911 Speedster built as a Sonderwunsch Factory One-Off

16/08/2024 Porsche enthusiast, designer and Speedster collector Luca Trazzi made his dream of a 911 Speedster come true via the Sonderwunsch programme. The result is a one-off car based entirely on the personal vision of the designer.

Since 1954, Speedster variants have been part of the Porsche company history. They combine open driving pleasure with particularly expressive driving dynamics. The car is characterised by its shortened windscreen and its rear lid. But there is a gap in the model history of the 911. From 1988, when the G-Series ended, Porsche offered a two-seater of this kind, and from 1989 a car based on the Type 964. With the exception of two one-offs and, much later, a model rebuilt as part of a factory restoration, there was no Speedster from the fourth generation of the 911, the Type 993, in the regular model programme.

“At the start I looked around but couldn’t find the car of my dreams. So, I decided to build it myself.” Luca Trazzi has made this legendary statement from Ferry Porsche his own. And the successful designer from Milan didn’t just dream – he, too, took action. A 993-generation 911 Speedster was

missing from the Porsche enthusiast's extensive Speedster collection.

Luca Trazzi turned to the Sonderwunsch team at Porsche to realize his project. Together with the experts, he made his dream car a reality. It took more than three years to create his one-off car based on a 911 Carrera Cabriolet (Type 993) from 1994. The two-seater with the characteristic rear lid, which also underwent comprehensive technical modifications, is one of the highlights of this year's Monterey Car Week (9 to 18 August 2024) in California.

The creation process: a customer and designer at the same time

“As a young boy, I fell head over heels in love with the puristic Porsche Speedster. I had to work very hard to be able to afford my first Porsche, a Speedster 1600 Super from 1955. Ever since, I’ve managed to live my passion, or more precisely, my Speedster-mania,” says Luca Trazzi. “My dream was to complete my collection with a 911 Speedster of Type 993. Out of passion, I designed what this model might look like. I wanted the project to unify the stylistic elements of all previous Speedster models. Because although this body version has always continued to develop throughout its history, it preserved the elegance of its predecessors and stayed true to its beginnings.”

“In this form, and with this vast range of modifications, the 911 Speedster is our first Factory One-Off for an end customer,” says Alexander Fabig, Vice President Individualisation & Classic at Porsche. “This one-off car shows what’s possible with our Sonderwunsch programme – based on a classic Porsche 911 from 1994.” The project team even built a true to scale design model of the Speedster.

“Having a designer as a customer was an exciting experience for me. Because Luca and I speak the same language, our collaboration was creative and focussed,” says Grant Larson, Director Special Projects Design. “He was also intensively involved in the project with very specific suggestions.”

The project began with a visit to the company archive to take a deep dive into the history of the Speedster and generate additional ideas. Luca Trazzi arrived at this first meeting with his own project book full of drafts and sketches and with a very clear and defined project idea on how he wanted to create his individual Speedster. This chimed with the philosophy of the Factory One-Off, namely that before the one-off car is finished, the focus is on the joint, creative car development process. The customer becomes an active part of the project team, closely following the implementation of their idea from the perspective of a project manager.

During the project, Luca Trazzi visited Porsche multiple times, making good use of the works ID issued to him for the project. Among other things, he witnessed his Speedster taking a bath in the cathodic dip-painting at the factory paint shop. This procedure is otherwise reserved for new cars undergoing the regular production process. Then began the complete manual coating cycle. The luminous yellow car paint was not just developed as a colour specifically for the customer – its name was also very personal, coming as it did from the customer's own dog, Otto. During a meeting, the designer spontaneously named the paint after his four-legged companion, and ‘Otto Yellow’ was born.

“The rear lid with its concave and convex forms required a lot of work in the design, conception and production phases,” recalls Philipp Setter, Manager Sonderwunsch Customer Consulting. “But even here we managed to harmonise Luca Trazzi’s design visions with the Porsche processes and quality standards. After all, our Sonderwunsch credo is ‘You dream it. We build it.’”

Exterior and interior: Speedster stylistic elements reinterpreted

The rear lid and the windscreen are typical of the Speedster. They are bordered only by a thin black frame that intensifies their effect. Further striking exterior features include the black, conical exterior mirrors in the classic design of sports cars from the 1960s and the four-point daytime running light of modern Porsche models. The bodywork line for the rear lid has been completely redesigned by Luca Trazzi.

