

Products 05/06/2020

## When necessity becomes a virtue: vehicle concept for the Porsche Targa

The Targa was the reaction of Porsche to a discussion held in the early 1960s on the importance of safety of open-top cars in the US market.



From Detroit to Dallas, open-top cars were suddenly considered dangerous as they were said to provide insufficient protection for occupants in an accident. Dark clouds were brewing over the future of the convertible.

This development was naturally not well-received in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen as most of the 356s shipped overseas had a fabric roof. The Swabians did not want to lose their customers in the sunshine states of the USA as the sales department was vehemently insisting on an open-top variant. Something new was therefore required: a smart solution in keeping with the company's style that would overcome the apparent contradictions of being visually attractive but functional in form.

### One of the world's most spectacular race circuits: the Targa

The Targa Florio was a motor race on public mountain roads through the Madonie Mountains of Sicily. From 1906 to 1977, racing cars with up to 600 PS thundered round hairpin bends and through picturesque mountain villages. Since 1978 it has continued as a rally. The original circuit, conceived by Vincenzo Florio (see below), initially led from Cefalù through Cerda, Caltavuturo, Castellana, Petralia, Geraci and Castelbuono.

But with Big Circuit, Medium Circuit, Small Circuit and Sicilian Lap, alternative routes established themselves over the years. The Big Circuit, for example, was 148 kilometres long and, with an altitude difference of over 1,000 metres, a special challenge for man and machine.

Between 1956 and 1973, Porsche won the Targa Florio 11 times. The road race brought Porsche its first victory in a Manufacturers' World Championship event when, in 1956, Umberto Maglioli won the 1,000 kilometre race driving a Porsche 550 A Spyder in scorching

heat, just eleven days after the model's racing debut at the Nürburgring. More about the history of Porsche at the Targa Florio [here](#) (in German).

## **The prize as the source of the name: Targa means shield**

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