Porsche holds spectacular ‘Launch Control’ event at Sydney Airport

30/10/2020 Porsche has held one of the most spectacular car launch events in recent memory, hosting the ‘Launch Control’ event on a 2.2 kilometre runway at Sydney Airport.

Porsche conducted the event to launch the new Porsche 911 Turbo S sportscar to the Australian market, with VIP guests able to drive the car on ‘Runway 16L/34R’, one of two runways that protrudes out into Botany Bay.

Instructors from the Porsche Track Experience were on-hand to safely guide all participants through two runs each down the runway.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sydney Airport was Australia’s busiest airport, hosting 44 million passengers and more than 300,000 flight movements annually across its three runways. With passenger traffic down 97 per cent, Sydney Airport coordinated with multiple government and regulatory agencies to safely and temporarily close the runway for this event.

The Porsche 911 Turbo S delivers 478kW of power at 6,750 rpm, as well as 800Nm of torque. It moves from zero to 100km/h in 2.7 seconds, zero to 200km/h in 8.9 seconds and has a top speed of 330km/h.

How the Launch Control event came to life at Sydney Airport

It started as a far-fetched idea. With airlines operating at a vastly reduced capacity due to COVID-19, could Porsche host an event to launch the 911 Turbo S on a runway at Sydney Airport?

“I feel like I’ve got the golden ticket to Willy Wonka.”

That’s how one Porsche enthusiast described receiving a ‘boarding pass’ to what is one of the most exclusive events ever held on four wheels: Launch Control.

Months of planning has turned a Porsche Centre Sydney South boardroom brainstorm of driving the new 911 Turbo S down one of Sydney Airport’s main runways into a reality.

“We always knew we wanted to do something special to launch the 911 Turbo S type 992,” explains Belinda Coen, Marketing and Events Manager of Porsche Centre Sydney South.

“Operating in the current climate at such a reduced capacity, Sydney Airport said they were able to entertain the idea [of hosting a vehicle launch on a runway]. Launch Control was born.”

Forty-eight 911 Turbo customers were handed the keys to the new 911 Turbo S type 992 for the first event like this ever attempted at Australia's gateway airport. The venue for the Friday 30 October 2020 event was Runway 16L/34R, otherwise known as Sydney Airport's third runway.

Jutting into Botany Bay and stretching some 2.2 kilometres, the unprecedented event showcased the all-wheel drive acceleration of the latest iteration of a Porsche legend, in safe and controlled conditions on the expansive tarmac. With 478kW from its 3.8-litre twin-turbo boxer six-cylinder, the Turbo S can storm to 100km/h in 2.7 seconds.

Supervision was provided by Porsche Track Experience instructors, led by Deputy Chief Instructor and Bathurst 1000 champ Luke Youlden.

"It's such a unique and unrivalled event," said Coen. "It's probably never going to be repeated – it's once in a lifetime."

Simply getting to the runway has been an involved process involving almost a dozen stakeholders and months of meticulous preparation.

"There were numerous site visits before we could all agree it was actually possible," recalls Coen.

"Logistically there's so many things to consider, first and foremost safety."

The extensive process started with site assessments and an evaluation of the asphalt surface. Sure, the runway is designed for passenger jets with upwards of 50,000 horsepower and 300 seats, but it also needs to suit a car with some 170kg of aerodynamic downforce and suspension designed to lap the Nurburgring.

"A lot of work went into understanding the length of the runway, speeds the vehicle would be able to get to at various lengths and then working backwards ... so we could deal with any situation."

Being airside and driving a car on a runway at what was Australia's busiest airport in 2019 also created its fair share of paperwork.

"There have been all sorts of meetings ... it's definitely taken patience and perseverance from all parties."

As the event drew closer, Australia was gradually reawakening from its COVID-19 slumber. While there were short-lived concerns that increased movement may limit access to Sydney Airport, it quickly became apparent the third runway would still be available.

After months of secret work to bring the big idea to life, Launch Control was 'go-for-launch' on Friday 30 October 2020.

For those 48 faithful Turbo owners, many of whom would have been regulars at the many events Porsche hosts each year, they are set for an experience of a lifetime.

Consumption data

911 Turbo (Predecessor model)

911 Turbo S (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).

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https://newsroom.porsche.com/en_AU/2020/products/911-turbo-s-launch-control-the-event-22731.html

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