

The Aquarius and the pet fish

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21/04/2020 Where others tend a garden with lawns and flower beds, he has pond that measures 240 square metres in size. A background story about Porsche works driver Sven Müller.

The dark-haired athlete sits at the edge, gazes into the depths – but does not slide into the cool water. Instead, the Porsche works driver sweeps his fingers over the surface in gentle strokes. Suddenly, they are here: countless koi carp, their mouths o-shaped in the air. Müller, born under the sign of Aquarius (7 February), gently pets the rainbow-coloured fish. "They think there's something to eat, so they become quite tame," explains the 1.81-metre-tall man from the German town of Bingen on the Rhine River. Looking at his 60 koi, the brown eyes of the racing driver radiate warmth, the likes of which his rivals on the racetrack have never seen.

"I discovered my love of fish as a small child when I went fishing with my granddad," says the 28-year-old, who lives near some fishing ponds. The Rhine River is also just a stone's throw away. His grandfather lives in Switzerland. Müller's mother was also born there. This is why the helmet of the

2016 Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup champion is adorned with the black, red and gold stripes of the German flag and the Swiss cross. Every time he visits the Alps, Müller goes to the pond with his grandfather. “I think fishing is the perfect balance for the fast, hectic and loud hustle and bustle of motor racing. I can totally relax.” In contrast to his koi pond at home, the fishing trips are not about petting and feeding the fish, but about catching them. “Trout and pike taste delicious,” laughs Müller. “But whenever I catch a big carp, I don’t know what to do with it. How should I cook a 25-kilo fish in my kitchen? And who should eat all that fish anyway?”

Müller lives alone in a 50-square-metre apartment in the Dromersheim district of Bingen. The home of the avid runner and skier is furnished in a simple, functional style. His brother Benedict, who is about three years younger, lives next door. His younger brother’s business often gives the Porsche works driver additional work. “He has a body workshop but repairs everything else on cars, as well. At the moment, of course, with the change of season, we’re swapping a lot of wheels,” says Müller. “I trained in mechatronics and I always like to help him out.” The knowledge Sven Müller gained from his profession also helps the 28-year-old in his job as a professional racing driver.

“I made a conscious decision back then to undertake this training,” he reports. “Michael Schumacher is responsible for me choosing this apprenticeship. He was always my idol. I found it impressive how, as a car mechanic, he was able to work with engineers better than anyone else back then thanks to his technical knowledge. I wanted to be like that.” Today, Müller’s training helps him provide valuable input when setting up his car. “I know exactly how a differential or a gearbox works. I can communicate with the engineers at a very different level.”

In addition to getting his hands dirty helping in his brother Benedict's workshop, he also prepares for the upcoming motor racing events. In the common room of the small two-person company – the boss has employed an apprentice – stands the Porsche driver’s race simulator. “In the times of the coronavirus, the simulator has taken on a completely different meaning,” he says as he glances at the original seat from a Porsche 911 GT3 RSR (997 model). “If there are no real-life races then I just have to go racing online, for example, in the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup Virtual Edition. I’ve just contested the first race weekends and I have to say it’s super competitive! It gets a bit wild, but it’s huge fun.”

Müller maintains his physical fitness by running. Every day he runs ten to 15 kilometres through the nearby vineyards. As a loyal companion, he always takes his dog, Amy, a greyhound crossbreed from the animal rescue. “After my run, I do power training followed by coordination exercises,” says the fitness fanatic, outlining his training regime. While rope skipping, Müller begins to dance. He hops on one leg with impressive ease and moves his feet like a tap-dancing Fred Astaire. After finishing his workout, he heads to the garden. “If you don’t have any work, find some,” grins Müller. “I’m currently in the process of creating a kind of frost-free section of the pond so that my koi can spend winter there in the future. The fish can survive frosty conditions quite well, but I want them to live in complete comfort all year round.”

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