

Ice. Ice. Baby!

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24/02/2015 Searching for the perfect drift: Those who participate in the Porsche Driving Experience in Levi, Finland, are given the opportunity to push the sports cars from Zuffenhausen to the limit.

There's nothing but snow and ice as far as the eye can see, temperatures are well below freezing, and the light conditions are completely different from the brightness of more southern latitudes. There's a very special mood here indeed, whereby 'here' refers to a location 170 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle in the Lapland region of Finland.

The largely undisturbed wintry landscape in this region tends to make people rather tranquil – that is unless they come here for the Porsche Driving Experience, in which case their adrenaline gets pumping and they become filled with feelings of excitement and happiness. The event in Levi, which is located approximately 1,000 kilometres north of Helsinki, offers participants the opportunity to experience a whole new dimension in driving. More specifically, participants are trained on specially prepared courses to execute manoeuvres on snow and ice that would be impossible to carry out on normal roads.

Driving pleasure. In a Porsche. On ice.

They are taught by professional instructors, many of them are Porsche employees from Zuffenhausen, Weissach or Leipzig. Most of these instructors are engineers. There is also a theoretical component that offers a perfect foundation for the practical training sessions. The result is a programme that allows participants to gradually hone their driving skills in wintry conditions. The theoretical component includes instruction on the laws of 'driving physics' as they apply to aspects such as oversteer, understeer and vehicle behaviour on slippery surfaces. Still, more than anything else, the practical training is all about driving pleasure. In a Porsche. On ice.

Participants climb into a 911 Turbo for the introductory training session and follow the orders radioed to them by their instructor – for example, 'hit the brakes briefly here, steer to the left, and now let the rear of the vehicle swing out and hit the gas!' It sounds easy enough, but participants quickly realize after their first few attempts that it does indeed take practice. Well, that's why the Porsche Driving Experience exists to begin with.

As it turns out, most of participants get the hang of it after the first few training runs: With 520 PS of power behind them, they're able to get the vehicle into a curve at the right angle as spikes on the rear tyres spin round and round and kick up a swirling cloud of powdery snow **(see the videos and photos in the left column)**. Even if things don't go as planned, it's no big deal: Drivers can quickly radio for assistance if their Porsche happens to get caught in a heavy snow pile after a drift, in which case a Cayenne will arrive on the scene to tow the sports car back onto the course.

Porsche Driving Experience: Run laps with the professionals

Two people who would never require such help were recently in Levi for a special driving event for journalists and bloggers: LMP1 drivers Neel Jani and Timo Bernhard, who race for Porsche in the 24 Hours of Le Mans and other races, took participants in Finland for a ride in a 918 Spyder and a 911 GT3 Cup over a handling course and showed them how driving professionals are able to keep things moving fast, even on snow and ice.

The Porsche Driving Experience offers participants around the world the opportunity to hit the road on different types of closed driving circuits of varying difficulty in order to improve their driving skills, test their limits and those of Porsche vehicles, and thus ultimately enhance their own safety. The programme's events are mainly targeted at Porsche owners who want to get to know their vehicle better and push it to the limit. However, the Porsche Driving Experience is also open to those who would like to try out a different model for a change or simply wish to make their dream of 'driving a Porsche once' come true.

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