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There's white goods, and there's white goodies, and speedART's 991-based SP91R is one appliance that'll put you in a spin

A WHITER SHADE OF PALE

Words: Johnny Tipler Photography: Antony Fraser



SPEEDART SP91R

Ever since I underwent an involuntary facelift courtesy of a dishwasher my relationship with white goods (and chemicals) has been aggressively ambivalent. So when confronted by a showroom full of white Porsches, as I was the other day at speedART, it was actually a cathartic experience. For these sportsters are masterpieces of Porsche enhancement, and none more so than their very latest creation, the 991-based SP91R.

We're in Rutesheim, close to Stuttgart, and trundling up the high street aboard the Frasermobile, we spot speedART's new premises – a glazed rotunda, purpose-built for showcasing automobiles, flanking a courtyard and workshops. We're greeted enthusiastically by smart marketing exec Isolde Stratila who, over coffee, talks us through the dashing white chargers ranged around the spacious edifice. As well as our prospective feature car, the SP91R, she draws our attention to the glam Cayenne, the Panamera, the BTR – that's the B Turbo Racer – and a curiosity item, a fibreglass-bodied 964 Cabriolet-based Spyder, a design exercise that almost hits the target. The Cayenne, she says, is their best seller because that's what customers in the far east and the desert kingdoms want. Show and go, and the bigger the better.

We're joined by lean and trendy CEO Bjorn Striening, who founded speedART in 1999, having worked as a salesman for Gemballa in nearby Leonberg. 'We've relocated a couple of times,' he tells us, 'growing the workshop and showroom in the process. I started doing aftermarket wheels for the 993, and the next step was making a bodykit for the 996, which was also the first car we did a complete interior for. That was the beginning of the speedART brand. Eventually our 996 Carrera looked a little bit like the Turbo, as did the Boxster. When the Cayman was released in 2005 we did a lot of modifications for that, though that's virtually dried up with a new one just around the corner.'

In our boy-racer days (R.I.P.) many of us subjected our long-suffering tin tops and hot hatches to iniquitously vast air-dams and wings, sometimes dwarfing the unfortunate vehicle to which they'd been applied, and I owe one particular Alfa Romeo a huge apology for subjecting it to the DTM treatment. If the SP91R is anything to go by, speedART's offerings are not so radical and retain a sense of proportion. It's based on a 991 Carrera S and endowed with a carefully judged bodykit and oversize wheels, suspension lowered with sports springs, and a cabin decked with new upholstery. This is their Geneva show car, blistering with all the factory options, and tastefully done, and as Bjorn points out, 'it's to demonstrate what we can do and what is possible; it always depends on what the customer likes, because there's maybe more going on here than you would actually want.'

The procedure is initially straightforward: either the customer brings their own car to speedART for the transformation to be wrought, or, very occasionally, the client places an order with speedART who then obtain a standard model from the Zuffenhausen production line. Then the transformation takes place, according to what the client has specified.

There are some carbon parts but they are mostly fibreglass. All the sections of panelwork were created



in-house, then seconded to a local specialist for productionising. Additional accoutrements fitted to the SP91R demonstrator include the front spoiler, side skirts and rear diffusers that occupy the lower section between the tailpipes and the rear spoiler; the spoiler is an additional wing fitted to the original, which augments the original's function by moving up and down at 80kph. The additional spoiler gives more down force in combination with the larger front spoiler so the balance is OK. There are different tail pipes and a sports exhaust, and the customer can buy into the complete package or just part thereof. Designed in-house, the jaw-dropping 21in diameter wheels are forged in Italy from blanks sourced in the States; speedART calls them LSC, or 'light spoke competition' wheels, with five twinned spokes that overlap the outer rim. The optical effect has been carefully determined: 'it's a 20in rim, but the centrepiece is 21in, so the blank is always 1 inch taller than the rims, so it looks much wider.' There are three sizes of LSC wheel: 20in for 997, Boxster and Cayman, 21in for the 991, and 22in for Cayenne and Panamera. Despite their size these wheels are not so heavy, weighing 16 kilos

Left: Each speedART car is a custom build, so if lime green isn't your thing, then you can spec whatever you want - flouro orange for example. Or just black!
Below: Low and lean, body mods and wheels look tough

each, having hefted them in the showroom. SpeedART are also agents for Fuchs wheels, with a modern set also on display.

Brakes are commensurately enormous on the SP91R, the same design as for the Cayenne, dimensions calculated according to load index and tested accordingly. Sourcing tyres to fit these rims was relatively straightforward, since Michelin is the only manufacturer who produces the appropriate sized boots. 'Michelin have made this size of the tyre especially for the 991's 20in wheels so they know how the car drives and they decided to make a 21in, which looks much better. I think Continental plans to do the same.'

The image projected is dependent on the particular body kit employed, but speedART have one or two other tricks to augment the attitude: 'if you lower the car and the wheels are a little bit outside the wheelarch it looks much better, and we fitted H&R sport springs that are 20mm lower than standard, and we're preparing adjustable Bilstein sports suspension too.'

