

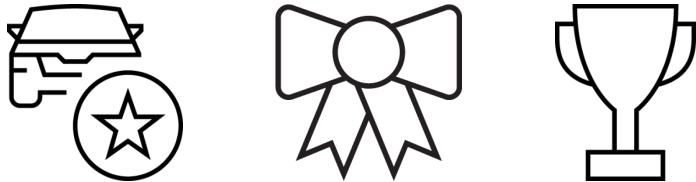


Škoda Auto in 2023:  
Landmark anniversaries in 2023

ŠKODA

## Škoda Auto in 2023: A Year of Landmark Anniversaries

Among other milestones in 2023, Škoda Auto will be celebrating the **100th anniversary of its logo** with the winged arrow, a symbol of dynamism and progress, and the **80-year tradition of 4x4 drivetrains**. Anniversaries of sporting triumphs, breathtaking long-distance journeys across continents, luxury cars paving the way for the Superb, as well as the robust Škoda utility vehicles, are also woven into the story of the successful Czech brand.



# Škoda Auto in 2023: A Year of Landmark Anniversaries

- 1** 125 years (August 1898): The First Factory Building and Working Regulations of L&K
- 2** 115 years (11 December 1908): World Speed Record in the category of four-cylinder cars with a bore of up to 86 mm – 118.720 km/h
- 3** 110 years: Laurin & Klement M – A model series with Cutting-Edge Technology
- 4** 100 years (15 December 1923): Škoda Logo with the Winged Arrow
- 5** 90 years (April 1933): Škoda 420 with Backbone Chassis
- 6** 85 years (18 May 1938): Long-Distance Journeys Across Africa and South America
- 7** 80 years (October 1943): Škoda Superb 956, Type 956 – the Brand's First 4x4 Model
- 8** 60 years (20 – 24 January 1963): Hat-Trick of Class Victories for the Škoda Octavia at the Monte Carlo Rally
- 9** 55 years (20 November 1968): Škoda 1203 – A Legendary Multifaceted Utility Vehicle
- 10** 25 years (3 March 1998): The First of Four New Generations of the Popular Škoda Octavia Combi
- 11** 20 years (6 March 2003): Debut of the Škoda Fabia WRC, Predecessor to the Current Successful Fabia RS Rally2 Specials

## 125 Years (August 1898)

### First Factory Building and Working Regulations of L&K



**The first purpose-built factory was completed in August 1898 on the road between Mladá Boleslav and Kosmonosy.**

It had 690 m<sup>2</sup> (53 × 13 m) of floor space. The buildings used previously were originally intended for other purposes and had been adapted for L&K's needs.

In the summer of 1898, 32 workers along with six apprentices and three clerks began working at the site, which would remain part of the Škoda Auto complex for over 100 years. 1898 also saw the introduction of L&K's first working regulations, governing the relationship between the company and its employees in 11 paragraphs.

Workers committed to performing tasks other than those originally assigned to them as needed; the rapidly changing industry required considerable flexibility, just as it does 125 years later. The working regulations also included provisions on sickness and accident insurance for employees, certainly not commonplace at the time.

# 115 Years (11 December 1908)

## Class World Speed Record – 118.720 km/h



**The Mladá Boleslav brand's successful involvement in motorsport dates back to 1901 when a Laurin & Klement motorcycle completed the international Paris-Berlin race. After many victories on two wheels, L&K cars took over the baton, scoring points in demanding competitions, hill climb races and on less common circuits at that time.**

The extremely successful 1908 season culminated in a speed record at the Brooklands Motor Circuit near Weybridge in Surrey, England. It was a 4.43 km oval concrete track with bends up to 9 metres high, so at least in theory, speeds of up to 192 km/h were possible, taking into account the poor tyre adhesion of the time.

In addition, there was a 1.8km straight at Brooklands with capacity for 287,000 spectators. This was where the Mladá Boleslav team headed with their racing special L&K FCS to attempt a new record in the category of four-cylinder cars with a bore of up to 86 mm.

The regulations of the time did not limit the displacement of the engine itself, so the designers aimed to maximize the cubic capacity by lengthening the stroke to 150 mm.

Record sul Brookland

Una velocità che suscitò meraviglia presso tutta la stampa Inglese  
(Km. 118.720 l'ora)

Il Conte Kolowrat ha fatto colla sua Vettura a 4 cilindri di 86 mm. di alesaggio una media di Km. 112.266 all'ora. Alcuni giorni più tardi Hieronimus ha portato la velocità di questa Vettura a Km. 118.720 su un miglio lanciato, e Km. 116.150 facendo 10 giri, e cioè 48 Km. circa. **ECCO DELLE PROVE ELOQUENTI!** Ad Oriente oppure ad Occidente, nelle montagne oppure sul piano, su distanze brevi o lunghe, nelle mani dei dilettanti oppure dei professionisti, su strade buone o su strade cattive, su una motocicletta o su Vetture leggieri, con Vetture pesanti o su Autobus noi sempre abbiamo dimostrato la superiorità della nostra marca.

