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August 2020



FEATURED ARTICLE:

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Pandemic challenges Porsche test drivers

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How Porsche motorsports technology aids production design

Technological innovations from motorsports have always carried over to series production design at Porsche. The same applies to Formula E. Let's look back at the relationship between racetrack and road – from the 550 Spyder to the Taycan.

It's like stepping into a spaceship: the walls are white, the floors are spotless, the light is neon-bright. Orange cabling winds its way along, joining with a machine in the center of the room. The signal color is well-warranted: the cables carry 800 volts. We're in the high-voltage test rig at the Porsche Development Center in Weissach, the place where Porsche tests electric motors. Right now, a special specimen is being put through its motions: the motor driving the Porsche 99X Electric, Porsche's contender in Formula E since last year. The electric mover propels the black-red-and-white race car from 0 to 100 km/h in only 2.8 seconds.

Here on the test rig, the engineers are trying to improve the motor's efficiency further still. To do so, they're taking it through a sheer endless cycle of laps along a virtual race track, always subjecting it to acceleration and braking levels identical to real-world conditions. But the tests are not only meant to take the racer to victory. Porsche also intends to carry over as many innovations from motor racing to their regular production vehicles.

"Our mission is to win races. But we're also pursuing a smooth transition to series production," explains Martin Füchtner, Senior Manager High-Voltage Drive Development, motorsports.

Advancing progress in electric mobility overall is a goal shared with the Formula E organizers. The racing formula is not designed to be an exclusive technology reserve. Instead it intends to motivate series production innovation.

That makes it a totally different ball game from combustion-engine racing. The key difference is that all the teams have to use largely identical vehicles. Formula E specifies the vehicle chassis and standardized battery. All the powertrain components, on the other hand, are the teams' own designs. This includes the electric motor, inverter, brake-by-wire system, transmission, differential, drive shafts, structural frame, and associated suspension elements on the rear axle as well as the cooling system and control unit.

This way, the teams need to design fewer parts themselves, which levels the playing field for teams with lower funding. It also allows the engineers to focus on the actual electric drive instead of investing lots of money in expensive secondary issues like aerodynamics, for example.

"It's awe-inspiring to see how massively we've pushed technology over recent years — drive systems with under five liters volume are now capable of producing the same power as a full-blown sportscar engine. And at efficiency rates we only dreamed of," said Füchtner.

But perhaps even more significant is how technology transfers through the minds of people. "Many on the Taycan team are former members of the team that previously developed the 918 Spyder," Christian Wiedenbrügge says. Team transfers like this are common practice at Porsche. Being in the same area also plays an important part: Porsche's Development Center is only about 1,000 meters away from the motor sports headquarters. "We all come in through the same gate, and we share meals meet for lunch," Füchtner says and laughs. He knows that many a neat idea for winning the first Formula E race could be born in Weissach's cafeteria.



Pandemic challenges Porsche test drivers

How to safely conduct test drives during Covid-19 has been something of a challenge for the development teams at Porsche. Those involved have had to show rationality, discipline and teamwork – as demonstrated during testing of the new Panamera model update.

While it may be something the public is still getting used to, the use of masks is quite normal for Porsche engineers. Around the globe, face coverings are playing a key part in preventing the spread of coronavirus, but in Weissach masks have long been used to hide new, as yet unseen Porsche models from prying eyes. At Porsche's Development Centre, test cars remain in camouflage until they reach series production stage and only then are their attractive proportions, accentuated details and innovative technology revealed to the world.

This necessary secrecy has always been a challenge, but it is not the only one faced by Porsche engineers today: with test drives often involving two people sharing a car – something currently banned under social distancing rules – they must also think about the safety of their colleagues. A recent example was during the final testing phase of the new Panamera – known in-house by the codename G2 II. Face masks, disinfectant and disposable towels are now part of the essential toolkit of the team headed by the Vice President Model Line, Dr. Thomas Friemuth.

"The crisis forces us to be more flexible", explains his colleague, Head of Testing Marcel Hönemann. He is clearly relieved that the series of complex test drives for the G2 II, carried out in a variety of climates, were completed before the virus became a global crisis. Due to current international travel restrictions, these hot and cold climate tests have been temporarily suspended.

"We are now test driving cars more on home turf," he says. In the case of the new Panamera, the pre-production cars have been hitting the roads around Weissach and in the Black Forest.

On test and fine-tuning drives, Porsche engineers swap from car to car every 45 minutes. Every head of division has to test-drive all engine variants and equipment because when the teams get together later to discuss their findings they are expected to not only assess their "own" assemblies but show interdisciplinary insight, too.

The crisis – and the risks it brings with it – means that it now takes longer to change between cars. Each one has to be thoroughly cleaned using disinfectant and disposable towels, with special attention paid to the steering wheel, seat adjustment mechanism, control clusters, rear-view mirror and switches. Once a driver has got out of a car, door and boot handles are sanitized: only then can a vehicle be passed on to the next person. "Every one of us is aware of our responsibility to the others in the team," says Hönemann.

High fives used to be exchanged when two drivers swapped cars; now, when Hönemann gives the signal for his engineers to move into the next vehicle, the new tradition is to use hand sanitiser. Once satisfied, the masked team from Weissach returns to the road – accompanied either by the sports exhaust system of a top-of-the-range new Panamera, or the silent force of the electric motor under the bonnet of a new hybrid model.

Featured Vehicles at Porsche of Halifax



2019 Porsche Macan S

\$69,700

Exterior Colour: Night Blue Met
Interior Colour: Black/Mojave Beige Std Int
Transmission: Automatic
Body Style: Crossover

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2017 Porsche 718 Boxster S PDK

\$74,700

Exterior Colour: Agate Grey Met
Interior Colour: Black Std Interior
Transmission: Automatic
Body Style: Convertible

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2020 Porsche Macan GTS

\$90,190

Exterior Colour: Carrara White Metallic
Interior Colour: Black Leather Package With Partial Leather Seats
Transmission: 7-speed Porsche Doppelkupplung (PDK)
Body Style: Crossover

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2020 Porsche Cayenne

\$100,035

Exterior Colour: Jet Black Metallic
Interior Colour: Leather Interior In Black
Transmission: 8-speed Tiptronic S
Body Style: SUV

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2020 Porsche Cayenne

\$97,845

Exterior Colour: Jet Black Metallic
Interior Colour: Leather Interior In Black
Transmission: 8-speed Tiptronic S
Body Style: SUV

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2020 Porsche 718 Cayman GT4

\$142,031

Exterior Colour: Chalk
Interior Colour: Decorativ Stitching In Contrasting Colour Silver
Transmission: 6-speed Manual Transmission With Dual-mass Flywheel
Body Style: 2-Door Coupe

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Featured Vehicles at Porsche of Halifax



2018 Porsche Cayenne Platinum Edition

\$71,823

Exterior Colour: Carrara White Met
Interior Colour: Std Black/Luxor Beige Interior
Transmission: Automatic
Body Style: SUV

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2020 Porsche Cayenne E-Hybrid

\$115,010

Exterior Colour: Quarzite Grey Metallic
Interior Colour: Leather Interior In Black
Transmission: 8-speed Tiptronic S

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2020 Porsche Macan S

\$81,545

Exterior Colour: Night Blue Metallic
Interior Colour: Standard Interior Black/Mojave Beige
Transmission: 7-speed Porsche Doppelkupplung (PDK)
Body Style: Crossover

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2020 Porsche Taycan Turbo

\$201,048

Exterior Colour: Jet Black Metallic
Interior Colour: Two-Tone Leather Interior In Black /
Body Style: Chalk
4-Door Coupe

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2020 Porsche Macan

\$71,075

Transmission: 7-speed Porsche Doppelkupplung (PDK)
Body Style: Crossover

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2020 Porsche Taycan Turbo

\$196,068

Body Style: 4-Door Coupe

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