

# BACK IN BLACK

THIS RARE 1975 TURBO WAS THE FIRST  
TO BE PAINTED MATTE BLACK.

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**All Porsches have a specialness. Whether it is the soft contour of an early Speedster, or the angular angriness of the latest GT3 RS, all are special.**

But for some, a “from the factory” example is not quite enough. Specifying optional 20-inch Carrera Classic Wheels and a colorful “Dreams” color may do the trick.

Others longing for something really special tap Porsche’s willingness to scratch that itch—for a price. This specialness could be as simple as an added rear windshield wiper for a 356 A coupe, as dramatic as a Coppa Florio Blue GT2, with Speedline color-matched wheel rims, and a full-leather, Can-Can Red interior, or as unique as a one-off, Type 993 Speedster in glowing yellow, a shade named after Otto, the client’s dog.

“While individual customer requests tended to be the exception in the early years, the Sonderwunsch (Special Wishes) and Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur ranges now include some of the most popular products,” said Alexander Fabig, Vice President of Individualization and Classic at Porsche.





For Manfred Weismann, a friend of the Porsche family, his specialness was a 1975 Turbo in Spartan form—limited-slip differential, Sport seats, a smaller-diameter, leather 363-mm steering wheel, beefier Pirelli tires, black roof liner, and rear foglights. Nothing more. No sunroof. No air conditioning. Oh yes, the exterior must be Matte Black. Weismann wanted the sinister Darth Vader look, a couple of years before Darth Vader was a thing.

As Cam Ingram, owner and resident guru of Road Scholars, put it, “These options suggest that he (Weismann) was interested in just going fast, possibly at nighttime, in the lightest, ‘murdered-out’ turbocharged 911 possible.”

The 1975 Turbo was the company’s first supercar. It was remarkable that in the midst of the OPEC oil crisis, when gasoline prices soared, Porsche introduced this awesome performance car, basically a race car in street clothing. It was the lightest Turbo (H Series) ever made, just under 2,600 pounds with 260 horsepower. In 1975, Porsche built 274 examples, instantly selling all of them. Most were sold to Porsche family friends and business associates. All were special ordered with unique features. None were exported to the United States.

“This special Turbo was brought to my attention by Rolf Sprenger,” Ingram said. “Herr Sprenger ran Porsche’s Sonderwunsch program, the predecessor of Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur. I worked with Herr Sprenger previously on the 1950 Porsche Gmünd Coupe, the 45th Porsche built, that we restored for Hans-Peter Porsche. That Road Scholars-prepared car won the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance in 2011.

“Herr Sprenger was a remarkable engineer and individual. He called me in October 2015 and said, ‘Cam, I have a very interesting 1975 Turbo that was special ordered from the factory. It’s Black Matte.’

“I responded, ‘That’s cool. What was the original color?’ Herr Sprenger replied, ‘Cam, it was a Paint-to-Sample in Black Matte and this was the first.’ There was a moment of silence. I then said, ‘Herr Sprenger, are you telling me that the factory, back in 1975, painted a car Black Matte?’ He replied, ‘Yes, the car was special ordered in Black Matte by a man named Manfred Weismann, who did a lot of business with Porsche. He’d bought a 906 and a 911 RSR, and raced the cars privately.’ Weismann loved the matte finish look of the wheels on the RSR and wanted a

From any angle, this Turbo offers a “Shock and Awe” presence. Sinister Darth Vader, with a light saber in hand, comes to mind.



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**“WE BELIEVE THAT RESTORATIONS SHOULD REFLECT HOW THE CAR WAS BUILT AT THE TIME, NOT ALWAYS PERFECT.”**  
**—Cam Ingram**

1975 Turbo painted that color. Herr Sprenger found that this Turbo was indeed the first 'Black Matte' car Porsche ever built."

**SPRENGER SUBSEQUENTLY SENT** to Road Scholars an inspection report on a special-ordered 1975 Porsche Turbo, Chassis 9305700198, documenting that it was painted Matte Black from the factory, spent its life in Germany and Austria, was well-maintained, and had only seven previous owners. When the seventh owner, Lutz Ilgner, purchased the Turbo in 2007, the exterior color had been changed from Matte Black to a more traditional Black Gloss. Ilgner subsequently ordered a bare-metal restoration, changing the color to Lemon Green. The report indicated that during that restoration, the chassis was "fully overhauled [overhauled] and renewed, the transmission was fully overhauled [overhauled], the engine was checked, but not overhauled [overhauled], and the chain tensioners had been renewed. The engine had an oil leakage coming from a faulty oil cooler. The exhaust pipes and muffler are corroded. The muffler is even the old original (Bischoff) one."

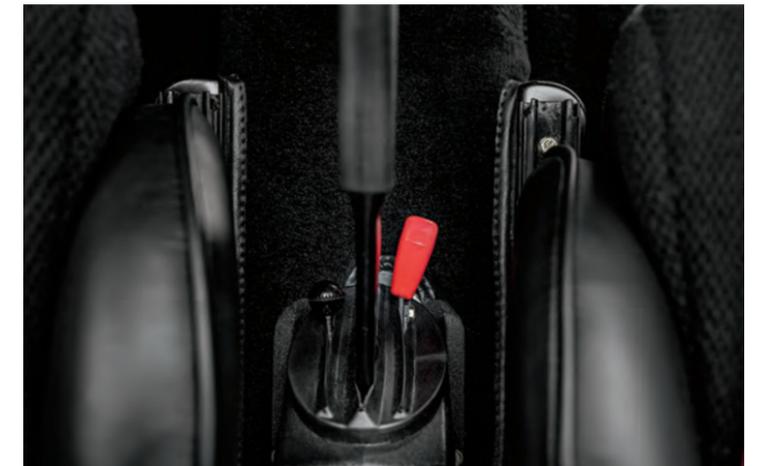
Sprenger's overall opinion? "The car is technically OK, but is used and worn according to the mileage and has some scratches, dirt but no corrosion. All in all, the car is in a good but used and never fully restored condition."

Ingram immediately purchased the car. Once at Road Scholars' shop, restoration began. "We set the bar high on authentic, accurate restoration," he said. "Not 'over' restoration. We believe that restorations should reflect how the car was built at the time, not always perfect."

Ingram's mantra reflects that of Miles Collier, founder of the Revs Institute automotive museum in Naples, Florida: "Proper restoration work is not our idea of perfection. It is the recreation by imperfect people building imperfect cars during imperfect times."

Ingram added, "Our goal is to build a car that when you look at it, you can't consciously understand why you are drawn to it. It's about everything. Is the suspension set up right? Does it look right? Does it have the right stance? Many cars are lowered too much. Is the paint the right thickness? Does it have the right sheen? It is easier to build the perfect car than to do the research and restore a car as it was first built."





The ignition key beckons. Dare you light the fire?  
The old-school four-speed is jarring.

“This particular project was difficult because of the Matte Black paint. You can squirt it only once—you have one chance to get it right. Fortunately, the car was really clean once we got it to bare metal. It had all the original metal in place, with a numbers-matching drivetrain and panels. That’s a god-send when a restorer gets down to the nitty-gritty. We restored and built the whole car before painting it. We painted after it was done because there was no way to do final assembly without chancing a complete disaster damaging the Matte Black finish. We have a wonderful paint booth where we could paint the entire car in one setting. We waited for a day with low humidity. When you paint the car a single-stage Matte Black, the result is what it is. There is no redo. That is the way it would have been at Porsche in 1975. After we finished painting the car, we noticed some imperfections, but left them there. That’s the way it was with Matte Black paint.”

The present owner, Rick Mershad, has developed an important collection of special Porsches, from concours-winning Speedsters and early 911s, to a spectacular 904 GTS that won overall in the 2024 Porsche Parade. “The combination of the Turbo’s rarity, color being the first Black Matte, model year, and the caliber of Road Scholars’ work made it clear this was a historically significant car worth preserving and sharing,” he said. “It checked every box for me.”



Power comes from a 3.0-liter flat-six engine with a single boost-pressure-controlled turbocharger. Other key figures: 0-60 mph in 5.4 seconds. A curb weight of approximately 2,641 pounds. Top speed of 150 mph.

