Audi Tradition

Anniversary Dates 2026

Contents
Anniversaries in Our Corporate History

Contents
Motorsport

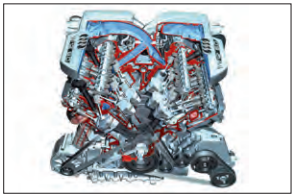
25
years

First Audi Twelve-Cylinder Engine in the Audi A8 W12

In the Audi Avus quattro and Audi ASF concept studies, the conceptual model of a prestigious twelve-cylinder power unit had already been presented to the public. However, the envisaged twelve-cylinder fan engine, featuring three cylinder banks and built in several running prototypes, ultimately proved too complex for series production.

A new line of development emerged based on proven components from the VR6 engine family. After the construction of 44 test vehicles equipped with 5.6- and 6-liter engines in the year 2000, the top model of the A8 series was launched in 2001, featuring a formidable 6-liter twelve-cylinder engine in W-configuration. The Audi A8 6.0 was available exclusively with all-wheel drive and an automatic transmission, in either the standard or the long-wheelbase version, and at that time ranked as the world's most powerful twelve-cylinder luxury sedan.

The combination of classically conservative design and innovative technology proved to be a complete success. On 20 February 2002, the 100,000th Audi A8 was produced; in total, more than 105,000 units of the first generation of the "aluminium Audi" were sold.



30
years

Audi A3

At the “Mondial de l’Automobile” in Paris, Audi presented the Audi A3 in 1996, a compact car that used the platform of the VW Golf IV, which would not be launched until the following year. Initially, the A3 was available exclusively as a three-door hatchback sedan in three equipment lines – “Attraction,” “Ambition,” and “Ambiente” – and with four different petrol and diesel engines. Several engine variants could also be ordered with all-wheel drive.

From March 1999 onward, following its debut at the Geneva Motor Show, a five-door version complemented the model range. The high-performance, all-wheel-drive Audi S3 completed the line-up at the upper end. Among other distinctions, the successful design of the Audi A3 won the “Goldenes Lenkrad” and the “Autotrophy.” In the EuroNCAP safety test, the A3 achieved top scores in May 1998 for outstanding safety standards.

Production of the first A3 generation ended in Germany in June 2003. In Brazil, the model continued to be built until October 2006.

35
years

Audi Cabriolet

At the 1989 Frankfurt IAA, visitors were able to admire the concept study of an Audi Cabriolet. The tornado-red four-seater with white leather upholstery had been developed on the technical basis of the Audi Coupé, which had been presented one year earlier.

One and a half years later, in March 1991, the series-production version made its debut at the Geneva Motor Show. Initially, the roll-bar-free Audi Cabriolet was available exclusively with the proven 2.3-liter engine; over time, two different six-cylinder petrol engines, two four-cylinder petrol engines, and a four-cylinder TDI were added to the engine line-up or replaced individual variants during the production cycle. Two facelifts brought changes primarily to bumpers, headlights, indicator and fog-light units, as well as to the interior materials and fabric designs.

Due to capacity constraints, production of the Audi Cabriolet was relocated in late 1997 to the bodywork specialist Karmann, at the company's facility in Rheine. By the end of production on 27 July 2000, a total of 12,112 vehicles had been built there. Altogether, 71,510 units of the first Audi Cabriolet were produced.

40
years

Audi 80

At the 1986 IAA, the third generation of the successful Audi 80 model was presented, featuring a fully galvanized body and an aerodynamic drag coefficient of c_w 0.29. In this discipline, it even undercut the previous c_w world champion, the Audi 100. As part of production preparation, extensive modifications had been made at the Ingolstadt plant. Among other things, the new paint shop on the northern edge of the factory grounds was constructed.

The most powerful engine variant available was a four-cylinder, sixteen-valve unit producing 137 hp; at the other end of the performance scale were the naturally aspirated and turbocharged diesel engines available from the outset. Five-cylinder engines were offered from May 1987 onward only in the higher-positioned and better-equipped sister model, the Audi 90.

From the start of sales, the Audi 80 was also available in a quattro version. Internally designated as Type 89, it remained in the line-up for five years and sold a total of exactly 1,287,799 units during that period.

