



Sports

# Made by Porsche

**Never before has there been more praise for a tennis tournament. In the words of the WTA's representative: "It was brilliant." The secret? Porsche has transferred its business philosophy to the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in Stuttgart—for a totally new kind of sponsorship.**

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**It's just before** 11 p.m. The American tennis star Serena Williams returns from a stroll on the town and makes a beeline for the VIP lounge in the Porsche Arena. "There's no other tournament in the world where players feel so comfortable and get to hang out in the evenings to party with fans and guests," says Ana Ivanovic. It's the evening before the semifinals, and Ivanovic, the fifth-ranked player from Serbia, takes a little whirl on the dance floor with last year's champion, Nadia Petrova. The man at the piano is playing "I Did It My Way"—and even Serena Williams sings along.

Indeed, the old Frank Sinatra hit perfectly sums up Porsche's philosophy, both when it comes to business and when it comes to sponsoring the Tennis Grand Prix. The company began its commitment to tennis 30 years ago by supporting Dieter Fischer, who



at the time was basically a one-man business with the ambition of establishing a world-class women's tennis tournament in his hometown, nearby Filderstadt. The event has become a highly professional undertaking with its very own location, the Porsche Arena. This year, the world's eight top-ranked players attended, and three of the top players were in the semifinals—something rarely seen in a Grand Slam tournament. Laura Ceccarelli, who constantly travels the tennis circuit in her position as a supervisor for the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), says, "I'm not overstating things when I say this tournament is amazing—truly the best women's tennis event in the world."

While most of the credit for the success of the first incarnation of the Tennis Grand Prix in Filderstadt goes to Fischer, Porsche has been instrumental in shaping the tournament's course since it moved to its new quarters. The company secured the rights to the name of the modern new arena in Stuttgart and hired Swiss native Markus Günthardt, one of the world's most experienced experts on tennis tournaments, to handle the organization. Günthardt, in turn, hired seasoned professionals for all the tasks involved in putting on a top-notch sporting event—including a star chef to provide guests with gourmet cuisine. Stuttgart's mayor, Wolfgang Schuster, sees a logical connection between Porsche and tennis: "Porsche always goes to the limits of what is technically possible, and tests and expands those boundaries."

That, and nothing else, is the secret behind the world's most modern tennis tournament, an event that offers both first-rate sports and entertainment of the highest rank. It is not only a hit with audiences and the media, it is hugely popular with the players, as well—as the following statements testify. "The conditions in Stuttgart are a dream," says Svetlana Kuznetsova, second in the world rankings. Finalist Tatiana Golovin of France puts it like this: "This tournament is really special." Last year's champion, Nadia Petrova, is no less full of praise: "A wonderful, friendly tournament." And Williams has this to say: "The future belongs to this fabulous arena."

Ceccarelli confirms that these four players are not alone. "Usually after a tournament the players will approach me with suggestions on how things could be improved. This time all I heard from them was how wonderful it was." What makes this event stand out? The explanation is quite simple: Porsche puts a lot more than just money into the event. This idea is integral to the company's approach to sponsorship in general. When it sponsored the refurbishment of the famous Ladegast organ in Leipzig, for example, experts from the Porsche Design Center contributed to the undertaking, with the result that the organ is now the only one in the world that is "started" on the left—just like a Porsche. Germany's former foreign secretary Hans-Dietrich Genscher praised the effort with the following words: "Porsche acknowledges its social responsibility by giving back to society."

Education and training is another area where Porsche takes its commitment very seriously. It sponsors Chinese language instruction in schools, as well as the Ferry Porsche Prize for students with ▶

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**See and be on the scene: The Porsche Arena is a stage popular with the stars—and not just on Center Court**



outstanding achievements in science. But the company's commitment goes beyond the financial. As a partner of the Deutscher Gründerpreis (German Startup Prize), Porsche fosters innovative companies and young talents by offering a resource as precious as money, if not more so: the time and expertise of its consultants. "Our goal is to offer them support in realizing their ideas and visions in Germany," says PR Director Anton Hunger, who is in charge of sponsorship. "Look at the schools and kindergartens—that's where our future lies."

Porsche has recently set its sails for a new venture in the area of sponsorship: the America's Cup. Porsche Consulting will be responsible for management and technology for the construction of the German entry in the world's premier sailing competition. "Instead of money, we'll be providing our know-how," says Hunger.



Of course, the new project was the topic of conversation in the VIP lounge at the Porsche Arena, as well. There could hardly have been a more fitting conclusion to the evening than when Serena Williams requested an encore rendition of "I Did It My Way"—and as the piano man played the song for the third time that night, everyone clapped and sang along. ◀

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**Premium prize: Serena Williams didn't get beyond the quarter-finals, leaving the way open for Justine Henin (below right) to win the 911 Turbo Cabriolet by beating Tatiana Golovin in the final**

