

CLASSIC DRIVER

Porsche's King of the 'Ring: The 908/3



This car had more in common with Porsche's hillclimb special 909 *Bergspyder* than it did with preceding models in the '908' range. It was very, very light, powerful and perfectly designed for relatively low-speed circuits, such as the Targa or the 'Ring.

The famous Stuttgart manufacturer has always placed emphasis on low overall weight. Utilising air-cooled engines that, until the 917 came along, were never the most powerful for the capacity, Porsche had to rely on simple designs and the use of exotic materials such as beryllium, titanium and... er... balsa wood.

In 1970, the 908/3 was introduced as a works-only machine for endurance racing on the tighter circuits that did not suit the now well-developed 917. Developing a 3-litre prototype (as opposed to the 'production' 917), the company was allowed much more freedom with the rules. The car had no headlights; and the tiny triangular roll-bar was the minimum possible – although this was beefed-up for 1971.



Nothing was superfluous. The specially formulated bodywork (PVC foam sandwiched between two layers of plastic) was left unpainted on its inner surfaces. The seat was of the simplest design, the gear-lever in wood and even the key was drilled to save weight.

The simple, high-downforce aerodynamics and excellent, very forward-placed driving position suited the road-type circuits where handling and manoeuvrability were at a premium. In 1970 and 1971 the cars were run as works entries, albeit painted in the colours of the Gulf or Martini teams. Porsche knew how to win at the Targa Florio and the 'old firm' organisation led by Ferdinand Piëch handled matters both years, winning in 1970 and only let down by wild driving in 1971.







At the Nürburgring, Porsche Salzburg triumphed in 1970, Martini Racing in 1971. As an example of just how fast these cars were, at a private test session at the 'Ring in 1970, Jo Siffert lapped in 7m 41sec - one second faster than Jacky Ickx had achieved the year before in a 420bhp Brabham-Ford F1 car.

After 1971, privateer 908/3s were to be seen racing for many more years, ultimately powered by a variation of the 1974 Turbo RSR motor.



This example, restored to 1970 Targa Florio 'Gulf' specification, is to be offered for sale by RM Auctions at its forthcoming 9 March sale at Amelia Island.

Related Links

For more details on this 1970 Porsche 908/3, see www.rmauctions.com

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