

PORSCHE V8 POWER

A TRACK-CAPABLE UTILITY SLOTTED TANTALIZINGLY BETWEEN THE CAYENNE S AND TWO CAYENNE TURBOS

BY JOE SAGE



Ten months ago, we called the 2012 Porsche Cayenne S a \$100k sports SUV that is “all business”—for its straightforward capabilities, but also for the sizable ka-ching factor in its Monroney sticker. Its base price was just \$65,000, but with options quickly totaled \$98,165.

For this year’s Cayenne GTS, we start with a base price just over \$80k, then option it up to over \$123k. The GTS is certainly also all business.

The Porsche Cayenne overall is available in a wide range of models, starting at \$49,600 and running up to \$146,000 base (for the new Cayenne Turbo S, a 2014 model). It’s not hard—in fact, pretty unavoidable in most cases—to throw the equivalent cost of a couple of Kias into your build, as well (see options in sidebar). There are other apples-and-oranges variables in the lineup— notably diesel and hybrid models. For a quick

grasp of the full Cayenne range, let’s look at engines, horsepower and ascending base price:

Cayenne	V6	.....300	.....\$49,600
Cayenne Diesel	V6(TD)	.....240	.....\$56,600
Cayenne S	V8	.....400	.....\$66,800
Cayenne S Hybrid	V6(S)	.....380	.....\$70,900
Cayenne GTS	V8	.....420	.....\$83,300
Cayenne Turbo	V8(T)	.....500	.....\$110,400
Cayenne Turbo S (2014)	V8(T)	.....550	.....\$146,000

Horsepower never tells the whole story, but is always useful in a performance-oriented brand such as Porsche. What 420 horses delivers in a Cayenne GTS includes a top track speed of 162 mph and a 0-to-60 time of 5.4 seconds (not bad at all for a utility vehicle that weighs 4597 lbs, yet in the face of all those other numbers can still deliver an estimated 21 MPG highway).

Still, you can almost buy two base Cayennes

for the price of the GTS (thus putting 600 hp in your two-car garage). Or you can spend \$16,500 less and buy a Cayenne S with just 20 hp less than the GTS (and very comparable track speed of 160, 0-to-60 of 5.6 and better highway mileage of 22).

The base Cayenne sports a 3.6L V6, the diesel a 3.0L V6 turbo diesel and the S Hybrid a supercharged 3.0L gasoline V6. The other four all have 4.8L V8 variants. The 400-hp Cayenne S and the 420-horse GTS we are driving here both have naturally-aspirated V8s, while the Turbo and Turbo S are both, predictably, twin-turbocharged.

The base Cayenne has the lowest torque (295 lb-ft, against 360 and 389 for the S and GTS, or 553 for the new Turbo S) and the slowest acceleration time (7.4 seconds, against 5-something for the S and GTS, and 4.3 for the Turbo S).

Put it all together, and the base Cayenne is a



clear winner for the base price shopper, while the Turbo S will be a clear winner for the gotta-have-it, hang-the-expense buyer. But between the S and the GTS, there still appears to be a significant gap in the bang-for-the-buck department. It can’t be in the GTS’s basic trim, given the \$40k needed to bring our tester up to its spec as presented.

Besides a 20-hp advantage (easily outweighed by a little driving technique), the GTS’s ride height is lowered 20mm, and it has a lower final drive ratio than the others (matching the top-dog Turbo S in the front, while 13 percent meatier in the rear, and 20 percent stronger all around than the Cayenne S). Snug ground effects and these gear ratios can help the GTS beat the S on the track.

The GTS is also differentiated by several style and trim elements, including glossy piano black trim, flared rocker panel skirts, wider wheel arches, the hood and front fascia of the \$110k Turbo, and twin matte black exhaust pipes. Those wheel flares house RS Spyder wheels with a modified offset, and upgraded GTS brakes are also sourced from the Turbo. Last year’s Cayenne S came to us in silver with black wheels, too, which we found dull then and still do now. The GTS is available in two special colors: Peridot Metallic (the wild green of our Cayman R on the Jan/Feb 2012 cover) and Carmine Red. In either of those, although by definition superficial, we guess we would feel the model’s individuality more immediately.

We knew the key to the GTS lay in its beastly track-tuned heart. During our week with the vehicle, we received a video from a colleague elsewhere in the US, who was driving the same thing, but was able to take it to the track. Whoa. This vehicle can really burn it up. We were inspired.

It’s when we really opened up the GTS that it



Our Cayenne GTS’s interior was upgraded with two pricey packages (see sidebar). The \$3655 Peridot package (named after the yellowish-green paint we’ve seen on the Cayman R) features yellowish-green stitching on the instrument panel and seats.

truly started to shine. We did not have track time, but were able to mentally extrapolate it from what we did have. From its engine and exhaust notes to 369 lb-ft of torque that felt like a lot more, there was no mistaking this as a performance machine, with a capital P and M.

We appreciate a connected road feel, and the GTS has it in spades, ready or not. The specs are the same as the others we’re comparing here: fully independent double wishbone up front, fully independent multilink in the rear. Yet our logbook noted the ride may be “a little rough for most people, unless they’re track driving.” There are normal, comfort and sport settings (as well as mountain-4WD-highway settings and high-low suspension settings). We received our GTS in normal/middle settings and drove it that way for awhile. When set in comfort, ride and shifts were softer.

The GTS ran straight and true in daily freeway and surface street duty. Tire noise seemed to indicate that any harsh ride was probably due to our GTS’s optional 21-inch wheels—a huge plussing from 18-inch standards. Skip the \$2605 spent on those, thus also avoiding some of the expense at tire-replacement time, and we think you’ll have a better all-around ride. Unless, of course, you’re after maximum showoff points, in which case, this hits a decent balance between the S and the Turbo S, well short of the Turbo S’s price but with several of its best features. Nonetheless, we can’t help revisiting the Cayenne S every time we get serious about taking delivery. ■

PORSCHE CAYENNE GTS

ENGINE	4.8L 32-valve four-OHC V8
TRANS	8-spd Tiptronic S w/auto start-stop
POWER/TORQUE	420 hp, 369 lb-ft torque
BRAKES (FR/R)	14.2" 6-piston / 13" 4-piston
FUEL MILEAGE	15/21/17 MPG city/hwy/comb

BASE (STICKER) (now \$83,300) **\$82,050**

OPTIONS: There were some (33) options on our GTS’s Monroney sticker, starting with (7) no-cost options (e.g. TPM, a special Porsche crest, a 12-volt outlet in the rear).

• From that point, some relatively less expensive options include:

Classic Silver paint	\$790
Painted car key	\$335
Cargo management system	\$590
Auto dim mirror	\$420
Aluminum shift knob	\$495
Sport steering wheel rim	\$290
Light comfort package w/memory	\$250
LED comfort lighting	\$845
Trailer hitch w/o ball	\$650

• And some of the pricier options include:

Cayenne GTS interior package	\$3450
GTS interior package, Peridot	\$3655
21" wheels	\$2605
Dynamic Chassis Control (PDCC)	\$3510
Torque Vectoring Plus (PTVPlus)	\$1490
Heated seats, front/rear	\$1050
Keyless entry and start	\$1090
Insulated glass (thermal; noise)	\$1120
Door sill guards, stainless	\$1100
PCM w/navigation module	\$3675
Adaptive cruise control	\$2490
Reverse camera, park assist	\$1750
Burmeister sound system	\$5690
Sirius XM+HD radio recvr	\$1120
.... and ten or so other items.	

DESTINATION \$975

TOTAL AS TESTED \$123,265