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'74 RS

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THE HOOLIGAN'S ACCOMPLICE

An edgy prospect from the get-go, the 3.0 Carrera RS needs careful handling if arrant yobbery is to be avoided. We went cruising for a bruising

Words: Johnny Tipler Photography: Antony Fraser

Some cars bring out the devil in you and, make no mistake, the 3.0 Carrera RS belongs to the wild boys' brigade. We've been lent one by Mick Pacey, who handles Zuffenhausen exotica at his burgeoning Export 56 operation which, by coincidence, is a neighbour of Aston Martin's Newport Pagnell HQ. No surprise, then, to find the odd Vantage burbling along the same Bucks B-road we'd chosen for our photo shoot. We go into confrontation mode. Yep, has to be done. Goad the Aston into a duel, taunt him a bit, and then duck and dive by, late-braking into a sweeping up-and-down, left-right sequence, revelling in the 911's more agile dynamics.

Actually, I made up that last bit, but it could easily have been true. The 3.0 Carrera is that

kind of car. Cocksure as a Jack Russell, it's not afraid of a bloody nose. It's as rare as they come, too, this being number 97 (chassis number 911 460 9097) and just one of six right-hookers in a limited run of 109 Group 3-spec cars built during the 1974 model year for fast roadwork and sprinting, and as the basis for competition RSRs in upgraded Group 4 trim. Or, in the case of this particular machine, rallying, since its first owner, Jack Tordoff, proprietor of Bradford dealership JCT600 (not to mention the local football club), put it through its paces in one or two tarmac events.

A child of its time, the 3.0 Carrera RS paved the way for a new generation of super-fast 911s – the RSR Turbo, 934 and 935. In a road-going context, spurred by US emissions and safety

legislation, times were a-changing for the 911, and the 3.0 RS was a visual quantum leap from its 2.7 RS predecessor, pointing the way towards what some see as the ultimate production 911 styling, manifest in the 964 Turbo of 1991. Following on from the 1972/'73 2.7 Carrera RS, the 3.0-litre model was constructed mostly from normal 911 body panels because the lightweight parts had run out earlier in 1973. This explains why the 230bhp 3.0-litre road car is not vastly quicker than the 210bhp 2.7 version. There were concessions to weight saving, naturally, and the new RS – for Renn Sport – was endowed with glass-fibre protrusions front and rear that emulated (more or less) the new-look impact bumpers of the standard (G-programme) 911





As ever, it's about the details. Those deeply-dished rear Fuchs are a design classic. They need to be wide to fill out those huge arches. Interior is sparse, but not totally stripped-out, with lightweight carpets and those unusual RS seat covers. Chunky three-spoke wheel marks this out as a post '73 car. Lightweight Fuchs Spacesaver takes weight-saving to almost obsessive levels

that came in with the 1974 model year. The pert duck-tail-spoilered engine lid was replaced by the expansive whale-tail wing, and competition-style flared arches shrouded significantly wider wheels and tyres.

Production of the 3.0-litre RS series began in Autumn '73, and the first 15 examples went to the States as racing cars to be used in the IROC (International Race of Champions) series that pitted drivers from a variety of disciplines against one another in identical cars (see pages 62/63). Of the 109 units made, 59 were road-registered, and one of the six right-hand-drive cars was delivered to Australia.

The RS's 3.0-litre flat-six bore and stroke measures 95mm x 70.4mm (the 2.7 RS is 90mm x 70.4mm) and uses Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection. Our test car has been converted to run on unleaded fuel, for which it has a

the 1973/'74 World Championship for Makes in having less extravagant wheels and tyres and, by implication, not such pronounced wings and arches, a smaller rear spoiler and magnesium, as opposed to aluminium, crankcases.

The RSR had barely been homologated when Peter Gregg and Hurley Haywood won the 1973 Daytona 24-Hours in the works-supported Brumos Carrera, running in the prototype class. For the first 14 hours they'd duelled for the lead with the (old-style bodied) Penske Racing 911 crewed by Mark Donohue and George Follmer, until that went out with a holed piston. It was only natural to find this pair at the forefront of Roger Penske's IROC series later in the year (see International Race of Champions story, page 62).

The 3.0 RS and RSR were established midfield runners in the 1974 World Championship for Makes endurance events, and

“The 3.0 RS is only marginally less extreme in appearance than the RSR”

healthy appetite. There's a Fichtel & Sachs single dry-plate clutch, an all-synchromesh five-speed box and limited-slip diff. It develops its 230bhp at 6200rpm and musters 202.5lb/ft of torque at 5000rpm. Top speed is 155mph, 0-62mph acceleration takes 5.5secs, and 125mph is attained in 21.5secs. The suspension is uprated from standard 911 to include a front strut-brace, strengthened spring legs and roll-bar bearings, and front and rear track are altered to facilitate the fitting of coil springs.

