

Porsche for Dummies – Part 4

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27/03/2015 At Porsche in Zuffenhausen, everybody knows that the Jorg Muffler isn't something Grandmother wears around her neck. You'd like to know a thing or two about Porsche?

R

Redstart."'Phoenicurus ochruros' is actually a Black Redstart from the family of flycatchers. Their diet consists mainly of insects. The song of the black redstart is characteristic, since the middle part is more like a scratching sound..." – is Wikipedia really describing a bird here? It could also be the 550 Spyder RS 1500 model with its redpainted rear fenders, the last Porsche Spyder with a swing axle. It too killed insects on the racetracks of the world, and it's best not to even mention scratching noises.

S

Smuggling Compartment. If you want to hear (good) stories, ask a customs officer sometime. Even hard-bitten officers don't know all the secret places where smugglers hide their goods. It was never planned for Porsche to make a contribution to this doubtful trade: The space in the trunk floor of the 911 for the optional heater, for example, is ideal for making one or the other cigarette disappear. And so it got the nickname "smuggling compartment". In the meantime, there are even more options – such as the spare wheel compartment in the SUV. But don't get your hopes up: Customs knows these hiding places too...

Safety Finger. Normally, a Porsche 928 automatic driver doesn't want anybody fingering around in his Porsche, and certainly not especially dexterously long fingers. But there is one finger he'll tolerate, for it comes from Zuffenhausen, was supplied as standard and is there to save the day: It's a small locking piston at the automatic selector lever to prevent the position R or P from being selected when driving forward, thus keeping the gear ensemble from becoming finger food.

Sebring Exhaust. No wonder that the exhaust manufacturer Sebring from Voitsberg/Austria named its sports facilities after the course in Florida – it sounds like history, power, exoticism. In 1963, the first optional exhaust leaves the Sebring plant, and is screwed to the bottom of a Steyr Fiat 1100. It set a trend, Sebring expanded and in the 50s and 60s of the last century, it supplied special mufflers for the four-cylinder models of Porsche as well. What's so special? The Sebring exhaust condenses the exhaust gases from a quad fan in a tailpipe with a powerfully protruding profile.

T

Taxi. If you order a taxi at Porsche in Zuffenhausen, this doesn't necessarily mean you're looking for the minimum four-door passenger transport vehicle that, for a fee, brings passengers from point A to B at a modest pace as relaxed as possible. A "taxi" at Porsche is instead the exact opposite: A car with two doors or less, which brings one passenger (who may or may not be paying) from point A to A at a breakneck speed with as much adrenaline as possible, i.e. in a circle. This is because the term "taxi" refers to a race car in which a second seat is installed, so that in the future, it can take racing fans who aren't allowed to take the wheel themselves for a ride down the track. For example, the decommissioned 917 in bright red livery, which is used for visitor rides on the test track at Weissach.

Telephone Booth. Granted, not all that Porsche builds and built is a perfectly shaped piece of design. But this was also because some cars are pure research vehicles, prototypes or external orders where certain techniques or the like are tried out. This also includes the EA266 prototype, a compact car for VW from the year 1968. Due to its large glass surfaces, it quickly acquired the nickname "phone booth". In fact, it was initially planned with an underfloor engine as the successor of the VW Beetle. Nobody resents Porsche because instead of the EA266, it became the Golf. Or do they?

V

VoPo. Originally a "Vopo" was a "people's police-man" (Volkspolizist) in the walled-off German brother country. He was about as popular there as a fan-shop of the Federal Ministry of Finance in the West. Is it possible that this ulterior motive played a part when the VW Porsche 914 (built 1969-1975) also was called VoPo? Or was it just an abbreviation for "People's Porsche" (Volksporsche), because there was suddenly a low-cost option to drive a Porsche? The fact is: 911 riders distinctly turned up their noses at the sight of the Wolfsburg/Zuffenhausen co-production. Nevertheless, the model powered by an air-cooled boxer engine was built nearly 120,000 times from 1969 to 1976, most of the four-cylinder 914/4s (80 hp) at Karmann, all of the six-cylinder models 914/6 (110 hp) at Porsche. It was the first mass-produced mid-engine vehicle.

W

Weissach Axle. Things could've been so easy once upon a time: The rear suspensions with toe-in correction of the Porsche 928 were of course developed in the Plasticine Kitchen (see >P) – obviously, they received the name Weissach axle. Really? No, not really – the word comes from the functional designation "**W**inkel **ei**nstellende **s**elbst **s**tabilisierende **A**usgleichs-**Ch**arakteristik" (toe-setting self-stabilizing compensation characteristics). At least somebody was paying attention…

»Windhund«or Greyhound. It's Maundy Thursday, April 6th, 1950. For the first time, a Porsche 356 rolls out of the plant in Stuttgart. Its salient features include the split windscreen and the fixed glazed rear window. No Porsche logo is on it – it wasn't designed until 1952/53. On the front and rear, therefore, there was the "Porsche" lettering. The interior was dominated by a white three-spoke steering wheel made of bakelite. What has all this to do with the nickname "Greyhound" for the first Stuttgart Porsche? No idea. Some things are better left a mystery…

Z

»Zigeuner-Verdeck« or the Gypsy Top. Even if it might have been a better idea at the end of the Second World War to respectfully refer to all ethnic groups, some terms just couldn't be banned from linguistic usage. This included the term for the "wandering people": Gypsy. They usually had no roof over their head – thus the term "Gypsy top" for the Spartan emergency cover with which the Porsche 356/Type 1 (1948) and later the Speedster were equipped. It is doubtful whether the 356 drivers of the time also referred to the weather protection of their more or less treasured Porsches in the same way…

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