



Total 911

THE PORSCHE MAGAZINE

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CARRERA 4S

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A high-angle, rear-quarter view of two silver Porsche 911 996 cars driving on a paved road that curves into the distance. The car on the left is a Carrera 4S, with its rear spoiler and 'Carrera 4S' badge visible. The car on the right is a Turbo, with its rear spoiler and 'Turbo' badge visible. Both cars have 'RPM TECHNIK' license plates. The background features a line of trees and a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene conveys a sense of speed and performance.

996 C4S VS TURBO

WIDE EXPECTATIONS

Width-enhanced 911s are nothing new but the last real Turbo-look car was based on the 996. Total 911 pits the C4S against its Turbo rival to see how they compare

Written by **Kyle Fortune** Photography by **Daniel Pullen**



“The Turbo felt like it was monsterring the road beneath it, while the C4S instead is far more delicate”

Necessity, it's said, is the mother of invention, so when Porsche needs a wider track with the 911 it adds some width to the car's hips. It's been going on ever since the first Porsches took to the track, the flared arches both front and rear allowing ever bigger wheel and tyre packages for the increased performance that racing brings. Necessity, then, creates function too, which can also be attributed to another phrase relating to form.

The 911 is, to many, at its best when it is at its most curvaceous, the form here in particular relating to the rear, the Rubenesque lines attributed to the Turbo something many find irresistible. Following the Turbo's original introduction it was clear that the 'Turbo look' was something that appealed to the market, a number of tuners allowing owners to have their Carreras changed to reflect the shapelier lines of the Porsche's forced-induction flagship.

It wasn't until 1984 that Porsche would officially provide customers with the factory option to have their Carreras with the wider Turbo-look body. The 3.2 Carrera was the first 911 to be offered with the M491 option, which brought not just the Turbo's wider body but the rear spoiler – a delete choice via option code M470 – lower front spoiler, Turbo Fuchs alloy wheels and Turbo-derived suspension and brakes. More than just a visual change, then, the M491, known as the Supersport Equipment – or

the SSE – (as it's also correctly referred to from 1987 onwards) altered the character of the car, even if the additional equipment it added actually marginally blunted the performance of it against the clock and at the top end.

Even so, the Turbo-look remained an enduring legacy, the wide-body 911 having been offered somewhere in the price lists since, though more usually as a distinct model series rather than a stand-alone option. A rarely-taken possibility on the 964, it was standard on the Anniversary cars, that laying the template for the 993 wide-body offering, with the last air-cooled 911 offered in S and 4S with its enhanced, broad-hipped stance. Porsche also added the Turbo-look to the 996 via the 4S model, it arguably the last 911 that can genuinely be described as 'Turbo look', following the M491 revisions pretty much to the letter yet without the Turbo's bigger rear spoiler.



Left While both cars feature five-spoke Twist wheels, the Turbo's spokes are hollow, reducing unsprung mass, while the 4S's are solid



Left Inside the C4S, spec was similar to the standard 996 Carrera, rather than the Turbo car it was seeking to mimic from the outside



Carrera 4 models a touch wider than the standard Carreras, though not as expansive as the Turbo itself. The only 991 to genuinely feature the Turbo's look, or at least an approximation of it, was the 991 GT3 RS. The RS added a twist, as unlike all Turbo-bodied naturally aspirated 911s before it, the Rennsport car features the punctured rear wings of the Turbo, these being used as part of the RS's more specialist induction system rather than charge air cooling.

Necessity, opposed to vanity, then, has driven Porsche's more recent use of its wider bodywork and, given the engineering-based pragmatism of the company, that is perhaps unsurprising. With even the base modern 991 Carrera featuring a width some 25mm wider than the 930 Turbo though, we've arguably reached a point where there's no need for the option of wider Carreras, physical dimensions limiting the requirement, and indeed appetite for a wide-body option like the M491.

The 996 Carrera 4S is the last of what can be genuinely described as a Turbo-look Carrera. It arrived late 2001, for 2002 delivery, debuting at the IAA Motor Show in Frankfurt, costing £62,250, or just £2,600 more than its Carrera 4 relation, which given the changes was something of a bargain. Like the SSE, 993 S and 4S before it, the changes were very much

in keeping with the M491 option first introduced with the 3.2 Carrera.

Of all the 996s, the Carrera 4S is arguably the best looking, that reflected in the car's popularity compared to the rest of the 996 line-up. In Seal grey metallic here, it looks superb, those shapelier rear hips adding some form to the 996's otherwise surprisingly flat flanks, the Turbo's front bumper too giving the 996 a boost in visual aggression. There's no Turbo spoiler above at the rear, though the red strip connecting the rear lights both adds to the visual width and creates a gloriously evocative nod back to the air-cooled 911s before it.

Under that strip sits the wider rear bumper, out of which a pair of exhausts sits beautifully within cut outs perfectly mimicking their shape. It's one of those details that's so neatly executed you could miss it; again it shared this with the Turbo. As plentiful as the similarities are, park the 996 Carrera 4S alongside its Turbo contemporary and the differences are just as apparent. The rear vents behind the back wheels feature more filling behind the body-coloured strakes in the Carrera 4S, the Turbo requiring greater venting and being effectively open. There's no punctured intakes fore of the rear wheels either, the 4S's breathing and cooling managed without the need

to resort to those additional inlets required for the Turbo's charge air cooling.

The front bumpers differ slightly, too, or more correctly what sits underneath them. The Turbo has a black portion jutting out front, while the Carrera 4S's is body-coloured and more neatly integrated, losing the middle section. That's been done to balance out the effect of not having the Turbo's rear spoiler. Like the looks, the technical specification changes over the C4, specifically concerning the suspension. Yes, the 4S ostensibly rides on the same suspension and uses the same brakes as the Turbo, but there are subtle but crucial differences to how they're set up. Those five-spoke twist wheels might look identical but those on the Turbo are lighter thanks to their hollow spokes, the 4S's wheels featuring solid spokes, and thus a greater unsprung mass over those of the Turbo.

That, allied to the 4S's revised damper rates, softer springs and thinner anti-roll bars creates a difference in how the two cars feel on the road, despite the clear similarities visually. The additional weight of the Carrera 4S did slightly blunt its acceleration, too, Porsche quoting a 5.1-second 0-62mph time for it, against 5.0 seconds for the Gen2 996 C4. Without the Turbo's extra power to help shove that additional 60mm of width through the air, the Carrera 4S's



Differing slightly externally, the Turbo features punctured air intakes in front of the rear wheels to channel air to its intercoolers



Model	996 Carrera 4S
Year	2001
Engine	
Capacity	3,596cc
Compression ratio	11.3:1
Maximum power	324hp @ 6,800rpm
Maximum torque	370Nm @ 4,250rpm
Transmission	Six-speed manual
Modifications	None
Suspension	
Front	MacPherson struts; coil springs; dampers; anti-roll bar
Rear	Multi-link; coil springs; anti-roll bar
Wheels & tyres	
Front	8x18-inch, 225/40/R18
Rear	11x18-inch 295/30/R18
Dimensions	
Length	4,435mm
Width	1,830mm
Weight	1,495kg
Performance	
0-62mph	5.1 secs
Top speed	174mph



Model	996 Turbo
Year	2001
Engine	
Capacity	3,600cc
Compression ratio	9.4:1
Maximum power	450hp @ 6,000rpm
Maximum torque	620Nm @ 2,700-4,600rpm
Transmission	Six-speed manual
Modifications	X50 factory Powerkit
Suspension	
Front	MacPherson struts; coil springs; dampers; anti-roll bar
Rear	Multi-link; coil springs; anti-roll bar
Wheels & tyres	
Front	8x18-inch, 225/40/R18
Rear	11x18-inch 295/30/R18
Dimensions	
Length	4,435mm
Width	1,830mm
Weight	1,540kg
Performance	
0-62mph	4.2 secs
Top speed	191mph

The 996 C4S is Porsche's last true 'Turbo-look' 911, sharing the 1,830mm wide body of its forced induction sister

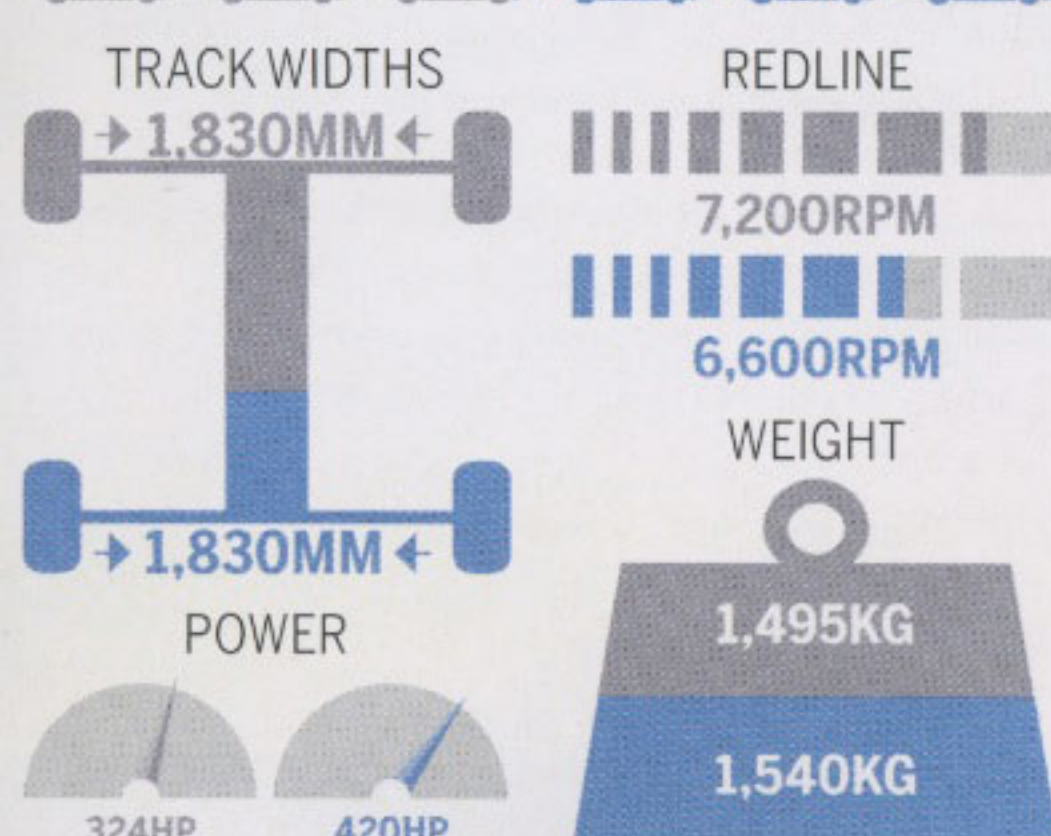


“Drive it at ordinary speeds and it’s almost possible to forget that the Turbo has the capacity to bend time”

996 C4S V TURBO

PRICE NEW £62,250 PRICE NOW £87,250
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maximum speed was also lower than its slimmer-hipped Carrera 4 relation, the narrower car having a 3mph advantage with an official 177mph top speed.

But the numbers only really tell part of the story. At the launch of the Carrera 4S Porsche claimed that the C4S could lap the Nürburgring in eight minutes and 16 seconds. That's four seconds quicker than its same 320hp output C2 relation managed; a combination of the 4S's greater grip, stronger braking and, thanks to the four-wheel-drive system, improved traction being advantageous around the famous track. To negate the sizeable 135kg weight penalty it carries over the Carrera 2, the Carrera 4S's handling is a marked improvement over that of the significantly lighter Carrera.

It's familiar inside, the Carrera 4S's interior little changed from the standard Carreras, this one finished simply in black leather, only the small sat-nav screen and telephone receiver fixed to the side of the centre console dating it. That's true inside the Turbo too, again finished in black leather, 996s at their best when so specified. This Turbo additionally benefits from the X50 power kit – and the original owner mated it to the manual transmission.

Very similar, near identical inside, then, but the perception when sitting inside the Turbo is one of greater weight and, oddly, given the cars' identical

dimensions, scale. Whether it's the sight of those intakes in the rear wings, or the glimpse of the rear spoiler, or more likely simply the Turbo's mighty reputation, there's a difference, intangible perhaps, but it's there.

