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# BUILD IT & THEY WILL COME

A late-'80s 911 is turned into one enthusiast's dream RSR.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SEAN SMITH





**R**ichard Schickman didn't set out to build the car of his dreams initially; it just worked out that way. At the tender age of 15, before he even had his full driver's license, he purchased a 1969 911T, which was in terrible condition. No matter, he taught himself to weld and installed new floors in the Porsche. Schickman then hung around local repair shops to gain practical knowledge on auto repair, maintenance, and restoration. With time, he got his car running and fell in love with the 911.

Later on, Schickman sold the T and focused on his career in New York real estate. However, he always dreamed of owning another air-cooled 911, preferably an RSR—one of Porsche's legendary 1970s GT race cars. Unfortunately, only 49 RSRs were manufactured in 1973, making them rare in the market. When one finally becomes available, the price tag is usually high enough to make even a strong man faint (one was more recently listed on RM Sotheby's for \$2.0 million). There was only one thing Schickman could do, though: build one of his own.





Before conceiving the RSR build, Schickman purchased a pristine 1967 912 from the West Coast. Although the four-cylinder Porsche was nearly flawless, it was woefully underpowered. Schickman believed that the 912 would be the ideal foundation for his RSR creation: upgrade the body panels, install a powerful flat-six engine, and voila! But more rational minds prevailed. That particular 912 was too nice to alter, so it was sold. Soon after, a very clean 1977 911 became the genesis of Schickman's dream.

The interior received a similar makeover, with all RSR-style components replacing the stripped-out elements. The dash was wrapped anew, the glovebox door was removed to save weight, and the car gained a new headliner, RS door panels, fixed-shell bucket seats with slightly more padding than the racing versions, Perlon carpet, a Wevo shifter, and a 380-mm (15.0-in.) deep-dish steering wheel.

The gauges were overhauled, and the original 2.7-liter flat-six engine and five-speed transmission that came with the

Schickman then sourced another clean 911 and began the process again. This time, even before the car was completed, someone was already interested in buying it. Schickman's passion for his project was contagious, and others were drawn to it. He began building cars for himself, but they were all eventually sold to other interested parties. Finally, he decided to turn his passion into a business, which is how The RSR Project in Bedford Hills, New York was founded.

He searched for an accident-free 1984-1989 911 Carrera 3.2s to continue



The transformation of that car began. Everything was stripped out, including the interior, glass, fenders, impact bumpers, and engine. The body was media blasted to bare metal, and the sun-roof hole was welded shut with a piece of sheet metal. RSR-style steel flared fenders were added to all four corners, followed by a fiberglass hood and bumpers and a ducktail spoiler at the rear. To complete the look, the body was painted in silver.

car were both stripped down and refurbished. The suspension was entirely rebuilt with new shocks and bushings, and all four corners got new brakes. The end result was an 800-pound lighter 911 than the one that left the factory—less weight equals more speed. The RSR build was finished, and Schickman's dream was fulfilled. However, someone else made an offer he couldn't refuse, and the car was sold. Now what? He could build another!

his project and began collaborating with various shops in and around New York. As things got more hectic, he had to refine his collection of artisans to ensure that the machines met his exact standards. The RSR Project gained recognition thanks to Schickman's social media presence, and orders began to roll in. The RSR Project's builds started getting known around the world.

Soon, a gentleman from Abu Dhabi placed an order for the car you see here: a



Every detail is considered on an RSR Project build: From the chrome surrounds on the windows to the correct deep dish steering wheel and removal of the glove box door—even the aesthetic change of where the exhaust exits the car.

## EACH BUILD IS A BESPOKE CREATION CATERING TO THE OWNER'S DREAMS.



Bahama Yellow RSR Project car. A pristine 1987 911 Carrera 3.2 was sourced, and the rebuilding process began. The engine was enlarged to 3.4 liters, fitted with RSR racing cams, and rebuilt. However, just as the flat-six was ready to go into the car, the customer decided to add Kinsler ITBs (individual throttle bodies) with a Motec management system to the engine.

That decision caused a setback in the build, as the car had already been prepped with a Griffiths air conditioning system

that would not fit with the throttle body change. The A/C unit was removed, and a system from Classic Retrofit was ordered. Several months were needed to build a new A/C system, during which time the Kinsler units were produced.

Meanwhile, the car was treated to four-piston brake calipers surrounded by Fuchs-style wheels by Braid measuring 15 x 9 inches in the front and 15 x 11 inches in the back, wrapped in Michelin TB 15 tires. The all-new suspension was profes-

sionally corner-balanced and aligned. The customer chose a colorful plaid for the seat inserts. He opted to remove the clock and added a Porsche Classic radio and navigation system, with speakers discreetly hidden under the dash.

For extra period correctness, the black window trim was replaced by period-correct chrome pieces, and the rear windows were changed to the pop-out variety. New front and rear glass were also installed. Schickman—always striving for perfec-





tion—made some rolling changes, such as switching to an aluminum long hood from the previous fiberglass unit, which never quite fit well, and substituting a new Porsche Classic dash instead of re-covering the original one.

After months of waiting, the Kinsler equipment was installed, and the re-rebuilt engine with its custom stainless M&K exhaust with aluminum-coated headers and a Steve Wong chip was ready to be reunited with the Porsche. Everything went together as planned, but the car was not running properly. Schickman contacted Rasant Products, who took on the programming of the ECU, then the timing was set, and the car was finally ready to go.

It took some time to complete this build, but let me tell you, it was definitely worth the wait. If you've ever been behind the wheel of an air-cooled 911, the dash and gauges will feel like old friends. The rest of the interior, along with the deep-dish steering wheel, lets you know you're somewhere special. Once you fire it up, you're in air-cooled Porsche heaven.

Out on the road, The RSR Project creation transports you back to a more



SPECS

## 1987 911 Carrera 3.2 "RSR"

	STOCK / MODIFIED
Drive	Rear-wheel drive
Layout	Rear-engine
Wheelbase	89.45 inches
Engine	3.2 / 3.4-liter flat-six
Transmission	5-speed manual
Horsepower	217 / 250 hp
Torque	195 / 243 lb-ft
Weight	2,866 / 2,066 lbs
Pounds Per HP	13.2 / 8.3 lbs/hp
0-60 mph	6.4 / 5.5 sec. (est.)
Top Speed	152 / 170 mph (est.)

basic, fun, analog age, where there aren't any electronic nannies getting between you and your driving pleasure. The steering is tight and precise, and you can feel the added lightness from the removal of all the unnecessary bits and bobs of a traditional 911. It handles the road like any good Porsche would, but somehow, it has just a bit more flair and purpose; it's a super road machine that would not be

out of place on a race track.

Step on the throttle, and the response is almost instantaneous. The short-shift kit makes changing gears fast and meticulous. Behind you, underneath the lightweight ducktail, is an engine that will take you to Steve McQueen levels of ecstasy on a winding road, and then be as docile as you need it to be as you navigate the streets to your local cars and coffee event.

You can't just get out of one of Schickman's builds and walk away; you have to turn around and spend a few moments taking in the sensuous tribute to the famed RSR. The RSR Project's cars are wonderfully thought-out and built to an exacting standard of quality. They're as close as mere mortals will probably get to a factory-original RSR, but they won't be afraid to toss it around on their favorite piece of asphalt, and they'll still have money in the bank.

By the time you read this, the Bahama Yellow jewel will have flown off to Abu Dhabi, and other cars will be getting built. But there's still one burning question: Will Richard ever get to keep one for himself? ■