



Tradition Communications

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Home again: the last Auto Union Type D twin-supercharger Silver Arrow returns to Audi

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- Auto Union Type D built in 1939, then lost in the USSR for many years
- Thomas Frank, Head of Audi Tradition: “One of the most emotional moments in our heritage work for AUDI AG”

Ingolstadt, August 10, 2012 – “This is one of the most emotional moments in our heritage work for AUDI AG – we have come full circle,” says Thomas Frank, Head of Audi Tradition. A few weeks ago, the car manufacturer was able to repurchase an extremely rare Auto Union Silver Arrow racing car – consisting largely of original parts. It is the Auto Union twin-supercharger Type D dating from 1939, and is one of the two legendary “Karassik cars”. AUDI AG now owns three of the five Auto Union racing cars that can claim to be original.

The Silver Arrow legend was born in the 1930s. In 1934, Auto Union and Mercedes-Benz appeared on the international motor racing scene with German racing cars of totally new design, with a silver finish and futuristic appearance, and were immediately successful. Whereas Mercedes-Benz relied on conventional front-engined cars, Auto Union placed the engine behind the driver – the layout that is still a standard feature of today’s Formula One cars. The two manufacturers dominated racing on Europe’s Grand Prix circuits without serious opposition until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

The 16-cylinder and 12-cylinder racing cars from Zwickau and Stuttgart captured one title after another, almost as if no other cars were competing. Drivers such as Bernd Rosemeyer, Tazio Nuvolari and Hans Stuck (Auto Union), Rudolf Caracciola, Manfred von Brauchitsch and Hermann Lang (Mercedes-Benz) are still acknowledged as heroes by modern motor sport enthusiasts: they often reached speeds of more than 300 km/h in races devoid of any serious safety precautions. On the long straights of the Avus circuit in Berlin in 1937, Rosemeyer’s car was timed at 380 km/h.



The Second World War put an abrupt end to what had become known as the supercharger era. Mercedes-Benz was able to rescue almost all its Silver Arrow cars after Germany's total collapse, but fate was less kind to Auto Union. Zwickau was occupied by the Soviet Army, Auto Union was liquidated and the factories shut down. The Russian occupying forces found the Silver Arrows where they had been stored: in a mine building above ground. The cars were carried off to the Soviet Union as part of Germany's reparation payments, and all trace of them was soon lost in that vast country.

The vehicles best able to pay tribute to Auto Union AG's great motor sport heritage were thus regarded as irrecoverably lost by the new Auto Union GmbH (today's AUDI AG) when it was established in Ingolstadt in 1949. The Cold War had already begun and the Iron Curtain was firmly in place. Only one Auto Union Type C remained accessible; it had been presented to the Deutsches Museum in Munich before the war, but was later damaged in a bomb attack there.

At the end of the 1970, the first rumours were heard to the effect that one of the long lost Auto Union racing cars had been located somewhere in the vast region of the former Soviet Union. Paul Karassik, an American collector of high-class classic vehicles, came to Europe with his wife Barbara, whose family came from Germany, and began to search for the car. As a small boy he had been a spectator in Belgrade at the last Grand Prix held before the Second World War – an unforgettable experience. Later, after emigrating to the USA and becoming a wealthy man, it proved to be useful to him in his search that he came from a White Russian family, had grown up in Serbia and spoke fluent Russian. It took more than ten years and numerous visits to the USSR before he tracked down the remains of two dismantled Auto Union cars in Russia and the Ukraine and, with great negotiating skill, was able to buy them.

This was followed by several hair-raising journeys, often at the wheel of a delivery van, before he was able to bring the parts out through the Iron Curtain to Western Europe. The engines, chassis, axles and gearboxes were then flown to Florida in the USA. In the autumn of 1990, Paul Karassik made initial contact with experts, including in May 1991 the AUDI AG Tradition department, which acted as advisors for the planned restoration. The Karassiks entrusted the rebuilding of their racing cars to the English company Crosthwaite & Gardiner, which already possessed the extensive know-how needed for the restoration of historic racing cars.

After detailed examination of the racing cars' components, it was decided to rebuild a Type D single-supercharger racing car to 1938 specification, and a Type D racing car in the 1939 version with twin supercharger. In both cases a complete replica body had to be constructed, since no parts of the original bodies had survived. Rod Jolley Coachbuilding built the new bodies in England. In August 1993 the first of the two



racing cars, the one rebuilt to 1938 specification, was completed. A year later the twin-supercharger 1939 car was also “ready for roll-out”. With support from Audi, both cars appeared on the starting line for the first time since 1939: at the Eifel Classic at the Nürburgring on October 1, 1994.

In recognition of its support during the rebuilding project, Audi was able to exhibit the 1938 car in the years that followed; it was purchased by AUDI AG in July 1998. The 1939 twin-compressor car returned to Florida. In the spring of 2000, Paul Karassik sold the second car to a private collector: in 1999 he had hoped to see this Auto Union run again in Belgrade, 60 years after the last Grand Prix held there, but the Balkan War put an end to this dream.

Purchase of the Type D twin-supercharger car means that AUDI AG now owns all three Auto Union racing cars recovered from what was formerly the USSR. Thomas Frank, Head of Audi Tradition is delighted: “20 years ago we would never have dreamed that such a thing would be possible!” As well as the two “Karassik cars”, the collection includes the famous hillclimb car driven by Hans Stuck, the Auto Union Type C/D. This was on show at the Car Museum in Riga, Latvia, until just after the demise of the Soviet Union, and is today one of the outstanding exhibits at the Audi museum mobile in Ingolstadt. This is also where Audi plans to display the Auto Union Type D on a long-term basis. But first of all, the new acquisition is to make a notable guest appearance at the Goodwood Revival in England, from September 14 to 16. After 67 years, the latest homecomer from the former Soviet Union will form part of an impressive ensemble together with the Auto Union Type D racing cars first seen in 1994.

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The four rings of the Audi badge symbolise the brands Audi, DKW, Horch and Wanderer, which were combined to form Auto Union in 1932. Auto Union and NSU, which merged in 1969, both made many significant contributions towards the development of the car. AUDI AG was formed from Audi NSU Auto Union AG in 1985. Together with the two traditional companies Auto Union GmbH and NSU GmbH, Audi Tradition has nurtured the extensive, diverse history of Audi for many years and presented it to the public. The Audi museum mobile at the Audi Forum Ingolstadt is open daily from Monday to Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The August Horch Museum in Zwickau is open from Tuesday to Sunday from 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. www.audi.de/tradition

Audi Tradition supports the work of Audi Club International e.V. (ACI). Officially recognised by AUDI AG, this umbrella organisation represents all Audi brand clubs and the clubs of the predecessor brands of the present-day AUDI AG. Information at www.audi-club-international.de

The Audi Group delivered 1,302,659 cars of the Audi brand to customers in 2011. In 2011 the Company posted revenue of €44.1 billion and an operating profit of €5.3 billion. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). The Audi Q7 is built in Bratislava (Slovakia). In July 2010, CKD production of the Audi Q5 was added to the existing Audi A4 and A6 manufacturing operations in Aurangabad (India). At the Brussels plant, production of the Audi A1 has been running since 2010, while production of the new A1 Sportback began in 2012. The Audi Q3 has been built in Martorell (Spain) since June 2011. The Company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include AUDI HUNGARIA MOTOR Kft. (Győr/Hungary), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant'Agata Bolognese/Italy), AUDI BRUSSELS S.A./N.V. (Brussels/Belgium), quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm and the sports bike manufacturer Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna/Italy). Audi currently employs around 65,000 people worldwide, including over 48,000 in Germany. Between 2012 and 2016 the brand with the four rings is planning to invest a total of €13 billion – mainly in new products and the extension of production capacities – in order to sustain the Company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" claim. Audi is currently expanding its site in Győr (Hungary) and will start production in Foshan (China) in late 2013 and in Mexico in 2016.

Audi has long been fulfilling its social responsibility on many levels – with the aim of making the future worth living for generations to come. The basis for Audi's lasting success is therefore formed by environmental protection, the conservation of resources, international competitiveness and a forward-looking human resources policy. One example of AUDI AG's commitment to environmental issues is the Audi Environmental Foundation. Within the context of "Vorsprung durch Technik," which extends far beyond its products, the Company is directing its activities toward a major goal – comprehensive CO₂-neutral mobility.