

The teardrop exposed

One of the most effective ways of improving the appearance of many Porsches is to install Aero mirrors – better known as teardrops. It's a simple job, too, as Philip Raby discovered when he fitted a pair to his 964-model 911 Carrera 4

Porsche calls them Aero mirrors, and they're also called Cups, but out in the wider world most people know them by a more descriptive term: teardrops.

First fitted to the 968 and the 928GTS during 1991, and to the 964-model 911 a year later, these sleek new mirrors replaced the previous and rather clumsy rectangular items.

These (for fairly obvious reasons) are frequently dubbed elephant ears or flag mirrors, and date right back to the mid-1970s. Not only are Aero mirrors a far nicer shape, but they also don't have the unattractive black-plastic surround of the older items.

The fact is, though, that Aero mirrors can easily be fitted to any Porsche which has these flag mirrors. In other words, post-1978 924s (although the electrically operated flags remained optional until

1980), all 944s and 928s, and 911s from 1974.

It's up to you to decide whether the modern mirrors would look right on an older car, but there's no doubt that they work on the 964, which was, after all, fitted as standard with teardrops from 1992. They also suit later 944s very well, too.

You can buy new Aero mirrors from an Official Porsche Centre or from most independent Porsche specialists. There are replica items out there, but it's worth going for the genuine Porsche items; some replicas I've seen don't even have electric operation.

I bought my (genuine) mirrors from Design 911 (see page 70), and they cost £250 plus VAT for a pair. If that sounds a bit steep it's because they're for a left-hand-drive car, and so are less common here in the UK. The same mirrors for a right-hooker cost £199 plus VAT (or £270 including VAT per pair from an Official Porsche Centre). In all cases these prices include the glasses, by the way.

The next step is to have the mirror shells (both inside and out) painted in the same colour as the car. I had mine done at Yorkshire-based AutoClassica (see page 70 again) because it happened to be there anyway. This company charged me £150 plus VAT for paint and labour.

You could spray the mirrors yourself, especially if your car is a non-metallic colour. Here in the UK Halfords superstores (call 0800 197 1196 for the nearest to you) can mix any colour of paint (you

need to supply a code; you'll find it in the luggage compartment in the case of the 964) and put it into an aerosol can while you wait.

Fitting the mirrors takes no more than around half an hour per side. Follow our step-by-step guide on the next two pages to see how simple the job is.

Not only do the new mirrors look better and dramatically update the appearance of the car, but they're also about half the weight of the old ones. While this wasn't an issue in my case, it's none the less a worthwhile consideration if you're building a lightweight trackday or racing car. ■

What you'll need

- Pair of replacement mirrors (see text)
- Five-amp (ie colour-coded red) male and female crimp connectors
- 5mm hex-head key
- Wire cutters
- Auto-electrician's crimping pliers
- Cutting compound, polish, cloths

Joint effort

You'll need to make some electrical connections when fitting Aero mirrors. Shown below is a simple chart listing which wires to join to which. Note that the red and white cables on the new mirrors must be joined together.

Car	Mirror
Brown	Brown
Grey/green	Brown
Black/blue	Blue
Red/white	Red and white joined
Blue/grey	Black



Teardrops or elephant ears? Unless you're a real stickler for originality there's no doubt that the newer-style mirrors (above left) look far better than the rather clumsy original items (above)



Mirrors are secured by 5mm socket-head bolts. These should be covered by plastic caps, but invariably aren't. Undo the bolt, and then gently lift the mirror up and away from the door



The old mirror is electrically linked to the car by five wires in a black sheath that disappears into the door shell. But the new mirror has a plug. It's obvious there's a compatibility issue here!



The unwanted plug has to be cut off the new mirror. Snip the wires as close to the plug as possible to give yourself a reasonable length of wire with which to work



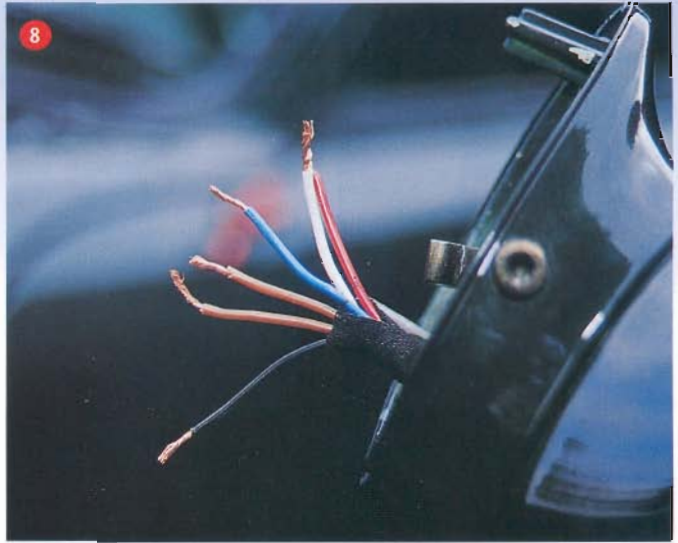
Now you have to cut the wires running into the door. Again make



The paintwork on the door may well be marked where the old mirror



7 Strip back the black sheath and then crimp a female connector to the end of each of the five wires coming from the door. Check that each connector is firmly attached; they can work loose



8 Strip the ends of the wires coming from the new mirror, and then twist together the white and red wires, as above. Attach a male red crimp connector to each wire; five in all now



9 Fit the gasket on the base and then push the crimp connectors together, matching the colours as indicated in the panel on page 68. Transfer the bolt and its shaped nut from the old mirror



10 Check that the mirror moves in both planes when you operate the adjuster switch. Then bolt it into position, ensuring that the two lugs and the clamp nut locate in their holes



11 Last job is to fit the glass. Push it into place and then use a screwdriver under the lower edge to rotate the locking ring. Now it's time to do the other side!

Contacts book

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Thanks also to Ruairidh from the Rennlist 964 bulletin board for providing wiring information. The Rennlist boards are at www.rennlist.com