

Panamera
Special
Premiere

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The Panamera Moment

There could hardly be a plainer example symbolizing an upward trend: the Panamera had to travel 425 meters (1,394 feet) straight up to the 94th floor of the Shanghai World Financial Center to celebrate a premiere unlike anything ever seen in China or the rest of the world. The lofty aspiration of creating a separate class in the luxury segment with the Panamera is already being realized with this spectacular debut above the clouds.

Panamera Special



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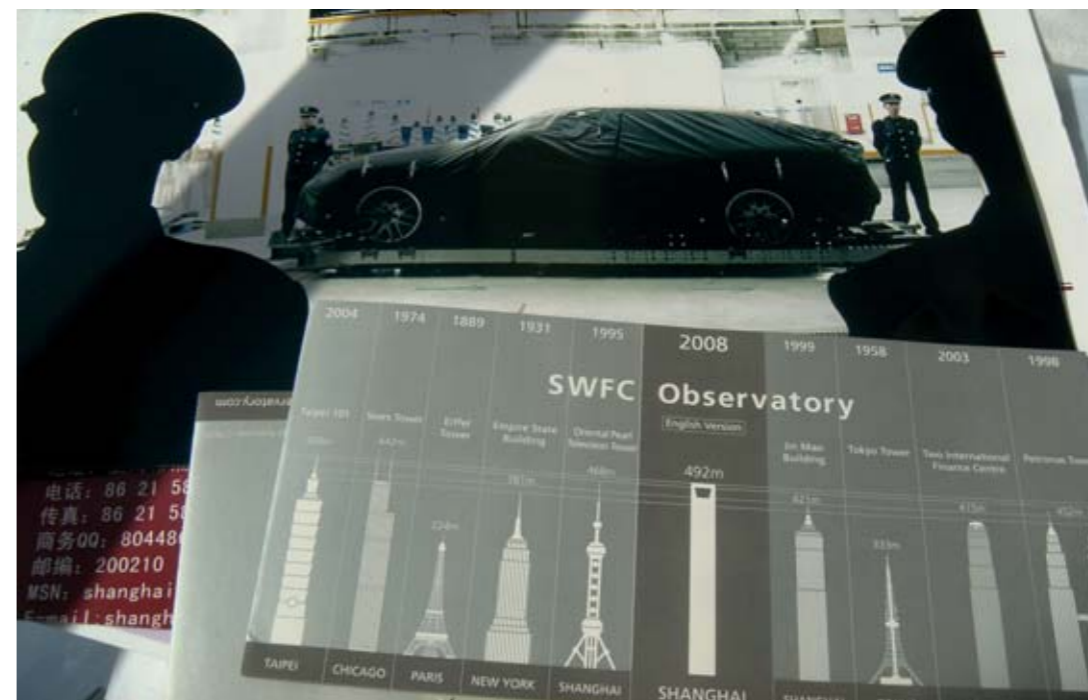
A trip among the clouds brings the very positive message that Porsche is moving to the very top with its fourth model series. With one critical exception: without becoming airborne. "This is a moment we have long been waiting for," says the event's host, Christian Dau, director of corporate communications at Porsche AG. For Porsche, the new Gran Turismo is of crucial strategic importance.

The choreography of the forces of nature couldn't have been predicted by anyone, even with the most meticulous planning. But it turned out perfectly for this event. During the night, when Porsche is setting new standards for high-performance luxury automobiles, a strong southeast wind is driving white shreds of clouds up the facade of the Shanghai World Financial Center, which soars into the dark sky above the metropolis like a luminous needle. Once they have arrived on the lofty platform of the 94th floor, the guests of the world premiere enjoy an overwhelming spectacle. The Panamera is getting off to a good start with a strong tailwind.

"There has never been a car like this," emphasizes Klaus Berning, executive vice president Sales and Marketing at Porsche AG. "The Panamera marks the advancement of the sporty automobile into an entirely new dimension." Berning has total confidence in the fourth Porsche: "We've succeeded in combining the best from the sports-car world with the world of luxury sedans. Never before has it been so fascinating to travel in a motor vehicle that seats four people." Dr. Wolfgang Porsche, chairman of the supervisory board, sets the course for this high society as the guest of honor of the first world premiere of a Porsche on the Asian continent: he has already ordered a green Panamera Turbo. Wolfgang Dürheimer, executive vice president Research and Development at Porsche AG, further whets the appetite of the select audience with his description of the technical advantages of this uncompromising Gran Turismo: in the Panamera, Porsche has invested the sum total of its know-how, its wealth of ideas, and its great passion for sports cars. Making reference to the unique venue of this presentation, Panamera designer Michael Mauer says, "This automobile is at least as modern and innovative as the building we're in." And at least equally spectacular.

