

How Did I get Here? Finding My Way Back to Car Contentment and Inner Peace. (Part 2 of 2)

Back to the GT3: For my own particular set of circumstances and needs, the 2004 GT3 simply wasn't the right car for me and my track driving style. Once again, Brent Smith, Smith Volvo, San Luis Obispo, CA sold it for me, leaving me to apply the funds toward the purchase of a more modern Porsche car, eventually selected a 2015 981 Cayman GTS with "Track Nannies" galore.

Insert Pic 2015 Cayman GTS at track

This car comes with Porsche Stability Management (PSM) and (Sport) Porsche Active Stability Management (S-PASM). A Google search reveals, "PASM keeps your tires on the surface of the earth, while PSM tries to keep your car headed where you want to go". Add to this, a traditional mechanical limited-slip differential, enhanced by Porsche Electronic Torque Vectoring (PTV) technology, that will engage the inboard rear brake caliper when understeer is detected, possibly preventing an unscheduled track exit

The 981 GTS may be configured with the optional PDK, dual clutch speed 7 speed automatic transmission, or with the standard manual 6-speed transmission. Regardless of the transmission selected, Sport Chrono is an option, providing its three driving modes, Normal mode for around town, Sport mode that can be used on the street and track providing aggressive up, and downshifting patterns and Sport +, the most aggressive of the three. In this mode, the car would accelerate to Red Line in the first six gears, unless overridden by the paddle shifters. It soon became very clear to me that Sport + was an ideal track mode, being somewhat impractical for the street.

From my first day with this car at Willow Springs Raceway, driving in the Sport + mode, the 981 GTS was 3 seconds a lap quicker than the best lap times I had seen in the former 2004 GT3, running in the low 1:35s right out of the box. It would appear that I had made the proper decision to change it up going to the 981 GTS. But a nagging question was soon to surface, were the improved lap times a result of the more modern 981 GTS

technology, or had I miraculously improved as a driver? In all candor, the former in contrast to the latter was the more probable reason.

The 981 GTS incorporates features from the Porsche 991.1, with its revised engine and transmission, and varies substantially from its model predecessor, the Cayman 987 car, having a wider front and rear track, and a longer wheelbase too, all performance-enhancing improvements. The 981 GTS is equipped with improved and more responsive electromechanical steering with the car being 77 Lbs. lighter than its predecessor, the 987 Cayman.

In summary, the 2014 – 2016 981 GTS is an incredible car, delivering world-class performance at an affordable price point for many. It is mid-engine, a design feature found on exotic street cars all the way up to Formula 1, resulting in a 50/50 weight distribution, equipped with Sport Exhaust, as well as an array of Track Nannies (PSM, Sport PASM, PTV) always lurking in the background to augment a driver's skills, should the need arise, which it inevitably will.

So why would I ever sell the 981 GTS? The car is actually so good, all the while at the track subtly correcting my driving mistakes in real-time, that it became a little boring. In addition, I have never been a two-seater guy, it's not my style. As silly as this may seem, I really missed having a back seat, as I had in prior 911 cars. The 981 GTS front "frunk" and limited rear storage were no substitute for rear seats, admittedly these rear seats on 911 cars are considered by most to be somewhat useless.

Be that as it may, I wanted to go back to my roots and resume my 25 year love affair with the Porsche 911, with its six cylinder horizontally opposed engine, naturally aspirated or turbocharged. Early on I decided not to pursue a 911 Turbo car; the later models were simply not in my budget. The same can be said for the Porsche GT3 cars, too expensive and more car than I needed. This left the Porsche 911 S as my model of choice. I had to have that "S" designation....I had never had a "S" car, what better time than now? I was not interested in the 996, or the 997.1 models, a little "long in the tooth", and that possible IMS failure placard was forever etched in my brain.

I also decided not to consider the 997.2 Carrera S, in spite of it being mechanically sound with the latest 9A1 engine, and somewhat affordable too. Unfortunately, due to the age of these cars the mileage accumulated tended to be higher than I was comfortable with. Higher mileage also made it unlikely that 997.2 cars would be found on a Porsche dealers' lot having that scrumptious 2 year CPO warranty I was enamored with, a "must-have", for me, or so I thought at the time.

