

1 Is it the right car for you?

– marriage guidance



Tall and short drivers

The steering wheel and main instrument panel adjust as one unit, so most drivers can find a comfortable driving position pretty quickly. Those with short legs will find the seat range moves well forward, and those needing extra length can push it right back. However, in the early cars, tall drivers sometimes found themselves short on headroom. Those of us with large feet might also find the pedal space restricted.

The handbrake is recessed between the door and the edge of the seat, and after application it drops down so as not to cause a problem when getting in or out.

Weight of controls

Power steering is standard across the range but could be regarded as on the heavy side. The brakes are firm, will take some punishment, and always feel secure. The clutch has a long travel, and can be heavy. The gearlever movement in the 5-speed box is not ideal but comes with practice. The automatic change is smooth enough, with a sensitive kickdown, further aided by the later introduction of a four-speed in 1983 on the S in the USA/Japan, arriving on the European/RoW (rest of world) S in 1984.

Will it fit in the garage?

928

Length 4447mm/175.08in *4462mm/175.67in
Width 1836mm/72.28in plus door opening

**USA models had extra bumpers, front and rear*

S4/GT/GTS

Length 4520mm/177.95in
Width 1836mm/72.28in (GTS 1890mm/74.41in)

Interior space

Plenty of room for two adults, but the seats are more suited to those of a slender girth than those with a wider frame.

Although a genuine 2 plus 2, the 'plus 2' has limits. If chosen for the children, no problem up to the early teenage years. If choosing for adults, think of short journeys only.

Luggage capacity

The luggage area, before folding down the rear seats, will take one medium-sized case plus several soft ones. Pushing the back seats down creates space for two cases, plus more softies.

Running costs

Recommended service intervals of 20,000km/12,000miles are not too onerous but, if little used, it



**The 1983 928S at introduction:
note rubbing strip and chin/
tail spoilers.**

(Courtesy Porsche AG archive)



1983S: gently rusting underneath, but still roadworthy; note fuel pump cover was rusted away on right.



Exhaust box on same car still in good shape. Good news as a replacement can be very expensive ...

in the GTS but is a feature of all models. Notice also how low wind noise is and the lack of mechanical thrash.

Run through the everyday controls, but at the same time dial in the air conditioning (standard from day one, temperature controlled later on). See if the headlamps come up promptly; is the red tyre pressure warning red light on the display on all the time – see section Wheels/tyres in chapter 9. The battery gauge needle should be in approximately mid position or higher, and the oil needle should be at the maximum pressure position.

If the suspension can be heard at all, suspect the shock absorbers and be wary of other hidden suspension expense, like the body mounting points which are perishable rubber bushes. Check the ball joints first - these can cause the steering to 'float'. If white smoke comes out of the exhaust be careful, there may be a leak in the head gasket: if blue smoke continues after warm up then the car is burning oil: not a good sign. Ask when the cambelt was last changed. Factor in the cost if it needs replacement soon (see chapter 2 – Cost considerations).

Awarding points (out of 10)

Exterior = 0 to 3. **Interior** = 0 to 3. **Paperwork** = 0 to 1. **Mechanicals** = 0 to 3.

Walk away or stay?

High score and looks promising? Consider a visit to the nearest specialist or official Porsche dealer for an 87 point check, which will provide that final reassurance that the car is as good as it looks. The car may be needed overnight to allow for a cold start check. Of course it may well be unnecessary to go this far as the checks already outlined may have made the decision easier, and convinced you to make the purchase after carrying out the fuller inspection detailed in chapter 9. Take your time, and if in any doubt walk away to reconsider. Be realistic; the last 928 was made over ten years ago: really good ones are rare!

If restoration is a consideration, turn to chapter 13.



Oil cooler positioned in front of radiator (grille removed in this photo).

8 Key points

– where to look for problems



When buying a Porsche there are six major points to consider:

- Body condition (external)**
- Interior condition**
- Service history/complete documentation**
- Road test**
- Engine condition**
- Underbody condition**

When viewing a car for the first time it is strongly recommended you do so in the order presented above – the idea being to eliminate obvious faults quickly and to pause at the inevitable questions, and raise them with the owner, as the inspection progresses. It may all sound exaggerated and unnecessary but, for a car with the complexity of a 928, it is time well spent.

If the car has a major failing in any one of these areas it is unlikely to be worth pursuing. A Porsche is a status symbol, as well as a sports car, and in order to maintain its price and reputation it must be in good condition with a good history supported by paperwork.

After a long journey to see the car, practicalities probably mean that the test drive will be first, but whatever happens it is still necessary to attach as much importance to the paperwork as it is the test drive. Do not allow the current owner to gloss over it. Don't let your emotions and enthusiasm lead to an expensive mistake.

