



Porsche 911 Targa

Dream machine

Car review | Most boys have decorated their rooms with posters of some kind of dream car or another; in the majority of cases, it was the Porsche 911. For many years, Porsche's success story retained its name as well as its look; thus allowing some of those young boys, who've since become successful, to still acquire their dream car. However does it now mean that this long running model has in the meantime become so desperately outdated? Or has the car been perfected in the minutest of details? To answer those questions, Autozine went out with the new 911 Targa to answer that question.

Let's start at the beginning - this is the all new 911 Targa. In comparison with that old version from the boy's room and its posters, the difference is immediately apparent. However, the difference with the previous model is less so. In any case, it is really about a car which has been designed from scratch. To start with the new 911 Targa is much wider than its predecessor. Head lights have been adapted; even the rear has been redrawn. The roof line, the aspect where the 911 Targa differs from the 911 Carrera, is now accentuated with a chrome strip.



Targa

It is the roof construction that differentiates the Targa from the 911 Carrera. This has been refined enormously as well. With a press of a button, the large glass roof opens even when driving. The Targa offers a

driving experience somewhere between that of a coupé and convertible. At least, if you can fit in! If these really comfortable seats are pushed all the way backwards, you do run the risk of hitting your head against the edge of the open roof. The fun can end pretty quickly then.

Due to the large surface area of glass, the 911 Targa has a remarkably sense of freedom and space even with the roof closed. Overall, the car is also considerably spacious for a two seater. To be able to squeeze in under its low roof, the driver no longer has to double up to get in the car nor are they almost horizontal behind the steering wheel. Both in the front and in the back, there is all the necessary storage space, which makes this sports car really quite practical.



Ergonomics

The dashboard has been completely redesigned for the new 911 Targa, however on some points it is still an ergonomic puzzle. Some of the electronics are operated with paddles on the steering wheel; whereas other functions are activated with buttons located around the colour screen. Not only are the graphics pathetic, but the clarity of the text leaves little to be desired.

The navigation system has no TMC function, in order to automatically plan routes around traffic-jams. To use the mobile phone in the car, the SIM-card has to be removed from your phone; the Porsche engineers

have obviously not yet heard of Bluetooth. What is a real shame is the exhausting and bombastic sound of the audio system, which puts a stamp of negativity on the whole experience.

Several of the ergonomic eccentricities are due to the history of the make. Certain things that seem clumsy, simply hark back to the long tradition of the make. One only has to think of the numerous applications of those toggle switches; and in continental versions of the car the ignition is placed on the left hand side of the steering wheel. This is a remnant from the good old racing days, when drivers started the race with a dash to their cars. With the ignition on the left, the right hand was free to control the gear stick. This gave the Porsche driver a marginally quicker start.

Performance

Turning the key brings alive that six cylinder engine, which has traditionally been placed behind the rear axis. This used to cause some dodgy behaviour, which was due to the disproportionately weighting over the front and the rear wheels; however with the most recent Porsches, this problem is no longer so evident.

The steering is enjoyably heavy and extremely exact. Moreover, as the 911 is smaller than its direct competitors, the car is noticeable more agile and manageable. The suspension is hard, but still offers a certain degree of comfort. In fast turns, the car leans a little; at full acceleration, the 911 really comes into its own.



At the touch of a button, the suspension can be made harder. The 911 Targa is one of the few cars where the

effect of the Sports button is so effectively noticeable. In sport mode, the car immediately gives more feedback and can take turns with great sense of trust.



In most cases, the Sport-mode is preferred, however on poor road surfaces, the suspension is so hard that anyone sitting in the car is almost thrown out of it; consequently it is perfectly understandable to give the driver this choice.

With the introduction of this new generation 911 Targa, four-wheel drive is now standard. This contribution increases the security of the car in extreme weather conditions. The majority of test kilometres were driven in driving rain; and with the four-wheel drive, it was possible to make use of the full engine power. The four-wheel drive allows the Targa 911 to transmit power not only safely but also optimally to the road surface in all types of circumstances.

Engine

And the 3.8 litres six cylinder offers more than enough power. The new 911 Targa delivers as standard 325 hp; the test car was an S model, which is good up to 355 hp.

This power is transmitted by means of an (optional) five-speed Tiptronic gearbox. Tiptronic allows the driver to choose between driving the car either as fully automatic or with the use of the finger paddles on the steering wheel. On either side of the wheel, there are plus and minus-switches to choose either previous or next gear respectively. Since the plus-switch is larger

than the minus-switch, it is still possible to feel which is which even as the steering wheel is turning. The automatic more than suffices for daily use and has a good feeling to it when the driver wants to play a little.

Normally the flat six-cylinder engine sounds raw but agreeable. It is as if Louis Armstrong were contemplating his songs happily from the rear seats. When the acceleration pedal is rammed into the floor, the rasping and satisfied noise of the engine changes suddenly into brutal and powerful. The performance is sublime, but a sprint from 0 to 100 km/hr within 4,9 seconds is so easy that something feels as though it is missing.

Sport

For this reason the engine, as well as the suspension, can be given a little tickle with the sport switch. When the 911 Targa is provoked, a wonderful world changes from one moment to the next into an infernal machine which goes roaring and yelling on the attack. Especially with the roof opened (and in a tunnel!), the engine makes such a noise that you are instantaneously covered in goose bumps.



With the 911 Targa on the attack, the performance is overwhelming. The horizon approaches worryingly quickly; from 120 km/hr, a rear spoiler appears automatically; the rest of the traffic seem to stand still. As it should be with a car like this, the driver feels simultaneously nigh on invincible and extremely privileged.

At the end of the test period when the tank had to be

emptied, some guy walked around the car admiringly. He said, "Y'know, I really like your car. It has always been my dream car." Hey, you're not the only one.



Conclusion

Does the unending continuous development of an existing model make a perfect sports car or is the new 911 Targa actually mutton dressed as lamb? Without any doubt, the answer is the former. The 911 Targa unites all of Porsche's many years of experience in one model.

The communication between the car and its driver, its behaviour, its finish, its seating position: it is all correct. With the four-wheel drive, anyone can drive this extremely fast sports car without a care in the world. The Targa roof offers a considerable dose of extra driving pleasure when the sun pops out on the odd occasion.

Whereas the 911 Targa 4S is a sports car of the purest kind, the car can nevertheless be used on a daily basis. Under all circumstances, this performance orientated athlete is safe, offers sufficient comfort and it even has the necessary storage space. In short: with the Porsche 911 Targa, the everlasting dream of many a boy has been achieved (Ivo Kroone). ■



Specifications

Porsche 911 Targa 4S

Size and weight



Length x width x height	443 x 185 x 130 cm
Wheelbase	235 cm
Kerb weight	1.535 kg
Trailer	unknown
Trailer - braked	unknown
Fuel capacity	67 l
Luggage space	105 l
Tyre size	235/35ZR19

Engine and performance



Capacity	3824 cc
Cylinders / valves	6/4
Max power	355 PS @ 6600 rpm
Max torque	400 Nm @ 4600 rpm
Drive	four wheel drive
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	4.9 secs
Top speed	288 km/h
Average mileage	11.8 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	17.5 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	8.5 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	285 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 77,370
Price base model	Â£ 70,320