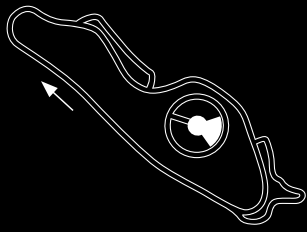


WEISSACH



Weissach test grounds

Track length: 2.88 km
(hill-climb variation)

Right-hand turns: 9

Left-hand turns: 5



With the Cayman S in Weissach

Fritz Enzinger is heading the most spectacular racing project in years: Porsche's return to Le Mans. He drives a Cayman S on the test grounds in Weissach.

By Heike Hientzsch
Photos by Christoph Bauer

At 16 you're still dreaming ... Fritz Enzinger is fond of this line. It's a slightly modified version of a Peggy March hit from 1965 ("At 17 You're Still Dreaming"—sung in German) and refers to Porsche's record number of 16 victories at Le Mans. Enzinger is 56, and living his dream. He is responsible for the most sensational racing project at Porsche in years: the return to Le Mans.

Enzinger knows racing from every angle. Born in the state of Styria in southeast Austria, he studied mechanical engineering and joined BMW in 1981 as a chassis engineer, transferring five years later to the racing department, where he remained for a quarter of a century. The man sticks

with what he wants and loves. (He has been together with his wife since back in their school days.)

Enzinger has held management positions in a wide array of programs: touring cars, sports cars, Formula One, purchasing, logistics, sponsoring, and networking. He has a thorough grasp of how racing works, in terms of technology, policy, and competition. The only thing that could entice him away from Munich was the opportunity to start a new project with carte blanche at Porsche. "If anyone can beat BMW, it would have to be Porsche," is the condensed version of his brand philosophy. He recalls a workshop for management personnel: "There were three of us who had already been involved in Le Mans victories

The start and finish structure in Weissach; the Le Mans prototype will also run on this test course

in other functions: one with Audi, one with Peugeot, and me with BMW. We all agreed that Porsche would add a different dimension, a special quality. You can't help sensing the legend."

Enzinger is not the person to put legends into words. But he beams when driving the Cayman S around the test course in Weissach. At every lap his office comes into view. He's making a site visit with this 239 kW (325 hp) mid-engine sports car for the big day in June when the Le Mans prototype will take its first drive here. He enjoys the immediacy of having the engine directly behind his seat. "And also the precise response of the steering and the suspension when accelerating and braking," he notes. "There's more than just a sports car in there. In its heart the Cayman wants to be on the racetrack, and that's what makes every Porsche different from other great cars."

Complexity combined with measurability are what fascinate Fritz Enzinger the most about racing. And the ultimate test of quality is a public event.

Today's drive is relaxed, without any rivals, but otherwise Enzinger's profession consists of competition. The complexity combined with the measurability is what fascinates him about racing. "There's no such thing as an unimportant detail," he says. "Everything has to work on the ground, and you also need backing from above." That's what he was given, so he rolled up his sleeves and went to work.

We make a short pit stop at the entrance to the test grounds. The boxer sound is heard everywhere because the course is constantly in use. "The chance to build such a challenging project from the ground up at Porsche, to design the structures, to put together the team, and to set up the processes needed to create a completely new race car at a single company," he says, ticking off these tasks on his fingers before stating simply, "the challenge was simply irresistible." He speaks

quickly, because he has no time to lose. His project has the correspondingly compact name of LMP1. It's streamlined, but also spectacular. The abbreviation stands for Le Mans prototype class 1. These cars shoot for overall victory and are the source of legend.

When Enzinger started at Weissach in November of 2011, fifteen staff members were designated and two buildings were in planning. Since then the number of personnel is approaching the envisioned two hundred. The team moved into the office building in September 2012, and into the workshop in November. In the intervening period he had more people than space, a problem he solved in typical Enzinger form. "In the beginning we were spread out in four different buildings," he recalls. "But that's not the way to build a team. So we worked for three months in an enormous container. It was just a container, but at least we were all in it together."



The overarching aim is to generate technical synergies for series production. The LMP1 project actually comprises multiple teams that combine to form one large team, a team with clearly defined areas of responsibility. "Everyone needs to have the job that they can do the best," he says. The glass door to Enzinger's office is always open, in keeping with the character of the individual behind it. No dark corners for him—trust and loyalty are what he prizes.

As *primus inter pares* ("first among equals") he was the announcer at an evening event for the team. Not the usual fare, no meat-loaf or beer, but rather torchlight and racing films as part of a first-class motivational gathering. "When the managers came onto the stage they were cheered like crazy. There was so much fire and energy in the room that I thought, 'Enzinger, this might just work.'"

Wolfgang Hatz, the board member in charge of development who also oversees

The test grounds have three different courses; Enzinger naturally chooses the longest





The Le Mans director has strong backing; here it's a good 239 kW (325 hp)

the racing department, supports the project with heart and soul. "And he also makes sure I don't forget why I'm here," says Enzinger with a smile. "We've set up all the right conditions, and now we have to deliver." Measurability. In racing, the ultimate test of quality is a public event. The fact that CEO Matthias Müller also dropped by that evening is a sign to the team that Le Mans is a matter of the highest priority.



Enzinger came to Weissach with two major goals: first, to set up a structure that facilitates the highest level of racing, and second, to have Porsche win the 24 Hours of Le Mans as soon as possible. The structure is now in place.

The project is consuming. Months went by before he was home from work early enough to enjoy the balcony of his apartment in daylight. In 2014 the LMP1 will have to show its qualities in the World Endurance Championship (WEC), whose undisputed highlight is the marathon in

There's a lot of pressure. But despite that Enzinger doesn't seem harried. More like charged up. Every fiber of his being radiates enthusiasm for racing.

Le Mans. "Given the level of competition," says Enzinger, "it will be a 24-hour sprint."

There's a lot of pressure. But despite that Enzinger doesn't seem harried. He instead seems charged up. Every fiber of his being radiates enthusiasm and passion for this sport, which has often touched him deeply. "When the cars are at the start and there's a buzz of barely contained power, when it smells like fuel and rubber and the bleachers are full, then you can positively inhale racing. That's an enormous kick."



Does he spend all his time thinking about how to make things go faster and farther? Enzinger shakes his head and says simply, "Iceland." His favorite vacation destination, it is a synonym for relaxation. His daughter, now an adult, introduced a passion for horses into the family. "When I go out on a ride in the early morning in Iceland and feel the animal and the fresh air, then I feel at peace," says this family man. "I calm down and also realize what really counts." And what really counts? The salty wind from the ocean, unshod hooves striking the lava below, one horsepower, and perfectly natural traction. He knows a lot about horses from the far north, and loves talking about the tölt, a hereditary gait resembling the pace, specific to the breed Icelandic Horse.

Enzinger has celebrated victories in touring car racing, in the FIA GT world championship, in Le Mans, and in Formula One. What has his greatest success been thus far? "That I didn't fall from the saddle on my first ride," he answers. The LMP1 project is keeping him on the move, much faster than the tölt; in fact, it's a gallop toward the first contest for the new Le Mans race car, in the spring of 2014. ●

CAYMAN S (TYPE 981)

Engine: Six-cylinder mid-engine boxer

Displacement: 3,436 cc

Power: 239 kW (325 hp)

Maximum torque: 370 Nm at 4,500–5,800 rpm

0–100 km/h: 5.0 (4.9*) sec.

Top track speed: 283 (281*) km/h (176/175* mph)

CO₂ emissions: 206 (188*) g/km

Fuel consumption

City: 12.2 (11.2*) l/100 km

Highway: 6.9 (6.2*) l/100 km

Combined: 8.8 (8.0*) l/100 km

* with Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK)