

‘X’ Marks the Spot

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WILD ONE!

ON TRACK IN PORSCHE'S
NEW 700-HORSEPOWER
911 GT2 RS

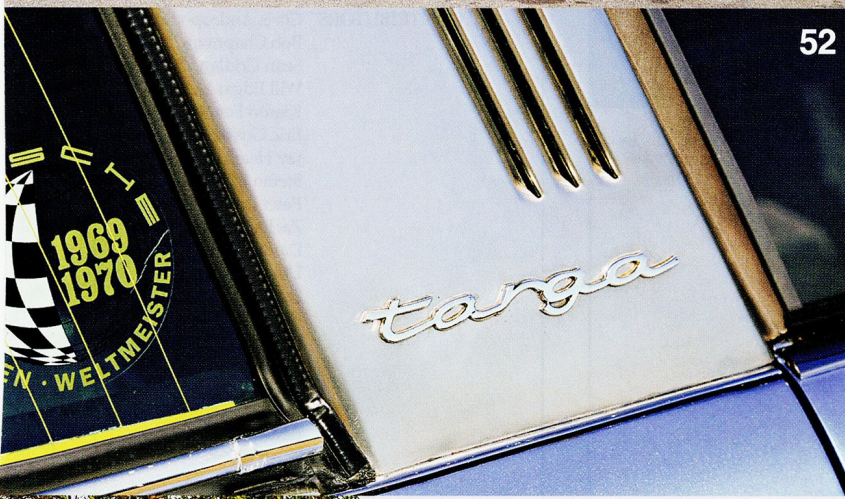


AFFORDABLE BOXSTER
WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BUY THE CHEAPEST
PORSCHE IN AN ENTIRE COUNTRY?

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KARL LUDVIGSEN LOOKS BACK AT
THE LIFE OF A PORSCHE LEGEND



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'X' Marks the Spot

With only 10 X83s built, and just four with the 3.8 RS rear wing, this variant of the 964 Turbo S is among the rarest of all production Porsches.

STORY BY PETER LINSKY
PHOTOS BY SEAN CRIDLAND



The 1994 911 (964) Turbo 3.6 S X83 Flachbau (Flatnose) you see here was acquired from its previous home in Japan in February of 2014 by the current owner, a well-known Porsche collector and vintage racer from Colorado. While it may have spent nearly all its life in the Far East, today we'll drive this rare, last of the traditional rear-wheel-drive 911 Turbos in the States to see just what it's got to give!

The Last of the 964s

Let's jump in the way-back machine and dial up Zuffenhausen in late 1993. There we find Porsche winding down production of the potent and scarce 964 Turbo. The new R-Program 993 is already in the pipeline and will arrive the following January. Notably, the incoming lineup will not be led by a turbocharged model. As David Colman wrote in the April 1994 issue (#44) of Excellence, that was certain to disappoint a great many Turbo lovers. However, a window of opportunity for fans of the outgoing 964 would emerge.

"The last small batch of Turbos built as '94 'S' models is now available," wrote Colman, "and each one is a very special car indeed." A total of 93 cars would be equipped, said Colman, with the [380 hp] X88 "Works Increased Horsepower" option, which offered many of the same features as the [355 hp] '1994 911 Turbo Sport option M4P3 Parts," which had been available since February of that year. The higher horsepower X88 engine was based upon the 1993 3.6 Turbo S2 flat six created by Andial, Porsche's Southern California-based race shop, for IMSA's Bridgestone Supercar Championship.

The Andial engine, which was not assigned a specific type number, used 964 cams, a K27 turbocharger and an intercooler, and was built to deliver maximum power at high rpm at the expense of low-end torque. While the 355-hp 911 Turbo S2 Parts package was nowhere as comprehensive or powerful as the 380-hp X88 option, it was installed in about 20 S2 street-legal cars before the arrival of the factory's 964 Turbo S in order to qualify the S2 racers for the Bridgestone series, where they excelled. Those "production" cars are highly sought-after today.

The left-over new 964 Turbo S coupes would be clothed in either standard Turbo 3.6 bodywork, or with special Flachbau bodies fabricated by Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur. Production Flatnoses were not a new idea; they had first appeared in the late 1970s as custom-built street-legal 935 Turbo-lookalikes based on factory-built 911s and Turbos for clients who wanted something unique and were willing to write a large check for that privilege. Variations of the retracting headlamp design had also been applied to the familiar 928 and 968 series.

