

## Laurin & Klement RK/M (1921): Racing driver Count Sascha Kolowrat-Krakowsky's favourite model

- › **The RK/M is one of the few surviving vehicles that bear witness to the merger of Laurin & Klement and the Reichenberger Automobil Fabrik (RAF – Liberec Automobile Factory)**
- › **The legendary racing driver Count Alexander Kolowrat-Krakowsky was behind the development of this sports car based on the Laurin & Klement RK in 1921**
- › **The well-preserved RK/M is today one of the most valuable exhibits in the National Technical Museum in Prague**

**Mladá Boleslav, 14 May 2026 – The imaginative entrepreneur Count Alexander Kolowrat-Krakowsky shaped the Austrian film industry at the beginning of the 20th century and also left his mark as an enthusiastic car racer. Count 'Sascha' is considered the creative force behind the unique Laurin & Klement RK/M, which is now one of the most valuable exhibits in the National Technical Museum in Prague. Laurin & Klement acquired the sporty model after taking over the Reichenberger Automobil Fabrik (RAF), later modifying it with a more powerful 4.7-litre engine. The company thus helped launch the innovative vehicle's second successful motorsport career in the newly founded Czechoslovakia.**

The Laurin & Klement RK commemorates a fascinating, almost forgotten chapter of automotive history: the Reichenberger Automobil Fabrik (RAF). The company, which operated in what is now Liberec, specialised in custom-built luxury vehicles. Its founder was Baron Theodor von Liebieg, one of the first automobile owners in Central Europe. As the costly production of car bodies gradually became less profitable for von Liebieg, he began searching for a solution. At the same time, he was also a member of the Board at Laurin & Klement, so a takeover by the up-and-coming and more efficient company from Mladá Boleslav was an obvious choice. The merger was finalised in 1912.

Immediately before the sale, however, von Liebieg had acquired the licence to build valveless slide engines for the RAF 18/50 HP from the Swabian specialist Daimler. They were based on the so-called Knight principle and considered pioneering at the time. In 1913, Laurin & Klement incorporated the luxury Landulet with the name RK into their own model range practically unchanged; the model designation stood for 'RAF-Knight'. The term Landulet, taken from coachbuilding, refers to automobiles with a partially closed body whose rear roof section can be opened like a convertible. By 1915, 116 units of the RK had rolled out of the factory gates in Mladá Boleslav.

The sporty variant of the model for Count Kolowrat was built in 1913. The 1,400-kilogram vehicle had a 4712 cm<sup>3</sup>, 36.8 kw (50 hp) slide-valve engine. The four-cylinder transmitted its power via a multi-plate clutch to a four-speed gearbox, the highest gear of which was a direct-drive mechanism. Longitudinally arranged semi-elliptic springs formed the chassis; it also had screw spindle steering. In addition to a hand-operated drum brake for the rear wheels, two foot brakes were installed, each acting on the torque transmission, one in front of the gearbox and the other behind it.

Count Sascha used the Laurin & Klement RK as a private car, but in 1913 and 1914 he also competed with it successfully in the Alpine Rally, one of the most popular long-distance races of the time. When the First World War broke out, he made the car available to the military. By 1916, the vehicle had covered 70,000 kilometres without any major technical problems – a remarkable mileage by the standards of the time.

At the end of the war, the car found its way back to its owner, who had friendly ties to the company as a shareholder. Kolowrat-Krakowsky, therefore, had no trouble convincing the firm to rebuild the now eight-year-old vehicle: it was given a new four-cylinder racing engine with overhead valves and double electric magneto ignition, which delivered 55 kW (75 hp) of power from a 4,713 cm<sup>3</sup> displacement. From then on, the model was given the designation RK/M.

After its reconstruction, the top speed of Count Sasha's car increased from between 90 and 100 km/h originally to as fast as 125 km/h. Unsurprisingly, with František Svoboda at the wheel, the car enjoyed numerous successes on domestic racetracks in the first half of the 1920s. The RK/M won the International Reliability Tour of Czechoslovakia in 1921, triumphed in the Schöber race in the class up to 5.3-litre capacity the following year and also set the benchmark in hill climbs; Svoboda finished third in the Zbraslav – Jíloviště hill climb contest.

In the following decades, Kolowrat's car was frequently overhauled and modified, and today it is one of the most attractive exhibits in Prague's National Technical Museum. Thanks to its dimensions, attractive design as well as its impressive patina and extraordinary history, it won one of the main categories of the Classic Car Elegance Competition at Loučeň Castle in 2015.

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**Škoda Motorsport:**



**Media images:**



**Laurin & Klement RK/M (1921)**

Compared to the original 1913 specification with the Knight engine, the Laurin & Klement RK/M from 1921 was distinguished by a four-cylinder with overhead valves, 4.7-litre displacement and a power output of 55 kW (75 hp). It reached speeds of up to 125 km/h.

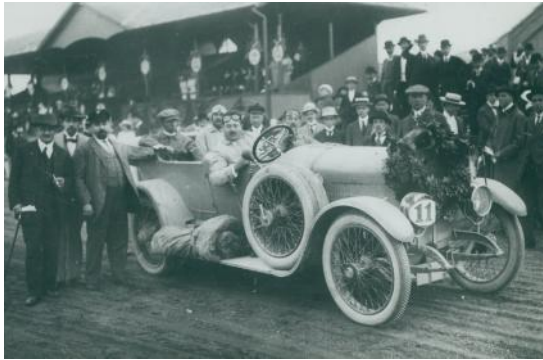
Source: Škoda Auto



**Laurin & Klement RK/M (1921)**

The Laurin & Klement team, led by legendary racing driver Sascha Kolowrat-Krakowsky, demonstrated the strengths of the vehicles from Mladá Boleslav in the 1922 reliability tour.

Source: Škoda Auto



**Laurin & Klement RK/M (1921)**

Count Sascha used the Laurin & Klement RK as a private car, but in 1913 and 1914 (pictured) he also competed with it successfully in the Alpine Rally, one of the most popular long-distance races of the time.

Source: Škoda Auto

**Škoda Motorsport**

- > Škoda celebrates 125 years of Motorsport since the first efforts in 1901, garnering success in rallies as well as in circuit racing.
- > Highlights include winning the 1981 European Touring Car Championship (ETCC) with the Škoda 130 RS.
- > Since 2009, the Škoda Fabia celebrated numerous successes for the Czech manufacturer on rally stages worldwide.
- > Until 2014, the Škoda Fabia S2000 (2.0 naturally aspirated engine, four-wheel drive) secured 50 international titles and national rally championships. The Škoda Fabia S2000 also helped to win the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) and the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC) three times each.
- > The successor model Škoda Fabia R5 (1.6 turbo engine, four-wheel drive) entered the scene in 2015. Later renamed to Škoda Fabia Rally2 and followed by the further developed Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo, the model collected nearly 2,000 victories in 68 countries until the end of the 2022 season.
- > During this period, Škoda Motorsport factory drivers Jan Kopecký (CZE), Esapekka Lappi (FIN), Pontus Tidemand (SWE) and Kalle Rovanperä (FIN) won the FIA World Rally Championship's support category WRC2/WRC2 Pro. Škoda Motorsport also took the WRC2/WRC2 Pro Manufacturers' title five times in a row from 2015 to 2019.
- > Beginning with the 2020 season, Škoda Motorsport changed its strategy to supporting private teams. The success story continued: Driving a Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo run by Toksport WRT, Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR) und Emil Lindholm (FIN) became WRC2 Champions in 2021 and 2022. Mikkelsen became WRC2 Champion again in 2023 with team Toksport WRT, when the all-new Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 entered the scene. The Škoda Motorsport supported team Toksport WRT also won the WRC2 Teams' title three times in 2020, 2022 and 2023. In 2025 Toksport WRT took another WRC2 Teams' title and Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov of Toksport WRT become WRC2 Challenger drivers' and co-drivers' champions respectively.
- > Škoda Motorsport customer teams have also won titles in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the FIA African Rally Championship (ARC), the FIA North American and Central American Rally Championship (NACAM), the FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR) and the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC).

**Škoda Auto**

- > is successfully steering through the new decade with the Next Level Škoda Strategy;
- > aims to become one of the top three best-selling brands in Europe by the end of the decade by offering its customers the best of both worlds through a range of attractive BEV, hybrid & ICE products;
- > effectively exploits the potential in important growth markets such as India, Vietnam and the ASEAN region;
- > currently offers customers 12 passenger car model ranges: Fabia, Scala, Octavia, Superb, Kamiq, Karoq, Kodiaq, Elroq, Enyaq, Slavia, Kylaq and Kushaq;
- > delivered more than 1,040,000 vehicles to customers worldwide in 2025;
- > has been part of the Volkswagen Group, one of the world's most successful car manufacturers, for more than 30 years;
- > is part of Brand Group CORE, an organisational merger of the Volkswagen Group's volume brands, with the aim of achieving joint growth and significantly increasing the overall efficiency of all five volume brands;
- > independently develops and produces components such as MEB battery systems, engines and transmissions for other Volkswagen Group brands;
- > operates three production plants in the Czech Republic; has production capacities in Slovakia, Kazakhstan and India, mostly through group partnerships, as well as in Vietnam and Ukraine in cooperation with a local partner;
- > employs around 40,000 people worldwide and is active in almost 100 markets.