

SPECIAL 100TH ISSUE: Our Largest Ever!

The Magazine **11** About Porsche
excellence

**5 Porsche
Turbos
Face Off!**

959 vs 996 vs 993 vs 964 vs 993



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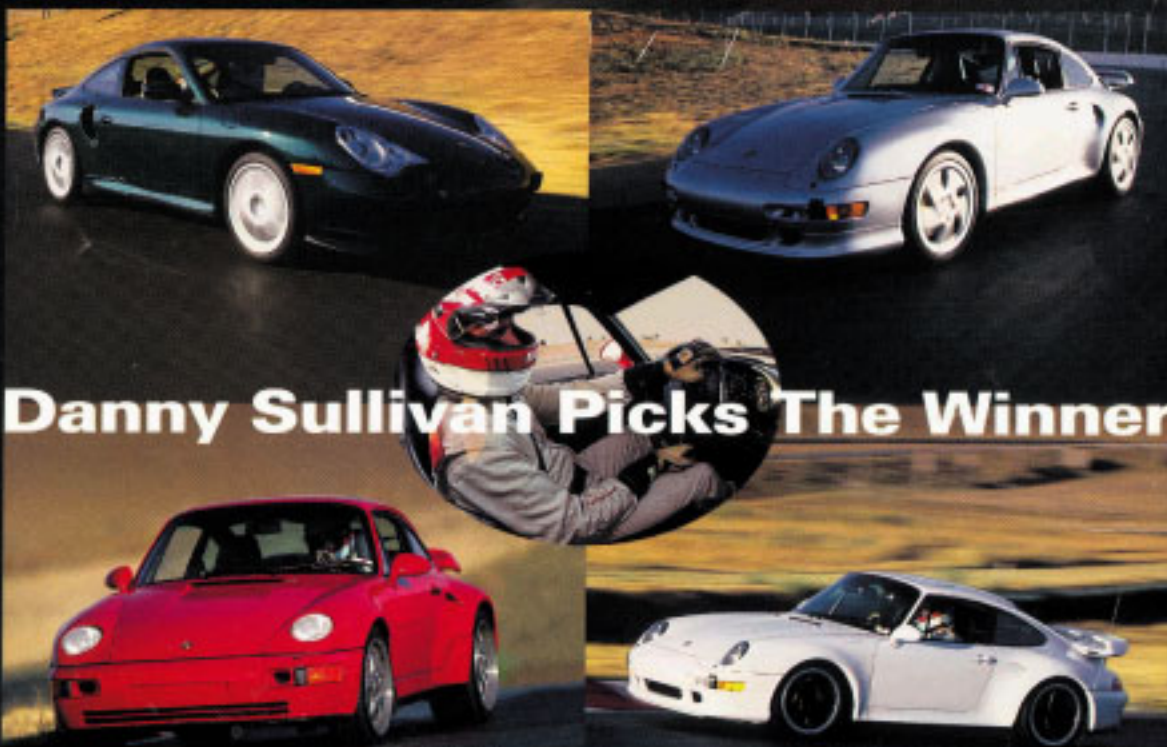
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Danny Sullivan Picks The Winner

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engine computer to work with the cats. Didrick says that the only requirement for importation of his 959 is the addition of catalyts, but that will cost him about \$15,000.

A true enthusiast to the core, Doug Didrick then had the catalytic converters removed before shipping the car to Sears Point Raceway for our compare test, because he felt their presence would snuff the car's true performance. Of course, a representative from the ICI had to be present during the proceedings, and the 959 could not leave the confines of Sears Point during its stay in California. But Didrick plans on refitting the catalyts as soon as possible because his hope is that his car will be the first 959 released by the DOT under show and display laws.

Danny Sullivan can also count himself among the lucky few who actually owned one of these cars back in the

days when they were the *sine qua non* of automobilia. So a stint behind the wheel of Doug Didrick's car came as something of a stroll down memory lane for the Indycar champ. But in some ways, the memories he harbored were better than the realities he encountered at Sears Point. On reacquaintance, the 959 seemed somewhat less magical than Sullivan recalled it to be: "I had one in 1988 and it seemed awesome then." The emphasis was clearly on "then." Of course, more than a decade of development has intervened since he owned his 959. Ten years ago, the car defined the summit of technology. Now it occupies but a prominent rung on the ladder.

