Beat: Automobiles

Half a century of Driving Performance

Celebrating 50 years

Stuttgart/Affalterbach, 15.01.2017, 19:05 Time

USPA NEWS - Affalterbach. AMG “ these three letters stand worldwide for supreme automotive performance, exclusivity, efficiency and highly dynamic driving pleasure. In 2017, the company founded by Hans-Werner Aufrecht and Erhard Melcher is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

In the course of this half-century, Mercedes-AMG has recorded numerous successes in motor sport and through the development of unique road-going vehicles, thereby repeatedly underlining its position as a highly successful sports car and performance brand “ and today this is truer than ever. Today, as a wholly owned subsidiary of Daimler AG, the Affalterbach-based company represents the sporting spearhead of the Group. In this anniversary year, with an eye to the future, Mercedes-AMG will carry on the exceptional success story of what began as a two-man company.

For each of the now around 1500 employees, the focus will be on the brand promise of "Driving Performance", which unites the core strengths of AMG: cutting-edge technology and a passion for dynamic, emotively appealing products. The company from Affalterbach stands worldwide for outstanding engine expertise, which includes not only development, but also the "one man, one engine" philosophy, which means that each engine is, so to speak, hand-crafted by one engine builder. With almost 100,000 units delivered in 2016, i.e. over 40 percent growth, and the biggest strategic model initiative in the company's history, AMG heads into this anniversary year with record figures under its belt.

Mercedes-AMG expanded significantly in 2016 as a whole and, with growth of 44.1%, again significantly exceeded the best previous-year figures. With 99,235 vehicles delivered, the success story of Mercedes-Benz's sports car and performance brand reached a new level. Unit sales have thus more than tripled since 2013. This dynamic growth was made possible by continuous further development of the performance models, which are in greater demand than ever.

Yet the strategic broadening of the portfolio in recent years has also led to the successful development of new groups of customers. Hence, the company's global success is not solely based on the popular eight-cylinder models of the 63 series. The compact 45 series models, along with the wide range of 43 series models, are finding favour with very many customers while placing AMG's modern product portfolio on a broad, solid basis. The markets with the highest unit sales in the most successful year in the company's history were once again the USA, Germany and China.

"We're on the road to worldwide success with our strategic portfolio expansion and can look back on a sensational year. The 63 series models still constitute our core product line, and they continue to delight auto enthusiasts around the world. In addition, our AMG GT series, which was developed entirely in-house, is now available as a broad-based family, with which we have impressively demonstrated our expertise as a sports car brand.

At the same time, our broad portfolio puts us in the perfect position for further sustained growth. Our task now is not just to celebrate the AMG success story, but, in one of the most exciting periods of automotive history, to help shape the performance of the future," says Tobias Moers, Chairman of the Board of Management of Mercedes“‘A MG GmbH.

Development of new categories of customers through portfolio expansion

2016 saw the biggest strategic model initiative in the history of Mercedes-AMG: with over ten new models being added to the product portfolio, from January 2017 performance-minded customers are able to choose from over 50 models. In each category, Mercedes-AMG boasts a comprehensive and impressive product offering: from the most powerful standard-production four-cylinder compact to the sportily elegant S 65 with a superior twelve-cylinder engine, from saloons and estates in many different output classes, to a broad range of SUVs and coupés, to cabriolets and variously configured roadsters.

The available technology is among the best on offer in the respective vehicle categories, ranging from optimised rear-wheel drive to state-of-the-art all-wheel drive, as well as from a dual-clutch transmission to a sporty nine-gear automatic transmission.

At the same time, the sports car and performance brand has won entirely new groups of customers with its recently launched 43 series models. The first such vehicles were unveiled by Mercedes-AMG at the Detroit Auto Show two years ago.

The 43 series models come with a powerful and efficient six-cylinder engine. Other hallmarks of the 43 series derivatives include special transmission tuning with shorter shift times as well as AMG-specific axle designs and suspensions, powerful brake components and other various interior/exterior distinguishing features, confirming the models as typical AMG vehicles that fully meet the brand claim of "Driving Performance" while authentically representing the brand in the respective market segments.

With the Mercedes-AMG GT series, the Affalterbach-based company is once again underlining its status as a highly dynamic sports car brand. Following the SLS AMG, the GT models are the second sports car family to be developed entirely in-house. The front mid-engine concept with transaxle and the intelligent aluminium lightweight construction form the basis for a highly dynamic driving experience.

In 2016, AMG added particularly dynamic and fascinating models to the GT family in the form of the GT R and the two open-top roadster variants, the GT Roadster and the GT C Roadster. But that's not all: following the AMG GT C Roadster, the Coupé is also available in the anniversary year with the same next-level performance and technology. It is positioned between the AMG GT S and AMG GT R and, at the time of the launch, will be exclusively equipped as the Edition 50 special model. At the same time, the Mercedes-AMG GT and AMG GT S benefit from visual and technical enhancements.

Hypercar with Formula 1 technology

Alongside its continuing strategic product initiative, Mercedes-AMG is setting a further landmark in 2017 by giving a fascinating peek into the future performance in the form of a street-legal hypercar. Offering unadulterated Formula 1 technology for the road, the hypercar is thus the first commercially available vehicle with F1 hybrid powertrain and road approval. With a system output of over 1000 hp and four-wheel drive with all-electric front axle, it marks the pinnacle of what is currently technologically feasible.

In terms of output and efficiency, this hypercar points the way to "AMG Future Performance". AMG models are already among the most efficient in their class. The latest example is the Mercedes-AMG E 63. For maximum efficiency, AMG has, for example, equipped the V8 engine in the performance saloon with the AMG Cylinder Management cylinder deactivation system. In addition, a highly intelligent all-wheel drive system as well as a transmission optimised for sportiness and efficiency, including a coasting function, provide the guarantee of exemplary low consumption and emissions values.

Outstanding customer sports season 2016

With a total of 18 overall victories and 32 other podium finishes, the international customer and performance teams celebrated a sensational season in 2016 with the new Mercedes-AMG GT3. The GT3 racing car got the season off to the ideal start. Following victory in the ADAC 24“‘hour qualification race, in the 24“‘ hour race at the Nürburgring in late May the new GT3 racing car posted the greatest victory to date since the inception of the AMG customer sports programme, with overall victory, pole position, fastest lap as well as further finishes in second, third, fourth and sixth place now on record in the annals of motor sport.

The brand's clean sweep of the podium places in the world's largest car race was shared by the AMG team BLACK FALCON (P1), the AMG team HTP Motorsport (P2) and the HARIBO Racing Team-AMG (P3).

Also in the customer sports programme, Mercedes-AMG will keep its foot on the gas in the coming season, with participation of the successful AMG GT3 being extended to the USA. Renowned teams will contest both the highly popular IMSA Series as well as the PWC, the Pirelli World Challenge. Also in the USA, the teams will benefit from optimal support from Mercedes-AMG Customer Sports.

Competence centre for V8 development

Affalterbach is home to the management, administration, sales, development and design teams as well as AMG hand-crafted engine building. This is where AMG V8 engines are produced. Other engines are produced in Kölleda (four-cylinder in-line engines) and Mannheim (V12 engines). Each engine is hand-assembled by a single engine builder at these sites according to the "one man, one engine" philosophy and provided with a badge hand-signed by the relevant technician.

Mercedes-AMG is today responsible for the development not only of the new eight-cylinder family of the Mercedes-Benz brand, but also of the AMG V8 engines. The first standard-production vehicle to be fitted with a V8 engine developed in Affalterbach was the G 500, which celebrated its market launch in September 2015. The V8 engine for the upcoming new S“‘Class was also developed in Affalterbach, underlining the engine-building expertise of the three-lettered brand.

First-class customer support at AMG Performance Centres

As part of the strategic broadening of the portfolio to over 50 models, the number of AMG Performance Centres has also undergone huge expansion. At over 400 Performance Centres in 40 countries, customers and fans can immerse themselves in the brand world of Mercedes-AMG. These are places where the history of the brand and its DNA can be experienced first-hand. In addition, first-class customer service is an essential part of the AMG brand claim of "Driving Performance".

The sales rooms at the AMG Performance Centres, which are integrated into Mercedes-Benz dealerships as a shop-in-shop system, are characterised by an entirely distinct AMG brand identity. High-grade materials, an exclusive motor sport ambience and hallmark AMG colours make for an accessible brand experience. As appropriate for the wide product range, trained and qualified AMG sales and service experts provide knowledgeable advice and support to customers worldwide.

The next stage in the development of the AMG Performance Centres will see the opening of further AMG sales and service operations with a distinct architecture in Japan and Australia. As an addition to the existing global sales network, the separate centre in Tokyo Setagaya, which opens on 12 January 2017, will spearhead the dealer network while defining the next stage of the strategic sales initiative. In a total area of almost 1000 square metres, customers can learn about the latest AMG Performance models and their technological features, the AMG Driving Academy, the AMG Collection and the involvement of AMG in motor sport.

Exclusive AMG Private Lounge

Another central component of customer support is the online AMG Private Lounge. Launched in 2006 for US customers, it was expanded to German-speaking areas in 2009 and brought an international dimension to the official AMG Brand Community. The online platform invites AMG owners to share their passion for the brand with other AMG enthusiasts. Insider knowledge, direct contact with Affalterbach, exclusive events and opportunities to communicate and exchange ideas give the brand a more approachable face. At present, the AMG Private Lounge Community has an accredited membership of over 48,000 worldwide. No other car manufacturer offers anything comparable.

Pit radio for AMG customers

To ensure a high quality of customer support, customers have access to an exclusive AMG hotline, launched in October 2016. The primary aim of the "pit radio" is to restore performance when needed “ “ in the event of an accident, for example. The service hotline can also help if the customer has any technical questions or wants to make a workshop appointment. A defined process guarantees customers the quickest possible assistance. The hotline is initially available to customers in Germany, Great Britain, France, Austria and Switzerland, with further markets and a broadening of the offering to follow.

Milestones in the history of the sports car and performance brand

The company, founded by Hans-Werner Aufrecht and Erhard Melcher, has been fulfilling the dreams of performance enthusiasts for 50 years. The pair set up their first workshop in an old mill in 1967 as an "engineering office and design and testing centre for the development of racing engines". In 1971, the AMG 300 SEL 6.8 of "Aufrecht and Melcher, GroÃŸaspach" “ “ in short: AMG “ “ claimed victory completely out of the blue in its class and took second place overall in the 24“‘hour race at the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps. Another milestone was the all-new cylinder head with cutting-edge valve technology, developed by Melcher.

Collaboration with Mercedes-Benz began in 1990. The C 36 AMG, launched in 1993, was the first vehicle on the market to result from the collaboration agreement with Daimler-Benz. In 2005, Mercedes-AMG became a wholly owned subsidiary of Daimler-AG and 2009 saw the introduction of the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG, the first vehicle to be developed entirely by Mercedes-AMG. AMG branched into motor racing with the SLS AMG GT3 in 2011. This was followed by the introduction of the Mercedes-AMG GT in 2014 and the launch of the 43 series models in 2015, introducing a broader target group to the brand.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-10530/half-a-century-of-driving-performance.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Daren Frankish - Daimler AG.

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619