Delle prove! - Ne abbiamo date a centinaia.

**LAURIN & KLEMENT**

Società Anonima per la costruzione di Automobili e Motociclette a Jungbunzlau.  
Succursali: Praga - Vienna - Brünn - Budapest - Londra e Mosca.

## 115 Years (11 December 1908)

Class World Speed Record – 118.720 km/h



First, the experienced racer **Count Alexander 'Sasha' Kolowrat-Krakowsky** took the wheel, clocking an average of 112 km/h at Brooklands. However, that would not be enough to break the record. He was replaced by the slimmer chief designer **Otto Hieronimus** who crossed the finish line in a record speed of **118.720 km/h**.



118.720 km/h

# 110 Years

## Laurin & Klement M – A model series with Cutting-Edge Technology

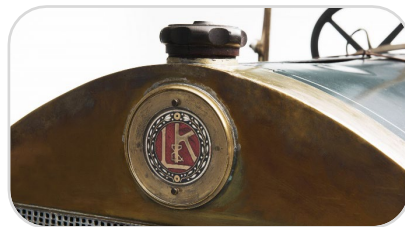


**1913 marked the debut of the Laurin & Klement M model series with powerful four-cylinder engines. Thanks to their outstanding reliability and powerful engines, these robust, comfortable and fast cars also enjoyed considerable success in motorsport.**

The first to leave the factory were the four-cylinder M and MO versions, generating 40 hp (29 kW) from a 3,802 cm<sup>3</sup> capacity and the 50 hp 4.7-litre Md or MK delivering 40 hp, in contrast to their valvetrain siblings, which utilised sophisticated Knight sleeve valves. Fast ambulances were also built on the robust 'M' chassis.

On 21 December 1918, upon his return from exile, the first Czechoslovak president **Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk** took a triumphant ride through Prague in an open-top L&K MK-series car.

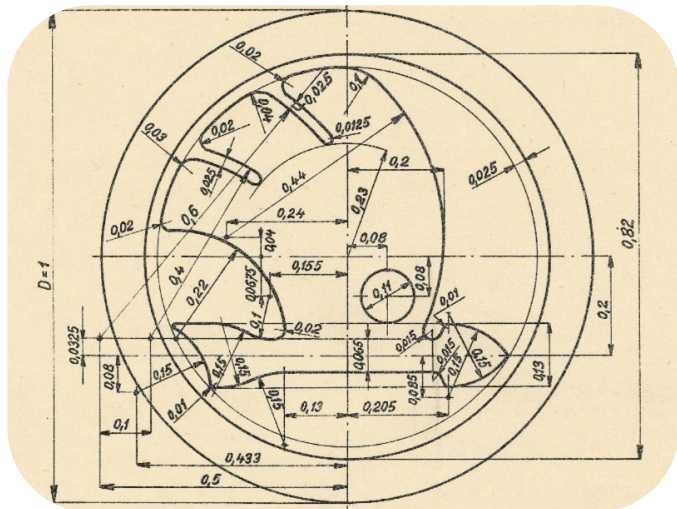
The prestigious M series from Mladá Boleslav was continuously modernised until 1925, when the Škoda Hispano-Suiza picked up the flagship baton, followed by the eight-cylinder Škoda 860 and, in the mid-1930s, the first of the legendary Škoda Superbs.



# 100 Years (15 December 1923)

## Škoda Logo with the Winged Arrow

Saturday, 15 December 1923 marks the date the trademark of the Škoda arms and engineering plant in Pilsen was officially registered: a logomark of a flying arrow, imaginatively carried by three feathers. But the legal protection also covered a variant with five feathers and integrated Škoda lettering that was rarely used. This was the result of a year-long search for a trademark, which began with a public tender.



From around 300 designs, a variant depicting the head of an Indian chief with a feather headdress was chosen, a motif used on a painting hanging for some time in the office of the Škoda Plzeň Sales Director, Jihoslovan Toma Maglič. However, **who exactly created the logo design remains a mystery; it was probably a collaborative effort**, gradually revised by various departments.

Reducing the five feathers that figuratively held the arrow in flight to three was necessary due to the fact that the new logomark used on a wide range of products had to be clear even after being significantly scaled down and in a three-dimensional moulding or casting. That is why the additional Škoda lettering was also eventually dropped. The new badge began appearing on cars from Mladá Boleslav less than 2 years later after Laurin & Klement had been incorporated into the Škoda engineering and arms group.



# 100 Years (15 December 1923)

## Škoda Logo with the Winged Arrow



**Over subsequent decades, the graphic design of the Škoda badge, including the logo itself, underwent numerous changes, reflecting the dynamic nature of the company, the overall evolution of aesthetics and other changes – including social developments.**

Specifically, the events of the World War II and the later waves of nationalisation and privatisation, including the split of the Pilsen and Mladá Boleslav development divisions.

The original circular Škoda logo was used on corporate printed materials for Mladá Boleslav products until 1992-93, on cars as a badge until 1995, and was then limited to individual components such as engine blocks or glass.

## 90 Years (April 1933)

### Škoda 420 with Backbone Chassis



**Škoda's response to the global economic crisis was to launch a new generation of cars with a very rigid yet lightweight chassis frame with independent wheel suspension, replacing traditional ladder frames and rigid axles.**

The innovative concept, later gaining prominence in models such as the Škoda Popular, Rapid, Superb, Octavia and Felicia, remained competitive for 40 years! On the other side of the world from 1966, it served as the basis for the ever-practical Trekkia light utility vehicle, making its final appearance in the Škoda 1202 (1961-1973).

It was in April 1933 that the first car utilising this concept rolled out of Josef Zubatý's workshop – the Škoda 420 had swing axles at the rear while keeping a rigid front axle. At the end of 1933, the Prague businessman Břetislav Jan Procházka, a friend of Ing. Zubatý, drove a Škoda 420 Standard to the USA, and by the spring had covered 12,000 kilometres without incident on the winter route Prague – New York – Washington – Prague.

## 85 Years (18 May 1938)

### Long-Distance Journeys Across Africa and South America



**On 18 May 1938, after almost 2 years and 52,000 kilometres travelling in a Škoda Rapid, the Africa explorers Marie and Stanislav Škulín returned to Prague.**

They had taken the four-cylinder 1,400 cm<sup>3</sup> 31 hp car, a mid-range vehicle by the standards of the time, on an impressive route across the continent from north to south, not forgetting the island of Madagascar.

And because the reliable Škoda Rapid performed admirably even under extreme conditions, the Škulíns decided to drive through Africa once more, this time from the Cape of Good Hope to Egypt and then home to Czechoslovakia.

Around the same time, on 18 July 1938, fellow experienced travellers **Eva and František Alexandr Elstner** set off for South America in a smaller 30 hp semi-convertible **Popular 1100 OHV**, reaching speeds of up to 105 km/h. After an eighteen-day voyage from Genoa to Argentina, they disembarked in Buenos Aires. What followed was a twelve-day ordeal across gravel, sand and rocks through Rosario and Tucumán north to the Bolivian border and back to Buenos Aires via Córdoba. The compact Škoda **covered over 6,000 kilometres** with a daily average of 530 km. Due to political tensions, the Elstners returned to Prague earlier than planned on 29 September 1938.

## 80 Years (1943)

### Škoda Superb 956, Type 956 – The Brand's First 4x4 Model



**Following a lengthy development process starting in September 1942, production of the first Škoda with all-wheel drive (4x4) began in October 1943.**

The military Type 956 was based on the successful civilian Superb model. It differed, for example, in its front axle with trapezoidal suspension, complemented by coil springs. The designers mounted the front axle differential asymmetrically, closer to the right wheel – this was to allow for the output from the gearbox, complete with reduction. Controlling the off-road cars of the time was no easy task, with five levers to operate the handbrake, shift the main gearbox and reduce the locking of the two differentials.

The formidable, open-top Škoda 956 with a length of 4,850 mm was equipped with wide, low-pressure ('balloon') 9.00-16" tyres for travelling on less rugged terrain. Though the technologically intriguing but production-intensive model was never significantly extended, the 4x4 powertrain enjoyed great popularity among customers throughout Škoda's modern history and, of course, the Superb and Superb Combi, distant relatives of the Š 956, would not be complete without it. Škoda's latest all-electric models based on the MEB platform feature a particularly efficient all-wheel drive system with two electric motors, one on each axle.

## 60 Years (20 – 24 January 1963)

### Hat-Trick of Class Victories for the Škoda Octavia at Rally Monte Carlo



**Vehicles from Mladá Boleslav have been competing in the prestigious and demanding Rally Monte Carlo since the second event (1912), also enjoying success during the First Republic. In the early 1960s, three Škoda Octavias demonstrated their strengths on the MCR course, achieving a hat-trick of class victories in January 1963.**

This remarkable story began in January 1961. At the time, Scandinavian drivers dominated in the wintry conditions of the Monte Carlo Rally, prompting Škoda to call on the talented Finnish driver Esko Keinänen and his co-driver Rainer Eklund to drive the new Škoda Octavia TS 1200. Claiming victory in the category up to 1300 cm<sup>3</sup> and achieving an impressive 6th place in the overall standings amid fierce competition confirmed the brand's decision.

At the 1962 Rally Monte Carlo, all 3 Škoda factory crews drove the Octavia TS 1200 to the Principality of Monaco in a star-studded event, with the best Škoda car placing 10th in the 1,300 cm<sup>3</sup> class. Once again, the Finn E. Keinänen dominated the scene in the under 1300 cm<sup>3</sup> class, finishing 21st overall. The resilience of Norway's Laila Schou-Nilsen is also worthy of recognition, placing 17th in the class despite technical difficulties on the track. The class hat-trick came at the end of January 1963, with the victory of the Octavia TS 1200 driven by Norwegian Edward Gjolberg and Carl F. Karlan.

## 55 Years (20 November 1968)

### Škoda 1203 – A Legendary Multifaceted Utility Vehicle



**The first production model of the Škoda 1203 light commercial vehicle with a self-supporting trambus body, i.e. without a bonnet, rolled out of the Vrchlabí plant gates in November 1968.**

In its first year of production, the Š 1203 was only available to customers, who were almost exclusively from the ranks of the then state-owned enterprises and the public sector. Other versions, from an estate version to the minibus, were gradually added over the three-decade span of this unmistakable model. At just 4.5 metres long, the compact Škoda 1203 could carry up to 950 kg of cargo with a kerb weight of 1,170 kg. It was powered by a 1,221 cm<sup>3</sup> four-cylinder petrol engine delivering 49 hp (36 kW), tried and tested in the earlier Š 1200, Š 1201 and Š 1202.

Due to capacity constraints, AZNP production was eventually transferred from Škoda's branch plant in Vrchlabí to Kovosmalt in Trnava, Slovakia, renamed to Trnava Automotive Works (TAZ) from mid-1967.

The series production of the Škoda 1203 in Czechia lasted until 1981.

## 25 Years (3 March 1998)

### First of 4 New Generations of the Popular Škoda Octavia Combi



**A concept of the upcoming Škoda Octavia Combi was presented at the well-attended Frankfurt Motor Show in September 1997.**

Its very practical two-compartment body and the type designation itself referred to the tremendously popular 1961-1971 model. Series production was launched in Mladá Boleslav in February 1998 and on 3 March, it was presented to the trade and general public at the traditional Geneva Motor Show. The first customers received their new Škoda Octavia Combi in May 1998. With a wheelbase of 2,512 mm, the estate was identical to the two-year-old liftback, six millimetres longer and 26 mm taller, weighing just 15 to 30 kg more depending on the configuration.

What attracted the most attention was the elegant design of the car's rear, offering plenty of space for luggage, specifically 548-1512 litres. In the first year, the estate version accounted for 15% of all Octavia sales, rising to 36.7% the following year and as much as 40.5% by 2001. The second modern generation was produced from 2004; the third was on sale from 2013 and the current fourth generation has been available since late 2019.

## 20 Years (6 March 2003)

### Škoda Fabia WRC



### The Geneva Motor Show hosted the premiere of a new Škoda Motorsport Innovation: the Škoda Fabia WRC in spring 2003

It was based on the sporty RS version of the first-generation Škoda Fabia production model and made its racing debut during the 2003 German Rally, part of the World Rally Championship. In the top category of the World Rally Championship, the Fabia WRC took over the baton from the larger Škoda Octavia WRC.

The compact newcomer was powered by a water-cooled four-cylinder turbocharged engine with a two-litre displacement, delivering 221 kW (300 hp) and a maximum torque of 600 Nm. The power was transmitted to all four wheels via a six-speed sequential gearbox and three active differentials. By the time the second-generation Fabia was launched, 24 units had been produced in Mladá Boleslav. The Fabia WRC represented the first step on the road to the hugely successful **Fabia S2000** (2009), **Fabia R5** (2015) and the latest version of the **Škoda Fabia RS Rally2**. Driving hundreds of these special cars from Mladá Boleslav, Škoda Motorsport and its customer teams celebrated a total of 16 world championship titles, 24 continental titles and 118 national titles between 2015 and 2022 alone.



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