

# Q&A's to the Lone Star Region "Experts"

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## **1. PURCHASE / PRE PURCHASE INSPECTION**

### **1.1 Automobile Inspection (September 2005) and Service Recommendation (December 2005)**

I am new to the Porsche scene. I have just purchased a 1993 968 Cabriolet. I live in The Woodlands, Texas just north of Houston. I would like to bring the car by to someone who can look it over and make any recommendations for servicing. It has 85k on it and may need a timing belt and whatever else. I am looking for someone who I can trust to service it and need help with referrals. Please let me know if you can help. I also am looking to purchase a used spare tire for it but not sure where to look for parts.

Thanks for any help

Adam Watson

Is there a reliable Independent Porsche mechanic on the north side of Houston? I live in The Woodlands. I am relatively new to the 911 world and I like to tinker. I am wondering who I could take my car to if and when I get in to deeper for the tougher work. I have heard recommendations for Eurocar Werks (sp?), Koby, SP, Swiss Mechanic and Proteknic (sp?) . I was hoping to find a shop closer to home. Any suggestions?

Thanks in advance ...

Gerry Wilbourn

I just acquired a beautiful 1967 Porsche 912 w/ a recently rebuilt engine. I don't really know too much about cars, and I'd like to keep this one in great shape. If anyone knows of a reputable mechanic in the Houston area please let me know.

Josh Oakum

I am located in Los Angeles, CA. I am interested in purchasing at 2000 996 in the Houston area, but am in need of assistance regarding a pre-purchase inspection. Apparently unlike some dealers here in Los Angeles, dealers in Houston, specifically Momentum and Advantage Porsche, do not do pre-purchase inspections.

Tony Garcia, Jr.

## **ANSWERS**

We generally recommend any of the advertisers in our monthly PorscheNaut as referrals for vehicle inspections, tune-ups, and repairs - especially if the vehicle is out of warranty and you don't have ties to a dealer. You can see them at <http://www.lsrpca.com/P-Naut/PNaut%20Advertisers/advertisers%20page.htm>. I personally use Momentum (Jeff Pollard is the service manager), as I purchased my car from them and I do have a warranty. Most people think that they are a bit pricey, but if you limited your visit to an inspection and service recommendations, you could decide later if you wanted to take it to someone else.

You should also check the Tech Section on [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org) and search the Q&A's for your model. This will give you a good idea of common problems and recommended maintenance. For example, it is recommended that the brake and transmission fluid be replaced every 2 -3 years (I am going off my memory here - this may not apply to a 968), and some Porsches with twin distributors (again, I don't know if that is the 968) need to have the belt between them inspected and a vent kit installed).

Your best bet on a spare would be The Mart at the PCA web site or any of the salvage yards for recovered parts (used to call them junk yards) that advertise in the Panorama magazine.

Let me know if you need additional help. In the meantime, I will send your question around to our "panel of experts" and have them get back with you.

Jim Heimer

Go see my friend Michael Cawley-281-873-5111, at European Auto Techniks.

My '84 Black TurboLook is in his shop now, while I am up in Denver on business.

If you come South on Kurkendahl and turn Right on Gears (West), you will be at his shop 3 lights later. Look off to your right-the shop is set back about 100 yards.

He is a friend and a neighbor of mine, so this is hardly an objective recommendation..;-)

George Bigham

Curt at C & C's (Tracktime Performance) He and his crew are very honest and know Porsche, as one of his techs worked for me at Don McGill Porsche. They are located off Cutten Road and 1960 - 832-375-0933

Steve Mikula

Unless you need someone to take care of your car at once, my personal recommendation is for you to joint a few LSRPCA events and talk to the other club members at the events. Different people have different experience with vendors. You may collect their experience on why he/she like or dislike any particular vendor. Also, if you like to do some work yourself, you will get some tips from the other club members. A lot of our club members do minor maintenance and minor repairs themselves. Also, knowing your car well is very useful. Sometimes, fixing a minor problem can make the difference of either stranded on the road or going home. (You do not have to worry about that too much during a club event such as a long driving trip. There will be enough people giving you "advice" to fix it so that you can go home.)

I am active in the Driver's Ed events. I tried to go to every event because that is what I like to do. There were mechanics at the track who serviced some of their customer cars for the whole weekend. Usually, the mechanics are very knowledgeable about the cars because they also service race cars. Eric Georges of Valkyrie Racing (281-495-1055) is the past chairman for LSRPCA Driver's Ed. I know him personally due to seeing him and his crew at every track event for the past several years. He usually has a whole trailer at the site.

For cosmetics, the best is to go to Concours and talk to the members there. I cannot help you here because I am not as picky as the Concours guys. My standards on cosmetic may be lower than you wanted.

If you need immediate work, go to the website, [www.LSRPCA.com](http://www.LSRPCA.com). At the Home page in the middle of the screen under FLASH!, click "Check out our current advertisers" for info.

William H. Wong 10/26/05

### **1.2 Pre Purchase Inspection (September 2005 – answer updated July 2010)**

I am writing to see whether you could recommend one or two independent specialist who you would trust to do a pre-purchase inspection on a 964 that I have found in Houston TX.

Dr. Frederick Wong

I got your e-mail address from the PCA group web site. I am a member looking to purchase a 911 cab (looking seriously at a couple of 88's )in the Houston area. can you suggest to me, or tell me where I can find a list of dealers or garages who are knowledgeable on the details of older 911s here in Houston, who would be willing to do a pre-purchase inspection for me? I live in Massachusetts...but the cars I am looking at are in Houston. I am planning to fly down, to take a look in person, and any info on finding help to clarify the condition of these cars before I make my final decision would be greatly appreciated. Thanks in advance for your help.

Barnett Adler

ANSWER

We generally recommend the dealers and mechanic shops that advertise in our magazine, the PorscheNaut. They can be found in the online version of the PorscheNaut on our web sites at <http://lsrpca.com/porschenaut.htm>.

Jim Heimer

### **1.3 What tips can you give me on purchasing a Porsche? (September 2008 – updated July 2010)**

I am in the market for a used Porsche, but don't know where to start, how much I should be paying, or what models are available. What should I do? (September 2008)

ANSWER

There is a special section on the PCA website in the Tech Q&A section on buying a Porsche. Further, by reviewing the Q&A postings for a model of interest, you will find out a lot about the potential problems or benefits of a particular mode.

If you are not a current Porsche owner or PCA member, Porsche has the Quest Program, which provides you access to The Mart on the PCA website and an annual subscription to the Panorama magazine, which also has The Mart information. It currently costs \$40 for a year. This same link also has articles on some entry level Porsches, and this material will be updated periodically.

Jim

### 1.4 Where to purchase 993 (January 2006 – answer updated July 2010)

I am German and am living in the Woodlands just north of Houston since 6 months. I am looking for a well maintained 993 cabrio (variocam). I already researched autotrader.com and the local Porsche dealerships without success. Can you recommend a local independent dealership or do you have any tips where else to find offers?

