

Tests: 1972 Porsche 911E & Porsche 914,
Jaguar XJ6 Sedan, 1.85-liter Saab 99E

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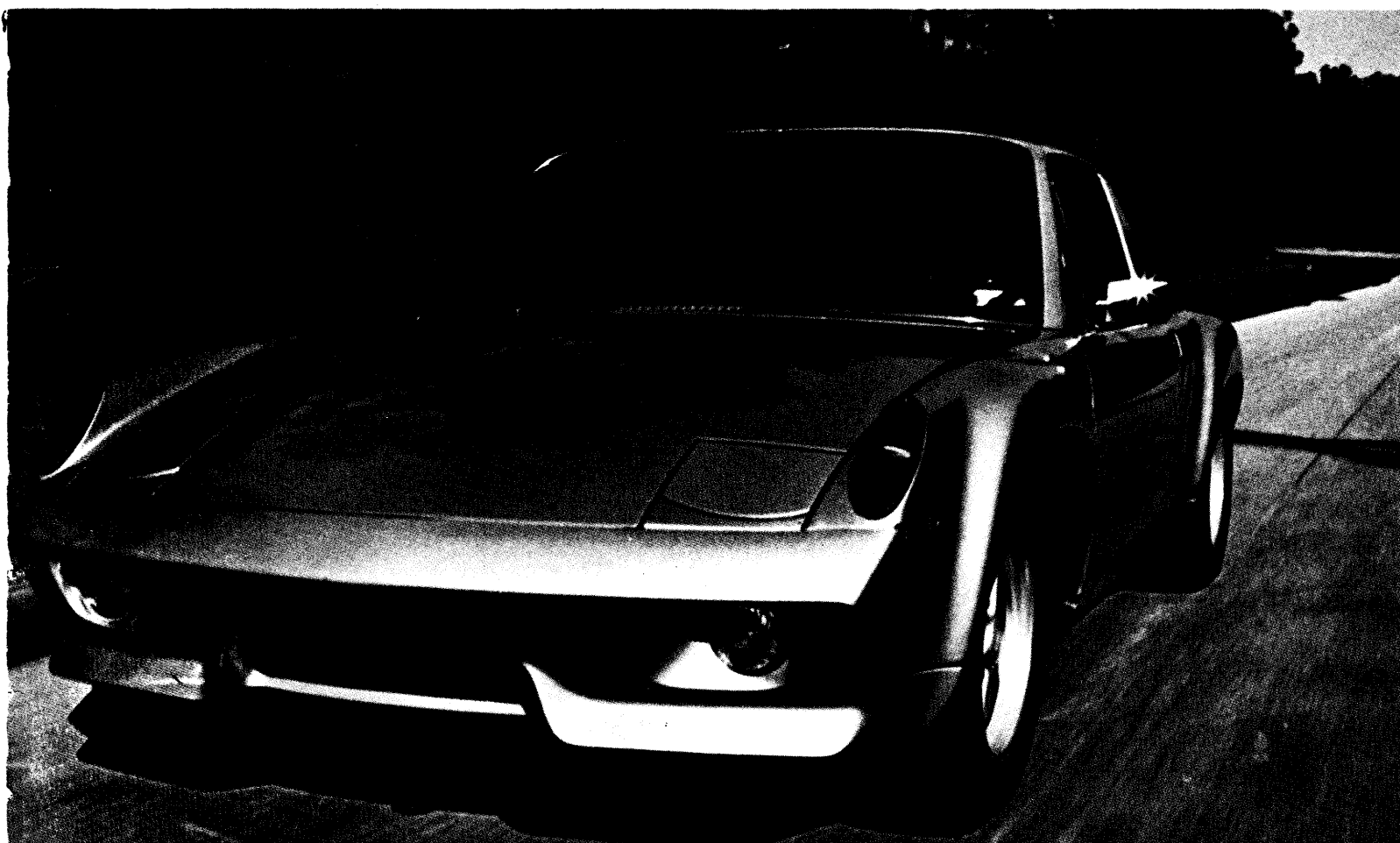
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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

LONDON, PARIS & TURIN AUTO SHOWS - PHOTO
CONTEST WINNERS - AUTO SAFETY BONUS FEATURE



One of a kind for America:
PORSCHE 916



EVER SINCE THE Porsche 914 and 914/6s arrived on the automotive scene, much has been rumored in the way of restyling the controversial lines of the car. One-offs have shown up at a number of the European shows and rumors of a newly revamped car based on the 914 series have been circulating for months. The first indication on the part of the Porsche works that a new car was being considered came last August when a variation on the 914 was seen at the factory. Reports had it that this car, and several others like it, were "special order cars for the Paris distributor." Then, in early October, photos of what was designated the Porsche 916 were circulated to all the U.S. distributors. Rather than being a restyled 914 or 914/6 residing in the \$3400 to \$6000 price bracket, the 916 was a super-luxurious 914/6 at a price rumored to be in the \$14,000 to \$15,000 bracket—or in other words, a 914/6 for the price of a Ferrari Dino. With the current money stabilization problems, the duty surcharge on imported cars, and the higher labor costs in manufacturing a low volume car, Porsche decided that the market wasn't large enough to warrant production. What is (or was) the 916 and how could it differ so much from the 914/6 so as to justify the price differential of \$8000?

The 916 pictured here is the only "Americanized" 916 to reach these shores and, for that matter, the only 916 that will ever reach the States. It was brought over prior to the

decision not to market the car here and was obtained by Peter Gregg of Brumos Porsche/Audi in Jacksonville, Fla. At first appearance, the 916 looks like the 914/6 GT that was campaigned last year in a number of FIA endurance races. The flared fenders are the same, the wider grille mesh over the engine compartment is the same and the front mounted oil cooler is included; however, after a closer look, one notices the small luxurious touches that indicate that this car was intended for highway use. The interior is upholstered in real honest-to-goodness leather. The instrument panel is lifted straight out of the standard 914/6 with the exception of the lefthand instrument group. There, an oil temperature gauge and oil pressure gauge have replaced the fuel gauge and idiot lights of the 914; the fuel gauge resides in a small center console. The seats have a rather mod fabric insert and, unlike the earlier 914 series, both seats are adjustable. A nice American touch, which seems likely for production, is a hidden radio antenna imbedded in the windshield. The antenna on this particular model was connected to a Becker AM/FM signal-seeking radio that features a cassette slot for stereo fans (not cartridge, mind you, but the latest cassette). The car isn't air conditioned, although Peter Gregg says it could be without much trouble. Probably the least noticeable but most significant styling/engineering feature of the car is the permanently attached roof. Gregg claims that this adds considerably to the tightness and



strength of the car and in addition permits a sewn-in headliner with sound deadening material superior to the production 914s.

Mechanically the 916 has borrowed much from the production 1972 model 911s. It has the 2.4-liter, 190-bhp (net) engine and, like all 1972 Porsche 911s, the 916 will run on regular fuel. The engine drives through a 5-speed gearbox with the newly revised shifting pattern, i.e., the first four gears are in the standard "H" pattern with fifth gear to the far right and forward. Also new are the 7-in.-wide alloy wheels under those flared fenders. With the alloy wheels and the fiberglass "bumpers" front and rear, a savings of 70 lb over the production 914/6 has been realized. While on the subject of bumpers, the revised front and rear panels on the prototype are of fiberglass and would be hard pressed (no pun intended) to pass any collision test; however, one wonders if on a production model they might not have used a color-keyed rubber or polyurethane bumper.

The suspension features heavy-duty Bilstein shocks, anti-roll bars front and rear, and four ventilated disc brakes, again borrowed from the production 911S.

