

Things you probably didn't know about SEAT

Martorell, 07/05/2020. A lot can be done in 70 years, and SEAT has made the most of it. In these past seven decades, the brand has not only accumulated successful designs and record figures, but also thousands of stories, anecdotes and curious facts regarding its cars and employees. On the occasion of its 70th anniversary, here are some of the things you probably don't know about SEAT.

- 1. "The Guestmobile".** For the inauguration of the Zona Franca factory in 1955, a SEAT 1400 was adapted to accommodate the maximum number of guests on each tour of the facility. The car's roof and boot lid were removed so that side bench seats could be installed in the back. The employees nicknamed the quirky model "The Guestmobile" and still call it by that name today. Not many people are familiar with this car, but it takes its rightful place in the A122 building of the same factory that it helped inaugurate, the one in Zona Franca, Barcelona, along with 330 other gems that make up SEAT's collection of historic cars.
- 2. Car number 1 million, traded for the downpayment on a flat.** When the 1 millionth SEAT car was produced in 1969, a SEAT 124, the company decided to raffle it off among the employees. It went to a young man who was working the afternoon shift. He didn't have a driving licence and couldn't get one at the time, as he was saving up. Even though he had just gotten married, he was still living with his parents. So SEAT decided to exchange the car's value so that he could put a downpayment on a flat. This vehicle also has a prominent place in SEAT's collection of historic cars.
- 3. SEAT's Popemobile.** In 1982, SEAT made the Popemobile used by Pope John Paul II on his visit to Spain. The Vatican car wouldn't fit through the gates of Camp Nou and the Santiago Bernabeu, so SEAT engineers adapted a Panda in record time for the Pope. On February 11, 2019, a fire at the Barcelona plant put the 317 vehicles in SEAT's historic collection at risk, with the Popemobile located right next to the source of the fire. In the end, all the cars were saved thanks to the swift action of the safety and emergency brigades.
- 4. A 500 kg battery.** In 1992, SEAT's first electric model was produced, for the Barcelona Olympics no less. The car was to open the marathon. The technology of the moment allowed it to be equipped with a half-tonne battery for a range of 65 km. The most curious thing is that for the power supply, a charger was concealed behind the front grille. The company's involvement in this sporting event went even further. SEAT loaned 2,000 vehicles to the Games organisers to transport athletes, journalists and organisers and produced a luxury version of the Toledo, the SEAT Toledo Podium, which had landline telephone and fax as equipment, for the Spanish medalists.
- 5. SEAT at sol... because there's no snow.** The photovoltaic plant that SEAT installed on the roofs of its workshops in Martorell was made possible by the fact that the plans for its

construction were based on a Volkswagen factory in northern Germany. Given the weather conditions in that area, the roof was designed to withstand piles of snow, something more than unlikely in Barcelona. But that weight allowance became an opportunity, and today SEAT has the largest photovoltaic plant in the automotive industry in Europe.

- 6. The Crown Prince's Ibiza.** When King Felipe VI of Spain turned 18, his father, then King Juan Carlos I, gave him a SEAT Ibiza. After years of use, the car returned to SEAT and in 2014, during a visit by the King to the factory, he was surprised with his completely restored Ibiza and a photo of the moment when his father had given it to him, a gesture that touched him.
- 7. SEAT Names.** SEAT models have been named after Spanish cities or towns since 1982, when the SEAT Ronda was launched. Since then, there have been up to 14 other city names more: Ibiza, León, Arona... Previously, the cars were named by engine displacement (800 or 1,500) or project number (124 or 127). In the case of the 600, it owes its name to a coincidence of figures: its big brother was the Fiat 600, its engine was 600 cubic centimetres and it weighed 600 kilos. The names of the latest models were decided by the public. For example, the SEAT Tarraco, in honour of the city of Tarragona, was given this name after a public participation process in which proposals were submitted. After a pre-selection, the winning name was decided by popular vote and Tarraco won with 52,000 votes.

SEAT is the only company that designs, develops, manufactures and markets cars in Spain. A member of the Volkswagen Group, the multinational has its headquarters in Martorell (Barcelona), exports 81% of its vehicles, and is present in more than 75 countries. In 2019, SEAT sold 574,100 cars, the highest figure in its 70-year history, posted a profit after tax of 346 million euros and a record turnover of more than 11 billion euros.

In 2019, SEAT allocated 1,259 billion euros to accelerate its investment programme, mainly for the development of new electrified models. In addition, and as part of its commitment to decarbonisation, it invested 27 million euros in sustainable initiatives and is working on an ambitious environmental strategy, called Move to Zero, which aims to make Martorell a zero-carbon footprint plant by 2030.

SEAT employs over 15,000 professionals and has three production centres – Barcelona, El Prat de Llobregat and Martorell, where it manufactures the highly successful Ibiza, Arona and Leon. Additionally, the company produces the Ateca in the Czech Republic, the Tarraco in Germany, the Alhambra in Portugal and the Mii electric, SEAT's first 100% electric car, in Slovakia.

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