



PORSCHE 911-S HAS LESS INITIAL UNDERSTEER THAN 911 OR 912, THANKS TO STABILIZER BAR, BUT TRANSITION TO OVERSTEER IS QUICKER.

BY LEO LEVINE

A look at the history of the house of Porsche shows it was inevitable the Stuttgart firm would produce a "hot" version of its 911. They did it with the 1300cc and 1600cc 4-cylinder engines which were previous mainstays of the production program, and thus the announcement of a 180-hp edition of the 6-cylinder coupe comes as no surprise. ● The fact that the 911-S happens to be a great automobile will also cause no raising of the eyebrows, as Porsche has been turning out cars of this class since a few years after World War II. Back when the British were still conning people into thinking it was *de rigueur* for a sports car to have leaky side curtains, a primitive top and an ox-cart ride, Porsche had long since been selling

lies in being a competition car. The 1967 FIA rules classify a grand touring car as anything that has been built in a minimum of 500 examples in the preceding 12 months; you can bet by the beginning of the '67 racing season Porsche will have 500 of these on the road. ● With the introduction of the 911-S, the Porsche sales program now breaks down in the following manner: The 911-S at the top of the line, with 180 (SAE) hp, a 5-speed gearbox, ventilated discs, additional rear stabilizer and light alloy wheels as standard. It costs \$6990 at the Newark, N.J., port of entry. ● The 911, with 148 horses and a top speed of "only" (only?) 130 mph, now has a 4-speed box as standard and costs \$5990. ● The 912, which has a 102-hp version of the old reliable 4-cylinder and must struggle along with a 4-speed box and a top of 115 mph, costs \$4790. ● The

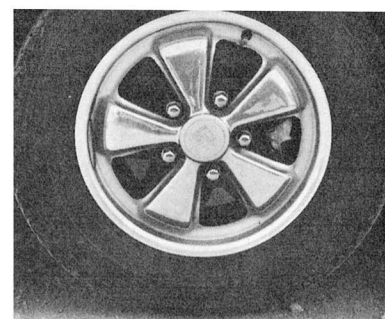
PORSCHE 911-S

32 MORE HORSES,
10 MORE MPH,
1000 MORE BUCKS

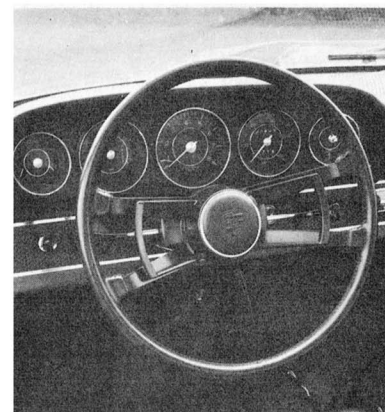
comfortable coupes with wind-up windows and lots of room which would outrun, outbrake and outcorner anything in its class while still managing not to rattle the driver's teeth. ● But this time a curious thing has happened: Porsche has built a car that at least from the standpoint of American road conditions, and the capabilities of the average sports car-type, is *too* good. ● The 911-S is advertised as being capable of 140 mph — and Porsche hasn't yet produced a car which wouldn't do what its makers claimed. But where are you going to drive it that fast? What's more, since its 2.0-liter engine lacks the bullish acceleration of the larger-capacity, V-8-engined cars, you can't even soothe your psyche by beating Mustangs in the grand prix of the traffic light. ● It is obvious, since the 911 and 912 Porsche models are suited for the street, that the 911-S's future

5-speed is available in either the 911 or 912 for an additional \$80. Note that the price of the 911 has been dropped several hundred dollars to make the spacing of the model range more comfortable for the dealers. ● Will anyone pay \$7000 for a 2-liter car that will go 140 if you get it out in the Nevada desert? Porsche expects to build 600 of these during the first year; since 50% of total Porsche production winds up in this country, that means 300 cars will be available. Between the competition-minded and the status seekers, there's bound to be a waiting list a mile long. ● At first glance the only noticeable exterior difference between the 911-S and the other two cars are the alloy wheels, which are not particularly handsome but which aid in cooling the disc brakes and which Porsche says save five pounds of unsprung weight per wheel. ● But — the

