

Opel History 1910-1919

- 1910 A modular production system is implemented: prefabricated car bodies are combined with various chassis and engines.
Opel's market share in Germany grows to 12.3 percent.



Production hall for large vehicles, circa 1912.



Turning shop, circa 1912.



The so-called "Opel Eye," 1910-1935. Based on a suggestion from the Grand Duke of Hesse, the emblem design was realized in 1910 by Plant Manager Riedel and Mr. Stief from the construction department. It was modified in 1928.

- 1911 With a 6/16 hp model, Opel adopts the new "torpedo" body form. In addition, Opel responds to technological developments, filling new market gaps: the carmaker develops its first aircraft engine, which drives the Euler biplane. At the same time, the company builds a heavy-duty motorized plow for large farms.
A major fire destroys a large part of the plant.
Sewing-machine production ends with the manufacture of the one-millionth unit.
The "Adam Opel Foundation" is established to fund an old-age pension plan for the company's workforce.



The 6/16 hp Opel Torpedo Double Phaeton from 1911.



The 6/16 hp Opel Torpedo Double Phaeton from 1911.



The two variants of the 10/24 hp Opel from 1911: a torpedo double phaeton and a covered limousine with a fold-down windshield.



Advertisement for the Opel aircraft engine built for the Euler biplane, from 1911.



The Opel aircraft engine, 1911.



The Opel motorized plow, 1912.



The fire of 1911. In the night of August 19, 1911, a large part of the plant was destroyed by fire.



The one-millionth, and last, Opel sewing machine, from 1911.

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- 1912 Opel celebrates its fiftieth anniversary.
The ten-thousandth Opel motorcar rolls out of the plant.
Based on experience gathered from the major fire of 1911, the engineers in Rüsselsheim develop the “Motorized Fire Pump” for the plant fire brigade. The early fire engine is successfully marketed to towns and cities.
A new flagship model is introduced: a substantial 40/100 hp four-cylinder vehicle.



The company celebra its fiftieth anniversary with a gala event on August 23, 1912.



The Opel Motorized Fire Pump, from 1912.



Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse by the Rhine in front of a 40/100 hp Opel, 1912.

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- 1913 Race cars employing ground-breaking engine technology are developed for the Grand Prix season: the four-cylinder power units with 4-liter and 4.5-liter displacements feature four valves per cylinder and an overhead camshaft driven by a vertical shaft.



Sophie Opel, 1911



At the Huy Automobile Meeting in Belgium, Carl Jörns comes in first in the under 4-liter class and is declared overall winner, in October 1913.



The 110 hp Opel Grand Prix race car, from 1913.



The 110 hp Opel Grand Prix race car, from 1913.

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- 1914 A record-breaking race car is developed, based on the engine technology that led to the 1913 Gran Prix triumph. The cutting-edge vehicle is not only one of the first cars to feature four-valve technology – at a swept volume of 12.3 liters, its four-cylinder, 16-valve power unit is the largest displacement engine to emerge from the Rüsselsheim facilities.
Opel becomes Germany’s largest automobile manufacturer.
A 5/14 hp model goes into production. The hugely successful car is dubbed “Puppchen” (little doll).
During WW I (1914–1918), Opel produces heavy trucks for the military.



In a 260 hp, 12.3-liter race car built in 1914, Carl Jörns wins first place in the over 5-liter class of the Schauinsland hill climb, in August 1925.



Carl Jörns at the wheel of a 260 hp, 12.3-liter Opel race car from 1914. Beside him is his navigator, Kurt C. Volkhart..



The 260 hp race car with a 12.3-liter, 4-valve engine, built in 1914.



The Opel 3-ton heavy truck, built in 1914 to military specifications.



The 5/14 hp Opel, dubbed "Puppchen," from 1914.



Advertisement for the 5/14 hp Opel "Puppchen," 1914.

1916 In a 18/50 hp model, Opel introduces its first six-cylinder engine, with a displacement of 4.7 liters.



The 18/50 hp Opel from 1916.

1919 The Opel Racetrack, located south of Rüsselsheim, is inaugurated. The oval course with banked curves, paved in concrete, is the first permanent track for racing and testing in Germany – years ahead of other well-known racetracks, such as the Berlin AVUS and the Nürburgring.



The Opel Racetrack at Schönauer Hof near Rüsselsheim, circa 1931.



The Opel Racetrack during the racing season, 1920.



Car racing on the Opel Racetrack, circa 1923.