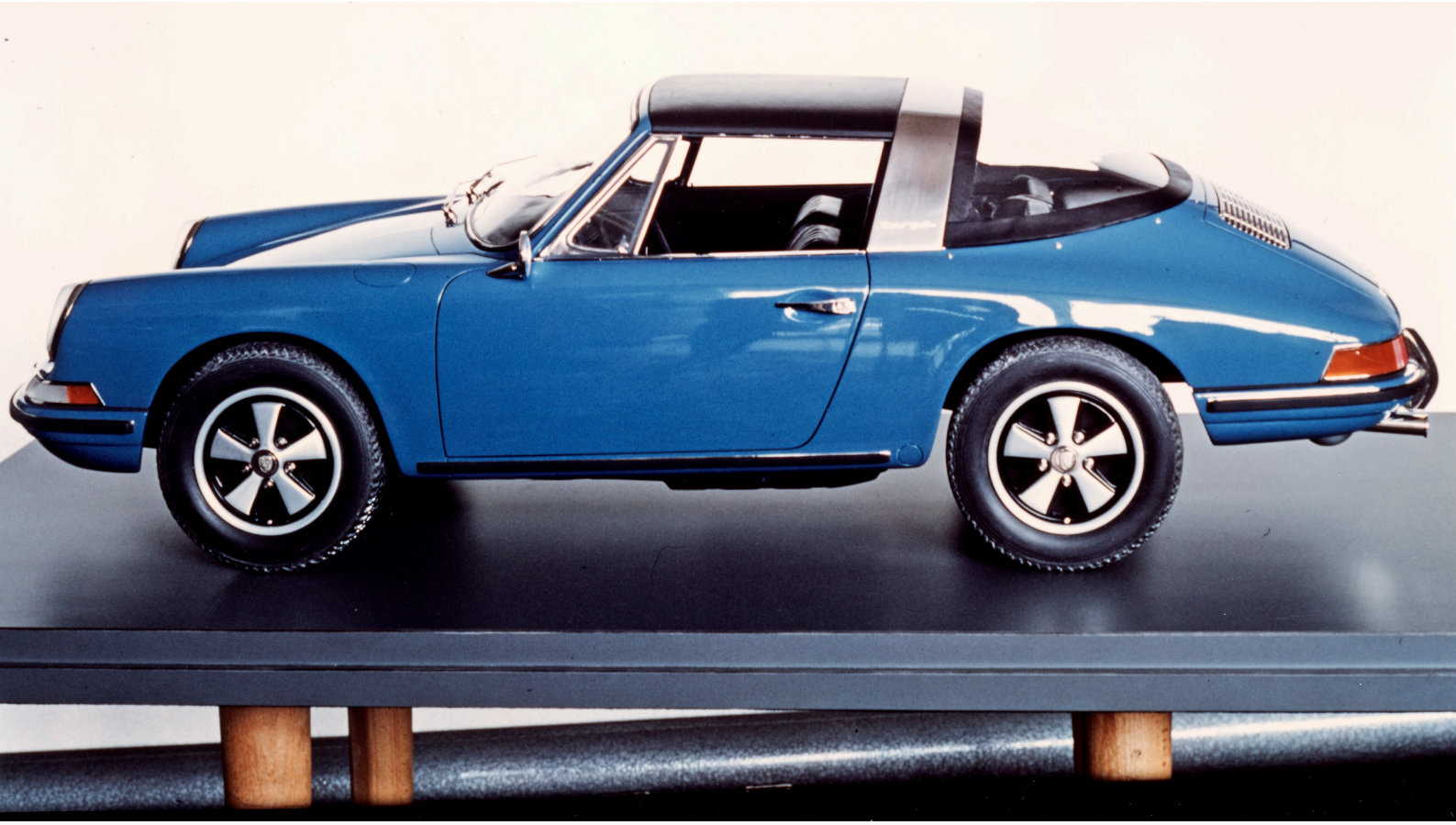


Craftsmanship in perfection: the 1:5-scale model Targa

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25/04/2022 This 1:5-scale model Targa was built entirely by hand and from scratch: from measuring, filing and casting to drilling, milling and turning. This jewel adorns the '50 Years of Porsche Design' special exhibition at the museum in Zuffenhausen.

It was a model ship that initially got the project on course. It was moored at the Württembergischer Yacht Club in Lindau on Lake Constance, built by Elmar Roßmayer and on view in a display case. A member of the Porsche family discovered this masterpiece, along with a small brass sign engraved with the name and address of the model maker. "It all really began with this sign," says Roßmayer, now a spry 80-something. It wasn't long afterwards that he received a call from Porsche in Zuffenhausen asking if he could also build model cars. The virtuoso craftsman recalls it well: "First, I asked my wife what she thought of it. For my part, I was a bit scared of biting off more than I could chew. Porsche, this world-famous company, wants me to build them a model? But really I had nothing to lose."

