

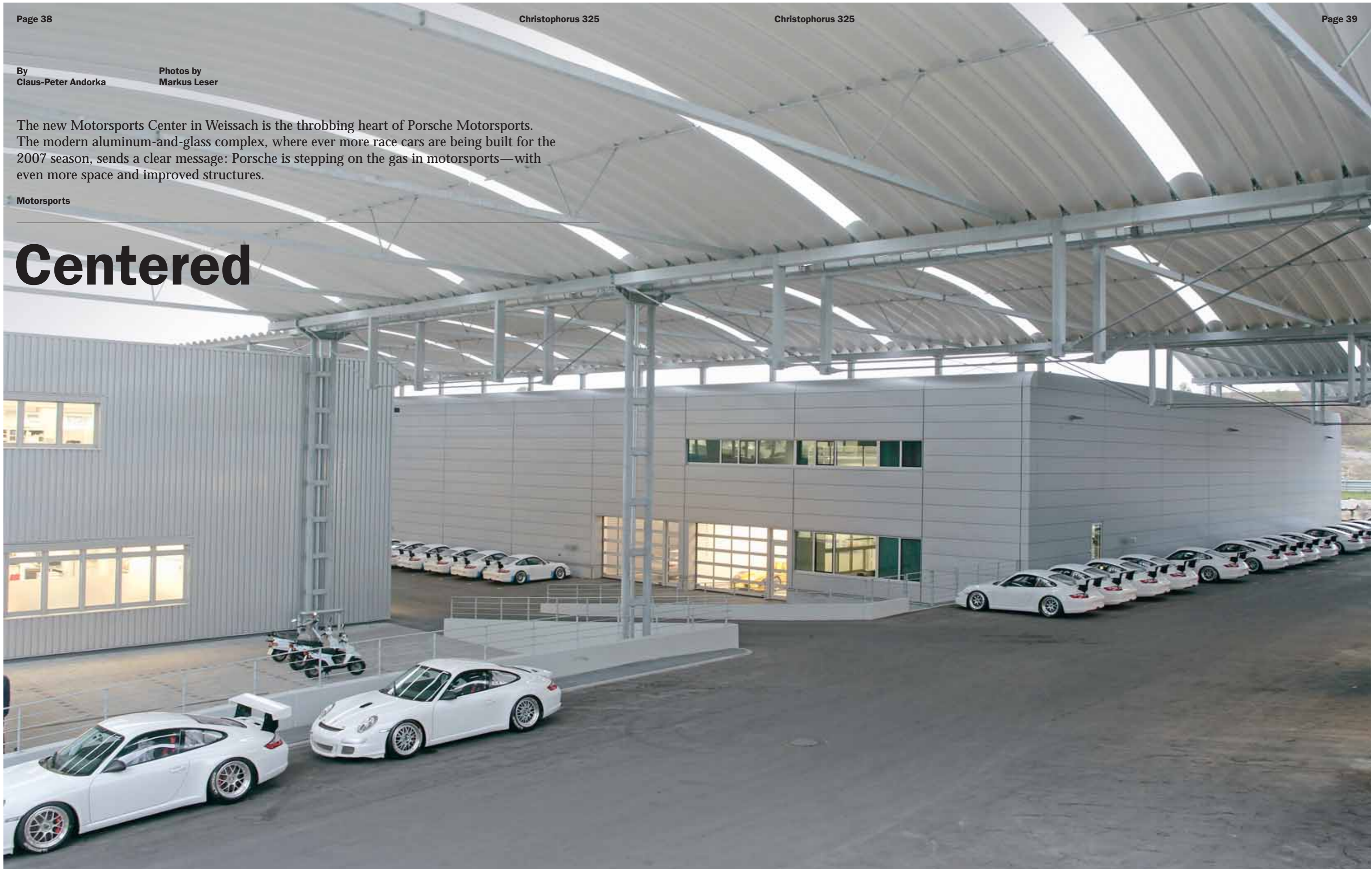
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The new Motorsports Center in Weissach is the throbbing heart of Porsche Motorsports. The modern aluminum-and-glass complex, where ever more race cars are being built for the 2007 season, sends a clear message: Porsche is stepping on the gas in motorsports—with even more space and improved structures.

Motorsports

# Centered





In the 23 years he's been working at Porsche, Achim Schmied has held fast to a dream: "Someday," he says with a blissful gaze at the engine of the 911 GT3 RSR, "I'd like to put an engine like that together blindfolded." He's just tightened the last screws on the high-tech puzzle containing some 1,400 parts, and to put this masterpiece together while blindfolded would be a challenge very much to his taste: "I definitely think I could do it."

Schmied's confidence fits in well with the get-up-and-go mood one senses everywhere in the new Porsche Motorsports Center. You can feel the sporty attitude as soon as you walk in. Along the road leading from the main gate of the Weissach Research and Development Center to the Motorsports Center, red-and-white curbstones and stacks of tires convey a racetrack atmosphere to visitors, customers, and the over two hundred employees. The new buildings, which are connected by a transparent roof structure, have doubled the usable floor space available for motorsports to 12,000 square meters (130,000 sq. ft.). The space problems of past years, when vehicles newly produced in Weissach had to wait outside in the wind and weather, have been solved. "At that time, we had only one workshop, one office building, a warehouse, and several temporary structures," Porsche Motor Sport Director Hartmut Kristen remembers. "We were bursting at the seams."

The motorsports staff is especially proud of the new production area. On 800 square meters (8,600 sq. ft.) of floor space in the

**The pride of the Motorsports Division: The 911 GT3 RSR (above) and the RS Spyder are built in the Weissach workshop**

light-bathed building in the rear of the complex, race cars, including the RS Spyder and the 911 GT3 RSR, are built by permanent teams of experienced specialists. The cars are built completely by hand. Walter Marelja is one of these specialists. Much has changed in the 25 years that the master mechanic has worked at Porsche. "We used to build race cars in a workshop," he recounts. Today, they are built in a manner similar to the lean-production principle applied in Zuffenhausen and Leipzig. Philip Morsey, head of Motorsports Technology and Logistics, says, "This is good not only for the production efficiency, but also for the quality of the vehicles."

The workshop is not a completely new building, but the production methods—with race cars built at eight stations simultaneously—is completely new. The RS Spyder, in which teams like Penske Motorsports and Dyson Racing will be driving in the ▶





**High-tech puzzle:** The engine of the 911 GT3 RSR consists of 1,400 individual parts. Right: The raw chassis in the logistics warehouse

American Le Mans Series this season, covers three stations. In two workweeks, Marelja and his colleagues assemble the sports prototype, which consists of no less than 5,000 parts. On the second line, the 911 GT3 RSR is built at the other five stations. The well-trained team builds one a day.

The required parts are right around the corner, in the spacious 2,000-square-meter (22,000 sq. ft.) logistics warehouse. The new Porsche center for motorsports customers ended the separation between customer-sports and development warehouses. "By consolidating them," Morsey explains, "we created a single, integrated warehouse that will let us work even more productively and flexibly."

The offices of the staff responsible for brand cups and GT race supervision are in the first upper story; on the ground floor, the customers can get everything they need for their race cars—selecting



from an inventory of 25,000 different parts—from the dust covers to transmissions. Of those, some 10,000 are test parts and 15,000 sports parts for sale. The entire inventory numbers some 4.5 million parts. With that kind of supply, there is usually no wish that remains unfulfilled. "Our customers," says Morsey, "can assume that we have parts in stock for race vehicles of the last ten to fifteen years."

And there's plenty of room for it all: The small-parts storage shelves of the warehouse have more than 5,500 compartments in the current set-up, and the pallet shelves have more than 400 module segments for 1,200 standard pallets. The chassis warehouse has room for 32 painted raw chassis for the 911 models, equipped with roll cages. What is at least as important, however, is that all areas of the so-called supply chain—from entry to storage, to parts sale, packaging, and shipment—are now under one roof. They were previously handled at different places. Some customers come to the reception area themselves to make their purchases, but most parts are shipped. Every year, the SAP-run warehouse ships about 700 tons of parts.

From the parts storage area, it's only a few steps to the terminal. With its 1,700 square meters (18,300 sq. ft.) of floor space, the terminal is the home base for seven race transport trucks. The huge trucks not only supply the customers at the racetracks with spare parts; they also house ultramodern computer workstations for the racing engineers, along with completely furnished con-

ference rooms. Previously, the trucks had to be loaded and unloaded in the open; now, that can be done under the roof—and more quickly.

The office building is another new structure, featuring three floors for the research and development department and the administration, as well as the prototype parking garage. The remodeling and renewal of the 3,500-square-meter (37,500 sq. ft.) workshop area will be completed this year. In the biggest hall, the Cup Workshop, the customer and VIP cars of the brand cups, such as the Carrera Cup and the Supercup, are maintained. In the RS and GT workshops, which are closed to the public, mechan-

### The Races in 2007

**After the opening races in Sebring and St. Petersburg, Florida, the following races are on the calendar of the American Le Mans Series: April 14, Long Beach, California; April 21, Houston, Texas; May 19, Salt Lake City, Utah; July 7, Lime Rock, Connecticut; July 21, Mid-Ohio; August 11, Road America, Wisconsin; August 26, Mosport, Ontario; September 1, Detroit, Michigan; October 6, Road Atlanta, Georgia; October 20, Laguna Seca, California.**

**Export hit: The race cars built in Weissach are shipped to teams all over the world**



ics and engineers take care of the test and development vehicles, including the 911 GT3 RSR and the RS Spyder. These were the winning cars of the American Le Mans Series 2006, in which Porsche won its classes with flying colors.

However, the heart of Porsche Motorsports beats in the manufacturing workshop. The work processes were designed to allow quick changeover in the production line when necessary. Everything is on rollers except for two firmly installed hydraulic lifts. That makes it easy to move workstations, processes, storage facilities, and equipment quickly to fit new requirements. The planners of the Motorsports Center focused on flexibility and short distances, taking into consideration the rapid development of Porsche Motorsports. The numbers are indeed impressive: During the mid-1990s, only 50 race cars per year were built; for the 2007 season, production—together with Zuffenhausen—was 270 vehicles, a new record.

The race cars built in the Weissach manufacturing workshop are export hits. In the free space between the logistics warehouse and the terminal, two 911 GT3 RSRs have been stowed, waiting for delivery to customer teams in the USA. Thomas Feichtenschlager helped build one of them. Now, he's watching as the vehicles vanish into the truck. He admits to "a little melancholy; there's a lot of lifeblood in those cars."

Together with his workmates, he's now looking to North America eagerly. Because if a Porsche wins, the pain of parting will soon be forgotten.