Converting the 3.0 Carrera RS to 330bhp Group 4 tune cost \$5500 (approximately £2800) in April 1974. Such cars running in GT events differed from the Martini-liveried works RSRs prepared by Porsche's experimental department that ran as sports prototypes in

British stalwart John Fitzpatrick scooped the honours in the European GT Championship with five class wins in the Gelo Racing 3.0 RSR. With Kremer Racing the other leading campaigner, key protagonists were Clemens Schickentanz ('73 Champion), Paul Kelly, Claude Ballot-Lena, Claude Haldi, Georg Loos, Ennio Bonomelli and Hartwig Bertrams, while better-known figures such as Tim Schenken, Rolf Stommelen, Toine Hezemans and Gijs van Lennep featured from time to time. By the end of 1974 the 3.0 Carrera RSR was ubiquitous, all ten runners in the Hockenheim, Pergusa and Monza 6-Hours being RSRs. The RS wasn't prominent in rallying, although Jack Tordoff won the Circuit of Ireland in a 2.7 RS, with Bjorn Waldegård the 911's key exponent in 1974. Privateers Cahal Curley and Ronnie McCartney took the top two places in

the Circuit of Ireland Rally that year with 2.7 RSs, while Tordoff gave the Escorts a run for their money with our feature car, placing 18th on the Lombard RAC Rally.

The 3.0 RS is only marginally less extreme in appearance than the RSR, and it oozes attitude. You absorb the external hallmarks in one orgasmic take, from the impressive width of its gargantuan wheelarches and polished wide-rim Fuchs to the unprecedentedly capacious oil cooler housed in the front valance, plus the pair of cooling ducts on either side for the front brakes. We're accustomed to tea-trays and whale-tails, so we reminded ourselves that the 911's rear wing was in its infancy back in '73, superseding the elegant duck-tail of the original 2.7 Carrera RS. Tap the front bonnet and it resounds like glass-fibre. Or is it? Rap the extremities and it feels metallic. Look from the underside and it's evidently a steel rim with a plastic centre section bonded in.

The car once had a sunroof (when briefly at Hexagon-of-Highgate) and I fancy that's been replaced with a glass-fibre panel, although I could be wrong – it just sounds that way when you tap it. You can just make out the original Porsche script that once graced the leading edge of the front bonnet, an adjunct to the prominent gold Carrera graphics adorning the flanks and the RS logo on the engine lid.

Amongst the copious documentation file is a photo of the car when new, registered JCT 600, with a rubber toggle holding the front lid shut.

The cabin is austere, lacking normal niceties like sun visors, glove box lid, door pockets and



PROOF OF OWNERSHIP

Rallyman Jack Tordoff bought the car from AFN on 18th June 1974. It remained with the JCT600 proprietor (with that reg number) until August 1975, when it was acquired by Paul Michaels of Hexagon-of-Highgate. A minor cosmetic restoration was carried out back at the Porsche factory for Pat Jennings in July 1980, and five years later it was bought by Brian Powley from Autofarm for £30,000, having done 15,000 miles. Now registered as 69BP, it was treated to a comprehensive five-month restoration in 1986, which cost its new owner the best part of £50,000. The copious data file contains correspondence about the project between Powley and Josh Sadler, and three bills for labour (£7800), mechanicals (£17,000), parts and paintwork (£20,000). Bear in mind that the purchase price of an RS was £6255 in 1973 – and that is a serious escalation of values in just a decade.

It changed hands next via an auction at Silverstone in 1993, falling into the clutches of BMW specialist, BTCC champ and historic racer Frank Sytner, who disposed of it a year later to Winston Mak in Hong Kong, when it was registered BR930. In 2003 it relocated to collector Don Tryhorn in Australia, and was acquired by Mick Pacey of Export 57 in the summer of 2006. He's just swapped it with a Kings Lynn enthusiast for another competition-derived icon, a quad-cam 356 Carrera.





