

CLASSIC DRIVER

Destination Dubai



Whoever explores the hinterlands of Dubai nowadays is most likely to leave the traditional 'ship of the desert' in the stable. Today's adventurer will take an off-roader, that will cross the dunes as easily as it does the tarmac. The ultimate expression of this must be from Porsche, who put its newest 521 HP car at our disposal in the desert last week.





An early-morning sun warms up the freshly-laid bitumen on the nearby road to 30°C. And that suits me fine because with 720 Nm of torque available from 2,750 - 3,750 rpm I shall be need as much traction as possible for the combination of full-power, on- and off-road driving I have planned today. The test car is finished in the special colour reserved for the Cayenne Turbo S, 'Marine Blue Metallic', and every corner of the interior is trimmed in sand-coloured leather. Even the Alcantara headlining is sympathetically toned to the colours of the desert. In this top model from Porsche, that's basic price starts at 117,573 Euro, there's everything that anyone could ever want including: full climate control, five seats, Bi-xenon headlamps that follow the road and park-assistance.



The first pressure on the accelerator reminds me that I am sitting behind the wheel of the world's fastest SUV. The revised turbo-motor now produces 521 HP at 5,500 rpm and has all the characteristics of a jumbo jet on take-off. 0 - 100 km/h comes up in 5.2 seconds, but hold on! There's a speed camera sign by the side of the road, and soon after I see the white box that forces me to attack the brakes. The 2,355 kgs of Porsche 4x4 is quickly arrested by the improved braking system that features 380 mm radius front discs (with 358 mm rear). But I'm not really looking at a maximum speed run today - I have a totally new experience to discover. The desert.



After half an hour I'm standing in front of a large gate with a sign saying 'Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve'. It's only with special permission that visitors can enter and explore the infinite space of the desert. Before I cross the threshold, the pressure of the Cayenne's tyres is lowered to 1.0 bar. The side profile of the 20-series rubber is now little more than the sole of a shoe, but this is the procedure in order to obtain the best possible traction in sand. With gearbox in 'manual', and accompanied by an instructor, I set off behind the rest of the caravan, being careful to keep my distance from the car in front. The noise of thunder shakes the desert as I power up the dunes, only for silence to fall on the descent. The scene is repeated again and again, and every time as I hit the apex the powerful eight-cylinder is on full song.



When you get accustomed to the extreme conditions of the desert - and can maintain concentration - it's an

incomparable driving experience. Every bit of acceleration makes the wheels spin and produces high plumes of sand. The Cayenne's engine roars like a herd of camels, and when I reach 'camp' at midday I open the door and stand for the first time on my own two feet on the desert. The atmospheric conditions that I had been insulated from over the last couple of hours soon becomes obvious: 39°C heat, and it's still the winter. The sand is glowing hot, and soon enters every part of your clothes. The fears I had about the luxury car from Porsche being an unsuitable vehicle in this environment have evaporated like water in the desert itself. And talking consumption, the car averages 15.7l per 100 km, while I'm sticking with a bottle of "Emirate" mineral water.



On the way back to the tarmac road I move the Cayenne S over to an expanse of hard sand and really test the power. The surface makes the car drift, but it responds well to the slightest of steering angles. After leaving the desert completely it's time for a little 200 km/h+ driving on the motorway, en route to a little sightseeing in downtown Dubai. The bizarre mixture of hotels, skyscrapers, the famous 'Burj Al Arab' and fairytale mosques makes for a fascinating experience - even though I am already dreaming about my next drive in the desert.



Conclusion: The Porsche Cayenne Turbo S is the ultimate SUV. Whoever orders one will not be disappointed. Discussions over its high price and outrageous fuel consumption are just as relevant as whether the company should be in this market at all. At least driving the car in Dubai will mean no shortage of petrol.

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