Although a sports exhaust system is fitted, Bjorn admits the ECU (engine control unit) is not yet ready:

'an engine upgrade with the ECU will take a few days; the manufacturer prefers that you don't tune their ECU, and they've changed from Bosch Motronic ECUs to Siemens, which is a completely different technical level. It's so difficult to get data in and out to remap it, and it's the same for the Panamera and Cayenne.' He's confident that they will find more power by various means, probably 25bhp: 'it's always a combination of remapping the ECU, changing the inlet and exhaust manifolds, fitting sport cats and a sports exhaust system, because if you've got fatter pipes the air goes through much easier.' The ensemble is nicely co-ordinated. 'We could have had a totally different design at the back, but I wanted to keep the original bumper so we just changed the tail pipes, which are bigger bore than the originals but not so large that we have to cut holes for them: the effect is that the car looks much wider.' And for those of us who can't resist lowering our windows when driving through a tunnel, the better to hear our flat-six's aural delights, speedART offers double the exhaust note volume with the flick of a switch. That's one for the school run, then.

But what's a fancy façade without a radical

There's no doubt that those wheels are speedART's signature touch. Sitting just proud of the wheel arch, they are a masterpiece of design. Standard PASM keeps the ride quality tight and controlled

“Designed in-house the jaw-dropping 21in diameter wheels are forged in Italy from blanks”





Bjorn Strienig is the man behind speedART in Germany, one of the major Porsche tuners on the scene.

Below: White is very much the in colour. 997 GT2 is one of speedART's more extreme offerings

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though this is exceptional as normally it's customers from Germany and Switzerland close by in the middle of Europe who bring their cars to us.' SpeedART also undertake classic car restoration, and though there are no Porsche projects currently in the workshop, Bjorn's personal Mercedes-Benz 220SE fintail is a perfect example of its type.

Incorporating any items of bodykit to your car has a potential effect on factory-honed aerodynamics, and although speedART's spoilers are not specifically evaluated in a wind tunnel, Bjorn is confident that his designers and the firm that manufactures them have sufficient relevant expertise. In any case, the TÜV (MoT) is bound to test the car before it comes to market. 'They tell us what the restrictions are for the aerodynamics and how we must configure the parts to protect the public in case of an accident, and this tells us how deep the spoiler and splitter can be. It is a major difference whether you just do a spoiler or a complete bumper.' They can do a bumper for a Cayenne with no problem because the vehicle weighs more than 2.5 tonnes and doesn't require a safety test; for sportscars like the SP91R a spoiler is fine, but a complete bumper panel demands a major test that costs 10,000 Euros. So, for the German market they just offer a spoiler, and for export they'll do a complete bumper; the US market where you'd expect more stringent legislation to be in place is actually more lenient than Germany. As he says, 'European TÜV approval is accepted all around the world, even in Switzerland, where it's normally very difficult to get the cars registered.'

No worries about legislation, then. The price of the SP91R, complete with Porsche options (PDK, PCM, Bose, Sport Chrono, sunroof, etc) and all the speedART modifications, is 131.000 euros (without VAT, or £107K). This is the middle way: not so radical nor expensive as,

say, a Ruf, and less extreme looking than a Gemballa; but a perfectly acceptable way to individualise a standard Porsche without making it look like a fairground attraction. It'll appeal to those who don't want to push their upgrade to the limit but want something more than factory issue.

Having absorbed the data on this riotous rocket it's time to launch a white riot of my own. Carpe viam – 'seize the road' – is speedART's slogan, and so we do. The factory 991 is a fabulous car in any guise, and the SP91R stays true to the formula. It's extremely fast, accelerates like a rocket, tracks true through the Swabian bends, and stops on a sixpence. We've reccied a route through the country lanes north of Stuttgart, swooping through spring flower meadows and maize fields, a mixture of nicely cambered curves and right-angle field boundary, and we come within a whisker of a Weissach trespass (lots of new building going on!). We pass by as discretely as possible in this leary lad and make for the disused airfield at Malmsheim for our photoshoot. The SP91R has behaved impeccably on its countryside saunter, and now, unconstrained by speed limits and boundaries, I can see how fast it accelerates and stops. Perfect environment! I gun it around the main runway, leaning on its ample rubberware to kiss the verges either side of the asphalt. No question, it does the business – as you'd expect of a factory derived 991. Disused airfield did I say? Not quite! As Antony snaps the details, we're buzzed Apocalypse Now style by a huge military helicopter that alights briefly on the infield before chugging noisily skyward again. Minutes later a couple of dozen parachutists fill the heavens, and I rush the car down the runway and make a dramatic turn or two to give them something to look at on their descent. The days when military aircraft flew from our airstrip may have faded, but we can help restore the image: bring on the White Tornado! **PW**