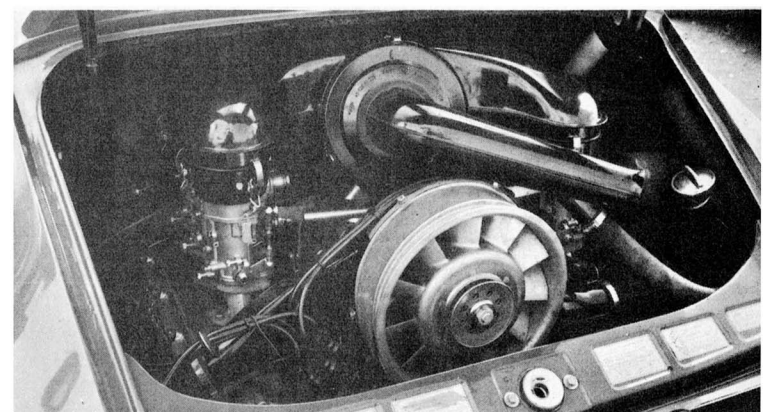
brakes on the 911 and 912, which are not of the ventilated type, are already of impeccable quality for everything but all-out competition work, and so is the roadholding. For normal American driving purposes, about the only function of the light-alloy wheels is to inform the general populace that your car is a 911-S. If you have one of the other two models, the wheels are an optional extra for \$375. ● Interior differences on the hot one include velour carpets instead of the traditional Porsche rubber mats (which are easier to clean and which remain on the 911 and 912), and a basket-weave accent stripe on the dash which does not look as typically Porsche as does the brushed aluminum counterpart on the cheaper two cars. The 911-S version also has a leather-covered steering wheel which may be the most comfortable ever installed in a production car. ● From an engine standpoint, the 912's powerplant is the old reliable 4-cylinder that has served Porsche for so long, this version producing its maximum output at 5800 rpm. The 911 engines are street versions of the Carrera 6 motor, with single overhead cam per bank of air-cooled cylinders and with dry-sump lubrication. The 911's optimum revs are 6100, the 911-S's horses are most numerous at 6600, with the main difference being camshaft, compression and carburetion. The S has its red-line at 7400, remarkably high for a series production automobile, and the engine sounded healthy right up to that point. ● When the first 911-S's were fresh off the boat, they were taken to the Lime Rock, Conn., road circuit for tests and for comparison with the 912 and 911 in both 4- and 5-speed configuration. There were several shortcomings to the test, the most notable being that the three different vehicle types were equipped with three different makes of tire (912 — Continental Radial, 911 — Goodyear Grand Prix, 911-S — Dunlop SP). As Porsches are sensitive to both tire type and pressure, it would have been better, for comparative purposes, to have the same make on all vehicles. ● Tests of Porsches, unless one has been driving the cars for some time, are difficult because all of them exhibit a degree of roadholding and general behavior that is far above the accepted standard for most other cars. All of them are so good that it takes a while to realize that one may be better than the other. ● The first impression of the 911-S is that before reaching the limit of tire adhesion, it understeers somewhat less than do the other two models, due to the extra stabilizer in the rear. Once the limit is reached all three cars go into a predictable oversteer with plenty of warning, although the transition from front-end to rear-end steering is somewhat quicker with the 911-S than with the other two. Gearing on all three, but especially on the 911-S, is somewhat long for American conditions; the 911-S will do approximately 120 in 4th. ● In fast driving, but not at racing speed, the 911-S proved to be an extremely forgiving automobile; it could be taken into corners on practically any line within reason and would always find its way around, helped by the slight sawing motions on the steering wheel that have always been helpful when driving Porsches quickly. ● They have come a long way from the old swing-axle, no-front-sway-bar days of the 1950s, when you knew you were driving a rear-engined car not only by its feel but sometimes by sight — when you saw the rear end passing the front in the middle of a curve. ● To do the same in the 911-S, for the average driver, is also possible, but in this case for an entirely different reason: Despite the fact that the engine is still in the rear, the vehicle is so stable that anyone but an experienced racing driver might suddenly find himself (comfortably, no less) going around a corner some 10 or 15 mph faster than he'd ever done it before. If panic set in, trouble could occur — and at high speeds if it happens at all, it is going to happen in a hurry. Even Porsche is cognizant of this, one of the sales brochures noting "this is no car for a novice." ● Nor, for that matter, for a poor man. /MT



Light alloy wheels help identify 911-S from its brethren, cool the disc brakes, also may indicate competition plans for car.



4-spoke, leather-covered steering wheel is another competition touch, forces driver to use "quarter-to-three" hand placement.



Horizontally opposed 6 delivers 180 hp to the 5-speed gearbox, standard in the 911-S. Carburetors are triple-throat Webers.



Superb handling, a Porsche characteristic, is better than ever, as shown here. Carrera 6 engine redlines at 7400 rpm.

COMPARATIVE ACCELERATION TIMES

| | 912 4-spd. | 912 5-spd. | 911 4-spd. | 911 5-spd. | 911-S |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| 0-60 | 11.0 | 11.1 | 7.9 | 7.3 | 6.9 |
| 0-100 | 36.0 | 33.0 | 21.0 | 21.0 | 17.7 |
| 1/4-mile (Standing start) | 18.5 | 18.2 | 16.3 | 16.0 | 15.3 |

(Ed. note: The above figures, supplied by the factory, seem slightly optimistic but do reflect the relative performance of the various models. Times were taken with driver only, whereas MOTOR TREND performance data is obtained with two aboard.)