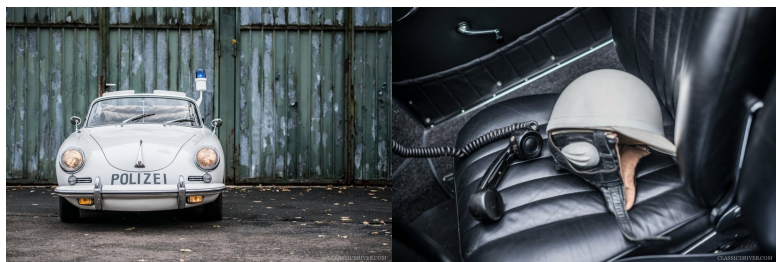


CLASSIC DRIVER

[Back when the police drove convertible Porsches](#)

Lead
There was a time when the police didn't use only nondescript, high-performance saloons to bring highway lawbreakers to task. In the 1960s, police stations across Europe used Porsche sports cars in active service - including this 356 cabriolet...

Blue lights and sirens... on a convertible Porsche?



On 23 November 1960, Porsche delivered a white 356 cabriolet kitted out in special equipment to the police in Düsseldorf. The 75HP Porsche was henceforth used by the autobahn patrol, capturing 160,000km on the odometer (and undoubtedly numerous crooks) before its well-deserved retirement in 1966. It subsequently remained static for 25 years before being discovered and brought back to life as part of a restoration completed in 2000. It was then kept in a Belgian collection.

Fleet of 40



But it wasn't only in Germany that [Porsche 356s](#) could be seen in police uniform. In 1960, when a new, 500km highway network was opened in the Netherlands, the Rijkspolitie were left wondering how they would catch aggressive or unsafe drivers. Their German colleagues, from the land of unrestricted motorways, recommended the purchase of a fleet of cars from Zuffenhausen. No fewer than 40 356Bs made their way from Stuttgart after a few test miles - [one such car](#), one of the first batch delivered, was recently sold at a [Bonhams auction](#). Only specially trained officers were allowed to drive them, with further stipulations that they should be at least 25 years old and

married, preferably with children.

Wet day at the office



Of course, there were special requirements of the cars, too. They were given flashing blue beacons, a loudspeaker, 'stop' signs, a larger fuel tank, radio telephones and antennae, twin internal rear-view mirrors, stickers, control buttons... and a water-repellant interior coating. Since the officers wore helmets and the 356's headroom isn't exactly generous, the fabric roof was kept down in all weathers - the only protection in its place being standard-issue caps, goggles and raincoats. In the 1970s, European police forces adopted more practical [911 Targas](#) alongside their Ford Capris - an alternative explanation for the 'safety cabriolet' concept, perhaps?



The car pictured is a [1960 Porsche 356 Cabriolet used in period by Westphalia Autobahnpolizei](#), and currently for sale via German dealer [Early 911s](#).

Photos: [Rémi Dargegen](#) for Classic Driver © 2015.

Gallery

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