

Porsche 911S 1967-1973

# The Soul Of A Dynasty

by Mitchell Sam Rossi  
PHOTOS BY LES BIDRAWN

While Porsche has built many types of sports cars over its 53-year history, few can argue against the fact that one particular model, the 911, elevated the small, family-owned manufacturer to superstar fame in the world of automobiles. If not always the company's flagship, the 911 represents the concept of what every Porsche should be.

Penned by Ferdinand "Butzi" Porsche, the grandson of the company's founder, the 911 succeeded the venerable 356 in the model year 1965. First received with skepticism (even back then, Porsche owners were disapproving of anyone fiddling with their beloved cars), the new coupe soon proved itself a worthy descendant.

But the first production 2.0-

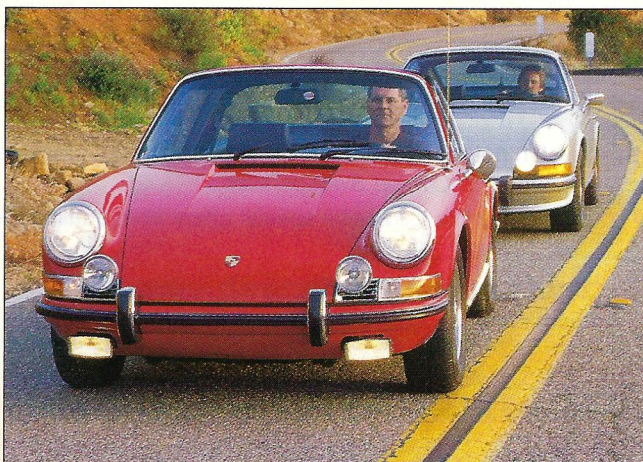
liter, aircooled, six-cylinder boxer engine was built conservatively in both displacement and performance. The car's design also held more potential, yet, at its introduction the 911 was somewhat less awe-inspiring than many of its market competitors, such as the cheaper but decidedly quicker, Chevrolet Corvette Sting Ray.

By 1967, Porsche was ready to introduce the souped-up 911, a model that would offer its customers something more spectacular and fitting of the marque—the 911S.

Bearing the insignia of Super, a name inherited from the high-performance 356s, the 911 was transformed from a grand touring automobile, barely two

model years old, to a sports car that was both fast and agile, yet luxurious and dependable. It was the perfect balance between styling and performance, but even as the automobile press garnished it with fanfare, no one could have predicted the cult-like status the S would attain.

The car's unruly habit of pirouetting in mid-turn should have been a public relations deathblow—the sports-car version of SUV rollovers. Yet, it became part of the mystique, a bit of the legend. Conquering the 911S was, and still is, a badge of honor. In how many other cars, while flying in a screeching sideways slide already a heartbeat beyond control, does one daringly avoid the brakes and, instead, stomp on the throttle?



### The Road to Greatness

In the latter part of the '60s, the bays at Zuffenhausen were filled with race cars. Variants of the 904, 906, 907, 908, 910 and the ultimate Teutonic knight, the Porsche 917, were either enjoying current success or in the early stages of design and development. Thus, the S was left to teethe not on the racing circuit but in the far more grueling realm of open-road rallying. Here, the new coupe was not only pitted against other great automobiles and drivers but against Mother Nature herself.

For all the cynicism and scorn it received for its tendency to convert understeer into oversteer with a mere flinch of the right foot, the 911 showed itself a remarkable contender in this arduous and unpredictable arena. While the 910 conquered the Nürburgring, the 911S dashed its way to dominance through paths of snow and gravel and smothering dust.

Yet, it must be noted that while the prototype cars drew

the majority of the factory's competition efforts, the racing engineers did not turn their backs completely on the 911S. As it had always been at Porsche, factory-supported teams were furnished with the most advanced components and equipment available.

The cars were well prepared, usually having all extraneous equipment, undercoating and sound-insulating material removed. The bodies were molded from thinner pieces of sheetmetal and their standard glass was replaced by Plexiglas. The flat-six engines were tuned to the highest output possible while still providing reliability. Later units were given displacements well beyond the production motors. Equipment was often experimental or taken directly from the prototype's parts bin. These production-based 911S cars, known internally as the STs, would become the champions of the S folklore.

In 1968, the famed duo of Vic Elford and David Stone

piloted a 911 with a highly tuned S motor to the checkered flag at the 37th running of the prestigious Monte Carlo Rally. The team captured its class and first overall, but the celebration wasn't over. Following them across the finish line in second overall was another 911.

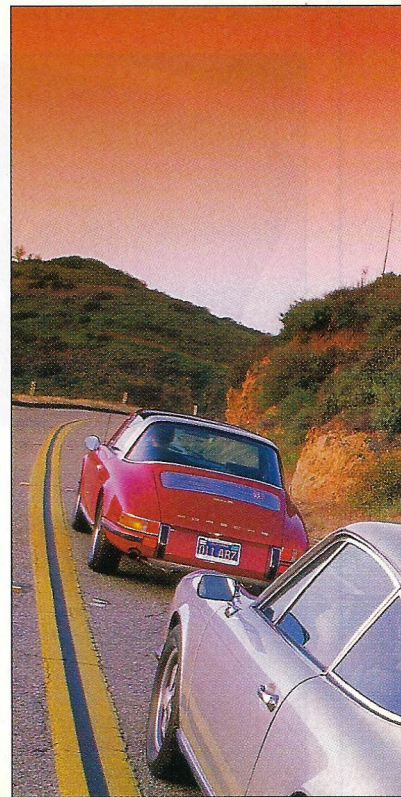
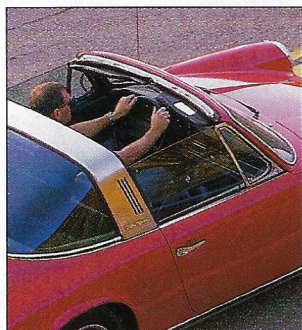
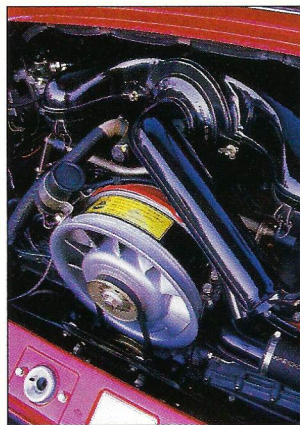
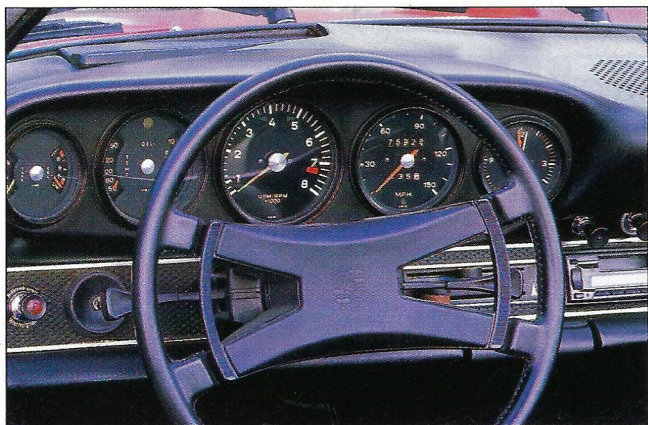
For 1969, the 911S prevailed again at the Monte, this time at the hands of Björn Waldegaard, one of the most successful rally drivers to speed through a snowstorm. The S also conquered the Austrian Alpine Trial and the Swedish Rally. Across the Mediterranean, it hoisted the team of Toivonen/Kalari to the top of the podium at the exceedingly harsh Acropolis Rally of Greece.

At the turn of the new decade, the Monte was again owned by Porsche. It was the first time a manufacturer had captured the French rally in three consecutive seasons. The year of 1970 was also the inauguration of rallying's International Championship

for Makes, a collection of seven different races ranging from Africa's scorching Safari Rally to the often bitterly cold and snow-covered Swedish Rally. At the helm of a 2.2-liter, 235-bhp 911S, Waldegaard made sure the name of Porsche was the first to be etched on the championship's trophy.

