

red-hot turbo

It feels and handles like a Porsche, even if it's a slightly elevated one. Its acceleration and top speed are also in super sports car territory. After days of fun on the road, Dieter Losskarn took the turbo-charged 500hp Cayenne off the tarmac. He was not the only one in for a big surprise.



Imagine dating an attractive super-model in high heels, who goes hiking

with you in lousy weather along a muddy path, drinks beer, watches sport on television, cooks your favourite meals to perfection and serves them to you. Impossible? No, it's exactly like driving a Cayenne Turbo.

Remember when Porsche announced its plans a couple of years ago to build an SUV? It caused an uproar among Porsche fans and the

impending demise of the famous German sports car manufacturer was predicted. For some purists, it was not only strange, but downright heretical to take a Porsche, almost synonymous with an air-cooled 911, off-road.

But in the end, the initial Cayenne sales in the United States made Porsche what it is today: one of the world's most successful car manufacturers. And while years ago rumour had it that



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Audi or VW would swallow the sports-car maker, Porsche now owns 31 per cent of Volkswagen.

But what most car enthusiasts don't know is that the Cayenne is not the first 4x4 to bear the Porsche badge. During the Second World War, VW Beetle creator Ferdinand Porsche gathered some experience in off-road technologies by building military versions of the Bug in both two- and four-wheel-drive versions, the Kübel (type 82) and Schwimmwagen (type 166), as well as about 600 Beetles (type 87) with four-wheel drive and huge off-road tyres, which were very popular with German officers.

The Porsche badge followed a couple of years later. In an attempt to win a contract with the new post-war German army, the Bundeswehr, Porsche developed the 597, also known as the Hunter or Jagdwagen. It featured a rear engine layout and was planned to be an amphibious vehicle, just like the war-time VW Schwimmwagen. The heart of the Hunter was a detuned Porsche 356 engine with 50hp and a weight of 990 kilograms, enabling it to reach 100km/h and to crawl up a 65 degree angle.

But unfortunately, the Porsche was too expensive (so what's changed?) and the contract went to the much cheaper Auto-Union (predecessor of Audi) DKW Munga with its noisy, stinking two-stroke engine. Altogether, only

71 Hunters left the factory in Stuttgart between 1954 and 1958, 49 of which were civilian models, making this vehicle one of the rarest Porsche vintage cars today. Period photographs show the Hunters being assembled alongside 356 GTs and 550 Spyders of James Dean fame, and even sharing some of their parts, such as the rear lights and turn signals.

The step from a Hunter to a Cayenne is more than a quantum leap. The 2008 Cayenne has a new exterior design, giving the vehicle a much more attractive face than the first generation, thanks to a modified headlight design and a more muscular body with broad wheel arches. New technologies, including direct fuel injection, have led to a power boost, combined with better fuel efficiency in all three Cayenne models. According to strict European environmental laws, this qualifies the Cayenne Turbo as a low-emission vehicle.

The newly developed Porsche Dynamic Chassis Control offsets body roll, resulting in even better handling and safety characteristics than the previous model.

But enough talking – climb into the leather-clad, Bose sound-equipped Cayenne Turbo and take its 500 horses for a ride – yes, all of them. And what a ride it is. The Cayenne



Before the Cayenne, there was the Hunter or 597 Jagdwagen, Porsche's first 4x4 and today a very rare classic.

feels and handles like an authentic Porsche, especially when you activate instant-sports mode with the push of a button in the centre console while driving. Then the vehicle lowers itself, the suspension stiffens tangibly and the gears get shorter.

I have previously driven a 911 Carrera 4S and I detected almost no difference between it and this beast in agility, acceleration and roadholding. The Cayenne is definitely a 911 in high heels. There's no body-roll whatsoever. At very high curve speeds (going up a deserted Kloof Nek Road in Cape Town, or down Franschoek Pass early on a Sunday morning), where any other SUV would lose it, the Cayenne seems to be glued to the road. Theoretically, it is capable of doing 275 km/h, however, the top-speed I managed before running out of uncluttered tarmac was around 215 km/h – but don't tell anyone. >

Neither the deep sandy tracks, nor the steep rocky path up the mountain that followed caused the Cayenne any sweat

The low-down

Price: R595 000 for the Cayenne, R750 000 for the Cayenne S and R1 395 000 for the Cayenne Turbo (driven by *Getaway*)
Engine: 3,6 litre V6 – 213 kW/290 hp
 4,8 litre naturally aspirated V8 – 83 kW/385 hp
 4,8 litre twin turbo V8 – 368 kW/500 hp
 0 - 100 km/h: 8,1secs; 6,6 secs; 5,1 secs
Top speed: 227/252/275 km/h
Consumption/100 km: 13/15/20 litres
Fuel tank: 100 litres
Ground clearance: 241 to 271 mm (with air suspension on level 2)
Approach angle: 31,8°
Departure angle: 25,4°
Wading depth: 500/555 mm (with air suspension on level 2)
Towing capacity: 3500 kg
For more information: www.porsche.co.za

For the same amount of money (R1 395 000), you could buy:

A Porsche package: Porsche Cayenne S R750 000 plus Porsche Boxster S R595 000 plus a trip to Europe, including an advanced Porsche driving course (R50 000)
A non-Porsche leisure package: Hummer H3 Adventure Luxury Automatic R444 750, plus Lotus Elise 111 R R450 000 plus two Harley Davidson Fat Boys (his and hers) 2 x R199 000 plus R102 250 spending money for a de luxe holiday.

