

Undercover boss: camping at Le Mans with Porsche's CEO

23/06/2023 At this year's 24 Hours of Le Mans, race fans in the Porsche Employee Camp were surprised by an unlikely neighbour.

For 75 years, from the boardroom to assembly line, Porsche has been a family. And come early summer, when the conditions are right in a certain corner of north-west France, that family likes to go camping.

Since its return to top tier endurance racing, Porsche has supported its factory campaigns at the 24 Hours of Le Mans with a travelling fanbase of employees, all of whom are invited to camp together on the infield at the Circuit de la Sarthe. At the heart of the action, the Porsche Employee Camp has become something of an institution in recent years, a ringside seat at the greatest race in the world with an unrivalled party atmosphere.

With just 400 places made available for the camp this year, a lottery system is used that selects the lucky winners at random. And in 2023, with Porsche Penske Motorsport competing for overall victory with the 963 for the first time, applications were understandably high. The excursion to La Sarthe was

organised under the leadership of Johannes Schneider, Project Lead Global Events and Motor Shows, and Richard Schramm, Assistant to the Executive Board Human Resources and Social Affairs. “We held the lottery in April and there was huge demand for tickets,” Schramm says, “because this was such a unique opportunity to go to the centennial Le Mans in the 75th year of Porsche. More than 1,200 people applied. We only give out 200 tickets with everyone who wins one able to bring a friend or partner.”

Le Mans is a nine-hour drive from Stuttgart, and on the Thursday preceding the race, the roads due east of Baden-Württemberg were dotted with a mix of camper vans, motorhomes and a variety of Porsche models – from high-performance Caymans and 911s to several examples of the highly practical, all-electric Taycan Sport Turismo. The Employee Camp filled steadily over the next two days, old friends reconnecting and new friendships forming over a shared anticipation of what was about to unfold. And parked up in one corner of the campsite was a black 911 Turbo S, unusual only because of its matching black roof tent.

The 100th staging of Le Mans meant the Employee Camp would play host to a number of special events. Alongside the traditional barbecue and musical entertainment, the site was visited by factory drivers André Lotterer, Dane Cameron and Nick Tandy, one driver from each works car, to take part in a Q&A session and photo opportunity. They were also joined by Brand Ambassador and 919 Hybrid veteran Mark Webber and representatives of the Racing for Charity initiative which would see 750 euros donated to three charities for every lap turned by the 963 during the race.

But for many, the most memorable moment of the weekend would be more impromptu. On race day itself, employees queuing up for their breakfast were greeted by the surprising sight of Oliver Blume waiting in line with them. Eager to be at the centre of the Porsche community on this remarkable weekend in racing history, Porsche's CEO and Chairman of the Executive Board had come up with the unusual idea of sleeping under canvas in amongst his co-workers.

Camping in a roof tent on top of the 911 Turbo

The 55-year-old was joined by his wife, and for two nights they camped in a roof tent on top of his 911 Turbo, revealing to colleagues that it was actually very comfortable.

While the CEO had a packed schedule over the weekend, he nevertheless found time to spend with his fellow campers, watching the race and enjoying the unique atmosphere that the Employee Camp offers.

“I’m lucky that through my work I can get as close to the action as anyone could dream,” said Blume, following the weekend. “But this year was incredibly special: camping on a Porsche, in amongst the Porsche community, is something I’ll never forget. The fans are at the heart of Le Mans, and this is what keeps drawing us back.”

Following what would prove to be a challenging debut for the 963 at Le Mans, the sense of community

at Porsche was nevertheless stronger than ever. “On the Monday after the race, I sent out a survey for feedback on the whole experience,” continues Schramm, “and lots of people commented on how meaningful it was that our CEO was sleeping in the camp and standing in line to get breakfast. Everyone loved that he was there, in shorts and sandals, totally relaxed and just part of the Porsche crew.”

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Consumption data

911 Turbo S (Predecessor model)

911 Turbo (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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