

Top(less)

*The new Porsche 911 Targa has a rollover bar again.
Which means it's following the family tradition—and is a perfect synthesis
of the current 911 and the classic Targa.*

By Peter Weidenhammer
Photos by Steffen Jahn

The new Targa meets its forerunner: A 911 Targa 2.0 from 1967 in the background, and the 911 Targa 4S in the foreground. The newcomer's top opens at the press of a button, whereas the old one had to be removed and stowed away by hand





Rollover family: All Targas up to model year 1993 (from left to right: original 911, 964, G series) featured a rigid frame behind the heads of the driver and passenger; the new 911 Targa (991, front) continues this tradition



While Porsche is offering the new model (left) only as the Targa 4 or Targa 4S—which means only with all-wheel drive—in its time the 964 Targa had either rear-wheel or all-wheel drive

*I*t was to be expected. So outrageously beautiful, this latest 911. So seductive a convertible. Such a thoroughbred, this Turbo. And yet one can only stare at it in amazement, with a quickened pulse. Yes, that's exactly what it should look like. So different and yet so familiar. So different because such a perfect synthesis of the new 911 and the classic Targa hardly seemed possible. So familiar, because that's precisely what the synthesis achieves.

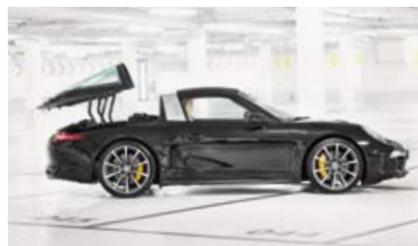
To be specific: the 911 Targa is the spitting image of its coupe and cabriolet sister models—down to the height of its door sills. It's very closely related to the open-top Carrera 4, as is clearly evident in everything from its broad shoulders to its rear axle, and discretely confirmed by the narrow strip of lighting across the breadth of its tail. Underneath a muscular athlete's exterior it has all-wheel drive with Porsche Traction Management (PTM), which for every driving situation shifts just the right amount of additional engine torque to the front wheels by means of a multiple-disc clutch.

The formidable six-cylinder boxer engine over the rear axle works with a displacement of 3.4 or 3.8 liters and an output of 257 kW (350 hp) or 294 kW (400 hp), for the latest 911 comes as either the 911 Targa 4 or the 911 Targa 4S. The gear-box always has seven speeds, with either a clutch and purely manual transmission or two clutches and automatic transmission. The optional Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK) can do everything better, faster, and more efficiently, although it goes without saying that the PDK obeys the direct shifting commands of the driver.

The Targas surge powerfully to the fore in every respect: they need just 4.4 to 5.2 seconds for the sprint to 100 km/h, and their peak speed lies between 280 and 296 km/h, depending on the version. These new 911s



Bar gallery: A brilliant display of evolution in the underground garage of the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen—the 911 Targa 2.0, 911 SC Targa, 911 Carrera 2 Targa, and 911 Targa 4S



Sophisticated Targa kinetics are a good example of Porsche art in motion

consume only between 8.7 and 10 liters of fuel per 100 kilometers according to the New European Driving Cycle (NEDC).



But figures alone don't tell the real story. In fact the only figure that leaps spontaneously to mind is the start number that one can't help but imagine on the door. The way it appears above the belt line recalls the charisma of legendary Porsche race cars. Despite a silhouette that hardly differs by a millimeter, two elements make the car look very different, namely, the broad Targa rollover bar instead of a B-column, and the complete absence of a C-column—for a glass dome stretches from behind the roll-over bar to shortly before the engine compartment.

This architecture gives the Targa the feeling of a two-seater with a long tapered tail. And it elicits memories—of racing legends like the Carrera 6 and the 917 from the late 1960s, which sometimes also offered glimpses of glass behind their roll-over bars.

The 911 Targa was born of those days. It was facilitated by the rollover bar. Stricter safety regulations in the United States back then had placed this full convertible at the top of the list of endangered automotive species. Porsche responded with the world's first series-production safety-oriented cabriolet. The B-column grew into a stable frame of Nirossta stainless steel behind the heads of the driver and passenger. Together with the front windshield frame, it provided survival space for the occupants in the event that the car rolled over.

Porsche christened this new model the Targa. This name, to which the company still retains the rights, has two meanings. On the one hand it calls to mind the Targa Florio road race in Sicily, which Porsche had won multiple times. And "targa" is also the medieval Italian word for shield, whose function is fulfilled by the rollover bar.

The 911 with the rollover bar was and remains a fascination. Right from the start, the Targa was a big seller—whether as the 912 with a four-cylinder engine or as the 911 with six cylinders. In its first year on

the market in 1967, its share of production already exceeded that of the open-top 356, which had been discontinued two years earlier. It was not a simple matter, however, to expose this safety-oriented convertible to the air. Its top had to be unlocked from the inside and removed from the outside, folded like a formal top hat, and stowed away. The plastic rear window—not replaced by a rigid glass version until two years after the premiere—could be partially opened or completely removed by means of a zipper that ran around it.



Today everything is done at the press of a button. And then the show begins. The glass dome at the rear rises, seems to hover weightlessly in the air, and leans far back. In the meantime, two epaulets on the Targa rollover bar open and reveal the mechanics behind the top panel. With a graceful bellows-like movement, the fabric-covered top folds in two and settles behind the folding rear seats. The epaulets close, the glass moves forward, and the open 911 is ready to start. The show lasts just about

20 seconds. And it only works when the car is stopped, for an industry-wide memorandum of understanding states that convertibles with a rigid top panel may not robe or disrobe while in motion.

The new Targa is clever in its metamorphosis and it is also considerate of others and itself. The rear ultrasound sensors of the parking assistant sound an alarm if an object comes within 40 centimeters of the 911 and thus might be on a collision course with the glass tail as it glides to the rear.



And off we go. In just a few meters, the new Targa effortlessly succeeds in reviving the old Targa feeling. If that's too much excitement to bear, two small but effective aerodynamic tranquilizers can be activated. The front windshield frame and the Targa roll-over bar each have an integrated wind deflector which extend at the touch of a button and calm the rush of air overhead. It's a pure 911 driving experience: spontaneous, sporty, speedy, and safe. The 911 Targa is as commanding as ever. It is a bit more comfort-oriented than its siblings, but this doesn't subvert its fascination in the slightest. Even when driving, one's thoughts often return to the start number on the door.

Some things haven't changed between the Targa of then and now. The word "targa," for example, is still written in lowercase letters. And in italics. It's unmistakable. And to be expected. ●

911 TARGA 4 (TYPE 991)
Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 3,436 cc
Power: 257 kW (350 hp)
Maximum torque: 390 Nm at 5,600/min
0–100 km/h: 5.2 (5.0*) sec.
Top track speed: 282 (280*) km/h (175/174* mph)
CO₂ emissions: 223 (204*) g/km
Fuel consumption
 City: 13.1 (11.8*) l/100 km
 Highway: 7.5 (6.9*) l/100 km
 Combined: 9.5 (8.7*) l/100 km
 * with Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK)

911 TARGA 4S (TYPE 991)
Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 3,800 cc
Power: 294 kW (400 hp)
Maximum torque: 440 Nm at 5,600/min
0–100 km/h: 4.8 (4.6*) sec.
Top track speed: 296 (294*) km/h (184/183* mph)
CO₂ emissions: 237 (214*) g/km
Fuel consumption
 City: 13.9 (12.5*) l/100 km
 Highway: 7.7 (7.1*) l/100 km
 Combined: 10.0 (9.2*) l/100 km
 * with Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK)

Original 911

Models: 911 Targa, 911 S Targa, 911 T Targa, 911 L Targa, 911 E Targa, 912 Targa
Model years: 1967–1973
Displacement: 1,991–2,341 cc
Drive: Rear-wheel drive
Number sold: 27,498 (including 2,562 912s)



G series

Models: 911 Targa, 911 S Targa, 911 Carrera Targa, 911 Carrera 3.0 Targa, 911 SC Targa, 911 Carrera 3.2 Targa, 911 Carrera Targa Turblook, 911 Turbo Targa, 911 Carrera Clubsport Targa
Model years: 1974–1989
Displacement: 2,687–3,299 cc
Drive: Rear-wheel drive
Number sold: 57,350



964

Models: 911 Carrera 4 Targa, 911 Carrera 2 Targa
Model years: 1990–1993
Displacement: 3,600 cc
Drive: Rear-wheel drive (Carrera 2), all-wheel drive (Carrera 4)
Number sold: 4,863



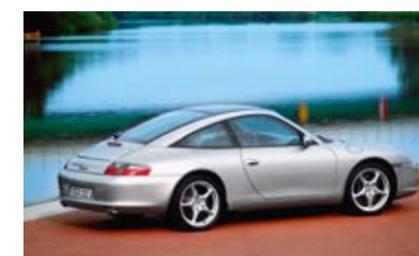
993

Models: 911 Targa
Model years: 1996–1998
Displacement: 3,600 cc
Drive: Rear-wheel drive
Number sold: 4,583



996

Models: 911 Targa
Model years: 2002–2004
Displacement: 3,596 cc
Drive: Rear-wheel drive
Number sold: 5,142



997

Models: 911 Targa 4, 911 Targa 4S
Model years: 2006–2012
Displacement: 3,596–3,824 cc
Drive: All-wheel drive
Number sold: 8,459

