

Calm and chaos: the world of Sigurd Wongraven

27/12/2021 Sigurd Wongraven alternates between very loud and very quiet tones: as the front man of a black-metal band and as the composer of a soundscape for Edvard Munch. The combination of his two Porsche 911 GT3 and his Taycan forms the logical equivalent.

Only the rustling of the leaves can be heard when Sigurd Wongraven lies in his trekking hammock, which he stretches between two trees. Sometimes he needs silence. The vast forests around Oslo are his place of refuge. “I spend the night here and let the sound of darkness take effect on me. The moon, the smells, and the twinkling of the stars inspire me. That's where many of my lyrics come from,” says the 46-year-old, who has become known internationally as the front man of the Norwegian black-metal band Satyricon. Even in winter, Wongraven takes evening trips on cross-country skis with a headlamp – preferably away from the prepared trails, where experience in deep snow counts.

He knows the pitfalls of nature – and treats them with respect. His personality is characterised by a self-confident sense of calm. This comes from the intensity with which he devotes himself to absolutely everything he does. Breaking down barriers and changing tempo are his specialty – a life that

is like a composition of very loud and very quiet tones. If you experience him on stage in a black rocker outfit with morbid white makeup backed by a heavy beat, it is hard to imagine him dreaming in a hammock. The combination of powerful noise and soft tones continues in his garage: two Porsche 911 GT3 cars (a 991 and a 992) share the space with a Porsche Taycan 4S.

Founding member of the band Satyricon

Wongraven has been living life in the fast lane since he left school at 17 without qualifications. Music was more important to him and he had obtained a recording contract with Satyricon. He wanted to span genres and create something new. And he was rooted in the then-young genre of black metal – a dark underground direction with a predominantly Scandinavian history. Wongraven learned to play the drums and later switched to guitar. Influenced by the forefathers of heavy rock, he was fascinated by the style of Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi. His furious riffs in minor key are reflected in Wongraven's special sound, which put Norway on the global metal map. As a founding member of Satyricon, Wongraven belongs to the first generation of the black-metal movement.

He is a singer and songwriter who grumbles and snarls like a predatory animal in the song 'King'. He developed this style himself and has been experimenting with it ever since, without ever losing his appreciation for old blues music. Wongraven can talk for hours about music and performances from Sydney to St. Petersburg. "The band's territory is clubs and medium-sized halls," he says, explaining the tour planning. "In stadiums, the contact with our special fans is lost."

A multi-layered tapestry of sound for works by Edvard Munch

Between the Satyricon albums 'Volcano' and 'Now, Diabolical', Wongraven followed another great passion: in his late 20s, he bought his first Porsche 911 – a black Carrera 4 (993). "The last one with air cooling," as he proudly states. "For me, the 911 has always been like a Les Paul, to draw a comparison with style-defining guitars: an absolute classic in form and sound." He rocked his way through everyday life with the car, transporting his snowboards to the slopes around the Holmenkollen himself.

He challenged the Porsche, studied it in his own thorough way and stayed loyal to the brand. Through discovery and passionately delving deeper into the subject to reach a level of true expertise – that is also how the artist started his second career as a wine producer. That was after the success of the album 'The Age of Nero', released in 2008. "After almost 15 years with the band, I needed fresh impetus." Cuvées bearing his name have long since become an established label.

Currently, a completely new chapter in his eventful life is being created in a farmer's cottage made of dark-brown logs, converted into a high-tech recording studio with a wonderful Nordic ambience: a sound installation for a special exhibition in the spectacular Edvard Munch Museum, which protrudes like a cliff over the bank of Oslo harbour. Together with sound engineer Erik Ljunggren, who has previously sat behind the mixing desk with the band a-ha, Wongraven rolls out a multi-layered musical

tapestry. This will envelop a special selection of Munch's extensive oeuvre in a cloud of sound.

Satyricon & Munch is the name of the combination. The opening is on 30 April, 2022. "Dealing with this master is the biggest challenge of my career so far," admits the musician. "Munch's harsh realism initially met with scandal. An anti-establishment figure who had to battle to assert himself. That fits with me!" Wongraven silently takes in the black-and-white lithograph 'The Kiss of Death' – it is one of his favourites by Munch.

Sigurd Wongraven and the GT3 on the racetrack

After the silence, it's time for the loud side to come out again: this time the Rudskogen Motorsenter provides the stage – a 3.25-kilometre racetrack designed by the German architect Hermann Tilke, the man behind almost all modern Formula One racetracks. This is where the Oslo Porsche racing community meets.

The metalhead reveals his course record with emphasis on the last decimal place – 1:32.7 minutes. "First you drive to knock off seconds, at some point that becomes tenths," he explains. The Guards Red GT3 (991) with his initials on the license plate is another challenge to which he devotes himself meticulously.

As a member of the Rudskogen Drivers' Club, it took him a whole year to internalise the track and master the 368 kW (500 PS) sports car along every metre and in all manoeuvres. In this environment, too, the high standards Wongraven sets himself are the foundation of the cool confidence with which he now analyses the course. The name of the long, sloping straight sounds like the title of a metal album: ANGSTEN. And the bend that follows is a sharp change of direction perfectly suited to the habits of this driver, who is always on the hunt for new experiences.

A bridge between eras

"Go with the flow" is a premise from hip-hop that Wongraven heeds as a fan of the hit New York group Beastie Boys. Since the autumn of 2020, the father of two sons has been driving his Taycan 4S through Norway, the country with the world's highest density of electric vehicles. He raves about acceleration and torque, and draws an extensive comparison between the switch from the GT3 to the electric sports car and a change of guitar.

The fact that his Taycan attracts attention at every Oslo traffic light is not only due to the exclusivity of the brand: the free spirit has had the legendary Salzburg design added to the exterior as a decal. A moving memento of the Porsche 917, with which Hans Herrmann and Richard Attwood clinched the first Porsche overall victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1970. "The inspiration came from Porsche Cars North America," he says, "to mark the launch in Florida, the Taycan was presented in four famous racing looks."

However, pure nostalgia is not a relevant factor for the avant-gardist. What matters is that the design with the emblematic #23 racing number symbolises a bridge between two automotive eras. “I’m learning to appreciate electric driving more and more. It is a positive development and one that is irreversible. At the same time, I enjoy every ride in the GT3. And above all,” concludes Sigurd Wongraven, “I’m excited to see what the next challenges will be!”

Info

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Consumption data

Taycan 4S (2023)
Fuel consumption / Emissions

WLTP*
Electric power consumption* combined (WLTP) 24.1 – 19.8 kWh/100 km
CO emissions* combined (WLTP) 0 g/km
CO2 class A Class

911 GT3
Fuel consumption / Emissions

WLTP*
Fuel consumption* combined (WLTP) 13.0 – 12.9 l/100 km
CO emissions* combined (WLTP) 294 – 293 g/km
CO2 class G Class

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, COEmissions 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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