

CLASSIC DRIVER

Get Ready to Rumble in the Alps: Battling the clock in a 911 Carrera 2.7 RS

Lead

In 1974, the 'Rumble in the Jungle', the greatest battle in boxing history, saw Muhammed Ali defeat World Heavyweight Champion George Foreman. From the same era comes another boxer legend, the 911 Carrera 2.7 RS, which J. Philip Rathgen eagerly borrowed for his own (more modest) skirmish...

Arosa in late summer. A place familiar to me, as it was here that – almost exactly a year ago – I introduced myself to the 76 corners of the Arosa ClassicCar hillclimb. As before, Porsche kindly invited me to tackle the event in one of its own sports cars from the museum in the Swiss canton of Graubünden but, for 2013, things have moved up a gear.

Sceptical of my driving skills, Porsche last year blessed me with the loan of that 'housewives' Porsche', the much-maligned [Porsche 924 Carrera GT](#) (which defied all my disparaging expectations). Apparently I passed the test, so here I am with a new sparring partner: the magnificent Carrera 2.7 RS. Now we're talking!



I stand face to face with this legend from Zuffenhausen, the boxer-engined Muhammad Ali of the automotive world: fierce yet nimble, with all the pulling power of a world-conquering boxing champ. Filled with awe, I walk slowly round the dream car of my schooldays. True, I would have preferred a Viper Green RS to the yellow example before me, but who's bothered about the colour when this Ferrari-slayer is ready to carry me into battle?



The RS is not a reserved sort of chap. Just look at the confident livery along the side and beneath that aggressive spoiler. "My" RS left the factory in 1973 and is equipped with the more comfortable 'Touring' features, rather than being the ultimate lightweight version. Yet from its 2.7-litre boxer engine, the athlete draws 207bhp and will happily accelerate to more than 150mph.

Ding, ding, round one. The flag falls and with (I must admit) a slightly trembling leg, I depress the clutch and put the car into gear. From the rear I hear an angry rumbling, and off we go... once on the move, the needle of the large tachometer leaps round the dial, then it's into second gear and just as the engine reaches a crescendo it's time to put firm pressure on the brake as we approach the first bend. My heart is beating hard and fast, like the pounding of Ali's fists against my ribs. My breathing becomes faster and I find I'm talking to myself in an attempt to calm down. Without success.



I fly through the first few corners, aware of the stopwatch ticking relentlessly. Aware, too, of the risks of pushing too hard, I steady things a little, and my aching heart muscle gives some relief. But the RS asks for more and – dangerously – lulls me into a sense of security. But the sense of confidence this car inspires pays off: after six minutes or so, the battle is over. Not a world record time, perhaps, but I'm satisfied.



This was the first of three runs, during which the RS and I cemented a firm friendship that saw us tackle the bends without mishap. At the end of it, my childhood love of this 'greatest of all classic Porsches' has matured into a deep and lasting respect. What a car.

Photos: [Urs Homberger](#)

Gallery

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