

Air|Water puts down Californian roots

28/04/2025 The third Air|Water event took place at the weekend, attended by more than 1,000 cars, as the organisers look to turn it into a fixed event on the Porsche calendar.

Exploration and inclusivity are at the heart of Air|Water driven by Mobil 1, the all-encompassing Porsche event held at the weekend in southern California. The brainchild of Patrick Long, the co-founder of Luftgekühlt, and Luft's creative director Jeff Zwart, this third staging of the fast-growing Porsche festival once again saw thousands of enthusiasts travelling from across the US and beyond to experience Air|Water's unique celebration of Porsche in all its forms.

Unlike Luft', which focuses exclusively on Porsche's air-cooled cars, the purpose of Air|Water is to be a broader church for fans of the brand, offering the opportunity for anyone interested in the wider world of Porsche to discover more. And while Luftgekühlt moves to a different location each year, Air|Water has returned to Costa Mesa in Orange County, with a fixed venue now designed to promote the idea of an annual meet up.

As in previous years, the offering at Air|Water 2025 was complex and substantial, with more than 1,000 cars on display at the OC Fair & Event Center, from owner-driven arrivals on the day to what the team refers to as 'hero cars' – special models selected for more considered curation with lighting and story-telling designed to bring visitors closer to the heart of each exhibit.

One of the main draws for 2025 was the McLaren MP4/2B driven by Alain Prost to overall victory in the 1985 Formula 1 season. This car was powered by a turbocharged V6 engine designed by Porsche's master engine builder Hans Mezger and produced by Porsche in Weissach on behalf of Techniques d'Avant Garde (TAG).

Other star cars at the event included an example of the ultra-rare Rothmans-Porsche 911 SC/RS that won the Middle East Rally Championship in 1984 and 1985, an equally rare street-legal Schuppan 962 CR – one of just six Group C-derived road cars built by former Porsche works driver Vern Schuppan, and the Flying Lizard Motorsports 911 GT3-RSR driven by Long himself in the 2012 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Themed displays housed in six separate areas included a focus on mid-engined Porsches of all ages and a deep dive into the water-cooled, transaxle 944, with further space given to Porsche's little-known series of now highly collectible tractors and Rod Emory's celebrated 356 'outlaw' builds. Meanwhile, the 'Actions Sports Arena' used a dirt oval as the backdrop for all manner of off-road Porsche concepts, from overlanders and rally cars to the new breed of intrepid 911 campers.

New for Air|Water in 2025 was a Porsche thrill ride, the 'Carrera Carnival', an experience created by Porsche Cars North America that allowed visitors to ride around a specially-designed handling circuit with a professional Porsche driver in some of the brand's latest sports cars.

"More than 50 per cent of our focus is around the non-Porsche owner who is curious about the brand and who wants to learn about the past and present," explains Long. "And people who want to get into one of these cars and understand why they're different and why there's so much enthusiasm out there. So we partnered with Porsche Cars North America and they produced an event within an event, which is something that has been an ambition of ours for a long time."

Another draw for visitors this weekend, and a critical component to the future vision of Air|Water, was the diverse variety of exhibitors, offering everything from artwork and wearables to aftermarket, performance and service items.

"A big ambition of Air|Water was always that it wasn't just adding water-cooled cars to the Luftgekühlt formula," Long explains. "There was something missing in North America, around the idea of an all-inclusive event where fans, brands, collectors and restoration and aftermarket specialists could come together once a year – a destination where they could network socially *and* professionally."

Alongside the static, active and exhibitor displays, another major attraction at Air|Water was the second staging of Broad Arrow's Porsche-specific auction, which featured a wide variety of collector's cars, ranging from rare air-cooled road and racing cars to examples of the sought-after Carrera GT and 918

Spyder. “There was a stacked line-up for the second year in a row,” says Long. “It’s where the party within the party exists – standing room only and always an amazing energy.”

The impressive turnout of cars and visitors, the sheer scale of the event and the remarkable array of attractions within it, speaks to the rightness of Long’s vision for Air|Water, and to the intensity of interest that persists in Porsche’s past, present and future. Envious Europeans will be happy to learn that the Luft team has also just announced its intention to hold the first Air|Water across the pond later this year. Scheduled for 13 and 14 June, Air|Water Poland will be held at Nocny Market in Warsaw, and alongside a typically eclectic display of ‘hero’ and owners’ cars will be several exhibits from the Porsche Museum.

“This is the next chapter in the Luftgekühlt story,” says Long. “It’s a whole different ball of wax, but it’s something I am as passionate about as I am about Luft, so we’re super-excited to see that come to fruition.”

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Consumption data

911 Turbo S (Predecessor model)

*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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