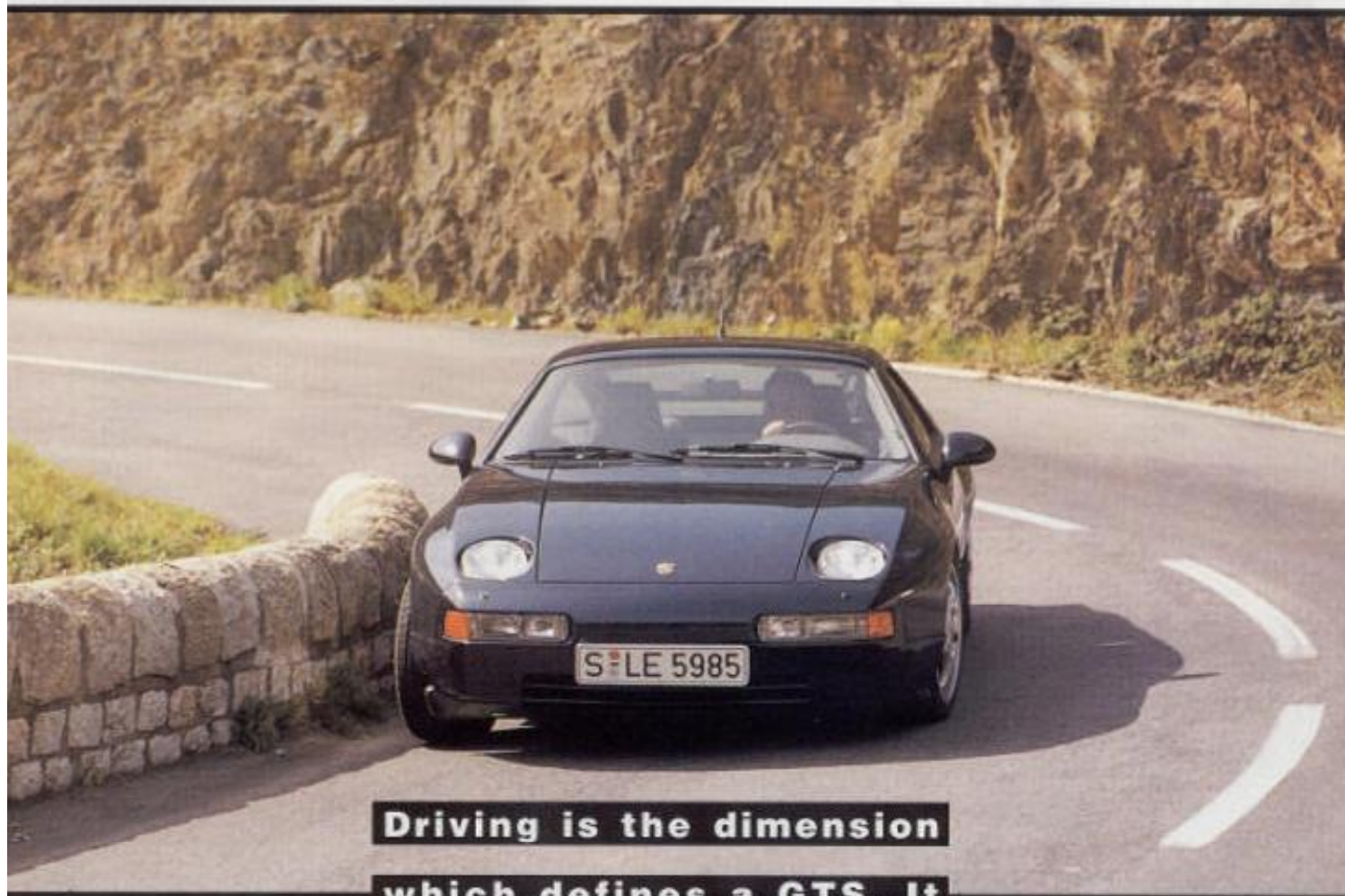


928 GTS: GT or Sports Car?



**Driving is the dimension
which defines a GTS. It
tries to be both luxury,
high-speed cruiser and
big sports car. GTS cor-
ners flat and precisely but
lacks nimbleness to com-
pensate for harsh ride.**

clutch has been beefed up again with spring boost for the pedal. The automatic in this car has an altered torque converter and new electronic program.

