Media Information

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120 Years of Opel Automobile Production

From Lutzmann to Doktorwagen: The pioneering years

Opel joins the ranks of the automotive pioneers of the late 19th century that include Daimler, Benz and Peugeot by buying Friedrich Lutzmann's motor car factory. In the spring of 1899, the first Patentmotorwagen "System Lutzmann" is built in Rüsselsheim.

Two years later, a converted Lutzmann wins the Heidelberg-Königstuhl "Mountain Race" by beating "16 other vehicles made by well-known German carmakers".

Overall, the development in the automotive industry is fast and furious. While the first models are direct descendants of horse-drawn carriages, Opel launches an ultra-modern small car for an extremely competitive price in 1909. The 4/8 hp Opel Doktorwagen already has an Opel-engineered and Opel-built 4-cylinder in-line engine. In the adverts, Opel promises that it is ideal for "Doctors, veterinarians and lawyers".

The Doktorwagen is available for prices between 4,000 and 5,000 Mark while many other cars made during this period cost 20,000 Mark. It transforms the motor car from a prestigious toy for the rich and the famous into an affordable mobility solution for a broad audience.

Contact:

Uwe Mertin +49 (0) 6142-7-74083 uwe.mertin@opel.com