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ON THE ROAD

911 TARGA BY DESIGN

What is beauty? Ask the engineer and he will tell you it is a measurable thing. A matter of proportions, geometry and functionality. The artist, on the other hand, will say true beauty is that which stirs our deepest emotions and inspires us. With the new 911 Targa, Porsche asks: why not both?

Text Jason Miles



The new 911 Targa is a beacon of design ingenuity.



Incorporating a renaissance of the iconic Targa bar combined with innovative roof technology, the latest Porsche masterpiece is neither coupe nor cabriolet, but rather something entirely new. At the press of a button, the car's beautifully curved, lightweight rear window rises and two wing-like flaps open in the magnesium rollover hoop. The cloth-covered magnesium roof segments raises, bends into a subtle Z-shape, and tucks itself behind the rear seats. Then everything closes again. And just like that, in a mesmerizing mechanical ballet that lasts just 19 seconds, the Targa has transformed from classic 911 to the open-top driving experience of a lifetime.

While today's version of the Targa roof is a good deal more intricate than its predecessors, the idea behind it has always been the same: What do you do with the roof? And how do you stow it? Back in 1965, when

the original Targa made its debut, the solution was simple: a folding, removable roof and a roll-over aluminium bar for protection – Porsche's ingenious answer to American safety standards. Over the following years, the Targa bar has become the most distinctive and style-defining feature of the car, impressing both drivers and fans around the world. But it hasn't always been included in the design. In 1975, the silver bar was replaced with a black one for the 'G-series' version of the 911 Targa, while 1995 saw the car get a completely new roof concept: an electrically operated glass roof with aluminium trim strips running along the sides. Today's Targa marks the return of the iconic Targa bar in a breath-taking design which conveys the pure bliss of open-top driving. Even when the top is closed.

Sloping dynamic roof lines. Accentuated front and rear wings. Round, piercing

headlights. For 50 years, these have been the defining features of the Porsche 911. It goes without saying that these principles apply equally to the new 911 Targa. But design is not just about aesthetics. It is about purpose. Function. The new sports car makes this clear as it cruises down winding city streets, surrounded on all sides by compelling architecture and urban inspiration. While the new Targa certainly maintains that classic 911 silhouette, its focus on functionality means it also carries several distinctive design hallmarks and engineering features, such as an extended wheelbase for even greater stability. Above all else, of course, is the flawless integration of the revolutionary roof concept. Ingeniously, rather than running counter to the evolved design idiom of the 911, the roof blends with the rest of the body to create a harmonious whole. The result is a design which is purposefully timeless yet always current.

Sophisticated Targa kinetics are a good example of Porsche art in Motion.



The new 911 Targa is both an engineering marvel and an artistic masterpiece, one of those rare occasions where the top car manufacturer in the world manages to surprise even itself with its own design genius. After 50 years of engineering, trend-setting and innovation, this iconic sports car, which began as neither coupe nor convertible, has now become a class in its own right. ●



Porsche recommends  | 

Visit www.porsche.cn for more information

By Design.

The new 911 Targa

By Design. All down the line. The new 911 Targa epitomizes a timeless concept. And it not only represents the comeback of the distinctive Targa aluminium bar, but also combines the iconic design of the first 911 Targa with an innovative, fully automatic roof system. A classic in 1965. The future today.



PORSCHE

EVENT REVIEW

PORSCHE TAKES THE SPOTLIGHT AT AUTO CHINA 2014

Nothing compares to the rush of an auto show. The thrill of walking through a sea of flashing cameras. The sheer joy of witnessing the latest cutting-edge sports cars. Now take that feeling, enhance it by a factor of 10 and you have Auto China - the biggest auto show in the country and the fourth largest in the world.

Text Jason Miles
Photo Kai Hartmann & Charlie Xia

On stage with the new Cayman GTS and Boxster GTS, from left to right: President & Chief Executive Officer of Porsche China, Mr. Deesch Papke, Chairman of the Executive Board of Porsche AG, Mr. Matthias Mueller and Member of the Board-Sales & Marketing of Porsche AG, Mr. Bernhard Maier.



From 20 to 29 April, Auto China 2014 saw hundreds of thousands of enthusiasts from across the country flock to the China New International Exhibition Centre for the experience of a lifetime. 230,000 square-metres of exhibition space. Dozens of manufacturers. Among them only one name stood above the rest: Porsche.

Showcasing its newest lineup of cutting-edge innovations, China's leading sports car marque provided a feast of technology and engineering at the event. Chinese automotive lovers were thrilled as they explored the two-storey, new concept exhibition space, relishing the chance to experience the marque's latest creations first-hand. With five World Premieres and three Asia Premieres planned among an unprecedented collection of 12 state-of-the-art Porsche sports cars, it was little surprise the Porsche stand proved to be a stunning highlight of the week-long event.

During the press day, Senior Porsche Executives from Stuttgart welcomed members of the media and VIPs to view the World Premieres of the new Porsche Macan, Boxster GTS, Cayman GTS, Panamera 4S Sport Edition and Panamera 4 Executive. "At Porsche, we are very proud of our success in China," stated Mr. Matthias Mueller, Chairman of the Executive Board of Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche AG, as he addressed the crowd from the Porsche stand. "And we are very grateful for the passion China shows for Porsche. Already, China is our second-largest global market and our biggest single market for SUVs and sports-sedans. Last year, we delivered more than 37,000 cars to Porsche fans here. Porsche is also the market leader for sports cars in China."

From the powerful yet tenacious new Macan to the luxurious new Panamera, every model on display was clear in its

goal: a celebration of the most cutting-edge innovation both in terms of performance and design. And yet the words on the tip of everyone's tongue spelt out: G-T-S. Gran Turismo Sport. They were talking, of course, about the all-new Boxster GTS and Cayman GTS. Taking prime position on turntables on the first floor of the Porsche stand, the two-door Porsche mid-engine roadsters were unmistakable as they celebrated their World Premieres: the Cayman with its newly-contoured GTS frontend, and the Boxster with its insatiable appetite for acceleration. Representing the pinnacle of their respective ranges, both models were inscribed with the classic GTS script, printed in gloss black across their sleek frames. "Two-door sports cars remain the heart of the Porsche brand," said Mr. Mueller as he introduced the new sports cars. "The new Boxster GTS and Cayman GTS continue that tradition.

A delighted enthusiast poses for a photo inside the new 911 Turbo.



The new Porsche Macan celebrates its World Premiere at Auto China 2014.



The Porsche 919 Hybrid and 911 RSR on stage.



They will be the pinnacle of their range, each the fastest and most powerful to carry that name." Meanwhile, following the World Premiere of the Macan S and Macan Turbo at the Geneva Motor Show, Chinese car enthusiasts had a chance to witness the World Premiere of the new base model of the Macan, as it made its International Debut in China. With a maximum speed of up to 223 km/h and an average fuel consumption of only seven litres per 100 kilometres, this new model drew unanimous praise as a beacon of power and efficiency.

Making their way through the first floor of the Porsche exhibit, visitors also delighted in the World Premiere of the new Panamera 4S Sport Edition. Capable of sprinting from 0 to 100 km/h in 4.5 seconds and achieving speeds of up to 286 km/h, the sportiest member of the Panamera family elevated heart rates

throughout the show. It was joined on stage by the luxurious Panamera and Panamera 4 Executive, also celebrating their World Premieres. With an extra 15 cm added to the length of the body, the new Panamera offer a more spacious and luxurious interior while promising a greater command of the road.

With the return to Le Mans 24 Hours fast approaching, it was only fitting the marque also included its hottest two new supercars in the show: the 919 Hybrid and the 911 RSR, both celebrating their Asia Premieres. The 911 RSR, having finished first and second in its class at Le Mans 24 Hours in 2013, gave attendees a taste of the excitement to come in this year's World Endurance Championship. The 919 Hybrid, on the other hand, is the most complex racecar Porsche has ever built. From its lightweight chassis and sleek aesthetic to its compact four-cylinder

der combustion engine and dual energy recovery systems, the new hybrid provided visitors with a glimpse into the future of Porsche Intelligent Performance.

Looking beyond the impressive sports cars on display, Porsche provided an exclusive and stimulating environment for all. While the breath-taking new models basked in the spotlight on the ground level, the second floor of the Porsche stand featured an extensive hospitality area, where guests, VIPs and members of the media could enjoy the impeccable service for which the marque is renowned.

By all accounts, Auto China 2014 was a roaring success for both Porsche and its enthusiasts. Showcasing its latest lineup of cutting-edge models while providing world-class Porsche hospitality, the marque once again proved its commitment to automotive innovation and excellence. ●

MOTORSPORT

NEW TEAM, SAME PASSION

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP ASIA 2014

2014: the Year of the Horse, a symbol of passion, speed and victory. A fitting year for the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia to be celebrating its 12th season, as it commences another sizzling championship with an even stronger entry of racing drivers, a new Porsche 911 GT3 Cup car (991 type) and a thrilling calendar spanning the width of Asia. Once again, the premiere one-make series promises to raise the pulses of millions of motorsport enthusiasts across Asia.

Text Huang Ning
Photo Lei Gong



This year's Porsche Carrera Cup Asia boasts even more talented international racers.



With a field of professional racing drivers and talented gentlemen drivers, the competition is as fierce as it is enthralling. And as always, putting these international driving talents together for a competition of the highest level across Asia, is something only the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia can do, and do it better and with more passion every year.

This year's championship holds the largest grid in history with a record 10 Porsche dealer teams, ensuring a gripping and fierce battle for the overall title. Leading the charge is Earl Bamber, the reigning champion with LKM Racing Team, who will face ferocious challenges from Team Porsche Holding's Martin Ragginger, as well as 2012 champion Alexandre Imperatori, who will be going full steam ahead for a second title with the three-time champions PICC Team StarChase. Macau driver Rodolfo Avila,

entered by Team Jebesen for the sixth straight year and former F1 Reserve Driver Ho-Pin Tung with Budweiser Team Absolute Racing, are also among the serious contenders for the overall title this year.

In Class B, the contest is no less competitive. With Egidio Perfetti now competing for the overall title, following an impressive class B win last year; a number of close rivals will be drawn into the intense fight this season, including Dorr Have-lock Racing's Yuey Tan and Open Road Racing Team's Francis Tjia, two veterans of the championship, as well as up and coming drivers Alif Hamdan from Nexus Racing and Johnson Huang of BC Racing Team.

Among the stellar lineup of the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia, a group of Chinese racers are especially noteworthy. For 12 years

the championship has been dedicated to spreading motorsport culture in China, a commitment which is showing remarkable results as an increasing number of Chinese drivers begin to make their mark on the international racing arena. This year, Porsche will provide additional support to four young driving talents with a new training initiative: the China Junior Development Programme. Zhang Da Sheng, 8th place finisher in 2013, entered by Zheng Tong Auto this season; Team C&D's Zhang Zhi Qiang, 10th overall in a stunning series debut last year; new Team Basetex entry Zhang Zhen Dong; and reigning Scirocco R-Cup China champion and Formula Masters China Series regular Bao Jin Long of the new Team Synsanly, have all been chosen to take part in this new Porsche training initiative.

In addition to assembling a more dazzling roster of established and up-and-

Earl Bamber of Team LKM Racing holds pole position amidst fierce competition.



coming drivers, the championship further raises the intensity this year through the improvement of another key element – the car itself. With a more powerful 3.8-litre flat six engine, the new Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (Type 991) produces 460 horsepower, 10 more than previously, and is fitted with a six-speed sequential gearbox operated by a pneumatic paddle shift system, a first for the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia.

Driving the finest GT sports car, the racing aces of the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia will compete in 12 hair-raising races on some of the most prestigious racetracks in the region, including the newly-added Fuji International Circuit in Japan. With an ongoing partnership with the FIA Formula 1 World Championship and a series of high profile motorsport events, the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia keeps bringing electrifying racetrack experi-

ences to tens of thousands of racing fans across Asia.

Defending champion Earl Bamber of LKM Racing converted a pole position into an impressive win in the action-packed first round of the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia 2014, held as part of the Malaysian Formula 1 Grand Prix.

ROUND 1: EARL BAMBER TRIUMPHS IN THRILLING SEASON OPENER

As the lights went out, Bamber got to a good start, but not without Team Porsche Holding's Ragginger close on his heels, behind whom PICC Team StarChase's Imperatori was busy fending off the charge from Avila of Team Jebesen. Bamber fought a hard battle with Ragginger throughout most of the 10-lap thriller in the scorching heat, crossing the checkered flag eventually with a lead of

over three seconds. Ragginger finished second, while Imperatori, having survived an early entanglement that forced out Avila, claimed the third place on the podium. The leading trio had the same pace for much of the race and the slightest mistake would have meant a totally different result. "That is a testament to the level of this championship," said Imperatori, whose view was echoed by Bamber: "It's going to be very close all year. I've had a bit more testing, but the others for sure are going to catch up."

The young Chinese drivers also had a good start to the season, with Zhang Da Sheng of Zheng Tong Auto, Team C&D's Zhang Zhi Qiang and Team Basetex's Zhang Zhen Dong taking the 5th, 6th and 7th places respectively; a remarkable achievement thanks to the expert tuition they have been receiving under the China Junior Development

Drivers negotiate a tight corner on the Sepang International Circuit.



Martin Ragginger, Earl Bamber and Alexandre Imperatori celebrate their first win.



Earl Bamber pops open the victory champagne to celebrate his victory.



Programme from Porsche Motorsport Junior Coach Sascha Maassen and two-time champion of the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia, Christian Menzel.

In Class B, Alif Hamdan of Team Nexus Racing clinched the first class win of the season, followed by OpenRoad Racing's Francis Tjia and series returnee Mok Weng Sun of Clearwater Racing, who managed to grab the final podium place from Dorr Havelock Racing's Yuey Tan on the last lap.

With this gripping on-track action, the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia has once again fulfilled its ranking as Asia's premier one-make racing series. But the excitement doesn't stop here. After kicking off its 12th season in true Porsche fashion, the competition is on track to set the racing world on fire with even more adrenaline fuelled races spanning the width of Asia.

"It will be a long, hard battle for the championship this season, so we will have to be on our toes all the time," predicts Imperatori. The PICC Team StarChase driver is right, of course. With finely-honed racing talent, world-class machinery and some of the most challenging tracks in the world, anything can happen. And if the sensational on-track excitement seen so far is any indication of what lies ahead, the next battles promise to be nothing short of spectacular. ●

For further information please visit the Porsche Carrera Cup website: <http://www.carreracupasia.com/>

EVENT REVIEW

SNOW FORCE 2014

DRIVING AGAINST THE ELEMENTS

Take a Porsche sports car, place it on a surface of tightly packed snow and ice, add a mix of slaloms, chicanes, and hairpins and you have a recipe for one of the most exhilarating experiences you can encounter behind the wheel of a car. In February and March, more than 400 customers and members of the media did just that as they gathered on the crisp white terrain of Yunlong Lake in the remote region of Yakeshi, Inner Mongolia, for Porsche Snow Force 2014.

Text Kim Hobson

Photo Kai Hartmann



The Porsche Snow Force instructors pose for the camera.



A 400 horsepower 911 Carrera drifts over the icy surface; its wheels spinning furiously and leaving a spray of snow in its wake, as it tackles the final corner before the finish line. As the car comes to a halt, the doors fling open and an energetic figure emerges, triumphantly punching the air with his fist. Every bit the racing driver, Mr Zhang Wenhe is ecstatic and delighted with his latest attempt at the slalom course. This is his second year at Porsche Snow Force and it's not hard to see what keeps him coming back - a perfect mix of challenging and technical driving tracks coupled with a breath-taking backdrop of snow-capped mountains which frame the icy terrain of Yunlong Lake; and you have the ultimate driving experience. Each winter this undisturbed frozen landscape is transformed into a winter playground for Porsche enthusiasts and thrill seekers.

Most attendees stay for an adrenaline fuelled 48 hours, putting their driving abilities to the ultimate test in the most unforgiving and challenging environment. For Mr. Zhang, a self-confessed super Porsche fan with a passion for driving experiences, 48 hours simply wasn't enough to fulfil his passion for ultimate driving. Three weeks was a much better option. "It's love," he says. "The love of driving a sports car. I take this course as a unique opportunity that I have once a year to really enjoy the challenge of driving on ice and snow. The past 20 days have been really precious. This time I had even more opportunities to drive the cars, and I was given a lot more freedom because I'm more experienced".

There is no greater way to learn the unique capabilities of Porsche models than in extreme conditions. Porsche

Snow Force gives participants the opportunity to complete the Porsche Intensive Driving Course where they learn essential driving techniques such as acute breaking, evasive manoeuvres and controlled drifting. With its series of bends, slopes and long fast straights, the course is specially created to test the unique handling characteristics of Porsche sports cars. This year, Porsche Snow Force raised the bar even higher with six custom built handling tracks carved into the icy lake surface, with the addition of a new handling course designed on the new Porsche Experience Centre track.

For Porsche aficionados like Mr. Zhang, driving in extreme cold conditions in a Porsche is less of an obstacle and more of a challenge to be relished. Since buying his first Porsche Cayenne GTS, he's upgraded his collection to span almost the entire Porsche line-up, and has attended

Mr Zhang Wenhe smiles for the camera at Snow Force 2014.



all levels of Porsche Sport Driving School at least twice. He says his thirst for these events comes from their ability to open doors to new experiences. “The best part of Porsche Snow Force for me this year was learning to drive and handle 4 wheel drive sports cars. I used to drive only rear wheel drive, which I’m well acquainted with. At first I was reluctant to try a 4 wheel drive model because I was afraid I wouldn’t be able to handle it as well. The instructor arranged a unique opportunity for me to experience a 4-wheel sports car and I knew it was a precious opportunity I couldn’t pass up. I really loved it! If I had to choose a model to drive in Snow Force 2015, it would definitely be a 4 wheel drive!”

For customers like Mr. Zhang Wenhe, who have already earned their stripes on the driving course, Porsche goes above and beyond to help them accomplish

feats they never dreamed of. As well as a record number of six handling tracks carved into the icy surface, this year’s event included challenges and experiences to take their driving skills to the next level. “This year I had the chance to drive each of the Porsche models and took part in the more advanced courses like Snow Force S. I learnt how to handle the cars with winter tyres, 2mm and also the 4mm in Snow Force S,” says Mr. Zhang. “I have to say, the 4mm stud tyres are my absolute favourite. When you’re trying to drift you need a faster speed, and this allows for fewer mistakes. Fix those on the 911 Carrera 4S with its performance and handling and I’m a happy man!”

Porsche Snow Force offers a unique driving experience that can’t be found at other driving events. The icy surface is more forgiving than the precision required on a race track and drivers can

push the cars to the limit; safe in the knowledge that should they over shoot they will gracefully skid into a cushion of soft snow. Despite that it’s still a challenge that requires the utmost skill and concentration. “The toughest experience for me was following the ideal route,” says Mr. Zhang. “You don’t want to make any mistakes. It’s very difficult, it requires that you fully control the car and it needs to be 100% precise”. For Porsche lovers, the Porsche Snow Force is also a chance to experience the magic of their dream race cars and discover that they truly can withstand the harshest of weather conditions in terms of performance, safety and control.

While professional instructors encourage drivers to attack the courses with as much gusto and nerve as they can muster there’s also an emphasis on safety. The instructors play an important and essen-

Participants stop for a quick debrief before the next track.



Nothing compares to the sheer exhilaration of driving on snow and ice.



tial role in the driving experience, and they are there at every step to support the drivers and give feedback and expert direction. Skilled instructors coach participants on how to properly approach hairpin turns, lean into snowy bends and correct a spin on icy roads, helping them to learn skills they can apply on the road. “I’ve attended several Snow Force events and have a really good relationship with the Porsche driving instructors,” says Mr. Zhang. “I really enjoy coming back to see how they’re doing and catching up with them, they really make the experience. I am also delighted that one of the instructors gave me the opportunity to test drive with the 4mm stud tyres, as these are usually only used during demo laps. That was super!”

The icy plains, exhilarating thrills and stunning backdrop provide an awe-inspiring experience that lives up to the

high standards of the Porsche marque. For Mr. Zhang, learning to master a number of challenging winter manoeuvres is only the beginning. Undertaking the course has enthused him to continue on other driving experiences offered by Porsche like the Porsche Sport Driving School Telemetric and G-Force Course. For him, it’s about improving his technique and skill as a driver.

As the sun descends behind a row of jagged mountains, Mr. Zhang reflects on the most attractive part of Snow Force before heading off for his last night in the Mongolian yurt. “The more you learn, the more you find out there’s more to discover,” he says wisely. And does Mr. Zhang think he saw an improvement in his skills over the period? Definitely. “Snow Force has really boosted my driving confidence and Porsche arranged a very good customised course

A traditional Mongolian ceremony.



for me that helped me get to the next level. I will go to Porsche Sport Driving School again this year, I can’t wait to get my International C-Class racing license and hit the famous circuits around the world. I am planning to join Class B of Porsche Carrera Cup Asia next year”. ●

For more information, please visit our website www.porsche.cn/snowforce, or call your preferred Porsche Centre.

The Porsche Classic Cars Parade attracts the attention from Porsche fans as it makes its way through the crowd.



Guests experience hot laps on the circuit.



Driving simulators offer a fun time for the whole family.



Participants test the Cayenne's off-road capabilities.



EVENT REVIEW

FASCINATION PORSCHE COME. SEE. BE CAPTIVATED.

A Porsche is more than just a car. It is a key which unlocks the door to fascinating new experiences.

Now in its sixth year, Fascination Porsche offers sports car aficionados the unique opportunity to explore the captivating world of Porsche in one mesmerizing day.

Text Jason Miles
Photo Lei Gong & Kai

Celebrating the marque's return to the LMP1 class of the FIA World Endurance Championship after more than a decade, it was only natural that this year's Fascination Porsche would take place on two of China's most prestigious racetracks, the Shanghai International Circuit and the Beijing Goldenport Circuit.

On arrival, guests had a chance to learn about the Porsche brand in new and interesting ways through a variety of activities and exhibits. The Porsche DNA Pavilion, for instance, provided guests with a unique opportunity to explore the rich heritage of the marque with an array of Porsche models on display, both new and old. Meanwhile, state-of-the-art racing simulators provided endless fun for guests of all ages, as they tested their driving skills on the simulated tracks. Throughout the enthralling spectacle, the motor-

sport theme of the event was made clear by the numerous glittering 911 GT3 Cup cars spread out amongst the various displays.

Meanwhile, on the track, guests witnessed the power of Porsche sports cars with hot laps demonstrations by experienced Porsche instructors. During the 911 Guided Driving module, guests had a chance to test the adrenaline-pumping performance of the Porsche 911 while the Sports Car Handling module provided an opportunity to experience the unadulterated driving pleasure of the mid-engine Boxster and Cayman. Guests also experienced the off-road capability of the new Cayenne in the exhilarating Off-road Experience module. Last but not least, kids also got to join in the fun as they piloted Porsche pedal cars on a tailor-made circuit, courtesy of the Porsche Kids Driving School.

As darkness descended on the racetrack, the world of Fascination Porsche transformed into an evening carnival for the whole family to enjoy. A delicious BBQ buffet provided attendees with a taste of world-class Porsche hospitality, as racing drivers from the 10 Chinese teams in the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia demonstrated hot laps on the Shanghai International Circuit, in the new cutting-edge 911 GT3 Cup cars.

More than just an event, Fascination Porsche 2014 proved to be the experience of a lifetime, with many fans promising to be back the following year. ●

CULTURE AND HEALTH

GREAT SUMMER ESCAPES

Whether you are a nature lover or urban explorer, summer is the perfect time to travel further afield and discover the unique and breathtaking wonders China has to offer. Here are just four of the inspiring destinations spanning each of its four corners to help you stay cool during the scorching months.

Text Kim Hobson

Photo Wu Xun



Northern China – Changbaishan

An incredible mountain range and national park, Changbaishan is an area rich in natural wonders. Upon scaling its famed mountain, not only are you rewarded with breathtaking views of the surrounding peaks but also the jewel of the area, Tianchi, or Heaven Lake. Formed in the crater of a dormant volcano, the lake is both mesmerizing and serene; a perfect setting to calm your mind away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

In the surrounding areas, other gems lie waiting to be discovered. Nestled among the clifly canyons, Changbaishan's glacier valley is home to an incredible amount of biodiversity, and its sunken forest boasts ancient jade green trees that stretch into the sky. A visit to the famous Changbai Waterfall is a must see and its refreshing spray is the perfect way to cool down as you watch the water cascade gracefully into the crisp, white plunge pool below. Dotted around, are a number of soothing hot springs naturally heated by the area's geothermal energy.



Eastern China – Lu Shan Mountain

A misty land in spring, a green jade in summer, an intoxicating crimson in autumn and a white jade in winter". Lu Shan is a place for all seasons, but in summer its breath-taking scenery is at its most vibrant. One of the cradles of Chinese civilization, this sacred area has a history stretching over a thousand years and has been the inspiration for many Chinese paintings. It's not hard to see why; looking down from atop its cool, mist-wreathed hilltops, jagged peaks burst through a sea of clouds, giving the impression you are floating in heaven.

For those wanting even more adventure, Lu Shan offers waterfalls, grottos, rivulets and ravines that lie undisturbed in the valley below. To end the day, sightseers can pay a visit to the Poyang Lake Migratory Birds Nature Reserve. Settled at the foot of the mountain, the reserve offers a rare glimpse of the migratory Siberian cranes, with their brilliant-white plumage and onyx-black wing tips.



Southern China – Shennongjia

Located in Hubei province and known as "the roof of Central China", Shennongjia Nature Reserve is home to a chain of rugged mountains, beautiful forests and wetlands. The name Shennongjia comes from the emperor of the same name and 'jia', meaning ladder, after a mythical rattan ladder that Shennong was said to use to climb up and down the mountain.

Exploring the tranquil forest area of Shennongjia plunges you into the undisturbed and rich woodland with its fresh, clean air. For centuries the region has been synonymous with beautiful fauna and plant life; it was here that locals were first introduced to farming, medicine and tea by Xia King Shennong, who often scoured the land for herbs. In the surrounding areas lie a number of tea plantations that sit atop the sloping valley sides amongst a sprinkling of quaint farmhouses. Endangered species are protected in a number of conservation areas, where visitors may catch a sight of the rare golden snub-nosed monkey, or even the fabled Chinese Wildman.

With its heavenly views and relaxed atmosphere, Erhai Lake is the perfect place to cool down.



Western China – Da Li

A perfect oasis in Yunnan's mountainous province, Da Li is a town for everyone. Old meets new as convenient and newly developed areas around its lake juxtapose against the ancient walled town at its centre. As a former stop on the Silk Road, Dali has a rich history and boasts diverse local traditions and culture. While Dali City offers modern buildings and amenities, Dali Old Town remains untouched, nestled at the foot of the Cang Shan Mountains. Wandering round the narrow streets is a great way to explore its stunning architecture and beautiful scenery.



Even more majestic, is the Erhai Lake which is surrounded by mountains and a perfect place to cool down from Yunnan's intense sun. With a scenic road contouring the entirety of the lake, visitors can watch the Bai fishermen catching fish using trained cormorants - an ancient and vanishing technique. Exploring the surrounding countryside brings with it a multitude of rewards. In the valley are fishing villages, Bai farming communities, mysterious temples, historic towns and beautiful retreats, each with a charm of its own.

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Porsche (China) Motors Ltd.
保时捷 (中国) 汽车销售有限公司
中国上海浦东新区
东方路 1215-1217 号 3 层
邮编: 200127

Deesch Papke
总裁及首席执行官

电话: +86 21 61565 911
传真: +86 21 61682 911

电子邮箱: info@porsche.cn
网址: www.porsche.cn