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1988 PORSCHE 962

1988 Porsche 962-010

- '962-010': the very last works chassis to be used by the factory team
- Driven to 2nd place at Le Mans by Derek Bell, Hans Stuck and Klaus Ludwig
- Impeccable ownership history since sale by Porsche in 1989
- Amazing time capsule condition, untouched since her last race

Few cars better define their era than Porsche's family of 956 and 962 sports-prototypes. Throughout the 1980s, these cars formed the backbone of Group C racing, winning the World Sports Car Championship five times in a row and the Le Mans 24 Hours every year from 1982 to 1987.

In 1988, the 962 being offered for sale here – chassis 962-010 – came achingly close to making it seven consecutive victories in the French endurance classic. Porsche had that year decided against a full-time World Sports Car Championship programme and would instead be focusing its efforts solely on Le Mans. Of the three cars it raced there, '010' was the only one built new specifically to tackle that year's 24 Hours. In fact, it was the very last works 962 chassis to be used by the factory team.

Numerous modifications were made for this 1988 Le Mans challenger, including a different radiator layout and air-intake shape. New KKK turbochargers were fitted, along with a new exhaust system, while the updated Bosch Motronic MP1.7 management system extracted more power and better fuel consumption from the 2994cc flat-six engine.

The lightweight anti-roll bars were carbon at the front and titanium at the rear, while the underbody venturis were altered to comply with the new-for-1988 regulations. Other aerodynamic developments included a reprofiled nose section and a larger, lower rear wing, and '010' was dispatched to Le Mans having completed nothing more than a 27-lap shakedown at Porsche's Weissach test track.

That year's running of the 24 Hours was shaping up to be an epic battle between the factory-entered 962s, the five-strong TWR-Jaguar squad, and the two Sauber-Mercedes. Sadly, the Saubers withdrew following a high-speed tyre failure during practice, so it boiled down to a straight fight: Porsche vs Jaguar.

First blood went to Weissach thanks to '010', sporting No. 17, which had been assigned to the three best drivers Porsche had on the roster, Derek Bell, Hans Stuck and Klaus Ludwig, who had no less 10 Le Mans wins between them. Using a special high-boost engine reputedly giving 880bhp, Stuck put the car on pole position with a banzai qualifying lap of 3 minutes 15.64 seconds. Group C of the time were a cocktail of gigantic numbers, and 962-010 is no exception, clocking an average speed of 155.445mph on its pole lap, a full 3 seconds faster than its sister car, and six seconds clear of the leading Jaguar. Along the way, '010' was clocked at 242.9mph on the Hunaudières, in what was to be one of the last editions without the chicanes.

In the race itself, Stuck did the first stint and led the early stages, but was already engaged in a tight scrap with the Jaguar of Jan Lammers, Andy Wallace and Johnny Dumfries. The two cars traded the lead and '010' was back in front when, with Ludwig at the wheel, disaster struck. The German veteran had tried to eke out one more lap before pitting, but ran out of fuel in the Porsche Curves.

He managed to get '010' back to the pits on the starter motor alone, but two laps had been lost by the time the car rejoined the fray. All three drivers then got their heads down and charged back into contention. By midnight, the 962 was up to fourth, and five hours later it was back in the lead before a broken water pipe relegated the car back a couple of laps.

When the Lammers-Wallace-Dumfries Jaguar stopped to have its windscreen replaced, '010' swept into the lead – only to lose another seven minutes when a water pipe had to be repaired. The charge then started all over again, and Stuck chipped away at the Jaguar's lead as rain fell across the circuit, giving a helping hand to the more thirsty Porsches.

As it dried out, however, Jaguar regained the upper hand. Ludwig managed to reduce the gap to less than one minute during the final stint, not knowing that Lammers had only fourth gear at his disposal, but that was as close as he got. This would be Jaguar's year, and '010' had to settle for a dramatic second place.

Just 10 days after Le Mans, the 962 was chosen and quickly prepared to support the factory team assault on the high profile domestic Supercup championship, raced as car number 1 at the Norisring from pole and finishing second. The car was raced two more times – by Stuck and Ludwig – in that year's ADAC Supercup series. It was then put back into Le Mans "langheck" specification and sold to Porsche Kremer Racing, who displayed it in its showroom for six months before selling it to American Porsche collector Kerry Morse.

Most recently, '010' has formed part of a well-known private collection of Group C cars, and has been demonstrated at high-profile events such as the Goodwood Festival of Speed, Silverstone Festival and select high profile concours such as Amelia Island. It has also been reunited with Derek Bell on numerous occasions, including during an emotional meeting with the car during a film shoot at our showroom.

Presented in extremely original 'timewarp' condition, still wearing her Le Mans paint, 010 is an aching tale of what might have been. One of just 3 cars to be raced in period in the iconic and evocative Shell Dunlop livery, this Porsche 962 is surely one of the most iconic Group C machines ever made. Not only does this famous car represent a rare opportunity to acquire an ex-works Porsche 962, its starring role in one of the most memorable Le Mans 24 Hours ever staged means that its place in the "highlights" section of the motorsport history books is secure forever.

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