45
years

Audi Research Car

In 1978, the Federal Ministry for Research and Technology launched a research program aimed at promoting the development of motor vehicles with regard to energy and raw material savings as well as environmental compatibility. Audi participated in this project as one of three German automobile manufacturers.

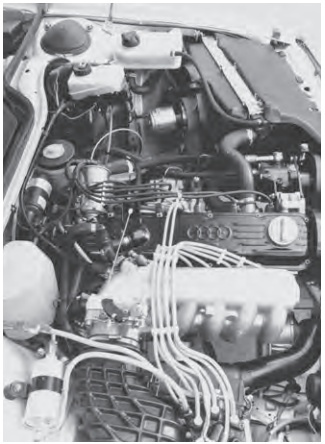
The aerodynamically refined body of the Audi research car featured flush-fitted, bonded front and rear windows, as well as flush-mounted crank-operated side windows. The crash-optimized steel safety cell carried bolted light-alloy fenders and a bonded sandwich roof. The underbody consisted of a one-piece fiber-composite sandwich panel with a rigid polyurethane foam core. Housed within a sound-insulating capsule was a turbocharged four-cylinder carburetor engine which, thanks to lean-burn operation, was exceptionally fuel-efficient and low in emissions. The driver had access to a vehicle information system and an onboard computer.

At the 1981 IAA, the research car was displayed on the Audi exhibition stand. In the following year, the third generation of the Audi 100 demonstrated impressively how closely the concept vehicle and the series-production model had converged in many technical aspects.

50
years

Audi 100

On 6 August 1976, Audi presented the second generation of the Audi 100 to the public in Luxembourg. During its development, the team in Ingolstadt had envisioned a “globally deployable vehicle family with a wide range of variants.” Safety and comfort had the highest priority as part of the model series’ move upmarket. Consistent lightweight construction reduced the vehicle’s weight by a full 200 kg compared with similar models from competitors.



In terms of length and width, the “C2” grew by only 4 cm compared with its predecessor while becoming 3 cm lower. However, the longer glass surfaces made the car appear significantly larger. In addition to the two- and four-door sedan versions carried over from the previous model, a five-door hatchback variant with a large tailgate became available from September 1977 as a completion of the range, marketed under the designation “Audi 100 Avant.”

At market launch, the new mid-size model was offered with two four-cylinder engines: a 1.6-liter unit producing 85 hp and a 2.0-liter engine with an output of 115 hp. From spring 1977 onward, the Audi 100 GL 5E

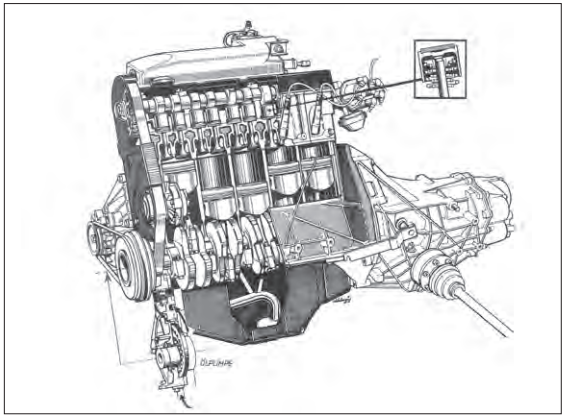
assumed the role of top model in the series. Its five-cylinder fuel-injected engine was a novelty and captivated with an eight-cylinder-like sound. Delivering 136 hp from 2.2 liters of displacement, it accelerated the sedan to 100 km/h in 9.5 seconds and enabled a top speed of 190 km/h. All engine variants were available with a four-speed manual transmission and, on request, with a three-stage torque-converter automatic.

