# Coming home

19/09/2018 “Luftgekühlt” has finally come home to Germany. Patrick Long, the factory racing driver from the USA who is essentially the godfather of the classic Porsche gathering, was there in person. He and his crew were welcomed to the Bavarian capital, Munich, with quite a few surprises.

“This just beats anything we could even have imagined for our first time in Germany,” says Patrick Long, looking down from a rooftop terrace in Munich’s Werksviertel district. There are quite a few people bustling around the area near the old potato factory, six storeys below. Special Porsche sports cars from the “luftgekühlt” (air-cooled) era from all over Europe have lined up between them. They are clearly responding to the invitation of Luftgekühlt MUC, which was sent out mainly on social networks. “Thanks to Jeff Zwart’s directing skills, every sports car here has its own perfect spot,” the Porsche factory racing driver from the USA tells us, pointing at a man riding across the course on a bicycle.

“Being a film-maker as well as an ardent Porsche-lover, Jeff has a special eye for arrangement which is just ideal for this event. All the sports cars dance to his tune for a few hours when they arrive. Once the guests realise who exactly it is who is leading them to the right parking space, they are even prouder when they actually get there,” chirps Long in delight. But the parking manoeuvre is nothing in comparison to the show which was staged the other day. To provide a suitable place to exhibit four highly prized Porsche cars, the Luftgekühlt crew of Long the factory racing driver, Zwart the Pikes Peak legend and Stefan Bogner the Curves photographer simply heaved them up to the fifth storey of the building without further ado.

Each sports car in turn was lashed down inside a shipping container and then raised 50 metres above terra firma. Nicki Knoll, the owner of the Porsche 911 2.3 ST Repsol, felt somewhat queasy at the sight. The vehicle is parked again back home, but only as a copy. The precious cargo reached its destination safe and sound, however. Knoll’s Porsche soon found itself in the lofty company of Steve McQueen’s Porsche 908 Spyder, a 935 K3 original with 850 hp, and a 993-based Porsche 911 GT2, which came in at eleventh position at Le Mans in 1997.

## Impressions from the setup

McQueen’s Porsche 908, all in white, appears to positively float in the air. This racing car, which was used by McQueen in 1970 to create the spectacle he needed while shooting for his film *Le Mans* , even came in at ninth position. Herbert Linge was at the wheel back then. In the same year, McQueen drove the Porsche into second place with his left foot broken, together with team-mate Peter Revson, at the 12-hour race in Sebring. The US actor simply stuck sandpaper onto his soles to prevent slipping off the clutch with his bandaged foot. What a King of Cool!

The mood at the fifth gathering of Luftgekühlt in the Bavarian capital is exuberant. Howie Idelson, who

came up with the idea of organising Luftgekühlt along with Patrick Long, is here too. He takes over whenever Patrick is called back downstairs by his crew.

“We were actually quite nervous about coming to Germany. It's a bit of a challenge bringing our American idea of a classic car gathering to the homeland of Porsche,” Idelson tells me. “But I think we've been successful. The number of visitors is already twice as high as it was at our last event in England. The people are happy.” Idelson has been there right from the beginning. As a designer with petrol in his blood, it is he who has endowed the Luftgekühlt brand with its unmistakeable face. “Patrick and I know each other from karting. We are both total petrolheads! But we didn't like the way nobody would speak to each other at the American car shows. The men would just stare silently at the cars on show. There were no women or children to be seen anywhere. We changed all that with Luftgekühlt,” said the US American.

Luftgekühlt doth not live on sports car displays alone. It is the panoply of different, colourful characters at the classic Porsche gathering here in Munich which makes it so special. People who travel down from way up north with a surfboard on their roof. Porsche-lovers without a car, who have flown in from England for just three hours, because they have to be back at work on time on Monday. People like the Swedish designer living in New York who was taught by Charles Eames; and who squeezed in Luftgekühlt as a stopover on his European tour in a shipped Porsche 912. Or Xavier from Avignon, who has driven to Munich with his 1959 Porsche 356 still in the same shape as when he first received it from its owner in the USA. “I preserve the rust blooms immediately by using a special preservative agent. Everything on this Porsche is original. Okay, I did replace the windscreen wiper blades, but that was about it.”

Even Porsche VIPs can be found mingling among the crowd: Thorsten Klein, Interior Designer, has travelled here; as has Tony Hatter, Manager of the Design Quality Style Department; or Roland Kussmaul, Patrick Long's Racing Manager for many years, who has turned up with one of the three legendary 914/6 GTs. Not by trailer, as everyone would clearly have expected, but on his own axles. In 1970, Porsche won the first three places at the 86-hour Nürburgring race, the Marathon de la Route, with the 914/6 GT. Two of the three winning cars still exist, but there is no trace of the third. Kussmaul himself came to Porsche in 1969 as a young engineer and later became a development and racing engineer. “When Patrick called me to reveal he wanted to bring Luftgekühlt to Germany and invited me, I immediately said yes.” When Kussmaul was managing him, Long was able to claim his first Le Mans GT victory on the 911 GT3-RS, together with Sascha Maasen and Jörg Bergmeister. The two of them have not seen each other for a long time. Luftgekühlt has brought them back together.

The common denominator for everyone here is quite simple: Porsche. Idelson and Long have succeeded with great support of Porsche Deutschland. The spirit of Luftgekühlt can also be felt in Munich.

Planning Luftgekühlt Munich was quite different, however, from planning the Luftgekühlt gatherings in Los Angeles. “We had a lot of meetings. Long meetings... But we're definitely going to be taking the German sense of order and punctuality back with us to America,” Long finishes, taking leave of us with a

wink.

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**Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft**
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart