

CLASSIC DRIVER

Driving the 2007 Supercar Tour in a Porsche 911 Carrera



Leaving the Bugatti Veyrons and Spykers to more flamboyant participants on this year's tour, we went the tried-and-tested route, choosing a car that remains an enigma after so many years of constant development - the Porsche 911.

The format for the 2007 Supercar Tour was the same as last May, and revolved around the simple principle of meeting in St James's Square at 8.30am, breakfasting well at the Royal Automobile Club, and then proceeding in a multi-million-pound, Technicolor snake from Central London through suburbia and on to Silverstone for the beginning of the Tourist Trophy weekend.

As last time, a troop of Her Majesty's finest motorcycle outriders were available to escort the cavalcade through the capital's meaner streets, although at times they had their hands full with many a grid-locked junction to negotiate, despite an ebbing London rush hour.



Whisper it, I've never had access to a new 911 over an extended period and even now, after 10 days' or so reflection, I still find it hard to describe the quirks and nuances of a car that so divides motoring opinion.

Ours was the 325 HP model, at a list price of £60,810 - although equipped with over £14,000 of extras - and with its 2-wheel drive and ostensibly 'no-frills' demeanour it begged the question, is this all you need?



The initial drive into London the night before for the opening of [Joe Macari's state-of-the-art service facility](#) revealed a meticulously-assembled piece of machinery, albeit one that the optional sports suspension makes negotiating London's pock-marked tarmac a misery. It is *seriously* hard and however fantastic is the handling on smooth roads (and believe me, it really is), city-dwellers would be wise to skip this on the options list.

Gunning the flat-six past the Pall Mall headquarters of the Royal Automobile Club for the start of the event brings on the familiar buzz-saw rasp (aided by this car's optional sports exhaust), and soon demonstrates that every one of the 325 HP the 3616 cm³ engine delivers has its own little job to do, and is busy as the proverbial doing it.

It's a spare, finely-honed and -toned car that makes use of not only all of its power but every inch of its 4,427 mm-long bodysell with a big storage area under the bonnet, occasional 2 + 1-and-a-bit seating, a rear parcel shelf and generous interior oddments areas. I've got that 'do you really want anything else?' feeling coming on again.



As we drove out of London and the pace crept up, the car's steering, braking and gear-shifting abilities showed themselves. Riding on optional 19" Sport Design alloy wheels (£1,256.00) and slowed by ultra-effective Porsche Ceramic Composite Brakes (PCCB - £5,349.00), there's not much that will out-run a 911 on a twisty road or track-day, and don't be fooled by the 325 HP - compare the 911's 232 HP/1000 kg with other, more powerful, cars' greater weight and you won't be missing out.

Flick it out of a roundabout and pour on the throttle, and hang about, what's that!? There's definitely something going on at the back, as the tail *just* tugs out at moderate speeds, as if guiding you on to the next corner. It's not a worrying moment but for those used to front-engine and rear-wheel drive with big rubber it's a surprise.

Pressing the button that comes with the Sport Chrono Package Plus package (£507.00), enlivens the car yet further, the 'hard' rev limiter cutting with ferocity while heel-and-toe gear changes are that much faster as the free-spinning boxer-motor picks up its skirts and flies.



It's a visceral experience that you can bet 90% of owners will never experience. You miss out on the rapturous welcome as befit the Bugatti, Spyker and assorted F430s, 'Pah, just a 911!' but our 911, resplendent in 1980s' Guards Red, sure did the business – and some.



A couple of hours later and we were at the Northamptonshire grand prix circuit, at the end of the Supercar Tour and joining many 100s of other Porsches in the car park to watch opening practice at the [FIA GT race](#). It wasn't the Stuttgart company's day – one gets the impression that the rule-makers have just about had enough of years of 911 dominance – but you know that many of the underpinnings of the car you've driven to the circuit have been race-proven over 43 years of development.

Despite the fact that many 911s are bought as a 'statement', the irony was that on Supercar Tour Friday, well and truly 'out-statemented' alongside the Bugatti, the Spyker and several Ferraris, the unassuming red car was genuinely 'all you need'.



The car tested was a Porsche 911 Carrera 2 Coupe with a UK list price of £60,810.00. Extras fitted to this car included -

*19" Sport Design alloy wheels £1,256.00
Rear Window Wiper £229.00
Coloured wheel centres £107.00
Smooth leather sports three-spoke steering wheel £432.00
Sports seats £257.00
Sports gear shift £380.00
Porsche Ceramic Composite Brakes (PCCB) £5,349.00
Sport Chrono Package Plus £507.00
Bi-Xenon headlamps with washers £705.00
6-disc CD autochanger £348.00
Sports chassis 20mm lowered & limited slip diff' £1,030.00
PCM Navigation module £1,260.00
PCM Telephone module £523.00
Tyre pressure monitoring system £427.00
Sports exhaust system £1,160*

Total price including VAT: £74,390.00

Editor's Note: *We had a thoroughly enjoyable day out and weekend ticket to the Royal Automobile Club Tourist Trophy courtesy of the superbly-organised Supercar Tour. Keep in touch with www.silverstone.co.uk for details of next year's event.*

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