

The 1965 Monte Carlo Rally – first use of the 911

January 1965 was the first time that a Porsche 911 had entered a motor sport event. Herbert Linge and Peter Falk came fifth overall at the Monte Carlo Rally.

When the racing manager says that ‘it’s okay if you finish last’, there must be some extraordinary circumstances at play. At the start of the Monte Carlo Rally, the result was irrelevant for Porsche racing manager Huschke von Hanstein: his only wish was that the new Porsche 911 would drive past Prince Rainier in the port of Monte Carlo with no damage – but great PR impact. However, Herbert Linge and test engineer Peter Falk wanted to demonstrate what the 911 could do on its very first sporting mission. Falk said: ‘We want to drive fast – we aren’t there to dawdle!’

One of the 13 test cars was made ready for the 34th Monte Carlo Rally. Thanks to Weber carburetors, slightly higher compression and polished channels it achieved around 150 horsepower, a cubic capacity of 1991 cc and a weight of 1,080 kilograms. Other features included roll bars, bucket seats, a reading light and a trip meter. Falk installed an early form of intercom system, which used a plastic tube to transmit Falk’s words to the driver’s helmet. ‘It works brilliantly and Herbert can’t answer back to me. I don’t hear him in any case,’ noted Falk.

Everything went according to plan on the long drive to Monte Carlo. But when things got serious on the great circuit, the teams started to practically sink under the masses of snow. Peter Falk said: ‘We found the timing checkpoint at the end of the special test by compass, and then there was nobody after us.’ Linge added: ‘We were in third place for a while, the Scandinavians were gobsmacked! They think they’re the only ones who can drive a car on snow.’

The 60 best cars were entered into the grand finale. Linge and Falk were of course among them, as was a second car from the Porsche factory – the 904 Carrera GTS with Eugen Böhringer and Rolf Wütherich. There was not much between the two Porsche teams as they approached the end. ‘But before the last special test, Böhringer had Porsche’s last set of legendary Hakkapeliitta tyres fitted,’ said Falk. That cost time. Nevertheless, the result turned out to be just as surprising as it was outstanding: fifth place in the overall standing for Herbert Linge and Peter Falk. And von Hanstein was happy too. The 911 drove past the royal box without any damage at all. Böhringer and Wütherich claimed second place in the 904.