

Fifth generation Porsche 911, (996), 1997–2005

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With the presentation of the 996 in 1997, Porsche was entering new territory. The sports car was the first series 911 with water cooling. This was necessary because new statutory exhaust regulations meant that Porsche had to use a four-valve cylinder head, which could only be cooled reliably in all operating situations with water. At the same time, this four-valve technology enabled the basic six-cylinder boxer to deliver 300 PS, and it was trailblazing in terms of emissions, noise and consumption. And everything else about the 996 was new: the body was 18.5 centimetres longer and 3 cm wider, while the styling and assistance systems were also new. And the parts-sharing strategy with the Boxster was another new innovation. Thanks to high-strength steel and new production methods, the 996 weighed around 50 kilograms less than its predecessor.

With the 996 generation, Porsche discovered a path to the future. The 996 was based on a new platform that enabled parallel development with the already-launched Boxster. The new model was also bigger, offering significantly more space and comfort. Aside from the name and the engine layout,

Porsche kept only the crest on the bonnet, the wheel hub covers, the steering wheel and the airbags from the previous 993. Walter Röhrl, two-time rally world champion and consultant at Porsche since 1993, collaborated with racing engineer Roland Kussmaul to develop a dream car: the first Porsche 911 GT3. Röhrl rhapsodises even now: “A milestone for me. A racing car for the road.”

With the mid-life model update in 2002, the regular 996 was given the front headlights of 911 Turbo model, which were rounded off at the bottom so as to differentiate it more clearly from the Boxster. The starting price of the 911 Carrera Coupé of model year 1998 was 135,610 Deutschmarks. Between 1998 and 2005, Porsche built 175,262 examples of the 996.

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