

Ferdinand Alexander Porsche

As the designer of the Porsche 911 and the founder of his own design studio, F.A. Porsche was one of the biggest names on the international design scene.

The Porsche 911. An automotive icon. Inimitable. Unique. The 911 was given its striking design by the team around Ferdinand Alexander Porsche, or F.A. Porsche for short. Also known as 'Butzi' by his friends and relatives, he was the artist of the family. Commissioned by his father Ferry to design the successor to the 356 in the early 1960s, F.A. Porsche drafted a basic form for the future 911 that has only ever undergone minor adjustments in subsequent decades. He succeeded in designing a classic sports car that has gone through a number of model generations and remains in production today. Ferdinand Alexander Porsche was born in Stuttgart on 11 September 1935 as the eldest son of Ferry Porsche. The family moved to its Schüttgut estate in the Austrian village of Zell am See in 1942 before ultimately returning to Stuttgart in 1949. F.A. Porsche attended the Waldorf school there and subsequently began his studies at the Ulm School of Design. However, he found himself wanting to put his talents to practical use and started at the Porsche bodywork styling studio in 1958. After he was appointed the design director in Zuffenhausen in 1962, his concept for the 911 quickly took shape and the 904 Carrera GTS soon followed.

When the firm became a form of limited company known as an 'AG' in 1972, the family members who had previously held management positions stood down from these roles. F.A. Porsche responded by founding his own design studio in Stuttgart – and his first commission came from Porsche AG. This project led to the design of the classic 'Chronograph I' watch, which featured a black case and a black dial. The design philosophy of F.A. Porsche was and remains simple and incisive in equal measure: above all else, design must serve function and never the opposite. He returned to Zell am See two years later, moving his Porsche Design Studio into a functional building at a business park in the vicinity of the Schüttgut estate. A passionate pipe smoker with a distinctive beard, he had come back to the place where he felt happiest and where he could work creatively with his team. 'Design by F.A. Porsche' went on to become a world-renowned premium brand and the man himself was awarded the title of 'Professor' by the state of Austria in 1999. In 2003, F.A. Porsche transferred almost two thirds of his shares in the company to the newly-founded Porsche Design Group that had its headquarters to the north of Stuttgart. He then withdrew from day-to-day business in 2004. F.A. Porsche passed away on 5 April 2012 at the age of 76, with his ashes being buried in the private chapel at the Schüttgut.