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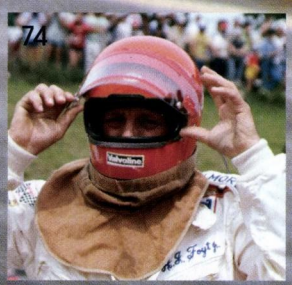
Volume 83 Number 4

The Original Motor Racing Magazine

contents







Features

Nelson Piquet 34
Brazil's triple World Champion talks of fun with Bernie and Gordon, friction with Nigel

Profile 45
Exactly why Renault's 2006 World Championship-winning R26 was so successful

Lunch with... 56
Simon Taylor finds out why Ross Brawn's taking a break and when he wants to return

AJ Foyt 74
One of the USA's all-time greats won Indy four times, twice in his own Coyotes

Grand Designs 82
Ilmor's 500i engine side-stepped a rule – and won Indy

Jackie Oliver 84
He won Le Mans and a Can-Am title, but never a race in F1 – as a driver or team boss

Grand Prix Saboteurs 92
Three racers who became Resistance heroes of WWII

Photo Gallery 98
Another feast of Roger Lane's superb '60s shots which have never been seen in print

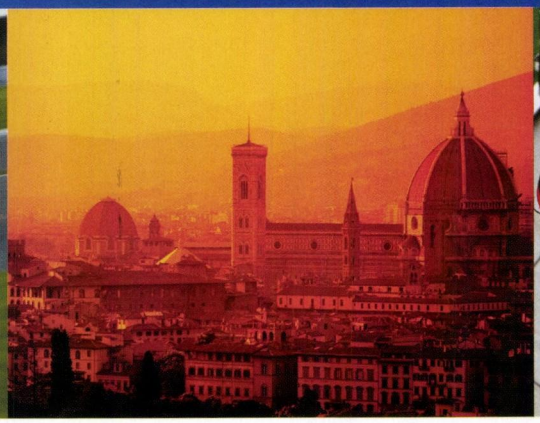


Nelson Piquet moved to Lotus for big bucks, but no joy, in 1988 – see p34

Cover: Schlegelmilch. This page: LAT, Ian Fraser

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13th May	Spanish F1	3 nights from £649
27th May	Monaco F1	3 nights from £499
3rd June	Italian MotoGP	3 nights from £545
10th June	Canadian F1	4 nights from £1455
17th June	Le Mans 24 Hours	Sold Out
17th June	US F1	3 nights from £1580
1st July	French F1	Sold Out
8th July	British F1	Hospitality only
22nd July	German F1	3 nights from £680
5th August	Hungarian F1	3 nights from £625
26th August	Turkish F1	3 nights from £625
9th September	Italian F1	3 nights from £720
16th September	Belgian F1	Sold Out
30th September	Japanese F1	5 nights from £1015
7th October	Chinese F1	5 nights from £855
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Volume 83 Number 4

Eighty-fourth year of publication

contents

Regulars

News 8
Donington sold, 'Toulo' de Graffenried obituary

Desirables 16
Fast Clio, Linley picture frame

Book Reviews 19
Porsche 917, Automobile Year

Models 20
Spirit of America and monster Merc

Auctions 23
Brabham BT11A, Ferrari 512S

Letters/You were there 25
Memories of Le Mans in an Imp

Guest Column 29
Musician Leo Sayer

Mark Hughes 31
Is Webber destined to be the latest big talent to underachieve in F1?

Andrew Frankel 32
Mercedes SLR 722 disappoints

Busmans' Holiday 66
David Coulthard's Le Mans 'win'

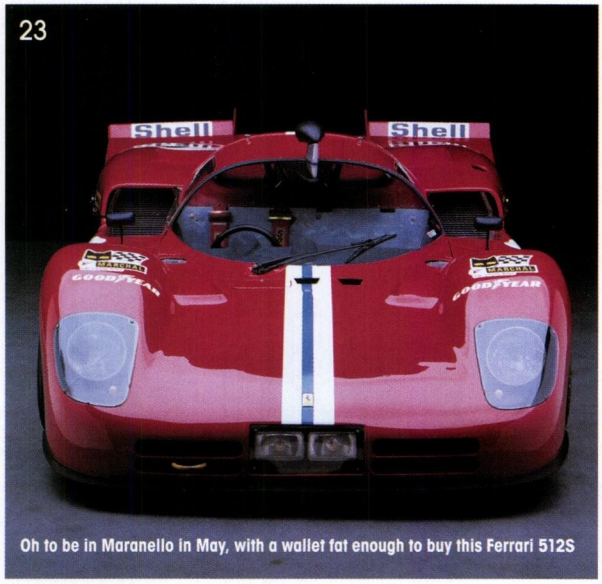
Nigel Roebuck 68
On Bernie Ecclestone's prescience and distrust of long-term planning

Classic Cars 70
Brash but charming Corvette

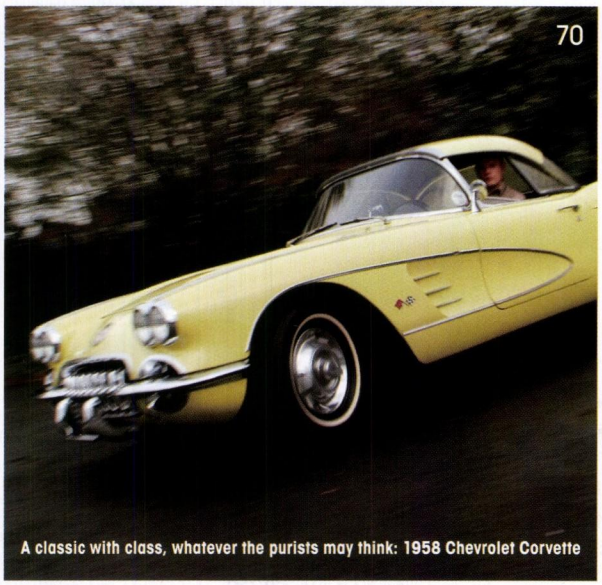
The Specialists 90
Aston Martin Works Service

Bill Boddy 106
Giant Fiat to be re-born

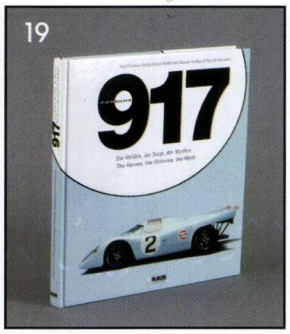
Parting Shot 110
Lago-Talbots at Reims



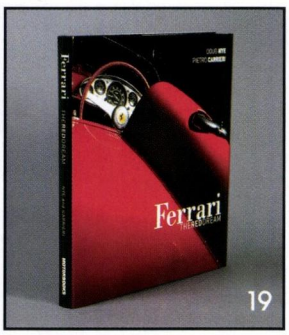
Oh to be in Maranello in May, with a wallet fat enough to buy this Ferrari 512S



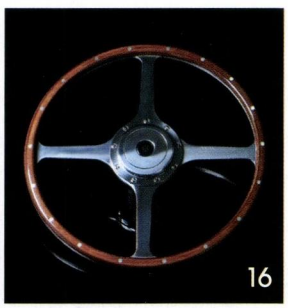
A classic with class, whatever the purists may think: 1958 Chevrolet Corvette



Yes, another work on Porsche's great 917, but with new material to offer



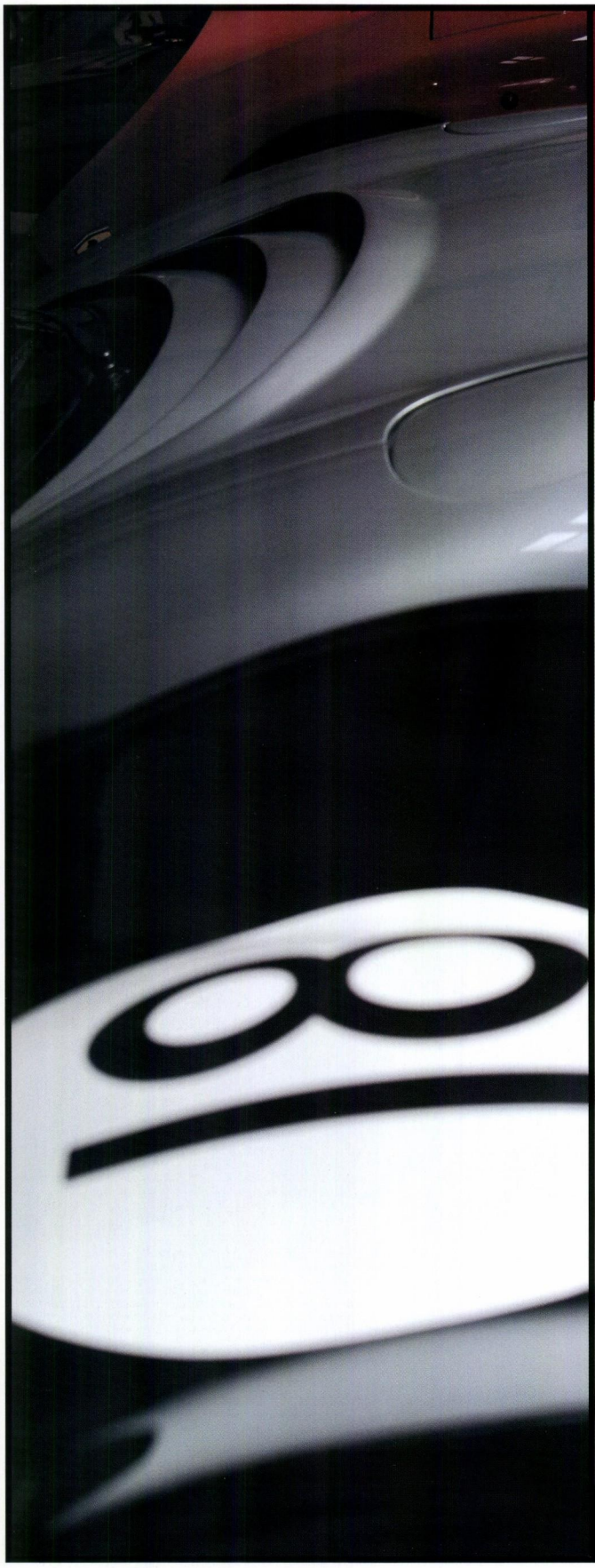
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LAT, Ian Dawson, RM Auctions



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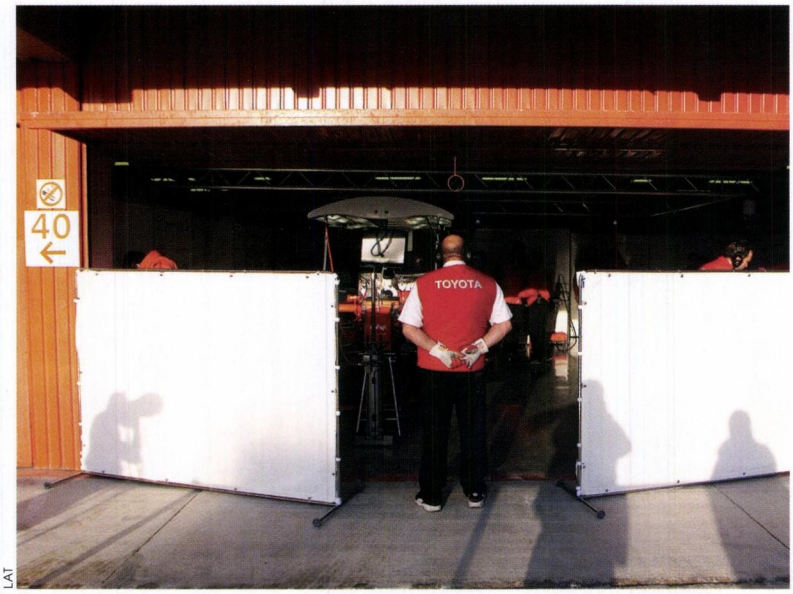
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EDITORIAL



LAT

UNDER WRAPS

We've been to France. Some of us to the wonderful Retromobile show; another party to photograph the F1 Renault which Fernando Alonso drove in his 2006 title season. That brought up a question of security which would have made Jenks' beard curl.

In his time DSJ could fill this magazine with detailed technical facts about current grand prix cars. Of course, teams have always tried to conceal innovations right to the first race, though few would go to the lengths Auto Union did with its new car in 1938. *Motor Sport* commented that it seemed to have stuck with the previous car's V16 format, judging by the stub exhausts – until it started up, when smoke issued from only 12 of them. The engineers had added four fake stubs to disguise a new V12.

Despite any early-season obfuscation, Jenks would eventually be able to photograph most parts of the suspension, engine and gearbox and explain them in the magazine. It wasn't like that with the Renault R26. Even though this is last year's car, we were asked not to open up the body panels, and could not photograph the engine. That's not to criticise Renault, who were extremely helpful over the shoot, and to whom go our thanks; it's merely a lament for today's culture of enormous secrecy over minute design elements. Those of us who are more interested by machinery than by drivers' contracts find that a shame.

Gordon Cruickshank, Deputy Editor

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NEWS



Historic racing will remain a pillar of future schedules at Donington Park, according to the circuit's new owners

Charlie Wooding

DONINGTON PARK LEASE SOLD

A new company has taken a 150-year lease on Donington Park and vows to focus on the Collection and to support historic racing

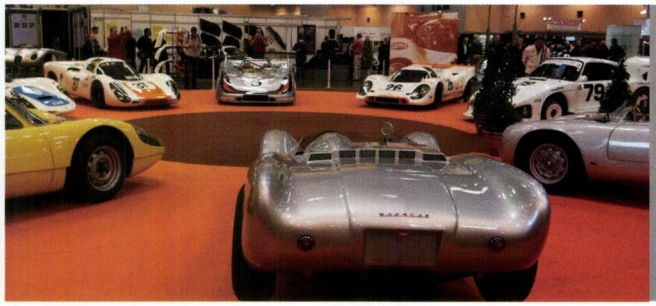
The new owner of Donington Park has pledged to keep historic racing as a key part of the venue's future programme and encourage more visitors to the Donington Grand Prix Collection.

The sale of a 150-year lease on the complete venue was recently completed and a new holding company, called Donington Ventures Leisure Limited, has been formed by Simon Gillett and Lee Gill. As well as the existing 300-acre site, the new owner has also acquired a further 400 acres of land, which is situated largely behind the Old Hairpin and McLeans corner.

Circuit founder Tom Wheatcroft has joined the new company in the role of president, while his son Kevin will act as special advisor. His particular focus is on developing and promoting the Grand Prix Collection, which the new owner will run, though the actual cars will remain in the ownership of Tom Wheatcroft. The change of ownership of the lease on Donington ends a frequently strained relationship between Wheatcroft and former lease-holder Live Nation (formerly the Clear Channel Group).

Gillett, a confessed motorsport enthusiast, has pledged to invest further in the venue and plans to pay particular attention to spectator facilities. The 2007 racing programme will continue as planned, with three major historic events on the schedule. "Historic racing is absolutely central to the future of Donington Park," says Gillett. "It is very strong in the UK and we'll play our part in supporting it. We've already got a great historic calendar for 2007."

Gillett, whose grandfather Tom was a mechanic for Billy Cotton's ERA at the 1938 Donington Grand Prix, also plans to greatly increase the number of visitors to the Donington GP Collection.



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MANUFACTURERS AND FANS FLOCK TO ESSEN

A Porsche stand featuring live restorations is one of the stars of Techno-Classica Essen 2007, which is billed as the world's largest classic fair.

The 20 halls boast contributions from over a dozen car manufacturers. Exhibits include a 1954 DKW rally car, the oldest Alfa Romeo in the company's museum, Emperor Wilhelm's Mercedes and the sensational Jaguar XJ13. There are large restoration and classic motorsports sections, automobilia, literature and models, plus over 200 classic racing cars on sale.

Date: March 29-April 1. For details see www.classiccarshows.co.uk



LAT

SHOW TIME

More than a decade after it last featured as a special stage on the Rally of Great Britain, Chatsworth in Derbyshire will again host rally cars when 'Rally Show at Chatsworth' is held on September 29/30.

The grounds of Chatsworth House regularly hosted a spectator stage on Rally GB until 1996, and now Malcolm Neill, former RAC Rally Manager, is planning an event that will include competitive rallies for both historic and modern rally cars, and a pageant of rallying history, featuring many of the world's greatest rally cars.

"We are planning a wonderful weekend at Chatsworth, with famous drivers in fabulous cars," said Neill.

BRADFORD BLAST

Group B rally cars will take to the streets of Bradford City Centre on July 22 when cars from 'Slowly Sideways' take part in the 'Bradford Classic'.

The cars will then run at speed over a Super-special stage in nearby Odsal Stadium. Up to 15 cars from the Group B era of the early 1980s will form a 'tribute to rallying'.

"This is big: it's been months in the planning, and means road closures and diverting over 200 bus routes," said Steve Davis of Slowly Sideways.

Chimay licence restored

Racing will return to the Chimay street circuit in Belgium this year after local administrative issues were resolved.

The annual Chimay race meeting, which dates back to before the Second World War, was cancelled at short notice last year after wrangles over licences and permits. However, those problems have now been dealt with and all six Top Hat race series will have hour-long races in the 2007 programme on July 14/15. "I'm delighted that we're going back to Chimay; it's a wonderful event," says Top Hat boss Julius Thurgood.



Eric Sawyer

GT SERIES LAUNCHED

A new endurance race series for pre-1966 GTs and pre-1963 sports cars has been created by Flavien and Vanessa Marçais. It features three races in France in 2007, with an intended expansion into the UK in 2008.

Two dates have been confirmed for the 'GT and Sports Car Cup', with a one-hour race at Pau on May 26/27 and a 90-minute race at Dijon on June 23/24. They aim to add a third race at Paul Ricard at the end of October.

"This is a brand new thing for us," says Vanessa. "The organisers at Pau asked us to put a grid together. The response has been unbelievable. Cars and drivers have come to find us, and we'll probably draw out more rare French cars."

The races will feature similar cars to the Gentleman Drivers' series; indeed the loss of the Gentleman Drivers race at Pau due to a clashing Masters fixture at Brands was the catalyst for the Pau race. "We're not going against anyone and we hope it won't clash in any way. Our series will be 'back to basics' for genuine cars."



New series will welcome Maseratis and Jaguars like these seen at Reims in 1956

LAT

NEWS IN BRIEF

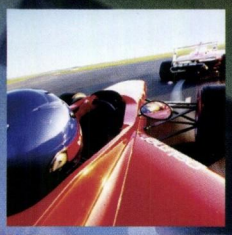
A race for Le Mans-type cars running into the dusk of Saturday evening will be a feature of the Silverstone Classic on July 28/29. A capacity 44-car grid is expected from the World Sportscar Masters series. Porsche is the featured marque, and the field is set to include 917s, 908s and 906s.

Pre-war sports cars will race at the Oulton Park Gold Cup for the first time in 2007. The August Bank Holiday meeting will include the Motor Racing Legends pre-war sports car series, which also include races at Dijon, Porto, Silverstone and Spa on its five-round schedule.

The Silver Arrows of Mercedes and Auto Union will be the theme of the SEE RED race meeting at Donington Park on September 15/16. The silver edition of the VSCC's flagship marks the 70th anniversary of the 1937 Donington GP when the German cars dominated.

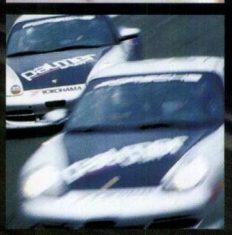
To avoid clashing with several major UK rallies, the annual celebration of rallying heritage at Castle Combe will move to a new date of September 22 in 2007. Rallyday, which starred Ari Vatanen in 2006, regularly attracts over 10,000 fans to see displays and demonstrations.

A contingent of over 60 British racers and their classic cars will race at Daytona in November on a package trip organised by the Classic Sports Car Club. For an all-in fee of around £3000, the cars will be shipped to the Florida track for races from November 9-11.





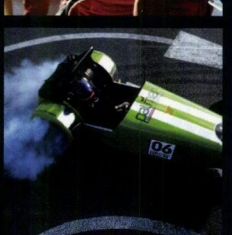












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NEWS



McKlein

LEGENDS FOR SAFARI

Rally legends Stig Blomqvist (above) and Björn Waldegård are among early entries for the third East African Safari Classic Rally in December. The former World Rally Champions will team up with David Sutton at Historic Motorsport to campaign a pair of Escort RS1800s in the nine-day, 5000-kilometre rally.

Blomqvist, who has yet to win the Safari, will be co-driven by regular partner Ana Goni, while four-times Safari winner Waldegård will have his son Mathias alongside.

With 2003 and 2005 Classic winner Rob Collinge claiming that he has retired from rallying, the way is open for a new winner in the next Safari Classic.

Preview

RACE RETRO

Group B rally action and 450 stands at Stoneleigh show

One of the biggest ever gatherings of Group B rally cars, many of them in action on a demonstration special stage, will feature at Race Retro, the International Historic Motorsport Show at Stoneleigh Park near Coventry on March 23-25.

The event will include 450 stands covering 70 years of historic motorsport. After a trade day on Friday, public days on Saturday and Sunday will include live action from the four-wheel-drive, turbocharged Group B rally cars of the 1980s. French ace Michèle Mouton will be a star attraction at the wheel of her 1985 Pikes Peak Hillclimb 500bhp Audi S1 Sport Quattro.



LAT

Mouton's S1, now owned by John Hanlon, is one of nearly 40 rally cars, including about 25 Gp B cars, to be demonstrated. "I don't believe that we've ever had so many works Group B cars together at one time," says organiser Steve Davies from the Slowly Sideways organisation.

As well as Mouton, Björn Waldegård will be in action in the Porsche 911SC he used on the 2005 East African Safari Classic, while Russell Brookes will drive an Opel Manta 400.

Mouton will open the show on Saturday, while 1969 Le Mans Porsche 917 team-mates Richard Attwood and Vic Elford will open it on Sunday. They will then meet visitors and sign autographs.

Advance one-day tickets cost £18 (two-day ticket, £32). Visit www.historicmotorsportshow.com or call the ticket hotline on 08701 262121.



LAT

McLAREN LIFE TO BE FILMED

A feature film is to be made based on the life story of the late Bruce McLaren, with filming set to start early in 2008.

Barrie Osborne, producer of 'The Lord of the Rings' will be the producer of the film. He says the movie will trace the emotional story of McLaren from childhood in New Zealand through to F1 as a driver and manufacturer.

"We have been really pleased with the interest shown so far in this project both in New Zealand and internationally," says Osborne, who also made 'The World's Fastest Indian'.

The aim is to release the film internationally towards the end of 2008 or beginning of 2009.



Jim Houlgrave

GROUP C REVIVAL

The new team behind the management of the Group C/GTP race series is confident it will secure bigger grids for the 2007 season as part of a three-year plan to move the sports-prototype cars to the forefront of historic racing.

A group of competitors have made a financial commitment to the category and a return to a support race at Le Mans is one of their ambitions. "There are over 50 cars in Europe that could be competing," says racer Henry Pearman. The season will be headlined by a race at the Silverstone Classic in July.



LAT

GPLive

TURBO CHARGERS

Organisers expect a dozen 1984-87 F1 cars for demonstration runs

The organisers of the GPLive event at Donington Park in May are hoping to have a spread of F1 cars from the turbo era to take part in demonstration runs over the weekend of May 19/20.

"We're aiming to get about a dozen cars from the 1984-87 era to run," says event director Charles Challinger. "It will be a rare opportunity to see these cars in action." Among the cars pledged is an ex-Senna Lotus-Renault 98T from 1986, shown above on pole position at the French GP.

In addition, a number of pre-wing 3-litre F1 cars are being assembled from the 1966-1968 era, and will either complete demonstration runs or race during GPLive, depending on the wishes of the owners.

500cc ANNIVERSARY

The 60th anniversary of the first race for 500cc Formula 3 cars at Gransden Lodge in July 1947 will be celebrated by a special race on the Brands Hatch GP circuit during the Historic Superprix on June 30/July 1.

Organised and backed by Richard Utley, the race entry is free. "I have a list of more than 60 known running cars," says Utley, "and we're hoping to get a grid of about 30 cars."



Early days of 500cc F3 at Brands Hatch

LAT



LAT

SHELSLEY SURFACES

The entire 1000 yards of Shelsley Walsh will be resurfaced before the 2007 season, with work at the historic Worcestershire hillclimb venue scheduled for early April.

For the first time since 1992 the hill will be resurfaced in one go, and the Midland Automobile Club plans to pay particular attention to the section at the Crossing, where cars have been bottoming out in recent times.

"It is a considerable investment in the hill," says Roger Thomas of the MAC, which owns the venue.

EX-SCHUMACHER CARS TAKE PRIDE OF PLACE



A small mews street in London is currently the home of four ex-Schumacher F1 cars. The Jordan, two Benettons and an F2002 Ferrari are part of the stock of a new company, Cars International, which specialises in grand prix and sporting machinery. Former F1 driver Martin Brundle and fellow TV commentator Tony Jardine were guests of honour at the January opening of the showrooms. The company's founders are Jonathan Kaiser and Paul Osborn, who often drives the F1 cars at events such as the Goodwood Festival.

As well as sales, the firm offers a race-preparation and restoration service based near Swindon, which can handle everything from 1960s GTs to late-model F1 cars. Visit www.carsinternational.com for details.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Stephane Ratel's SRO organisation is planning to bring the mighty GT1 cars back in to racing this season with a trial pair of races for cars running to period 1990s regulations. McLaren F1-GTRs and Porsche 911GT1s are expected in the '90s GT1 Revival Series, with races at Silverstone (May 5/6) and Nogaro (September 29/30).

The 2007 Roger Albert Clark Rally will run from November 17-19, with more special stages in the dark, in response to competitor feedback. The event, in the style of the 1970s Lombard RAC Rally, will start in Yorkshire before switching to the Scottish Borders and Kielder forest. The two overnight halts will again be in Carlisle.

Personal memorabilia of pre-war racer Gwenda Hawkes has gone on show at Brooklands Museum, expanding the display about lady drivers at the Track. The objects were a private donation and join the material on show in the Ladies Reading Room. Gwenda raced the Duesenberg later donated to the museum by Jenks, and a Derby-Miller in which she broke records at Montlhéry and the Brooklands ladies' lap record.



Lotus enthusiasts can take to Donington circuit during the Club Lotus Show and Festival on March 17/18. Classic Team Lotus will also bring a grand prix car. Tel: 01362 691144

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Illustrated:
Two owners from new, Brooklands race-winning 1923 Bugatti Type 23 Brescia from The Yorkshire Car Collection

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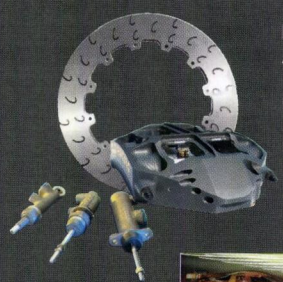
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OBITUARIES, HOW TO...

OBITUARY



LAT

De Graffenried's greatest moment – Silverstone, 1949, in Enrico Platé's Maserati

'TOULO' DE GRAFFENRIED

The passing of 'Toulo' de Graffenried has broken one of the few remaining links with the earliest post-war grands prix. The Swiss racer's finest result was winning the 1949 British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

Baron Emmanuel de Graffenried, born in May 1914, was a notable driver in the early years of the World Championship and raced for the works Alfa Romeo team before retiring in 1956 to concentrate on his Alfa Romeo dealership. Later he took on a PR role for the Swiss-based Philip Morris tobacco company and was a regular visitor to F1 races until the 1980s.

'Toulo', as he was known, started racing in 1936, having been inspired by races at Bremgarten in his home town of Berne. It was on the daunting, cobbled 4.5-mile street circuit that de Graffenried had some of his best results.

After winning the pre-World Championship 1949 Silverstone race in a Maserati 4CLT/48, he contested five rounds of the 1950 championship, with sixth places at home and at Monza. Over the next six years, he picked up several top-six finishes, with a career-best fourth place in the 1953 Belgian Grand Prix at Spa.

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OBITUARY

BENNY PARSONS

Former NASCAR Winston Cup champion Benny Parsons recently lost his battle against cancer, aged 66.

The former taxi driver started racing in 1964, and his NASCAR title came at the expense of Richard Petty in 1973. Parsons added victory in the Daytona 500 in 1975 and won 21 NASCAR races during a 24-year career.

He finally retired from racing at the end of 1988, but then carved a very successful career as a hugely popular broadcaster, first with ESPN. In 1996 he won an Emmy award for his work as a NASCAR expert commentator.

OBITUARY

GUNNAR ELMGREN

The historic racing world was saddened to learn of the death of Gunnar Elmgren, until recently President of the FIA Historic Motorsport Commission. The Swede passed away aged 64, after an illness.

He will be remembered as a popular figure in international historic racing, who dealt with many difficult issues with fairness.

After learning to drive at the age of 13, he enjoyed a successful career in the Swedish automotive industry. Elmgren was also an enthusiastic racer and enjoyed racing a Maserati 250F during the 1990s, as well as competing in an Austin Healey 100.

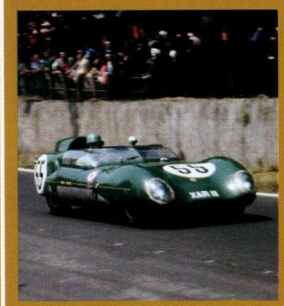
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An option for £15,000, or less, is the Lotus 7 – another very practical yet exciting sports-racing car. According to Robert Brooks of Bonhams – who has spent years at the sharp end of



the grid – both will give you a thrilling but straightforward route into historic racing. These cars cost little to run, and help is on hand from the Lotus XI register, the Historic Sports Car Club and the Vintage Sports Car Club.

More economic still might be a small capacity saloon car, for example a Standard 10 rather than the more costly Lotus Cortina or Mini Cooper options. Top Hat Racing, now part of the Masters series, runs great races for saloons, and founder Julius Thurgood is an expert on finding a suitable starter car.

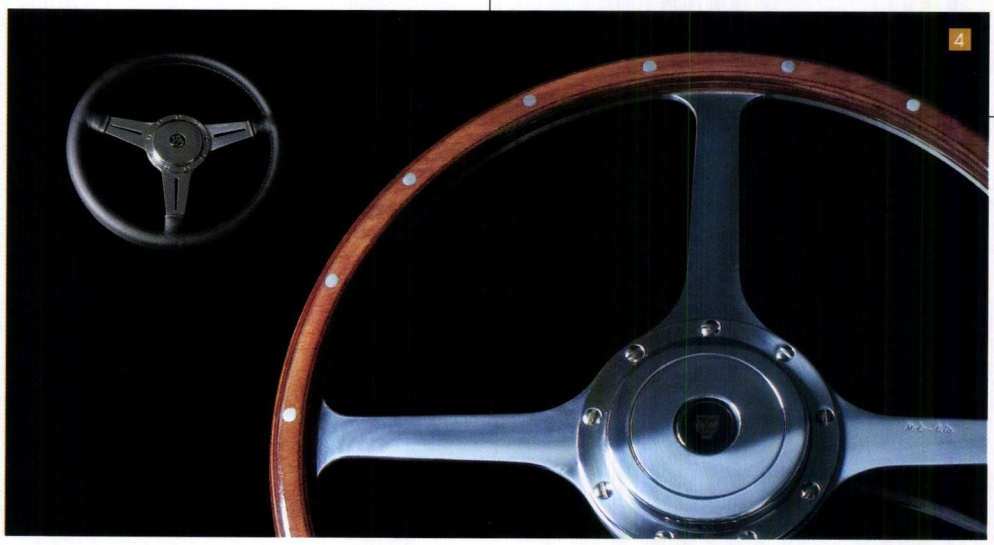
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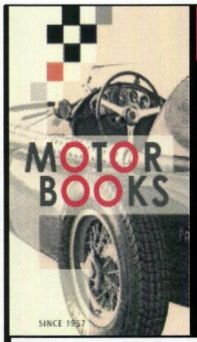
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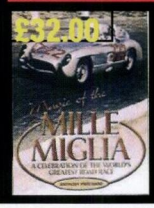


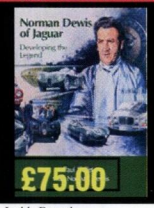
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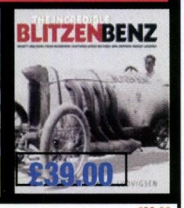


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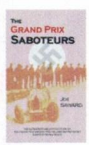


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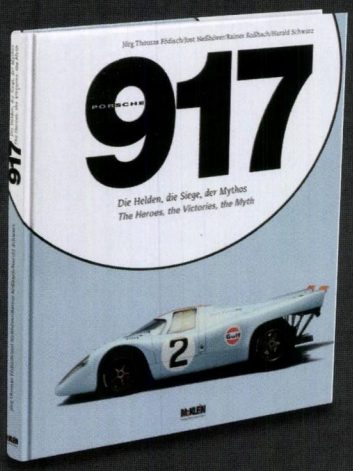
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Reviews

BOOKS



PORSCHE 917. THE HEROES, THE VICTORIES, THE MYTH

JT Födisch, J Nesshöver, R Rossbach & H Schwarz

Packed with interesting and unusual photographs and featuring chapters from Porsche personnel and drivers, plus sections on the Can-Am and Interserie spyders, this book majors on first-hand memories from the guys who actually drove the legend. It's a comprehensive tome and includes an extensive results appendix and profiles of the leading 917 drivers. The text is in both German and English and though the clunky English translation grates rather, it's still a good read with a mass of great images. **RH**

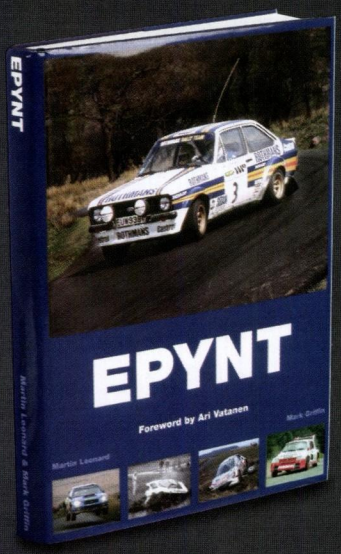
Published by McKlein Publishing, £34.99. ISBN: 3927458260

EPYNT

Martin Leonard and Mark Griffin

A labour of love, relating all you could possibly want to know about rallying on one of the most celebrated rallying grounds in Wales. This book has countless first-hand accounts, detailing the delights and very real hazards of Epynt. It's extremely well illustrated with a host of photos, covering the full breadth of the Epynt experience, from the quirky to the artistic and the frankly scary. There is also a comprehensive results section. One for the enthusiast. **NP**

Available from griffinrally.com, £35.00





AUTOMOBILE YEAR 2006/2007

Ian Norris

An essential reference book if you're in the business, and something of an institution, having been published every year since 1953. There's something for everyone in Automobile Year, a nice book to sit down with on a winter's evening and just enjoy looking back over the year gone by. This is the annual for car nuts, covering everything that moves in the automotive world, including a comprehensive review of the sporting year. Some nice pictures too. Automobile Year is alive and well under its new owner Christian Philippsen. **RW**

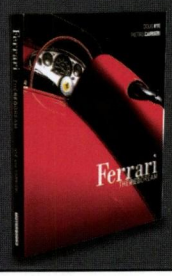
Published by Philippsen, £43. ISBN: 2916206043

FERRARI – THE RED DREAM

Doug Nye and Pietro Carrieri

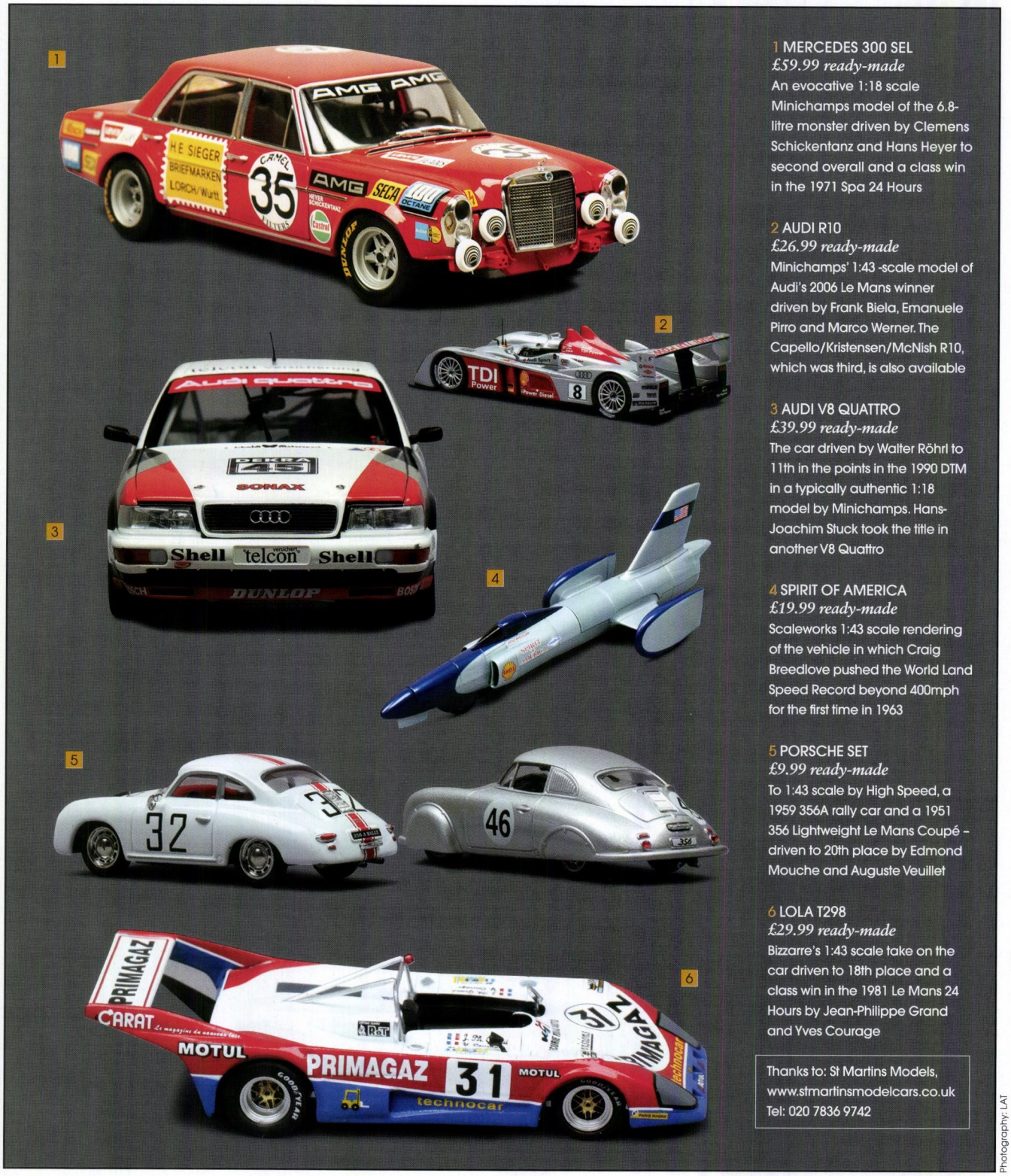
What a beautiful book. If you love Ferrari, you have to check out this book, at the heart of which are some truly stunning photographs by Pietro Carrieri. The talented Italian's pictures just make you stop and stare while Nye's text tells you all about what it is you're looking at. The Red Dream is one of those books that come along every now and then which you simply cannot resist. Great value, too, compared to lesser works of this type. It's a beauty, and the perfect present for devotees of the red cars. **RW**

Published by Motorbooks International, £40. ISBN: 0760328277



Photography: LAT

MODELS



1 MERCEDES 300 SEL
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An evocative 1:18 scale Minichamps model of the 6.8-litre monster driven by Clemens Schickentanz and Hans Heyer to second overall and a class win in the 1971 Spa 24 Hours

2 AUDI R10
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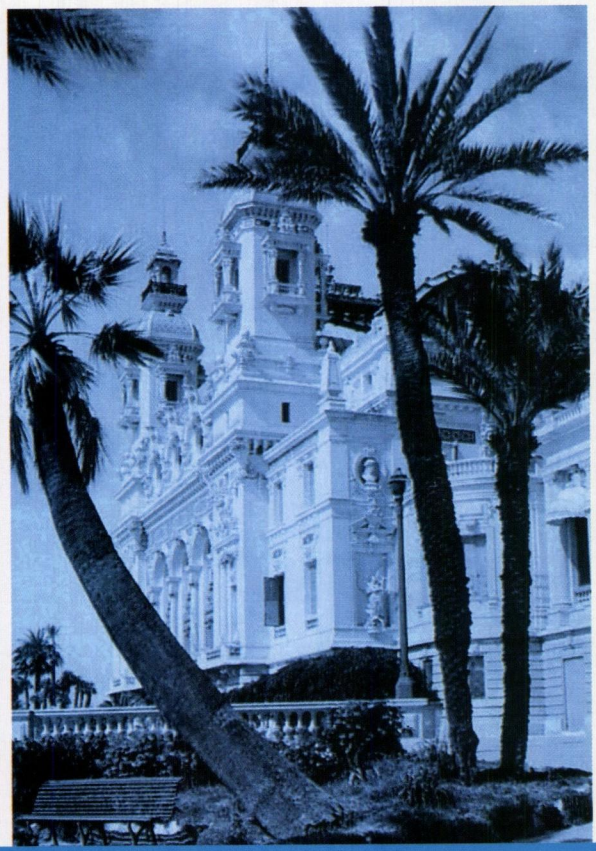
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MONACO

LÉGENDE et PASSION

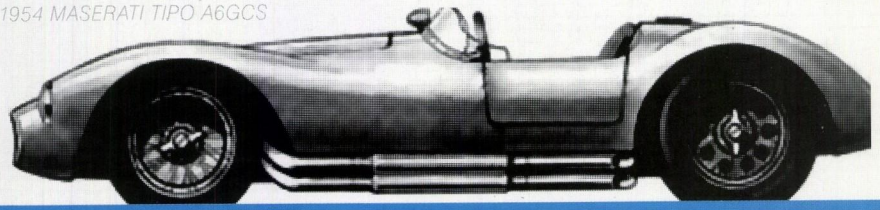
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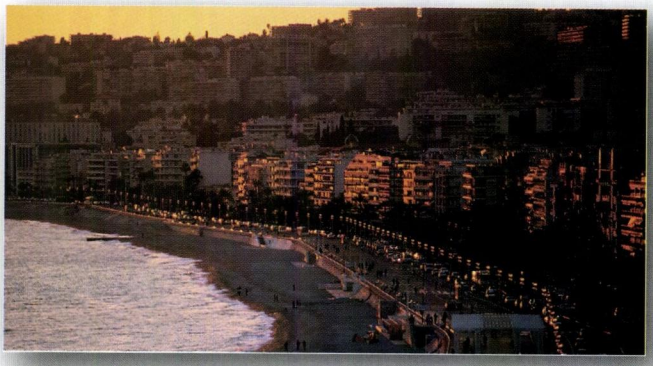
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ABTA

This month's lots...

Brabham chance

Competitive historic racer stars at Bonhams' Race Retro sale

1 TASMAN BRABHAM

Bonhams will put up a Brabham BT11A at its sale at Race Retro at Stoneleigh on March 24. The Tasman variant of the BT11 grand prix car, which ran in period with the 2.7-litre Coventry Climax FPF engine, is expected to fetch between £110,000 and £140,000. Also on the bill are a Lotus XI (estimate £80,000-£90,000), a Formula Atlantic-spec Brabham BT35 (£27,000-£30,000) and a F5000 Lola T142 originally raced in South Africa by Jackie Pretorius (£32,000-£36,000). Tel: 020 7468 5801



1 Tasman BT11A



2 Lantern slides

2 CAMPBELL'S CREAM

A fascinating lost collection of glass 'magic lantern' slides featuring Sir Malcolm Campbell is coming up for auction in the Cheffins sale at The Saleground, Sutton, near Ely, Cambs, on April 21. Images of record attempts, a young Donald sitting in his father's Bluebird and even a treasure-hunting trip to the Cocos Islands are among the slides which recently emerged from a garage clearout. Tel: 01223 213777



3 NART 512S

3 RED WEDGE

An ex-NART Ferrari 512S is the star lot at the *Legenda e Passione* Auction at Maranello to be held by RM Auctions in association with Sotheby's on May 20. The car, driven by Sam Posey and Ronnie Bucknum in the 1970 Sebring 12 Hours shortly after it was delivered, is said to be one of the most original examples around. Among the other lots is a 1997 ex-Schumacher F1 Ferrari. Tel: 020 7293 6336



4 Sold: £650,000

4 ASTON ACTION

A 1963 Aston Martin DB4 GT – a lightweight, and the last built and sold by Aston Martin – went for an astonishing £650,000 at RM's Arizona sale on January 19. The headlining 1983 Le Mans-winning Porsche 956 failed to sell though, after the bidding stalled not far south of a million pounds.

DIARY

March 20
Barons, collectors cars at Sandown Park. Tel: 08454 306030

March 22
DVCA Vintage and classic cars, at Henstridge Airfield, Somerset. Tel: 01963 363 353

March 24
Bonhams, competition cars and automobilia at Race Retro, Stoneleigh. Tel: 020 7468 5801

April 3
BCA, collectors cars at Bridgewater, Somerset. Tel: 01252 743390

April 14
VCMA, collectors cars at Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcs. Tel: 01584 811118

April 13-15
RM, classic cars at Toronto, Canada. Tel: 001 519 352 4575

April 18
H&H, collectors cars at The Pavilion Gardens, Buxton, Derbyshire. Tel: 01925 730630

April 20-21
RM, the Gene Ponder Collection, at Marshall, Texas.

April 30
Bonhams, collectors cars at RAF Museum, Hendon, London.

AROUND THE DEALERS It's rare to see an Alfa Romeo Tipo B in a dealer's stock, but Hall and Hall are offering 5006, sold in 1932 to Marquis de las Casas, as well as a Ferrari 250 Monza sports racer. Tel: 01778 392 562 • Pugsley and Lewis in Beckenham, Kent, have a very original, unmolested Series 4 Aston Martin DB4 with a remarkable 15,500 miles on the clock. Tel: 020 8776 5577 • Fancy a DTM racecar? Oakfields offers a Mercedes CLK with 475bhp V8. Tel: 01256 760256

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Letters

OUR READERS RESPOND

RAILTON EXTRAS

Sir,

Michael MacDowel is right in his letter in the March issue to praise the late Victor Gauntlett for his fantastic effort in raising funds for Brooklands Museum's purchase of the Napier-Railton, but in fairness to the Heritage Lottery Fund it should be pointed out that it paid 75 per cent of the price, not 50 per cent.

Also, although Hawker Aircraft operated the Dunsfold aerodrome where the tests took place, it was the GQ Parachute Company which acquired the Napier-Railton and had it modified by Thomson & Taylor for braking-parachute trials in 1954 (when it still wore bodywork modified for the James Mason film *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*).

The 15in-diameter disc brakes, which we understand were built by Dunlop for a 1950s aircraft (so far unidentified) still work superbly during the regular runs we undertake. Look out for the car in action at the Brooklands Centenary on June 16/17 and at the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

Allan Winn, Director, Brooklands Museum Trust Ltd

COLLINS AT THE CLUB

Sir,

The profile of Peter Collins was particularly poignant for me when I read how Enzo Ferrari described his "generosity of character", something I can endorse from personal experience.

As a boy in the 1950s, I was an avid golfer at Kidderminster Golf Club. By that time I had already developed a keen interest in cars and would wander around the car park admiring members' cars.

I don't recall Peter ever playing golf but he visited on several occasions during which I often came into his company – I hesitate to say 'met' as in those days children were hardly introduced. However, I recall Peter as warm and friendly. On one sunny afternoon he arrived driving what I only saw then as a convertible Ferrari in dark green, the most memorable feature of which was the 'cut down' door.

Some 20 years later I discovered that this car was unique – 250GT Pininfarina Spider serial number 0655 GT. Peter fitted the car with disc brakes and D-type Dunlop alloy wheels but I cannot recall whether it was so fitted on that sunny afternoon in 1956 when he left with a friendly smile and a wave.

My next memory was being told that Peter had been killed. Father attended the funeral, returning home to share with me what Peter's father had told him – "Never let your son go motor racing." I have now been competing for over 40 years. However, in those quiet moments on the starting grid, the words of Peter's father always come back into my head and I make one extra tug on the seat belt. In that small way Peter Collins and his "generosity of character" live on.

Anthony Moody, via e-mail

DYNA-MATE

Sir,

My memory of Peter Collins involves an 850cc Dyna Panhard, which had been brought over for him to drive in a Silverstone Touring car race.

I remember my excitement when he drove my father's highly tuned Ford Prefect with me as passenger while my father tried out the Panhard.

Two things I clearly remember are how this real racing driver chatted to me (I was 10 or 11 then) and how slow the Dyna Panhard was compared to the Prefect. After this, of course, he was my hero.

However, I have no recall of how the Dyna Panhard performed or if it even started. Perhaps someone could enlighten me?

Bob Hamilton, Soulbury, Bucks.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

A HILLMAN IMP AT LE MANS

Sir,

Remembering my own 'You Were There' moment, I was a 14-year-old boy in the back of our Hillman Imp on our way to Le Mans in 1965. Suddenly the Imp was rocked as a bright red Italian V8 roared past us.

"Iso Grifo," I blurted out. My dad steadied the wheel as another shot past. This was dark green – a Le Mans Spitfire that would gain the French admiration as it toiled on bravely through the 24 hours.

The next evening, night and day were to be some of the best I ever spent. Sleeplessly I wallowed in the ecstasy of sound and crackling atmosphere as Ford took its maiden Le Mans win with such a flourish.

But the 'glad I was there' moment I cherish the most is of my dad passing the pits (after an eternity of trundling) in our little Imp grinning from ear to ear as mum and I waved from atop the pits on his 'open to the public' lap. A proper enthusiast! Vive Le Mans...

Nick Reece, Dolgellau, Wales



LAT

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MARIO AND MOORE?

Sir,

I very much enjoyed Simon Taylor's report on his lunch with Mario Andretti and all the memories it generated.

This prompted an almost forgotten memory. Can I ask your readers if I was dreaming, or did Mario once appear with Roger Moore in *The Saint*?

As I recall it, the plot called for Moore to take over Mario's race car (a single-seater at that) for some strange reason; this improbable event not even mentioning the rather different statures of the two.

I have often spoken of this to friends but none seem to remember it. Since this was before magic mushrooms perhaps I dreamed it.

Bob Dove, via e-mail

[An episode of The Saint featured Dan Gurney, Richie Ginther and Jack Brabham. Was that it? Ed]

PIONEERING WING

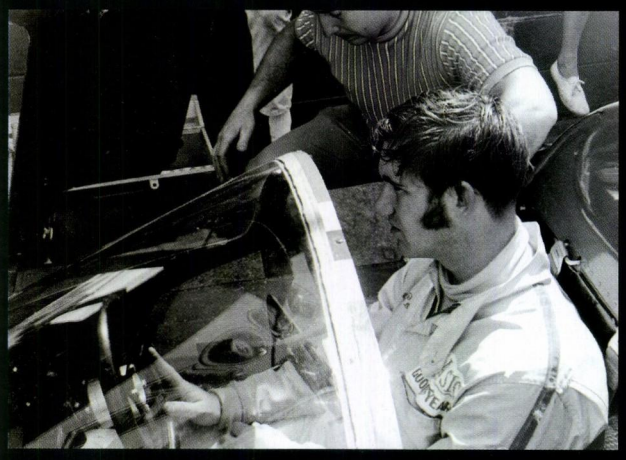
Sir,

Looking at the picture on page 47 of February's issue, Jean Rondeau's eponymous M379 puts me in mind of the FIA's much-vaunted 'Centreline Downwash Generating Wing', Formula 1's alleged cure-all.

Isn't it nice to see that motor racing's supposed premier ▶

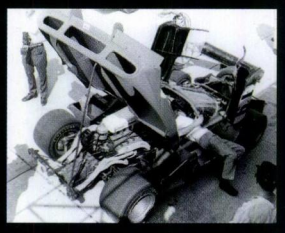
Letters

OUR READERS RESPOND





Left: Sam Posey in the NART Ferrari 512 he shared with Ronnie Bucknum. Above: Galli and Stommelen in Alfa pits. Below: Andretti/Merzario Ferrari



YOU WERE THERE

The 1970 Sebring 12-hour race is famous for Mario Andretti's almost single-handed, last-ditch victory over Peter Revson and Steve McQueen's Porsche. However, further down the finishing order there was a nearly as impressive, if less eye-catching, result from the Porsche 906 driven by Mike Rahal (father of Bobby), Dr Hugh Wise and Werner Frank – it won the under 2-litre class.

A young Ed Sexton, who was photographing the race in Florida for a school project, had been a gofer for Mike during the time he competed in SCCA National events with an Elva-Porsche, and came to know the Rahals, father and son, well.

"Mike was a business associate of my father and when he heard I liked racing, he asked me to come along," explains Sexton. "The entire Rahal family was very good to me and made me feel right at home: it was a wonderful time of my life. In 1970 Mike had acquired a Porsche 906 and decided to race the Sebring 12 Hours. With great access throughout the pits, I was able to take these pictures. In the race, all three Rahal Team Porsche drivers put in great performances on the way to the class win. It was too bad Bobby wasn't old enough to join them: it was shortly after that he started his great career."

WE NEED YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

We always love to receive readers' photos, from famous grands prix to national touring car races. If you feel you have some gems, and anecdotes to share, we'd like you to send them in to the address on the editorial page. We will return your photos safely after use but suggest you hold on to any negatives.

high-technology category is only 27 years late?

As Ecclesiastes taught: "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the Sun." Or maybe someone else said that first, too?

Tim Lawrence, Matlock, Derbyshire

THUMBS UP TO LA SARTHE

Sir,

I greatly enjoyed your articles on Le Mans in the February issue. Gordon Spice reckons that Jean Rondeau was "a bit of a madster" – he was not the only one.

Some buddies and I were at a loose end after our University exams in 1980 so I suggested we might hitch to Le Mans. 18 lifts and a night under a motorway bridge later we were there.

Your photo of Rondeau on the straight in the rain brings back strong memories – he was a lot drier than I was: it rained all the way over and most of the way back as well as much of the race.

But what a race: 26 years later I'm still waiting for another like it. Three of the original four of us set off again the next June, and we are now on a second generation.

It is traditional to close letters with the words "happy days". My one photo from my first Le Mans suggests other. Were the old days really better or were they miserable? I'm in two minds...

Ian Mann, Divonne, France

Next Month in

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Founded 1924
MOTOR SPORT

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GILLES VILLENEUVE RECALLED ||| LUNCH WITH MARTIN BRUNDLE ||| RON DENNIS INTERVIEW

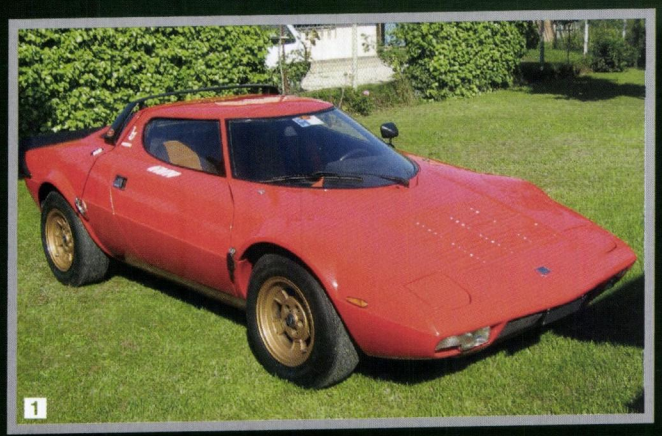
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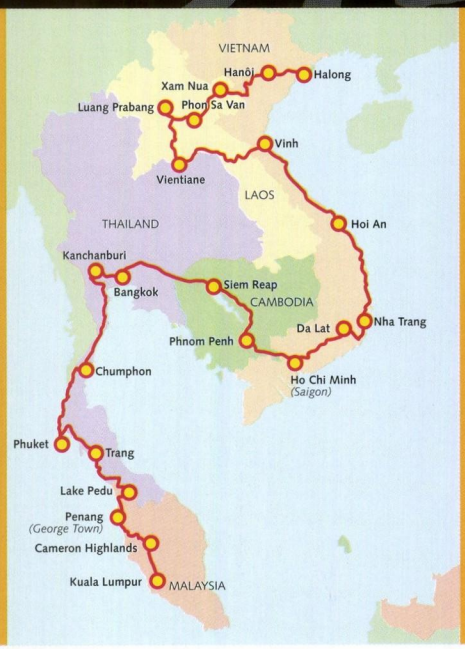
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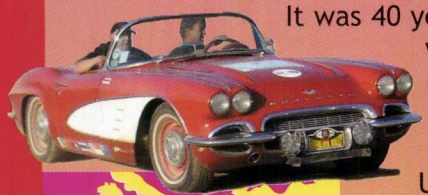
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PEACE, LOVE AND CLASSIC CARS

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THE Hippy Trail

Guest Column

LEO SAYER

Racing superfan

Singer Leo Sayer became hooked on motorsport as a child. The passion continues and now he feels privileged to count his heroes as his friends



I'm very happy finally to make it into the pages of *Motor Sport*, even if it is about 40 years later than I'd have liked.

When I left school in the mid-sixties I was not very good at very much else but art, and I went into graphic design. It was around about that time that I sent some gouache paintings of F1 cars to *Motor Sport*.

It was particularly the Brabhams that I was obsessed with at the time, with the green and gold finish. Of course, being a young guy and not knowing the system, I sent in the originals. I never heard anything back – and I've always wondered what happened to them!

I inherited my interest in motorsport from my engineer father, who used to sneak off with his friends and work with old motorcycles. I used to watch them working, and there was lots of racing oil around, and I think it started to get into my bloodstream. We lived in Sussex, and one day dad said, 'We're going to drive to Goodwood and see some motor racing.'

This must have been about 1958 or 1959. Stirling Moss was there, and Graham Hill was just starting out. Later we were there when Stirling Moss had that horrendous accident. We were on the corner where he crashed.

I grew up wanting to be either a fighter pilot or a racing driver. These two things obsessed me, and I used to draw pictures all the time. I did get a chance to meet Jim Clark and show him one, and he said, 'Very nice!' But I never managed to get his address to send it to him. I was also a big Bruce McLaren fan.

The art career didn't go too badly, because I ended up doing record covers and designing typefaces for Letraset. Later when I got into the music business my manager Adam Faith used to buy cars from a guy called Bernie Ecclestone. He didn't introduce himself in motor racing terms, he just said, 'I'm a car dealer!' Typical Bernie, you don't know anything unless you find it out.

I didn't really become a racing 'insider' until about 1977. I was flying to a show in South Africa and I met James Hunt, Paddy McNally and John Hogan, who were sitting in first class with me. That was the connection that really got me in, and that's when I really got to know Bernie.

He and Gordon Murray took me on, and looked on me as a talisman for the Brabham team. I was lucky enough to get to know Niki Lauda, Nelson Piquet, Riccardo Patrese and, a little later on, guys like Ayrton Senna, Gerhard Berger and Stefan Johansson. It was an exciting time, and I even drove a ground-effect McLaren at Silverstone for my BBC2 show – only six weeks after passing my driving test!

However, in the nineties I took more than 10 years out. I went through a personal financial recession. When everybody's got the latest IWC watch, and you're sitting there with a Seiko, you don't feel so good! Then I moved to Australia, and last year I was invited to play the Grand Prix Ball in Melbourne. That was my first race for about 13 years.



Leo Sayer in conversation with Toro Rosso boss and former driver Gerhard Berger

Until about three years ago I found modern F1 very boring. Michael Schumacher had no challenge, and it appeared from the outside that Ferrari was starting, let's say, to make the rules work for them. But in the last couple of years it seems to have come back in leaps and bounds. The rules have opened up, and Bernie has personally regained a lot of interest in it, having been distracted by all the financial side.

I think F1 is in very good shape now. If the manufacturers had taken over, I would not be enjoying it, because it would just be a corporate business. But last year was great. It was amazing to see the fear of losing in Michael's eyes, and you kind of knew that you had racing back. It wasn't just a given that certain things would happen. Fernando Alonso had to fight so much, and he had to fight himself as well.

I was talking to him about that at the launch of the Abu Dhabi GP. I said, 'You really raised yourself as a man this year,' and he said, 'I had to fight a lot of bullshit, and I'm still angry about some things.' I told him it was all about channelling that anger, and making it work for you, and he agreed it's better when you have to fight to win. He said there was a lot of fortune in the first championship, and a lot of fight in the second. And he's ended up respecting Michael a lot more because of what happened.

I was very impressed when I met Nico Rosberg and Robert Kubica last year. I've only briefly met Lewis Hamilton, but he seems like a nice kid, and very talented. The future is in good hands. I can't wait for Melbourne, and like last year, I hope to spend some time with Stirling Moss. The fact that my heroes have now become my friends is a magical thing.

"I inherited my interest in motorsport from my engineer father. There was lots of racing oil around and I think it started to get into my bloodstream"

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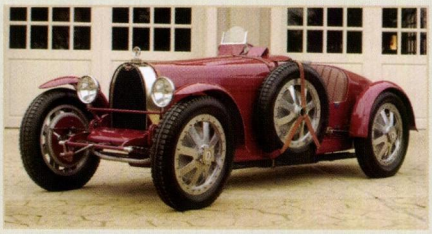
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MARK HUGHES

The stars who missed the mark

There is a select group of supremely talented grand prix drivers who never achieved the results they deserved at the top level. Is Mark Webber in danger of becoming the next on the list?

Arthur Duray, André Boillot, Kenelm Lee Guinness, Giulio Masetti, Raymond Sommer, Archie Scott Brown, Chris Amon, Tom Pryce, Pierluigi Martini. Just a chronological list off the top of my head of drivers who showed enough to suggest that their grand prix scorecard vastly undersold their ability. Guys who never got in the right car at the right time for sustained success, but whose regular flashes of brilliance tell you all you need to know about what they could have achieved.

Duray took an unfashionable Lorraine-Dietrich to the front of the 1907 French Grand Prix, ahead of Felice Nazzaro's 'unbeatable' Fiat, until the gearbox cried enough. He also took a brilliant second on his first visit to Indy – in a 3-litre car among a field of 4.5s. Boillot's performance in the 1919 Targa Florio suggested he could have emulated his late brother Georges, but this was in the days of factory-employed drivers and his factory, Peugeot, was no longer much interested in GP racing.

Into the 1920s Kenelm Lee Guinness had a wicked combination of searing pace and a silky touch that took so little out of his cars. But he crashed down a ravine in the 1924 San Sebastian GP, killing his riding mechanic. After that, he wanted nothing more to do with race driving and some years later took his own life after suffering depression said to relate back to the accident. Masetti was a gifted amateur – yet on the few occasions he ran with the works team pros, he was invariably faster.

Sommer resolutely drove on his own terms, but twice – at Miramas in 1933 and Spa 1950 – his privateer efforts in inferior kit terrified the works Alfa team. Scott Brown – a man who wowed Fangio with his supernatural car control – never got a proper crack at Formula 1 because his physical disability meant difficulties acquiring an international race licence. But in a couple of non-championship events in 1955 and 1956 he was utterly sensational.

In the period 1968-1972 only Jackie Stewart produced as many virtuoso GP performances as Chris Amon, yet Chris never won a race. Tom Pryce had talent dripping from his fingers yet even had he lived might never have got in the right car. Martini may not have been quite so blessed, but he regularly transcended his Minardi in the late 1980s/early 1990s and blew away all his team-mates.

Lots of worthy F1 drivers never get into winning cars. But occasionally, frustratingly, drivers beyond mere worthiness remain in the also-ran category until their time in F1 is over. It may be happening right at this moment.

Mark Webber has done everything that could reasonably have been asked, given the machinery he's had, but is now entering his sixth season of F1. At 30, with only a single podium under his belt, his career clock is definitely beginning to tick louder.

This is a man who has had seven F1 team-mates, and over a season has been quicker than every one of them. It's a guy who put a *Jaguar* on the front row of a grand prix, who drove his below-par 2005 Williams around the Nürburgring faster than Alonso's Renault or Raikkonen's McLaren – or anyone else, for that matter, once you weight-adjusted everyone's times for fuel loads.

There was a suggestion of a few too many race errors in 2005, but that was well and truly nailed last year. His most eye-catching performance was probably at Monaco where in another substandard Williams he was apparently fighting for the victory with Alonso and Raikkonen before coming up to lap Fisichella. Fisi mistook Webber for the other Williams of Nico Rosberg with which he was fighting, and blocked him for several laps – and the marshals, possibly not believing a Williams could be fighting with the leaders either, failed to show Fisichella blue flags. By the time Webber got through, the leading duo were six seconds clear. The day before, only Schumacher's parking stunt had prevented Webber from sticking the Williams on the front row.

There was another remarkable race performance at Hockenheim where he passed both Renaults and engaged Raikkonen in a fight for a podium place. As he approached his first pit stop, he needed to pull out the stops to leapfrog Alonso. He unleashed a searing sequence of qualifying-style laps, one personal best after another – each a tiny bit faster than the previous one as the fuel load came down. He did this for seven consecutive laps, something very rarely seen. He duly came out of the pits with the champion's Renault behind him, Fisichella next in his sights. It all came to nothing, thanks to a broken water hose. Just as broken exhaust primaries had cost him the Monaco podium.

So he got no points in either of his best races last year, but the point he made was huge: outside the established title-contenders, it's difficult to conceive of another driver on the grid who could have wrung that sort of performance from what he had to work with.

His manager Flavio Briatore had wanted him to join Renault for 2005, but Webber was convinced the place to be was Williams. Webber now accepts that Briatore was absolutely right and he was wrong. With his star no longer in the ascendant, his chances of getting another Renault offer for 2007 were less firm.

So now, Webber's very future in F1 probably hangs on the quality of Adrian Newey's Red Bull RB3. If Newey can work his magic, there could yet be a fairy tale ending to this story. But if not, we can probably add Webber to that list at the top of the page.



Webber was superb at Monaco in 2006 – but will he become one of the nearly men?

Webber unleashed a searing sequence of qualifying-style laps, one personal best after another, each a tiny bit faster than the last, for seven consecutive laps

ANDREW FRANKEL

Mercedes SLR McLaren 722

It's got pedigree, enormous power and a truly exotic price tag, so it should provide a brilliant drive. Not so, says Frankel. It's flawed in concept, and could have been so much better

The first book I bought with my own money was something called 'My Greatest Race', a collection of 20 first-person stories by the greats of racing's past and present. Published by the Jim Clark Foundation in 1974, I remember trembling with excitement as only an eight-year-old can as he hands over three pounds and 50 new pence of hard earned pocket money.

I must have loved that book because not only has it survived 33 years, it remains in remarkably good condition, even though I came to know it so well I could quote vast tracts on Innes Ireland winning at Solitude and Gonzalez at Silverstone to anyone kind enough to listen. But if I let it fall open today, it is invariably at page 125 that the leaves part – where Stirling Moss starts his tale of the 1955 Mille Miglia.

I was so fascinated by this event that, when road testing for *Autocar* in the early 1990s, I borrowed a Porsche that happened to be in for evaluation, drove it to Brescia, talked my way into a Mille Miglia media pass and chased Stirling, now navigated by fellow contributor Simon Taylor, right around the route. Of course I couldn't keep up, but in those brief moments when I was behind that man in that silver 300SLR with those three little numbers on the side, watching its progress and listening to its desmodromic valve gear hurl flame and thunder out of its stubby exhausts – well, short of actually driving the thing, I could not see how life could get better.

And then, a couple of weeks back, I did get to drive an SLR. It too had '722' stamped on its side and I'm unlikely to forget the sound bellowing out its side-exit pipes either. And just like Stirling's, it would slam you past 170mph on even quite short straights. It should have been the drive to end them all, but I spent almost all my time pondering how much better it could, and should, have been.

I'll explain. Mercedes has been better behaved than many other manufacturers when it comes to exploiting its rich racing heritage for cold commercial gain. There have been no special Caracciola editions, no E-class 'Silver Arrow'. But the temptation to put Stirling's race number (and start time) on this revised version of its SLR supercar has proven too much, even if the resulting name – Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren 722 Edition – is one of the biggest mouthfuls in the automotive canon.

At £340,000 it is expensive enough to provide a few moments' fun pondering what else you could have for the same money – I think a BMW M5, a Ferrari F430 and a Toyota Amazon for towing whatever racing car the remaining hundred grand would buy might make an interesting stable – but as the entire UK share of a production run of just 150 is already sold, people shopping in the rarified regions of this market are clearly not that price-sensitive.

What you're buying into, of course, is a carbon-fibre car designed by Gordon Murray before he left McLaren and, thanks to some remapping work, now boasting 650bhp, making it more powerful even than his masterpiece, the 627bhp F1. It's no secret that Murray and Mercedes did not at times see eye to eye through the whole process, nor that the result was considerably heavier than he would have liked. Even though the light wheels, lightened oil tank and aluminium dampers boasted by the 722 version have dropped weight by 42kg, it still weighs 1724kg, making it much heavier than, say, a long-wheelbase supercharged Jaguar XJR limousine.

Then again, with 650bhp under your right foot, not to mention 604lb ft of torque, you can probably afford a few extra kilos. Most importantly, it doesn't feel heavy. Despite the curious, and to me inappropriate, five-speed automatic gearbox, this more powerful, less heavy SLR explodes off the line. Forget 0-62mph in 3.6sec, or even 0-125mph in 10.2sec: how about 0-186mph in 28sec flat instead, accompanied by the most aggressive V8 blare this side of a NASCAR grid?

But all this excitement merely makes a promise the rest of the car struggles to keep. I have no evidence for this, but the 722 feels as though the vast bulk of its development has been done on the racetrack and not enough on the public road. With a lowered ride height and dampers 15 per cent stiffer in bump than before, it changes direction like no other front-engined car of this weight I've encountered. But instead of making the SLR feel super-agile, the needlessly aggressive steering actually makes it feel twitchy and nervous. I even spun it doing a cornering shot in the Dubai desert – my fault entirely for trying too hard to make it perform for the camera – but I genuinely cannot remember when I last lost control of a car on a public road. After that I left the safety systems on.

Other problems remain: it has even bigger carbon-ceramic brakes than the old SLR, but they're no nicer to use or easier to modulate. The cabin remains cramped with little stowage space and the seats are uncomfortable, while the ride quality has deteriorated to just plain harsh.

I can see why Mercedes has decided to create this car, and the fact that it has all but sold out will doubtless prove to them it was the right decision. And in this context, the fact that the car itself is slightly disappointing is perhaps not that important. Whether Mercedes should have played quite so fast and loose with those three little numbers is another matter. For one I wished they had not, and if I had a choice of driving this new 722 again, or merely following the old one for another few minutes, I'd choose to follow every time.



Despite greater power than a McLaren F1, the SLR 722 disappoints – but they're all sold

Following and watching Moss's 300SLR and listening to it hurl flame and thunder out of its exhausts – well, short of driving it I could not see how life could be better

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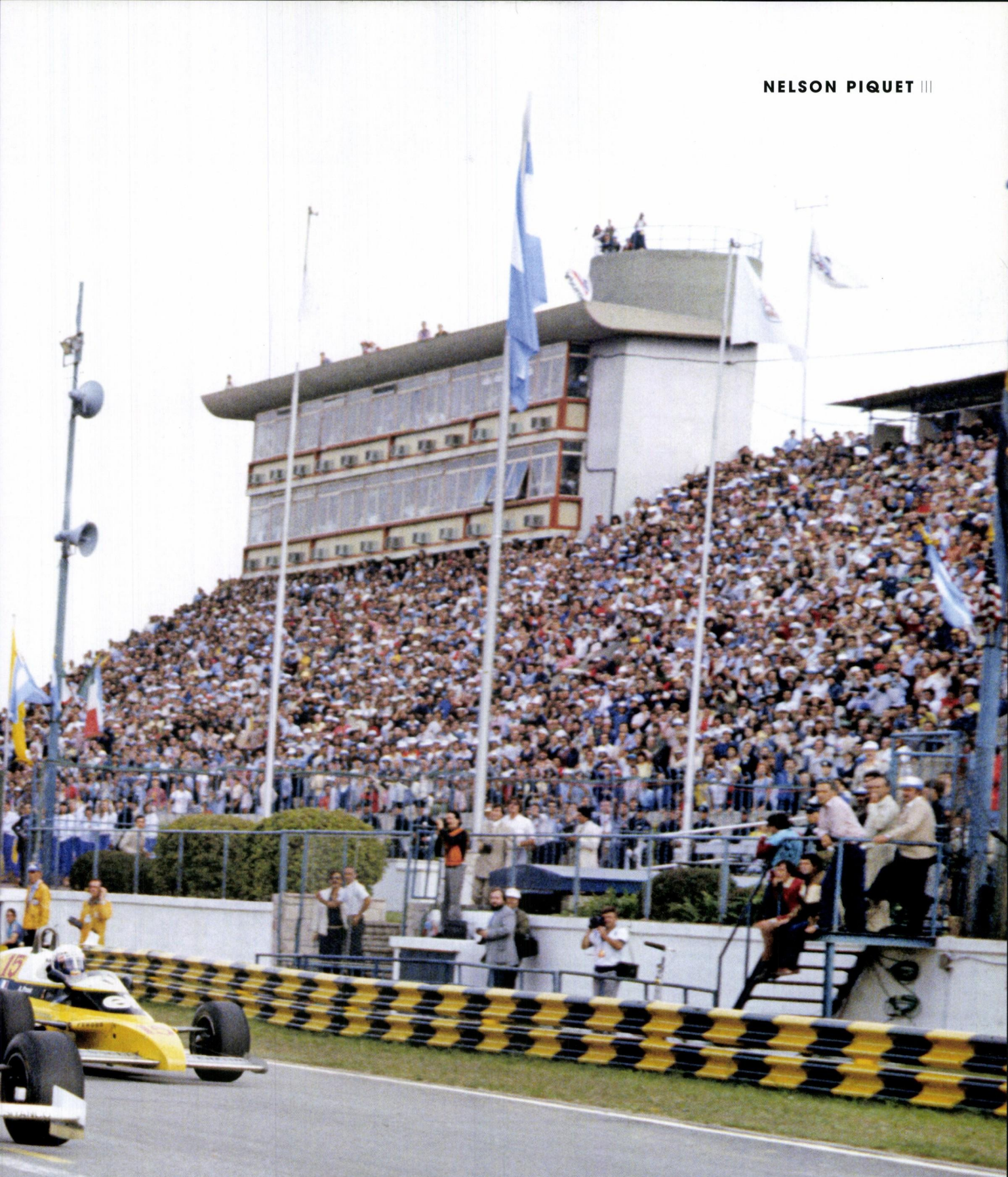
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Words: Rob Widdows. Photography: LAT

Nelson Piquet came to Europe desperate to reach Formula 1. Gritty determination took him to three world titles and brought him wealth and fame – but he would have done it for the sheer love of it, because...

"I just wanted to race"





Piquet leads off the Williams of Alan Jones and Alain Prost's Renault in Argentina, 1981. Victory here will start his title roll

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There's a glimmer of recognition in his eyes as he walks towards me. We first met in 1978 when he came to England with his Formula 3 team, fresh from an encouraging campaign in Europe where he'd finished third in the championship. It was a grey day at Thruxton, the interview was in most uncertain English, and his little band of Brazilians looked somewhat underwhelmed by Hampshire in winter. Most observers agreed, however, that here was a champion of the future.

Twenty-five years have passed since the first of three world titles but the wiry figure in baggy jeans and slightly tatty sneakers is unmistakably Piquet, the mischief still close to the surface, the craftiness in the grin and those very steady brown eyes. As he limps on injured feet through the Interlagos paddock, the fans fall in behind, even now wanting autographs. Only Fittipaldi attracts a bigger crowd – but then, as Nelson readily acknowledges, it was Emerson who blazed the trail from the vastness of Brazil to Europe's promised land.

"Yeah, of course, he was the first and we saw it could be done," says Nelson. "I didn't come from a racing family but I was quick on a kart and as a youngster I knew what Emerson was doing. It was big news, you know."

Nelson Souto Maior was born in Rio de Janeiro, the son of Brazil's health minister. The family moved to the capital, Brasilia, where Nelson grew up in a comfortably middle-class environment. Later in life he took his mother's maiden name of Piquet in a failed attempt to hide his motor racing from a disapproving family.

Most Brazilian boys are drawn to football, in the street or on a floodlit beach, but Nelson was steered towards the tennis courts by his father, himself a talented player. He was good at it and there was talk of becoming a professional. His parents packed him off to high school in San Francisco where he was supposed to get himself an education and hone his skills on the court. But it didn't happen like that.

"I got involved in classes for working on cars and spent time in the workshops. I got the idea of racing then, so when I got home I did some 'bike races, bought a kart and went racing, trying to keep all this from my parents," he laughs. But that failed too and 17-year-old Nelson was sent back to America to study at university. That lasted a year. Back in Brazil again, the racing bug still swirling in his blood, he got back on the kart, winning the national championships in '71 and '72, and entering the national Formula Super Vee series for the following year.

He grips my arm, animated. "I was very quick in karting, you know, from the first day. I just found it so easy, it was so natural, so easy to feel everything. I never thought about why, or how, or anything," he says matter-of-fact. "It wasn't hard work, or luck, it just came so easy to me."

He won the Brazilian Super Vee championship in '76 and began to think about Europe. He knew it would not be easy, hadn't even considered Formula 1, though by now Fittipaldi's success in England was big news in Brazil. So, at the beginning of 1977, Piquet made the big decision, bought a March F3 car, signed up a couple of Brazilian mechanics and headed off for the other side of the world.

"I spoke a little bit of English but I'd forgotten most of what I learnt in America. When I arrived in Europe most people thought I was an Australian. Anyway, we did the European championship and finished third, which was not so bad," he smiles. "Then we went to England for 1978 to do the BP and the Vandervell F3 championships."

These early days in Europe taught Nelson a few tough lessons from which he was able to benefit when, many years later, he brought his son Nelsinho to England. Most people went out to find a sponsor and then paid a team to run them. But the Piquet way was to have his own team, his own people around him. The little band of Brazilians had proved they could take on, and beat, the best of the professional outfits.

"It helped me that I could work on the car myself," he says. "I mean, I was a mechanic and I was always messing, fiddling with the car, making it how I wanted it. I invented tyre-warmers in Formula 3, you know that? It was a revolution," ▶



The 1978 French GP support race at Paul Ricard. It was a round of the BP F3 Championship, which Piquet went on to win that year

"I just found it so easy, it was so natural, so easy to feel everything. I never thought about how. It wasn't hard work, or luck, it just came so easy to me"



"Was good times with Bernie and Gordon and the guys – Charlie Whiting, Herbie Blash. We worked hard and we had some fun"



Both: LAT

he grins. "I made up all the bits for them and we had tyre warmers before anyone had ever thought about it. You could just fly round in the early laps, make up a lot of time. Later on, at Brabham, I told Gordon Murray about my new invention. Then they banned me from the workshop after I kept visiting every day to see what they were doing. I used to mess around with bits and pieces, do my own thing, it drove them mad. Niki Lauda got really pissed off with me being at the factory and looking at all the new bits."

Back to 1978: Nelson reckoned he needed a team manager, who spoke English and who knew where all the circuits were. "Peewee [Siddle] knew nothing about motor racing but he knew where everything was and he drove us everywhere. I offered him £30 a week and he told me that real team managers earned more than that. But we worked it out and he looked after us all through that year," Nelson remembers.

And what a year it turned out to be: champion in the BP series and runner-up to Derek Warwick in the Vandervell. It was clear that the Brazilian was going to be something special. His name was already being noted, scribbled on the pads of those who constantly scouted for new talent. What caught the eye was his sheer natural speed, his lack of mistakes and some revolutionary tweaks he and his team had brought to the art of optimising the performance of Formula 3 cars.

"I had to learn how to race in the wet," says Nelson. "We didn't get wet races back home but again I just found it so easy, and we won a lot of races, seven in a row at one stage. Midway through the season I got a call from Mo Nunn, and by the end of July there I was, sitting on the grid at Hockenheim in an Ensign." Just like that, the ball was coming to him, and fast.

Portugal 1986: Nelson shows no sign of the friction between himself and team-mate Mansell as they pose with championship rivals Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna

Next it was into a McLaren M23 for Bob Sparshott at the Austrian, Dutch and Italian grands prix. He came home ninth at Monza. "I didn't know what to do. They wanted to sign me up. I was winning in F3, working at Ralt building cars to make some money, and then Bernie Ecclestone got in touch about joining Brabham." Nelson is talking fast, moving around a lot, as if he was back there, on the verge of his dream. "Bernie wanted me for the last race in Canada and he offered a three-year deal starting the following year in '79.

"He said: 'look, if you're that good and you sign for Sparshott, you're in the shit because you'll be stuck there.' That made sense, and I said OK. And, yeah, it was a cheap deal for him. I just wanted to race; it wasn't anything to do with the money. He offered me $50,000 a season for three years but I would have driven anyway. I was going to F1."

So Nelson did what he reckoned all F1 drivers did. He went to Harrods and spent £400 on a set of new clothes so he would look smart when he got to Heathrow to board the plane to Montreal for his first race with the Brabham team.

"When I got to the airport, there was Gordon Murray, looking like some hippy with his long hair, his flowery shirt, frayed jeans and sneakers. And then in the paddock at Montreal there was my team-mate Niki Lauda in baggy old blue jeans, a t-shirt and an old red baseball cap..." He slaps the table, laughing. "So much for the new clothes."

Piquet and Murray sparked straightaway, the bright young South African forming a relationship with the Brazilian kid that would mature into one of the most successful engineer/driver partnerships of the era. Within three years they were World Champions. ▶

"I was a good mechanic, remember, and did a lot of my own work on the F3 cars, so I could communicate with Gordon, tell him what I wanted."

He also learned a lot from Lauda before he retired at the end of '79. It was a difficult time for a new boy, as Brabham struggled with Alfa Romeo engines and then switched to the Ford-powered BT49 for 1980. So that first season was tough, alongside Lauda and grappling with an inconsistent car.

But Nelson got the measure of Lauda, his natural talent showing through rapidly, and some have said that Lauda saw the writing on the garage wall. The Austrian admits that he much preferred a team-mate like John Watson, a man he could out-psyche, rather than a Piquet or a Prost, both of whom threatened his dominance in the team. "Yeah, could be right," grins Nelson. "He said he just got fed up with racing."

All this prepared Piquet well for 1980 when he would be out on his own with only Hector Rebaque and Ricardo Zunino as team-mates, neither anywhere near pushing him. He and Murray worked together, battling with Alan Jones for the championship in only Piquet's second full season. Jones won out in the end but the Brazilian had made his mark.

Brabham stayed with Ford into 1981, and the BT49C proved to be an effective weapon. But it was a close-run thing. Jones and Reutemann, for Williams, constantly threatened to keep him from his first title. By the end of a chaotic race at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas in October, Nelson took the title, by one single point from a downbeat Carlos Reutemann.

"Fantastic, is fantastic," he grins, lapsing into the present tense. "My first championship – I can't believe it's 25 years ago. It was a tough season but I work with Gordon and we make very quick car. I learn how to win the title and I knew I could do that again. The driving was coming easy to me.

The Ford-powered BT49 had potential – Nelson placed fourth at Hockenheim in the German Grand Prix

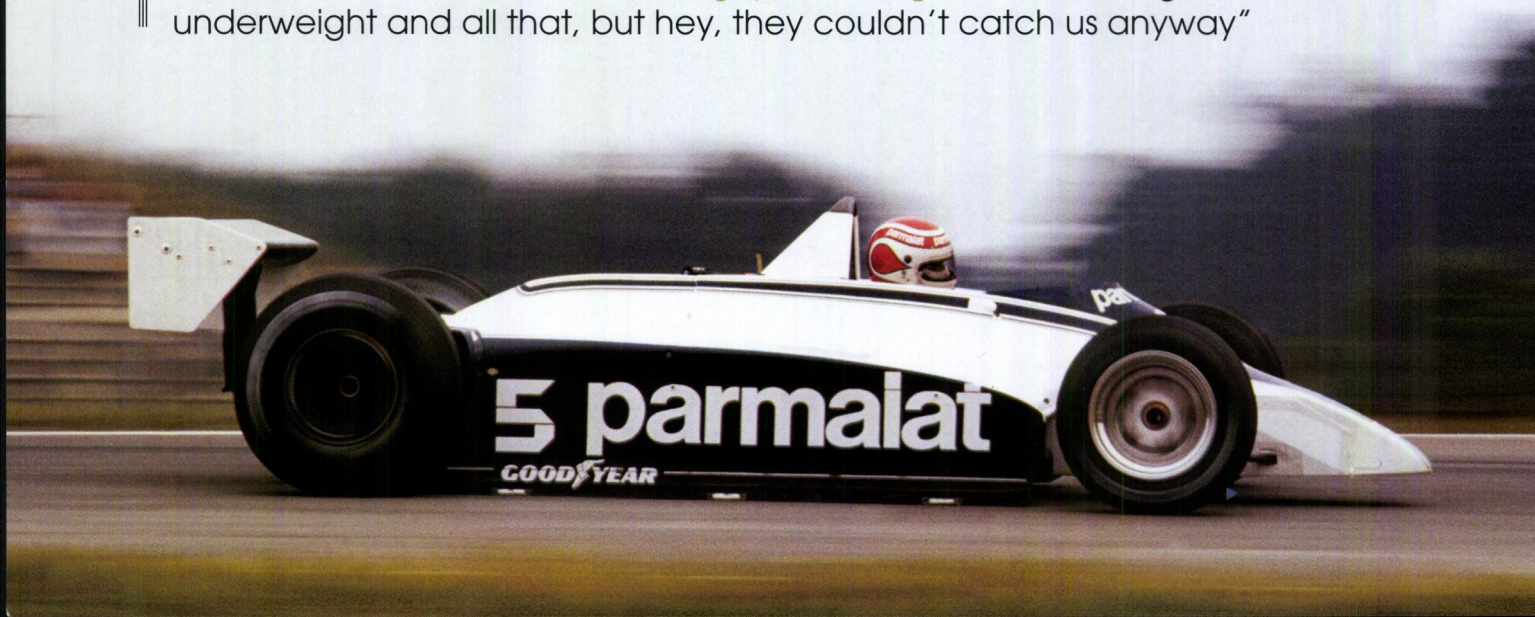
"The next year was not so easy," he recalls. "We were developing the BMW engine and for 1982 we used the Ford and the BMW. There were a lot of blow-ups, it had lots of power, but it kept blowing up and then we started re-fuelling in the races, remember? We found an advantage there." He finished a lowly 11th in the championship, a point behind team-mate Riccardo Patrese.

But Piquet and Murray came back with a vengeance in 1983, the beautiful BT52 BMW proving too much for Alain Prost in his final year with Renault. "That thing had so much power," he grins. "You had to have it in a straight line before you got the power down, otherwise it just went round, big spin, no warning. You know, coming out of a corner, you had to point it straight ahead before you could really get your foot back on it. Then it took off like a rocket, all the way up the gears, blat blat blat blat." He goes through the gears in the chair next to me. Another big grin. "But you had to change the gears slowly, not too rushed, or the gearbox broke."

"Yeah, was good, was good. Gordon made a nice car. We did lots of development with BMW and we knew we could win." Nelson thinks back: "Was good times with Bernie and Gordon and the guys – Charlie Whiting, Herbie Blash. We worked hard and we had some fun. People say we ran close to the rules, very close, and yeah, we did. Renault accused us of running special illegal fuels, running underweight and all that, but hey," he shrugs, "they couldn't catch us anyway."

The fairy story about the boy from Brazil who made it so good, so fast, begins to fall apart at this juncture, Brabham slipping down the grid during the next two years, and taking precious few victories. The subsequent move to Williams, he says, was not his best idea, and when I mention Nigel Mansell he looks like I've offered him a bowl of spiders. ▶

> "People say we ran close to the rules, very close, and yeah, we did. Renault accused us of running special illegal fuels, running underweight and all that, but hey, they couldn't catch us anyway"





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1955 Ferrari 500 Mondial by Scaglietti

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He looks me in the eye, roguish smile. "I've said this before, you know that, but hey I don't care. It was terrible with Mansell there, he was like a f***ing pig, you know, not educated, he was a f***ing blockhead. I was rude to him, yeh, but he was an idiot and the team was not a family. I kept telling Frank, after the races, what we should do about it but I had not so much courage then."

The feeling was entirely mutual, Mansell describing Piquet as vile, stupid, and childish while the Brazilian's penchant for practical jokes left Our Nige distinctly unimpressed. Mischief was never far below the surface. His mechanics recall the day Nelson planted plastic turds in the cockpit of his team-mate's Williams, not a prank that was appreciated by anyone except himself. "Yeh, well, I hated him and he probably hated me." End of story. I get the feeling he would rather drink ink than expand any further on this subject.

All this feuding did little to help the team rack up the points in 1986. Alain Prost sneaked up behind the pair of them and stole the world championship from Williams, Honda, Piquet and Mansell. But it was clear that Honda had a very potent engine. So how did the move to Williams come about, after the great days at Brabham?

"Bernie wouldn't give me any more money, said I had to stay because of the Parmalat contract, but I told him he could tell Parmalat whatever he liked. He wouldn't pay more and Frank Williams just about trebled my money. So I went.

"But it was a bad move at the beginning. They didn't deliver what they said they would, I had no engineer, Patrick Head was on Mansell's car and it was, you know, an English team with an English driver. I was supposed to be number one, to have the T-car and I knew how to be a world champion. But I was never treated like the number one and it was never good with Mansell there. They made many promises that were not delivered and it was almost a year before I got Frank Dernie engineering my car, in '87, and I won the championship. So."

Piquet's third world title was achieved after a huge battle with Mansell, the two Honda-powered cars invariably ahead of the field. The Englishman took more victories but Nelson scored more points, his consistency winning the day.

"I was not happy there, especially with Mansell, so I left, went to Lotus for big money, really big money this time, 17 million dollars," he smiles. "But the car, and the team, was shit. Really, it was shit, the car was slow and the team didn't know what to do."

So Nelson's career in F1 petered out amid accusations that he'd given up, lost his touch and was sitting out the last years just for the money. And he certainly enjoyed his riches, with a private jet and a yacht in Monte Carlo. Yet, while he agrees that he went to Lotus for the big salary, he firmly denies that he was slowing down. His three victories at Benetton, where he spent the final two years of his career, underline this claim.

"I could still drive, no problem, I always loved the driving. I didn't give a shit about the fame, I just wanted to race, and it was better at Benetton. I won three races, including my last one in Canada. But in the end I just decided to stop and go back to Brazil, build up the business I had started. I was 40 years old, time to stop."

Back in Brazil his telecommunications companies were beginning to make serious money and Piquet now presides over a multi-billion dollar corporation, supplying satellite navigation technology, from his headquarters in Brasilia. But there was one last ambition to be sated and the call came, early in 1992, from Menard in the United States.



LAT

1987 British GP, Silverstone: Nelson Piquet leads team-mate Nigel Mansell in their Williams-Honda FW11Bs, with Ayrton Senna (Lotus Honda 99T) next. Nelson would finish second to Mansell

> "Menard came on the phone, offered me a million dollars to come out of my retirement to do Indy. I said yes, OK, I do it"

"I'd always dreamt of doing Indianapolis and Le Mans," he explains, "Menard came on the phone, offered me a million dollars to come out of my retirement to do Indy. I said yes, OK, I do it."

It was the wrong answer. A huge and terrifying shunt in qualifying ended his career for good. He knew, there and then, as he lay in the wreckage at the Brickyard, that it was all over.

"Yeh, I knew soon as I looked at my feet, they were all splayed out, my ankles were smashed to bits and it hurt like hell. I sat there praying. I've always believed in God and that day I just prayed that I would live. The pain was terrible. But you know, it was the best thing that happened, because now I had to stop, I knew it was over and this was a wall in my life, the wall went up and the racing was finished, in the past."

But he hasn't shuffled away into obscurity. His son Nelsinho is now test driver for the Renault F1 team, Nelson having supported him through F3 and GP2, while his eight-year-old son Pedro has just won Brazil's junior kart championships.

"I have seven children." His credentials as a ladies man, or womaniser, always were impeccable, his success rate legendary. "I help them when I can. I learnt that hard work and sacrifice equals results and to get on in F1 now you need to make sacrifices. Or you can work less, have more fun, and not get the results. I have said this to Nelsinho."

Nelson Piquet had fun. And results. But they were different days. He hobbles away on those injured feet, arm around his Formula 1 son. They are wanted for a Renault sponsor's photograph. Another motor racing dynasty, very much the fashion these days, is being established. It's in the blood. Somewhere down the road we may see more Piquet-Rosberg jousting. And Nelson will no doubt be aware that the Sons of Mansell are embarking upon the next stage of their motor racing journey. Hold the back page.

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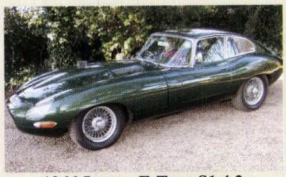
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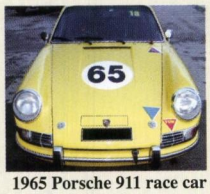
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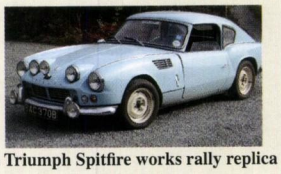
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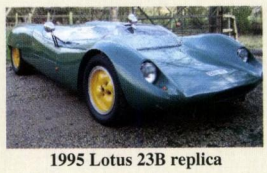


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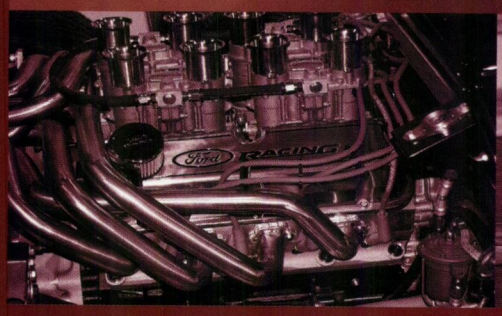
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Profile

RENAULT R26

Fernando Alonso drove this chassis in every race of 2006, on his way to double world championships for Renault. We analyse the attributes which made it a multiple winner

Words: Mark Hughes. Photography: Ian Fraser



The 2006 world title-winning Renault R26 stands as the team's crowning achievement. Although Renault entered the season as reigning world champions, the new car faced some very significant new challenges.

For one, there had been the first major formula change in 11 years: the 3-litre V10 engines gave way to 2.4-litre V8s. For another, it had already been announced that the team's champion driver Fernando Alonso would be leaving at the end of the season to join McLaren, potentially affecting the close working relationship between driver and team in their final year together. Then there was the return to tyre changes after a season in which a single set of tyres had to last the whole race. Not insignificantly, the '06 tyre rule played into the hands of Ferrari and Michael Schumacher, a combination that in 2005 had effectively been taken out of the equation by Bridgestone's inability to supply a tyre that combined the pace and durability of the Renault's Michelins. Without the endurance requirement, the Bridgestone/Ferrari combination was right back in the thick of things in 2006. Yet despite all these new threats the R26 came through, Alonso winning seven races and securing the team their second consecutive Drivers' and Constructors' world titles.

Remarkably, Alonso achieved this feat using the same chassis – number three – throughout the season. Because he never damaged the car, and because there was no loss of rigidity each time it was checked, there was no reason to change it. It is this chassis which you see in our pictures.

Right: Fernando Alonso, and the R26 he used throughout the 2006 season, receive attention during the German Grand Prix at Hockenheim. Below: Alonso's office in chassis number three

Despite it racing in an era in which F1 cars look very alike, the R26 was designed to a technical philosophy different to that of any rival. Like its immediate forebe featured a more rearward-biased weight distribution, a this had significant implications.

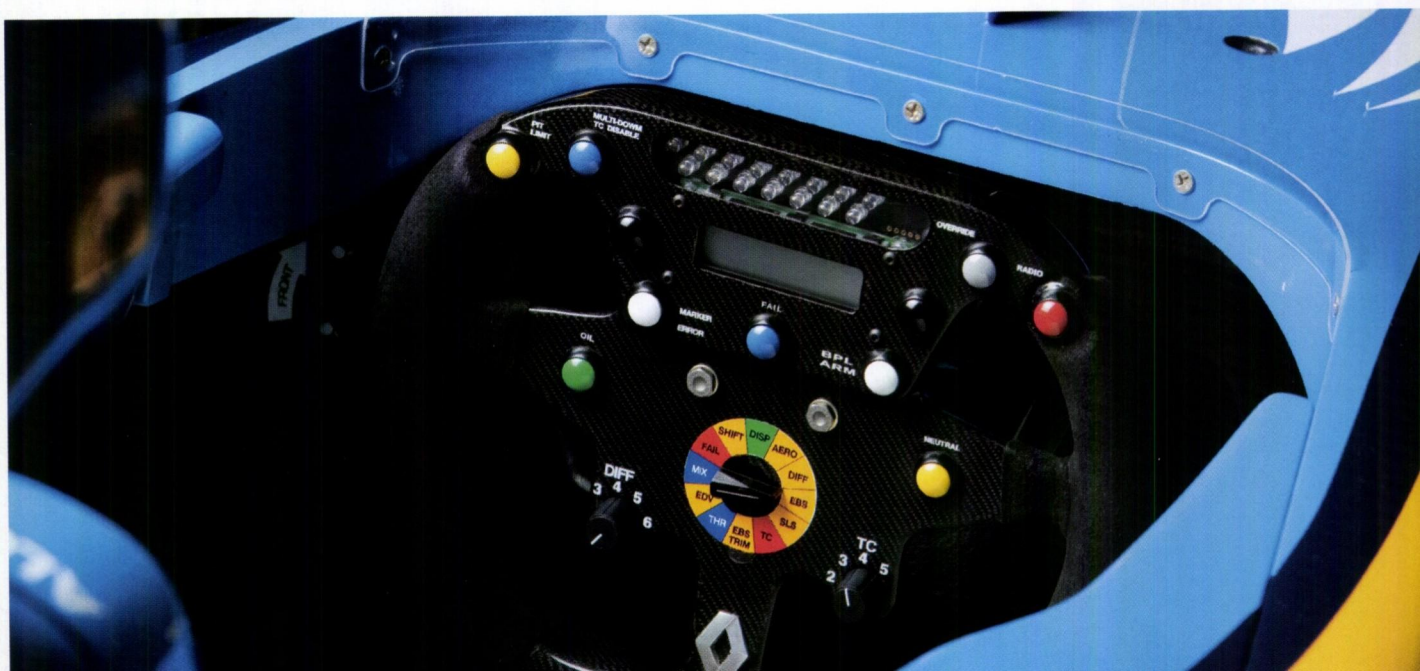
TEAM PEDIGREE

Renault bought the Benetton team early in 2000, thou wasn't re-branded as Renault until 2002. The R26 wa joint creation of the chassis group based in the old Ber factory in Enstone, Oxfordshire and the Renault Sport department in Viry-Chatillon, near Paris. A weekly sh plane runs between the two facilities to aid communic

It is a beautifully balanced team of engineers, withou role of visionary star designer seen elsewhere. In its pla highly integrated system with many layers of expertise, group consensus, making it relatively immune to the de of any single person. This was notably evident back in when the team lost its technical director Mike Gascoyn its engine chief Jean-Jacques His, yet the progress of the as a whole continued unabated.

The R26 was the work of a group of people shepherd by technical director Bob Bell. Chief of engineering Pat Symonds fulfilled a dual role, at Enstone and at the track chassis designer was Tim Densham, chief aero-dynamici Toso. Rob White, a 20-year veteran of Cosworth, who j Renault in 2004, oversaw the Viry Chatillon engine oper where the RS26 V8 design was project led by Léon Taill

> Remarkably, Alonso achieved this feat using the same chassis – number three – throughout the season. Because he never damaged the car, and because th was no loss of rigidity each time it was checked, there was no reason to chang




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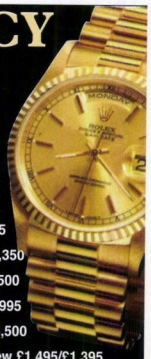
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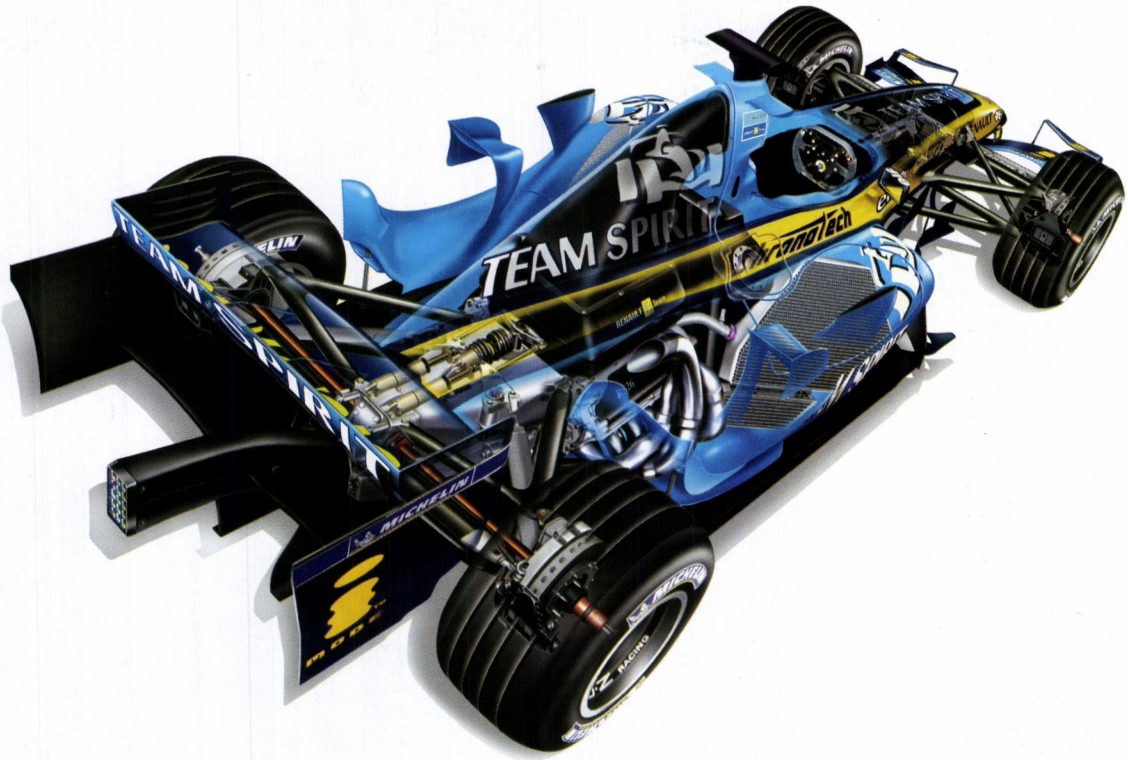
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Hubert Vincent/RenaultF1

Ironically, the work put into minimising the flaws in the design of the 2001 Benetton B201 led to a development path that resulted in the multiple world title-winning Renault R25 and R26 designs of 2005 and 2006

TECHNICAL PHILOSOPHY

It is believed that the R26 never ran with more than 45 per cent of its weight on the front axle line (there is scope to vary the distribution from track to track with ballast). Most rival designs could go to 48 per cent and beyond.

This more rearward bias has been a feature of Renault designs for several years and can be traced back to the Benetton B201 of 2001. That car was fitted with what was originally a very light 111-degree V10 engine. But by the time it was beefed up to make it reliable, it was very heavy, and it had completely changed the car's weight distribution. The limitations brought about by that engine's relatively great weight and restricted upper rev range led the team in a direction that ultimately proved very fruitful.

The rearward weight bias brought traction benefits and also made it easier to find an aerodynamic balance at a time when the regulations made frontal downforce gains very difficult to achieve (see 'aerodynamics' below). The restriction in revs brought about by the mechanical imbalance of the vee angle led to very useful gains being made in the useable torque curve. This in turn helped improve the economy and lower the heat rejection of the engine – both extremely important considerations when it comes to the car's race performance.

Ironically, the work put into minimising the flaws of the B201 design led to a development path that resulted in the world title-winning R25 and R26 designs.

Top: cutaway reveals some of R26's secrets. Central rear wing pillar allows endplate design to be focused purely on aerodynamic efficiency

ENGINE/GEARBOX

The new 2.4-litre formula was highly prescriptive. The regulations specified the number of cylinders (eight), the angle of the vee (90-degree), the maximum cylinder bore (98mm), minimum gap between the cylinders (106.5mm), minimum total weight (95kg), the centre of gravity height (165mm above the lower edge of the oil sump), the C of G position (plus or minus 50mm of the engine's geometric centre), minimum crankshaft height (58mm above reference plane) and maximum fuel pressure (100 bar). Variable inlet and exhaust geometries were banned, as was variable valve timing. Only one injector per cylinder was permitted, the fuel pump had to be a mechanical type and the engine could only use titanium and aluminium alloys.

Yet even within such tightly defined parameters, the RS26 engine displayed a superb combination of performance, economy, driveability and heat rejection. In comparison to the competition it displayed much the same advantages as had the previous 72-deg V10 designed to a much freer set of regulations. There were four performance upgrades during the year and in 'E' specification it was believed to produce circa 775bhp at circa 20,500rpm. In original Bahrain form these figures were more like 725bhp at 19,200rpm.

The change to V8 from V10 brought an increase in external vibrations – although internal vibrations were reduced. This made it easier to make the internals reliable but meant some external parts needed to be strengthened. ▶

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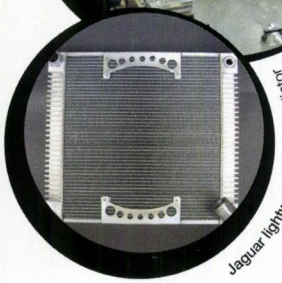
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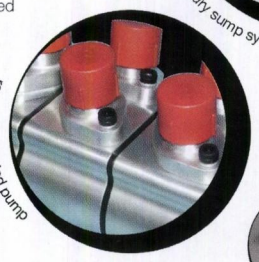


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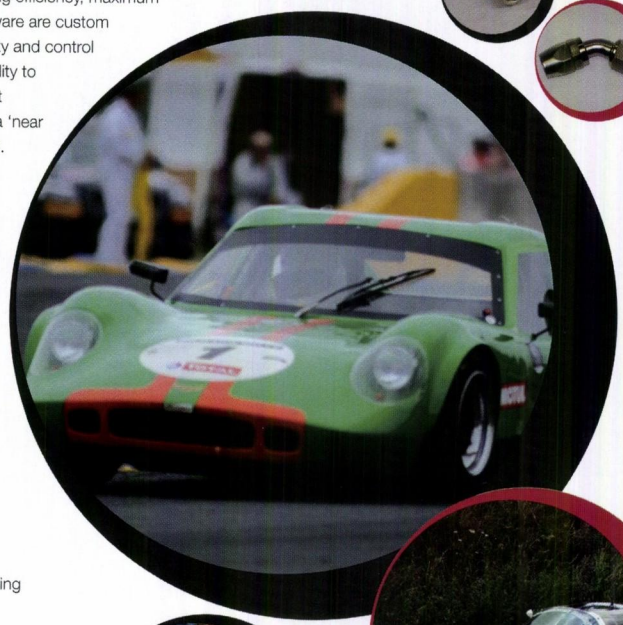


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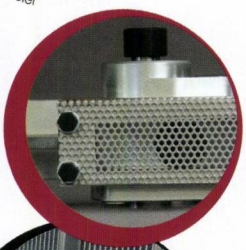


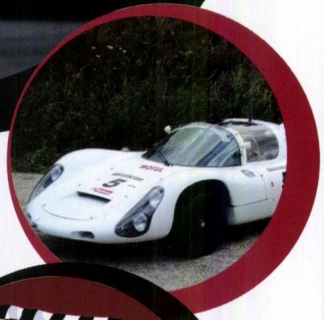


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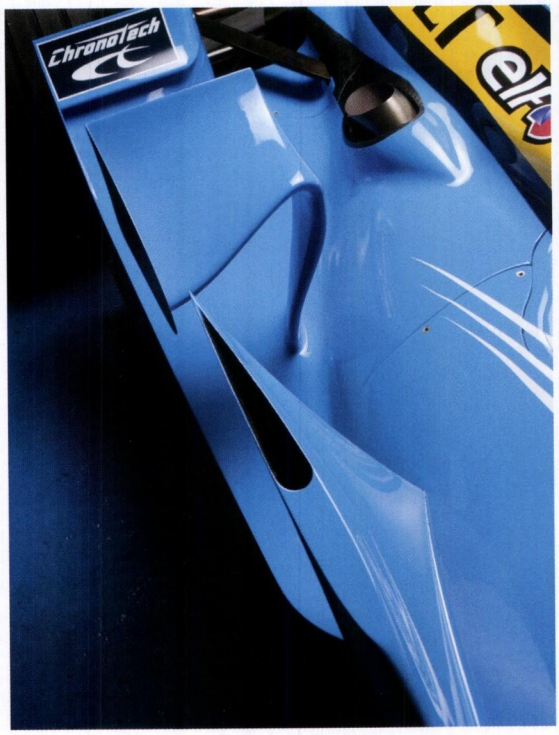


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Glenn Dunbar/LAT

The reintroduction of tyre changes for 2006 moved the regulations back in favour of Renault and away from McLaren, but it was a double-edged sword: the new regs also brought Ferrari back into the equation

The smaller capacity combined with the ban on variable inlet devices forced the design team finally to abandon a six-speed gearbox – as used since 2001 – in favour of a seven-speed. This at last brought it into line with everyone else. The closer ratios increased the duty cycle of the engine, as did the greater use of full throttle prompted by the reduction in capacity. Therefore care had to be taken to ensure the motor still met the two-race endurance rules.

The engine's relatively friendly torque curve, in combination with the rearward weight bias, helped the car to the best startline getaways of all, something of a Renault tradition in recent years.

AERODYNAMICS

Matching up weight distribution with the centre of aerodynamic pressure is a key endeavour for any F1 design team. It gives the car a wider operating band in that there is greater correlation between low- and high-speed handling characteristics – correcting excessive low-speed understeer need not involve worsening high-speed oversteer, for example.

Which for the Renault team over the years has meant matching up the rearward weight distribution with a similar downforce distribution. The way the regulations have continuously sought to restrict frontal downforce over the years – mainly through wing height – has therefore worked in Renault's favour. The aero distribution demanded by the weight distribution has been more easily and efficiently accomplished for them than for other teams with a more conventional weight distribution.

There have been downsides to this approach, however. With rear tyres that are deliberately under-dimensioned for their workload by the regulations, it has sometimes led Renaults to over-use their rear tyres. This was noticeable in 2005 when tyre changes were not permitted: then the R25 was often slower than the more forward-biased McLaren MP4-20. The reintroduction of tyre changes for 2006 moved the regulations back in favour of Renault's approach and away from McLaren's. But it was a double-edged sword, because as well as helping Renault see off McLaren, the new regs brought Ferrari back into the equation. In effect, it simply changed the identity of Renault's prime rival.

Above right: Giancarlo Fisichella heads for fifth in the Australian Grand Prix. Above left: the engine's favourable heat rejection figures allow small radiators and so more freedom to optimise the aerodynamic efficiency of the sidepods

Helping retain the rearward weight distribution, the R26 featured a fairly long wheelbase of 3100mm. This had aero benefits too, in that it allowed more space between the front wheels and the sidepods, thereby giving the airflow along the body a better chance of staying attached as it had a greater length in which to change direction.