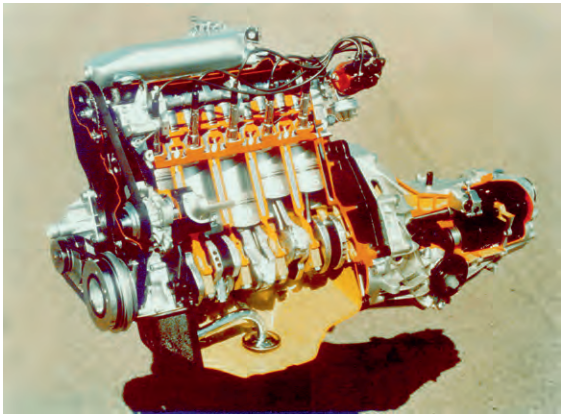
50
years

Audi Five-Cylinder Engines

The introduction of the first Audi 100 in 1968 had secured the continued existence of the Audi brand. The succeeding generation, the Audi 100 Type 43, was intended to be positioned somewhat higher in the market. It was clear that the four-cylinder engines available up to that point would not be sufficient for this purpose. Therefore, consideration was given to the use of five-cylinder and six-cylinder inline engines. The inline six-cylinder was ruled out because the front-wheel-drive vehicle would have become too nose-heavy; a V6 engine, which had also been contemplated, would have required extensive investment in new production lines and was therefore not feasible for cost reasons.

The inline five-cylinder engine could be integrated into the existing engine production and was also based on the young EA 827 four-cylinder engine family, used, for example, in the VW Golf and Passat as well as in

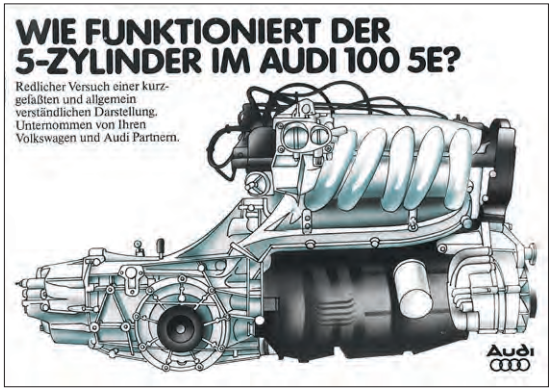




the Audi 80 and 100. The first five-cylinder petrol engine was introduced with the Audi 100 Type 43 in August 1976 in Luxembourg, with deliveries beginning in March 1977. The fuel-injected engine (Bosch K-Jetronic) with a displacement of 2,144 cc produced 100 kW (136 hp). In September 1979, the first turbocharged version followed, delivering 125 kW (170 hp) in the Audi 200 5T, and in 1980 the Audi quattro with 147 kW (200 hp). As early as 1978, the first diesel version attracted attention with a world endurance run.

In the following years, the five-cylinder engine family was consistently expanded. It appeared in the B and C series with various displacements as petrol and diesel engines, with exhaust-gas aftertreatment, and as four-valve turbocharged units in the high-performance powerplants of the Sport quattro, 200 quattro 20V, quattro 20V, S2, S4, S6, and Avant RS2.

The first generation of Audi five-cylinder engines remained in production until the introduction of the Audi A4 (B5) and Audi A6 (C5) model series.

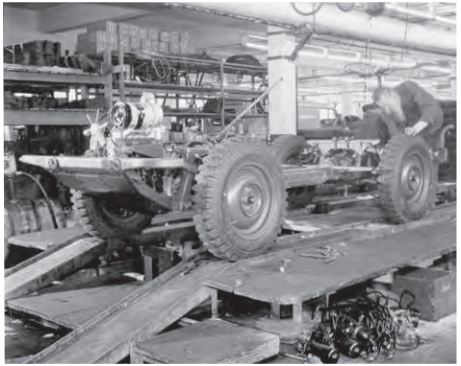


70
years

Start of Production DKW Off-Road Vehicle

Starting in 1953, Auto Union GmbH began working on the development of a lightweight, all-wheel-drive off-road vehicle. The trigger was confidential information regarding the “vehicle equipment of a future German Wehrmacht,” which the VDA had provided to all German automobile manufacturers under strict secrecy.

At the end of 1956, the DKW F 91/4 – its model designation standing for “DKW F 91 with four-wheel drive” – built at the Auto Union plant in Ingolstadt, was introduced into service with the newly established German Bundeswehr as the standard vehicle in the 0.25-ton payload class. In 1962, the DKW off-road vehicle received the model designation MUNGA, an acronym for “Mehrzweck UNiversal Geländewagen mit Allradantrieb” (multi-purpose universal all-wheel-drive off-road vehicle). With the end of Bundeswehr procurement contracts, production of the last DKW two-stroke vehicle ceased in December 1968 after a total of 46,750 units had been built.



