

1993 TOURING CARS PREVIEW

# FAST LANE

# 911 at 30



We Drive Peugeot's 1993 Touring Car



**Suzuki Cappuccino**  
**Bentley Brooklands**  
**Citroen Xantia**  
**Lotus Esprit S4**





A high-angle photograph of a yellow Porsche 911 Turbo driving on a rocky, gravelly road. The car is in the lower-left corner, with its rear end and taillight visible. The license plate is partially visible, showing 'M 601'. The road is composed of large, light-colored rocks and smaller gravel. The background is a textured, brownish-yellow surface, possibly a dirt or gravel road.

# Out With a Bang

This is the last incarnation of the old charger before the Frankfurt Show launch of the all-new 993 Porsche. You had better get your cheque book out if you have always wanted a 911 Turbo. But do you really want one? *Andrew English* reports

## 911 TURBO

Careful, said the Porsche mechanics, when we started the test drive in the South of France. They had already dragged the smashed remains of one Turbo back to the hotel the previous evening, which was now draped sorrowfully with a tarpaulin in the corner of the car park.

Good advice. The wet and slimy roads around Nice were not the most suitable testing ground. I took the wheel gingerly, and manoeuvred the car. The clutch is light, and it is easy to balance engine power without stalling or ripping the tyres to pieces. The power steering feels positive and weighty, and the electrically-adjustable seats comfortable and supportive.

Inside, it feels slightly cramped, but you have lots of room to flail your arms around the wheel rim and there is enough storage space — a usable supercar.

For a former Beetle driver there are familiar touches. The fascia switches, the floor-mounted pedals and the gear lever, all say Herbie, not supercar. The dashboard is its usual jumble of switches, dials and buttons. It is friendly and easy to use, but you have to get to know where everything is before you have to find it in a hurry.

Taking the coast road, we drove through Antibes' rush-hour traffic for half an hour. The wheels thump into every pot hole, and track every groove and seam in the road, but at least the thumps are subdued with a suppleness in the suspension that keeps the worst out of the bodysell. On the whole the ride is comfortable. Under 3,500rpm, the turbo lies dormant, but

### One of the most exciting motoring experiences is coming out of a bend fast in a Porsche 911 Turbo

it is possible to drive briskly, without fumbling around with the gearbox or oiling the plugs. The huge brakes do not need warming up to operate effectively, although anti-lock proved over-eager to cycle when the road was bumpy. Sound deadening keeps the Mike Smash and Dave Nicey of Monte Carlo radio stations audible at moderate speeds, although some might see that as a disadvantage.

At last we reached the open road, after a large roundabout. Taking second gear I gently accelerated out and just touched 3,700rpm. The Kraken awoke, and with a rush of air into the inlet-charge cooler, the revs soared and the rear tyres lost grip on the slippery road. Fishtailing away from the roundabout, steering with gentle slides, and muttering nervously, "Don't lift off, don't lift off," I got the car on course again. When the turbo is blowing the throttle pedal is incredibly sensitive, and tiny movements mark the difference between hard acceleration and effectively lifting off.

While the car is easy to drive around town, it does not thank you if you use the turbo-charger only tentatively. Although the boost does not arrive all at once, it builds up quickly. If you edge the revs just above 3,500rpm, the



Massive Speedline wheels are shod with Yokohamas



Dash is a familiar jumble of switches and instruments



Badge change to 3.6 means blistering performance



Carrera crankcase is the biggest change, but 360bhp Porsche turbo power requires very expensive innards

### Speed-yellow: Pigment of the imagination



engine comes alive and you take off down the road like a scalded cat. Fumble for the next gear too early, and the gearchange will balk, the engine will lose all the boost and the driveline will shunt the power off almost as if you had put the brakes on.

You can't be half-hearted about driving a 911 Turbo. Pretty much it's all or nothing.

Once you have decided you want to go charging down the road, the engine and gearbox will help you all the way. Stretch the revs beyond 5,000rpm, and the next gear is engaged almost before you reach down for the lever. In third, you will be doing nearly 100mph by the time you reach the red line. In fourth, nearly 130.

Nicey and Smashy are left far behind, as the whining, whirring and whooshing behind you combine in a sound track beguiling and, yes, exclusive.

The ride smoothes out at speed, and response to steering inputs is linear and easy to judge when placing the car for bends, the *déjà vu* of 911. Stopping before them should not be a problem if your courage fails you, as the new brakes have massive four-pot aluminium-alloy calipers clamping cross-drilled and ventilated discs. There was not much wrong with the brakes on the old Turbo, but these are even more powerful.

One of the most exciting motoring experiences you can have, is coming out of a bend fast in a Porsche 911 Turbo. The road ahead is empty, dry and smooth, the blower is howling and there is no danger of you having to lift off. Just plant your right foot, the rear tyres will control all of 360bhp onto the road, the steering is alive informing your hands, the chassis tilting, bobbing and working at keeping the projectile on line. It is a bit like being a champagne cork coming out of a very expensive bottle of the vintage elixir; a heady brew.

Add bumps in the road, however, and the huge tyres feel uneasy, the shoulders gripping on some ridges and not others. Lower the coefficient of friction, with water, mud or both, and the danger of sliding is all too real. Swap corner exit to corner entry and you had better just hope the road ahead is clear. As for keeping the power in, the throttle is so sensitive that even if you are well versed in the ways of the 911, even relaxing the pedal slightly will be read as a lift. It is particularly difficult to balance the car on the throttle through a bend because of this, especially in second gear.

