

PORSCHE STORY by Mike Willis

"Carrera" Graphic courtesy of Christopher C. Alexander

From what I can determine, Porsche started using the Carrera designation because of their involvement with the Carrera Panamericana in 1953. Porsche entered the race with 550-03 and 550-04. These two cars had longer rear fenders and sloped front ends.

This little article basically attempts to outline the use of the Carrera nameplate for the street Porsche. The Carrera nameplate is also used for a multitude of "racing" Porsches. That is a whole other subject and with input from others I would happy to put it together and post as a sequel to this article.

Four Cam Engine

The Carrera debuted in the fall of 1955 with a four-cam engine at Frankfurt auto show. The Carrera was recognizable by dual exhaust, oil tank peering out from the left rear wheel opening, gold colored script "Carrera" on the rear deck and front fenders. It was the first 1.5 liter production car to reach 200 km/h (124.3 mph). The four-cam roller bearing engine could easily reach 7500 rpm which in 1955 was quite a feat.

Coupes and Speedster Bodies

The 1957 Carrera coupes or speedster body were available. Also a deluxe was available with "heaters" for the passengers. During 1958 to boost sagging sales, a redesign of the Carrera was made to make it more road worthy for the street driver.

1958 Reutter GT Carrera doors and deck lids were of aluminum; engine cover louvered at the sides for cool air ducted to the carburetor air intakes; seats were made of aluminum (not steel); aluminum wheels with steel centers; spacers were used to increase track width; aluminum hub caps (not usually used); and Koni shocks used at all four corners. The engine was a 1.6 liter, now with plain bearings but retaining the 4 overhead cams. Change for the sake of making the car more street worthy.

Quieter Street Versions

The 1959 Carrera had more sound insulation, and was the heaviest Porsche built to date. The acceleration times also suffered some because of the additional weight. A twelve-volt system was used for the first time in production car.

Carrera Becoming The "Race" Version

From 1955-60 700 Carreras of all kinds were produced. Most of these were race cars. In 1960-61 the Carrera started to phase out. The only ones built were for racers and hard core street users.

1960-62 saw the "Abarth Carrera", a much sleeker version of the 356 and was strictly a racing Porsche for European sports car circuits.

The Carrera 2's

The 356B/2000 GS Carrera 2 entered production in April 1962 and was targeted toward the racer and elite Porsche buyer. Porsche planned to produce only 100 but eventually made 310 of the B Model and 126 356C Models. They had a 1966cc 4-cam engine with 9.5 compression ratio, 130 hp, and disk brakes.

Carrera GTS

The 904, or Carrera GTS, entered the racing world in 1964 and later (1966) Porsche introduced the Carrera 6 (a.k.a. Type 906), an entirely new tube-frame chassis with a six-cylinder engine. The 904s used the 4 cam engines, fiberglass bodies with coil over shocks for the suspension at each corner. Disks brakes were standard. Both the 904 and 906 were build for racing and were not intended as street cars.

During the "60"s the Carrera name was applied to specialty racing cars and not until the "70"s did the Carrera nameplate return to the high performance variant of the production Porsche.

Carrera again as "production" Porsches

The Carrera nameplate returned in late 1972 with the 1973 Carrera RS and RST (touring). Also, 60 RS Porsches were turned into RSRs (Rennsport Racing). History was made at Daytona as a RSR won the race (Peter Gregg). The 906, 907, and 917 had been "ruled" out of race in 1971. Old racing axiom: if you can't beat a Porsche, change the rules.

The rear duck tail and Carrera side script were the hallmarks of the model RS and RSTs. The touring version was fitted with 911S interior and other fittings.

In 1973 Porsche supplied the cars for the IROC (International Race of Champions). These were identically prepared RSRs. Each had the 1974 3.0 engine. The larger turbo-style whale tail was used on these cars.

In 1974 Porsche added a Carrera coupe and Targa to the line with the CIS 2.7 engine. This was basically the 911 S with different rear spoiler (duck tail), 7 and 8 inch wheels standard, "SC" type flares on the rear, and the factory options as standard equipment. The engines were the 911S engine with no special treatment. The U.S. 1975 Carreras were similar to the 1974's in that no special engine differences were made. There wasn't a U.S. Carrera model in 1976-77.