Turn to chapter 9 for detailed advice on each of the six points.

Under the skin

To really see the inside of a 928 take a look at the accompanying pictures.



1992S4; check for body condition – externally.



Check the interior condition – a view of the controls.



Space in the rear.

Battery

Ex **4** Gd **3** Av **2** Po **1**

Removal of the spare wheel reveals a trap door; open this to find the battery compartment (66/78 AMP at least) and check for rust at the same time. A ventilation hole is part of the body, not a sign of rodent attack!



Rear towing eye – for when the other guy breaks down.

Towing eyes

Ex **4** Gd **3** Av **2** Po **1**

The 928 is fitted with two threaded points for easy towing, using the towing eye from the toolkit. At the front it is partly hidden by the external radiator slats and at the rear, in the centre, adjacent to the licence plate, under a cover. The threaded bolt hole tends to rust, so test it instead of being caught out.

Mechanicals

Ex **4** Gd **3** Av **2** Po **1**

Manual gearbox (see chapter 8 – Key points)

The fully synchromesh five-speed gearbox permits rapid changes, but has a long clutch travel. The design is a dry twin plate (later single plate) with hydraulic adjustment. First gear is found down to a dog leg left, with an H pattern for 2, 3, 4, 5, with reverse opposite first.



1992S4: view of gearbox.

Clutch

Ex **4** Gd **3** Av **2** Po **1**

A heavy clutch usually indicates a worn clutch, and whilst a new one does not come cheap, it can bring plenty of driving pleasure: factor it into the purchase price.

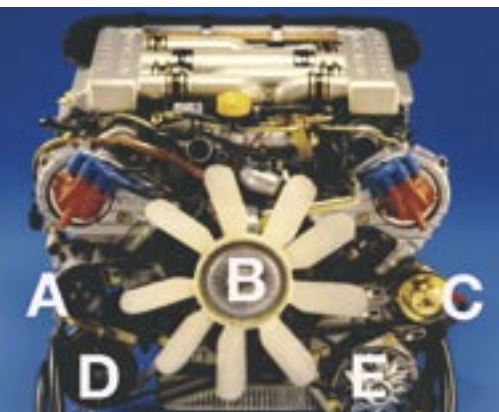


1986S Europe specification engine.

Automatic

Ex **4** Gd **3** Av **2** Po **1**

The auto box is Mercedes S Class in origin (450SEL) and is not the smoothest of changes. At launch it had a three-speed torque converter, and then improved to four-speed, both with a T bar for shifting. The bulky central lever moves back from P to R, N, D, 3, 2 on the four-speed. A really jerky change may just mean adjustment of the vacuum pressure, not a new gearbox, which has a reputation for long life.



1986S4 American specification engine – A: air pump; B: fan; C: power steering pump; D: air con pump; E: alternator. (Courtesy Porsche AG archive)

Power steering

The pump tends to burst its pipes more than anything else.

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

Auxiliary air pump

The auxiliary air pump was originally for USA and Japan, to meet their emission regulations, then supplemented by the catalytic converters, which were extended to all cars as other countries' regulations required this feature as well.

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1



Air conditioning pump mounted on the engine, adjacent to the sump.



Air conditioning pump in detail.



1982S2. Intensive washer bottle in front of radiator, with red cap, moved to S4's scuttle left side near hood/bonnet stay.

Sparkplugs

The Bosch type plugs are W8D or DS, and then WR7DC or DP for S4 onward. A special tool is required to remove some of them. The condition of the 'plugs is academic in terms of valuation. Firing order 1-3-7-2-6-5-4-8.

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

Washer system

There are two systems, one complementing the other. The main screen cleaning from twin nozzles on the bonnet runs from an 8 litre unit, filled from one side of the engine compartment. A smaller unit, scuttle or front of radiator mounted, holds 600ml of special traffic-smear-removing silicone solution. This is squirted through the same nozzles in smaller amounts. These same nozzles came with heating for some markets, as did the headlamp washers all supplied from the main unit. There was no rear window wash.

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

Engine mountings

The mountings relax over time. At tick over, a light vibration can sometimes be felt transmitting through to the footwell area, as the back of the engine touches metal.

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

Catalytic converters

Catalytic converters were introduced to meet environmentally friendly emission levels, but not every market required them when the 928 was launched, so not every car was equipped in this way. The USA/Japan models were so equipped, and with a secondary air pump suffered at least a 10hp power disadvantage as a result, until the S4 restored power levels. All cars had two silencers/mufflers but 1978-79 models had three with the cat inserted after the first one, and then from 1980 the gases went straight into the cat, then into the middle box and then the final tail box. When a cat fails, it can typically block the gas flow, stopping the car dead. It will then restart for a second or two, then die again.

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1