



# From Rough to Buff

NUMEROUS ENGINE UPGRADES WERE THE STARTING POINT ON THIS 944 TURBO.

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**"I BOUGHT THIS** 1986 Turbo about two and a half years ago," began Chicago Region member Richard Ballot, Jr. "It showed up in the *Panorama* classifieds and on Facebook. The car was only 30 minutes away from my home, so I thought I'd take a look. It was in, well, not the best of shape. You could tell it was a Midwest car. Lots of corrosion, but not much rust. It needed a lot of love."

Projects. Tempting as the siren's song, but fraught with rocks and riptides. You're handy, right? You've got a little time for a project, maybe over the winter. And the price? Pretty darn low for what was once, and could be again, an awesome car. How sweet the sound of those alluring voices.

"I looked it over, drove it about two miles, bought it,

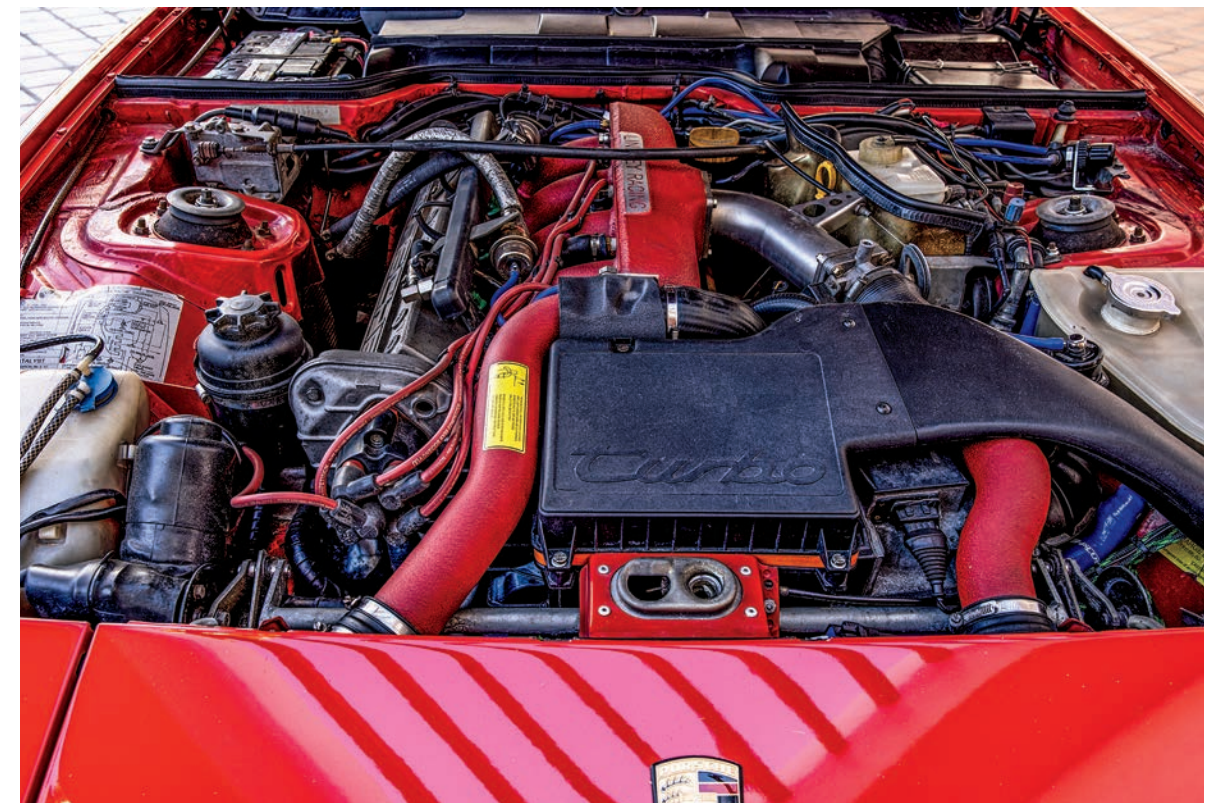
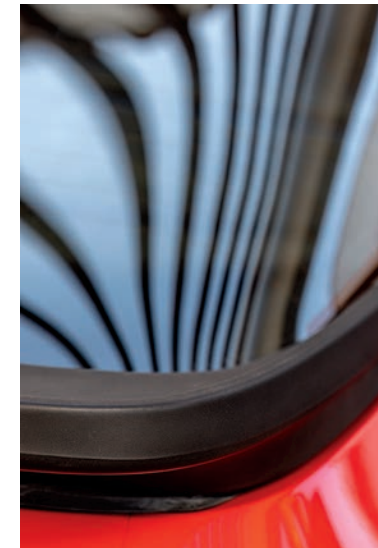


