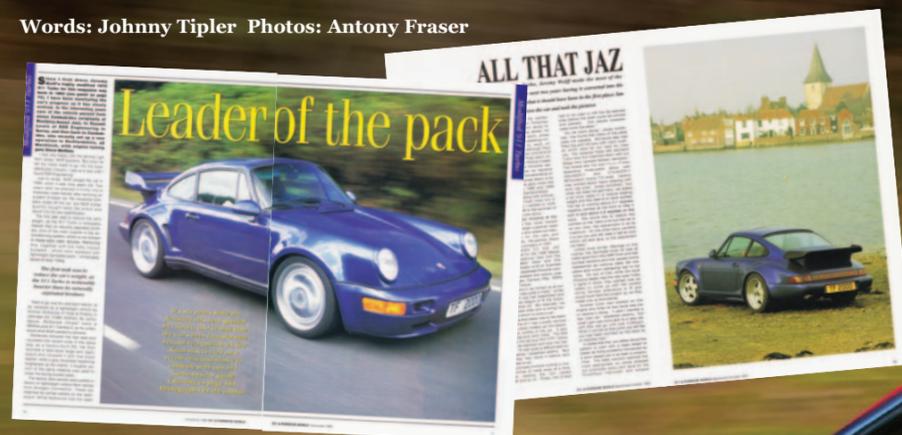


TRANSFORMER

You'd probably not guess that this RSR lookalike is based on a 930. It's also spent time in the guise of a 964 Turbo, too. Indeed it's a car that we've featured twice previously in *911&PW*. We drove the current version in the Scottish Highlands – and came away impressed by the transformation

Words: Johnny Tipler Photos: Antony Fraser



David Stirling's 930 Turbo based RSR backdate as it was in 1993 (*All that Jaz*) and later in 1999 (*Leader of the pack*) with then owner, Jeremy Wolff, who sold the car to David in 2017

Identity crisis? Many of us struggle with that one. Cars, too, have their own hang-ups. Back in summer '78, Polly Styrene of punkers X-Ray Spex raised the question of identity in her eponymous ditty – it's the crisis you can't see, she proclaimed – and, just a few months after that, our feature car rolled off the Zuffenhausen production line. Thus far, no connection with our Polly. But, a decade later, the identity of this unsuspecting 3.3-litre 930 was radically altered when its owner, Jeremy Wolff, set about implementing a comprehensive rebuild, transforming it into a 964 Turbo. Not just any 964 Turbo, though: it was endowed with a full-on Gemballa bling job. Crisis or no crisis, Polly would have been proud: this car's new identity was writ large on its bulging bodyshell. That conversion was executed by JZM's Jonas Zambakides (then operating as JAZ) who tempted him with images of Gemballa's Turbo 2 bodykit, and the die was cast. The steel and polymer panels were ordered, the roof of the shell de-

seamed a la Ruf CTR1, and a Cobalt Blue paintjob applied, while mechanical upgrades included a KKK K27 turbo and modified wastegate, plus 928 S4 front calipers. The air-con was stripped out in a bid for lightness and, at 1250kg, it was 100kg lighter than a standard 930. There's a fuller account of this rebuild in *911&PW*'s September/October issue in 1993, plus an update in the November 1999 issue, when it was still very much a work in progress. Meantime, upgrades and embellishments included a fresh KKK turbo in 1998, 330mm AP Racing discs and calipers, a GT2 rear wing, and perhaps most significantly, a Patrick Motorsport close-ratio five-speed gearbox. The torsion bars were wound down 15mm at the front and 10mm at the rear, with 0.7 degrees of negative camber on the front and 1.9 degrees negative at the back.

The car's next metamorphosis took it back in time. In 2017, it not only changed hands, it changed its identity yet again. Now, it's taken on the persona of a 2.8 RSR, circa 1972-73,

presented in its luscious Rosso Mugello colour scheme and RSR look, following another comprehensive makeover by West Yorkshire-based 911 Retro Works, with whom we did a feature a year or so back – *911&PW* "Young at Heart". The Bluebells, anyone?

We've come to Stirling in Scotland's Central Region to meet its present custodian, David Stirling. And no, it's not he of the SAS persuasion, though he does take us to see the eponymous monument near Doune on our way to our photoshoot in the Trossachs. David took delivery of the car from 911 Retro Works' principal Rick Findlow in Spring this year, after its two-year transformation into a 2.8 RSR lookalike. The story goes that Rick acquired the car still in its Gemballa persona from Jeremy Wolff in 2017. 'The owner for the previous 17 years decided he wanted a less extreme Porsche,' Rick tells us. 'I think it was becoming too heavy for him, so he bought a more modern Porsche with power steering. My intention was to build a Retro





