

**ROAD TESTS: PORSCHE 911 CARRERA
RENAULT TURBO 2, TOYOTA'S NEW MINI VAN**

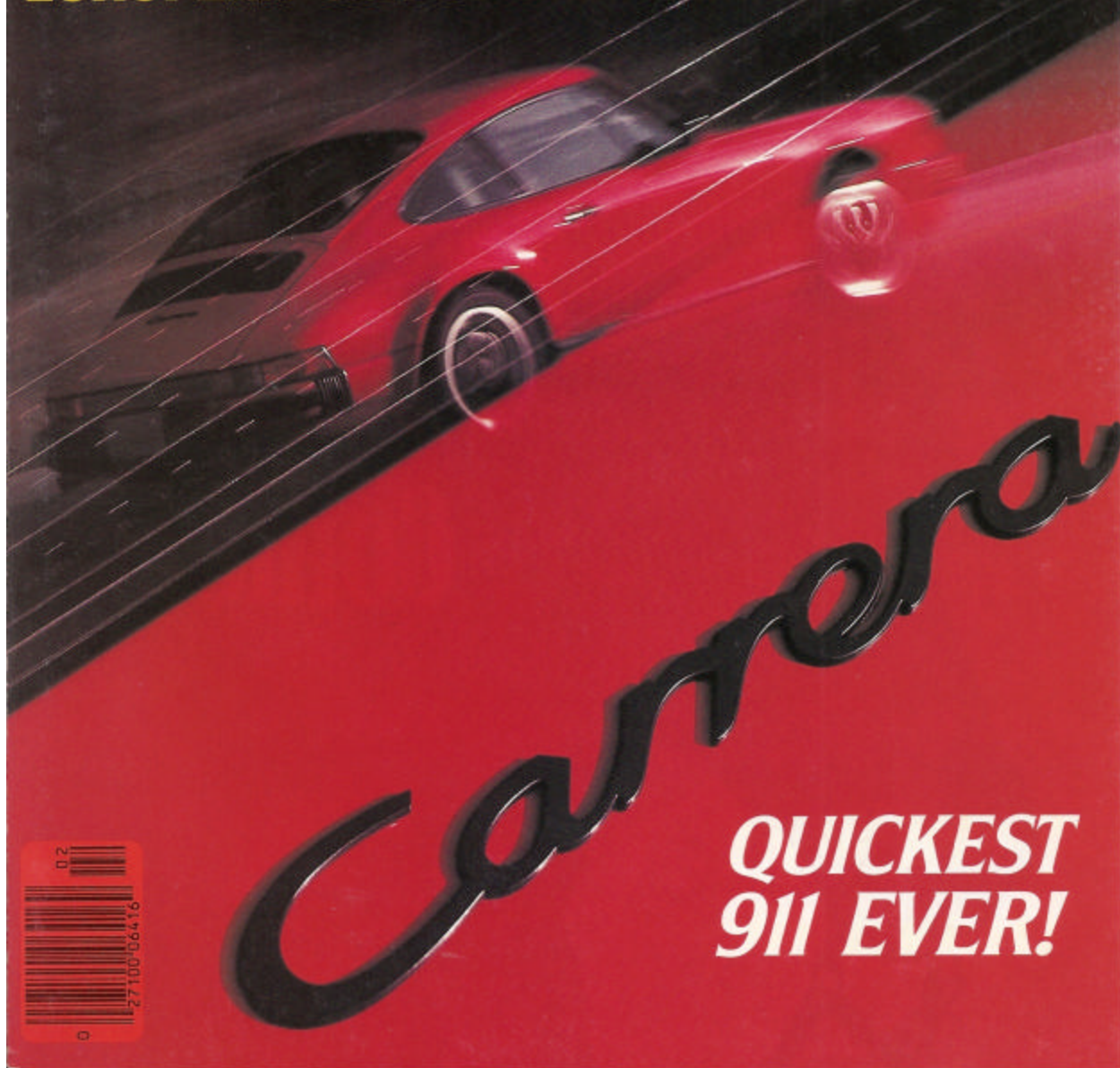
ROAD & TRACK

FEBRUARY 1984

UK £1.25

\$1.75

EUROPEAN CAR OF THE YEAR CANDIDATES



**QUICKEST
911 EVER!**





ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES CRANDALL

