

Birth of an icon

The SEAT 1400: the first SEAT vehicle celebrates its 65th anniversary

- / The SEAT 1400, an elegant and luxurious passenger car, was born on the 13th November 1953 **beginning the brand's automotive story**
- / The technologically advanced SEAT 1400 used an all-**enveloping 'pontoon' body**, instead of a separate chassis with the bodywork screwed on – one of the first in Europe
- / 98,978 vehicles rolled off the factory line in Barcelona **during the 1400's production** run between 1953 and 1964

Martorell, 12/11/2018.- The car that launched SEAT will celebrate its 65th anniversary tomorrow. The SEAT 1400, a luxurious and elegant saloon, marked the beginning of the **brand's story** and formed the platform for its future success.

The first SEAT 1400 – with registration plate number B-87.223 – rolled off the Zona Franca factory in Barcelona on the 13th November 1953, just three years after the brand had been formed. At the time the production rate was just five vehicles a day during the first year, but that number would rapidly climb and priced at 117,000 pesetas (**around 705€**).

Conceived as the vehicle to build the foundations of SEAT's business, the 1400, was an impressively executed four-door, front engine, rear-wheel drive saloon, equally at home as an official state authority vehicle or providing transportation to the masses as a public taxi.

Performance to impress

Built at SEAT's manufacturing plant in Barcelona, with an initial workforce of 925 employees, **the 1400's technical specifications were reflective of the period: longitudinally mounted** petrol engine at the front with power delivered to the rigid rear axle which incorporated a differential.

That engine was a four-cylinder unit with a displacement of 1,395cc, linked to a four-speed manual transmission and with a maximum output of 44PS, giving it a top speed of 120km/h.

The chassis incorporated helical springs that produced an elastic effect on the rear suspension, and longitudinal semi-cantilever springs – which acted as thrust arms – to give it anti-roll stabilisation. A Panhard rod ensured the lateral positioning of the axle. The setup was an ultra-modern setup for the time.

The 1400's exterior took its design cue from American vehicles of the time, with a rounded rear shape extenuated by conical-shaped rear lights, but it also introduced curved, one-piece windscreens and a heating system to the market.

As well as appealing aesthetics, the SEAT 1400 also offered more than sufficient performance. Its 48-litre fuel tank gave it significant range thanks to its fuel consumption figure of 10.5 litres/100km and it would gladly cruise at 100km/h.

Manufactured for success

By the end of the SEAT 1400's initial production run in 1954, 1,345 units had been produced, **but that was just the beginning of the car's life. The 1400 family continued with the** introduction of the 1400 A in 1954, the 1400 B in 1956 and 1400 C in 1960, along with a number of special versions.

With each version came improvements to the performance and design, helping solidify its position in the market and grow SEAT as a brand.

The 1400 helped SEAT's growth skyrocket, although initial production numbers were small, by the end of 1954, 959 units were delivered, and a year later annual production was tipping towards 3,000 – and produced with nearly 100% nationally sourced components. In 1956 7,000 vehicles were manufactured, with that number hitting 10,000 a year later. By the end of its life, 98,978 units had been sold and its place in history was guaranteed.

Technical specifications

SEAT 1400

Engine	
Number of cylinders/valves	Four-cylinder/Eight valves
Bore and stroke	82mm x 66mm
Displacement	1,395cc
Carburettor	Solex or Weber downdraft with manual choke
Cooling	Liquid cooled, belt driven fan. Water pump
Transmission	Four-speed manual, plus reverse
Chassis	Front: Independent, deformable trapezium with springs and telescopic shock absorbers Rear: Rigid axle with springs, telescopic hydraulic shock absorbers and longitudinal leaf springs
Tyres	5.90 x 14
Brakes	Front and rear drums



SEAT is the only company that designs, develops, manufactures and markets cars in Spain. A member of the Volkswagen Group, the multinational has its headquarters in Martorell (Barcelona), exporting 80% of its vehicles, and is present in over 80 countries on all five continents. In 2017, SEAT obtained an after tax profit of 281 million euros, sold close to 470,000 cars and achieved a record turnover of more than 9.5 billion euros.

The SEAT Group employs more than 15,000 professionals and has three production centres – Barcelona, El Prat de Llobregat and Martorell, where it manufactures the highly successful Ibiza, Arona and Leon. Additionally, the company produces the Ateca and the Toledo in the Czech Republic, the Tarraco in Germany, the Alhambra in Portugal and the Mii in Slovakia.

The multinational has a Technical Centre, which operates as a knowledge hub that brings together 1,000 engineers who are focussed on developing innovation for Spain's largest industrial investor in R&D. SEAT already features the latest connectivity technology in its vehicle range and is currently engaged in the company's global digitalisation process to promote the mobility of the future.

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