At the front, the R26's lower suspension wishbone was attached to the tub via a 'vee keel' that dropped down from the high nose. Unlike the rival twin or zero keels, this allowed an adequate distance between the lower and upper wishbones to give some adjustability of camber to aid set-up. But compared to the traditional solid single keel, it still offered the airflow a clear passage through to the underbody.

Keeping this passage uncluttered also played its part in determining the shape of the front wing. It used a twin-plane design – as opposed to the triple-plane seen on the McLaren MP4-21 – to give a single-slot gap. The size of the slot gap can be changed to tune out any airflow separation. Above the connected twin-planes are upper winglets. These are aerofoil shaped at the outer ends to give downforce but then change to a more neutral profile in the middle, so as not to block the flow to the underbody. The design of the endplates is quite intricate and is a major influence on the car's ▶


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TECH SPEC – RENAULT R26, CHASSIS 3



CHASSIS
Carbon-composite monocoque and bodywork
Front suspension double wishbones, pushrods to torsion springs
Rear suspension double wishbones, pushrods, torsion springs plus central auxiliary coil spring
Brakes carbon ventilated discs
Steering rack and pinion, PAS

ENGINE
Configuration 90-degree V8
Valvegear DOHC, 32 valves, pneumatic operation
Bore x stroke secret!
Capacity 2.4 litres
Fuelling electronic injection, mechanical pump
Ignition digital electronic
Maximum power 775bhp

TRANSMISSION
Gearbox seven-speed 'box
Clutch carbon

DIMENSIONS
Wheelbase 3100mm
Length 4800mm
Weight distribution 45F/55R







The R26 rear wing is highly unusual. The wing ends are usually where the greatest downforce can be created but at a greater cost in drag. Renault appeared to get around this with a highly intricate wing/endplate arrangement

behaviour in transient conditions – as it changes direction. This also plays an important part in maintaining adequate airflow to the radiators when the wheels are turned.

The fins atop the front bodywork are flow conditioners which take airflow from the front and channel it to the rear wing. They effectively convert front downforce to rear, and the shortfall in the front is then compensated for by increasing the flap angle. The advantage of doing this is that front downforce costs far less drag than downforce derived from increasing the angle of the rear wing.

The low heat rejection figures of the engine allowed very small radiators. This in turn allowed the aero team to viciously undercut the lower part of the sidepods. This created a low-pressure area that the airflow rushed to fill, thereby increasing the speed of the flow towards the rear beam wing, which in turn increased downforce.

The shorter dimensions of the engine compared to the V10, within the same wheelbase, meant that the engine could be mounted further forward in the car, thus creating more space at the rear for downforce generation. It allowed the designers to enhance the 'coke bottle' profile of the lower bodywork. This worked in concert with the sidepod undercuts to speed up the airflow over the rear beam wing.

The rear wing is supported by a central pillar rather than the R25's endplate mounting system. Freed of structural requirements, the endplates could be shaped more aggressively to scavenge the outer channels of the diffuser, so speeding up underbody airflow – a detail inspired by the 2005 Toyota.

Above left: lower front wishbone mounted on 'vee keel', which is aerodynamically 'clean' and allows good camber adjustability. Above right: winglets behind driver smooth airflow to the rear wing

With a narrower section in the middle than at the ends, the rear wing is highly unusual. The wing ends are usually where the greatest downforce can be created, but it is usually inefficient in that there is a greater cost in drag. The Renault wing appeared to get around the drag increase with a highly intricate wing/endplate arrangement. It is believed this design also kept downforce more consistent as the car changed direction.

Another detail unique to the Renault is the very low positioning of the lower rear wishbone. This was introduced on the R25 and required a completely new gearbox casing, but it allowed the wishbone to work in aerodynamic unison with the diffuser and lower beam wing.

MASS DAMPERS

The R26 ran with front and rear mass dampers from the start of the season until the devices were banned prior to the German GP. These simple devices were sprung weights that opposed the pitching and bouncing of the car. That at the front comprised a weight of up to 9kg that was tuned to counter pitch. The rear one was smaller and countered bounce. The aim was to even out the load variations on the tyres, which on an F1 car with its stiff suspension but low-pressure tyres are very considerable. In this way the mass dampers effectively increased the usable grip of the tyres.

They were controversially banned by the FIA after objections from other teams that they could construe an aerodynamic advantage.

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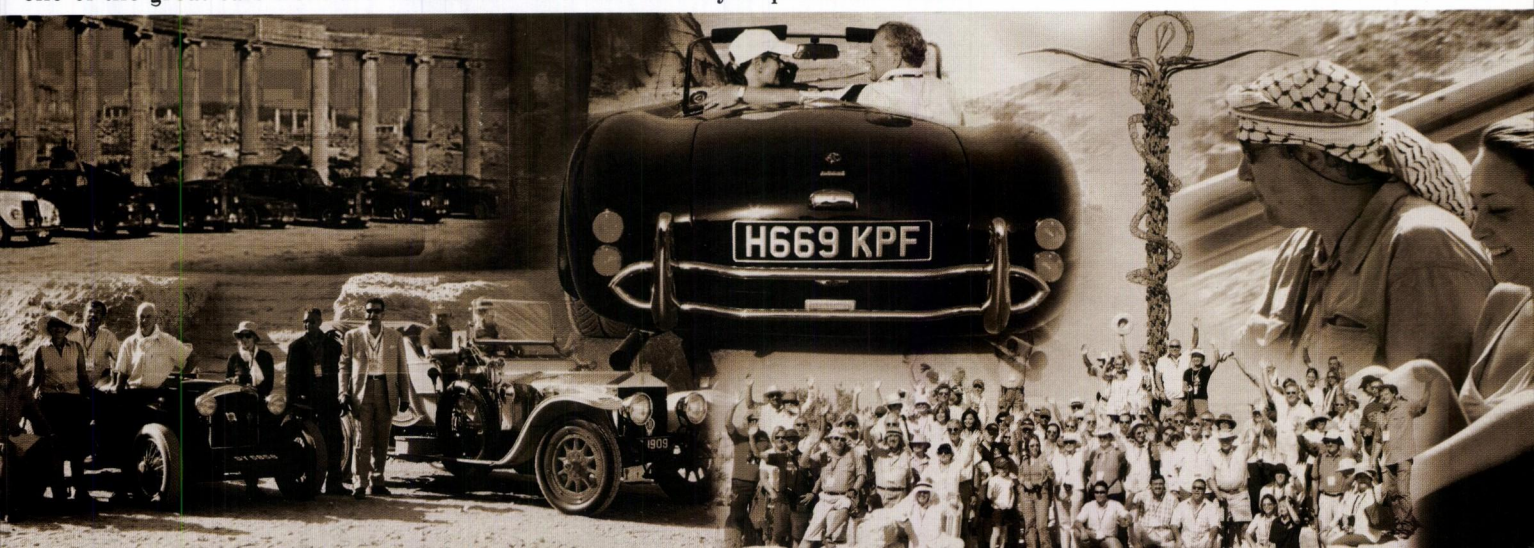
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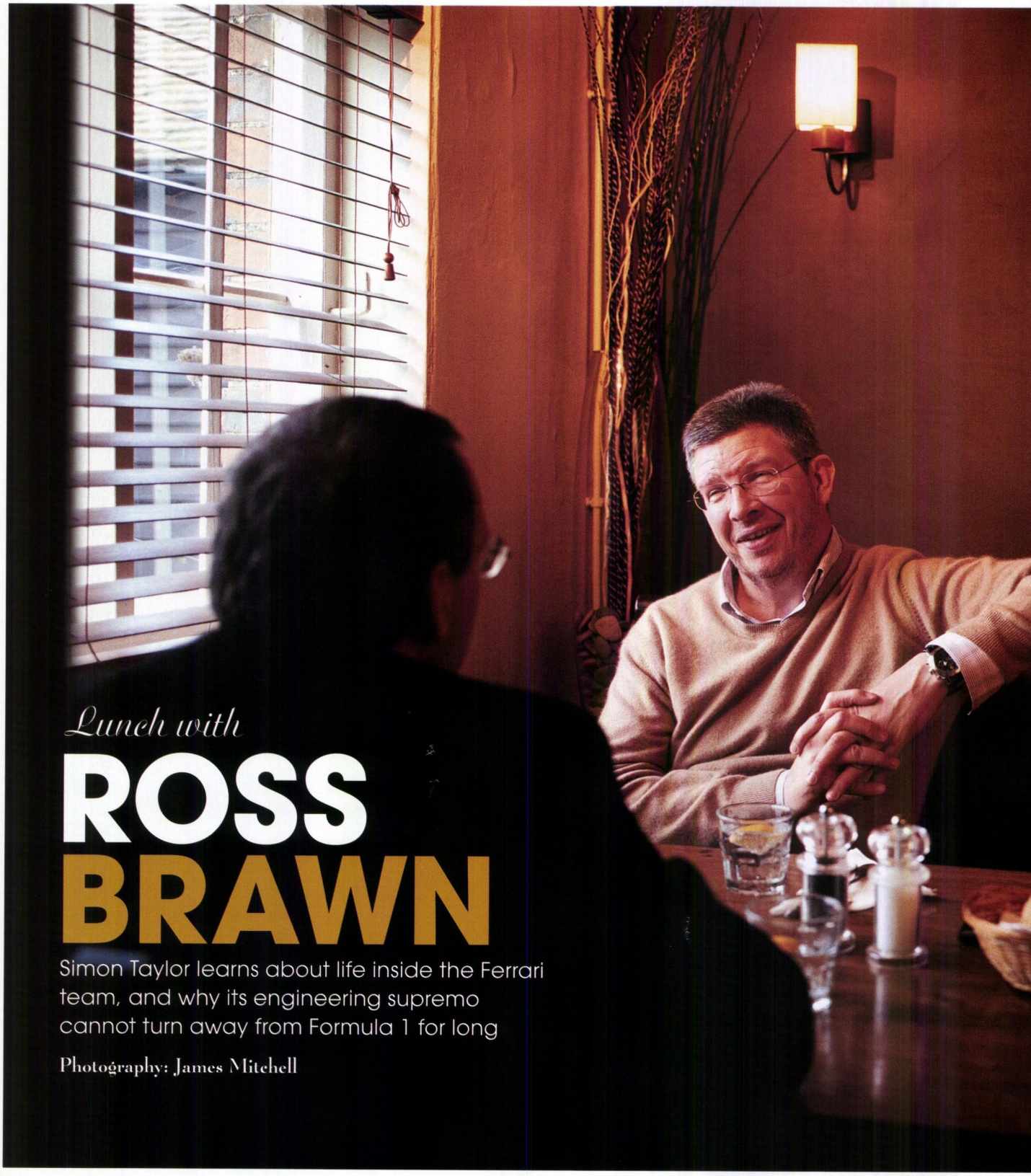
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Lunch with

ROSS BRAWN

Simon Taylor learns about life inside the Ferrari team, and why its engineering supremo cannot turn away from Formula 1 for long

Photography: James Mitchell

Among the avalanche of tributes to Michael Schumacher on his retirement at the end of last season were several that named him the greatest racing driver of all time. I have to say that I find greatest-ever titles in motor racing pretty meaningless. Every element of the sport – cars, circuits and technology, to say nothing of levels of reward and acceptable behaviour – goes on changing down the years, so that all-time comparisons become pointless. Therefore, trying to impose some sort of absolute pecking order on the likes of Jim Clark, Tazio Nuvolari, Ayrton Senna and Stirling Moss is like comparing plum jam with tomato soup.

But there can be no argument that Schumacher, during his own era, was indeed the greatest. He won his first F1 victory at Spa in 1992, and his 91st in Shanghai 14 years later. And all through this incredible career runs a consistent thread, for on the pit wall to cheer his first win for Benetton and his last for Ferrari was the same tall, bespectacled figure. Ross Brawn has been an essential ingredient in almost every Schumacher success, and in many ways the architect of every one of his seven world titles.

Ferrari's first season in modern F1 without Schumacher will also be its first without Brawn. After 10 years with the team, Ross is having a year away from motor racing altogether. He still has a house in Italy, but we meet in the picturesque Oxfordshire village where he's had a home for many years. We lunch at his local, the Cherry Tree, where he is evidently a well-liked regular, and where the pub food includes excellent pork and leek sausage and mash.



Crash PA

> "It's black and white: either you're winning or you're not. It's a horrible feeling when you're not. You can cope with it when a driver makes a mistake. But when I get it wrong it goes deep. It takes me time to come to terms with it"

"It's a strange experience for me, after nearly 30 years in motor racing, not to be part of the new season. But a lot of things came together which helped me decide to take a year out and indulge myself a little, recharge the batteries. Ferrari has been the most enjoyable period of my career. They're a lovely bunch of people. But after 10 years of doing the same thing, I need a new challenge. Whether I get it from Ferrari or elsewhere we'll have to see. The agreement with Luca [de Montezemolo] and Jean [Todt] is that we'll stay in touch, and in July or August we'll reach a decision. Taking a sabbatical gives me a way to leave the company gently if I choose, but also gives me the option to return. I'm open about which route I take – it could be a different job with the same team, or the same job with a different team – but I'll discuss the situation with Ferrari first. If things are running well there and there's no window for me, I'll look to see what other openings there might be.

"So yes, it could be with another team that needs to progress. A period of progression can be very exciting, whereas a period of consolidation – which is what we've had towards the end of my time with Ferrari – is, I think, less stimulating. It's not complacency, because there was never any of that at Ferrari. It's more an unwillingness to make radical change. When you're down near the back of the grid you take risks, because you've still got to prove yourself. Taking risks gets more difficult when you're winning, because you don't want to spoil things that are working well."



Top: Ross whispers in Schumacher's attentive ear in the Ferrari pit garage. Their working relationship has produced success that is unparalleled in modern F1

Was Schumacher's departure a factor in Ross' timing? "No. I decided what I wanted to do a long time ago, before the issue of Michael or Kimi (Raikkonen) came up. I saw it as my job to structure my succession, and develop the technical organisation to carry on without me. That's been going on for the last 18 months. I really started to reach my decision after we won the 2004 championship almost at a canter (that year Ferrari won 15 out of 18 rounds). Strangely enough 2005 and 2006, much tougher years when we didn't win the championship, gave me more stimulus. From a technical point of view we get our rewards in lots of different ways. But championships are what we're after, obviously. We're very happy with lots of things from 2006, but we didn't win the championship. Renault did a better job."

Ross is clearly an utterly competitive person, just as much a racer as his star driver. "It's black and white: either you're winning or you're not. It's a horrible feeling when you're not. There are various stages of not winning: it might be because a driver makes a mistake. You can cope with that. It's frustrating, but you can come back from the race thinking we did what we should have done, and it just didn't work out. ▶

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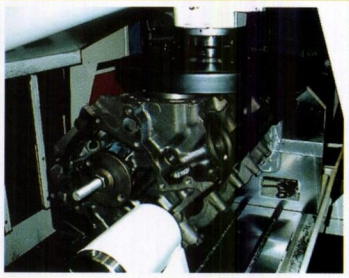
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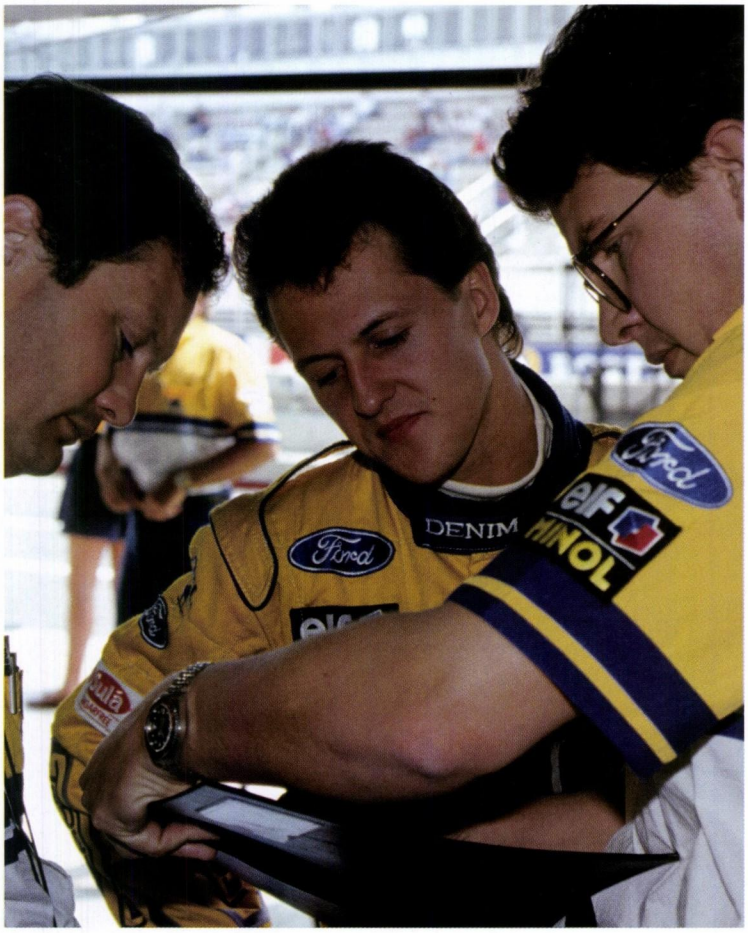
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MOTOR SPORTS

You get situations like at Spa in 1998 [Schumacher was leading the race by over half a minute when he ran into the back of Coulthard], races that are in the bag and you lose them for some stupid reason, and you get angry, but you don't feel frustration for yourself.

"But then you get races when you should have won and you didn't because you haven't done a good enough job, either yourself or someone in the team. If I get it wrong it goes deep, it hurts like hell. It takes me a couple of days to recover from one of those. Outwardly I have to show that we're going to sort this out, we're going to fix everything, but my wife Jean knows not to touch on the subject for a couple of days. It takes me time to come to terms with it. The problem is solved by the need to get ready for the next race, the constant rota of races which drives us all along.

"The peculiar phenomenon in Formula 1 is that we all have different cars, different engines, different drivers, different personnel, and yet the front-runners end up within a tenth of a second of each other. If all of us were working in isolation on a project to those parameters, there's no way we'd come out so close. It's impossible. The reason why we end up like that is because we're driving each other. The catalyst is when you're not fast enough, and when you are fast enough there isn't the same stimulus. You can say you're still putting in the same commitment, making the same effort to go faster. But somehow you aren't. When you're quicker you're not prepared to take as many risks. When you're behind you're pushing the boundaries harder in all the areas. The teams that are behind, provided they've got the resources, will always catch up. That's why the teams that are slower make more progress than the teams that are quicker."

By the mid-1990s Ferrari had become a team that was slower. A Ferrari driver hadn't been World Champion since the late 1970s: Williams and McLaren, and then Benetton, ruled the F1 roost. The young Michael Schumacher had joined



LAT

> "When you're quicker you're not prepared to take as many risks. When you're behind you're pushing the boundaries harder in all the areas. That's why the teams that are slower make more progress than the teams that are quicker"



LAT

Benetton late in 1991 just as Ross arrived, returning to F1 after designing Jaguar's all-conquering XJR-14 sports car. Schumacher was a winner by 1992, and in 1994 and 1995 he won back-to-back titles. But then he quit.

"Michael going to Ferrari was a snub. It was the team's fault that he left. I was totally focused on Benetton. We were a team, Michael, Rory (Byrne, the chassis designer) and me. Then one day Flavio (Briatore) walked in and said, 'Michael's going to Ferrari.' We'd just won two World Championships, we were the strongest team, and Michael was leaving. It was quite difficult for me to come to terms with it. I talked to Michael about it later: there were some problems between him and Flavio, some things which Flavio had done. To be honest, it's the same with Fernando Alonso now – it's illogical for him to have left Renault, but he's left. So why?

"Then I had my own problems with Benetton. At the end of 1995 I'd agreed to stay, on condition that I got total responsibility over the whole engineering side. Flavio agreed ▶

Younger days: Ross confers with Michael and Frank Dernie. As well as the Drivers' titles in 1994 and 1995, Benetton were Constructors' champions in 1995. Left: Ross designed the Jaguar XJR-14, which won the 1991 World Sports Car Championship. This is the Brundle/ Warwick car winning at Monza



Both: LAT

Turkey 2005: As Schumacher storms out of the pits, Ross stands impassively behind, checking for damage from the Ferrari's tangle with Webber's Williams

to that, but ultimately he didn't implement it. F1 is pretty incestuous, and Michael got to hear I wasn't happy. At the same time, he wasn't happy with the technical structure at Ferrari either. Just before Monaco in 1996 I got a call from Willi Weber, asking if I'd like a chat. That's how it started."

So the initial approach to join Ferrari actually came from their driver's manager. Is that a measure of the power that Schumacher was already wielding at Maranello?

"Well, at Benetton Michael was only a driver: a top-class driver, a winner, but not as deeply integrated into the team as he became at Ferrari, because he'd come into a team that already had a structure. When he arrived at Ferrari the team was at sea; they were looking for some reference points, and Michael was a very good reference point.

"But in the middle and later stages of the Ferrari renaissance Michael always worked through me and Jean, the two senior people. He respected the structure we had. His influence never had a divisive effect, because it came through the proper channels. He'd sit with me or Jean or Rory and give his point of view. He always had a good contribution to make, but he never got stroppy if we didn't choose the path he proposed.

"At Ferrari everybody knew they had the opportunity to contribute to the conclusions we were trying to reach. Take tyre choice for a race: that was always very complicated. I'd chair a committee where all the different elements would present their views. The test team would set out their data, so would the race team, the vehicle dynamics guys, the tyre specialists, we'd have Rory there too. Then I'd decide which was the strongest argument for which tyre choice. And the great thing was that everyone then supported that decision, even if it wasn't their proposal, because they knew they'd been part of the process. Michael always knew that his opinion had been properly heard and properly considered, and if it hadn't been adopted he knew there was a good reason. He's an intelligent guy. It was never: 'I'm Michael Schumacher, I want this'. That was never in his vocabulary. That's how he became a much more integrated, intrinsic part of the team than he had been at Benetton."

What about the role of Michael's team-mates at Ferrari – Eddie Irvine, Rubens Barrichello, Felipe Massa – and controversial races like the 2002 Austrian GP, when Barrichello reluctantly obeyed an order to move aside and allow Schumacher to win?

"The only *contractual* advantage Michael ever had over his team-mate was that he had first call on the spare car, and because of rule changes the spare car has not been an issue in



recent years. But we would always take a decision in a race that we felt was best for Ferrari. Those decisions tended to favour Michael, because he was in the best position to win the championship – but it was never a case of Michael is the No 1 driver, so he has to get this or that.

"We had some difficult times with Rubens, who gave Michael quite a hard time competitively during his six seasons with us. If Rubens had been 20 points ahead of Michael in the championship, it would have been logical for all the strategy decisions to favour him. But it never occurred.

"That race in Austria caused a furore. But you have to remember that at that stage in the championship Michael had 44 points to Rubens' six points, and of course we wanted to maximise Michael's chances of the title. Championships have been lost in the past by a single point. We asked Rubens several laps before the end to concede position, but he wouldn't until the last few hundred metres. These things are all discussed beforehand in the calm of the motorhome, so Rubens knew the score.

"But he's a passionate guy, he was leading the race, and I can understand how he felt. Three races later (by which time Schumacher's championship was almost, but not quite, clinched) we let Rubens lead Michael home in Germany."



Highlight of the Brawn-designed Arrows A10's career was third and fourth places in the 1988 Italian GP at Monza for Eddie Cheever and Derek Warwick

Today, Formula 1 races are all about strategy – thinking through every permutation of weather, tyres, fuel and safety-car, and second-guessing other teams' plans too. Ross Brawn is the acknowledged master of this multi-layered game of poker, and his intellectual approach has helped Ferrari to win five Drivers' Championships and five Constructors' Championships in 10 years. We're all familiar with the mid-race TV close-ups of Brawn talking on the radio to Schumacher and, we assume, dictating race strategy on the hoof as a race pans out. But Ross maintains that most of it is envisaged beforehand.

"More and more situations are covered by the computer models and simulations that we work up. We plan for almost every eventuality, because I want to avoid having to make a major decision on the pit wall. I hate those situations when you've suddenly got to pull something out of thin air. If possible, everything's got to be thought through, and every circumstance pre-conceived.

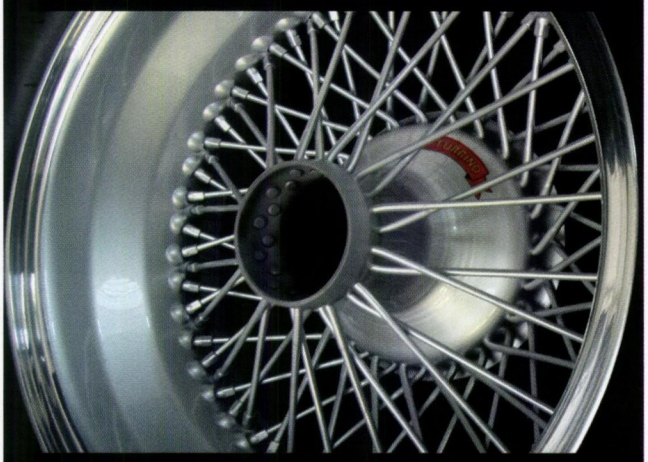
"In the pre-race briefing at Magny-Cours in 2004 Luca Baldisseri, who works on our strategies, said, 'Look, I've got this idea about four pitstops, and it doesn't actually look stupid. It's no faster than three, but it could actually work.' So we looked at how it could be introduced into the race.

"Early in the race we had the fastest car, but we were stuck behind Alonso, and we couldn't use our advantage. On the pit wall I said to Luca, 'Sod it, I'm not going to let him stay stuck like this. Let's do something exciting.' Michael is the guy to make these things work, because he spends time with you and understands what you're on about. So I said to him on the radio, 'Michael, we're getting bored here. We're going to have a go at something.' He knew it was a long shot, but the race came to us and we had the reward."

Magny-Cours has a short pitlane, and its approach bypasses the tight final corner, so pit stops are less costly than at most circuits. Michael's four stops separated him from Alonso, on a lighter fuel load. When Ross demanded a string of qualifying-speed laps to build up enough cushion for the extra stop, Michael delivered. Alonso was beaten by 8.3 seconds.

During a race, what would Ross talk about to Michael? "The systems are quite good now, but they're not 100 per cent. That's why you still see pit boards because – assuming the driver reads them – they are the only 100 per cent system available. The main thing Michael wanted to know was ▶

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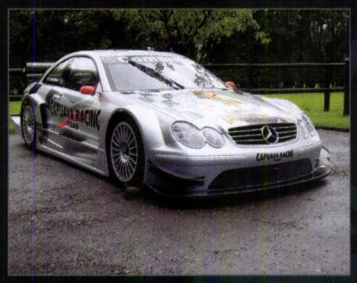


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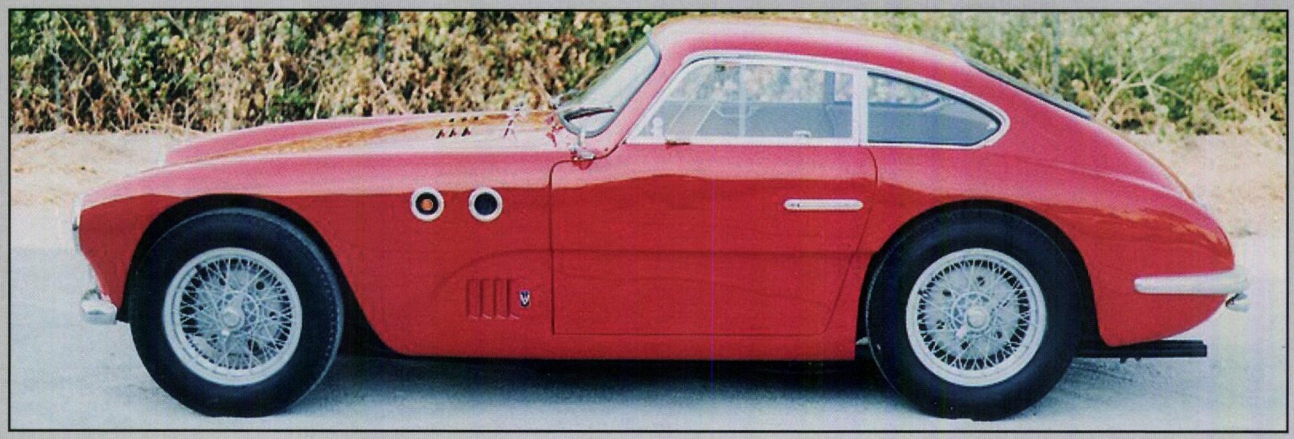
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Bandini 1000 Barchetta, 1965,
Bentley Derby Special, 1937.
Bristol Frazer Nash Rep Rep.
Fiat 124 Rally, 1974.
Ford Escort MK1 RS 1600 works.
Ford RS200, 1986.
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how the race around him was developing, because he was in a little cocoon so he couldn't see the whole environment. Lots of times we'd be giving him targets, telling him how he needed to drive, whether he could consolidate his position or whether he had to push. And we'd talk about what the car was doing and what he, and we, could do to improve it. He was always very active in his discussion with his engineer during a race, and he would do a lot of work with the car because we had lots of adjustable controls that he could play with, plus things we could adjust when he came in, like tyre pressures or wing angle. He could talk to his vehicle engineer, his race engineer and me, and I would be listening in to all of it on both cars."

So being an F1 driver today demands, as well as everything else, high intelligence? "Yes. That's the new era of race drivers. Michael was the first to make that step, and he made the step because he had the ability to do it. It's being able to drive the car on the limit and still have some spare brain capacity to do other things at the same time. As things evolve, the successful drivers will not just be quick. More and more they'll be the ones who can combine that range of skills – really understanding a race, and how to work to get the best from a car. I get the impression that Alonso is in that category.

"Whenever Michael had a new team-mate, he always made them raise their game. They saw the way he worked and learned to follow it. Rubens made great progress when he joined Ferrari, and Massa has too: commitment, approach, fitness. You don't go back to the hotel at six o'clock on Saturday, you stay there with the engineer who's trying to improve the situation."

But Michael did on occasion make mistakes – the aforementioned collision lapping Coulthard at Spa, for example, or his extraordinary behaviour in qualifying at



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Monaco in 2006. Did he apologise when something was his fault? "The culture in F1 is that you don't apologise for something you've done. If a mechanic cocks up or a wheel stop goes wrong, or if the driver hits the wall, or I make a wrong call in a race, everyone knows you've got it wrong and that's enough. It's not done to go around the crew and say sorry. If Michael made a mistake he'd be very angry, very frustrated. And he'd come back for the next race very quiet, very determined, not jovial, not having a laugh with the guys like he normally did, but totally focused on the race because he wanted to redress the balance. He didn't say anything, but you knew he was thinking, 'I'll make it up to you now.'"

Ross' father worked for Firestone, and he was taken to races from a young age. "I raced karts when I was very young, but I was never much good. There's nothing worse than having the spirit without the faculties to achieve it. Then my father got me involved in slot-car racing, which was quite big in the '60s and '70s, and I raced them all over Europe, won some championships. It was a technical art developing those cars. They weighed three or four ounces and would do 60 or 70mph, so the aerodynamics were quite significant.



Although Ross Brawn will play no part in F1 during 2007, he's looking forward to many more years in the sport – whether with Ferrari, or with another team

"I did a mechanical engineering apprenticeship at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell, and then I saw an advertisement in the local paper for a job at Williams. I did a year there as a machinist, but the team was so small that when they discovered I could do other things I did a bit of everything. Frank was having some difficulties and sold out to Walter Wolf, so I left and worked for a season as an F3 mechanic. Then Frank called to say he was back on his feet with Patrick, and was forming a new team. That was in the old carpet warehouse at Didcot. When I joined Frank Williams Grand Prix Engineering there were 11 staff, including me. Today Ferrari's F1 operation is 1000 people.

"I'd been interested in model aircraft, so I understood a bit about aerodynamics. So when Williams started a wind-tunnel programme I got involved almost by default. I found it fascinating. I had a lot of help from Dr John Harvey at Imperial College, who spent more time than he should have done in their wind tunnel showing me how things worked. I'm still in touch with John. He finds us the occasional third-year student he thinks we should take a look at, and every couple of years we take an Imperial College student into Ferrari. ▶



Both: LAT

In the 2002 Austrian GP, it was only in the final charge to the finish line that Rubens Barrichello finally yielded to team orders and moved aside to let Schumacher win

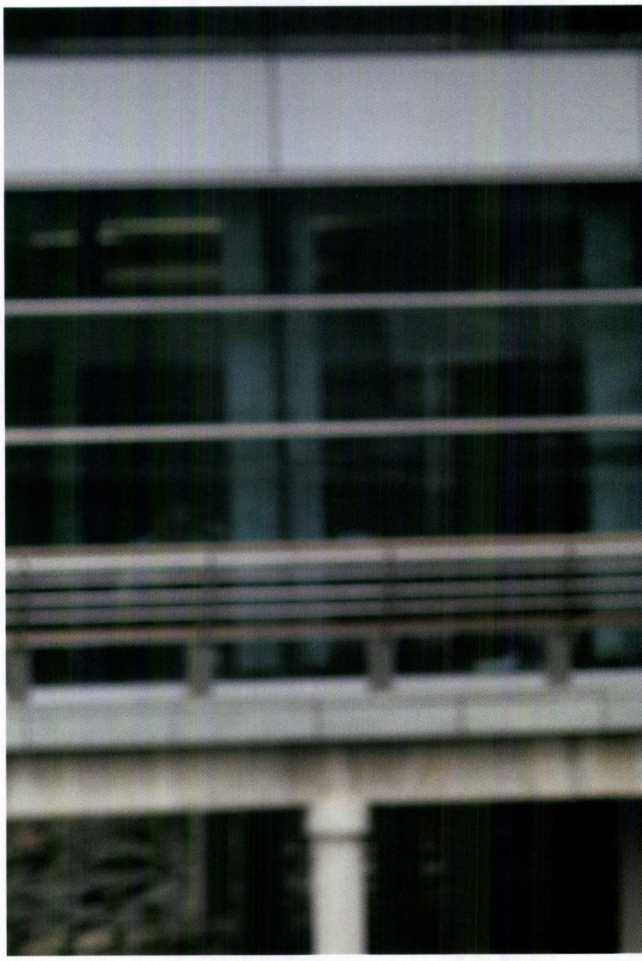
"The Williams years were very formative. We didn't really know what we were doing, but no-one else did either, so we produced a competitive car. After seven years at Williams I went to the Carl Haas Force team. It wasn't a successful project, but it did stretch me; I did the aerodynamics and bodywork. When they folded I went to Arrows for 1987. This was another step into the unknown, because suddenly I was responsible for the whole car. In 1988 we were equal fourth in the Constructors' Championship with Derek Warwick and Eddie Cheever.

"Then Tom Walkinshaw asked me to join the Jaguar sports car programme. We did the first sports car of its generation to use full F1 technology, because some of the engineers I drew into the project had been involved in F1, and our thinking was F1. We looked at the rules and, unlike F1 where you can't be very aggressive technically, there was this formula which had some constraints but was basically incredibly open. It was a playground for us, and we won the World Sports Car Championship in 1991.

"The XJR-14 was the last time I designed a complete racing car because, when I moved back into F1 with Benetton, Rory Byrne took a large part of that responsibility. In the early days at Benetton Rory would do the basic concept and I would help him, but as the team expanded he was happy with that role and I moved more into the engineering and racing side.

"In sports car racing, strategy was a key part of things, but in F1 it was only just getting started then. When I returned to F1 I was amazed how poorly some of the teams used the pit stops to work for them strategically. In 1994 we were often able to beat Williams through simple strategic moves. The fuel rigs were much slower then. We knew we could stay with them carrying 10 more kilos of fuel, and we'd stop at the same time as them but we'd have more fuel left so we could put less in. So our pit stop would be a couple of seconds quicker than theirs and we'd come out in front. All sorts of accusations went flying around, and our fuel cells were stripped three or four times that season. But the calculations were quite simple. It was just something we were more familiar with, because of sports car racing.

"Clever moves can lead to protests, and I got a bit of a reputation, unfortunately. The one I feel aggrieved about was Imola 1994, the traction control issue. The rest you can argue were all about interpretation of regulations and so on, but in 1994 we were simply accused of cheating. The FIA had our



ECUs [electronic control units] examined by an outside firm, who found some redundant features that referred back to 1993. All the race data from Imola was available, and it showed no sign of traction control or launch control being used. The menu didn't have those options on it, so although they still existed in the software they could not be activated. All the FIA said was, 'We agree it wasn't being used, but it was there.'

"It was all ensnared in the huge political row going on between Max Mosley and Flavio and Tom, who'd written a letter to the FIA saying Max wasn't fit to be president. Then Flavio said to Rory and me, 'We're going to concede this one, because all Max is going to do is take away our points from Imola.' And I said, 'If you do that deal I will walk out the door, and so will Rory, because we haven't done anything wrong. You won't have a technical director or a chief designer.' So he had to go back to Max and say, 'We'll fight the case, because my guys won't accept a deal.'

