

CLASSIC DRIVER

A morning sprint over Bernina Pass with Aloisa Ruf in the CTR Anniversary prototype

Lead
What could be better to drive out winter than an early morning drive over a famous Swiss mountain pass? Doing it in an all-carbonfiber, 710 hp monster expertly driven by the daughter of the man who made it.



"Please don't take pictures of these elements of the interior", Aloisa asks me with quite a serious look on her face as I squeeze into the low, sleek and very yellow RUF CTR Anniversary parked outside the Badrutt's Palace Hotel in St. Moritz.

Aloisa Ruf - who can be only described as 'the nicest person I know', as I have never seen her not smiling or in a bad mood - is, after all, responsible for the company's public relations. Her words, a reminder that this is not only a Sunday morning drive with a friend, but also a professional rendezvous between a journalist and a car maker's official representative.





"This is only the prototype, and of course, the customer cars are finished to the highest possible standard and can be modified according to their wishes", she adds and quickly turns the smile back on. Then puts the CTR in gear with one precise and swift move of her arm, just as gracefully as she had me put back into my rightful place a moment ago. As we head out towards the peaks it starts to snow. The acceleration and deep bellow from the 710 hp, twin-turbocharged engine (with dry sump lubrication) as well as the occasional sideways action on the slippery surface are doing a better job at stimulating my nervous system than any espresso doppio I didn't have time for this morning.



Aloisa, if you don't mind, let's talk about the car later and start with... you. I know you have siblings. Do they all work for your father's company, or are you the only one?

I do have two siblings, who followed their own passions which deviated from cars. They're very successful in their own endeavours and I am extremely proud of them. So quite frankly, I'm the only one whose passion for cars ignited once and hasn't left. I can't imagine not being part of the car world.



Wait, you're telling me that as a kid you didn't want to be a veterinarian, an astronaut or a fire woman?

Honestly, no. I mean of course I have had thoughts about pursuing different careers at times, but I can't say that I really seriously entertained the idea of doing something else. Its funny, because some might assume that I have to follow the legacy, but I believe that in an industry in which the love for something dictates the success, there's no way around it. Of course, I do have interests other than working with cars, one of them being art. I combine both worlds through my fine art photography, which I sell through my online shop. That could be considered another 'occupation' besides working in the family business.



You said "working with cars" - is this a good time to mention that you not only represent the company in the public eye but also really do sometimes work on the production line?

I like to get involved and really understand the engineering behind our cars. So, yes, I do work on the cars and I personally restored Bertha, my own Porsche 912. With the help and guidance of my mechanic colleagues of course. But ultimately, we are a car manufacturer and as such an engineering company. I take my job very seriously so I feel that I really have to know and understand everything about the cars we make. Not just on paper.



Tell me about the CTR then, it looks like a Porsche 964. Is it based on... a 964?

No, this a completely bespoke design. The chassis is a carbon fibre monocoque, designed in house by us, with an integrated roll cage and an axle carrier and crash structure made out of high-strength steel tubes. Actually, if you lift the carpet you could see the exposed tub. The entire car looks like a 964 because we love Porsche and it's an homage to the original Yellowbird. Modifying Porsche cars is of course where it all started, it's embedded in our DNA. But we are driving in a completely bespoke machine, with an all-carbon-fibre body, which is longer and wider than any 911 of roughly this shape. Actually, if you park it next to one, you will immediately see the difference and how disproportionate it is.



Power? Torque? Drive? Weight?

It's rear wheel driven, as you probably noticed in that last hairpin (laughs), because we want to keep the car as light as possible so that it can perform up to our expectations. That is why the interior is also so minimalistic, although we also think that minimalism equals a more analogue perception of the overall design. Everything you see on it was made especially for this car. The brakes are 380 mm discs with 6 pistons in front and a 350 mm 4-piston set-up at the back. The suspension is lengthway mounted and pushrod actuated just like on a grand prix car, so that the CTR can be stable at very high speeds, and the engine is a 3.6 litre twin-turbocharged unit, which develops 710 hp, and 880 Nm of torque at as low as 2750 rpm. Top Speed: 360 kph. 0-100 kph: 3,5 seconds. Weight: 1250 kg, and I'm eyeballing here.



We probably won't be able to reach that top speed today, not in these conditions and not on a Swiss road, but do you have a wind tunnel at RUF? How do you test the aerodynamics of what is essentially a hypercar in a period-inspired body?

All the cars are aerodynamically tested in a wind tunnel when we make the clay models. By the way, we also make a naturally aspirated version called the SCR with 510 hp and a "ducktail", so of course we also had to know how this kind of spoiler affects the performance. You can also predict a lot these days with advanced computer modeling.



Sounds like a car that I would really enjoy driving - speaking of which, do you often go on drives like the one we're having this morning?

Of course! I have a group of friends with whom we like to organise weekend or day trips in cars. But I also like to drive alone. I recently drove Bertha from Pfaffenhausen to Como for the day just because I felt like it.



OK, so we know that you are a RUF & Porsche person, but do you have any 'guilty pleasure' cars that you like even if you're not supposed to? I can start if it makes you feel better - I love the E65 BMW 7 series, designed by Chris Bangle.

This is between you and me (laughs) - but I really, really love lowriders. I don't know what it is about them, but I love how they look and that they really do not serve any other purpose than being fun. When I tell that to people including my friends they all think I'm crazy, as lowriders are of course the total, polar opposite of what we do at RUF.



As the biggest fan of the YouTube show 'Hot Ones', let me finish off this interview by asking the classic Sean Evans question: Can you let the people know what you have going on in your life at the moment?

I'm actually traveling to the USA tomorrow! I'll be working more closely with the Petersen Automotive Museum this year, I'm really excited about where this will take me. So yeah, imagine, we're driving here, now, not a care in the world, but tomorrow...

Okay Aloisa, we'd better get back, you need to pack!

Photos by Błażej Żuławski for Classic Driver © 2023

Gallery

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