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Porsche 911 Carrera 4 and 4S: Autumn heroes

Lead

Just in time for the onset of autumn, a new generation of the four-wheel-drive 911 has arrived. Available in two flavours – Carrera 4 and the more potent Carrera 4S – the all-season sports car inherits the traditional design flourishes of its bloodline. But what's it like on the road?

It had to happen. As October brings the autumnal mists, temperatures fall and the asphalt is garnished with raindrops rather than sunrays. And, every bit as consistent as the seasons, Porsche has released a new version of its all-wheel-drive 911 as a remedy. Since its 1988 entrance to the 964-era 911 roster, the Carrera 4 has been a staple to the range – and now it's resurfaced again in the latest 991-generation, available in coupé and convertible forms. The base model gets a 345bhp 3.4-litre powerplant; the S is furnished with a 394bhp 3.8-litre unit, both in the traditional boxer layout, of course.





Visual differences between the Carrera 4 and its [rear-wheel-drive stablemates](#) are subtle but noticeable. The rear arches are extended by 22mm each side, primarily to accommodate the 4WD system's wider track but also to further boost the more muscular profile of the 991-gen car in relation to its predecessors. Also a Carrera 4 trademark is the horizontal brake-light strip, though this time it's been narrowed to just a sliver, assimilating the tauter styling theme of the 991.





Inside, things remain unchanged, as does the driving experience – to a point. While you might expect all-corner power delivery to change the finely balanced character of the 911, the power is sent solely to the rear wheels in all but the most demanding situations. The front wheels only turn up to the party during enthusiastic acceleration or cornering, or when the PTM (Porsche Traction Management) system senses some slip. This can only be a good thing; you get the commended handling persona of the regular car, but with a theoretical safety rope should the autumnal leaves get the better of you. Which is quite pleasing when you’ve spent upwards of £77,000.





Reminding you of the greater safety is a new graphic in the instrument cluster, which shows the current torque being applied and how the electromechanical clutch is dividing it between each axle. Of course, the option of spread-eagle power delivery comes at a price: there's a 50kg weight penalty over the Carrera 2, but this is negated by the fact that the Carrera 4s are up to 65kg lighter than their corresponding 997 iterations. In monetary terms, you'll pay a premium of around £7,000 for the all-weather tractability offered by the Carrera 4, with the base car starting at £77,924 and the 4S commanding £87,959.

Photos: Frank Ratering

Gallery

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