

FOR CAR COVERS SEE THE BACK COVER

FULL COLOR

Art Prints & Accessories

57 VETTE F.I.

\$2 for samples. Credited toward purchase.

"WHEELS OF ART"

P.O. Box 289, Worthington, Ohio 43085

Porsche 911SC: Refined for '81

The 1981 model year has opened, and surprise! The venerable Porsche 911SC returns to the U.S. with few changes outside of its price (see News Briefs, Page 5).

European Editor Georg Kacher recently drove the latest 911SC, in European trim, and filed this report:

By Georg Kacher

The smoking, screeching 911SC is still the embodiment of the typical Porsche: It is very fast, very well made and very difficult to drive. It is a man's car.

But the 911SC has dated, almost unnoticed. During the 17 years since its introduction in 1963, the parameters for a modern sports car have gradually exceeded the potential of the 911's

rear-engine / rear-wheel-drive concept — no matter how often or how well it may have been refined.

The 911 also epitomizes Porsche's current dilemma; in a way, it plays the role the Volkswagen Beetle played in Wolfsburg before the Golf was born. Zuffenhausen's main problem is the slow demand for the Porsches of the '80s — the van-engined 924 developed originally for VW and the big, expensive and overstyled 928 which has been suffering from teething troubles for almost three years now.

So far, the 911 and its turbo sister can still make up for the hole in the purse since they are selling reasonably well. But the two rear-engined models, which by now would have been discontinued had the marketing plans worked out, are being kept alive at a high price. For how long will Porsche be able to afford the costly luxury of producing three different model ranges in parallel (the 911's current daily production rate rarely exceeds 40 — still comfortably within the breakeven point of 20 units per day), and how will the company weather the change from the almost outdated, but much loved tailheavies to their rather imageless successors?

THE ZUFFENHAUSEN engineers in the past years have continuously refined the rear-engined models, but the latest 911SC represents a bigger step ahead than any of its predecessors

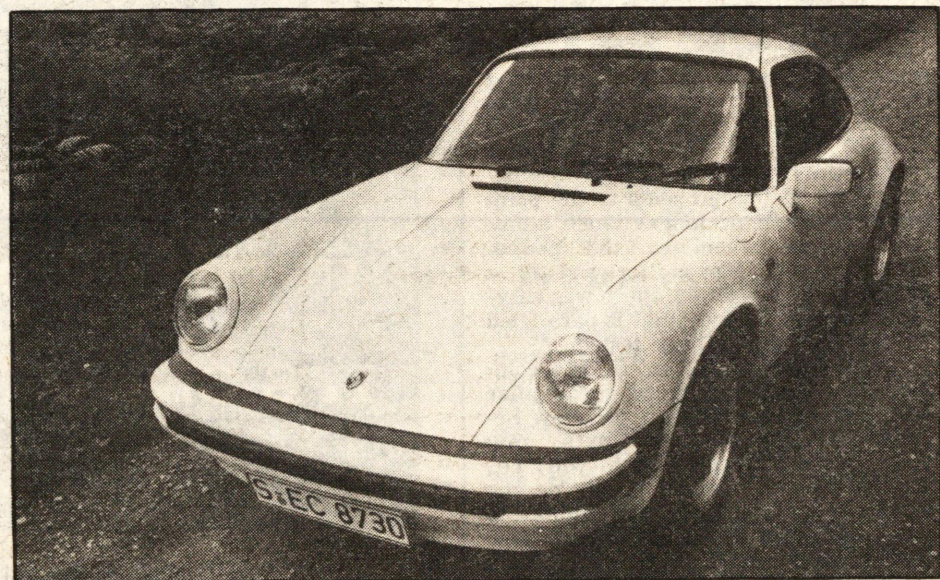
ly in the wet, in winter or on loose ground that you approach them. Under these conditions, the transition from light understeer to brutal oversteer can happen unexpectedly early and quite abruptly.

On dry roads, however, the change is progressive and fairly predictable: Going at moderate speeds, the nose will run a bit wide and has to be forced towards the apex. Increase the speed and the line tightens, the steering gets sharper and the car enters its neutral phase. Go faster still and the ride may become pitchy; the steering is now very, very quick, and the weight sits markedly on the rear as the car's balance is held or upset mainly by the throttle.

The 911 does not feel equally at home on all types of road. In tight corners or through uphill bends, it's superb, but through long fast bends, over crests and grooves, it by no means feels unbeatable.

THE 911 SHOWS its age most when one actually reaches or exceeds these limits. Despite the mellow tires, the 911's trigger-happy tail requires very quick and well-timed counter-action. When you're too slow, the answer may be a *tete-a-tete*; when you overreact, the car may repay with zig-zags.