Thanks!

Erik Stibitzky

The Woodlands, TX

#### ANSWERS:

You can search the cars available on the Lone Star Region classifieds page at <http://lsrpca.com/classifieds.htm>. Also go to the contacts page <http://lsrpca.com/contacts.htm#regions> and search nearby Regions.

I also suggest logging in to The Mart on the PCA web site at [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org) and searching for a 993. Unfortunately, you may have to do some digging into the details of the ads, since I don't think the location of the cars is given in the summary. You need to be a PCA member to use this feature of the PCA website; if your not already, then you can join PCA and the Lone Star Region at this link: [http://lsrpca.com/membership\\_info.htm#join](http://lsrpca.com/membership_info.htm#join).

Another source is, believe it or not, eBay. We have had several club members buy their Porsches on the web. The main caveat is that your purchase should be subject to inspection. I assume you are knowledgeable about potential problems on the 993, which could affect the price of the car – see Question 1.3 above and 1.5 below.

Jim Heimer

RPM Sports Cars - the best collection for sale in the US of air cooled Porsche cars. It is by appointment only, but you can view his inventory at [www.rpmsportscars.com](http://www.rpmsportscars.com). Ray Joseph has all the pristine Porsches you could want.

Steve Mikula

It is a bad idea to broadcast your desire to have a particular model and it is even worse idea to let all the used-car salesmen know that you had a difficult time to find one. If they find one, the price will not be cheap since they know you want one badly and you had a hard time finding one.

Keep a low profile and patiently look for it yourself. When you talk to used-car salesman, at least to pretend that the 993 Cab is just ONE of your choices.

Even if money is no object to you, use only one used-car salesman. If you talk to 20 salesmen, all 20 will look for it. Mostly likely, they will find the same guy who is selling his 993 Cab. If you are the guy selling, and there are 20 people asking, what would you do to your price?

William 1/13/06

He can also try Victory Motorcars at <http://www.victorymotorcars.com> is the website. Robert Neal is the owner.

Burnel

### 1.5 What should I look for in purchasing a 993 C2S or C4S (January 06)?

[OK - this question came from the PCA Tech Section web site, but I thought that it would be of interest to members, and - the general answer (search the PCA web site) applies to the purchase of any used Porsche) - webmaster.] I'm interested in purchasing a 993 C2S or C4S... And, want to know if there is anything I should be looking for... or looking to avoid with this specific model... Obviously, I would like low mileage, but what is acceptable mileage for this year/make/model...

The objective is this... Find a great C2S/C4S that is acceptably priced, and doesn't need severe mechanical help 2 weeks after I buy it...

It won't be a daily driver... more of a weekend car... and I like the C2S/C4S model, but probably can't find one with 10K miles, and don't want one with 70K miles...

Further, besides the obvious, are there any meaningful differences between the two models.

What's a good balance for this year/model?

Thanks in advance.

**ANSWER:**

This question has been asked many times and many different ways here. Unfortunately it is hard to find the answer since there are now so many answered questions here. Most are in the Engine section, but I would be curious if you are, or are not, able to find any of these. <http://www.pca.org/tech/>, pick the section containing the 993 model, then click Engine.

Let me try to summarize the issues.

- All 993 models suffer from premature valve guide wear. A rebuild to correct it is no less than \$6,000. Once done (at 50k or 100k miles) the new guides should last a lot longer. I would place a premium on a car that had a solid rebuild done by a reputable Porsche shop. Likewise I would deduct for a car that did not have it done yet, or claims to have had it done with no records or any specifics to back it up.
- All 993 models suffer from clogged Secondary Air Injection (SAI) smog systems. They need to be cleaned every 30k, but no one knew that until recently. I am still early in the process of spreading the word. If they go 60k miles they tend to coke up solid and need that rebuild anyway.
- Early 993 models suffered from a rear suspension geometry problem. But all of your S and 4S models are 1996 & later, so they have all the fixes.
- For valuation, check out Bruce Anderson's Market Reports in excellence, those are by far the best.

As 993's go, the S and 4S are among the most desirable. To some people it is more important to have a Cabriolet than an S, but not to everyone. Among the sportier & track drivers the S and 4S rule. Among the casual street drivers in good climates, any Cabrio beats any S. The 4S is darn good in winter weather on snow tires, while the plain S is not. I guess that leads back to what you called "obvious".

Joel Reiser - PCA WebSite - 1/3/2006

**2. SERVICE / MAINTENANCE / WARRANTY**

**2.1 Repair Shop for 356 Models (November 2005)**

I am a transplant from California who has my car here at my wife's residence in Houston but I spend the majority of time in ST Croix the Virgin Islands. I have had my car repaired twice here once by someone's recommendation and the second time at a Porsche shop which charged me as if my car was a Turbo-Carrera--I would like to find a repair shop whose owner appreciates what a 356c Porsche is and is not--I was fortunate in California to have a shop run by two old German mechanics who although I had to take personal abuse for not caring for my car as they thought I should did an excellent job--They worked only on Volkswagen and 356 Porches--is there such a shop in Houston--??Thank you for whatever assistance you can give me

Robert Johnson

**ANSWER**

Robert:

Check with Michael Cawley (who used to own a 356B "Super 90" way back when, and wishes he had it back..;-) at European Auto Techniks. He does great work, and advertises in the PorscheNaut. I'm a neighbor and friend as well as customer, so this recommendation is highly biased..;-)

George Bigham

**2.2 Extended Warranty (November 2005)**

The warranty on my 2003 Boxster S is due to run out in January. I'm thinking of buying an extended warranty for it, possibly to last another 10 years. I did talk to one local Porsche garage that advertises in the PorscheNaut and was told to be careful as some insurers are reluctant or slow to pay for repairs, may not cover diagnostic work, and have even gone so far as to BUY data from repair shops so to compile a exclusion list for the more common problems.

The factory warranty extensions are expensive from the dealer. Any advice as to which insurance companies to deal with? Am I better off going with the dealer if I intend to keep the car indefinitely?

Help. Thanks.

Gary Lelvis

### ANSWERS

Gary,

When I purchased my 2001 911 in 2003, I got enough extended warranty from the dealer to cover me for the seven years I plan on owning the car. As you are probably aware, both the 996 and 986 (and, unfortunately, probably the 997 and 987) are prone to suffer Rear Main Seal (RMS) leaks. It costs about \$1000 to redo the seal and \$8000 for a new engine, if the seal cannot be repaired. Failure usually occurs between 20 and 30,000 miles (also right after the factory warranty expires), but it can be sooner or later. It is also likely to repeat at the same interval as the first failure. For that reason, the PCA 996 expert (Joel Reiser) has been suggesting extended warranties or trading in before the original warranty expires.

You can read a lot about the RMS failures (and other, semi congenital problems) on the PCA web site tech section at [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org). Go to the 996 engine section and search for rms, rear main seal, warranties, etc.

