Porsche Vision 357: homage to the first Porsche model line, the 356

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26/01/2023 75 years ago, on 8 June 1948, the 356 No. 1 Roadster became the first automobile bearing the name Porsche to receive its general operating permit – the birth of the sports car brand.

Porsche is now embarking on its anniversary year with the Porsche Vision 357 and a reference to the Porsche 356 – the dream of Ferry Porsche of a sports car. As an homage to this, the design study brings the monolithic form into the present day. Liberated from the regulations that apply for implementation as a series model, the Style Porsche Team manifests potential expressions of the future design philosophy: one example is the consistent enhancement of the light signature, which is both progressive and visionary in the way it points towards the future. The fundamental concept is reflective of the interplay between tradition and innovation: what would the dream of a sports car of Ferry Porsche might look like today?

356 as a basis to design DNA

“We created a very special birthday present in the form of the Porsche Vision 357, one which uses the 356 as a basis to underscore the significance of our design DNA,” as Michael Mauer, Vice President Style Porsche, says. “The design study is an attempt to combine the past, present and future with coherency, featuring proportions that are reminiscent of its historical archetype and details that visualise the outlook for the future.”

Built on the technology platform of the 368 kW (500 PS; **718 Cayman GT4 RS (WLTP)*:** Fuel consumption combined: 13.0 l/100 km; CO_2 emissions combined: 295 g/km; CO_2 class: G) 718 Cayman GT4 RS, the Porsche Vision 357 represents outstanding sports car performance. The exterior design study is the highlight of the special exhibition “75 Years of Porsche sports cars” at the Volkswagen Group’s “DRIVE” Forum in Berlin, which opened with an exclusive evening event on 25 January 2023. The exhibition will be open to the public from 27 January 2023, and the Porsche Vision 357 will be on exhibit until mid-February. The design study will be presented at the South by Southwest in Austin from 10 March 2023 and at further international events over the course of the year.

Design has been an elementary component of the Porsche legend since the very beginning. Visionary studies and concept cars form the foundation for Porsche’s unmistakable yet innovative design. “Thinking out loud about the future is one of the core missions of Style Porsche. Design studies are the pool of ideas that feed the design of tomorrow,” says Michael Mauer. “We are perpetually on the conceptual journey into the future of mobility. Time and again, the brand history serves as a source of inspiration. Taking a look back at our tradition with a future concept car is not as paradoxical as it might seem. Creative freedom is also important: this is where valuable ideas can emerge unfettered, ones that help us imagine our consistent design philosophy in innovative new directions.”

Modern interpretation of the Porsche 356

With its monolithic form, the narrow passenger cell with an abruptly sloping flyline and broad shoulders, the proportions of the Porsche Vision 357 evoke the lines of the 356. The windscreen sharply wraps around the A-pillars. As in its historic forebear, Porsche is pushing the boundaries of glass production: early 356s had a split windscreen with a bar down the middle. The split design was replaced in model year 1952 by a one-piece windscreen with a bend down the centre. The A-pillars of the Porsche Vision 357 are black and visually unite the side window surfaces into a single unit. This DLO (daylight opening) graphic resembles the visor of a helmet.

The functional details are integrated and underpin the sculptural character of the vehicle. This includes the concealed door openers by the side windows and the tail lights, which sit behind a patterned array of points in the body itself. Another nod to the original is the grille pattern in the rear, in which the third brake light is integrated. Like all current Porsche models, the Vision 357 features a four-point light

signet in front. The round design of the headlights is also a throwback to the characteristic lights of the 356. There are also parallels in the paintwork: the two-tone concept with Ice Grey Metallic and Grivola Grey Metallic in the nether regions of the front end hearkens back to the grey tones that were already popular in the 1950s.

The wide track makes a bullish impression and enhances driving stability. The 20-inch wheels are made of magnesium and are equipped with aerodynamically advantageous carbon fibre hubcaps and central locks. Visually, they also recall a legendary Porsche wheel: the 356 A and 356 B with drum brakes had rims with the notably large bolt circle of 205 millimetres.

Sporty details from the 718 Cayman GT4 RS

The “75” anniversary logo adorns the doors and the front of the design study like a start number. And that is far from the only detail from the world of racing: there’s nothing behind the lower area of the front wheels, which allows better ventilation of the wheel arches. The wrap-around, jointless front bonnet is fastened with quick-release mechanisms. Threaded rods stabilise the large front spoiler. On the side sills, the Porsche designers employed natural fibre-reinforced plastic (NFRP) – as in the Porsche Mission R, the concept study for an all-electric GT racing car presented in 2021. The basis for the sustainable materials is provided by flax fibres from agriculture. Instead of traditional exterior mirrors, the design study is equipped with cameras on the edge of the roof. The visible tailpipe trim in the rear is made of a blueish-looking titanium, while the inside of the tailpipe is made of ceramic.

Like the 718 Cayman GT4 RS, the Porsche Vision 357 has process air intakes positioned high behind the driver- and passenger-side windows, which designers adorned with comic-style “Air” decals. Like the “eFuel” logo on the tank cap on the right wing, the decals are reminiscent of motorsport decals. The naturally aspirated six-cylinder boxer engine theoretically draws 368 kW (500 PS) from four litres of displacement. The high-speed mid-engine would be designed for operation with e-fuels.

About the Porsche 356

The 356 No. 1 Roadster was the very first car built by the Porsche brand. With the two-seater with a multi-tubular frame and mid-engine, Ferry Porsche and his team fulfilled his dream of building his own sports car. The Porsche 356 went into series production as a coupé with a different frame and a 40-PS rear engine instead of the original mid-engine concept. This type formed the foundation for the success of the Porsche brand. After the first largely manually built cars (coupé and convertible) 356/2 with an aluminium bodyshell, Porsche moved from Gmünd back to Stuttgart at the end of 1949. This is where series production of the Porsche 356 sports car began. The sheet-steel bodies were manufactured by Stuttgart-based Reutter bodyworks while engine production began in Zuffenhausen in space rented from Reutter as Porsche Werk 1 was still occupied by the Allies.

Some 78,000 units of the Porsche 356 had been built by 1965. 356 (“pre-A”, 1948-1955), 356 A

(1955-1959), 356 B (1959-1963) and 356 C (1963-1965) were available in a range of open- and closed-top body versions and various performance levels.

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Consumption data

718 Cayman GT4 RS (WLTP)*: Fuel consumption combined: 13.0 l/100 km; CO_2 emissions combined: 295 g/km; CO_2 class: G

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

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