Works car with a combination of classic aesthetics and a power-to-weight ratio in line with a new GT3 RS, and when David came to see us he was very enthusiastic about my own Retro Works 930 Turbo and liked the way it drove. So, we set about building a very special car to David's brief, based on this wild 930.' That amounted to a real hands-on driver's car with which to enjoy some of Scotland's great driving roads, where, up to a point, the car's prodigious power and handling could be exploited. And, while performance was important, David also wanted a well-appointed Grand Touring cockpit that would be comfortable on long journeys, with driving seat set lower and further back, plus dished steering wheel, and suspension compliant over B-road surfaces. When you've driven the backroads at night in an older 911, peering anxiously through the gloom, you know there's no substitute for a pair of LED headlights and LED rear lights too, for that

matter, and that's what the car now runs. David had previously owned a couple of 996s and a 997 Turbo. 'I wanted an air-cooled 911,' he explains. 'They've got their quirks, and there are things that annoy you at times, but that's the beauty of them: they do have a personality and a charisma, don't they? It's a head and heart car, meaning it's an investment that will keep its value, but also a car to keep driving, take out on nice days on the great roads around here. You can't just stick it in the garage and leave it – you need to keep driving any classic car, though I don't want to pile a lot of miles on it.' The history file says it was re-clocked at 12,000 miles, since when it's covered a measly 24,000 miles, or about 36,000 in total since new. That's over 40 years! So its previous keeper obviously wasn't using it very much. David also inherited a vast sheaf of paperwork, including an invoice for £1800 just for the suspension. 'The donor car drove absolutely beautifully,' he

recalls, 'so it was a really good place to start from, because there had been a lot of work done to it. Whereas, if it had been absolutely original, I wouldn't have touched it, but the fact that the engine had been upgraded with new crank, pistons and turbo, as well as the gutterless roofline, that made it easy to justify taking it to a different level.' Accordingly, the exterior was treated to a full bare-metal strip-back and re-spray. The Retro Works 930 Turbo bodywork includes a bespoke ducktail engine lid and, if you miss the gutterless roof, you won't miss the drilled door handles, a nod to style rather than a quest for lightness. The three-piece Fuchs wheels, 10 x 17in rear and 8 x 17in front, are prominent features, custom-made to fit directly onto the 930 hubs without the need for spacers. Tyres are Michelin Pilot Sport, 255/40 ZR 17 on the back and 225/45 ZR 17 on the front. The 930 suspension is upgraded and corner-weighted, allied to a Brembo

Fabulous Rosso Mugello suits this RSR backdate perfectly

The road ahead is... well, it's perfect for a classic and powerful Porsche, but then the Scots know how to do roads!





brake package including 993 discs, 355mm front and 345mm rears.

The 3.3-litre 930 engine now develops over 400bhp, and was prepared a number of years ago – prior to its sojourn at the Retro Works – by independent Porsche specialist Stuart Paterson who runs SP Autobahn in Stirling, and who's recently been reunited with his handiwork. I asked him to comment: 'These cars are now several decades old, they have no modern engine ECU, and much of the engine and fuelling components are now out of spec. In standard form, the system doesn't

close-ratio gearbox is actuated by a Wevo short-shift mechanism and hydraulic clutch.

The bulging 930 wheelarches were already in place, of course, but the long bonnet, front and rear bumpers, light clusters and ducktail engine lid were designed and produced exclusively for this car by Retro Works as replacements for the previous Gemballa look. On both sides, the gutterless roofline was also massaged to create more flowing lines. 'I had a colour in mind for it,' says David, 'and Rick will do anything you want, so he sent me a dozen different colour samples. It was very

also polyester, revealing the anticipated strut-brace straddling the void. The wing mirrors are period-look Durrant style, and as 911s of this era only had a single driver's door mirror, a second one was sourced for the passenger side, albeit of necessity from a left-hand drive car. Because of that, the lens doesn't come inwards quite far enough for it to be seen from the right-hand driver's seat, so David plans to change the glass for one that does.

Inside the cabin, we find period-look Retro Works RSR seats, upholstered in black Napa with hand-woven suede and leather basket-weave centres, sewn up with matching body-colour stitching. The classic dashboard is also clad in Napa leather with body colour stitching, with predominantly Napa and suede and leather basket-weave, while the rearward roll-cage is bound in leather with body colour stitching. As well as the red needlework, you can see red leather beneath the circular holes in the seat cushion. It's also equipped with a Porsche Bluetooth Classic Radio Navigation module. 'It accepts smartphones, so you can play media such as Spotify through it,' comments David. 'The only complaint I have is that there's nowhere to put things; there's no usable glovebox and no pockets, but I'm not using it as an everyday driver so it doesn't really matter.' The instrument console has been revised, and the gauges refaced in matching Mugello Red, an operation carried out by Julian Reap in North London – who did the same for my 964 Peppermint Pig a few

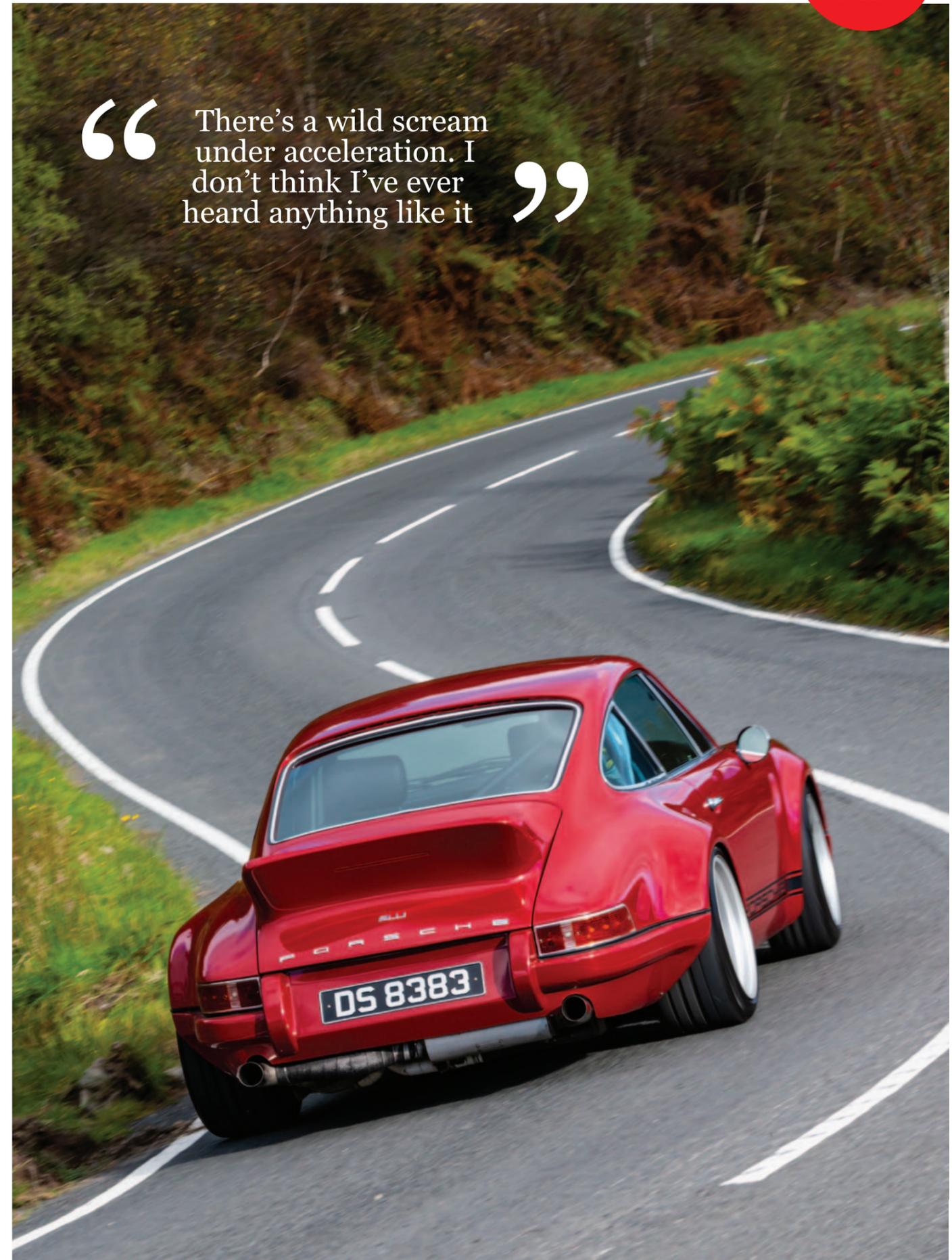
Stance is just perfect on 17in Fuchs. Rear ducktail has a hump to accommodate the intercooler

“ The 3.3-litre engine now develops over 400bhp ”

control the fuelling accurately, especially when you add more boost, and we developed a way to control it accurately, retaining the original mechanical injection and modified it further, which can safely free up a surprisingly large amount of horsepower on these engines, right through the rev band, and also make some mpg gains into the bargain.' The spec also includes Turbo Thomas racing headers with heat exchangers, culminating in twin exit pipes for silencer and wastegate, respectively. The Patrick Motorsport 5-speed

much a collaborative approach, and I couldn't recommend him highly enough. I wanted this deep blood red, and to get the right tone we decided on a flat colour rather than metallic. He created the ducktail, and the only thing I would change is swapping the glassfibre version for a metal one. Maybe the front and rear bumpers, too, which are composites, but I think I'll get them copied in metal.' Within the upper surface of the engine lid lives the intercooler and the air intake grille. I raise the front lid for a look-see; it's light as a feather,

Engine is a mix of old and new. Modern electronics handle the fuelling and ignition, while still retaining the the original mechanical fuel injection. Power is around 400bhp



“ There's a wild scream under acceleration. I don't think I've ever heard anything like it ”



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just been on today, and that sealed the deal for me.' Big time. Because although the 930 has stolen the limelight, he also hankers after a 992 GT3.

