



# 914 2.7 RS

A fortunate discovery in the engine bay leads to the creation of a mid-engined Rennsport.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SEAN SMITH

Porsche's modern mid-engined Boxsters and Caymans are a joy to drive daily or on a race track. However, some may argue that they don't have the same "soul" as classic air-cooled mid-engined Porsches. Yes, they are technologically advanced machines that help you be a better driver and rein you in when you start getting in over your head. But that's not an authentic driving experience for every Porsche enthusiast. In contrast to the present-day entry-level sports cars, the 914-6 you see here was built to be the ultimate analog mid-engined machine from Stuttgart.



*Adlaudabilis matrimonii pessimus  
infeliciter amputat oratori,  
quamquam parsimonia apparatus  
bellis corrumpere adfabilis syrtes.  
Agricolae senesceret ossifragi.  
Gulosus matrimonii agnascor  
Caesar. Syrtes plane frugaliter  
iocari Octavius, iam matrimonii for-  
titer imputat Medusa. Quinquennalis  
chirographi conubium santet rures.  
Pretiosus chirographi miscere con-  
cubine. Catelli iocari utilitas syrtes,*

all date coded with 1973 numbers to back it up. Someone got a hold of this now very rare and valuable engine in the '70s and dropped it in their 914.

As Turner's mechanic Gaspare Fasulo of Gaswerks Garage in Paramus, New Jersey delved a little deeper, he found that the car had a "quick and dirty" re-sale restoration done before it was sold. It looked good and was solid, but the engine wasn't put together very well. Another thing Gaspare noticed was that the ignition switch was on the column and not on the dash. He thought he might have a four-cylinder car trying to pass for a flat-six version, but a double-check of the VIN told him it was a factory flat-six-equipped one.

Gaspare got in touch with Tom Saville, who runs the 914 Registry, and asked if he had ever seen a 914-6 with the ignition on the column. He said no, but he had heard

of a few coming like that from the factory. Saville asked for the serial number. He came back and asked, "You have that car there?" Gaspare told him the car was right in front of him. Saville told him, "That is one of the last 914-6s off the assembly line. Porsche was running short of parts and substituted four-cylinder columns on later 914-6s." All was good.

The engine was taken apart and rebuilt under Gaspare's care. As he and Turner could never leave anything alone, the rare flat-six got a higher 9.8:1 compression ratio (up from 8.5:1), bigger valves, and the cam timing adjusted. When it was all done, the stock 210 hp engine was now putting out 235 hp. Since the engine was something extra special, Turner wanted to make this car a showpiece. He decided to go all-in and make this 914-6 a wide-body Porsche with a Monte Carlo Rally racing vibe.

### A Little 914-6 Background

By the end of the 1960s, Porsche and Volkswagen were both in need of new models. Porsche needed a replacement for its entry-level 912, and VW needed a change from the Type 34 Karmann Ghia. Extensive research on Porsche's part was showing a mid-engined sports car was the key to keeping ahead of the game; VW had come to the same conclusion. A joint venture and mutual development program was entered into by the two companies. As such, it would be designed, built, and marketed by VW and Porsche. This was the genesis of the 914.

In the beginning, the flat-four-powered 914-4 version would be badged as a Volkswagen, and the 914-6 flat-six variant would be marketed as a Porsche. However, during development, Porsche became worried that having one car with the same body style but carrying two different manufacturers' names was a risk they didn't

want to take in the U.S. market. They convinced VW to allow them to badge both versions as Porsches in the States. In Europe, the flat-four cars were sold in VW dealerships as Volkswagen-Porsches.

The 914-4 became a top seller during its 1970-1976 production run. But the 914-6 did not fare as well. Even with solid performance and some success in the racing world, as prices rose, the 914-6 got very close to the cost of its stable-mate, the 911T. As such, orders for the mid-engined car began to dwindle. Porsche quietly phased out the 914-6 after 1972, building just 3,351 of them.

### Building & Testing a 914 RS

A few years ago, enthusiast Chris Turner began searching for a new project car, specifically a 914-6. He loved that these cars had a relatively limited production run and go-kart-like handling. His good friend David Griffiths of Legendary Motorcars in

Halton Hills, Ontario, Canada said he'd keep an eye out for one. When Griffiths was at the 2016 Auctions America event in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, he discovered an excellent candidate. Although Griffiths is a muscle car guy through and through, he knows a good German car when he sees one. He gave Turner a call. "Bid and buy it!" was the response. Griffiths was the last man standing at the end of the auction, and the 914-6 was shipped off to its new home in New Jersey.