Gregg, whose expertise with Porsches of all varieties is widely recognized, did the chauffeuring duties for my ride in the 916. It is in the hands of an experienced driver that the value of this car is most evident. The car started and idled easily. The 2.4-liter engine is remarkably docile, considering

that it is Porsche's highest-output production engine. It accelerates strongly and smoothly: not a real kick in the back like a big-displacement car but an authoritative shove back into the seat. The factory figures show a 0-60 mph time of "less than seven seconds" and although there was no time to run acceleration tests properly, there's reason to believe the factory figures are very conservative.

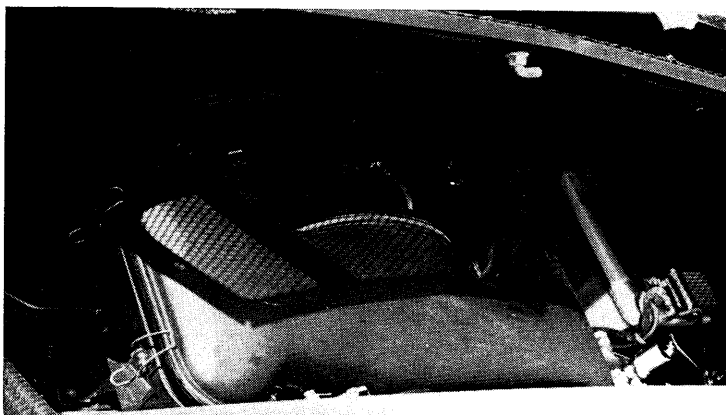
The 916 cornered flat and neutral throughout the speed range. Several 90-100-mph corners were negotiated close to the limit and, unlike the 911 series, the 916 did not require constant steering correction to maintain the line. Braking was straight and sure with no lockup. The Michelin XVR tires were a definite contributing factor to cornering ability at elevated speeds (these tires are standard equipment on the Citroen SM, Ferrari Daytona Coupe, and Porsche 911S) and were relatively quiet although they did emit a slight hum, more noticeable outside the car than inside. As in the production 914s the seats were comfortable. It did seem unfortunate on a car of this type that Audi-type inertia reels weren't used, as the belts are hard to adjust and have a tendency to flop out the door on exiting.

From a practical standpoint, Porsche's decision to not produce and market the 916 probably was the right one. But the 916 is a mechanical masterpiece, and one can't help but wish that the fortunate few who can afford \$15,000 for such a car had been given the chance to own one.





PORSCHE 916



911S engine, 911S instrumentation, rich carpet, Becker radio, leather upholstery with print cloth inserts distinguish the 916 from a 914/6 along with the wild bodywork.



Engine:

Type.....sohc flat 6
 Bore x stroke, mm.....84.0 x 70.4
 Equivalent in.3.31 x 2.77
 Displacement, cc/cu in.2341/143
 Bhp @ rpm.....190 @ 6500
 Torque @ rpm.....159 @ 5200
 Compression ratio.....8.5:1
 Fuel injection.....Bosch mechanical
 Type fuel required.....regular, 91-oct
 Emission control.....fuel injection

Drive train:

Transmission.....5-speed manual
 Gear ratios: 5th (0.759).....3.36:1
 4th (0.962).....4.26:1
 3rd (1.26).....5.58:1
 2nd (1.83).....8.10:1
 1st (3.18).....14.06:1
 Final drive ratio.....4.43:1

Chassis & Body:

Body/frame.....unit steel
 Brake type: vented disc; 11.1-in. front,
 11.4-in. rear, vacuum assisted
 Wheels.....alloy spoke, 15 x 7K
 Tires.....Michelin XVR 185/70-15
 Steering type.....rack & pinion
 Front suspension: MacPherson struts,
 lower A-arms, torsion bars, tube
 shocks, anti-roll bar
 Rear suspension: semi-trailing arms,
 coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll
 bar

General:

Curb weight, lb.....2000
 Wheelbase, in.96.4
 Track, front/rear.....54.6/58.3
 Overall length.....156.9
 Width.....68.3
 Height.....48.0
 Ground Clearance.....5.1
 Overhang, front/rear.....30.9/29.6
 Fuel tank capacity, U.S. gal.16.4