In general, although it cost a lot, I feel a lot better having a dealer extended warranty, although if I only have one RMS repairable failure while I own the car, I will have left money on the table. BTW, when I purchased the car used from the dealer with 5k miles on it, it did have an RMS leak (just a spot on the garage floor), and I had the seal replaced under warranty at that time. With about 20 k miles on the car now and no repetition, I am reasonably comfortable that I will get "normal" performance from the seal.

Jim Heimer

Gary:

I do not have extended warranty, so I do not have a lot of detail or experience. From what I read in Consumer Report years ago about extended warranty, it recommended to stick with the OEM (Porsche for you) extended warranty. I do not know what the price difference is. Third party is risky for your wallet when you need it.

As you will never see the full contract, you never know what is covered or not cover. Consumer Report said they had a hard time to get a copy (in some case cannot ) of the contract detailing what is covered.

You will get life time warranty. That is ...the life of the insurance company.

Some will not cover the work before they know what has to be replaced. A friend of mine who had third party extended warranty on his old model used M-B. He had some A/C leaks. Warranty paid for some \$50 item but he had to pay for \$500 for the time to find out what leaked.

William Wong 11/25/05

### 2.3 Extended Warranty (November 2005)

I'm picking up a 997 today and wondering about the RMS issue. Planning to keep the car 5 years and then decide on an upgrade. That would put me with one year outside the normal 4-year warranty period. What do you think of an extended warranty?

Tim

### ANSWER

For some time, Joel Reiser, the PCA 996 tech guy, strongly recommended keeping the car under warranty for as long as you plan to own it. If you are going beyond the Porsche warranty, then an after market warranty would be useful. You can read about this issue by going to [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org) and selecting the tech section, then searching the 996 section for RMS, warranty, extended warranty, etc. Although it is early in the game for 997 RMS leaks, apparently

the design of the crankshaft that causes the problem was not changed, although the seal has been upgraded (originally for the Cayenne).

The cost of a seal repair is about \$1000, but if it is bad enough that you need a new engine, then it is \$6 - 8000 (update - \$12 to \$13,000 as of January '08 - ask me how I know). Or you could self insure by putting your spare change in a box for the next four years.

More recently with better repair information (frequency and cost), Joel has expressed some skepticism about extended warranties due to their cost versus the cost of the most likely repairs (like the RMS).

Jim Heimer

### **2.4 Extended Warranty (RMS Seal)**

Thanks for the info - I'll check into the extended warranty cost. Do you know whether it's mileage-related or is degradation of the seal over time also an issue? Chances are that in 5 years I won't put over 15k miles on the car. - Tim

#### **Follow Up Answer**

The general problem with the RMS is that the crankshaft is, by design, slightly off center in the 996, 986, 997, and 987 (i.e. water cooled) engines. This induces uneven forces on the engine to gearbox connection, which results in the seal having to take a lot of flexing. This design is different from the air cooled (993) engines, which do not have this problem (but they have valve guide rod and secondary air injection problems, which are in the same ball park to correct as the cost of a new engine).

The seal failure seems to be mileage related. If your first one goes at 20,000 miles, expect another at 40,000 miles, approximately. If the leak is minor, just continue replacing the seal (with the new design - there is also a procedure involving epoxy that is on the PCA site). If the leak is major, or recurs at short (mileage) intervals, Porsche pulls the engine and puts a form over the crankshaft. If it won't fit, because the shaft is out of position by more than Porsche thinks is acceptable, you get a new engine (which could be a remanufactured engine with a new engine warranty) - or you get to buy a new engine, if out of warranty.

I subscribe to the PCA tech site for the 996. I get a half dozen or less e-mails a day, which I find very interesting and informative - and scary, sometimes. You can register to get these e-mails in the Tech Section of pca.org.

Jim Heimer

### **2.5 Mechanic for Engine Replacement (November / September 2005)**

I have just moved back to Friendswood, TX and recently transferred my membership from the Redwood region to the Lone Star region. I had my 1975 911 shipped from Napa, CA three days ago for delivery today at my home in Friendswood. The truck driver called and told me that my cars engine caught fire when they tried to start it. I have yet to see the damage, as these guy's have not showed up yet. I'm in need of a good mechanic to probably pull and replace the engine. Also, any suggestions on where I can find a good 3.0 or 3.2 in the area would be appreciated.

Thanks for any input.

Jim Bille

Friendswood, TX

I am looking for a good repair shop in Houston that can rebuild and upgrade my 1979 Porsche 911 engine and transmission. I don't want to go to just any shop since I'm sure the costs will be high and my budget is generally pretty limited.

Thanks

John Conzel

#### **ANSWER**

There have been no responses to this question.

### **2.6 Rebuild 914 Engine (November 2005)**

Are there any recommendations for a shop in Houston that can re-build a 1970's 914 engine?

Larry

**ANSWER**

European Auto Technik advertises in the PorscheNaut. The owner, Michael Cawley, owns a very pretty robins-egg blue '74 914. Your 914 will be in good hands there!

George Bigham

(Update September 2008) Victory Motors is also expanding from acquiring, refurbishing, and reselling air cooled cars (mostly Porsches) into the maintenance and repair area. They may be a possible for this job.

Jim

**2.7 Changing Shocks / Suspension (January 2006)**

Do you know what is involved in changing front shocks on a 2002 996? (A C4S, to be precise) (The rears are simple bolt on deals, as I recall.). I pretty much know, but what I don't know is will it need to aligned afterwards? I recently had them changed on a VW Jetta, which has a somewhat similar front suspension, and it did not need realignment.

So what about the P-car? And should I use Momentum? Or is there a LSR friendly place you would recommend?

Mark

**ANSWER:**

I suggest going to the Tech Section of [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org) and searching the Q&A database for your model. Since I have subscribed to the 996 board, there have been dozens of questions on changing suspensions and components, and many of the responses are quite detailed. Let me know if you have trouble finding it. It makes a big difference if you are replacing like for like, upgrading to stiffer shocks, changing ride height, etc.

I like Momentum, but they tend to be pricey. However, if your car is still under warranty, even though this would not be warranty work, I would stay with the dealer in case something goes wonky with the suspension in the future. Our (the LSR "Panel of Experts") usual recommendation, other than the dealer, is to call around to the shops advertised in the PorscheNaut.

**2.8 Response to RMS Oil Leak (January 2006)**

[Once again, this is a question from the PCA Tech Section, but since it addresses a common problem with the water cooled Porsche Engine (996, 986, 997, 987, and Cayenne), I thought it would be good to post it here. For much more information on this topic, go to the [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org) Tech Section and search for RMS under one of the above models. - webmaster]

Hi. I just purchased a 2003 C4S with 12,000 miles. From the first day I purchased the car, I have noticed some oil on the floor. The size of the drip was approximately 4 inches in diameter in one night, but much smaller the next day (about 1 inch). The location appears to be that close to RMS from reading the info at this site.

