

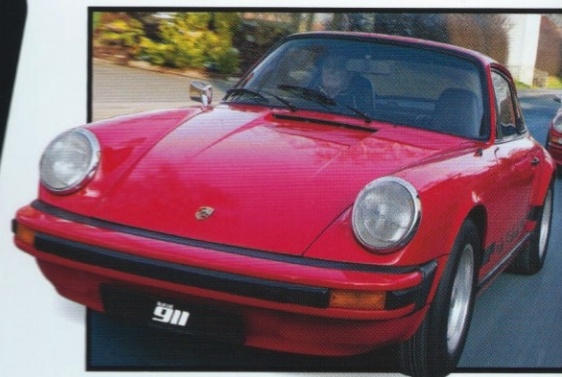


Total 911

THE PORSCHE MAGAZINE

2.7 CARRERA V 2.7

Same flat six, very different
– which is the best overall?



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**INSIDE:
PATRICK
LONG
SPEAKS**



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RARE 964 S

DRIVEN: Turbo flatno
RS N/GT 'Racing Pack



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RACE SIMULATORS

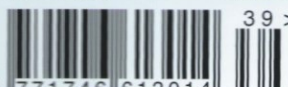
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ENDURANCE GT3

On track in a 996 GT3 RS built by We...
for FIA approved racing around the...

ONE OF 20 RS N/GT 'RACING PACKAGE'
**PEAK 964 RS
PERFORMANCE**

A firecracker road car with race-ready pedigree, an N/GT is a scintillating 964 Rennsport. **Total 911** uncovers the story of a unique example with a mysterious yet fascinating history

Written by Lee Sibley Photography by Ali Cusick



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When the email and accompanying pictures came through, I had to double take. At first the car on screen appeared to be a 964 RS N/GT: with only 290 units ever produced, the car is a fairly rare find by Porsche standards, accounting for around 12 per cent of total 964 Rennsport production. However, I'd soon realise this isn't an ordinary N/GT. An extra special and substantially rare sub-production model straight from Weissach, just 20 examples of this car were made, each finished in a different colour. Its story is both enthralling and peculiar (though positively credible), the sort of Porsche legend that perpetually excites both writers and readers of this fine publication, and the perfect start to our 'rare 964s' double bill for issue 139. First though, a little history.

Originally a lightweight homologation special of the 964 Cup cars, the N/GT was a competition-ready fire breather permitted on the public road. A true performance thoroughbred, the suffix attached to that famous 'Rennsport' moniker simply denoted the competitions it was applicable for, this being FIA group 'N' (ostensibly production vehicles in competition), and GT racing.

Denoted from the factory as a 964 RS with option code M003 (M001 being a Cup car and M002 being the Touring model), the specification of an N/GT was Rennsport in its purest form. On top of the usual RS liturgy of a strengthened, seam-welded shell, an alloy front boot lid, no rear seats, front bucket seats with no electrical adjustment, thinner glass for side and rear windows, magnesium wheels and a lightweight rear bumper, M003 stipulated a complete removal of sound deadening (which, as well →

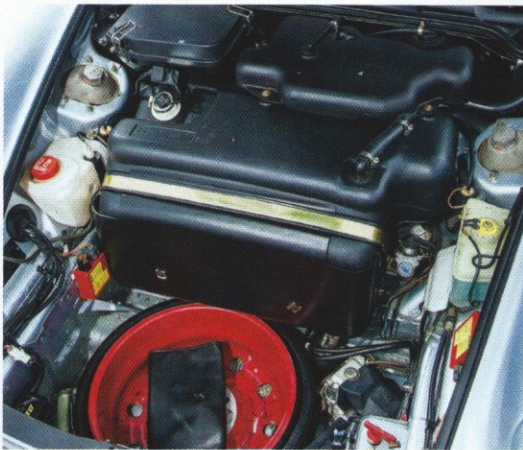


as the engine compartment cladding, meant the removal of all interior carpets and headlining, as well as carpeting in the front boot). A sun visor was only present on the driver's side, and a welded Matter roll cage was installed as standard equipment. Carpets in the front of the N/GT's cabin were replaced with plywood footboards, and the bucket seats, colour-coded and covered in leather in the RS Touring, were covered by flame-retardant Nomex material. Schroth harnesses held the driver in place and a bigger-capacity fuel tank was installed, along with an onboard fire extinguisher and cut-off switch. Like the 964 RS Touring and Lightweight, power was boosted for the N/GT by 10bhp, the result of modified pistons and cylinders as well as the deletion of catalytic converters, though the DME was relocated on N/GTs. The result is an aggressive Rennsport that's an uncompromising if not brilliantly exhilarating race car that, somehow, was deemed fit for the public road.

And that's where the subject of that aforementioned email enters the frame. Originally destined for a one-make racing series in Macau in the early 1990s, 26 cars had been ordered from Porsche with the intention of making the grid for the first race. However, the championship was canned before the first green flag was waved, leaving Weissach in possession of 26 unwanted 1992-spec N/GTs (GT Racing was already moving on to the mighty GT2, of course). One-time Porsche importer for Japan, Mitsuwa, originally offered to buy 20 of the cars from Weissach in 1995 providing they were refitted with interiors more befitting a road car. Porsche obliged with the cabin accoutrements, though later that year (and again before the cars could be delivered) Mitsuwa were issued with a cease and desist order to use the Porsche name, culling the deal. Instead, the 20 cars were sold to Art Sports in Osaka, who marketed the cars as the 964 RS 'Racing Package'.

These 20 cars, each painted in a different colour, went on sale for 8.8 million Yen, which was substantially cheaper than the 13.5 million Yen a 964 RS Lightweight cost at the time. All were sold in Japan and most are believed to still be in the Land of the Rising Sun, though **Total 911** is aware of an example recently sold at Pannhorst Classics in Germany. The Polar silver car in our pictures is the sole example residing in the UK, sold to current owner Richard Cook in 2015 by independent specialists JZM.

Sure, elements of the story surrounding those early years of this unique mini-run of Japanese Rennsport N/GTs may be shrouded in relative mystery but what is clear is the interior retrofit was done at the Porsche factory. These options recognised by Porsche include a leather covered cage, triple leather covered RS Touring bucket seats and a full RS carpet fitted, thereby serving up a race-ready N/GT with some choice upgrades that make it more palatable for cross-country blasts. Of course, we had to drive it. ➔



Rotated tacho clock, 75-litre fuel tank and lightweight magnesium wheels are all part of this special N/GT's racing repertoire

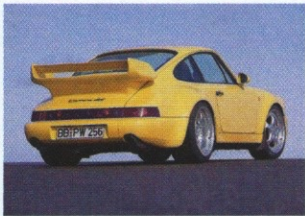


“With only thin carpet for sound deadening you’re constantly treated to an orchestral-like symphony of sounds as the 964 shoots along the asphalt”



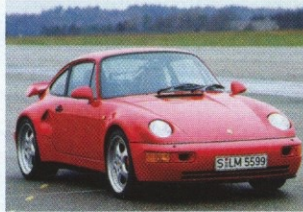
Other super-rare 964s

The 964-generation of Porsche 911 boasted a mouth-watering array of special models within its repertoire:



964 RS 3.8
Production run: 55

Again a homologation special, the 3.8-litre 964 Rennsport was built on the virtues of its earlier 3.6-litre stablemate, though an additional 40bhp was garnered from the M64/04 engine while, impressively, the 3.8-litre RS was 20kg lighter than the 3.6 in Touring guise. A uniquely special road-going Rennsport guaranteed by its rarity – only two were produced in right-hand drive – the 3.8-litre car’s exotic looks of a Turbo body and Speedline split-piece alloys also give it clear substance over narrow-bodied forebears. It’s perhaps the 964 to have, if you can ever find one.



964 Turbo S Flatnose
Production run: 76

The Turbo S was already a special 964 while retaining its customary silhouette: effectively a turbocharged Rennsport in all but name, an extra 61bhp was eked from the 3.3-litre blown flat six, while a huge 180kg was shaved off the original Turbo’s weight. With an RS-specification suspension, and intakes in the rear quarters feeding cool air to the brakes (a style format later used on the 3.6-litre Turbo), the 964 Turbo S is both a performance icon and a collector’s dream. Total production of the 964 Turbo S reached just 93, with only 76 of those in the rarer flatnosed aesthetic (just 27 RoW).



964 Speedster wide-body
Production run: 15

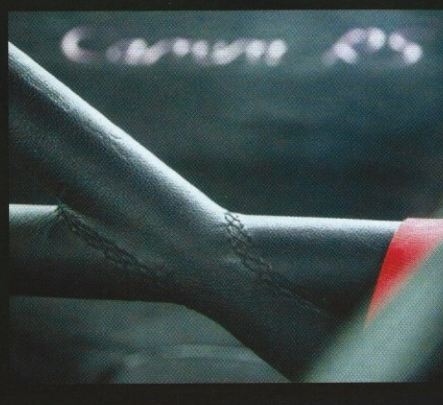
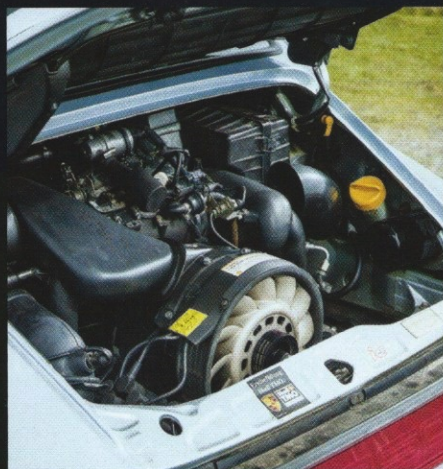
Feeding off the back of the 3.2, which first brought the ‘Speedster’ look to the 911, the 964 was perhaps most true to the heritage of Porsche’s famous drop top due to its minimalist interior, including plain door cards, lightweight bucket seats (taken from the RS production line), and a Clubsport steering wheel. Melding a 964 body to the hood and windscreen of the earlier 3.2 Speedster, demand fell for the 964 version and only 936 were produced. However, those were narrow-body examples; just 15 wide-bodies were created by Porsche Exclusive, which came with Speedline wheels.



964 C4 Lightweight
Production run: 22

The C4 Lightweight has long been a Total 911 favourite. Created by Jurgen Barth himself, the car showcases the very best of the 964 mechanical capabilities: four-wheel drive was carried over from the 959 supercar, with a four-way adjustable differential allowing the driver to constantly alter levels of mechanical grip available thanks to two dials on the dashboard of the sparse, carpet-free interior. A short ratio gearbox and a featherweight mass of just 1,100kg ensured lightning-quick acceleration. This was a true competition thoroughbred, illegible for the public road.

Model	964 RS N/GT
Year	1992
Engine	
Capacity	3,600cc
Compression ratio	11.3:1
Maximum power	260bhp @ 6,100rpm
Maximum torque	325Nm @ 4,800rpm
Transmission	Five-speed G50
Suspension	
Front	Independent; MacPherson struts; coil springs; gas-filled double action shock absorbers; anti-roll bar
Rear	Independent; semi-trailing arms with telescopic dampers; coil springs; anti-roll bar
Wheels & tyres	
Front	7.5x17-inch magnesium Cup wheels; 205/55/ZR17 tyres
Rear	9x17-inch magnesium Cup wheels; 255/40/ZR17 tyres
Dimensions	
Length	4,250mm
Width	1,650mm
Weight	1,230kg
Performance	
0-62mph	Not tested
Top speed	Not tested

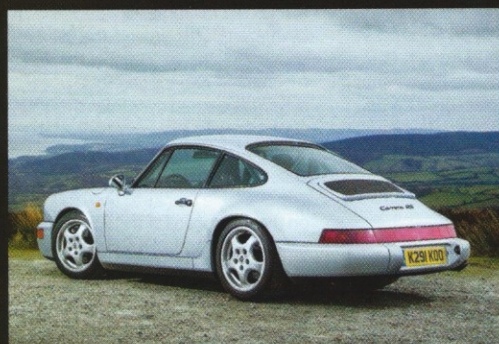


Top left: M64 engine in Rennsport guise gains an extra 10bhp over Carrera 2 variants

Top right: Unique N/GT interior features carpeting, headliner and leather seats. Cage is leather-clad, too

Three weeks later, I'm stood in front of the N/GT in a garage just outside Exmoor as Richard, the car's owner, recites his reasons for buying this truly unique, 'hot' 964. Originally entering the market in search of a good 964 Rennsport, Cook explains how he found far more than he was bargaining for: "I was attracted by the pretty unusual colour of this particular RS, then Russ [Rosenthal] from JZM filled me in on what he knew of the car's documented history, and the more I learned the more intrigued I became," he says.

Inviting me to take a closer look at the car, I conclude that, as with those original pictures sent to me electronically, from the outside this looks like any other RS. Sitting squat over those magnesium 'Cup' alloys thanks to the M030 sports suspension, there's brake cooling ducts in the front bumper,



'Cup' mirrors affixed to either door, and the lightweight rear bumper is present, too. Opening the front boot, the lid is clearly alloy and very light by comparison to a Carrera 2 or 4, and a few N/GT traits begin to appear. The large, 100-litre fuel tank sits either side of the suspension top mounts in the uncarpeted boot compartment, while a battery cut-off switch resides down in front of the ABS servo (interestingly, all left-hand-drive 964 Rennsports came with ABS as standard, while right-hand-drive examples did not). Venturing round to the driver's door, I click it open and take my first look inside.

