A memorable meeting: The Mediterranean idyll of the Nice region is the perfect setting for a generational rendezvous, with the Speedster that started it all—the 356—meeting the fourth generation: the new 911 Speedster.

At Porsche, the concept of carrying on tradition means: movement. The new 911 Speedster took to the open air of Nice, tracing the tracks of its predecessors.

Photos by Achim Hartmann
Gone with the wind: Driving in a Speedster is a matter of taste. Where else could the sea air be quite so sublime?
Narrow-gauge romanticism: The Speedster exhibits its very open qualities as it navigates narrow streets, rubbing shoulders with its surroundings.
Generations together:
Model history all lined up, with the 911 Speedster (2010), the 356 Speedster (1954), and the 911 Carrera 3.2 Speedster (1988).

911 SPEEDSTER

Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 3,800 cc
Power: 408 hp (300 kW)
Maximum torque: 420 Nm at 4,200–5,600 rpm
0–100 km/h: 4.4 sec.
Top track speed: 305 km/h (190 mph)
CO₂ emissions: 242 g/km
Fuel consumption
City: 15.5 l/100 km
Highway: 7.3 l/100 km
Combined: 10.3 l/100 km
The Porsche Speedster is considered a fresh-air delight for anyone who wants a little more than a Cabriolet. But the times when one had to relinquish a little comfort in the process have passed. As a special luxury model from Porsche Exclusive, the new 911 Speedster once again rides the winds that its fans wouldn’t want to do without.

By Roland Schreiber  Photos by Boris Schmalenberger
Developed as an entry-level model for the USA: The 356 Speedster attracted attention not just on the racetrack.
**911 SPEEDSTER**

*Period: October 2010–June 2011*  
*Production: 1,156 vehicles*  
*Engine: Four-cylinder boxer*  
*Displacement: 2.7 liters*  
*Power: 240 hp at 6,000 rpm*  
*Top track speed: 245 km/h (152 mph)*

A car for individualists, but that has always been the case with the Speedster. Anyone who values wind over hairstyles had to wait well over 30 years for the next big whirlwind after the 356 Speedster. At the International Motor Show (IAA) in Frankfurt in 1987, Porsche presented a Speedster club sport study: a 911 that had no front windshield at all. Its all-round paneling made it a single-seater. The road version, the 911 Speedster 3.2, followed a year later and placed a premium on muscularity. Its suspension, tires, wheels, and broad body came from the Turbo Cabriolet, and it had a bullish hump on its rear made of fiberglass-reinforced plastic. A sharply angled front windshield 80 millimeters (3.1 inches) lower than its counterpart in the cabriolet, coupled with the bad-weather top, clearly marked this powerful vehicle as a Speedster, not to mention its weight reduction of 70 kilos (154 lbs.). This set the stage for the following market-ing message: “A Cabriolet is a closed car that you can drive with the top down. A Speedster is an open car that you can drive with the top up.” Porsche made 2,103 Speedsters with the Turbo-look until the year 1989. And only 171 of the version with the narrower body.

In the third generation, Porsche returned to its original idea and focused once again on a purist and sports-oriented character. The 911 Carrera 2 Speedster of 1992 had to keep out of car-washing tunnels; its top and its side mirrors had to be moved by hand. The car had no door pockets or emergency seats, and leather straps served as door handles. The unconventional front windshield and the double bubble on the rear had long become its trademarks. The Speedster could accelerate from 0 to 100 km/h (62 mph) in 5.7 seconds, so the ads picked up on time as well: “Please in a real sports car can only be increased by leaving half of it off. Preferably the top half.”

The Speedster is now enjoying its fourth spring, this time as a fascinating luxury object that is true to form. The Speedster has always represented luxury; one just has to know how to appreciate it—no other Porsche can match this car in its ded-ication to the open road.

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**911 CARRERA 3.2 SPEEDSTER TURBOLOOK**

*Period: 1992–1993*  
*Production: 930 vehicles*  
*Engine: Six-cylinder boxer*  
*Displacement: 3.6 liters*  
*Power: 355 hp at 6,400 rpm*  
*Top track speed: 280 km/h (174 mph)*

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**PHOTO SESSION**

Did you enjoy the Speedster feeling from the high-speed photos? That's great! Photographic Boris Schmalenberger and the Christophorus graphic artists had to use the tracks, because if the Speedster does not go to the road, the road has to come to the Speedster. So they first found the right photos, made a montage of them (3.0 x 4.5 meters; 9 ft x 14.8 feet), set them up with the right perspective, adjusted the lighting, and took the shots.
Many features of the 911 Speedster differ from those of the Cabrio—including the soft top. Newly developed, this manually operated construction maintains a tight seal even at speeds of 300 km/h (186 mph).

By Peter Weidenhammer

Open or closed: every once in a great while, the 911 Speedster will be driven with the top on. So it would not be complete—either as a work of art or as an experience—unless it had a top. That is why this two-seater features a top perfectly tailored to its contours, one that not only functions with the precision of a Swiss watch but also is operated like those timepieces as well, namely, by hand. The engineers have developed a mechanical work of art unparalleled among tops throughout the world.

In contrast to its classical predecessors, the span element in the rear part of the top simply lies on the lid of its compartment. A lock on the top was out of the question for aesthetic reasons—no clasp and certainly no hole should disrupt the curved aesthetic of the aluminum lid of the top compartment. Yet in order for the outer contour to exhibit the desired flow, and to ensure the interior enjoys the necessary tight seal, the engineers produced a kinetic system that uses landau bars on the inside. In this design, the landau bars press the top’s fabric seal onto the lid of the compartment so effectively that it is watertight. Connected to the mechanical components of the top by means of an intelligent kinetic system, the bars securely prevent water or drafts from entering the interior, even at speeds exceeding 300 km/h (186 mph).

The top does all of this without requiring any particular muscle power from the driver. The kinetic system is adjusted in such a way that any driver—whether physically powerful or not—can easily open and close it by hand. Regardless of the stage in which the top is released, it remains in that position and moves neither forward nor backward—demonstrating perfect balance in its mechanics. Thanks to the gear ratio in the two manual levers, no great strength is needed to make the closed top taut either.

A special production process for the lightweight metal rods also ensures there is no play in the mechanical construction, yet it still can be easily moved. Just like a Swiss watch.

 emitting: 242 g/km
Fuel consumption
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– Highway: 7.3 l/100 km
– Combined: 10.3 l/100 km