



MACAN AN IMPRESSION

It was tough growing up in Bulawayo in the sixties...no twitter, no McDonalds, no Mr Delivery. But we did have the stark granite outcrops of the Matopos less than an hour's drive away. And in town those three iconic attractions – soft serve at the Eskimo Hut, a walk on the second longest railway platform in the world and weekend revelry around Fritz drive-in restaurant.

Apart from the best steak rolls of the era, at Fritz, you could start a bloody brawl or arrange a wheel spinning dice at the mere nod of a head. With my mate Steve behind the wheel of his mother's prized Vauxhall Viva we took on all comers – my duty was to surreptitiously change the gears from the passenger side, starting the rumour that we had the first automatic in town!

And there were no finer streets for racing. According to legend they were constructed so that a fully spanned ox wagon could do a u-turn and the only hazards were that the drainage ditches at intersections meant you were airborne for much of the duel.

London and New York would have loved that start to their city's street planning...the only problem is that Bulawayo never really grew much in the following decades. There is that strange irony that when we are at our street racing peak we never have the steeds to gallop to glory...it's the balding grey haired drivers who are at the controls of the menacing machinery of the day. And maybe that is a good thing all round! Not that you would purchase the stunning new Porsche Macan just to be first off the lights on William Nicol... when they are working that is.



Macan And Impression Two

So why would you fork out a minimum of R862k on the baby brother to the top selling Cayenne? Well firstly we are not talking about a striking family resemblance. The "Tiger" is more dashing, sits lower on its haunches and has a claimed DNA match with the iconic 911 - although that may just be overly romantic. Put simply it is a lot more sporty, and it's not your typical family wagon. And that's the major selling point for the Stuttgart car maker. They are insulted if you start comparing the latest Leipzig entrant (at an investment of around seven billion Rand) with the Audi Q5 (although it shares a basic platform), the BMW X3 or the Range Rover Evoque. This, it is boldly claimed, is the sports car of the compact SUV segment, setting new benchmarks in terms of performance, driving dynamics and adrenalin boost on meandering tar and more testing off-road terrain. Well ain't that the truth! All those claims were evident while chasing "catch-me-if-you-can" Porsche CEO, Tony Venter, through the Cape winelands. Gone are the fears of the rock n' rolling 4x4s of the last century, even in some extremely windy conditions, (unusual for the Cape I know); the Macan was stable and subtle to drive. Not quite the kick in the kidneys and the sweet gurgling from the tailpipes of the 911 GT3, but very impressive all round. The stylish controls also always seem to be just waiting at your fingertips, with the instruments telling you what you need to know without any frills. In its segment the Porsche Macan will be the SUV to seek in 2015. Just a pity I can't put the fastest SUV in the world through its paces on Grey Street in Bulawayo. Fritz drive-in has closed down and Uncle Bob no longer welcomes me with open arms. ■ Derek Watts