Through its adolescent years, rallying was the 911S's forte, but the car's teardrop shape wasn't totally absent from the racetrack. When 917K brutes were hurling themselves down the Mulsanne straight in 1971, they were sharing the Le Mans circuit with 18 911S siblings.

The next year, the privateer 911S from Auto Kremer Porsche took the European GT Championship trophy after British driver John Fitzpatrick won five of the nine series races. On the left shore of the Atlantic, it was the dawning of the fabled team of Peter Gregg and Hurley Haywood as they charged across the finish line to capture the Daytona 6 Hours.



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Factory efforts and private teams aside, if anything earned the 911S its fame and following, it was the gentleman driver and weekend race enthusiast. For Porsche's clients, the adage "Race on Sunday, sell on Monday" should have read, "Buy on Saturday, race on Sunday."

The 911S could be driven to the track, emptied of its spare tire, tools and picnic basket, then thrashed solidly about in chivalrous competition. At the end of the day, it needed only to be re-packed for the journey home. And more often than not, these weekend sojourns would earn its owner/driver a trophy or two for his/her mantle.

What was true then is true today. A visit to any sports-car club event on any given weekend across the country—be it concours, autocross, rallying or high-speed cup racing—will find a distinguished gathering of early 911S cars.

In the hands of the avid per-

fectionists, some will have been restored to a state far better than the factory ever produced. Others, whose owners are influenced more by the racing bug than historical preservation, will look as if they have been cursed with gargoyle wings, bulbous fenders and angular facets something akin to GT3 competitors.

The majority, however, fall in the middle of the spectrum. These are cars still teeming with life. They conquer roads and highways on a weekly basis, if not every day. Pockmarks and road grit climb across their hoods, and their paint is fading. Blisters of rust probably threaten the bottom edge of the front fenders near the door frames. They always do.

Inside, the seatbacks shrug awkwardly like inebriated friends. The dashboards have that particular crack in that particular spot. The clock is dead, its hands set to 12 noon

because there is no better place to aim them. And underneath, black veins of oil cling to the seams of engine cases. These are badges of honor, the medals of war heroes who have never been retired.

Thirty-four years after its introduction, the allure of the 911S is thriving.

### Owning a Legend

Buying a new 996 takes only money. Owning an early S requires dedication. To be sure, maintaining any type of vintage car takes patience, time and plenty of effort. They are rarely comfortable, quiet or dependable. The upkeep is costly, parts are difficult to locate, and finding a trustworthy mechanic is more important than having a gentle dentist.

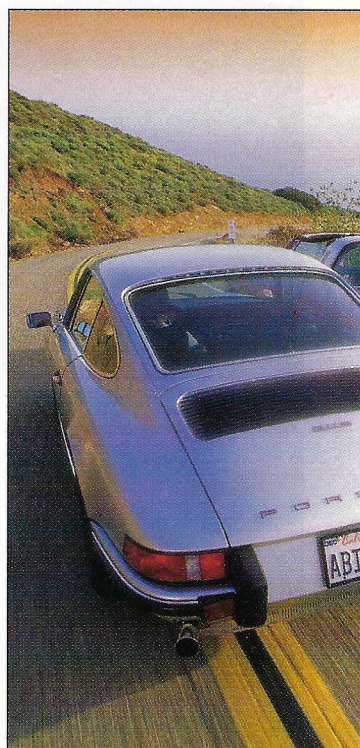
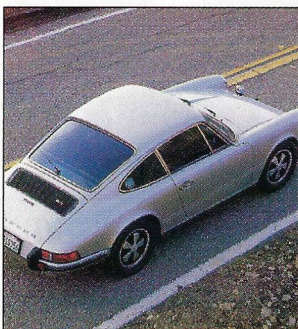
Choosing which is the best 911S to buy is like deciding whom to fall in love with. The only answer is to follow your heart. But, there are a few distinctions to each year that should be considered.

Overall, the earliest of cars will need the most care and

pampering. While you may not lean toward keeping your car in concours condition, be aware that there is not as great an abundance of aftermarket products for the 1967-68 cars as for the later models. You may find yourself tracking down pieces that are only available at the Porsche junkyard. But, if you are thinking of vintage racing, then the '67 S is your ride.

