

Air-cooled enthusiasts enjoy Luftgekühlt's homecoming

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11/10/2022 The 10th edition of the famous celebration of Porsche's air-cooled past took place at the weekend, when Los Angeles welcomed home Luftgekühlt 8.

When it comes to car culture, southern California supplies enthusiasts equally with variety and passion. From low riders and hot rods to sports cars, the region has something for everyone, and parking lots fill every weekend with purists and creatives showing off their four-wheeled treasures while admiring the tastes of friends old and new. This past weekend, Los Angeles hosted Luftgekühlt 8, the latest installment of the very special air-cooled gathering pulled together by Jeff Zwart, of Pikes Peak fame, the Le Mans-winning driver Patrick Long, and Howie Idelson.

With its origins rooted in LA, Sunday's meeting at CRAFTED at the Port of Long Beach was something of a homecoming for 'Luft', as it has become known. Set in and around a pair of 1940s-era warehouses

formerly used as a holding point for shipping companies, the 10th edition featured pristine examples of historic racing cars and museum-quality machines among more humble offerings driven in by local owners.

While some of the focus was on the 50th anniversary of the Carrera RS 2.7, crowds at the sell-out event mingled among other highlights including a 1956 550A Spyder, a 934/5 crafted by Canepa, a few custom creations from California-based designers and builders, and a handful of endurance race winners covering Le Mans, Sebring and Daytona.

Hundreds more models, spanning the sports car manufacturer's rich 74-year history, were spread out in creative arrangements that not only displayed the brand's lineage, but ensured an Instagram-friendly feast for keen photographers.

"My background is film and photography so our goal is always to create a highly visual event and the cars that were submitted this year for sure allowed us to do that," said Zwart. "Patrick Long has such a vision for these events and I always feel like I have to up my game to support that with visuals that allow the show to live well beyond the first-person experience.

"This year we were able to highlight from the earliest 1951 split-window 356 all the way through to the 959 and into the last of the air-cooled RS models with the 993. I was very happy when we found out that we had three of the original white '73 Carrera RS cars with the red, blue and green graphics available. The arrangement on the centre platform felt like the show stage in 1973."

Elsewhere, a naked 356 chassis formed part of a display by Porsche Classic, which showcased its parts and services for owners looking to restore their cars. The new book by Type7, Type7 Volume 3, also made its US debut, with editor-in-chief Ted Gushue signing copies. And dozens of food trucks – a staple of LA – kept the tens of thousands who attended well-nourished, with a menu as colourful and eclectic as the cars on show.

After the 2020 event was cancelled due to the pandemic, and 2021 was limited in size, Luftgekühlt 8 proved that there is an appetite for more than good food in California – and that Porsche people know how to party. Zwart: "These events are lots of work for our incredible team but when all the cars have landed and the crowd rolls in, it's so satisfying to see how much people just enjoy wandering around with great music and cars to inspire the air-cooled story."

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