As a result, I moved up to the next model run, the 991.1 commencing late 2012 until replaced by the 991.2 in the 2017 model year. My focus was on the 991.1 Carrera S as my Porsche model of choice. I was intrigued by the 3.8 liter, high revving, great sounding naturally aspirated engine, as well as an enticing list of options: PDK automatic transmission with Sport Chrono, I had previously experienced on my former 981 GTS, with its track friendly Sport + mode. World class performance was assured with 400 HP and 324 lb. ft of peak torque at 5,600 RPM. Unfortunately, soon after I had set my sights on a 991.1 PDK car with Sport Chrono, a complication developed that would deny me access to 991.1 cars with the Sport Chrono option.

In November 2020, coinciding with the time my search for a 991.1 Carrera S was about to begin, Porsche Cars North America (PCNA), issued a Stop Sell order to their dealers for 991.1 Sport Chrono equipped cars, precipitated by the 991.1 Sport Chrono equipped car's inclination to produce unacceptable levels of Nitrogen while operating in the track orientated Sport + mode. The only way to buy a 991.1 car optioned with Sport Chrono, was to purchase the car from a private party or a non-Porsche dealer.

I was uncomfortable with the private party buying process, and based on past experiences, was somewhat distrustful of non-Porsche dealers, being more at ease, purchasing my car from a Porsche store. With CPO status as "bait", it was easy for me to rationalize that a 991.1 Carrera S, should be more than capable of compensating for its lack of the Sport Chrono option, and its track optimizing Sport + mode. Really? What was I thinking? Also note the supply of 991.1 S cars was severely impacted.

In the Spring of 2021, I located a car meeting my buying criteria, it had most everything but Sport Chrono, a low mileage, 2013 991.1 Carrera S, at Porsche, Tampa, FL. It was a CPO car, one owner, full maintenance records, well optioned, having a clean Carfax Report, optioned with the

PDK automatic transmission. If I were to get a 991.1 Carrera S, I was just going to have to learn to live without Sport Chrono, not knowing if and when the PCNA Stop Sell order would be lifted, if ever. A common trait found in automotive malcontents such as me, we always want what we can't have, and as a result, the Sport Chrono seed of discontent had been implanted in my brain. At that point in time, if I wanted to buy a 991.1 Carrera S with CPO status from a Porsche dealer, it would have to be sans Sport Chrono. In March 2021, I bought the car, and had it shipped out to me.

Insert Pic: The 991.1 Carrera S with New O.Z. 19" Wheels and RE-71R tires.

By June of that year, I had the 991.1 Carrera S car to the track. It was fast with exemplary handling and braking. But that Sport Chrono seed of discontent had sprouted. As a result, I began to wonder how much better the car's performance could be had it been optioned with Sport Chrono and its Sport + track driving mode? I suppose a retrofit could have been possible, but it would be very expensive and would affect the originality status of the car, possibly diminishing its value in the marketplace when it came time to sell. I also missed having Sport PASM and Sport Suspension on the 991.1 S, options that I had experienced on my former 981 GTS.

Fast forward to December 2021, I was engaged in my pastime of scrutinizing the Porsche car market, attempting to stay current on used Porsche market trends. Much to my amazement, a sunroof delete, Agate Gray Metallic 2017 Carrera GTS, the same color as my 991.1, had popped up for sale at the local BMW dealer, 10 miles away from my home. These cars are considered "keepers" by many, and seldom come up for sale. And now one pops up for sale, 15 minutes from my home. It was well optioned as are all 991.2 GTS cars, having PDK and the Sport Chrono lacking on my present-day 2013 991.1 Carrera S car.

