Power from Patagonia

Dear Reader,

“What do you mean the forests are dying? Show me a tree that’s died because I drive a Porsche and I’ll show you 100 Porsche drivers who’ve died because there was a tree in the way!” Of course it was the sports car manufacturer who became the target of the stand-up comedians when the environmental problems caused by cars first came to public attention. Because their products were the real gas guzzlers: high fuel consumption accompanied by high pollution emissions.

Even then, many of the critics would have done well to take a more balanced view. But nowadays, it would be a really good thing if the shortsighted politicians who regard the electric car as being the only solution to the mobility problems of the future could adopt a more neutral approach. Spain is the most recent member of the would-be eco-club to announce a ban on the sales of vehicles with combustion engines from 2040 onward. It joins a group of around a dozen countries that have made similar decisions. We have not yet got tired of mentioning here that electric cars do not automatically protect the climate and are far from being environmentally friendly in and of themselves.

Surprisingly, the phrase “environmentally friendly” brings us straight back to Porsche with its farsighted plan to invest in a company with a promising future based in southern Chile. There, not far from the famous Cape Horn, the wind conditions are extreme. It’s not for nothing that sailors refer to these latitudes as the Roaring Forties and the Furious Fifties. The original inhabitants of Patagonia called this region Hari Oni, which means “strong wind.” This is where the Hari Oni project, which involves not only Porsche, but also Siemens and Exxon, got its name, in reference to the

inexhaustible reserves of renewable energy. And there, on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, water isn’t exactly in short supply either. These are ideal conditions for the cost-effective production of green hydrogen, which can be used to manufacture e-fuels.

And that is precisely what will be happening very soon in Patagonia. During the pilot phase in 2022, around 130,000 l of e-fuel will be produced. In the next two phases, the capacity will be increased to around 55 million l per year by 2024 and to approximately 550 million by 2026. In the future, the wind from Patagonia will provide a sustainable, environmentally friendly supply of fuel for combustion engines.

I’d like to be there when the politicians who introduced the ban on combustion engines hear the first climate-neutral Porsche go roaring past parliament, while their electric cars will be powered by electricity from coal-fired, gas-fired and nuclear power stations for years to come.

Frank Jung
Editor

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