ROAD & TRACK

FEBRUARY 1984 VOLUME 35, NUMBER 6

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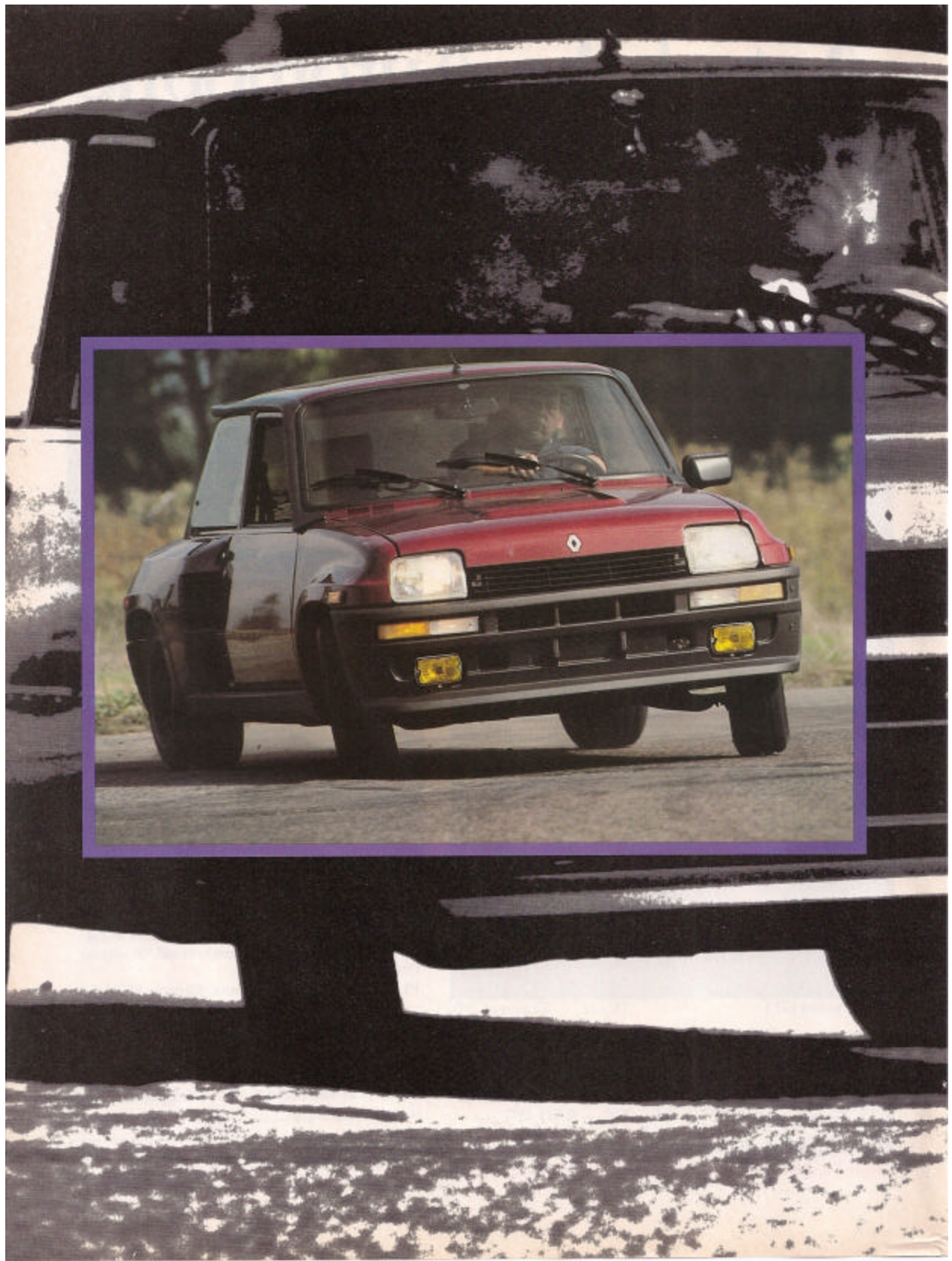
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1984 Porsche 911 Carrera—photo by Jeffrey R. Zwart

