



PORSCHE

Press Release

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Porsche Rennsport Reunion VI, Laguna Seca/USA

Highlights: of man and machines

Stuttgart. The Porsche Rennsport Reunion VI at Laguna Seca (USA) has more than 60,000 fans of the brand from Stuttgart spellbound. At the four-day event in California, avid motor racing enthusiasts in legendary vehicles and unforgotten works drivers from the last five decades congregate. Around 2,500 vehicles – from the 356 Speedster to the RS Spyder, the 959 Dakar and the 919 Hybrid – thrill visitors with their fast laps in seven categories. The theme of the sixth edition of the Porsche Rennsport Reunion is “Champions”, and with over 30,000 race wins, the sports car manufacturer from Weissach is by far the most successful brand in motorsports worldwide.

Wolfgang Porsche takes the wheel of the Number One

70 years of Porsche sports cars in a nutshell: On the occasion of the Rennsport Reunion VI in Laguna Seca, Dr. Wolfgang Porsche turns some laps in the 356 No. 1 – the first registered vehicle of the sports car manufacturer from the year 1948. “It was a pleasure to drive,” says the Chairman of the Supervisory Board at Porsche AG. “The corkscrew corner is definitely a lot of fun in a really fast car. I only know this passage from our track at Leipzig. The original is far more impressive.” Ferry Porsche designed the Porsche 356 Roadster 70 years ago. “My father couldn’t find his dream car anywhere, so he built it himself,” says Dr. Wolfgang Porsche.

Porsche keeps you young

The passionate race driver George Batcabe celebrates his birthday on the first day of the Rennsport Reunion VI. He's turning 86. George Batcabe climbs into his 1956 Speedster and hurtles around the Laguna Seca circuit. "Why shouldn't this still be fun when you're older?" asks the businessman from the gambling paradise of Reno in the US state of Nevada. "My Porsche keeps me young and fit," he declares. His race car is his loyal companion. "I have a close relationship with my Speedster. At the end of the fifties I flipped this car on the way to Road America. It was a total write-off. I kept it in the yard for 50 years and finally restored it in time for the 2015 Rennsport Reunion. Since then I've driven it regularly at events. As long as I'm in nobody's way I'll keep driving. Age doesn't matter."

Family affair

Mentos and Chupa Chups are his business, Porsche is his life. The Norwegian Egidio Perfetti, who contests the World Sports Car Championship WEC in the 911 RSR fielded by the Porsche customer team Project 1, has come to the Rennsport Reunion with his family. His younger brothers Daniele and Augusto also drive historic 911 racers, just like their father Ambrogio. "And my uncle is our sponsor," says Egidio Perfetti, from whose collection eight vehicles are exhibited and raced at the Laguna Seca event. "I've acquired the legendary 962 in the Coca Cola design. I'm not allowed to drive that one at this stage. Dad's a bit scared, but that'll soon change. Then I'll go for it!"

The business of speed

Passion becomes big business. Bruce Canepa's company restores classic Porsche race cars. He employs around 70 people. "My father used to trade cars – just American brands. At some point someone traded in a Porsche. When I was 19 I always used to secretly take it out for a spin at night. I was smitten and I still am," says Canepa between his track outings at the Porsche Rennsport Reunion in Laguna Seca. "We've just restored a 917/30, which I tested at Laguna Seca. After four laps I posted a time

that would have planted me on the first grid row at the last IMSA race. The car has incredible power!”

Porsche tractor in pink

The “pig” ploughs through the field. Weighing 2.3 tonnes and with an engine output of 25 hp, the Porsche tractor is perhaps not the sporting highlight of the Rennsport Reunion, but it’s definitely a favourite amongst fans. The Gunnar Racing team has painted the venerable vehicle in the “Pink Pig” livery and added a large rear wing to lend the tractor a sporting look. For good reason: John Oates, the frontman of the famous American pop duo Hall & Oates (“Maneater”) is eager to go racing. Since the insurance contract of his current tour forbids him from driving a race car, he is putting his foot down in a tractor. “You’d be surprised. I have several tractors on my farm in Colorado. I know what you can do with them,” laughs the pop star.

Unforgotten overall victory

Fun in California, reminiscing about Sebring. As Timo Bernhard arrives in the paddock of the Laguna Seca racetrack his eyes light up. He is finally reunited with his beloved Porsche RS Spyder. “It reminds me of our sensational overall victory at Sebring in 2008,” says the German. “On the morning before the race I saw a banner at the entrance that read: 17 Sebring overall victories for Porsche. When I left the track that night after winning, fans had turned the number 17 into a big 18. That was incredibly emotional back then – and it still is today. Such thoughts always arise at the Rennsport Reunion.”

Pacesetter for many years

The Porsche 911 Carrera RSR is a true champion with a strong signal. Developed for the 1973 season, the race car sent a powerful message in the USA. Hurley Haywood and Peter Gregg scored overall victory in the No. 58 Carrera RSR at Daytona – and achieved the first win in North America for a 911 at a 24-hour race. The long-established Porsche customer team Brumos Racing followed up with many other victories. The white vehicles with red-and-white stripes turned into the epitome of

Porsche success in North America in the 1970s and 1980s. “It was enormously important for Porsche motorsport in the USA,” recalls Hurley Haywood on the occasion of the Rennsport Reunion VI. “We dominated for many years.”

Kiwi on a world tour

The New Zealander Paul Higgins stands next to his Brun Porsche 962 C with a proud smile. “My car, my big love,” beams the ardent collector of historic cars. “This vehicle finished tenth at the 1989 Le Mans 24-hour race. When you get in the car you can feel this history. No matter if I’m driving at Sebring, Daytona or Laguna Seca, there’s always a touch of Le Mans there.” With his son John, Higgins races his classic Porsche all over the world. “It’s expensive, but it gives me a feeling that money just can’t buy.”

Life lesson

“Some very emotional experiences are connected to so many Porsche race cars,” says the Belgian motor racing legend Jacky Ickx during a walk around the Rennsport Reunion VI in Laguna Seca. “But it’s the incredible moments that are deeply rooted. This becomes more and more obvious when I see a Porsche 936. In such a car we won a seemingly impossible race at Le Mans in 1977. For hours we fought tooth and nail. The team gave their utmost. In the end we climbed to the top of the podium. We made the impossible possible. No one gave up – you never forget such lessons.”

Lawyer gone astray

If you ask a child to draw a Porsche, what will you get? The unforgettable silhouette of the 911. But not with Thomas Gruber from Austria. “I really like the 914,” he says, gently running his hand over the red paint of his 914-6, which Brumos raced earlier in the USA. “It was the spare car of Brumos that had its big moment in 1971: class victory at Watkins Glen. The car handles sensationally. Thanks to its weight distribution and balance, I’m always faster than the others going into corners. It’s incredible fun!”

As good as it gets

Jochen Mass, the Porsche legend from Germany, looks around incredulously at the Rennsport Reunion in Laguna Seca. "It's fantastic to see all these race cars. That's when I realise everything I drove back then," said Jochen Mass. The Sebring winner of 1987 still cannot resist it, even on the eve of his 72nd birthday. "When I see these cars, I want to race them. Especially the 962. These cars bring back all the memories. For instance, I think how magnificent it was to drive the works cars. When customer teams slightly modified the 962, often the good balance was gone. What does that tell us? Leave a Porsche as it is. That's as good as it gets."

The swansong

The final appearance of a Le Mans legend: After scoring three overall wins at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the title of the World Endurance Championship WEC and setting records on the Nürburgring-Nordschleife and the Circuit Spa-Francorchamps, Porsche works driver Earl Bamber from New Zealand turns the final laps in the evo-version of the Porsche 919 Hybrid at the Rennsport Reunion. "Everyone wants to contest Formula 1. I don't need to do this anymore. This car's performance exceeds every expectation," said the Le Mans champion. In the coming weeks, the successful LMP1 hybrid vehicle will take its place of honour in the Porsche Museum at Stuttgart.

Exclusive surprise

The star of the event is not a classic but a brand new vehicle from Weissach. The new edition Porsche 935 thrilled fans at the surprise presentation at Laguna Seca on Thursday. The car, designed for club sport, is a salute to one of the most famous race cars from Weissach, the Porsche 935/78 – better known as "Moby Dick". "The new 935 is unbelievably grunty. It's huge fun to drive," says works driver Jörg Bergmeister. The 700 hp racer will be produced in a limited number of 77 units and delivered to customers from the summer of 2019.

Porsche blood in the veins

The 65-year-old Porsche enthusiast Kevin Jeanette from California has brought far more than 20 stunning race vehicles to Laguna Seca, run by his Gunnar Racing team. “Most of them belong to friends, only a few are mine,” said the modest American. When counting his cars, he stops at ten and says with a grin: “Okay, so quite a few are mine. I simply need this. I have Porsche blood running through my veins. I love motorsport with all my heart. For me, the Rennsport Reunion is a chance to pass on my racing passion to as many young folk as possible. It doesn’t matter if it’s through a 911 in the Disney Pixar look or a 962 with a Le Mans heritage.”

Fast neighbours

Tennis champion in power paradise. At her visit to the Rennsport Reunion, Maria Sharapova meets Porsche Selected Driver Christina Nielsen. The swift Dane is making the most of the opportunity to introduce Porsche’s Russian brand ambassador to the new 911 GT3 R, which she will drive this upcoming season in the USA. “And how do I fit my other leg into the car?” laughs the 1.88-metre tennis player as she climbs into the GTD class racer. “We clicked immediately, and we’re virtually neighbours in Los Angeles,” says Nielsen. “I’d love to give her a lesson in race driving in the next weeks at the Porsche Experience Center in Los Angeles, and Maria can teach me how to play tennis.”

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