My question is - Is it okay to just make sure there is sufficient engine oil? (The car also does a self check at start up on oil level) or do I need to make sure that the RMS is replaced as soon as possible. I guess, I am not exactly sure what happens after the initial RMS leak.

Thank you for help.

Regards

**ANSWER:**

Yes you need to make sure there is sufficient oil in the engine, however, if you have an RMS leak, here is what is about to occur. First you would need the transmission removed, and the clutch & flywheel out, and have the main seal replaced. I believe this will cost roughly \$1200 or perhaps a bit more. They should check with the "go / no-go gauge". If it is a no-go, then you need a new engine, which is about \$12,000 installed.

If the test with the gauge is OK, then the seal can just be replaced, and that might take care of it. However, within about 20k miles it may happen again. Your options at that time are the same as you have now.

You could ignore it, drive the car, and maintain the oil level as per the instructions in the owner 's manual. However, you may find that one morning you come out to the car and there is a very large puddle of oil. Or you may have that

experience in a parking lot somewhere after the car sits after being driven. So it is best to get this taken care of before that happens. If you try to drive the car after it has lost a large amount of oil, the engine will probably be destroyed before you get it home or to the shop.

Back to the repair, there are two points to work on here:

- 1) There is a new version seal, available only from Porsche dealers, and only by VIN number of the car. I would only use this new one. I would have a real Porsche dealer do this work, or get your car over to Farnbacher Loles in CT (not far from your location) where Scott Slauson works.
- 2) Read my write-up of Scott Slauson's epoxy fix. I would have the shop follow those instructions.

If you can't or don't want to do all of the above, then you may need to get in touch with a Porsche dealer or even a lawyer. First, establish what is the warranty on the car, if any. Second, see if you can give the car back to the dealer that sold it to you, and get a different car.

Please let me know how you make out with this.

Joel Reiser - PCA WebSite - 1/8/2006

### **2.9 QUESTION: Are the recommended frequencies for changing fluids sufficient? - February 2006:**

[Once again, this question came from the PCA Tech Section web site, but I thought that it would be of interest to members, since this is a common concern.]

The fellow who writes the tech column in Roundel, the BMW club magazine, says that the BMW manufacturer recommendations for fluids changes are bogus. He recommends changes much more frequently. What do you think about Porsche's recommendations? Should we be changing fluids more frequently than the manufacturer recommendation? He also does not believe in the lifetime fluids.

#### **ANSWER:**

I am not familiar with BMW's latest recommendations, but you raise a good point.

Engine oil has a tough job. If all it had to do was flow everywhere and lubricate everything, it would not be that difficult. But unfortunately for the oil, it also has to circulate up at the piston crowns, around the rings, and get spread and scraped along the cylinder walls. The oil is right up against the piston rings where combustion is occurring. Even though our oil temperature gauges will tell us the oil temp is around 180 or 200 degrees, it is a lot hotter right there at the point of combustion. We don't have any temperature sensors up in there.

Add to this exposure to the combustion process, the engine oil also gets diluted and polluted by fuel and exhaust components. The piston engine is not 100% efficient at burning all of the fuel, and the rings don't seal 100% perfectly, and the oil scraper rings don't scrape 100% efficiently. If they did, the cylinder walls would not be lubricated well enough. So a small amount of unburnt fuel and more importantly some exhaust gas mixes in with the oil, contaminating it.

So for engine oil, there are all sorts of forces at work trying to destroy the oil. So I would recommend changing the engine oil more often than some of the new higher mileage targets. For a car that is not driven all the time, nor very many miles, changing the oil once a year is fine. Otherwise yes I would change it more often than the mileage points listed.

Brake fluid is a very important subject within this topic. Porsche's brake fluid change intervals are not followed by enough people. I hear of many, and even see a few cars myself where the brake fluid has been in the car for 5 to 10 years. When Porsche says to change it every 2 or 3 years, I think that is a very reasonable recommendation. This plan works well when followed. In the case of brake fluid, it is when the plan is not followed that gets some owners in trouble.

Another point worth mentioning is that there has been some confusion about Pentosin products. Some people say "Pentosin" as if that automatically means "hydraulic oil", and then they go and use Pentosin brake fluid where Pentosin's hydraulic oil CHF-11S and CHF-202 are specified for the power steering, or vice versa. This is really really bad, since the two systems are not compatible. Pentosin is a brand name of a company that makes fine products, but we can't be careless when we decide where to pour each into the car.

CHF-11S and CHF-202 are compatible, those are the older and newer versions of the hydraulic oil used for power steering. But neither of those two Pentosin products are compatible with Pentosin's (or anyone else's) brake fluid.

Since you have filed your question under the "Transmission" heading, let's talk about that. Gear oil in the 911 lives a pretty good life in street use. Where the recommendations are not even close is when the car goes to the track. Gear oil does not get broken down the way motor oil does, but the transmission has metal parts that wear, and as they do, they will leave metal particles in the gear oil. Changing the gear oil is great from that standpoint, that is how we remove those particles from the oil. But otherwise on a nicely driven street car, you can really go a long time between gear oil changes.

Joel Reiser - PCA WebSite - 2/6/2006

**2.10 Can anyone assist with 986 ignition replacement (July 2006)?**

Has anyone out there had any problems with the 986 ignition switch/steering lock (I think the 996 uses the same parts). Perhaps more to the point, has anyone tried replacing one? Mine is malfunctioning and I'm going to either need to replace it or have it replaced so I'm looking for relevant insights and experiences before I proceed.

Dave

**ANSWER**

If you have not already done so, you may want to have a look over on renntech at this link:

- <http://www.renntech.org/forums/index.php?showtopic=493&st=0&#entry1941>

or here:

- <http://www.renntech.org/forums/index.php?showtopic=1313&hl=ignition+switch+replace>

Good luck,

Greg

**2.11 QUESTION: Can you recommend a mechanic in North Houston? (March 2006)**

I'm looking at buying a 944 Turbo that's in the northern part of Houston (zip 77064). I need a good mechanic to look it over and make a few repairs before I come pick it up and drive it across the country. Please recommend someone for me to have it taken to.

**ANSWER**

Rick, check our list of PNaut advertisers at <http://www.lsrpca.com/P-Naut/PNaut%20Advertisers/advertisers%20page.htm>. I don't know if any of these are in North Houston or not. These are the people we usually recommend, as we have some knowledge of them (and some of them are LSR members).

Jim Heimer

Curt Raulen who is with C&C's Northside Motors, and Tracktime Performance has a certified Porsche tech working with him who used to work with me when I was at McGill Porsche. Curt is Extremely honest, and a very good guy - he would be worth a call to. He has not been on the list of DE tech shops because Eric said there were enough repair shops in town. 832-375-0933 the shop is in the Willowbrook Mall area on Theale Rd. just off Cutten Road. He has been taking care of several race cars as well, including Mike Hardage's fleet, and race cars.

Steve Mikula

**2.12 I need to replace my 944's catalytic converter (failed emissions test) and am also looking for better performance.**

Which brand of catalytic converter do you recommend? The car has 92k miles, a new timing belt, in good shape and runs good; just wondering if a new converter would make a real difference (August 2007).

Luis

**ANSWER**

From what I have read, the Porsche catalytic converter is pretty well designed, so it's unlikely that you will see measurable performance improvements unless you actually removed the converter. That, of course, is illegal (big fine if you are stopped, car will not pass emissions test, etc.).

Go to [http://www.pca.org/tech/tech\\_qa.asp](http://www.pca.org/tech/tech_qa.asp), which is the tech section on the PCA website, select your year of 944, then search for catalyst, catalytic converter, and exhaust system to see what advice others have received on this subject. You could also post your specific question to the appropriate 944 tech person (you must be a PCA member and log on to the site to ask a question).

Hope this helps. If not, get back to me, and I can circulate to our board members; I know of two who are knowledgeable on the 944.

Jim Heimer

### **2.13 Suitability of Mobil 1**

There is a lot of Mobile 1 bashing on some of the web forums. Specifically, 'experts' argue that the formulation/specification (API?) of M1 0w-40 was changed to 'SM' which makes it no longer a good choice for our cars. Your opinion? (April 2008)

[This question appeared on the PCA Tech Q&A section]

#### **ANSWER**

I don't know one tenth of what I would need to know to really say for sure. I spoke with a Mobil1 tech support engineer recently about this, and he essentially shrugged it off. I really don't know what to say about that. But my thinking has been greatly influenced by the following article, <http://www.lnengineering.com/oil.html>.

Joel Reiser

## **3. TIRES AND WHEELS**

### **3.1 QUESTION: What tires does Porsche recommend? - February 2006**

Porsche recommends specific tires, which have been tested and given an "N" number. Where can I find this list?

#### **ANSWER:**

A copy of the latest list is posted on the LSR web site at this link. This list is current as of September 2008, but it is only for 996's. See the following items for additional information, and check-out the PCA Tech Q&A website on this topic. There is also a Porsche publication, "Tires - Porsche Approved Original Equipment - Fall / Winter 2007 / 2008," which should be available at any Porsche dealer.

### **3.2 Where can I take my Boxster for an alignment (July 2006)?**

My 2001 Boxster S needs to have an alignment done. Any recommendations on where to go? I am located in College Station, so the closer, the better. I am looking to get a fairly stock alignment, maybe a tad bit more aggressive for the occasional DE.

Also, what (approx.) should an alignment cost me?

Thanks!

Gary

#### **ANSWERS**

Check out the advertisements on [www.lsrpca.com](http://www.lsrpca.com). I think Koby will come to your place. Valkyrie might do it at the track for you during the next DE weekend. Call him to check is schedule and make an arrangement. Sam at ProTechnik might be able to do it this Saturday at the Drive and Dyno.

Sorry, I don't know any good shops in College Station / Bryan. Valkyrie did a good job with my 78SC alignment for the track.

Craig

Jim Hedderick gets his done at Momentum. You would need to ask for the same setup he gets. Ours (he and I autocross the car nationally) is fairly aggressive, but still streetable or so Jim tells me.

James

If there is an NTB in College Station, take it there.

Burnell

I had my 996 aligned at Momentum about 18 months ago, and it cost \$189.50. I had my Boxster aligned about three years ago at a small independent shop in Santa Fe after I replaced my front tires due to a blowout on a trip. That cost about \$50.

Momentum did a good job. They are probably a bit pricey, but they should have the right tools and know the specs. You might take a look at this topic on the [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org) web site Tech Section for the Boxster and 996. There have been a number of Q&A's about the correct alignment procedure and specs for different uses.

Jim

### 3.3 TireRack and wheel alignment

I am looking to buy new tires from Tirerack. Can anyone recommend a high quality installer who can also do an alignment?

#### ANSWER

I think that you can get a list of local installers from tirerack.

Try that route first.

However, you may want to check out Discount Tires on line <http://www.discounttire.com/dtcs/home.do> - I think this is their web site, but there are a lot of people out there advertising as "discount tires"). I got a better price from them than from tire rack on N-rated Pirelli Rossos with free shipping, and the local drive-in store (between Buffalo

Speedway and Kirby on SW Freeway) had the tires in stock, gave me the internet price and did the installation for free.

They cannot, however, do an alignment. I had mine done at Momentum, but it was expensive - about \$200, as I recall.

Jim

I'm an installer from tire rack (Pro-Am) and obviously a Porsche guy. Send them there and I'll take care of ya. I also can recommend some good tires, and I also do race tires and such. And no I don't scratch wheels and am careful. Usually takes about an hour to hour and a half.

Also we get our Boxster aligned at southwest alignment (Greg does them). He's careful and precise. If you need corner weighting on coilovers go to Pro Technik and see Sam.

David Hedderick

Pro-Am Auto Accessories

Just my opinion, but Greg at Southwest alignment is one of the best I have ever used for aligning my cars both with stock alignments and performance alignments. I've watched him stare at the computer screen and then move a couple bolts and be dead on. He also manually measures to confirm the machine is not fooling him before he takes your car off the rack. Finally, he'll drive it around the block and be sure the wheel is centered correctly. Greg charges \$60 to \$120, depending on how complex your requirements are.

That being said, Momentum now has a brand new high tech alignment rack in their new Porsche only facility across the freeway. The alignment rack is a grade and there is a pit for the tech to work in. I'm sure they are excited to show off what they can do with their new tool.

Jim Hedderick

We live near Willowbrook and have a good relationship with our local Discount Tire store on 1960. I watch 'em when they torque lug nuts and start jacking up my 911, but I'd do that wherever.

By the time you save a buck at Tire Rack, pay shipping, haul tires and rims around from place to place, there's no savings so far as I can tell. [http://www.discounttire.com/texas\\_tires\\_wheels.html](http://www.discounttire.com/texas_tires_wheels.html)

George Bigham

### **3.4 Tire Recommendation**

I am going to the DE event at TWS in less than 2 weeks. My tires just barely passed the technical inspection. I have been planning to replace them, but this forces the decision. I would like some opinions. What tire is best? I have Pirelli P Zeros now. I think they are great. Is Michelin better? Which one. Where should I go to buy them? Momentum Porsche did my tech inspection and they have been great for the limited number of things I've had them do. (June 2007)

Elizabeth

#### **ANSWER**

I suggest you go to [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org) and enter the tech question section for the type of car you have, then search for tires. I am a member of the 911 (1995 - 2006) forum, and I know that the Tech Advisor Joel Reiser has answered many questions on this topic. I have Pirelli P-Zero Rossos (not sure of the spelling may be Rosas) on my car, and since I generally replace them 2 at a time (rears then fronts about half as often), I have stuck with them to keep all four tires matched (very important). Also, many consider it to be important that whatever tires you buy have an "N" rating. This certifies that the tires have been tested and approved by Porsche. There will be a number after the "N", which designates the series of the tests conducted and should be the same on all four tires.