This attitude makes the 911SC a rather tiring car to drive. To achieve high average speeds, you have to pay more attention and drive with more



Georg Kacher

since the days of the legendary (and often overrated) Carrera. The biggest improvement was achieved in an area where one would have expected it least — the car's overall balance and its handling qualities are distinctly superior to a 911 I drove in 1978. It is difficult to judge how much of the credit has to go to the Goodyear NCTs the test car was shod with. The 60-series NCTs did offer a better wet grip and far superior directional stability — absolutely crucial in the 911 — than the better-gripping, better-looking, but uncompromising Pirelli P7s. They were also more forgiving when one approached the car's high limits.

The 911 is still at its best on the open road, on narrow country lanes and on twisty mountain passes. Contrary to fast highway driving where the steering lets through too much bump-thump and where — especially in crosswinds — the grip at the wheel simply requires too much muscle and concentration to maintain a straight line, the set-up feels right on side roads where the steering is nicely balanced, light and accurate. Here, the nose is tied to the ground (instead of being slightly unstable on the autobahn); here, the handling is ultra-quick and responsive and, at least on dry pavement, reassuringly safe.

The 911SC's roadholding abilities are beyond the skill and experience of the average motorist. It takes many miles to work yourself closer and closer to the car's limits, and it's main-

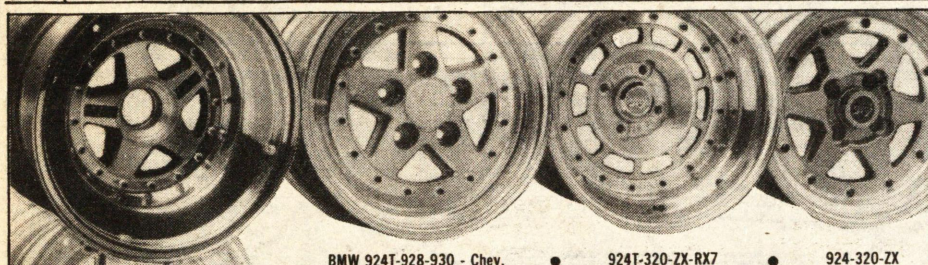
concentration than in a truly modern sports car. After about 100 fast miles through rural France, I emerged from the 911 with the distinct feeling of having worked hard. This impression was enhanced by the heaviness of the clutch and brake pedals and by the action of the standard five-speed gearbox, which at last features a conventional pattern with fifth straight up, but which otherwise feels disappointingly bony and slow.

The 911 shows its age least when it comes to sheer *brio* and the price you pay for making use of it. The flat six is not only one of the nicest boxer engines, it is also one of the most refined six-cylinder powerplants overall. For '81, power output has been increased (on the European models) from 188 to 204 BHP at 5,500 RPM. The new 911SC tops 146 MPH and can accelerate in 6.6 seconds from 0 to 60 MPH; its maximum torque is available at a rather high 4,300 RPM.

IMPRESSIVE AS the spec sheet is, you really have to take the 911 on the road to discover its virtues. Strap yourself in the bucket seat, find the ideal driving position and start the hoarse, nervous engine. The throttle response is immaculate, and with the tachometer needle dancing around 3,000 RPM, a careful left foot may release the clutch.

As the nose lifts and you push down

Continued on Page 12



GOTTI RACING WHEELS

Congratulates his best customers for 1980

- Renault & Ligier Formula One Teams, winner of 5 Grand Prix, with Arnoux, Jabouille, Pironi, Laffitte

- Jean Rondeau, winner, 1980 - 24-hours of LeMans.

Ferrari: Boxer 303
Pantera-Audi Turbo

We can provide you with the latest in modular racing wheels for your SCCA/IMSA/CART/CAN-AM? F.S/V, ATL., F/F needs at the best prices. Our wheels are the safest, best constructed modulars on the market. We have a very large inventory of all types and can provide wheels for older type racing cars.

NEW: 928, 8x16 Modular
NEW: Formula Ford lowcost.

2-piece modular for Crossle,
Lola, Van Diemens, Zink - List
\$149.00.

Can-Am

F/Ford

NEW: RONAL-TURBOKOOL WHEELS for F/A, CAN-AM, TRANS/AM, ETC. - 13" 15" 16" 19", compatible with BBS parts. Very lightweight, will not require any cooling fans. Inquire for price - availability.

NEW: ETOILE ★ RACING WHEELS - All new technology in racing wheel design for F/Atlantic - S/V - CAN-AM - IMSA, with magnesium centers and rims. Inquire by phone. Available winter '80-'81.

