

Porsche 911 Speedster Concept fascinates US audience

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28/09/2018 The Porsche 911 Speedster Concept again receives an enthusiastic welcome at its third public appearance.

Following its world premiere on 8 June in Zuffenhausen, Germany, on the occasion of the “70 years of Porsche Sports Cars” anniversary celebration and first demonstration drives at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in July, the open-top concept car is now celebrating its premiere before the US public at the Rennsport Reunion VI in California. The 911 Speedster Concept is based on the current 991 series and also offers a preview of a potential new equipment range from the Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur. With the Heritage design packages, the Stuttgart-based Sports Car manufacturer will provide a modern interpretation of the distinctive themes and colours of its Sports Car history from the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. In addition to the 911 Speedster Concept, Porsche is presenting another unique product at the Laguna Seca Raceway as part of Rennsport Reunion VI: the Porsche Design ‘911 Speedster’ concept

chronograph. A decision about a possible series-production version of the 911 Speedster Concept will be made very soon.

With a purist concept, the two-tone drivable concept car – probably the best present Porsche has given itself for its anniversary – reflects the brand core of the Stuttgart Sports Car manufacturer in precise clarity and historically accurate design. It was developed at Porsche Motorsport in close cooperation with Style Porsche and the Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur. It is powered by a flat-six engine with more than 500 hp. It does without turbocharging and achieves engine speeds of up to 9,000 rpm. This power is transferred to the rear wheels by a six-speed manual transmission. The development focus was on a pure driving experience.

Strong partnership: Top performance meets fine craftsmanship

The cooperation between Porsche Motorsport and the Exclusive Manufaktur for the 911 Speedster Concept – as the first glimpse of a forthcoming Heritage design strategy – has historical roots, as the two divisions have the same origins. Porsche Exclusive once fulfilled special requests from racing customers, such as the legendary 935 Street, designed with a flat front end. The last joint project between Porsche Motorsport and Porsche Exclusive was the Porsche 911 Turbo S Lightweight (Type 964) from 1992.

With the expansion of motor sports at the Weissach Development Centre, the two divisions parted ways. As specialists for manufacture of individually crafted vehicles, Porsche Exclusive concentrated with a passion for detail on individual customer requests and limited production runs, such as the 911 Sport Classic of 2009 or the 911 Speedster of the 997 series of 2010, of which only 356 were built. As a general rule, one-off products are almost always possible within the boundaries of the applicable legislation and while also ensuring that Porsche requirements relating to quality and long service life are met. In the current fiscal year, there is a particularly strong demand for personalisation of GT models. This shows that GT customers, who were previously interested primarily in purism and performance, now also want to express their personality in colours and custom equipment.

The numerous lovingly executed details of the 911 Speedster Concept clearly demonstrate just how well the revitalised collaboration works. The handcrafted paintwork in the classic GT Silver and White colours, together with the so-called ‘spears’ on the front wings, reference the brand's racing history. The same applies to the tank cap positioned in the middle of the bonnet in 1950s style, the exterior mirrors in the classic Talbot shape and the special design of the headlights. The transparent and opaque surfaces of the headlight covers resemble the shape of a cross – a further nod to the early years of Porsche in motorsport. Both the wide B-pillars and the rear end are decorated with milled and gold-plated Speedster lettering.

Design

Porsche Design has created a special timepiece for the new 911 Speedster Concept: the '911 Speedster' concept chronograph. Just like the vehicle, it is initially a one-off; subsequent production is currently under consideration. The chronograph case is made of a lightweight titanium, with a black titanium carbide coating to highlight its sporty design. The matt-black dial – similar to the instrument cluster of the 911 Speedster Concept – is characterised by its excellent readability. Instead of a small second hand, a function display with '911 Speedster' lettering positioned at 9 o'clock indicates that the movement is running. As a special gesture on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Porsche Sports Cars, the '70' on the tachymeter is highlighted in a contrasting colour. The leather strap matches the interior of the concept vehicle and is made of identical types of leather.

The timepiece is powered by the first independently developed Porsche Design calibre, the Werk 01.200 with flyback function, load path optimised movement bridge and official COSC certification. The Swiss movement is the result of three years of development and state-of-the-art manufacturing methods. It combines engineering and watchmaking skill with the know-how from sports car construction, and impresses with precision, functionality and performance.

Looking back: Speedster models from Porsche made their debut 66 years ago

Various Speedster models have been part of Porsche company history since 1952. They combine open-top driving pleasure with outstanding driving dynamics. The forefather of these models is the 356 1500 America Roadster, whose aluminium body was manufactured by hand. It weighed 60 kilograms less than the 356 Coupé and its top speed of 175 km/h (108 mph) from its 70 hp flat-four engine was impressive at the time. The exclusive Sports Car, developed for the US market and built only 16 times, already featured key elements of the Speedster design with slot-in windows for the doors, a folding rain-cover top and lightweight bucket seats.

Porsche produced a significantly less expensive version in 1954, which also included 'Speedster' in the model name and quickly caused a sensation in the world of motorsports. For the first time, it combined the sheet steel body of the coupé with a flat windscreen, reduced interior equipment and a rain top. In the USA, the 356 1500 Speedster cost less than 3,000 dollars and became an instant hit in the sunny coastal states. Hollywood icon James Dean was also an enthusiastic racing driver and chose this purist model, which is dedicated solely to the sheer pleasure of driving. Other variants followed. The model reached its peak in 1957 with the 356 A 1500 GS Carrera GT Speedster.

It was not until 1988 that a Speedster variant was introduced in the 911 series, as the crowning highlight of the discontinued G-model generation. It was based on the air-cooled 3.2-litre six-cylinder

engine with up to 231 hp and – unlike the 911 Speedster Clubsport concept car previously shown at the IAA in Frankfurt – featured a wide turbo look. At the same time, 161 units with a lean Carrera body were also produced. They were intended for export and are particularly prized by collectors today.

It is exactly the other way around with the successor model: Between 1992 and 1993, 930 units of the 911 Carrera 2 Speedster of the 964 generation rolled off the production line. In addition, there were 15 vehicles with wide turbo bodies, which are currently attracting top prices.

Even more rare is the opulent 911 Carrera Speedster based on the 993 series. Only two of this model were developed by the Porsche Exclusive department – for Ferdinand Alexander Porsche and an American collector. Customers didn't get their hands on a Speedster version of the 911 again until 2010, when it debuted as a limited production run from Porsche Exclusive based on the 997 model generation. The Sports Car with the shortened windscreen was produced in a strictly limited edition of 356 units.

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