

TRIED & TESTED

With 911 & Porsche World's Deputy Editor, Brett Fraser

911 CARRERA 3.2 TARGA 1987 66,300-MILES £POA (BUT WE RECKON ABOUT £56,000)

Specialist dealers often talk about 'time warp' cars, but this 66,300-mile Grand Prix White 3.2 Targa with Sport Equipment, for sale at RPM Specialist Cars of Harrogate, genuinely is that very thing – after a few miles behind its gently writhing steering wheel I was transported back to 1987, when as a junior road tester on a motoring magazine, I drove one new. This six-owner machine's overall condition really is like new: it even smells like a car fresh from the Porsche GB press fleet towards the end of the 1980s.

This Targa was first registered in August 1987, to a Mrs J E Williams who, by ticking the 'with Sports Equipment' box on the order form, along with several other options, blessed the car with front and rear spoilers, 16in Fuchs alloy wheels, sports dampers, sports seats, a rear wiper and a passenger side door mirror, amongst other things. And as part of a general upgrade for the 3.2 Carrera that year, this car also has the desirable G50 five-speed gearbox, hydraulic clutch, electronic engine management and fuel injection.

RPM's Andy Meeking doesn't believe the Targa has ever been restored as such, but concedes that 'it must have had some paint done at some stage.' He's probably right because the nose is almost completely devoid of stone chips and those alloy bumpers often bubble up even when well looked after.

The paint is smooth as you like, all the panel gaps are neat and even, (suggesting an absence of accident damage); the rubber of the whale tail is black and pliable, not misshapen and greying as many are; the rear light clusters are clear, bright and unscratched, and the headlight reflectors free from blemishes; the Fuchs are unmarked and devoid of corrosion and their Dunlop SP Sport 9000 tyres have almost a full complement of tread; even the concertinas of the characteristic impact bumpers look near-new.

Crucially, the roof looks as though it was refurbished in very recent times. Only the targa roll-hoop betrays the car's age, having slightly faded and dulled over the years. A peek into the wheelarches reveals an absence of rust and an abundance of bright, white paint. The engine bay is also notable for its cleanliness and shining paint. Helping appearances are new plug leads and distributor cap, a fresh coat of enamel for the fan blades, and a new oil filter.

The door handles retain the precision action they enjoyed when new and act almost like a trigger; tug the release buttons towards you and the doors ping open off their latches with some force. In a few places the rubber inner door seals have come adrift from the adhesive that once held them firmly in place, exposing patches of brown glue that jar with the otherwise pristine nature of the rest of the interior: a dab of new



glue should fix the problem.

Meeking reckons the previous owner of the Targa was a fastidious individual, and it shows inside: there are no scuffs from clumsy feet against the door trims, no ingrained grime on any of the plastics, the carpets are bushy and clean, the leather upholstery immaculate and free from scratches or bolster.

After the fine condition of the rest of the Targa, it's no surprise that it fires up first turn of the key and settles into a smooth idle. Out on the open road that 3.2-litre air-cooled flat-six howls along with all the vocal character that you could wish for, revving sweetly through the mid-range and then encouraging you – through an ever-increasing rate of acceleration – to kiss the red-line whenever possible. At the top end it's much quieter than more modern 911s, brusquely mellow rather than angry.

The G50 gearbox shifts between ratios neatly and swiftly, provided you don't try to rush second to third. Similarly – and again in keeping with how this generation 911 drove when new – the brakes require your careful attention, as at high speed you have to think your way past their initial lack of bite. No problems when you stomp on them, though. And the steering of this Targa tracks straight and true, even while the wheel exhibits that special air-cooled 911 trait of constantly bobbling around in your hands and that thing we call 'steering feel.'

Though old-fashioned in some respects, this 3.2 Targa still feels as though you could use it every day, just as it was designed for. Such a shame that its low mileage and outstanding condition are likely to condemn it to a life of inaction.



CHECKLIST

BACKGROUND

In 1984 Porsche increased the capacity of the 911 Carrera's flat-six to 3164cc, and used Digital Motor Electronics – DME – engine management to tend to the ignition and Bosch L-Jetronic fuel injection. The upgrade raised power output to 231bhp, giving the 911 a very useful boost in performance. Over the next three years there were various refinements to the Carrera; for the 1987 model year came the most significant – the introduction of the G50 gearbox (much improved over its predecessor), combined with hydraulic actuation of the clutch. Pertinent to the Targa we see here, Sport option Carreras were henceforth known as '911 with Sport Equipment'. Turbo-look derivatives adopted the new name of 'Carrera Supersport'. The Carrera 3.2 continued in production until 1989.

WHERE IS IT?

Although RPM Specialist Cars of Harrogate has been operating for the past 13 years – run by two ex-JCT600 employees, Andy Meeking and Nick Roberts – the North Yorkshire-based servicing and repairs outfit has only comparatively recently ramped up the sales side of its business.

Both Nick and Andy confess to probably spending too long prepping RPM's sales cars, yet they're also acutely aware of the potential damage that could be done to the company's reputation by a car that wasn't up to scratch. . . rpmspecialistcars.co.uk.

FOR

Immaculate overall condition and a great drive. Accompanied by a massive file of paperwork.

AGAINST

The car's low mileage and time warp condition may encourage its new owner to drive it only very occasionally. It deserves better.

VERDICT

A beautifully cared for 3.2 Targa that looks like new inside and out, and drives superbly.

VALUE AT A GLANCE

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| Condition | ●●●●●●●● |
| Price | ●●●●●●●● |
| Performance | ●●●●●●●● |
| Overall | ●●●●●●●● |