

Factory Thrill-Drive

The Company

A Porsche premiere in Leipzig: Peter Kopprasch, a furniture dealer from Bonn, and his wife, Claudia Becker, were the very first to pick up their Panamera Gran Turismo directly from the plant—and to take it for a spin on the test track. Collecting the luxury sports car right at the Porsche plant offers the opportunity to experience its amazing performance even before you take delivery.

By
Jürgen Zeyer

Photos by
Ernst Fesseler

Just before the double bend on the racetrack at the Leipzig Porsche plant, and at a speed of 130 km/h (80 mph), copilot Guido Majewski, a former race-car driver who is now an instructor at Porsche, advises, “Don’t be shy! Make use of the entire radius of the bend, be consistent in your braking, and accelerate out by applying strong pressure to the accelerator pedal.” At the wheel of the Carrara White straight-from-the-plant Panamera 4S is Peter Kopprasch, whose wild ride around the test track with a guide is giving him his first sense of the Gran Turismo feeling; he scarcely believes that so much performance can be married to such superb comfort. A few laps suffice to establish a limitless rapport: a “first date” at 400 horsepower, ranging from the start-finish straight, chicane, and corkscrew bend, a five-second sprint from zero to 100, uncompromising braking performance, and then back to the start. “Mere words can’t do justice to this car’s capabilities,” Kopprasch raves. “How often do you have an opportunity to take the car of your dreams to the limit? Here, you develop an incredible relationship with your car from the start.”

This very dynamic dating agency is located on the 3.7-kilometer (2.3-mile) circuit, right next to the Cayenne and Panamera production facility’s Customer Center. Anything that facilitates

familiarization with the new car is permitted. Full braking at 120 km/h (75 mph) presses the passengers into their seat belts, demonstrating how Porsche Stability Management (PSM) maintains the four-door sports car’s poise and control no matter how forceful the steering movements may be. As Majewski describes it, pressing the Sports button “sharpens” acceleration on the straights to the Monaco Loews turn.

Claudia Becker soon catches the Panamera bug as well. Her initial thought was merely to keep her husband company on the trip to pick up the car. But now she finds herself in the driver’s seat. Her verdict: “It’s so easy to drive. I never would have guessed that the Panamera could be so much fun.” And what starts out as fun quickly becomes nothing short of a thrill when the car’s occupants change places. Instructor Majewski suggests taking a turn as driver—and now it’s down to brass tacks as the car thunders its way through a few laps, accompanied by the sound of screeching tires. Passenger Kopprasch is enthusiastic. “Get a whiff of that rubber,” he says, visibly impressed by the tracks left behind by the spirited taxi ride. Sometimes the way to a man’s heart proves to be through his nose. “Our circuit presents a unique opportunity to really get acquainted with the vehicles’ motor racing genes,” says Majewski. ▶





Round and round we go: Driving the Panamera on the factory test track gives customers a feel for the luxury sports car

The circuit is reserved for an exclusive one-hour get-acquainted solo tour for each customer. This is a key part of the program for those who have opted for factory pickup, as is the opportunity to hop into the Cayenne and plow through the off-road obstacle course, enjoy a guided tour of the production facility, and delight in a three-course meal with a view of the track. A day spent absorbing the world of Porsche. A day to celebrate and breathe in the brand. One of six colleagues from Customer Support who alternate in accompanying visitors during their visit is Robert Haufe, who notes, "We spare no effort in creating a one-of-a-kind experience for our guests."

And when the anticipation becomes unbearable, it's time to head for the pit lane at the Customer Center. This is where the vehicles await their new owners, magnificently posed against an impressive backdrop. The license plates are already in place. "So there she is," says Kopprasch, keeping his distance at first. His initial approach to the black Panamera 4S has almost an air of reverence to it, until the ice is broken. "It is exactly the way I imagined it," says the 39-year-old.



In detail: Instructor Guido Majewski initiates Peter Kopprasch in the capabilities of the Panamera

"So there she is! It is exactly the way I imagined it. I'm as excited as a little boy."

And this even though the sports-car enthusiast is picking up his seventh Porsche, following three 911s, a Boxster, a Cayman, and, most recently, a Cayenne S. But he has been waiting especially anxiously for this particular car. As soon as Porsche published the first design studies over two years ago, the Bonn furniture dealer was beside himself with excitement. "At long last, a sedan from Porsche. That was something I wanted to be a part of, so I lost no time in signing a purchase option. From the start, it was crystal clear to me that Porsche has found *the* answer. The result surpasses my expectations."

A new era is beginning for the Porsche plant in Leipzig, as well. In the last business year, Porsche customers picked up 1,250 Cayennes at the plant. With the Panamera in production, Porsche expects a considerable increase in factory deliveries. Today alone, the keys to four more vehicles will be handed over to customers. "We are excited that now, in addition to the Cayenne, we can offer our customers a second model for factory delivery," says Majewski.

For the past three and a half years, Majewski has taken the time to explain every detail of the Cayenne to customers who choose factory delivery. Now, he and the other nine Leipzig instructors have immersed themselves in the Panamera and are on intimate terms with it. For any question, there is an answer. Even when Kopprasch asks about the specifics of programming the radio control for his garage door opener, Majewski can offer a helping hand.

And thus collecting your vehicle at the plant lays the groundwork for a long-lasting relationship. "A fantastic experience," says Kopprasch. The couple from Bonn and their black Panamera 4S set off on the journey home, more than 500 kilometers (300 miles) away. "I'll be back for the next Porsche," promises Kopprasch. ▲

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