

# 1974 PORSCHE RS 3.0



## 1974 Porsche RS 3.0

By the mid 1980s, I had owned and driven two Porsche 911s, a 1976 Carrera 3.0 and a 1974 Carrera 911 (really a 1973 RS but with big bumpers). It hadn't taken me long to discover that I really liked these cars!

Whilst looking through "Motor Sport" one day, I found an RS 3.0 being sold by Mike Lavers, an "RS 3.0 with Le Mans history". I promptly called Mike who assured me that yes, this was indeed the Almeras Brothers' racer of 1976, which had placed 12th overall at that year's Le Mans 24 Hours and won the GT Class outright. If I remember correctly, the asking price was around £25,000.

I made an appointment and drove down to Mike's premises to be greeted by him and shown over the old girl. And "old girl" is the right description. I should perhaps add "tired" to that epithet. I don't think that one wheel arch matched another and she definitely sagged down more on one corner than the others. Nevertheless, the engine started and ran well and I was intrigued by the car's Le Mans history and so made an offer on her of, I believe, £18,000, which Mike said that he would put to the owner and get back to me on. I seem to remember that this must have been in October 1985.

A few days later, Mike called and asked if I would up my offer a little, whereupon the RS would be mine. I did so and a few days later caught the train down to London and took a taxi to Mike's place, where the RS was waiting for me. Bear in mind that this was now November and that I hadn't yet driven the car!

I drove away from Mike's place into the deepening gloom of a cold evening, which swiftly turned to darkness and immediately discovered two things: One, there was no heater(!) and; two, upon reaching sixty mph, the rear axle emitted a banshee howl that must have proclaimed the RS's coming minutes before it finally arrived.

I had just a hundred miles to go to get home that night but oh my Gawd, that was a long drive. It was so cold in there that I finished up having to drive one-handed whilst I placed my other hand under the opposite armpit for warmth.

Mind you, even with half freezing to death and that banshee howling diff, I enjoyed the drive home in a masochistic way because.... she went!

I booked the RS into the local Porsche garage and they renewed the diff and gave it a check over, saying that it was "basically sound but the cosmetics could do with attending to!" As cosmetics have never bothered me very much, I did nothing about them but used the RS for a few hillclimbs.

By this time, I had a 1974 RSR that I was using on the circuits and after just a couple of races, the flywheel came loose on the engine. I pressed the RS into action in the races that I had already entered, whilst the RSR engine was being repaired and did a couple of races with it.

The RS was surprisingly good, considering that it was giving away a hundred horsepower to the RSRs. Of course, they beat me but I do remember finishing seventh overall and winning my class at Oulton Park and then getting a sixth at Mallory Park in the "Porsche v. Ferrari" race there. Certainly, the RS trounced 308 GTBs!

Sometime around 1992, I sold her to a customer in America who, I believe, still has the RS, as well as another one!

Just before I bought this original RS 3.0, I had bought a replica RS 3.0, fitted with a twin-plug RSR 2.8 engine, from Josh Sadler and Steve Carr of Autofarm. This definitely falls into the category of "Cars I should have kept!" despite it being a replica. Boy, was it fast! I had a couple of great long-distance runs in this car, which had a very early RSR engine that had been used in Porsche's efforts to develop the RSR in late 1972, but that's another story, covered in my book "From R to GT2".

In those days (the early 1980s), the British police were not quite so hot on speeding on the road as they later became and the dreaded speed cameras were not yet in existence. Consequently, I was able to average over 100 mph from London to my home one night, when there wasn't much traffic around. I do remember seeing an indicated 140 mph for quite a long stretch of the M1; you certainly couldn't do that today!

I remember hillclimbing this RS and having a great dice with some other cars that had been to the same meetings on the way home, hey-ho, we were all lucky people then. Happy days!

Site Contents © John Starkey 2009