This new batch of 1994 Turbo S models would carry option numbers X83, X84, and X85, depending upon the market where they would be sold. Option X85 was earmarked for U.S. customers, X84 for “Rest-of-the-World” buyers, and X83 for Japan. We’ll explain the differences.

Unique Turbocharged Beasts

Although David Colman was told that there were 93 cars designated 911 Turbo S, the passage of years suggests the true number was somewhat smaller. Mark Smith, who has created several comprehensive websites on the subject, concludes (and Porsche later confirmed) that there were just 76 of these very interesting cars delivered to Porsche Exclusive for conversion to what would become the 964 Turbo S, or the “36 Option.” All of these included the X88 Turbo S engine. 39 of these, the largest batch, were Option X85 Turbo Ss for the American market. Colman’s story focused on one specific U.S.-specification example which had been delivered to a dealer in Beverly Hills, California.

Smith writes that the U.S. version of the Turbo S Flatnose was available as a \$60,179 option on top of the Turbo 3.6’s base price \$99,000 (or \$101,532 and \$167,029 in current U.S. dollars). The option price was so high because the alterations would essentially be done by hand. Most of these, including the example cited by Colman, featured the latest version of the factory’s Flatnose front end.

The remainder of the X85 group—estimated at just 17—were equipped with normal 964 front fenders, vertical fixed headlights, the 964 3.8 RS’s asymmetric rear fender air inlets and a ‘Turbo S’ script on the engine cover. These cars, in ‘stock-air-inlet-form,’ can be identified by their tiny but DOT-legal rubber bumperettes. They are known as “package cars,” and presumably carried a lower sticker price. It was also possible to order the \$7,914 X88 “Increased Horsepower” package without the Flatnose body mods.

The RoW X84 version lacked those bumperettes. Along with the 968-like nose, it incorporated front air inlets with fog lights from German tuning shop TechArt as standard fitment. Smith notes that these items “are described in the Xe Porsche technical bulletin as ‘auxiliary headlights fitted in air scoops.’ Some cars were delivered with the 964 3.8 RS air inlets. Early cars feature the ‘Turbo 3.6’ script instead of the ‘Turbo S’ script. 27

cars were built including 12 RHD.” As on the U.S.-spec cars, the factory offered a wide range of exterior and interior colors.

Back to the X88 Turbo S engine (M64/50S), which is quite interesting in its own regard. The factory reportedly produced about 150 of these special single-turbo powerplants, of which 76 were installed in Turbo S chassis, and another 51 went into standard Turbo 3.6 models which had been fitted with “Special Order Option X88.” The balance may have been sold for racing applications. These engines can be identified by their case numbers, which are followed by a large capital “S” of an unknown type font about twice the size of the engine’s serial number.

This single-turbo flat six had cylinder bore diameters of 100 mm and a stroke of 76.4 mm, yielding a displacement of 3,600 cc. Thanks to 7.5:1 compression, larger-capacity injectors, more radical 964 camshafts, higher boost pressure and reduced exhaust manifold back-pressure from the larger K27 7006 turbocharger, and a “more efficient” intercooler, it was reportedly good for, as mentioned earlier, 380 hp at 5,750 rpm, running about 11.45-12.3 psi of boost.

Smith mentions that there were some questions raised about actual power output. Some early published accounts—including this magazine’s—suggested that the claimed horsepower gain was actually closer to 500 hp. Smith, however, states that the factory’s bench-test figure of 380 hp was pretty accurate, with about 300 hp reaching the wheels, and that figure appeared in Porsche’s technical bulletins.

Torque was 384 lb-ft of torque at 5,000 rpm. All that twist was delivered to a G50/52 fully-synchronized five-speed manual transaxle and ZF limited-slip differential set up with 20 percent lockup under acceleration and 100 percent lockup under deceleration. The factory claimed a 0-62 mph time of 4.7 seconds. Top speed was 174 mph.

Smith notes that the M64/50 was the last of Porsche’s “X-tronic” engines, and everything that came later had to be on-board diagnostics (OBD)-compliant. Smith continues, “This means that these are the last of the cars that you ‘can get away with it’ when it comes to engine modifications and emissions standards.” Also included in the X88 package were an uprated flywheel and clutch package, different heat exchangers, reinforced shock mounts, a four-pipe muffler, and new rear brake ducts.

Spotlight on the X83

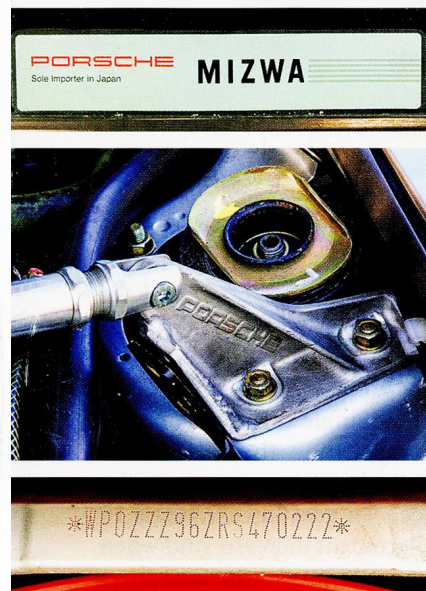
Now, let’s take a close look at the 964 Turbo S’s designated option number X83, as delivered to Porsche’s Japanese distributor of that period, Tokyo-based MIZWA Motor Sales Corp. Ltd. MIZWA filled that role for some 45 years, until 1998, when Porsche took over. There were just 10 of these, and all were notably different in external appearance from the X84 and X85 versions. All were fitted with the 930 Turbo S Flachbau design with complex, fully-retracting single headlamp assemblies atop 935-style fenders, requiring a different and more complicated front wiring harness and washer system.

Those alterations, in turn, forced some changes to the interior of the front trunk compartment as well as access to the headlight release levers. All included the louvered front fenders, boxed rockers, ‘X92’ model-exclusive front spoiler, ‘X93’ Exclusive rear spoiler, and ‘X99’ Exclusive rear fender vents with horizontal gills, which Smith notes “were similar to those featured on the prior years’ 3.3 Turbo S.”

The air inlets in the rear panels were for engine cooling and do not feed any air to the brakes. They are not symmetrical in size, as on the 964 3.8 RS. The right (passenger) side is narrower to accommodate the oil tank located behind the quarter panel which services both the standard and auxiliary oil tanks.” For Japan, the air inlets featured several horizontal gills as on the prior 930 Turbo S models. All were delivered in Polar Silver Metallic (A8) with black full leather upholstery, a black headliner, and black interior trim.

In terms of factory-installed options, these 10 Japanese-market cars were loaded, equipped with the X83 Turbo S Flachbau Full Option Package. This included factory-installed Option 130—“Labeling in English,” Japanese market version (metric instrumentation) with “left-hand-drive steering” exception, a heavy-duty battery, a special differential, and special-order tires mounted on polished modular light-alloy Speedline Carrera RS Cup wheels. These were sized 18-inches in diameter x 8-inches wide with 225/40 ZR18 tires in front, and 18 x 10 with 265/35 ZR18 rubber in back.

Additional items like headlight washers, special thin-shell Carrera RS bucket seats, a rear window wiper system, a radio system calibrated for overseas designated countries with a 928-style roof-mounted antenna, headlights for left-hand traffic, and additional signal enhancers (side flashers) were included. There was also a



Clockwise from above: Only four of the 10 Japanese-market X83s were fitted with the 3.8 RS biplane rear wing. This large intercooler hides the 380-hp 3.6-liter single-turbo flat-six engine. The Flatnose X83 casts a menacing profile. All a driver needs to know at any speed. Special alloy brackets support the front camber brace. MIZWA Ltd.: Gone but not forgotten.



green graduated-tinted front windscreen, electric sliding sunroof, a trip computer, split back seats without backs or restraints, and a front luggage compartment fitted with velour carpet.

The X83s came off the assembly line assigned VINs WPOZZZ96ZRS470222, 285, 291, 311, 326, 335, 344, 362, 386, and 388. It appears that 285 was the first of this group completed, on November 16, 1993; however, the first car delivered was 326 on April 1, 1994. The last car completed was 344 (January 12, 1994) and the last one delivered was 285 on November 27, 1995. Number 222, the car on these pages, was completed on November 25, 1993 and was delivered March 9, 1994. Seven of the ten cars are accounted for,

price was ¥24,500,000 with the standard spoiler, and ¥25,400,000, or \$159,179 in U.S. dollars, with the 3.8 RS rear spoiler and special front chin spoiler.

Beyond the “Increased Horsepower” engine, the X83, X84, and X85 versions of the 964 Turbo S appear to be the same mechanically. The suspension was identical to the standard Turbo 3.6, with Boge shocks and anti-roll bars of 21 and 22 mm diameter. These Turbo Ss wore the familiar “Big Red” ventilated disc brakes as used on the Turbo 3.6; rotors 322 mm (12.7 inches) in diameter and 298 mm (11.7 inches) in the rear—and all were fitted with 18-inch “Speedline for Porsche” three-piece polished light-alloy wheels. OEM tires were Yokohama A008. Smith

Rolling out in first, you can immediately feel that this is no normal 964—it is planted and confidence-inspiring with none of the typical 964 RS 3.6 bump-steer or nervousness. No, this is a car that—despite its 380 horses—is so composed it could take even more power. This car has covered 37,430 kilometers, or just over 23,000 miles from new. It’s amazing to me that the owner has only added another 400 or so miles since taking delivery!

Starting to get the feel and exploring the handling (carefully, as always when driving someone else’s car); the overall balance is amazing. It communicates its limits clearly, without a hint of being twitchy. The tail feels planted and front-end turn-in is also excellent. On throttle,



1994 911 (964) Turbo 3.6 S X83 Flachbau

Drive	Rear-wheel drive
Layout	Rear-engine
Wheelbase	89.4 inches
Engine	3.6-liter turbo flat-six
Transmission	5-spd. manual
Horsepower	380 hp
Torque	384 lb-ft
Weight	3,031 lbs
Power-to-Weight	8.0 lbs/hp
0-62 mph	4.7 seconds
Top Speed	174 mph
MSRP	¥25,400,000 (\$159,179) (1994)

From behind the wheel, the lack of traditional 911 fenders and headlights make driving this Turbo a unique Porsche driving experience.

says Porsche expert Prescott Kelly, and one is known to have been destroyed. That would be either 285, 326, or 335.

All ten cars are believed to have been fitted with a special front shock-tower cross-brace (Option XD7) whose cast-alloy mounting brackets carry the Porsche name. As usual, where Porsches are concerned, there would be a some exceptions to the blanket statement “All were equipped...” Four of these beasts, including number 222, were delivered with the eminently suitable rear spoiler taken from the 3.8 RS parts bin while six received the standard and much less aggressive rear wing from the 3.6 Turbos. That made a difference in the price; the base sticker

says these were the only production Porsches ever delivered with Yokohama tires as standard (option M235).

In the Driver’s Seat

Let’s slide behind the wheel and get a taste of this last of the “classic” single-turbocharged 911 Turbos. The X83 sends a message that it is a first and foremost a performance machine; the interior has many luxurious touches including a sunroof and lots of leather, but the thin hard-back bucket seats are very 964 RS.

The view out the windshield of a Flatnose is startlingly different for those accustomed to driving “normal” 911s. Where are those familiar fenders? Where is the nose of the car?! OK, ready to go and your hand falls to the great 964-era shifter, short, precise and exactly where you want it. Five cogs are all we’ll need; great weight, nice spacing and superb feel.

off throttle, under braking, it is a confidence-inspiring machine. Credit the stiff tub, the great spring and shock package and the grip from the wide tires. This car exudes that “built out of one piece of solid metal feeling” present in a good tight 964.

The 3.6-liter single turbo produces a lot more torque than the earlier 964 Turbo’s 3.3. Both off-boost and on, the difference feels far greater than just a 10 percent displacement increase. And when the boost hits —*Wham!*—the tach soars to redline, and we’re grabbing the next cog. In what feels like an instant, the process repeats, even though the X83 is geared for the Autobahn, not around an office park as on this test drive. Staying in the power band allows the massive torque to overcome any gearing issues, and it feels “happy” in what feels like a gear taller than normal. Without a doubt, this is an amazing and grin-inducing machine! ■