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Porsche Panamera: First Official Pictures



The first official photos of the Porsche Panamera are hugely welcome in more ways than one. After the announcement that BMW has dropped its plans for the forthcoming Concept CS, one couldn't help but wonder whether the axed car's anticipated rivals would go the same way. Would we see the four-door, four-seater Panamera, along with the Lamborghini Estoque and Aston Martin Rapide, likewise swept away on the harsh winds of recession?

It could still happen, of course. The Panamera isn't due for market launch for another nine months but, with these stunning photographs, we can hold onto the hope that Porsche will rise above the tidal wave of economic disaster and bring this front-engined GT sports car to life.

The designers hope the Panamera will be perceived as a brand-new and truly different model which nonetheless retains the looks of a typical Porsche. Measuring 1931mm in width and 1418mm in height, the Panamera is wider and lower than comparable four-door models, while its 4970mm length and short overhangs lends it the unmistakably sleek GT silhouette.



The Panamera comes with strongly contoured air intakes instead of a conventional radiator grille. These, plus the striking wheelarches and long, flowing bonnet create what Porsche calls a typical 911 'landscape' at the front. At the rear of the car, muscular shoulders and a dynamic sweep of coupé-like roofline again hint strongly at thoroughbred Porsche.

V6 and V8 engines, some turbocharged, will range from 300 to 500bhp, mated to either manual six-speed transmission or the new seven-speed double-clutch gearbox, the Porsche-Doppelkupplung (PDK). Rear-wheel drive will be standard in all except the top-of-the-range model, which boasts all-wheel drive – an option on the lesser models. There will even be a hybrid Panamera, though details aren't yet available.



The annual sales target of 20,000 seems optimistic in the current climate but, by the time the first models arrive in dealerships across the world next summer, the economy could have changed dramatically. Let's hope it's for the better.





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