

Living the 24/7 Porsche dream

This article reflects the status at the time of its publication. The content may since have become outdated.

25/01/2021 Eating, sleeping and breathing Porsche with its accidental air-cooled influencer, Tom Gädtke – aka Onassis.

Tom Gädtke has turned a love of Porsche into a living. Over the last decade, the German enthusiast has grown his Onassis brand into a multi-faceted international success story, with a diverse portfolio that includes events, a magazine and bespoke film production. Gädtke is now, as he says himself, "living 24/7 Porsche".

The 41-year-old from Recklinghausen, near Dortmund in western Germany, studied automotive engineering at university in Bochum for two years before moving into teacher training. To support himself through his studies, Gädtke worked for a company putting on trade fairs, learning over a six-year period the vital tricks of the events trade.

"I was interested in vintage car restoration as a hobby, and I started restoring VW Beetles at around 17

or 18," Gädtke recalls. "That was my first step into cars as a hobby, but later on my focus became purely Porsche. My 356 is the first and only Porsche I own. It started as a father–son project; we bought it cheap, my father built the garage for it and it took us eight years to finish it. By then it was a natural process to combine my interest in Porsche and the experience of my work to set up my very first event in 2015."

Onassis "tunnelruns" as a start

The first Onassis "tunnelrun" was a night time blast for just 18 cars, revelling in the unique sound of Porsche's boxer engines as they echoed off the walls of some favourite local tunnels. Despite the success of this trial outing, for the time being it was a side-line to a hobby, nothing more.

"When I finished at university I had to decide where to go and what to do," Gädtke explains. "I'd already done my first event and was restoring my first car. So I decided to take a totally different route." Gädtke's best friend was already in the Porsche restoration business, and swamped with work, he had need of a spare pair of hands. Gädtke took two weeks off from the trade fairs and went to help out, gaining hands-on experience fixing up a variety of classic Porsche models and revelling in the opportunities to add personal touches.

Restoring vintage Porsche cars as a passion

"We suddenly realised that restoring vintage Porsche cars with your very best friend in a small, clean, well-equipped workshop actually felt quite good!" Gädtke laughs. And with that, he quit his job and went full time into restoration, creating bespoke air-cooled Porsche and designing modified parts that prompted demand from around the world.

Throughout this period, Gädtke was still working hard on the Onassis events, with uptake soon so great that what had started as his low-key tunnel run concept was soon forced to become a far larger, static event. By 2019, 18 cars had become 330, with 500 guests all managed by Gädtke himself and requiring a mind-boggling 4,500 emails in the run-up.

"Streetart.Motorsport.Revival" events as a next step

Unsurprisingly, after six years of juggling his 100km commute to the workshop with the constant demands of the events, Gädtke decided to lay down the tools. The tunnel runs had evolved into what is now known as the "Streetart.Motorsport.Revival" to better reflect how so many of the cars are personalised by their owners, and each event is given a unique identity based upon its carefully curated location. But for Gädtke the overarching principle is still simply bringing friends together, rather than showing off the cars.

“I like my events to feel like a festival,” he says. “We always have some live music playing, which gives them a cosy, summer atmosphere. The cars are a connection to everyone there, but there’s no-one posing next to their car, showing off their new rims or whatever. They come together in a great a visual setting and it should feel like a nice summer party with your friends.”

The growing success of Onassis has seen Gädtke busier than ever. The events have given rise to Sight, a Porsche magazine inspired again by the people behind the cars. Gädtke is editor of this high production bi-annual, alongside another new role within a creative agency which produces visual content for Porsche. “My official job title these days is Senior Project Manager, but I’m also an editor, a writer, a storyteller, a manager and an event organiser. I’m everything more and less. Living 24/7 Porsche!”

Short film "Dream" as a portrait of Tom Gädtke

The recent short film about Gädtke, aptly entitled "Dream", shines a light on this unique and hectic lifestyle, revealing how hard graft and a true passion for the brand has enabled him to turn pastime into profession and fantasy into reality. And how his feet still stay firmly on the ground.

Gädtke’s reputation has grown exponentially and his events now attract long-distance enthusiasts from as a far afield as Ireland, the UK and Denmark. But he is reluctant to adopt the influencer identity, preferring that 24/7 Porsche existence to speak for itself. “Some people say I represent the scene,” he says, “but I think I’m just a part of it. Perhaps all that’s different is I have tried to make a living from it. And I still love to just go out driving without the events or the magazine in mind. Because driving these cars with your friends is the best time you can have. Which is more or less the whole idea of Onassis.”

Image Sublines

Path: Living the 24/7 Porsche dream/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Tom Gädtke, 356, 2021, Porsche AG
Subline: Tom Gädtke

Link Collection

Link to this article
https://newsroom.porsche.com/en/2021/scene-passion/porsche-air-cooled-influencer-tom-gaedtke-onassis-23443.html

Media Package
https://pmdb.porsche.de/newsroomzips/37c22671-e258-46d5-b21f-b00d216a16fb.zip

External Links
https://www.instagram.com/onassisporsches

Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart