



Design

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TAKEOFF!



Behind the wheel of the Panamera, common notions about how to interact with your car take on a new dimension: the fourth dimension. It's no surprise that people refer to this area as the cockpit when they're talking about the Gran Turismo. We've let a real expert sit in this seat to try it out: a flight captain. His first impression, very spontaneous, was, "Fabulous!" Of course, he also gave us more specific reactions, all of them very positive, about the Panamera's unique interior design concept.

By
Jürgen Zeyer

This story is about the encounter between two worlds—flying and driving. It's based on the idea that there is a seat where they almost converge.

Photos by
Boris Schmalenberger

Even at his daily job, Sandro Wittrin conquers space and time quite routinely. On this morning, fog over Germany has muddled up his flight plan. But now the sky is clearing. "No further problems. This is going to be a picture-perfect flight," says Wittrin in the pilot's seat, facing dozens of instruments. This is his world. But before he takes off—destination Saarbrücken—he'll get to know another, more earthbound, but nevertheless just as fascinating world: the command center of the Panamera 4S.

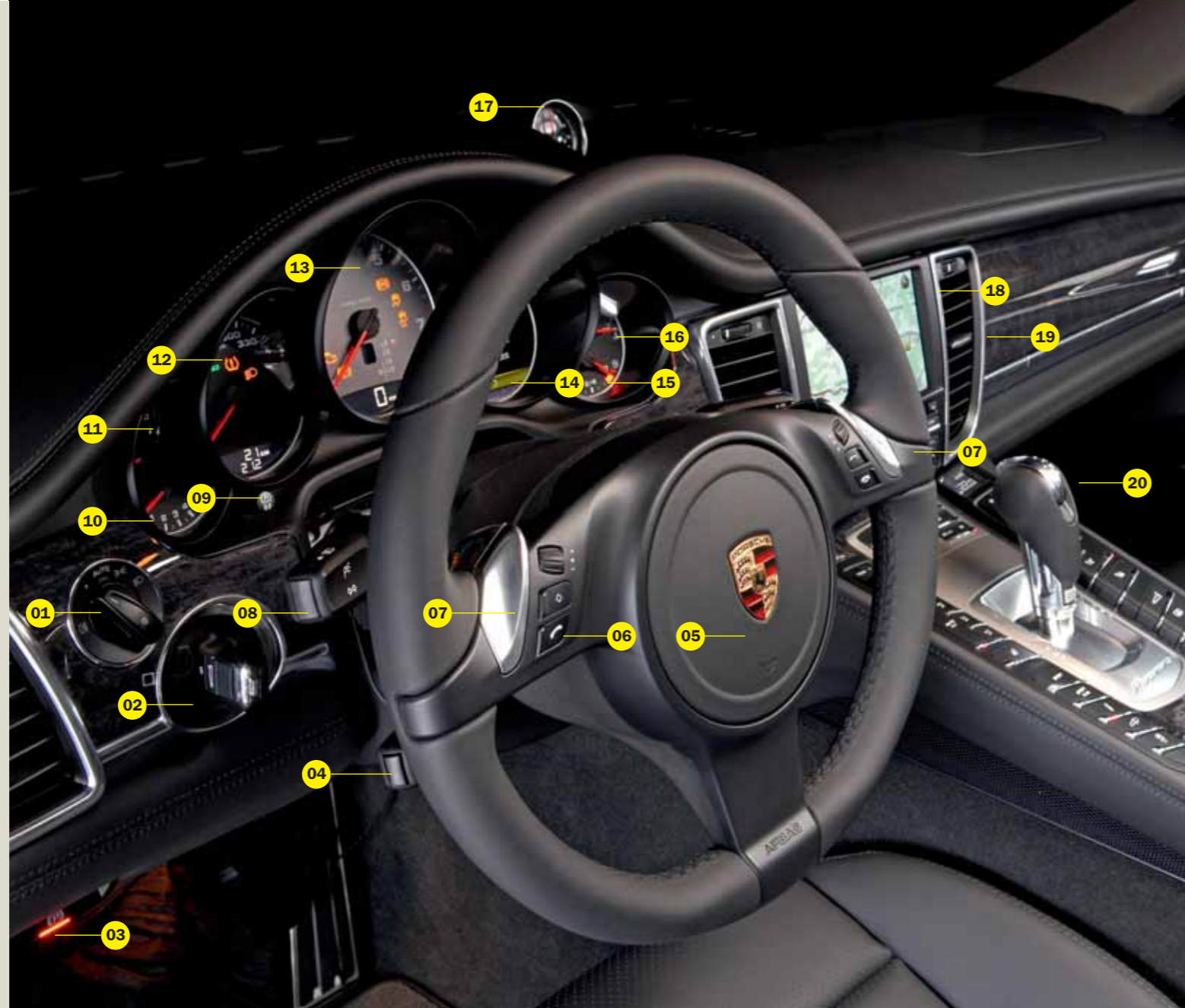
Wittrin relates that he has been extremely eager to learn more about the new Porsche he has heard so much about. Well then, please enter and have a seat. The 37-year-old pilot's first reaction: "Fabulous!" He immediately notes the tachometer and speedometer. "Those really stand out." He lets his fingers wander over the center console, the display screen of the Porsche Communications System, the steering wheel with the push buttons for the Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK), and the telephone controls. The Panamera magic is working. "Fascinating, elegant, ▶



Everything in the right place: Pilot Sandro Wittrin in the cockpit of the Fokker 100—and a view of the control center of the Panamera

Take a Seat in the Panamera

- [01] Light switch
- [02] Ignition lock, steering wheel lock
- [03] Electric parking brake
- [04] Cruise control/distance control
- [05] Horn
- [06] Telephone controls
- [07] PDK shift keys
- [08] Turn-signal lever
- [09] Instrument panel lights dimmer
- [10] Oil pressure indicator
- [11] Oil temperature indicator
- [12] Speedometer
- [13] Tachometer
- [14] Multifunction readout
- [15] Fuel level indicator
- [16] Coolant temperature indicator
- [17] Sport Chrono clock
- [18] Porsche communication system (PCM)
- [19] Air vents
- [20] Gear selector lever
- [21] Porsche Stability Management (PSM)
- [22] High-level ride
- [23] Active suspension system (PASM)
- [24] "Sport"/"Sport Plus" mode
- [25] Seat heating, seat ventilation
- [26] Climate control
- [27] Warning blinker system
- [28] Power locks
- [29] Rear-window/side-mirrors heating
- [30] Retractable rear spoiler
- [31] Sun shield, rear/backseat windows
- [32] Auto start/stop function



"Fascinating, elegant, luxurious, a wonderfully logical layout—the whole ambiance appeals right away," enthuses flight captain Sandro Wittrin.



**Eye-catcher:
The Panamera 4S
touching base with
the airplanes**



luxurious, a marvelously logical layout—the whole ambiance appeals right away,” says Wittrin, who obviously likes what he sees. “And you immediately find everything right at your fingertips.”

That is exactly what the designers in the Style Porsche studio at the Development Center in Weissach had in mind. Even at first glance, the Panamera is a Porsche. Yet it is in a class of its own at the same time. Designer Oliver Rosenbohm refers to the “Porsche DNA, which has consistently shaped this design.” In the cockpit this means, among other things, such typical family traits as the ignition switch on the left of the steering wheel and the round instruments with the tachometer in the middle. Visual messages that may be perceived subconsciously as Porsche genes but that never go entirely unnoticed.

In addition to such stylistic aspects, the Panamera identity is defined by a new element: the slope of the center console. “It’s a design element borrowed from the Carrera GT,” Rosenbohm explains. With this adaptation from Porsche’s supercar, the fourth model series has been endowed with a “totally innovative control design.” The range of electronic capabilities is made easily accessible to the driver by means of a keyboard-like control console for superior dynamics, agility, athletics, and comfort, as well as improved driving safety and efficiency—from Porsche Stability Management (PSM) and Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) to the climate control, retractable rear spoiler, and Sport Exhaust System.

From an airline pilot’s point of view, Wittrin considers it “simply fantastic, having the controls within easy reach so you’re always in complete control.” From designer Rosenbohm’s perspective, the console embodies Porsche’s driver controls philosophy: “All important functions can be actuated directly by the touch of a button with no complicated menus. Tactile feedback is provided by means of carefully designed raised surfaces.”

The console is the interface to a range of sensory impressions, elicited many times even during the design phase. To realistically experience, comprehend, and grasp the development at every stage, the experts in Weissach began early on to create full-scale models of the cockpit made

from Plasticine®. The look and feel of a real vehicle was created—even the seams were sculpted into the modeling material with meticulous accuracy. Rosenbohm adds: “Right from the start, we pursued a broad-based approach.” The holistically designed interior evokes an extraordinary sense of spatial awareness. “The driver immediately feels like a part of it all,” asserts the design expert. And the pilot confirms it in his own words: “This is a cockpit in which you instantly feel comfortable,” says Wittrin.

At the workplace of the flight captain in the Fokker 100, on the other hand, the comfort level might be a bit more limited. “Rather spartan,” Wittrin comments about the aircraft’s console in comparison to that of the Panamera. “But here, too, the instruments are arranged very logically. That evokes the comfortable feeling that you’ve got everything under control.” Then he recalls the thrill of crossing the Alps at a cruising speed of 815 km/h (506 mph) at an altitude of about 10,500 meter (34,400 feet), “especially at sunrise,” and the spectacular landing approach to Nice from the Mediterranean. And he adds: “Just like in a Porsche, the cockpit of a jet fascinates by evoking the sense of mastering technology. And you feel a kind of magic in how easy it is to cover long distances.” Another similarity in how these two worlds are experienced. Of course this shouldn’t come as a complete surprise: the secret project name of the Panamera when under development was “Space Coupé.”

At the end of this unorthodox expert appraisal, Wittrin is still driven by curiosity. He wonders whether all the seats offer the same level of comfort. Of course, he has to try it out. All four doors of the Panamera 4S are open. His reaction in this final test is limited to an approving nod: each seat offers first-class comfort. That may be more than you can say for his aircraft. But now it’s ready for takeoff. ◀