

CLASSIC DRIVER

Tracing Sportec's success in racing, tuning, and restorations

Lead

Sportec is one of Switzerland's premier racing, tuning, and restoration houses. CEO, Gregor Burkard fills us in on the company's greatest achievements, their unique philosophy, and the future of the brand.



Gregor, thanks so much for chatting with us today. Firstly, how did you come to occupy the captain's chair at Sportec?

I am a longtime [Sportec](#) fan and customer for both tuning and motorsport. After several optimized vehicles and three years in the Porsche Sports Cup Suisse, I took over the majority stake of Sportec in 2020 and would like to lead this company into the next era.

In the changing times, Sportec must also change while staying true to our values, which are passion, performance, and technical excellence and under the label "Swiss Made". We are working under high pressure on various new products and projects in the areas of tuning, Porsche Classic, and motorsport. I want to lead the company to a new golden age.



How would you describe Sportec, and what would you say is your specialty?

What really sets Sportec apart are the people - we're a bunch of car lovers living our dream. We currently have a healthy mix of experienced founding fathers and young, committed, innovative-thinking and energetic employees. All employees have their voice and are heard, and these differences of opinion and the open exchange are extremely

important. This is the only way we can create something new, build modern project vehicles, and thus prove our technical excellence over and over again. The willingness to help is always high, knowledge is shared, and we work together to achieve the desired goals. I see Sportec as my family.



We have an extremely wide range of activities, from maintenance work on collector's items, to complete vehicle construction. This requires a high degree of competence and flexibility from every employee, and I am aware that the demands on our employees are higher than in a normal workshop. We all move between hard days on the racetracks of Europe, restorations, complete conversions, and maintenance work. I see our mechanics as technical and aesthetic artists who bring our projects to life. You breathe soul into the vehicles with your manpower and wealth of ideas.

We look back on 30, 40, or 50 years of experience in various fields and today we are in the process of passing this knowledge on to the next generation. For the founding fathers, performance in all areas has always been the number one priority. We are still walking this path today and everyone lives it that way. Sportec is not just a story of successes with its products, vehicles, or world records. In the end, it is all employees who write this story.



Tell me more about Sportec Racing - when did it start and what have been your greatest achievements?

Sportec Racing (formerly Sportec Motorsport) was founded in 2010 by Andreas Hodel, brother of Ueli Hodel (also a founding member). Since Andreas comes from motorsport and Sportec customers wanted more and more to go to the racetrack, it was a logical step to set up a professional racing department. Sportec Racing has grown over the years, and last year we bought our own facility for the department.

Sportec Racing has competed in various national and international racing series, such as the 24h race in Barcelona. We've also been a part of the Porsche Sports Cup Suisse since the beginning. In 2018, with Ernst Keller, we won the championship and have always been seen with different drivers on the podium. A notable part of our increase in successes in motorsport is also due to Marcel Fässler, who joined us in 2021. Thanks to him, our customers benefit directly from the know-how of a multiple 24h Le Mans winner and can implement these tips and tricks directly into podium finishes. Marcel is also jointly responsible for the final set-up in our vehicles and tests them regularly on the racetrack. For me, it is admirable that a motorsport great is putting his potential into our small company.



In 2021, with the new KTM X-BOW GT2 and Christoph Ulrich, we won the newly-created SRO GT2 Championship in the AM classification. It's remarkable that a small company from Hôri overshadows the KTM factory team and everyone else early on in a new series with a new and previously unknown vehicle, isn't it?

In addition, we look after a large number of track day customers with their GT4, GT3 Cup, or their GT3 vehicles. This mostly on the Porsche and Lamborghini brands. We also provide our own racing vehicles from the KTM X-BOW range (GTX & GT2) as well as Porsche Cup vehicles from different generations for rent.



While we're at it. What is your goal with the Sportec Trackday Academy?

We see more and more that our customers want to test themselves on a racetrack. With the Sportec Academy, which is headed by Marcel Fässler, we want to enable those with a passion. We start on rather short and easier circuits and work our way up in different stages. With a lot of talent, experience, and the right skills, you can get into a racing car with us at the end of the academy.

This is how we accompany our customers right from the start. With our Trackday Academy, we also have the opportunity to optimally prepare and accompany potential customers who want to become a racing driver. With Marcel Fässler we have one of the best racing drivers ever, who can bring the course participants closer to the race track in a credible and serious manner. I can't think of anyone better to introduce our customers to the racetrack.



Moving on, could you tell me about Sportec Classic?

Old but gold... this is where our artists come in. Everything that revolves around the older Porsche models goes straight to our Porsche Classic department. Sportec launched its first Porsche Classic conversions 10 years ago and had already taken care of numerous vehicles from the Classic area before that, such as a radically converted 964 with carbon-kevlar wide body.

When it comes to conversions, there are almost no limits to our imagination. As a Swiss company, quality is not just one concept, but the core of our mentality. Our Porsche Classic department has been managed by Raphael Jaggi for four years now. I see great potential in him. Thanks to his training as an automotive engineer, he brings with him a great deal of theoretical knowledge and a structured working method. This knowledge complements the know-how of our old guard perfectly and both sides benefit from each other. To strengthen our Porsche Classic department, we have hired young, competent, and ambitious mechanics who drive the work forward. So I can be sure that our classic vehicles are in good hands. Today and tomorrow.

The industry is currently suffering from a global shortage of skilled workers and the old, experienced mechanics who learned on these vehicles are retiring. So it is all the more important to me that we pass on the knowledge of our old guard to the younger generation of Sportec mechanics. Our know-how from 50 years of Porsche engines remains in-house. Fortunately, our old guard continues to work energetically, is always committed, strives for knowledge transfer and invigorates the young minds with constructive solutions.



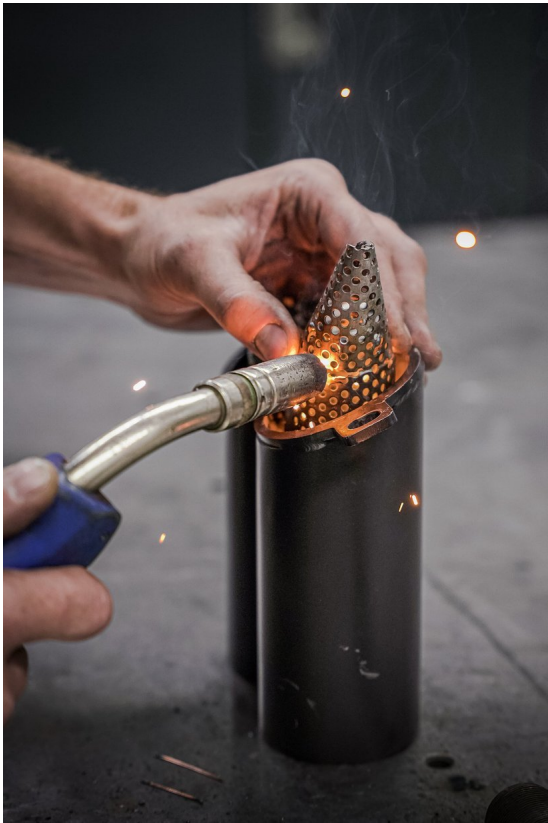
You mentioned your own models. Are you talking about the Ferdinand and the SUB1000?

Yes, we are about to reveal two different Porsche restomod series, dubbed Ferdinand and SUB1000, each with their own unique approaches. In the case of both models, each car will be an absolute one-off with many innovative solutions from Sportec. To guarantee this, each colour will only be assigned once.

With both models, we start with a freshly built, painted bodyshell that has been refined and widened with carbon elements. The Sportec SUB1000 is our puristic driving machine, which should appeal to anyone who wants to experience true driving pleasure. It's based on the G Model 911 and, as the name suggests, should weigh under 1000kg. Lots of carbon, no insulation, no radio, no air conditioning. Instead, a completely rebuilt drive train with a choice between 280hp to 330hp and up. It has a custom exhaust system, a custom-made chassis from BILSTEIN's motorsport range, a larger brake system, and various technical in-house solutions for more efficiency, safety, mileage, and cooling. I don't want to go into much more detail here, but in any case, our classic conversions should be on the road for another 40 years and there is always room for individual customer requests, albeit reduced due to the prescribed maximum weight of 1000kg.



Ferdinand, on the other hand, is based on a Porsche 964 and will be presented to the public this autumn. Performance is still a top priority for this model, albeit not implemented as radically as with the SUB1000. We want the customer to drive it comfortably every day. Here, too, the drive train is completely rebuilt, the internals of the engine are adapted, we've designed a custom exhaust system, all in keeping with road standards. The engine has already been tuned on our test bench and delivers 325 hp and 399 NM. Of course, the chassis, brake system, and so on are also optimised for Ferdinand. Here we have significantly more options for customisation without the weight limit. The interior is rounded off by a modern media solution including air conditioning, both wonderfully integrated into the classic design.



What's your restoration philosophy and how does Sportec differ from its competitors?

"Swiss Made" is also the goal and our claim here. We aim for perfection in everything we do. I learned from my father that the difference is in the details. Especially in the vehicle interior, in which the driver spends hours, we want to create a harmony. In the end, all the senses are addressed. The driver literally sees, feels, hears and smells the vehicle. These four senses are our guide to our perfection.

As an example: when we buy modern vehicles today, we know at the same time that they will lose quality. New vehicles are now manufactured under massive cost pressure and this is noticeable. In my new car, for example, various plastic elements vibrate when I listen to music. I almost grit my teeth, it almost ruins my experience with the vehicle. Our goal is not to build the strongest, fastest, loudest, or flashiest vehicles. But to coordinate the combination of different elements or senses in such a way that the overall experience always feels perfect.



Are there any recent restoration highlights you'd like to mention? What's your favorite car you've restored?

Probably the most beautiful restoration project we have done recently was a 964 RS N/GT that suffered damage on the race track. The car caught fire and the damage was significant, but we felt the vehicle should be rebuilt despite this. During construction, it was revealed that this was chassis #1 - formerly a press car - of the RS N/GT limited series. In a process lasting many years, the entire vehicle was completely restored and built 100% true to the original, working closely with the owner.

We regularly invite our customers to updates on the vehicle project and discuss the individual steps in detail. For us, the "perfect experience" begins with the discussion of the ideas and continues through to the subsequent maintenance and further support. We want the customer to feel part of the bigger picture.



Now, back to the 964 RS N/GT. Due to the impact, we had to adjust the body to the original dimensions. In the end, the deviation was less than 1 mm, which was excellent because the vehicles that left the works at that time had significantly higher tolerances, so we surpassed the factory specifications.

After the straightening, the body lay was given a lye bath and was repainted in the original colour, a beautiful deep black. Of course, the engine, gearbox, suspension, chassis, and all other technical elements have been overhauled, restored, or replaced with original Porsche parts. Today the vehicle is like new and puts a smile on my face every time I visit it. The fact that it is chassis number 1 makes the whole thing even more special.



To end, how does your approach differ between modern and classic cars?

That's a good question. From my point of view, the biggest difference lies in the duration of the projects. As mentioned above, the overall experience is extremely important to us. We want to generate this overall experience with every vehicle we deliver. With Ferdinand or SUB1000, we have a construction time of about a year. In comparison, a completely rebuilt B9 RS4 takes about two to three weeks. Thus, the supervision of a classical project requires a lot more resources, conversations, and, depending on the vehicle basis, a certain degree of uncertainty.

In the end, what counts for us is the love of cars. That might sound a bit strange, but it is what it is. We love vehicles and would like to share this with our customers. I am firmly convinced that this can be felt when you visit us in Höri.

Gallery