brought it home, then didn't drive it again for two years," Richard said. "No pre-purchase inspection. Just a quick once-over, a short, two-mile drive, a handshake, and a signed title." Richard was now the owner of a 944 Turbo in dubious condition. What next? What do you do first with a car that had its share of warts, blemishes, and a murky past? "I knew a little bit about the 944 Turbo, and at such a low price, I figured I'd take a chance," he said. "At first, I just wanted to get the car up and running, and then, well, the project just kept growing."

Get the car up and running? Yeah. A total engine and drivetrain rebuild was first on the agenda. Because Rich-

ard is a "Go-Fast" kind of guy, tweaks certainly were part of the process. His Turbo is healthy. Very healthy. The deeply resonant Speed Force Racing exhaust system, in concert with the larger BorgWarner KKK 26/8 (later Turbo S) Turbo and larger Lindsey Racing manifold, makes its presence immediately known.

The suspension was beefed up with KW V3 coil-overs, quick-change torsion bar adjustments, and "all the Elephant Racing performance suspension parts available," Richard said. "Of course, I had the car corner-balanced and lowered." (See the accompanying list for all performance-oriented parts in the rebuild.)



The business end of this Turbo is in the front, not the rear. Opposite: Speed Force Racing provided the noise this Turbo makes.



Richard also was finicky about how his 944 Turbo would ultimately look. He replaced the original “phone-dial” wheels with 16-inch painted/polished five-spoke Fuchs from Fuchs Restoration. Precision Bodyworks II in Crystal Lake, Illinois, completed the glass-out refinish in brilliant Guards Red after finishing necessary bodywork. “I replaced both front fenders with original Porsche fenders, acquired from Germany, through my local dealer,” Richard said. “The previous owner apparently tried to jack up the car without using the proper jack points, damaging the originals.” Because the body shop was close to home, Richard visited his

car throughout the multi-month process. With the exterior done, except for minor adjustments here and there, Richard plans to have the interior reupholstered soon. “The interior is pretty good; in fact, the dash shows no cracks, but still...” Richard is a perfectionist.

With all the performance-oriented modifications, does Richard plan on some track time, say at nearby Blackhawk Farms Raceway? “I originally planned to track the Turbo, but now, well, it’s just too nice. At least for me,” he said.

What drew Richard to a 944 Turbo, especially since a GT3 is another garage resident? Perhaps it’s because



“The interior is pretty good” is an understated description of Richard’s 944. The Pioneer audio upgrade is necessary when this Turbo is at full song. Opposite: Lowered and corner-balanced, this Porsche has the perfect stance.



Black-painted/polished 16-inch Fuchs wheels, a necessity in Richard's opinion, add to an aggressive demeanor. All smiles, and why not? Richard's project looks beautiful.



# Inside the Return of the Turbo

FOR MODEL YEAR 1986, after an extended absence from the U.S. market, Porsche finally reintroduced the 930, now called the 911 Turbo. It was a joyous reunion. With massive rear fenders over 245/45VR16 Dunlop SP Sport D40 rear tires, an imposing rear spoiler that one could serve lunch on, and a menacing front clip, this beast was on the walls of every teenage boy's bedroom. The 911 Turbo also had the punch to back up its looks. The turbocharged and intercooled, air-cooled, 3.3-liter flat six generated 282 hp at 5500 rpm and 278 lb-ft of torque at 4000 rpm.

For those who preferred to look forward, rather than glancing backward, Porsche introduced a lean, mean upstart to the U.S. market in 1986. The new 944 (951) Turbo tempted buyers with the shapely silhouette of an Olympic swimmer rather than a brutish bodybuilder, 50/50 weight bal-

ance, and a \$20,000 lower price. Its turbocharged and intercooled, 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine developed 220 hp and 243 lb-ft of torque at 3500 rpm. This was enough to launch the Turbo from 0 to 60 mph in 5.7 seconds, just a tick slower than the 911 Turbo, and on to a top speed of 162 mph, which was faster. The 944 Turbo utilized the same four-piston Brembo brake calipers found on the 928.

Sure, the transaxle 944 Turbo had its engine in front. Sure, it had four cylinders rather than six. And sure, it was liquid-cooled rather than air-cooled. But with a curb weight difference of 150 pounds, none of which hung over the rear bumper, and the \$20,000 price differential, those considering a Turbo purchase now had something to seriously noodle.

sometimes we “buy” memories that transport us back to an earlier time in life. We might buy a sailboat because Uncle Fred had one. Maybe, a horse because a neighbor had a horse farm. “When the 944 first came out, I was 19 years old,” Richard said. “I read about it in one of my car magazines, *Car and Driver*, *Road & Track*, one of those, and I thought that I'd really like to own one someday. I liked the style of the car, but thought it lacked power. But when the Turbo was introduced, the power was substantially more than the normally aspirated version. I loved the look of the front end. Sure, the 911 is the ‘go-to’ Porsche, and I've owned a couple, but the 944 Turbo remained in the back of my mind.”

Palm Springs was Richard's fourth parade, with nearly all of them long-distance jaunts from Chicago. “My first parade was in Boca Raton, Florida,” he said. “I drove there with my Carrera. I have to say that after driving this car from Chicago to Palm Springs, California, it was a joy to drive. My car really likes the mountain roads. Now granted, it is not stock. I kept pace with newer 992s and 911s. Some of those drivers were surprised. For the record, we were not speeding.”

Asked what draws him to PCA Parades, when the vast majority of members have never been to one, Richard said, “There are a couple of reasons. I really like talking with the other owners. It's always fun. Some of these folks have been members for years, while others are new. I started going to national events when I was a BMW owner. Those were enjoyable, but I have to say that I prefer Porsche events. The people are warm. It is exciting to meet people with similar interests. People at Parade are genuinely interested in you and your car.”

Although tempted to enter his Turbo in concours competition, Richard chose not to. “The drive out here, with all the bugs, made the car disgusting,” he related. “I would not have had the time to properly prepare it.

“The Parade drives and tours are favorites of mine. That's where you get to sit down with people, have lunch with them, talk with them. And, you get to see parts of the country you may not have seen before.

“Of course, some of the cars here are simply fantas-

tic. The 356s are beautiful. Members will talk about the 944 they owned. One guy said he had a 944, but his wife insisted on his selling it. He turned around and bought a 356, like his first Porsche, a 356 he bought after leaving the Air Force. That's another reason why I came here with my Turbo. There are not many 944s and 944 Turbos at Parade. I met a young guy here who owns a white 944. He bought it while still in high school. Has had it for six years. He's working hard to bring it back to the way it should be. That's the coolest thing.”

| RICHARD BALLOT, JR. 944 TURBO:<br>ENGINE/SUSPENSION/DRIVETRAIN ENHANCEMENTS |  |
|---|--|
| MANUFACTURER  | EQUIPMENT  |
| <b>Elephant Racing</b>  | QuickChange spring plate splined hubs<br>Rear QuickChange 27mm hollow torsion bars<br>Control arm front monoball cartridge<br>Control arm rear monoball cartridge<br>Trailing arm monoball cartridge<br>PolyBronze spring plate bearings |
| <b>Lindsey Racing</b>   | 968 MO30 sway-bar kit (30mm front, 19mm rear)<br>Adjustable rear drop links<br>Dual-port wastegate<br>Manual boost controller<br>Intake manifold<br>E-Prom   |
| <b>Auto Meter</b>   | Boost gauge<br>Sport-Comp wide-band air/fuel gauge   |
| <b>944Online</b>  | Venturi-delete kit   |
| <b>Speed Force Racing</b>   | Stage 2 header system in 321 stainless steel<br>3-inch downpipe<br>3-inch testpipe<br>3-inch Borla cat-back, stainless steel   |
| <b>Rada Race Lab</b>  | Wastegate inlet pipe (custom)  |
| <b>KLA Industries</b>   | Rear support truss   |
| <b>KW</b>   | V3 coil-overs  |
| <b>Powerflex USA</b>  | Polyurethane rear-axle carrier outer bushing   |
| <b>Kroon Wire Harnesses</b>   | Replacement engine wiring harness  |
| <b>BorgWarner KKK</b>   | Replacement turbocharger 26/8 (turbo S spec; replaced original 26/6 turbo)   |
| <b>Spec Clutch</b>  | SP293H Stage 2+ clutch   |