

The Heart of the World

This article reflects the status at the time of its publication. The content may since have become outdated.

16/06/2015 The 24 Hours of Le Mans lives on its night. New York, the city that never sleeps, lives for its night. A Panamera S E-Hybrid unites the exceptional race with the extraordinary metropolis.

Blame it on the song, its famous verse. The line about the city that never sleeps. I was simply humming away while brainstorming about the 24 Hours of Le Mans when the melody and the words—"I wanna wake up ..."—popped into my head. New York is just fast-paced enough and loud enough to serve as an urban parallel to the classic of the motor-racing world. Especially Manhattan, that sky-scrapered sliver of land that is forever re-creating itself with a preternatural energy. A Panamera S E-Hybrid, with its twenty-first-century use of electric propulsion, comes to life in Manhattan, that most electric urban center. It is the perfect place to go from day to night and back again.

"Manhattan sometimes seems like a giant ship with its engines running 24 hours a day," says city reporter Ulrike von Bülow. The Panamera S E-Hybrid adds a pleasant hum to the constant aural backdrop of the city streets. This type of silence is unusual amid all the beautiful noise. Up to 36

kilometers of purely electric locomotion are possible this way. That's roughly enough for one lap of the peninsula; on the track in France, it would be enough for almost three.

Stop-and-go in the Panamera is known as start and stop

At Le Mans, mind you, there are no signs warning of gridlock, as one might encounter between Wall Street on the southern tip and Columbia University in the north, between the Lower East Side and the Upper West Side. Stop-and-go in the Panamera is known as start and stop, and that's why even with the new speed limit of 25 mph (40 km/h), it's still plenty of fun to conquer the continent of New York City with a four-seater sporty sedan. It feels extremely light-footed, almost playful. And unbelievably exciting. Rush hour becomes an event.

This hyper-caffeinated version of everyday life can give the 24-hour classic of Le Mans a run for its money at any intersection. You encounter revved-up emotions, compressed dramas, a flood of flickering images and top-speed impressions. A drive along Central Park recalls the Mulsanne straight, while the hard curves around Grand Central Station provide an equivalent to the Dunlop chicane (at reduced speed, of course), and a Sunday drive might take one out to Coney Island, where there's a Ferris wheel resembling the one at Le Mans.

A multimedia masterpiece

But we stay in Manhattan, a carnival in itself. Night owls can be found in droves at Times Square as well, amidst a remarkable display of visual advertising pyrotechnics. In the late and early morning hours, the Panamera struts its stuff as it is reflected in the storefront windows. Visually and acoustically, New York is a multimedia masterpiece. Wandering down Broadway, the writer Nik Cohn coined an apt title for the city: “The heart of the world.”

We start to feel the city's dopamine factor, an experience that takes in all the senses. Our hybrid Gran Turismo, sometimes humming, sometimes accelerating rhythmically, hews close to the lyrics in Sinatra's “New York, New York,” showing that as a big-city car, it can be a part of New York, and write its own story in the capital of tall tales. Even speed has its own unit of measurement here: the New York minute.

Traffic becomes a metaphor

It describes the time span between a traffic light turning green and the first honk by the guy behind you. In reality the honking is practically synchronized with the changing of the light, but the rest of the country—at least according to local legend—would take at least a minute before displaying such impatience. The expected chorus of horns is easily escaped with an electric motor output of up to 70 kW (95 hp).

The people here are especially proud of their acceleration skills. It makes them harder, ambitious almost to the point of mercilessness with themselves. There is one ironclad traffic rule: They may see the other cars, but they're looking out for themselves. That's more or less how right-of-way is determined on the avenues of NYC.

Finding oneself suddenly surrounded by six medallion taxicabs, painted iconic canary yellow, is to suffer urban yellow fever. But here again, traffic becomes a metaphor. If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere. You can never lose sight of the opportunities, albeit merely a sudden, well-executed turn. Just made it; our guest in the rear seat gives a thumbs-up. After all, "blocking the box," as the traffic code calls standing in an intersection when the light turns red, can earn you a $150 fine.

Kirk, the NYC native behind the wheel of the Panamera S E-Hybrid, finds the continuous search for new perspectives a welcome form of self-renewal. As we drive by, he points at the facade of an Episcopal church on Sixth Avenue. Built in the eighteenth century, in the 1980s it was converted into a nightclub, first the Limelight, then the Avalon; these days the building is a retail marketplace and gym. New York is endless. And thus a city of beginnings. "The constant changes keep everything fresh," confirms the chauffeur.

