



Out of the Shadows

The heart of an RS beat in Porsche's overlooked Euro-spec Carreras

BY DAVID LaCHANCE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DON SPIRO

For a car that's been produced in such variety over so many decades, there's a surprising lack of dispute over which was the best 911 of all time. The 2.7 Carrera RS, the faithful nod in agreement, is the car that has the most of what makes the 911 the greatest among sports cars: telepathic steering, simplicity of design, light weight, a taut and athletic chassis, and a sense of purposefulness and subtlety matched by no other car. And then, of course, there's the engine, a 2.7-liter, mechanically injected flat-six blessed with both low-end grunt and copious amounts of upper-rev-band power, accompanied by a Nürburgring-worthy soundtrack.



It's no wonder that so many Porscheheads regard the 2.7 RS as Zuffenhausen's holy grail. Yet what's a secret even to some of the marque's most ardent admirers is that this car's 210-horsepower, 2.7-liter six, a key element in its greatness, found a new home after the last of the 1,580 copies of the RS was built. To find it, you simply have to look in the engine compartment of a 1974-1975 Carrera. But wait, you say, wasn't the Carrera equipped with the standard 911S engine, which was rated at 175 horsepower at most? Yes, that's true, if you're talking about the U.S.-spec car. But in Europe, as well as in the rest of the world, the Carrera continued with the RS-spec powertrain, cloaked in the new impact-bumper body style introduced for 1974. Porsche refers to these as Rest of World, or RoW, production, a name that gives you an idea of just how essential the U.S. market was (and continues to be) to the automaker.

U.S. enthusiasts can be forgiven for any unfamiliarity with the car, because the Euro Carrera — an unofficial name that, in its backwards way, makes Porsche's American offerings sound like its regular production cars — was, like the 2.7 RS, never imported into the States. The most likely reason is that the mechanically injected engine just couldn't be squeezed under the federal government's ever-lower emissions limbo stick, although it's also possible that the marketers calculated that there wouldn't be enough demand for the engine to justify federalization, especially given the hurt that the global energy crisis was putting on Porsche sales. It's not as if this was a high-production car, with just 1,544 Coupes and 630 Targas built over the two years. Whatever the reason, it's just another of the many cars we never got to fall in love with the first time around.

George Norsig of Sonoita, Arizona, is one of the lucky few. About 20 years ago, after joining the local Porsche club, George was offered some driving lessons by a fellow club member named Ann Moncus, who owned an RS. "She was a very accomplished time trialer," he said, "and she would take me out on weekends." One of the more memorable venues was a rainswept airfield in Mineral Wells, Texas. "We would drive for hours in that car. And all I can say is I fell in love with the car because





Tools for serious driving: a 300 KPH speedometer and a tachometer with a 7,200 RPM redline.



The steering wheel was identical to that of the RS. Seats featured aggressive bolsters.



A previous owner installed lightweight-style door panels, but kept the original parts.

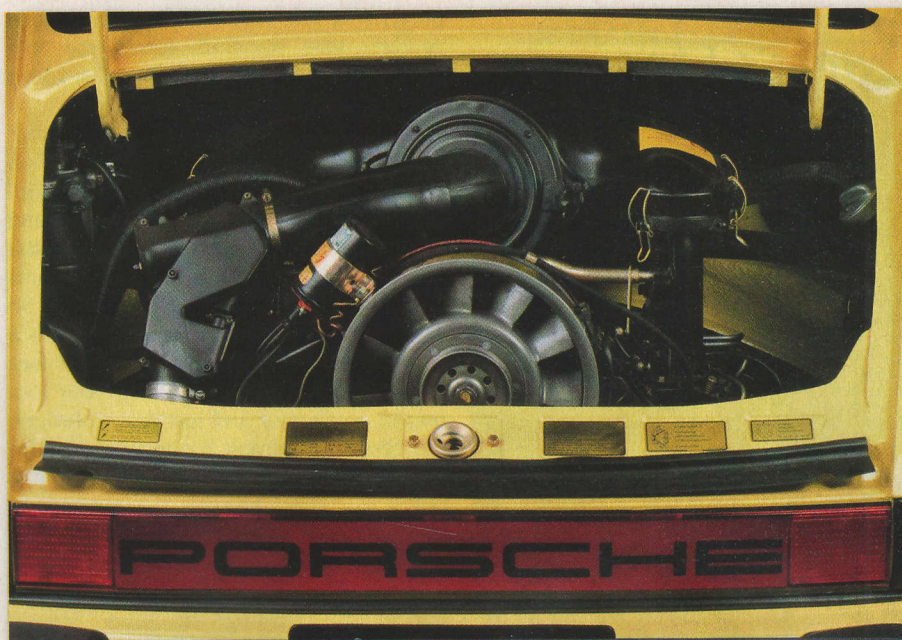
Carrera

of its particular characteristics." George owned two Porsches, including a modified 1990 C2 coupe, "but there was no doubt in my mind I was driving something that was a lot more special than what I had," he said. "I vowed that someday I would buy an RS of my own because I just loved the performance." About 2½ years ago, George succeeded in finding the car of his dreams, the 1974 Euro Carrera that's featured on these pages.

