Tradition in motion: Porsche Heritage Experience in Iceland

20/08/2025 A country born of fire that lives in the light of the midnight sun is a good place to talk about the future. And what it will bring. Iceland is more than a backdrop for the Porsche Heritage Experience. It is a landscape that embodies the mission of Porsche Heritage and Museum, to build bridges between the past, present and future.

A narrow tarmac track runs like a dash through purple lupins and rising thermal steam. A chronicle of time glides along it: six generations of the 911 Targa. Steel and aluminium bound as chapters, chrome as punctuation, tyres and glass as passages between Then and Now. Contact with the earth, openness to the sky, in between the track that continues to be written. If you drive here, you learn how quiet strength can be – and how strong silence can be. This is how heritage becomes movable; not behind closed doors, but in motion. Cars can be a moving memory. This is the idea behind Porsche Heritage and Museum: collecting, preserving, sharing history to build bridges between what was and what remains possible. Heritage interpreted as an attitude that points forwards.

60 years of the Porsche 911 Targa

The convoy is a story in six sentences: from the Targa Soft Window of the late 1960s to the 911 Targa 4 GTS T-Hybrid from 2025. The same silhouette, read again and again. The same idea, more precisely formulated. The Targa, the car of the midpoint since 1965 – not a coupé, not a cabriolet, but a shape that embraces air and incorporates the sky as the epitome of freedom in its design. A signature that is updated over the generations.

Iceland, a geologically young and culturally ancient country, offers the right topography. Glacier and sea spray share the map; volcanic sand and lupins appear in the same view. In the morning, the air smells of warm earth, in the afternoon of sea salt, in the evening of rain. People have learnt to think with the weather. The roads align to the geology, not the other way around. So the cars from Zuffenhausen get exactly the space they need to show what they were built for: for technology becoming a culture when it comes from engineering and principles.

The conversation of generations

The Porsche Heritage Experience translates this idea into a curated expedition: six generations of 911 Targa cars drive for two days across south and west Iceland – from Skyrland to Friðheimar, and from the Commonwealth Farm, up to Þingvellir, where waterfalls, volcanoes and the black beaches of Vík await. Each destination was chosen because these are places where craft makes the value of heritage visible. The cars act as cultural ambassadors on wheels, while the Porsche Heritage and Museum team acts as a bridge builder between local tradition and engineering from Zuffenhausen. Listening, sharing, driving – this opens a conversation that preserves the past and shapes the future.

Traditions that need to be protected

The first stop of the Porsche Heritage Experience is Skyrland. A bright house where time, temperature and lactic acid cultures work together. What is created here is more than just food. It is knowledge that has been preserved and passed on for centuries by families down the generations. Heritage in its simplest sense: successfully passing on a craftsmanship. The lesson strikes us quietly: heritage is not a state, but a repeated gesture, precise enough to exist, open enough to accept the present.

Friðheimar is about an hour southeast of Reykjavík. Tomatoes grow between glass and steam in sub-polar light. Geothermal energy and gardening – two words that make themselves understood in one sentence. A small utopia under the domes; a family-run business that turns the resources of the village into a cycle. The clever connection is the trick here: technology that is not against nature, but comes from it. That's another aspect of working within a tradition: continuing the tried and tested using the knowledge and means of the modern age.

The next Heritage Experience stop takes us northeast into the Þjórsárdalur. There is where you find the Commonwealth Farm. Wooden tools, the smell of hay and iron, a look back full of respect. Here you can see how much pride lies in the craft. Here things are repaired rather than replaced and family stories are passed on. Anyone looking around will understand why Porsche Heritage and Museum views cars as cultural ambassadors: not because they shine, but because they create connections.

In the afternoon, the horizon expands in the Þingvellir National Park. Between the plates of the earth, Europe on this side, America the other, there stands a valley that practised politics early on: one of the oldest meeting places in the world. The landscape looks like a laid-back arrangement of principles. Separation can also be clarity, and distance an instrument of order that connects, rather than divides. Resistance arises where movement has structure. Heritage also works in this way: it is a set of rules of preservation that can withstand change.

The line of the Targa

When the cars park next to each other for the night, the eye is drawn to a contour that has had a clear signature for more than six decades. The roll-over bar is a trademark, the glass rear section a contemporary window motif. The Targa is a principle. Openness yes, but ordered. Freedom with responsibility. This attitude explains why further development looks familiar, from air-cooled classic to T-Hybrid, which sees electrification not as a break with the past, but as reinforcement. Innovation as a continuation by other means.