LEFT: Travelling first class: the luxurious interior boasts soft leather-covered seats and top-of-the-range Bose sound equipment.
OPPOSITE: The 911 in heels: the face-lifted Cayenne Turbo in all its glory on Western Cape roads, ready to let its 500 horses loose on tarmac or dirt.



Boys' outdoor toys

So is it any good off the road? Should one even take it there? I was determined to find out. Even though they were rather sceptical at first, the owners of Klipbokkop Mountain Trail (www.klipbokkop.co.za) near Villiersdorp, Elmarie and Gerhard Groenewald, allowed me to use their 4x4 trail to see what the vehicle could do. Judging from their comments, they didn't expect too much from the Porsche, apparently because of a previous Cayenne visit.

The first stop on the trail was the quarry, to figure out what the vehicle (and the driver?) could do. It had rained heavily the night before and the trails which had been bulldozed into the quarry walls were very muddy. Elmarie pointed to two of them, remarking rather pessimistically, "You might try those two, but use lots of momentum."

Not only did the Cayenne manage these routes, but every other wet ascent in the quarry, including the 'no-go' steepest one – without as much as a tyre spin. Elmarie, who has seen many struggling vehicles in her 'test' quarry before, couldn't believe her eyes. Needless to say, neither the deep sandy tracks, nor the steep rocky path up the mountain that followed caused the Cayenne's big horses any sweat.

The Porsche really surprised me. I'd previously driven an earlier model Cayenne S through Namibia, but never seriously took it off-road. This was the same vehicle I'd cracked the 200 km/h mark with about an hour before, with the same tyres, which I hadn't even deflated for the occasion. All I did was push the right buttons; it's just switching off PSM, adjusting air suspension to its highest level, engaging low range and diff-lock – and off-road you go.

Now for the big question: would I buy one, if I could afford it? Well, dating a super-model can be great fun for a week, but the constant pressure of keeping up with her might get quite stressful in the long run.

Next month: We travel north in two vehicles named after nomadic tribes, a face-lifted VW Touareg and a Nissan Qashqai, to check out two new border crossings to Namibia in transfrontier parks: Mata Mata in Kgalagadi and Sendelingsdrif in the Ai-Ais/Richtersveld.



Defending the Landy

Despite being modified in about 200 different details, the new Defender is still a real Landy. It looks, feels and sounds like one. At first glance, Landy enthusiasts will notice the bonnet bulge, a result of the new, larger 2,4 litre common-rail diesel engine, and the removal of the characteristic fresh-air vents under the windshield. However, most changes have been made inside, from stadium-seating and a functioning air-con to a much improved sound system. We drove this Landy for a couple of hours on-road and around a rather technical 4x4 track. The new six-speed transmission works well and the 32 per cent lower first gear helps tackle even the steepest obstacles. After some heavy rainfall, we also appreciated the wading depth of 500mm. The new Landy comes in 14 different body styles; the Defender 90 Station Wagon costs R309 096, the Defender 110 is R349 056. For more information and pictures, web www.landover.co.za. We'll definitely be taking it on a longer trip for a more comprehensive write-up.

House hauled

With the help of customer feedback, Jurgens has managed to constantly improve its tow-homes. Both the Oryx (R112 150) and the Xcape (R91 900) can be taken off the beaten track. For more information and photographs, check out www.jurgenssafari.co.za.



De-agricated

Recreational quad-bike sales are declining, while those of utilities are booming. Following the trend, Honda has introduced a new mid-sized TRX 420 FM 4x4. It's a cross-over which takes the agri-factor out of the utility quad by adding the creature comforts that recreational ATV bikers expect, such as electric starter, comfortable suspension and a larger, fuel-injected 420cc engine. The purchase price of R51 450 gives the new quad owner access to Honda's Adventure Academy, with free activities for the whole family, from off-road training to organised trips to the Wild Coast or private game reserves. For more information, web www.honda.co.za. ■

Stuck



This four-wheel-drive vehicle got stuck in the boglands of Newfoundland in Canada. Note the wire rope from the excavator to the Jeep.

Irene Ryan, Old Shop, Canada.

If you have photographs of a 4x4 getting stuck, e-mail them to wheels@getaway.co.za or post them to Getaway Wheels, PO Box 180, Howard Place, 7450 Cape Town. You could win a Nissan Secure Tech Survival Kit worth R1 000, comprising an Off-Road Tactix manual and DVD, as well as a recovery bag with pull strap, shackles and a pair of gloves.