The 1969-73 cars are in the ballpark of being three decades old, but relatively speaking they are far more modern than the earlier cars. Their options lists were longer, and they were built with better materials. In short, Porsche had worked out most of the bugs. First, and foremost, was the lengthening of the wheelbase by extending the rear trailing arms, which moved the car's center of gravity forward. It made for a much better handling automobile even before the S was pushed to its extremes.

Buying a Targa, coupe or sunroof is a personal choice, but on average expect a Targa to be a few hundred dollars more expensive. A sunroof



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doesn't seem to change the value much. If you are considering taking the S to the track and competing seriously, shy away from the sunroof cars. The unit adds about 60 lb in the worst possible location.

Targas are also a race-track faux pas. They are roughly 100 lb heavier due to chassis reinforcement, and they still twist in the chicanes.

Carbureted cars are more fickle than the engines with Bosch mechanical fuel injection. And while the MFI is expensive to rebuild (as are Weber carburetors), a reconditioned system is nearly infallible. The 2.0-liter motor of the 1969 S has unique cylinder heads with larger valves than the later motors. These heads are expensive to refurbish and replace.

The 1973 S is probably the most desirable, as it is the last of the true 911S cars. On the other hand, the 1972 model, nearly identical in mechanicals and accessories, has the distinction of possessing the one-year-only oil filler cap on the right rear fender.

Estimating the current prices for early 911Ss is a veritable Pandora's box. I have witnessed cosmetically clean and mechanically fit cars pass hands for under \$15,000 but have also heard of sales of \$30,000 gems. These high rollers are usually cars that have undergone complete restorations or are in such original condition that they look to have been in a time capsule. Also decide the importance of having matching numbers, where the engine and chassis corresponds to the original registration. This adds value to original and concours cars.

The vehicle identification

numbers are in several locations, including inside the trunk above the fuel tank and on the front latch panel. For late 1969, it showed up on the driver's-side A-pillar and on the driver's doorjamb after 1970. A good restoration book can decipher the chassis numbers and tell the car's exact model year, engine type, date of manufacturing and a variety of other details.

For sanity's sake, keep three rules in mind while shopping: First, purchase the absolute best 911S you can find—not the best you can afford, the best you can find. It is worth borrowing the extra money.

Second, beware of rust. While mechanicals are important, and inescapably expensive, once an engine or transmission is overhauled, it should last another 100K miles. A chassis full of rust is a scourge that can never be completely defeated.

Lastly, never purchase a 911S without taking it to a reputable mechanic for a complete diagnostic inspection and test drive. Because the 911T and 911E can be outfitted to look like a true S, it is often difficult to know exactly what model is under the "For Sale" sign. There is no limit to the number of seedy characters who are eager to cash in on the 911S frenzy. They usually pronounce Porsche as a single-syllable word.

### Detail: Year by Year

**1967:** This is considered the short-wheelbase car. The 2.0-liter flat-six engine received lightweight forged pistons, and compression was increased from 9.0:1 to 9.8:1. The Weber carburetors received larger jets. The intake and exhaust valves grew by 3mm to 42 and 38, respectively. These changes helped the

high-performance motor gain an additional 30 horses, bringing power up to 160 bhp.

Other components of the "S package" were Koni shock absorbers, ventilated disc brakes, front and rear. Anti-sway bars were added to both ends of the car. Inside the cockpit, basket-weave trim covered the bottom panel of the dash, and the driver was given a leather-covered steering wheel, replacing the standard wood-rimmed wheel. Outside, the car was surrounded by larger rubber decoration strips.

The most prominent announcement that this 911 was different from its stablemate was the introduction of the now famous Fuchs wheels. With today's myriad aftermarket wheels, it is hard to believe that the 1967 911S was the first production sports car to be offered with forged alloy rollers.

**1968:** Also a year of the short-wheelbase car. Due to strict emissions controls, the 1968 911S was not imported into the U.S. Instead, the 911L (Lux), a car similarly equipped to the S, was brought across the Pond. The L, however, shared the 130-bhp engine of the standard 911.