Puffs of fog are dancing outside the panoramic windows. The Sky Arena itself is tinted in remarkable blue tones. Silver streaks of lightning flash among the clouds. Suddenly the voice of Ferry Porsche is heard, as if out of nowhere, discussing timelessness, creativity, and uniqueness. A historical recounting, but quite germane to the Panamera presentation. The center of the large room is the focus of attention, the stage for a premiere unlike anything ever seen in China or the rest of the world: this is where the Porsche Panamera is making its debut, 425 meters (1,394 feet) above Shanghai's bustling streets. "High, higher, Panamera" is the headline the participants of the exclusive press conference will use for their copy that night.

That's already evident during the arrival of the showpiece. The new Panamera has many capabilities, but levitation isn't one of them. Nevertheless, on this occasion it has to defy gravity. ▶



A picture replete with aesthetics and symbolism: with its fourth model series, Porsche is proving its far-sightedness, and not just in Shanghai. Managing board members Klaus Berning and Wolfgang Dürheimer, design chief Michael Mauer, and PR director Christian Dau (right to left) are happy to confirm it.

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Klaus Berning, executive vice president Sales and Marketing, Porsche AG



At the all-important moment in the preparations for the Panamera world premiere, the nerves of the logistics team are as taut as the massive chains attached to the front end of the vehicle. It's already well beyond midnight. Two hours are required to gingerly transport the car on a special skid from the loading ramp of the Shanghai World Financial Center to the freight elevator. Sixty workers carry out a meticulously planned move. They handle the Panamera as if it were made of porcelain.

A humming noise signals that the crucial moment is at hand. Until now the clearance has been relatively comfortable, if one can call 20 centimeters (8 inches) a comfortable cushion for a car that is 4.97 meters (16 feet) long. But at the elevator door things are getting really tight, with only a 20-millimeter (3/4-inch) clearance between the car's skin and the nearest obstacles. The paint job of the Panamera is unprotected, since there would be no room even for a protective cover. Suddenly, a loud metallic bang! A scary moment, but no harm done: one of the workmen just dropped a tool. Take a deep breath. Concentrate. Continue the delicate task. An invisible hand seems to carefully inch the tilted Panamera into the elevator until it comes to a stop in a nearly vertical position. All that's visible from the outside is the tail end, seemingly hanging half a meter (20 inches) above the elevator floor. That seems like a lot of room. But the impression is misleading: there is absolutely no room to spare. Will the elevator door even close? Fortunately, the Panamera is only 1.42 meters (56 inches) tall. The elevator door descends. This is precision work. With a push of the button, the 400-meter (1,300-foot) ascent of the Panamera can begin. Porsche PR director Dau glows when the job is done: “People will remember this debut for a long time.”

Upward-bound! It's the right message. “The Panamera will help us beat the crisis,” says Klaus Berning. “This car will delight our Asian customers, and Porsche drivers around the globe as well.” It was a message broadcast around the world the next morning at the Auto Shanghai fair. Porsche expects to sell 20,000 units annually once the Panamera is introduced to the worldwide markets starting in mid-September. The magic of the fourth dimension is already beginning to work at the Porsche booth: several Chinese onlookers already confirm their intent to buy a Panamera on their business cards. An enthusiastic confirmation of Porsche's sales strategy. The new model series targets “customers who can't get emotionally charged up anywhere else.” The Panamera can do that in the first moment—and what a moment it is. ◀

The Book about the Panamera

Its face, its silhouette, its broad shoulders all say: I am a Porsche. But what a Porsche! The new Panamera establishes a new dimension in sports-car design. The top-tier position of the fourth model series is also confirmed in the book *The Panamera Moment* by Elmar Brümmer and Reiner Schloz, with exclusive photography by Frank M. Orel. The book will be published this fall by Verlag Delius Klasing. The images in this article provide a first impression of the forthcoming publication.