The Panamera's Adaptive Air Suspension is a brilliant idea

The major north–south avenues each have their own urban personalities: Seventh belongs to fashion, Park to money, new and old, Fifth to high-end retail and then to posh apartments, Madison to advertising, and Sixth (only first-time tourists call it Avenue of the Americas) to media conglomerate headquarters. All of them share worn asphalt so bumpy and pot-holed that it is in effect a world-class test track for proving why the Panamera's Adaptive Air Suspension, providing a constant vehicle position, is a brilliant idea.

The race doesn't let up in Manhattan when night falls, as darkness accentuates the electric energy of advertising signs, and the pace never slackens: a dinner, club, theater, or party to rush to. Times Square, with its extraordinary lighting that is easy to spot from outer space, is the recipient of an extra bit of brightness from the Panamera's Bi-Xenon headlights. They illuminate the theater district and street thespians whose box office is an outstretched hand or canister, open for donations. No one can resist this cross between Disneyland and a metropolis. Our concierge had warned us: Don't stare at anyone.

Mobile box-seat has its advantages

But it's not always easy when a man in a G-string and a cowboy hat crosses the street before your eyes, or you spot a lady whose hairdo wouldn't look out of place on Lady Gaga. Who knows, maybe it is Lady Gaga. All the other ladies on the street are wearing elegant dresses, albeit with well-worn sneakers. The style is known as street-smart—an intelligent way of mastering the difficulties entailed in walking on buckled pavement. The killer heels for the office or the dance floor, depending on the hour, are stowed

in the gym bag. Our mobile box-seat has its advantages. Kick back into the sports seat for a breather before turning back to the exterior world known as New York City with full concentration.

Because the city, unlike Le Mans, has no laurel wreath to bestow upon its drivers, we make a pit stop at a flower shop in SoHo. Open 24 hours, how practical. The lights around the Panamera are in the service of eternal temptation. But nights are honest too. At night, feelings are clearer—that's as true for Le Mans as it is for New York. In the glowing lights, suddenly a horse buggy enters stage right. One horsepower meets 416 hp (306 kW). Roughly a hundred of these carriages still ply the roads in and around Central Park. The Panamera S E-Hybrid, by now an experienced big-city nomad, takes such encounters in stride.

The streets blur into a sea of colors and shapes

At five in the morning, even the neon sign across the street warms the heart, promising as it does hot coffee. The puddles in front of the street vendor's cart turn yellow, pink, and blue in succession. The Panamera S E-Hybrid adds acid green to the mix—the signal color of Porsche E-Mobility. That's the color of the brake calipers, as well as the "e-hybrid" logo on the doors. Between swipes of the windshield wipers, the streets blur into a sea of colors and shapes.

After a stormy night, the outside lanes of Fifth Avenue have become a graveyard for umbrellas. The night still feels young, but in fact it is nearly at an end. At this hour, pulling off small miracles is no problem—like finding a parking spot on the street, for example. A New Yorker who managed this feat on a first date would surely have won the heart of the admiring and amazed person in the passenger seat.

The entire city functions like a hybrid

We're no longer in search of light, but we're still on the trail of the city's code, the tactics of the night. Night owls and early birds alike are united by the rousing feeling that the city is at their feet, and there just for their pleasure. To possess the heart of the world: it's a seductive idea. The occupation is an emotionally charged one. "It's the energy that always draws me to the city," confides Kirk. As he brushes aside a shoe on the curb while getting into the car, he says simply, "Must have been an interesting night."

Generating excitement is the common denominator between Porsche and New York City. The entire city functions like a hybrid. The Panamera comes to rest in a parking garage—24-hour parking, of course. From a restaurant, we monitor the charge state of the battery on the smartphone display. Outside, in the mist of the early morning light, the city is recharging its batteries. Its people are readying themselves for their next 24-hour race, to make it in New York, New York.

Link Collection

Link to this article
https://newsroom.porsche.com/en/christophorus/porsche-panamera-s-e-hybrid-new-york-10225.html

Media Package
https://pmdb.porsche.de/newsroomzips/0a723f91-ac3a-44cd-9cfe-6a2caa8e1727.zip

External Links
http://www.porsche.com/usa/aboutporsche/christophorusmagazine/

Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart