

Cayenne Register

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A steep learning curve - Cayenne Off-Road Driver Training Day



We're perched on the top of a 60% gradient (30 degrees), can see nothing over the bonnet of the Cayenne Turbo except the horizon and tree tops, gripping the steering wheel with both hands and...over we go! Suddenly our eyes fix on the ground at the bottom of this monster rise and the Cayenne's low range gearing immediately takes over and controls our descent at a very reassuring pace which is thankfully much slower than Newton's force! "That's bloody steep!" comes the call from the passenger seat as the Turbo lurches forward, our seatbelts restraining our bodyweight and preventing our faces from pressing up

against the windscreen. A touch of the brakes as we approach the base of the descent with the car standing almost on it's nose and more level terra-firma and we're down, intact! "Let's go again!"



The day for the inaugural Cayenne Register event – Off-Road Driver Training Day – was perfect, the participants somewhat apprehensive, but the friendships, experience and knowledge gained unforgettable!

Sunday December 3rd began with a sprint to the International Automotive Research Centre located just outside Anglesea to ensure we all made the 9.00am arrival for a 9.30am start. Despite some minor vagaries in the map all participants passed the navigation test with ease and fortunately for some, the unmistakable silhouette of a Cayenne ahead in the distance was a welcome sight if you could keep up with it...DB!

Off the bitumen and onto the dirt roads, clouds of dust from the lead cars engulfed all who followed too closely and also concealed large hopping marsupials which on occasion ventured into the path of an approaching Cayenne – not the type of hood ornament any of us were keen to possess!

Upon arrival we assembled at the teaching facility which is superbly located in a true Australian bush-land setting to meet each other and our learned trainer – Adrian du Jardin. Adrian is an accredited trainer and assessor and agreed to run the Porsche Cayenne Off-Road Driver Training for us. The day was intended to provide an introduction to 4WDing specifically for Cayenne owners to experience the capabilities of their vehicles in a controlled environment.

The full day course comprised a brief theory and extensive practice sessions to give each participant an increased understanding of how their Cayenne operates and experience the Cayenne's capabilities in actual off-road situations. As Adrian said, "I can't make them experts in one day,

but they will have a very good idea of the way the car works and how the car should be driven safely.”



Although there were places for up to eight vehicles, only four attended – a little disappointing, but for those that did not attend, you really should have! All vehicles were Cayenne Turbos with varying tyres and enhancements. The Cayenne Register Off-Road crew included Matt Stoupas and Ben Faggetter from Weltmeister with their “renter”, David Burden with his immaculate black beast complete with sports muffler and assorted enhancements, Ken and Matthew Townsend in their silver Turbo and myself and a good friend riding shotgun also in a silver Turbo. Three of the four vehicles were on road tyres with drivers hoping the lower profiles wouldn’t be a disadvantage (they weren’t!).

After a casual “meet and greet” our training commenced with Adrian giving us a brief on the fundamentals of a 4WD and what makes it so, such as the differential system, cross axeling, etc.

After which, we all lowered our tyre pressures to 30 psi, installed metal valve caps and headed for the driver training area. We were also asked to turn off the Porsche Stability Management System and parking sensors – standard practice in 4WDing situations. The bleating parking sensor alarms will drive you crazy everytime the vehicle gets close to nature and act as a distraction and by disengaging the Porsche Stability Management system the Cayenne will perform correctly as a 4WD.



Taking the road pressures down to suit the terrain.

The initial session was a chance to experience the low range gearing and the traction control system of the Cayenne and familiarize ourselves with fundamental 4WDing techniques on moderate ascents and descents, water crossings and side angles. Before commencing any driving we all inspected the drive path, surveying it’s idiosyncrasies and committing them to memory.

Adrian provided a few tips for ascents – “Stick to the high (bald) parts of the track on the way up to ensure maximum traction and on the way down keep your wheels (front left with back left wheel, or front right wheel with back right wheel) in the ruts to make sure the back follows the front. Other wise the back will overtake the front!”