75
years

Death Anniversary August Horch

The son of a blacksmith, Dr. August Horch was born on 12 October 1868 in Winningen on the Moselle River. After completing his craft training, years of travel, and studies at the Technical College in Mittweida, Horch joined Carl Benz in Mannheim in 1896, where he accompanied and helped shape the early days of automobile construction as head of the Motor Vehicle Production Department until 1899.

In the same year, he set up his own small repair workshop for motor vehicles in Cologne. In 1901, he built his first automobile of his own design. In 1902, he relocated his company to Reichenbach in the Vogtland region, moving again two years later to establish the final location of the Horch works in Zwickau.

In 1909, after a serious dispute, August Horch left the company he had founded and only a few weeks later established a second automobile factory, which in 1910 he named “Audi,” the Latin translation of his family name. In 1920, he resigned from his position as a member of the board of Audiwerke AG in order to work as an assessor and expert in the field of automotive engineering. When Auto Union AG was founded in June 1932, August Horch was appointed to the supervisory board of the new corporation.

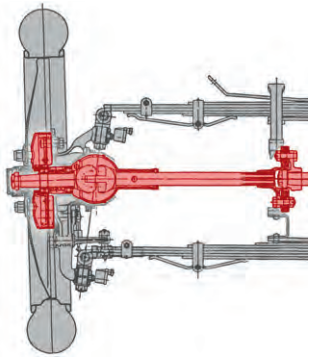
On 3 February 1951, Dr. August Horch passed away in Münchberg in Upper Franconia, where he had found refuge after the end of the war.

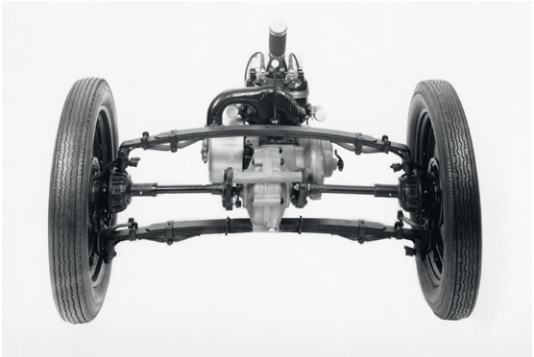
95
years

Front-Wheel Drive in the DKW F1

In August 1928, Jörgen Skafte Rasmussen had acquired the majority of shares in Audi Werke AG in Zwickau. Due to misguided model policy, the company had slipped into the red, and Rasmussen hoped to stimulate sales of the six- and eight-cylinder engines produced under his direction, which were now installed in the large Audi automobiles. However, strong American competition and the effects of the global economic crisis beginning in late 1929 placed Audi Werke under increasing financial pressure. A marketable product was urgently needed to secure the company's continued existence.

In October 1930, Rasmussen appeared in the Audi design office and instructed the immediate development and prototype construction of an entirely new small car. For the development, he specified: an engine from the DKW motorcycle range, front-wheel drive, and a lightweight steel chassis. A maximum of six weeks was to be allotted for the entire design process. The seemingly impossible succeeded. At the end of November 1930, the DKW front-wheel-drive car began its first test run. In February 1931, the DKW F1 was presented at the IAA in Berlin. The front-wheel-drive DKW became a sales success. In its various versions, it evolved into a high-volume model for Auto Union, with seven model series and nearly 270,000 units built at the Audi works in Zwickau until production ceased in 1942.

