

# Whoosh

SAYING GOODBYE TO THE LAST 911 TURBO  
THAT'S THE ONLY TURBO 911.

STORY BY PETE STOUT  
PHOTO BY MICHAEL ALAN ROSS



**IN THE UGLY CONCRETE WORLD** near LAX, on wide streets filled with taxis, shuttles, and rental cars, this metallic white, \$182,700 911 Turbo S feels unusual and *very* special. It's a feeling that lasts for all of 30 minutes. By the time we get to Malibu, we spot six 991 Turbos. Black, white, or silver, most are Turbo Ss and/or Cabriolets.

The 991 Turbo's popularity on the Pacific Coast Highway drives a point home: Porsche's flagship 911 is very

different from the scene-stealing GT3. This 198-mph 911 can be used every day in every way by anyone, not just enthusiasts. It can get into and out of driveways with the kind of reasonable care taken by reasonable people. Its all-wheel drive transfers an incredible 560 hp and 516 lb-ft of torque safely in the hands of drivers who may not possess incredible skill.

In other words, it is a legitimate alternative to a Benz SL or a BMW 6,

something one really can't say about a GT3. So let's call it what it is: The ultimate 911 *for most people*—and it certainly has ultimate attributes.

A hard start managed by Launch Control is something to experience, being both visceral and violent—in an oddly polished way. All you have to do is engage the Sport Plus mode, hold the brake pedal, and floor the throttle. The car builds boost, tells you when to release the brakes, and

then manages the torque and tire slip. All you have to do is keep the throttle pinned. The car *erupts* forward as internal organs travel down your torso. If the sensation is surreal, the acceleration is undeniably real.

Few cars can touch this 911 for acceleration, and you're unlikely to encounter any of them on your commute. *Car and Driver* recorded a 2.6-second 0-60 mph time, just 0.1 second off its time for the Bugatti

Veyron. Porsche's own 918 Spyder tripped *C/D's* clock at 2.2 seconds, but what's a few tenths between friends, especially when you're well under three seconds for a fifth of the price? With back seats.

Those back seats are part of the Turbo's trump card: everyday usability. It's one reason so many examples are seen on the streets of L.A. Compared to a Carrera, there are no real downsides—other than extra girth

and added thirst to go with the added thrust. The well-appointed interior and automatic gearbox allow this 911 to process rush-hour traffic much the way a fine luxury sedan would.

On smooth, fog-slicked mountain roads high above Malibu, the Turbo S's effortless point-to-point pace will give a hard-driven 991 GT3 fits. Both are a lot of car to manage on tighter roads, but the Turbo feels less connected. Criticism about the lack of steering feel remains valid, though steering response and precision belie the car's 3,538-pound curb weight as well as its mechanical complexity. The PASM variable dampers do a fantastic job of keeping the massive 245/35R20 and 305/30R20 tires in touch with the road, while the standard ceramic-composite brakes scrub speed with unerring consistency.

For all its capability, the modern 911 Turbo has come to face a tough question—one that probably annoys Porsche engineers but remains critical to Porsche fans: Is it actually fun to drive? Autobahn superiority does not count for much in North America, and straight-line party tricks eventually get old. As the canyon roads dry out, the 991-1 Turbo S remains impressive, but isn't all that rewarding to drive. Fast? Yes. Fun? *Kinda*.

Is a Carrera or GT3 better on that score? Yes, as they should be. The Turbo is meant to be different, a fast but luxurious 911 rather than an RS. By that measure, the 911 Turbo is better than ever—though it's hard to escape the notion that some turbocharged 911s have walked the fine line better when it came to fun. Think 996 Turbo... or 991-2 Carrera.

Predictably, the next 911 Turbo is even more powerful, but we're more curious about the fun factor. Time to head to South Africa to drive one...