"That was the tragedy of traction control: it was like drugs in athletics. Whichever team did well, there was always the innuendo that they had some system that couldn't be detected. All a team principal had to do was have a quiet word in a journalist's ear: 'We hear they've got traction control...' Yet when they made traction control legal and everybody started



Ross talks tactics with Jean Todt before the Chinese Grand Prix at Shanghai in 2006. Schumacher, who scored his final victory here, always respected the decision-making structure at Ferrari directed by the Englishman and the Frenchman

using it again, the same teams were winning, the same teams were losing. So either everybody had it before, or nobody had it before.

"The more open a formula is, the more stimulating it is technically. I believe that budgetary constraint on Formula 1 has to come from commercial viability, and nothing else. We've frozen the engines, we've got a control tyre, so Ferrari's approach is going to be how to divert those funds that have been saved into other technologies to get a performance advantage. It won't necessarily reduce the overall spend. That's why everyone is building two wind tunnels. When the only variable left is aerodynamics, all the money will be ploughed into that."

Ross believes that F1 can enhance its relevance to the outside world by accelerating technological initiatives for the greater economic and ecological good. "The pressures of F1 mean that things get developed very quickly, but I don't think regenerative braking will wash – I can see it working in town traffic, but it won't help much in a motorway cruise situation. My proposal for F1 is an efficiency formula, where the only constraint is the fuel flow rate. You can use any engine you like, because if the fuel is constrained you'll eke out every ounce of energy. So clever use of energy will win races. We'd probably go for a very small turbocharged engine."

The day after our lunch, Ross and Jean are off to Argentina on a fishing trip. Fishing is a passion for Ross, along with gardening and classic cars. He has a pair of Jaguars, an AC Ace, a 300SL and three beautiful Ferraris: a 275GTB, a Daytona and his "company car", a 430. "But I couldn't turn my back on motor racing and just go fishing and play with my cars. My life needs the stimulus of F1, its energy, its motivation, its structure.

"While I'm away from racing I'm going to miss the adrenalin. During the last couple of races in 2006 I was fitted up with a heart monitor, because Ferrari has a physio who likes to monitor these things. He started with the drivers and then moved on to the rest of the team. In Japan, when Michael was leading, we were in a strong position, and my pulse was 120. The very moment his engine failed – the moment we effectively lost the championship – it dropped to 90. You could plot the exact second it happened from the trace of my pulse. When they say your heart sinks, that's exactly what happens."

So Ross will recharge his batteries this year: catch fish, do the garden, drive his classic cars. But that won't make his pulse race. The lure of Formula 1, which has ensnared him for three decades, remains. Wearing a red uniform or not, Ross Brawn will be back.

The win that wasn't there

A young David Coulthard was so focused on getting in to Formula 1 that he scarcely noticed the day and night he spent hammering around the Sarthe

Words: Jonathan Noble. Photography: LAT

It is a little ironic that while Jacques Villeneuve has just signed up with Peugeot for this year's Le Mans, his friend David Coulthard confesses that he sometimes needs reminding that he's actually a winner himself at La Sarthe.

In fact, it was only a few hours before *Motor Sport* contacted him that Coulthard's most recent prompt had come.

"I was just rereading a draft of a book I'm doing," explains Coulthard. "It mentions Le Mans in one chapter, proudly boasting that I have won it. I had actually forgotten that."

Coulthard's victory was in the GT class in 1993, when Jaguar returned to the event with the XJ220C. Today, however, the record books classify Coulthard, David Brabham and John Nielsen in 31st overall (just ahead of the non-finishers) due to their post-event disqualification for an illegal exhaust.

That does little justice to the fact that the three put in a stirring performance, overcoming 73 minutes lost through a fuel leak to beat the Larbre Porsche Carrera RSR of Joel Gouhier, Jurgen Barth and Dominique Dupuy to 15th overall.

Coulthard, at the time driving for Paul Stewart Racing in F3000 and with his sights set on F1 after landing a Williams-Renault test deal, reveals that he only took part because of the near two-month gap in his commitments that summer.

"It was one of those things I ended up doing because there wasn't anything else happening at the time," he says. "I couldn't say I was passionate about Le Mans; it was only when I got on the podium at the end I realised just how big it was."

Coulthard tested the XJ220 at Silverstone, but his 'relaxed' approach saw him miss pre-event practice and he only turned up from qualifying onwards. His workload increased, however, when Brabham hurt his foot after the car fell on top of it.

"Me being the youngster, they stuck me out for the sun-down period and the morning when the sun was coming up. It was difficult driving in that part of the day, but it was great. The team would tell you to adjust your pace by half a second over what's quite a long lap, and I enjoyed that aspect – even if you're not driving at 100 per cent all the time like in F1."

Not all his memories are favourable, though: he still gets goosebumps from his treatment at the hands of one rival.

"Eddie Irvine's Toyota passed me ridiculously closely on the straight; it just wasn't necessary. I recall the door flapping in on the Jaguar and sitting there thinking 'This isn't much fun'."

Although the disqualification was a clear disappointment, it did not make much difference to Coulthard's life. "I've still got the trophy, it's up in Scotland with all the others," he smiles. "And my focus at the time was so much on F1 that it didn't upset me much. I had been there and done the job."

Would he do Le Mans again? "I would," he says. "I wouldn't want to go there with people I didn't know though. There has to be a social aspect to it. I've been speaking to Gil de Ferran, Paul Stewart and Jacques Villeneuve and saying it would be fun to do it with friends. But I think the chances of finding a team willing to take us all on are quite slim..."



Coulthard's Le Mans drive coincided with Jaguar's return to Le Mans in the GT class with the XJ220C

"I was rereading a draft of a book I'm doing and it mentions Le Mans in one chapter, proudly boasting that I have won it. I had actually forgotten that!"

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Casting the runes

Bernie Ecclestone is capable of making startlingly accurate predictions of the future – so why did he tell Nigel Roebuck he didn't believe in long-term planning?

Photography: LAT

Long-term planning," said Bernie Ecclestone, "is a nonsense. The world changes so fast these days that any guy who talks about what's going to be happening in four years' time is an idiot. A complete idiot…"

This was 1995, in a conversation I had with the master of all he surveys at the French GP. It came back to me recently when, at the announcement of the future Abu Dhabi GP, Ecclestone said he was thinking of a 20-race World Championship.

Back in 1995 the F1 team owners were adamant we should not have more than 16, and Ecclestone agreed: "No, we can't. I would never, *ever*, put more than 16 races on the calendar"

Hang on, I said, we've got 17 races *this* year… "Well, this is the exception," said Bernie. "I put 17 on, thinking we were bound to lose at least one. Imola might not have happened – there was all that circuit work to do. Monza still may not happen, and there were doubts about Aida, because of that big earthquake. I thought we'd better add one in case, but I'm not intending to have more than 16 in the future…"

Long-term planning, as he said, was indeed a nonsense. We did indeed have 16 the following year, 1996, but 17 or 18 has become the norm, and perhaps it will be 20 in the future.

Back then there were fears that, because small teams like Simtek and Pacific were going to the wall, we might end up with small grids – perhaps as few as 20 cars. It was a long way from the days of pre-qualifying, when sometimes there were 30 or so entries, but Ecclestone said he couldn't care less.

"We're the best, right? People go on about only 20 cars in the race – but so what? The size of the field doesn't bother me at all. It is much better to have a smaller, better quality grid than have a lot of rubbish. We're in the quality business, not quantity. I've had enough of people walking around with begging bowls, crying as if it is everyone else's fault – people we should never have let in in the first place."

Bernie Ecclestone (R, with Gordon Murray, L, and Carlos Reutemann) loves business, but reckoned it didn't match the satisfaction of running Brabham

Always know where you stand with Bernard Charles. From his earliest days in the business he favoured a direct approach, and has seen no reason to change.

As he said, anyone who predicts what's going to be happening in four years' time is an idiot. Back in the mid-nineties he may have considered 16 grands prix the optimum, but now he has adjusted his thinking to suit a changing world.

Back in 1995 we had only six races outside Europe, but for as long as anyone could remember Ecclestone had been determined to make it more of a *World* Championship, and he talked constantly to potential race organisers across the globe.

For all his frequently expressed impatience with Americans, Ecclestone recognised the sponsors' need to have a race in the US. "I've been talking to the people in Vegas about a street circuit race. If I can make it happen, I will."

Indianapolis, which began hosting the US Grand Prix in 2000, was not even on the horizon.

"What else?" said Bernie. "Well, China... the Middle East..." Both Shanghai and Bahrain duly materialised. "I've got super-serious enquiries from Russia – or ex-Russia, or whatever it is now. The people there are serious – there's no problem with the money, I'm sure. It would be Moscow, and not a street circuit – they'd build a permanent state-of-the-art track." A dozen years on, though, the Russian GP still awaits.

Still, as he said, the world changes so fast now. Of the 17 circuits which hosted a GP in 1995, only 10 figure in this year's championship, half of whose races will be outside Europe.

At the time of our conversation, Michael Schumacher was en route to his second World Championship, with Benetton, but rumours were mounting that Ferrari had made him an offer he couldn't refuse. Bernie said this: "I think he'll go there – I'm *sure* he'll go there. How long have Ferrari been nowhere? A long time. Well, I'll have a bet with you that Michael will *transform* that team – perhaps not instantly, but he'll do it. He'll work with (Jean) Todt, and he'll get the right people there – and eventually Ferrari will dominate again, and for years. He'd do that with any team he went to – he's worth a second a lap as a driver, and he's a *motivator*, like Senna, like Prost. People like that don't just drive for teams – they *run* them..."

Remarkably prescient, you'd have to say. People think of Ecclestone as a hard-headed businessman, and that he is, in spades, but at heart a racer he remains. The owner of Brabham for nearly 20 years, he told me that day that he still missed having a team. "It got to a point when I couldn't do both – the other team owners think about nothing else for 24 hours a day. You could say that, yes, there's job satisfaction in what I do – when you leave a race, and there's been a good crowd, and you've sorted the various problems that always arise over a race weekend, and nobody's been hurt, there's satisfaction in that – but it's not the same as the satisfaction you get from having a race team, and your car winning the race."

At the time we talked, a mere year had passed since the death of Ayrton Senna, and although, as it always has, the sport had picked itself up after the tragedy, memories were still raw. Prior to the loss of Senna and Roland Ratzenberger at Imola, a dozen years had passed since the last grand prix fatality, and the veneer of safety had gathered many coats.

"You and I have been around long enough," said Bernie, "to remember that, regrettably, we used to lose drivers. And, although we obviously weren't happy about it, it was something that was accepted.



Michael Schumacher amply proved that Bernie's powers of prediction are sharp

> "I'll have a bet with you that Michael will transform Ferrari. He'll work with (Jean) Todt, he'll get the right people – and eventually Ferrari will dominate again, and for years"

"I remember very well, at the end of 1968, when I was managing Rindt, we had the choice of the Goodyear deal with Brabham, or the Firestone deal with Lotus. And I said to Jochen, 'If you want to win the World Championship, you've got more chance with Lotus than with Brabham. If you want to stay alive, you've got more chance with Brabham than with Lotus.' It wasn't a bad thing to say; it was a matter of fact. And I'm not saying it now because he got killed in a Lotus. That was what the pattern was, for whatever reason: people did get killed in Lotuses. Maybe Colin took things to the edge a bit – and anyone who drove for Lotus was prepared to take it to the edge, too.

"What I'm saying is that Jochen was prepared to accept that, and so were the other drivers. Everyone knew that people got killed in racing. Now, suddenly we've got a brand-new breed of journalist, spectator, television viewer, who have never seen anyone killed in a F1 car.

"They don't understand that it's the sort of thing that used to happen a couple or three times a year. I remember when (François) Cevert got killed. I was sitting on a crate with (Carlos) Reutemann, and the conversation was: 'What happened?' 'Oh, he went under the guardrail, and was more or less cut in half.' 'Christ, what happened?' 'Well, he just lost it.' 'Oh. Er, what engine are we using this afternoon?'

"It wasn't a matter of being callous – it was the fact that it happened so often. You cannot race cars without it happening. It's got nothing to do with the speed. When people are in that environment, racing bikes, climbing, whatever, and they're competitive, and they're taking things to the edge, people are going to get killed. So don't be shocked when it happens.

"After poor Senna got killed, everyone said, 'That's it, F1's finished, forget it'. Remember that? 'Brazil,' they said, 'don't even have a race in Brazil.' Well, this year we had the biggest crowd ever in Brazil. The TV ratings have been bigger than ever this year, and at every circuit the crowd has been up. Now, don't ask me why – it was the last thing I expected. And this is what I mean about long-term planning being a waste of time, about the world changing so fast. All you can do is react as you go along..." Ⓜ



CHEVROLET CORVETTE

Viewed with suspicion by many Europeans, the Corvette is in fact highly capable. It sounds and looks fantastic, and it has a fine competition history

Words: Richard Heseltine. Photography: Ian Dawson

Some cars command your attention for reasons that are variously good, bad, interesting, hilarious or downright impressive. In this particular instance, a 1958 Chevrolet Corvette – in yellow – against a backdrop of rain-sodden Kent back roads commands all of them at once.

It's a contradiction. The noise is thrilling, the handling treacherous (at least in the wet) and performance downright ridiculous for its vintage. When you consider that to some the greatest sports car ever made in America was the Ford GT40 – and that, some argue, was British – five minutes gamely clinging to the tiller like your life depends upon it (which it does), only adds weight to this assumption.

Except that would be to miss the point entirely. In Detroit-speak, this is a sports car and, if you consider that the main constituents of a truly classic example of the breed are performance, charisma and a competition pedigree, the Corvette ticks all the boxes. It's just that a certain level of cultural imperiousness stops many – we'll call them snobs – short of accepting the fact. The thing is, it's rather good.

First, this 1958 car looks amazing even if it does appear a mite out of place in Blighty. Somehow storming sleepy desert border towns, sending contrails of dust swirling around in its wake, seems far more appropriate for the Corvette than gingerly avoiding puddles in Snodland in winter.

The styling is brash, memorable and utterly captivating in an 'it ain't done 'til it's overdone' sort of way. Design deity Harley Earl and his team of starry-eyed futurists certainly realised their own take on the sports car theme: you'd never mistake this for anything emanating from Coventry or Maranello.



It also feels very well made. Though the Corvette was not America's first glassfibre sports car (that was the Glaspar G2, *née* Brooks Boxer, but you had to assemble it yourself), the Corvette doesn't have that 'staying together by means of prayer and bailing twine' vibe proffered by so many British specialist sports cars of the period. This particular car has had over 40 years worth of calloused European asphalt thrown under its wheels and it still feels tight and together.

It's powerful, too. To date, there have been six generations of Corvette from C1 through to C6. Concentrating on the C1 years – 1953 to 1962 – the model only really got serious after the insertion of the small-block V8 in 1955. Hitherto, the first three seasons worth of 'Vettes had been powered by middling, truck-derived 'Blue Flame' straight sixes. Trumpeted by Chevrolet's advertising bods (in 1957) as being the first mass-produced engine to attain one horsepower for every cubic inch, the 4.6-litre 283 cubic inch bent eight transformed the car from sitting duck to big fish in a small pond. And it does sound very good indeed – all pent-up fury and snarling aggression.

All very groovy, even more so when you – to borrow an Americanism – stand on the gas. Acceleration, traction permitting, is of the singularly visceral kind. It probably sounds quicker than it actually is, the gloriously misleading 160mph speedo only heightening the sense of drama. The rev counter, mounted atop the steering column, is calibrated from 0-7000rpm but it's red-lined at only 5500. Not that piling on the revs is necessary: it's all about torque. You don't really need to swap cogs too often as urge is instant regardless of gear. Which is a definite boon, as the actual lever action is a mite vague. It's not that it's unwieldy, but it's not much else either.

Booming along narrow country roads, the car's size is all too obvious, the body sides seeming to spill over a good half a foot beyond the side glazing. It's not intimidating, but there's none of the sense of intimacy found in European ▶



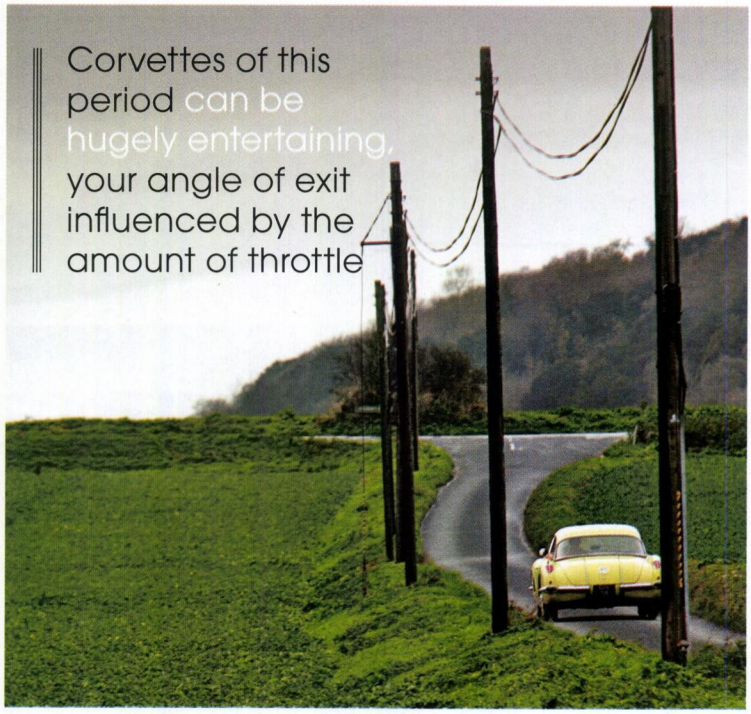
Dave Friedman, LAT

BORN-AGAIN CORVETTE RACER

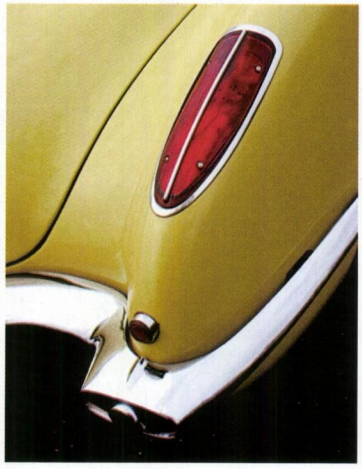
Bernie Chodosh, Corvette specialist, is building a car to invoke the feats of Dave MacDonald's famous 00 racer. "It'll be as close to how it would have looked in period as possible within the FIA regs," he says. Anyone who witnessed his antics in his old black 'n flames '58 car should expect it to look the part. "It's a 1960 car. Originally an Italian raced it on the East Coast and his son later drag-raced it. Tom Falconer and I have fitted a proper 283cu in V8 and four-speed Muncie 'box and, while I don't expect it to be as quick as the more developed cars, it should be competitive against most cars of the same age." Look out for it in Gentleman Drivers and Swinging '60s events in '07.

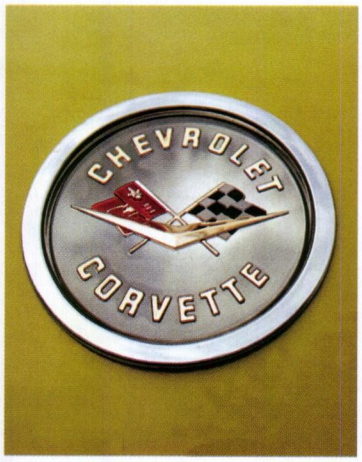
> The styling is brash, memorable, and utterly captivating in an 'it ain't done 'til it's overdone' sort of a way

Left: Quick, and unexpectedly agile, the Corvette is a true classic. Above: Three 'Vettes to the fore at Le Mans in 1960. Fitch and Grossman (3) finished an astonishing eighth. Above left: Dave McDonald in the 00 Corvette special, '62



Corvettes of this period can be hugely entertaining, your angle of exit influenced by the amount of throttle







sports cars of the period: the seats are wide and shapeless, the steering wheel vast and slippery; but there's no banging or crashing over rutted topography.

Which is to be expected. Consumers in the home market were, to some degree, conditioned to demand decent driving comfort, roominess and plenty of low-down grunt for speedy getaways. Non-existent ground clearance and filling-loosening ride stiffness would invariably have met with customer resistance: the biggest of Detroit's big three would never have got away with it. Compared to the concurrent Ford Thunderbird, it's light years more sporting (really: pushing a T-bird hard on switchbacks is like trying to steer a water bed over a rockery).

The Corvette's ride is supple as opposed to soft. Even on undulating roads, it irons out most of the bumps without the expected eerie floating sensation. It's the corners that prove a mite tricky. In the dry, Corvettes of this period can be hugely entertaining, your angle of exit being greatly influenced by the amount of throttle flexed. You do tend to hunch yourself over the wheel for greater purchase, being quick to catch the tail once it starts flaying. It rolls predictably, but feels a heavy car and the front end washes out before the rear. Tighten your lock, abruptly back off or equally stomp on the accelerator and initial understeer is swiftly transformed into eye-widening oversteer.

It certainly makes you appreciate the early SCCA Corvette racing heroes like Dr Dick Thompson, Jim Jeffords and Bill Pollack who pedalled these solid-axle beasts so convincingly. In the wet, conservatism rules.

You have to respect the Corvette on so many levels. To European sensibilities it's entirely alien, but remember that outside the US it was more than capable of inflicting the occasional upset result. Briggs Cunningham's three-car team rocked up at Le Mans in 1960 as outsiders, but the lead car driven by John Fitch and Bob Grossman finished an astounding eighth overall and won its class. Chevrolet's legacy in the endurance classic is a compelling one, the latest strain having won the GT1 category in five of the last six events. And that's before you consider John Greenwood's multi-winged warriors, with their stars and stripes livery, that thundered along the Mulsanne in the '70s at a colossal lick.

Top: the Corvette is happier on little English roads than you'd expect. Above: Harley Earl's styling could never be confused with anything from Coventry or Maranello. Above right: huge steering wheel and glitzy dash

It really is a classic. Just sitting in the Corvette, dazzled by the Jetsons-meets-Wurlitzer dash, is enough to make you laugh, and even more so on start-up.

It's visually alluring in a chrome-laden manner, and both fast and engrossing. Driving one is never boring. For these reasons and more, you cannot simply dismiss the Corvette. Just picture Dave MacDonald terrorising Riverside in Max Balchowsky's '00' Corvette Special, or Betty Skelton's record-breaking runs at Daytona Beach. You can almost smell the tortured rubber and hear the bellow of a race-prepared 'eight' approaching valve bounce.

It's heady stuff.

Thanks to Tom Falconer at Claremont Corvette. Tel: 01634 244444; www.corvette.co.uk

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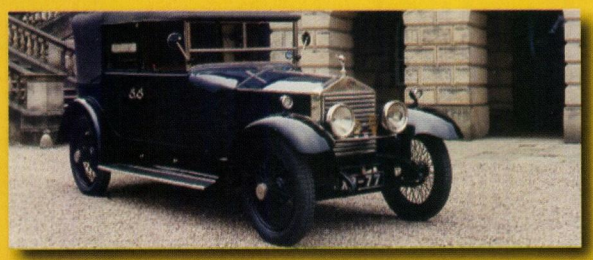
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WINNING COYOTE

AJ Foyt was not content with a mere two wins in the Indianapolis 500 and a string of USAC titles. He went back to Indy as a constructor and proceeded to add another pair of victories driving his own Coyote cars. He tells Gordon Kirby why these were the greatest days

Thirty years ago, AJ Foyt ensured his legendary status in motor racing history by becoming the first man to win four Indy 500s. Foyt scored his third Indy 500 win in 1967, six years after his first victory in the American classic, but it would take another 10 years before Foyt made history by winning his fourth 500. When he finally pulled it off in 1977, the Texan had been the man to beat for a few years in a row and he did it with his own team, cars and engines, a remarkable accomplishment, unlikely to be repeated in modern motorsport.

Foyt made his first USAC championship start in the summer of 1957 when he was 22 years old, after making a name for himself in midgets and sprint cars. By the 1960 season Foyt had moved to the Bowes Seal Fast team where George Bignotti was chief mechanic and AJ came on strong in the year's second half, winning four 100-mile dirt track races aboard the team's Meskowski-Offy dirt car and beat Rodger Ward to take the first of his record seven USAC championships.

AJ scored his first Indy 500 victory the following year aboard Bignotti's Watson/Trevis-Offy roadster after a famous battle with Eddie Sachs. A fuel rig malfunction late in the race seemed to have foiled Foyt, but then Sachs – inexplicably to some – came into the pits to change a badly worn front tyre, handing victory to Foyt. AJ says he probably would not have taken the safe route chosen by Sachs that day had he been in his competitor's shoes. "Everybody says, what would you have done?" Foyt reflects. "Well, I was young and I wanted to win. I would probably have driven it 'til it blew and I crashed. He made the right decision. But would I have made that decision? Probably not."

He also beat Sachs to win his second USAC championship that year. But Foyt and Bignotti argued about car set-up and Foyt quit the team in August of 1962, jumping to Lindsey Hopkins' team. By the end of the year he was back with Bignotti before deciding to race his own cars with the help of his father Tony Sr and chief mechanic 'Little Jack' Starne.

Foyt won the USAC title again in 1963 and 1964, was second to Mario Andretti in 1965, and took his fifth USAC championship in 1967. He won the Indy 500 a second time in 1964 in what turned out to be the last win for a front-engined roadster, a Watson-Offy, then scored his third 500 victory in 1967 aboard his own Lotus-based rear-engined car, which he called a Coyote, grabbing the glory after the leading STP turbine car of Parnelli Jones broke in the closing laps.

Foyt believes the great drivers are separated from the merely good by a deep desire to win rather than any God-given natural talent. "You've got race drivers and then you've got race drivers," he remarks. "It's the same as a quarterback or the leader of any team. You've got quarterbacks and then you've got quarterbacks who want to go to that extra edge to be number one. It's hard to explain but if you want to win you've got to work at it. It's not easy. You're going to have to give that little extra to win.

"I know some great race drivers who were always satisfied with second or third when they could've won. They did not want to put out that extra little effort. They were satisfied. My worst days were when I ran Indy and ran like crap myself. I couldn't wait to get back there the next year to prove a point."

After his third win at Indy in 1967, Foyt encountered a long fallow period at the Speedway. He was on the pole in 1969, but lost 20 minutes in the pits repairing a broken intake manifold. "In 1969 we sat on the pole with a car that was the first to have wings on the back of the rollbar. Then we broke a little fitting and we had to take the manifold off to weld it. ▶

Left: Foyt enjoys his entrance to Indy's victory lane after his record-breaking fourth win in 1977. Above: The man himself, sporting branding from his long-term supporter Gilmore



Top: Foyt in a Shrike chases Lotus-mounted Parnelli Jones at Phoenix in 1964; Main pic: Foyt (right), Clark (centre) and Gurney lead the 1965 Indy 500

"I know some great drivers who were always satisfied with second or third. My worst days were when I ran Indy and drove like crap. I couldn't wait to get back to prove a point."

EMPICS, Pete Biro

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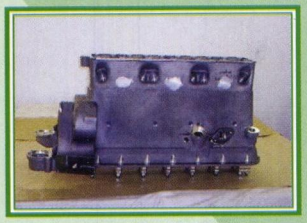
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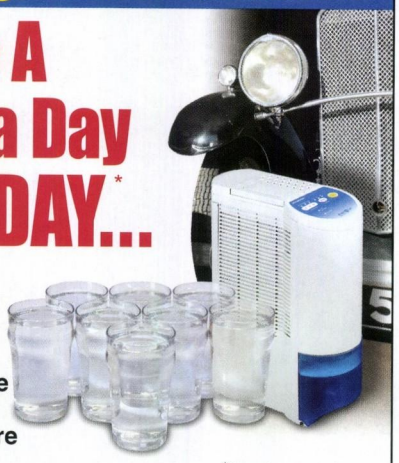
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Andretti won the 500 that year and he deserved to win. We went a lot of years chasing that fourth win and every time we were really strong it never happened."

A new Coyote was designed by Bob Riley in 1973 and with his own turbocharged Foyt/Ford V8 engines, AJ was on the pole at Indianapolis in 1974 and 1975. He won seven races and took his sixth USAC championship in 1975, but his fourth Indy victory remained elusive.

"In '75, '76 and '77 nobody could run close with us," Foyt recalls. "In '75 I ran second or third, real strong, and I had to pull it in. We ran second or third and ran out of gas in '76, and in '77 I felt like I had it won easy and I ran out of fuel again! I said: 'Man, am I ever going to win it four times?'

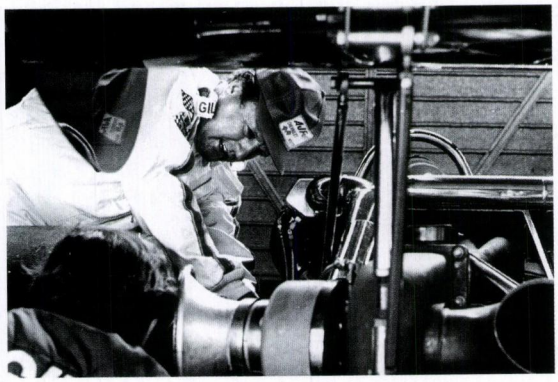
"The '77 race was a great race all day long," he continues. "At that time they didn't have yellow flags and I ran out of fuel and got 32 seconds down on Gordon Johncock in George Bignotti's car. I started picking him up by two, two and a half seconds a lap. I told 'Little Jack' that I was going to turn the boost up when we got a little closer because I didn't want to take a chance on blowing the motor up. It was our own motor and I knew about what it could stand in boost.

"As I was closing down on Johncock I knew that Bignotti would let me get to within about 10 seconds of him and then he would send Johncock on. I drove for Bignotti and I knew he wasn't going to let me get any closer than that. So it got down to 10 seconds and Jack said, 'Have you turned the boost up yet?' I said, 'No, not yet.' And it got to nine, eight, then seven seconds, and I said, 'They've got to be in trouble.' And right there, Johncock blew up."

With 16 laps to go Johncock's engine blew and Foyt finally had that long-sought fourth win. In those days Indy cars raced with unlimited turbo boost, restricted only by fuel mileage. Many people believe that was the heyday of Indy cars as the world's most demanding cars to drive.

"You had a lot of power and not nearly the downforce you have now, but still you qualified at over 200mph," Foyt observes. "People don't realise today what it was like. I'm glad that I raced at Indianapolis long enough to run the Speedway into the 1990s where you never had to lift all the way around. The last time I qualified, like 225 or something, there was no lifting. When I talk to good friends of mine like Parnelli Jones I say it's a shame you retired when you did because it's hard to ▶

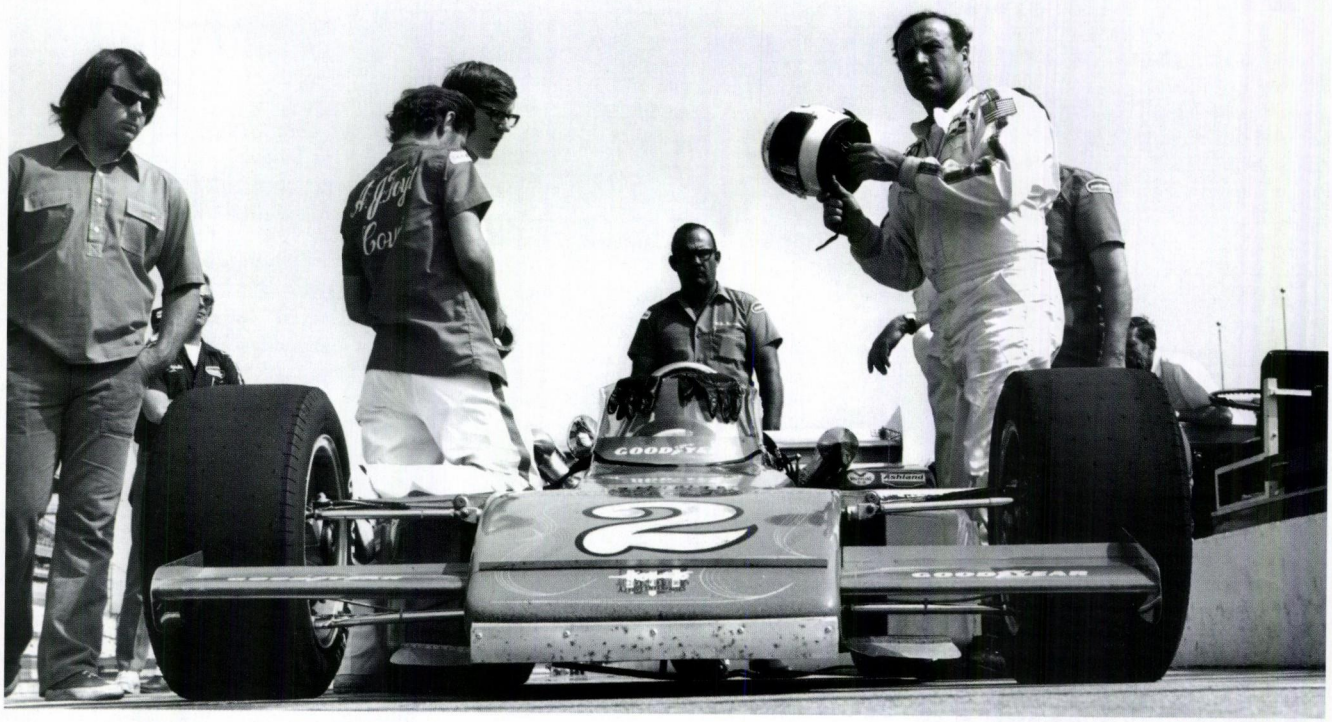
Below: AJ gets his hands dirty. Bottom: Practice shot of the Coyote Foyt would take to victory in the 1967 Indy 500



> "You had a lot of power and not nearly the downforce you have now, but still you qualified at over 200mph. Those boys today don't know how hard those cars were."



LAT





Pete Biro, Bob Tronolone

> "You could build your own car, you could do whatever you wanted. I always liked it when you controlled your own motor situation, though you blew up a lot more"

tell you what these new cars drive like compared to the crap we used to drive. Of course, it's the same thing the other way. These boys today don't know how hard those cars were. You didn't have near the equipment they have today but you were running almost as fast."

Foyt is also among those people who believe those were Indy car racing's greatest days from a purely sporting perspective. "You could build your own car and you could run for Firestone or Goodyear," he remarks. "You could do whatever you wanted. I always liked it when you controlled your own motor situation even though you blew up a lot more motors than you do today. Right now, you're in somebody else's hands and there's no way you could build your own stuff and compete with Honda."

AJ broke his back in a stock car at Riverside in 1965 and badly broke his legs in an accident in an Indy car at Elkhart Lake in 1992. He came back to race at Indy one more time before retiring at the ripe old age of 59.

Top: Foyt gets ready to board the Coyote he drove in the 1972 Indy 500. It retired with engine failure. Above: The Parnelli AJ took to second place in the '79 500

"I think the biggest thing that's happened in Indy car racing and stock cars has been the safety," he says. "That's one of the biggest things that's advanced in racing over the past 30 years. You still had 200mph laps back in those days. But the advances in safety have made the speeds today about a hundred times safer than it used to be."

Foyt enjoys an all-time record 67 USAC wins as well as a record seven USAC championships. He also won seven NASCAR races, including the 1972 Daytona 500, and won the 1967 Le Mans 24 hours with Dan Gurney and Ford as well as the Daytona 24 hours aboard a Porsche 935 in 1983 and '85 and the Sebring 12 hours the same year.

Today, at 72 years old, Foyt continues to oversee the operation of his IRL team. Briton Darren Manning drives for Foyt this year and AJ continues to attend all the races. He has ceded the team management duties to his son Larry but AJ still makes all the big decisions.

"Through the years I had a lot of fun," he remarks. "People say, 'Would you change anything in life?' And the truth is, no I wouldn't. I made a living doing what I love to do. I had a lot of fun and was able to win a few times at Indianapolis and have the opportunity to be able to win overseas and at Daytona in sports cars and all that stuff. I enjoyed life and I've got things I never thought I'd have. If I had the chance, I'd do it the same all over again."

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Mercedes-Ilmor 500i

One engine. One race. One win. Mario Illien talks about the push-rod engine that was developed in secret, produced more than 1000bhp and won the Indy 500 for Penske in 1994

Words: Keith Howard. Illustration: Tony Matthews



LAT

Mario Illien of Ilmor

For Penske Racing, 1994 was an annus mirabilis. Its three drivers – Emerson Fittipaldi, Paul Tracy and Al Unser Jr – won 12 of the 16 Indycar races, 10 from pole position, and finished line astern in first, second and third places on five occasions. At Indianapolis, even through Tracy retired with turbo failure and Fittipaldi crashed trying to lap team-mate Unser, it famously won the race with a mighty Mercedes-Ilmor engine built specially for that one event.

The year before, USAC had relaxed its rules on pushrod engines for the race. Intended to encourage the entry of production-based powerplants, these had initially insisted that the block be a stock item from a road car, with the carrot that it could then have 3.43-litre capacity, 30 per cent greater than OHC competitors, and 22 per cent more turbo boost. What changed for 1994 was that a stock block was no longer mandatory, opening the door for a purpose-built pushrod engine that in all other respects was state of the art.

In great secrecy and during a period of only 10 months, Mario Illien of Ilmor Engineering, who talks about the engine below, designed the 500i and Penske took it testing. Initial reliability problems evaporated and at the Brickyard Penske's drivers were able to overtake, as Illien recalls it, 'like a hot knife through butter'. Only a year later, in one of motor racing's cruel reversals of fortune, Penske failed even to qualify.

