

A Christmas pilgrimage – in a Taycan Turbo S

20/12/2024 The Pacific Coast Highway. The Route Napoleon. And the road from Nasareth to Bethlehem ... Wherever there are great driving routes, you find Porsche cars. And as Christmas beckons, so too does a particularly special stretch of road.

Wales, our destination this festive season, is justly famous for a number of things. The warmth of its welcome, the beauty of its landscape and its stirring male voice choirs are just a few of them. In recent years, it has also earned a reputation for having some of the world's greatest driving roads.

Enthusiasts head here from far and wide to experience the 'Evo Triangle' – a triangular loop of road made famous by the British motoring magazine, 'Evo'. Automotive photographers also regularly frequent the Elan Valley – one of the industry's most beautiful of backdrops. And it's even rumoured that car manufacturers – and not just the British ones – head out on to the Welsh roads in convoys of camouflaged prototypes late at night as part of the final sign-off process of their latest product's suspension settings.

The fact that some of these incredible roads lie between the tiny hamlets of Nasareth and Bethlehem was therefore excuse enough in the run-up to Christmas to head out on a road trip in a wintry white Taycan Turbo S – with a special envelope tucked in the glovebox.

Hairpin bends and quicker straights

The route starts in Nasareth, named after its 201-year-old chapel, and spelt with an 's' as there is no 'z' in the rich and ancient Welsh language. On the day of the drive, the UK Meteorological Office has issued warnings of 150 km/h winds and torrential rain sweeping in during the afternoon so there is no time to admire the views out over the Irish Sea. The Taycan makes a comfortable job of the first section of the 200-kilometre route, a combination of the optional Porsche Active Ride chassis and powerful electric powertrain causing progress to be serene – the Taycan providing a rather different experience to the single donkey power of the nativity story.

The next landmark on the route is the Mach Loop, a series of valleys between Dolgellau and Machynlleth, these days something of a place of pilgrimage for plane-spotters. Over the Llyn Clywedog dam and across the hills beyond, the Taycan shows itself to be 100 per cent Porsche as swooping bend follows swooping bend, the cadence of the route punctuated by occasional hairpins and quicker straights. This is precisely the sort of driving that Wales is famous for – and the Taycan feels perfectly at home.

Three friendly shepherds

As we get closer to Bethlehem, the skies darken as the storm arrives. There will be no stars visible tonight, for either following or photographing cars under. We stop to take some shots by the village sign and a modern-day Bethlehem shepherd eases to a halt next to us, grandsons perched with him on his ATV, as he asks if we need any help. These three kind men are on their way to check on their sheep, literally watching their flocks by night, and confess that they've left the sheepdog snoozing by the fire as they didn't have the heart to move him.

Appropriately enough, kindness seems to be a bit of a theme in this tiny little community. There's no inn any longer, but there is a village hall where a group of locals volunteers at this time of year. People used to come to the local post office from all over the country to get a Bethlehem postmark on their Christmas cards and letters but, when the post office closed, this service came to an end.

A Christmas letter with Bethlehem stamp

Nia Clement, volunteer manager of the Bethlehem Village Hall, picks up the story. "The tradition of sending your Christmas cards with Bethlehem on the envelope had been on Blue Peter [the BBC's flagship children's programme]. Busloads of people used to come especially and we were worried that

they'd be disappointed when it stopped. So a group of us volunteer every year in the run up to Christmas. We're here every day to welcome folk, put a special Bethlehem frank on their envelopes and raise some money for the community at the same time. We lay on lunches sometimes, so that we can look after groups of ramblers, motorcyclists and even participants in a charity donkey walk! It's not an inn, and it's only tiny, but I suppose we make room," she laughs.

Christmas letter posted, thank-yous and goodbyes administered, the Taycan gildes off nearly silently into the night. And, in a touching similarity with 2,024 years ago, our special delivery is accompanied by the kindness of strangers.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Consumption data

Taycan Turbo S (WLTP)*: Electrical consumption combined: 19.9 – 17.8 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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