

A Quick Stop in Stuttgart

by Marc Davey

Having experienced the technological wonders of the Ferrari museum in Maranello, the Lamborghini museum in Sant' Agata Bolognese, and the BMW factory in Munich, the next stop on our 26-day tour of Europe was Stuttgart, home of Porsche and Mercedes Benz. We left our hostel in downtown Stuttgart at sunrise in hopes of making it in time for a Porsche factory tour, only to find out that booking months in advance is the only way to get in.

The factory and museum, which are across the street from one another, are conveniently located right next to the railway station. The museum itself is a piece of architectural significance that has graced the presence of architectural textbooks worldwide, and even to my naïve, untrained eye, it looked “pretty cool bro.” The sheer presence of the great mirrored building with angles jutting out at seemingly random directions left my brother in awe while my curiosity led me to check out a small photo shoot going on near the entrance.



As I walked in, instead of looking at the typical lobby of a car museum, I was staring straight into a workshop unlike any I had seen before. Separated by nothing but a layer of glass, I watched in astonishment as half a dozen uniformed technicians worked on Porsches of all types and ages in a workshop so pristinely spotless it made Ferrari workshops in south Florida seem like run down used car dealerships. On my side of the glass was an overpriced gift-shop and an even more overpriced café where I proceeded to pay about \$9 for a cappuccino while waiting for my brother.

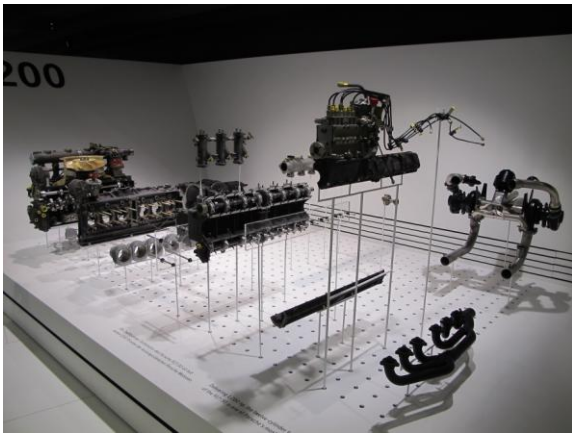
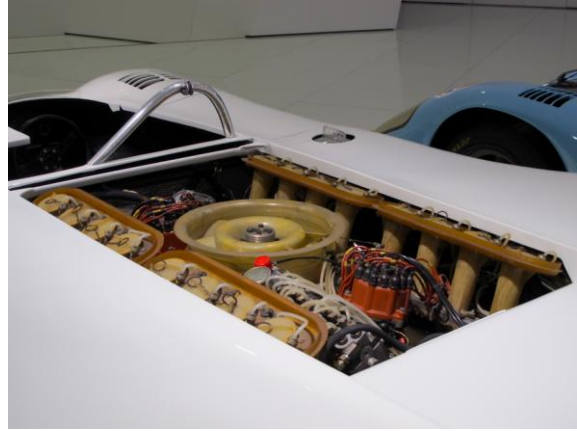
Expecting to see the same kind of set-up as I had seen in the BMW museum the day before, I was presently surprised to see that the Porsche museum is in a class of its own. Whereas the BMW museum felt like it was designed to move a lot of people on a daily basis, the Porsche museum felt like an exhibit of timeless quality, a place that caters to a much different clientele. Every surface and texture of the materials used in creating the car exhibit had obviously been thoroughly thought out, and the cars flow in such a seamless stream that it made the three hours we were there feel like fifteen minutes.



Regarding the cars themselves, pictures speak louder than words, and even the most ardent Porsche connoisseur will be satiated by the selection the museum offers. In typical Porsche fashion, the motorsport vehicles far outnumber the street cars, and some of the endurance and rally cars have been lightly varnished to reflect their post-race condition.



A trip to Germany is incomplete without drinking beer and visiting one of the many automotive exhibits of which the Porsche museum sits proudly at the top. With a Lufthansa flight from Orlando to Frankfurt every evening, and a train from Frankfurt to Stuttgart every hour, if you call yourself an avid Porsche enthusiast, you have no excuse not to go.



Photography by Kevin Davey