

BUYING A PORSCHE 997

BUYING GUIDE FOR A PORSCHE 911 (2005-2012)

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INTRODUCTION

The Porsche 911 built from 2005-2011 (code named 997) was an important car for Porsche. Following the economic successful but controversial Porsche 996, Porsche took a look at what their customer base disliked about the 996 and sought to improve it with the upcoming 997 model. They succeeded.

The Porsche 997 was hailed as a big step forward by the media and die-hard Porsche 911 fans, and eliminated many issues Porsche fans had with the Porsche 996. The Porsche 997 was more evolutionally than revolutionary like the prior 996, and kept the 1999-2004 Porsche 996's chassis and greenhouse as its foundation. But it ditched the unusual headlight design, added flared fenders and oval headlights that recalled the much beloved air-cooled Porsche 993 (1995-1998). The interior was also redone to make a return to the traditional Porsche forms – with simple vents, door panels and squarer seats. The big difference was performance. It was visually improved with a redesigned suspension and more powerful engines. New technologies were incorporated such as electrically adjustable shock absorbers and PCCB carbon-ceramic brakes. In the second-gen 997 the cars featured all new engines and the new PDK dual-clutch gearboxes.

With the last 997 shipped from the factory in 2012, its safe to say the Porsche 997 was a huge success and now is a great Porsche 911 to buy in the second-hand market. This guide will help you on your way to obtain a Porsche 997.

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MODELS

During its course run, the 997 had numerous model derivations. During the first gen (2005-2008) Porsche came out with the following 911 models:

- Carrera
- Carrera Convertible
- Carrera S
- Carrera S Convertible
- Carrera 4
- Carrera 4S
- Targa 4
- Targa 4S
- GT3
- GT3 RS
- Turbo

This continued with the 2nd generation of the 997 from 2009 to 2011. In addition special model ending versions were released including the highly sought GTS, Speedster and Black Edition models.



Gen 1

In 2005, the Carrera and Carrera S came to the market. Although the 997 didn't appear to be very radically different from the previous 996 model, more than 2/3 of the car was all brand new. The base Carrera had a 325 hp 3.6 liter engine while the Carrera S went with a bigger 355 hp and 295 lb-ft torque engine.

The suspension was also revised from the 996 design, with the front and rear track now increased by 30 mm. An electronically adjustable damper was offered as an option but standard on all the 'S' models. The system known as *Porsche Active Suspension Management* or **PASM**, this lowered the car by 10 mm and allowed the driver to choose between Normal or Sport driving modes. Normal mode offered a noticeable ride quality improvement over a standard suspension set up, while the Sport mode made the suspension completely stiff and ready for nicely paved roads (or racetracks).

The Carrera came with standard 18-inch wheels while the Carrera S came standard with the bigger 19-inch setup. Tire pressure monitoring systems were also now available as an option. The Carrera S also came with larger brakes and a set of red colored calipers. PCCB carbon brakes were a very expensive option now offered in the 997 and would be costly to replace (in the neighborhood of \$8,000.00 USD according to some owners).

Overall at this point, it's better to look for a Carrera S since you will get more standard upgrades like bigger brakes, more hp/torque and standard PASM.

By 2006 Porsche introduced the Targa and 4 wheel versions of the Carrera to the lineup. The big news was in 2007, after a break in production, came the all new Porsche 911 Turbo.

The 997 Turbo featured a wider body and different bumpers, plus a retractable rear wing. PASM was standard. The highlight was the 480 hp engine with variable geometry turbos that produced 460 lb-ft of torque. An over-boost function with Sport-Chrono

Package increased torque to 502 lb-ft for up to ten seconds at a time. This car still had the famed Mezger engine, as did the 2008 and 2009 models (key to remember). In 2008 Porsche released the Turbo Cabriolet.



Gen 2

In 2009 Porsche introduced an updated 911. Commonly referred to as the 997.2 (and hence the early 997 is called the 997.1), this revised model featured an all –new flat-size engine known as the 9A1. The big news is the direct fuel injection, which allowed the new engines to produce more power from the same displacement as their precursors while also consuming less fuel. The base Carrera 3.6 liter power-plant now delivers 345 hp while the 3.8 liter engine found in the ‘S’ produced 30 more hp for a total of 385 hp. But the biggest news was the elimination of the shafts and with them the 996 and 997.1 RMS and intermediate-shaft bearing (IMS) problems (More on the IMS later in this guide).

The Gen 2 also came with a optional automatic called Doppelkupplungsgetriebe gearbox or better known as PDK. This was a dual clutch seven-speed transmission that allowed drivers to shift without a clutch. The PDK was a faster shifting and more fuel-efficient transmission then the previous Tiptronic S.

Outside the 997.2 received a face-lift, with new front air inlets, new mirrors, new wheels, reworked bi-Xenon headlights and LED lighting in front and back. Interior wise the central command system called PCM was updated to PCM 3.0 which allowed for Bluetooth streaming and a updated touch-screen navigation system.

In 2011 Porsche introduced two new models – the rear-drive Carrera GTS which combined the wide body of the C4/C4S but in a rear drive format, side sills, center-lock wheels, Alcantara interior accents and an upgraded 408-hp 3.8 liter engine. This slotted the GTS right below a GT3 and on top of a Carrera S model. The GTS came in rear-wheel, all wheels and convertible configurations.

The other big model was the Speedster. Like its predecessors, the Speedster had a lower raked-back windshield and a double hump cover for its convertible top. The Speedster also had the wide-body from the GTS as well as the GTS' 408 hp engine. Came standard with many options including PDK, Limited slip differential, PSAM, PCCB Brakes and more. Just 356 were produced making sure they become instant collectible cars.



Turbo

The Porsche 997 Turbo was launched in 2007. The Porsche 997 Turbo had all the features from the 997 plus all-wheel drive and an even wider body than the C4/C4S models. The 997 Turbo's engine featured variable geometry turbo-chargers bringing power to 480 hp and 460 lbs of torque. Pressing the Sport-Chrono Package "Sport" button also stiffened the 997 Turbo's PASM dampers. In 2008 Porsche introduced the Porsche 997 Turbo Cabriolet.

There were no changes in 2009 but in 2010 saw the introduction of the 2nd generation Porsche 997 Turbo (or 997.2 Turbo). The new 997.2 Turbo came with a whole new engine (based off the 9A1) that now delivered 500 hp. It was offered with a manual or now the optional 7-speed PDK dual clutch gearbox.

The exterior was pretty much the same but in the back the car now had LED tail-lights. The rear exhaust tips were even fatter looking and there were new Turbo style 19-inch wheels that came with the 997.2 Turbo.

The "Mezger" Engine that was seen in the 2007 - 2009 models are considered legendary by Porsche owners, and a configuration of a manual with the Mezger engine is considered a future collectible since future Turbos will no longer have manuals or the Mezger engine.

In 2010 an upgraded version of the Turbo was offered. Called the Turbo S, it came only with a PDK transmission and increased hp to a robust 530 hp. Maximum torque was rated at 516 lb-ft which can happen at anytime from 2100 and 4250 rpm.



GT3/GT3 RS

The Porsche 911 GT3 is a 911 from the GT division of Porsche, which builds track-ready cars from the factory. The 997 GT3 is a naturally aspirated engine that delivers a whopping 415 hp. The GT3's engine was refined from the original 996 GT3 power-plant with a higher redline (up to 8400 RPM) and traction control. It was 30 mm lower than the ordinary Carreras and featured adjustable anti-roll bars, and a limited-slip differential that offers a different ratio of front to back base on acceleration and deceleration speeds.

The GT3 RS model was also offered and Porsche uses it as the homologation car for the track-only GT3 RSR. Unlike the 996 GT3 RS however the 997 GT3 RS was sold in the US and became a massive hit.

In 2010 Porsche unveiled the 997.2 versions of the GT3 and GT3 RS. The long used GT1-derived engine was suitably upgraded with Vario-Cam Plus technology and output climbed to 430 hp for the GT3 and 450 hp for the GT3 RS.

While the Turbo offers more power the GT3 delivers more fun on the street and the track. Simply put, it's the 997 to buy if you have the means. The value and limited run of the 997 GT3/GT3 RS has brought a rapid acceleration in used market prices for these cars. The GT3/GT3 RS is the most engaging 997 to drive and with the combo of the normally aspirated engine, stiff suspension and fantastic steering feel, it can't be beat.

BEGINNING YOUR SEARCH

If the Porsche 996 was a disappointment to many Porsche buyers, then the 997 became a Porsche favorite. They were much better than their predecessors and look wise went back to the iconic 993 for inspiration - which made Porsche fans happy. This has come back to the good resale values of the 997.

The good thing is that the 997 came in so many different models and so many numbers that it will be possible to find a 997 that suits all tastes from daily drivers to weekend drivers to track lovers.

While the first model is now 10 years old it's not uncommon to see 2005 models with low mileage. Many 997s have been used as weekend toys and won't have racked up many miles. But some may have racked up the miles as daily drivers. We don't have a preference for either as long as you follow these simple rules when buying any Porsche:

1. Make sure the car you buy has maintenance records. While used 997s are cheaper than new, you are still buying a car that easily cost over \$100,000.00 USD when new. Parts and service still match its original cost.
2. Always get a Pre-Purchase Inspection (PPI) done by a reputable and knowledgeable Porsche mechanic. Local shops sometimes do better work than Dealers. Dealers are also more expensive hourly than local shops.
3. If buying from a private party, you are not buying the car but also buying from the previous owner. Check them out. Try to go to their home to see the car and engage the owner. See if they know about the car or just treated it as any other car. You can glean a lot about the car based on the owner's knowledge of the car, their home's condition (is it neat and clean) and the surroundings (is there oil spills by the car?).

WHERE TO LOOK

The best place to start looking is at your local Porsche Club Chapter. Usually the owners/members would be helpful in obtaining a car from a member (who may be selling). Also each Porsche Club Chapter has a monthly publication with a classified section. Many appear only in those classifieds first.

<http://www.pca.org>

Next would be to go to the Porsche forums. Two that pop out are 6SpeedOnline and RennList.org. Both cater to Porsche owners and have robust classified sections. Plus you know you will be dealing with mostly private owners, which will be cheaper than Dealerships.

<http://www.6speedonline.com>

<http://www.rennlist.org>

Then you have your paid marketplace websites like AutoTrader and Cars.com. These sites are helpful that you can search by zip code so you can look locally or expand your search to regions outside your area. Note that Porsche 997 sale prices are much different depending on your region and time of season (i.e. cheaper in winter, more expensive in summer).

There is also Porsche's own website that has a car locator. Note that this will work for the following: If you plan to buy a car from a dealer and have a car that has a warranty (either original or a CPO warranty). Porsche will only be listing cars that are on their Dealer's lots and come with the warranty service. While this is preferable for many buyers, note that you will be paying a premium for these cars. Sometimes the best deals are made with Private Sellers.

997.1 vs 997.2

There was two generations of the 997. The first generation known as the 997.1 were cars built from 2005-2008. The second generation was the 997.2 and were cars built from 2009-2012 (2012 also brought the new model – 991, there was some overlap with the 997 in the same year).

A common question asked by potential buyers is: Which 997 gen should I buy? A simple answer would always be - buy the latest model you can afford - but with the 997 its not that simple. There are some huge differences between the generations and it will be based not only on budget but also on preference.

997.2 cars will be higher priced then their 997.1 brethren by at least \$10,000.00 for the same model/miles. So budget wise, that is a huge gap for some. Additionally the early 997.1 (2005-2006) are susceptible to the infamous IMS issue. In a nutshell the IMS is a flawed design of a bearing in the Intermediate Shaft that can 'grenade' and destroy the engine at any time. The previous 996 had this issue and it's the primary reason why the used car values of the 996 (sans Mezger engine 996s like the 996 Turbo and GT3) are so low. To buy a new engine for your 997 would easily run to \$20,000.00 USD for parts and labor.

The later models 997.1 (2007-2008) had an updated IMS bearing which greatly reduced the issue. In fact issues with later year 997.1, the IMS has cease to be reported by owners. For the early 997.1 models the only remedy is to outfit the IMS with a new 3rd party IMS system that will cost approximately \$2,000.00 for parts and labor (also depending on your region). Hence for many future buyers, this alone is a deal breaker.

Another solution is to buy an exclusive warranty that will cover any issues with the IMS or any issues in general with your 997.1. Adding a warranty to the older 997.1 will still be cheaper then buying a newer 997.2 model as well.

The 997.2 circumvent the IMS issue altogether with its new 9A1 engine. The 9A1 engine no longer has an IMS or RMS. But it now has direct fuel injection, which sometimes cause carbon buildup. Also note that the Turbo and GT3 models used the Mezger engine and did not suffer from any IMS issues at all.

Ultimately it will depend on the buyer's risk tolerance as well as their budgets for what generation they will buy. But many people still buy and sell the Porsche 997.1, so do not feel that it's a bad choice.

Main differences between the two generations are:

- Cost. The 997.2 are easily \$10k more than the same optioned 997.1 model with equal miles. Higher variations like the 4CS will be more of a pricing delta.
- Feel. The 997.1 has a more raw feel compared to the more 'sophisticated' feel of the 997.2 This includes the Porsche Sport Exhaust and the engine sounds. Remember the 997.2 came with a whole new engine.
- Exterior. The 997.2 came with updated exterior lighting including Daytime Running Lights (DRL) and LED tail-lights
- Interior electronics. The 997.2 finally came to the 21st Century with Bluetooth capability with the PCM 3.0, which allows for music streaming from a Smartphone as well as calls. The Navigation system was also updated with a new touch-screen navigation system.
- New front bumper. The 997.2 came with an updated front air-grill design. Some people prefer the 997.1 look over the 997.2. It's all personal preference.

