

A wave of enthusiasm: Timo Bernhard meets Sebastian Steudtner

13/05/2022 The 36-year-old surfer Sebastian Steudtner gets two-time Le Mans overall winner Timo Bernhard wet at the DTM in Portugal.

With spring-like temperatures of 22 degrees celsius and bright sunshine at the season opener in Portimão, Portugal, the DTM's drivers and teams are drawn to the beach. Between the final test drives and the first training session, a free day to swim and unwind beckons. As a number of drivers splash about in the shallow water of the Algarve coast, seven drivers set off for Praia de Cordoama beach, some 50 kilometres southwest of the race venue. One of them is Porsche Brand Ambassador Timo Bernhard. The two-time Le Mans winner and endurance world champion has another title-holder at his side on this day: Sebastian Steudtner, the reigning big wave world champion and Porsche partner. The 36-year-old sends Bernhard into the surf.

"I don't know if my forays can really be described as surfing," laughs the racing driver following his

attempts – some a little ungainly – on the beginner's board. "But I had probably the most capable teacher in the world. In the end, I was actually on the board two or three times, surfing a wave. Those few seconds alone gave me a tremendously liberating feeling." According to Steudtner, the water masses in the immediate vicinity of the beach were "perhaps 50 cm high" – not quite what the surfing pro is used to. Steudtner's natural habitat are the waves in the wildest surf on earth, which can reach a towering 30 metres.

"There was a rock face at the beach that was about 30 metres tall. Sebastian said that the waves he rides are sometimes that high. That's absolutely inconceivable for me; I don't even want to think about it," says Bernhard, owner of the new DTM Team 75 Bernhard, shaking his head in disbelief. "He enjoyed diving into my world – in the truest sense of the word," says Steudtner, slapping his thighs in amusement after his student's involuntary underwater interludes. Even so: he who laughs last ...

A day later, with the sun still beating down, the neoprene suits have long since dried. Time for the second leg: Bernhard introduces Porsche partner Steudtner to his high-speed world of racing. On completion of the DTM practice session, a Carmine Red Porsche 911 Carrera GTS rolls into the pit lane of the Autodrómo Internacional do Algarve near Portimão at 18:00.

While Bernhard beams with anticipation, Steudtner is visibly nervous, but also excited, as he surveys the 353 kW (480 PS; 911 Carrera GTS: Fuel consumption* combined (WLTP) 11.4 – 10.4 l/100 km, CO emissions* combined (WLTP) 258 – 236 g/km, CO2 class G) beast. The two men put on their helmets. Bernhard jumps into the driving seat first to show his 'learner driver' the ideal line and braking points on the 4.7 km circuit. For two laps, the Porsche Brand Ambassador really puts his foot down, calmly explaining how the job is done.

The big wave world champion is visibly thrilled during a short pause in the pit lane. Then they swap roles. Steudtner takes over the steering wheel and heads out onto the undulating track. "Timo gave me superb instruction at the wheel of the 911. It was spectacular and exhilarating because I've never driven on a racetrack before. I really got into a flow, it was amazing," enthuses the Esslingen native. "Of course, they go a lot faster when they're racing. But no one should forget that a car is an enclosed piece of sports equipment and there is an abundance of crumple zones. It's very different in my case. In surfing, everything's a lot more direct, you feel it immediately all over your body – and you can be travelling at up to 80 km/h, but there's no brake on the board."

The engineers at Porsche Engineering are hardly likely to develop a brake for Steudtner's high-tech equipment. Nevertheless, these experts have made every effort in recent months to improve the world champion's surfboard for the tasks ahead. "I'll be in the wind tunnel with the board for two days in mid-May. Such a consistent development of a surfboard is certainly a novelty in big wave surfing," says Steudtner.

Consumption data

911 Carrera GTS
Fuel consumption / Emissions

WLTP*
Fuel consumption* combined (WLTP) 11.4 – 10.4 l/100 km
CO emissions* combined (WLTP) 258 – 236 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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