A day at the Porsche Track Experience

27/11/2020 Shaun Birley and his dad Lindsay experience a day at the Porsche Track Experience in Queensland, Australia.

Why drive one when you can drive them ALL! Well, that's now an option at Mount Cotton in Queensland. The Porsche Track Experience allows you to get behind the wheel of various Porsche models in a range of conditions that will test your driving ability.

The Porsche Track Experience caters for all driving abilities, with the aim for you to walk out at the end of the day as a better and more educated driver from when you walked in.

The first section of the morning focuses on the physics and theory around cornering. The science behind weight shifting through braking and accelerating, and the positioning of the car when approaching the apex when hitting the various courses. Such as the Motorkhana, closed circuit and skid pan.

If you have yet to watch the video above, the track day is a full day out with the Porsche team with the aim to make you a faster BUT safer driver. Porsche's professional divers are there to push you to the edge of your comfort zone and trust me when I say they do exactly that. You will find yourself gripping the wheel too tight, becoming ridged through the shoulders and tense through the core, but these are all characteristics the team will point out to you. Towards the end of the day, I found myself relaxing more and letting the mechanics and technology of the cars do most of the work.

The closed-circuit section of the track provides the driver with a one-way road that would essentially simulate a public road. Mount Cotton's trees and shrubbery emulates that beautiful country drive you picture yourself in when you get your hands on a Porsche. The course is designed for you to tackle a range of cornering manoeuvres from chicanes, hairpin and blind bends. Drilling down on searching for that apex with your eyes up further down the road. Fortunately for us, the exercise allowed us to test a range of vehicles from the 718 Cayman GTS, 718 Boxster GTS, a 911 Carrera S, to the 911 Carrera 4S. Each drive felt slightly different, so I found myself adjusting quickly to the variety of cars, handling, braking and torque with each change over.

Welcome to "The Skid Pan", an exercise that I still have yet to master. Where the frustration lies with me here is in my own eagerness to put the pedal to the metal to drift around the corner. When in fact, it's an incredibly counter-intuitive process. The exercise is to accelerate until the rear wheels lose traction and come out from underneath you. Then you need to steer into the direction your rear tyres are heading with a slow and controlled pressure on the accelerator to create that drifting motion. It's a fine balance to master, but it's an exercise that teaches you to recognise and take control of the car in a

situation where a lot of people would tend to struggle.

The Motorkhana is where today's newfound confidence comes out to play. There was torrential rain for our group on the day, so that allowed us to execute both the skills we learnt on the close circuit road around cornering, as well as having to combat the wet surfaces similar to the skid pan.

The Motorkhana is a short course time trial around strategically placed cones that incorporate fairly tight cornering, which meant you had to be incredibly accurate with your braking and accelerating. There is plenty of room for error with each cone costing you a hefty 2-second penalty if it's knocked over.

Your final course time was your average time posted across 3 models, the 718 Boxster, the Macan GTS and the Cayman GTS. The trick here was not to get the old case of "The Led Foot". The course was specifically designed to reward smooth calculated drivers. Those who were wanting to get as much speed out of the cars as possible were punished by poor braking and time penalties when it came to pulling up in the stop zone.

Naturally, this is where the competitive claws of the class will come out. Everyone's attention is aimed directly at the timekeeper, monitoring every millisecond and cone fault. Nothing goes unnoticed when there is glory on the line. For me, my main goal was to beat the man who taught me to drive.

My father took an early lead in round one by a few seconds, but it was the last two drives I took control over him at the very end with just over a 2 second average due to a fallen cone during my Dads last lap. Earning me bragging rights at the family BBQ for a few more years to come.

This event comes highly recommended by Lindsay and I, and if it's something you want to get involved in, the Porsche Track Experience offers five levels of driver training within their fleet. Levels 1 and 2, or Precision and Precision Plus are both held at the Mount Cotton Training Centre. Levels 3 to 5 are hosted at Queensland Raceway. Each level slowly turns up the heat in both adrenaline and skill level. Starting from $1,595.00 AUD the Porsche Track Experience can now be booked online here.

Info

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