

CLASSIC DRIVER

Driven: 911 ST by PS Automobile

Lead

We recently reported on a contemporary interpretation of a Porsche 911 ST by PS Automobile. For 911 enthusiasts, the bare facts are fascinating enough, but a Porsche is made to be driven. So that's what we did.

The Starnberg district in the south of Germany is fairly rich with Porsches as it is but, since last week, a new addition has heightened the interest of locals. The detail-perfect interpretation of the classic Porsche 911 ST, now revitalised by PS Automobile, is a joy to behold. And what a sound... a pure, unfiltered listening pleasure, a well-rehearsed brass sextet starting up in the tail of the car. But how goes it on the road?

According to Dirk Sadlowski, founder and owner of PS Automobile, "We looked at the full spread of Porsche's classic models and wanted what we believe to be the best from each one. The result is our modern interpretation of the Porsche 911 ST."





Early 911s are in great demand today: the value of these models seems only to rise, and good specimens are increasingly hard to find. And the classic Porsche 911 ST is unquestionably an icon worthy of comparison with the Porsche 911 Carrera RS, which is currently celebrating its 40th birthday, or the legendary Porsche 911 Turbo.



In the early 1970s, Stuttgart developed the so-called ST model primarily for racing purposes. The car was built in limited numbers in 1971 and 1972 when, equipped with a 2.5-litre boxer engine, it developed a hefty 270HP. In combination with a kerb weight of less than one tonne, the ST proved a success at such venues as the Nürburgring, the Targa Florio, Daytona and Sebring.





Now, powered by an air-cooled Porsche 911 type-964 engine, these athletes live again. Even at first glance, the level of craftsmanship and attention to detail is impressive. The panel gaps are perfect, the flared, slate-grey wings look like two powerful muscles, and the discreetly chromed tail lights integrate with delicate bumpers to give the ST an impression of cultivated sophistication. With a clean, metallic snap, the driver's door opens to reveal a window frame lacking the expected dark finish. Instead, there is the shine of polished aluminum, both beautiful and wonderfully tactile.



Then it's time to fire her up, and any impression that this is an 'old' car is instantly dispelled by the prompt patter of the rear-mounted engine. It sounds pleasantly fresh, yet growls throatily when you ask for more from the now-300HP air-cooled metal boxer. But first, we warm the new engine gently.





Once the ten litres of oil and stainless steel exhaust system have reached operating temperature, the ST is ready to rip – yet this is no diva, no untrustworthy prima donna of a sports car. The ST is impressively energetic: it delivers its punch properly, but predictably (and that’s fortunate, since an even more powerful version promises up to 370HP).



The lowered suspension and shortened, stiffened springs cause this 911 to squat on the asphalt. The lower centre of gravity means high-speed bends feel good – secure – the car cutting through corners with amazing accuracy, the rear discreetly and controllably sliding. Because of its carefully balanced chassis, even relatively inexperienced drivers can, if they wish, achieve high speeds safely. This 911 ST is seriously good: the real feeling of a Porsche and an all-round athlete. What a triumph.

Photos: Mathias Paulokat

Gallery

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