



SPEEDSTER

NICE TO HAVE

At Porsche, the concept of carrying on tradition means: movement. The new 911 Speedster took to the open air of Nice, tracing the tracks of its predecessors.

Photos by Achim Hartmann

A memorable meeting: The Mediterranean idyll of the Nice region is the perfect setting for a generational rendezvous, with the Speedster that started it all—the 356—meeting the fourth generation: the new 911 Speedster

Gone with the wind:
Driving in a Speedster is
a matter of taste. Where
else could the sea air be
quite so sublime?





Narrow-gauge romanticism:
The Speedster exhibits its very open qualities as it navigates narrow streets, rubbing shoulders with its surroundings

Generations together:
Model history all lined up,
with the 911 Speedster
(2010), the 356
Speedster (1954), and
the 911 Carrera 3.2
Speedster (1988)

911 SPEEDSTER
Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 3,800 cc
Power: 408 hp (300 kW)
Maximum torque:
420 Nm at 4,200–5,600 rpm
0–100 km/h: 4.4 sec.
Top track speed:
305 km/h (190 mph)
CO₂ emissions: 242 g/km
Fuel consumption
City: 15.5 l/100 km
Highway: 7.3 l/100 km
Combined: 10.3 l/100 km



2010
2011

To heaven and back in Pure Blue:
The 911 Speedster comes
in a limited edition of
356 vehicles.

SPEEDSTER

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

The Porsche Speedster is considered a fresh-air delight for anyone who wants a little more than a Cabriolet. But the times when one had to relinquish a little comfort in the process have passed. As a special luxury model from Porsche Exclusive, the new 911 Speedster once again rides the winds that its fans wouldn't want to do without.

By Roland Schreiber Photos by Boris Schmalenberger



1954 1957

Developed as an entry-level model for the USA: The **356 Speedster** attracted attention not just on the racetrack.



At some point racing was no longer limited to the track. Americans, who used to swear by tail fins that practically needed firearm licenses, became increasingly enamored of small sports cars from Europe in the 1950s. With the 356, Porsche was definitely on the right course. Agile and fast, the 356 provided all manner of pleasure. And it left a big impression, on boulevards as well as at popular weekend racing events. But the British also recognized the trend and sent their roadsters over the pond—at rather favorable prices. The challenge was to beat them. Porsche importers Max Hoffman (East Coast) and John von Neumann (West Coast) pleaded with the company: the United States needed an entry-level Porsche, a light version of the comfortable 356 America Roadster, equipped with the basics but sufficiently attractive to draw attention on the boulevards. And it had to be sufficiently powerful to win on those racing weekends. Its price was not to exceed \$3,000.

The Porsche 356 Speedster celebrated its premiere in 1954. Its windshield was excitingly narrow, its side windows had to be hidden. Its roof was a bad-weather cover

requiring considerable manual effort to close. This special car cost \$2,995, heating and tachometer extra. It did not even have a fuel gauge; a dipstick was used to measure the fuel level. But in return, the Speedster promised enormous freedom and a fascinating lightness to anyone who could do without comfort. Seventy kilos lighter than the cabriolet, its 55-horsepower, four-cylinder boxer engine offered completely new performance opportunities. True to the U.S. sales strategy of “Win on Sunday, sell on Monday,” John von Neumann drove the purist newcomer at its first racing event in Torrey Pines, California, on Thanksgiving weekend—and promptly won the 1.5-liter class for standard-series sports cars.

Some 1,800 of these cars were sold in the first year, and precisely 4,854 by 1957. That was it. The Speedster’s career seemed as short as its front windshield, which, on the other hand, has always been known for providing breathing space.

At the recent Paris Motor Show, Porsche’s latest interpretation of this extreme cabriolet celebrated its world premiere. The company’s specialists from Porsche Exclu-

sive gave the new 911 Speedster its special character—one that is irresistibly noble. Only 356 of these vehicles will be made by Exclusive Manufaktur. It is a car for true fans, a collector’s item available in two colors—Pure Blue and Carrara White—and it leaves no wish unfulfilled: bi-xenon, dynamic steering-dependent headlights, Park-Assist, aluminum doors, the Sport Chrono Package Plus, Porsche Ceramic Composite Brakes (PCCB), PASM suspension (lowered by 10 millimeters, or 0.4 inches), mechanical rear-axle differential lock, Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK), and a 408-horsepower boxer engine. It also features a broader rear with the typical Speedster roof compartment cover, SportDesign front paneling, specialty paintwork, and a new interpretation of the legendary Fuchs rim for the wheels. Its interior has smooth-finish black leather along with aluminum and ceramics fittings, adaptive sports seats with a checkered-flag motif, illuminated door sills, and a limited-edition plaque. The love of detail is evident absolutely everywhere. The only reminders of the car’s purist pioneering days are its raked windshield, which is 60 millimeters (2.4 inches) lower, and its manually operated top.

A car for individualists, but that has always been the case with the Speedster. Anyone who values wind over hairstyles had to wait well over 30 years for the next big whirlwind after the 356 Speedster. At the International Motor Show (IAA) in Frankfurt in 1987, Porsche presented a Speedster club sport study: a 911 that had no front windshield at all. Its all-round paneling made it a single-seater. The road version, the 911 Speedster 3.2, followed a year later and placed a premium on musculature. Its suspension, tires, wheels, and broad body came from the Turbo Cabriolet, and it had a bullish hump on its rear made of fiberglass-reinforced plastic.

A sharply angled front windshield 80 millimeters (3.15 inches) lower than its counterpart in the cabriolet, coupled with the bad-weather top, clearly marked this powerful vehicle as a Speedster, not to mention its weight reduction of 70 kilos (154 lbs.). This set the stage for the following marketing message: “A Cabriolet is a closed car that you can drive with the top down. A Speedster is an open car that you can drive with the top up.” Porsche made 2,103

Speedsters with the Turbo-look until the year 1989. And only 171 of the version with the narrower body.

In the third generation, Porsche returned to its original idea and focused once again on a purist and sports-oriented character. The 911 Carrera 2 Speedster of 1992 had to keep out of car-washing tunnels. Its top and its side mirrors had to be moved by hand. The car had no door pockets or emergency seats, and leather straps served as door handles. The unconventional front windshield and the double bubble on the rear had long become its trademarks. The Speedster could accelerate from 0 to 100 km/h (62 mph) in 5.7 seconds, so the ads picked up on tempo as well: “Pleasure in a real sports car can only be increased by leaving half of it off. Preferably the top half.”

The Speedster is now enjoying its fourth spring, this time as a fascinating luxury object that is true to form. The Speedster has always represented luxury; one just has to know how to appreciate it—no other Porsche can match this car in its dedication to the open road.

2010
2011



911 SPEEDSTER

Period: October 2010–June 2011
 Production: 356 vehicles
 Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
 Displacement: 3,800 cc
 Power: 408 hp (300 kW)
 Maximum torque: 420 Nm at 4,200–5,600 rpm
 0–100 km/h: 4.4 sec.
 Top track speed: 305 km/h (189 mph)
 CO₂ emissions: 242 g/km
 Fuel consumption
 – City: 15.5 l/100 km
 – Highway: 7.3 l/100 km
 – Combined: 10.3 l/100 km

1954
1957



356 SPEEDSTER 1500

Period: 1954–1957
 Production: 4,854 vehicles
 Engine: Four-cylinder boxer
 Displacement: 1,488 cc
 Power: 55 hp at 4,400 rpm
 0–100 km/h: 17 sec.
 Top track speed: 160 km/h (99 mph)

1988
1989



911 CARRERA 3.2 SPEEDSTER TURBOLOOK

Period: 1988–1989
 Production: 2,103 vehicles
 Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
 Displacement: 3,164 cc
 Power: 231 hp at 5,900 rpm
 0–100 km/h: 6.3 sec.
 Top track speed: 245 km/h (152 mph)

1992
1993



911 CARRERA 2 SPEEDSTER

Period: 1992–1993
 Production: 930 vehicles
 Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
 Displacement: 3,600 cc
 Power: 250 hp at 6,100 rpm
 0–100 km/h: 5.7 sec.
 Top track speed: 260 km/h (162 mph)

PHOTO SESSION

Did you enjoy the Speedster feeling from the two lead photos? That’s great! Photographer Boris Schmalenberger and the Christophorus graphic artists had to use a few tricks, because if the Speedster does not go to the road, the road has to come to the Speedster. So they first found the right photos, made a backdrop out of them (3.0 x 4.5 meters; 9.8 x 14.8 feet), set them up with the right perspective, adjusted the lighting, and took the shots.



TECHNOLOGY

TOP FORM

Many features of the 911 Speedster differ from those of the Cabrio—including the soft top. Newly developed, this manually operated construction maintains a tight seal even at speeds of 300 km/h (186 mph).

By Peter Weidenhammer

Open or closed: every once in a great while, the 911 Speedster will be driven with the top on. So it would not be complete—either as a work of art or as an experience—unless it had a top. That is why this two-seater features a top perfectly tailored to its contours, one that not only functions with the precision of a Swiss watch but also is operated like those timepieces as well, namely, by hand. The engineers have developed a mechanical work of art unparalleled among tops throughout the world.

In contrast to its classical predecessors, the span element in the rear part of the top simply lies on the lid of its compartment. A lock on the top was out of the question for aesthetic reasons—no clasp and certainly no hole should disrupt the curved aesthetic of the aluminum lid of the top compartment. Yet in order for the outer contour to exhibit the desired flow, and to ensure the interior enjoys the necessary tight seal, the engineers produced a kinetic system that uses landau bars on the inside. In this design, the landau bars press the top's fabric seal onto the lid of the compartment so effectively that it is watertight. Connected to the mechanical components of the top by means of an intelligent kinetic system, the bars securely prevent water or drafts from entering the interior, even at speeds exceeding 300 km/h (186 mph).

The top does all of this without requiring any particular muscle power from the driver. The kinetic system is adjusted in such a way that any driver—whether



Totally tight: When the top is closed, the rear seal is pressed against the lid of the top compartment

physically powerful or not—can easily open and close it by hand. Regardless of the stage in which the top is released, it remains in that position and moves neither forward nor backward—demonstrating perfect balance in its mechanics. Thanks to the gear ratio in the two manual levers, no great strength is needed to make the closed top taut either.

A special production process for the lightweight metal rods also ensures there is no play in the mechanical construction, yet it still can be easily moved. Just like a Swiss watch.

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