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## 1974 Porsche 914 2.0 Roadster

**The 914 changed the rules. For starters, you paid extra for chrome bumpers and vinyl-covered roof sections. Excuse me?**

by Jim Schragar



Porsche introduced the 914 at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1969, and it became available in the U.S. in the spring of 1970. Priced at just under \$3,500 (for the 4-cylinder car), an extra \$200 bought the "appearance group" option that included chrome bumpers as well as an aluminum-trimmed vinyl covering for the roof pillars. Oddly enough, buyers on the West Coast had to pay an additional \$100 for the privilege of the chrome and vinyl option.

The car was built by long-time Porsche body builder Karmann and assembled with a VW engine. Initial public reaction was muted, but nevertheless sales were steady and reliable, which were attributes of the car itself. The removable fiberglass roof section promised open-air motoring in safe style. The flat-4 air-cooled powerplant, with fuel injection, provided reasonable performance and spirited touring, and the chassis was often praised because of its near neutral handling.

This beautifully presented Metallic Silver example was acquired by the previous owner, who resided in Fairfield, Connecticut. Visually, the car is stunning, as it has been treated to a refinish and shows no obvious blemishes or imperfections. The interior is in very fine condition with no tears or signs of wear. Similarly, the engine bay is very well presented throughout. Purchased at the 2006 Christie's Greenwich sale (for \$15,275), this 914 has been treated to a number of maintenance tasks, including a new fuel filter, cleaning of the fuel injection, new front brake pads and rotors, as well as parking brake calipers. The current owner has decided to sell due to a rapidly growing collection and space constraints. Rarely found in such prime condition, we advise consideration of this highly usable Porsche.

The SCM Analysis Although estimated at an aggressive \$14,000–\$18,000 and offered at no reserve, this pretty 914 made \$24,200 at Christie's auction in Greenwich, CT, on June 3, 2007. The price is well above the going market rate, and would be tough to duplicate.

The 914 changed all the rules for Porsches of the day, with some of the changes just too much for marque enthusiasts to deal with. For starters, you paid extra to have chrome bumpers and vinyl covered roof-pillar sections. Excuse me? Porsche buyers famously avoided bling on their cherished 356s and 911s, and you simply never saw a vinyl roof on any of these cars, in spite of the significant popularity of the option on other cars of the day. Chrome bumpers? Not exactly a hot seller for traditional Porsche buyers, but an extra cost option—frequently purchased—by the 914 buyer.

The engine in the middle makes servicing an act best left to those who have trained on the high wire in a circus, but to make matters worse, there was a heavily electrified fuel injection system that no one who hadn't been factory schooled could even begin to troubleshoot. The fact it was a humble VW engine didn't kill the car, but it didn't help much either.

## Gone was that useful back seat

Then there was that interior. Gone was the tremendously useful back seat area for kids, groceries, and other necessities of modern life. However, Porsche design folks understood the Spartan nature of the 914 design and the interior has held up quite well over time, seeming functional and almost welcoming in today's stark and harsh high tech world. The lack of rear seats has become a non-issue.

The exterior design was always another matter. Some have said the car looks like it was designed by a committee, and in fact, it was. Let's call the looks distinctive, and in some ways, daring. But it had none of the intuitive streamlining and grace of the 356 and 911 cars that preceded it. With all these differences from the core of the Porsche brand, you might expect the car would fall on its face, but it was a nice success for Porsche. With over 100,000 sold, and all the 4-cylinder cars built outside the busy Porsche factory, this was a clever way to sell more cars and make more money without having to invest in plant capacity. But it fell far short of its mission of replacing the 911 (perhaps more rumor than fact), and Porsche went in two different directions for its next cars: The down-market, water-cooled, front-engined 924 slotted below the 911, and the up-market, water-cooled, front-engined 928 slotted above.

The values of 914s have been moving upward gently, but few who can afford a 911 would select a 914 instead, so the pressure on 914 prices will remain modest. There is no shortage of 914s, but the 2.0 is the best of the 4-cylinder cars and in many ways, better even than the 914-6, due to the simplicity and low cost of the 4-cylinder engine.

Even though it's a lovely car in the rare color of Metallic Silver, this result is about twice the going rate for similar cars. We'll call this one very well sold.

### Price Guide Values

<b>Year/Make/Model</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
73-76 Porsche 914 2.0L	\$6,000	\$9,000

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