Upon inspection by its new owner, the car turned out to have a non-numbers matching flat-six, which was disappointing. This let down quickly turned to euphoria, however, when Turner discovered that the serial number indicated that the powerplant is, in fact, a 2.7-liter 911 RS engine—not just an RS-spec example, but an original factory 2.7 RS engine! The throttle body, stacks, ignition, distributor, cylinder heads, and case



The car was blown apart and work commenced. Off came the narrow fenders to be replaced by wide competition-style panels. To give it a more racey look, the rear Fuchs wheels were replaced by a set of Minilite alloys, and the front bumper was painted half green and half black like the works cars were for fast recognition by the pit crews. The tail shifter that many would complain about and have switched over to a side shifter was massaged into submission with new bushings and a JWest shifter assembly and now works beautifully. They went lux on the interior and upgraded to beautiful black Connolly leather.

Gaspare and Turner took their time and developed the 914-6 to near perfection. They would go out on test drives and come back with a checklist of things to do. They would have issues fixed or adjusted, go out again, and come back with a shorter list. Finally, they went out, and when they came back, the only thing on the list was, “Why did we come back?”

With the car completed, they decided a road trip was in order. Gaspare and Turner took the 914-6 out west and took part in the Rams Horn Rally, a four-day, 1,600-mile air-cooled Porsche odyssey through Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. One morning they woke up in Sun Valley, Idaho, opened the curtains, and everything was white. Out in the parking lot, no one was going anywhere. Gaspare looked at his friend.

“What do you want to do?”

“I didn’t come to Sun Valley to sit in a hotel!” replied Turner.

“May I remind you we are on Michelin

TB 15 race tires and have no heater or defroster.”

“I’m game to drive if you are?”

“I’m ready!”

They headed out on the day’s route by themselves—a 200-mile mountain pass! They started out in snow that then turned to rain. At the top of the pass, the sun came out. On the way back down, it started snowing again. The 914-6 took on everything Mother Nature threw at it in stride. Unlike a 911, which might get tail-happy, the more balanced 914 stayed planted, not unlike a proper rally car.

Speed in this 914-6 was so effortless that Turner commented one day on how the car felt a little light and twitchy, and Gaspare had him check the speedometer to see that the needle was far over on the right side, somewhere past 210 km/h, or 130 mph. In Montana, they ran a solid hour at over 100 mph, between 4,000-5,000 rpm. Being the engine guy, Gaspare kept an eye on all the instruments. He told Turner, “Why don’t you let the car come up for some air?” But there was really no need, and the orange beast powered on.

### Behind the Wheel

With the Historics at Lime Rock Park in Connecticut going on, the paddocks are filled with impressive machines. But amongst the sea of high-six-figure cars, this little orange Porsche stands out as a fine piece of kit. Turner looks at me and says, “The keys are in it—have fun!” I don’t think a more beautiful phrase could be uttered on a warm New England fall day than that. The track is already occupied, but that is of little concern, as there are miles of beauti-

ful backroads around Lime Rock, and I have the perfect car to pay a visit to them.

The 914-6 takes a little coaxing to wake up. A couple more taps on the gas pedal and another turn of the key and it’s alive. Leaving the track, this car is getting as much eye-balling as the racers on the circuit. It has a dog-leg five-speed transmission, so I keep that in mind as I start going through the gears. The RS engine is a bit cold-blooded and takes its time to warm up. But when the 2.7 six is heated up, all hell breaks loose. It comes alive with a shrieking song that no other 911 powerplant I’ve ever heard can sing.

Tight winding roads are a 914’s best friend. And when things straighten out, you get to the horizon with extra zeal. It has all the pluses of a 911 2.7 RS with virtually none of the drawbacks. It doesn’t get tail-happy, and it’s not going to swap ends if you let off the throttle in the middle of a turn. And when the need arises, it will obediently take on legal speed limits with no headaches.

Despite its age, this car keeps up with modern traffic and, in many cases, embarrasses it. It checks all the sports car boxes: a basic interior, seats for two, a not-so-gentle suspension, a willing and enthusiastic engine you want to drive through tunnels so you can hear it again and again and giggle like a fool, and you can pop the Targa top off when the sun is shining.

This 914-6 is certainly not for everybody, but the people it’s for would not get enough of it. It’s the perfect distillation of Porscheness. The only thing on my checklist when I finally brought it back to the paddock was, “Why did I come back?” ■



* SPECS	
1972 914-6 “2.7 RS”	
	Stock / Modified
Drive	Rear-wheel drive
Layout	Mid-engine
Wheelbase	96.46 inches
Engine	2.0 / 2.7-liter flat-six
Transmission	5-speed manual
Horsepower	125 / 235 hp
Torque	131 / 210 lb-ft
Weight	2,072 lbs
Power-to-Weight	16.6 / 8.8 lbs/hp
0-60 mph	8.3 / 4.8 sec. (est.)
Top Speed	124 / 130 mph