

Porsche Cayenne Diesel

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PROS 'N' CONS

Comfortable ✓
Fast ✓
Practical ✓
Good for towing ✓
Pricy options list X

FAST FACTS

Max speed: 138 mph
0-62 mph: 7.6 secs
Combined mpg: 39.2
Engine: 2,967 cc V6 turbo diesel
Max. power (bhp): 242 at 4400 rpm
Max. torque (lb/ft): 406 at 2000 rpm
CO2: 189 g/km
Price: £46,338 on the road

FOR ANY business, particularly for those based in the countryside, Porsche's latest Cayenne Diesel is a good alternative to the predictable Range Rover.

The German car, which was revamped recently, has permanent all-wheel drive with self-locking centre differential. The luxury SUV's power is transmitted to all four wheels with optimum precision and control.

It is a refined and impressively quiet off-roader which is also capable of great acceleration - it is a Porsche after all! The latest three-litre V6 Diesel engine offered in the Cayenne now delivers 242 bhp - 5 bhp more punch than previously via an eight-speed Tiptronic S automatic transmission, which includes steering wheel mounted gearshift controls.

Fuel economy has also risen to 39 mpg from 38.2mpg, and CO2 emissions have dropped six grams to 189 g/km. That is enough to bump the Cayenne diesel down to a 30 per cent benefit in kind tax rate, from 32 per cent. In addition, the power increase has had a positive effect on performance. For example, the acceleration time from 0-62 mph has been cut by 0.2 seconds to 7.6 seconds, and top speed is up 2mph to 137mph.

Unsurprisingly, the Cayenne makes a great towing vehicle and the preparation for an optional tow bar system comes as standard. For the biggest loads, you can choose from two towing options: an electrically retractable tow bar unit, which was fitted to my test vehicle (at a cost of £825), or a manually detachable tow bar. With the electric version, the ball neck can be retracted beneath the rear apron - all at the push of a button. Both options have a maximum braked trailer load of 3,500 kg (with a maximum nose weight of 140 kg) and come with a 13-pole socket. This makes the car ideal for anyone with, for example, an equine business. It is absolutely ideal for lugging a fully laden horse trailer and, with its 4x4 capacity, it is perfect for getting in and out of muddy fields.

Of course, the Porsche doesn't just come with tow bar options; it has a lot of others - but they come at a cost. For instance, the Cayenne I drove had: metallic paint (£697.00), Porsche communication management including navigation mode (£2,137.00), black full leather interior package (£2,177.00), universal audio interface (£227.00), air suspension with self-levelling ride height adjustment (£2,380.00), Bluetooth phone capability (£534.00), 19-inch Cayenne Design II alloy wheels, with all season tyres optimised for rolling resistance (£1,456.00), electric tilt/slide sunroof (£1,004.00), bi-xenon headlights (£1,165.00), brushed aluminium interior package (£526.00), roof rails including roof mouldings in aluminium finish (£590.00) and a heated windscreen (£324.00). Phew! Along with the electric tow bar fitting that pushed my Cayenne Diesel's price tag to a whopping £60,380.00!

Option-packs aside, Porsche says that the basic Cayenne Diesel is confirmation that a 100-metre sprinter can also run a marathon. To be honest I would agree, because that statement pretty much encapsulates the oil-burning model's attraction - it is a tremendously sporty car to drive, but it is also very practical and delivers decent fuel economy for everyday use.