Simona De Silvestro: “When I got a chance, I took it”

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08/03/2021 Simona De Silvestro from Switzerland is the first female works driver in the history of Porsche Motorsport. In the latest “Inside E” podcast on International Women’s Day on 8 March, she talks about her role as a woman in a male-dominated world, about the early days of her extraordinary career as a racing driver and the goals she hopes to achieve with Porsche in the coming years.

“As a baby, I was only really quiet when Formula 1 was on television.” Simona De Silvestro knows this from her father, a car dealer and avid racing fan. At the age of four, she sat in a go-kart for the first time – but her legs couldn’t reach the pedals. She cried until her father promised to buy her a kart when she was big enough. When she was seven, he fulfilled his promise. “It seems I was born with the racing driver gene!”

In the world of motor racing, women are still a rarity. It’s a tough business, where performance is everything. Simona De Silvestro has no problem with that. “Sure, I'm a woman, but first and foremost I regard myself as a racing driver who tries to do a good job in the car,” she says. “The fact is: we all wear a helmet, and whoever wins, in the end, deserves it and reaps the rewards.” When asked about the secret to her career success, she answers in two sentences: “If I got a chance, I took it. And I never gave up.”

When women ask her for tips on climbing the motorsport career ladder, she encourages them to believe in themselves and to have the courage to follow different paths. She had that mettle. At 17, she left her parents’ home and moved to America. She then relocated to Australia for several years. In order to race, she not only had to prove herself, she also had to convince others that she deserved a chance. She succeeded: as underlined by her five starts at the legendary Indy 500. While she obviously admires strong women who have accomplished major successes in motor racing, her sporting idol is a man: Michael Schumacher. “I’ve always been a big fan of his,” she says. “I wanted to achieve what he'd achieved. That motivated me.”

As the official reserve driver of the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team, she witnessed the season opener just over a week ago in Diriyah. “It felt great to finally come together as a team again,” she says. “We’re all motivated, we cheer each other on and we have just one goal: to win races. It's like one big family and I’m proud to be part of it.” She finds the success story of Formula E fascinating. “It's astounding how quickly the development has progressed, how the cars have become faster and more efficient. And it’s incredibly exciting that we can contribute to how our society’s mobility develops over the next ten to fifteen years.”

She has even more big plans with Porsche. “I hope that we can win races together and perhaps I could contest Le Mans one day,” she says. While she has already fulfilled many dreams as a racing driver, she radiates ambition and energy: “Sometimes I feel like a wide-eyed kid looking out at the world, waiting to see what the future holds.”

Info

The Porsche Formula E podcast is available in English and can be downloaded in the Porsche Newsroom. “Inside E” is also available on other platforms, such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Google Podcasts.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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