

## Searching for Speed - Austria

prix races, and for races of "tourenwagen" (e.g., stock BMW and Mercedes cars), historical race cars, Formula 1600, Ford 2000 and Formula 3 cars. It is open to the public.



Fig. 59 Touring car racing on Salzburgring.

**Seefeld** Near the German border south of Munich and Garmisch.

**Alpinekönig** Seefeld is home to a Daimler-Benz resort for employees, and the Alpinekönig, one of the finest hotels in the alps.

**Semmering** 65 km southwest of Vienna. Semmering is Vienna's main ski resort, spread across the Rax and Schneeberg mountains. At 3000 feet, the village offers a healthy climate and scenic charm.



Fig. 60 Raxbahn cable car above Semmering

In 1854, Karl von Ghegas' Semmering Railway, the first mountain railway in Europe, was completed with 16 viaducts, 15 tunnels, 142 vertical structures, 129 bridges, artificial rock faces and supporting walls. The Semmering tunnel was 1430 meters long and was the first tunnel constructed in the Alps - some years after the first mention of a tunnel, for a water pipe 1 km long on the island of Samos in 522 BC.

The railway allowed access to higher altitudes, especially the Rax and Schneeberg, both around 6500 feet. Hitler climbed the Rax around 1907 while Semmering attracted celebrities such as Oskar Kokoschka, Adolf Loos, Peter Altenburg, Karl Kraus, Arthur Schnitzler, Gerhart Hauptmann and Stefan Zweig. Even today the appearance of the Semmering is still determined by imposing hotels such as Panhans (opened in 1888) and ornate villas. Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph learned to ski on slopes outside the Panhans.

Lending credence to the idea that mountain roads are necessary in building fine cars, Porsche's early cars were tested on the steep slopes around Rax mountain and near Semmering.

**Environs:** Jauern am Semmering.

**Hotel Erzherzog Johann** Hotel Johann was the finish line for the Semmering Hill climb which, on 19 September, 1909, the day Ferry Porsche was born, saw Ferdinand win his class in a 'Mixte' or 'Mischwagern', covering 10 km of the then dirt road that twists up 1300 feet with an average 25% gradient in 14 minutes, 52.2 seconds, an average of about 25 mph. The over-all winner was Christian Lautenschlager in a Mercedes.

The Mixte was a very expensive car whose chassis alone cost 33,000 kroners, about \$6685. The engines, from either Daimler in Stuttgart or Levassor in Paris, gave the Mixte a top speed of 56 miles an hour on level ground, a speed equal to Maybach's 1900 Mercedes.

Porsche had driven the Semmering before, on 23 September, 1900, when he set a record for electric cars in his gas-electric Lohner-Porsche.

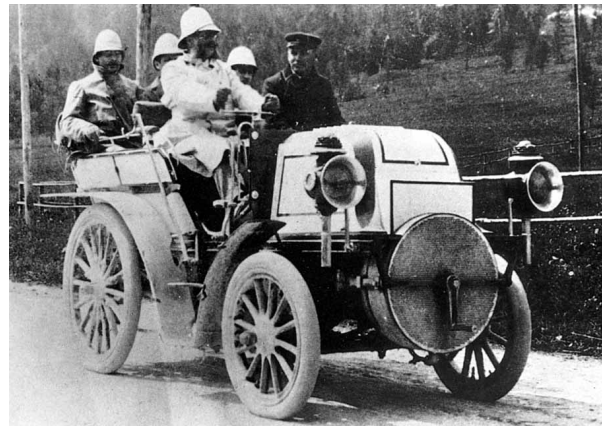


Fig. 61 Emil Jellinek and Phoenix, Semmering, 1899

The first Semmering races began in 1899. In 1901, Richard von Stern's 35 HP Mercedes won the prize, a winged Victory-like statue donated by industrialist Theodor Dreher. Emil Jellinek also participated in his Phoenix.

In 1902, Wilhelm Warner won in a 40 HP Mercedes-Simplex belonging to American Clarence Gray Dinsmore, a millionaire who used Daimler mechanic Werner to drive him about Europe.

In 1904, Braun won in a Austro-Daimler car, and won again in 1906. In 1907, Ferdinand Porsche stood along the route when Willy Pöge won in a Mercedes.

In one race, Ferdinand Porsche again won his class in a four cylinder 32 HP Austro-Daimler which he had designed. During the trials, he was almost killed avoiding a drunk in the road, but produced a victory which encouraged Franz Joseph, and the Queen of Bulgaria, to purchase an Austro-Daimler instead of the usual Gräf & Stift.

In 1924, Christian Werner won the Semmering in a Porsche-designed 1924 120 hp supercharged Mercedes which set a new record of 53.78 mph. In 1926, Rudi Caracciola won in a 4.5 liter Grand Prix Mercedes at 55.77 mph. A four lane highway bypasses the old hill climb road which has since been paved.

### Silvretta Hochalpenstraße

*"We loved the Vorarlberg and we loved Schruns."*  
Ernest Hemingway's *A Movable Feast*