**It is particularly difficult to balance the car on its sensitive throttle through a bend, especially in second gear**

If you do lift off in a 911 Turbo when going fast round a blind, wet and bumpy corner in second gear with the turbo in, then you had better be thinking of a damn good excuse for St Peter at the Pearly Gates. If you hit another car in the middle of your massive spin, then God's mercy is about the only thing you can hope for.

The 911 Turbo is an icon for many, its shape is used for a million soaps-on-a-rope, posters and crystal-glass models. And I think the sight and sound of a hard-driven 911 Turbo is one of the most intoxicating in motoring. Perhaps the ultimate mixture of danger and speed. Sadly it is not as rewarding to drive as the naturally-aspirated cars. A rear-engined car like a 911 Porsche needs to be balanced carefully on the throttle when driving fast. A turbocharger will always give a stepped power delivery however much clever engineering is done to achieve a linear throttle response.

I have read a lot of stuff from other motoring journalists about sliding the back of the 911 around like a Dinky toy which sounds like nonsense to me. None of the very experienced Porsche drivers and mechanics wanted to drive the car on wet roads the day we arrived. ■

## TECHNICAL FOCUS

### Tantalising Turbo

When it was launched in 1976, the 911 Turbo featured a standard 3-litre, air-cooled, flat six, with a KKK turbocharger. It produced around 260bhp at 5,500rpm, and would sprint from rest to 60mph in under 5sec, with a top speed around 155mph.

Advertising for the first Turbos stressed their exclusivity and aesthetic appeal, a theme that has proved as impervious to environmental, economic and fuel crises as the adulation for the car.

The engine received another 300cc and an inlet charge-cooler in 1978. Three years later the suspension was revised and 16in wheels were fitted with low-profile tyres. Minor power increases and ever-wider wheels were the main revisions, until in 1989, the Turbo was dropped to make way for the introduction of the naturally-aspirated Carrera 2 and 4. The Carreras' success, coupled to a worldwide recession and increasing environmental awareness, meant the relaunch of the Turbo in 1990 was quite a surprise.

Based on the substantially-improved Carrera 2 chassis and with more power and torque, the 1990 Turbo (tested *FAST LANE* September 1991) was a great improvement, especially in its relatively well-mannered handling. There were a few, however, who felt the 1990 Turbo was a soft car, lacking the handling challenge implicit in a chassis with the engine slung behind the rear axle.

Now Porsche has completed the transformation with the Turbo model getting the Carrera 2's crankcase as well as its chassis. Changes are many, but almost exclusively below the surface. New camshafts, with longer valve duration, new pistons, connecting rods and cylinder heads, are included in a feast of expensive bits. The oil tank has been moved in front of the rear axle to allow more room for a bigger exhaust silencer, and cooling air is ducted up to the cylinder head behind the exhaust valves. Compression ratio is up to 7.5:1, and there is that extra 300cc. It seems ironic that about the only part of the engine going back to the original 911 flat-six engine is the 31mm diameter front crankshaft seal. The rest is changed.

Porsche claims 360bhp at 5,500rpm, and 383lb ft at 4,300rpm for the new engine. It also claims the torque curve has been filled in at the bottom end to help reduce the effects of turbo lag. Fuel consumption is improved in part-load conditions, and although the urban economy is unchanged, Porsche claims 5-10percent improvement in normal use.

To cope with the extra power, the clutch-pedal geometry has been revised and the limited-slip differential is tightened up with carbon-fibre plates to give to give 20 percent locking under power and 100 percent on overrun. Stronger driveshafts are used in the rear axle.

Visually the most striking changes are the 18in Speedline wheels. These are shod with Yokohama tyres of gargantuan proportions,

### Comparisons

Model	911 Turbo 3.6	911 Turbo 3.3
Engine Bore/stroke	100mm/76.4mm	97mm/74.4mm
Compression Ratio	7.5:1	7.1:1
Peak Power bhp/rpm	360/5,500	320/5,750
Peak Torque lb ft/rpm	383/4,300	332/4,500
Transmission	five-speed manual RWD with LSD	five-speed manual RWD with LSD
Wheels/Tyres Front	8.5x18in rims/ 225/40ZR18in radial tyres	7.5x17in rims/ 205/50ZR17in radial tyres
Rear	10.5x18in rims/ 265/35ZR17in radial tyres	9.5x17in rims/ 255/40ZR17in radial tyres
Performance Claimed 0-62mph	4.8sec	5.2sec
Claimed Top Speed	175mph	169mph
Government Composite Fuel Economy	21.2mpg	21.8mpg

and as the wheel rims are significantly wider than the tyres, it pays to take your time when parking. It is also worth remembering that for the replacement cost of just one rear tyre £450 – you could find a runabout in the small-ads of your local paper.

Predictably, the brakes are updated, with the vented and cross-drilled rotors from the 911 Turbo S, and four-pot aluminium-alloy calipers powder-coated red. Suspension spring rates take a 12 percent hike, and the whole car is lowered by 0.79in, compared with the old 3.3 Turbo.

Coachwork changes are mainly confined to stretching the rear wings yet further over the massive rear wheels. A larger undertray and different wing mirrors marginally reduce lift and aerodynamic drag. Price is unchanged from the old model – £72,294.



Porsche badge: the Arms of Stuttgart