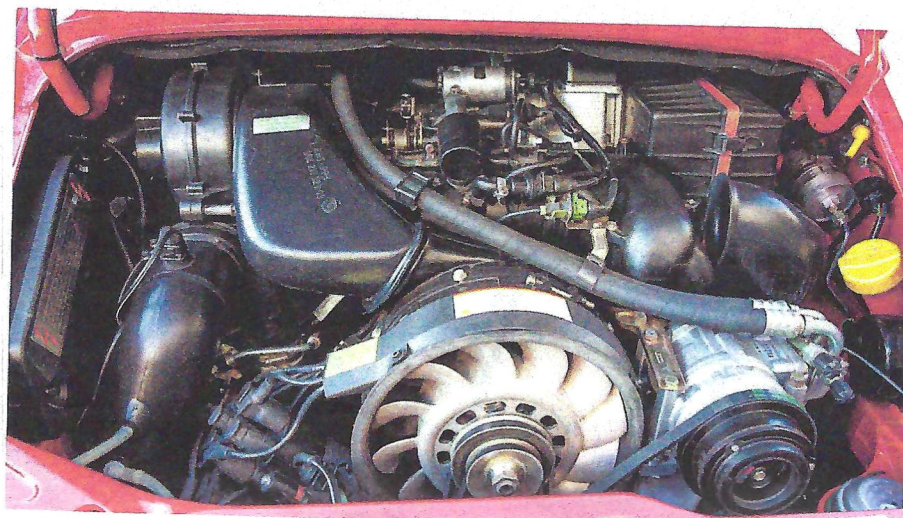




1993-'94 Porsche
911 RS America

This stripped-down, track-day special is a hot commodity today

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA



In U.S. trim, Porsche's 3.6-liter, twin-plug, air-cooled flat-six was good for 247 hp and 228 lb-ft of torque. The engine felt a little more powerful in the RS America due to the car's 2,690-pound curb weight.

In the Porsche world, the letters "RS" carry some weight. The initials stand for "Renn Sport" and the expression translates to "racing sport." When Porsche tacks the letters onto a car, it signifies that the engineers in Weissach, Germany, have turned up the wick, battened down the hatches, pulled out all the stops, and probably qualified for another metaphor or two related to just making the car faster and sharper.

When an all-new 911 debuted in 1989 (a version the Porsche faithful refer to by its internal chassis number, 964), it was the biggest change in the model since the mid-1970s. The 964 was more luxurious and refined than any previous 911, not to mention heavier. After a couple of years, Porsche introduced the RS, a lightweight homologation version that dropped any notion of comfort and luxury. If it didn't make the car go faster, Porsche jettisoned it. Sunroof, electric seats, central locking, electric windows, power steering, rear seats, sound-deadening insulation, undercoating, and most of the sound system's speakers were all deleted. Lowered by 40mm, the car benefited from stiffer springs and shocks and revised anti-roll bars.

By giving the car a 10-horsepower boost to the 3.6-liter, air-cooled flat-six, a close-ratio version of its five-speed transaxle, bigger brakes, and a limited-slip differential, Porsche served notice it wasn't messing around. The result was a 2,690-pound, track-carving rocket that underscored Porsche's ability to produce a street car that could immediately roll off the showroom floor and onto the race track. The price for this special car was at least \$20,000 more than the standard 911,

depending on which market you were in.

It would also forever bear the dreaded "RoW" stamp from Porsche: Rest of World. If you lived in North America, no soup for you! Despite the U.S. long being Porsche's top market, we are often left to sit on the sidelines when the best stuff rolls off the line, hence products signified as for the U.S. or RoW. The full-tilt RS never made it across the Atlantic. A lack of air bags and side-impact beams along with thinner glass and an engine tune out of whack with EPA requirements meant it would never be granted a visa by the feds. But not all was lost.

Instead, Porsche gave us the RS America, a model built solely for North America. While not as light or as tightly focused as the RoW RS, the RS America was instead

a stripped-down model priced like one, giving the U.S. and Canadian markets a taste of Renn Sport with a discounted price of admission. With an MSRP of \$53,900, the RSA was roughly \$10,000 below a standard 911 Carrera 2—and a staggering \$40,000 less than the RoW RS. Porsche intended to build the RS America only for the 1993 model year, but a handful of cars were built so late they ended up as 1994s; production amounted to 701.

As for being stripped down, the RSA did without rear seats (save for the '94s; it was the only difference between model years), air conditioning, power steering, a stereo, and interior door handles. Instead, the doors featured flat panels with fabric pull tabs for handles and old-fashioned door pulls in lieu of armrests. Power windows remained, again owing to a requirement to submit the car to additional DOT scrutiny if the lighter manual windows were installed. Overall weight reduction was 75 to 90 pounds, depending on whom you believed and which options were installed.

But the bargain was even better than the price tag showed, as all RS Americas came standard with an upgraded suspension (though with no change to the ride height) and a set of staggered, 17-inch pressure-cast alloy Cup 1 wheels that together would raise a standard Carrera 2's price by \$2,000. Those suspension upgrades included the 22mm front anti-roll bar and firmer springs and shocks from the \$119,000 911 Turbo. This setup represented the M030 Sports Suspension Package. And while it didn't entirely transform the already capable Carrera 2, it produced a more neutral handling



The RS America's cockpit was inviting but devoid of luxury trappings. The seats were covered in cloth and there were no interior door handles, just a pair of tabs to pull. Air conditioning would set you back an extra \$2,805.

►BUYER'S GUIDE

seen the track are getting fewer and farther between. If you are seriously considering an RS America, you may need to choose between paying for originality and condition, or learning to live with something a bit different than the factory intended. Either way, you're likely to be rewarded with one of the last, air-cooled factory specials, one built with your driving pleasure in mind.

Body and Chassis

Fortunately, after the rust debacles from the 1970s, the 964's steel body shell used the same, reliable hot zinc-dipped process that had been so successful at inhibiting corrosion on the previous-generation 911 Carrera. Although the bodies looked the same, the updated 964 was entirely different, the car sharing zero body or chassis panels. The robust steel and complete body sealing underneath means that rust will have a hard time taking root in all but the most neglected cars. The RS America carried the full 10-year anti-corrosion warranty, unlike the not-for-U.S. version, which was devoid of factory undercoating.

Porsche offered the RS America only in red, white, black, silver metallic, and dark blue metallic, though a buyer could have opted for the \$2,500 cost of a paint-to-order finish in any color he desired. Unlike standard Carrera 2 models that had a speed-sensitive retractable rear spoiler, the RS America came with a fixed whale-tail spoiler similar to those found on the Turbo. RS script in front of the rear wheel arches and on the decklid also sets the car apart.

Interior

While the RS America represents a complete-car approach to increasing performance, the interior is a reminder of what it

takes to go fast, how less can be more, though it's not nearly as Spartan as some other RS models. Most obvious are the minimalist, flat-panel doors with cloth tabs in place of interior door handles, which may be difficult to find. The seatbelts were the same color as the door handle tabs, available in red, blue, or black, depending on the color of the car.

Deep fabric sport seats keep the driver and passenger in place, even during the most spirited driving. The lack of rear seats and the removal of some sound-deadening material are additional reminders of the car's purpose. It is not a quiet car. Although the Carrera 2 offered air conditioning as standard in 1993, it was a pricey \$2,805 option on the RS America. Other than that, the RS America's interior is essentially the same as the standard Carrera 2's, with five round dials, most critically the big tachometer and its large numbers found in the center of the cluster.

Engine

The RS America drivetrain is standard-issue 911 Carrera 2 from the same model years, giving the engine parts commonality with all normally aspirated 911s sold in the U.S. from the 964's debut in 1989 through its phase-out in 1994. In U.S. trim, the 3.6-liter, twin-plug, air-cooled flat-six was good for 247 hp and 228 lb-ft of torque, both figures that felt stronger due to the car's slight diet.

Most of the problems with the 964's

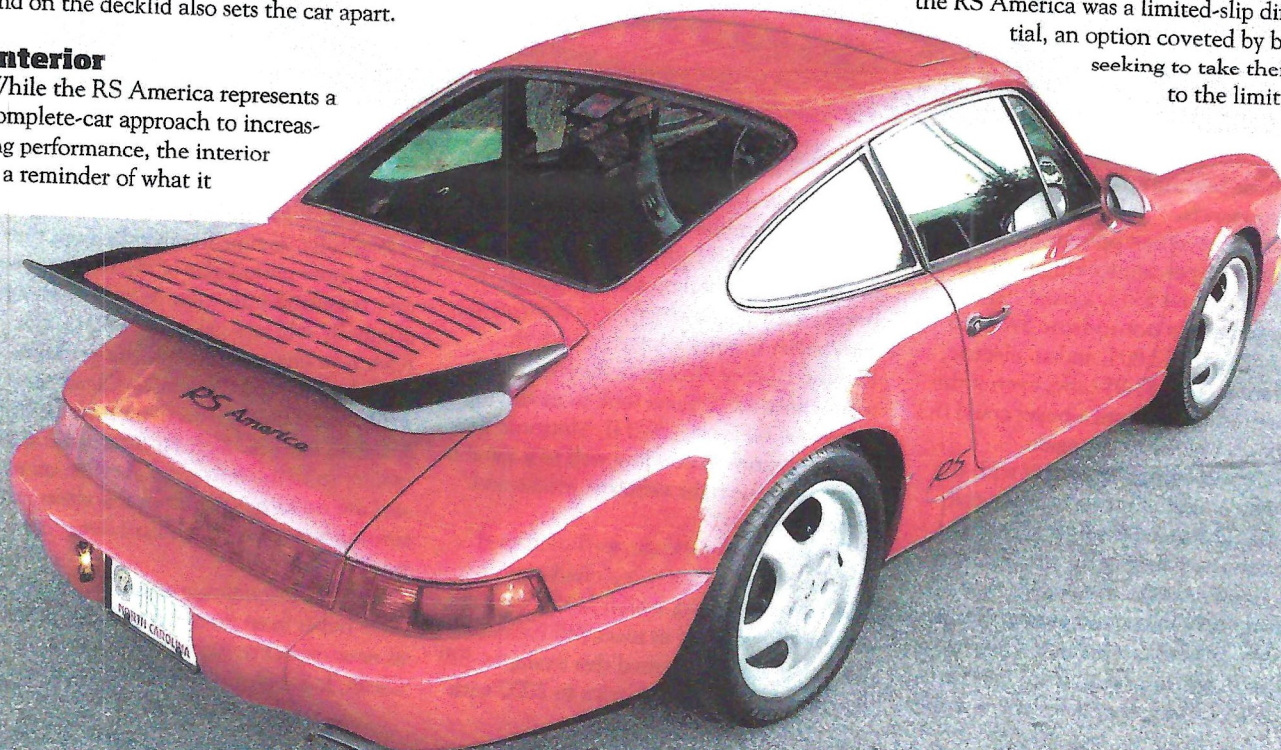
engine, which debuted in 1989, were worked out by 1993. The car's dual distributors require some routine inspection and maintenance, however. The distributor is a two-headed unit with one head driven directly off the crankshaft and the second head driven by a belt off the first. The belt can dry up and break, potentially causing a severe misfire, and sometimes the belt failure is a symptom of a worn distributor shaft bushing. Replacement belts are inexpensive, but the distributor must be removed from the engine and disassembled to replace it.

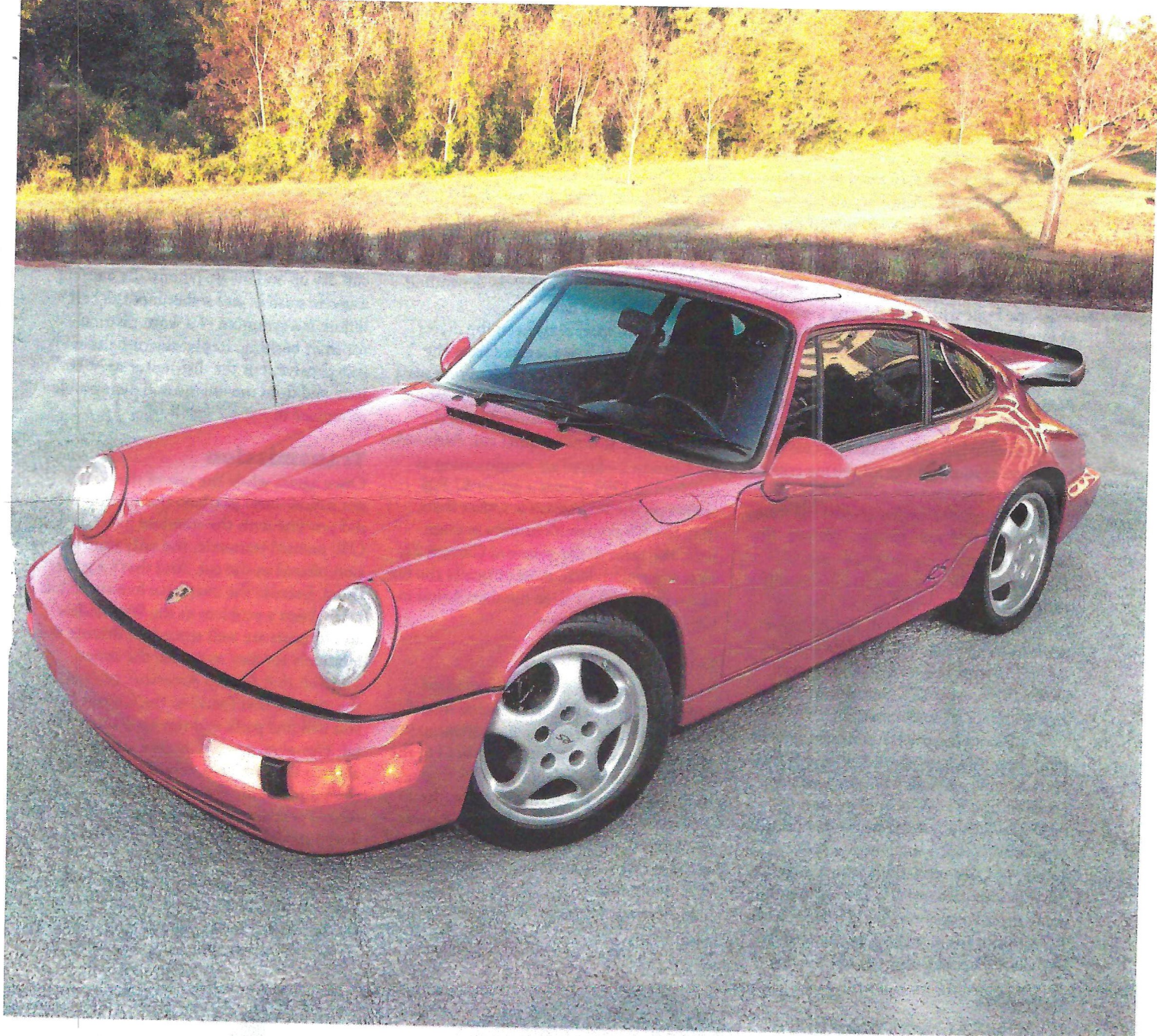
Transmission

Once again, while the rest of the world got a close-ratio gearbox, the RS America did just fine with the standard five-speed G50 manual transaxle, the only transmission offered in the car. And that's a good thing, because the overdrive five-speed has rarely been a problem in the 964 models and its gears are well spaced for driving the relatively torquey motor on the street.

Given that the RS America's gearbox is the same as that found in the Carrera 2, you will find parts and service more plentiful. However, given that we are talking about a Porsche here, rebuilds and parts carry a premium. But the G50 was a very rugged gearbox, with some versions used on Turbo models making as much as twice the torque of the RS America's flat-six.

One of the four factory options—and the only one related to performance—on the RS America was a limited-slip differential, an option coveted by buyers seeking to take their cars to the limit.





car without beating up the driver and passenger too much.

Porsche offered four options on the RS America: a 40-percent locking limited-slip differential for \$913, a basic stereo with cassette for a not-so-basic \$986, air conditioning for \$2,805, and an electric, sliding sunroof for \$1,952. So, even if this 911 came stripped down, a buyer could tick a few boxes to fatten it up again.

The car was an immediate hit with the press, who praised it for its near-neutral handling. The speed freaks at *Car and Driver*, who managed to hit the 0-60-mph sprint in 4.6 seconds, concluded, "We know a foolproof way to convert almost anyone into a full-lather Porscheophile: Give 'em one hour of the right road in an RS America." *Road & Track*, too, loved the way the

car drove, declaring, "Spirited, even frisky, this 911 is a thoroughbred designed to do one thing: run like a Preakness winner."

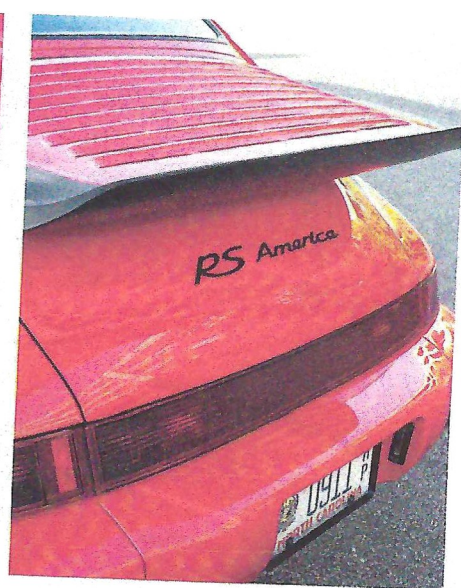
The car was also a hit with performance-minded Porscheophiles, many of whom turned their RS Americas into competition cars, either as autocrossers, or with the Porsche Club of America's excellent club racing program. Others took to modifying their cars, their pre-OBD II, Motronic-controlled engines responding well to a capable tuner with the right software, intake and exhaust.

Finding a low-mileage, well-preserved 911 RS America today is a challenge. Most were modified, which is why we were pleasantly surprised to meet Bill Funderud back when he still owned this example. Bill bought his 1994 RS America in 2000 with

just 852 miles on the odometer, and after 18 years of meticulous caretaking, sold it in 2019 with 9,158 miles on it.

Ironically, as time has marched on, the less-is-more philosophy of the RS America now translates into value as well. Although originally sold as a value-priced 911, the RSA now commands a healthy premium over the standard Carrera 2s. Clean cars with typical mileage on them start north of \$50,000, and are likely far from concours quality in that condition. Likewise, many cars are no longer suited for the street, and turning a race car back into a street car is no easy task.

For very low mileage examples that have never been modified and still present as new, expect to pay \$100,000 or more. Clean, low-mileage cars that have never



Brakes and Suspension

When it comes to the brakes and suspension underpinning the RS America, the upgraded sport options on the car are what make it handle so well. Known as the M030 Sports Suspension Package, the parts were also standard on the contemporary 911 Turbo and optional on Carrera 2 models. Parts remain available and somewhat reasonable.

However, the aftermarket offers countless upgrades in the suspension department, including everything from the factory Euro RS setup (that lowers the car 40mm and features an adjustable rear anti-roll bar) to

double-adjustable coilover setups that allow for an owner to modify the ride height and shock damping at whim.

With aluminum Brembo calipers and vented rotors at all four corners, the RS America's brake system was another high point and should provide for years of service. The only caveat would be cars exposed to lots of road salt, where supporting brackets could corrode, particularly where the steel meets the aluminum. Fortunately, most RS Americas were not very likely to have been exposed to such elements.

WHAT TO PAY

Low	\$60,000
Average	\$90,000
High	\$120,000

PARTS PRICES

Air box	\$175
Alternator	\$358
Carpet kit	\$995
Coilover suspension	\$2,085
Cylinders (six)	\$4,300
Deck/engine lid shock	\$14.50
Distributor belt	\$10
Distributor vent kit	\$46
Engine cooling fan	\$480
Engine mount	\$300
Front fender	\$1,500-\$1,700
Grille	\$70
Headlamp rim	\$59.75
Head gasket set	\$280
Oil pump	\$1,112.50
Oil tank	\$1,777
Pistons (set of 6)	\$1,000
Sun visor	\$424.50
Valve cover, lower exhaust	\$500
Voltage regulator	\$100

Quality Automotive Equipment At Discount Prices

GREG SMITH
Equipment

2 POST LIFTS

9KOH
9000 LB Capacity
\$1695



20 Other Models Available

ALIGNMENT MACHINES

Ultra Fast
And Accurate
Systems
STARTING AT
\$11495

5 MODELS AVAILABLE



CRANES & TABLE TRUCKS

Hoist &
Transport
Heavy Parts
STARTING AT
\$270

HYDRAULIC



4 POST LIFTS

GP8000
8000 LB Capacity
\$2245



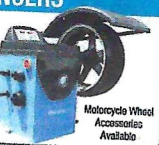
11 Other Models Available

WHEEL BALANCERS

Wheel Weights
Also Available

STARTING AT
\$1095

8 MODELS AVAILABLE



JACK STANDS

1 Ton To 12
Ton Models
Available

AS LOW AS
\$25

SHORT AND TALL



ARIZONA • CALIFORNIA • DELAWARE • GEORGIA • INDIANA • IOWA • NEW JERSEY • OREGON • TEXAS

CALL OUR
EXPERTS
TODAY
TOLL FREE

800-282-1968
www.GregSmithEquipment.com

COME VISIT
ONE OF
OUR HUGE
SHOWROOMS

Prices & Specifications Are Subject To Change Without Notice. We Ship Anywhere In The Contiguous United States. Shipping Prices May Apply. We Are Not Responsible For Misprints.