
Porsche 918: Final testing begins, power now 770HP

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Porsche has signified the final round of development testing of its 918 hybrid hypercar, by releasing pictures of the latest batch of pre-production prototypes complete with camouflage inspired by their (numerical and spiritual) predecessor: the legendary 917.

The new set of prototypes display what will be close to the final design for the bodywork, albeit clothed in camouflage which serves as a monochromatic tribute to Attwood and Herrmann's legendary red-and-white 917K. Previous 918 test mules have had much cruder bodywork solutions.

Porsche has been unusually vocal about the 918's abilities since revealing it in conceptual form at the 2010 Geneva show, deciding to announce its intended power output and economy figures to the world. Typically, manufacturers keep mum about these; firstly because rivals treat this kind of information as gold dust and, secondly, because if the car doesn't meet the claimed figures, it'll be deemed a failure before it rolls a wheel in production form.

So, looking at that last factor, how do the quoted figures look? Very well, it seems, with claimed power now up from 718HP to an awe-inspiring 770HP. And, somehow, the expected fuel economy hasn't suffered, staying at 'around 3 litres per 100km', which equates to roughly 94mpg. Emissions also remain unchanged at 70g/km - less than a diesel Smart car.



At the heart of the modern miracle is a 4.6-litre V8, mounted amidships and joined by a hybrid module on the rear axle (which also has adaptive steering) and an electric motor on the front axle. The technological showcase continues with a full carbonfibre reinforced plastic (CFRP) monocoque, fully adaptive aerodynamics, and an upward-venting 'top pipes' exhaust system.

A further welcome piece of information is that the car is still on track for a September 2013 production debut, with owners receiving their cars before the year's end. Another number that remains unchanged from 2010 is the build quantity: just 918 people will enjoy the marvel that the super-Porsche will surely be, should it come out of the final production tests with the same abilities it went in with.

Photos: Porsche

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