For the discerning Porsche enthusiast, the sight here is nothing short of fascinating. The presence of carpets, headlining and leather seats with tricoloured inserts would have you assume it's an RS Touring after all, but look closer and Schroth harnesses, a Clubsport wheel, and a DME relocated behind the seats are obvious traits of N/GT, while the tacho, rotated so peak power at 6,100rpm stands at 12 o'clock, makes for a covert nod to this 911's competitive intentions. Further proof is needed, so I peel the scant carpet away from the footwell and, sure enough, underneath the plywood footboards the car's floorpan is painted Polar silver, matching the exterior hue. Exactly as you'd find in an N/GT.

Next to grab my attention is the leather-clad roll cage. Comprising of door bars at either side, with 'A' pillar supports stretching forward from the roofline

and falling down to the base of the dashboard where it's bolted to the floor at the front, it's certainly extensive, with a huge x-brace and bolting points in the rear of the cabin, too. That's nothing though, compared to the cow-hide perfectly wrapped around every bar: akin to that of a show car (or perhaps a Singer?), the immaculate stitching is nothing short of exquisite. It's so perfect it could only have been administered at Porsche.

But don't get this confused with your dearest Concours winner. As with the carpet on the floor, the headlining is thin and I can feel the contours of the roof's bracing through the fabric. Meanwhile, the seats – covered in yet more leather – work splendidly with the Schroth five-point straps in anchoring me firmly into position behind the feelsome Clubsport wheel. Motorsport is the clear objective from inside the cockpit and I'm ready to sample the capabilities of this unique N/GT.

I turn the thin key in the ignition barrel as the engine catches immediately, emitting a loud, gruff growl as the flat six settles quickly to idle. The shrill bark of that M64 power plant reverberates throughout the cabin, punctuated by the familiar transmission chatter of a single mass flywheel. Depressing the clutch pedal, I'm surprised to find there's a rather light weighting to it (owing to the factory fitted moulded facing for street use) but the biting point is gloriously low and after a quick



counter-flick of my right and left feet, the 964 is away and running.

Hours pass in quick succession as the N/GT devours the sweeping roads around Exmoor's expansive national parkland, its hardy character willing me to commit through each and every apex with aplomb. Typical 964 RS traits are displayed here, namely a tendency for the front end to go light very early into a corner, requiring a sure-footed synergy in both steering wheel and throttle inputs from a committed driver. Steering itself is a wonderful experience here, with left-hand-drive examples such as this benefiting from the heavy, unassisted steering system. As a result, the small-circumference Clubsport wheel perfectly illustrates the front two tyres' relationship with the road through my palms with little fuss, aiding my confidence to kick down further as the RS N/GT hunts for the horizon. That M64 engine is quick to react to any prod of the accelerator, swinging the rpm needle enthusiastically around the tachometer to 4,000rpm when another shove of thrust is unleashed, pushing me further back into my seat as the 964 screams all the way to the redline.

The chassis is wonderfully taut, too, a hallmark of the M030 suspension featuring a lowered ride height and uprated dampers and springs. Impressively nimble, the N/GT displays an envious turn of pace that belies the performance

capabilities of a car soon to be turning a quarter of a century old. Perhaps most satisfying, though, is the sensory appeal of the N/GT. With very little in the way of sound deadening, as a driver you're constantly treated to an orchestral-like symphony of sounds as the 964 shoots along the asphalt. Primed by that unfiltered mechanical wail of the flat six, its kamikaze tones imitating that of rapid machine gunfire as the crank spins ever faster, on the road you'll also hear the pinging of catseyes right through the car as the front tyres hunt to use all of the road for a fast corner. Complementing the aforementioned steering, the gearbox feel is wonderfully positive. Short but precise in its throw, the five-speed G50 rewards a driver for holding on to each cog to really wring out the revolutions before a quick change up to a new gear. The entire setup makes for a sensational drive.

Pleasingly, too, there's a civility to this N/GT that ensures longevity to the fun to be had from continuous driving. A 'normal' N/GT would not make for the ideal tourer; its unapologetically raw nature would in fact be overawing after long stints at the wheel. Here, however, I'm inclined to drive the car all day long, the virtues of performance not ever undone by the vices of discomfort. That's not to say this 'Racing Package' has blunted that all-out appeal of the N/GT, more just refined it ever so slightly for a more palatable experience

for both road and race use. Its very being may well be the stuff of a proper Porsche legend, another scintillating tale from inside Stuttgart, but this special RS N/GT offers a drive that's as unique as its own story of existence. Perhaps showcasing the 964 era in its very best light from a performance perspective, its rarity and desirability only adds to the appeal of this petite Polar silver predator. Want in on the exclusive fun? There's another 19 cars out there somewhere... **911**

RARITY OF THE RS N/GT

