Porsche Track Experience Celebrates 20th Anniversary

09/04/2020 The name has changed but the successful formula remains the same. For 20 years, Porsche Track Experience has been making dreams come true for American car enthusiasts.

Porsche Track Experience (PTX), one of the longest-running manufacturer-operated driving schools in the U.S., is celebrating two decades of driver development, with a focus on refining driving techniques while teaching visitors to be safer, more accurate drivers.

Programs offer progression as the driver's skills improve, ranging from a one-day, thrill-seeking dash to a four-day instructional course that enables graduates to apply for a racing license. In 2019, more than 2,500 participants from four continents and 47 states benefitted from the program. Including demonstration laps and non-driving guests, the total number of visitors was well above 3,000 people passing through the doors at PTX.

The program benefits from extraordinarily experienced instructors, led by a five time Daytona winner. "When people buy a Porsche, they expect a certain standard," said PTX Chief Driving Instructor Hurley Haywood, America's most accomplished endurance racer. "And Porsche is one of the few manufacturers that run a bona fide school to teach their customers how to drive all the different variants."

Located at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Alabama, since 2003, Porsche Track Experience first launched in 2000 as Porsche Driving Experience at Georgia's Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta. Until 2018, it was known as Porsche Sport Driving School. The name and venue have changed, but the philosophy remains the same as it did two decades ago - give participants equal amounts of skills and thrills with the guidance of world-class, Porsche-certified professional instructors.

The roots of Porsche driving courses go back almost as far as the company itself. The first driver training under the marque took place in Switzerland in 1954 with German racing legend Herbert Linge among the instructors. Stateside, it was just two years later that Porsche importer and dealer Max Hoffman along with the Porsche Club of America arranged the first course on a small track in Thompson, Connecticut. The training efforts around performance driving were organized under the name "Sportfahrschule Porsche" (Porsche Sport Driving School) in 1974, coinciding with the premiere of the 911 Turbo: a car so powerful and dynamic that it confronted its driver with new tasks in terms of vehicle control.

Today, all PTX courses start with registration and breakfast before a briefing on driving techniques and, above all, safety. By 9:00 a.m., participants are behind the wheel. They have come to drive, so the days are tailored to maximize seat time. Split into smaller groups, part of the day is spent rotating between

modules focused on mastering single elements such as oversteer and understeer on a wet skid pad, precision on an autocross course, and hard braking.

The majority of the time is dedicated to the main event: the 2.38-mile track. With 16 corners and more than 80 feet of elevation, the FIA-certified circuit is challenging enough to test even experienced drivers as they advance through the various PTX courses. Returning customers make up over 30 percent of the retail participants, proving there is always room for skill improvement - or simply more thrills. To keep the learning curve steep and the excitement high, each program features a variety of the latest Porsche sports cars. With a lineup that includes the 718 Cayman GTS, Panamera Turbo, 911 Carrera S, 911 Turbo S and even a Cayenne for off-road elements, each vehicle showcases a unique combination of powertrain, drivetrain and dynamics. Joining shortly will be the track-oriented 718 Cayman GT4.

The 20th anniversary is currently being celebrated with a special exhibit in the Heritage Gallery of the Porsche Experience Center Atlanta.

Info

PTX programs are open to the public, and corporate events are also available. Read more and make a reservation at: www.porschedriving.com/porsche-track-experience

The decision in 2018 to name the marque's official U.S. driving school Porsche Track Experience positions the program alongside the many other Porsche Experiences offered. They include:

- **Porsche Experience Centers**in Los Angeles, CA, and Atlanta, GA, where visitors can immerse themselves in the brand with 90-minute driving experiences, car displays, fine dining, simulator labs and more.
- **Porsche Ice Experience.**For those wishing to swap out track tarmac for a more slippery surface, the Porsche Ice Experience in Canada gives a rare opportunity to push the boundaries in conditions that would normally call for caution.
- **Porsche Travel Experience.**Globetrotters might instead look to the Porsche Travel Experience, which takes participants on epic road trips, piloting the latest Porsche sports cars along the most scenic routes in the world.
- **Porsche Racing Experience.**This is a unique opportunity for drivers who want to get a taste of 911 GT3 Cup race cars and potentially make the jump into competitive series like the Porsche Carrera Cup or the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup.

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Subline: The first U.S. Porsche driver training in 1956

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