

CLASSIC DRIVER

Which Porsche 911 GT3 generation would you take to the street?

Lead

With a new Porsche 911 GT3 in the starting blocks, we look back at the evolution of our preferred street-legal racer from Zuffenhausen since 1999. Naturally the Classic Driver Market offers plenty cars for sale from all GT3 generations - 996 to 997 and 991. Which one would you pick?

Porsche 911 GT3 / Generation 996



Let's skip past the 'fried egg' headlight conversation, the introduction of a lightweight, focused 911 back into the Porsche range was very much welcomed, when the 996 GT3 was revealed to the world in 1999. That 'Mezger' engine transformed the car, and in this list of GT3s, the 996 while the least powerful, is perhaps the most rewarding of the trio. You get out what you put in with this car, there's no traction or stability control. The 996 is pure, unfiltered GT3, you might give away around 100bhp to the 991, but it more than compensates with just how immersive the first generation GT3 is.

Porsche 911 GT3 / Generation 997



The last outing for the 'Mezger' engine, the last of the analogue steering GT3s and a jump of 50bhp over the 996, the 997 has a lot going for it. Inside, the 997 GT3 still feels modern, where the 996 is in that awkward 'old but not classic' category. The gearbox is about the best you will ever experience and keep in mind unless you go for a GT3 Touring or 911 R the 991 will be a PDK. The performance figures don't give a clear picture of the 997s talents, on a smooth road there's not much give between the 997 and its younger 991 brother.

Porsche 911 GT3 / Generation 991





The real triumph of the 991 is that it manages to deliver all the magic of a 997 GT3 but with added refinement. What you do lose is the sweet manual gearchange and some steering feel, thanks to the move to electronic power steering. The handling exudes confidence, perhaps it's almost too easy, compared to how the 996 challenges you. If you want to go fast, easily, the 991 GT3 is the car. Remarkably, even eight years later, the 991 GT3 still sells for around its original purchase price, with good examples still over their purchase price. One thing is for sure, there's no wrong choice, but you do need to make a choice!

All photos by Image Automotive

Gallery

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