

PORSCHE PANAMERA TURBO S E-HYBRID SPORT TURISMO

Tim Barnes-Clay tries not to get carried away with the power of this mighty machine

The nameplate doesn't exactly trip off the tongue, does it? But there are many reasons to salivate over Porsche's Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid Sport Turismo.

It delivers pulse-racing performance and ladles of luxury; and, conveniently, the Porsche is a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) and an estate car rolled into one.

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But speed isn't the only thing you want on British roads. Well, I don't want it at the moment as I'm being a good boy, having recently received my first set of penalty points for years. So, I took the Panamera home for a few days to find out what it was like to live with – not lose your licence with.

The first thing I did was plug the German car's mobile charger into an outlet at my house. Then I started out gently. The Porsche will customise its hybrid mode to your driving style, tactically deciding when to use the petrol and electric motor for utmost efficiency. This means you don't have to consider battery management too much.

I drove the Turbo S E-Hybrid Sport Turismo about 70 miles to visit friends, and I was down to the last bit of charge in the battery as I rolled up. For that outing, I put the car into its Hybrid Auto setting and let it sort the power out by itself. It was swift, comfy and hushed when I wanted it to be.

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Driving in E-power guise is undemanding. There's a bunch of lights under the tachometer needle to inform you how near you are to needing the petrol engine. There's also a tangible point in the travel of the accelerator – a kind of click that when you go beyond it, petrol propulsion is summoned. Despite its large size, the Porsche is convenient in urban surroundings, especially when using its electric power. The 136-horsepower offered by the electric motor is enough on its own without needing to use any petrol.

On motorways, I found the car's lane keep assist and adaptive cruise control to be helpful. But, it's still easy to get carried away with the

clout on tap when you're on the open road. Little 'toys', like the Sport Response button in the middle of the mode dial, are just too tempting. Yes, I pressed it – and discovered it puts the Turbo S E-Hybrid Sport Turismo into the most potent of sport settings for 20 seconds. Thank goodness then, that when it comes to scrubbing off velocity, there's not a worry to be had. The Porsche's brakes – especially the large carbon ceramic ones on this model – will get you out of a tricky situation.

So, for quick trips around town, this is a superb, cost-effective electric vehicle with up to 31 miles of pure-electric range. What's more, the Porsche's

cabin has loads of space for four adults. Its boot is also large enough for suitcases, shopping, or anything else you'd need an estate car for. I found it extremely useful. And when it comes to long commutes, it's a fast, comfortable performance car that munches miles scarily quickly.

Finally, it's a real head-turner; it's good-looking and visibly costly. It'll make other motorists sit up and take notice, whether you're whirring noiselessly away from traffic lights under clean electric power or letting the tailpipes of the 4.0-litre V8 roar in Sport mode. Every second I spent behind the wheel of the Porsche Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid Sport Turismo was terrific. Just keep an eye on that speedo!

Fast Facts

Max speed: 192 mph
0-62 mph: 3.4 seconds
Combined mpg: 94.2
Engine layout: 3,996cc
8-cylinder twin turbo
+ electric motor
Max. power (PS): 680
CO2: 69 g/km
Price: £139,287
(£158,407 as tested)

