

NEW 911 TURBO NEW GT3 NEW CAYENNE S TURBO

# 911 & PORSCHE

February 2006

WORLD

# Carrera RS 3.6

Replica 911RS  
packs 280bhp  
3.6-litre  
punch



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AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION

## New 911 Turbo spotted

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# Sting in the tail

We're not going to kid you - it's not the real thing. In fact it's rather more interesting than that, featuring as it does the addition of a 3.6-litre motor courtesy of a 964 model 911 packed into the shell of a 911T. Welcome to the world of the 'bitsa'



Story by Steve Bennett  
Photography by Paul Lomas

It's late December and I'm making a familiar journey to Paul Stephens, purveyor of fine Porsches to the enthusiast. He's got something he thinks I might be interested in. Hmm, I've heard that one before. Virtually four years to the day and a similar journey resulted in my driving home in a red 3.2 Carrera - *my* red 3.2 Carrera. Trouble is Paul knows I'm keen on giving that very car the retro look and if

anything is going to sway me it's an orange RS replica. I'm weak and he knows it and this might just swing the deal.

Not that this is one of Stephens' own retro inspired creations but it's just as interesting. Purists step away now because what we have here is a 'bitsa.' You know, a few bits from this a few bits from that. It's something that 911s and pre-1990 911s in particular lend themselves well to, except

these days instead of turning old into new everyone is turning back the clock. Oh, and let's not forget this is how the factory - to a large degree - created its homologation specials back in the era of the 2.7, 2.8 and 3-litre RS models.

The orange RS rep sits in stark contrast against the dark clouds racing across the sky, driven by an icy Siberian blast. Real or not it doesn't matter because it looks simply

stunning, bristling with attitude and detail. And cold we may be but as the engine churns over and catches with a hard-edged bark, then somehow the extremities are quickly forgotten in the mechanical clatter mixed with barely silenced exhaust and high-octane haze. Or to put it another way, and forgetting that flowery guff above, it sounds fan-chuffing-lastic.

Hard core Porschephiles would at this point be sniffing a clone. That whirring, flat-six soundtrack sounds right enough but the pitch is of something a bit bigger in the capacity department. There is a heavier note rather like hitting the loudness button

on an amp. So our 'bitsa' is starting to reveal itself. The automatic assumption would be that our machine is a 3-litre SC or a 3.2 Carrera with its bumpers removed, even so it still doesn't sound quite right. Not surprising because slung out the back is a 3.6-litre motor from the important end of a 964 model 911 with enough extra to catch anyone's attention.

As Paul Stephens has proved, it is possible to build something close to an RS replica using a 964 as a base, it's obvious that this is an older shell with a 964 engine dropped in. It is, in fact a 911T bodyshell and 35 years old at that. It's authentically

clad with the correct steel rear arches and the lightweight RS rear plus ducktail and front spoiler all resplendent in the correct Blut Orange and complete with Carrera graphics.

So what else does our 'bitsa' contain? Well, engineering an earlier shell like this to take the G50 'box that a 964 engine usually hooks up to is difficult so this car uses the 915 gearbox that everyone loves to malign. It's strange because I never seem to hear people bitching about it too much in relation to a real RS. This one's not standard featuring, as it does, a limited-slip diff, oil pump and cooler, the latter two required to



*As ever it's all in the details. Momo Protipo steering wheel complements the interior perfectly. Recaros are modern but work. The 3.6-litre engine gives the 'bitsa' a serious turn of speed*



cope with the extra torque from the 964 unit.

Suspension is from an SC but with 21mm front and 31mm rear anti roll bars. The brakes are SC too, while the fabulous Fuchs are the real deal and have just been refurbished by an outfit called Biaggio (01933 395453). They're newish on the Porsche refurbishing scene but the quality of the anodising is excellent. Sounds like a company that we need to drop in on.