Sullivan's best lap: 1:59.78

Observations: *The 959 is a high-speed autobahn car. I only used two gears here. This car has been fitted*

with bigger turbos and a chip, and they leave lots of lag. This car had a little bit of push, but don't forget — that's a Porsche characteristic. You've got that big engine sitting back there, and when you hit that big turbo and it sits down and squats, the tendency is always for the front end to fly a little bit and push a little. You know, like it's searching. For me, the 959 had a little too much body roll from side to side. It was a little bit too soft, so it felt very sloppy. You have to anticipate where to turn in, then walk it out to the exit.

But when cars are built for the street and for production, and to go faster on the autobahn, they make 'em softer 'cause it feels more comfortable. Let's take into consideration the type of course you have here, with quick lefts and rights, ups and downs, and the esses, where you get most of your pitching from side to side. If a car is

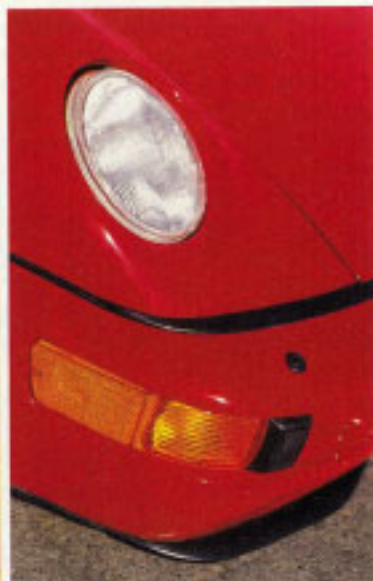


■ **Far left**—The 1994 911 Turbo S had the weakest brakes of the bunch, this despite the fact that they were the first of Porsche's Big Reds.

■ **Left**—Polished, three-piece alloy wheels from Speedline were standard equipment, carrying Yokohama A008P tires with an 18-inch diameter.

■ **Below, left**—Porsche's last single-turbo 911 used an air-to-air intercooler and a large turbocharger to make 380 hp. Rumor has it that number is deceptively low.

■ **Below**—Part of the \$60,179 X85 flat-nose package were these 928-style folding headlights.





wallowing there, or has a little bit of understeer, it's going to be slow. But look, it's still a 959! It's almost 20-year-old technology. Then it's pretty damn amazing. As with all of these cars, it doesn't take much to do a few little things and make 'em much faster.

Buckler's best lap: 1:59.01

Observations: *This car has lots of turbo lag. It absorbs the bumps really nicely. I'm using only two gears, and not even going to the top of the rev range in third. It seems like you can only use about 80 percent of the power that this engine makes. The brakes feel surprisingly good. There is no all-wheel-drive feel to the car, which I expected to find.*

Author's best lap: Don't ask.

Observations: *When I went out for my first few laps, the dashboard warning light for low tire pressure was lit. Remember, this car was so advanced for its day that it came with a low tire pressure warning system that only a few other high-end sports cars have offered after all of the intervening years. When the light went out after the pressure built up, I felt much better and concentrated on enjoying the 959, which felt big to me — sort of lurchy and truck-like.*

The lag accentuates the boost rush in this car more than any other car in the group. Once you're on the boost, the 959 pulls like a Metroliner. The brake pedal was the firmest of the bunch, making corner entry very con-

1994 911 TURBO S

Vehicle Type: Rear-engine, rear-wheel-drive two-plus-two coupe

Engine Type: Six-cylinder, horizontally opposed, air-cooled, turbocharged

Valve Train: SOHC, two valves per cylinder

Displacement: 3.6 liters

Compression Ratio: 7.5:1

Horsepower: 380 hp

Torque: 385 ft/lbs+ (est)

Transmission: Five-speed manual

Brakes: Vented cross-drilled discs, 322 mm (f), 299 mm (r)

Suspension: MacPherson struts, trailing arms, coil springs, anti-roll bars

Wheels (f, r): 18x8, 18x10 three-piece alloys

Tires (f, r): Yokohama A008P 225/40ZR18, 265/35ZR18

Overall Length: 168.3 in.

Wheelbase: 89.5 in.

