

Classic Cayennes get resto-mod treatment as stars of the Icons of Porsche Festival

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24/11/2022 Twenty years after its launch, the first-generation Porsche Cayenne has had new life breathed into it as part of a project in the United Arab Emirates ahead of this weekend's Icons of Porsche festival.

The Porsche Cayenne is a milestone car for the Middle East. When it launched in 2002, it opened the door to a new customer base, introducing a capable and luxurious off-road sports car to the region's vast deserts and valleys for the first time. Ever since, it has proved to be the ideal vehicle for partaking in the region's love of the outdoors and off-roading.

Two decades on, and to mark the 20th anniversary of the iconic SUV, Porsche Middle East and Africa

FZE set a challenge for the United Arab Emirates' two Porsche importers – Porsche Centre Dubai and the Northern Emirates (Al Naboodah Automobiles) and Porsche Centre Abu Dhabi (Ali & Sons) – to customise a fleet of first-generation (E1) Cayenne SUVs that would mark the vehicle's contribution to the region.

The carefully restored cars have already been put through their paces by members of the media at a press event in the mountainous desert region of Hatta, near Dubai, and now the SUVs will go on display at the second Icons of Porsche festival, which takes place over the weekend of 26-27 November in the Dubai Design District. There, the eight cars will be on display in the Camp Cayenne area alongside the latest generation of the SUV, which will be available to take guests on a thrilling off-road experience, alongside expert drivers.

"We were tasked with regenerating the first-generation Cayenne to highlight its offroad capabilities through accessorising and modifying where necessary, as well as utilising some of the accessories that have recently become available for it from Porsche Classic," says Darren Abel, Brand Manager for Porsche Centre Abu Dhabi, Ali & Sons. "In conjunction with Porsche Centre Dubai, we purchased four E1s each, ranging from 2007 to 2010 examples, and I think both teams have enjoyed modifying them and giving the E1 a new lease of life."

"I'm really excited about these cars because they've all come out better than any of us could have imagined and they look superb," adds Mark Sinclair, General Manager of Porsche Centre Dubai and the Northern Emirates, Al Naboodah Automobiles. "We have three Cayenne S models plus a Cayenne GTS, which we've modified by focusing on underbody protection and ground clearance. We didn't need to touch anything mechanical because this model is very capable when it comes to the drivetrain."

Meeting strict requirements

Sourcing good condition, relatively standard first-generation models proved to be the biggest challenge for the two teams as they had to meet strict requirements that included the cars being GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) specification.

"They've gone through the same inspection process that any Porsche Approved pre-owned vehicle would go through, so they've all been through the workshop and required quite a lot of work, which you would expect from cars that are 17 to 20 years old, but we already have customers lining up to buy them," says Abel, whose team modified their four cars with lift kits and off-road wheels. "We've also put a rear spare wheel carrier on them, which meant we had to make a holder to attach the spare wheel, as well as a roof rack system for the roof tent, which is one of the main accessories we are displaying during Icons of Porsche."

"The roof tent is pretty cool," adds Sinclair, about the new Cayenne accessory from Porsche Tequipment. "It's a Porsche pop-up tent, and you simply unclip it, it unfolds, a ladder pops out and it can then sleep two people on top of the car."

His team at Porsche Centre Dubai also added 30-millimetre spacers to the rear wheels and 25 mm spacers at the front to give their cars a wider stance, along with locally modified tubular bumper bars for extra clearance.

“The result is a much stronger look but the whole project involved a lot of tiny and constant tweaking, realigning and final adjusting to make the cars look just right. It was all great fun and has been a really exciting project to work on,” says Sinclair, who revealed that a number of potential buyers have already been lined up for the restored SUVs.

Renewed love for the E1 Cayenne

“One of the cars we bought from a customer, who asked why we wanted to buy it,” he says. “We explained our plans to modify and upgrade it and he said it sounded like a car he might like, so asked if we’d consider selling it back to him after the Icons of Porsche event is finished. I think he’s found a renewed love for his E1 Cayenne.”

While the aim of the project was to modify the cars, Porsche Centre Abu Dhabi also wanted to demonstrate how well the original Cayenne has aged over the past two decades. Keeping the revisions to one of the cars to a bare minimum, they fitted a set of limited-edition matt-black 8J x 18 ET 57 Porsche Classic wheels, which have been powder coated for added protection and feature a laser-engraved Porsche logo. Besides a roof tent, the team also applied graphics, choosing from a range of three available decal sets – ‘Adventure’ (Guards Red), ‘Rallye’ (Ice Race Blue) and ‘Hunt’ (Hunting Car Olive).

Abel explains: “With the other cars we included off-road accessories to demonstrate how far it’s possible to go to transform a Cayenne into pretty much anything a customer wants.” The possibilities will further increase when Porsche Classic adds additional parts to its offroad accessory range in 2023.

The 20th anniversary of the Cayenne is just one of the themes of this year’s Icons of Porsche festival, which launched in 2021 when it attracted more than 7,000 visitors and 1,000 Porsche cars. The event is a meeting point for Porsche enthusiasts, families and a wide variety of international and local communities that are driven by a shared love of classic cars, art, music, off-roading and a range of exciting experiences.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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