

919 Tribute Tour at the Nordschleife

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12/05/2018 Today's joint show of the Porsche 919 Hybrid Evo alongside the 956 C on the German Nürburgring Nordschleife was the second stop of the '919 Tribute Tour'.

Whereas at Spa-Francorchamps (BE) Neel Jani (CH) on April 9 beat the former Formula One lap record time, on this occasion Timo Bernhard (DE) and Hans-Joachim Stuck (DE) took it rather easy in the Eifel mountains.

Timo Bernhard: "This lap just before the start of the 24-hour race was a special experience for me. It was an honour to go side by side with Hans around the Nordschleife with him driving the 956 C and me at the wheel of our 919 Evo. The fans really enjoyed seeing these two legendary racing cars. I could almost feel their excitement in the cockpit. This was a very nice gift for me."

Hans-Joachim Stuck: "Christmas came kind of early today. It was fun for the fans and fun for us. The barbecues are lit and smoking, it is absolutely unique what the fans set up around the track here. Of

course you can have a close look at that when you go so slow as us today. But I have to admit the right foot was really itching. The 956 stills runs like a clockwork."

Fritz Enzinger, Vice President LMP1, comments on the appearance in front of 200,000 thousand people: "The get-together of those two extremely successful racing cars produced remarkable pictures." Enzinger explains: The initial idea of a farewell tour with the Porsche 919 Hybrid came up last summer, soon after the decision was made to pull out of the FIA World Endurance Championship. First we spoke about exhibitions and demo runs. But then inside the team the idea evolved to combine the tour with a try of a lap record to show the car's true potential. This is how we began to unchain the 919 from a few restrictions that came from the regulations. Of course we needed financial backing for the '919 Tribute Tour' and the Evo development. Without our partners, we wouldn't have managed this. Therefore, and also on behalf of the fans, I really want to thank them very much."

The 919 Hybrid – the Le Mans and FIA World Endurance Championship winning car of 2015, 2016 and 2017 – met the prototype that won all titles in the World Sportscar Championship from 1982 to 1984 and still holds the outright Nordschleife track record.

The lap on the Nordschleife was the 919 Evo's first public appearance. With the car that has been liberated from the restrictions that came from the championship regulations, Porsche recently established a new track record at Spa-Francorchamps. On April 9 2018, Porsche works driver Neel Jani (CH) lapped the 7.004 kilometre long Belgian circuit in 1:41.770 minutes. He was faster than any Formula One car ever, beating the previous record by 0.783 seconds set by Lewis Hamilton (GB) at the wheel of a Mercedes F1 W07 Hybrid, securing him pole position for last year's Grand Prix. At the Nordschleife, the second stop of the '919 Tribute Tour', however, no stopwatches were required as the two racing cars were driving behind a safety car and bypassed the start-and-finish section because of the grid formation for the 24-hour race.

Porsche, Timo Bernhard, Hans-Joachim Stuck as well as both the racing cars are connected closely to the Nürburgring and the Nordschleife.

37-year old Timo Bernhard from Germany is the reigning FIA World Endurance Champion. On the way to the 2017 title, he has won the Le Mans 24-Hours and took his third consecutive win of the six-hour race at the Nüburgring, repeating his achievements from 2015 and 2016 at the wheel of the Porsche 919 Hybrid. Also on his tally: Five overall victories at the Nürburgring 24-Hours with Porsche, which makes him a record winner. In 2018 he now looks after his own team, Team75 Bernhard, entering a Porsche 911 GT3 R.

The Porsche works driver, who is racing himself this year in the GT Masters as well as in the GTE class at Le Mans, points out: "The Nordschleife is home for me. When I was a kid I used to accompany my father to the Eifel mountains. The complexity of this over 20 kilometre long track doesn't compare to anything." Timo Bernhard is a passionate admirer of Stefan Bellof who died at Spa in 1985. "I'm not only impressed by Stefan Bellof's great performances", he explains, "he must have been a really great guy. Whoever knew him seems to have adored him. His 1983 unbeaten lap record at the Nordschleife is

terrific. I feel honoured to accompany a historic Porsche 956 C with the 919 Evo."

In 1983, Bellof lapped the Nordschleife in 6:11.13 minutes

On May 28 in 1983, during practice for the 1000-kilometre race, Bellof lapped the Nordschleife in a storming 6:11.13 minutes. Due to construction work, the exact track length was 20.835 kilometres at the time, which resulted in an average speed of more than 200 km/h. The 2,649 cc six-cylinder, twin turbocharged, flat engine in the 956 C produced 620 hp. Bellof's car was chassis number 007. He was leading the race when he retired in a massive accident in the area called 'Pflanzgarten' but walked away unharmed. One year later, in 1984, he won the 1000-kilometre race at the Nürburgring, sharing a Rothmans Porsche 956 C with British driver Derek Bell.

On his way to his 1984 Driver's World Endurance Championship title, Stefan Bellof once shared a 956 with German Hans-Joachim Stuck. Despite an incident by Stuck that required repairs, the couple won the Imola 1000-kilometre race.

"This race in Italy was of very high importance for me", 67 year-old Stuck recalls. "The 956 was new to me and Stefan taught me how to drive this ground effect car. I learnt an awful lot from him. When I joined Porsche, I understood why those cars were unbeatable. You had no gearbox issues, the brakes were excellent and thanks to this tremendous downforce, you could enter the corners at very high speed. Literally, the car stuck to the ground. For me it is a world-class opportunity to take the 956 once again around the Nordschleife. Emotionally, this is something hard to top."

Stuck: two Le Mans victories and three Nürburgring 24-Hours wins

Among Stuck's many successes belong two Le Mans overall victories in 1986 and 1987, driving the successor to the 956, the 962 C. The Nürburgring 24-Hours he won three times when driving for BMW.

The 956 C that Stuck now takes for a lap around the Nürburgring carries chassis number 005. It is the car Jacky Ickx (BE) and Jochen Mass (DE) shared during the entire 1984 world championship season. For commercial rights reasons the name of tobacco sponsor Rothmans frequently had to be replaced by the word 'Racing'. This was the case on Bellof's record lap chassis 007 and is the same at the car that Stuck drives on May 12.

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