

Sea-air-cooled

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24/06/2022 Porsche & surfing - the Petro-Surf Festival on Sylt combines both passions in a breathtaking setting. Lea Perelsztein from Hamburg also connects these passions in a fascinating way: She loves to photograph Porsche cars - and prefers her own.

'Little Miss Ruby Red', 'Bahama Mama' and 'Ghostrider': Lea Perelsztein loves cars – especially if they're a Porsche. Her favourites of all are those she has given these evocative pet names: her Ruby Red Porsche 356 SC Coupé, a Bahamayellow 912 and a Slategrey 964. Among other places, they can be admired on Perelsztein's Instagram account '@lealovescars', which has long been an insider tip for anyone looking for aesthetically pleasing, surprising, colour-intense Porsche photos. Although occasionally other brands can be found there, too. "I've taken exactly 134,301 photos so far," Perelsztein laughs during an interview at the end of January, in Hamburg, "and I haven't run out of ideas for subjects yet." Her tablet keeps an exact count for her. Since then, several hundred new photos will undoubtedly have been added.

Perelsztein loves more than anything to stage her photos in unusual places, working with contrasting colours and forms with surprising effect. In Perelsztein's home city, for example, these include the expansive harbour area in which she can still find enchanted, deserted places in spite of all the activity. And it's not just the inhabitants of Hamburg who can rediscover the city through Perelsztein's eyes.

Sylt, Porsche & Surfing

Two Sylt natives, Angelo Schmitt and Ken Hake, a good friend of Perelsztein's, launched the Petro-Surf Festival in 2018. In doing so, they brought together two things that they had always seen as belonging to their island: surfing and Porsche. Since the 1950s, Sylt has been known as the birthplace of German surfing. And Porsche? Well, it's a part of the Sylt lifestyle as much as the oysters in the Gogärtchen or the champagne in the Sansibar, to name just a couple of Sylt icons.

However, the cars driven by the Petro-Surfers have nothing in common with the latest 992 or Taycan Cross Turismo with Hamburg, Düsseldorf or even Munich number plates, which are more commonly driven on Germany's 'poshest' island. As the Petro-Surf motto has it – "a congregation of mostly flat-sixes and single fins" – only air-cooled Porsche models are permitted, preferably in a raw 'outlaw' style or refashioned as imaginative safari rally rides. They fit in better, everyone here reckons, with the elemental style of the alternative surfer community. Top restored classics from Zuffenhausen are rare among the participants, though they're not forbidden. And it doesn't have to be a 911 – a 356, 912 or 914 is also welcome. Tolerance is the watchword.

The meeting point for the 80-or-so teams is the little Munkmarsch harbour, situated on the mud flats between Braderup and Keitum. From here, people spend the weekend drifting around in casual groups and having fun: talking shop, driving, partying and, if the conditions are amenable, even surfing.

Lea loves cars

Around six years ago, Perelsztein began posting her photos on Instagram and found the platform to be an ideal place to share her long-standing love of old metal. To start with, her feed was filled with her light-blue Fiat 500, built in 1971, which she understandably christened 'Baby Blue'. He was soon joined by Little Miss Ruby Red, the 356 SC Coupé from 1964. It marked the fulfilment of an early childhood aspiration. "It was my absolute dream car," says Perelsztein. "Since the age of five it's been my dream to have my own Porsche."

Her father's classic car collection, which included several Porsche models, was the inspiration for this perhaps less common little girl's fantasy. Perelsztein created a photographic homage to her father, who died at a young age, in her book 'Little Miss Ruby Red – The Adventures of a 1964 Porsche 356 SC': a colour photo from 2016 shows her getting out of Ruby in front of a stylish Hamburg villa. Below this sits an almost identical black and white image, taken a good 50 years earlier. This time it's a man in a trench coat getting out of a 356: the man is Perelsztein's father.

It's one of the few clues to her origins that the photographer shares with her fans. But even in this semi-autobiographical photo, the viewer only sees her from behind, as in all of her other images. "I like to stay in the background," she says. "For me, the cars are the stars."

Naturally, this also applies to Bahama Mama, the yellow 912 Coupé from 1969, which regularly accompanies Perelsztein to the annual Petro-Surf Festival on Sylt (though in 2020 Petro-Surf was cancelled due to the pandemic). It got people's attention there not just because of its cult colouring, but especially, as Perelsztein emphasises, "on account of the surfboard that's mounted California-style." For those who can't readily picture this, the board is strapped to the roof rack with the underside facing upwards and the tail at the front.

The 2022 edition of the festival will take place from 24-26 June. On 25 June, the festival is open to all island visitors from 2 pm. Here, the vehicle exhibition of selected air-cooled Porsche models can be seen as well as various other exhibits on the subject of surfing. Perelsztein can hardly wait. She has great memories of travelling back on the List auf Sylt ferry to the Danish island of Rømø, on which a couple of dozen air-cooled treasures will be stored once again in the cargo hold. "It's a sight that knocks me out every time," says Perelsztein. "It just brings a smile to my face."

Perelsztein hasn't decided yet whether she's taking Bahama Mama with her to Sylt. With a heavy heart she recently sold Little Miss Ruby Red, but her collection is now enriched by a Viper Green 1972 911 T Coupé that's sure to be as big a hit on Sylt as the yellow 912. Now she just has to think of a name for her new star.

Porsche & Petro-Surf

Porsche Germany is sponsoring the event for the fourth time. Among other things, the Porsche Centre Hamburg will be presenting itself in the historic boat hall of Munkmarsch harbour. In addition to a photo exhibition by Frank Kayser, which provides insights into a legendary Porsche community from California, known as the "R Group", Porsche will present newly released genuine parts from Porsche Classic and accessories from the Porsche Driver's Selection. In addition, a new edition from the Porsche Classic product range will be physically presented for the first time: the original Fuchsfelge® for the models 911, type 993 and 996 as well as the Boxster, Type 986.

Info

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