what we are going to vary is the mid-engined concept. Of course, that's easier said than done, but we got it done."

Marchant recalls a senior member of staff suggesting they just do a more affordable two-seat version of the 911 instead, a slightly different twist on the old 912 formula, but the board quickly approved Marchant's concept.

The four-door 989 project was canned, and so a new strategy was developed, whereby the next 911 (the water-cooled 996) and the mid-engined Boxster were developed in tandem, with the two

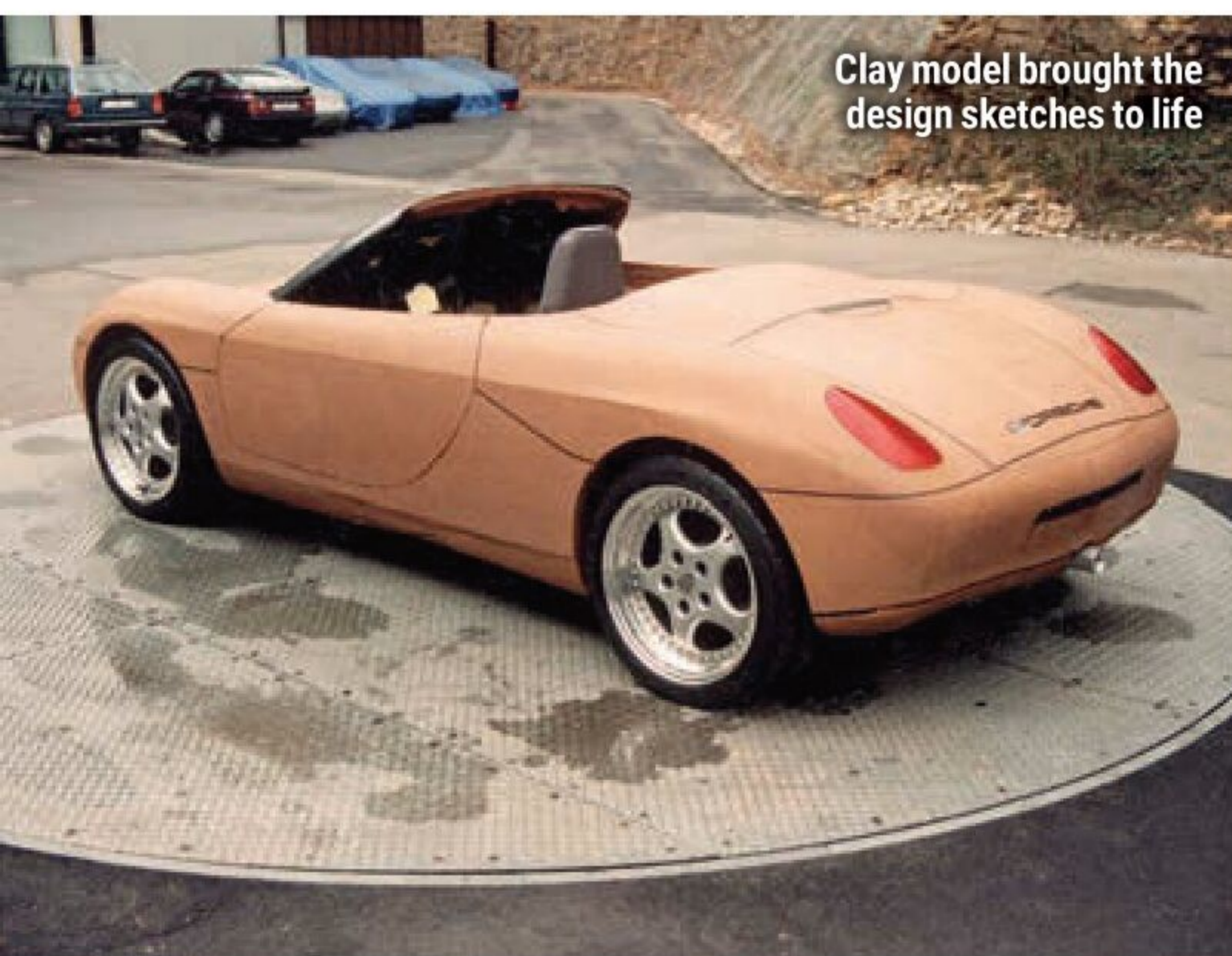
always intended to share around 50% of parts to save costs (Porsche saved 30% on the 911's bill of materials) without compromising the 911's technical specification.

Porsche simultaneously re-organised the way it operated – not just each department working largely in isolation, as had previously been the case, but in co-operation. "When we started these two model lines, we set up 21 teams in development, but these were cross-functional teams from all departments," explains Marchant. Porsche also learnt lessons from the development processes and prototype tooling used by Japanese manufacturers, particularly Honda.

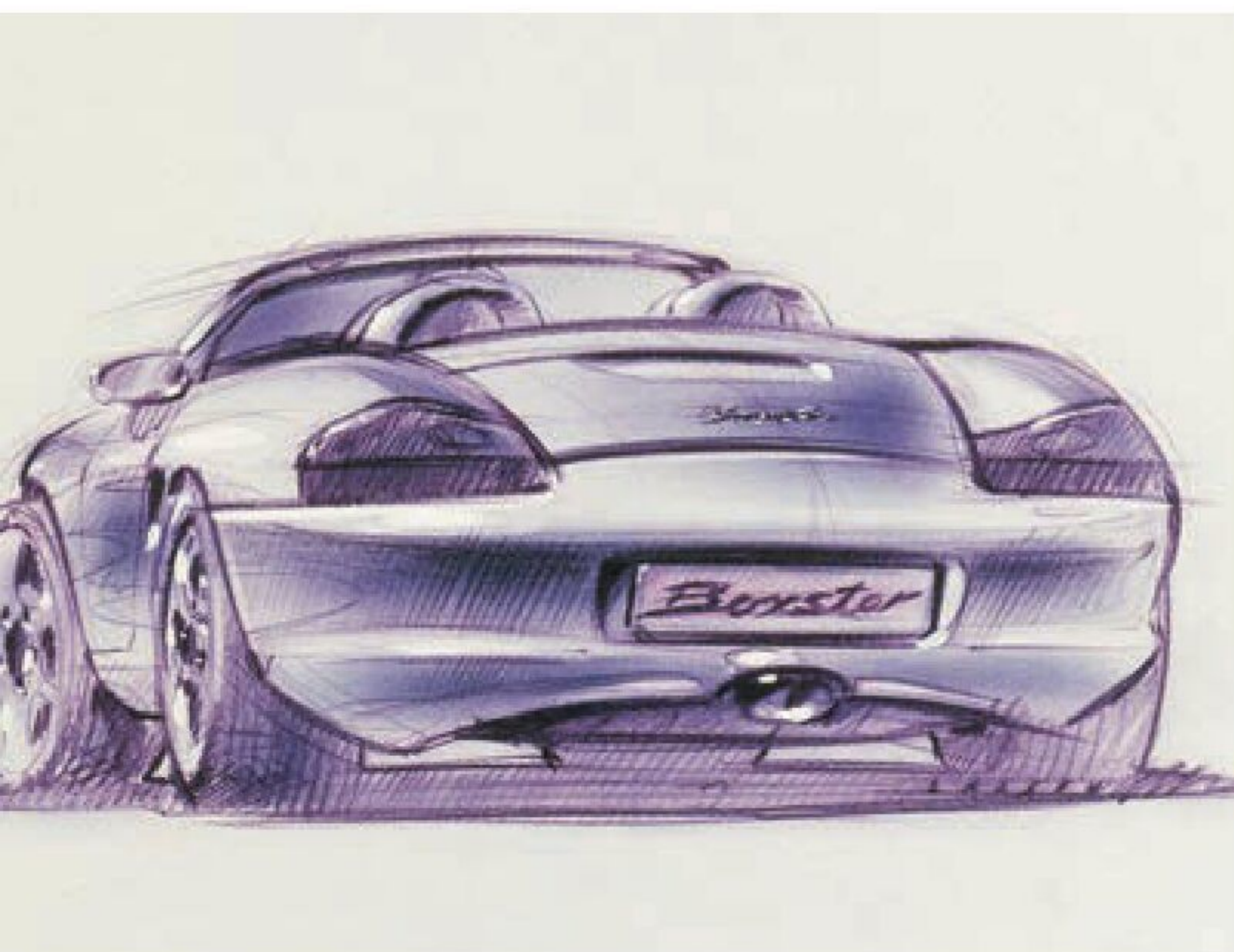
Grant Larson designed the Boxster concept and production car. He arrived from Audi aged 32 in 1989. "As a designer, you always look at



The Boxster Concept was unveiled at the 1993 Detroit Motor Show, where it went down a storm



Clay model brought the design sketches to life



“MY IDEA WAS TO GO BACK TO THE ROOTS. WE DIDN'T HAVE THE BOXSTER YET, I JUST TOLD THE BOARD WE'RE GOING TO TAKE THE 911 AND COME UP WITH A NEW CAR”

places where things are going on – at that time it was Japan, and there was less in Europe, and the least was happening at Porsche, which was known as a company that just facelifts a model for decades. My first project was a 944 facelift, which became the 968, as well as the 989,” he recalls. “When we first started the Boxster we were a bit down, because the 989 had just been cancelled, around the middle or fall of 1991, but we knew something new was coming with the idea of the Boxster, and of course, together with the 911 this was an exciting moment for us.”

Larson looked back at Porsche mid-engined models for inspiration, including the 550 and its successor, the 718 RSK, though he also acknowledges the wedgier 914. The design process was more analogue back then, but Porsche’s clay modelling was particularly artisan – rather than using co-ordinates, the clay modeller worked freehand from Larson’s sketches.

“I was really lucky to have an older

gentleman, Peter Müller, with a lot of experience in clay modelling,” Larson fondly recalls. “He just said ‘give me a sketch’, so I plastered the walls with all these drawings, and of course, talked to my boss, we put little red dots on each of the areas that we thought could become the new Boxster. And this guy looked at the drawings, and started sculpting the clay model with this thing that looked like a cheese grater and the car just sort of blossomed from his hands – not only from my sketches but from his hands.”

Larson describes the Boxster concept as having typical mid-engined proportions – longer wheelbase, cab-forward design, sculpted wheel arches, low bonnet and low rear deck, plus sculpted sides that, at that point, weren’t constrained by the production realities of carrying over 911 doors. He’s particularly happy with the central exhaust, a nod to the 550’s pea shooter.

The concept interior was developed with Stephan Stark. “The idea was to bring



more body colour into the car and have driver-oriented seating, so the car is basically asymmetrical with a tighter seating position with side bolsters that hold your hips,” elaborates Larson. “There are all kinds of wonderful details – one of the most famous is the moving ventilator fans, which unfortunately didn’t make it into production.”

The Boxster Concept was revealed at the Detroit Motor Show in January 1993, because back then Porsche was exporting 60% of production to the US, and needed to gauge reaction in its most crucial market. It went down a storm with potential buyers, journalists and the wider public alike.

The design was scaled up around 10-15% for production, to provide more luggage space front and rear, and to accommodate radiators that came from the 996. The air intakes were also

moved up from the side skirts to the body sides. The concept name – a portmanteau of ‘boxer’ and ‘roadster’ – was retained, and Marchant jokes it too was developed in-house, saving money on consultants.

Porsche initially planned to use an aluminium bodyshell, but the short timescales meant it stuck with the steel structures it knew. Plans for a four-cylinder engine were even discussed. “I was not too happy about that idea, but we definitely wanted to have a different output between these two models,” recalls Marchant.

Thankfully the engineers had package-protected for six cylinders and Audi’s overly ambitious quote for a four-cylinder meant it was more cost-effective for Porsche to develop a flat-six shared with the 911 if turned through 180°. It would be Porsche’s first entirely water-cooled

flat engine.

The Boxster’s much lower price point and inherently better-balanced chassis meant it had to be de-tuned to save the 911’s blushes. “We knew from the beginning that the Boxster would be the faster car if it had the same power as the 996, that’s why the Boxster performance is lowered a little,” says Marchant.

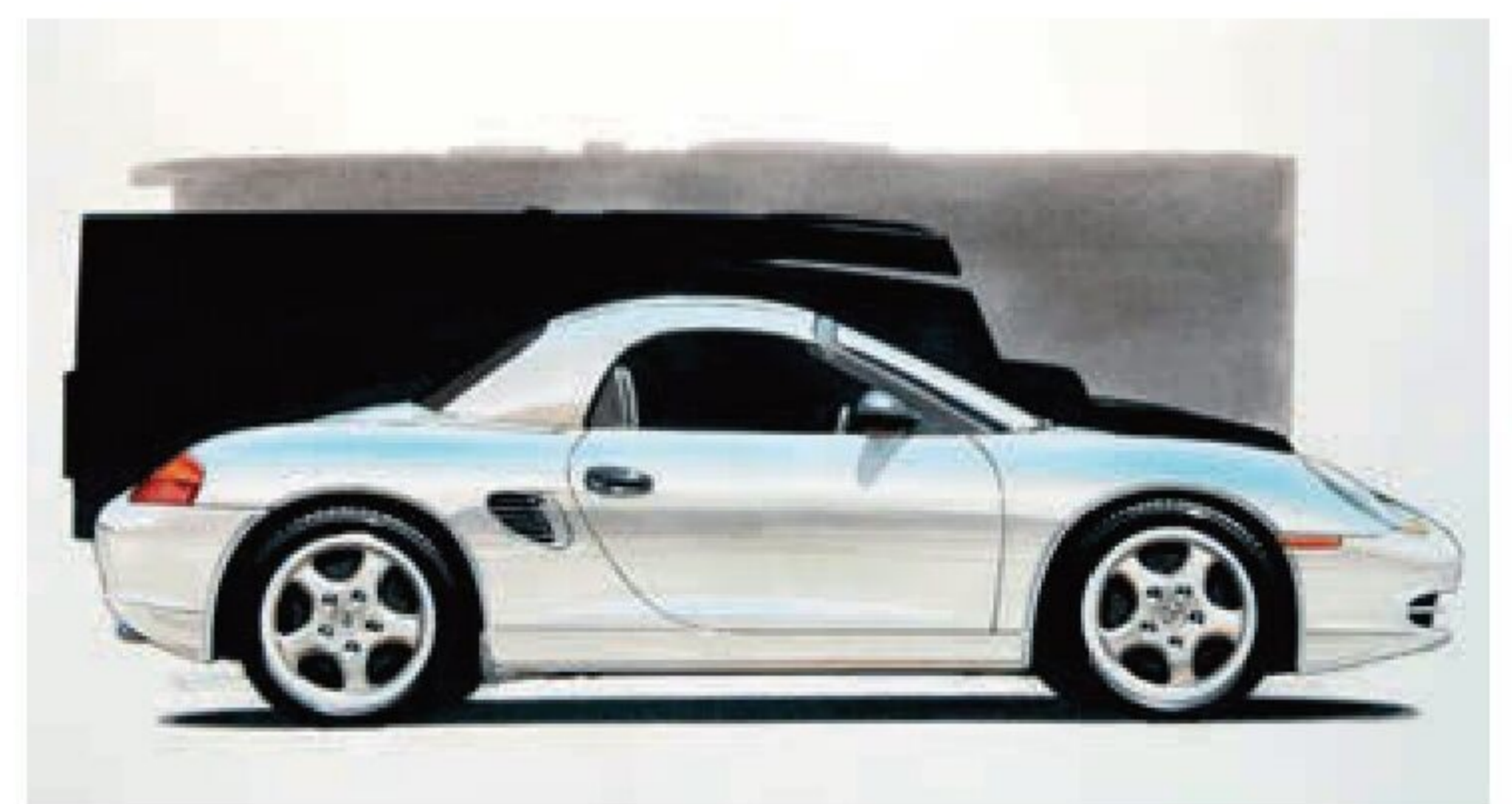
The final specification of the new M96 engine was 2.5-litres for the Boxster with 204hp, versus a displacement of 3.4-litres with 300hp for the 911. But Marchant is frank in revealing this wasn’t always enough to mask the Boxster’s strengths. “In curvy passages where the full power of the car is not required, the Boxster was able to convince, even compared to the 911,” he says, before giving the 911 a get-out-of-jail card by adding that “sometimes it is up to the driver which is fastest in the end.”



Production Boxster retained the essence of the concept



Workers gave up their free time to ensure the Boxster project was a success



“WE KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING THAT THE BOXSTER WOULD BE THE FASTER CAR IF IT HAD THE SAME POWER AS THE 996, THAT’S WHY THE BOXSTER PERFORMANCE IS LOWERED A LITTLE”

The bonnet, doors, wings and the position and rake of the windscreen were always going to be shared between 911 and Boxster for production. Other shared elements included the front suspension, and an interior that was largely similar, with the Boxster most obviously differentiated by having three rather than five dials in its instrument binnacle, and a more playful typeface.

But Porsche was still having trouble balancing the books and was making staff redundant as the Boxster was being developed. Then, late in the process, the design team learnt that the Boxster’s (simpler and cheaper to produce) modular headlamps would be used for the 911, and the Boxster would use the 911’s front bumper – the design team successfully fought the shared front bumper, though the first 996 911 did famously share the Boxster’s ‘fried-egg’ headlamps, prior to the 996.2 facelift.

Throughout development, Marchant remembers just how hard employees worked, with some clocking out of work then coming back in to give up free time, while Larson sums

up the pressure both he and the wider design team faced. “You think ‘how are we going to have a hit?’ because you have the responsibility of resurrecting the company,” he remembers. “It was very important for us to make the best out of this opportunity and we put ourselves under a lot of pressure.”

It certainly paid off: the Boxster did the business from its launch in 1996, and shifted an impressive 164,874 units until the second-generation 987 replaced it in 2004, outselling the 911 and only eventually being toppled by the Cayenne SUV. “We had two model lines [with the Boxster joining the 993 911], which we felt would allow us to recover, and then one year later we launched a 911 [the 996] and then with the recovery of the economy we felt that we were out of the woods gradually,” recalls Marchant.

26 years on, the Boxster might be a permanent fixture in the Porsche line-up, and still widely respected, but in the intervening years and success of the SUVs, many of us have forgotten just how crucial it was in kickstarting Porsche’s renaissance ■



With early cars available from under £4000, the 986 Boxster is a serious bargain

BUYING GUIDE BOXSTER 986

The original Boxster is still a joy to drive, and with affordable prices, it's a very enticing way to sample Porsche ownership

Words BOB HARPER / Photos MATT WOODS

There's a school of thought among some enthusiasts that a 'proper' Porsche has to have its engine in the back and has to be a 911, but those of us with more liberal views will know that's utter codswallop. Each and every product to have emerged from Zuffenhausen's hallowed halls has its pros and cons, but if you're after a sublime driving experience and don't want to break the bank, then the 986 Boxster is the model to turn to.

No, it's not as quick as a 911, but even the smallest-engined model still has a respectable turn of speed, even if it'll be seen off by a modern warm hatch in a straight line. It's not the

out-and-out performance that makes the Boxster such an enjoyable steer but a chassis that's still lauded as a benchmark for handling prowess and tactility. Buy a good one and it'll reward the keen driver like no other modern classic.

HISTORY

The Cayenne is oft-touted as the car that saved Porsche but in reality, it was the Boxster that kept the company afloat before the sporting SUV's arrival. In the early 1990s, Porsche was in financial trouble, and there was a real need for a more volume model than the slow-selling 928 and the evergreen 911. The 968 was about to be launched but there was no hiding its 944 roots so

Porsche looked at the possibility of producing a roadster to act as an entry-level model.

The 986 was initially shown as the Boxster Concept at the North American International Auto Show in 1993, and following widespread acclaim, work began in earnest on a production version. To keep costs at a manageable level the Boxster was to share many components with the 996 generation of 911 including the same basic floorpan, bonnet, front wings, headlights, interior and engine architecture.

Production began in earnest in 1996, with UK deliveries starting in 1997. Initially, it was available with a 2.5-litre version of the water-cooled M96 flat-six that would also go

on to power the 996 generation of 911, and in 2480cc guise, it was good for 204hp at 6000rpm and 181lb ft of torque at 4500rpm. While its performance wouldn't have won a game of Top Trumps, it could accelerate from 0-62mph in 6.9 seconds (in five-speed manual guise) and topped out at 149mph, with the Tiptronic version taking 7.6 seconds for the sprint and running out of puff at 146mph.

The first major update to the Boxster occurred in the second half of 1999 when the 2.5-litre was given a capacity increase to 2687cc, endowing the Boxster with 220hp and 192lb ft of torque – enough for the 2.7 to shave 0.3 seconds off its 0-62mph time in manual guise, with the Tiptronic being 0.2 seconds quicker than a similarly equipped 2.5. The new 2.7 also received a fly-by-wire throttle setup, which improves drivability. At the same time, the more sporting Boxster S was launched, complete with a 3.2-litre version of the flat-six and a six-speed manual 'box. With 252hp and 225lb ft of torque, it upped its performance, just dipping under the six-second mark for the benchmark sprint. Flat out, the 2.7 could hit 155mph, with the 3.2 capable of 162mph.

There were further changes to the range in 2002 when the Boxster received its facelift. While it didn't change the car's overall look there were revised bumpers and a rear spoiler along with clear indicator lenses. There were minor interior revisions, and the hood received a glass rear screen. Power was upped slightly for both the 2.7 and 3.2, now boasting 228hp and

260hp, respectively.

The last hurrah for the 986 Boxster was the '50 Years of 550 Spyder' edition launched in 2004. Based on the Boxster S, power was up to 266hp, and all were painted in GT Silver paint with a cocoa brown interior and sported a numbered plaque on the dash. In 2005 the 987 Boxster arrived.

WHAT TO PAY?

Prices start at a smidgen under £4000 and rise to around £20k – the former bagging you a miley and somewhat down at heel example with the latter buying you an absolute minter with low miles and bulletproof provenance.

You might get lucky at the lower end of the market, but bringing a neglected Boxster back to rude health will be financially unviable and will end up costing you money. Better to opt for the middle of the market, where you should be able to buy a car with reasonable mileage, verifiable service history and plenty of evidence of regular expenditure over the years.

OUR CHOICE

Every Boxster is an enjoyable steer provided it's in fine fettle, but perhaps the sweetest spot in the range is the 2.7 in facelift form. It provides an excellent balance between having enough performance with excellent throttle response along with a delightful chassis. In facelift form, you get the glass rear screen too which makes the Boxster a better all-year-round companion. If you want the ultimate in performance, →

BOXSTER 986

2.5 (96-99)

ENGINE 2.5-litre flat-six

TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or five-speed Tiptronic

MAX POWER 204hp @ 6000rpm

MAX TORQUE 181lb ft @ 4500rpm

0-62MPH 6.9 seconds (7.6)

TOP SPEED 149mph (146)

2.7 (02-04)

ENGINE 2.7-litre flat-six

TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or five-speed Tiptronic

MAX POWER 228hp @ 6300rpm

MAX TORQUE 192lb ft @ 4700rpm

0-62MPH 6.4 seconds (7.3)

TOP SPEED 157mph (154)

3.2 S (02-04)

ENGINE 3.2-litre flat-six

TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or five-speed Tiptronic

MAX POWER 260hp @ 6200rpm

MAX TORQUE 229lb ft @ 4600rpm

0-62MPH 5.7 seconds (6.4)

TOP SPEED 164mph (160)

(figures in brackets refer to Tiptronic models)



Check behind the seats for any signs of water ingress



986 interiors are generally pretty tough and hold up well

then, by all means, look to the Boxster S, but do bear in mind it's a more focussed machine with a harder ride and a slightly less forgiving nature.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

EXTERIOR

There aren't too many horrors when it comes to the Boxster's bodywork, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't pay attention to any potential problems. Corrosion is very rare on a Boxster, and any evidence of rust will almost certainly be down to badly repaired accident damage. And, while a Boxster is a pretty forgiving car on the road do consider that it's perfectly possible a previous owner ran out of talent and had a prang. Examine shut lines – they should be tight and even – and look for signs of filler or poor paint finishes that don't look factory.

The front bumper is quite susceptible to stone chipping, so don't be surprised if it's either peppered with chips or been resprayed. While you're there, check that the front bumper ducts aren't blocked up with leaves and debris, as this will lead to premature corrosion on the coolant radiator and air-conditioning condenser. Their location also makes them susceptible to

stone damage.

Make a point of checking the hood too. The electric hood should raise and lower quickly and smoothly – if it's slow or jerky some lubrication of dry joints may be required. On cars with the plastic rear screen, check it's not milky or becoming brittle – replacement rear screens are relatively inexpensive or can be upgraded to the glass type.

INTERIOR

Typical Porsche build quality means that interiors generally fare pretty well but pay attention to worn leather and check for any rips and tears or overly sagging seat bolsters. Check everything works, especially the air conditioning as condensers do lead a hard life behind the front bumper, being vulnerable to

damage and corrosion.

It's also worth thoroughly checking the cockpit for water ingress. The hood is generally pretty sound, but if it's the original, it's likely the seals could be perishing by this point and allowing water to seep in. It's particularly important to check behind the seats to ensure the floor is not wet. The rear roof drain holes can become blocked with leaves and dirt and this results in water dripping into the interior, and as there is an electronic control unit under the carpet back here, it's not something you want to find. Unblocking the drain holes and keeping them free from debris is a simple task, though.

ENGINE & GEARBOX

Even the briefest of searches on the internet will elicit reams of forum posts noting catastrophic

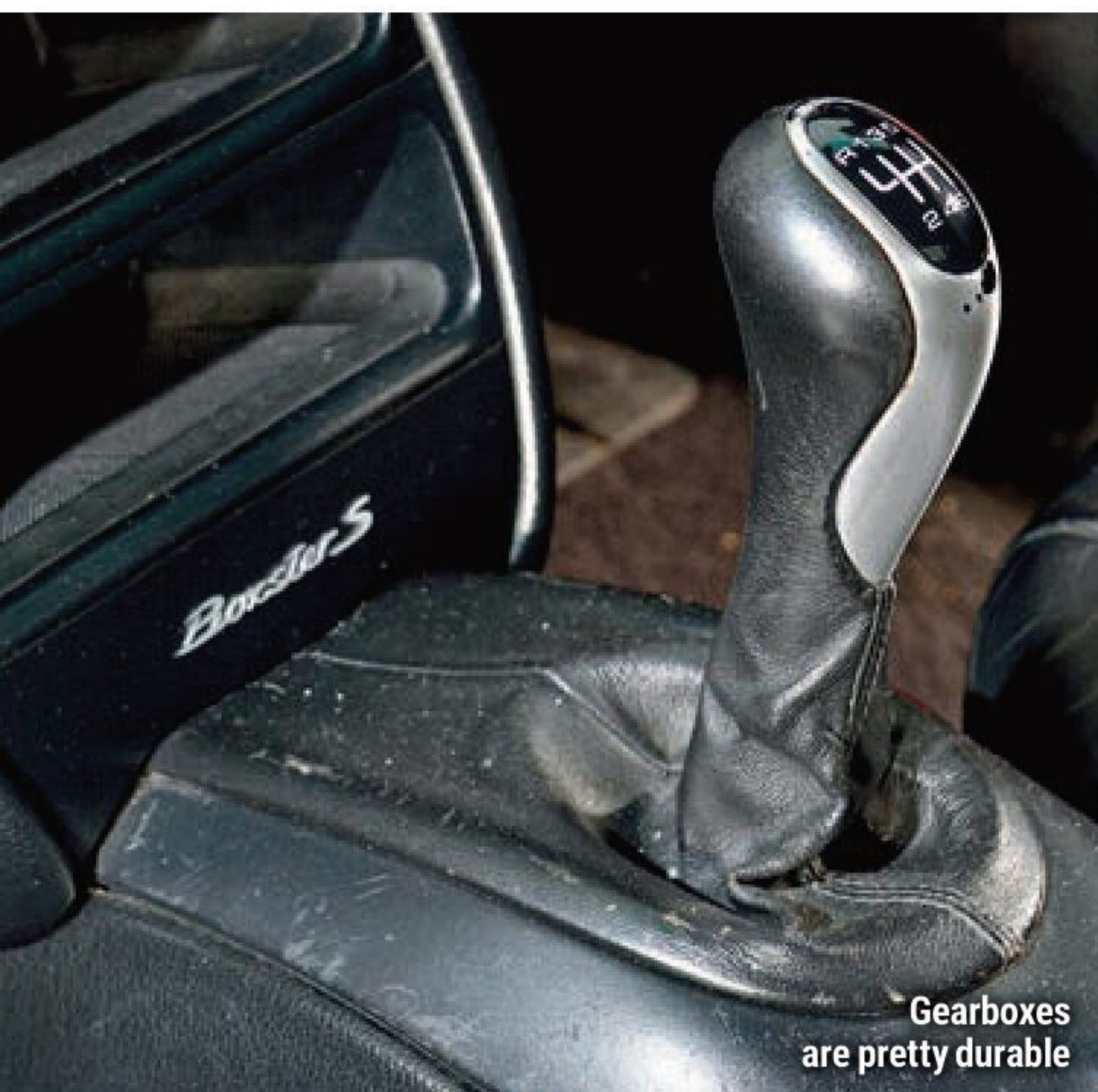
“PERHAPS THE SWEETEST SPOT IN THE RANGE IS THE 2.7 IN FACELIFT FORM. IT PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT BALANCE BETWEEN HAVING ENOUGH PERFORMANCE... ALONG WITH A DELIGHTFUL CHASSIS”

Make sure the hood works correctly, and inspect the rear screen if it's an earlier plastic one





The Boxster featured a three-gauge cluster



Gearboxes are pretty durable



Quality tyres (like these Michelins) are always a good sign

engine problems on the Boxster, but the first thing to get straight is that while potential problems do exist, they're by no means as widespread as you can be led to believe. The four most likely tales of doom will relate to cracked bore liners, intermediate shaft (IMS) bearing failure, rear main oil seal (RMS) leaks and worn Variocam guide rails. The best way to prevent a problem is to have a car thoroughly inspected by a Porsche specialist or to buy one that has had various remedies carried out.

Cracked bore liners are most common on pre-2001 cars, and the most obvious sign is oil in the coolant and vice versa, but given the Boxster's mid-engined configuration, this is hard to spot. A pre-purchase borescope check will detect if there's a problem but in the overall scheme of

things cracked bore liners is probably the least of your worries as it is pretty rare.

IMS bearing failure is rare on early cars as they had a dual row IMS bearing, but Porsche changed the design from 2000-on, and it's not as durable as the earlier setup. A retrofit IMS solution can be fitted, and our advice is to try and buy a car that's had the upgrade carried out. Otherwise, it's sensible to budget to have the update carried out as preventative maintenance – it's far cheaper than an engine rebuild.

The RMS is prone to failure, and while it'll give you an oil leak, it's unlikely to be catastrophic so long as you keep a close eye on the oil level and how much the engine is losing. In the case of both the IMS and the RMS, it →

makes sense to have repairs carried out at the same time as a clutch replacement which will result in a considerably lower labour charge than having each job done individually.

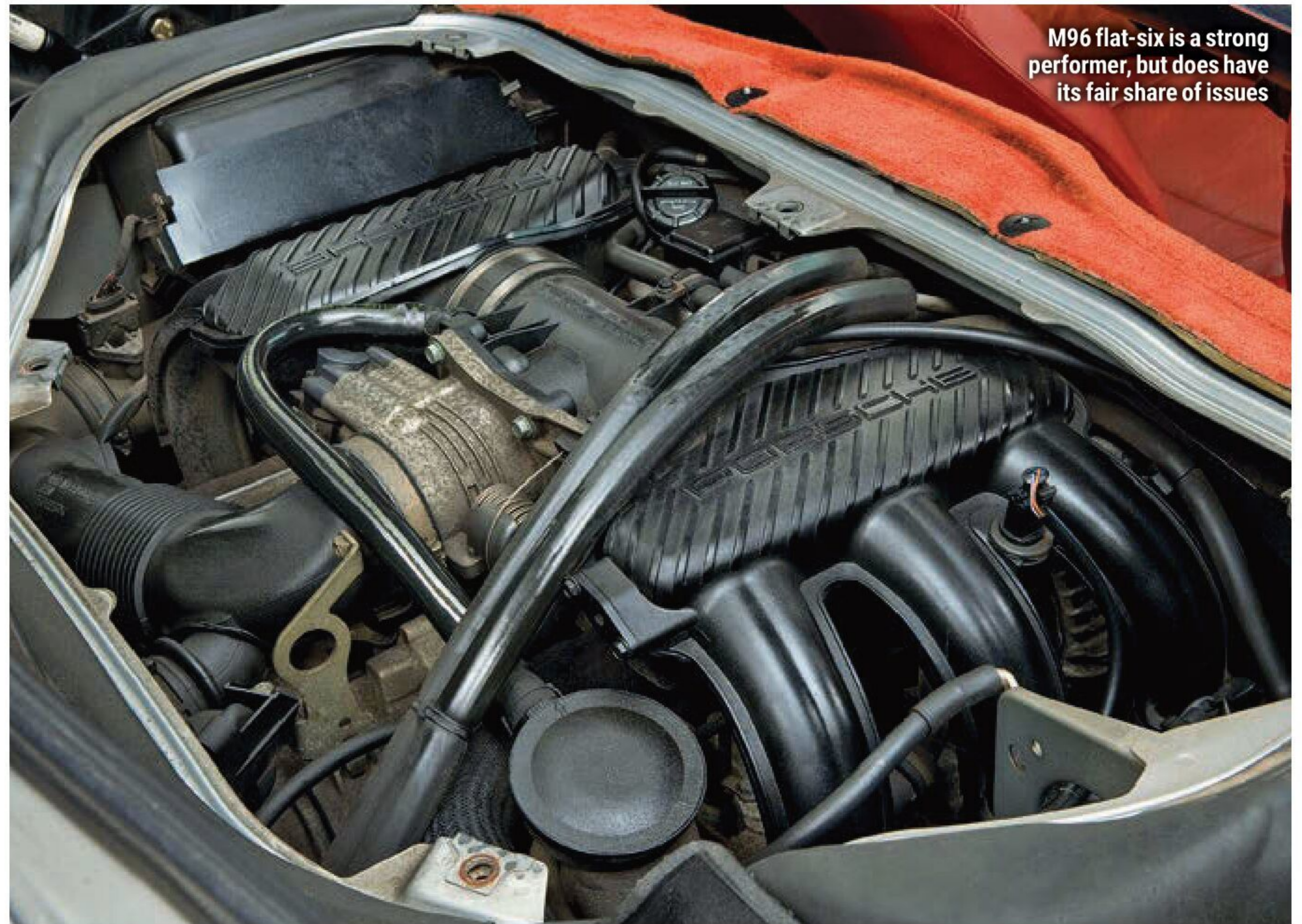
Worn Variocam guide rails are most likely to be a result of stretched service intervals, so it pays to ensure that any potential purchase has been subject to regular servicing at a reputable specialist at the required intervals. Other potential engine woes are most likely to be cracked coil packs which can lead to rough running or a misfire, and a worn mass airflow sensor which will most likely manifest itself as a hesitation under acceleration.

Gearboxes tend to be pretty durable but watch for a heavy clutch pedal (it should be light and smooth in operation) and stiff first to second changes. A clutch replacement won't leave you much change from four figures, and as with the engine, do check that the gearbox oil has been changed during the car's life.

CHASSIS

The main attraction of a Boxster is its fluid chassis, so you'll want to make sure everything is ship-shape in this department. Suspension bushes wear pretty regularly, and as a general rule of thumb, you'd probably want to replace them every five years or so. Squeaking noises from the car's underpinnings indicate worn bushes, as does uneven tyre wear and imprecise handling responses. Coil springs tend to snap too, and rear wheel bearings can fail at higher mileages – listen for a hum from the rear as speeds increase.

There aren't too many worries over the



M96 flat-six is a strong performer, but does have its fair share of issues

Boxster's brakes – pads and discs wear as with any car – just make sure replacements have been with quality items. Disc condition and pad thickness can be checked through the wheels.

Lastly, have a look at the wheels and tyres. You'd want to see a set of quality brand tyres, not necessarily Porsche N-rated rubber, but the amount the previous owner has spent on replacement tyres speaks volumes about how carefully (or otherwise) they've looked after the car. Uneven tyre wear can point to worn suspension components, so pay attention to

tread depths across the tyres.

VERDICT

The 986 Boxster is a cracking car to drive in all of its guises, but do your homework before purchase as a worn-out one will cost you dearly. Examine the service history carefully for the correct schedules and ensure that there's some evidence of preventative maintenance along the way. If in doubt, have a specialist inspection carried out – if it prevents you from buying a wrong 'un, then it's money very well spent ■

The 986 Boxster is still a fantastic driver's car



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CLOUD NINE

With advanced chassis dynamics and 570bhp on tap, this modified 997 Gen II Turbo ably demonstrates why the 996's successor continues to enjoy heightened popularity

Words DAN FURR / Photos DAN SHERWOOD



W

hen Porsche commenced manufacturing of the 997 in 2004, 911 enthusiasts everywhere exhaled a sigh of relief. The 997's predecessor, the 996, was arguably the most controversial production model in the company's history, signalling the 911's switch from air-cooled to water-cooled engines, plus a radical rethinking of the way the Stuttgart brand's flagship offering should look. A revised profile, 'fried eggs' in place of 'bug eyes', generously proportioned bumpers and an updated interior suggested revolution more than

evolution. Yet if complaints Porsche purists levelled at the new 911 were loud when the first 996s rolled off the production line in 1997, they were positively drowned out by the later chorus of screaming from unlucky owners finding the mechanical componentry propelling their Porsche was susceptible to catastrophic failure. To add insult to injury, the quality of materials used for the new upholstery and exterior decoration was likely to wear prematurely. Even the 996's in-car entertainment system earned a reputation for playing up.

Of course, not all 996s are basket cases, and in

an age of online forums and social media posts spreading bad news like wildfire, it's safe to assume the number of owners experiencing the difficulties we've just outlined is exaggerated as a result of horror stories published online gaining far more traction than tales of hassle-free motoring. Add the preventative measures owners can take to ensure their prized Porsche continues to deliver plenty of smiles to the mile, and it quickly becomes apparent the much-maligned model's less than enviable reputation has had the positive effect of ensuring there are bargains to be had on the used car →





This Gen II Turbo sits on 19" Sport Classics and KW V3 coilovers

market, making 911 ownership affordable to those working with a modest budget. Even so, high-profile tales of engine failure are enough for many prospective purchasers to dismiss the idea of investing in a 996, and, if we're being honest, most buyers want their 911 to exhibit classic 911 DNA, hence the immense popularity of the 997 following Porsche's decision to return to familiar design cues.

"The 997 is a great car, but it's not a 911 without its problems," says Peter Robinson, General Manager at independent Porsche specialist, Ninemeister. He's hinting at the 997's main developments being interior and exterior styling, with the model's early underpinnings remaining largely the same as those of the late 996. "Second-generation 997s are widely regarded as being more desirable than earlier

examples thanks to a revised drivetrain and uprated chassis equipment," he says, "but whatever 997 you find yourself driving, rest assured you're in control of a 911 that's receptive to modifying."

It's the 997's willingness to be tweaked and tuned that's led us to Ninemeister's Warrington workshop, where the company's talented technicians have just finished working their magic on a 997 Gen II Turbo. It's a gorgeous car, blending retro styling with present-day levels of performance and efficiency. "The wheels are genuine Sport Classic staggered 19s," confirms Peter. Coupled with the deep lustre of glossy Guards Red bodywork, they furnish this modern motoring icon with classic 911 looks, but don't be fooled into thinking the attention to detail is skin deep.

The car first came to Ninemeister's attention a few years ago, when the firm hosted an open evening at its then-new premises. The Turbo's owner was in attendance and liked what he saw. At that point in time, with the exception of its fantastic five-spokes, the car was exactly as Porsche intended. "To begin with, we were asked to take care of basic servicing and maintenance," Peter recalls. "Later, the owner's son became interested in 911s and their potential for vastly increased performance over factory specification. He recognised his father's 997 Turbo as a prime candidate for personalisation. Before long, we were mapping out the various stages of development to transform the car into the 570hp beast it is today."

Derestricting airflow was the first task, not only to help the turbocharged 3.8-litre lump

CHANGE GEAR

The 997 was given a facelift in 2008. Styling updates were accompanied by revised suspension. PDK dual-clutch transmission replaced the Tiptronic system.



“IT’S THE 997’S WILLINGNESS TO BE TWEAKED AND TUNED THAT LED US TO NINEMEISTER’S WARRINGTON WORKSHOP”

to breathe better, but also to promote a raspier exhaust note. To that end, Kline Innovation exhaust manifolds and 200-cell sports cats were bolted into place, ensuring torque curves and peak power were improved whilst simultaneously reducing lag. Attention then turned to the car’s transmission, which was treated to a GT2 RS short-shifter. “The nylon bushes in the standard Turbo linkage are prone to wear,” Peter explains. “Gear changes in our customer’s car felt vague. It was a condition eliminated by the GT2 kit, which boasts aluminium bushes.”

The biggest change to the transmission, and one which has played a vital role in changing the car’s overall driving characteristics, is the installation of a Wavetrac limited-slip differential. “It’s a clean sheet, state-of-the-art design engineered to be a better differential than any other when used on the road or at the track in a high-powered car when a wheel is more likely to lift despite the presence of torque biasing,” stresses Peter. “Unlike limited-slipppers from other manufacturers, a Wavetrac diff provides quicker acceleration and faster cornering by driving both wheels instead of one. In other words, it’ll allow transfer of power between wheels even if an axle isn’t loaded. Lift a wheel in a corner, and you’ll still get power sent to the wheel on the ground. This doesn’t happen with other differential designs, which make it possible to lose traction if you hit a pothole or encounter similar surface defects. With a Wavetrac unit in place, the host Porsche’s road manners remain unaffected, yet performance is drastically improved.” Clearly, the design of a performance part is as important to the team at Ninemeister as the effect produced by the component following installation.

Peter cites the engineering-focused career path of company boss, Colin Belton, as one of the reasons Ninemeister has forged a reputation for technical excellence when it comes to the planning and execution of the 964-based restomods the Cheshire-based marque specialist has become famous for in recent years. “What people don’t always realise is that the same level of consideration is applied to every Porsche entering the Ninemeister workshop,” says Peter, highlighting the 997 Turbo on the pages before you as a solid example of where an owner →



Engine mods include high-flow exhaust manifolds and 200-cell cats, resulting in 570hp

997.2 TURBO





Red centre stripe and gear knob add a flash of colour to the interior



wanted to enhance their pride and joy without the need to commission an accompanying restoration. “The suspension,” he goes on to say, “is typical of this approach, where we installed KW Variant 3 coilovers after assessing their suitability for the car in terms of the driving environment it’s likely to find itself in. The V3s offer comprehensive bump and rebound adjustability at the same time as affording us the opportunity to dial-in a GT3-esque ride height, thereby enhancing the car’s appearance at the same time as significantly improving handling.”

He’s not wrong. The dampers work brilliantly alongside the Wavetrac differential and the sticky Michelin rubber wrapped around each rim ensures this red road riot remains firmly planted to the asphalt at all times. No matter if you’re throwing the car into a corner or propelling it at breakneck speed along a straight, the sure-footedness delivered by the revised chassis inspires elevated levels of confidence when exploring the additional power Ninemeister has extracted from this sublime 997. “It’s how Porsche should have built it at the factory,” Peter shrugs.

He’s quick to dismiss the idea Ninemeister

might market the parts fitted as an off-the-shelf 997 Turbo performance package. “The company is more concerned with engineering than marketing!” he laughs. “That said, we would certainly adopt the same approach to evaluating and developing a similar setup for any other customer’s water-cooled 911,” he adds, suggesting there’s no such thing as ‘one size fits all’ in the Porsche world. “A wealth of options is available for us to plunder, but we’ll always put the customer’s requirements above our perception of what a car will benefit from most. After all, every driver is different, meaning what’s good for one isn’t necessarily suitable for the next.”

We ask what the father and son duo encouraging the continued development of the Turbo we’ve just stepped out of has in mind for the next phase of the project. We’re told different intercoolers and a new map are on the cards, with the possibility of a retrim bringing red Alcantara seat centres to the party. “Mechanically and cosmetically, the 997 platform is perfect for personalisation,” concludes Peter, and this Turbo is the perfect example of that ■

STAR ATTRACTION

The second-gen 997 Turbo was launched at the 2009 Frankfurt Motor Show. The new model introduced a lightweight 3.8-litre flat-six equipped with VTG turbos.

BUYING GUIDE 911 TURBO 997

16 years after its launch, the 997 Turbo is still one of the planet's finest-ever supercars that's also capable of everyday driving duties

Words **BOB HARPER** / Photos **DAN SHERWOOD**

For over 45 years, the 911 Turbo has been one of the most devastating performance cars money could buy – other supercars have come and gone but the turbocharged 911 has endured and is one of the most rounded and complete machines to have ever graced the planet. The original 930 might not have had the bedroom poster appeal of a Testarossa or a Countach, but owners knew that here was a machine that could blow both its Italian competitors into the weeds and would be reliable while doing so. The 997 Turbo continues that theme, providing devastating performance with everyday usability. It's quite a machine and one that's proving to be remarkably durable, too.

HISTORY

While the 997 range made its debut in 2004,

the fire-breathing Turbo didn't come along for another two years with its global reveal at the 2006 Geneva motor show. It was an impressive reworking of the 911 Turbo theme, and while it might have used an upgraded version of the 996 Turbo's flat-six, it was none the worse for it.

The Mezger flat-six had been reworked to produce another 60hp over its predecessor, now boasting 480hp at 6000rpm and a colossal 457lb ft of torque all the way from 1950 to 5000rpm. The additional oomph in the 997 Turbo was mainly down to the adoption of variable turbine geometry for its turbochargers with adjustable guide blades which direct the engine exhaust flow variably and precisely onto the turbine wheel of the exhaust turbocharger. Porsche reckoned the variable turbine geometry united the advantages of small and large exhaust turbochargers and led to a discernible

improvement in flexibility and acceleration, particularly at low speeds.

Naturally enough, the 997 Turbo was quite a performer with 0-62mph coming up in 3.9 seconds for the manual and 3.7 seconds for examples equipped with the Tiptronic S transmission, and the latter model was capable of hitting 125mph from a standstill in just 12.2 seconds. Top speed for both models was 192mph. There was also an optional 'Sport Chrono Package Turbo' which added a Sport button for increased boost pressure for up to 10 seconds which generated an additional 44lb ft of torque.

Power was transmitted by a redesigned all-wheel-drive system with an electronically controlled multi-disc clutch. Porsche Traction Management was standard as was Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM). Brakes were beefed up from their 996 application

The 997 Turbo delivers mind-blowing performance



with the front discs now measuring 350mm in diameter and clamped by six-piston front calipers. Porsche Ceramic Composite Brakes were available as an option for even more assured stopping power.

The Cabriolet joined the lineup in late 2007, but the biggest change for the 997 Turbo occurred in 2009 when it received a similar set of updates as the rest of the 997 range to create the 997 Gen II Turbo. The major news was that for the first time in 35 years, the Turbo was to receive an all-new engine – every generation up until now could trace its engine’s roots back to the original 930 Turbo.

In line with the rest of the 997 range, the Turbo saw a capacity increase to 3.8-litres along with the adoption of direct fuel injection →

911 TURBO 997

TURBO GEN I

ENGINE 3.6-litre flat-six

MAX POWER 480hp @ 6000rpm

MAX TORQUE 457lb ft @ 1950-5000rpm

0-62MPH 3.9 seconds

TOP SPEED 192mph

TURBO S GEN II

ENGINE 3.8-litre flat-six

MAX POWER 530hp @ 6250rpm

MAX TORQUE 516lb ft @ 2100-4250rpm

0-62MPH 3.3 seconds

TOP SPEED 193mph



Most Turbos have either the Tiptronic S or PDK gearbox, making manuals like this rather rare



Optional Adaptive Sport Seats



Sport Chrono Package was a popular option



BOSE audio was standard on the Turbo



The 997 Turbo looks great but is even better to drive

for headline figures of 500hp and 479lb ft of torque. As well as the power and torque increases of 20hp and 22lb ft, Porsche was keen to point out that the Gen II Turbo was 16% more fuel-efficient and 8% faster as well as up to 25kg lighter than the Gen I model. The Tiptronic S was also consigned to the history books, with those seeking a Turbo with an automatic transmission now being treated to the seven-speed PDK 'box. Add the optional Sport Chrono Package and the 997 Gen II Turbo could hit 0-62mph in just 3.4 seconds and hit 193mph flat out.

The ultimate in 997 Gen II Turbos was the Turbo S (available both as a Coupé and Cabriolet), which arrived in 2010 and power was upped to 530hp and 516 lb ft of torque. It was fitted with just about every go-faster option in Porsche's options list, so came with the PDK transmission, Porsche Traction Management, Dynamic Engine Mounts, Porsche Torque Vectoring with a mechanical rear diff, as well as the Sport Chrono Package and PCCB. 0-62mph was knocked off in a scant 3.3 seconds while 0-125mph took an equally rapid 10.8 seconds. The 997 Turbo and Turbo S models bowed out in 2012 and were replaced by the all-new 991.

WHAT TO PAY?

The good news is that you won't have to dig quite as deep as the first owner to buy a 997 Turbo, but the bad news is that they've yet to fall into bargain-basement territory. Having said that,

you can now buy a 997 Turbo for the sort of money that a high-end BMW diesel estate will cost – we know which one we'd rather have.

Prices stretch from around £42k for a higher mile 2006 model up to about £90,000 for a very late low mileage Turbo S. Manual models are far rarer than Tiptronic S cars, and if you're looking for a 997 Gen II Turbo, then the manuals are even rarer.

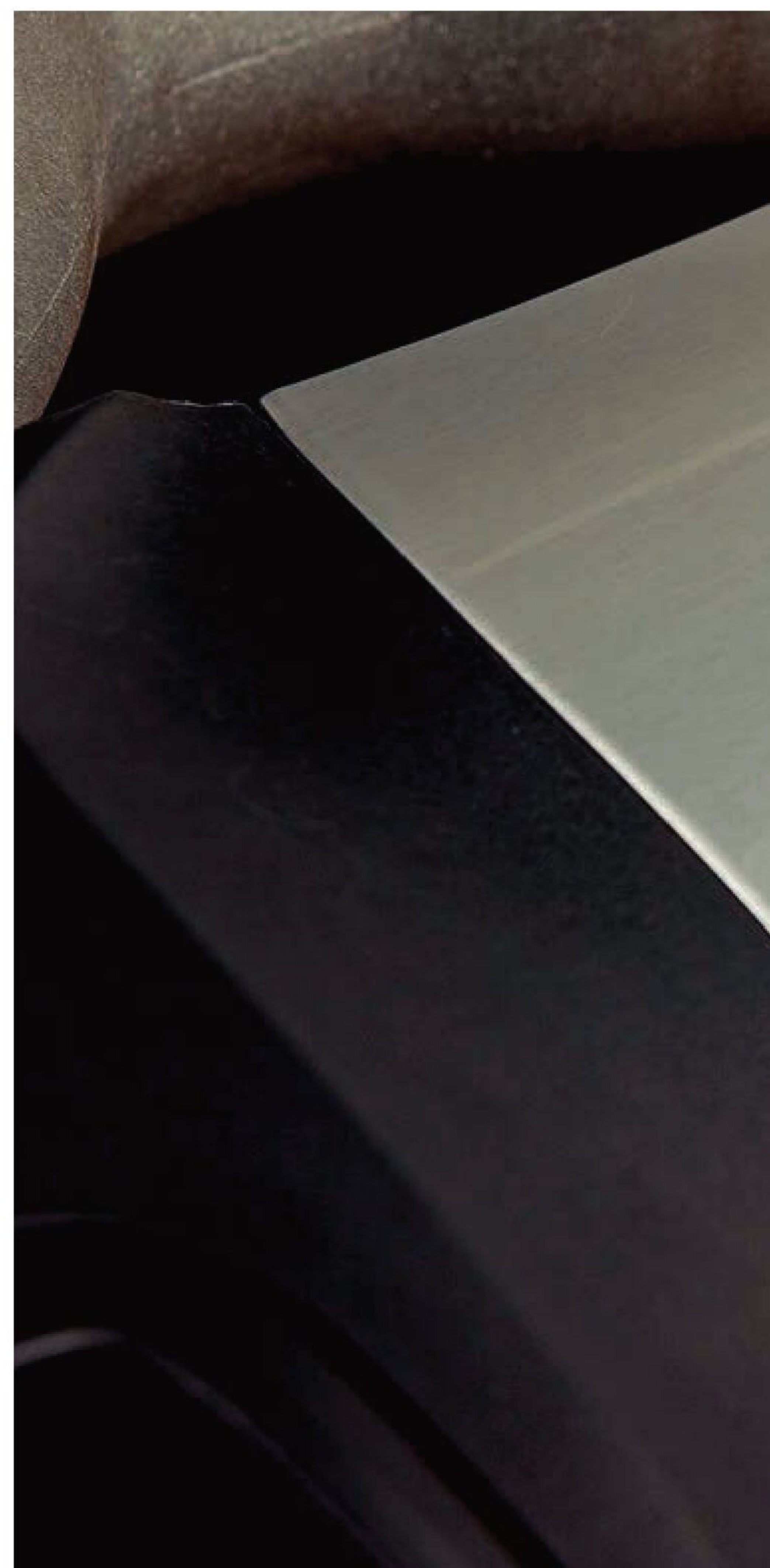
OUR CHOICE

Which model you decide to buy will, to a certain extent, depend on how much you're willing to pay, with the Gen II models still proving to be quite a bit more expensive than the earlier 3.6 Gen I machines. There's no reason to get worked up about the additional performance you get with a Gen II car – any 997 Turbo has far more get up and go than can be safely deployed on the public road, so we'd be tempted to save some money and buy a really nice Gen I car. Choose one with a comprehensive service history with bills and receipts to prove recent expenditure and revel in one of the finest driving experiences that money can buy.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

EXTERIOR

It should come as no surprise that all 997 Turbos were well assembled so you should be looking for a perfect exterior with no serious blemishes. Rust shouldn't be an issue on a car that's no more





“THE 997 TURBO IS A SUPERB PIECE OF KIT – DEVASTATINGLY RAPID AND INVOLVING TO DRIVE, YET NOT RUINOUSLY EXPENSIVE TO RUN... BUY A GOOD ONE, AND YOU’LL REVEL IN ONE OF THE FINEST AND MOST USABLE SUPERCARS EVER MADE”



Gen I 3.6 made 480hp, while the Gen II 3.8 developed 500hp



Active rear spoiler

than 15 years old and any signs of this will point to poor quality repairs. The front end of any 911 is a little susceptible to stone chips so give the front bumper and bonnet a good check over. Some cars will have had a respray at the front to clear up any road rash and if this is the case then ensure it's been carried out to a high standard with no overspray and a perfect colour match.

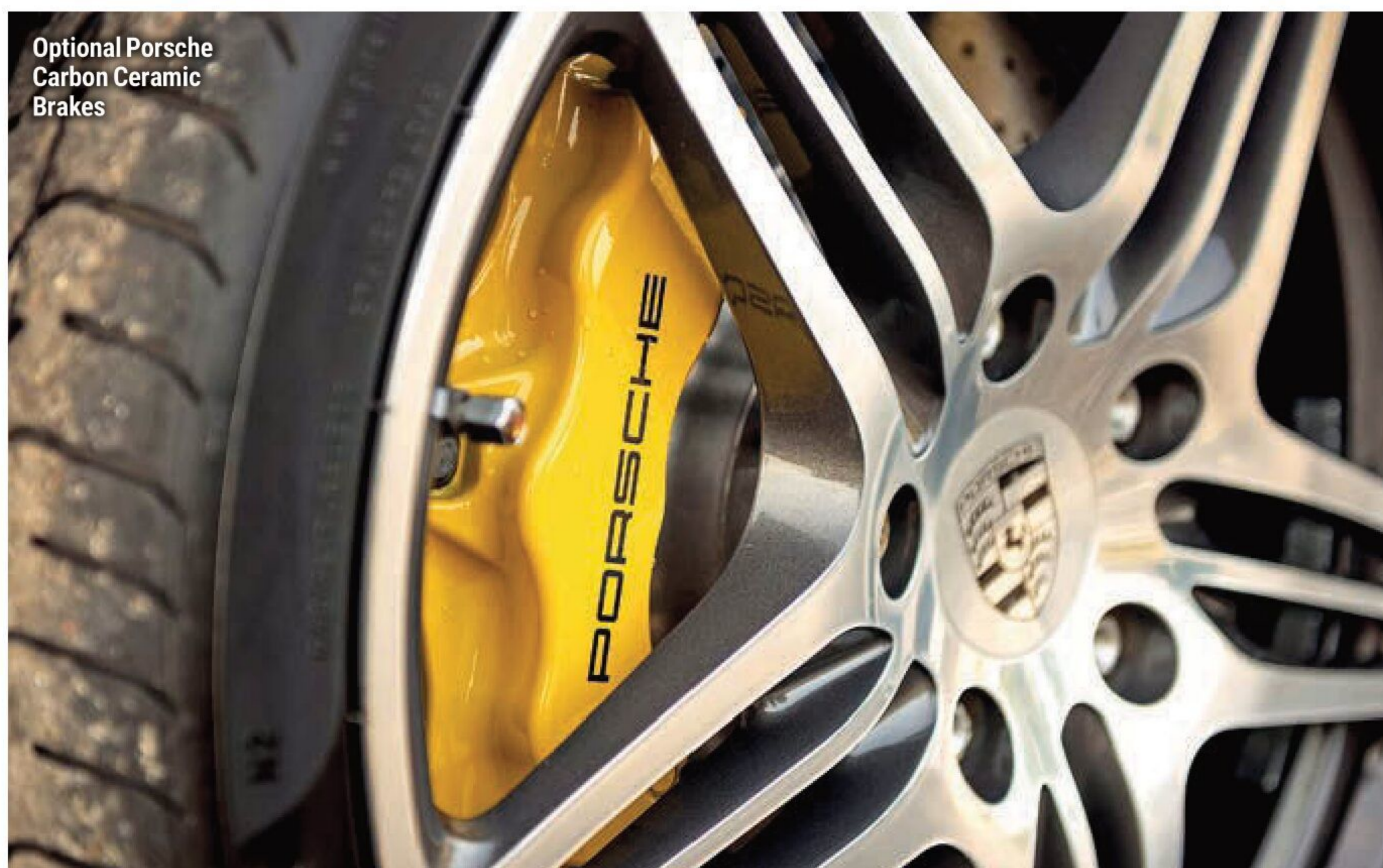
While you're examining the front, also check the lower front spoiler trim as it is quite close to the ground and can be susceptible to scraping and cracking. Also, try to get a look at the radiators that are fitted behind the front bumper – these are quite vulnerable to stone damage and can also become partially blocked by debris. If left unchecked, this will lead to a build-up of moisture and possible early failure of the components due to corrosion. The front coolant pipes can also be affected, and you're looking at a four-figure sum to have them replaced at a Porsche main agent.

While the front end is where you should carry out the most checks do also examine the rest of the body for damage and any signs of accident damage. Check for consistent panel gaps and perfect paint match between panels. The forged alloys aren't the easiest wheels to refurbish so examine them carefully for damage or less than brilliant refurb quality. Examine the tyres for even wear and also check the brand – you want to see four matching high-quality items, preferably N-rated.

On Cabriolets, check that the hood is free from any damage and that there's no fraying around the areas where the hood folds. It should be seamless and rapid in operation.

INTERIOR

Generally speaking, the interior of a 997 Turbo is a great place to be with just the right blend of good ergonomics, comfort and sporting touches. As the 997 ages, some owners are starting to experience some rattles from their interiors though, so keep an ear out for these on a road test. The most common culprits tend to be a creaking from around the A-pillars and trim panel under the dash while rattles from the instrument cluster, glove box and air-con vents are not uncommon. All can be cured, but it can be time-consuming and expensive. →



Optional Porsche Carbon Ceramic Brakes

Check the leather for any damage such as rips or tears and make sure the seat side bolsters are in good condition as they can start to sag and look a little tatty, especially if the previous owner was on the larger size. Don't forget to examine the rear seats too – they don't get used much for passengers, but can be damaged when used as additional luggage storage.

Another 997 foible is electric window failure so check they work effectively as both motors and regulators can fail. While earlier cars do represent much better value for money, do remember that they use an earlier version of Porsche Communication Management (PCM2) which is nowhere near as good as the PCM3 system used in Gen II cars. If this is a deal-breaker then make sure you look for a Gen II Turbo.

ENGINE & GEARBOX

The good news for Turbo owners is that the problems that can affect 996 and 997 Carrera models aren't an issue on the Turbo models. Sure, there will be the odd horror story of spun bearings or other such catastrophic failures, but these really are the exception, and you can sleep easy at night without having to worry about IMS bearing failures and the like. However, that's not to say that a Turbo won't go wrong – the flat-sixes in the Turbos are great engines, especially when you bear in mind their specific outputs – but they are a mechanical item and will suffer from some failures.

Turbo actuator rods can wear or seize and will require replacement at some point, and on higher mileage cars the Turbos themselves will be subject to wear. Although this is unusual at the moment, it could be an issue as 997 Turbos get older and pile on the miles.

As well as potential coolant leaks from the pipes going to the front radiators you should also pay attention to those at the engine end as

failure will require the engine to be dropped to effect replacement. Water pumps are a known weak point, too, as is the oil tandem pump. It's also worth checking that the plugs have been changed as it's not the nicest job in the world, and as a result, it can be skimped at service time. Any rough running is likely due to coil packs which can suffer in the heat of the engine bay.

All transmissions are pretty durable but check that their fluids have been changed at some point – it's not expensive but ensures both manuals and auto continue to shift sweetly. Oil leaks aren't unknown and can be expensive to fix as there's quite a bit of stripping down involved. On manual cars, the average lifespan of a clutch is around 50k miles – more on gently driven cars that don't see much stop-start traffic, potentially less on a car that's spent its life in town.

While the Turbo isn't unreliable, costs can quickly spiral if a few jobs need doing at the same time, so that's why it pays to closely examine all the invoices, receipts and bills that accompany a potential purchase. Don't just look at what's been replaced: check if there are any advisory notes on the invoices which could give a clue as to potential maintenance required soon. If in any doubt, have a Turbo inspected by an official Porsche main agent or by a specialist – an independent inspection might seem costly but will (hopefully) prevent financial heartache further down the line.

CHASSIS

As well as being monumentally quick, the Turbo is a tidy handler too, but to harness all that power the car's underpinnings need to be in good order. Listen for clunks, creaks and groans from the suspension on a road test that might point to potentially worn items. If there's no evidence of suspension expenditure in the last few years budget for some replacement components.

On the road test, check that there's a discernible difference between the different suspension modes on the PASM – replacement dampers will likely leave you with little change from £2000 in parts alone.

VERDICT

The 997 Turbo is a superb piece of kit – devastatingly rapid and involving to drive yet not ruinously expensive to run. The proviso here is that buying the very best car you can afford is key to a happy 997 relationship as putting things right will potentially put a bit dent in your wallet. Buy a good one, though, and you'll revel in one of the finest and most usable supercars ever made ■

The view most other road users will see...



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BITTEN & SMITTEN

This awe-inspiring personalised Porsche from RPM Technik's CSR division is a Brewster Green 997 known as Snakebite, and it's the brand's most accomplished build to date

Words **DAN FURR** / Photos **DAN SHERWOOD**

Porsche owners aren't obsessed with speed. Granted, that statement might sound completely hatstand to an outsider recognising the manufacturer's unrivalled motorsport success, but the truth of the matter is the joy of driving one of Stuttgart's finest road cars is more about the immersive experience than how quickly you can reach your destination. Reinforcing the claim, the guys at Hertfordshire-based independent Porsche specialist, RPM Technik, have been

championing the benefits of enhanced chassis dynamics over ballistic engine output for years, a campaign that eventually led to the creation of the company's CSR brand as a means to optimise factory models through the application of the wealth of engineering ingenuity possessed by the company's talented team of technicians.

The concept of CSR was tabled during a routine engineering meeting back in 2010. Recognising the limitations of using a GT3-badged 911 as a road car, but also being aware of the fact a Carrera or Turbo didn't match —>







Stunning HRE 19s

Centre-exit exhaust sounds sensational



Each CSR comes with a numbered plaque

“A DEEP, GLOSSY COLOUR COATING A GENUINE CARBON-FIBRE DUCKTAIL AND UPDATED BUMPERS”

a GT3 in terms of pure driving excitement, it seemed clear to the RPM Technik team there was a gap in the market for a Clubsport-esque range of upgrades that could be applied to base model 911s, Boxsters and Caymans. As if Porsche was listening in to what the lads in Long Marston were discussing, the mid-level 997 Gen II GTS landed a short while later. Offering a wider body and track, plus larger displacement and an even larger purchase price, the new arrival was well

STRONG START

A 986 Boxster was the first Porsche to wear the CSR badge. Tested against a 987 Spyder and 981 Boxster S, the car received rave reviews and paved the way for the CSRs of today.

received, but even this car featured a limited range of adjustment. Besides, the GTS was being marketed at a broad audience, whereas CSR-labelled Porsches could offer RPM Technik customers the opportunity to own a truly bespoke Stuttgart-crested sports car.

The idea was a big hit, as demonstrated by the fact the 32nd CSR is currently in the process of assembly at the time of writing. Based on a 997 Carrera S, the Brewster Green bruiser you see on these pages is the 28th and most recently completed build. It represents a huge step forward in the evolution of CSR production, not least because it's the first of the line built from a completely stripped shell thanks to its owner's request for a complete restoration prior to the appointment of newly developed CSR products, including adjustable coilovers produced to RPM

Technik's custom specification by the firm's technical partner, KW Suspension.

“The guy who owns this 997 also owns the recently completed, GT4-baiting, track-focused 981 Cayman CSR,” confirms RPM Technik's Commercial Director, Darren Anderson. “He absolutely loves the car but wanted to add to his fleet with a CSR-configured 911 suited to fast-road and touring work. As a clean-sheet build, we sourced an Arctic Silver 997 Carrera S and stripped the car to a shell before reassembling it to custom specification in close collaboration with the customer and our chassis development specialist, Tim Harvey.”

Tim's is a name many of you will know from his days racing in the Super Touring era of the British Touring Car Championship, his series record of 35 overall victories in the Carrera →



RPM Technik Commercial Director, Darren Anderson



Technical Director, Ollie Preston



Sales Director, Greig Daly



Project Department Manager, Simon Maxted

Cup and his television presenting work for ITV4's weekend motorsport coverage. "We have vast in-house experience of configuring cars for road and track work," continues Darren, "but Tim's wealth of seat time in powerful Porsches at racing circuits all over Europe means he's able to provide helpful suggestions demonstrating how we can further improve ride quality through fine-tuning of each CSR's chassis."

Eibach adjustable lower arms, polyurethane bushes, uprated and adjustable anti-roll bars, custom-profile spring rates, a variation of KW's hydraulic front axle lift system and RPM Technik's own CSR geometry and corner weighting, not to mention lightweight HRE Weiss Gold 19s (treated to sticky Michelin rubber), give the Brewster beauty super-sharp handling ably assisted by a CSR-branded mechanical limited-slip differential. "The CSR plated diff is currently the only available unit of its type available for the 997," says RPM Technik's Technical Director, Ollie Preston. "The part's ramp angles can be adjusted to determine how much pressure is applied to the diff plate according to the owner's driving style and the environment the car will find itself in. This approach is entirely in keeping with the CSR recipe of Engineering Exhilaration, which translates as a Porsche configured and personalised to vastly improve the driving experience, ensuring the customer leaves RPM

WEIGHT OF NUMBERS

The 997 is the most commercially successful 911 of all time, with first-gen models achieving sales in excess of 100k units alone. Needless to say, there are plenty of early 997s available to use as the starting point for a custom build.

"A PERSONALISED PORSCHE THAT'S PUSHED FORWARD THE NEXT GENERATION OF CSR UPGRADES"



Deep-dish MOMO steering wheel



Recaro CS seats in green leather and houndstooth with gold stitching



917-style wooden gear knob



Custom CSR gauges



Custom portable fridge is one of the many interior highlights



CSR looks sensational and delivers an incredible driving experience

Technik far happier than when they first visited our workshop.”

The clutch itself is a lightweight item joined by a CSR billet flywheel promoting faster travel through the rev range, while the 3.8-litre flat-six benefits from a fettled X51 power upgrade and is one of two 997 CSR development engines currently being developed and cross-compared for this application. Darren and Ollie are keeping tight-lipped about what this equates to in terms of improved power, primarily because they’ll only quote figures once development is completed and dyno-tested to validate. Suffice to say this gorgeous green Neunelfer possesses plenty of extra poke, with a bark just as impressive as its bite thanks to a custom CSR centre-exit exhaust system promoting uninhibited gas flow. “It’s an evolution of what we achieved with our 996 CSR EVO exhaust system,” explains Ollie, referencing CSR build 22, which you’ll find on p34. Poking out through the base of the 997’s modified GT3 rear

bumper, the superb stainless pipework is the third version of the system fitted to the green machine, further highlighting the constant investment in research and development RPM Technik affords its CSR programme.

The brakes are largely standard, unlike the cosmetic updates this sensational CSR has been subjected to. For a start, there’s the obvious addition of that leafy green paintwork. It’s a deep, glossy colour coating a genuine carbon fibre ducktail, updated bumpers and a lower front splitter. The true triumph of the car’s cosmetic styling, however, awaits those fortunate enough to step inside the cabin. “It was originally going to be trimmed in purple leather, hence our Parts Manager giving the car its nickname, Snakebite,” smiles RPM Technik’s Sales Director, Greig Daly. “We’d pulled together material samples for the car’s owner to consider, but his wife, a woman with real flair for interior design, brought new ideas to the table, resulting in the mix of black Alcantara, green leather, houndstooth fabric and light gold stitching now inhabiting the cockpit,” he adds.

Heated Recaro CS sports seats, a retro-stitched parcel shelf, a rear seat delete, a 917-style wooden gear knob, a MOMO three-spoke steering wheel, a nifty Bluetooth connectivity kit in place of the standard Porsche head unit, custom CSR gauges and even a portable

fridge housed in a cabin-matched carry case make for one of the finest 911 interiors we’ve had the pleasure to spend time in. Like every aspect of this brilliant build, the attention to detail lavished on the interior is nothing short of amazing and demonstrates just what RPM Technik can do for enthusiasts who find Porsche’s latest output far less engaging than older, naturally aspirated, water-cooled 911s. “The only limit is your budget and imagination,” grins Greig.

Stripping the donor Carrera S to a shell before building it back up again makes Snakebite the most accomplished CSR to date. It’s the result of an intense programme of engineering excellence bringing together everything we’ve celebrated about older CSRs – whatever the base model – and demonstrates just how good RPM Technik is at delivering a custom car entirely in keeping with its owner’s tastes in style, performance and the intended application. This is also a personalised Porsche that’s pushed forward the next generation of CSR upgrades. “We’re in the process of working on an electronically adjustable coilover kit,” reveals Greig, bringing us up to speed by highlighting how CSR continues to cater for the individual needs of every fan of modern, water-cooled Porsche cars, a quality begging us to ask one crucial question: what’s your poison?! ■

NET RESULT

RPM Technik recently launched a website dedicated to its CSR programme. Visit csrporche.co.uk for product information and details of each completed build.

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EXCLUSIVE 911s

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SIVILITY BEGAN

We revisit two 911s that shaped the modern Porsche Exclusive lineage – the 2009 Sport Classic and 2010 Speedster...

Words MATT ZUCHOWSKI / Photos MACIEJ KINTOP



In 1955 Max Hoffmann, a well-known car supplier for the sybarites living on the American east coast, made a call to Zuffenhausen to ask for a cheaper and sportier version of the 356. In return, he received the first Porsche Speedster. His idea was brilliant in its simplicity; it took not much more than a raked windscreen and elimination of part of the equipment to create a more focused, distilled version of the Porsche formula. The 356A 1600 Speedster rose to such prominence that throughout the following decades its idea was repeated five times, in the form of 930, 964, 993, 997, and the 991 Speedster.

Arguably, the 911 that started the retrospective Porsche movement as we know it was the 997 Sport Classic of 2009. In the cynic's eyes, it wasn't much more than a humble 997 Carrera S with a handful of bespoke details and a unique finish that pushed its price way beyond the flagship 911 Turbo – and beyond any rationale. But with its long-time-no-see →



Finished in exclusive Pure Blue, the Speedster looks stunning



Sport Classic came in Sport Classic Grey, and featured a double-bubble roof and ducktail spoiler

double-bubble roof, ducktail spoiler and Fuchs wheels, this was a 911 for those in the know; indeed it was a special car. Porsche fans loved it, and collectors yearned for it, buying all 250 cars allocated for production before you could count that far. Now sellers value them at around £250k to £300k apiece, more than twice their original asking price (and roughly five times the price of 997 Turbo of the very same vintage).

The 911 Sport Classic played a pivotal role in the Porsche Exclusive department's expansion. The skunkworks garage was

set up in 1986 in response to the growing demand for individualisation that the previous Sonderwunsch (Special Wishes) programme, which had operated for nine years, simply couldn't accommodate. Even if the Porsche Exclusive nameplate was yet to be widely recognised in 2009, the department already had several advanced and truly special 911s under its belt. Those included high-performance 964, 993 Turbo S, some little-known Turbo Cabriolets, and two Speedsters. Those were a rather unsuccessful 964 Speedster that failed

to meet their 3000 unit production estimate by selling in less than 1000 and a little-known 993 Speedster of which just two were built.

With today's individualisation mania, Porsche Exclusive is a heavily promoted sub-brand with a global reach. It even gave its name to some of Porsche's most, well, 'exclusive' models. In 2014 the Panamera Exclusive Series and in 2017 the 911 Turbo S Exclusive Series, for example. But it's much more than just a name. Even though the division operates within Porsche's main headquarters in →



**"THESE LIMITED-
EDITION MODELS
MARK THE END OF ANY
GIVEN 911'S REIGN.."**



Speedster interior featured blue highlights, including a chequered flag pattern on the seats





Rear tonneau cover gives the Speedster a unique look

Both models came with retro-styled Fuchs wheels



Zuffenhausen, it has its own dedicated team working in a separate facility using its own manufacturing methods.

The 911 Turbo S Exclusive Series can be regarded as a highlight for the workshop, this special model can also be viewed as a spiritual successor to the 911 Sport Classic. There's clearly a pattern here. These limited-edition models mark the end of any given 911's reign – the 991 generation and the 2019 Speedster being a case in point. Just like it, the pair of 997s in our photos ended the 997 eras. Let's remind ourselves how they did it.

I grasp the Speedster's keys. As in the Sport Classic's case, here, the 3.8-litre flat-six has also benefited from a slight power hike, the result being 408hp and 309lb ft. The 997's engine wakes with a spine-tingling bark. Soon it settles into low revs, but the red tachometer needle clearly wants more as it dances happily in search of the 7250rpm redline.

To my surprise, the first thing that makes me excited is, objectively, the least special about this car. After all, its six-cylinder boxer engine doesn't differ dramatically from the one that could be found in the common decade-old 911 S or GTS. Nonetheless, taken out of this context, it makes a glorious impact and complements this truly fine sports car.

There's still so much fun to be had from a smartly-specced, but still pretty basic, late-2000s 911, which, technology-wise, this Speedster effectively is. Fitted with voice control, PASM suspension, a seven-speed PDK gearbox, and PCCB brakes, this 2009 car comes remarkably close to more recent equipment standards. The active suspension makes a good first impression as it provides a supple ride while rolling slowly. As speed rises, it keeps the body in taut control as it should. Then there's the steering, which with hydraulic assistance, is a gem. The electrical setup of the current 911 may be miraculously good but, at best, is just as good as this one.

Of course, there are also places where Porsche and its suppliers have made significant progress over the last decade. The pedal feel of the carbon-ceramic brakes is one of the welcome improvements, while the dual-clutch auto 'box possibly has made not even one but two steps forward during the last ten years. Not that much of this means anything today as the "No.000 of 356" plate displayed on this car suggests it has assumed the role of (Porsche Museum) garage queen.

If this car is meant to be admired, so be it. After all, it does make quite a visual impact, doesn't it? Mixing well-known 911 motifs with a distinctive two-humped tonneau, it really looks like a Porsche Speedster. Just like in 1955, it didn't take much to achieve this effect. The windscreen got shortened by 77mm, but, unlike the previous Speedsters, this car's windscreen rake remained the same as in the other 997s. The body is 40mm lower than a conventional Cabriolet, making it the flattest 911 of



Sport Classic came with Espresso brown leather and woven leather and fabric panels

its generation. In combination with the 997 4S extended arches (and the 964-style black decorative film mounted in front of the rear arches), it also looks to be the widest.

For a complete sense of occasion, the Speedster's creators borrowed lightweight aluminium door panels from the 911 Turbo and a front lip spoiler that debuted on the nose of the 911 Sport Classic. They designed and constructed the folding roof and the double-bubble tonneau cover especially for this model, effectively forcing the side windows to take on a unique shape as well.

In good old Speedster tradition, the owner has to do without rear seats or any aid in getting the roof above his or her head. The mechanism is operated by hand, and one needs to get out of the car to unload it, but the procedure remains logical and ergonomic in a very German way. The solution serves its purpose even during

heavy rain.

After the main design work was done, it was Porsche Exclusive's turn to make the Speedster even more desirable. The final result is a highly elegant combination of some distinctive black details and Pure Blue paint that was created especially for this model. Even if it hasn't appeared on any other Porsche model to this day, even rarer (and thus more coveted) are the Speedsters finished in plain Carrera White, the other colour option that was available upon request.

The cabin boasts even more details that make this car something much more than just yet another 911 derivative. There are some unique and quite striking parts, like the aluminium handbrake lever with Speedster lettering, and the chequered flag motif embroidered in the seat centres. Even without these trinkets, the cabin would still be quite a special place to sit,

Porsche Exclusive's exceptional attention to fit and finish has managed to single-handedly elevate the final effect well beyond the usual 997 fare. Virtually everything you touch here is leather, including not only door panels or dashboard, but air vent frames and seat bolsters. Truth be told, the Sport Classic took this level of individualisation a step further, throwing into the mix such gems as leather-clad coat hooks. Possibly, it was this car that displayed the power of Porsche's Exclusive department most explicitly during its nascent times, as it had nothing more than just some body and cabin details to play with in its quest to create a 911 that stands out. And stand out it did, ending up as possibly the hitherto most convincing reference to the 911s of yore. With its blatant '70s-inspired bodywork details and cabin colours, this quirky limited-edition 911 was a 997 like few others ■

**"IT WAS THIS CAR THAT DISPLAYED THE
POWER OF PORSCHE EXCLUSIVE..."**



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As an all-round sports car, the 997 Carrera is hard to beat

BUYING GUIDE

911 CARRERA 997

Every generation of 911 has been pretty special but if you're looking for one of the ultimate all-rounders then the 997 can make a brilliant purchase

Words **BOB HARPER** / Photos **DAN SHERWOOD**

There's a temptation to dismiss the 997 generation of 911 as a mildly reworked 996, but that would be selling the later car short. Despite using a broadly similar rolling chassis, the 997 generation is a more rounded machine, offering better all-round everyday usability – it really is a machine that has an extraordinary depth and breadth of ability. If you're after the ultimate in tactility from your water-cooled 911, then a 996 generation machine might be the better option, but as a brilliant all-rounder that's equally happy clipping apices as it is popping to the shops, then the 997 is where it's at.

HISTORY

Launched in 2004 the 997 made its debut on the 40th anniversary of the 911 – not a bad birthday present, and one that Porsche had been working on since 1998. Despite retaining a broadly similar overall silhouette the 997 could be immediately recognised by the return to more conventional headlights and a thoroughly revised interior.

Initially available with rear-wheel drive and two different power outputs, the launch models were the Carrera and Carrera S with 3.6- and 3.8-litre versions of the 996's flat-six respectively. The 3.6 could muster five horsepower more than in its 996 application and

was good for 325hp and 273lb ft of torque. For the first time since 1977, the normally aspirated 911 was offered with a choice of engine size, and the Carrera S at 3.8-litres offered 355hp and 295lb ft of torque, making it that little bit quicker than the base model. Both cars came as standard with a six-speed manual with a Tiptronic S 'box as an option.

To differentiate the models further there were several differences between the cars and the additional equipment offered on the S made it a pretty compelling model in the showrooms. As standard, the 3.8 featured Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) (it was an option on the 3.6) which allowed the driver



Electric seats were optional



997 interior still looks smart



Sport Chrono Package is a desirable option



to switch between a comfort or more sporting orientated suspension set up while the S also received 19" wheels and larger 330mm vented front discs, too. A Cabriolet version of both models joined the lineup in April 2005 while for the 2006 model year the all-wheel-drive 911 joined the fray in the form of the Carrera 4 and 4S with a wider rear track and even more explosive acceleration thanks to the additional traction. Targa models entered the market in late 2006 (only on the all-wheel-drive models) and offered a good compromise between the Coupés and Cabriolets.

The major change for the 997 Carrera models occurred in 2008 for the 2009 model

year and these models are known as the 997 Gen II or 997.2. While external updates were fairly minor – LED rear lamps, a revised rear bumper, LED DRLs, restyled front air intakes and door mirrors – the were big changes on the engine front. This all-new unit had 40% fewer components with a two-piece crankcase with integrated crankshaft bearing housings and no intermediate shaft operating the timing chains. The heads were simpler too, and perhaps most importantly, direct injection was adopted while the 'auto' option changed from Tiptronic S to PDK (Porsche-Doppelkupplung, or Porsche double clutch).

The 3.6 saw a power hike to 345hp with torque

911 CARRERA 997

CARRERA GEN I

ENGINE 3.6-litre flat-six

TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or five-speed Tiptronic

MAX POWER 325hp @ 6800rpm

MAX TORQUE 273lb ft @ 4250rpm

0-62MPH 5.0 seconds

TOP SPEED 177mph

CARRERA S GEN II

ENGINE 3.8-litre flat-six

TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or seven-speed PDK

MAX POWER 385hp @ 6500rpm

MAX TORQUE 310lb ft @ 4400rpm

0-62MPH 4.7 seconds

TOP SPEED 187mph

swelling to 287lb ft, and it was ferociously quick for what was an entry-level model, just dipping below five seconds for the 0-62mph sprint if equipped with PDK. The Carrera S saw its power and torque swell to 385hp and 310lb ft for a 0.2-second faster 0-62mph time when compared to the standard Carrera. The Cabrio continued with its all-electric hood and a revised roof →

to reduce wear on the fabric when opening and closing.

For the Gen II 997, there was once again the option of a Carrera 4 and 4S and the Targa models were again offered but weren't anywhere near as popular as the full Cabriolet. Towards the end of the 997's life, there were a number of special-edition models, the most notable of which was the Sport Classic which was produced in limited numbers – just 250 were sold. Based on an enhanced Carrera S it boasted 408hp and featured retro styling complete with a ducktail rear spoiler. In late 2010 the Carrera GTS was launched using the 408hp version of the 3.8 and based on the rear-wheel-drive Carrera S with the wide-track body of the 4S. It was an absolute peach to drive and is perhaps the ultimate in 997s bar the GT2/GT3 and Turbo models. Further, run out models included the Black Edition based on the regular Carrera. The 997 bowed out in 2011 when it was replaced with the new 991-generation for the 2012 model year.

WHAT TO PAY?

How long's a piece of string – you'll find 997s stretching all the way from just under £20k for a miley and possibly ropey basic Carrera to a low-mileage, mint condition GTS at up to around £80k. Gen II cars command significantly higher prices than the earlier cars but are probably the ones to go for if you can stretch your budget.

OUR CHOICE

The 997 is a great piece of kit and for the vast



Tiptronic gearbox was a popular choice



Folding rear seats add some practicality



Carrera models came with a 3.6-litre engine, while S models like this one came with a 3.8



Optional BOSE audio is worth seeking out



“THERE’S NO DOUBTING THAT THE 997 GENERATION OF 911 IS A BRILLIANT PIECE OF KIT – HANDSOME, DELICIOUSLY QUICK AND ENTERTAINING TO DRIVE”

majority of people, a Carrera or Carrera S will be more than sufficient. If you can stretch to the S, it’s the one to have, given the extra equipment it features, particularly the PASM. On the other hand, a traditionally sprung and damped basic Carrera is still a supremely sweet car to drive, and with a less complex suspension setup, it’ll be cheaper to maintain in the long run. The Carrera 4 and 4S are excellent too, and if you use your 911 all year round, the extra traction in the wet could be a deciding factor.

Ideally, we’d opt for a Gen II car as these have a superior Porsche Communication Management (PCM) system, and there’s less to potentially go wrong with the direct injection engines, too.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

EXTERIOR

These were very expensive cars when new and tended to be rather better assembled and finished than the fare from more mainstream manufacturers but don’t simply think that the

997 is relatively new and therefore not worthy of some close examination of its bodywork. Rust shouldn’t be an issue, so any signs will probably point to a car that’s had accident damage.

As with many Porsches, the front end is quite susceptible to stone chips, so examine the front bumper and ‘bonnet’ for stone rash – the aluminium bonnet can also be dented by larger bits of debris thrown up from the road, so give it a thorough check. Some cars will have had their front ends repainted to tidy them up, and while this is probably a good thing, do check for a decent paint match and that the respray was just for stone chips and nothing more sinister. Remember to examine the car for tight and consistent panel gaps around the rest of the car too, and check light lenses for damage as none of them are desperately cheap to replace.

While you’re checking the front valance do try to see if the radiator and air con condensers are free from debris. It’s hard to clear this debris other than at service time, so it can be forgotten about and, will lead to potential →

corrosion in these components. An average life for condensers is around eight years.

Check wheels and tyres carefully as a refurb and a set of four tyres will run to a considerable amount of money. Ideally, we'd be looking for a set of Porsche N-rated rubber – it's what the car was designed to be run on after all, but failing that, do check for a matched set of quality tyres. On Cabrios and Targas, make sure the hood/roof works seamlessly.

INTERIOR

There aren't any particular horrors to look out for here, so concentrate on condition, colour combinations and ensuring that everything works properly. Several options could be fitted to the 997 generation so check that everything operates, especially the air conditioning and electric seats if fitted, as motors can seize from a lack of use. If fitted, check the PSE (Porsche switchable Sports Exhaust) still operates as the flap in the exhaust can seize shut if not used every now and then.

Overall the interior of the 997 is a nice place to sit with plenty of stylistic nods back to the 993 generation while still looking, and feeling, fresh and modern. Cars with the optional Sport Chrono package are desirable and can easily be identified by the stopwatch sitting atop the dash. Gen II cars came with the far superior third generation of Porsche Communication Management (PCM3) which is a considerable leap forward from the earlier PCM2 setup.

ENGINE & GEARBOX

It should come as no surprise that as the 997 is firmly based on the 996's architecture that some of the earlier car's Achilles' heels remain. The good news is that most of them will only be evident on early cars, and as usual, the internet



19" Carrera Classic wheels



folklore has probably blown many of the problems out of all proportion.

The IMS (Intermediate Shaft bearing) failure discussion must occupy a significant number of terabytes in the cloud, but for those that have suffered it, it's no laughing matter and can lead to a complete rebuild. However, Porsche redesigned it and fitted a stronger bearing from late 2006 build onwards which is much, much less likely to fail. If you're looking at a car built before this time then check to see if the IMS has been replaced and if not budget for a replacement before it fails.

Bore scoring is another potential 997 concern, but again, it's been overblown and is pretty unlikely to occur. Potential giveaways that a car is affected are a blackened nearside exhaust and/or a tapping noise at idle. A borescope inspection at a specialist can tell you one way or another, and it's worth pointing out that it's more likely to affect the 3.8 than the 3.6. Gen II DFI engines are not affected.

Other potential problems are failed coil packs – which will manifest themselves as hesitation or a misfire – and this is down to their location by the exhaust, and as they get hot and cool again, they can crack. Replacement won't cost an arm and a leg. On Gen II cars, the tandem vacuum pump can corrode and lead to an oil leak from the rear of the engine. Again. It's not catastrophically expensive to replace.

Transmissions are pretty durable all-round, although the shift cable for the manual can fail. Clutches have an average lifespan of 50k miles, although cars that have been driven hard or spent lots of time in town may succumb earlier than that. If a new clutch has been fitted, check that Porsche or OEM quality parts have been used by checking the invoice for the repair.

On manual cars, it's also worth having the

ECU interrogated to see if the engine has been over-revved during its life, as this can severely affect its longevity.

CHASSIS

There aren't any real horror stories with the 997's underpinnings, but even though it's relatively modern, don't forget that the earlier cars are well over 15 years old now, so components will require a refresh. Lower arm control bushes wear pretty regularly, and anti-roll bar drop links and suspension top mounts can fail too. Listen for any clunks from the front end or any creaking noise as all indicate worn components.

While PASM is a great system – when it's working – giving a good ride or sporty handling it's expensive to replace. If all four dampers need replacement you'll be looking at £2k in parts alone, although some companies can rebuild them. While this might seem like a sensible solution, your specialist or dealer probably won't be too keen on your car taking up a ramp while the shocks are being rebuilt!

VERDICT

There's no doubting that the 997 generation of 911 is a brilliant piece of kit – handsome, deliciously quick and entertaining to drive. For a high-performance sports coupé, it's a pretty practical proposition, too.

You need to do plenty of research before purchase, and we'd advise focussing on which model you want and then deciding which options are must-haves. Buy on condition, not mileage, and ensure that any potential purchase has a cast-iron service history, with plenty of invoices. A specialist inspection would also be wise, especially on an earlier car, as they have the potential to be more expensive ■

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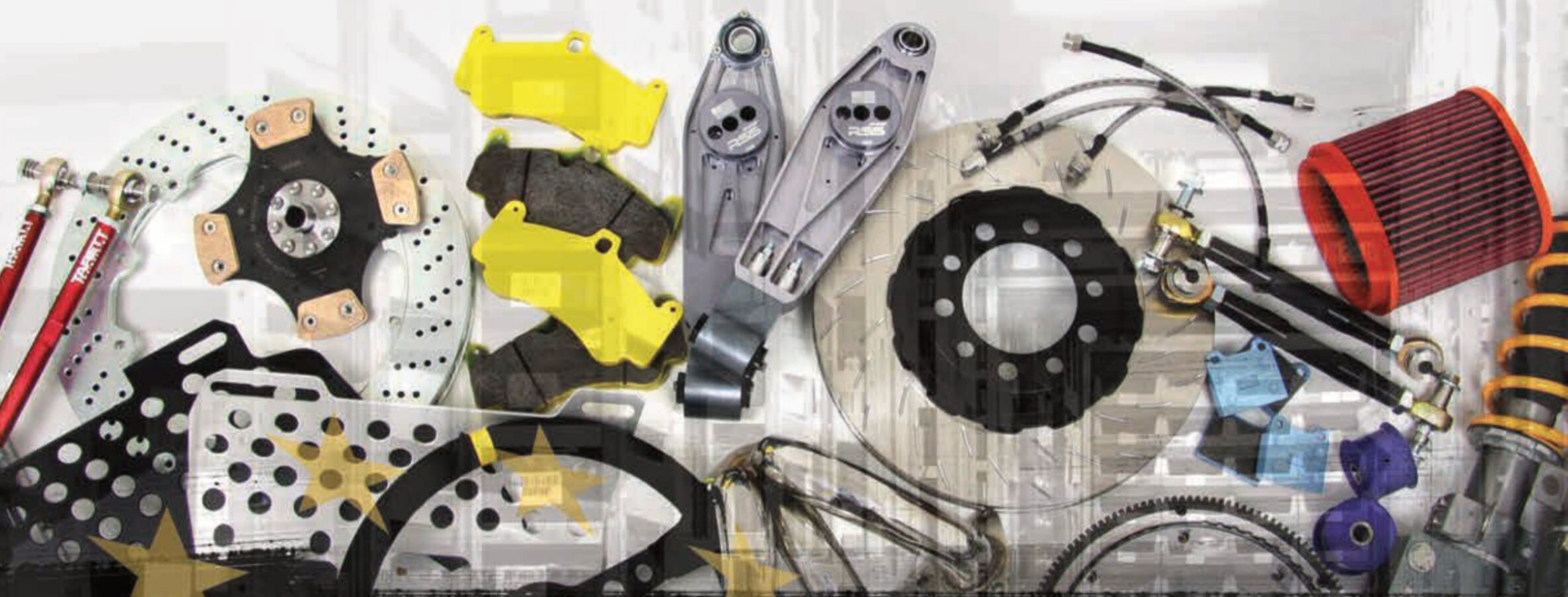
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PEOPLE'S CHOICE

There has never been a better time to buy a 987. With the help of Porsche specialist, Paragon, we take an S example of each for a drive to find out why either might rival a 911...

Words **SIMON JACKSON** / Photos **MALCOLM GRIFFITHS** / Drone photos **JASON SEALE**



It is no exaggeration to claim that there's a significant element of the Porsche world that is going crazy for the 996 of late – and there's good reason for that. The once unloved 911 has, without doubt, found a second wind and, with values of the older models skyrocketing, some are banking on a similar level of appreciation befalling the first water-cooled 911. Those who are financially speculating here, of which there are many, are (if they have bought well) most likely in the pound seats if they're playing the long game. But more importantly, those who simply adore the 996 for what it is, money aside, are all the richer for it too. However, as 996 prices steadily rise they are meeting the values of its replacement, the 997, which creates a

dilemma between the two – which do you buy? However you slice the argument the 997 can largely match its forebear blow-for-blow, some will even tell you the later 911 far exceeds the car it replaced – that's an argument for another day. No matter how many superlatives you throw at either 911 though, there is another increasingly affordable option that, while admittedly not in possession of a 911 badge, affords all the benefits of a 997 for 996 money – we're talking about the first-generation 987 Cayman or Boxster, both created in the likeness of the 997. Natural depreciation has brought both the 987 Cayman and Boxster into view for those with 996 money burning a hole in their pockets, and those folk really should take a moment to weigh the options, for this is not the →

cut-and-dried argument it might first seem.

Introduced in 2005, the first-generation 987 debuted initially with the Boxster and Boxster S, which replaced the highly successful 986 generation before it. The new mid-engined roadster boasted a fresh design with some 80% of its parts being completely new. The entry-level car, the 2.7-litre, put out 240hp, the S version 280hp, the 2.7 coming with either a five-speed manual or Tiptronic, the S with a six-speed manual – PASM active suspension was available on both. For the 2006 model year came the Cayman S – a 3.4-litre affair producing 295hp, it was based on the Boxster sharing its 997-style contemporary looks. The following year came the 2.7-litre entry-level Cayman with 245hp, at which point power figures between the two models, hardtop coupé and ragtop roadster, became unified. Of course, both models shared much, namely a family resemblance, especially from the front aspect, with the 997 which meant gone were the so-called (and somewhat divisive) ‘fried egg’ headlamps of the 996 and 986. The

restyled contemporary aesthetics weren’t the only thing that set both two-seater 987s apart, for their drivability was also key. Chiefly the car’s 47% (front) and 53% (rear) weight distribution ensured a thrilling drive, and with a tuneful and tractable water-cooled flat-six engine, these were very much driver’s Porsches in the truest sense – and oddly practical with it. Finally, there was a legitimate alternative to 911 ownership, crowded many.

It was arguably the Cayman that received the most plaudits, and today perhaps its slightly more desirable nature continues, for you tend to find Cayman prices higher than the equivalent Boxster, with its powered convertible roof, by comparison. As you might expect it is the more powerful S models, with firmer suspension and uprated brakes, that command the most attention, but by no means should lesser models be discounted. Likewise, a preference for manual gearboxes would seem to prevail over Tiptronic autos, but your preference will depend on what you plan to use the car for, the two 987s

“THE ROOF ADDS STIFFNESS TO THE CAYMAN, IT IS TWICE AS RIGID AS THE BOXSTER”

3.4-litre S makes 295hp



Cayman excels on winding country roads



The Cayman S is a fantastic driver's car



Tiptronic 'box not as sharp as the manual, but it's the better choice for those living in town and dealing with traffic



Standard 18" S wheels

in our pictures have one of each gearbox type – both are the cream of the crop; full fat S variants.

The 2007 987 Cayman S you see in our pictures has the Tiptronic S gearbox coupled to its 3.4-litre engine. Having covered just over 53,000 miles, the Meteor Grey car boasts a few optional factory-fitted extras increasing its desirability; rear wiper, heated sports seats, cruise control, satellite navigation, and sports tailpipes. Inside a multifunction steering wheel, stainless door entry guards, CD changer and BOSE audio system add to the pleasantries. By contrast, the Boxster S alongside it, a slightly newer 2008 car, has covered 61,000 miles. Its

combination of Basalt Black paintwork with a black hood and matching leather seats are timeless. Topping the Cayman's 18" S wheels come 19" Sport Design alloys, like the Cayman it features a multifunction steering wheel and heated seats – rear park assist has also been factory fitted. The audio side is taken care of by a Porsche Sound Pack, while the 'other' audio side comes courtesy of a switchable sports exhaust system – finally, its all-red rear light clusters lend it an air of extra chic. Both look and sound the part, but how do they drive, and can they really rival a 911?

Porsche sold something like 140,000 986

Boxsters across eight years, from which it's safe to say it learnt a few things, the benefactor was the 987. Though it shared a certain familiarity with the 986 before it, this was an all-new car and it drove like one – that still holds true today. The 987 Boxster shared less than 30% of its parts with the 997, yet the family similarities are tough to ignore, something that in part extends to the driving experience. Like the 997, the 987 Boxster moved to variable-ratio rack-and-pinion steering which gives the feel of both a certain commonality. It's neatly balanced if left a little wanting in feel at low speed, though in conjunction with an engine that is happy →

to trundle through traffic, it offers an entirely user-friendly experience.

Naturally, though you'll be wanting to travel a little quicker, and with a kick from mid-range revs, the S is happy to oblige with an addictive roar full of torque delivered up to and exceeding 6000rpm – it works well with a switchable sports exhaust. The six-speed manual 'box in our car is delightful, it snicks into gear in a hugely satisfying fashion. As your pace increases, there's little in the way of obtrusive wind noise with the roof up, with it so dropped comes a heightened sense of speed and connection with the scenery, in our case the stunning clifftops around Beachy Head.

Fire this car into corners a little hotter than perhaps you should and, thanks to its fantastic chassis, it delivers an exciting ride as everything underneath loads up. I think you develop the confidence to do just that in the Boxster and Cayman (no matter which generation), far more quickly than you might in an equivalent era of 911. This car feels nimble and threadable, it doesn't overtly struggle for grip provided you drive it accordingly, it's almost refreshing to get into a Porsche of this era for they feel better suited to the width of UK roads than some of their more modern counterparts. A quick flick of the switch brings this Boxster's roof back to its original position via the magic of electricity, the final task to bring it home is a manual job via



Interior still looks and feels good

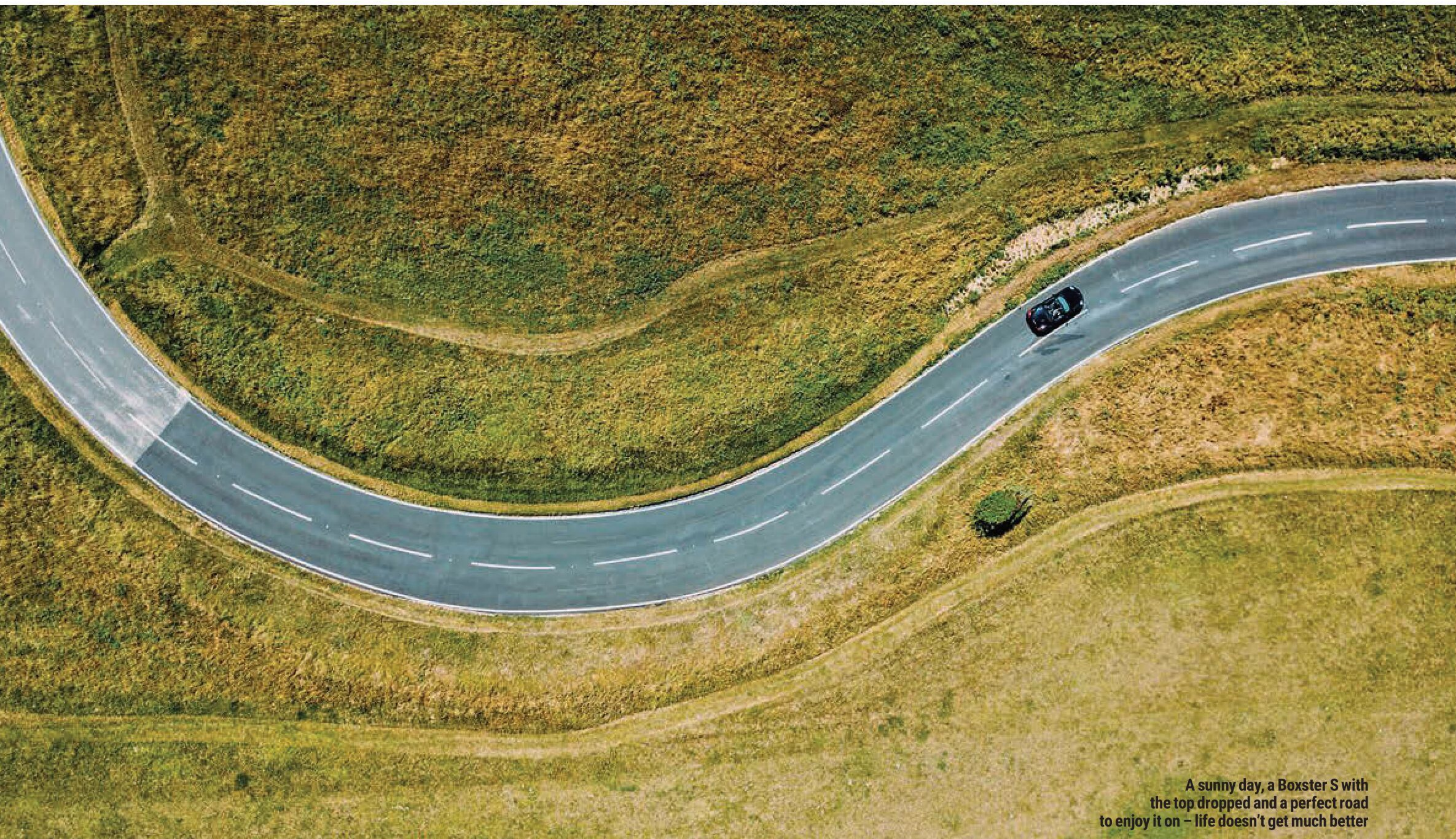


Boxster S matches its hardtop counterpart for power



With the roof down, the Boxster feels even more exciting





A sunny day, a Boxster S with the top dropped and a perfect road to enjoy it on – life doesn't get much better

“WITH THE ROOF DROPPED COMES A HEIGHTENED SENSE OF SPEED AND CONNECTION WITH THE SCENERY...”

19" Sport Design alloys on this Boxster S



an easy-to-operate handle. With the roof back up and (standard fitment) air-conditioning on, this Porsche suddenly becomes ever so slightly more civilised. Despite its two seats, this is a practical and dynamic car too. Of course, the vehicle we are chasing, the 987 Cayman, might be considered yet more practical still, and even a slightly more focused driver's car.

If there was one real surprise with the first-generation Cayman, it was just how close Porsche allowed it, as a package, to get to the 911. While the Boxster hints at a certain similarity with the 997, the Cayman takes things one stage further. Of course, the driving experience of the two cars differ, the Cayman's front end has a lighter feel than that of the 911, and it lacks the outright speed of its bigger brother, but it also offers a chassis that little bit more taught than the Boxster's, different yet equally appealing in comparison with the 997. This car really does feel like a baby 911, one that perhaps is not such an infant. By way of a contrast to the Boxster we've just jumped out of, the coupé in our pictures runs a Tiptronic gearbox. Now, while these have their place and make increasing sense in a world of gridlocked motorways and horrifically dull town centres strewn with traffic, you do lose a certain element of involvement with the automatic gearbox option here. The latter 981 Cayman and Boxster, I feel,

works well with a DSG gearbox, but on a 987 I'd recommend you opt for a manual gearbox – be that the six-speed in the larger-engined cars or even the perfectly pleasurable five-speed in the smaller capacity versions. Having said that, it really does all depend on what you'll be using your car for – blasting around the countryside is certainly the territory of a manual gearbox, sitting in tailbacks on a motorway commute is very much the forté of a Tiptronic gearbox. You pay your money and take your choice.

The Cayman was, at launch, dearer than the Boxster to purchase which at the time was unusual for a Porsche, typically its open-topped cars were priced at a premium. Drive one though and you'll instantly feel where that extra spend has gone, for a 987 Cayman is a wonderful thing to pilot. As you'd expect the driving experience shares much with that offered by the Boxster, but I would go so far as to say it is this tin-top 987 that feels closest to the 911 experience. While this 3.4-litre S shares its power output with the Boxster S with which it is paired here, let's not forget that earlier cars benefitted from a horsepower advantage over their convertible siblings, and that serves to instantly spice things up a treat.

The two cars here are, from midway down, identical, their track width and wheelbase being the same, though the Cayman is more than →



“FALLING VALUES HAVE, IN RECENT TIMES, BEGUN TO MAKE THESE CARS MORE AFFORDABLE...”

a centimetre longer in overall length. From inside the cabin, you might imagine that you'd be hard pushed to remember which version of 987 you were driving, but there are differences of course. The rear tailgate is, when opened, pretty sizeable, but it does not afford a great deal more practicality than that found in the Boxster. Although both cars feature only two seats, Porsche provided an excellent number of cubby holes in which to store your clobber, the front and rear boot areas proving surprisingly useful too.

Like the Boxster, you can expect this car to

reach 60mph in around five seconds, but that's not the full story for it is within its chassis that it manages to outperform what you'll find dictated on paper. As you might expect the addition of a roof adds stiffness to the Cayman, it is actually twice as rigid as the Boxster upon which it is based, and equally as rigid as its larger stablemate, the 997. Its overall stability and agility though is delivered thanks to the Cayman's inherently well-balanced layout, and it is this which serves to ensure this car's thrilling ride – just like in the Boxster. You can push the 987 Cayman harder than you might

first think, and as you ramp up your corner entry speed so you begin to feel just how well engineered this car is. While it will feel loose on the limit at times, the 987 Cayman is not the understeering mess you'll find from behind the wheel of certain other mid-engined sports cars. And, while its traction may not be as good as it could be, there's enough grunt in the larger-engined versions to pull you out of trouble. All told it's enormous fun, and addictive too. Is it enough to quench that 911 thirst? Quite possibly.

Falling values have, in recent times, begun to make these cars more affordable. Of course, purchasing a car like this is one thing, running it is quite another. Those in the know agree that these cars are both better built (and arguably engineered) than the 986s before them, perhaps even more so than the 996, too. It's been said that the much-publicised bore scoring issue of which many prospective Porsche purchasers are concerned, affected only a small percentage of first-generation cars – perhaps as few as 5%. Regards the issue of IMS failure, during late 2005 Porsche introduced a new stronger bearing, post-2007 models should be of less concern regarding the issue. RMS problems were largely cured by the introduction of the 987 models. In either instance, a specialist will be able to offer guidance on a solution to the problem and preventative measures. It is also accepted that it is the larger-engined cars that are more susceptible to such failures over their 2.7-litre counterparts. But these possible issues should not stop you from buying of one of these cars. With prices of 996s rising, and 997s perhaps still slightly out of financial reach for some, the 987, now more affordable than ever, offers a genuine 911 alternative worthy of consideration, no matter which model you opt for... ■



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The 987 Boxster is an exceptional sports car for not a lot of money



BUYING GUIDE

BOXSTER AND CAYMAN 987

With a wide range of engines, keen chassis, and both roadster and coupé body styles to choose from, the 987 duo offers a lot of Porsche for not a lot of cash

Words DANIEL BEVIS / Photos MATT WOODS, PORSCHE

Riding on the success of the original 986 Boxster, the new-for-2005 987 model boasted a raft of updates and a huge step forward in quality. And, of course, there was the addition of the fixed-roof Cayman to the range...

HISTORY

When the original 986 Boxster launched in 1996, it represented a very interesting period for Porsche's accountants. Way before the era when SUV sales were robustly bolstering the coffers (indeed, in a time when such a thing would be utterly unthinkable), the Boxster crystallised something that a lot of people

had been muttering about for some time: a mid-engined Porsche sports car. While the marque had been persevering with the 911's rear-engined format from time immemorial – with a great deal of success, it has to be said – there was a strong argument for a compact, lightweight roadster with the motor mounted ahead of the rear axle. So how could the money men justify engineering a totally new car to fill a potential niche? Quite simply, by not engineering the entire car from scratch: while much of the 986 Boxster was bespoke, there was also quite a lot of 996-generation 911 in there – it shared the bonnet, front wings, headlights and interior, and the architecture of the engine was

essentially the same too. Naturally, this was a great way to annoy 911 owners, who'd paid considerably more for their cars, but life has a natural way of balancing such things out, and as the popularity of the Boxster grew, so did the hierarchy of it being 'not a 911'. Everyone still knew where they stood. So when the second-gen (987) Boxster arrived in 2005, the pattern was established. This time the styling was inspired by the Carrera GT; the 987 shared only 20% of its parts with its predecessor, and the most marked shift was in the interior, which was a real step forward in terms of design and quality.

At launch, engine options were the M97.20 2.7-litre flat-six (240hp), or the M96.26

3.2-litre (280hp) for the Boxster S, with a five-speed manual for the 2.7, six-speed for the S, or a five-speed Tiptronic gearbox. Engines were revised for the 2007 model year: the 2.7 received VarioCam Plus tech to increase power to 245hp, while the 3.2 was replaced by the M97.21 3.4-litre engine with 295hp.

A facelift arrived in 2008, the 987.2 Boxster again receiving power upgrades – a totally new engine, the MA1, was brought in; the base Boxster now had a 255hp 2.9, and the Boxster S had a 310hp 3.4, both available with either a six-speed manual or the slick new seven-speed PDK dual-clutch auto. The cosmetic element of the facelift comprised new head- and rear lights, bigger front intakes with DRLs, and twin diffusers on the tail.

A couple of notable special editions were created: the RS60 Spyder, of which 1960 examples were sold worldwide with a unique colourway, and 2009's Boxster Spyder junked the entire electric roof mechanism (the roof was essentially a get-you-home piece of anchored canvas) along with much else to drop the kerb weight down to 1275kg. With 320hp this was a vivid experience, although its lack of all-weather ability made it one for the hardcore.

When it comes to the Cayman, this is one of those good ideas that's panned out to become a massive sales success; taking the Boxster platform and adding a fixed roof offered something credible in its own right that was way more than simply 'not a 911'. Built from 2005-12, the first model to be launched was the Cayman S – Porsche taking the characterful move of

Boxster S came with a larger engine and more power



releasing the hot one first, then sneaking out the more affordable one a year later. The Cayman shared much of its architecture with its Boxster sibling, including the platform, powertrain, suspension (slightly stiffened) and basically everything forward of the front bulkhead as well as the forward part of the interior. The back end was made of lightweight steel and had a handy hatchback. The Cayman S boasted the M97.21 3.4-litre flat-six (295hp), while the base model had the M97.20 2.7-litre (245hp); the latter had a five-speed transaxle while the S got a full-fat six-speeder (although six ratios were an option on the 2.7), and options across the range

included PCCB brakes, Tiptronic transmission, PASM, bi-xenon headlights, and the Sport Chrono Package. A limited-slip differential could be had from 2009 onwards, and in line with the Boxster, the facelift increased the base Cayman's engine to 2.9-litres, added direct injection (and 20hp) to the Cayman S, while bumpers and lights were redesigned. The Tiptronic option was replaced by the seven-speed PDK.

