

IT'S ELECTRIFYING!

Porsche Taycan Turbo S

More than 120 years ago, a young Ferdinand Porsche gifted the world a concept vehicle that, decades later, would see the Porsche brand finally return to its electric car roots.





The Taycan may be Porsche's first foray into the realm of the electric vehicle, but it is not the first electric vehicle to be developed under the Porsche name. That distinction goes to the very first Porsche, the P1, otherwise known as the Egger-Lohner electric vehicle, C.2 Phaeton model, which made its world debut in the Austrian capital, Vienna, on 26 June 1898.

The P1, which today takes pride of place in the Porsche Museum Stuttgart, as a shining example of Ferdinand Porsche's vision for human mobility, was powered by the "octagon" electric motor, which took its name from the eight-sided design of the motor housing. The electric motor produces (it is functional to this day) an output of 2.2 kW and, for short periods up to 3.7 kW, with a top speed of 35 km/h.

Porsche even participated in the Berlin Road Race in 1899 with the car, winning the gold medal and beating

the next competitor by an incredible 18-minutes.

The car disappeared for 112 years and only recently was found in a warehouse in Austria, where it had remained untouched since the start of the 20th century. Although the car's batteries and seats have gone missing, it has been partially restored by the museum's experts.

NOT FIRST, BUT FANTASTIC

Although the four-seater P1 was not the world's first electric car, its direct descendant, the dazzling new Taycan, is now in the 21st century, the first modern electric Porsche, and one of the most inspiring electric vehicles I have driven.

It may be a four-seater sedan by the usual standards, yet there's nothing typical about it. At its heart, the thrum of internal combustion may have been transplanted by two electric motors that are capable of creating up to 560 kW of magic, and





1,050 Nm of thrust (in Turbo S guise), but its soul is well and truly that of any other pedigreed Porsche.

What truly makes these figures exceptional, is the fact that (like other pure electric cars), every kilowatt, and every Newton meter, is 100% yours to command from standstill, bringing the Taycan's explosive zero to 100 km/h acceleration time of 2.8 seconds within phenomenally easy reach.

TECH WIZARD INSIDE

It has become *du jour* to compare any new electric car to an equivalent Tesla, and the Porsche Taycan is no exception. Electric car enthusiasts will take to spreadsheets and spec sheets to prove why this car, or that, is better at that element or this than an available Tesla model. This practice, in my opinion, does a disservice to both brands, and the Taycan, being a Porsche, commands respect both inside and out, despite some technicalities that fall outside the scope of the *established* Tesla "norm".

The Taycan shifts boundaries, provokes dreams, and inspires feelings that few other cars ever will, and it does so most gracefully.

Inside the cabin, for example, the Taycan bristles with up-to-the-minute

Porsche technology, yet gains a sustainability edge through the use of recycled materials, all the while retaining Porsche's luxuriously functional interior feel. Porsche has even developed a new type of faux leather for the Taycan, adding to its appeal as a new generation tourer with minimal ecological impact. A curiosity that motoring fans would notice, is that Porsche has retained their standard nomenclature in the Taycan range - '4S' denotes the entry-model, while Turbo and Turbo S are reserved for the crazy and the ludicrous versions.

It is safe to say that nothing can prepare one for the experience of launching the Taycan Turbo S at full tilt for the first time. Even the most seasoned drivers will be surprised by the silent effortlessness of the Taycan at take-off. With two "gears" guiding the aforementioned available 1,050 Nm of torque in the Turbo S to the road, and all-wheel-drive ensuring that the tarmac itself doesn't roll up behind the Taycan as it propels forward, this sleeper supercar will leave you breathless and questioning everything you know about pushing the boundaries of the humble automobile.

From a practical point of view, though, the Taycan faces similar

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challenges to any other electrical car available in South Africa. Without a clear, coherent infrastructure strategy and network in place, even the most thrilling electrical beast will be confined to driving the highways and byways of the city, seldom venturing beyond half of its approximate 450 km range. While it is technically possible to drive from Joburg to Cape Town with a Taycan, the trip will take careful planning and some extra time, than that of a standard ICE vehicle.

Naturally, Porsche has installed charging stations at their dealerships across the country, and additional, high-capacity units are also planned for the

near future. With these charging stations – and others along some national routes and at several shopping malls – can charge your Taycan for a 100 km distance in a mere 5 minutes.

That said, during the recent launch drive, we completed a 250 km round trip in the Taycan (stopping a couple of times to engage the car’s launch control function), and generally not sparing the horses. Yet, the Taycan returned us safely – and with ample range – to Porsche’s Johannesburg dealership. Range anxiety? What range anxiety?

LAST WORD

Almost to the day of our Porsche Taycan launch drive in Gauteng, the last production unit of the ancestor to the Porsche 911 – the classic Volkswagen Beetle – rolled off the assembly line in 2003. Few would have predicted, when the ‘Car of the Century’ first began production in during WWII, that it would become such a powerful symbol of mobility, of innovation, and motoring accessibility. Although the Taycan is more closely related to the P1 of the 19th century, I believe that this car will

have an equally profound effect on the Porsche brand into the future. 🚗