The Speedster is painted in Otto Yellow. This imposing yellow was developed especially for the car. The 18-inch light alloy wheels in Turbo design are painted black, with the fineline in contrasting yellow. The black stone chip protection sheets in front of the rear wheels are functional design elements and striking features from other Speedster generations. They harmonise with the black door handles and the air intakes in the front spoiler. The Factory One-Off has a sporty look, with the Sonderwunsch experts having drawn on the front spoiler, side skirts and rear fenders of the 911 Turbo (Type 993). The looks of the indicators, taillights and light strip have been reinterpreted.

The interior is dominated by black leather with decorative stitching in yellow. The headrests feature an embroidered Speedster logo. The visual highlight of the interior is provided by the seat centres, which bear a check design in yellow and black. A masterpiece of craftsmanship, with every check being tailored and sewn by hand. The same pattern adorns the front luggage compartment upholstered in leather, the car cover, and a matching touring bag. Carbon elements on the dashboard, centre console and handbrake and gear levers further individualise the interior. The backs of the seats are also in carbon. For the first time in a Porsche 911 of Type 993, the carbon door sill trims are illuminated – in ‘Otto Yellow’, of course – and carry an individual logo.

State-of-the-art infotainment with navigation and Apple CarPlay is on board in the form of the Porsche Classic Communication Management (PCCM). These retrofitted devices developed by Porsche Classic open up the digital world to vintage and contemporary cars of the brand. The start screen was also individualised for the customer.

The switches for the power windows also underline the attention to detail, with the symbols redesigned to show the typical Speedster side line. A gilded ‘One-off’ badge on the dashboard bears witness to the car’s uniqueness.

The drivetrain: more power

The engine, chassis, steering and brake system are from the 911 Carrera RS (Type 993). At that time, the air-cooled six-cylinder boxer was the most powerful engine from Porsche, with a displacement of 3.8 litres generating 221 kW/ 300 PS.

To date, there are precisely two units of the 911 Carrera Speedster based on the 993 generation. The first was developed in 1995 by the Exclusive department especially for Ferdinand Alexander Porsche. The car is green with 17-inch light alloy wheels and a Tiptronic gearbox, and is based on the Carrera body. This unit found its way back to the factory museum, on loan from the family. A second 911 Speedster (Type 993) was built in 2001 for an American customer based on one of the last 993 Cabriolets from 1998. The sitcom star received his silver Speedster as a Turbo-width 4S model with 18-inch wheels.

The Speedster presented here not only has a different origin story but is also differentiated from its predecessors by its unique design and its technical components.

The Factory One-Off: the most exclusive format of the Sonderwunsch programme

Porsche is reinterpreting its legendary Sonderwunsch programme from the late 1970s to enable individualised, one-off cars – co-designed by the customer and realised professionally by Porsche. This individualisation option is possible for road-approved Porsche cars of all ages. Depending on the car, the work itself is carried out by either Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur or Porsche Classic experts.

There are three decisive milestones in the process of building a Sonderwunsch Factory One-Off as the ultimate format. The process begins with the customer's idea, which they communicate to a Sonderwunsch customer consultant via their Porsche Centre. If, after an initial assessment, the Porsche experts consider the idea to be feasible, Porsche invites the customer to a project meeting. In the concept phase, specifications are drawn up in collaboration with designers and experts from the respective areas. In the end, the customer decides whether to go ahead with the project.

In the third phase, the components are developed and the car is built. The design, engineering and development departments work closely with the mechanics, body builders and paint specialists at the Porsche production facilities. If required, specialists from the Development Centre in Weissach or other areas of the company can also be called upon, and test facilities such as engine test benches can be used. The dream car takes shape through manual craftsmanship with the constant involvement of the customer.

About Luca Trazzi

Luca Trazzi, architect and industrial designer, was born in Verona in 1962. Awarded with the Carlo Scarpa prize at a young age, he worked for fifteen years alongside Aldo Rossi, of whom he was a close collaborator and assistant. Today he works in Milan and China. He is also one of the founders of designboom.com and designs for the most prestigious international brands.

Luca Trazzi loves to draw objects that do not follow fashion. “Objects that are easy to use, to understand, beautiful to look at. Objects with simple, captivating shapes, lines that never go out of fashion”, explains Luca Trazzi. “Attention to detail is the characteristic that can be seen in my work. In parallel with design, I interpret places in an artistic way, through installations that represent the 'staging', almost in an open-air theatre, or my visions and thoughts.”

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