



Catching a Ride

By
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Photo by
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The Time Traveler

Name: Karl-Friedrich Scheufele, born 1958
Family status: Married, three children
Profession: Entrepreneur
Connection to Porsche: Enthusiast

Roads not traveled are avenues not explored. Guided by this idea, *Christophorus* takes a seat in the cars of people who love to drive—to find out what drives them. This time, join us as we meet Karl-Friedrich Scheufele, the head of Chopard.

Timeless design—it is hard to imagine a better conversational partner than Karl-Friedrich Scheufele, the vibrant head of the luxury-goods company Chopard. But the example he points to is not one of his sophisticated watches, but a car: “A Porsche 911 from 1975 still looks good today, whereas other cars already seem antiquated. For me, the Eleven is the quintessential classic automobile.” When the conversation turns to elegant sports cars, you can tell that the inner clock of this forty-seven-year-old starts ticking a little faster.

Scheufele was brought up to stay on the move, but never forget the time while doing so. His parents’ company was his playground, even back when he was a child—he could bike over to the watchmakers’ workshop in just five minutes. Karl-Friedrich Scheufele was born into a venerable watchmaking and jewelry dynasty that traces its beginnings to 1904. In 1963, his father bought out the Swiss watchmaker Chopard. Under this new name, the combined company with a worldwide reputation set down roots in a Geneva suburb. His son learned early to accept responsibility. Scheufele has lived in Switzerland since 1975. Ten years ago, a dream came true when he began manufacturing his own clockworks in Fleurier.

A passion for speed is another thing he inherited; his great-grandfather was also a sports car aficionado. Karl-Friedrich has great respect for tradition, and a special weakness for classic cars. “Historic automobiles make you aware of your own limits. The braking distance is longer, and they don’t hold the road as well. You learn how to drive better.” It is a personal luxury for the hard-working head of Chopard to have any time at all for his passion. “In an old-timer, I can really unwind, because you have to concentrate more. New cars are too easy to drive.” As a firm believer in remaining true to your principles, he is especially partial to Porsches—the brand par excellence when it comes to the continuity of design and quality. “Porsche fascinates me, because the company has managed to develop state-of-the-art technology while always maintaining the classic design form,” he says.

In 1988 Chopard decided to become a sponsor of the Mille Miglia, the rejuvenated classic road race. This connection became a real experience the next year, when Scheufele himself took part in the race. Good fortune allowed him to combine his private passion with his professional work—he developed a watch that is given to every participant. Although he is a man of great precision, Scheufele has no problems with the organized chaos on Italy’s roads; for him, it provides relief from the strict order of his working life. “You just have to go with the flow. I’ve driven through Cairo many times on rallies through Egypt, and compared with the conditions there, traffic in Italy is almost soothingly tranquil,” he says with a grin. He can even relax in the passenger’s seat, provided that the driver knows what he’s doing. When he’s out with Porsche racing legend Jacky Ickx, there is no question about that. His restraint is a matter of principle: “It doesn’t matter if you’re riding in a car or running a company,” he says, “if you’ve given someone responsibility, then you can’t turn around and meddle all the time.” If Scheufele could build his dream car, it would be a sporty vehicle with no frills. There would be no compromising for comfort. One car that comes very close to his ideal is the Porsche 550 A Spyder. He plans to drive it again at the next “Mille.” Asked to name his favorite car, he smiles impishly. “The Porsche 356 Speedster that you photographed me with.” Old love never rusts: “It was the first classic car in my collection.”