**1969:** This is the first year of the long-wheelbase 911s, as the rear wheels were moved back 2.4 in. The compression ratio of the S engine was bumped up to 9.9:1. Larger intake and exhaust valves and the race-developed Bosch mechanical fuel injection helped the new motor produce 170 bhp and 134 lb-ft of peak torque. An auxiliary radiator-type oil cooler was mounted inside the right front fender.

The Fuchs grew to 6x15 in. The Sportomatic, Porsche's four-speed semi-automatic transmission, was an option. Aluminum calipers were slipped over the front brake discs.

**1970-71:** Across the model line, the engine bore was

increased to 84mm, creating a 2.2-liter six. The S now commanded 180 bhp and 147 lb-ft of torque at 5200 rpm.

The ZF limited-slip differential became an option for all 911s in 1970. The Sportomatic was dropped from the S options list.

**1972-73:** All 911 engines received an increased stroke of 70.4mm, creating 2.4-liter motors (actually only 2341cc). For 1972, the oil tank moved ahead of the right rear wheel on all models. It returned to its original position the next year.

Despite a drop in compression ratio to 8.5:1, the S engine picked up another 10 horses, bringing power up to 190 bhp with a 4000-rpm-induced torque of 158 lb-ft. The new engine facilitated the introduction of the stronger 915 transmission in all the cars.

Anti-roll bars were 15mm at the front and rear. A steel front airdam was added to the S to improve high-speed stability. In 1973, the front oil cooler was replaced with a simpler tubular-type unit.

Regardless of the year, there is a thrill to descending into the cockpit of an early 911S—the way the thick, barely supportive driver's seat absorbs you...how the leather steering wheel grips your fingers and palm. With gauges on the dash, it is heartening to see the most critical, the tachometer, prominently in the center. It is all modest, uncluttered, self-assured in its purpose.

And then, with a stab at the left pedal and a twist of the key, the resurgence of the orchestra, crisp, raspy music whirling about, a harmony for the enthusiast's ear to be sure. But the sweetest of melodies nevertheless.

Driving a 911S? That is simply a Zen-like experience—where the destination is irrelevant and the journey everything.

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### The Nuts And Bolts

Throughout 1967-1973, the S could be had either as a Targa, Coupe or Sunroof coupe.

### Model Year 1967

#### PERFORMANCE

- Max speed: 140 mph
- 0-60 mph : 6.5 sec.

#### ENGINE

- 2.0 liters (1991cc)
- 9.8:1 compression ratio
- 160 bhp @ 6600 rpm
- 132 lb-ft torque @ 5200 rpm
- Forged alloy pistons
- Valves: intake 42mm, exhaust 38mm
- Weber 40 IDS carburetors
- Red engine cowling

#### TRANSMISSION

- Type 901; five-speed synchromesh
- Three optional gear ratios: "Nurburgring," "Hillclimb," "Le Mans"

#### BRAKES AND SUSPENSION

- Koni shock absorbers
- 15mm front anti-roll bar
- 16mm rear anti-roll bar
- Ventilated discs

#### WHEELS

- Fuchs alloy wheels, 4.5x15 in.

#### EXTERIOR

- Thicker rubber strip on bumpers and sides

#### INTERIOR

- Leather trim steering wheel
- Basket-weave upholstery on lower dash
- Velour carpeting

### Model Year 1968

For 1968, because of strict emissions standards, the 911S was not imported to the U.S.

### Model Year 1969

#### PERFORMANCE

- Max speed: 136 mph
- 0-62 mph: 7.4 sec.