WE OFFER THE BEST SERVICE TO DEALERS AND P/P. WHY STAY WITH THE MEDIUM WHEN YOU CAN GET THE ABSOLUTE BEST, FOR LESS!

Send \$3 for color brochure to:

GOTTI ★ ETOILE-EUROPEAN RACING, INC.
2872 C Walnut Ave., Tustin, CA 92680
Tel. (714) 838-7021. Telex: (910) 5951515.



go
for the
ultimate in
HANDLING
QUICKOR

Only Quickor suspension systems offer the precision, the quality, the custom fit necessary to make your machine an exceptional handler "Integrated Suspension Systems" specialists at Quickor Engineering.

Write today for your Free copy of "Suspension in Action"

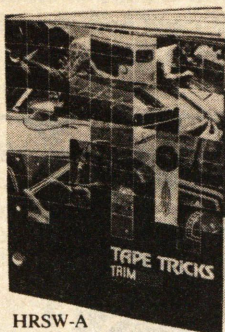
Quickor Engineering
6710 SW 111 Ave., Dept. AW
Beaverton, OR 97005



Stripe your car like a PRO in minutes, for peanuts!

We've packed a ton of how-to-do-it tips into this new Tape Tricks Manual. From the fine points of pinstriping to applying solar window film. Plus multi-striping...wide deck striping...forming spear ends...creating custom accents. It's all here. With detail pictures of every step in turning your stock vehicle into a mean machine. Trimbrite's new Tape Tricks Manual. At \$2, it's a steal. Send today to: Spartan Plastics, Inc., P.O. Box 67, Holt, Michigan 48842. (Canadian residents add \$1.00 for handling)

TRIMBRITE®
PRODUCTS



HRSW-A

AW 10

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

IMPORT CAM POWER



SPRITE • MIDGET • MINI • COOPER • MGA/MGB • CAPRI-V6 •
CORTINA • PORSCHE • VW • OPEL • TRIUMPH • TOYOTA •
DATSUN • JAGUAR • FIAT • ALFA ROMEO • VOLVO •

ISKY has the right hi-performance cam profile for Road & Rallye, Autocross or SCCA Road Racing Applications to suit just about any import or sports car on the road today.

Select our new "Express" cam regrinding service (we process your camshaft, no core exchange — Express Service) or, for many applications new cams are available on an outright basis.

For complete details and information on all ISKY valve train components for import cars, send for our 1980 catalog "THE TRUTH ABOUT CAMS," and a 4 color ISKY jacket patch all for only \$2.00 P.P.D.

ISKENDERIAN CAMS

ED ISKENDERIAN RACING CAMS

16020 S. BROADWAY • BOX 30 • D/AW • GARDENA, CALIF. 90247 • (213) 770-0930

NEW super dyno

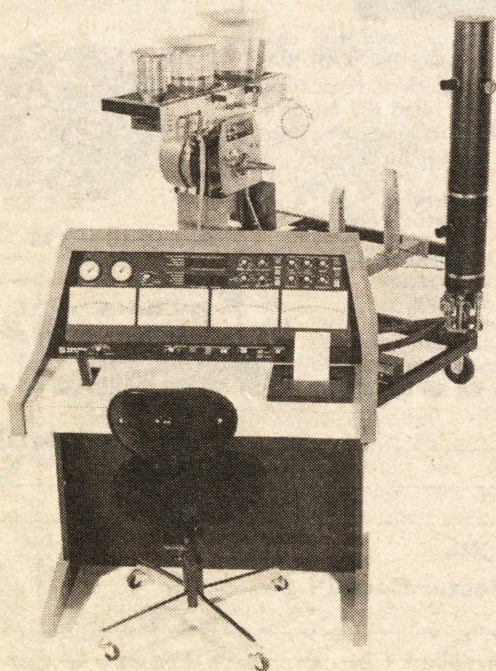
Featuring:

- Computer control
- Acceleration tests
- Instant data recording
- Print-out
- 10,000 RPM, 800 Ft.-lbs.
- Air and fuel flow
- Exhaust gas temperature
- A/F ratio & BSFC

\$14,900 complete

The SuperFlow dyno automatically measures engine RPM, torque, HP, fuel flow, air flow, air-fuel ratio, bsfc, and exhaust gas temperatures.

Data can be recorded while the engine is accelerating at selected rates up to 2000 RPM/second. Select the



beginning and ending RPM and the computer will run the test and print out the results. For more info:



SuperFlow

3512-A North Tejon
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
Phone (303) 471-1746



Georg Kacher photos

Porsche 911SC updated

Continued from Page 10

the accelerator just far enough to avoid the expensive black marks on the pavement, the 911 first leaps, then darts off as if driven by a catapult. With first gear reaching up to 40 MPH and second taking you past 70 MPH, the 911 is undoubtedly one of the quickest cars this side of the law.

The power surge continues to about 110 MPH or for approximately 20 seconds; after that, and especially when you have to change into fifth at 125 MPH, the final miles to the red-line need to be squeezed out with some determination.

The first four gears of the five-speed box are very well spaced, but fifth is really too long to be used on the highway all the time. You find yourself shifting down into fourth or third more often than you like, and more often than in the much stronger four-speed 930 Turbo.

The efficiency of the 911SC's four ventilated disc brakes is beyond reproach; they decelerate the 2,550-pound car reliably and without fading or premature lockups. After a few high-speed stopping maneuvers, however, the brakes require a very high pedal pressure.

ALTHOUGH PORSCHE increased the engine's power output by 8.5 percent and thus brought the BHP figure up to the level of the 1976 Carrera, the extra performance looks only like a side-effect compared with the 17-percent gain in fuel economy. The new 911 must be the world's most frugal 3-liter sports car: It averages 27.1 MPG with a low of 21.0 MPG for the urban cycle and an astonishing 35.3 MPG at a steady 56 MPH.

To achieve these results, the engineers had to thoroughly modify the flat six. They raised the compression ratio from 8.6 to 9.8 to one, they redesigned the piston head shape (thereby optimizing the combustion process), they uprated the valve timing and they modified the injection and ignition system.

One must congratulate Porsche on the net results of these measures. I can think of no other car that can be driven as fast as a 911 and at the same time use so little fuel.

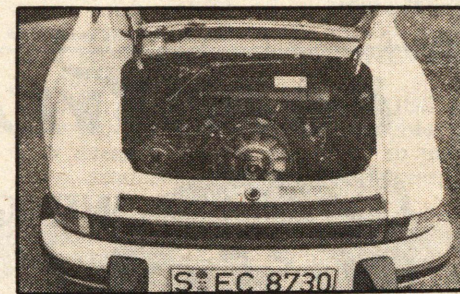
Because of its antagonistic qualities, the 911 is of a controversial car. Its forte—the economical and powerful engine—barely manages to outweigh its drawback—the outdated driving characteristics.

Whether you like it as a car depends on your personal priorities. If you can and like to handle steering fight, a quick tail and a certain unpredictability when going really fast, the 911 is the right choice. If you want a sports car where you can relax behind the wheel, look elsewhere.

It will be difficult, however, to find a car which unites the ambiguous but often fascinating roadability of the 911SC with its objectives like economy, build quality, finish and longevity. Expensive as the 911 is to buy in the first place, it is without doubt one of the cheapest top-notch sports cars to keep for a long time. Considering its limited

production time and Porsche's unconditional seven-year anti-corrosion warranty, it may even be an investment.

In a way, the Porsche 911SC is like a piece of art: In some important respects, it does not match the standards of today, but its owner will value it highly as a classic remnant of a bygone era.



Quattroporte

Continued from Page 9

brakes—large, power-assisted ventilated Girling units with floating calipers—are fairly light and easy to modulate.

We're a bit disappointed that state-side Quattroportes are available only with automatic transmissions—in this case a Chrysler TorqueFlite slushbox connected to a Salisbury 3.54 rear end—but it works well and seems to suit the temperament of the car.

Suspension, of course, is independent all around, with wishbones in front and trailing arms in back. There's a moderately sized sway bar at the front only. Handling is predictable and surprisingly precise for a 4,190-pound sedan. Body lean is substantial, making for an undignified attitude in hard cornering, but there doesn't seem to be any compromise in cornering force, and ride quality is first-rate. Cruising along at 5,000 RPM in top gear (113 MPH) or just puttzing around town, the Quattroporte is, above all, reassuring in its response to driver input.

It gets out of its own way, too. Performance, in 0-60 talk, is 8.5 seconds. Horsepower is 288@5,200 and torque is 308@3,000; not bad for an engine that breathes through two huge catalytic canisters.

If only it didn't gulp so much fuel, we could be near unanimous in our praise for the newest addition to the Maserati stable. The EPA city rating of 7 MPG is the stuff oil shortages are made of. There's a vacuum gauge on the dash which always operated in the "wanton waste" zone, no matter how gently we pressed on the throttle. We don't think such fuel economy (or lack thereof) is conscionable, much less forgivable, particularly when hard driving can drop the Maser's distance between fillups (what might more rightly be referred to as fillips) down below 200 miles.

So what can we say about the Quattroporte? It's \$55,382 sticker and 7 MPG are a price and appetite too rich for our resources, or our tastes, humble resource-conscious scribes that we are, but if we had the money? We're thinking, we're thinking...