

Charging south for winter – in a Taycan 4S

18/02/2025 Amid a freezing Canadian winter, one dedicated Porsche employee heads south in search of the sun. Some 2,400 kilometres south, by electric power alone …

Winters in Canada are not for everyone. Temperatures plummet. The nights draw in. Snowfall is measured by the metre. For Manuel Ratke working for Porsche in Toronto, the arrival of the Christmas holidays presented a challenge: sit it out at home in minus 10 °C or find somewhere a little more hospitable for he and his wife, to see in the festive period.

Ratke happens to have friends and former colleagues in Miami, Florida, one of whom invited them to spend the holiday season together. “So we had a place to stay and just had to figure out how to get there,” he explains. This winter escape is such a common phenomenon among Canadians that they have earned themselves the nickname ‘Snowbirds’. But the preferred means of getting to Florida for the average Snowbird is not a 2,400 km drive in the dead of winter. The Ratkes, however, had decided to turn a straightforward break into an unforgettable road trip. There was just one catch: the car outside the couple’s home, already under a dusting of snow, was an all-electric Taycan 4S.

It wasn't all that long ago that few would have dreamed of undertaking a 5,000 km round trip in an electric vehicle. But for Ratke, who has seen the remarkable advances in range and charging that have accelerated the usability of Porsche's first purely electric sports car in recent years, it was a no-brainer.

"This was the first big road trip I'd done in an EV, but I wasn't worried about it," he grins. "I drove the first generation Taycan for around 18 months and never had any problems. And now the second generation has increased range, and there are even more chargers in the network. There really was nothing to worry about."

Ratke sought advice from his colleagues at Porsche before planning a route that tried to make allowances for everything from local traffic to seasonal conditions. But even the best laid plans remain at the mercy of the weather, and the route south would be unforgettable in more ways than one.

"At that time of the year the weather conditions around the Great Lakes and the Appalachian Mountains can be very rough and unpredictable," Ratke says. "For that reason, we decided to take the I-70 and I-95 via Washington. However, the weather was much worse than expected. When we crossed the border, the border officials informed us that some roads were closed due to a strong snowstorm. After a few kilometres we were in the middle of it, with heavy snow and low visibility. It was so bad that the Governor declared a state of emergency for that area."

Their chosen mode of transport had also raised a few eyebrows: "At the border, they asked us what car we were driving. When I said it was a Taycan EV they said 'Oh, good luck with that!'. There is still that mindset with electric cars, but it's all-wheel-drive, on winter tyres, and the range was still dependable even with the snow, so actually, it was ideal."

Altering their itinerary at short notice, the couple diverted for an unscheduled stop in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, but past the worst of the winter weather, they were able to enjoy trouble-free driving for the rest of the trip, taking in the stunning scenery and winding highways through Pennsylvania, Virginia, South Carolina, and all the way through Florida, where the ambient temperature was now a welcome 25 °C.

Thought-provoking highlights from the drive for the Ratkes included a memorable lunch at an Amish farm shop in Lancaster, a striking contrast to the modern technology of the second generation Taycan, and a visit to Washington's political heartland, including a visit to the White House. Throughout the journey, the Taycan performed faultlessly as a quiet and comfortable grand tourer, returning approximately 400 km on a charge in the coldest parts of the journey, rising to up to 650 km in the warmer south.

While in Florida, the Ratkes and their Taycan made the most of the balmy weather to tour the state, visiting the Everglades and Key West, the southernmost city in the continental United States. That 523 km return trip was completed without recharging, and with 80 km of range left to play with. They finally returned home via a different route, passing west through Georgia, Kentucky and Ohio before veering east again towards Lake Eerie and home. By the time they arrived in Toronto, the car had clocked up

some 6,500 km and averaged an impressive 21.3 kWh/100km.

Ratke still speaks with enthusiasm about the relative simplicity of undertaking such a journey in an electric car, citing the charging speed of the new Taycan 4S which, with the Performance Battery Plus, could go from 14 to 73 per cent in only 15 minutes. But above all, he extolls the hidden virtues of the Taycan as a car in which to do big distances: "On the way back we drove 1,465 km in one day. The comfort, handling, and performance, in conjunction with the driving assistance systems and infotainment, made the trip an unforgettable experience, whether on snow or on a sunny day along the coastline. The Taycan really is the perfect grand tourer."

Consumption data

Taycan 4S (WLTP)*: Electrical consumption combined: 20.1 – 17.6 kWh/100 km; CO_2 emissions combined: 0 g/km; CO_2 class: A

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

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