

1
997 GT2 RS
620
BHP

NOT JUST ANY RENNSPORT

The GT2 has been Porsche's top-performing road-going Turbo model since 1995, but the addition of the RS moniker lifts this special model into a class of its own





Even without the RS emblem on the back, there are plenty of clues that suggest this is a very special GT2, starting with the liberal carbon trim

Every now and then, you come across a sports car that stands out from the crowd. It's a feat that's often hard to achieve in Porsche circles, such is the high calibre of decorated sports cars to have left the Zuffenhausen factory over the last five decades. However, when the car in question is not only a turbocharged Rennsport, but also Porsche's fastest road-going production 911, you are dealing with a very special sports car indeed – and that's before we realise it has just 957 miles on the clock.

First introduced in 1995, the 911 GT2 has been powered by a 3.6-litre, twin-turbocharged flat-six boxer engine. This was originally air-cooled in the 993, of course, before switching to water cooling for both the 996 and 997. However, the halcyon GT2 in our pictures, a 2010 GT2 RS, draws on its premium sporting heritage from as far back as the 2.7-litre Carrera RS from 1973, when Porsche first started producing high-performance road-going 911 models with the 'RS' moniker. These legendary Rennsport models have always been produced in limited numbers, but all have been naturally aspirated – until the turn of this ferocious GT2 RS.

Plenty of evocative adjectives have been used to describe the car since its inception: brutal, overpowered, aggressive, monstrous, feral; even the 'Widowmaker' tag has been applied in portraying the performance of the GT2 RS. While the turbocharged Rennsport has elements of all of these in its character, in truth it possesses so much more because it can still be driven at street-legal speeds, and is capable of behaving in an assured and civilised fashion.

See it like this: it was once said that a child could fly a Boeing 747, but it took a qualified pilot to land the craft or handle an emergency. In the same way, most people would be able to drive the GT2 RS at normal speeds; it's only when you start getting an itchy right foot that you need to have an advanced level of ability in handling this high-performance supercar properly.

We've been forthcoming with the reputation of the GT2 RS, but as we stand before it, surely it's just another lightened 911 GT2 with a bit more power under the engine cover? Well, for starters, this model represents the last of a line of cars that featured the Mezger engine: the indirect-injection

engines that can trace their lineage all the way back to the Le Mans-winning GT1 of 1998 and ultimately, if tenuous, back to the 930 Turbo cars. The 997 GT2 RS is also the last of the top-end supercars still equipped with a manual gearbox, as the tendency today shifts to the sophisticated automatic gearboxes with steering wheel-mounted paddle shifts. Our feature car also has a special lineage in that it was acquired by a Mr Eric Clapton, before the current owner purchased it in July 2012. Clapton put 135 miles on the clock during his tenure at the wheel, the current owner duly adding another 822 miles in nearly two years of ownership. So, with less than a 1,000 miles on the clock, it's hardly run in yet! With a history as described, and being number 195 of a total production of 500 units, this GT2 RS is certainly rather special, whichever way you want to look at it.

The GT2 RS is arguably the pinnacle of the range, and while it's more track-focused, pleasingly it's still fully road-legal. The GT2 RS will complete a lap of the Nürburgring's Nordschleife in just seven minutes and 18 seconds – a full 14 seconds quicker than the 911 GT2. The 911 GT2 RS →



'Big Yellows' with PCCB are a much-needed standard spec to help keep the big power in check



Weight saving in the GT2 RS

True to its Rennsport moniker, the GT2 RS has enjoyed substantial weight-saving measures. As such, a reduction of 70 kilograms (twinned with a 90hp boost compared with the 997 GT2) gives the GT2 RS a power-to-weight ratio of only 2.21 kilograms per horsepower, setting a new benchmark in its class.

Weight-reduction measures in the engine include a single-mass flywheel, which shaves off eight kilograms alone. The car's expansion-type intake manifold made from special synthetic material reduces weight by three kilograms, and the titanium muffler at nine kilograms is 50 per cent lighter than the equivalent stainless steel unit. The rear axle aluminium diagonal suspension bars are 1.4

kilograms lighter than on the GT2, while a further reduction of three kilograms is achieved with new front and rear axle springs. The brake covers on all four composite brake discs are likewise made of aluminium, cutting the weight of the crucial unsprung mass by a further 4.8 kilograms.

A distinguishing feature is the naked all-carbon boot lid, resulting in a reduction of 2.5 kilograms over the aluminium unit on the GT2. The flared wheel arches (26mm wider at the front) are made of a special plastic and finished in body colour, with a further four kilograms shaved off the overall weight through the use of a polycarbonate rear screen and rear side windows. Lightweight door panels carried over from the Carrera GT with their red opening loops and

the absence of the normal padding beneath the carpets at the rear of the passenger compartment reduce weight still further. Also contributing to the overall reduction in weight are a number of smaller, individual carbon body components, such as the wing-mirror housings and various air intakes/outlets.

For the first time, the driver also has the choice of front wheel arches in body colour and reinforced by carbon fibre, trimming a further five kilograms. Another option comes in the form of a lithium-ion battery, chopping more than ten kilograms off the scales. Lightweight headlights featuring halogen technology are also available as an alternative to reduce the mass of the turbocharged Rennsport.



“The sense of acceleration is other-worldly”

can reach the 200kph (125mph) mark in just 9.8 seconds, with 300kph (187mph) reached in 28.9 seconds – and the top speed of the GT2 RS is a heady 205mph. Such mesmerising statistics were not wasted on GT2 clientele; all of the planned 500 units had been sold within months of the 2010 launch date.

No 195 of 500 is owned by the Bigmore family, as son Ross shares: “The idea is to pick a nice day and get out there and enjoy the 911, and not to let it rot in a garage, and all the while you’ll have a car that is hopefully going up in value. I came across the GT2 RS while searching on the internet; it was with an official Porsche Centre, so when you buy it from a proper dealer, you know the car is of a high standard.”

Much of the car’s limited mileage has been on local roads, as Bigmore explains, “It’s never going to be used as a daily, and as we have such great roads in South Wales, if the weather is good we’ll take it out and try to get away from the crowds and really drive the car.”

However, the GT2 RS is born for the track. Starting with the same chassis layout as the GT2, the RS is further optimised for higher performance by featuring a wider front and rear axle. These dimensional increases ensure improved roll stability, resulting in higher speeds when entering and exiting a bend. The increase in front track has been achieved by reducing the press-in depth of the wheel centres from 53mm to 47mm on each side.

Where possible, suspension bars are fabricated from aluminium instead of steel, and suspension components such as wheel track, antiroll bars and springs are adjustable, allowing for a variable setup depending on track layout and conditions.

The wheels are attached by means of a single lightweight central nut rather than a five-stud setup, drawing on the car’s motorsport heritage. The GT2 RS is fitted with an improved tyre pressure control system, ensuring more accurate and quicker tyre pressure measurement of its bespoke-made tyres. The day of our photoshoot was the first time this 911 had seen a race track, and Bigmore is fully aware of his GT2 RS’s most suited environment: “It’s a catch-22 situation, because the car is optimised for the track, but you always have to temper that with how much they cost, as the car is pretty much irreplaceable.”

In a straight technology transfer from the race track to the production line, the GT2 RS is

fitted with Porsche ceramic composite brakes (PCCB) as used in the Mobil 1 Supercup series. Up front, the GT2 RS is fitted with six-piston aluminium fixed calipers with four-piston calipers at the rear. The 911’s Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) settings have been modified, reflecting the RS’s motorsport intentions, with the ‘normal’ setting being modelled on the Nordschleife profile. The Porsche Stability Management (PSM) system is standard on the GT2 RS, simplifying the driver’s preferred settings such as switching the Stability Control and Traction Control off, should this be required.

Under the decklid lurks a 3.6-litre twin-turbo flat-six engine, pushing out a gargantuan 620hp at 6,500rpm. The twin water-cooled variable turbine geometry (VTG) exhaust gas turbochargers are built to handle a maximum charge of 1.6 bar – up from 1.4 bar on the GT2. The Porsche turbo engine also requires an expandable air



The GT2 RS’s exhilarating ‘Ring laptime is testament to the capability of one of the last 997s

“While it’s more track focused, pleasingly it’s still fully road legal”



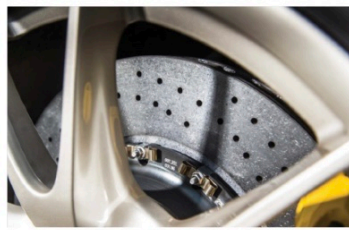
Model Year	997 GT2 RS (2010)
Engine Capacity	3,600cc
Compression ratio	9.0:1
Maximum power	620hp @6,500rpm
Maximum torque	700Nm @2,250-5,500rpm
Transmission	Six-speed manuals
Suspension	
Front	Spring-strut axle in MacPherson configuration optimised by Porsche with independent wheel suspension on wishbones; longitudinal arms and spring struts; split track control arms; cylindrical coil springs with inner-mounted vibration dampers; wheel supports with ball bearings
Rear	Multi-arm axle with independent wheel suspension on five arms; split-track control arms; cylindrical coil springs with helper springs and coaxially inner-mounted vibration dampers; PASM Porsche Active Suspension Management with electronically controlled vibration dampers; two manually adjustable control maps/setups
Brakes	
Front	PCCB; six-piston aluminium monobloc brake calipers; cross-drilled and inner-vented composite ceramic brake discs with aluminium brake covers, diameter 380mm, thickness 34mm
Rear	Four-piston aluminium monobloc brake calipers; cross-drilled and inner-vented composite ceramic brake discs with aluminium brake covers, diameter 350mm, thickness 28mm; two brake circuits with individual axle split
Wheels & tyres	
Front	9x19-inch alloys; 245/35ZR19 tyres
Rear	12x19-inch alloys; 325/30ZR19 tyres
Dimensions	
Length	4,469mm
Width	1,852mm
Height	1,285mm
Weight	1,370kg
Performance	
0-62mph	3.5 secs
Top speed	205mph



Servicing the GT2 RS

A service interval for a minor service on the GT2 RS is every 20,000 miles or two years, according to the owner's handbook. However, Martin Wright, After-sales Manager at Porsche Centre Cardiff, says the ferocious sports car is more likely to be serviced according to time rather than mileage intervals. "This is due to the nature of the GT2 RS; these cars don't generally tend to rack up the miles," he says. A minor service is likely to cost around £1,300, while a major service is around £1,500. "The difference in price between a minor and major service on the GT2 will just be on parts," Wright offers. "Relatively speaking, they are just straightforward services. They are one of the performance cars where, unlike some others, you have to take major units out of the way during servicing, the GT2 RS is pretty straightforward to service." With a £164,107 price tag when new, owners will no doubt be pleased to hear this news.

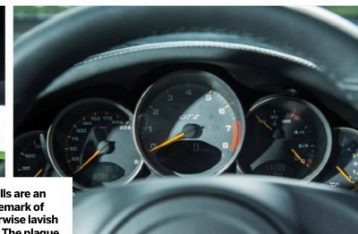
Far from being a 'widowmaker', the GT2 RS can be tamed for road use, though the track is where such a performance-laden sports car will excel



All over Porsche's GT2 RS you'll find plenty of intricate attention to detail, meaning this exuberant 911 is as breathtaking to look at as it is to drive



Door pulls are an RS trademark of an otherwise lavish interior. The plaque mounted on the glovebox acts as a reminder of the GT2 RS's exclusivity



intake manifold to accommodate the alternating pressure levels that build up in the intake system between the throttle butterfly and inlet valves. Such an expansion-type manifold is a prerequisite to best deal with the fluctuating high and low-pressure conditions within the turbo engine. Unlike Porsche's GT race cars that have a centrally mounted dual exhaust outlet, the rear end of the GT2 RS is characterised by two single-exhaust outlets, which exit left and right of the car's underbody. Due to the high temperatures generated by the turbos, the mufflers and tail pipes are made from titanium, which is not only lightweight, but also resistant to high temperatures.

