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Dream Ride

THE RSR PROJECT CAN HELP YOU CREATE YOUR OWN RSR TRIBUTE.

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This Viper Green RSR Project 911 has custom matte silver graphics, a 3.2-liter engine rebuilt by Speed-sport Tuning with K&N cold air box, ceramic-coated plenum, tins, and fan, a custom center exhaust, and a client-spec'd Prototipo steering wheel.



Think of the number 57.

57 cents isn't going to get you anything at Starbucks.

It's not even going to get you a lowly cup of Joe at the local diner. 57 dollars might buy you dinner for two if you don't drink. 57 mph isn't going to get you stopped by the highway patrol (unless you are in Ohio). ♦ So 57 is not a big number. But in Porsche lore, 57 is very special. Chassis #300 057 is one of the first 911s ever built, produced in 1964 as a 901. 57 is also the number of RSRs built by Porsche in 1973. ♦ Porsche needed to build 500 2.7 RSs in 1973 to get the RSR homologated for Group 4 racing. The 2.7 RS was so popular that the company eventually built 1,580 of them, so the RS is almost common compared with the RSR.

The RSR came out of the factory screaming, winning the 1973 24 Hours of Daytona in February and the 12 Hours of Sebring in March. Then in May, the factory Martini Racing team took the win at the Targa Florio. Other cars went on to do battle at Monza and Spa-Francorchamps. In June of 1973, three RSRs finished in the top ten at Le Mans. The top RSR came in fourth, beaten by two MS670B Matra-Simcas taking first and third, with a prototype Ferrari 312PB splitting the two.

The RSR went on to dominate Group 4. By the end of the year, the RSR was the overall points leader—ahead of multiple exotic prototypes. It also was the car of choice for the 1973-74 IROC series.

WITH SO FEW RSRs built, there are definitely not enough to go around, and if/when one does come to light, you better practice writing your zeros, because there will be a helluva lot of them when you make out your check.

What's an enthusiast to do? Over the past few years there has been an inspired group of the faithful out there backdating later Porsches to create their dream rides. PS AutoArt, probably one of the first of the made-to-order shops, and 911 Retro Works—both in the U.K.—have turned out some special machines. There is also one ex-musician out on the West Coast who's building mind-boggling machines with mind-boggling price tags.

But what about those of us who don't breathe that rarefied air? Those of us who have a dream but don't have the robber baron/trust fund/hedge fund/Saudi sheik pocket change to place an order like that. It's the RSR Project to the rescue.

The RSR Project was created by Richard Schickman out of his own personal need—well, lust—for one of those iconic 911s. Richard was a fan from an early age. At 15, before he even had his full driver's license, he

bought himself a 1969 911T. It was a bit of a basket case. No matter—Schickman learned to weld and put in new floors. Hanging out in garages gave him other practical knowledge. He got the ailing car roadworthy and went out and drove it.

Life got in the way for a while as Richard got involved with the world of New York real estate, but the RSR was always haunting his dreams. Meanwhile, Richard bought himself a present: a flawless 1967 912 from the West Coast. He loved the beautiful car, but it was underpowered. He was about to take a torch to it when clearer thoughts prevailed: "It's too nice to turn into something else!" The 912 found a new home, and a 1977 911 took its place under the knife.

The 911 was stripped down to bare metal, the interior was removed, and the transformation started. The sunroof was welded up. Off came the impact bumpers; textbook fiberglass long hood and bumpers took their place. The same at the back, with the ducktail standing proud. Steel flares sprouted from all four corners. The interior got the full treatment as well. A beautiful silver paint job topped the whole thing off.

So Richard drove off into the sunset with his dream come true. End of story.

No—that's not what happened.

Richard did get to drive the car for a while, then someone saw it and had to have it. So he started over, building another dream car, and it happened again. As before, he hadn't even finished the car yet. His passion was front and center in his builds, and others were gravitating toward them. Maybe he was on to something.

RICHARD STARTED THIS RSR journey with Graham Lawson, a mechanic with whom he had a 30-year relationship. Graham was kept hopping with all of the work



This Signal Orange 911 has customer-spec'd houndstooth seats with headrests, RSR 380mm deep-dish steering wheel, and Braid wheels with 72mm studs. It's all in the details, with correct hood latches and side mirror.



Richard was bringing him. Soon, Richard was needing to do multiple cars at once, but Graham couldn't handle the volume. So, with a heavy heart, Richard had to move on.

He found himself at the door of Spencer Cox's Speedsport Tuning in Danbury, Connecticut. Spencer had been around Porsches since the age of three, when he would play in the pits while his father ran his 356 at Lime Rock Park. As a teenager in 1976, Cox cut his mechanic's teeth in the West Coast shop of North American Racing Works, so he was working on these cars when they were only a few years old. He moved back east and worked at a number of different Porsche-centric shops until he took over Speedsport in 1997. Besides running an amazing shop, Cox was a multiple championship winner on the PCA Club Racing circuit. This was a match made in Porsche heaven.

The cars that Richard's team produces are beautiful, gem-like beasts. This must make them pretty dear, you ask? Well, in relative terms, they're not so bad. Here's what \$175,000 will get you.

The first thing is the donor car. Schickman sources a 1984-89 Carrera with no accident history and no rust. This is his go-to period, as the bodies were galvanized and are in the best shape. The lucky car heads off to SST to be stripped down to the bare tub.

Next, the body goes off to be media-blasted down to bare metal, and then it is off for its beauty makeover and a new coat of paint. It then moves on to have the interior redone in the RSR fashion. A new dash is installed, sans glovebox door as a weight-saving nod to the original. A new headliner is installed, along with no-frills RS door panels. Lightweight Perlon carpet goes in and is topped off with fixed-shell bucket seats with a bit more padding than their racing counterparts. Then new front and rear glass is installed.

After that, it's back to Speedsport for the installation of all new oil lines, brake calipers, powder-coated suspension components, and the rebuilt 3.2 engine and transmission with a Wevo shifter on top, plus refreshed gauges.

Richard wants the finished machine to be as close to the real thing as possible, so he sweats the details. It may have a 3.2-liter heart beating under the hood, but you won't see electric window switches on the doors or the center console for the A/C, which, by the way, it doesn't have. It has pop-out rear side windows, not the 1980s fixed ones, and it rolls on proper Fuchs-style wheels by Braid: 15x9 up front and 15x11 out back. No dubs for an RSR Project creation. There are one or two other small changes you might notice: the exhaust has two center pipes compared to the original widely spaced units. The car also sports Turbo flares instead of original-style RSR flares. This was just a bit of aesthetic license on Richard's part.

ALL OF THAT IS GREAT, but the real fun starts when you get behind the wheel, which might take a little time because it's hard to take your eyes off the super-sensuous



lines of this celebration of all things RSR.

Once in the driver's seat, you are deep in wonderfully familiar Porsche surroundings. To help with the RSR vibe, you have a 380mm deep-dish steering wheel to wrap your mitts around. Fire it up, and you are in an air-cooled happy place.

For this story, the Monticello Motor Club graciously allowed us to take to their track for some fun time and photography. Out on course, it's time to stretch the car's legs a bit. Even with a slightly damp track, the Porsche feels well connected to the ground by the Michelin TB-15s. Richard's creation takes you back to that wonderful analog age, when there weren't all those computers getting between you and your driving pleasures.

The steering is tight and precise; the RSR Project 911 has gone on a 400-plus-pound diet, so it's very responsive. And that sound when you put your right foot down is a tune straight out of Zuffenhausen that you will want to experience as many times as humanly possible.

Another nice thing about this car is that it's not the high-strung racer it's emulating. You can take it out on the open road or down to the local Caffeine & Carburetors and still have more fun than you can stand. The RSR Project's cars are wonderfully thought out and built to a very high standard; you would be hard pressed to think you weren't in the real thing. Richard Schickman had the dream and the passion, and it looks as if others have the same affliction.

So if you have the urge to fulfill your Vic Elford, Hurley Haywood, and Steve McQueen fantasies, this just might be the road to go down. For non-bank-breaking numbers, you can have a bespoke answer to all your RSR dreams.

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There is no ductkail on this Slate Grey RSR Project car, per the customer's specifications. Also note the amber headlights and the Porsche script (rather than Carrera) along the rocker panels.