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[Porsche 911 Targa: Rendezvous with a childhood sweetheart](#)

Lead

The new Porsche 911 Targa harks back to the original model from the 1960s, but is the concept still relevant today? Classic Driver investigates...

When Porsche introduced the [911 Targa](#) at the 1965 Frankfurt Motor Show, the U.S. export market rejoiced. The 'secure cabriolet', as the open sports car with its removable roof was unromantically dubbed by Porsche, complied with the strict American regulations, making it possible for customers from California, Florida and the Hamptons finally to enjoy the sports coupé from Stuttgart with the wind in their hair. After all, a 911 cabriolet proper didn't emerge until the 1980s.

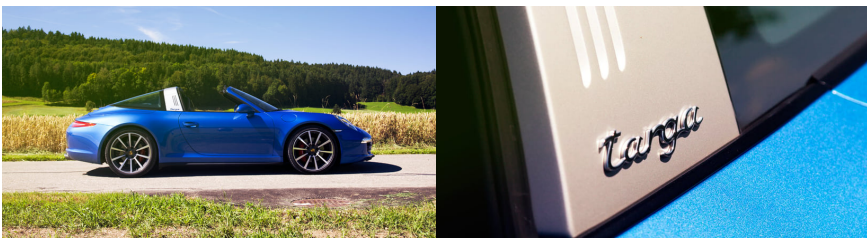
A childhood sweetheart



The Targa roof was a simple yet clever design. Behind the aluminium roll bar there was a fabric top which easily reclined and stowed. It wasn't until 1969 that the car was given a vast, mounted rear window, a feature which characterised every Targa until the mid-1990s, when it was replaced with the panoramic sunroof (boo). As such, the Targa is now considered one of the most influential designs in the marque's illustrious history.

Now the Targa's back, and the [latest 991-generation car](#) follows the exact same recipe as the first, albeit with an automatic retractable roof. "Imagine meeting your childhood sweetheart again, and they've become even more beautiful," enthused Porsche gushingly. A nice sentiment, but is this new Targa really much more than a nostalgic gesture; a retro gimmick cashing in on the classic 911 craze?

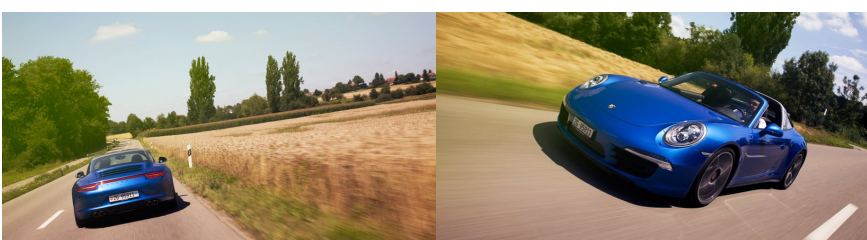
A 400HP, high-tech spectacle



On a sunny late summer's day, we've borrowed a 911 Targa 4S in which to roar through forests and fields in the hinterland of Zürich. The fresh wind blows while the six-cylinder crackles and shouts. When required, the 400HP easily enables the car to reach 62mph from rest in 4.6sec – not spectacularly fast, but then the car's four-wheel-drive system incurs a significant weight penalty. Much to the dismay of traditional motoring journalists, this is now more of a luxury car for the countless comfort-seeking customers around the world. So where does the Targa sit in the model line-up?

Porsche already has a brilliant [991 Cabriolet](#). But it's the Targa's retro appeal that will allegedly attract customers. Erecting the roof in the original Targa certainly wasn't an appealing process. It required patience and dexterity, particularly in a sudden downpour. Not any more, though – on the new car it's a 16-second affair, whereby the rear window, along with a section of rear bodywork, is lifted to make way for the origami-style fabric roof to be deployed. Impressive, but hardly understated!

Wishful thinking



Don't get us wrong, the new Porsche 911 Targa is an impressive example of modern automotive engineering; a desirable open-top sports car with a roof like something out of the Transformers films. But what we'd really like is a pared-back,

lightweight version, with the traditional manual roof, along the lines of the (now sought-after) [911 Speedsters](#). This, in our opinion, would embody the spirit of the original to a far greater extent. That such a concept no longer corresponds with the majority of customers' tastes is another matter. When it comes to meeting that childhood sweetheart, remember what made you fall for them in the first place.

Gallery

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