

History

Origin

[Ferdinand Porsche](#) (1875–1951) founded the company called "Dr. Ing. h. c. F. Porsche [GmbH](#)"^[4] with [Adolf Rosenberger](#)^[5] and [Anton Piëch](#) in 1931.^[6] The main offices was at Kronenstraße 24 in the centre of [Stuttgart](#).^[7] Initially, the company offered motor vehicle development work and consulting,^[4] but did not build any cars under its own name. One of the first assignments the new company received was from the German government to design a car for the people; that is, a [Volkswagen](#).^[4] This resulted in the [Volkswagen Beetle](#), one of the most successful car designs of all time.^[8] The [Porsche 64](#) was developed in 1939 using many components from the Beetle.^[4]

Porsche's tank prototype, the "Porsche Tiger", that lost to [Henschel & Son's Tiger I](#)

[Panzerjäger Elefant](#) – after the loss of the contract to the Tiger I, Porsche recycled his design into a [tank destroyer](#).

During [World War II](#),^[9] [Volkswagen](#) production turned to the military version of the Volkswagen Beetle, the [Kübelwagen](#),^[9] 52,000 produced, and [Schwimmwagen](#),^[9] 15,584 produced.^[10] Porsche produced several designs for [heavy tanks](#) during the war, losing out to [Henschel & Son](#) in both contracts that ultimately led to the [Tiger I](#) and the [Tiger II](#). However, not all this work was wasted, as the chassis Porsche designed for the Tiger I was used as the base for the [Elefant tank destroyer](#). Porsche also developed the [Maus super-heavy tank](#) in the closing stages of the war, producing two prototypes.^[11] Ferdinand Porsche's biographer, Fabian Müller, wrote that Porsche had thousands of people forcibly brought to work at their factories during the war. The workers wore the letter "P" on their clothing at all times. It stood not for "Porsche", but for "Poland".^[12]

At the end of World War II in 1945, the [Volkswagen factory](#) at [KdF-Stadt](#) fell to the British. Ferdinand lost his position as chairman of the board of management of Volkswagen, and [Ivan Hirst](#), a British Army major, was put in charge of the factory. (In Wolfsburg, the Volkswagen company magazine dubbed him "The British Major who saved Volkswagen".)^[13] On 15 December of that year, Ferdinand was arrested for war crimes, but not tried. During his 20-month imprisonment, Ferdinand Porsche's son, [Ferry Porsche](#), decided to build his own car, because he could not find an existing one that he wanted to buy. He also

had to steer the company through some of its most difficult days until his father's release in August 1947.^[14]

The first models of what was to become the 356 were built in a small sawmill in [Gmünd](#), Austria.^[14] The prototype car was shown to German auto dealers, and when pre-orders reached a set threshold, production (with aluminum body) was begun by [Porsche Konstruktionen GesmbH](#), founded by Ferry and [Louise](#). Many regard the 356 as the first Porsche simply because it was the first model *sold* by the fledgling company. After production of the 356 was taken over by the father's Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche GmbH in Stuttgart in 1950, Porsche commissioned a [Zuffenhausen](#)-based company, Reutter Karosserie, which had previously collaborated with the firm on Volkswagen Beetle prototypes, to produce the 356's steel body. In 1952, Porsche constructed an assembly plant (Werk 2) across the street from Reutter Karosserie; the main road in front of Werk 1, the oldest Porsche building, is now known as Porschestrasse.^[15] The 356 was road-certified in 1948.

Company logo

- [Weimar-era Württemberg coat of arms](#)
 - [Coat of arms of Stuttgart](#)

Porsche's company logo stems from the [coat of arms of the Free People's State of Württemberg](#) of [Weimar Germany](#) of 1918–1933, which had [Stuttgart](#) as its capital.

(The [Bundesland](#) of [Württemberg-Hohenzollern](#) used the same arms from 1945 to 1952, while Stuttgart during these years operated as the capital of adjacent [Württemberg-Baden](#).) The arms of Stuttgart appear in the middle of the logo as an [inescutcheon](#), for the company had its headquarters in Stuttgart. The heraldic symbols, combined with the texts "Porsche" and "Stuttgart", do not form a conventional [coat of arms](#), since [heraldic achievements](#) never spell out the name of the [armiger](#) nor the armiger's home town in the shield.

Württemberg-Baden and Württemberg-Hohenzollern both in 1952 became part of the present Bundesland of [Baden-Württemberg](#) after the political consolidation of [West Germany](#) in 1949, but the old design of the arms of Württemberg lives on in the Porsche logo. On 30 January 1951, not long before the formation of Baden-Württemberg, Ferdinand Porsche died from complications following a stroke.