

The Uncommon Cold

This article reflects the status at the time of its publication. The content may since have become outdated.

17/01/2018 Putting the Panamera Turbo Sport Turismo through its paces in the icy arena of North Sea surfing.

The fast and narrow A66 traverses northern England's Pennine mountains. At almost 1,400ft above sea level it's a regular target for sudden and intense snow storms in winter, and tonight is no exception. Minus on the mercury, middle of the night, and a solitary car is inching on regardless, steady and determined, towards the most northerly point on the British mainland. For a spot of midwinter surfing.

The headlights of the Panamera Turbo illuminate a dense blizzard, windscreen wipers frenetic, 20-inch rear wheels shod with mighty 315/35 ZR 20 rubber tracing the fringe of frozen snow that lines the verges and gradually spreads across the road.

When Porsche unveiled the Sport Turismo at the Geneva Motor Show last March, the possibilities were limitless. Executive levels of luxury, super car performance in Turbo trim and unprecedented levels of

practicality. What sort of an adventure could do it justice?

The sweet spot in this increasingly diverse range

An epic drive, over challenging roads through stunning scenery to a remote location and a rendezvous with one of the hardiest sportsmen on the planet. All very Sport Turismo. But as visibility drops further and the Arctic blast intensifies, with 400 miles still to go, is this all a step too far?

The Panamera Turbo Sport Turismo is for many the sweet spot in this increasingly diverse range, lighter and more agile than the all-conquering Turbo S E-Hybrid at a little more than two tonnes, still capable of hitting 188mph and seeing off 62mph in an astonishing 3.8 seconds (Fuel consumption combined 9.5 – 9.4 l/100 km; CO_2 emissions 217 – 215 g/km). Boot space is up to 520 litres, and there's something about that lower roofline and reimagined rear end that seems to work a little magic on everyone.

As it turns out, the four-wheel drive system and that vast quantity of regulation rubber prove to be more than enough to keep the Sport Turismo on the black stuff, and the miles, however tense, keep ticking by.

The man at the end of this journey is something of an enigma. Mark Boyd is a professional surfer who represents his native Scotland on the international stage while also competing for himself at the highest level. He has surfed all over the world, with destinations including Indonesia and Costa Rica, but his preferred patch is 58.6° North, in the tiny Scottish town of Thurso.

The draw here is one of the best right-hand banks in Europe. But the waves are at their peak in the depths of winter, when sea temperatures will drop to a fraction above freezing and the melt off the surrounding mountains brings blocks of ice in amongst the breakers. Mark is a single-minded sort of man then. A Porsche sort of man.

Snow flurries whip around the Panamera

The Sport Turismo rumbles into Thurso at first light the following day and heads straight for the shore. Down a rutted farm track into a muddy yard strewn with rusting agricultural machinery, a wire fence separates the car from a hundred yards of seaweed-covered rockpools that lead out to the fierce and foaming North Sea. The wind is howling in from the east and sleet begins to settle on the windows.

Daylight at this time of year never really gets going, with a 9am dawn bleeding into a 3pm dusk with little in between. Mark uses the tailgate of the Sport Turismo to provide cover as he pulls on wetsuit, boots and gloves still damp from the day before.

Snow flurries whip around the car as he calmly waxes his board. The sea beyond is a vast, grey swell, choppy in gusting wind and thundering heavily into the bay to our left. He picks his way carefully down

to the rocks and heads silently out to the surf.

Mark began surfing on the Moray coast at the age of 14. A place in the Scottish surf team and appearances at national and international competitions have seen his competitive reputation grow in recent years, but it is his extreme hardiness that makes him so special. From the slippery shoreline he is almost lost in an icy spray that whips off the water and rattles across frozen rock pools.

Mark is fighting choppy and difficult waves with considerable lulls between sets. He waits patiently in the swell, his tiny short board fully submerged, a small black figure in an immensity of grey, framed by the snow-capped hills of Orkney in the far distance.

After more than two hours he comes in, rosy-cheeked and satisfied. “Every day of the year I'll be out there,” he explains as he wanders back towards the sanctuary of the car, “as long as there's some waves.”

It would seem that Mark and his small handful of fellow Caithness surfers are cut from a different cloth. Mark changes back into a hoodie and some torn jeans and straps his board to the roof of the Sport Turismo. The light is already fading and a deep orange sun peeps beneath the clouds, shrouding Thurso with a slightly misleading appearance of warmth as the first few street lights begin to twinkle into life.

Surfing in Northern Scotland

So this is the place? A far cry from the balmy Caribbean or crystal clear Indian Ocean. Mark thinks for a while as we drop down into town. “I like to get out of the cold now and again and get to some warner climates – it's a nice break – but I definitely feel tied to the north of Scotland and the waves I know so well. I'd say I am a cold-water surfer at heart.”

By the time the kit is stowed it is dark, save for the lights of a ferry pitching and rolling across the water towards Stromness. The ground is frozen firm under foot and another dusting of snow is blowing in off the fields behind the town. It's more than 800 miles home and the weather is taking a turn for the worse.

The Panamera heads quietly out of town and the reassuring burble of its exhausts echoes off snow-capped drystone walls. The gentle rhythm of the wipers marks out the metre of slow and steady progress south. The wind roars conspicuously through the empty roof rack the whole way home. Mark Boyd proves a difficult man to forget.

Link Collection

Link to this article
https://newsroom.porsche.com/en/scene-passion/porsche-panamera-turbo-sport-turismo-mark-boyd-surfer-waves-thurso-scotland-icy-conditions-14729.html

Media Package
https://pmdb.porsche.de/newsroomzips/c3dde04c-3c9d-4555-9b69-d02f8a963b85.zip

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