Luft Tokyo: air-cooled Porsche models shine in the Land of the Rising Sun

16/03/2026 The fan-favourite Porsche gathering headed to Japan for the first time, taking over the former KK Line Expressway in the heart of Tokyo to celebrate a shared passion for the air-cooled era.

Partially opened in 1959 and fully completed in 1966 following a 13-year construction period, the two-kilometre-long Tokyo Expressway (commonly known as the 'KK Line') served for 66 years as a key transport link between the Tokyo neighbourhoods of Kyobashi and Shimbashi. But, as the city's road network continues to evolve – largely underground – the KK Line was decommissioned in 2025 ahead of a project through which it's set to become a public green space at the heart of the city.

The fact that the Tokyo landmark was laying dormant as it awaits its big transformation did not go unnoticed by the team at Luftgekühlt, the experiential car culture event that began life in the US and is gradually venturing to automotive hotspots around the world. A Japanese chapter of Luftgekühlt's unique blend of automotive storytelling was a long time coming.

“When I was racing here in the WEC, I would always lay over for an extra day or two to look at different venues,” says Patrick Long, the brand’s founder and former Porsche factory driver. “So, the discussion’s been going on for more than a decade, with our on-the-ground partner Kohey Takada.”

How special this site is for local fans certainly wasn’t lost on the team. “A generation of people have only ever driven on this elevated expressway, and locals were really excited to walk around up here, celebrating the air-cooled world,” adds Jeff Zwart, Luftgekühlt’s creative director.

The Luftgekühlt team are no strangers to hosting events in interesting and unexpected places – take the Universal Studios Backlot in California, the restored Dworzec Świebodzki railway station in Wrocław , and the American Tobacco Campus in North Carolina as prime examples – but the Tokyo show, which was officially sponsored by Porsche Japan, offered a new and unique experience, even for those accustomed to Luft events.

Spectacular setting for air-cooled classics

It was the first time the show has used such a central city location and, to make the most of the metropolitan backdrop and the bright lights of the bustling city nightlife, the first time it has run on into the evening, after dark.

“When people see the imagery of this show, it will be something completely unique, not only to Luft’s portfolio but also to what you usually see online of Tokyo at night” explains Long.

“The idea was to run the event into that photographic moment – experiencing the cars from daylight through to night.”

The collective creative force behind Luft once again ensured stunning visuals. “My job description is almost: make a car look great in a location,” says Zwart. “When I see a site where I can envision hosting our storytelling and our style of presentation of the air-cooled world, that becomes really exciting to me."

"And what surrounds us here in a 360-degree way is an absolute modern, bustling, world-class city centre – and then you go up an on-ramp and you’re suddenly in your own world. And we have this contrast between this modern environment and the basis where all Porsches came from: the air-cooled era,” says Zwart.

On display were some of the finest examples of cars from Porsche’s road and racing history in Japan, including famous prototype racing cars from Japanese teams that achieved success both in national and international motorsport.

One well-known and widely loved example was the Number 28 Porsche 910 with which Tetsu Ikuzawa and the Taki Racing Team finished second overall and first in class at the 1968 Japanese Grand Prix at

the Fuji International Speedway.

Among the road-car royalty on display were four examples of the extremely rare 964 N/GT (also known as the 'Macau' 964), only 20 of which were ever made – each in a different colour.

Porsche Japan also had a significant presence at the event, exhibiting several cars under the theme of 'Classic to Modern' – including an adjacent feature to the show with cutting-edge electric cars like the Taycan Turbo GT and Macan Electric and showcasing what the Porsche Experience Center Tokyo has to offer with a display of air-cooled icons like the 356 and the 1973 911 Carrera RS. Fans were also able to get their hands on a selection of exclusive items from the newly launched Luftgekühlt x Porsche Lifestyle range.

Such is the pull of Luftgekühlt's events that enthusiasts from all over the world flocked to Tokyo for the brand's first gathering in Asia. In total, about 11,600 visitors attended the event, which showcased more than 220 cars on the famous KK Line – the maximum number of cars the team were permitted to bring onto the expressway. "It's all about coming together for this common celebration," beams Long. "It's not just about the best or the most expensive, it's telling the entire story of Luftgekühlt and air-cooled enthusiasm – a little bit of everything. It's about knocking down those barriers of exclusivity to get people together. We want to observe, admire and learn about these cars, but the human aspect of it is something that we always keep as an equal priority."

About Luftgekühlt

For co-founders Patrick Long and Howie Idelson, the idea for the now world-famous annual meet-up started out as something of a quest to bring the story of 'air-cooled' to a wider audience – filling a gap in the experiential side of classic Porsche car culture and making it accessible to those with a casual interest as well as dedicated car fans.

After fairly modest beginnings in southern California, the event rapidly grew in size and popularity – featuring hundreds of cars and welcoming thousands of attendees from countries all over the world. Before long, this growth led to events overseas and the establishment of a second, sister brand, Air|Water.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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Consumption data

Taycan Turbo GT (WLTP)*: Electrical consumption combined: 21.2 – 20.5 kWh/100 km; CO_2 emissions combined: 0 g/km; CO_2 class: A

Macan (WLTP)*: Electrical consumption combined: 19.4 – 16.8 kWh/100 km; CO_2 emissions combined: 0 g/km; CO_2 class: A

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

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