BTW - in a recent question on this topic, I recommended two sources for the tires. One is TireRack. Their web site is worth a look, since it will contain a lot of technical information on the tires, comparisons, etc. They are also considered the "standard" for the lowest price, but since you have to buy over the net or by phone and have the tires delivered to you or an installer (they will provide a recommendation), it is somewhat of a hassle and you will pay for installation. You will also pay for installation if Momentum puts them on - at Porsche technician rates, of course. A second source, and the one that I prefer, is Discount Tires. I usually check their web site for price and shipping costs, then use this to negotiate a price at my local Discount Tire store. Installation is included in their price, and you can opt for the road hazard insurance (which is good, since you are never very far from a Discount Tire Store, it seems).

If you can wait until June 27th, 2007, LSR is having a Tire Tech Session at the Discount Tire Store on 1960 near the Willowbrook Mall. We will have a Yokohama rep there, but he promises to be impartial in discussing tire performance. The announcement is now on our web site at [http://lsrpca.com/misc\\_events/Tech%20Session%20-%20Yokohama/Yoko%20Tech%20Session.html](http://lsrpca.com/misc_events/Tech%20Session%20-%20Yokohama/Yoko%20Tech%20Session.html). A list of Porsche approved tires is also at [http://lsrpca.com/misc\\_web\\_stuff/approved%20tires.htm](http://lsrpca.com/misc_web_stuff/approved%20tires.htm). This was taken from an answer to a query on this topic on the PCA site.

Jim Heimer

## **4. FUEL**

### **4.1 QUESTION: What octane is correct for my Porsche? - February 2006**

I currently use 92 or 93 octane. My search of other questions on this subject leads me to believe that as long as the engine doesn't ping, then the electronics are adjusting the timing properly. As I read responses to earlier questions, one indicated that higher octane, by itself, does not actually increase horsepower. So, if I switched to 89, AND my engine runs without ping, etc., are there any other concerns?

#### **ANSWER:**

[This is another question from the PCA Tech Section - but since in some parts of Texas only 91 octane fuel is available, I thought it might be of interest to the members.]

Well your logic is OK, however 89 octane is not as high as these engines want. The knock sensors and oxygen sensors are all fine and good but only really used for light cruising. When you put your foot flat to the floor on the power, the sensors and electronics are too slow. Furthermore, the car is designed to run reasonably well even if a sensor failed. What does that tell us? That tells us the engine is using predetermined amounts of fuel and spark advance at full power. That means that if it pings (and it will), you won't be able to stop it from causing trouble.

Realize that if the cars truly used all this technology to tune themselves under all conditions, we would never need chips then, would we. So as before, believe about half of what you read or hear. Reality is that this technology is used primarily at light throttle in cruise mode for fuel economy and emissions. Those are fine. But don't assume the engine will "do the right thing" in all situations with inadequate fuel. In other words, it can adjust to deal with 89 octane for light cruising, but not necessarily at full power. Check your owners manual, I believe they want to see at least 91 octane if possible. If you are forced to use lesser grade fuel on a trip somewhere, avoid full throttle and just take it easy until you can use up the tank, and refill with the good stuff.

Now, let's approach this another way. Let's say you just drive the car easy for fun, and you never floor it. Then the answer is yes, you can fill up and cruise around just fine on 89 octane.

Joel Reiser - PCA WebSite - 2/9/2006

### **4.2 QUESTION: Can my car use E85 Ethanol? Will it wreck the fuel system? (February 2006)**

#### **ANSWER:**

[This is another question from the PCA Tech Section web site - also, see the update at the end of this question, or go to the [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org) tech section and search for e85 for more commentary on this subject].

There is a lot of hype and marketing around this now, and it is hard to sort through it all to see what's real.

In some states it is actually illegal to sell E85, because there is an older law on the books stating that it is illegal to sell gasoline with higher than 10% (or 15%) ethanol. All of this is changing rapidly though as E85 is a big deal now.

Ask your dealer to tell you what PCNA's latest official position on E85 is. It could be anything from "it is not approved", or "if you use it you void your warranty", or it could be "it works fine". Even if I knew the answer, a) it is important that you know where you stand with your warranty at your dealership, and b) Porsche's position on this issue is likely evolving as we speak.

I doubt it would wreck the fuel system, but it could slowly start to gum it up. Ethanol used to attack certain materials in the system, but E10 blending has been going on for years, and the changes needed to go that far have been made long ago. But the first thing you will notice with E85 is you will be down on power. There is less energy content per gallon in E85 than in our familiar blends of gasoline. The ECU in your car will change the ignition timing and the fuel injection duration to retune for it.

However at full power this may not work. If you try it, do NOT use full throttle, and let us know what else you find. If the ECU runs out of adjustment range on fuel or timing, or if it doesn't like the exhaust content, you will get a check engine light. That should go away on its own if you switch back on the fuel.

I will try to post an update after I ask around and gather more information on this.

Joel Reiser - PCA WebSite - 2/22/2006

UPDATE: I was able to talk to a few others on tech committee about this over the weekend at our national tech meeting in Tulsa, in conjunction with Cimarron Tech. The consensus is it won't work without some serious engineering by Porsche, and we do not believe they have that on the agenda. I would expect bad or no running and a check engine light to come on with multiple fault codes almost instantly. It would go away and should run normally again after draining the fuel tank and refilling with normal fuel, but only if you did not push it too hard and damage the engine.

Joel Reiser - PCA WebSite - 3/6/2006

## **5. REPAIRS**

### **5.1 I need to have a new rear window installed in the soft top of my Porsche 996 Cabrio. (May 2006)**

Can you advise me a good shop in North Houston (Woodlands, 77382)?

Erwin Lammertink

#### **ANSWER**

Go visit Michael Cawley at European Auto Techniks, on Rankin Road just West of I-45 (about 3 lights, past the Kuykendahl right turn exit). Either he can help you or he will know someone who will. He takes care of my '84 TurboLook Coupe (no soft-top), and is a personal friend. (This is a highly biased recommendation.)

Check the PorscheNaut or the lsrpca.com website for a map and contact info.

George Bigham

I recently had my rear window replaced at Victory Motors, who is a P'Naut advertiser and our concours sponsor. They did a good job. Another Lone Star Region member used Richmond Auto Upholstery at (713) 781 8746. They were satisfied with the job on their Boxster and quoted a price about half of that at Victory (which was less than Momentum). A word of warning - convertible tops have a life expectancy of 7 years or so depending on climate, exposure to sunlight and UV rays, etc. In many cases, replacement of the rear window cannot be done without replacing the top, if the top has become "brittle" with age.

Jim

### **5.2 How do I maintain my Convertible Top**

The last time I washed my convertible top, the water soaked in with no beading at all. Since I am headed out on a long trip, I want to get the top sealed. Who can do it, or what can I use to seal it (September 2008).