Width: 69.8 in.

Height: 50.7 in.

Track (f, r): 56.8 in., 59.3 in.

Curb Weight: 3,241 lbs

Weight Distribution (fr): 36%/62%

0-62 mph: 4.8 sec. (manufacturer's est.)

Top Speed: 174 mph (manufacturer's est.)

Price (1994): \$159,179 (base)

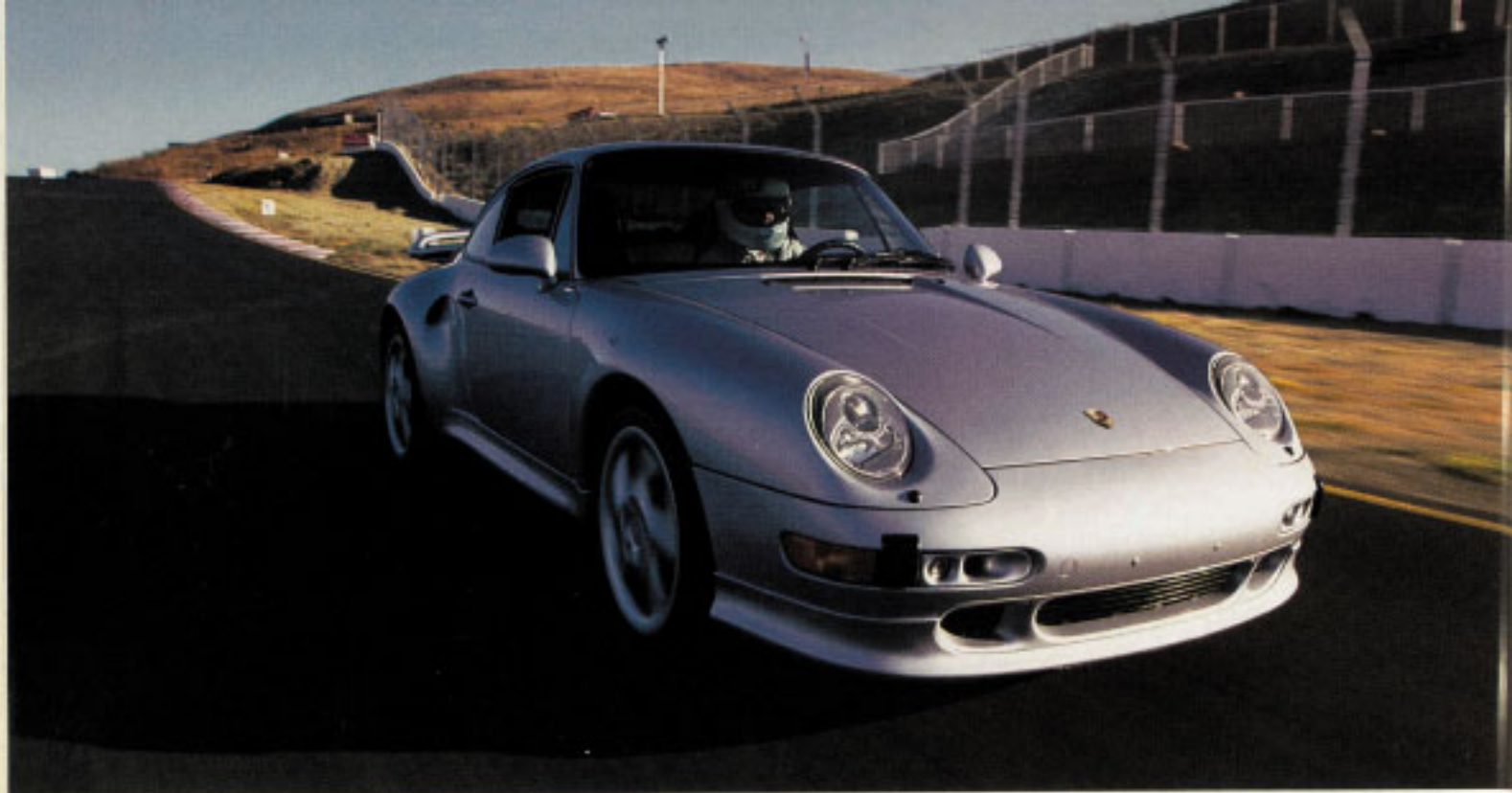
fidence inspiring. But the handling had a gawky, disconnected feel to it — like a marionette suspended from a paddle. So there was a lag not only between throttle application and urge, but also between driver intent and directional change. Some retuning of the Motronic system in this car by Stuart Schikora between sessions improved the car's best lap times by three full seconds.

1994 911 Turbo S

Next up was the rare and delectable 1994 911 Turbo S, also belonging to Doug Didrick and his father Bart. This car, which originally retailed for \$166,000 (seven years ago!), was built to commemorate the end of production of the fourth generation of the 911 Turbo. It represents the last of the tempestuous rear-wheel-drive 911-based Turbos Porsche had been building in one form or another for the U.S. market since 1975. It was an idea superceded by the all-wheel-drive, 993-based 1996 911 Turbo.

Of the 93 1994 911 Turbo S models built, 66 were finished at Rolf Sprenger's Stuttgart Customer Service Center rather than on the assembly line. Among the options fitted to this last King of Oversteer was an X/88 engine upgrade that boosted horsepower from the 355 of the stock 3.6-liter Turbo to 380, at 0.9 bar of boost. Porsche fitted about half of the cars with a slope-nose option (X/85) which used 928-style headlights for a startling frontal appearance. Other identifying traits of the 1994 Turbo S "flat nose" were its special rear fender vents, unique whale tail, and 959-style front lower valance.

Didrick's car is just such a flat-nose variant, and he was lucky enough to pick it from Fred Baker Porsche in Cleveland, Ohio on the second-hand market at a considerably reduced price. Didrick believes his car to be the one Porsche displayed on its stand at the Detroit Auto Show in January of



1994. When he took delivery of it in May of 1999, the odometer showed only 10,000 miles. Now it reads 11,000. And he insists that he will never sell his 1994 Turbo S. "I'll keep the 1994 forever," he enthuses. "I really like that car."

Sullivan's best lap: 2:06.57

Observations: When you go from a four-wheel-drive car to a two-wheel-drive car, that in itself is a pretty big change. I liked the car, it had great potential. The fun part is that you can get the back end out more than in an all-wheel-drive car. That is good. I wasn't super comfortable with the brakes — the pedal was a little bit soft, so I didn't want to go in too deep.

The power was good, and the gearing was better around here than in the other cars. You could drop it down a gear and it picked right up. The throttle response was quite good. I don't know what the turbo setup on it was, but you could just pick up the throttle and whoop, whoop, whoop! There wasn't as much lag as there was on the 959, and I went up one gear everywhere versus the 959. I used second gear in Turn 11, and third, fourth, and fifth everywhere else. You're not in fifth long, but you need it on the front straight here 'cause otherwise, you're going to be on the rev limiter.

I never could figure out whether to change up to third gear for Turn 2 and then hit the brakes, or change down to

1997 TURBO S

Vehicle Type: Rear-engine, all-wheel-drive, two-plus-two coupe

Engine Type: Six-cylinder, horizontally opposed, air-cooled, twin turbocharged

Valve Train: SOHC, two valves per cylinder

Displacement: 3.6 liters

Compression Ratio: 8.0:1

Horsepower: 424 hp

Torque: 413 ft-lbs

Transmission: Six-speed manual

Brakes: Vented cross-drilled discs, 322 mm (f), 322 mm (r), ABS

Suspension: MacPherson struts, 5-link (rear), coil springs, anti-roll bars

Wheels (f, r): 18x8, 18x10 alloys

Tires (f, r): Bridgestone Potenza S-02 225/40ZR18, 285/30ZR18

Overall Length: 167.7 in.

Wheelbase: 89.4 in.

Width: 70.7 in.

Height: 51.8 in.

Track (f, r): 55.6 in., 59.3 in.

Curb Weight: 3,307 lbs

Weight Distribution (f/r): 38%/62%

0-62 mph: 4.5 sec. (manufacturer's est.)

Top Speed: 180+ mph (est.)