Notable special editions include the Design Edition 1, which was a Cayman S reworked to commemorate 35 years of Porsche Design – it was all-black and came fully loaded with options. The Cayman S Sport had the sport →

Cayman delivers a slightly more focused driving experience





exhaust, active suspension options and 303hp, plus paint choices borrowed from the 911 GT3 RS. Finally, there was the Cayman R, introduced in 2011; this came with the optional Aero kit as standard-fit, the lightweight 19" alloys from the Boxster Spyder, lightweight doors from the 911 GT3, carbon-backed fibreglass bucket seats, 20mm lowered ride height and a 55kg weight reduction. Just 1621 Cayman Rs were built, and they're very much sought after.

WHAT TO PAY?

The most affordable entry into 987 ownership would be to find an early pre-facelift Boxster, which can start from as little as £7000 – just be fastidious when you're combing through the history. An extra £2-3000 on top of that will get you into the more powerful post-2008 variants, and this is perhaps the more desirable route. Clean and usable ones rise to the £11-12k mark, with really good examples of the 3.4 Boxster S at £16-17,000. Interestingly there are a few RS60 Spydres on sale in the UK at the time of writing, priced around £24,000.

Caymans command more of a price premium. Early 2005/06 2.7 cars start at £15,000, rising to £17-19k for the 3.4. Facelift models start in the low £20k-range, with late-model 2011/12 cars climbing to £34k. And if you can find a Cayman R, you'll be looking at around £45,000.

OUR CHOICE

Despite being so fundamentally similar, the two cars are extremely different in their approach and the way they feel. And while the tin-top Cayman may be the more 'pure' choice, we would go for a Boxster simply because the open-top thrills suit the platform so well. We'd



Boxster and Cayman offer a wide selection of engine choices





want a post-2008 3.4 with the Sport Chrono Pack and Bose audio – ideally in dark blue, which complements it beautifully. However, if budget allowed, there’s a very strong argument for finding a Cayman R and enjoying the very best of what this platform has to offer.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

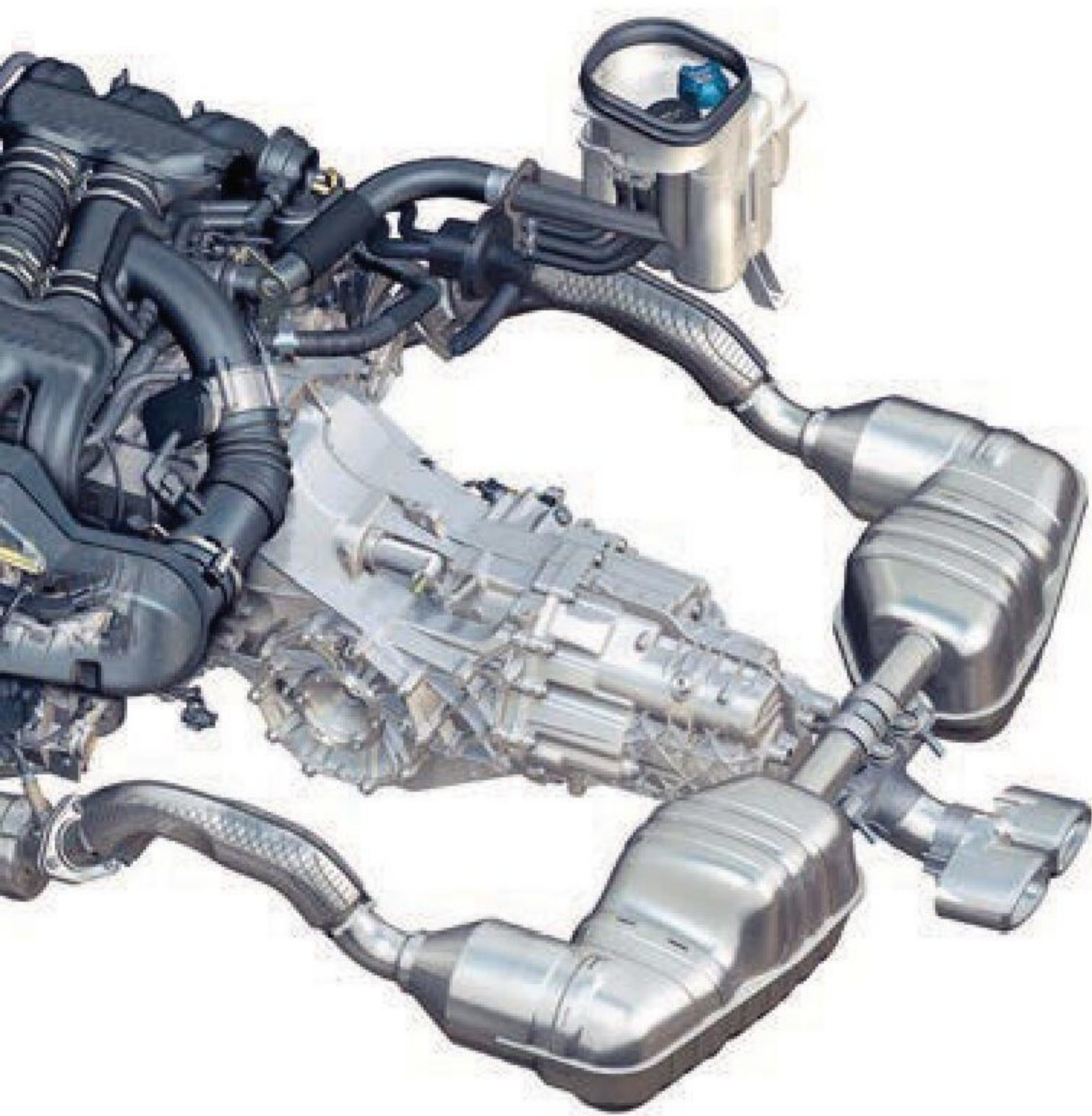
EXTERIOR

Unlike the earlier 986 Boxster, which has passed into true bargain-basement territory with some examples, it’s rather less likely that you’ll find a 987 which has been maintained on the cheap and neglected, although that’s not to say it doesn’t happen, so your key concern is to

pore over the history and make sure every bit of servicing and maintenance can be accounted for.

Bodywork corrosion isn’t an issue with these fully galvanised cars, so be suspicious of any rust you may happen to find as this’ll most likely be the aftermath of poor accident repairs; uneven panel gaps are a further giveaway of a chequered past, as are uneven paint matches from panel to panel. Take a good look at the radiators in the nose, as these are vulnerable to stone damage. Headlamps can go hazy and opaque, but this needn’t be a concern as they’re generally quite easy to freshen up. →

“UNIVERSALLY LAUDED BY CRITICS AND ROAD-TESTERS, THE 987 PLATFORM PRODUCED TWO ESSENTIALLY SIMILAR SPORTS CARS OF WILDLY DIFFERING CHARACTERS”



Cayman offers a surprisingly practical boot



Rare and roof-less Boxster Spyder



987 interior was a big step up over the 986 in terms of both design and quality

INTERIOR

When it comes to the interior, the 987 was a huge leap forward in quality from the old 986; the materials are hard-wearing and the fit-and-finish impressive. You may find wear to the seat bolsters on higher mileage examples, and the black finish can rub off the heater controls on the dash, but beyond that, there's not too much to concern yourself with in the cabin. Water ingress isn't common with the Boxster unless the roof actually has a hole in it; some owners have found wet carpets in the front which has actually been air-con condensation from the foot vents on hot days.

ENGINE & GEARBOX

There's a lot of talk of IMS bearing failures with Porsches of this era, but it's not too common an issue with the 987. Early Boxsters were fitted with the undersized bearing that's prone to failure, but this was remedied for the 2006 model year; check the history of early cars to see whether this area has been addressed.

It's rare but not unheard of for timing chains to snap, and crankshaft bearings can fail – these are by no means common concerns, and the best way to prevent it is simply by preparedness: buy a car with a proven service history and continue to service and maintain it correctly.

CHASSIS

These are performance machines, engineered to be driven enthusiastically, and Caymans tend to have been used a bit harder than Boxsters. If you're looking at a car that's been used regularly on track, be aware that the chassis will have been under more stress and the components of the braking and suspension systems may be unduly worn. Check the history to see what's been renewed and when, and perhaps budget for a chassis overhaul (shocks, springs, bushes, alignment) to get everything back to factory specs.

VERDICT:

Universally lauded by critics and road-testers, the 987 platform produced two essentially similar sports cars of wildly differing characters. While the Boxster and Cayman share almost everything, there's a key conceptual difference here: the soft-top is more often bought as a cruiser, while the Cayman is more of a point-to-point weapon for B roads and circuits. This isn't true in all cases of course, but it's interesting how differently each car appeals.

The vivacity of either variant is undeniable, and the specs are really quite attractive: even the least powerful and lowest-priced cars will be thoroughly entertaining, while spending a little more and getting a tidy example of a later car could well net you something you never feel like selling. These are formidable machines that can offer exceptional value for money ■

Hardcore Cayman R is rare and expensive, but extremely desirable



BOXSTER AND CAYMAN 987

2.7

ENGINE 2.7-litre flat-six
TRANSMISSION Five-speed manual or five-speed Tiptronic
MAX POWER 240hp @ 6400rpm (245hp @ 6500rpm)
MAX TORQUE 199lb ft @ 4700-6000rpm (201 @ 4600-6000rpm)
0-62MPH 6.2/Tip 7.1 (6.1/7.0)
TOP SPEED 159mph/Tip 155 (160/156/Cayman 157)

2.9

ENGINE 2.9-litre flat-six
TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or seven-speed PDK
MAX POWER 255hp @ 6400rpm
MAX TORQUE 213lb ft @ 4400-6000rpm
0-62MPH 5.9 seconds/PDK 5.8
TOP SPEED 163mph/PDK 162

3.2 S

ENGINE 3.2-litre flat-six
TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or five-speed Tiptronic
MAX POWER 280hp @ 6200rpm
MAX TORQUE 236lb ft @ 4700-6000rpm
0-62MPH 5.5 seconds/Tip 6.3
TOP SPEED 167mph/Tip 162

3.4 S

ENGINE 3.4-litre flat-six
TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or five-speed Tiptronic, seven-speed PDK (2009)
MAX POWER 295hp @ 6250rpm (310 @ 6400rpm)
MAX TORQUE 250lb ft @ 4400-6000rpm (265lb ft @ 4400-5500rpm)
0-62MPH 5.4 seconds/Tip 6.1 (5.3/PDK 5.2)
TOP SPEED 169mph/Tip 164 (170/PDK 169)

SPYDER

ENGINE 3.4-litre flat-six
TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or seven-speed PDK
MAX POWER 320hp @ 7200rpm
MAX TORQUE 272lb ft @ 4750rpm
0-62MPH 5.1 seconds/PDK 5.0
TOP SPEED 166mph/PDK 165

CAYMAN

ENGINE 2.7-litre flat-six
TRANSMISSION Five-speed manual or five-speed Tiptronic
MAX POWER 245hp @ 6500rpm
MAX TORQUE 201lb ft @ 4600-6000rpm
0-62MPH 6.1 seconds/Tip 7.0
TOP SPEED 160mph/Tip 157

2.9

ENGINE 2.9-litre flat-six
TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or seven-speed PDK
MAX POWER 255hp @ 7200rpm
MAX TORQUE 221lb ft @ 4400-6000rpm
0-62MPH 5.8 seconds/PDK 5.7
TOP SPEED 166mph/PDK 163

3.4 S

ENGINE 3.4-litre flat-six
TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual or five-speed Tiptronic (Seven-speed PDK)
MAX POWER 295hp @ 6250rpm (320 @ 7200rpm)
MAX TORQUE 250lb ft @ 4400-6000rpm (272lb ft @ 4750rpm)
0-62MPH 5.4 seconds/Tip 6.1 (5.2/PDK 5.1)
TOP SPEED 171mph/Tip 166 (172/PDK 171)

R

ENGINE 3.4-litre flat-six
TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual
MAX POWER 330hp @ 7400rpm
MAX TORQUE 272lb ft @ 4750rpm
0-62MPH 5.0 seconds
TOP SPEED 175mph

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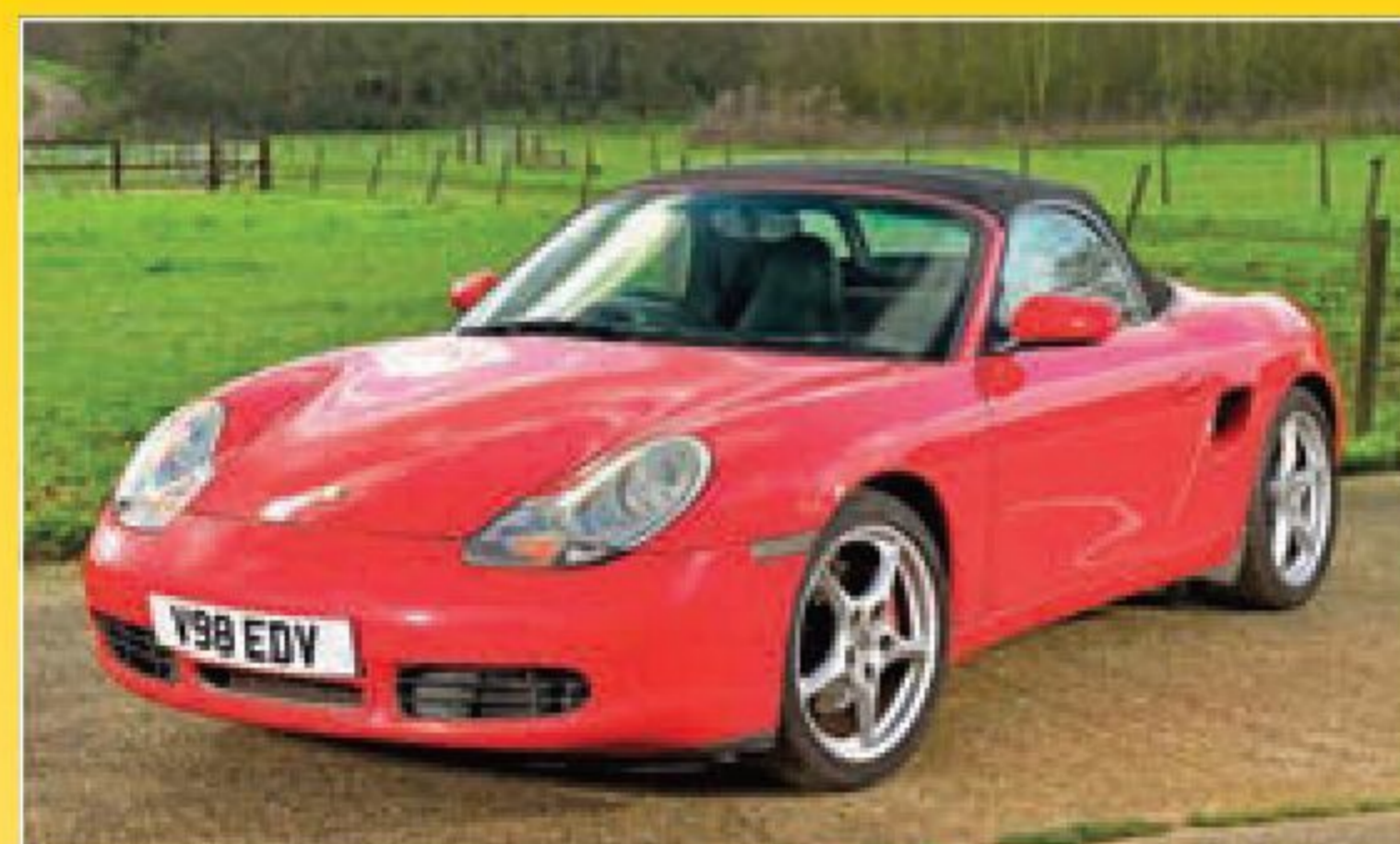
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ICONIC MODELS



BUYING GUIDES



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We then go behind the scenes of the 986 Boxster's creation with fascinating interviews with the people at the heart of the project. Then we take the 987 Boxster S and Cayman S out on the road to see how they compare and, also, bring you a comprehensive buying guide to this dynamic duo.

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