ORIGINS

"Roger [Penske], Paul [Morgan] and I came up with the idea for the engine over a dinner in Phoenix in 1993, after that year's Indy 500. Roger asked what we'd get out of it and I said 940bhp minimum. And I committed there and then to making the engine the same size for attachment to the existing chassis and gearbox, without having considered the design in any detail at that stage. I never regretted those promises but it was a bit tough to meet them. It wasn't straightforward to get the length and other dimensions right. That's why we chose a 72-degree bank angle rather than the 82 degrees used for the D engine of that year, for packaging reasons. It was the first pushrod engine I'd ever designed, and I had never designed an engine just for a single race before, and haven't since."

HUSH-HUSH

Ilmor's 500i engine was a one-off built for one race only. The pushrod unit, designed to fit into the existing chassis, was banned straight after its Indy victory

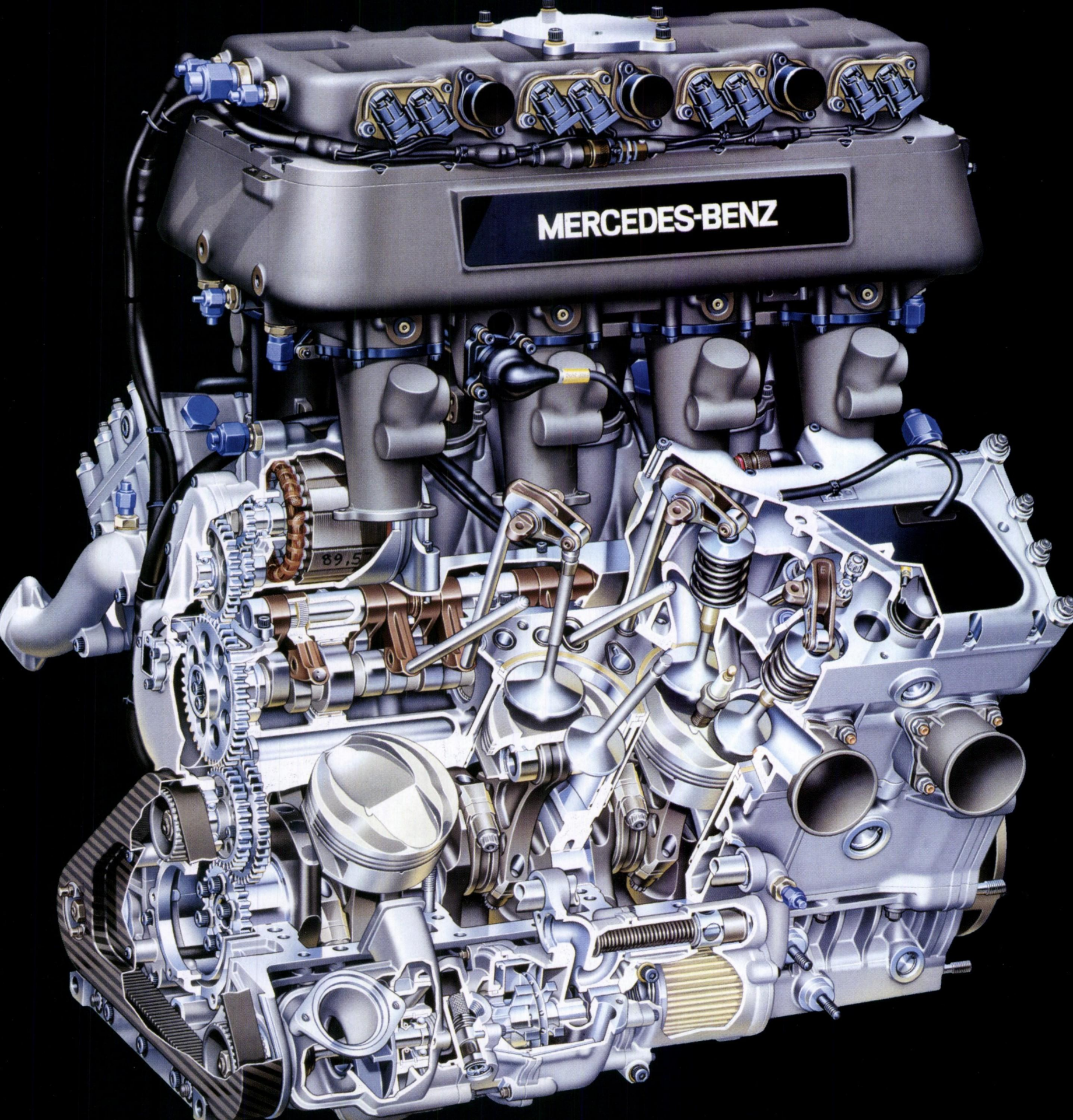
"I didn't consider that we were exploiting a loophole. The Buick guys were continuously at USAC to relax the rules so that they could become competitive, and year after year they were given more freedom to develop their V6. But we were clear that the regulations would be changed as soon as we'd raced the engine and that we'd never get the opportunity again. We had one go at it, that was all. If what we were doing had leaked out there was a danger that some of the opposition would have tried to get it banned before the race, or others would have started a similar programme. That's why speed was so essential, and secrecy. We went so far as putting odd descriptions on the drawings we sent to component suppliers so that it wasn't obvious what we were designing, and Roger had a secret workshop in Pennsylvania where they only worked at night. We sent parts over by Concorde almost daily. Paul flew them down to Fairoaks airfield near Brooklands, and the shipper picked them up from there and took them straight over to Concorde at Heathrow."

RELIABILITY

"We had reliability issues, mainly with the piston gudgeon pins – that was our biggest headache. The first test we did was at Nazareth in February, which is owned by Penske so there was security everywhere to make sure that nobody could get access. It came out later that Mario Andretti, who lived nearby, had heard the engine running and realised that it wasn't a normal Indy engine. He was curious at the time but didn't think any more about it! They had to clear snow from the track before we could run. Then at Michigan we again ran in sub-zero temperatures and again failed a gudgeon pin. We strengthened the pin, made it larger, did all sorts of things to fix the problem but it persisted. What we didn't realise until later was that running at sub-zero temperatures the engine performance was significantly higher than it would be in normal temperatures at Indianapolis. The peak cylinder pressure was so high that the gudgeon pin couldn't take it. It wasn't a design issue – the pin just wasn't made to tolerate that load. I think we probably also had a little bit of knock because of the cold weather and high cylinder filling. The first 500 miles we covered with that engine was on the Sunday before Indianapolis opened; we'd never managed 500 miles before that because of the gudgeon pin. The temperatures had risen, it was a nice spring day, and that fixed the issue. Early on we also had some valve spring failures but we fixed that with cam design and some other changes. Otherwise the valvetrain was absolutely bullet-proof."

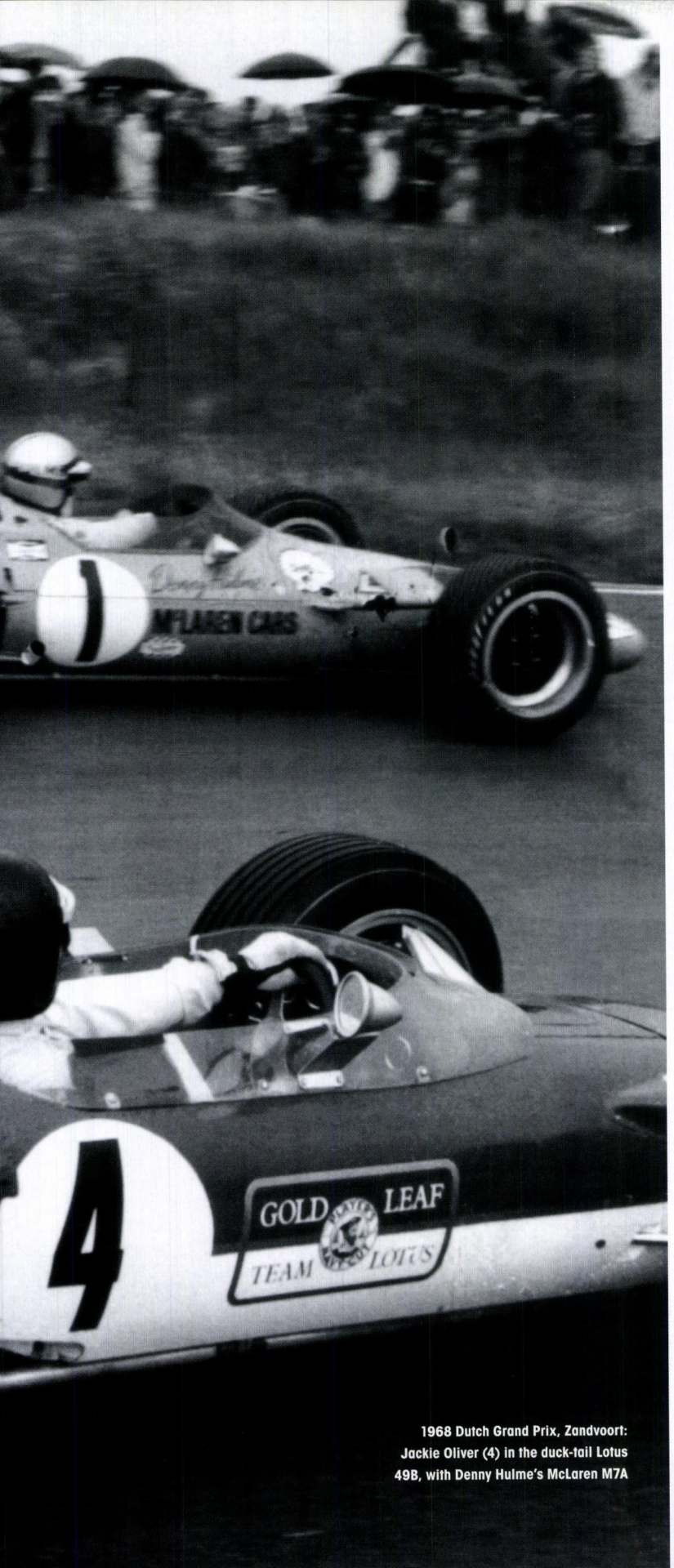
POWER

"I promised 940bhp, we achieved 1024bhp at 9800rpm and we could rev the engine to about 10,500rpm. I think we had about a 200bhp advantage over the nearest competitor. The engine's torque was so high that initially the drivers would get wheelspin coming out of the pits and hit the rev limiter. That worried us, obviously – it's not something you want. They also had to be very careful on a restart because if they nailed it in third gear they would also get wheelspin and risk spinning the car. It had a lot of torque, that engine. The drivers had to adapt but they got used to the additional power and torque pretty quickly. And then they wanted more, as always."


MERCEDES-BENZ
89,5



I was good enough to be a professional driver but I didn't have the talent for the big prizes. Maybe if I'd won a grand prix I would have won many more, who knows?"



1968 Dutch Grand Prix, Zandvoort: Jackie Oliver (4) in the duck-tail Lotus 49B, with Denny Hulme's McLaren M7A

LAT

Jackie Oliver NEARLY MAN

He's modest about his record, but most people would be delighted to count a Le Mans victory and a Can-Am championship on their CV

Words: Rob Widdows

I was the nearly man," he says with a smile I cannot precisely read, "I always thought if you were good enough, then the opportunities would come. Perhaps I was never good enough to win a grand prix. So you can call me Mr Nearly."

Well, it's better than Noddy, the name chosen by his Lotus mechanics owing to the ease with which he was able to take a nap at any time, even just before a race.

What Jackie Oliver has so far failed to mention is that he won the Can-Am championship, won Le Mans, and won long distance sports car races at Sebring, Daytona, Spa-Francorchamps and Monza. He still holds the fastest-ever lap of the Sarthe. And then there's the grand prix team he created which became a university for some exceptional young designers and the odd talented driver on the way up.

"Yes, I was good enough to be a professional driver, but I didn't have the talent for the big prizes. Maybe if I'd won a grand prix I would have won many more, who knows?" The smile again, and this time he looks into the distance. "I started my own team because the phone stopped ringing."

This is the man who led grands prix for both Lotus and BRM, but it was always mechanical reliability that let him down. Jackie Oliver is a motor racing enigma, despite the facts in the history books. The cynics say he was, at least latterly, in it for the money. Some say he was one of the best, just unlucky and in the wrong car at the wrong time. Certainly, he's a man of many parts and yes, he did make a great deal of money.

He started racing as a teenager supported, as so many are today, by his father. But his earliest experiences of speed came, not from karting, but from 'borrowing' his father's road cars.

"I took them out at night, Mercedes, Maserati, whatever he had. Drove around between Romford and Southend, met up with mates at the Green Tiles café, never crashed one, always got away with it. But I think he knew." ▶

Oliver senior sorted this out by supplying his son with a Marcos with which to go racing. He did crash that, comprehensively at Snetterton, and found himself sitting on the track among the bits.

"Didn't bother me though, I was untouchable. All through my career I believed I was untouchable, I had so much confidence in myself and in my ability. I'd always had fantastic car control, loved getting sideways. Sometimes I'd show off to the guys in the pit lane, getting all sideways for them."

The next step was a Formula 3 Brabham and he was immediately quick, impressing the Lotus team. "My Dad had bought an Elan so knew Chapman and I was asked to test at Silverstone where I was faster than Piers Courage and Roy Pike. Next thing I had a seat in the Charles Lucas F3 team, but at the first race I tightened up, couldn't repeat the pace. It happens like that."

But he settled down and caught the eye of Jim Endruweit, Chapman's team manager. "I told him I was quicker than any of them; he must have thought I was an obnoxious kid. And I was."

He looks me in the eye, this time challenging. "Look, I was aggressive, still am. I mean, I like litigation, love the challenge."

The big break for Oliver came in macabre circumstances, after Jim Clark was killed in a Formula 2 race at Hockenheim. "The chances came like that then," he says. "The death rate in those days was high, and yes, it was macabre, especially as Jimmy was Chapman's best friend and of course he was the best driver. So they drafted me in. I was the obvious choice; I was in the F2 team and they knew me."

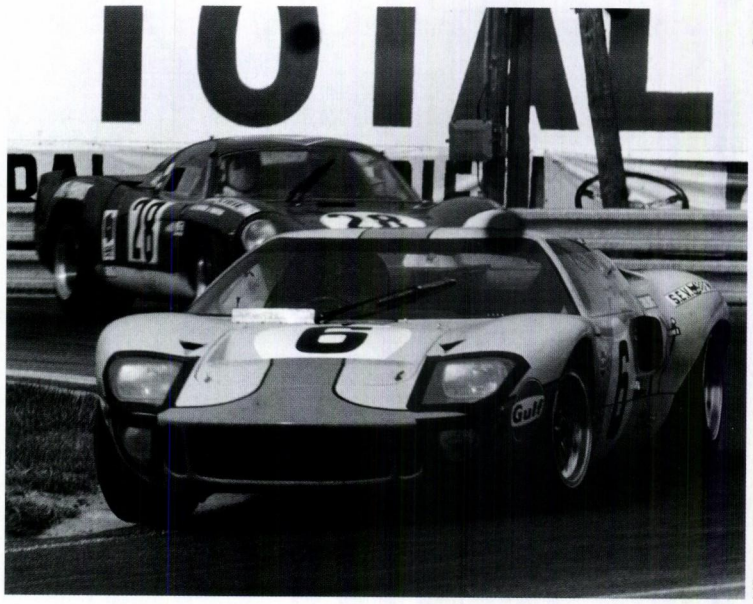
His first grand prix was at Monte Carlo in 1968, the baptism of barriers. "It was tough. Chapman came to me on the grid, stuck his head into the cockpit and told me to just get round, score a point. Imagine that – I'm just about to start my first grand prix."

Oliver didn't get round. Coming out of the tunnel he found the cars of Scarfiotti and McLaren spread all over the road. "There was only one light bulb in the tunnel. I went through, came out into the sunshine, saw the other cars and it was either into the harbour or into the wall. I chose the wall and took all the wheels off. Back at the pits Colin Chapman looked at me and said: 'That's the last race you're doing for me, lad.'

It wasn't, of course. Oliver went on to complete the season, leading the British Grand Prix at Brands until the transmission let go and finishing on the podium in Mexico with the Lotus 49. He was then replaced by Jochen Rindt, but there was a silver lining, because 1969 was to be one of his best years.

"I probably went to Lotus too soon, too young," he pauses, thinking. "There wasn't much support from the team, maybe the occasional arm round the shoulders. It was the deep end without armbands and, looking back, Lotus was a university of motorsport for me. I learned a lot from Chapman, watched his methods, listened to him. He told me: 'Lad, it's easy having the ideas; it's getting things made, getting things done that's the hard part.' I remembered a lot of this when I started my own F1 team."

Oliver signed with BRM for 1969 alongside John Surtees, and Ford took him on to drive the GT40. "I never got on



LAT

Le Mans, '69: Jackie Oliver shared the winning Ford GT40 with Jacky Ickx. Opposite: Monaco '68 was less happy. Oliver put his 49B in the wall to avoid hitting wreckage

with Surtees; he always wanted everything for himself. There was no delegation, and that was a lesson learned for the future. It was much better in 1970 with Pedro Rodriguez and we had a new car, the P153, from Tony Southgate who later came back into my life at Shadow and then with Arrows." Internal politics and unreliable machinery at BRM dogged those two years while a horrible fiery crash in Spain didn't improve matters; the 'untouchable' coming out unscathed.

Things went a lot better at Ford, with Oliver winning Le Mans and Sebring in 1969, sharing the GT40 with Jacky Ickx. And in 1971, with only a part season in F1 with McLaren, he joined John Wyer's sports car team, winning at Daytona, Monza and Spa in the spectacular Porsche 917, again sharing with Rodriguez. " I liked him; we got on well and of course he was very quick. I could win in sports cars, no problem."

Here we pause for breath and Oliver fixes me with one of his eye to eye, toe to toe numbers. We are approaching Shadow and Arrows territory. "You can ask me anything. I only ever told one lie in all my motor racing and that was about my intention of signing a particular driver."

Oliver joined Shadow in 1972 and won the Can-Am title for the team two years later. "McLaren had gone by then; the opposition was weaker," he says, that smile returning. "I was living in America, racing in America, I knew the tracks." This period at Shadow was to lead to the biggest and boldest move he was ever to take outside the cockpit of a racing car. Towards the end of 1977 he knew Shadow was going nowhere unless it built the cars in the UK, but owner Don Nichols didn't see it that way, preferring sunny California to somewhere along the M4 corridor. So Oliver left, took Tony Southgate with him, roped in Alan Rees and Dave Wass and found some money from Italian banker Franco Ambrosio, while German beer Warsteiner came with driver Rolf Stommelen. So Arrows was launched into a 1978 F1 season that brought immediate speed on the track and lots of expense and aggravation in the High Court. ▶

FORD



"I told (Jim Endruweit) I was quicker than any of them; he must have thought I was an obnoxious kid. And I was. Look, I was aggressive, still am. I mean, I like litigation, love the challenge".

"I knew we had trouble. It was an infringement of copyright. Tony Southgate brought a handful of initial drawings from Shadow; he should have brought the information in his head. There's a difference. So I thought, OK, what's it going to cost and how much time have I got to build a new car while the court makes up its mind?" he explains, matter-of-fact. "The lawyers decided that the FA1 was a copy of the Shadow DN9 and we built a new car in 50 days and that was that."

This is the middle of the season. The first Arrows had been quick right out of the box, Riccardo Patrese leading the team's second ever race at Kyalami before an engine failure and then finishing second in Sweden. A promising start which the new A2 reinforced, Arrows beating Shadow by five points in the Constructors table at the end of the year.

"It was a good car and we continued with good cars from Southgate and Dave Wass, while the team was very well run by Alan Rees. My job was to find the money, do the deals. Formula 1 is a business, very tough, very political and when a small team looks like it might challenge the grandees, in particular Ferrari, someone's going to get after you, try to push you back down. Every time we came up with something, started to show real speed, then the rules would change or there would be some other interference from the big boys by poaching key staff or drivers. Or the politicians would get involved."

In the late 1980s a bright young thing from the drawing office at Ford-backed Beatrice joined the team.

"I'd been trying to get Neil Oatley but he went elsewhere. Then this guy called Ross Brawn called me and I took him on. He was sharp, full of ideas and very good with people, knew how to get the team behind him. That's partly why he's done so well, his ability with people."

Strangely, though, Arrows was never to win a race in all its 255 starts. The little team was often nearly there, but never on the top step. Money was a perennial problem despite the Japanese corporation Footwork relieving some of the pain in



LAT

> "Every time we came up with something, started to show real speed, the rules would change or there would be some other interference from the big boys"

1991. But Arrows was becoming a university, the roll call of drivers including Villeneuve, Jones, Berger, Cheever, and Warwick – who scored the most points of them all, coming joint fourth in the 1988 championship. And designers came, Alan Jenkins following Brawn to Milton Keynes.

"You simply don't understand what F1 is about, what it's really like, if you're outside," says Oliver, leaning forward, spreading his hands. "Even as late as 1994 we had a good car and Jenkins had found an advantage with the aerodynamics, producing a clever venturi effect. At Imola we were right on the pace. But then Senna and Ratzenberger were killed and the FIA decided on radical changes, all of which benefited the bigger teams, especially Ferrari. Funny how Ferrari always seems to come out on top; and it's bad news if a small team starts to get too successful. But then Ron Dennis did it with McLaren, Briatore did it with Benetton, so it can be done. We just didn't get it done and by the end I was increasingly under pressure financially. Bernie stepped in and put me and Tom Walkinshaw together which saved the team but I couldn't work with Walkinshaw."

Jackie won the Can-Am title for Shadow in 1974. This car, the Autocoast Ti22-Chevy with titanium suspension, was less successful, retiring at Riverside in Oct '69

Oliver called it a day in 1999, accepting an offer for the team which made him rich. "When Lady Luck comes along you take her hand," he says. "It may be some time before she comes round again." And Oliver's life today would seem to support such a homily, his toast dropping butter-side-up once again.

"Maybe I didn't take big enough risks," he says, gazing out over his many acres of Bedfordshire. "Not in the race driving and not in the business. But I owed it my people to get out on top and not go bust."

Jackie Oliver still goes racing, sifting the best invitations, to Goodwood or a weekend at Spa, the maroon helmet packed alongside the golf clubs. There's a Ford GT in the garage, a reminder of the wins with the GT40. "Edsel Ford said I must have one, you know, with my Le Mans win and all that. Then he sent me the invoice." You win some, you lose some. But then Jackie Oliver knows all about that.

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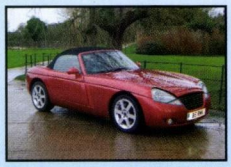




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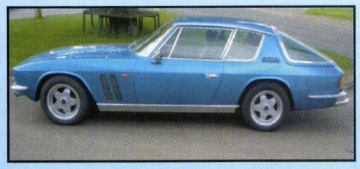




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Newport News

Aston Martin's service operation is extraordinary in its size and scope. However old or young your Aston, Works Service will perform any job – as long as it's appropriate...

Words: Gordon Cruickshank. Photography: Charlie Best

After-sales service is an overused term, but if there's an outfit which truly qualifies, it's Aston Martin Works Service. Most manufacturers rely on their dealers to maintain their product; not Aston. The firm runs its own service department, with a rather wide remit: whether your Aston is five weeks or 50 years old, they have it covered.

This summer sees the end of car production at Newport Pagnell, when the Vanquish line ends. The famous Bucks address will continue to harbour plenty of Aston activity, though, under the enthusiastic guidance of Kingsley Riding-Felce, Director of Works Service and Customer Relations. Passionate about cars, he has been part of Aston for many years. It's this continuity which makes customers bring cars back to Newport Pagnell. "People like coming here because they've got to know the staff – I try to keep the same faces in the front line. And we're no dearer than anyone else!"

Aston, as he points out, has always had a service facility, and there have been times when service and parts have been crucial to the firm's revenue. But more than that, says Kingsley, Works Service has remained a constant for customers through many changes. He reels off all the companies which have owned the marque since David Brown's time – it's a long list, and it may increase soon...

Technically, this outfit is in competition with Aston's own dealers; they, however, can't offer all of these services. AMWS divides into four: maintenance, crash repair, heritage, which we'll come back to, and Special Vehicles. Those who want more power, stiffer suspension, unusual interiors, or entertainment upgrades apply here. Kingsley shows us a DB9 having a touch-screen fitted which boasts TV and PlayStation as well as sat-nav and a hugely boosted hi-fi. Alongside is a Vanquish being converted from paddle-shift to gear lever. "Oh yes, we do quite a few," says Kingsley. "Some owners prefer tradition." As this means adding a clutch pedal and new centre console, it's a job you want done here by the makers.

We move through the maintenance bay, and I gape. I've rarely seen this many cars worked on in one garage: two rows of cars on hoists vanish into the distance. In fact there can be 100 cars in at any one time. Round the corner is the crash repair section, where experts tackle the aluminium and bonded composites construction of modern Astons. Luckily for my sensibilities I can only see lightly biffed V8s and Vanquishes being stripped to their carbon-fibre underwear.

Further back lies the heritage shop. If you own any Aston from 1950 on, AMWS can do anything from a service to a bare-metal rebuild, with the benefit of original drawings to call on, and sometimes even the guys who built the car in the first place. They will also modify older cars, adding air-conditioning, replacing a clunky Borg-Warner with a modern autobox, or slyly inserting an MP3 player behind a period radio. "But some things we won't do," says Kingsley, "like inserting a V8 into a DB4..." Parts are no problem: "there's nothing we can't get. Either we have it or we know a supplier."



Left (clockwise from top left): the only remaining Ogle Aston; works-refurbished six; pair of Towns-designed Lagondas; recent model service bay; almost every job is done in-house; DB4GT shell has first panel fit. Above: Kingsley Riding-Felce

Kingsley points out that with air-conditioning added and today's endless traffic jams there's more heat to dissipate, so one of the jobs they include in a restoration is extra heat insulation on the engine bulkhead. This is why they always ask what the customer will do with the car. Whether it is classic rallying, concours events or summer runs to the pub will affect the rebuild.

Beside us a DB4GT is being assembled in bare metal. "We always do a first-fit before painting so we can check fits and drill any holes needed," says Kingsley. "And when we panel it, we put the car on its suspension so we know it sits right."

Behind is a car I recognise even in its stripped state – the only survivor of the two Ogle Astons, styled by Tom Karen. With 22 rear lights and its sideways third seat, this raked in the headlines in 1972 and still looks impressive. One of the unique features of this concept vehicle was the huge glass panels with distinctive yellow stripes, and AMWS is currently having these copied for the restoration – an example of the one-off stuff this operation can undertake.

Opposite, a rare sight: a brace of the Bill Towns Lagondas, often reviled but staunchly defended by Kingsley. "Super cars, and very well built. They saved the company, too, bringing cash from the Middle East. I can remember driving prototypes through London – people stopped and applauded!" Looking at the car's broad angularity now I can agree; it's an amazing piece of packaging. Originality defers to practicality inside, however: AMWS normally replaces the tricksy fluorescent dash with real dials which work.

In a separate shop are the wheels, folders and guillotines on which aluminium body panels are made. Astons were always hand-built, which means that panels aren't interchangeable; they must be made to fit. And as Kingsley adds, "frankly it's much simpler to make a whole new body than to repair panels." But if customers want a patch they can have a patch: there's a DB5 here having some corrosion cut out ready for half a wing to be welded in.

The traditions of the company are ever-present as Kingsley talks. He recalls the 'one family from new' DB6 they restored: "as a surprise we recreated the original handover in front of Sunnyside [the house fronting the factory]". The firm is close to both AMOC and the Aston Martin Heritage Trust; Kingsley is a trustee of that and of the Gaydon Heritage Trust. If there's one lasting impression from a visit here, it's continuity.

One intriguing statistic: up to the last of the old V8s, the firm had made 13,000 cars in total. This year Works Service aims to handle 2500 cars. It's a strong commercial element in Aston Martin's makeup, but remains a highly personalised service which keeps owners returning to Newport Pagnell.



Before the war Robert Benoist's exploits were on the race track. Here he is in a Salmson entered in the JCC200 Cyclecar race at Brooklands in 1922

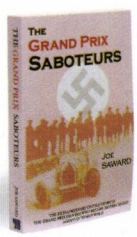
Grand Prix Saboteurs





Bravery in a racing car does not necessarily translate into the bravery of the battlefield. In the case of Robert Benoist, William Grover ('Williams') and Jean-Pierre Wimille, it did. When Hitler invaded France these three grand prix drivers, two Frenchmen and one French-domiciled Englishman, took up the fight in that most dangerous arena, the Resistance. Only Wimille survived the war: Benoist and Grover were killed after being captured during their campaign of sabotage.

A new book by Joe Saward uncovers the whole story of the trio's underground network and the dangers these men ran in the name of liberty. Here we present an extract, beginning as the German army rolls towards Paris. Grover has joined the British army; Benoist, an officer in the French air force, is still in France...



Grand Prix Saboteurs, by Joe Saward; Morienval Press, £12.99. ISBN 978 0 9554868 0 7. Top: Benoist in British uniform, and William Grover

Willy Grover became a member of the Royal Army Service Corps, being posted to the Central Purchasing Board as a driver. It was not the most glamorous work that the British Army had to offer, but Willy was happy to do it. After a couple of months in Paris he was posted north to work as a driver with Major General Roger Evans's 1st Armoured Division, which was part of the British Expeditionary Force.

Willy was based at Doullens, his job being to drive staff officers to meetings. He had been in Doullens for only a couple of days when the Nazi invasion began. The German army ignored the French fortresses on the eastern frontier and attacked through Holland and Belgium. The local defence crumbled in the face of the Blitzkreig. Within days General Heinz Guderian's Panzers had smashed through the French defences at Sedan and, turning west, raced towards the Channel ports, cutting behind the bulk of the British forces. The Allies were disorganised. There were rifts between French and British commanders and matters were not helped when General Gaston Billotte, commander of the French First Army Group, was killed when the staff car in which he was travelling collided with a truck.

The roads were highly dangerous.

Within a few days Guderian's tanks had reached Abbeville and the 1st Armoured Division was badly mauled by the Panzers while attempting a counter-attack at Abbeville. South of the German lines, outside the trap, communications had broken down. The Allies tried to organise a counter-attack and Willy drove to Paris, delivering staff officers to meetings there. It gave him a chance to see his family.



Bugatti Trust, Hulton Archive/Getty Images

The Germans paid little attention to most of the refugees but the Bugatti driven by an officer attracted attention. Benoist was ordered to join the German convoy

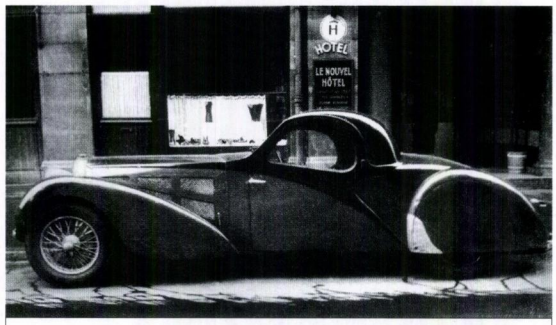
"He came to have lunch," remembered his niece Jessie Teager. "He told us that we were losing the war and that the Germans were coming. Luckily my father [Richard Wright Whitworth] had already gone to England."

Willy's brother Frédéric also remembered that visit. "He came at the end of May and told the family not to stay, saying that it was finished and it would be better for them to go to the south."

While Willy was in Paris the Allied forces trapped on the Channel coast began evacuating from the beaches of Dunkirk. Ships of every kind came across from England to save the army. By the time the evacuation was over nearly 340,000 soldiers had escaped through the Dunkirk pocket. Seventy thousand had been killed, captured or were missing. At lunchtime on June 3, as the last battles were being fought at Dunkirk, the Luftwaffe bombers turned on Paris. At Le Bourget, large numbers of French warplanes were destroyed on the ground. The Air Ministry on the Boulevard Victor received several direct hits and the railway junctions at Versailles and St Cyr were seriously damaged.

German armour began moving south towards Paris. France's military organisation folded and, by the weekend of June 8/9, German guns could be heard from Paris as the invaders broke through the French lines on the River Aisne. ▶

Above: Allied soldiers board a ship during the evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940. Right: the Bugatti 57 Atalante used by Robert Benoist during his daring escape from German custody after the invasion of France



BUGATTI 57 ATALANTE, CHASSIS 57392/456

Surprisingly, the Bugatti 57 Atalante in which Benoist escaped from a German patrol has survived. Built in May 1937 as No392, it was initially used by Jean-Pierre Wimille, who with Benoist ran the Paris Bugatti showroom. Sold in January 1939 as No456 to Albert Prejean, an actor, it seems to have returned to the showroom in Autumn 1939. After his high-speed escape Benoist sold it in April 1941 to a Mme Stoquer in St Nazaire, though he was still driving it when the Gestapo arrested him in 1943. The car reappears in Paris, where it was sold in July 1949 to Gaston Docime. In 1957 Belgian dealer Jean de Dobbeleer passed it to a Mr Haines in the US, and in 1960 Judge John North added it to his impressive collection, where I was able to inspect it in September.

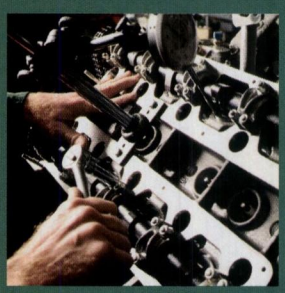
Intriguingly, a T57 'Tank' ran at Le Mans in 1937 with chassis No456, and restorer Chris Leydon reports this car has been hard used. Could it be the racer rebodied? Over to the experts... **GC**

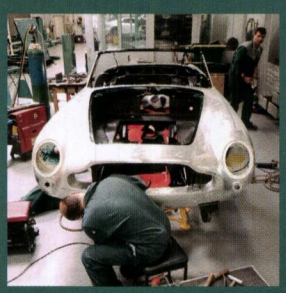


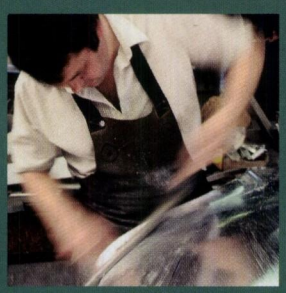
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The French authorities parked vehicles across the great Parisian boulevards to prevent gliders landing and an unprecedented exodus of people began, as the population headed out of the city across the Pont de Sèvres and down the RN10 to Versailles and on to Chartres. They used whatever means of transport was available and the road quickly became clogged with cars, trucks, limousines, taxis, hearses, tractors and even hand carts. The traffic moved at barely walking pace and along the road all shops were stripped of provisions. Petrol was almost impossible to find.

On the Monday morning the French government pulled out of Paris. Robert Benoist received orders to leave Le Bourget and report to an air base near Blois. He was given permission to make the journey in his Bugatti 57 Atalante, one of the most dramatic sports cars that Bugatti had ever built. The traffic jams meant that Benoist made slow progress although he took the opportunity to stop briefly to see his parents at Auffargis, the house being just a short distance from the highway.

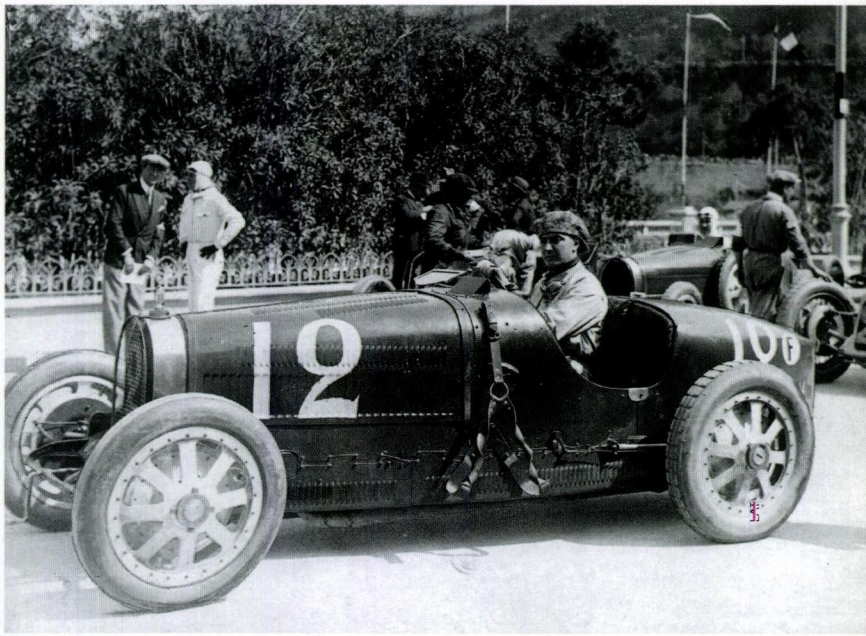
On Friday, June 14 the Germans took control of Paris and the following evening, meeting in the Hôtel Splendide in Bordeaux, the French cabinet voted 14 to 9 in favour of asking the Germans for peace. Prime Minister Paul Reynaud resigned and 84-year-old Maréchal Henri Philippe Pétain was appointed the new head of state. The German advance continued and as the armies advanced towards Blois, Robert received orders to head south again and report to an air base near Tarbes, in the shadow of the Pyrenées.

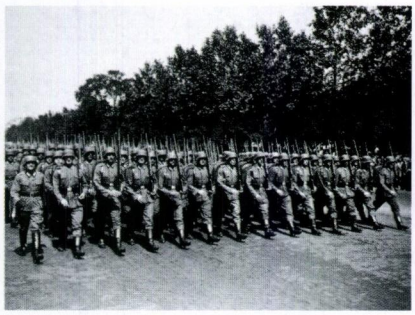
The refugee convoys were slower than ever, the roads blocked and the verges strewn with abandoned vehicles. Pétain went on the radio telling the French that it was time to stop the fighting.

For the British units which had been left behind in northern France, the only escape route was to head west to the Atlantic coast ports of Cherbourg, Saint Malo, Brest and Saint Nazaire, 400 miles from Dunkirk. Ships were sent to rescue them. Willy Grover ended up in Cherbourg and escaped on June 17. Under heavy attack from German bomber aircraft, Willy's vessel slipped away in the night and he arrived at Falmouth the following day.

In France, Robert tried to stay ahead of the German advance but his progress to Tours and Châtellerault was slow. On the night of the 18th, broadcasting from London, General Charles de Gaulle, France's under-secretary of state for defence, appealed to Frenchmen and women to continue the fight. Not many heard him. At Saumur, the 2000 officers and pupils of the famous Cadre Noir cavalry school held up the German advance for three days in desperate actions to defend the bridges along a 20-mile stretch of the River Loire.

Robert was nearly at Poitiers before a German convoy, its sirens blaring as it tried to get through the refugees, finally caught up with him. The Germans paid little attention to most of the refugees but the unusual Bugatti sports car, being driven by an officer in the Armée de l'Air, attracted their attention. Benoist was pulled over and ordered to join the German convoy. That evening they stopped in a field beside the main road. A stream of admiring German soldiers came to look at the Bugatti and that night Robert slept in the car. He was woken at dawn and given some fuel for the day ahead. Soon the convoy was moving again, heading towards Angoulême, but progress was slow and Robert began to consider his alternatives. He had no desire to remain a prisoner and wanted to try to make an escape before his fuel ran low.







LAT, RDA/Tallander/Getty Images, LAPI/Roger Viollet/Getty Images

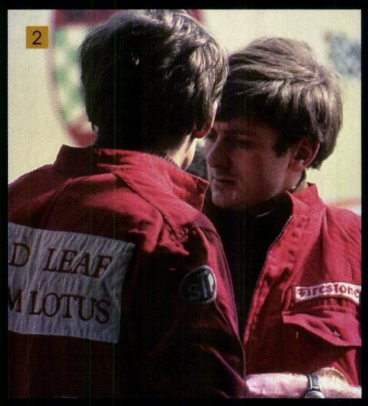
Top: Willy Grover, who raced as 'Williams', won the first Monaco Grand Prix in 1929 in his Bugatti T35B. Above left: Nazi soldiers march down the Champs Elysées. Above right: French refugees flee Paris

As the convoy slowed for yet another obstruction, Robert spotted a small lane off the main road. Without a second thought he floored the throttle of the powerful Bugatti. The car launched itself across the road and disappeared into the country lane. The move was so swift that it took the Germans completely by surprise.

Worried that the Germans might try to send a plane to look for him, Robert drove very quickly, aiming for the country estate of one of his friends, where he knew he would be able to hide the car in a barn.

After that, like most of the French nation, he waited to find out what the Germans were going to do next. The French government was collapsing, and on June 22 France's General Charles Huntziger signed an armistice at Rethondes, near Compiègne. It came into effect just after midnight on June 25. The French army was disbanded and French citizens were instructed not to fight the Germans. Benoist was free to go home to Paris.

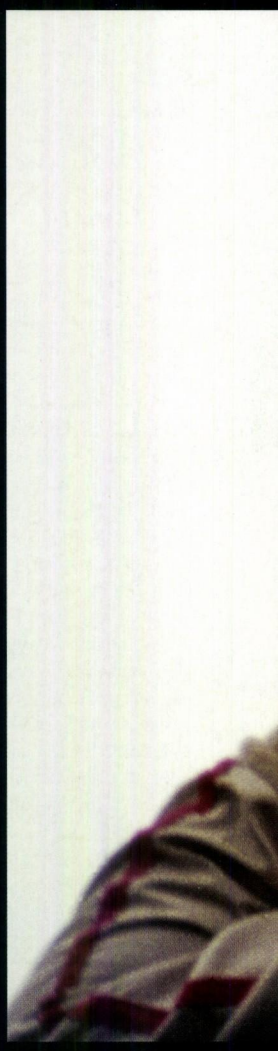




REWIND!

It was the perfect assignment: capture the colour and atmosphere of 1960s racing. That's what Agfa Film asked Roger Lane to do in 1968, and apart from audio-visual shows at the time these highly evocative shots have not been seen since. Part 3







4





6

Roger Lane's break came on a photographic teaching weekend, where he met the advertising manager of Agfa, the film company. He saw racing as the ideal way to showcase their new colour film, and gave Roger 50 rolls and a press pass...

1 Mechanic waits with Johnny Servoz-Gavin's F2 Matra in the assembly area
2 Gold Leaf Team Lotus conference
3 That quizzical Stewart look as he pits in his Matra, *Daily Express* trophy, Silverstone 1969
4 From inside the Lotus pit, Lane captures Graham Hill preparing for International Trophy
5 Selling programmes is a thankless job
6 Frank Gardner reduces tyre wear exiting Thruxton's chicane in twin-cam Mann Escort



The ex-John Dalton 1955 Austin-Healey 100S ~ Chassis # AHS 3702

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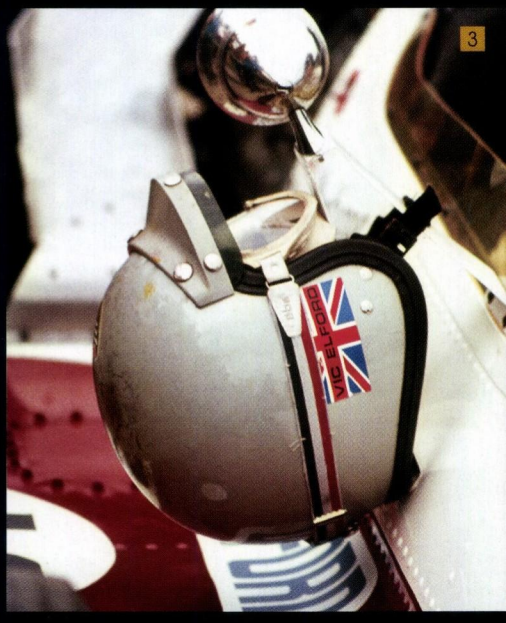
1959 Triumph TR3A Roadster ~ Chassis # TS37866

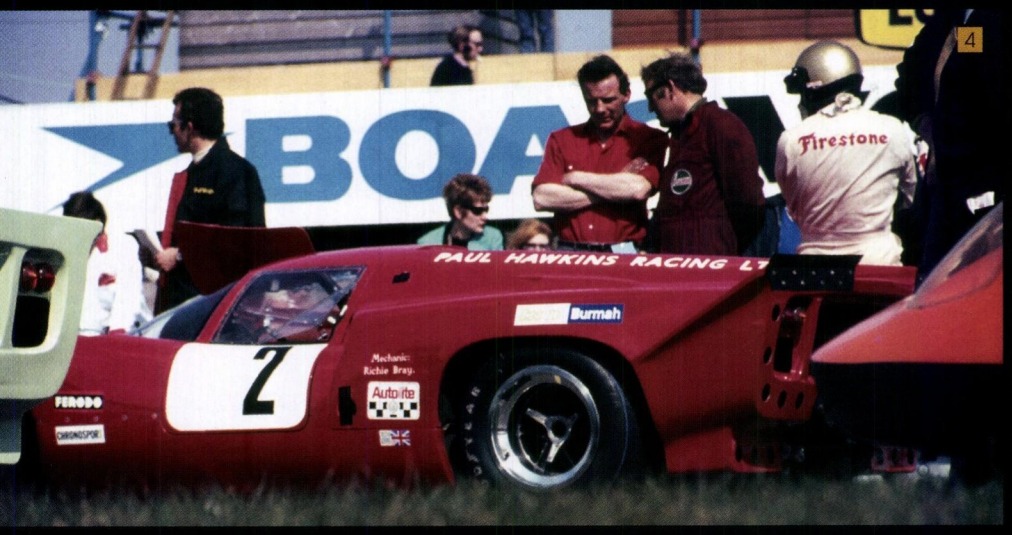
exceptional example of that much-loved British sports car of the 1950s, which since undergoing a meticulous, bare-metal, restoration has covered very few miles. The restoration is otographically documented and the file includes all bills together with an original, if well-thumbed, handbook. Beautifully finished in black, with matching red-piped upholstery and body coloured wire-wheels, this delightful car comes complete with hood, side-screens and tonneau and is in thoroughly excellent condition throughout.

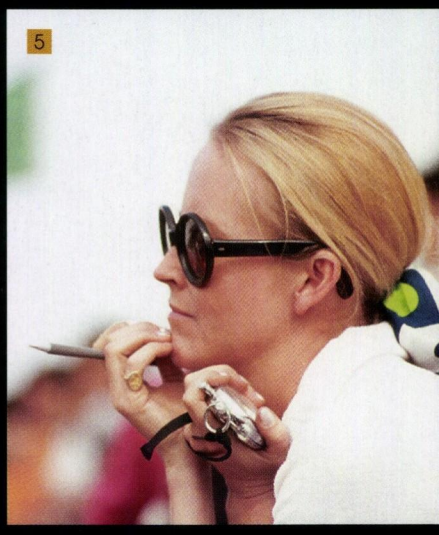


1 Refreshment break for Jochen Rindt during practice for British GP, Silverstone, 1969
2 Piers Courage fully committed to Copse in Frank Williams' Brabham in the same race
3 Vic Elford's helmet hangs on his Antique Automobiles-sponsored Cooper-Maserati before the 1969 International Trophy
4 Paul Hawkins in his distinctive gold helmet leans on his Lola T70 on the Thruxton grid
5 Stopwatch, pen and concentration...










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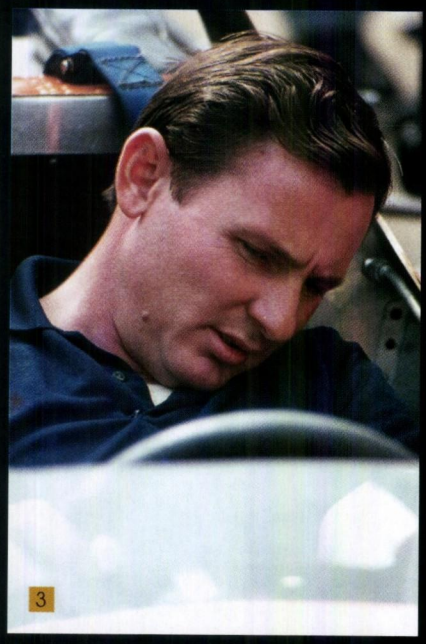

STP



1 All-Ford front row, Q Trophy, 1968. Falcons of David Hobbs, Brian Muir and Roy Pierpoint dwarf Frank Gardner's Alan Mann Escort
2 Colin Chapman has a last-minute talk with Graham Hill before the 1969 British GP
3 Werner Riedl awaits the F3 Plessey Trophy race beside his McNamara-Ford; he will be eliminated in a first-lap multi-car accident
4 Rain? At Silverstone? Swede Rolf Tellsten protects himself and Brabham in the holding area before the Martini International race











1 Juggling watch, charts and umbrella, Daily Express trophy, Silverstone 1969
2 With victory in sight, Denny Hulme gets a little opposite on his Brabham at Station Hairpin during the 1967 Monaco Grand Prix
3 Bruce squints down the footwell as he makes adjustments to his McLaren, '69 British GP
4 Ernesto Brambilla, F2 Ferrari, Thruxton '69
5 Future F1 star François Cevert takes a breather before an international F2 race

Because he was photographing only for Agfa, Lane did not feel part of the press pack, as he recalls: "at a very wet *Daily Express* International Trophy at Silverstone I made sure I was in a good position near the chequered flag. As Jack Brabham came into view I found myself next to Victor Blackman from the *Express,* and as his paper was the sponsor I moved aside for him. He eyed my Praktica warily, and later wrote in his column about how easy it was getting for non-professionals to acquire press passes..." Nonetheless Lane's evocative images, unseen since the 1970s, captured a colourful period in a unique way.

There is more of Roger Lane's work at: www.rogerlanephotography.com

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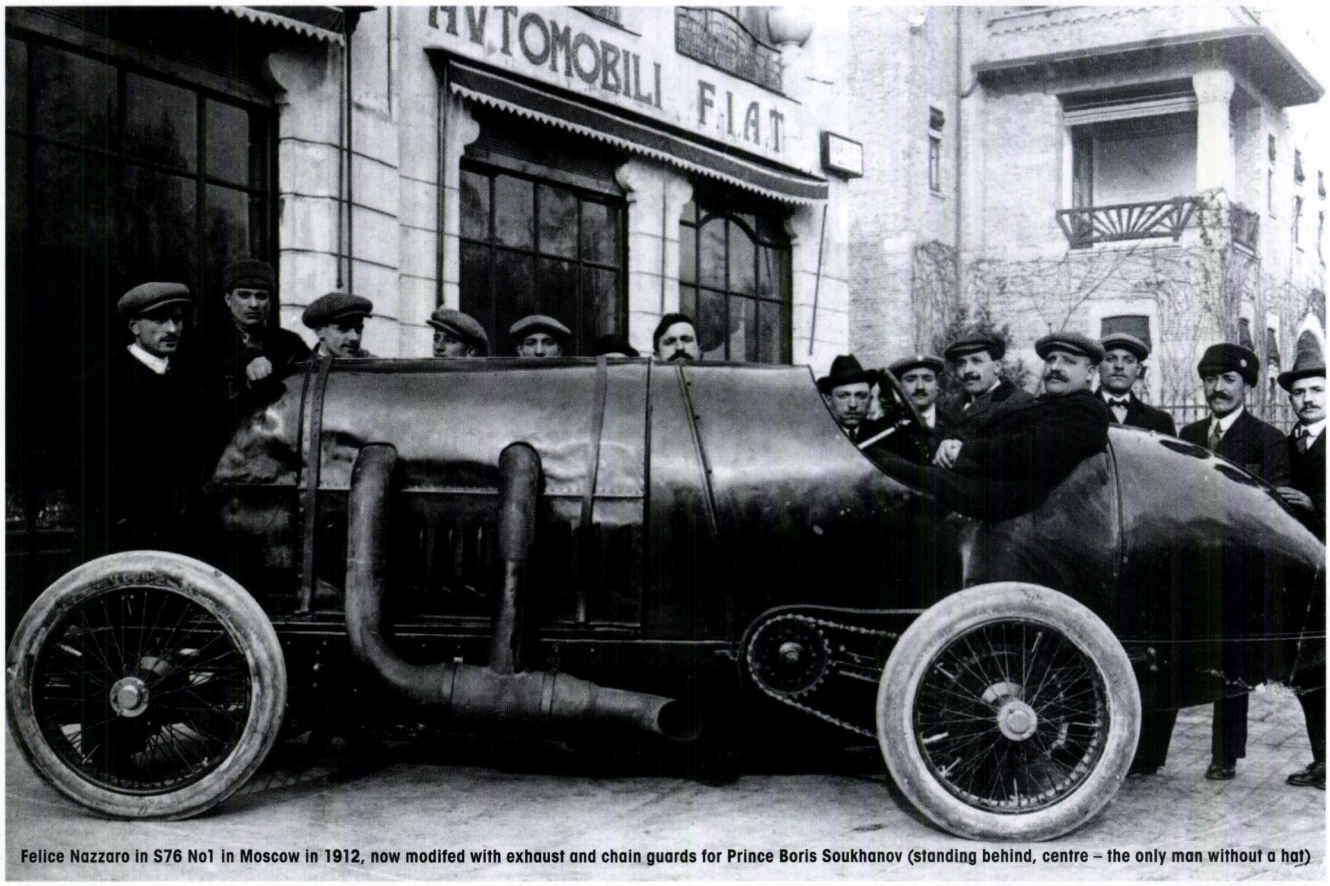
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Neill Bruce

Felice Nazzaro in S76 No1 in Moscow in 1912, now modifed with exhaust and chain guards for Prince Boris Soukhanov (standing behind, centre – the only man without a hat)

HUGE FIAT TO BE REBORN

One of a pair of remarkable 28.3-litre four-cylinder racing Fiats built in 1910/1911, unseen since the 1920s, is being re-constructed

The most exciting vintage-world news is that Duncan Pittaway is assembling one of the Fiat S76 racing cars of the pre-WWI era. These enormous cars were produced to out-do what Duncan calls "the girly 200hp Benz".

The Blitzen Benz had been doing very well in many events, including taking the Land Speed Record at Brooklands in 1909. It was presumably to counter this that during the winter of 1910/11 Fiat built two cars powered by enormous four-cylinder 190x250mm 28.3-litre engines. The story has been pretty well documented, to the time when the S76s disappeared. Neither of these machines was like the later 21.7-litre Mephistopheles or the S61 10-litre racing Fiat, both in the company's wonderful museum in Turin. The monster S76s, with their chain drive and stub exhausts, had not been particularly successful apart from Pietro Bordino in car No1 winning the Saltburn race meeting in 1911 and breaking the World one-mile record at 116.15mph.

Car No1 had also been taken to Brooklands in 1911 and again by Arthur Duray in 1913, maybe to try for the lap record or beat the LSR (Hémery, Benz, 127mph). But Bordino and Duray were perhaps not sufficiently acquainted with high speed round the Track in both directions.

In late 1911 a Russian prince, Boris Soukhanov, bought car No1 and it achieved a one-way 132.27mph at Ostend, driven by Arthur Duray in 1913. Its owner then disappeared during the Russian revolution but this preposterous Fiat, so tall that it was necessary to stand on its dumb-irons to fill its radiator, survived, was modified and continued to race as a Stutz-engined Fiat special in Australia, until being badly crashed in 1924.

As regards car No2, not much is known of any competition history. It was kept by the works in Turin throughout WW1 and, shortly after being photographed with a Fiat 501 tourer in 1919, was scrapped in 1920; only the engine was retained.

There the story ended, until Duncan Pittaway, having already acquired the remains of the No1 car from Australia, was told by an ex-museum employee that the No2 car engine still existed, and he was also able to acquire this. Inspection of a surviving airship engine and examination of the original drawings of the airship



Ludvigsen

Above: Felice Nazzaro tries the brand-new Fiat S76 on the Suza-Mont Cenis road north of Turin. Note lack of exhaust system. Below: No1 minus its minimal body, showing paired cylinders, exposed flywheel and twin exhaust ports. Car No2 had four exhaust outlets

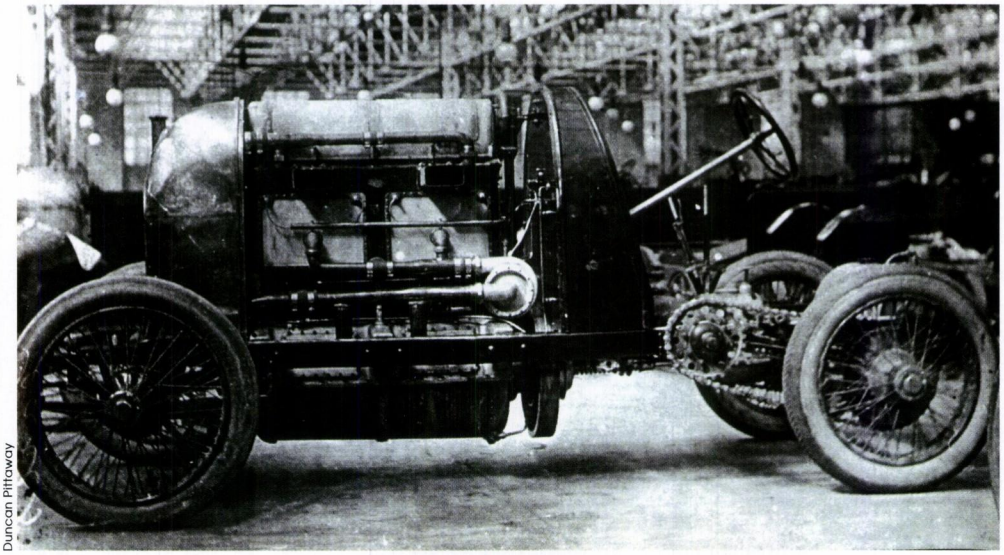
and car engines showed that we were all mistaken in saying the car had an airship engine. As with the S61 and S74, Fiat had indeed designed and built special power units for the S76s. So they were serious in this project.

It is apparent that two S76 cars were built during the winter of 1910/11, with detail differences in chassis, body and engine design. Both had OHC engines although, car No1 had two inlet and two exhaust ports, whereas car No2 had three inlet and four exhaust ports, clearly seen in the contemporary photographs.

Both S76 car engines show direct development from Fiat's S61 and S74 racing-car engines, with wide aluminium crankcases, relatively small sumps for semi-dry-sump lubrication, 16-valve cylinder blocks, starting-handle dogs, and flywheels designed to take Hele-Shaw clutches.

The later 1912 airship engines had very much simpler OHC eight-valve cylinder blocks, taller narrower cast-iron crankcases, enormous 15-gallon sumps and a geared, camshaft-operated, starting mechanism.

Duncan is reconstructing car No1, as he feels the identity lies with the chassis, and hopes to have this magnificent Fiat complete by the summer and running soon after that.



Duncan Pittaway

RUMBLINGS

Plans for the centenary of Brooklands Track in June are proceeding. On Saturday June 16 cars from before1920 will parade, and on the next day there is to be a similar display of those originating from 1921 to 1939. In these parades will be cars which competed at the famous (the original) motor course. Len Battyll tells me that already a great many of these have been found, plus a few Track personalities. He can be contacted on 01428 645724 by other would-be participants with suitable cars.

The VSCC opens its racing season on April 21 at Silverstone, followed by its not-to-be-missed events at Cadwell Park, Oulton Park, Mallory Park and Donington Park, with an invitation race for pre-war cars at the Silverstone Classic meeting in July. Its Light Car and Edwardian Section has its Welsh weekend on March 31/April 1, the Summer Rally in Hampshire on June 16-17 and an Autumn Tour in the Cotswolds on September 1.

Longevity? My Short and Mason clockwork barograph, which I was informed was supplied to the Brooklands Automobile Racing Club in 1906/07, still works perfectly.

This year's Amilcar/Salmson International Rally will be held in Wales on July 29-August 1. Also, at Prescott on May 26-27 there is to be a French car enclosure, and the Amilcar-Salmson Register is having a road run on the Bank Holiday Monday (details from Janet Blake, 01869 343444). Other French light cars and cyclecars are welcome.

Bill Boddy

MOTOR SPORT'S FOUNDING EDITOR



Percy Maclure takes the chequered flag to win the 1938 JCC International Trophy at Brooklands in his self-prepared 1½-litre Riley, beating Raymond Mays' sick ERA

LAT

Junior Riley

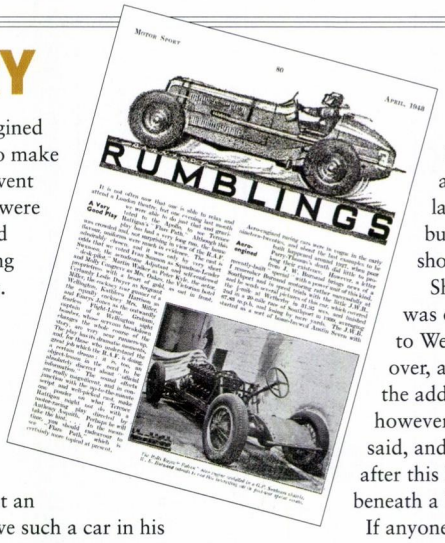
MACLURE MEMORIES

Older readers will remember the Maclure brothers who raced Rileys in the 1930s, especially Percy Maclure who was very prominent at Brooklands, notably when he won the 1938 JCC International Trophy race from Raymond Mays' supercharged, admittedly somewhat sick, ERA, in his self-prepared 1½-litre Riley by 0.02sec (84.36mph to Mays' 84.32mph). Riley enthusiasts, myself included, applauded him as he prepared to drive away in his dilapidated Riley Nine saloon.

You may also recall the miniature replica of a Brooklands-model Riley built for young Peter Maclure, his son. It had a Villiers two-stroke engine, a homemade gearbox and concealed chain-drive. Young Peter became so proficient in driving it that he was allowed to give demonstrations at important competition venues such as Donington Park. I had wondered what became of this little car; the excellent Riley Register *Bulletin* now informs us that it is hanging up above an MG1100 rally car in the Cotsworld Motor Museum at Bourton-on-the-Water.

Percy also drove at Le Mans in 1936 to a class win with Trevoux, and in the Ulster TT he won his class in 1932 and in 1936 was second in class. Edgar Maclure was also second in class in the 1934 race, all in British Rileys.

AERO MYSTERY



Have I told you the story of the lost aero-engined car? It began when Jenks wanted someone to make him a boat to use on the Aldershot canal. I went with him to a South Coast boat-builder. We were shown into a palatial office and he was asked whether he wanted a river craft or a sea-going yacht? We were unceremoniously shown out.

In 1943 I published in *Motor Sport* a description and picture of the 14.2-litre Rolls-Royce aero-engined car, allegedly with one of the 1921 GP Sunbeam chassis, which J W Burnand, who had raced his JWB special in Southport sand races, was building. After the war it and other such cars had vanished. I had, however, heard that an occasional Brooklands driver was said to have such a car in his boatyard not far from the one from which we had been ejected; so there we now went, to be told that some time ago someone had taken it away.

Some time later I was asked by someone who had a car of this kind whether it was still possible to obtain tyres for it. I told him where to obtain them and that I would like to see the car. We lived then a few miles away at Fleet in Hampshire and, getting no reply from his number, drove there. A lady asked us in, saying the car was in an adjacent shed but her son was out teaching his girlfriend to drive, but shouldn't be long. We waited a long time, before leaving.

Shortly afterwards I was told that this or a similar car was owned by a Marendaz Special owner living close to Weybridge. As my letter was unanswered we drove over, a smart Marendaz car outside a house confirming the address. The owner of the elusive aero-engined giant, however, said it was in London. "I am willing to go there," I said, and was asked to make an appointment. I did so. Soon after this I had a call saying that the car had been in a garage beneath a block of flats which had collapsed and destroyed it…

If anyone should challenge my account of the end of this interesting motor car I will swear on oath that this is my honest recollection. A *Motor Sport* reader is working on the history of the Burnand Sunbeam and I will be very interested to see if he can unravel any more of this story.

TONY ROLT ELECTED TO BROOKLANDS SOCIETY ROLE

Following the sad death of Tom Delaney who had been racing his Lea-Francis in vintage events at the age of 95, Tony Rolt has been elected a Vice-President of the Brooklands Society, the other Vice-Presidents being D Holland and A Hutchings.

Apart from his appearance at the Weybridge venue Rolt established himself as a top-class racing driver elsewhere. He won at Le Mans in 1953 with Duncan Hamilton in a C-type Jaguar (2450 miles, 105.85mph) and the same pair were second in 1954, and he took the same place in the Reims 24-hour event.

During the war Rolt served in the Army with the rank of Major and then resumed racing in F2 Connaught, HWM, Austin-Healey and Jaguar cars, not forgetting the Alfa Romeo constructed from *Bimotore* components.

His Brooklands appearances included an exciting win in 1938 from the Alta of George Abecassis by one second, with his ERA well on fire. In 1939 he won from scratch a race over the Mountain circuit after a well-driven performance in the Dixon-tuned ERA. He was second again in a Road Circuit handicap and later showed his ability when the ERA's brakes failed and nearly took him over the banking in a Mountain race.


12

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Come and see us at Race Retro, the International Historic Motorsport Show, at Stoneleigh. It's a little later in the year than it has been in the past, running from March 23-25. *Motor Sport* is on stand E28 in the central hall 2, where you will also find all the historic race championship organisers. *Historic Motor Racing News* will also be there and will be displaying a Fiat Abarth touring car from its U2TC championship. You can meet the Historic Motor Racing News team on stand C30.

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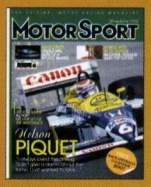
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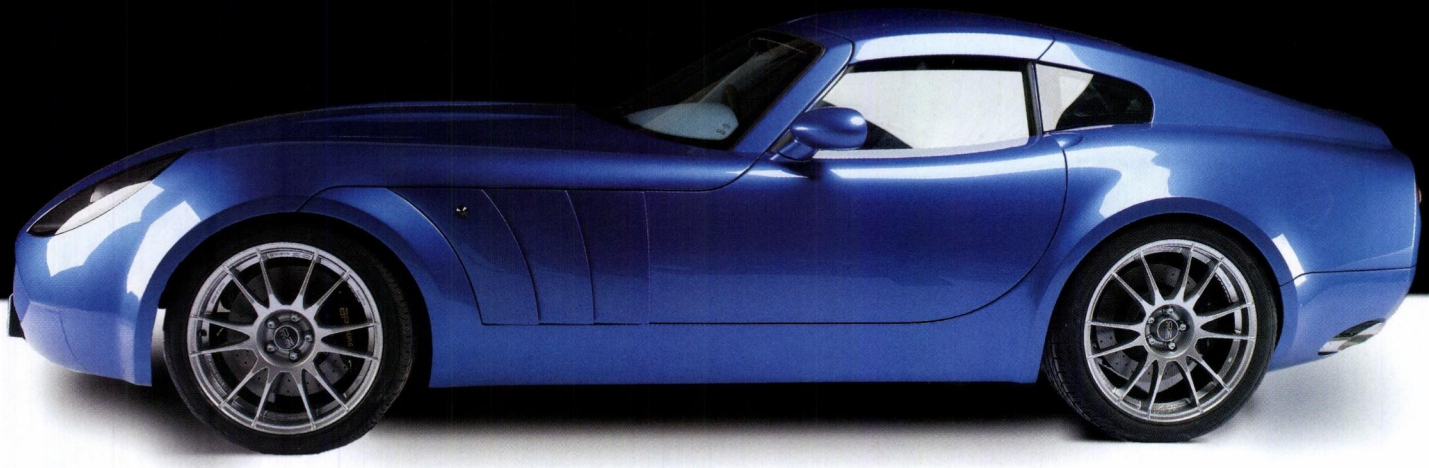
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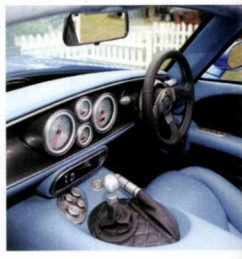
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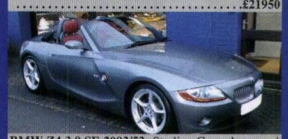
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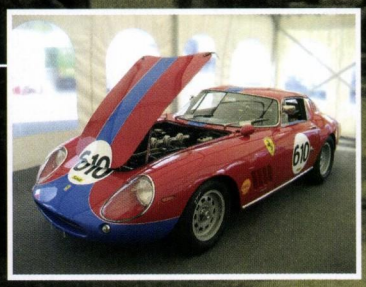
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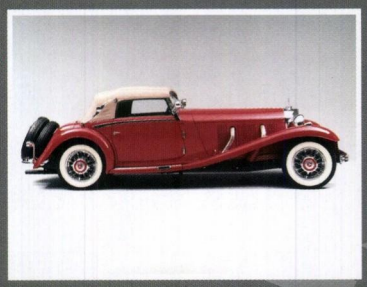
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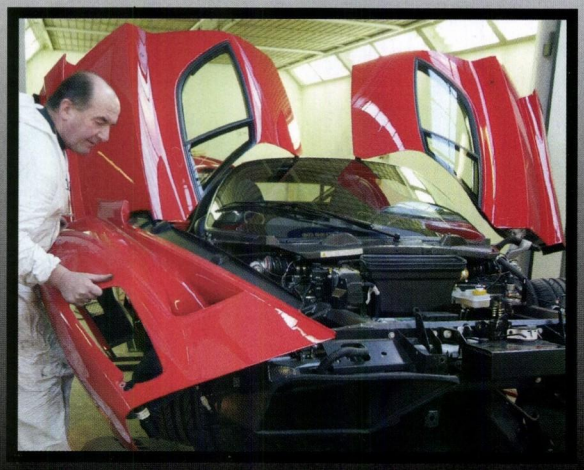
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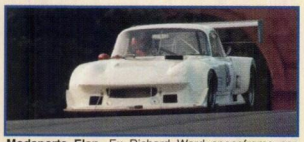
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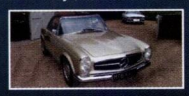


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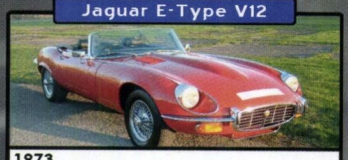


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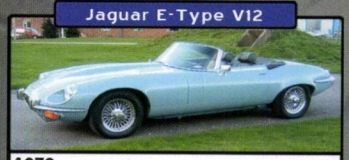


1973

Jaguar "E" type V12 roadster automatic. Original UK RHD, 50,000 miles, pristine condition, signal red with new black leather interior. Drives as well as it looks. Needs nothing apart from enjoying!

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Jaguar E-Type V12

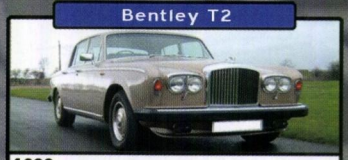


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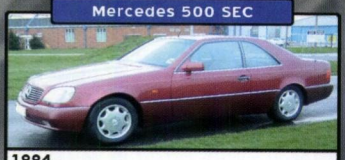


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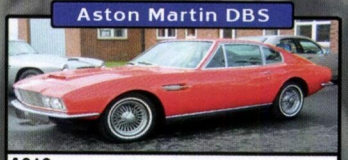


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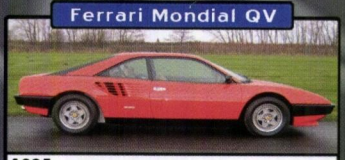


1969

Automatic. 54,000 miles from new with history, excellent condition visually and drives beautifully.