The morning after belongs to the water: Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss. Behind the curtain of the first waterfall is a space where the water drips down; at the second you can feel the fine impact of the spray – like an elemental memory. Then on to Eyjafjallajökull, the white dome that has been deeply inscribed in the memory of Europe. Further south, in Vík, the beach lies out before you like a black chapter of velvety sand. Basalt columns rise as if architects had carved time into an organ made of stone. A good place to understand that culture always has a geology. Layer by layer, a slow development.

Heritage as a task

Porsche Heritage and Museum isn't in the business of nostalgia. It works on choice, and omission. What do we take with us? And why? What values have shaped the heart of the brand and how can it be carried into the future? The archive is a studio, the museum a workshop and driving itself a form of research. The cars are both evidence and a test: they show where we come from and check that we're going in the right direction. The aim is to keep the car moving, to bridge the gap between heritage and possibility, between lineage and new departures.

One sentence from the team stays in our ears: heritage is a promise to the future. Heritage is not a question of ownership; it is a question of behaviour. How do we talk about the past without romanticising it? How do we honour tradition without sticking it in a museum? And how do we remain

open to what is yet to come? The answers can be found in the Porsche Heritage Experience by listening, sorting and specifying.

Tradition as the foundation of progress

Our travelling companion, Rúrik Gíslason, a native of Iceland, will accompany us through the individual stages. He knows the ways and the light, and above all he is an expert in the composure needed to make decisions here. The former professional footballer takes a step back, letting the landscape and the cars take centre stage. After his professional career, the now actor and entrepreneur decided to cooperate only with brands with attitude. "Tradition is not a contradiction to progress, it is the foundation," says Gíslason. A phrase that sets the tone of this journey and sums up the idea behind the Heritage Experience.

Anyone who sees the six Targa generations one after the other can see a common theme: lightweight construction as an ethical principle, function as a design language, evolving instead of jumping. In the Soft Window you will find the original lightness that gives driving its spring, in the Targa of the 1970s the quiet reliability of an attitude on four wheels. The nineties are elegance and departure, the 996 shows off technology as a statement. And the current 911 Targa 4 GTS T-Hybrid is a sign of the times. It radiates a self-assured calm, supported by electrics, supported by mechanics, balanced between efficiency and expression. That is how this kind of modernity comes about; and it is not to be confused with mere novelty.

Learning from the island

What is left of Iceland when the Atlantic disappears in the rear-view mirror? The future is not the opposite of the past; it is its most precise reading. The country has learnt to live with extremes – wind, stone, fire, ice. This gave rise to methods, not myths. That is precisely the task of all heritage work: to put history into practise. It is not big words that count, but consistent action. Skyr as nutrition, geothermal energy as heating, the Targa principle as openness.

In the evening, when the sun does not want to set, the cars stand bumper to bumper: ancient light beside modern composure. The air smells of damp moss. The Atlantic crashes. The mechanical heat echoes it. First a crackle, then a very quiet humming. In moments like this, heritage can be heard: as a sequence of sound from near and far, as a rhythm of passing on. This makes it easy to understand what the team means by "building bridges": constant work between archive, road and future.

Tradition, identity, culture

The Porsche Heritage Experience is more than just an unforgettable journey. Skyrland, Friðheimar, Commonwealth Farm, Þingvellir, the waterfalls, the volcano, the black beaches – these stops are

chapters in a book that you do not read, but pass on. It is about exchange, about trying out perspectives, about asking your own questions better in other cultures: what is it worth sharing? How can technology be presented as a cultural achievement? When does a brand become an attitude? The answers come on the road. At a petrol station in a storm, in the flickering of the heat of a greenhouse, at the cold railing of the vantage points.

In conversations, it becomes clear that tradition, identity and culture are not completely separate, but three axes of focus on the same core. Preserving tradition, not out of zeal, but out of respect. Experiencing identity, not as a label, but as a form of action. Understanding culture by sharing, listening and being amazed. In the end, it becomes clear that these three movements also describe the driving experience: preserve, experience, understand. In the rhythm of the road.

When Reykjavík's lights appear like narrow columns in the twilight and the convoy slides back into the city, a quiet conclusion comes with us. Heritage is not a reverse gear. It is a driving force that moves forwards, powered by the momentum of memory. On an island that negotiates with the elements every day, sentences like this become plausible. What persists is rarely loud. And what has a future is rarely without heritage.

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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Consumption data

911 Targa 4 GTS (WLTP)*: Fuel consumption combined: 10.8 – 10.6 l/100 km; CO_2 emissions combined: 245 – 239 g/km; CO_2 class: G

*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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