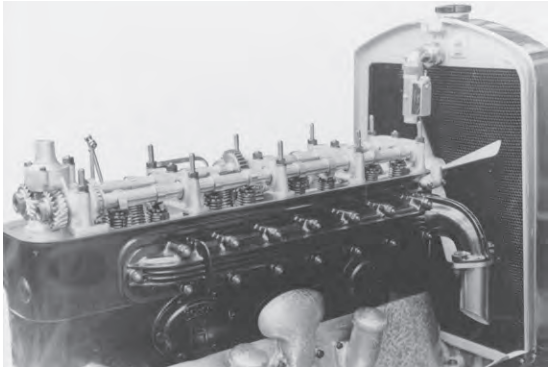




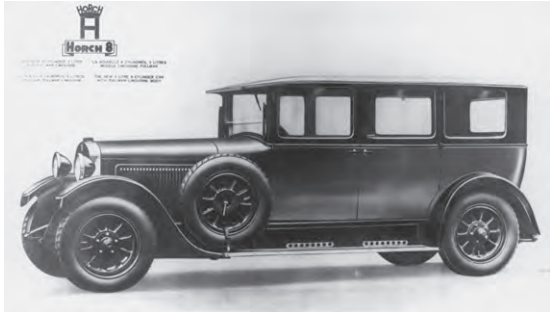
100
years

First Horch Eight-Cylinder Engine

At the Berlin Motor Show in October 1926, Horchwerke AG of Zwickau presented the Horch 8 12/60 hp, the first German production car with an eight-cylinder engine. The inline eight-cylinder engine, designed by Paul Daimler, son of Gottlieb Daimler, produced 60 hp from 3.2 liters of displacement in the Horch 303 (long wheelbase) and 304 (short wheelbase).



Two overhead camshafts driven by a vertical shaft, together with paired cast cylinders, five crankshaft bearings, as well as a long stroke and small cylinder bore, ensured smooth operation and ample torque even at low engine speeds. As early as 1927, the successor model with a 2.5 mm larger bore – providing 3.4 liters of displacement and 65 hp – appeared on the market in the Horch 305 and 306 13/65 hp. In 1928, the crowning achievement of this eight-cylinder series appeared in the Horch 350 16/80 hp, featuring an 80-hp four-liter engine with a cylinder bore increased to 73 mm while retaining the unchanged 118 mm stroke.



A remarkable total of 8,490 units of these twin-camshaft engines were produced until the end of production in 1931.

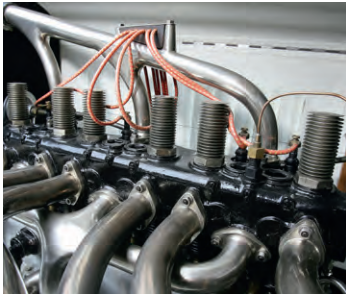
100 years

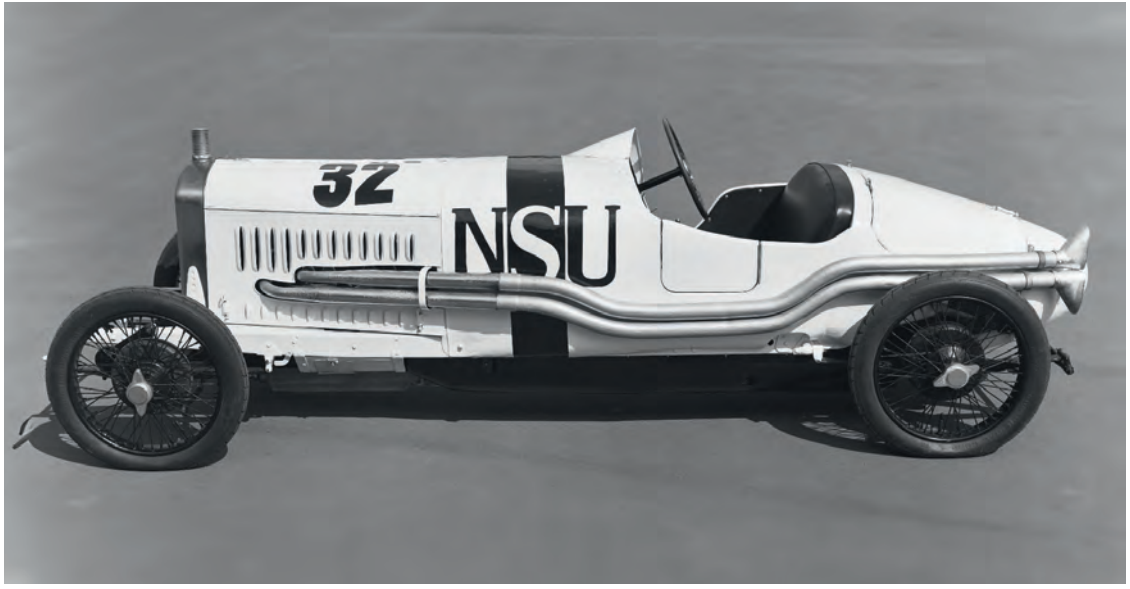
Quadruple Victory of the NSU 6/60 hp in the First German Grand Prix

NSU had already been involved in international automobile racing as early as 1908. The Prinz-Heinrich Rally of 1909 was a great success for the company, as were its entries in numerous long-distance and reliability trials. A “small” NSU 8/24 hp also won its class at the opening race on the newly built AVUS circuit in September 1921.

Developed specifically for racing use, the NSU Type 6/60 hp was introduced in 1925. NSU’s first six-cylinder model produced 60 hp from 1.5 liters of displacement thanks to supercharging by a Roots blower, weighed 830 kilograms, and reached a top speed of 175 km/h. In 1925, the Neckarsulm team entered a prototype of the new racing car in the International Taunus Race and secured overall victory in the 450-kilometer event at the first attempt.

The following year, on 11 July, NSU celebrated a highly acclaimed quadruple victory in the 1.5-liter “F” class with the NSU 6/60 hp at the first “German Grand Prix 1926” on the AVUS, and also claimed fifth place in the overall classification. This Grand Prix – organized by the AvD, the Automobilclub von Deutschland – was the major motorsport event of 1926, drawing roughly a quarter of a million spectators to the AVUS.



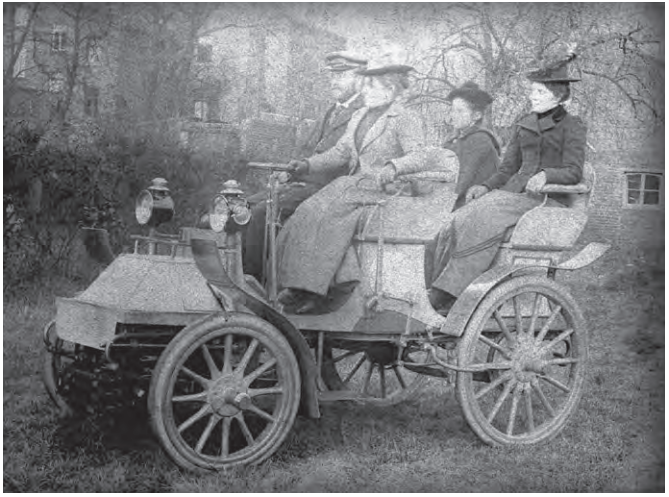


125
years

First Horch Automobile

August Horch, born in 1868 in Winningen on the Moselle, came to Mannheim in 1896 to join Carl Benz as head of the Motor Vehicle Production Department after completing his engineering studies. Carl Benz viewed the innovations proposed by Horch with skepticism and repeatedly curbed the drive and ambition of his plant manager.

Horch therefore founded his own company in Cologne in 1899 and designed his first automobile there, which was completed in 1901. The engine was a horizontally mounted two-cylinder unit that August Horch referred to as a "shock-free engine." One of the first ten Horch automobiles was the Vis-à-Vis model shown in the photograph, in which the driver and passengers sat facing each other.



120
years

Overall Victory in the Herkomer Competition

In 1904, August Horch relocated his company's headquarters to Zwickau. His philosophy included not only the principle of "building strong and high-quality cars under all circumstances," but also the testing of his vehicles in competitive motorsport. With the Horch 18–22 hp, a 2.6-liter four-cylinder model produced in Zwickau, the Zwickau attorney Dr. Rudolf Stöß achieved overall victory in the 1906 Herkomer Competition – just five years after Horch had built his first automobile. The event was one of the most demanding and challenging long-distance trials of its time.

Motorsport

30

years

Seven Countries, Seven Victories

For the 1996 racing season, Audi Motorsport Director Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich set his sights, in addition to the championships in Germany and Italy, on the British Touring Car Championship. Beyond that, the 285-hp Audi A4 quattro STW cars competed – with support from the respective national importers – for touring car championship titles in Belgium, Spain, Australia, and South Africa.

