



The history of the Technik Museen Sinsheim Speyer



The transport of the Sovjet shuttle in spring 2008 from Bahrain across the open sea to Rotterdam and from there on a pontoon up the Rhine to Speyer was a media event of the highest order. Source TMSNHSP



... this has now been surpassed by the transport of the submarine U17 in summer 2024. Source TMSNHSP

1. The Technik Museum Sinsheim

The history of the Technik Museum Sinsheim began in late 1980. During a meeting of technology enthusiasts the idea was born to give the public access to all the gems of technological history that had been restored, often in years of painstaking attention to detail. A museum club was founded and but few months later the Technik Museum Sinsheim opened its doors for the first time on 6 May 1981. From the beginning the museum was a great success and the ever increasing number of visitors made it possible to quickly extend the exhibition area from the initial 5,000 m² to more than 30,000 m². Besides many other vintage cars from all eras of automobile history and many other exhibit items the Technik Museum Sinsheim today presents the largest private collection of vintage Maybach, supercharged Mercedes, and Bugatti automobiles in Germany, several hundred motorcycles, aircraft, record vehicles, racing and sports cars, locomotives, military and utility cars, engines and much more.

In 1996, the Technik Museum Sinsheim created a unique film experience with the IMAX 3D large format movie theater. Never before had it been possible to admire 3D movies that even began to compare to this quality on a huge screen. Since then IMAX films have been casting a spell on over 5 million visitors in Sinsheim. In 2016, the IMAX 3D Sinsheim made history again, the IMAX 3D Sinsheim is presenting the brand new and revolutionary IMAX 4k laser technology as one of the first movie theaters worldwide.

In 1999 the museum club managed to acquire a Russian Tupolev Tu-144 supersonic passenger aircraft. In a spectacular transport, the aircraft was transported from Moscow to Sinsheim over

land and sea and mounted in starting position on the roof of one of the museum halls in early 2001. Enough room was left for the only other supersonic passenger aircraft ever built, the French/British Concorde, which at that time was still in service. Only four years later this gap could be filled when a Concorde was donated to the museum by Air France after the retirement of their Concorde fleet. The Technik Museum Sinsheim is the only museum in the world in which the only two supersonic aircraft ever flying in regular service can be visited side by side.

Over the last three decades Technik Museum Sinsheim has been displaying over 3.000 exhibits throughout the world of technology and they are constantly increasing. Therefore, it was only a matter of time until the capacity limit was reached – new facilities were needed.

The Association's Board of Directors agreed on an extension- the so called Hall 3. The new museum hall is the venue for regularly changing special exhibitions. The current focus is on 'Fascination Tuning - VW vs Opel', an exhibition that brings the world of vehicle tuning to life. Technical innovation, individuality and passion come together here - a scene in which every vehicle bears a personal signature. The exhibition will remain dynamic until 13 September 2026: changing exhibits and special events ensure that there is always something new to discover.

In April/May 2023, the Technik Museen Sinsheim Speyer shared a very special event with the public: From Kiel through the North Sea, the Netherlands and across the Rhine to Speyer - the exciting journey of the decommissioned Class 206 submarine to its temporary accommodation in the cathedral city took three weeks. Arrangements were made until the summer of 2024 to ensure its onward transport to Sinsheim. Then it set off on 30 June 2024: on the water, on the road, tilted and righted, through narrow villages, over railway tracks and motorway and through the winding roads of the Kraichgau region - the U17 journey took four weeks until the metal colossus reached its final destination, the Technik Museum Sinsheim. People followed the journey on site and via livestream with great interest. Thousands flocked to the respective arrival points to see the submarine up close; they lined the riverside roads or accompanied the low-loader for kilometres. The new exhibit will be open to the public from spring 2025.

3. The Technik Museum Speyer

In the early 1990s, when the possibilities of expansion in Sinsheim were nearly exhausted, the opportunity to build a second Museum in the very center of Speyer on the premises of the former Pfalz Aircraft Company came as a rare and fortunate chance. The first exhibition hall was the so-called "Liller Halle", a listed factory building from 1913, which today mainly shows vintage cars, motorcycles, aircraft, and fire engines. Today the museum has more than 25,000 m² indoor space and over 150,000 m² outdoor area.

Due to the huge outdoor area the museum made it possible to show very large and unusual exhibit items. The beginning was made in 1993 with the U9, a submarine of the German Navy with a length of 46 m and a weight of 466 tons. In 1999 it was followed by the Antonov An-22, the largest propeller-driven aircraft built in series with a wing span of 64 m and a length of 58 m. In 2003 the museum wrote history when a Boeing 747 "Jumbo Jet" of the Lufthansa was mounted on a gigantic steel scaffold erected on the premises of the museum. To this day, the Jumbo in the Technik Museum Speyer is the only aircraft of this kind which was dismantled, transported to a place outside from an airport and reassembled again. Other large exhibit items which have complemented the exhibitions in Speyer during the last years are the rescue cruiser John T. Essberger of the German Maritime Search and Rescue Service, a Transall transport aircraft of the German air force and a Vickers Viscount from Lufthansa.

The IMAX DOME movie theater at the Technik Museum Speyer, the only movie theater of this kind in Germany, opened in 1997. Contrary to other movie theaters, in the IMAX DOME the movie is not projected on a flat screen but rather on a gigantic dome. In 2000, the Museum Wilhelmsbau was opened in a historic building, which once housed the administration of the Pfalz Aircraft Company, on the premises of the Technik Museum Speyer. On four floors with 3,000 m² exhibition space this "museum within a museum" shows, besides other things, automatic musical instruments, fashion of the 18th and 19th century, artistic dolls, historic weapons, and uniforms. A special attraction is the "Lindenstrasse Room" with many exhibit items from the popular German telecast "Lindenstrasse".

The high point of the history of the museum so far was the acquisition of a Soviet Buran orbiter, the counterpart of the US American space shuttle. The transport of the Soviet shuttle in early 2008, which led from Bahrain over the open sea to Rotterdam and from there on a pontoon up the Rhine to Speyer, was an outstanding media event. To adequately present the shuttle to the visitors a new hall was built on the premises of the museum in Speyer. The building has a length of 85 m, a width of 75 m and a height of up to 22 m. The total exhibition space on three levels sums up to about 9,000 m². Outside from Russia and the USA the Buran in Speyer is the only space shuttle which can be visited in a museum.

Besides the Buran the Technik Museum Speyer shows in the new hall the space exhibition "Apollo and Beyond". With the help of many unique exhibit items, this exhibition tells the exciting story of manned space flight. From space suits to space food and a toilet which also works in weightlessness the exhibition encompasses everything connected to space flight. SPACE EXPO also succeeded in obtaining the original SPACELAB training module from DLR for the

exhibition. In addition, the museum received a 1:1 model of the ISS module COLUMBUS from the aerospace company EADS Astrium and a 1:10 model of the International Space Station ISS from the European Space Agency ESA. In May 2010 the exhibition was complemented by another spectacular exhibit item: the original landing capsule of Soyuz mission TM 19 which took the German astronaut Ulf Merbold back to Earth in 1994.

On occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first manned space flight in early 2011, the exhibition was considerably extended and now also shows 60 information panels and 100 exhibit items describing the history of manned Soviet/Russian space flight. One particularly interesting object is a true-to-the-original 1:1 replica of the Vostok spaceship with which Yuri Gagarin first flew into space in 1961.

In June 2013 another highlight could be added to the space flight exhibition. In the newly designed exhibition area "The Moon" the history of the moon landings is now comprehensively presented. Besides detailed information tables this section shows true-to-the-original 1:1

replicas of the Apollo 11 landing module "EAGLE", the Lunar Roving Vehicle, which was employed during the Apollo 15 - 17 missions, and of the space suits worn by the Apollo 17 astronauts Eugene A. „Gene“ Cernan and Harrison H. „Jack“ Schmitt. The absolute highlight, however, of the ensemble is a moon rock which was chipped off from a basalt boulder by the astronauts Dave Scott and Jim Irwin at station 4 of the second Apollo 15 excursion within the Hadley Apenninen landing zone on 1 August 1971. Within Germany the Technik Museum Speyer is the only museum presenting a genuine moon rock in a detailed setting with well-grounded information.

Other highlights in the Space Hall include changing special exhibitions. The current show is dedicated to commercial vehicles from Mercedes-Benz Trucks until March 2026. Under the title 'Legends on Wheels - Pioneering Spirit, Innovation, Tradition' and in collaboration with Mercedes-Benz Trucks Classic, 18 exhibits from the period from 1899 to 2024 will be presented. The exhibition includes historic lorries, modern commercial vehicles and concept studies that illustrate the technical development and innovative spirit of the brand. Each vehicle represents a specific era and shows the changes in design, technology and functionality. The permanent motorbike show, a Münch exhibition with 26 examples of the legendary 'Mammut' from the workshop of German motorbike designer Friedel Münch, completes the motorised exhibitions in the space hall of the Technik Museum Speyer.

3. Opening hours, contact information and admission fees

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11.228 Anschläge | 04.02.2025

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