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PHOTOS BY JOHN LAMM

RENAULT 5 TURBO 2

Son of Renault Turbo, overdosed with steroids



THE ORIGINAL VERSION of this car garnered the highly coveted Most Outrageous Commuter Award in our 10 Best Cars for the Eighties competition (August 1981). In fact, so blown away were we by the Renault 5 Turbo that we invented the award on the spot, even though the car was not readily available on this side of the Atlantic. As noted in our road test (September 1981), the R5 Turbo was designed and built as a homologation special to enhance Renault's chances in international rallying.

Well, there's good news all around. First, Régie Nationale des Usines Renault brought out a less expensive R5 Turbo 2 in Europe. Second, enterprising aftermarket compliance folks have seen fit to bring it here in reasonably substantial numbers. And, third, we've had the opportunity to confirm the wisdom of our 1981 choice: The R5 T2 is, to glean some brief views from staff members, "fun, sexy and exciting," "a super Mini-Cooper brought up-to-date" and, perhaps with some pre-cognition, "a ticket with my name on it."

To take this good news in order: The Turbo 2 is, like its predecessor, a turbocharged mid-engine street racer derived from Renault's familiar 5 (Le Car in our market), though only the basic unibody remains in either variant. The original Turbo had aluminum doors and roof; the T2's are of steel. And where the original car's interior had a decidedly Art Le Drugstore decor, the T2's is rather more conventional. The interior only, though; the exterior retains the look of a Le Car overdosed on steroids.

Beneath this whimsical sheet metal lies engineering that is akin to that of a purpose-built racer. Unequal-length A-arms locate each of the four hubs, with torsion bars as the suspending medium up front and coil springs at the rear. An anti-roll bar graces either end, and they're (wisely) tuned to give basic understeer when this mid-engine car's ample power is invoked. Four disc brakes of 10.3-in. diameter handle retardation, working through

AT A GLANCE

	Renault 5 Turbo 2	Ferrari 308GTBi	Lotus Turbo Esprit
Price, base/as tested	\$22,500/\$24,600	\$53,745/\$53,745	\$47,984/\$47,984
Curb weight, lb	2230	3250	2710
Engine/drive	inline-4/rwd	V-8/rwd	inline-4/rwd
Transmission	5-sp M	5-sp M	5-sp M
0-60 mph, sec	6.7	6.8	6.6
Standing ¼ mi, sec @ mph	15.0 @ 91.0	15.2 @ 91.5	15.3 @ 90.0
Stopping distance from 60 mph, ft	160	153	154
Interior noise at 50 mph, dBA	78	77	73
Lateral acceleration, g	0.864	0.811	0.811
Slalom speed, mph	64.0	60.9	62.2
Fuel economy, mpg	18.0	18.0	17.5

Renault 5 Turbo 2: A whimsical answer to the exotic car concept.
 Ferrari 308GTBi: Thirty-two busy little valves work their wonders (8-83).
 Lotus Turbo Esprit: A bindingly quick challenge to the prancing horse (12-83).

190/55VR-340 Michelin TRXs at the front and 220/55VR-365s at the rear.

The R5 T2 comes to U.S. buyers through one of two related sources: Sun International (577 Mary Ann Dr, Redondo Beach, Calif. 90278; 213 376-2267) or Centennial Renault (3215 28th St, Boulder, Colo. 80301; 303 444-5930). Sun imports the cars, engineers the necessary compliance work and also provides sales and service. Centennial is a Renault dealer on its own right, though importation of the R5 T2 at this point is independent of Renault's North American operations. There is a direct factory connection for parts, however, and also much broader warranties available than are usually the case with aftermarket compliance cars. Arranged through Republic Warranty Corp, a 2-year warranty costs \$276; one for five years, \$556, for example. All this may seem unimportant to a special import buyer, but it displays a commitment on the part of Sun and Centennial. And we applaud this sensible approach to marketing cars with more than a shade tree accompanying the importer.

