

CLASSIC DRIVER

Not even Google has heard of this Porsche 911 HLS

Lead

Can you believe that there's still a Porsche model today that doesn't have a single entry on Google? We wouldn't have believed it either, until we came across this unique Porsche 911 HLS 'retractable roof'...

Project 'Racing Coupé'



The story of the forgotten Porsche began in 1964. Back then, this particular [Porsche 911](#) sports car was happily running along in its standard form, little knowing that in 1966 it would be sent to the Automotive Engineering department at the University of Aachen. The mission: to turn it into a 'racing coupé' with a folding roof. The design study seems to take at least some inspiration from the pure racing [Porsche 904](#) and its rear engine cover, which could be seen as a kind of retractable roof.

Body shop at the end of the road



Technical drawings and a miniature model were devised before the in-house body department at the University of Aachen went to work on building a completely new body. To keep the weight low, many parts were fabricated in aluminium, including the characteristic rear louvres and the adjacent 'Targa' rollover bar. The fact that this Porsche had genuine racing ambitions can also be seen from the arrangement of the instruments on the dashboard: they were subsequently added to the right-hand side. The highlight of the study was undoubtedly the hinged cockpit canopy, integrated in its closed state to flow in harmony with the body line. Finally, the concept car, complete with its retractable roof, was sent to a paint shop in Würselen, a German town in the Aachen district of North Rhine-Westphalia, where it was given its bright green colour. Here, too, the model name Porsche HLS was added in black letters.

Left to rot



What happened next explains why the retractable roof Porsche 911 has, up till now, generated not a single entry on [Google](#): it simply disappeared. Presumably, the slightly eccentric study found no favour in the Zuffenhausen headquarters, and so it was simply parked up at the bodyshop and left there... for the next 40 years. It was not until 911 expert Manfred Hering of [Early 911s](#) was asked whether he could restore the long-forgotten concept Porsche that it once again came blinking into the light of day. "I was asked whether I could restore the Porsche for around 30,000 euros. Of course, I had to say no, but I then tried to buy this unique Porsche," says Hering. "After three years of discussions and negotiations I stood in front of the handsome wreck that had been left exposed to the weather for the last four decades. The original engine, and a spare engine, were dismantled but came with it – and had already served as a home for several families of mice."

A bright future for the retractable roof Porsche



Hering has definite plans for the future of the car: "In mid-April 2015, I will present the retractable roof Porsche at the Techno Classic for the first time. Then

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we will study it more closely and attempt to restore as many original parts as possible.” Whether he will at some point in the future want to sell this unique treasure is a question we’ll save for a later meeting...



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Gallery

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