

PORSCHE 911 (996 CARRERA)

PRE-PURCHASE PROTOCOL · BUYER CHECKS · SPECIALIST PPI · RED FLAGS

Compiled from public sources, the Porsche 996 Carrera, its Model File and specialist review · Personal use only · v2.1

WHAT THIS CHECKLIST IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

This checklist is written for enthusiasts who want a base of knowledge: enough context to follow what a PPI specialist tells them, to read an inspection report a dealer hands over, and to understand what is being discussed in videos and forums. It does not replace the diagnosis or judgement of a qualified specialist or workshop, and it is not a tool for saving the cost of one. If you are not deeply familiar with these cars technically and are unsure about a vehicle's condition, our standing recommendation is simple: commission and pay a qualified PPI specialist of your choice, whether an official dealership, a marque specialist, or an experienced supercar specialist who knows the brand. The checklist gives you context; the specialist gives you the verdict.

A · BUYER CHECK · PROVENANCE & PAPERWORK

- ☐ Variant truth first: 996.1 or 996.2, C2 or C4, Coupé/Cabrio/Targa, Tiptronic or manual, 40 Jahre by number — chassis data, never badges.
- ☐ GATEKEEPER 1 — IMS: status, upgrade type (LN/EPSt/equivalent) and the INVOICE. Bearing era understood: dual-row MY1999 (low rate), single-row 2000–05 (the risk cohort).
- ☐ GATEKEEPER 2 — borescope: arranged BEFORE purchase, or the car waits. No exceptions.
- ☐ GATEKEEPER 3 — oil-change history: complete, annual, with filter readings where noted.
- ☐ RMS and AOS history: invoices for re-seals and replacements.
- ☐ Cooling-system work documented: tank, pump, thermostat renewals.
- ☐ Recalls closed where the year applies: 00V109 (MY2000), 04V070 (MY2003).
- ☐ Originality: modifications documented or priced for return to stock.
- ☐ Accident file with geometry evidence, not paint readings alone.
- ☐ Tiptronic cars: gearbox oil-change history.

B · BUYER CHECK · AT THE CAR

- ☐ Cold start filmed: heavy white smoke points to AOS — noted, tested later, never ignored.
- ☐ Listen warm and cold: ticking or piston slap is a scoring flag until the borescope says otherwise.
- ☐ Tailpipes compared: soot on ONE side only is the classic scoring sign.
- ☐ Oil level and consumption story: what does the owner actually top up?
- ☐ Misfire watch: coil-age behaviour under load; fault memory before and after the drive.
- ☐ Coolant tank inspected: crust, level, age; puddle check after standing.
- ☐ Clutch and second-gear synchro cold; Tiptronic shift quality warm.
- ☐ Suspension: clunks from arms and drop links — the standard age finding.
- ☐ Cabriolet: full cycles, microswitches, drains; Targa: rails, drive, water traces.
- ☐ Interior honestly read: softlack, bolsters, pixels, climate panel.
- ☐ Underbody and radiators: leaves, corrosion, stone damage.
- ☐ Road test warm, then the second scan.

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C · SPECIALIST PPI SCOPE (MINIMUM)

- ☐ ENDOSCOPY of the cylinder bores — the non-negotiable core of every 996 PPI.
- ☐ Oil filter cut open and read for metal — the IMS early-warning check.
- ☐ IMS bearing type identified by year and records; retrofit physically verified where claimed.
- ☐ Compression and leakdown both banks.
- ☐ AOS function tested (crankcase vacuum measurement).
- ☐ Cooling system pressure-tested; pump play and tank condition assessed.
- ☐ Full scan: misfire counters per cylinder, Variocam solenoids, fault history.
- ☐ RMS area inspected on the lift; clutch reserve estimated.
- ☐ C4: front diff, propshaft, boots sighted.
- ☐ Suspension play check; geometry printout against spec.
- ☐ A/C pressures and condenser condition.
- ☐ Typical full specialist PPI cost, rounded orientation by market (2026): ≈€500–1,000 / ≈£450–900 / ≈\$550–1,100 — plus the borescope where quoted separately. Indications, not conversions; obtain current local quotes.

D · PRICE & INVESTIGATION ITEMS

The two gatekeepers ARE the price discussion: everything else is normal ownership arithmetic.

- ☐ Original single-row IMS, no retrofit: €2,000–4,000 scheduled — or priced as open risk.
- ☐ Scoring findings: €15,000–30,000+ revision — usually the walk-away number.
- ☐ AOS due: €600–1,200; water pump €800–1,500; tank and hoses itemized.
- ☐ Coils: preventive set priced in on older ignition.
- ☐ Suspension refresh: the standard 996 line item — quoted, not estimated.
- ☐ Clutch due: €2,000–3,500 (combined with IMS work where possible).
- ☐ Interior wear (softlack, bolsters, pixels): honest money, listed.
- ☐ Negotiate from the documented file: never from the odometer alone.

E · RED FLAGS · WALK-AWAY OR ESCALATION

- Seller refuses the borescope — the file closes there.
- Metal in the oil filter.
- One-sided tailpipe soot with no explanation on record.
- "IMS done" without an invoice.
- Gaps in the oil-change history on a single-row car.
- White smoke dismissed as "normal for these".
- A cheap car with no documentation, priced as a bargain.
- Fresh underseal or fresh paint at the screen frame.
- A car whose findings cannot be named, quantified and priced.

F · FIRST WEEK OF OWNERSHIP

- ☐ Baseline stored: borescope images, compression/leakdown, filter reading, scan log.
- ☐ IMS decision made if still original — scheduled, not postponed; cooling-system weak points renewed proactively.
- ☐ Service set to doctrine (annual oil + filter reading, coolant cycle, preventive coils); purchase file and PPI report archived.

"The 996 is decided before you drive it: IMS papers and a borescope. Everything else is normal ownership — those two are the purchase."

Deep dive: Supercar Models Paper 44 · Model File 44 · Owner's Intelligence series.