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Porsche 911 Turbo (993): Purple thrills

Lead

Having driven the new 911 Turbo S, our thoughts turned to our favourite generation of the blown Porsche: the formidable 993...

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For many (including those in the Classic Driver office), the 993 is one of the sweetest spots in the 911's half-century of existence. It was not only the last air-cooled, last hand-built 911 – but also the last to retain the diminutive footprint with which the model began its life.

Sure, more modern versions might be more dynamically capable, but they're bloated behemoths in comparison to the lean 993. You only need to open the elder's doors, for example, to notice their slender width, an impossibility with today's safety and technology needs.

The 959's production cousin



Though the classic proportions might have been familiar at launch, the range-topping Turbo, launched in 1995, had a little added visual muscle. The rear arches were wider, while the bumpers were more aerodynamic and cast a nod to the 959. Most notable, though, was the huge spoiler inherited from its forebears.

Dynamically, the 993 Turbo was a major step forward. Not only was drive splayed to all corners for the first time, along with state-of-the-art ABS, but the twin turbos – despite not using the 959's sequential arrangement – had less turbo-lag than the 964's singular unit. Being a sort of production cousin of the 959 had made it more predictable and controllable than its notoriously tricky-to-drive Turbo ancestors. In fact it was, quite outstandingly, the first really practical 911 Turbo, with excellent balance, traction and that acceptably low lag.

"Ferrari owners were constantly on the lookout..."



Rather than reducing the excitement, however, that practicality makes it all the more thrilling to drive. Its 408bhp withstands scrutiny today (the 991 Carrera S has less), but in the mid-90s it was mind-blowing: Ferrari 355 owners were constantly on the lookout. Modern times do betray its shortcomings, though: the floor-mounted pedals are noticeably offset, and the then-new six-speed gearchange isn't quite as positive as you might wish it to be.

Regardless, the 993 Turbo wins the right to be celebrated as one of the finest 911s – if not for the technology and timeless muscularity, then for the fact you don't need to be [Vic Elford](#) to hustle one along swiftly.

Photos: Simon Clay for Classic Driver

Gallery

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