It seems fair to say that the Euro Carrera has a legitimate claim as the 2.7 RS's successor; George, who's driven both extensively, maintains that most drivers could not tell the difference between the two. Dr. Georg Konradshiem, co-author of the definitive *Carrera RS*, sees the similarities as well: "The '74 Euro Carrera is a very nice machine [and] drives very similar to the RS, just due to the new seats and steering wheel it does feel a bit different," he said. Still, these are not quite identical cars. Even in roadgoing Sport form, the RS, which stood for Rennsport, or Racing, tossed creature comforts overboard in the interest of better performance through light weight. Rubber mats, rather than carpets, covered the floors; the door panels offered neither armrests nor conventional handles; and lightweight buckets took the place of the production seats. The rear seat, the glove compartment door and even the passenger's sunvisor were jettisoned. The Euro Carrera, in contrast, featured all of the trinkets of the rest of the 911 line, and came on the scene as Porsche switched over to its G-series impact-bumper body.

The 2.7 RS was the first Porsche road car to use different sized wheels—6 inches wide in front, 7 inches in the rear—and was given flared rear wheel arches to suit; it was built to homologate those changes for racing, as well as its aerodynamic aids and lighter weight. The 2.7 Euro Carrera that followed had no such competition-driven mission, and so did without the thinner body panels and lighter glass of the homologation RSH. In fact, its weight was exactly equal to the Touring version of the RS, at 2,365 pounds, even though the new body shell weighed 55 pounds more than the previous year's. Most important, it inherited the earlier car's 911/83 engine, essentially unchanged.

It should come as absolutely no surprise that the 911/83 engine was a direct outgrowth of racing experience. Porsche engineers had pushed the 911S engine to 2.4 liters, which was as far as the distance between its bores would allow, but as always were looking for more. The breakthrough came with a change in the material used for the cylinder barrels. Until then, 911 engines had used Biral cylin-



The European Carrera featured the RS-spec, 210hp 2.7-liter six, still with mechanical fuel injection. U.S. Carrera buyers had to be satisfied with the 911S engine, which offered just 175hp.

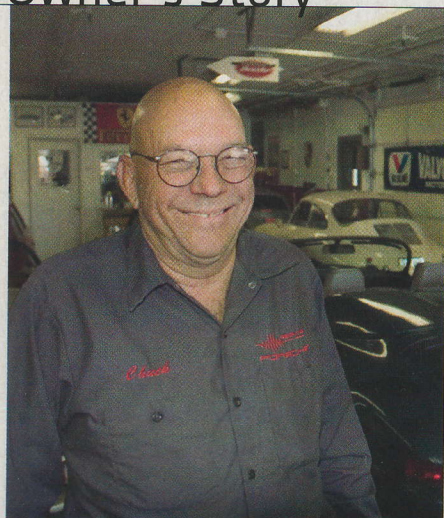
ders, with cast-iron liners surrounded by a finned casting. The engineers came to the realization that adopting the same type of finned aluminum cylinders employed in the 917's flat-12 engine would allow thinner cylinder walls, and hence larger bores, up from 84mm to 90mm. This bumped displacement up to 2,687cc. To keep the alloy cylinder walls from wearing, they were coated with a nickel-silicon carbide coating, known as Nikasil. Later Euro Carreras would use untreated Alusil barrels with iron-coated pistons.

Unchanged from the 911S engine were the valve timing, intake and exhaust port diameters, and compression ratio of a modest 8.5:1, allowing the continued use of regular gasoline. The Bosch mechanical plunger fuel-injection system from the 911S also continued in use. Horsepower increased from 190 to 210, while maximum torque rose from 159-lbs.ft. at 5,200 RPM to 188-lbs.ft. at 5,100 RPM. It's hard to overstate how great a difference the increased torque made; what the 911S needed 4,000 RPM to make, the 2.7 could



The "ducktail" spoiler was offered as an option in 1974, but not in Germany, where it was considered a hazard to pedestrians. Over-the-top script helped casual observers identify the model.

Euro-spec Carrera Owner's Story



After 20 years of longing brought on by his experience with a 2.7 RS, George Norsig's hunt for a 1974 Euro Carrera was mercifully short. Porsche expert Dave Terdy of Carmel Valley, California, needed just two months to locate the car, and reviewed it thoroughly before George went through with the purchase. "Every nut, bolt and part was as specified," he said. "[The previous owner] spent, if I may say so, a fortune getting this car up to snuff." As bought, the Carrera had simplified door panels and a "ducktail" spoiler from an RS, but came with the original parts as well. "Call it artistic license—I like it," he said.

"I didn't want a project—I wanted something that was turnkey, and that's not that easy to find. This car has been trouble-free," he said. In addition to driving the car in the New England 1000, George, who works as a management consultant, and his wife have done a number of rallies with the local Porsche club, and he's preparing for the upcoming Texas 1000 in November.

produce at just 2,500 RPM. A four-speed gearbox was standard across the 911 line, Carreras included, with a five-speed optional.

Does the engine live up to its billing? George says yes. "The power comes on quite early and it builds smoothly," he said. "I've had Ferraris in the past, and they tend to be high-revving...you've got to get the revs quite high to get the thing on the cams and start moving. This car is right there. So a big advantage is that you can go into a corner, tap the brakes with your left foot to slow down a little bit, keep your foot on the accelerator and just power through the corner. It's almost the reverse of turbo lag—the power's there right away, and it builds smoothly," he said. "All you have to do is cock the wheel to the proper angle, left foot brake if you need to brake at all and just keep your foot on the accelerator and let it build through the corner." He put the car's abilities to good use in a recent New England 1000 rally, when he was playing tag with a mid-Sixties Ferrari: "The guy just could not keep up with this car in the corners. When he would get a little bit close, the corners would come up and he would disappear. Disappear."

It's that combination of power, control and communication among driver, car and road that make the Euro Carrera such a rewarding car to drive, George said. "If the engine did not behave the way it does, then the rest wouldn't clear, it wouldn't be enough. It's the power plus the tightness that really makes the difference." Ask him if the car is a handful to drive at the limit, and you'll hear his argument that the 911's reputation for being tail-happy is largely overblown. "I drive it pretty briskly and I haven't had very many moments when I was in one of those very big tail-out situations," George said. "For what I'm going to call very brisk driving, where you're really

pushing it but you're not pushing it to the absolute limit, I think the car is really quite forgiving."

These days, the greatest difference between a 2.7 RS and a Euro Carrera probably lies in the bottom line. While examples of the former are pushing the \$200,000 envelope, Euro Carreras change hands for much smaller numbers—when you can find them. "It's a very nice combination of the new body with the classic engine. It's still a 'lightweight' car compared to the later SCs, etc.," Georg Konradshiem said. "I do like them very much but there are not many of them in really good state on the market," he said. "Most are very rusty or have been badly repaired. Here in Europe, these are between \$20,000 for a bad car and maybe \$80,000 for a really nice example. I have not seen an almost perfect car for a very long time." 🌐

What to Pay

1974-'75 Euro-spec Carrera

Low	\$40,000
Average	\$60,000
High	\$90,000

Club Scene

Porsche Club of America

P.O. Box 1347
Springfield, Virginia 22151-0347
703-321-2111
www.pca.org
Membership: 103,000+
Dues: \$42/year

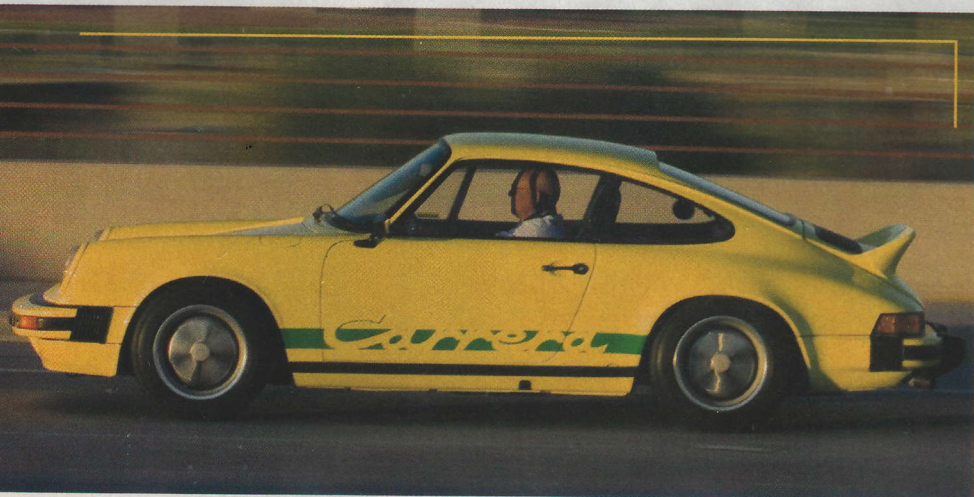
Pros & Cons

Pros

- Huge fun to drive
- Pure early 911 lines
- RS performance at less than half the price

Cons

- People keep asking if it's a clone
- Hard to find a good one
- "Signal" colors can be an acquired taste



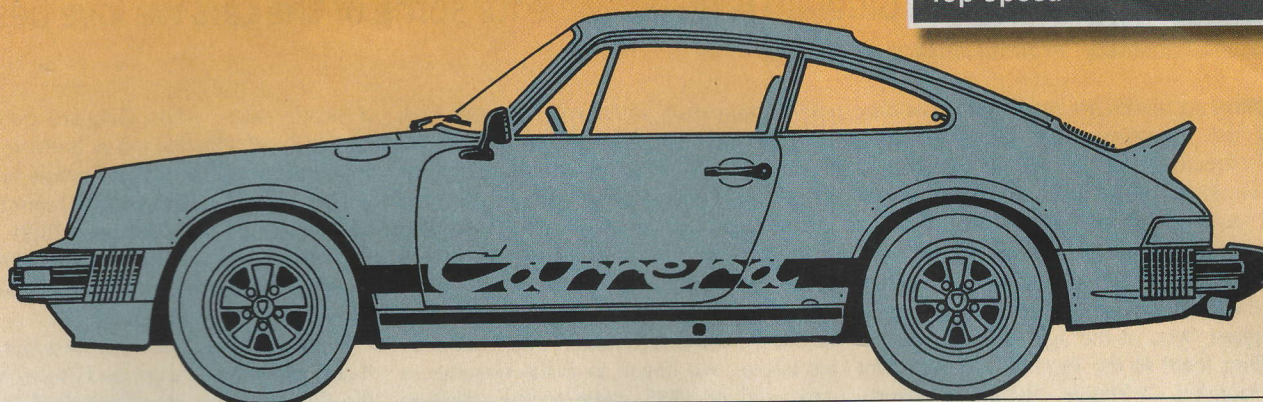


PORSCHE

1974 911 Carrera 2.7

PERFORMANCE

0-60 MPH	6.1 sec.
Standing Km	26.2 sec.
Top Speed	148 MPH



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

Type.....	Horizontally opposed six, air cooled, alloy block, cylinders and heads
Displacement.....	2,687cc (164.0-cu.in.)
Compression ratio.....	8.5:1
Horsepower @ RPM.....	210 @ 6,300
Torque @ RPM.....	188-lbs.ft. @ 5,100
Fuel system.....	6-plunger fuel injection pump
Lubrication system.....	Full pressure, dry sump, cooler
Electrical system.....	12-volt
Exhaust system.....	Single

TRANSMISSION

Type.....	Five-speed manual, fully synchronized
Ratios: 1st.....	3.181:1
2nd.....	1.833:1
3rd.....	1.261:1
4th.....	0.926:1
5th.....	0.724:1
Reverse.....	3.325:1

DIFFERENTIAL

Type.....	Spiral bevel gear
Ratio.....	4.429:1

STEERING

Type.....	Rack and pinion
Turns, lock-to-lock.....	N/A
Steering ratio.....	17.78:1
Turning circle.....	35.1 feet

BRAKES

Type.....	Hydraulic, dual-circuit, vented discs on four wheels
Front.....	8.98 inches
Rear.....	9.61 inches

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction.....	Unitized, welded steel
Body style.....	Two-door, two-passenger coupe
Layout.....	Rear engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

Front.....	Independent, transverse control arms, 19mm torsion bars, 20mm anti-roll bar, Bilstein double-action hydraulic shock absorbers
Rear.....	Independent, trailing arms, 23mm torsion bars, 18mm anti-roll bar, Bilstein double-action hydraulic shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

Wheels.....	Fuchs five-spoke alloy
Front/rear.....	6 J x 15 inches/7 J x 15 inches
Tires.....	Dunlop SS (currently Yokohama AVS ES100)
Front/rear.....	185/70VR / 215/60VR

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Wheelbase.....	89.41 inches
Overall length.....	168.94 inches
Overall width.....	63.39 inches
Overall height.....	51.97 inches
Front track.....	54.06 inches
Rear track.....	54.33 inches
Shipping weight.....	2,370 pounds

CAPACITIES

Crankcase.....	2.9 gallons
Fuel tank.....	21.13 gallons
Transmission and differential.....	3.17 quarts

CALCULATED DATA

HP per cc.....	0.078
Weight per HP.....	11.29 pounds
Weight per c.i.d.....	14.45 pounds

PERFORMANCE*

0-60.....	6.1 seconds
Standing kilometer.....	26.2 seconds
Top speed.....	148 mph

*Source: Auto, Motor & Sport

PRODUCTION

1974 RoW 2.7 Carrera:.. 1,036 coupes; 433 targas