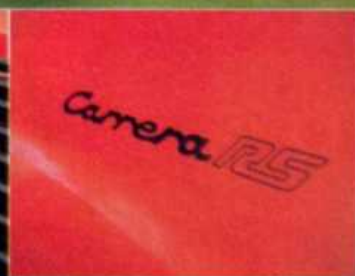
Inside the original 911T dashboard looks the part and is aided by a period style Momo Protipo steering wheel modelled on that used in the Le Mans 917s. The carpets are RS spec and the rear seats have been

dumped in favour of a half cage, while RS door panels and Recaro seats complete a convincing look.

So those are the bits but there's more to the story than that, plus we need to trace its origins. It's a left hooker so could be European, but actually it's of American descent and if cars could talk this one would have something of a draw revealing a Texan childhood. Indeed this car is as American as apple pie and only arrived in the UK in the summer of 2005 when it was imported by current owner, James Melhuish. This in part explains a little of the spec. American Porsche enthusiasts are a

little less squeamish about replicas and dropping in bigger engines is all part of the street racer look. This RS rep, built by Joe Povilaitus, was quite well known among US Porscheophiles and possibly even to some UK enthusiasts that use the excellent US-based Pelican Parts and Renn List forums.

So there we are, it's a 'bitsa' with absolutely no provenance whatsoever but frankly who cares? It looks the business and it promises go in equal measure to the show, particularly since the engine isn't standard. It's only mildly tweaked but with free flow exhaust headers, Timmings exhaust and re-chip plus cone filter, it





should be stumping up an extra 20bhp. That, then, should be somewhere in the region of 270bhp or a full 60bhp more than the original RS but yet weighing about the same. C'mon then Paul hand over the keys.

Inside and anyone familiar with a pre-996 car will feel immediately at home although for some reason the more Spartan the interior the smaller it feels. The Protipo wheel is delicately thin of rim and the drilled three-spoke design is highly evocative. The 915 'box in this car aided by a short-shift kit that seems to remove so much fore and aft movement making it hard to believe that first has been selected at all. But it has and ease the clutch up and this mobile hotch potch (in the nicest possible way) moves smoothly away.



*Above: Those Fuchs are the real deal and have been expertly re-anodised by Biaggio (see copy for contact). Bodyshell is originally that of a 1970 911T but with the correct RS spec steel rear arches. Exhaust is by American manufacturer Timmings*



It will come as no surprise that the dominant feature with this car is bolted to the back of the gearbox. Whereas an original 2.7 RS engine is all about revs allied to a throttle response that could cut with laser precision, the near extra litre of capacity gives this clone an 'any gear, any revs, anytime' answer to throttle inputs. It's bulging with power but not corrupted with it and adds a less frenetic character to a car that is widely perceived as being a bit of a wild child. It feels effortless and even slightly relaxed and at odds with its image. But I've always rather liked the big engine small car route and torque is a very useful commodity particularly on the road where hanging onto a gear and winding the engine round to the redline is becoming less appealing.

I wonder, though, whether the extra weight over and above the standard 2.7-litre engine increases that inherent pendulum effect that 911s are so famous for. Pointing the 'bitsa' down a typical squiggle of British B road and the steering wheel wriggles in that familiar way as the front end bobs and weaves, but turn in and there's an unmistakable feeling that things are slightly out of balance. Sure that feeling is always there on a 911 of this vintage (or of any vintage for that matter) but it is accentuated somewhat. Consequently I am not entirely comfortable on this cold and damp afternoon to try anything too heroic. Go in too quickly and physics will do what physics does.

But overall this is a great amalgamation of 20 years of Porsche componentry. It's a

hot rodded 911 built with attention to detail and a couple of fingers to convention when it comes to the engine. And we should never be too precious about modifying Porsches or even loosely passing off. There's just too dammm many of them around to get too worried about that sort of thing and many have done far worse. I've said it before but my own 3.2 Carrera is getting even more worried of what I may have planned for it.

Oh, but before we go and give the keys back, just why is it at Paul Stephens with a price tag on it? Well owner James is looking for something a little calmer to use on an every day basis - a 2.2 or 2.4S. How long before that's got something a little pokier in the back, James?

