Cool Slidings with Walter Röhrl

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30/12/2017 Practice makes perfect – especially when it comes to driving safely on ice and snow. Rally World Champion Walter Röhrl shows the fine art of controlled sliding.

Walter Röhrl has a very special relationship with slippery, even icy conditions. As a young man, Röhrl was considered an extremely talented skier in Regensburg and the Bavarian Forest, who combined both extraordinary motor skills and unique instincts in a nearly perfectly curved descent. After passing the German Ski Association's ski instructor exam as fourth best, Röhrl developed a passion for fast driving. His top priority in his early rallying days: "I wanted to drive as perfectly as I could ski." In icy and snowy conditions, he was at least as good as the Scandinavians, who dominated rallying at the time. His four wins at the Monte Carlo Rally were the natural consequence of his search for the perfect curve.

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Over the past decades, Walter Röhrl has perfected his feel for the slippery moments in life. Sliding a Carrera 4 GTS diagonally across a snow-covered road at high speed? Ordinary driving conditions for Röhrl. A few purposeful, staccato-like bursts of acceleration later, combined of course with lightning-quick steering, and the car is heading into the next curve in the correct position. It's a feat nearly impossible to learn. But it can be practiced, most effectively of course under the guidance of the master himself.

Gallery

They start by warming up on the Handlin-Parcours, still timid. The handling of a Macan GTS, Panamera 4, Cayman and Carrera 4 GTS is perceivably different, even at low speed. They continue with single sections: full brake, evasive maneuvers, slalom. Röhrl is standing on a heap of snow in warm hunting boots, giving instructions via radio: full brake pressure, steer into the curves early, but countersteer quickly, especially with the Carrera 4 GTS. The basics of driving on ice and snow: "You need to follow each movement of the gas pedal immediately with a reaction at the steering wheel. That's the only way to stay under control."

Walter Röhrl demonstrates what he means: Easily done, seeing as he still drives like his younger self. The others keep on practicing as well as they can, sometimes in the snow next to the track. One thing is certain: Even without Walter Röhrl, there is a confident winter sportsman in every Porsche.

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Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart