

## The Porsche Museum

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Standing at the beginning of the tour through the new Porsche Museum is the Type 64, also known as the Berlin–Rome car. And it's there for good reason: It was the first vehicle to display the “Porsche” name, and it carries all the brand's sports-car genes. The vehicle body that launches our journey through Porsche history has been reconstructed—which is a very special story in itself.

Restoration

# At First Glance

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Interior view: Master bodywork builder Hubert Drescher was responsible for the painstaking restoration of the Type 64



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**Its final journey** is like a trip back through time. All the car's descendants stand respectfully in rows as if paying homage to their ancestor—a 356 B from 1960 for example, or an early 911 Targa, all the way up to a 1996 Boxster. All of them are waiting almost reverently on their stages as the perfectly formed reconstruction of the Type 64, anchored to a specially designed dolly, is pushed the 820 feet from the vehicle elevator to its pedestal. The platform is placed directly above the escalator that will soon bring the museum visitors to the exhibits.

The Type 64 deserves its place of honor here. It is fitting that the first vehicle to meet the eye is the Berlin–Rome car that Ferdinand Porsche designed in 1938 for the planned long-distance race. It embodied the vision for all of the company's future classics; in it, the Porsche idea first took shape.

“Why not tease the visitors a little at the outset? Later, everything will make sense,” says the museum's designer Professor HG Merz. He doesn't like it when a museum lays out everything



at once. “That's why there's no 356 and no 911 here. Instead, it's important to put something at the beginning that speaks for the whole. This vehicle stands for the Porsche philosophy of being different. The Type 64 evokes emotions.”

First and foremost among those moved by the car is Hubert Drescher, for whom the homecoming of the primeval Porsche is also a farewell. From start to finish, it was this master bodywork builder from the Black Forest hamlet of Hinterzarten who literally shaped this work of art, hardly moving from its side for a year and a half, lending a new yet also old countenance to the Type 64. Before its re-creation, the Type 64 had disappeared for half a century.

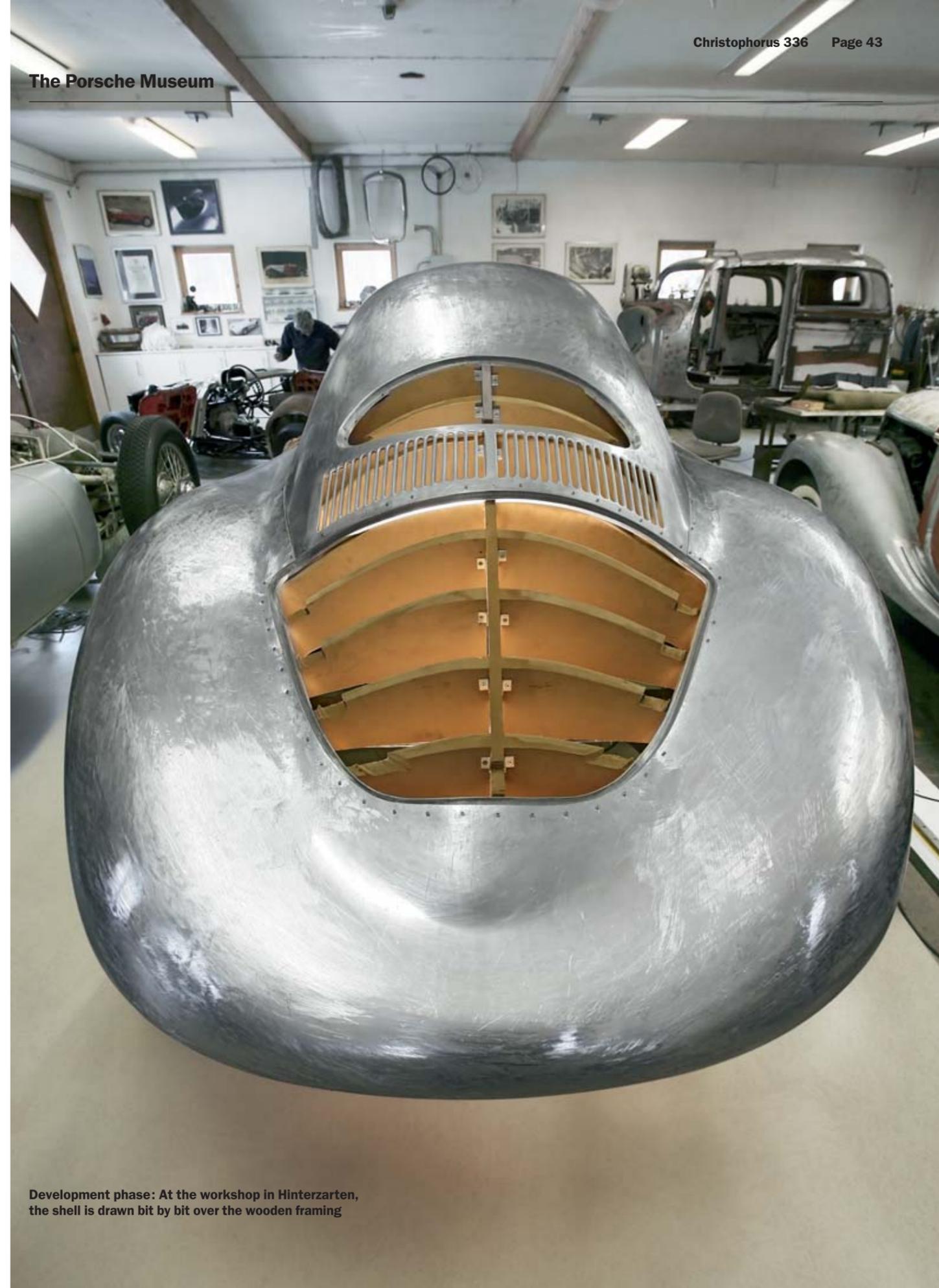
Drescher was responsible for probably the most unusual restoration project that Porsche has ever undertaken. With the approximately 175-lb. shell now firmly bolted to the platform, he finally opens the front hood and proudly shows the chassis number, taken from the records: 38/42. “We stamped that into the aluminum with old metal punch tools,” says Drescher. The number testifies to the authenticity of the body. It is true to the original, like everything about this model with its amazing history.

The rediscovery of chassis number 38/42 in Porsche's historical archives launched the journey of the Type 64, internally known as “Number Two,” into the present day. With this chassis number, a couple of photos, a few documents, and a tall order in his luggage, Klaus Bischof, head of the Museum on Wheels, headed for Hinterzarten to give Drescher his assignment. The Berlin–Rome car was to be resurrected for the new Porsche Museum, true to the original and genuine in every detail, in Drescher's old barn-turned-workshop.

For that, Drescher first had to form a mental image of the vehicle, internalizing its characteristics and thus also the Porsche genes: the long-dropping front end, the bulging fenders with ▶

**Homestretch:** The priceless exhibit is carefully rolled through the Porsche Museum to its pedestal

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**Development phase:** At the workshop in Hinterzarten, the shell is drawn bit by bit over the wooden framing

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### The Berlin–Rome Car



A long-distance race from Berlin to Rome planned for the fall of 1939 prompted Ferdinand Porsche to firm up existing plans for a VW-based sports car. The first detailed drawing for the body—then still designated VW Type 60K10—dates from September 1938.

In the spring of 1939, three 163.3-inch racing coupes were built, whose conspicuous features included streamlined lightweight metal bodies and covered wheel wells. Their aerodynamics were the work of Erwin Komenda, and were revolutionary for the time. They gave rise to the slim roof structure and the narrow cubicle with only just enough room for a foldaway seat for the front passenger. There was plenty of room under the front hood, however, for two spare tires, one in front of the other. This provided extra safety in those days when tire quality was still poor.

The 1,100-cc engine produced nearly 50 hp; top speed was 90 mph. Thanks to extraordinarily low air resistance, an average speed of more than 80 mph was achieved on drives from Stuttgart to Berlin. Ferdinand Porsche used a Type 64 as his private car, which was driven by his chauffeur Josef Goldinger.

Due to the outbreak of World War II, the race from Berlin to Rome never took place. Only one car made it through the war; an Austrian private driver named Otto Mathé used it in races until 1951.

**Finishing touch: Hubert Drescher's bodywork is true to the original in every detail—even the hood opens**

the wheels deep inside, the soft lateral lines, the sloping rear, the engine and transmission placed far at the back. And so dozens of historical black-and-white photos of the Type 64 were hung on the walls of the old barn—some side shots in front of the Porsche villa in Stuttgart; some diagonal rear views in front of the old Porsche Werk 1 in Zuffenhausen. And right in the middle, a historical drawing of the car's silhouette on a DIN A5 sheet (roughly half a letter-sheet).

Scale data enabled such important dimensions as the wheelbase, wheel diameter, ground clearance, and fender height to be calculated. This painstaking measurement process was accompanied by sensory experience. Drescher ran his fingers over the photographs, so as to be able to understand the forms and the lines, and thus to gain a sense of the proportions of such things as the transition between the covered wheel wells and the hood. One thing he noticed in doing so was the slight convexity of the door—designed in this way to increase its stiffness. “We tried to place ourselves in the mindset of that time,” he says.



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**End of the road: Having reached its ultimate “parking space,” the Type 64 awaits visitors to the Porsche Museum**

Only then did the idea take concrete shape. Drescher stacked polystyrene panels onto a huge wooden box, to carve the approximate contour of the vehicle out of the foam material with a chainsaw. Precision work followed with a rasp and sandpaper. That in turn served as the model for the skeleton, a frame of wooden slats spaced four inches apart. Finally, an aluminum skin measuring about one-twentieth of an inch thick was stretched across it piece by piece.

The light metal sheets were shaped with targeted hammer blows on a wooden block or a sandbag, then further shaped with a cam roller, and inserted onto the appropriate parts of the body, as it slowly took on form. “We kept stroking the curvatures, again and again, because there are things that the eye misses but the fingers can discern through touch,” says Drescher.

About 50 sheets, all handcrafted, were fitted, readjusted, and fitted in once again—right down to the engine vents in the rear—to give the Berlin–Rome car its historical contour at the very front of the new Porsche Museum. Every slat was re-created and welded in, with 34 individual lengths and intervals fitted into the overall work. Finally, the doorframes were given locks, handles, and hinges. Nothing was iffy, everything was the result of a respectful passion for detail. A glance at the interior shows that the door handles are made of a thick rope. Drescher actually tracked down a rope-making studio in the Black Forest that still pursues its craft on the basis of long-standing tradition. A photo that showed the open door of the Type 64—probably by chance—served as a model. And the unpainted Type 64 also proudly bears the traces of craftsmanship on the bodywork left by files and hammers. They very deliberately express respect for the engineering artistry practiced in Porsche's early days.

And so everything is new about this unique time traveler in the Porsche Museum, and yet it is its old self again. Welcome to history. ◀