All that power and performance potential requires an efficient aero package, and while similar to that of the GT2, there are also some significant differences. A new, wider front splitter, rear diffuser and higher-profile rear wing all help to keep the car well planted on the tarmac. Large end plates characterise the rear wing, which also houses a pair of openings to feed air into the engine. The aero modifications mean the car has a drag coefficient of 0.34.

At last, the time had come to climb on board for a few laps of the circuit in Llandow, Wales. First impressions on getting into the cockpit are how civilised it appears to be. There is no doubt that you're sitting in a high-performance car, with the red door pull straps replacing conventional door handles, but the GT2 RS is otherwise well appointed. This is the 'Comfort' interior with conventional seat belts, carpeting, electric seats and a satnav. The dashboard and centre console is uncluttered and well finished off with high-quality leather and Alcantara. After acclimatising to the



Specially crafted air-out grooves in the rear bumper melded to that wide Turbo body and tenacious fixed rear wing make for the most aggressive 911 rear end

lavish interior, we fired up No 195, and the muted burble from behind the comfortable, leather-clad seats neatly disguised the mayhem that was soon to be unleashed.

The floodgates were instantly opened, and I was sure I could feel the wind through my hair, even with the windows up. The sense of acceleration is other-worldly, but there was no associated frantic grabbing of the gear stick to move up a gear, or wrestle with the steering – everything happened with smooth and concise movements. There was a notable absence of noise, this being replaced

with an urgent-sounding 'whoosh' as the turbos delivered their power and the GT2 RS surged forward at an alarmingly fast pace.

Being exhaust turbochargers, there is a slight delay in the acceleration when applying the throttle, but it is so imperceptible as to be almost unnoticeable. Arriving at the chicane, the turn-in is precise and the car is incredibly sure-footed, and under acceleration on exit the level of grip is sensational – just like a race car at full chat, thanks to the grippy Michelin Pilot Sport Cup rubber up front with huge 325/30 tyres at the back.

“The **driver** remains in **comfort** throughout – there’s no sign of a widowmaker 911 here”

Inside though, lateral movement in the corners was minimal. The driver remains well planted and in comfort throughout – there’s no sign of a widowmaker 911 here.

However, the sheer accelerative force of the GT2 RS is utterly relentless, no matter what gear or speed. Turbo lag isn’t on the agenda as the car is launched up the road at a mere squirt of the accelerator. As we attack the track, Bigmore confirms to me, “Nothing this side of a Veyron or the very top echelon of supercars even gets close to the ferocity with which this car accelerates.”

Despite the huge torque available, handling appears secure and grip levels are maintained.

There’s the danger of overstepping the mark, of course, but if you know what you’re doing then the GT2 RS is exhilarating. You realise that the car has incredible turn-in precision and bite: where lower level 911s will understeer if you carry too much entry speed, the GT2 RS just digs in and grips.

The GT2 RS is so well put together, and even though many panels are lightweight and insulation material is at a minimum – although when out on the track, attention is wholly focused on the fast-approaching apex ahead.

It’s on this note that Bigmore makes a perfect summary: “Even with its intimidating power

levels, the GT2 RS always feels predictable and manageable in a way that a 620 PS car just shouldn’t. If you allow it to, the engine can utterly dominate the experience, but it doesn’t have to. It is quite simply a masterpiece.”

So, is it brutal? It can be. Is it aggressive? It could be. Is it overpowered? Not likely. What makes the Porsche 911 GT2 RS so exceptional, then, is the fact that it is just so phenomenally powerful and exhilarating in one breath, yet susceptible to being tamed and understated in another. Stepping away from the car for the last time, I wished Porsche had made a few more of them – but then, would more people be brave enough to pilot one? **911**



911 GT2 in numbers

Think a GT2 of any generation is hard to come by? These figures highlight just how premium a GT2 RS is.

Model Year	Type	GT2	GT2 RS
1996	993	141	
1997	993	32	
1998	993	21	
2001	996	247	
2002	996	716	
2003	996	233	
2004	996	73	
2005	996	18	
2007	997	16	
2008	997	939	
2009	997	287	
2010	997		497
2011	997		13