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Hot, hot Cayenne

THE much-awaited Porsche Cayenne has finally made its appearance in Malaysia.

Being Porsche's first four-door, five-seater ever, the Cayenne, one of the fastest production sport utility vehicles in the world, was launched by local distributor Auto Eurokars.

The Cayenne, the name of which was derived from a South American chili pepper, is the answer to BMW's X5.

One thing is for sure, Porsche is moving into a new segment while retaining its supreme standard and appearance.

Powered by a 4.5-litre V8 power plant, the Cayenne is capable of enormous power but is still very much an off-road vehicle. Porsche has simply synergised its hardcore performance breed and lumped it into one hot and power crazy SUV.

The V8 engines, in both the Cayenne S and Cayenne Turbo, vary in maximum output and torque.

The Turbo version can muster 450bhp at around 6,000rpm and a maximum torque of 620Nm at between 2,250 and 4,750rpm. This is with the help of two exhaust gas turbochargers and intercooler technology.

It is so powerful that it allows a maximum trailer load of 3.5 tonnes and is capable of reaching 0-100km/h in just 5.6 seconds and a top speed of 266km/h.

And to distribute all this power, a 6-speed tiptronic automatic transmission has been developed.

The Cayenne also has a chassis concept that ensures agility in both sports motoring and under tough off-road conditions. This simply means that the Cayenne can be pushed to its limits on the race track while maintaining the off-road prowess in this class.

Giving it a fierce look is a set of 18-inch wheels wrapped in 255/55 R18. Larger wheels measuring 19 and 20 inches are also available as an option.

The Cayenne S, although de-tuned, can still match the Turbo in many respects except the acceleration.

But the 0-100km/h sprint takes 7.2 seconds with a capability of hitting a top speed of 242km/h, which is surprising considering its weight of almost 2.5 tonnes.

The Cayenne S's naturally-aspirated engine pumps out 340bhp at 6,000rpm and 420Nm of torque at between 2,500 and 5,500rpm.

Both vehicles are equipped with Porsche's Traction Management (PTM), which is the core of its four-wheel-drive system.

The device distributes 62 per cent of the power to the rear wheels and the remaining 38 per cent to the front, depending on the situation. Up to 100 per cent of power can be distributed to the front or rear, as required.

Auto Eurokars chairman Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir said around 20 vehicles have already been booked.

"Most of the customers are existing Porsche owners and the bulk of them prefer the turbo version. They don't trade-in their existing cars, which shows that the Cayenne is being bought for different reasons," he said.

Mokhzani said Porsche would be introducing a smaller V6 version of the Cayenne in the near future to compensate for the lower price bracket.

"Demand has far exceeded their wildest dreams, which is why we could

only get our hands on left-hand drive units for the demonstration and test-drives. The right-hand drive vehicles should arrive next month," he added.

As far as the aftersales service is concerned, Mokhzani said a team of mechanics and engineers have been sent to Stuttgart to undergo training to service, maintain and repair the Cayenne.

The Cayenne Turbo costs around RM750,000 while the Cayenne S is RM100,000 cheaper. Both vehicles come with a two-year warranty.

Among the gizmos to be enjoyed are servotronic, electronic comfort package, sports seats, 19-inch wheels, bi-xenon headlamps, Bose surround sound system, air suspension and much more.

For more info, call the Porsche Centre Glenmarie at 03-5032 9911.