

Slide rules: sideways with a skiing legend

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27/04/2022 Ingemar Stenmark prepares for his first full season in the Porsche Sprint Challenge by going sideways on a frozen lake. Joining him is Porsche factory driver Simona De Silvestro.

Some 100 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle, a team of ice driving experts is hard at work. On the Ringeltjärn, a frozen woodland lake on the outskirts of Arvidsjaur, they are battling sub-zero temperatures to prepare the Porsche Ice Experience handling circuit for the imminent arrival of some very special guests.

Among the participants are internationally acclaimed racing drivers from the Porsche Carrera Cup Scandinavia and a group of select young talents from this year's Driver Development Programme. They are all here to improve their race craft by mastering the art of car control. And what better way to do that than by putting a 911 on ice?

One special guest, already quite at home behind the wheel of a Porsche, is alpine skiing legend Ingemar Stenmark. Considered by many to be the greatest slalom skier of all time, the Swedish Olympic medallist is preparing for the 2022 Porsche Sprint Challenge, and taking expert advice from Porsche development driver Simona De Silvestro. "This is super fun, and we're having a great time driving on the ice with Porsche," says Stenmark. "It's a special event, with drivers from the Carrera Cup and the Sprint Challenge. Simona De Silvestro is also here and the conditions are absolutely perfect: great weather and it's really nice on the ice."

Stenmark was born 200 km west of Arvidsjaur in Tärnaby, a village famous for producing generations of world class alpine skiers. From a population of less than 500, Tärnaby can claim an incredible 132 victories in the Alpine World Cup, 86 of which were Stenmark's.

Obsession with motorsport

But the 66-year-old father-of-two isn't a man to rest on his laurels. His latest obsession is motorsport, and following three races in last year's inaugural Porsche Sprint Challenge Scandinavia, Stenmark is going all-in with a full season in 2022. Starting in May, he will compete for the Porsche Experience Racing team aboard a 718 GT4 Clubsport.

"The Porsche Ice Experience is part of my pre-season build-up," he explains. "It's important for me to drive as much as I can, even though I don't know how much of the ice driving techniques I can transfer to the running on asphalt. Thankfully, before it all starts, we have two more tests at racing circuits Mantorp Park and Gelleråsen Arena."

Competing with Aksel Lund Svindal

Joining Stenmark in the 718 GT4 is another towering figure from the world of competitive skiing, Norwegian downhill expert and Porsche ambassador Aksel Lund Svindal. "It's going to be fun," the veteran Swede says with a smile. "Now that Aksel will be there competing with me in the same team, it definitely gives me an extra spur, and even more motivation for this year."

The Porsche Ice Experience offers Stenmark two full days of intense ice driving with highly experienced instructors. The ice track on Ringeltjärn has a technical layout, built to be both entertaining and challenging, allowing the drivers to explore the handling of the cars at and beyond the limit. It's an exercise that even an experienced sports car racer like De Silvestro thinks can improve her technique. "Driving on ice teaches you to be patient, something racing drivers tend to forget," explains the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E reserve driver. "You need to push, but if you push too hard you will end up very far off the track. And there are lots of pictures of me in the snowbanks right now!"

Alongside her past drives in Indy Car, V8 Supercars and Formula E, De Silvestro is also a familiar face among the drivers taking part in the Ice Experience following a guest appearance in Carrera Cup

Scandinavia last year. As such she was delighted to be invited along and to impart some advice to the group. “I was so excited to be asked to try the Porsche Ice Experience,” she says. “I’ve never been so far north before and it's also my first time driving on ice. It's so exciting, but I guess, every time you get to drive a 911 sideways it’s always extra fun. It's a very cool concept, the way they've built the track here. You can really push the limits.”

For Stenmark, having someone as experienced and approachable as Silvestro on hand proves invaluable in optimising his car control and confidence at the limit. “I've asked Simona for a little bit of advice, and the others as well,” he admits. “All tips are welcome when you’re a beginner. Especially the tricks of the trade, like how to handle the braking. She has given me some good advice on that subject. All the rest, I guess you learn over time, but I'm 66, so I have to pick up as much information as I can and as quickly as possible!”

Consumption data

911 Carrera 4 GTS (Predecessor model)

Taycan 4 Cross Turismo (Predecessor model)

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

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