#### ENGINE

- 2.0 liters (1991cc)
- 9.9:1 compression ratio

- Forged alloy pistons

- Valves : intake 45mm, exhaust 39mm

- Bosch mechanical fuel injection
- 170 bhp @ 6500 rpm

- 134 lb-ft torque @ 5500 rpm

- Red engine cowling

- Radiator-type oil cooler in right front fender

#### TRANSMISSION

- Type 901; five-speed synchromesh

- Forged alloy pistons

- Valves: intake 46mm, exhaust 40mm

- Bosch mechanical fuel injection

- 180 bhp @ 6500 rpm

- 147 lb-ft torque @ 5200 rpm

- Red engine cowling

- Radiator-type oil cooler in right front fender

#### TRANSMISSION

- Type 911; five-speed synchromesh

- Optional: ZF multi-disc limited-slip differential

- Sportomatic removed from options list

- Valves: intake 46mm, exhaust 40mm

- Bosch mechanical fuel injection

- Oil squirters for piston cooling

- 190 bhp @ 6500 rpm

- 158 lb-ft torque @ 4000 rpm

- Red engine cowling

- Tube-type oil cooler in right front fender

#### TRANSMISSION

- Type 915; five-speed synchromesh

#### BRAKES AND SUSPENSION

- Koni shock absorbers

- 15mm anti-roll bar

- Aluminum front calipers



- Optional: Semi-automatic four-speed Sportomatic

#### BRAKES AND SUSPENSION

- Koni shock absorbers
- 15mm front anti-roll bar
- 16mm rear anti-roll bar
- Aluminum ATE front calipers
- Ventilated discs

#### WHEELS

- Fuchs alloy wheels, 6x15 in.

#### EXTERIOR

- Aluminum rear deck and central bumper plate
- Thicker rubber strip on front and rear bumpers

#### INTERIOR

- Leather trim steering wheel

#### BRAKES AND SUSPENSION

- Koni shock absorbers
- 15mm front anti-roll bar
- 16mm rear anti-roll bar
- Aluminum front calipers
- Ventilated discs

#### WHEELS

- Fuchs alloy wheels, 6x15 in.

#### EXTERIOR

- Aluminum rear deck and central bumper plate
- Thicker rubber strip on front and rear bumpers
- Leather trim steering wheel
- Velour carpeting

### Model Years 1972-73

#### PERFORMANCE

- Max speed: 144 mph
- 0-60 mph: 6.0 sec.

#### ENGINE

- 2.4 liters (2341cc)
- 8.5:1 compression ratio
- Forged alloy pistons

- Ventilated discs

#### WHEELS

- Fuchs alloy wheels, 6x15 in.

#### EXTERIOR

- Steel front air spoiler
- Thicker rubber strip on front and rear bumpers

#### INTERIOR

- Leather trim steering wheel
- Velour carpet

### Books

- "PORSCHE Excellence Was Expected" by Karl Ludvigsen
- "Original Porsche 911" by Peter Morgan
- "Porsche 911 Performance Handbook" by Bruce Anderson
- "The 911 & 912 Porsche" by Dr. B. Johnson
- "Porsche 911 Red Book 1965-1999" by Patrick C. Paternie

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### Featured Cars

#### 1967 911S coupe with sunroof

Owner: Mr. Eade Hopkinson,  
Avon, Colo.

Owened: 2 years

Car completely original

Slate gray color

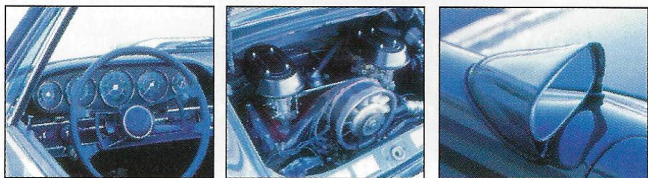
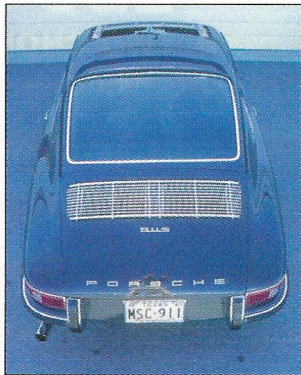
103,000 miles

Rare sunroof option

Recaro seats

Concours winner

Of interest: Original owner was astronaut R. Walter Cunningham (Apollo 7). Car wears the original plates MSC 911 (Manned Space Center 911). 550A Spyder-type exterior side mirror was ordered by Cunningham at the factory.



#### 1969 911S Targa

Owner: Mr. Marty Noonan,  
Long Beach, Calif.

Owened: 29 years

Car completely restored to original  
condition; completed June 2000

Polo Red

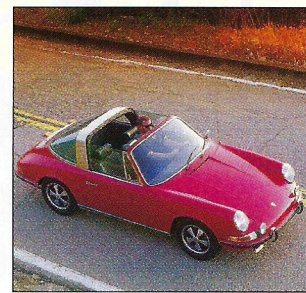
285,000 miles

Factory Hella driving lights

Factory Hella fog lights

Limited-slip differential

Of interest: Purchased car August 21, 1971, as gift to himself for surviving the Vietnam War as an Air Force pilot.



#### 1973 911S Coupe

Owner: Mr. Bata Mataja,  
Malibu, Calif.

Owened: 7 years

Car completely original

Silver Metallic

33,800 miles

Factory air conditioning

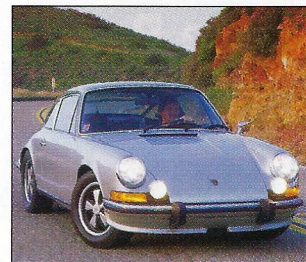
Factory three-piece muffler skirt

Factory Hella driving lights

Recaro seats

Factory tools and jack

Of interest: Car number 1,257 of 1,430 total produced.



## The Early 911S Registry

Of all the variations of the 911 that have rocketed along the autobahn and skidded across Weissach's test tracks, the purest and most celebrated is the early S, era 1967-73. To have a 911 is exceptional, to own an S is, well, it is arriving at your high school reunion with Elle MacPherson.

The number of automotive clubs honoring the House of Porsche is staggering. There is hardly a corner of the world that does not harbor an association applauding the German marque. One group, the Southern California-based Early 911S Registry, recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary.

Started in 1990 by Vern and Betsi Lyle of West Point, Pennsylvania, the Registry was to be just that, a registry. The Lyles had only intended to gather a database of owner's names, phone numbers and the particulars about their cars. They also produced a quarterly newsletter, first entitled "901- The Prototype" and later, "Esses." The periodical was filled with technical information authored by Lyle and other members, but the original purpose was simply to exchange knowledge and personal experience about these extraordinary automobiles.

"It wasn't a really club," Lyle admitted. "I mean, in the first 5 years we never had a meeting." He recalled that in the beginning owners were reluctant to turn over details about their cars. The Early 911S Registry, after all, was not just a faceless organization but urged its members to supply the database with chassis and engine serial num-

bers, along with such other pertinent information as body color, special equipment and even the number of owners the car previously had.

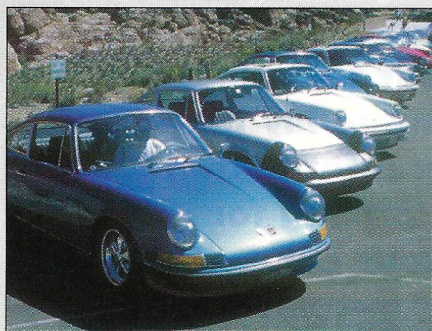
After 5 years of overseeing the Registry, it had evolved from a gratifying hobby to a full-time endeavor, and the Lyles decided it was time to find someone else to carry the banner.

Stepping into the fray was a small but dedicated congregation of Registry members from Southern California. Among the new group was Craig Stevenson, John Dilger, Ted Mumm and Fred Stewart, all of whom still campaigned their early S cars at various club racing events.

"I'm really happy with the West Coast guys," Lyle said. "They created a staff and made it into a real organization." Under Lyle's watch, the Registry, which began with 40 members, grew to 140 but with the ever increasing interest in rare and vintage sports cars and the advent of the Internet, today's Early 911S Registry boasts 425 members. There are partisans from nearly every U.S. state, across Europe, Japan, Australia, the

Philippines, South Africa and even Hong Kong.

While the club is dedicated to a special car, there is no implication that it has to be factory original or concours perfect. Most of these cars are daily drivers, and more than a few are weekend warriors of the race-track. Through its publication and gatherings, the Early 911S Registry not only offers its patrons a wealth of information but good-hearted camaraderie centered around a most worthy icon. —MSR



Early 911S Registry 433 Maryland St. El Segundo, CA 90245 (310) 322-7701 [www.early911sregistry.org](http://www.early911sregistry.org)