

# DAILY DRIVERS



**JOHNSTARKEYCARS.COM ::**

1974 Porsche 911S/Carrera – Now for sale!

## Daily Drivers

I thought you might be interested in what your author uses as daily wheels. Bear in mind that I don't drive very much, maybe 7-8,000 miles per year. The distances here in the States have me flying if it's any real distance to travel.

To tell the truth, I just can't see the point in shelling out lots of lolly for a new car, no matter how beguiling the advertisements might make it. After all, we all know that the moment a car leaves the showroom - wallop! - there goes thirty percent of its value, right there.

I'm careful with money generally, having been a spendthrift and learned the hard way some years ago that it's not a good way! These days, I only use cash. If I haven't earned it, I can't spend it. Credit cards? Not for me - that's joining the lobby now in power over here who want you to be in debt. Don't get me going, or I'll expound for hours about that. So my cars are always bought with cash, which makes me REALLY careful about just what I choose.

Back to daily drivers. My usual everyday car is a 1974 Porsche 911S. It's been considerably modified during it's life with a new interior based on the '73 RS Lightweight style (though still retaining the rear seats, which are SO convenient when folded down to act as a shelf for sundry parcels). Added to that, it's been re-engined with a 3.2 Carrera motor, making it great on either streets or highway. It's the torque with these bigger engines, not the revs that count. It also returns a healthy twenty-four miles per gallon of the cheapest fuel available.

I found her in "Excellence", over in California. The previous owner, a policeman, had owned her for many years and always looked after her well. She's a fine performer, cruising at a steady 80 to 90 mph on the Freeway (when traffic conditions allow!). I've seen 125 mph plus (on a track, of course!) and the oil pressure's steady at 80 psi with the temperature never exceeding 190 degrees, even in Florida's hottest weather. I've replaced the air conditioning compressor and had some paintwork redone to tidy things up, (She's been repainted at some time from yellow to the current black - shame!) and I've thrown away the horrible impact bumpers and replaced them with RS 3.0 like parts. Also, I've got rid of the "teatray" spoiler at the rear and replaced that with a "Burzel" (ducktail), from a 1973 spec. RS 2.7. She also has wider steel wheel arches to accommodate the seven inch front and eight inch wide rear wheels.

You can probably infer from the above that I like this little old Porsche and you would be right. When I counted them up the other day, I reckoned that I had owned some forty-eight Porsche 911s and I've loved them all from the first moment that I drove one, back in about 1978 (a Carrera 3.0).

Some day, I'll get around to a more modern 911 but for the moment, this one gives me lots of fun. The only cars passing me lately were two modern 997 turbos on two separate occasions. The last one was driven by two rather gorgeous blondes, who gaily waved bye-bye from the sunroof as they sped off into the middle distance at somewhere over 120 mph!

### The Other Car



1971 Corvette convertible.

Yes, well. Don't know how the hell I got into this but.... I have always had a soft spot for Chevrolet Corvettes. I'd owned several in the U.K. including a 1965 coupe that had been turned into a racecar (liked that at Spa!) and a delicious 1963 roadster with sidepipes that would set off a row of parked cars' alarms with one boot-full of throttle whilst I was passing. When it came time to leave England in 1997, I couldn't give the damn thing away and it went to Holland in the end for around \$14,000! Should have brought that one with me over here.

Anyway, where was I? You're not paying attention, are you?! So, I noted in 2003 that C4s (those Corvettes built between 1984 and 1997) were now cheap, the C5 having totally eclipsed them. Just up the street from me, about two miles away, I found a red 1989 convertible with just 30,000 miles on it, second owner, and got it for just \$7,500. I drove it home, gave it a new top (the old one was ratty) and got the front "pop up" headlights to pop up, so to speak. A general service and now it owed me \$8,700.

Trouble was, I found it boring, soulless even. One day, at the end of the street I live in, I spotted a red 1971 'Vette convertible with a white top, sidepipes and wider wheels than standard. It was parked outside an apartment and I scribbled out a note asking if the owner might be interested in a swap and pushed it inside the cockpit.

Three days later he called. I drove around in my Corvette and we did the swap. He must have been delirious to swap his old banger for my much newer 'Vette, but I figured the '71 car had much more upside to it as time went on, besides being a more interesting car. It's just a case of what you want, isn't it?

Then disaster struck. The engine misfired. I drove it to the local garage to put some gas in it and didn't dare switch off in case it wouldn't start again. I drove home, parked it at the back of my house and listened to the misfire in the engine. Suddenly, there was this horrible metallic clattering sound and I switched off quickly and jumped out. To my horror, there was a spreading pool of oil beneath the car. The stain is still there on the asphalt to this day.

Guess what? So unbalanced had the 'Vette's V8 been with the misfire, it had cracked the oil pipe to the pressure gauge in the cockpit. Starved of oil, the engine had run its bearings.

Two weeks later, the 'Vette departed on a trailer for my trusted mechanic sixty miles north of me. We decided on a new 383 cu. inch, 400 horsepower crate engine and, while Mike was at it, I had him give the car a general go-through and correct quite a few of the "little things" wrong with it: like non-working wipers, lights, rear tie bars etc. If you've ever gone down this road, you'll know how the dollars (and time!) can run away. By the time the car was ready, some fourteen months and \$13,000 had gone too.

I picked her up last Friday morning and drove her back. It was the first rainy day in two months. The top leaks where it meets the windshield. I got soaked. Su, my wife, following me home, got nicked by the cops in a laser speed trap, though I never saw them! (And, presumably, they never saw me!)

Impressions? Well, it certainly goes, but then, so does the gas gauge! It's probably not doing more than fourteen miles per gallon. At least it drives straight and true and the sound of the exhaust out of the side pipes is great, but I can't see myself keeping it for very long, it's just not me, somehow.

04/13/05: Update

I advertised the Corvette for sale in our local newspaper, the St. Petersburg Times. (A quite excellent newspaper, by the way.) I put in a little note to the effect: "Would swap for more modern car." After two weeks of phone calls from people who, having ascertained that it was not a "numbers matching" car, lost interest, I received a call from one John Hudson of P. J. Autoworld in Clearwater. "See you would like to swap it for something more modern?" he inquired. I confirmed that I would. "We have one classic car dealership and two modern car dealerships. Why don't you bring the Corvette up and see what you fancy?" I did. John and I spent a morning looking around his dealerships and I ended up, on a whim, swapping the 'Vette for a 1995 Ford Mustang Cobra.



1995 Ford Mustang Cobra (hotrodde!)

You probably all think me mad, but this thing has had tons of money poured into it with a list of engine power boosters that I can't begin to list. Add on the fact that it's on three inch exhaust pipes with MSD electronic ignition, K&N filter 3.73:1 rear end, Hypertech Chip and seventeen inch diameter, nine inch wide wheels and you get the picture. Another proper hooligan's car!

I love it. It's quick and handles well and the sound from the exhausts is pure "Bullitt".

I'm sure the dealer will make a handsome profit from the trade but me, I'm happy with what I got and that's the best sort of deal you can make, innit?

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