'74 RS loses some of the delicacy of the earlier '73 model, but makes up for it in wide-arched aggression. Gold wheel centres and Carrera script work well visually. Engine puts out 230bhp - the same as a 3.2 Carrera, which would, of course, make the ideal donor for a replica



clock, let alone back seats. It's fitted with thinner glass to the side and rear windows, and the dossier suggests it once had a roll-cage. There's a little floor-mounted fire extinguisher and bootlace leather thongs for opening the doors, with bargain-basement plastic handles for pulling shut. You sit on, rather than in, the glass-fibre Recaro shells that are original fitment for competition work, braced uncomfortably by four-point lap-and-shoulder Sabelt straps that are annoyingly prone to twisting. Crotch straps would engender a greater sense of security in a racing context.

The external rear-view mirror is only useful at low speeds, as it bends back against the door under high-speed buffeting. Like those plastic door pulls, why is it that the more expensive or exclusive the car, the stingier some of the kit? On the other hand, some details have been looked after, like the Fuchs-centred spacesaver spare, and the wiper and indicator control stalks that are way nicer to use than the later SC/3.2 versions.

All the engine compartment stickers are in place and it's pleasing that the motor hasn't been polished to within an inch of its life. According to the records, its servicing up to 12,000 miles was carried out by AFN at Isleworth. Their reports contend that it was involved in a minor altercation, perhaps sustained in rallying, citing a dented floor panel in front of the gearlever cowl, the offside sill

damaged, and front spoiler broken as a result of grounding. All long corrected, of course.

Time to get sparring! The RS slingshots us up the road, twitching and writhing at the slightest hump, its nose wanting to explore every nuance of the Buckinghamshire back-doubles. Best let it get on with it. Instead of grappling with the three-spoke wheel to restrain it, the optimal control method is to relax and simply be the guide. Steering is light, requiring a deft touch rather than a commanding yank, while lock is very good considering tyre width. It's beautifully set-up and easily controllable; turn-in is fantastic and you can place it instinctively where you want it.

But what a beast! It revels in right-foot rumpty, instantly responding to prods on the accelerator, surging forth in a burst of glorious six-pot excess. Tickover's on the high side at 1500rpm, but open it up and it roars magnificently like a true race car. Acceleration is phenomenal - vigorous from 2000rpm right round the rev counter to 8000rpm. Hardly daring to glance at the clocks in our private road scenario, I glimpse 110mph at 7500rpm in fourth gear. There's plenty of torque at the other end of the scale, making rolling starts viable in second gear. The clutch is so positive that even on dry tarmac the wheels will spin with a smartish getaway.

It patters this way and that with the undulations, shuddering and rattling at anything

approaching a pothole. The suspension, with its front strut-brace, is so unyielding that you feel every imperfection in the surface, so it's a real treat when you come across smooth new asphalt, where it glides serenely. The gearlever feels metallically precise as you move it through the gate, certainly not rubbery, yet selection requires care in order to avoid graunching. You need to be positive - fingers are for fish and chips, not Carrera stick-shifts. The brakes also require positive treatment, being sourced from the 917 racer and of the disposition that needs the pedal to be stood on to achieve any effect, at all.

It's running on wide-rim 9in and 11in Fuchs wheels, which are excessive in practical terms but complement the audacious stance of the car - Mick Pacey has the 7in and 8in originals, which would have been shod with narrower Pirelli CN36 215/60VR 15s at the front and 235/60 VR 15s at the rear, and I reflect that this over-tyring may account for the tramlining effect. It's all too easy to forget how wide your rear track is and ride the odd kerb - but you only do it once!

We shouldn't be surprised to discover behavioural and structural idiosyncrasies with such an esoteric machine, but some are not really acceptable, even in the name of originality. Bucket seats are fundamental to pressing-on motoring, but the driver's lightweight Recaro creaks too disconcertingly for comfort in corners, as if presaging a

departure from its mountings and, if t'were mine, I'd go for something stronger with a tad more padding to the squab and mounted lower in the car. But it's such a perky Porker you'll forgive its foibles. If you can afford it, that is.

Apart from Brian Powley's eight-year tenure of the car between 1985 and 1993 (see sidebar), it's never stayed long with any one owner. A rich man's trophy, it's done the rounds. Mick Pacey thinks it's worth £200,000. That's based on an average of offers that 12 serious collectors have made him for it, and he points to another right-hand-drive 3.0 RS that went for 300,000 Euros not that long ago. 'To value it, you have to view it as a whole,' he says. 'That includes provenance, condition and rarity. Although you can still get most lightweight bits for the 2.7 RS, the 3.0 RS is a different animal to restore as it's rarer, and parts like the brakes are even scarcer and correspondingly dearer: Its pedigree puts it in a different league from your average prize-fighter. It's right up there with Muhammad Ali: light on its feet, packing a powerful punch, a mighty noise - and worth a small fortune. 📌

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