



Porsche Cayenne

Lights, camera, action!

Car review | When Porsche released part one in 2002, it caused a storm of reactions. The brand broke with a long tradition of building sports cars and introduced an SUV instead. Fans and critics worried that an off-road vehicle could not be a real Porsche. Their concerns ceased quickly, because the Cayenne soon proved to be a hit at the box office. So now it is time for the sequel. Is Cayenne part two as good as the original?

Lights, camera, action! The show starts and the lead character appears on stage. The public falls silent. Does this show perhaps start with a flashback? Is this really the long awaited succeder? This car looks just like its predecessor!

Only when carefully studying the design, does the new car look a bit sleeker but the basics have not changed. This new Cayenne still looks like a disproportional sports car; it just feels wrong. It is understandable that Porsche hardly changes the design of its sports cars, because buyers want to realise a childhood dream. But an SUV particularly offers a chance to show that the designers are capable of more than repeating the same design over and over again.



Space

In the cabin the similarity to the Porsche sports cars is greater than before, but in this case that is a good thing. By increasing the sports car feeling, the Cayenne distinguishes itself more from other SUVs. The test car is executed with a dark interior, which even gives the cosy feeling of a coupé.



In the front the Cayenne doesn't feature a lazy couch, like in many other SUVs. Instead this luxury off-roader has large, yet sporty seats. The space in the front and the back is more than ample. Those who are drawn to the Porsche brand but not to a cramped/low coupé, will feel right at home in the Cayenne.

Trim levels

The atmosphere in the cabin is "high tech" and has more similarities with an airplane than with a car. The centre console, the dashboard and even the roof are scattered with knobs and levers. All of these have logical symbols, so the driver quickly understands what they are all for. Most buttons change the driving characteristics: when going off-road the ride height can be adjusted, on paved roads the driver can choose either a comfortable or a more sporty setting.



The dials have been copied verbatim from the Porsche 911. A large rev counter takes centre stage. Next to the very small speedometer there's a more accurate, digital speedometer. A real work of art is the round (!) display for the sat nav, to the right of the rev counter. This isn't just pretty to look at, but also more easy to read than a traditional display in the centre console.

Optionally the new Cayenne can be fitted with an audio system that has been designed in cooperation with "Burmester". This is a small, German hi-fi specialist that has proved itself in the home audio market already. The sound of this system isn't just crystal clear, but also very musical. To ensure this perfect sound under all conditions, Burmester fitted a "Sound Conditioner". This alters the volume, equaliser and even delay between speakers, depending on the speed of the car.



Driving

At Porsche performance comes first. But modern times demand that even fast cars are fuel efficient. To

be able to combine the two, Porsche has reduced weight in every possible way. Because of this the new Cayenne weighs 200 kg less than the previous model, which benefits both fuel efficiency as well as performance.



The Cayenne has an eight-speed automatic gearbox. This unusually high number of gears increases the chance that there's an ideal ratio in every situation. This also makes the car faster and more frugal.

The "Cayenne S" driven here, is fitted with a stop-start system. As soon as the vehicle comes to a complete stop, the engine shuts down to save fuel. It is unusual to have a Porsche waiting at the traffic lights without a roaring engine, as if the "soundtrack" is missing. On the other hand, this peace and quiet makes for a nice interlude during the experience.

Performance

And that quietness does suit the car, because the Cayenne certainly isn't meant as a tough off-roader. Instead the Cayenne is highly comfortable. The 4.8 litre eight-cylinder engine in the "Cayenne S" performs with so much ease, that the car is exceptionally quiet. For example: at 100 mph the silence was disturbed by a subtle metal tick, like a triangle in the background of an orchestra. It turned out to be the metal ring of the key fob that was softly touching the dashboard!

When the accelerator is handled with less care, the automatic gearbox immediately understands the hint. The Cayenne shifts down a gear and shows its sporty side. The sprint from 0 to 62 mph takes just 5.9 seconds.

However, the engine is so powerful (400 PS / 500 Nm) that even at 62 mph is hasn't even begun to fight. Accelerating from 93 to 125 mph is an especially impressive display of brute force. This is where the Cayenne really shines: this is a very comfortable car which can also deliver raw performance whenever necessary.



This comfort and performance do come at a price. Despite a calm driving style and all the measures to save fuel, the test car consumed as much as 15.5 litres per 100 km (18 mpg) on average.

Handling

When Porsche introduced the first Cayenne, fans were concerned that an SUV would not be able to handle like a Porsche. Rest assured. Especially in the "Sport" mode, steering is very direct and the suspension is exceptionally firm. Even in fast, short corners the Cayenne hardly tilts over at all.

Despite this, the whole experience is less intense than with a Porsche 911 Coupé. For the price of a Cayenne, Porsche sells cars that offer more driving pleasure. On the other hand, the Cayenne seats four people and keeps going on when even the tarmac doesn't. Finally, the Porsche DNA is undoubtedly present in the

Cayenne. Therefore, handling is significantly better (and safer!) than with many other SUVs. That is the moral of this story.

Conclusion

Average, everyday cars are plentiful. A Porsche is all about the show and the experience. That certainly goes for the Cayenne, in which not just two but up to four people can enjoy the show.

Compared to the previous generation, the new Cayenne has more Porsche genes and therefore distinguishes itself even more from the competition. The new Cayenne is lighter than before to save fuel and improve performance. Regrettably fuel consumption is still extremely high, but the performance is impressive indeed. The handling is top notch for an SUV. The (optional) Burmester audio system is even the best available at the moment. So put your hands together for the Porsche Cayenne part two! ■



Specifications

Porsche Cayenne 4.8 V8 S

Size and weight

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Length x width x height | 485 x 194 x 171 cm |
| Wheelbase | 290 cm |
| Kerb weight | 2.065 kg |
| Trailer | unknown |
| Trailer - braked | 3.500 kg |
| Fuel capacity | 85 l |
| Luggage space | 670/1780 l |
| Tyre size | 255/55R18 |

Engine and performance



| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Capacity | 4806 cc |
| Cylinders / valves | 8/4 |
| Max power | 400 PS @ 6500 rpm |
| Max torque | 500 Nm @ 3500 rpm |
| Drive | four wheel drive |
| Acceleration 0 - 62 mph | 5.9 secs |
| Top speed | 258 km/h |
| Average mileage | 10.5 l / 100 km |
| Mileage urban | 14.5 l / 100 km |
| Mileage extra urban | 8.2 l / 100 km |
| CO2 emissions | 245 gr / km |

Price

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Price | Â£ 53,692 |
| Price base model | Â£ 41,404 |