Opel History 1980-1989

1981  The engineering study Tech 1 demonstrates Opel’s pioneering role in the field of aerodynamics: the experimental vehicle achieves a drag coefficient of 0.235, setting a world record. Opel becomes the first carmaker to use environmentally friendly water-based paints. The Ascona C and the performance-oriented Manta B 400 enter the market.


1982  A new plant is commissioned in Saragossa, Spain, for the production of the Opel Corsa. The compact model rapidly advances to become the bestselling vehicle in its class. Walter Röhrl and his navigator Christian Geistdörfer prevail over tough four-wheel-drive competitors, piloting their Ascona 400 to victory in the Monte Carlo Rally and winning the Rally World Championship.


1983 Opel’s 20-millionth vehicle, a Senator, leaves the Rüsselsheim production facilities.

On May 25, 1983, the 20-millionth Opel, a Senator, rolls off the Rüsselsheim assembly lines.

1984 The Kadett E is introduced. The GSi version, with a drag coefficient of 0.30, is the most aerodynamic vehicle in its class worldwide. The Kadett is elected Car of the Year by an international jury.
1985  Opel becomes the first German manufacturer to include a vehicle with a catalytic converter in every model line.

1986  The Opel Omega makes its début, boasting the best drag coefficient in its class, at 0.28. The Omega is elected Car of the Year.

1987  Opel celebrates its 125-year jubilee. The Senator B is presented to the public.

1988  The Opel Vectra is introduced. The mid-size model, available in a choice of two body variants, is an immediate bestseller. The Vectra is characterized by dynamic design and driving comfort combined with technologically advanced drivetrain and chassis solutions. An all-wheel-drive version is available.
1989  Opel introduces catalytic converters as standard equipment in all models, the first among European car manufacturers.
The Opel Calibra is launched, with a world-best drag coefficient of 0.26.
The 25-millionth Opel rolls off the production line in Rüsselsheim.
The Adam Opel Prize for outstanding academic performance in engineering is awarded for the first time, in Rüsselsheim, Bochum and Kaiserslautern.