Insert 991.2 Lot Pic

Power is supplied by a 3.0L twin turbo DOHC 24-valve flat-six/450 HP @ 6500 RPM. The 405 lb-ft torque specifications are spectacular with a broad **torque range** occurring between 2150-5000 RPM, in contrast to the 991.1 car's **peak torque** of 325 lb-ft. occurring at only one point on the torque range spectrum. It seems that the only thing the 991.1 and 991.2 have in common are the roof and door panels. Everything else is new on the 991.2,

particularly their 3.0-liter power plants, with twin turbos added. Going forward, to this very day, all 911 Carrera engines are fitted with twin turbos.

Unbelievably, this 991.2 GTS was reasonably priced compared to other similar cars I had seen advertised for sale across the country, and having relatively low mileage at under 20,000. Also noting the prior owner had done the 4 year maintenance a few months earlier, which would save me over \$4,000. In addition, the front clip had been covered in XPEL saving me that expense, about \$2,000, and rugged grill guards had been installed too, saving another \$500. In addition it had a comprehensive 90 day warranty, albeit not a 2-year CPO warranty had I bought the car from a Porsche dealer or a private party.

I called for an appointment, and was soon off to the BMW dealership, to inspect my potential "dream car", and take it out for a test drive. To be candid, I was sold before I arrived at the dealership being a big fan of any Porsche car with a GTS, badge, and more so were I to come upon a 911 GTS car irrespective of the model be it 997.2, 991.1 or 991.2. These are very special cars, delivered with all of the most desirable options. I had missed out on a 911 991.1 GTS car a few years back and vowed that I would act decisively were another 911 GTS car to show up.

Being pre-sold on the 911 GTS concept, a test ride wasn't really necessary, but it was dealer protocol, so it was done. In a matter of minutes behind the wheel, I was simply amazed and decided, that whatever it would take, I was getting this car. Knowing their asking price, the question being what would they give me for my two trade-ins, and how much cash would I have to shell out? They gave me nearly what I had paid for my 991.1 Carrera S, some nine months earlier, and for my Tundra Limited pickup, they gave me more than I had paid for it a few years earlier resulting in minimal cash required to close the deal.

The car came with a relatively brief 90 day Dealer warranty. As a result, I was not going to get that 2 year CPO warranty, as it can only be offered by a Porsche dealer (Remaining CPO warranty can be assumed from a private party seller). Because I was getting the car of my dreams, I would have to live with the short-term warranty knowing I could buy a Fidelity Platinum Level, long term extended warranty, close to the expiration of the BMW dealers warranty, should I choose to do so, which I did.

Surprisingly, the car came with several options that I had never had the opportunity to experience on previous Porsche cars, the first and most obvious being a 3.0-liter twin-turbo engine producing 450 HP and tons of torque across a broad range. The other non-critical options, but clearly “nice to have”, included a backup camera, front and rear parking sensors, a Bluetooth connection, satellite radio, and Lane Control Alert (LCA), providing seemingly long-range warning of cars approaching from the rear and heated and cooled seats with adjustable lumbar support.

Insert pic of GTS at the track, possibly BW and Chuckwalla

The car and I have been to the track three times, with the car’s coming out party at Chuckwalla Raceway early in 2022, followed by several trips to Buttonwillow. Driving in Sport + mode was exhilarating, and yes, it is all it is cracked up to be, and a little more. The PDK produces precise upshifts and corresponding downshifts, braking was phenomenal sharing brake specs with the 991.2 Turbo car, and I found the sounds produced by the high torque 3.0-liter twin-turbo engine to be mesmerizing. We are headed to Willow Springs in mid-September, 2022. I suspect this is where the GTS star will shine most radiantly. Oh, and by the way, the car gets 27 MPG on the highway.

I feel strongly that I have found “The One”, the car that most closely meets, and perhaps exceeds my needs. Do I need to go 0 to 60 MPH in 3.5 seconds, or do a ¼ mile in 12.2 seconds reaching a velocity of 118 MPH in 1,320 Ft.? I don’t “need” it but it is nice to know I could access it were I so inclined. Should the reader ever be consumed, in their search for the perfect Porsche “Unicorn” car, consider heeding the advice from the 1970s TV series Kung Fu, “Choose wisely Grasshopper!” And buy the latest and greatest car that you can afford.

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