Jim

#### **ANSWER**

After checking the PCA Tech Advise website, try using RaggTopp Cleaner followed by Raggtopp Sealant (for fabric, since your car is a 2001 911 - they make a different product for vinyl). It is available from Keyston in Houston on Fulton Street, a few blocks south of Chimney Rock off I-45 north of town. You can also order it on the web. Plan on one bottle of cleaner (you will not use it all) and two cans of sealant (you will need more than one can, if you are starting from scratch and giving it the recommended three coats). Instructions come on the product, which will cost about \$60 total.

Jim

### **5.3 Is my speedometer or tachometer out of calibration (July 2006)?**

Previous owner changed the face of the gages to white. Looks good but I think something went wrong. In 5th gear @ 3000 rpm my gps tells me I'm doing 65mph. Speedo tells me I'm doing 83 mph. Every 200 rpm the speed, according to the GPS goes up 5 mph.

I know the speedo needs recalibrating but is the rpm similar to yours? Does it need to be sent in too? I have a 1987 Carrera coup with 16" Fuchs and a very stock turbo look.

Bobby

#### **ANSWER**

Paul Frere's book The Porsche 911 Story has gear ratio diagrams. I looked up the G50 transmission, which I believe is the one your car has, and at 3000rpm in 5th, you should be doing 70mph.

Considering that (I think) your wheels may not be stock, it seems that your rpm gauge is fairly accurate.

Gary

### **5.4 Where can I go to have a paint scratch repaired (August 2006)**

One morning I am pulling my 996 out of the garage when I hear this scraping sound on the passenger side of the car. I stop to find that a piece of metal that had been against the wall had fallen against the door and ... it is not a pretty story. Worse, I have nobody but myself to blame. Bottom line is that I need to get it repainted. The scratch is not very deep, but there. Any recommendations for a paint/body shop are greatly appreciated.

Mark

**ANSWER**

I have heard good things about Independent Paint and Body (<http://ibodypaint.com/>). They also advertise in the Pnaut.

CT

My favorite body shop is Collision Plus, at the corner of Bellaire and Fondren. Ashwin Patel and his sons, Sam and Nick, have always done a good job for me (and my wife, and my father-in-law, and my friends, and ....)

Tim

I have used Rapid Auto Works on Kuykendahl, south of 1960. They did a great job on three silver cars that I know of, and silver is a difficult color to match.

[Unsigned]

If you live south of Houston, you could use Joe's Body Shop in Alta Loma.

Burnell

**5.5 Windshield Replacement**

My 993 Cabriolet needs a new windshield. I would like to have recommendations for reputable (glass) repair shops in Houston that have done this right. I know that most of the Porsche dealerships bring the car to glass repair shops for this work. (September 2008)

Erik

**ANSWER**

You might try contacting some of the independent shops that advertise in our monthly magazine, PorscheNaut. If they don't do this work in house, they may be willing to recommend someone to you. The advertisers are at <http://lsrpca.com/P-Naut/advertisers%20page.htm>.

You are correct in your assumption that this work is usually carried out by a specialty shop (as are wheel refurbishments, detailing, convertible top replacement, etc.). However, the advantage of going through the dealer is that they will stand behind the work and have usually identified competent shops, which removes one of the potential aggravations.

Jim

**ANSWER -**

I had the windshield on my 2002 996 replaced last year. Admiral Glass in League City did the work and did an excellent job. The only problem they had was the original windshield they had was delivered with the wrong fitting for the mirror. After a day's delay, they got another one from Momentum and installed it.

Cost was around \$800.

Jim K

**5.6 Windshield Wiper Blade Replacement**

I have an '02 Boxster S. I am having difficulty finding wiper blade replacement inserts for the car..who carries the inserts..not the arms..in Houston..or who on the web can I order them from? (July 2008)

Bob

**ANSWER**

There are three Porsche dealerships in Houston, Momentum on the southwest side of town, Advantage on the west side, and Porsche of North Houston on the (surprise) north side. Their parts departments will have them, as may one of the independent shops in town. Information on them is at our web site at <http://www.lsrpca.com/P-Naut/advertisers%20page.htm>.

We also have a list of popular catalogues on our website at [http://www.lsrpca.com/member\\_services/Catalogues.html](http://www.lsrpca.com/member_services/Catalogues.html). Midamerica or Performance Products are probably your best bet.

Jim

### **5.7 My car makes an unusual noise**

Have a clunking noise in front end when going over bumps..most prevelant when suspension unloads after the bump..any ideas..car has 91k..also anyone heard of European Conseptis in Kingwood...are they a good non dealer choice? (September 2008)

Bob

#### **ANSWER**

I would go to the PCA web site [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org) tech section and search the Q&A's for your model. If there is nothing there, you could submit your question, but I suspect you would need to provide more details like exactly where on the front end, what speed you are traveling, if it is related to turning, does it happen every time, etc. From what I have read on that site, if the shocks and springs have not been replaced on your car, then that is probably the first thing to check.

I haven't heard anything about European Concepts in Kingwood. We usually suggest the independent shops that advertise in our newsletter, the PorscheNaut. They can be found at <http://lsrpca.com/P-Naut/advertisers%20page.htm>. You might try the Yahoo Forum and post a query about European Concepts - <http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/lsrpca/>.

Jim

## **6. MISCELLANEOUS**

### **6.1 Are the Houston summers too hot/sunny to comfortably enjoy the Targa, with the windows up and the air conditioning on? (February 2006)**

Cliff Creasy

#### **ANSWER:**

Good question. I have had cabs for the past five summers and I drive them with the top down all the time. Of course, I am a glutton for punishment, and when my wife drives with me, she makes me put the top up and turn on the AC. My daughter drives her Boxster with the top down and the AC on max, hence lowering the temperature in Houston a few degrees as a public service.

I have other friends with cabs who also drive with the top down and the AC on and they find it bearable. With a Targa and the windows up, you should have pretty good control of the cabin temp and humidity. You will probably need a hat, though, for the sun. I would not let the Houston summers put you off of buying a Targa, if that is the model you want.

Jim Heimer

--- Houston, TX

--- [lsrweb@earthlink.net](mailto:lsrweb@earthlink.net)

### **6.2 Where can I find track / racing clothing and equipment (August 2006)**

Anyone know a good place to find driving (racing) shoes in the Houston area?

Lee

#### **ANSWER**

I suggest ProAm, here is a link: <http://proamtdw.com/>. There address is:

ProAm Auto Accessories

6125 Richmond Ave.

Houston, TX 77057

713-781-7755 / 800-847-5712

713-781-8207 fax

Robert Granger

**6.3 Exterior and interior care (December 2005)**

I am taking delivery of a new 911 and wanted to know about keeping the car looking great. Do you know anyone I could call in the Houston area to talk about the exterior and interior care.

Thanks for the advice.

Brian

**ANSWER**

Sylvia Samuels is our concours chairperson. You can contact her from the "contacts" page on our web site, [www.lsrpca.com](http://www.lsrpca.com).

