

Porsche at the 1960 12 Hours of Sebring

In 1960, Hans Herrmann and Olivier Gendebien drove the 718 RS 60 Spyder to Porsche's first overall victory in Sebring, Florida, USA.

Unveiled in 1957 as the successor to the prolific 550 Spyder and 550 A Spyder, the type 718 heralded the dawn of what was then Porsche's most successful era in motorsport. Thanks to the construction and continuous further development of a number of variants, the 718 proved itself to be a winning concept over an extended period of around seven years. Having recorded the brand's first overall victory in the 12 Hours of Sebring, a number of wins in the Targa Florio, countless other high-place finishes in sports car races and in Formula Two, and several triumphs in the European Hill Climb Championship, the 718 secured its place as one of the most successful Porsche motorsport models of all time.

In the 12 Hours of Sebring race on 26 March 1960, the time had come for the new 718 RS 60 Spyder featuring a 1.6-litre engine. Hans Herrmann and Olivier Gendebien completed 196 laps on their way to a terrific and thoroughly comfortable overall victory, the first for Porsche in Sebring. Second place went to another Porsche 718 RS 60 Spyder, with Bob Holbert, Roy Schechter and Howard Fowler at the wheel for the Brumos Porsche Team that went on to enjoy a legendary association with the Porsche brand.

This prestigious breakthrough victory in Sebring, which also helped boost sales, saw the light and nimble 718 RS 60 Spyder immediately nicknamed the 'giant killer' in the USA. After all, it had left far more powerful rival cars trailing in its wake. The overall victory achieved in the Targa Florio by Joakim Bonnier and Hans Herrmann ensured that the 1960 season was Porsche's most successful to date in the World Supercar Championship – all thanks to the 718 RS 60 Spyder.

For Hans Herrmann, the 718 RS 60 Spyder remains one of the racing cars he most enjoyed driving. Its power and road holding were extremely balanced and it featured a wonderfully broad limit in terms of its driving dynamics. In addition, the engine boasted a wide usable speed range and terrific peak power. Given all these highlights, Herrmann was by no means the only racer to develop a real soft spot for this mid-engine racing car.