

Scene and Passion Feb 13, 2020

Panamera Mexicana

Along the band of asphalt known as the Ruta Panamericana, travelers encounter a nonchalance that unites the perfection of technical precision with the breezy verve of improvisation.



At today's destination, we'll be completely surrounded by nature. Thousands—perhaps tens of thousands—of mariposas monarcas will accompany our Porsche Panamera 4S, weightless, enveloping the car like a pulsating cloud of iridescent color. The fluttering dance of the monarch butterflies gaily complements the sports sedan amid the dust of the Pan-American Highway at the end of our drive from Mexico City to the valley of butterflies, some 58 miles away.

Up to a billion monarch butterflies populate the region around the Valle de Bravo between November and March each year. Multiple generations come from Canada and the United States and travel some 2,486 miles along the way to their warm winter quarters in the forested highlands of central Mexico. Monarchs always return to the same trees as the fourth generation before them, without ever having been there; exactly how they do it is unknown. They land in vast clusters and bathe trees and nearby boulders in vibrant orange. The collective flapping of their wings sounds like pattering rain, and when they rise up as one, the sun disappears as if behind a storm cloud.

Carrera Panamericana



The Porsche Panamera 4S on the roads of Mexico

The Mexico rally, which is closely associated with Porsche, was held between 1950 and 1954 and stretches over 2,113 miles. While the race was restricted to five-seat series sedans in its first year, it was open to sports cars from 1951 on. Porsche posted impressive stage victories from the outset and by 1954 dominated the field. The young brand from Zuffenhausen took six of the top seven places in the small sports cars category, including third place in the overall standings—Porsche's greatest international success before winning the Targa Florio in Sicily in 1956.

The race was held to mark the completion of the Mexican part of the Pan-American Highway, which links North and South America. The route stretching from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego—the longest dream road in the world—is not a road at all but a network of thousands of kilometers of asphalt. The race across Mexico was not burdened with an excess of rules, so the cars that drove on public roads risked accidents with abandon. The winner was the first car across the finish line, almost regardless of how it got there. The risk was soon too great and, after only five races, the Carrera Panamericana was history—but the idea and its legend lived on. Since 1988 the race has been held as a classic car rally with strict safety regulations.

Incredible tranquility and scenic beauty

The equipo Panamera



Comisario Locio González Gómez (middle) with his colleagues and the Panamera 4S

One of the armed policemen is Comisario Lucio González Gómez. He's worked the rallies for years as well. "It's always a great experience," says the police officer. "It's so much fun to see the impressive cars and feel the power of the vehicles and the excitement of the participants." Notwithstanding the coolness of his reflective shades, the 45-year-old cannot hide his enthusiasm.

We've reached the end of our journey. In the valley of the mariposa monarca we gaze up to the skies, entranced. The image reflected in our eyes is amazing beyond belief. It's a 500-meter section of the road that the fluttering butterflies cross before disappearing once again into the trees of the forest. This place is one of only a few natural wonders listed as a World Heritage site, and UNESCO couldn't be more right.

La Carrera Panamericana

The opening of the Mexican part of the Ruta Panamericana, the highway stretching from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, gave rise to the most famous of all road races in the Americas. In 1950 the field of five-seat sedans—sports cars were first allowed from 1951 onward—set off from north to south. The drivers needed six days for the 2,135-mile route. Due to numerous crashes and fatalities, the race was discontinued after 1954—with Porsche handily winning the small sports car class. The Carrera Panamericana was revived as a classic car rally in 1988. For more information, www.lacarrerapanamericana.com.mx

Info

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