

Sunday Drives: Australia

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04/04/2021 In the latest part of Newsroom's Sunday Drives series, Porsche Brand Ambassador Mark Webber takes us on a spectacular lap of his own backyard in Australia.

Where

Noosa, Queensland, Australia

Length

210 kilometres

Type

A lush rural route through the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast offering steep undulations, tight hairpins and incredible views

A long career racing single seaters and sports cars has seen Mark Webber spend less time than he might have liked in his native Australia. But the off season gaves the former Porsche works driver and busy Formula One pundit the opportunity to revisit some great local roads – a firm favourite of which is a picturesque loop through the high hills that fringe Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

"It's a route I probably do eight or so times a year, through the hinterland of Queensland," says Webber. "I leave Noosa on State Route 12 and head west towards a town called Eumundi. As you drive out of Noosa, you head through the lush, sub-tropical forest and you really appreciate what a beautiful area this is … the locals call it living in a 'biosphere' because so much of the area is protected forest. You cross the M1 motorway at Eumundi and hang a right to pick up the '22', the Eumundi-Kenilworth Road. Then it's about 30 minutes due west to get into some spectacular elevated driving, a good 500-600 metres above sea level. The temperature really drops, and you're into a lot of tight hairpins and superb twisty stuff."

One of the best things about this drive, Webber explains, is that you can vary the route, with great roads, great views and coffee stops in abundance whichever way you choose to go. "The loop swings left onto Obi Obi Road just before Kenilworth. If you are hungry, keep going into town and stop at the bakery on the main street. The food there is amazing, and they are famous for their doughnuts. They have a one kilogram doughnut and if you can finish it, you get your name on the wall. The record is two minutes 28 seconds, which is impressive and scary all at once."

Obi Obi Road runs alongside a fast-flowing creek of the same name, and presents the first tight and technical section of the loop. "What I love about a cracking road like this, is the undulations – steep and punchy – with some sensational blind crests. There's rainforest, mist, those great elevation changes and not one pothole! Considering the amount of rainfall in this area, which is probably north of 50 inches a year, they maintain the road really well."

Stunning views towards the ocean

The route follows the ridgeline at this point, offering stunning views towards the ocean some 50 kilometres east. "It's lush all year round up there," adds Webber, "like a sunny Scotland every day. When it rains, it rains heavy, and it can be quite humid, but it's always picturesque."

The Obi Obi Road finishes in the town of Mapleton. Turning right, you drive along the crest of ridgeline with views all the way down the coast and Pacific Ocean. When reaching the town of Montville, Webber suggests adding a lap down the mountain along a pass simply known as 'Hunchy' before driving back up a narrow and challenging pass along Palmwoods-Montville Road. If you like, you could do this steep and narrow section in either direction.

From the beach to almost alpine environment

"I remember taking Timo Bernhard up there in a Cayenne once," Webber says. "It was incredible to see his reaction. We'd just gone from the beach to this almost alpine environment and he couldn't believe this was Australia. That was pretty cool to see from someone who has travelled so much." Catching a breath after this challenging section, the route continues south towards Balmoral Ridge, onto yet another heart-racing section, Bald Knob Road. This quiet road includes some of the best views available of the spectacular Glass House Mountains, famous for their unusual shapes.

The drive then continues on to the town of Peachester. At the bottom of the main loop now, you turn left to head north up Old Gympie Road, which takes you past Australia Zoo, the wildlife sanctuary of late Australian conservationist and celebrity Steve Irwin, aka the Crocodile Hunter. Yet more twisting sections await until you eventually reach Palmwoods. Here, Webber suggests visiting Rick's Garage for lunch. The American-style burger joint is built in a former mechanical workshop, and reserves its best parking spots for 'Cool Machines Only'. The frozen Porsche Taycan 4S that Webber is driving gains the approval of staff, and takes pride of place right by the front entrance.

Driving past 'The Big Pineapple'

After lunch, take Kiel Mountain Road around more of the Glass House Mountains, driving past 'The Big Pineapple', passing through Diddillibah, Bli Bli and Yandina. The drive then joins the coastline at Peregian Beach and heads north towards the spectacular Sunshine Beach, where some of Australia's most luxurious homes are situated.

Although a Cayenne was ideal for some gentle sight-seeing with his LMP1 team-mate Bernard, Webber would normally recommend something slightly sportier to get the best out of the trip. "This is a loop for a well-balanced sportscar. Until recently, my recommendation for this loop would have been a 911, especially something with four-wheel drive like a Turbo S or 4S. But any 911 really. A 718 would be great through the tight stuff. "But driving the Taycan 4S today has been an eye opener. I've driven it a lot in Europe, but this is my first spirited drive of a Taycan in Australia and it's great to steer it for a day on home turf. It ate up the road with ease and didn't miss a beat all day.

"I'd recommend getting to Noosa Main Beach to start the drive as early as about 05:30, before it gets too hot. You always get people up there enjoying their cars, so start early and take it steady. It's not a

particularly long drive, or that fast, but it is beautiful. And it's a great way to get away from it all and back in touch with nature.

"When you finish over at Sunshine Beach, have a look out into the Pacific Ocean and listen to the waves breaking. This is one of the most magic places in the world."

Sunday Drives

With travel restrictions limiting the opportunities for road-trips, Porsche Newsroom's Sunday Drives series sets out to quench readers' thirst for adventure by discovering the world's most beautiful driving roads through the eyes of Porsche people around the globe.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Consumption data

911 Turbo S (Predecessor model)

Taycan 4S with Performance Battery (Predecessor model)

911 Carrera 4S (Predecessor model)

*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).

Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/176347_en_3000000.mp4

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