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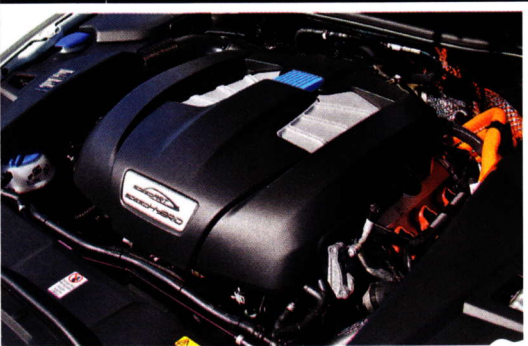
This is probably the first-ever story of a tuned hybrid SUV and it is certainly the first of a tuned Porsche Hybrid. While modifying a vehicle designed to be eco-friendly seems a contradiction in terms, when that vehicle carries the Porsche logo, the irony is substantially reduced.

With the exception of the Tesla, Fisker, eRuf, and SLS E-Cell, eco-friendly cars have been a bit short on excitement. That's because most electric and hybrid cars have been distinctly tailored to make a statement. As a result, "green" cars like Toyota's Prius are about as exciting to car enthusiasts as a toaster or a washing machine.

The world's first tuned Porsche hybrid.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY IAN KUAH





So when SpeedArt called to ask if we'd like to test its tuned Cayenne S Hybrid, my technical curiosity and the philosophical ramifications dictated an affirmative reply. One of the plus points of hybrid and electric vehicles is the impressive torque of their electric motors. Their handicap, of course, is weight — and their emphasis on economy before performance.

The V6 in the Cayenne S Hybrid is not the same as the one in the Cayenne. The latter uses a 3598-cc V6 good for 300 hp and 295 lb-ft of torque. 0-62 mph takes 7.8 seconds with a six-speed automatic, while top speed is 143 mph. The 2995-cc V6 in the Cayenne S Hybrid is supercharged and produces 333 hp and 324 lb-ft. Its electric motor provides an additional 47 hp and 221 lb-ft, but this is not directly additive. Porsche says total system power works out to 380 hp and 428 lb-ft. That's enough to deliver a 0-62 mph time of 6.5 seconds and a top speed of 150 mph — with *better* fuel economy.

SpeedArt wanted to improve on this, but ran into several hurdles. The first was electronic. So far, no aftermarket tuner has managed to crack the encryption used to prevent hacking into the latest Siemens ECUs in Cayennes and Panameras. So, like other tuners, SpeedArt uses an interceptor box to capture inputs and handshake

Hybrid Porsches are a whole new world, one in which you can keep an eye on your emissions and drivetrain use in real time. The supercharged 3.0-liter V6 gets more boost pressure, which can be monitored on the dashtop gauge.

with the ECU in such a way that makes it think everything is normal.

With boost pressure raised from 0.5 to 0.8 bar as well as new fueling and ignition maps, SpeedArt claims the V6 makes 403 hp at 6300 rpm and 383 lb-ft at 2600 rpm — for a total system output of 450 hp and 472 lb-ft. The effect is dramatic: Accompanied by an even stronger surge when you nail the throttle, 0-62 takes 5.9 seconds, and 0-124 mph drops from 29.6 to 25.9 seconds. Top speed is up 7 mph, to 157 mph.

To better cope with the full performance of the enhanced V6, SpeedArt fitted 22x10-inch alloy wheels and 295/30ZR22 tires all around. The only other visible change is the sport exhaust, with its twin 100-mm pipes. The exhaust adds a switch to the center console that enables you to flick between sport and stealth modes.

When you drive the SpeedHybrid, the differences in its character are immediately noticeable. The extra torque launches the SUV forward far more aggressively. Set to Normal mode, the exhaust sounds close to stock — but a deeper, more sonorous song comes when you switch to the Sport mode.

In the end, though, there's no getting away from the fact that the Cayenne S Hybrid is the heaviest Cayenne. If you drive it aggressively, fuel economy will suffer — so it's no surprise fuel consumption in SpeedArt's version is worse by roughly 20 percent. While some would argue this defeats the purpose of the basic car, others will take a different view: If one must drive a hybrid for social or other reasons, why not have a little fun with it? ■

