Porsche and America – a review 1

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22/09/2015 The USA are the largest Porsche market overall. How did that come about? The Porsche Newsroom examines the question. Part 1: The beginnings.

The love story between Porsche and America is inseparably linked to the name of Max Hoffman. The enthusiasm of the New York car dealer for Porsche sports cars allied with pure sales genius formed the basis for the rapid rise of the brand in the USA.

During the first talks with Hoffman at the Paris Motor Show in autumn 1950, Ferry Porsche mentioned he hoped to sell about five Porsche cars a year in the USA. Hoffman, who had a large dealer and sales network on the East Coast, replied he was not interested in a business deal if he could not sell at least five cars a week in the long term. Negotiations resulted in a contract for the sale of initially 15 units a year.

"Win on Sunday, sell on Monday"

In order to make the name of Porsche known among potential customers, Hoffman presented the 356 at his showrooms on Park Avenue and in advertisements, he extolled the car as the "German Automotive Jewel" and "Car for the Connoisseur". He also drove one of the first 356 models delivered in autumn 1950 to a race in Watkins Glen where the car caused quite a stir. Hoffman handed over another car to the well-known racing driver Briggs Cunningham who was so amazed that he immediately bought the 356.

"Win on Sunday, sell on Monday" was the slogan of American car salesmen, for whom racing successes were a decisive sales argument. As the number of victories increased, the motor sports scene in the USA became more and more enthusiastic for the versatile 356. All this made itself definitely felt in the rising delivery figures at Porsche KG. In 1951, Hoffman imported 32 models of the 356 and then 283 units in the following year. By 1955, the number of deliveries had increased to 1,514 units, more than 50 per cent of total sales.

Even Hollywood stars spread the fame of Porsche

The lightweight version of the car, the 356 Speedster, specially designed for the US market, helped Porsche to achieve the final break-through. 1,033 units of this model were sold in 1955 alone. The secret of Porsche's success was the public perception of the brand. It was regarded as sporty and

unconventional. The 356 quickly became a cult object.

Even Hollywood stars spread the fame of Porsche by showing themselves in public with the German sports car. One of them was James Dean who took part in many races with his 356 Speedster – before he was killed in a tragic accident in a 550 Spyder on a Californian highway on September 30, 1955.

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