The 1996 season became an overwhelming triumph for Audi and for quattro drive technology. On three continents, in all seven countries, the national championship titles went to Audi. There could not have been a more convincing demonstration of the superiority of quattro technology.

Motorsport

45

years

First International Rally Appearance of the Audi quattro

Parallel to the start of series production of the Audi quattro, which had been introduced in March 1980, Audi Sport began building the first rally vehicles. In January 1981, the quattro was homologated for Group 4 in international rally competition.

Before that, from 30 October to 2 November, Audi was able to run an early development stage of the rally quattro under real-world conditions at the Rallye Urbibel in Portugal's Algarve region, a round of the European Rally Championship. This first appearance as a "course-opening car" turned the entire rally world upside down. Hannu Mikkola and his co-driver Arne Hertz set the fastest time on 24 of the 30 special stages in the 300-hp quattro. Had the team not entered as a course-opening vehicle but as a competitive entry, they would have won the rally by almost half an hour.

At its official debut, the Audi quattro won the Jänner Rallye in Austria in January 1981. In February, the driver pairing of Hannu Mikkola/Arne Hertz followed up with the first victory in a World Championship round in Sweden.

Motorsport

45

years

Audi Coupé GT Group 2

In March 1980, the Audi Coupé – based on the technology of the Audi 80 – was presented at the Paris Motor Show. Production began in the summer, and sales started in October.

By that time, the Audi 80 had already achieved success in motorsport, and it was therefore an obvious step to prepare the Coupé as well for competition use in Group 2. Under the hands of tuners such as Bergmeister, Dupré, Kilian, Nothelle, Seikel, and Spiess, the naturally aspirated five-cylinder engine of just under two liters demonstrated its potential with outputs of up to 230 hp at 8,300 rpm.

With factory support, the fast front-wheel-drive cars were entered from 1981 onward in various national and international racing series. A car prepared by Bergmeister won the race at Zolder in its first year of competition in the European Touring Car Championship. Appearances in rallying were reserved exclusively for a Coupé prepared and fielded by Schmidt Motorsport.

Motorsport

70

years

August “Gustl” Hobl 350cc Vice World Champion

In 1952, the DKW three-cylinder racing motorcycle RM 350 received the nickname “singing saw” after its first race outings due to its distinctive sound. With the powerful and extremely high-revving DKW, the works riders Kluge, Wünsche, Hofmann, and Hobl achieved numerous victories in national and international races from 1952 until the dissolution of the DKW motorcycle racing department in 1956.

Hobl, employed by Auto Union since 1949, had ridden his first race in 1951 on the Donauring circuit in Ingolstadt. By 1952 he already held a racing license, competed in 1953 as a junior rider for DKW, and from 1954 onward was a full-fledged member of the DKW works team. In 1956 he won the German Championship in both the 125 cc and 350 cc classes. That same year, Hobl became vice world champion in the 350 cc class. DKW’s withdrawal from motorcycle racing also marked the end of Hobl’s racing career; he declined a contract offer from Italy and remained with Auto Union, continuing to work in customer relations.

Motorsport

70

years

NSU Speed Records 1956

In 1956, the NSU racing department undertook record attempts in several engine-displacement classes on the Bonneville Salt Flats in the U.S. state of Utah. On 2 and 4 August 1956, the works riders H. P. Müller and Wilhelm Herz achieved the following records for NSU:

NSU Baumm II, H. P. Müller
50 cc, single-cylinder two-stroke engine with rotary-piston supercharger, 10 hp at 10,000 rpm
1 kilometer, flying start: 196.042 km/h

75 cc (record was set using the smaller 50 cc engine)
1 kilometer, flying start: 196 km/h

100 cc, single-cylinder Rennfox engine with reduced displacement, 14.8 hp
1 kilometer, flying start: 222.192 km/h

125 cc, single-cylinder Rennfox engine, 20.4 hp
1 kilometer, flying start: 241.610 km/h

175 cc (record was set using the smaller 125 cc engine)
1 kilometer, flying start: 242 km/h

NSU Baumm IV, 250 cc, H. P. Müller
250 cc two-cylinder Rennmax engine, 43.3 hp
1 kilometer, flying start: 242 km/h

NSU Delphin III, Wilhelm Herz
350 cc two-cylinder supercharged engine, 75 hp
1 mile, flying start: 304.96 km/h

NSU Delphin III, Wilhelm Herz
500 cc two-cylinder supercharged engine, 110 hp
1 mile, flying start: 339.404 km/h

Motorsport

70 years

DKW 3=6 Monza Record Run

The fiberglass body of a two-seater sports coupé based on DKW components was created in 1954/55 on private commission by the Stuttgart coachbuilding company Dannenhauer & Stauss. The technical basis of the elegant two-seater, in the first three vehicles offered as the "DKW Solitude," was the chassis of the DKW F 91. All subsequent coupés used the chassis of the "Großer DKW 3=6," which had been presented at the 1955 IAA.

On the Monza circuit, the lightly modified sixth production vehicle set long-distance records for production cars from 3 to 6 December 1956, achieving average speeds of 140 km/h over 4,000 miles, 48 hours, 5,000 miles,

10,000 kilometers, and 72 hours. The previously unnamed two-seater coupé was subsequently given the model designation "DKW 3=6 Monza."

Three coachbuilders – Dannenhauer & Stauss, Masshold-er, and Schenk – produced a small series up to 1959, which differed in details depending on the manufacturer and the year of construction.

Motorsport

75

years

NSU Speed Record 1951

On 12 April 1951, motorcycle racer Wilhelm Herz succeeded in surpassing the world record previously held by Ernst Henne on a BMW (279.5 km/h) on a section of the Munich–Ingolstadt autobahn, riding a 100-hp, 500 cc NSU supercharged racing motorcycle.

With a speed of 289.603 km/h for the kilometer with a flying start and 286 km/h for the flying mile, he secured the world record for the Swabian company.

Motorsport

90

years

DKW Motorcycle Successes – 1936 Season

As a result of the 1936 racing season, the DKW works team was able to record four German Championship titles and two Vice World Championship titles.

Ewald Kluge – German Motorcycle Champion up to 250 cc, Vice World Champion up to 250 cc

Hermann-Paul Müller – German Motorcycle Champion up to 500 cc, Vice World Champion up to 500 cc

Karl Braun / Erwin Badschig – German Motorcycle Champions up to 600 cc, Sidecar Class

Hans Kahrmann / Julius Beer – German Motorcycle Champions up to 1,000 cc, Sidecar Class

DKW World Records
In the 175 cc and 250 cc classes, Walfried Winkler and Ewald Kluge brought 14 motorcycle world records to Zschopau.

Motorsport

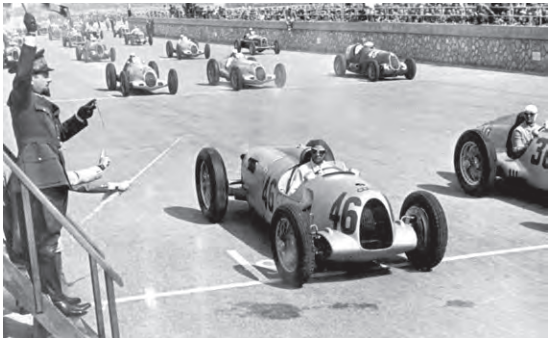
90

years

Winning Streak of the Auto Union Grand Prix Cars

The Auto Union Grand Prix racing car Type C represented the peak in the development of the car designed by Ferdinand Porsche according to the 750-kg formula and first entered in competition in 1934. As the most successful German racing car, the sixteen-cylinder engine with six liters of displacement and 520 hp won three of five “Grand Prix” in the 1936 racing season, half of the circuit races, and all hill-climb events in which Auto Union participated.

Inseparably linked with the Type C is also the meteoric rise of the racing driver Bernd Rosemeyer, who had been hired in 1935 as a junior driver and advanced into the top ranks of Grand Prix competitors. In 1936 – with seven victories, including three Grand Prix, winning the European Championship, the German Road Racing Championship, as well as the German Hill-Climb Championship – the difficult-to-handle Auto Union car made the year his own.



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