I suggest you also check the PCA Tech Section on the [www.pca.org](http://www.pca.org) web site. They have a special section on exterior and interior, which will have many tips.

I have found that care of your Porsche is a very personal subject, and many people swear by certain products and techniques. For example, Griot's Garage (see our Catalogues section) has provided support to our concours in the past. They make an extensive line of car care products, and their monthly catalogue and website contains tips on detailing. It just depends on how much time and money you are willing to spend.

Jim Heimer

**6.4 What is your opinion on 3M clear film protection and its durability in Houston. Also, are there any local installers you recommend? (December 2008)**

I have just today joined the PCA (nervously awaiting my new Cayman this week), and wanted to ask about the 3M clear film protection for rock chips etc.

Gavin

**ANSWER**

We have several members that have the clear film protection, and they are happy with it. I don't like it personally, as it has a visible line on the car, where it is applied. I am also somewhat concerned about achieving the same amount of "shine" on the film as on the regular finish. Rock chips are a concern, of course. I use a removable bra, when I drive any distance or for DE's, etc.

One source you should check is the PCA website Tech Section at <http://pca.org/tech/>. You can search for the answers to questions by car type or in the exterior/interior section. If you are a member, you can also e-mail your question to the appropriate tech expert.

Here are some answers to your question that I found in a quick search:

- [http://www.pca.org/tech/tech\\_qa\\_question.asp?id={6A6AFC8B-C034-4833-B505-732588EC148A}](http://www.pca.org/tech/tech_qa_question.asp?id={6A6AFC8B-C034-4833-B505-732588EC148A})
- [http://www.pca.org/tech/tech\\_qa\\_question.asp?id={2AE8D735-533E-4C04-B05E-08DC0A6EEAAC}](http://www.pca.org/tech/tech_qa_question.asp?id={2AE8D735-533E-4C04-B05E-08DC0A6EEAAC})
- [http://www.pca.org/tech/tech\\_qa\\_question.asp?id={F5E0A015-8620-4B8C-A463-E385DB8E537F}](http://www.pca.org/tech/tech_qa_question.asp?id={F5E0A015-8620-4B8C-A463-E385DB8E537F})
- [http://www.pca.org/tech/tech\\_qa\\_question.asp?id={6809FBE1-A594-40C8-9FA0-BA21526E4B49}](http://www.pca.org/tech/tech_qa_question.asp?id={6809FBE1-A594-40C8-9FA0-BA21526E4B49})

Overall, the PCA people seem satisfied with the 3M product.

Discoloring after use (several years exposure to UV) seems to be the main concern, though nothing is specific about Houston. However, if humidity is a factor, that would shorten the life of the film.

Jim H.

**ANSWER**

I highly recommend the invisible bra systems which are available today. When I purchased my 2007 997S two years ago, I worked an agreement with Park Place in Dallas to include the invisible bra on the car at no additional charge. The system that they used was called DigiShield. They cut the bras from stock material with a laser using patterns provided by DigiShield. The DigiShield system worked well....deflecting rocks and grit and saving the paint on the car. In one case, I was running down the freeway at about 75mph and a rock the size of a quarter bounced off the protected part of the hood, then glanced off the unprotected part. The rock stretched the film and allowed air under it...making it look white (the car is red). I later had the film piece replaced and discovered that the paint was pitted extremely lightly Not all the way thru the paint just on the very surface about the size of pen point. On the e area unprotected by the film the paint was removed to the undercoat. After replacing the damaged film, the pit in the paint is completely unnoticeable.

I have hit various garbage on the freeway unknowingly and can see where the film is lightly scuffed, but no damage in the paint. Last spring I hit a duck (long story) and it slide up the hood...no damage to the paint.

When I replaced the damaged film pieces on the hood, I could not find a DigiShield installer in Houston. Rapid Body Works in Spring (phone 281-893-6677) recommended a private installer of 3M product. His last name was sometime like Arrantegui. I have misplaced his card but Rapid could give his number to you. He did an excellent job installing the replacement pieces. The DigiShield peeled right off the car very easily after being heated by a hair dryer. No adhesive residue at all. It was apparent after removal that the DigiShield product has slightly yellowed after about 18 months. It is not noticeable on the red car put obvious after being removed. This would probably show up more on a light color car. Also the 3M product is slightly thicker than the DigiShield, and I would consider it a superior product. The installer assured me that the 3M product would not yellow...but that remains to be seen.

I like the invisible bra because, well, it's invisible. Mostly. If you study the car closely you can see the seams, but not thru casual observation. The film is not as high a gloss as the paint, but very darn close. What makes the seams more noticeable is wax residue, but that can be removed with a little care with a toothbrush. Also the film is cared for just like the paint, wash and wax as usual.

I recommend the invisible bra because it is carefree, and saves your factory paint. If the film gets screwed up, replace a piece. If the film gets gnarly after a few years, replace it for \$400-800. It's cheaper than a repaint and it preserves the original paint.

I also recommend X-Pel headlight protection. It is a thick 3M film that is custom cut to your vehicle and easy to install. I purchased mine from Auto Sport [www.autosportcatalog.com](http://www.autosportcatalog.com). It's a four piece kit that covers the headlights and foglights. It keeps the composite lens of the headlamps from becoming pitted. (My 5 yr old 60k mile BMW's headlamps are so pitted they look permanently dirty.) The 3M installer took me he did not recommend headlamp protection because the heat buildup would cause the life of the bulbs to be shortened by 40 %. I figure that bulbs are a whole lot cheaper to replace than a pitted headlamp assembly (Is that \$1000 or more per assembly?)

Jim Z.

**6.5 Where can I get my windows tinted? (April 2009)**

Can anyone recommend a reputable installer of car window tinting in houston (closer to downtown preferred). Any ideas on how much it should cost approximately?

Gavin

**ANSWER**

I used FormulaOne on Westheimer (next to James' Coney Island) near the Galleria. They used the 3M material, I believe.

Gregg

Motorwerks (5704 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77057, Ph. 832.419.8084) also use the 3M products to tint if so desired, & have the ability to come out to wherever you are. The Cayman price is \$185, less if you opt for a brand other than 3M. As for reputation, it's the same service employed by most of the high end dealerships here in town.

Akram

**6.6 Who can ship my Porsche? (July 2010)**

I'm looking for a good overland shipper to send my C4S Cab from Houston to Carmel. Who is recommended for a covered shipper with good credentials?

Gavin

**ANSWER**

You might check with Victory Motorcars here in Houston. Robert Neal ships Porsches all over the world (literally) both to and from Victory Motorcars - <http://www.victorymotorcars.com/>. I made an inquiry earlier in the year about shipping my car up to the US Border for the PCA Escape Weekend in Kamloops, but eventually decided not to go. However, he indicated he could arrange for that.

Alternatively, I would contact any of the vehicle transport advertisers in the PCA Panorama Magazine.

Jim