Enough of applauding sensibility, however. Let's celebrate wackiness as exemplified by the R5 T2's exaggerated fenders, louvered hood and flanks, oversize tires and burbly exhaust. Inside, there are a pair of sport seats, a proper thick-rim steering wheel, full instrumentation and, as one staff member called it, "the largest package tray in history." The real package, of course, is beneath this carpeted tray: an engine that began life as Renault's trusty 1397-cc pushrod 4-banger, transformed here into turbocharged intercooled form. Indeed, our test car carried the optional (\$1800; \$2100 installed) 185-bhp kit, as if the standard 160 bhp wasn't enough to get the adrenaline pumping. The 5-speed, actuated through a typically Renault wobbly shifter, has quite close gearing—the sort that encourages woup-woup behavior on the part of the driver. On the other hand, it's turning only 2850 rpm in 5th at 60 mph, so the ratios are actually well spaced.

You feel a bit of turbo lag, but only in contrast to the sudden surge of power once boost arrives. The 185-bhp kit allows a maximum boost of around 14 psi, by the way, compared to the 160-bhp's 12.6. Because of this lag, off-the-line is hardly the R5 T2's milieu, but our test equipment recorded a 0-60 mph time of 6.7 seconds, putting the car in very select company indeed.

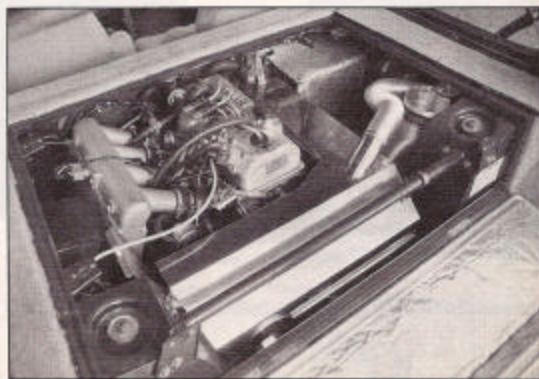
Company, you'll note, with prices considerably above the Turbo's as-tested \$24,600 (base \$22,500 plus the aforementioned 185-bhp kit). The quarter mile shows up in a scant 15.0 sec, by which time you're traveling 91.0 mph, giving one helluva race to the likes of the Lotus Turbo Esprit, Ferrari 308GTBi Quattravole or Chevrolet Corvette. All good things come to an end, of course, and the spunky little Renault's boxy shape eventually generates an aerodynamic brick wall. But by then you're almost at redline in 5th, 126 mph in our testing, and what's that in the rearview mirror anyway?

In rather more ordinary driving, the R5 T2 simply scoots. Its tall greenhouse gives outward vision that's the envy of your exotic car friends, and you can put this to good use in carving up traffic with nary an anxious moment. In fact, the car's whimsical looks come to your aid in this activity: Other drivers smile as you zip through; with a Ferrari, we've found they tend to scowl.

Nor need you slow down particularly as that favorite twisty bit appears, once you recognize that throttle lift-off in the R5 T2 brings lots of tuck-in—and quickly. This is best practiced on some deserted off-ramp, but once you've done so, you'll find it easy to maintain a lateral acceleration on the order of our 0.864g. "The tires barely sing when it's going its quickest," reported our test driver, "and, though it can be horsed around by throttle, it's quicker in the smooth mode." Through our slalom, he and the R5 T2 posted a super quick 64.0 mph. "It likes little squirts in each transition," he said, "then nail it as the last gate comes into view. But let the car balance itself before lifting off." Apparently our test driver learned about the tuck-in earlier.

In summary, the R5 T2 handles like any well bred car rolling on large tires and carrying a 40/60 distribution of its weight. Its grip is impressive, but you must recognize that its throttle is very much a part of the handling equation. "Diametrically opposite the Vette philosophy," noted one staff member. Both cars offer remarkably high cornering limits (and remarkably alike, for that matter: The Z51 Vette tested in January 1984 went through our slalom at 63.2 mph and rounded our skidpad at 0.880g). But whereas the Chevrolet Corvette has been engineered to give benign handling in response to throttle variations at the limit, the Renault Turbo requires a certain delicacy and rewards a skilled driver with enhanced maneuverability. Its rough-road ride is considerably better than the Vette's as well; though hardly a traditional Renault in its suspension travel, the R5 T2 is quite softly sprung for a car of this character.

