

CLASSIC DRIVER

Porsche 911 Speedster - Driven



Back in 1954, US Porsche importer Max Hoffman inspired the original Porsche 356 Speedster in order to boost sales to American buyers. Hoffman probably had no idea that he was starting a tradition that would still be with us today, seen here in the latest 911 Speedster that we have driven in the South of France.

Unlike the 356 model line-up, today's **911 Speedster** is not cheaper than its coupé equivalent. At 201,682 euros, the exclusive new car costs some 90,000 euros more than the standard 911 and, as a tribute to the past, production will be limited to 356 cars. The order book is sure to be closed by Christmas, with all of them sold.

Hoffman's original dream turned out to be a great American **Porsche** success story but his **356 Speedster** was a lightweight, spartan machine. It invited race-circuit use, whereas all subsequent **911 Speedsters** since the **G-Series of 1988** have been luxury cars with their own, unique style. Down the years, they have tended to become highly prized collectors' items.





The latest model is wider and lower than the comparable, contemporary convertible. As with **Speedsters** of the past, it is a pure two-seater with a sophisticated hood mechanism tucked away under its distinctive double-bubble top compartment. The hood is not fully automatic in operation but **Speedster** customers are happy to tolerate a minute or two spent fiddling with catches. Weight is kept down to 1540kg and, in its fittings, the **Porsche 911 Speedster** is a veritable showcase for all that the **Porsche Exclusive** service can offer today. □ □ Taking the coast road towards **Monaco**, away from the gloom of **Northern Europe** in November, we could get only a hint of the potential performance of the 3.8-litre engine, with no less than 408HP, driving through the famous seven-speed PDK transmission. The 0-62mph time is just 4.4sec, with a top speed of 190mph. We decided to get away from the busy coastal roads and head into the hills. □ The low centre of gravity was especially noticeable in the many hairpin bends, where the excellent suspension geometry maintained the **Speedster's** feeling of agility in the chassis. The mechanical rear axle differential adds to the sensation of precision when cornering hard. The car remains perfectly stable and a series of corners gives the driver a feeling rather like skiing, except of course that in the **Speedster** it can be uphill as well as down.

□

Wet leaves and some loose gravel on the legendary **Monte Carlo Rally Col de Turini** stage failed to upset the perfect balance of this exceptional car. The super-wide tyres maintained their predictable grip as we sped up the mountain road, climbing to an altitude of 1600m, where the air was as fresh as glacier water and the view to the majestic **Alpine** peaks in the north was breathtaking. With a new 911 due next year, we wondered, were we experiencing the last of a kind? Whether there will be a **Speedster** in any future model line-up is still not clear.





Whatever the future holds, this latest **Speedster** is sure to be a collectors' car, just as all its predecessors have been. The long-term value would seem to be guaranteed by the very limited production run. It's just a matter of deciding which colour would be the wise investor's choice. Every car is so well-equipped with modern gadgetry and luxury fittings that there is little to consider on that front. It's come a long way since **Max Hoffman** sold those stripped-out, basic **356 Speedsters** over half a century ago!

Text: [Classic Driver from original German text by Jan Baedeker](#)

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