That feeling doesn't change when you start it up, the Turbo firing quickly and easily. The sound of the flat six firing is familiar, the engine quickly settling into a quiet idle, the serenity inside at odds with the unusual forces the engine is able to generate. There's an authority to the way a Turbo drives; the control weights underline it, the steering has a heft to it that's reassuring, the rim delivering feel, which when new was criticised for being a little lacking, but in comparison to the muted steering today's sports cars deliver, it feels pretty rich in detail. When new, the X50-equipped Turbo's 450hp was pretty extraordinary, progress demonstrated by the fact that today a 991.2 Carrera GTS is able to boast such a figure.

Even so, it's a big number, capable of producing a 0-62mph time of 4.2 seconds and a top speed in the region of 190mph. And this is a 16-year-old car remember. It doesn't feel it on the road, it's taut, the suspension firm but not uncompromising. But the perception with the Turbo is that there's more to come, its placid low-speed nature at odds with the

ferocity on offer when you explore the upper reaches of the engine's output. Drive it at ordinary speeds and it's almost possible to forget that the Turbo has the capacity to bend time, its duality of purpose a huge part of its appeal, the temptation to push that accelerator to the floor one that's genuinely difficult to resist.

Do so and the force it's able to muster is remarkable – the Turbo's ability to produce big numbers is never in question, even if that ability is tempered by a touch of frustration. The building promise of more to come is causal of that, the feeling with the Turbo being that just as you're on the cusp of something incredible, there's the need to rein in your enthusiasm for fear of your licence. Opportunities to really extend the Turbo's performance really are few, the roads, and the laws that govern them, not expansive enough to ever feel like you're doing more than nibbling away at the fringes of what's possible.

With the Carrera 4S there's less of a daunting feel sitting inside, manifesting itself by feeling lighter, and higher. If you had told me that they would feel so different inside I would have shrugged it off, pointing at all their numerous similarities, but there's no denying that for all of them, whether real or perceived, there's a difference sitting behind the

wheel of each. Unlike the Turbo, it's the first time I've been in a Carrera 4S – I've been in plenty of 996s just not this particular model. Like the Turbo, the 4S comes with the weight of expectation, it's very much the darling of the 996 range, and I'm just about to find out whether that status is really justified. Darren Anderson, of RPM Technik, who kindly loaned us the cars, seems to think so, saying as we chat about them how much he regrets selling his own C4S a while ago, his, like so many toys, having been lost to the inevitability of house renovations.

Another person's extension then is someone else's opportunity to drive and own a C4S. This example, already sold, will be heading to a new home soon, RPM's Sales Director Greig Daly asking that I'm extremely careful with it. There's never any need to say, but it's duly noted. Immediately the differences are obvious, the engine's more vocal without turbocharging muffling it, while the steering feels lighter and more alert. It's genuinely surprising how different it feels; the Turbo felt like it was monstering the road beneath it, while the C4S instead is far more delicate, more informative, the detail coming through, its controls richer in information. It gives so much more, and earlier, to the benefit of enjoyment.

That makes any drive in the C4S a joy, not just those occasions when you have the space, lack of

traffic and confidence to go and enjoy the full breadth of its performance. Do so – with Daly's words of caution still ringing in my ears, obviously – and it's a total joy to drive; the C4S flowing beautifully, the balance between the chassis and the way the flat six delivers its 324hp is lovely, the free-revving enthusiasm and the useful performance that accompanies it being utterly captivating, the slickness of the six-speed manual and the weighting of the controls just so.

A fun car that's certainly deserving of its reputation as the 996 to have, it's so much more than the sum of its 'Turbo-look' parts, and, indeed, it is the more enjoyable, exploitable car compared to the Turbo relation it borrows from. That it's also the last of the 911s that can genuinely be described as such makes it interesting, Porsche 911s often at their best when they bookend a series. Get one while you can, as like the car we borrowed for our test drive today, Carrera 4Ss don't tend to stay in showrooms very long, and they remain something of a bargain in the current marketplace. **911**

Thanks

Both cars in our test were supplied by RPM Technik. For more information on RPM Technik's stock and services, visit rpmtechnik.co.uk or call +44 (0) 1296 663 824.