3.0 Euro Carreras

The 1975-77 European Carreras were another story. They had the 3.0 turbo engine without the turbo and were called the Carrera 3. During these years the Turbo was also referred to as the Turbo Carrera.

Racing Carrera's 1974-77

In the 1974-75 racing seasons the RSR's won just about every category for which they were eligible. Of all the 911 RS/RSR 3.0 was regarded as the classic, and many are still competing regularly. For the 1974 season the competition Carrera's used the new 3.0 engine. The RS engine produced 230bhp and the RSR produced 330 bhp. These Porsche were a major contender in a variety of categories.

SC's 1978-83

The SC has been referred to as the "Super Carrera". It is actually a street car and was not a special "Carrera" model as all of them were SC's. This was the beginning of the loss of the Carrera designation for a special model within the model years. The SC had wider rear fender flares to accommodate larger wheels and tires. This series of street car began the wide tires in the rear with 1 inch wider wheels. The SC also had the bullet proof 3.0 engine. With the ever exploding rubber center clutch. By now most of these clutches have been replaced. If you encounter a low mileage SC then be sure that the clutch has been changed or you will get to do it.

3.2 Carrera

The Carrera did not reappear until 1984 with the introduction of the Carrera with a 200-horsepower 3.2 liter engine. The interior included standard leather appointments and was truly a street car. The Carrera was the designation for the 911. From this point forward the Carrera designation has become the model, not the ultimate performance car as was so true in the past. Lost is the super performance designation for the Porsche Carrera. The 1987 Carrera had an improved 3.2 which gave up 14 more horsepower for a total of 214.

The Carrera 4

In 1989 the Carrera 4 was introduced and carried a 247-horsepower 3.6 liter engine. A new look was also present with redesigned front and rear bumpers and rocker panels. Also included was full time four wheel drive with traction control. For the first time power steering was included. The suspension was also changed from torsion bars to coil-over shocks on each corner. In 1990 the Carrera 2 was part of Porsche model line. Similar to the Carrera 4 but with 2 wheel drive.

The 993 Carrera

In 1994 Porsche introduced the new 1995 911 Carrera known as the 993. The car has reduced front fender height, wheel arches are sculptured, body is widened, and the headlights are flatter and raked back. The front of the car has a 959 resemblance. The engine is still 3.6 liters but has a revised intake system, free flow exhaust, new electronics and a multitude of internal changes making the horsepower now at 270 hp. The engine also has hydraulic lifters. All this for a mere \$60,000 suggested retail.

The 1995 Carrera 4 is also available for the paltry sum of \$65,900 which is \$3,600 less than the original Carrera 4 when introduced. The four wheel drive aspect will cost \$11,000 more than the Carrera 2.

The '96 Models

The 1996 Porsche 911 Carrera line encompasses the Coupe and Cabriolet; the all-wheel drive Carrera 4, Carrera 4 Cabriolet and new Carrera 4S (with Turbo-like body); the new, glass-roofed Carrera Targa, and the top-of-line, all-wheel-drive, 400-horsepower 911 Turbo.

The Carrera Targa now has a "rather" large glass top, (Or as Porsche calls it "a unique retractable tinted glass roof.") Some call this Porsche's greenhouse effect. Personally I am not impressed with the "new" look.

Some of the features of the '96 Carreras, Six speed Trans, 3.6 Liter 282 HP engine, 18" wheels, Xenon headlights, Becker radios, Introductory MSRP prices range from \$63, 750 for the coupe, to \$105,00 for the Turbo Coupe.

3.8 993 RSR

From Stuttgart for a mere \$129,000 you can get the new 3.8 993 RSR non turbo ready to go with center locks and air jack. IMSA or FIA fuel cell optional! (Thanks Dave for this tad bit)

Please access the Porsche USA <<http://www.porsche.com/>> web site for information/specifications on the 911 Carreras".

Racing Carrera Nameplate

During all of these years Porsche continues to use the Carrera name for its racing RS and RSR's. The Cup RSR's are called Carrera RSR to help continue the tradition of the Carrera name.