

# Le Mans 1996 – triple victory for Porsche

**The 24 Hours of Le Mans ended with a triple victory for Porsche in 1996. However, it was not a car belonging to the company that came out on top, but a private Porsche prototype entered by Reinhold Joest's team.**

The Porsche works team from Weissach pinned its hopes on the new GT classification in 1996. The Porsche 911 GT1 was developed for the BPR Global GT Series races, which evolved into the FIA GT World Championship in 1997. It was the first time since 1988 that the works team returned to Le Mans. However, it had some competition from another Porsche in the prototype class. Porsche had developed this open two-seater prototype for races in the USA, but it was not deployed due to a short-notice change in the regulations. Racing team boss Reinhold Joest from the Odenwald, whose Porsche 956 won at Le Mans in 1984 and 1985, was very familiar with the history of this prototype. Joest decided to speak to Horst Marchart, head of development, about the race car. As a result, The TWR Porsche WSC 95 was revised and modified in the wind tunnel at the expense of Joest.

In one of the best-attended Le Mans races in recent years, one of Joest's lightweight Porsche cars was in pole position and the other won with drivers Manuel Reuter, Davy Jones and Le Mans newcomer Alexander Wurz. A future Formula One racer, Wurz had taken out a loan to be able to drive for Joest. Due to some repairs and mistakes, the two 911 GT1 Porsche cars in the GT class entered by the works team had to settle for second and third place with drivers Hans-Joachim Stuck, Thierry Boutsen, Karl Wendlinger, Yannick Dalmas and Scott Goodyear.

Given this finishing order, the triple victory was initially received with limited joy by the works team. Horst Marchart, head of development, admitted: 'It's true, I would have been happier if we had won, but in any case it was a victory for Porsche!'