These Porsche cars saw the light of day in Geneva

03/03/2020 Geneva is the major stage for spectacular Porsche innovations since 1949: from 356 to Mission E Cross Turismo. A journey into the past.

More than 70 years ago, the young Porsche brand introduced itself to an international public audience for the first time. That spectacular première would be followed by many more over the decades – in each case with the sportiest models of the era, in a Porsche tradition that has been upheld right up to today.

On 17 March 1949, it was the 356 Coupé and the 356 Cabriolet from the series production of Gmünd (Austria) that Porsche presented at its small stand in the main hall. The response was fantastic, with both sports cars enthusiastically received. The successful showing in Switzerland is considered to be the foundation for the later breakthrough of the first series products from Zuffenhausen: by 1965, a total of around 78,000 units of the 356 had been built.

The Geneva Motor Show has a reputation for being the largest motor show in the world; a claim forged during the 1960s in particular. Every year, Porsche joins many other manufacturers there to present its strongest developments. The Porsche 904 Carrera GTS celebrated its première in Geneva 55 years ago, when the mid-engined sports car designed by Ferdinand Alexander Porsche was the subject of much admiration – in fact, the 904 Carrera GTS is still considered one of the most beautiful Porsche sports cars of all time.

The Porsche 917 also had its public debut at the Geneva Motor Show, in 1969, when the Press Department announced the strongest racing car of its time as "one of the most serious competitors in traditional long-distance racing". Exactly 50 years on, the 917 with chassis number 001 goes on display in the Porsche Museum, restored to its original condition as in 1969.

The sports car manufacturer also selected the Swiss trade fair floor for the world première of the first 911 GT3. The 911 GT3 from the 996 series, in understated Arctic Silver with "fried egg" headlights, met the world's press here in 1999. 20 years on, the GT3 denomination still signifies a sports car legend.

In 2014, Porsche celebrated its return to the big motorsport stage and with it the world première – in Geneva of course – of the Porsche 919 Hybrid for the top LMP1 category of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC). Its most famous milestone is the 24-hour race at Le Mans. The WEC regulations – which had only recently been created at that time – require an innovative hybrid drive. The 919 Hybrid with system output of around 1,000 PS would also function as a research space for the technology of future series-production vehicles. From 2015 to 2017 inclusive, the Porsche LMP team

achieved three Le Mans overall victories in a row, three world championship titles in the manufacturers' standings and three world championship titles for the drivers of the Porsche 919 Hybrid.

The LMP1 prototype was flanked on the Geneva stage by the Porsche 911 RSR, offering around 470 PS in the sharpest racing sport version of the sports car icon. The two racing cars – the 919 Hybrid and 911 RSR – started in various classes of the WEC, making 2014 the year of the most extensive motorsport programme in Porsche company history.

In 2018, Porsche introduced two innovations that represent the mainstays of the company's product strategy: the 911 GT3 RS with a motorsport chassis and 4-litre high-revving aspirated engine producing 520 horsepower and 346 lb.-ft. of torque, as well as the concept study for a fully electric Cross Utility Vehicle (CUV). Highlights of the study include its emotional design with striking off-road elements, as well as the innovative display and control concept with a touchscreen and eye-tracking control. Featuring a deep bonnet between heavily curved fenders, the front of the Mission E Cross Turismo has a clear visual link to the Porsche 911. The ready-to-drive Mission E Cross Turismo is connected with the Mission E study that was demonstrated at the 2015 International Motor Show Germany (IAA). In autumn 2018, the Porsche AG Supervisory Board decided to put the Taycan Cross Turismo into series production at the Zuffenhausen site.

Geneva 2019

Last year, Porsche premiered three new sports models at the 89th Geneva Motor Show with the highlight being the new eight generation 911 Cabriolet. Alongside the rear-engined 911 Cabriolet, Porsche also unveils the 718 T, a mid-engined driving machine in Boxster and Cayman forms to the audience gathered in Geneva. The Macan S, with new V6 turbocharged front engine, completes the debuting trio as a bestseller in the model range.

Image Sublines

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Title: Heinrich Kunz (salesman), Ferry Porsche, Bernhard Blank, Louise Piëch, Ernst Schoch (private secretary of Bernhard Blank), l-r, 356, Geneva International Motor Show, 1949, PCNA
Subline: The 356 made its first international appearance in Geneva in 1949

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Title: 356, Geneva International Auto Show, 1964, PCNA
Subline: Some brands have long since ceased to exist: the 1964 Motor Show

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Title: Geneva International Motor Show 2018: World Premiere of the new 911 GT3 RS, PCNA
Subline: The 911 GT3 RS was presented in Geneva last year

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