

The ducktail trilogy:
911 Carrera RS 2.7,
911 Sport Classic, and
911 Carrera S with
SportDesign Package

Duck Tales

The elegance and function of ducktails are perhaps even more evident on the rear of a car than in nature itself. After bringing us the limited versions of the 911 Carrera RS 2.7 and 911 Sport Classic, Porsche is now offering this striking rear spoiler for the new 911 for the first time as part of the SportDesign Package.

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Forty-year anniversary:
The 911 Carrera RS 2.7
debuted as the
sportiest Porsche
in its time at the 1972
Paris Motor Show

You'll search in vain for a reference to the Porsche ducktail in the OED. Dictionaries point to the rear end of a duck, or may mention a certain hairstyle that takes its name from the pattern of feathers on the bird's tail. There is no mention of the famous tail-shaped automobile spoiler—named after the backside of Donald Duck—that Porsche invented for the 911.

The term “ducktail” can probably be traced back to the Porsche sales department, which initially did not take to the spoiler and regarded the 911 Carrera RS 2.7 as all but unsalable. What they said, not meaning to be kind, was, “It looks like a duck’s tail.” Presto: a name was born! First presented at the 1972 Paris Motor Show, the RS was the crowning achievement in the history of the 911 series: the first car to make use of aerodynamic aids and the first car since the 356 to carry the legendary Carrera name. The trade journal *auto motor und sport* was impressed: “The fastest German series-production car boasts 210 hp under the hood and, thanks to the tail on the rear, looks so distinctive that no one will ever have the slightest doubt as to what car is driving in front of them.”

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Ever since then, the ducktail has been regarded as a marker for special 911s, and it has never been a common sight on the world's roads. The current 911 sports a rear spoiler that recedes into the body at low speeds and automatically emerges when the car hits 80 km/h (50 mph).

Porsche offered the RS in three versions: Touring, sport, and racing





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For the Carrera RS of the 1970s, the ducktail is obligatory. Excerpt from a test report at the time: “You can’t order the car without it, but no one wants to anyway. Beyond its aerodynamic effect, the synthetic spoiler has already become a signature feature of the Carrera. From a technical standpoint, the striking detail on the car’s rear reduces wind resistance.”



The second member of the ducktail club is the 911 Sport Classic, first exhibited by Porsche at the 2009 Frankfurt International Motor Show. Just 250 units of this mini-series rolled off the production line, making it one of the most exclusive variants of the 911 in its storied history. All 911 Sport Classic models are gray, offset by darker decorative stripes. Fittingly, they roll on a reinterpretation of the legendary Fuchs rims. The double-dome roof and the 44-mm-wider rear end (1.73 in.) make for a highly distinctive appearance. As if those distinctions weren’t enough, the special model

A defunct machine factory on the shore of Lake of Zurich proves an ideal backdrop for classic cars of any age: The spirit of the ducktail is channeled to the first Meilenwerk in Switzerland; a rooftop terrace and a planned hotel will provide perfect views of the natural classic-car region in Switzerland: the “Gold Coast.”

also features special drive technology. Thanks to a reworked intake tract and modified cylinder heads, the 3.8-liter boxer engine of the 911 Sport Classic puts out 408 horsepower (300 kW)—23 hp more than the 911 Carrera S on which it is based.

With the new 991, buyers can order the ducktail as an extra from the Porsche Exclusive range. The price list includes the SportDesign Package, whose most striking feature is once again the ducktail. Like its great-grandfather, it stands immovable in the wind and adds a unique touch to the Porsche rear. Nonetheless, the SportDesign moniker is only partly true. The ducktail, after all, not only gives the 911 a specific appearance, but also has a marked aerodynamic effect. In combination with the modified front apron, with its massive air intakes and a lower spoiler lip, lift forces are reduced on both axles. The front spoiler and the ducktail were honed together in the wind tunnel to form a perfectly harmonious team—which is why you can’t buy the components individually.



Test-drivers appreciated the ducktail's aerodynamic effects way back in the 1970s. The increased downforce on the drive axle of the RS 2.7 resulted in the almost complete disappearance of Carrera's tendency to oversteer in high-speed corners. Nevertheless, it must be said that the original ducktail is a car for drivers who know what they're doing. The RS Carrera can still oversteer under certain circumstances—it is essential that the driver gives the car his complete attention. It's true even today, spoiled as we are by Porsches that have been continually perfected for 40 years. Perhaps even more concentration is called for when driving a vintage RS, as the complete absence of electronic driving aids—once a matter of course—now represents a completely novel experience.



The RS can be a wild dog that wants to snap instead of play, and only obeys an owner who shows him who is the boss. The character of the engine alone makes sure of that. Though somewhat brawnier than its more civil 2.4-liter 911 relatives, the 2.7-liter engine of the RS and its resulting 210 hp (154 kW) hardly sound overwhelming by today's standards.

But actually driving it is another story. With only about 1,000 kilograms (2,200 pounds) to move, its acceleration can only be described as explosive. It races from zero to 100 km/h (62 mph) in just 5.7 seconds—besting the twice-as-expensive Italian sports-car icon, the Ferrari 365 GTB 4 Daytona (6.1 seconds). The surge, which doesn't quit until 240 km/h (150 mph), gives the driver the feeling of being launched from a catapult. In the first acceleration phase, our intrepid driver has to rush to keep up with shifting the gears in order to keep the regulator from kicking in at 7,300 rpms.

In spite of its performance, the Carrera six-cylinder is far from being a capricious sports-car engine. If you so desire, you can amble along at low rpms in fifth gear and still count on a jolt of spontaneous acceleration when you hit the gas pedal. The increased engine size compared to the regular 911 significantly improved torque, resulting in a smooth, continuous distribution of power across the entire engine speed range. It is a wolf that likes to step out in sheep's clothing now and again.

From today's perspective, 5.7 seconds is not exactly shocking; after all, the 911 Sport Classic needs just 4.6 seconds for the standard sprint, and the newest ducktail Porsche, the Carrera S with its double-clutch transmission, takes this time down to 4.3 seconds (or 4.1 seconds with the Sport Plus button active). But it's not just a question of numbers.

In the RS 2.7, the acceleration is characterized by the penetrating sound of the air-cooled boxer engine. The sound is raspy, sawing; it vibrates like Lee Marvin's

voice after his fifth whiskey. The RS delivers the unfiltered feeling of being part of a highly refined machine whose function is so all-encompassing that the Carrera becomes an experience of intrinsic power that goes down to the driver's last nerve endings. It is the essence of Porsche driving, an act of taming whose satisfaction lies in the very exertion required to pull it off.



The ducktails of today still have that special kick that distinguishes a rear-engine Porsche from every other sports car on earth. They simply serve it up in a less laborious manner, thereby demonstrating the astonishing results achieved through continuous improvement of this extraordinary and unique car concept.

The Sport Classic, for starters, is capable of higher speeds under any conditions in comparison with the original Carrera. Yet its driving dynamics are more authoritative. The water-cooled six-cylinder engine still has the same accent, but without the raw mechanical



The SportDesign Package is now available as an extras package from Exclusive for all 911s

sounds that characterized the original engine. The boxer concept ensures a silky smooth ride, as if the machine didn't even have to break a sweat to push the 911 into top-speed range at the drop of a hat. In terms of driving characteristics, the new 911s have shaken out all of the ticks that were still in the Carrera RS 2.7; and this improvement has nothing to do with the fact that electronic driving aids have since become de rigueur. Rather, it is exclusively rigorous chassis development that has made the 911 such a well-mannered, precisely manageable car. When you get behind the wheel of a 911 Sport Classic, you ask yourself how the driving dynamics could possibly be improved.

But it is possible—and Porsche proved it with the new 911. It cruises at 300 km/h (186 mph) with a composure that its grandfather could no longer maintain at 200 km/h (124 mph). Its driving dynamics set new standards once again. And although it has grown somewhat and provides a heretofore-unknown level of comfort, all of the old virtues are still on hand. The ducktail rear spoiler stands as a testament to that fact.

911 (TYPE 991) CO₂ emissions: 236 g/km to 194 g/km, Fuel consumption (combined): 10.0 l/100 km to 8.2 l/100 km

The ducktails of today still have that special kick that distinguishes a rear-engine Porsche from every other sports car on earth. They're just a bit more civil about it.



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