Let others have their upper-middle-market sporty cars. Here's an opportunity at the same price to have big-bucks exotic car performance wrapped in practical—if attention-getting—bodywork. Don't expect to carry much luggage, however, because there's only room for a couple small soft bags aft of the engine compartment. But no matter: Buy your special companion a duffelbag and head off for somewhere fun with good twisty roads in between. We guarantee you'll both have a ball.





PRICE

List price, FOB Redondo Beach.....	\$22,500
Price as tested.....	\$24,600
Price as tested includes 185-hp kit (\$2100)	

GENERAL

Curb weight, lb/kg.....	2230	1012
Test weight.....	2310	1048
Weight dist (with driver), fr, %.....	40/60	
Wheelbase, in./mm.....	95.7	2430
Track, front/rear.....	53.0/58.0	1346/1474
Length.....	144.4	3664
Width.....	69.0	1752
Height.....	52.0	1323
Trunk space, cu ft/liters.....	3.8	108
Fuel capacity, U.S. gal./liters.....	23.2	88

ENGINE

Type.....	turbocharged chr inline-4
Bore x stroke, in./mm.....	2.99 x 3.03.....76.0 x 77.0
Displacement, cu in./cc.....	85.2.....1397
Compression ratio.....	7.0:1
Bhp @ rpm, SAE net/kW.....	185/138 @ 6000
Torque @ rpm, lb-ft/Nm.....	159/216 @ 3250
Fuel injection.....	Bosch K-Jetronic
Fuel requirement.....	unleaded premium, 94 oct

DRIVETRAIN

Transmission.....	5-speed manual
Gear ratios: 5th (0.87).....	3.38:1
4th (1.06).....	4.11:1
3rd (1.38).....	5.37:1
2nd (2.06).....	8.01:1
1st (3.36).....	13.08:1
Final drive ratio.....	3.89:1

CHASSIS & BODY

Layout.....	mid engine/rear drive
Body/frame.....	fiberglass fenders & hood/unit steel chassis
Brake system.....	10.3-in. (260-mm) vented discs, front & rear; vacuum assisted
Wheels.....	cast alloy, 135TR340 front, 195TR365 rear
Tires.....	Michelin TRX, 190/55VR-340 front, 220/55VR-365 rear
Steering type.....	rack & pinion
Turns, lock-to-lock.....	3.2
Suspension, fr: unequal-length A-arms, torsion bars, tube shocks, anti-roll bar/unequal-length A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar	

CALCULATED DATA

Lb/hp (test weight).....	12.5
Mph/1000 rpm (5th gear).....	21.0
Engine revs/mi (60 mph).....	2850
R&T steering index.....	na
Brake swept area, sq in./ton.....	178

ROAD TEST RESULTS

ACCELERATION

Time to distance, sec:	
0-100 ft.....	3.2
0-500 ft.....	8.1
0-1320 ft (1/4 mi).....	15.0
Speed at end of 1/4 mi, mph.....	91.0
Time to speed, sec:	
0-30 mph.....	2.3
0-50 mph.....	4.7
0-60 mph.....	6.7
0-80 mph.....	11.0
0-100 mph.....	19.3

SPEEDS IN GEARS

5th gear (6000 rpm).....	126
4th (6250).....	108
3rd (6250).....	80
2nd (6250).....	54
1st (6250).....	33

FUEL ECONOMY

Normal driving, mpg.....	18.0
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BRAKES

Minimum stopping distances, ft:	
From 60 mph.....	160
From 80 mph.....	263
Control in panic stop.....	very good
Pedal effort for 0.5g stop, lb.....	20
Fade, percent increase in pedal effort to maintain 0.5g deceleration in 6 stops from 60 mph.....	20
Overall brake rating.....	very good

HANDLING

Lateral accel, 100-ft radius, g.....	0.884
Speed thru 700-ft slalom, mph.....	64.0

INTERIOR NOISE

Constant 30 mph, dBA.....	74
50 mph.....	78
70 mph.....	79

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph is actually.....	28.0
60 mph is actually.....	58.0

ACCELERATION