PDS, their anagram for slip limiter of laminates, taken from the 959, is included of course. Asked why they don't simply use proper traction control, Porsche says PDS always provides full propulsive force while traction controls do not. In their version ABS wheel sensors are used to indicate wheel spin at any corner, with a black box to compare wheel speeds and to factor in lateral acceleration (allowing for right/left speed differentials when cornering).

Weissach makes a fetish of excess braking performance. For the GTS this means even larger front discs, plus more pad area and improved friction

coefficient. Their current wheel design, taken from the Carrera cup racers, provides exceptional cooling as well. Wheels are now 17" with the so-called asymmetric hump. If the tire goes flat its bead is held by the rim edge rather than collapsing into the drop center. Rear rubber is a size larger at 255/40 ZR 17, on 9" rims.

Porsche engineering not only claims sub-six second 0-60 acceleration but the best deceleration figures of any car in this class, despite an empty weight of 3570 lb (+45 for the automatic). It would be even heavier if they hadn't saved some 68 lb by using alloy exterior panels. Remarkably, a 928 GTS only needs some 13.4% more distance to stop from 60 MPH on wet pavement than it does in the dry.

This is reassuring in an automobile capable of 170 MPH. A standard tire-pressure control system (also race-derived) warns of pressure loss, operating above 3 MPH.

Visually the GTS will only be identified by dedicated 928 spotters. The tail script is new to suit the current family style, mirrors are free forms

(right) A lot of technology in a tight package - forget their talk of +2 rear seats. Twin catalytic converters visible under front footwell, self-correcting "Weissach" rear axle with slip limiter (PDS) adapted from 959.

(below) Latest Porsche wheels in "Cup" style give excellent brake cooling. 928 was always slimmer than you might expect.



Photo by Werkfoto Porsche



painted in the car color and the rear fenders bulge more. None of this has helped the drag figure which remains an unexciting $C_d = 0.35$.

The interior remains much as before with the latest steering wheel in family style for an air bag, a somewhat reduced glovebox to accommodate the standard passenger bag and an instrument pod which rises and falls with the wheel, a system Porsche pioneered and continues because there isn't a better way.

They favor some electronic warning of potential problems, graciously avoiding a pinball-machine dash. Weissach's version considers three priorities: first is for problems which require immediate action, such as low oil pressure or loss of brake fluid; second, displayed in steady red, is for true but not life-threatening matters such as lack of cog-belt tension; and third, which can be cancelled by the driver, suggests it's time to refill the windshield washer, etc. The onboard

computer, operated by a lever under the wheel, is similarly limited in scope.

Extras include toys such as rear-seat air conditioner, electric sliding roof, CD player, changer for same, and telephone wiring — apart from the usual one-off colors or personalized upholstery, of course.

All this is familiar territory, carefully improved, and so it comes down to driving the 928 GTS to determine its true identity. Start with steering which is slightly dead around the center

joint. Porsche's 928 chassis man explains that a dual-wishbone layout and the chosen steering have more inherent friction and, moreover, they biased front suspension towards mild understeer with springs depressed. This is fine for rapid travel on smooth, straight roads, one GTS possibility. It does, however, reduce the precision

and road feedback in a long series of tight bends at sports car speeds.

Yet the ride is definitely sports-car firm over any but the smoothest pavements, appropriate for drivers who think they have a road racer, but less suitable for the GT enthusiast. Braking under any conditions is simply outstanding. So is acceleration, although

using PDS for full tractive force means that you can still spin one wheel on gravel, at least momentarily, if the other is biting on pavement.

Porsche most certainly achieved an engine which suits either manual or automatic gearbox with elegant, even contemptuous, ease. I'm not so sure they have managed the same trick with handling and ride. Or even that the trick can be performed at all. Those who liked the older 928s will love the GTS. Others may wonder which face they really prefer. GT or S, that is the question.



(left) Interior largely unchanged and lush. "Family" wheel for standard air bag. Automatic remains better tranny choice. 928 glove bin smaller, for passenger air bag.

(below) Rear fenders widened to accommodate even fatter rubber, latest spoiler and GTS badging in current family script.

