

Earth and High Heaven

The sky soars above us: 911 fans have been able to take classic drives into the blue for 30 years now. Nothing has changed in the fascination for the principle—open the roof, close the roof—but quite a bit in the technology itself.

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In its sixth (roof) generation, the new Porsche 911 Cabriolet continues to follow closely in the footsteps of its predecessors, with its superior roof and convertible top system for sports cars made even better. Our extensive gallery of ancestral portraits shows how the modern panel bow roof with magnesium ribs came about.

Precisely 30 years ago, in 1982, Porsche set off a veritable storm in the world of purist, dynamic sports

cars with the 911 SC Cabrio. Even earlier, in 1965, Porsche had already interpreted roof material and activation in such a revolutionary manner that the approach was eagerly taken over by many competitors in the sports-car business, from General Motors (Corvette) to Fiat (X1/9). The Targa became a concept, its own body form, and an emulated icon.

A 911 with a fabric roof may not lag behind that type of sister model. Every generation, of course, always comes

with a solid and pioneering roof design. Now, five model generations down the line, the 911 Cabrio remains what it has always been—a driver of technology, avant-garde in its roof design, and simply a classic. The “Cabrioler”—one meaning from the French is “to jump or dance for joy”—is contagious; the 911 Cabrio continues to fascinate Porsche drivers and engineers alike.

The following pages document an evolution of technology—and the roof of the 911. ●



G SERIES 1982



THE FIRST-BORN

A range of unfolding opportunities is launched by the 911 SC Cabriolet of 1982. A special feature is its manual mechanism for opening the roof. The tarpaulin in the 2+2-seater has to be fastened with snaps. The roof construction is 15 kg (33 lb.) lighter than that of a 911 Targa, but guarantees high dimensional stability and tautness

even at the peak speed of 235 km/h (146 mph). A self-adjusting roof-tightening system that uses spring-loaded cables to keep the fabric in shape ensures that the roof sits trimly. The rear window can be opened by a zipper. This Cabriolet is for purists. *Roof opening time (manual): about 10 seconds.*

911 SC CABRIOLET

Technical data

Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 2,994 cc
Power: 204 hp (150 kW)
Maximum torque: 270 Nm at 4,300 rpm
0–100 km/h: 6.5 sec.
Top track speed: 235 km/h (146 mph)
Fuel consumption: 10.4 l/100 km



964 1989

OPEN SESAME

High-tech takes up residence in the 964 series of the 911 Carrera, with ABS, power steering, and air bags. And the Cabriolet gets an optional electric roof for the first time. It's now a pleasure not to have to open the roof by hand. This work has been delegated to flex-shafts and swing gears, and uses not quite 340 watts (0.5 hp) to maneuver the folding roof into its compartment. But

only when the car is at a standstill. Another 60 watts are needed to bring two additional motors into play that lock the roof at its front edge upon closure. For the purist do-it-yourselfers, there is a mechanical folding roof variant, whose handling is similar to that of the SC.

Roof opening time: 20 seconds.

911 CARRERA 2 CABRIOLET

Technical data

Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 3,600 cc
Power: 250 hp (184 kW)
Maximum torque: 310 Nm at 4,800 rpm
0–100 km/h: 5.7 sec.
Top track speed: 260 km/h (162 mph)
Fuel consumption: 11.5 l/100 km



993 1993

HIGHLY CHARGED

The third Cabriolet generation of the 911 Carrera starts as model series 993 in the year 1993 with the first fully-electric folding roof. It has been developed to enhance comfort levels for open-top drivers, because more than 40 percent of the 964 model series cars were ordered as Cabriolets. The fully automatic, electric roof mechanism is largely taken from its predecessor. It only

functions, however, when the engine is running. Safety regulations require that the emergency brake is on. With a large part of its roof rigid, the 993 features sophisticated kinematics—and the first wind deflector integrated into the roof, which divides the cabrio community into two camps.

Roof opening time: 20 seconds.

911 CARRERA CABRIOLET

Technical data

Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 3,600 cc
Power: 272 hp (200 kW)
Maximum torque: 330 Nm at 5,000 rpm
0–100 km/h: 5.6 sec.
Top track speed: 270 km/h (168 mph)
Fuel consumption: 11.4 l/100 km

996 1997



WATER-COOLED IN THE OPEN AIR

Electric motors, electric pumps, and a microcomputer preside over the operation of the first water-cooled 911 and thus also the Carrera Cabriolet of model series 996. A hydraulic system takes charge of moving the roof rods, with its pressure in turn provided by the electric pump. Electric motors are also used to lock the

bow onto the window frame. This high-tech ballet is set into motion by pressing a button on the central console or by activating the remote control key. Optional features include a hardtop made of aluminum.

Roof opening time: 13 seconds.

911 CARRERA 4S CABRIOLET

Technical data

Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 3,596 cc
Power: 320 hp (235 kW)
Maximum torque: 370 Nm at 4,250 rpm
0–100 km/h: 5.2 sec.
Top track speed: 280 km/h (174 mph)
Fuel consumption: 11.4 l/100 km

997 2004



LESS AND MORE

Lower weight and enhanced performance is the guiding principle of the 997 model series. The Carrera roofs which delight Cabriolet fans starting in 2004 weigh slightly less than 36 kg (79 pounds) and are absolutely winter-proof. The Carrera soft top is thus considerably lighter than other Cabrio roofs. The manual wind deflector is now part of the standard package.

The electric and hydraulic systems offer excellent operational convenience. In addition, the roof now can be opened or closed while the car is in motion at speeds of up to 50 km/h (30 mph). The roof folds cleanly into place in the 997 as well. The 2004 Cabriolet of the 997 series brings you more—with less weight.

Roof opening time: 13 seconds.

911 CARRERA S CABRIOLET

Technical data (built in 2008)

Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 3,800 cc
Power: 385 hp (283 kW)
Maximum torque: 420 Nm at 4,400 rpm
0–100 km/h: 4.9 (4.7*) sec.
Top track speed: 302 (300*) km/h (188/186* mph)
Fuel consumption: 10.8 (10.3*) l/100 km
 * with Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK)

991 2012



TOP-NOTCH VISUALS

Magnesium and aluminum ensure that the roof has not gained in weight despite a greater number of components (panel bow, rigid interior roof segments, sound insulation) in the current Carrera Cabrio model. The roof is lowered into the very shallow space underneath the roof compartment lid by means of the Z-folding mechanism. The air-intake slats are integrated into this com-

partment, which is directly connected to the rear spoiler—one cover with two functions. All side windows open when the roof is opened. Following this technically masterful process, they then close. And the eye travels as well—when the roof is closed, the new Cabriolet silhouette exactly mirrors that of the Coupé. *Roof opening time: 13 seconds.*

911 CARRERA CABRIOLET

Technical data

Engine: Six-cylinder boxer

Displacement: 3,436 cc

Power: 350 hp (257 kW)

Maximum torque: 390 Nm at 5,600 rpm

0–100 km/h: 5.0 (4.8*) sec.

Top track speed: 286 (284*) km/h (178/176* mph)

CO₂ emissions: 217 (198*) g/km

Fuel consumption

City: 13.1 (11.4*) l/100 km

Highway: 7.0 (6.7*) l/100 km

Combined: 9.2 (8.4*) l/100 km

* with Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK)