The 911 GT3: from racing car straight to series production mode

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01/09/2021 In the new Porsche 911 GT3, the brand's most powerful genes combine to create something even stronger. Motorsport legends Walter Röhrl and Jörg Bergmeister provide expert analysis of the state-of-the-art racer for the road.

The highlight reel in Walter Röhrl's mind plays an over 20-year-old thriller. "We never would have thought that a series production car could lay down a sub-eight-minute lap on the Nordschleife," the motorsport legend recalls. In 1999, the first Porsche 911 GT3 pulled it off. Not least because it was driven around the Nürburgring by the two-time rally world champion himself. After 20.6 kilometres, the clock stopped at 7:56.33 minutes. It was a sensation! For Jörg Bergmeister, a 23-year-old up-and-coming Porsche factory driver at the time, there were no doubts: the GT3 was his dream car.

Now Porsche has presented the seventh generation of the high-performance sports car and, together with Lars Kern, Bergmeister catapulted around the infamous Green Hell during the final development drives. The absolute best time from four almost equally fast laps on what is now a 20.8-kilometre test circuit was set by development driver Kern: an astonishing 6:59.927 minutes. Roughly a minute faster than the first one. "A world of difference," says Röhrl.

The latest GT3 incorporates more racing technology than any of its predecessors. The layout of the double wishbone front axle, the refined aerodynamics with the swan-neck rear wing, and the striking diffuser are just a few of many examples. Bergmeister, now 45, knows the components well from the Porsche 911 RSR – the GT factory racing car that delivered Le Mans victories and championship titles for Porsche.

Stimulating sound sensation

All perfectly lovely, all high-tech, but the absolute sensation always was and still remains this absolute sound. "Exhilarating," says Röhrl approvingly. "No car lover can resist it." Bergmeister nods in agreement. He's working on the next generation of enthusiasts. "My three-year-old son always likes it when the sport exhaust system is activated," he grins.

The orchestral, naturally aspirated engine mobilises 375 kW (510 PS). The four-litre, six-cylinder boxer engine is based on the racing engine in the 911 GT3 R and is used in a practically unmodified state in the new 911 GT3 Cup. All of the high-performance technology comes from Porsche Motorsport

–developed in Flacht, the legendary complex at the southern end of the Weissach Development Centre.

When equipped with the standard PDK transmission, the new GT3 sprints from 0 to 100 km/h in just 3.4 seconds and achieves a top speed of 318 km/h. It delivers its maximum engine output at 8,400 rpm. “Over 20 years, practically all the advancements that were developed for the GT racing cars were adopted in the road car,” notes Röhrl.

“I have never driven a better series production car,” Bergmeister adds. “You always know exactly what the car is going to do.” Röhrl confirms: “Balance is the key to driving fast. And I’ve been a weight reduction fanatic all my life.” The 1.96-metre-tall rally legend pats his flat stomach with a grin. “When I hear that the new GT3, which is much larger, and much more capable, essentially weighs just under 70 kilos more than the first GT3, I can only doff my hat to a masterpiece of technology.”

From the GT race car straight to the series model

The car’s commendable weight is also down to insights from the racing world. The front hood made of carbon fibre-reinforced plastic, for example, or the lightweight glass windows, optimised brake rotors and forged alloy wheels. The lightweight sport exhaust system itself saves a stately 10 kg. All told, the GT3 weighs in at a svelte 1,435 kg. Die-hard purists can order a six-speed manual transmission that tips the scales with an additional 17 kg. Further weight-optimised components, such as the exposed carbon fibre roof, are also available.

The visual shift assistant with coloured bars to the left and right of the tachometer is useful on the track. The bars fill in yellow and flash blue at the optimum shifting speed. The shift light is racing technology from Flacht as well. And the new track screen delivers performance-relevant information such as the tyre and oil pressure, temperatures and fill levels. With all these and other details, the GT3 is unquestionably an athlete designed for the thrill of a track excursion. But not only that.

The most powerful series 911 with a naturally aspirated engine offers an astonishing level of everyday comfort for what is a razor-sharp driving machine. What else is there to say? The final word goes to the grand master of driving: “I am often asked which is my favourite 911,” says Röhrl. “It’s always the latest one – and the next one.”

Info

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Consumption data

911 GT3 (Modello precedente)

*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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