

Ice Race in Zell am See: Volkswagen offers a first glimpse of the new Golf R



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Public premiere following world premiere: the new Golf puts on a show at the traditional Ice Race in Austria

- Past, present and future – Volkswagen R presents sporty Golf models, including the future Golf R

- Motorsport legend Hans-Joachim Stuck and six-time World Rallycross Champion Johan Kristoffersson drift on ice and snow

Volkswagen started the anniversary year of the Golf in a very sporty and spectacular way at the Ice Race in Zell am See (Austria). The new Golf, which will be launched in time for its 50th birthday this year, had its public premiere at the traditional motorsport event on ice and snow. Volkswagen also provided a first impression of its sportiest model: the Golf R – camouflaged, with all-wheel drive and unmistakably R. The future flagship Golf model will celebrate its world premiere in mid-2024.

The traditional Ice Race was the ideal place to celebrate the past, present and future of the sporty Golf variants. Spectacular, a bit wild, but totally down-to-earth, the track on ice and snow became the big stage. Racing legend Hans-Joachim Stuck and six-time World Rallycross Champion Johan Kristoffersson showcased various Volkswagen vehicles in true style by driving at the limits. The cars included the Golf I GTI, which celebrated its premiere in 1975, and the Golf IV R32 from 2002, the forerunner of all performance variants bearing the R brand logo. Volkswagen also presented other historic exhibition vehicles: a rally version of the Golf I GTI and two rally versions of the Golf II.

According to Reinhold Ivenz, Head of Volkswagen R,

Volkswagen R is Volkswagen's premium performance brand

and has stood for sportiness and dynamic performance for more than 20 years. Here at the Ice Race, the past meets the future. We can hardly wait for the Golf R, still disguised here, to celebrate its premiere this summer.

The new Golf was on display in Zell am See in four variants – not only as an exhibit, but also in action. Alongside the Golf R, the Golf GTI, Golf eHybrid and Golf GTE completed the line-up.

Hans-Joachim Stuck says:

The Ice Race is a real spectacle. Other drivers would be putting on snow chains in these conditions, but for us racing drivers, this is when the fun really starts.” Stuck is a two-time Le Mans winner, former Formula 1 and sports car driver and German touring car champion. “At the Ice Race, you meet true motorsport fans and also many people who otherwise have little contact with motorsport – but go home with a lot of enthusiasm for it,

Johan Kristoffersson says:

I love driving a powerful all-wheel drive car on ice and snow – especially if it’s an R model.” The Swede won five of his six World Rallycross Championship titles with Volkswagen. He reveals: “It was great fun to sit in the brand-new Golf for the first time. I can only say that even though the Golf R has not yet been revealed, there is a true sports car under the camouflage that fans of the R brand can already look forward to.

The Ice Race can look back on a long history that started with skijouring, a daring leisure activity pursued by Nordic and Alpine farmers who let horses pull them over the ice on skis. Skijouring became a sport, but also bolder and more spectacular: motorbikes and cars replaced the horses. In 1937, a course for this was prepared for the first time in Zell am See; the event then took place again from 1952 and became a regular motorsport spectacle until 1974. In its current form, the Ice Race is already a second revival: it was held again in 2019 for the first time since 1974. In 2024, the fourth edition of the contemporary Ice Race presented not only traditional skijouring, but also spectacular racing cars and production vehicles on ice and snow.

Volkswagen R is Volkswagen's premium performance brand and is responsible for the sportiest vehicles that complement the product range. Customers currently have a choice of five performance-boosted and enhanced production vehicles – from the extremely dynamic Golf R to the brand's top model, the Touareg R eHybrid. With more than 35,000 vehicles produced, 2023 was a record year for the Volkswagen R. A total of more than 300,000 R models have been delivered since 2002. The Volkswagen R is now realigning itself for the future. Based on the four pillars – performance, design, innovation and quality – the portfolio will gradually see a shift to all-electric R models by 2030.

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