

“Porsche Heritage Moments” brings together five variants of the 935 for the first time

30/03/2026 The homologation of the Porsche 935 exactly 50 years ago marks the moment when an idea became a fully-fledged racing machine. In 2026, the sports car manufacturer celebrates “75 Years of Porsche Motorsport,” reflecting on a vehicle that went on to dominate the World Manufacturers' Championship as well as national and international series from 1976 onward. In five episodes of the “Porsche Heritage Moments” series, Timo Bernhard and Norbert Singer delve into the history of the 935 and its various evolutions in detail for the first time.

Fifty years after the Porsche 935 was homologated in March 1976, the sports car manufacturer is marking the anniversary with a five-part series of “Porsche Heritage Moments” on the Porsche Youtube channel.

Timo Bernhard, Le Mans winner and World Endurance Champion, guides viewers through the individual episodes, inviting former race engineer Norbert Singer to share his personal memories. For the first

time, Porsche brings together five key evolutionary stages of the 935: the original homologated 1976 model, the further-developed 935/77, the radical 935/78 “Moby Dick,” the compact 935 “Baby,” and an internal development prototype that was later used in a record attempt in cycling.

These five cars demonstrate just how rapidly the concept evolved from year to year. This pioneering spirit reflects the brand’s core identity. “In all episodes, it was important to us not to simply compare performance data. What truly matters is the spirit that runs through every variant: the precise interpretation of the regulations, the willingness to rethink technical solutions time and again, and the courage to make decisions under intense time pressure.” summarises Alexander E. Klein, Head of Porsche Heritage Operations and Communications.

The one that started it all: the 1976 Porsche 935

Few racing cars embody the relentless pushing of boundaries as consistently as the Porsche 935. Developed on the basis of the Porsche 911 and designed for the then newly introduced Group 5 category, it took shape precisely where the regulations left room for interpretation – while simultaneously challenging those very limits. Widened fenders, reimagined. Engineering solutions that sparked debate. And a concept that retained a clear and distinctive identity across all its variants. In the first episode of “Porsche Heritage Moments,” Singer recalls the demanding technical scrutineering by the FIA, during which every individual bodywork element had to be defended, as well as a cockpit designed for rapid adjustment. He also discusses with the host the importance of communication between driver and team in an era without radio contact to the pits.

The 935/77: evolution with the twin-turbo technology

In the second episode, the duo reflects on 1977, Le Mans, durability, aerodynamics, speed, and time. Singer recounts the new bodywork, the mirror relocated into the front fender, and the resulting limited visibility. From his perspective as a race engineer and aerodynamics expert, he explains where edges were smoothed to improve downforce. The most significant change from the 1976 model to the 1977 version, however, was the twin-turbo engine. “We wanted to eliminate the drawbacks of the large single turbocharger. Two smaller turbochargers respond more quickly, which means less turbo lag and more controllable power delivery. For the drivers, this was a major step forward in terms of drivability”, he says.

Special lightweight design for sprint races: the 935 “Baby”

The third episode of “Porsche Heritage Moments” is all about the courage to simplify. With the 935 “Baby,” Porsche took a step toward sprint racing. In this episode, Singer describes a car that started from the larger 935 and then: “Anything that wasn’t absolutely necessary was removed. We examined every single part and questioned its purpose.” This meant doing without seat adjustment and even

punching holes in the ignition key. The underbody was replaced by an aluminium frame, steel disappeared, and stiffness was rethought. The result was a chassis that weighed below the minimum limit. The downsized 1.4-liter engine placed the “Baby” in the two-litre class. It has plenty of power, but it needs to rev high. Bernhard describes the experience from a race car driver's perspective: “Restrained below 5,000 rpm, but suddenly assertive above that. A car that demands concentration. And respect.”

Episodes of extremes: the 935/78 “Moby Dick”

When Singer recognized the potential of Group 5 in the autumn of 1977, he didn't create another derivative of the 911. He designed a car at the very edge of the regulations. The rules allowed extensive modifications, and he reimagined the 935 with a clear goal: a Le Mans contender whose aerodynamics deliberately broke away from the familiar silhouette. The 935/78, later nicknamed “Moby Dick,” made its public debut in 1978. Already in practice for the six-hour race at Silverstone, it was two seconds faster than the rest of the field and went on to win the World Championship race with a commanding lead. The technical foundation: a 3.2-liter flat-six with twin-turbocharging, featuring water-cooled four-valve cylinder heads for the first time on air-cooled cylinders.

For sprint and World Championship races, up to 845 hp were available, while power was deliberately reduced for Le Mans. “What matters isn't just power, but how the car resists the airflow,” Singer explains. He also details the measures taken to reduce drag to such an extent that the car reached 366 km/h on the Hunaudières straight. Its career was short-lived and limited to just two vehicles. And yet the “Moby Dick” remains unforgettable to this day: “It was the crowning achievement of the whole project,” says Singer.

The first: the 935/77 test car

In the fifth and final episode, Bernhard and Singer come full circle with a car that was never intended for championship glory yet made everything possible: the first 935 test car from 1977. The test car itself saw only one race at the Norisring. Its real purpose lies elsewhere. It serves as a test bed, a think tank on wheels. It even played a part in an extraordinary project: a speed record attempt with track cyclist Jean-Claude Rude, with the 935 serving as a pace car and aiming for speeds beyond 240 km/h.

Finally, the race engineer looks back on all the evolutions of the 935. What remains true in the anniversary year of “75 Years of Porsche Motorsport” was already true back then: a racing car must be fast, but also reliable, intuitive, and robust. Only once it proves capable of winning does it go to the customers. And they, in turn, went to score points on racetracks around the world.

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