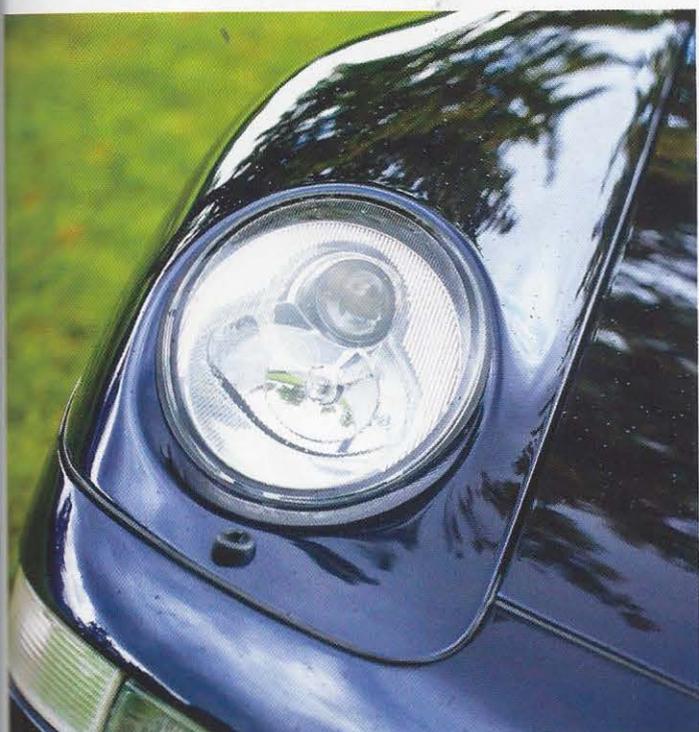


"This goes  
some way to  
approaching  
the Turbo's  
performance"



guy not come and see the car before agreeing to buy it, he then wired the cash sight unseen – and added on an extra wodge for Peter to trailer it to meet the Isle of Man ferry, drive it onto the boat and then leave the keys with the staff for our lucky buyer to pick up at the other end! If only all car trades were that simple.

Many years of trackdays and numerous memorable experiences in the mighty 993 RS ensued. The recollection of the 993 C4S still lived on, though. "I can fully remember the day I took a test drive back in 1996, and recall how tight and solid it felt. The dealer's demonstrator C4S was absolutely amazing, and no series of Porsche since has quite given me that same feeling. It was definitely the one to have, both back then and now."

So it was with such Carrera 4S admiration that last year, Peter became aware of something quite unexpected. His old 993 C4S was back on the market at Monks Heath Motor Company in Macclesfield. The price certainly reflected the pristine condition the car was still in – Peter's guy on the Isle of Man certainly hadn't let him down – but the very level of the ticket meant it was interest that was more noted rather than followed up with vigour. "They actually rang me to get some extra info on the car, and I, of course, spoke with interest on it." But, other than keeping in touch, he didn't take any further action.

At least until June this year, when the itch finally became too much. It was still for sale, so he called them up, struck a deal and thus did something that many of us can only dream about: he bought back his dream car.

"The car's only ever had three owners" said Peter delightedly, "and two of them are me!"

It finally set Peter's mind at rest, 11 years after selling it. "One of the things you always question is, was I right? Your head says yes, but your heart will always disagree, particularly when the car in question is as special as this."

Peter knew his 993 must be rare, so he contacted Porsche customer service in the UK, who subsequently agreed to do some research and find out just how many C4S cars with the X51 engine there are in the UK. "They're still crunching the numbers, but by my own research I only know of one other right-hand drive 993 C4S in the UK with the 3.8-litre RS engine." One of two? That's pretty rare.

That's why being reunited with it was so special. Although he did the deal to buy it over the phone, unlike the previous owner in the Isle of Man, Peter visited Monks Heath with a trailer to pick up his 993.

"I then had the most bizarre conversation with Monks Heath sales executive Andrew Cookson. I knew – and remembered – the car like the back of my hand. But Andrew is equally fastidious... so we ended up spending a lot of time walking around the car talking about minute scratches that I could remember, which Andrew had also found and tidied up."

It was, he recounted, a conversation where they almost had a detail-off: who could remember the best and most obscure minutiae. "Two detail geeks together..." but it was Peter's clear idolisation of this car that is most telling in the fact he can remember every facet more than a decade on.

So, what was it like, being reunited with it? Well, prior to our photoshoot, Peter hadn't had much time to drive the car. Indeed, the first long drive he had since purchase was actually the day of the photoshoot. His thoughts? "It still drives exactly the same. It's a big nostalgia trip – and it's wonderful.

"Most of the 993s I have in here have, by now, covered higher mileages – 60,000-plus, even over 100,000. It's thus weird, getting into what is effectively a brand new car by those standards. It's a great feeling: it really is just like driving that dealer demonstrator all those years ago. It takes me right back, and reminds me they really are still amazing cars."



With other cars in Peter's possession for trackdays, this 993 is purely a grand tourer saved for long road trips

Particularly with such a sublime engine. Remember how Peter was torn back in 1996 about which 993 to go for? This was the perfect compromise: a Turbo without a turbo, but with a rasping RS engine in its place.

We all know how great the 993 is. The only infinitesimal argument against the C4S is that, given the capabilities of its suspension, it was perhaps a bit underpowered. The extra power of the 3.8-litre engine makes all the difference.

"I'm not a fan of turbocharged engine response, so the Turbo didn't really appeal – this goes some way to approaching its performance, but with all the bite and response of a proper, normally aspirated engine."

There's another reason for Peter to love his car for its engine: in his line of work, he sees many 993 3.6 engines that have been bored out to 3.8 litres, increasing power accordingly. "This, though, is the real deal – it was built from scratch as a 3.8, so carries a lot more intrigue to people like me.

"It was a £6,000 option when new, but I'm so very glad I bit the bullet and chose it." A big part of the car's appeal to Peter, it seems, is the hidden gem beneath its Carrera 4S badge.

That it's Peter's keeper of a Porsche is all the more fitting, because the 993 Carrera 4S was actually one of the last developments of the original air-cooled 911. Introduced in August 1995, by 1997 it had been replaced by the 996, which brought with it an entirely new water-cooled way of producing 300bhp.

It's thus arguably one of the most well-developed original Porsches there is. For those who don't want a Turbo, an X51 993 Carrera 4S is a pretty tasty bookend to face an original Sixties 2.0-litre. There's well over three decades worth of development and understanding distilled into a car that still does what Ferry Porsche originally intended – carry its passengers and their luggage in comfort over long

distances at high speed. Which, of course, is something Peter's still doing in it today.

What's next for Peter Tognola's C4S, then? "I plan to do shows in it, European trips, pretty much use it in the way I intended back in 1996 – as a grand tourer. It won't be used for trackdays much, as I've got other cars for that. This will be the garage-treated special that I'll save for long road trips.

"I strongly believe that the best cars should be driven in this way rather than subjected to daily use. If you do that, you risk becoming blasé towards them. I'd much rather save it and take it out every few weeks for a proper drive so you can still appreciate the buzz it brings."

Peter's story shows there's hope for all of us that have sold a special car. How many of us have regretted it in years to come, longed to be reunited with it and relive all the memories that made it special? Well, if Peter's experience is anything to go by, it both can be done and won't risk being a disappointment.

Rose-tinted spectacles? Not at all. If a car is that good to have lived so strongly in your memory, it's likely to be a good 'un. Peter's 993 was back then. Today, it's probably even more alluring to him because of the separation. This isn't the risk of meeting your idols and being disappointed; it's getting back together with a first love and finding it's just as good now as it was back then. Peter's doing something we'd all love to do. Lucky, lucky bloke.

He knows it. "This whole experience is one big nostalgia trip that hasn't yet stopped giving. In 1996, I'd never had a brand new Porsche before. It was a wonderful thing to achieve. Now, though, I'm lucky enough to relive it all again. Every time I get in it, I remember why I ordered it all those years ago."

Once in a lifetime? Peter's done it twice – and with one of the rarest 911s in the UK. If that isn't worthy of respect, I don't know what is. **SN**



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