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Porsche 997s are generally very reliable but its still good to know what are the key items to look for in a used 997. Porsche 997's M96 and M97 engines didn't have the same amount of issues the 996 M96 engines had. And the Turbo, GT3 all immune to the IMS issue because they had the Mezger engines – which were totally different engine blocks.

Oil Leaks: Oil leakage is common from the rear main seal (RMS). Manual transmission cars are affected more then automatics. The heavy dual-mass flywheel and clutch are hung at the end of an un-supported crankshaft, and the load allow the main seal to move which leads to leaking. But this isn't a big deal. As long as the crankshaft assembly is still centered the seal can be replaced.

Brakes: Some 997s came with the Porsche Caron Ceramic Brakes (PCCB). While these are great for driving and stopping, and the brakes are light and longer lasting, the bad news is that they are expensive to replace. And they can be easily damaged. If you have a car with PCCB, make sure the PPI includes a through brake examination.

IMS: We covered it in detail previously but if you are looking to buy a 997.1, you must be aware of this possible issue. Cars affected are really the 2005-2006 years. 2007-2008 year cars came with an updated bearing and are no issue. There is no way to really tell if an IMS will fail but note that cars with lower mileage, and cars without frequent oil changes tend to come up with the issues. The only indicator that people has discussed was to check the oil filter when you do an oil change. If there's metal shavings in the oil filter, chances are the IMS is failing for the car.

OPTIONS TO HAVE

Ultimately as you look for your 997, you should be aware of the options that you will seek in your car. Porsche has a habit of offering hundreds of options for the original buyer, so sometimes it will be hard to find a used model with the exact options you are seeking. But here is a list of some key options we believe is worthwhile to purchase in a Porsche 997:

1. Sport Chrono Package (SCP). This is easy to find on most cars, look for the ugly wart on the dashboard. Also known, as the Chrono clock, this visual tell will indicate the car has SCP. Most cars that came with SCP also came with PASM which are damper settings for the car (normal and sport). The Sport setting will lower your car and enhance the sporty feel of the car altogether.
2. Porsche Sport Exhaust (PSE). This is an updated exhaust option from the factory. You'll be able to see if the car has PSE by looking for a button on the bottom of the center console that says "Sport" or looks like an exhaust icon. The PSE is a great sounding exhaust and having it from the factory allows you to have an on/off button on the center console. There is a huge difference in sound when you have it on.
3. PCCB. We recommend NOT having PCCB brakes. The way you can tell is by looking at the color of the calipers. If they are black or red, they are normal brakes. If yellow, then they are PCCB. Due to the cost to replace the PCCB rotors and pads, we recommend to stay away from this pricey option.
4. Adaptive Seats. Porsche offered several seat options for the 997, but the Adaptive Seats are considered the best and most comfortable. They have shoulder blade support, and smooth shell casings for the back.
5. Full Leather. This option is very expensive and is seen on loaded cars like the 4CS and Turbo. Having full leather is having leather hide on the dashboard, doors and center console. It livens up the driving environment immensely.
6. PDK. The PDK is much better than the previous Tiptronic automatic offered by Porsche and as a dual-clutch transmission, it's one of the best on the market. If you're looking for an automatic 997, then the PDK is the way to go. PDK was only offered in the 997.2, and packaged with the SCP offers a robust experience – including launch control.

OUR PICKS

Best All Around 997 – Porsche C4S

If you want a 911 that you can drive all year long, then look no further than the C4S. With the same power as a Carrera S, it also has a wider body due to the 4-wheel drive system. It will also drive differently due to the power pushed to all 4-wheels compared to the rear-wheel only S. But for looks, performance and capability you can't beat this car.

Future Classic – Porsche GT3/GT3 RS

If you want a car that will be worth more money in the future, as you drive the hell of it today, then look no further than the GT3 models. These cars are fun to drive and due to their limited production numbers and all-world capabilities are going to be collectibles down the road.

Most Fun – Porsche GT3/GT3 RS

Again, it's the best adaptation of a naturally aspirated, high revving, flat-6 engine with great driving dynamics. It doesn't get any better than this.

Best Value – Porsche Carrera S

Many 997s are the Porsche "Carrera S" which is good for you if you are looking to buy a 997. The 997 S makes a lot of sense over the regular 997 due to the options. Every 997 S came standard with the upgraded wheels (19 inch) package, PASM, and the upgraded rotors/brakes. This alone makes it worthwhile to buy the S over a regular 'Carrera' model anytime of the year.

To learn more about Porsche 911 (997), come to

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