Although the gradients and heights of what we were intending to conquer first were not immense, there was still a great deal of apprehension about driving such a vehicle up, and worse, down when you cannot see where you are going and you’re not allowed to use ANY BRAKES! That’s right no brakes during descent! “The Porsche Traction Management System will just walk you down”, said Adrian. And he was right! No brakes, no problem.



The Porsche Traction Management System in action. David on only three wheels with over 2 tonne of car with it’s nose over the edge and no brakes!



James & Bob making a cautious descent without brakes in low range 1st.

The traction management system may as well sense the driver's apprehension about driving off the edge of a cliff as it immediately controls the vehicle's descent according to the low range gear selected (in this case 1st) and prevents the vehicle sliding or skidding allowing it to slowly "walk" down the slope. "That's amazing!" were the calls from all drivers and passengers. Amazing is true when you consider the Cayenne is over 2 tonnes and there was effectively no slide on the way down on a loose dry surface.



Matt & Ben roaring up a moderate ascent with road tyres and getting some air – no problem.

We repeated this exercise many times driving up in 2nd low and down in 1st low with no brakes. With each run our confidence grew with both the Cayenne's capabilities and our driving technique.

Despite there not being a great deal of water around, a water crossing was able to be experienced by all drivers. "Remember the basics", said Adrian, "check your entry and departure angles by using a straight piece of timber (garden stake) – if you can enter, great, but if the riverbank on the other side is too steep, you'll never get out! Also, check the rate at which the current is moving. If it's moving too fast your vehicle will just float away! The most basic thing is to check the depth by walking it, ideally with another person holding hands and walking in the tyre tracks your vehicle will take checking for pot holes. If you can't stand up in the current and walk across the current is moving too fast." Finally, the most basic rule when it comes to water crossings **"if you don't have to go through water – DON'T!"** as all vehicles don't react too well to water of any kind." Adrian is right a teaspoon in a diesel engine and not much more in a petrol engine proves to be a very costly exercise.



However, if there is no way around and you have checked all of the above, and you're keen to test the fording depth of the Cayenne (550mm, or top of the tyres) then you're on your way – "Remember to **attach your recovery gear before you enter the water**, just in case! Then enter the water at a slow but constant speed – **do not enter the water too fast** as you risk flooding the engine bay and

the force of the water can cause engine components such as radiator fans to be pushed off their mounts through the radiator. **Slow and steady is the way.**"

Following the water exercise, we were given the opportunity to experience side angles – basically what it feels like to drive across a hill rather than from top to bottom – which can cause the vehicle to tip over.



Deliberately placing a vehicle in this situation is contrary to safe 4WD practice with many 4WD manufacturers not stating the number of degrees of side angle a vehicle can withstand before it does tip for fear some drivers may test it! Stupidly, some have! The side angle we experienced was approximately 15 degrees which provided both drivers and passengers with an appreciation of side angle and its potential dangers in a dynamic environment – e.g., rocks and pot holes each of which can immediately increase the side angle and cause the vehicle to tip.

With growing confidence in our abilities and the capabilities of the Cayenne we headed back to the hut for lunch and some good discussion about the morning's session.

After lunch it was back into the vehicles for some more challenging driving comprising steeper ascents and descents and challenging trail drives which included stopping to "read the interesting terrain" or change drivers.

The first exercise comprised longer and steeper ascent/descents. The day's dry and dusty conditions made the ascents and descents a challenge due to the loose, flaky, unstable surface which provided all drivers and passengers with the full Cayenne traction management system experience – delivering bursts of power to specific wheels and applying brakes to others simultaneously – which the Cayenne handled very easily on each occasion.



Putting the Cayenne through its paces on the steep ascents. Up on the bald sections (if you can find them) and down in the ruts to keep the car straight.

Having driven the same tracks in wet and slippery conditions I can vouch for the additional degree of difficulty moisture makes as the clay transforms the vehicles' off-road tyres into race slicks making ascent and descent extremely challenging. Imagine a skid pan on a 60% gradient and you have to drive up and down it! Although we are unlikely to see any rain for some time (of great concern) driving in very dry conditions with loose shale surfaces is challenging, but the Cayenne allowed each driver to master the terrain with ease and has shown all those present how capable it is off-road.

