A lap of the Isle of Man with TT legend John McGuinness

23/10/2026 In the latest instalment of the Porsche Newsroom's Sunday Drives series, motorcycle road racing legend and Porsche 911 owner John McGuinness MBE takes us on a lap of his favourite place on earth.

Since his TT debut in 1996, John McGuinness MBE has completed thousands of laps of the Isle of Man TT Mountain Course. He knows every one of the 260-or-so corners like the back of his hand, and his 23 TT wins are testament to his remarkable talent on two wheels. He also enjoys visiting the island on four wheels, in his 996-generation 911 Carrera 4S.

His love affair with the Isle of Man began early. Growing up in Morecambe, a seaside town in the north of England, McGuinness used to skip school and sneak onto the ferry that runs across the Irish Sea to the port of Douglas with his BMX. Little did he know then that one day a corner on the 60 km TT course would be named after him.

A lifelong connection to the Isle of Man TT

“I grew up dreaming about racing at the TT and as it turned out I've spent my entire adult life doing exactly that,” says McGuinness, 54. “I go there as often as I can and driving or riding a lap never gets old. Every bump, crest and corner holds the secret to a better lap, and a few stories of races gone by.

“When the roads are open to the public most are 30 mph [48 km/h] zones; during a race I go through them at closer to 190 mph [306 km/h], so chasing speed in the car doesn't feel necessary. There's no harm in running the right lines, though. When you drive off the boat in Douglas, you're about four sets of traffic lights and five minutes away from being on the greatest ribbon of tarmac ever made."

Exploring the Mountain Course in a Porsche 911

McGuinness can recite TT history like poetry at almost any point on the circuit. “Even the section after Ago's leap is special when the roads are open. On the left there's the Secret Garden. Ros, the owner, welcomes famous faces for a glimpse of life at 170 mph [274 km/h]."

"I've introduced a few friends to the TT by sitting them there," he says, listing Porsche Brand Ambassador Mark Webber, motoring journalist and TV presenter Chris Harris, and Kurt Geiger CEO and car collector Neil Clifford, plus “a few other Porsche guys”. “They've all laid on the wall and watched me carry a cheeky wheelie during a fast lap. In the car it's a third-gear ‘nothingness’ of a road. On the bike it's wide open in fifth gear – and on one wheel if I know someone is watching."

Key corners on the Isle of Man TT course

After hard braking at Quarterbridge, one of the course's slower corners, the route continues past the rugby club. “Quarterbridge catches people out because it's the first big braking and turning corner," continues McGuinness. “After a year of waiting, and on cold tyres and with a full tank of fuel, it's easy to overstep the mark. In the car it's a mini roundabout, with a fast-food restaurant round the corner and a fuel station if you need it. On the bike, it's first gear, clip the kerb on the inside and then full gas to fourth gear on the run to Braddan Bridge."

As the route heads west towards Laurel Bank, with its lush green verges, ask him what his bike is doing and the reply is familiar: “Flat out in top”. “It's a joy to drive a lap in such a nice car on my own. Usually I'm in a hire car overloaded with friends on our way to a restaurant to get away from the paddock."

On the Cronk-Y-Voddy straight, his Porsche allows McGuinness to take the view in – a novelty that never wears off. “I'm usually flat out in top along here, eyes fixated on the horizon, bike straddling the crown of the road."

Flat out through McGuinness's Corner

After the walled corner at Handley's, a left-hand kink in the road officially became 'McGuinness's Corner' in 2013. "It's a great feeling having my own corner here, especially when you consider who else has had the same treatment." How does he nail it? "Flat out in top, sixth gear and 180 mph [290 km/h]," he says, with a twinkle in his eye.

From there, the route continues to Ramsey Square, usually stopping for coffee and cake at 'Hutch' or 'Dolce Vita'. "Parking is easy and the cake is good. Plus the view changes as we head out of Ramsey and onto the mountain where it can get bleak in bad weather."

From Ramsey to the Mountain section

The right hander at the Gooseneck signals the start of the mountain section, where there is no upper speed limit. "When visibility is good you can see the road ahead, and oncoming traffic, for miles. There's no place like it in the world. On my bike I'd be at 195 mph [314 km/h] in some sections."

Through Windy Corner, round Kate's Cottage and heading down to the famous Creg Ny Baa pub, the speed returns to normal, even if the view doesn't. "When Douglas comes into view below, you know you've almost completed another lap, even if there are still a few miles to go. That view is special every time."

The long flat left at Brandish and sweeping uphill right at Hillberry signal the end of the open sections. Built-up areas follow, and the lap slows as you turn into The Nook. "It's the only section of the course that isn't open to the public all year round," says McGuinness. "Surrounded by trees, it's damp almost all year round. You have to remind yourself to take it easy – this is where you could throw a good lap away with a silly mistake."

The Nook rejoins the public road at the roundabout onto the Glencrutchery Road where the grandstand and control tower stand empty for 11 months of the year. The speed limit is 50 km/h (30 mph) and life – normally – rumbles along quietly.

Why the TT Course remains unmatched

"But climb the steps in the first week of June and you'll witness something spectacular," he concludes. "I'll never get tired of lapping this place. How could I? It's the greatest road in the world."

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