Price (1997): \$150,000 (base)

second, back off, and hit the brakes a little early. That might have been quicker because then you miss two gear changes. I would have had to do three laps one way, then three laps the other, then look at the times. You know, five laps tryin' to learn a car! Plus, I haven't been at this track in 20 years. I think

the two-wheel-drive car is the one you would need a little longer to get used to. Maybe three times a lap you'd get a little slide going where the back end would step out. I wouldn't say it was a big oversteer or anything, but when it happened, that made a difference.

Buckler's best lap: 1:56.71

Observations: There are probably eight seconds left on the table if you drive this car harder. It's really a nice car. You can feel all the changes in it, going back to the old technology. For example, the ABS here pulsates like a first-generation ABS system. The power is good, but there's a lack of low end until the turbo kicks in and gives you a real whack in the back. This is the best sounding car of the bunch. The muffler makes it seem like the car is really performing. (It turned out that the car had a test pipe—Ed). It seems like it wants for stiffer springs and better tires. The back tires are pretty skinny. It could be an alignment problem as well. The steering and the amount of body lean feel like an older 911. You have to be really careful not to get on the power too hard coming out of the corner.

Author's best lap: Don't tell.

Observations: This one sounds by far the best of the bunch with a rich, resounding whistle that makes you feel good whenever you pick up the throttle. The brake pedal went straight

to the floor at the top of the hill on my first lap, which is a caution to make your first test stab in the pits, not on the track. From then on, I was disinclined to trust the brakes much, even though they seemed to get the job done, if somewhat unconvincingly.

Due to the owner's concern for maintaining originality, this car was still shod with its original equipment Yokohama A008Ps, which did little to check the car's tendency to oversteer. Especially scary was the rear end's transition from right to left to right through the esses (turns 8 and 8A), where I almost lost it on my first pass. Only then did I remember that this was the only rear-wheel-drive Turbo in our test. I cycled into this one after driving the four all-wheel-drive cars first. And what a huge difference all-wheel-drive makes to Turbo marksmanship. To me, this car seemed noticeably down on power compared to the 993 and 996 versions. It accelerated like the 959, but without the turbo lag of that car.

■ **Right**—Litronic headlights were first big step forward for Turbo lighting. The 993 Turbo S also got combination brake duct/fog lights.

■ **Far right**—With twin turbochargers came the need for a new intercooler, one that hides almost everything in the engine compartment from sight.

■ **Below**—Hollow-spoke 18-inch alloy wheels were standard Turbo S fare and are lightly polished. Yellow caliper further differentiates the S.

■ **Below, right**—993 Turbo S had 424 horsepower in U.S. trim, so it's still the most powerful Turbo to reach the states. Subtle air intake on rear fender flare was a Turbo S trademark.



1997 911 Turbo S

In chronological progression, Larry Brackett's Polar Silver 911 Turbo S stood next in line in the paddock. Like Didrick's 1994 model, this one too bade farewell to a generation of Turbos. In this case, Porsche made around 200 S models to commemorate the end of the air-cooled 911 Turbo. Brackett is the kind of repeat offender that keeps a "standing order" at his local dealership for the latest Turbo, whatever it may be, whenever it may arrive. In 1997, that understanding brought him this 1997 Turbo S carrying a sticker price of \$164,510. Out the door, the tariff was more than \$185,000.

Exactly what did he get for that many dollars? Brackett laughs gently at the snake oil part of the deal: "I think it's one of those masterful things Porsche did in marketing — to have a car that was the last of the air-cooled Turbos be limited in production to 200. And they probably just tacked on an extra \$40,000. For what? Well that's a

good question. An extra wing. An extra hole here and there. But in all honesty, the interior is finished out very well. Everything's done in leather, so there are some upgrades."

In reality, Porsche did make some significant changes to the already potent 993 Turbo's portfolio with this *spätfäse* (late harvest) S model. In the engine compartment, they bumped horsepower from a stock rating of 400 to 424 hp, making it the most powerful Turbo Porsche has sold in the United States to date. Most of the other improvements to the S were of a cosmetic nature, such as yellow brake calipers, a new rear wing, brake cooling ducts, and rear air intakes in the fender flares that are similar to the ones on the 1994 Turbo S. Inside, the cockpit is a stunning medley of leather festooned knobs, carbon-fiber surfaces and aluminum gauge faces. From the driver's seat, the S looks every bit as expensive as it was.

