

Media information
16th November 2016

BMW Group mourns the loss of Paul Rosche. Legendary BMW engine developer passes away in Munich at the age of 82.

Munich. One of the most important engineers in the history of the BMW Group has passed away. Paul Rosche, who worked for BMW in various roles between 1957 and 1999, died at the age of 82 in his home town of Munich on Tuesday.

“We are all very saddened by this news,” said BMW Motorsport Director Jens Marquardt. “Paul Rosche not only represented and characterised the company and the BMW brand with his passion, his vision and his immense technical expertise over many decades in action on the racetrack. The results of his work – no matter in which car or in which series – were frequently milestones of engineering skill. The loss of Paul Rosche is a loss of an outstanding personality for BMW Motorsport and BMW M. He constantly redefined the limits of what was technically possible. We will preserve this spirit at BMW Motorsport. Our deepest sympathies go to his family and friends.”

Forty two successful years serving BMW.

Camshaft calculations for sports engines was always Paul Rosche’s favourite area, which is why he was given the nickname ‘Nocken-Paule’. In 1957, directly after completing his degree, he joined BMW and, over the course of his 42 years as an employee, he guided the company into Formula One twice.

Before joining BMW Motorsport GmbH in 1975 as head of the design of the BMW M1 production and racing engines, Rosche was involved in the research and development department under the charge of Alexander von Falkenhausen. In 1969, he designed the 2-litre turbo engine with which BMW won the European Touring Car Championship.

In 1980, Rosche, as Technical Managing Director of BMW Motorsport GmbH, along with Dieter Stappert, laid the foundation for BMW’s first Formula One involvement, and, as head of the engine project, was also a key factor for the success of the BMW engines in the turbo era.

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Rosche and his team turned a four-cylinder production unit displacing just 1.5 litres into a potential world championship winner. Sixteen valves, a turbocharger and – in a first for Formula One – digital motor electronics all helped the engine to post an initial output of around 800 hp. The Brabham BMW made its grid debut at the start of the 1982 season; just 630 days later Nelson Piquet scooped the World Championship. By 1987 the turbo unit had nine grand prix wins under its belt and its potential seemed almost inexhaustible. When asked about the F1 engine's maximum power output, Rosche once replied in his inimitable, irresistible manner: "It must have been around 1,400 hp; we don't know for sure because the dyno didn't go beyond 1,280 hp."

Rosche also had a hand in the BMW M3 and the BMW V12 LMR.

The triumph in Formula One was the most spectacular, but far from a solitary success spawned by the ideas of the thoroughbred engineer born in Munich in 1934. Other power units that came out of Rosche's fold were the large 2.0-litre four-valve four-cylinder engine, which racked up more than 150 race wins and six titles in the Formula 2 European Championship, as well as the 6.0-litre V12 engine that won the Le Mans race in 1995 and 1999. Rosche's term of office also witnessed the development of the engine for the first-generation BMW M3, which was to be the basis of the most successful touring car in the world, as well as a new kind of driving pleasure on the road.

Following the retirement from Formula One of BMW in 1987, Rosche continued as Technical Managing Director of the BMW M GmbH until 1996. Subsequently, as Technical Director and Managing Director of BMW Motorsport Limited, he led BMW into Formula One as an engine manufacturer for a second time. In 1999, Rosche entered retirement.

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The BMW Group

With its three brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 31 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2015, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.247 million cars and nearly 137,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2015 was approximately € 9.22 billion on revenues amounting to € 92.18 billion. As of 31 December 2015, the BMW Group had a workforce of 122,244 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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