His model-building career started with an early 911 Coupé. The blue 1:5-scale Targa that today enriches the '50 Years of Porsche Design' exhibition at the museum in Zuffenhausen was Roßmayer's second order from the sports car manufacturer. Tobias Mauler, the man responsible for small exhibits in the Stuttgart museum team, says: "Such pieces are increasingly garnering more attention. We've noticed that models are particularly appealing to our visitors. Perhaps that's partly because they remind so many people of their own childhood model collections. They clearly have a strong emotional resonance."

Porsche has a veritable armada of small exhibits in its collection – not only models, but also trophies, sculptures and technical miniatures that illustrate how different technology functions. Such historical gems can be the magic ingredients that spice up the exhibition and add a new facet to the topics on display.

But back to Elmar Roßmayer and his Targa. The virtuoso craftsman trained as a mechanic with Maybach in Friedrichshafen and had always preferred being in the workshop to the classroom: "When I started my training, drilling, filing and milling were nothing new for me. I had started testing my skills with models at an early age, beginning with ships." But the Targa, the first open-top 911 from Zuffenhausen, nevertheless confronted the expert craftsman with a very special challenge: "Porsche wanted a complete interior, a removable Targa roof and rear window that could be removed. And while the 1:5-scale Coupé had no interior and wheels with hubcaps, the blue Targa was supposed to be on Fuchs rims. That was an additional task."

In the age of 3D printers none of this would have been a problem, but 54 years ago, when this remarkable miniature was created, the 1:5-scale Targa was a matter of imaginative craftsmanship and, above all, improvisation. When Roßmayer begins to recount how he did it all back in the day, there's an unmistakable sparkle in his eye, as if he were that strapping young man again, back at the lathe, turning this incredible dream into a reality. The conversation gathers pace just as quickly as a real 911 of the era would have done.

It started with the body, which today shines in impeccable blue paint. Roßmayer: "For me, only one solution made any sense: epoxy resin. What that means, however, is that you first have to make a wooden model of the right size and cast a negative and a positive mould for each part. Then the epoxy resin hardens perfectly and you can rework it really well."

Creative solutions for the details

Time and again, Roßmayer had to find solutions for the details. He recalls: "I replicated the patterned texture in the lower part of the dashboard with the profile of a shoe sole, which I had to cut down to the right size." Even something as banal as a perfectly ordinary tyre can pose a daunting challenge. The model maker from Bad Schussenried, a spa town in Baden-Württemberg, says: "I started by cutting the tread wider and then I inserted a piece that mimicked the narrow grooves. Such fine structures can't be milled directly on a 1:5 scale. Then the whole thing had to be sanded again. The letters for the writing

on the tyres came from a typesetter and were inserted into the basic form in the correct order and then cast perfectly. I used a similar method with the raised tyre formats on the sidewalls."

The Fuchs rims were little works of art as well, painstakingly crafted into their original form on the lathe. As on the full-size car, they were fastened with bolts and can be removed. The model was equally refined in the interior. The sun visors are adjustable and the seat positions can be altered. The five round instrument dials in the cockpit are fully readable, of course. Roßmayer: "I simply photographed them and then shrank them to the exact size. All five dials are protected by glass, of course."

At first, the delivery to Porsche mainly translated into a sharp uptick in his cigarette consumption. Roßmayer: "I was really nervous. I smoked a pack of cigarettes, HBs, on the way there, wondering all the while if the model would appeal to the gentlemen of Porsche. And on the way back I was happy that the Targa had been so well received. I smoked another whole pack there and then!" Porsche was happy to pay the price for the unusual Targa: Roßmayer billed exactly 1,257.75 hours at ten marks an hour.

And the Targa was almost lost to Porsche, because it went back to Roßmayer and his workshop, together with the 1:5-scale model of a Porsche 914. "At some point I stood here in my little realm and thought, what would happen to these treasures once I was gone?" remembers Roßmayer. "I knew at once: I had to call Porsche. The models had to return home to Zuffenhausen." He goes quiet for a moment and takes out a handkerchief to wipe away tears.

"When we picked up these gems, we were just speechless in the best possible sense," Mauler continues. "We were then able to restore the Targa for the exhibition." And now it dazzles onlookers in the special '50 Years of Porsche Design' exhibition, alongside two 911 originals, a chair, a number of pipes and a pair of Porsche sunglasses.

Info

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