The second exercise was the descent and ascent of a concrete ramp with a 60% gradient (30 degree angle). This was by far the most impressive exercise of the day so far and gave all drivers immense appreciation of the Porsche Traction Management System – refer opening paragraph of article.

After conquering driver apprehension about driving off the top of this monster, we were to conquer its ascent. We needn't have worried as the Cayenne had no problem with torque, power or traction propelling itself up a serious incline.

By comparison and by way of demonstration how difficult loose, dry, unstable driving conditions are, even for the Cayenne, James launched his vehicle up the ascent next to the 60% gradient which comprises moguls. The top third of the track stalled his progress and many thought he was not going to make it. Foot down, traction management system working overtime trying to find some grip and advance the car, he finally cleared the ridge. See the video of a Cayenne in action at the PCV website under the Cayenne register.



James' Cayenne Turbo being tested on a steep, dry and unstable ascent.

Feeling pretty confident, particularly on the “groomed” gradients our next test was on some real bush tracks around the property which provided the true 4WDing experience – slippery, loose, dry and ever-changing track conditions with steep ascents and descents. This was the time to put all we had learnt into practice.

We set off in convoy to our first test. Upon arrival Adrian briefed us about the hazards we were likely to encounter and discussed the best angle of attack. One by one, we made our way up the track with nothing but success in our minds and the remaining drivers and passengers watching our line.



Ben emerging from the Cayenne's dust storm and conquering a formidable track section.

“The strangest feeling is being in a Porsche with your foot flat to the boards and not going anywhere!” Believe it! The conditions illustrated to all drivers the difficulty of 4WDing and what happens when even the world's best seemingly cannot conquer the terrain. A loss of momentum during ascent can be fatal as can the wrong driving line. Stopping on an ascent makes a second attempt very difficult if your driving line is wrong. Fortunately, even if the driver does take the wrong driving line, as some

did, the Cayenne does it's best to overcome the error and muscles its way through. Check out the video of the track runs from the day on the PCV website.



James & Bob following in Ben's tracks.

Our next run was of a more menacing track which Adrian introduced to us with a story about a Pajero that attempted it and tumbled down and rolled about 15 times with the vehicle and driver being air-lifted from the site. The vehicle was a right-off and the driver seriously injured.

This realization drew the following comment from David Burden, "What do you mean we're going to HAVE A GO? ...Aren't we going to make it?" David's anguish was clear and the group offered their support and encouragement "We're RIGHT BEHIND YOU David...[marching him back down the hill to his car!]." Much to David's relief, the track he thought we were going up was not to be and we turned left a few metres along the track to take an alternate route. "There are only two vehicles that could get up that, and they are an all-terrain vehicle and a trail-bike."

The day closed with everyone having a tremendous appreciation of the world's best "2 in 1" – the Cayenne which is so competent as a 4WD and as a performance vehicle on the roads. Driver feedback rated this event as an "Awesome day!", "Fantastic!" and "Definitely a must-do for all Cayenne owners."

David's view of "hell" – "What do you mean, we're GOING TO HAVE A GO?"



You will all be pleased to hear no Cayenne's were damaged during this event despite being a little dusty at the end of the day (nothing a blast back to Melbourne couldn't fix!). There were smiles from ear to ear from more knowledgeable and more confident Cayenne owners each of whom are even happier with their purchase decision of a Cayenne – the only Porsche that can provide the best of both worlds. **Live it, Love it. Cayenne.**

The Cayenne Register is now well established on the PCV website – check out the PCV Cayenne events at: http://www.pcv.com.au/PorscheClubs/pc_victoria/pc_main.nsf/web/DE294B8CF128FE3BC125714D000C3B8C and don't forget to view the videos and images of the Off-Road Driver Training day. A big thankyou to all who have contributed their photographic and video production prowess.

For any queries regarding the Cayenne Register please contact the register captain – James Winder on 0407 959 767 or email jwinder@i-p-g.com.au