

+++ Obituary Albrecht Graf Goertz +++ Obituary Albrecht Graf Goertz +++ Obituary Albrecht Graf Goertz +++



Left | Hands-on designer: Albrecht Graf Goertz working in his New York studio.

## Albrecht Graf Goertz, 1914 to 2006.

**Munich.** Great teachers don't always have to be right. In the late 1940s, legendary American designer Raymond Loewy gave his young charge Albrecht Graf Goertz this paternal advice: "You'll never make a decent designer. Make sure you marry a rich woman." He was wrong. In 1953 German-born Goertz set up his own design office in New York. Just two years later he produced a design for a car that ranks to this day as one of the most beautiful of all time: the BMW 507.

"The 507 is the star of the show! Congratulations!" wrote BMW's sales director Hans Grewenig in a telegram to New York from the 1955 Frankfurt Motor Show, since Goertz had chosen to follow the unveiling of his model from across the Atlantic. Thanks to this car,

and its classy sibling, the BMW 503 Coupé, Goertz was propelled into the ranks of the world's leading designers.

From that point on he was a firm fixture in the top design echelon. But his interests were not restricted to the design of a single type of product. "If I can touch somebody emotionally with a car, then I can do the same with other products," he once said. And so in the years that followed he came to design such diverse products as office equipment, radios, school furniture, jewellery, sportswear, clocks, cameras – the list goes on. In the course of his career he collaborated with at least 60 companies and was a highly sought-after design consultant to international companies up until an advanced age. Naturally cars continued to play a role throughout this. Another of his automotive designs was the highly popular Datsun 240 Z, which became the biggest-selling sports car in the world, as well as a special edition of the Jaguar XJS to mark the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

In 1989, aged 75, he returned to Germany, the home country he had left in autumn of 1935 for the USA. He moved back to his birthplace, his parents' estate in Brunkensen. It was here that he had been born on 12 January 1914, the son of a baron and a banker's daughter. In order to pass on his knowledge to up and coming designers, he taught at international design schools and in 1996 established his own foundation for the promotion of young talent. For his achievements he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross 1st Class of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In 2005 he created the Steinway piano "125th Anniversary Limited Edition Grand Piano Designed by Goertz" to mark the 125th anniversary of Steinway & Sons Hamburg. It was his last major work. Albrecht Graf Goertz passed away on 27 October 2006 in Kitzbühel, Austria, aged 92. ■

Below | Albrecht Graf Goertz in 2005 with his two famous creations, the BMW 507 and BMW 503, both going back to 1955.

