

AUTOMOTIVE

Porsche mourns loss of figure behind factory delivery concept

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The longtime director was responsible for some of Porsche's most brand-defining concepts. Image credit: Porsche AG

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

German automaker Porsche is celebrating the life of one of the company's brightest minds.

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Representatives announced the passing of Harald Wagner, a decadeslong sales director, executive board special representative and the brain behind some of the industry's most enduring innovations. Mr. Wagner, who passed at the age of 99 on March 20, 2023, is credited with having given the Targa model its name and is additionally responsible for designing Porsche's factory delivery system.

"The news of his death has touched us all," said Detlev von Platen, member of the executive board for sales and marketing in Zuffenhausen at [Porsche AG](#), in a statement.

"Our thoughts are with his family," Mr. von Platen said. "We thank Harald Wagner for his extraordinary dedication on behalf of the brand.

"His particular commitment to customer relations will never be forgotten."

German automaker

Born in Stuttgart, Germany on Aug. 28, 1923, the leader would eventually go on to work at the company with which he shared a home country.

Mr. Wagner began assisting Porsche's head of domestic sales in 1954, after 11 years as a commercial apprentice at a car dealership. Only two months after commencing the new role, Mr. Wagner moved up in the ranks to assume the role of Porsche's sales director for Germany.

Working in this position for 34 years, Mr. Wagner retired in 1988, though not in spirit, as the brand notes that he remained an executive board special representative and tended to the automaker's VIP clients for years up until his death.

It was in this role that Mr. Wagner came up with the innovative concept of factory delivery, a method Porsche still employs today.



In 1950, Mr. Wagner worked in Groglockner, Germany. Image credit: Porsche AG

Among many other feats, Mr. Wagner helped the company adapt to tightening safety protocols in the 1960s.

To sell in the booming, midcentury American market, open-top vehicles had to have heightened levels of safety measures. In response, Porsche pivoted designs, creating new variants of customer favorites.

When the first safety variant needed a name, the company turned towards Italian racing the branding strategy has brought Porsche much success, considering its ties to a rich racing heritage ([see story](#)).



The brand shares Mr. Wagner's contributions remain in use, thus, his legacy endures. Image credit: Porsche AG

As its fleet had performed well in the Sicilian Targa Florio race, executives considered using "Flori 911" as the name for the new invention. Mr. Wagner believed something simpler would sell better, simply floating the term "Targa."

The model was introduced under the moniker in September 1965. The car became the first safety cabriolet featuring a secured rollover bar, ever to this day, the name defines the sector.