

The Original in North America: The “No. 1” tours the world

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20/09/2018 As part of its anniversary tour, the Porsche 356 “No.1” Roadster is currently on the road in North America. Seventy years after the “No.1” left the plant in Gmünd, Austria, it’s now on show in Canada for the first time. Then it’s onward to the Rennsport Reunion.

It’s seen as the birth of the Porsche brand – the moment that the 356 “No.1” Roadster received its general vehicle certification as the first car under the family name. Now the original vehicle is on Canadian soil for the first time, and is making two stops there. This trip overseas was part of the anniversary celebrations of “70 years of Porsche sports cars”. Both the original and the show car, a replica based on the original look of the “No. 1”, can be seen in many countries around the world.

After its journey overseas to Pebble Beach in the U.S. for the Concours d’Elegance, the world’s most famous beauty contest for high-end classic cars, the original made its way to Canada. The “No.1” was

exhibited at the “Luxury & Supercar Weekend” in Vancouver, Canada’s premier lifestyle and car event with a collection of more than 187 luxury cars. The second stop was Toronto harbour, where the Roadster was presented in a beautiful setting on the green in front of the CN Tower on 14 September.

The next stop for the “No. 1” is from 27 to 30 September at the Rennsport Reunion in the U.S., the world’s biggest meeting for vintage cars and current Porsche racing cars. This is the original’s last stop before it returns to Zuffenhausen. Meanwhile, the show car heads to China for the last stage of its tour. The replica 356 “No.1” show car will spend more than two months in the brand’s biggest market – far and away the longest stage on the anniversary tour.

The Porsche 356 has a very special relationship with North America: in the 1950s it was seen as a lovable, unique car. The clear, aesthetic design of the Porsche distinguished it from the monotony of American mass motorisation.

The Porsche 356 quickly became an insider tip on the North American racing scene. Porsche’s great success in the U.S. is inseparable from the names of the first U.S. Porsche importers: Max Hoffman with his professional marketing and John von Neumann with his passionate commitment to racing. Their great enthusiasm, sure instincts for what the customer wanted and effective sales concepts helped the Porsche sports car to make its breakthrough in North America during this early phase.

Ferry Porsche (left) and son Ferdinand Alexander Porsche beside the 356 A Coupé in New York (USA) to receive the Elmer A. Sperry Medal (November 1958)

At the same time, countless sporting successes on American racetracks and prominent customers cemented the dynamic, exclusive image of the “Made in Germany” sports car. This not only had a positive effect on the sales figures: the fast but eminently driveable German sports cars were also very popular with film stars in Hollywood, and with James Dean in particular. This combination of racing success and Hollywood glamour helped earn the Porsche brand its unique lifestyle image in North America. And with America as a role model, this perception of the brand was also perpetuated in Europe.

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