

Porsche honours 50 years of Transaxle

14/05/2026 Under the title 'Forever Young. Celebrating Transaxle', the Porsche Heritage and Museum team marks the 50th anniversary of Transaxle with a series of rotating pop-ups and a range of perspectives. The focus is on the spirit of the 1980s and on the interplay of technology, design and motorsport that defined this era.

Half a century has passed since Porsche brought a sports car architecture into series production that still represents a distinctive approach to balance: Transaxle. In 2026, Porsche looks back on 50 years of Transaxle, covering an entire era in which almost 400,000 vehicles were sold. From 1976 to 1995, four model lines – the 924, 928, 944 and 968 – shaped this chapter.

This legacy forms the basis for the themed year 'Forever Young. Celebrating Transaxle', which deliberately departs from the format of a traditional special exhibition. “We have planned a series of pop-ups throughout the year: compact, flexible and offering constantly evolving perspectives on technology, design, motorsport and the spirit of the times,” says Iris Haker, curator at the Porsche Museum. “A format designed to surprise with diverse narrative angles – not only in Zuffenhausen, but

also at selected locations beyond." The opening presentation at the Porsche Museum will be on display until 7 June 2026.

The Transaxle story begins in the 1970s, before reaching its defining phase in the decade that followed. In the 1980s, the concept gains visibility and achieves commercial success. This decade marks the period in which the Transaxle reached its greatest convergence – technologically, stylistically and in public perception. With its positioning and character, the 944 proved highly popular with customers, and the model family expands. In this period, Transaxle evolves beyond a purely technical solution. It came to define the Porsche experience for an entire generation.

The cultural context of the 1980s aligns closely with the Transaxle models. The decade is characterised by technological optimism and strong visual contrasts. Pop culture and film elevated sports cars to lifestyle icons, while video games and digital media gained widespread popularity. This atmosphere of neon light, momentum and individuality provides the stage for the Transaxle models. With the Transaxle principle, Porsche demonstrates that identity also emerges from the courage to embrace change. This distinctive spirit of the era is reflected in the pop-up installations.

Engineered for balance

At Porsche, "Transaxle" refers to a layout designed to achieve balanced driving dynamics: the engine is positioned at the front, while the transmission is located at the rear axle. Both components are connected by a driveshaft within a rigid torque tube, transmitting power efficiently. Many drivers appreciate the stability and precise handling of these vehicles. The models combine sportiness with everyday usability – another hallmark of Porsche.

Four model lines, one defining era

The beginning of the Transaxle era also marks Porsche's entry into a new customer segment. Its origins date back to the EA 425 development project in 1972. When Volkswagen discontinued the programme in 1974, Porsche adopted the concept and introduced it as its own sports car in 1976. The 924 was produced in Neckarsulm and remained in the line-up until 1988.

The 928 premiered in Geneva in 1977 and was positioned as a comfortable grand tourer. It consistently translates the Transaxle concept for long-distance driving, combining a water-cooled V8 light-alloy engine, aluminium chassis and the Weissach rear axle. It is a Porsche designed for high speeds with greater comfort and dynamic capability over long distances.

During the 1980s, the 944 became the most prominent model within the Transaxle family. With its performance, drivability and a more defined, powerful design, it closes the gap between entry-level models and the classic sports car segment.

Produced from 1991 to 1995, the 968 marks the culmination of almost two decades of continuous development. Its 3.0-litre four-cylinder engine delivering 240 PS and 305 Nm, combined with modern valve control, reflects the maturity of the early 1990s. It combines high performance with everyday usability and balanced handling.

Design as a reflection of its time

The Transaxle models were developed under the direction of Anatole Lapine, supported by Harm Lagaaji, Wolfgang Moebius and Peter Reisinger. Flat front sections, pop-up headlights, large tailgates and clear lines define the design of the early vehicles, setting them apart from many other sports cars of the era. Over time, the design language becomes more defined, the presence stronger and the visual cohesion across the model range more pronounced. The focus is not limited to the exterior. The interiors reflect a clear design philosophy centred on functionality, ergonomic logic and a driver-oriented cockpit. The result is a clean, focused yet individual space. The Transaxle concept remains structured in its layout while allowing room for personalisation in colours, materials and details.

Motorsport as a proving ground

Motorsport reveals how robust a concept truly is under sustained stress. From 1979 onwards, Transaxle models were entered in events such as the Monte Carlo Rally, the Safari Rally and rallies in Australia. In 1980, the 924 secured the SCCA championship title in the United States. At Le Mans, the works team entered the 924 GTP, where the four-cylinder engines demonstrated their reliability in 1980 and 1981. From 1981, customer teams were also able to compete with the 924 Carrera GTS and 924 Carrera GTR. Walter Roehrl, among others, competed in the German Rally Championship with a special rally derivative based on this platform.

A themed year in motion

The Transaxle models represent a period in which Porsche deliberately explored new directions. With its contemporary pop-up concept, Porsche Heritage and Museum revisits this past from a present-day perspective. The installations draw on the cultural context of the 1980s to bring this era to life. Further information on the pop-up tour, as well as the themed weekends “Transaxle Meet”, is available on the Porsche Museum website and via the Instagram channel @porsche.museum. The first activity weekend, “Transaxle Meet – Spring Edition”, will take place on 23 and 24 May 2026. As part of the exhibition, curator talks offer insights into the technology, design, and historical context of the transaxle era. The topic also extends beyond the classic exhibition format: a photo spot featuring graffiti art is being created in the logistics yard. A quick-draw artist captures transaxle models in just a few strokes, with a keen eye for their defining lines. A 924 Carrera GT and the 924 GTP “Le Mans” will further enrich the program on the museum forecourt. Admission is free for members of Porsche Clubs.

Transaxle dates at the Porsche Museum

Pop-up presentation 944 and 968	25 August 2026 – 4 October 2026
“Transaxle Meet – Fall Edition”	3 and 4 October 2026
Pop-up presentation 928	24 November 2026 – 17 January 2027
"Transaxle Meet – Winter Edition“	12 and 13 December 2026

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Image Sublines

Path: Porsche honours 50 years of Transaxle/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Porsche 924 Turbo and Porsche 924 (l-r), 50 years Transaxle, Porsche Museum, Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen, 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: 924 Turbo and 924

Path: Porsche honours 50 years of Transaxle/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Porsche 924 record car and Porsche 924 Carrera GT prototype (l-r), 50 years Transaxle, Porsche Museum, Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen, 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: 924 record car and 924 Carrera GT prototype

Path: Porsche honours 50 years of Transaxle/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Porsche 924 Turbo, 50 years Transaxle, Porsche Museum, Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen, 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: 924 Turbo

Path: Porsche honours 50 years of Transaxle/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: 928 Prototype, wind tunnel, ca. 1977, Porsche AG
Subline: 928

Path: Porsche honours 50 years of Transaxle/Images/img_5.jpg
Title: 944 S2, acoustics lab, ca. 1988, Porsche AG
Subline: 944

Path: Porsche honours 50 years of Transaxle/Images/img_6.jpg
Title: 968 Cabriolet, 1992, Porsche AG
Subline: 968 Cabriolet

Path: Porsche honours 50 years of Transaxle/Images/img_7.jpg
Title: Porsche 924 Carrera GTS, 50 Jahre Transaxle, Porsche Museum, Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen, 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: 924 Carrera GTS

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