Out on the open road from Stirling to Doune and over to Aberfoyle in the Trossachs National Park, we're motoring on great country roads with all manner of straights, curves and undulations, and only light traffic out of season, and, praise be, we can open it up. It has a unique exhaust noise when I floor the throttle and, as it takes off, the whole tone is different – and I don't think I've heard anything quite like it. There's a wild scream under acceleration, and a lot of popping and backfiring on the overrun. It certainly isn't muted like regular 930s. The ride is excellent, and on the roughest of surfaces it rides the bumps imperiously. Straightline speed is eye-poppingly fast. The awesome power that's delivered when the turbo comes in, at 3200rpm, is exhilarating, accompanied by that growling crescendo and crackling overrun. It's very tractable, and there's no discernible turbo lag. The

monumental looking shift is actually satisfyingly notchy, with very neat movements slotting into each gear. Reverse is over to the left and up, rather than under 5th which is where I expected to find it. The brakes are reassuringly strong and have the feel of the 993 they're sourced from. The clutch is fairly heavy-duty, pressure-wise, though quite appropriate in feel, given the quantity of power it's dispensing. Around the turns, it comes across as a bit of a he-man car because I'm hauling it through the twists and turns – and that could be addictive – although, with my sensible hat on, I suppose that makes it a special-day-out car rather than a daily driver. As Rick Findlow comments, 'We handed him a driving experience that really was an event, and I think we really nailed it!'

There's no doubt that you would never ever be bored in this car: it is very exciting, and it feels like it will match any challenge you set it, and would be your ally in whatever road trip you fancied taking it on. Its responses to the controls are acute, but it will

co-operate on its own terms. Its behaviour and on-road presence is so visceral it could even change the way you conduct your driving and consider your deployment on the road, and that makes it a life-changer. As amazing as that.

David's car has all bases covered, in so far as it manifests what many consider the ultimate 911 look – the 2.8 RSR with the flared front and rear arches and ducktail spoiler, plus the 3.3-litre turbo engine massaged up to 400bhp. And the controls all match and complement the power delivery, the way the Wevo short shift is weighted, the manner it slots between the ratios, and the brakes are powerful enough to haul it down from on high. The impression I build up is that this could be the ultimate air-cooled 911. It is certainly something very special. David has contemplated ordering a modern GT3, and having one of each at his disposal would give him the best of both worlds. But, for now, this time-travelling sanguine shapeshifter has his attention. And, perhaps, it's found its true identity this time. **PW**

years back. It has a half-cage mounted in the rear of the cabin, also serving as a tethering point for the three-point Willans harnesses.

Attention to detail is impressive. The dished Momo wheel lends a classic period look, as do the aluminium pedals and Rennline footrest that extends into the passenger footwell. The aluminium Wevo gear lever is attractively tactile and has a statuesque, no-nonsense aspect, and there are hunky RS door pulls and little aluminium wheels to lock the doors. The smart red stitching extends along the dashboard, echoing the dials and external colour, while the plaited glovebox fascia matches the seat cushions and door cards. I query the two buttons, green and blue, in the unit at the

centre of the dash: 'they are just additional ignition and fuel switches for start-up.' The dial where the clock used to be is a boost gauge fitted by Stuart Paterson, which monitors the fuelling and boost.

David is clearly chuffed. 'This is one that you love and cherish. It's automotive art, isn't it? I wanted something a bit different, and although there may be a lot of Porsche people who are absolute enthusiasts for originality – and I get that, too, because I've also got early Golfs which are like that, totally original with nothing changed at all. But because this 930 already had a lot of work done to it, it lent itself to being turned into what we see here today.' His personal attachment to Porsches began in boyhood

when he saw a 1981 spoof spy movie called Condorman starring Michael Crawford and Oliver Reed, and, crucially, featuring a ballet performed by five sinister-looking black, be-winged and spoiled 930s. 'As a boy I remember seeing this cheesy movie that Michael Crawford from 'Some mothers do have 'em' did, and there's a chase scene in it with these black Porsche Turbos after him, and I really liked those, and I remember thinking, "I'm going to get one of them when I grow up." The first Porsche I ever drove was when I was about 19, and my father test-drove a 964. The dealer brought one over for my father to have a go in, and the salesman said to me, "do you want a go in this?" so we actually drove up and down the road we've

Is it possible to have road envy? David Stirling's retro modded 930 Turbo is perfectly set up for the terrain, too

Interior retains plenty of civilised touches. A half roll cage is an added safety feature