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Ferrari Mondial QV



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ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE. 1985. Royal Cherry with Magnolia hide piped burgundy. Fitted with 16"Ronal wheels, Handling up-grade, sports exhaust. Factory Lead free. Known to us from new and in outstanding condition. 40,000 miles ..... **£ 62,500**

ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE. 1995. Lichfield Black with Black hide piped slate grey. Twin supercharged 550 bhp, 6 speed. Fitted with Traction control. 1 of 280 production cars. Full factory and main dealer service record. 43,000 miles. **£65,000**

ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE VOLANTE ZAGATO. 1990. Hunter Green with Tan hide. 5 speed. 1 of just 6 in existence. Liberated from the well known Hunter Green collection this 6,000 mile car has been expertly sorted and is superb throughout. **£99,500**

ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE. 1983. Lichfield Black with Natural hide piped Burgundy. Fitted with 580X lead free engine and sports exhaust. Superb service history with ourselves and R S Williams. 47,000 miles ..... **£49,500.**



ASTON MARTIN V8 VOLANTE VANTAGE. 1979. Royal Blue with Magnolia piped Blue hide. Fitted with Vantage engine, 5 speed, Vantage 16" wheels, handling up-grade, sports exhaust and Nardi steering wheel. Extensive service history from new. ..... **£PoA**

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ASTON MARTIN DB7. 1996. Mendip Blue with Parchment and Navy Blue hide. Automatic. Air Bag model fitted with factory sports exhaust an OZ Magnesium Alloy wheels. Maintained by ourselves for last 6 years for Lady owner. **£26,950**

ASTON MARTIN VANQUISH 2+2. 2003. Tungsten Silver with Black hide. Fitted with walnut console and cappings, Linn Hi-Fi, tracker, warranty etc. AM Works history and only 13,500 miles from new ..... **£PoA**

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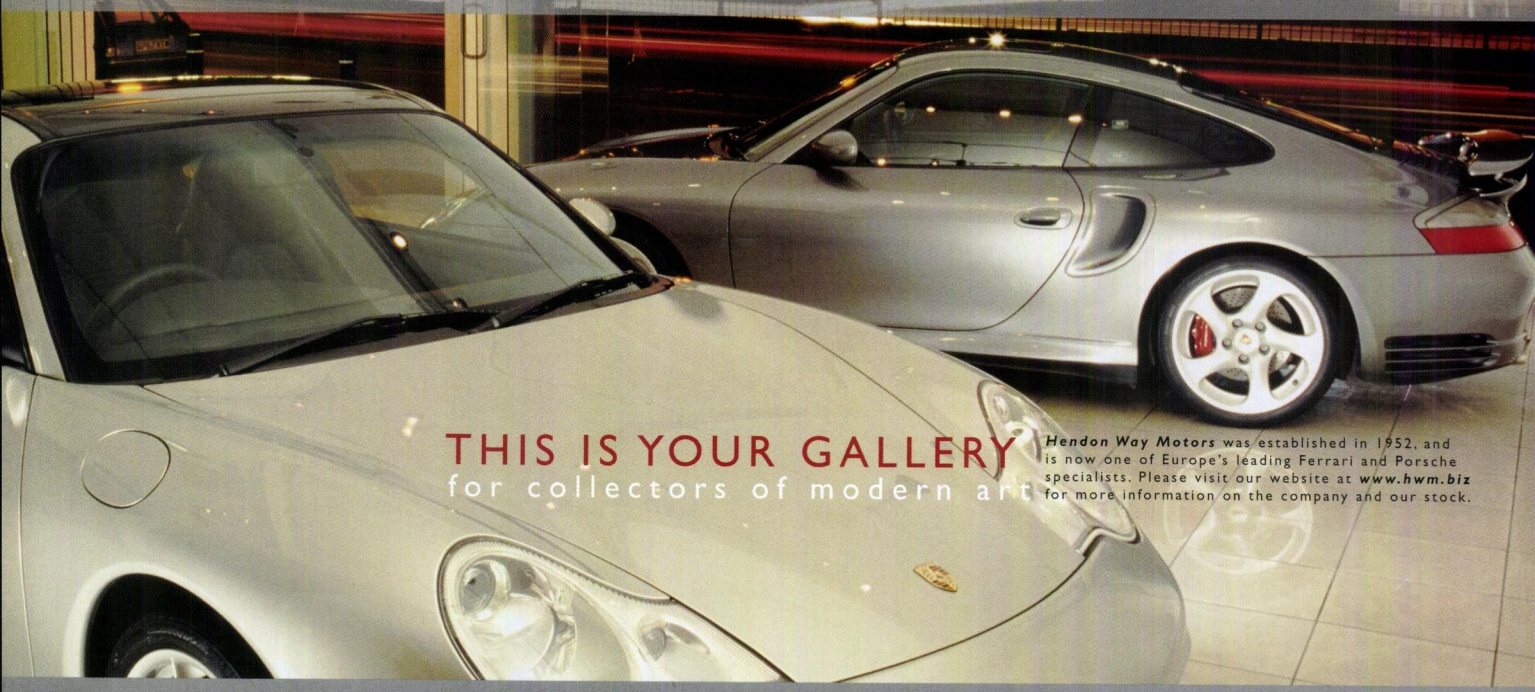
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Black leather, PSM, Multi Function Steering, Cruise, Chrono, Park assist

2006 PORSCHE 997 C4 S COUPE BASALT BLACK 1,000 MLS
Black leather, PSM, Cruise, HDM Seats, BOSE

2006 PORSCHE 997 C4 S COUPE GT SILVER 5,000 MLS
Black leather, PSM, Cruise, Navigation, Telephone module, Xenon

2006 PORSCHE 997 2 S COUPE GT SILVER 6,000 MLS
Black leather, Chrono Pack, Cruise, BOSE, 19" Alloys, , M/Function Steering Wheel, PCM

2005 PORSCHE 997 2 S COUPE BASALT BLACK 6,000 MLS
Black leather, PCM, Al Pack, Litronic lights, 19" Alloys, Cruise, Sunroof

2005 PORSCHE 997 2 S CABRIOLET TIP ARCTIC SILVER 12,000 MLS
Black leather, Navigation, Heated Seats, Cruise, Sports, Chrono Pack

2004 PORSCHE 996 TURBO CABRIOLET BASALT BLACK 16,000 MLS
Black leather, PCM, Sports Seats, Computer, BOSE, Litronic lights, Ally Pack

2004 PORSCHE 996 TURBO CABRIOLET TIP BASALT BLACK 12,000 MLS
Black leather, PCM, BOSE, Cruise

2003 PORSCHE 996 TURBO COUPE TIP MIDNIGHT BLUE 21,000 MLS
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2003 PORSCHE 996 GT2 MIDNIGHT BLUE 7,000 MLS
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1995 PORSCHE 993 COUPE TIP SLATE GREY 65,000 MLS
Black leather, 17" alloys, Climate Control, Computer, Full Porsche History

1995 PORSCHE 993 CABRIOLET ARCTIC SILVER 54,000 MLS
Black leather, Computer

1994/5 PORSCHE 993 CABRIOLET ADVENTURA 60,000 MLS
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Model Types 2.5 / 2.7 / S 3.2

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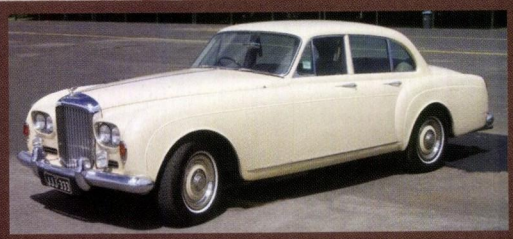
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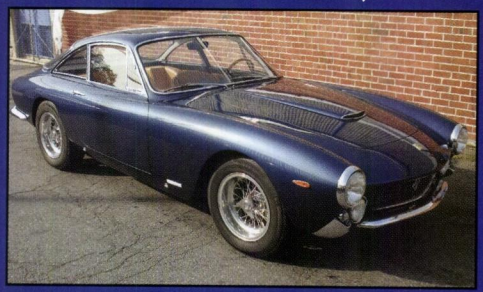
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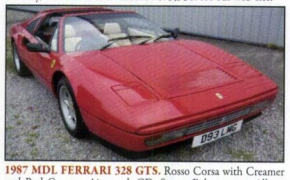
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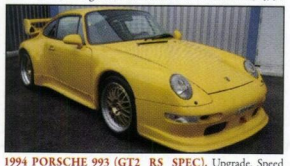
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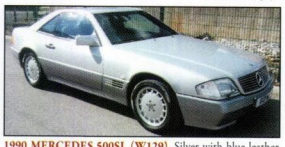


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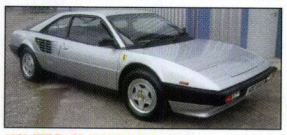
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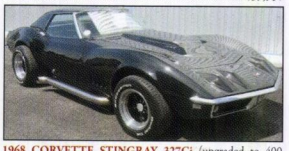
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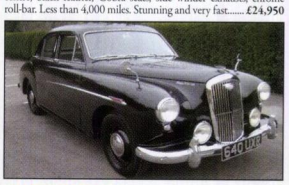
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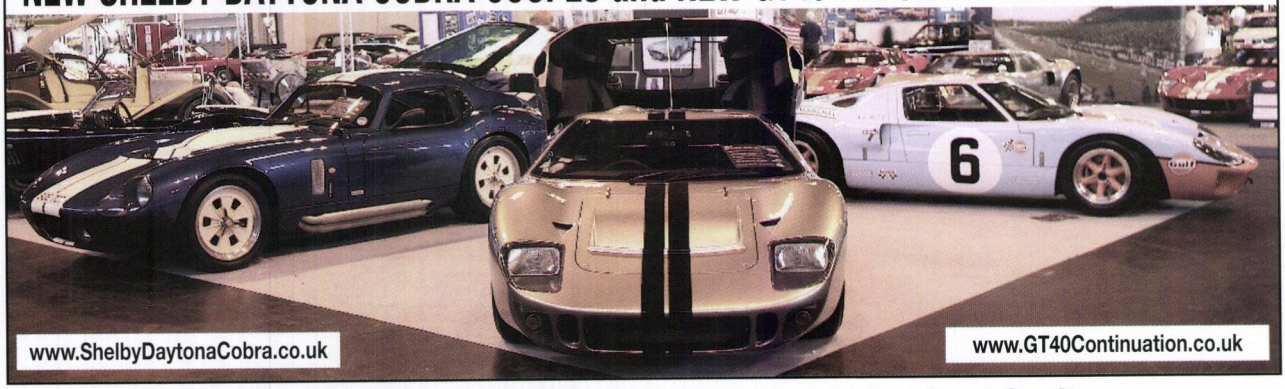


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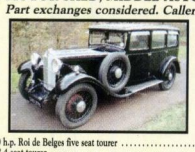
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1937 **MORGAN** 4/4 Coventry Climax engine ..... P.O.A.
1938 **RILEY** 12/4 Kestrel £9,250
1940 **STUDEBAKER** Commander sedan. Lhd. £4,950
1947 **AUSTIN** 16 6-light saloon £5,250
1948 **RILEY** RMA saloon. (Round dials) £6,250
1949 **ALVIS** TA14 Mulliner saloon £12,000
1950 **LEA FRANCIS** 2.5 litre 2+2 seat sports £23,500
1951 **BENTLEY** Mk VI 2-door coupe by Park Ward £32,000
1952 **DAIMLER** Special Sports by Barker £22,500
1953 **ALVIS** TA21 saloon £10,500
1953 **ARMSTRONG SIDDELEY** 346 Saphire saloon. Pre-elect gearbox £9,500
1953 **DAIMLER** DB18 Conquest 4-door saloon £7,250
1954 **M.G.** TF 1250 (Old English White) £16,500
1955 **M.G.** ZA Magnette £3,250
1957 **AUSTIN** A55 Manumatic Saloon £4,950
1959 **ALVIS** TD21 series I drophead coupe. (some series II mods.) £18,450
1960 **VAUXHALL** Victor. Needs some welding. £1,250
1963 **VAUXHALL** Victor de Luxe £1,475
1964 **AUSTIN HEALEY** 3000 MKIII 2+2 sports. Lhd. £25,000
1964 **JAGUAR** Mk II 3.8 manual with O/D & CWW. P.A.S. £17,250
1964 **M.G.** B roadster Old fitted (Black) £8,750
1964 **PEUGEOT** 403 saloon £3,450
1964 **ROLLS ROYCE** Silver Cloud III. One family, 77,000 miles. £29,500
1964 **VOLVO** Amazon Estate. Mechanically up rated. Old. Lhd. £4,250
1965 **ALVIS** TE21 saloon. 5 speed manual, CWW, PAS. £7,750
1965 **ALVIS** TE21 saloon. 5 speed manual, CWW, PAS. £17,000
1966 **ALFA ROMEO** 1600 spider Duetto. Lhd. £11,250
1966 **AUSTIN HEALEY** 3000 Mk III 2+2 Lhd. £21,000
1966 **JAGUAR** E-type 4.2 series I 2+2 coupe.Lhd. £17,250
1967 **JAGUAR** E-type 4.2 series II coupe. £23,750
1967 **LANCIA** Flavia Sport Zagato. (Rare right-hand-drive) £14,000
1968 **FORD** Mustang coupe. Straight-six, auto. £5,000
1968 **MORRIS** Minor 1000 van £3,450
1969 **DAIMLER** Sovereign 420 ..... £6,500
1969 **LANCIA** Fulvia Rallye Sport. 1.3S coupe £8,250
1969 **MORRIS** Minor 1000 Estate £3,500
1969 **M.G.** Midget. Hard top. Race prepared £5,995
1970 **FORD** Zephr saloon £700
1970 **LOTUS** Elan S4 SE £8,500
1970 **M.G.** B roaster (red) £7,750
1971 **FORD** Escort MKI 1300XL 4-door saloon £4,450
1971 **M.G.** B GT sunroof, disc wheels £3,500
1972 **MERCEDES BENZ** 350SL. Hard & Soft top. £6,500
1973 **MERCEDES BENZ** 350 SLC £9,000
1973 **TRIUMPH** Spitfire MKIV. 1500 engine, hard & soft top. £3,250
1974 **DAIMLER** Double Six series II saloon. Lwb. 2 owners, 29,000mls. £6,000
1974 **MERCEDES BENZ** 240D 4-door saloon. Lhd. Auto. £2,750
1974 **ROVER** P6 V8 3500 saloon. Automatic £2,950
1974 **TRIUMPH** GT6 MK III £4,250
1975 **FIAT** 124 spider. Lhd £4,750
1975 **ROVER** P6 2200SC saloon. 1 owner. £1,850
1976 **MERCEDES BENZ** 250 Automatic (Some work required) £1,250
1976 **M.G.** B GT. Sunroof (Flame) £2,200
1976 **M.G.** B GT. Sunroof (Flame) £3,375
1977 **M.G.** Midget 1500 ..... £3,500
1977 **M.G.** Midget 1500 ..... £3,500
1978 **FORD** Mustang II Ghia £4,850
1979 **M.G.** B GT. Needing work (Yellow) £900
1979 **M.G.** Midget 1500 ..... £2,850
1979 **VOLVO** 262C Bertone coupe £2,950
1980 **FIAT** 124 spider. Lhd. £4,500
1981 **DAIMLER** 4.2 Sovereign series III Vanden Plas £1,495
1982 **M.G.** B roadster (Yellow) £4,500
1982 **TVR** Tasmin convertible. (2 litre Ford engine) £5,950
1983 **ROLLS ROYCE** Silver Spirit (White) £9,850
1985 **RANGE ROVER** V8 HSE £600
1986 **FORD** Escort 1.6i cabriolet £625
1986 **RENAULT** Alpine GTA 2.5 Turbo £6,750
1990 **MAZDA** MX-5 sport £5,500
1991 **EVANTE** Mk II 2-seat sports £11,750
1994 **ALFA ROMEO** 164 2-litre twin-spark saloon. Not MOT'd £450
1995 **ROVER** 827 Vanden Plas Limo. By Coleman Milne. (Red) £2,500
1996 **TYRRELL** formula one racing car. Ch. No. 24/08. No mechanics. ..... P.O.A.

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1910 **FAVOURITE** 500cc. Abingdon King Dick engine £9,950
1912 **PIVOT** 500cc. Fafnir engine £9,250
1952 **HOREX** Regina 350 ..... £3,350
1958 **AWO** Simson 425 ..... £1,400
C1959 **MOTOBI** Ardizio 125cc £3,250
1974 **BMW** R90/6 ..... £3,000
1974 **MZ** TS 250 ..... £650
1979 **MOTO GUZZI** V35 ..... £1,700
1981 **BMW** K75 ..... £2,100
1981 **KAWASAKI** Z1000 fuel injected £2,200
1983 **HONDA** VN1100 ..... £2,300
1992 **JAWA** 350/638. Twin Sport. 430Miles, 2 owners £1,500

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1949 **BSB** President £2,050

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1933 1 1/2 Litre Le Mans Built on a shortened chassis, but with an original 2/4 seater body. Recent new engine, including block, steel crank and rods and cylinder head, by David Taylor and yet to be run in. In Belgium ..... Price £85,000



1930 1 1/2 litre International short chassis. High quality rebuild including chassis, engine, axle, gearbox and body by marque expert 15 years ago, and little used since. Correct nickel plate throughout. One of the best Inters I have ever driven. Interesting history file going back 60 years. ..... Price £80,000



1936 2 Litre 15/98 short chassis. Much work over the past ten years and very little use. Engine rebuild by Ecurie Bertelli and not yet run in. A very good example. 15/98's are now being appreciated for the fine cars they are and few are better than this . .Price £67,500



1936 2 Litre 15/98 short chassis. A very rare opportunity to complete a rebuild to your specification. This is the only 15/98 with Brooklands pedigree, and with lots of history in the 70's and 80's in the hands of Malcolm Cann. Rebuild work to a high standard by Morntane Eng. in the 1980's but never completed. Requires full engine rebuild and installation and minor finishing off. A project with real potential ..... Good value at £55,000

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Trust me, if you ever get a better deal for your electric, and Powergen says they will match it by offering you a three year contract, don't do it, just take the better offer from another supplier.

I made the mistake of signing up for a three-year contract about three years ago now. After managing to forget to send me an electricity bill for nearly eighteen months (lost in the migration process!) they then told me I didn't have a contract and nearly doubled my bill! - So much for privatised industry. I never did quite get that. You pay your taxes and the government uses your money to build up an infrastructure for generating and distributing electricity, water or gas and then after they've got all this social infrastructure working they sell it back to us (well some of us) and then after selling it back to us the prices go up to reimburse the investors, so we pay again for someone else to own our service (usually from across the Channel) AND when it gets in trouble the taxpayer bails it out, so guess what we pay again. How t.. f... does that work?In the real world of earning a living and having to provide a service in order to get paid, the Bugatti market seems as bouyant as ever, which means there are no cars for sale and a lot of people chasing them, so when a car does come up for sale it is gone very quickly. I think in some ways this is why there's such an interest in our FIA race-ready recreations, which from a racing point of view have three things going for them: First, the cost, which is about eighteen percent of the real one; second, everything is new, so you don't have to struggle with fifty year old magnetos and components which may or may not be cracked and liable to fail at any moment and third, should the unfortunate happen and the car leave the circuit you're not wiping out eighty years of history. Oh, and there's a fourth advantage if you compare it to a VSCC type car, in that people aren't tempted to break up perfectly good cars in order to spread the bits thin between two or more recreations, (not GP cars obviously, but Brescias certainly suffer)

I had a thought the other day that perhaps, working on the idea of it could have been done in period (which seems to be the justification of aero and boat engine specials, amongst others) a quick look through the Boys Own Annuals of the 20s reveals some fairly interesting ideas for racing cars and vehicles generally, which not only could have been done in period but were designed and committed to paper if not actually built. Could this be a rich new vein of VSCC eligible creations? A Jules Verne class perhaps.

2007 looks likely to be as busy as ever with barely a weekend off, but in one of those rare weekends it's down to me to organise the Next Generation Rally for the Bugatti Owners Club. This is a fun event where sons and daughters of current Bugatti owners get to try the cars on a relatively gentle rally, which this year I intend to base somewhere near Warwick. It's also open to owners of Bugattis who've never had family involved with cars and even members of the Bugatti Owners Club who don't have Bugattis but might want one one day and we try and arrange, where possible, that non-Bugatti owners and drivers get the chance to have a ride in a Bugatti at least. The event winds up at the Garden Party at Prescott (July 15th), this year by way of karting, a medieval banquet and a black tie dinner. Interested parties should contact me at either our web address or via the office phone.

Combined with the Bugatti events we will be doing selected saloon car races in the GTA, but also I will be dragging out my MAE engined Anglia and I am hoping to drive with Duncan in a Barracuda, the highlight being a race at the Nordschlieffe.

Top Hat has now become part of the Masters series of racing, for whom the success of the series and strong grids have obviously been the main attraction. The change to Masters has of course meant some changes to the way the series is administered with a drivers registration fee and an increase in the cost of each of the races. Obviously there are some fringe benefits such as a jacket, (which advertises the series) and a windscreen sticker (another ad). So the competitors have paid to help create a series, which because of its success was sold, now the cost of the series has gone up to repay the investors in the series, so essentially they are paying for someone else to own their ..... Hold on, I am sure I have heard that somewhere before..... Tim







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1953 Maserati A6 GCM 250 F single seater racing car. Exceptionally rare interim model. This one-off opportunity has been under wraps for over a quarter of a century. Please call for information pack and further details.



1934 Riley Lynx Four Door Tourer 9 HP Manual Gearbox. Superbly finished in Cardinal Red with oatmeal hide interior. Fastidiously maintained by the last owner for nearly 30 years. Many show prizes to its credit. Priced at a fraction of its restoration cost today at **£27,950**



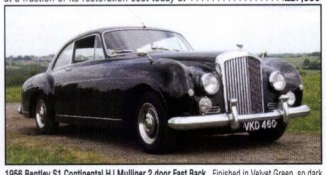
1965 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud III. A wonderfully original example, finished in Astral Blue with blue/grey hide interior. Known history - I have personally known this RR since the early '70's - low mileage and in superb unmolested condition. A rare opportunity indeed and priced accordingly at . . . **£49,950.**



1924 3 Litre Bentley, 4 door all weather Tourer with extremely rare William Arnold Coachwork. Wonderful patination and history file. Finished in British Racing Green with original grey hide interior . . **£99,950**



1947 Bentley Mk VI 2-door Convertible Coupe. Finished in Royal Blue with beige leather interior. This exquisitely rare Bentley is fresh from a 'money no object' restoration with bills well in excess of £100,000. Potential concours winner. Ready for Club events and enjoyable motoring. Competitively priced at **£79,950**



1956 Bentley S1 Continental HJ Mulliner 2 door Fast Back. Finished in Velvet Green, so dark its almost black with wonderfully original green hide interior. This highly sought after Continental has been blessed with one owner for 48 of its 50 year presence on the planet! Competitively priced in today's market where demand greatly outstrips supply for these highly sought after, legendary, coveted Continentals. An unrepeatable opportunity at . . . **£129,950**



1975 Bentley Corniche Convertible. Finished in Balmoral Green with black hide upholstery. Ebony finished wood trims. Comprehensive history file to reassure the new owner of this extremely rare, desirable Bentley's pedigree and provenance. Interesting part exchanges may be considered **£38,950**



1974 Jaguar V12 E Type Drop Head. Finished in Azure Blue with tan hide interior. Complete with rare factory hard top. AN UNBELIEVABLE 27,000 miles in the hands of a WWII Fighter Pilot Ace - only available due to owners advancing years! An outstanding opportunity at **£46,950** - choice of 4 other E Types available.



Oil painting by Dirk Verhaert active 1631-1664 in original carved frame, excellent condition, lightly restored by leading restorers Pelter Sands of Bristol, **size 48 by 60 inches.** Created for the aristocratic grandees Grand European Tours in the manner of the master painters. Purchased some 25 years ago for £28,000 taken in part exchange but not quite our thing, we need **£38,750** for immediate sale or interesting part exchanges considered.



A pair of white Cararra marble Acroterions from a substantial Edwardian House: 4 Mill Bank, London. O/A width at base 22" & 19" O/A height 68?" – E.& O.E. Full dimensions and provenance available on request. Owner purchased the columns some 25 years ago for the entrance hall in his West Country stately home for £28,000. Will listen to constructive offers or part exchange interesting classic vehicles.



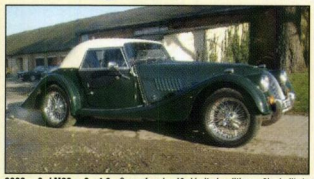
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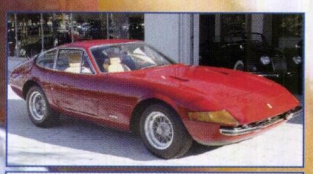
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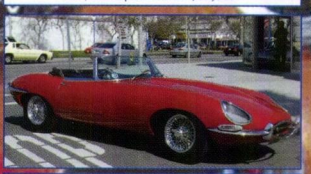
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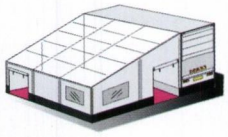
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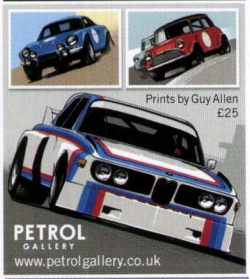
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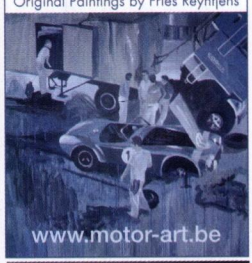


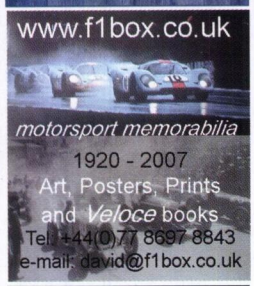
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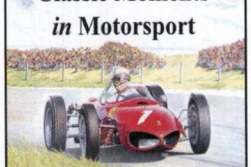


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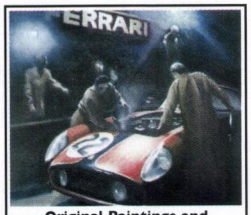


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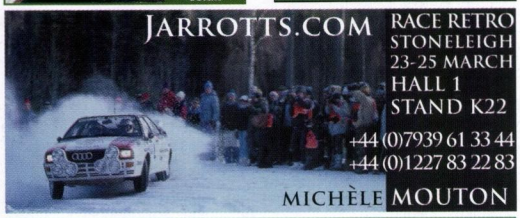
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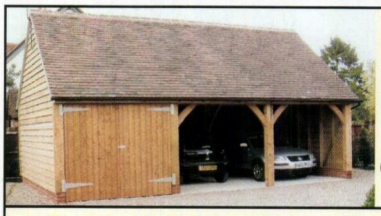
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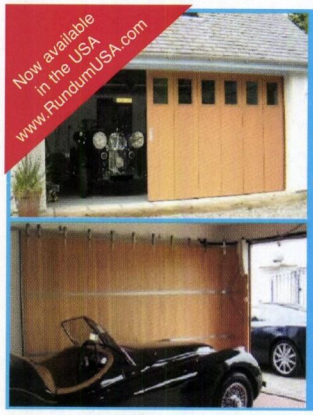
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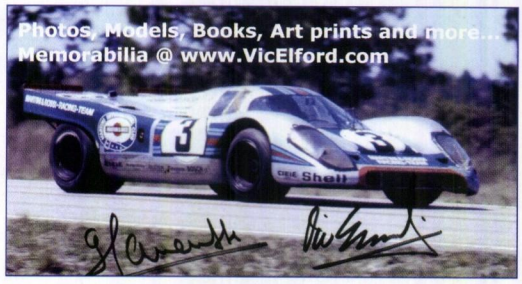
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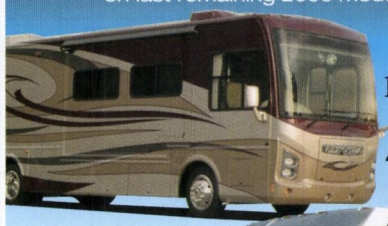
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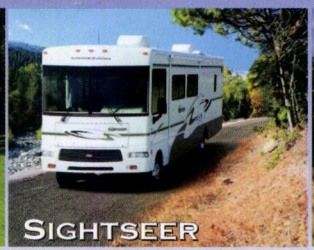
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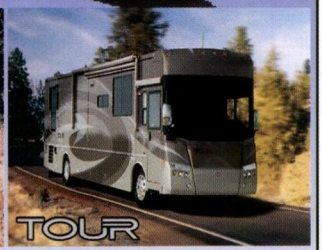
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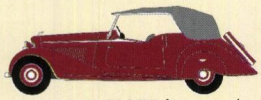
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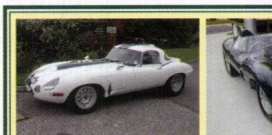


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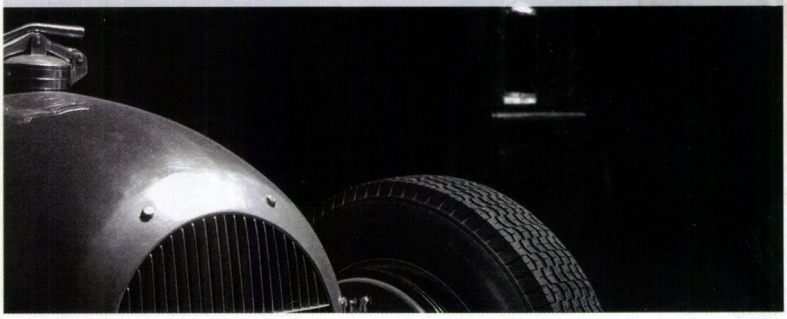
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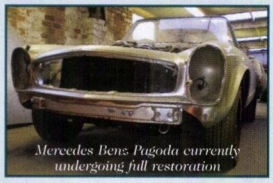
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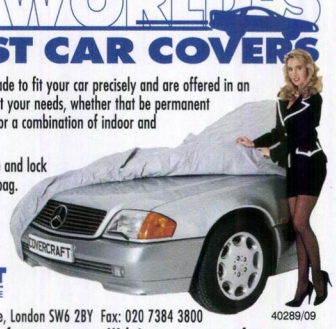


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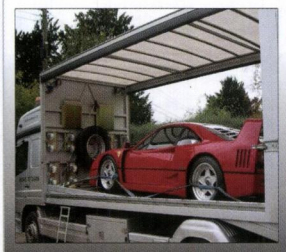
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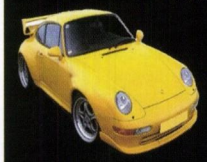
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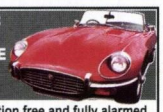
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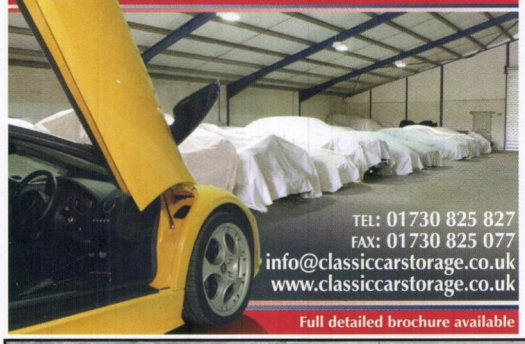
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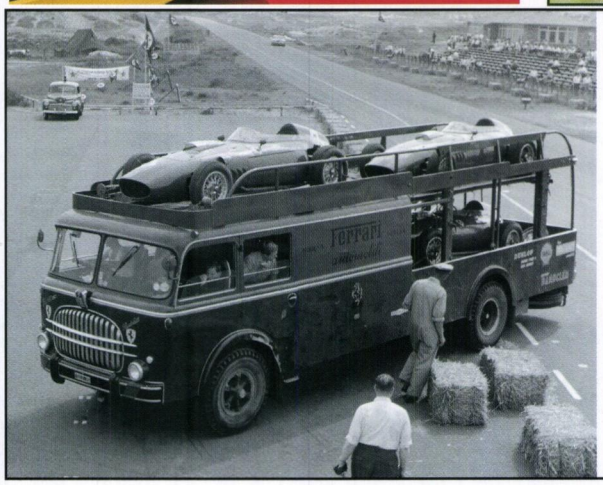
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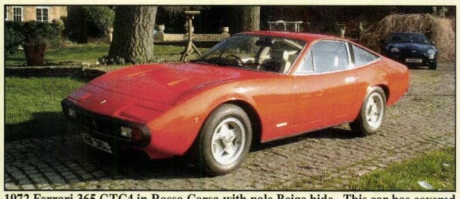
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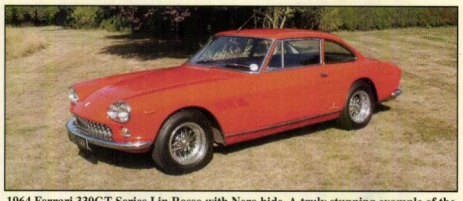
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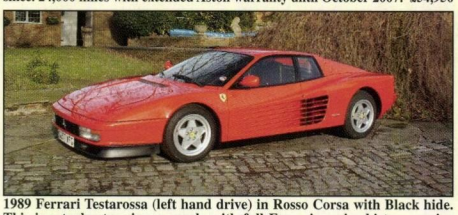
2003 Aston Martin DB7 GTA in Vertigo Blue with dark Blue hide. This is a stunning, well cared for example with total Aston Martin service history. Fitted with all usual refinements including Tiptronic transmission. A two owner example, originally "Grange" Aston Martin demonstrator and one owner since. 24,000 miles with extended Aston warranty until October 2007. £54,950



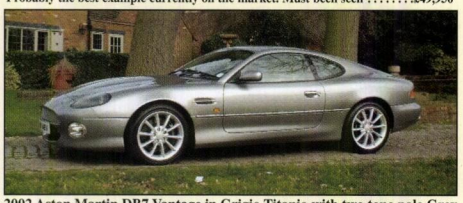
1964 Ferrari 330GT Series I in Rosso with Nero hide. A truly stunning example of the marque which has been in the same ownership for the last 12 years. During this time, it has had a full engine, axle and brake re-build at DK Engineering and a back to metal re-spray by Francis Tuthill together with rebuilt Borrani wheels and general servicing. Probably the best example currently on the market. Must been seen £49,950



2001 Aston Martin DB7 Vantage in Grigio Titanio with pale Grey hide. This car is in excellent condition and is fitted with all usual refinements including automatic transmission, air conditioning, heated front seats, walnut and leather steering wheel and walnut trim. Only 25,000 miles with full Aston Martin service history. £39,950



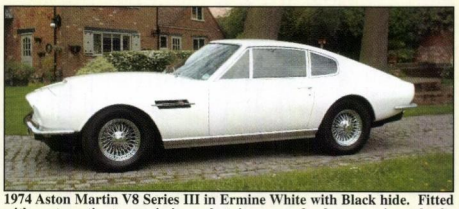
1989 Ferrari Testarossa (left hand drive) in Rosso Corsa with Black hide. This is a truly stunning example with full Ferrari service history, major service in December 2006 including cambelts, air conditioning and brake overhaul. Please enquire for full specification. Sensibly priced at £39,950



2002 Aston Martin DB7 Vantage in Grigio Titanio with two tone pale Grey hide. This is a perfect one owner example fitted with all usual refinements including 18" alloy wheels, mesh grilles, air conditioning, heated electric seats, adjustable steering column and Touchtronic gearbox. Only 35,000 miles from new with full Aston Martin service history. £45,950



1997 Aston Martin DB7 Volante in Masons Black with Black hide. Fitted with speedline alloy wheels, sports exhaust, heated front screen, twin airbags, automatic transmission, Vantage front nose cone and lights, upper and lower mesh grilles and hood cover. This car is in superb condition throughout and is sensibly priced at £29,950



1974 Aston Martin V8 Series III in Ermine White with Black hide. Fitted with automatic transmission, electric sunroof, chrome wire wheels, stainless steel exhaust and headlamp wash/wipe. Only one owner from new, 35,000 miles, this is undoubtedly one of the nicest Series III V8s in existence £29,950



1995 Aston Martin DB7 in Mendip Blue with Grey and Blue hide. Fitted with all usual refinements including 18" multi spoke alloy wheels, air conditioning, heated electric seats, adjustable steering column, electric windows and cruise control. 58,000 miles with full Aston Martin service history and is in pristine condition throughout. £25,995



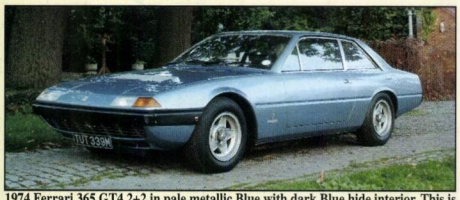
1996 Bentley Continental R in Peacock Blue with Magnolia hide. This is a beautiful one owner example fitted with all usual refinements that has covered only 25,000 miles from new and has full Rolls-Royce service history. Totally faultless. £54,950



2004 Mercedes Benz 350SL in Brilliant Silver with Anthracite hide. 39,000 miles and fitted with automatic transmission, 18" sports alloy wheels, electric heated memory seats, Xenon headlamps and alloy pack. Full service history £35,950



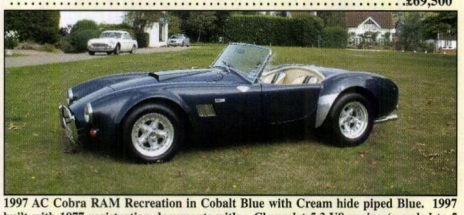
2002 Bentley Arnage T Auto in Moroccan Blue with French Blue hide. This is a beautiful example fitted with all usual refinements and having only covered 50,000 miles. Extras include Bentley remote Sat Nav, park assistance, electric front and rear seats and phone. Full Bentley service. £69,500



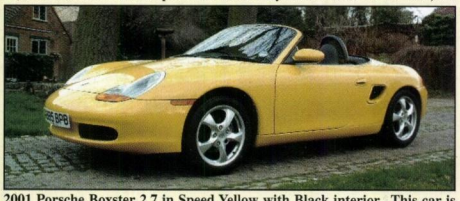
1974 Ferrari 365 GT4 2+2 in pale metallic Blue with dark Blue hide interior. This is a 12 cylinder 4.4 litre front engine Ferrari with 6 Weber carbs and is fitted with Manual 5 speed transmission. Suede dash, 5 spoke Cromodora alloy wheels and comfortably seats 4 adults. The car has considerable service history and has covered 59,000 miles. This is the cheapest route into a 12 cylinder Ferrari. £14,950



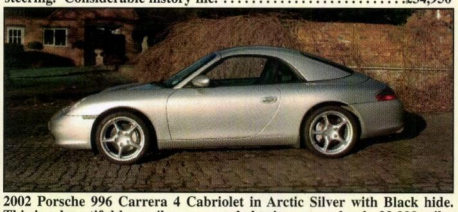
1965 Jaguar Mk II 3.8 Saloon in Masons Black with Regency Red hide. This vehicle has been refurbished to the highest standard and has a louvered bonnet, Coombes rear spats, 6 " chrome wire wheels with Radial tyres, Walnut veneer, modern J pattern Jaguar gearbox and power steering. Considerable history file. £34,950



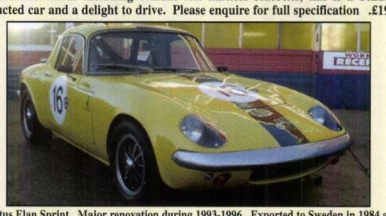
1997 AC Cobra RAM Recreation in Cobalt Blue with Cream hide piped Blue. 1997 built with 1977 registration documents with a Chevrolet 5.3 V8 engine (coupled to 5 speed gearbox) with Edelbrock manifolds and Holley carb and chrome air cleaner. Many interior extras including Willans full harness seatbelts, this is a beautifully constructed car and a delight to drive. Please enquire for full specification .£19,950



2001 Porsche Boxster 2.7 in Speed Yellow with Black interior. This car is in beautiful condition having covered only 23,000 miles. Fitted with Black hood, 17" Boxster S wheels, sound system, wind deflector, aluminium dials, aluminium gearshift and handbrake, embossed headrests and CD storage. One owner from new with full Porsche service history. £18,995



2002 Porsche 996 Carrera 4 Cabriolet in Arctic Silver with Black hide. This is a beautiful low mileage example having covered only 22,000 miles from new and is in perfect condition throughout. Fitted with Tiptronic transmission and Sat Nav and comes with full Porsche service history. £42,950

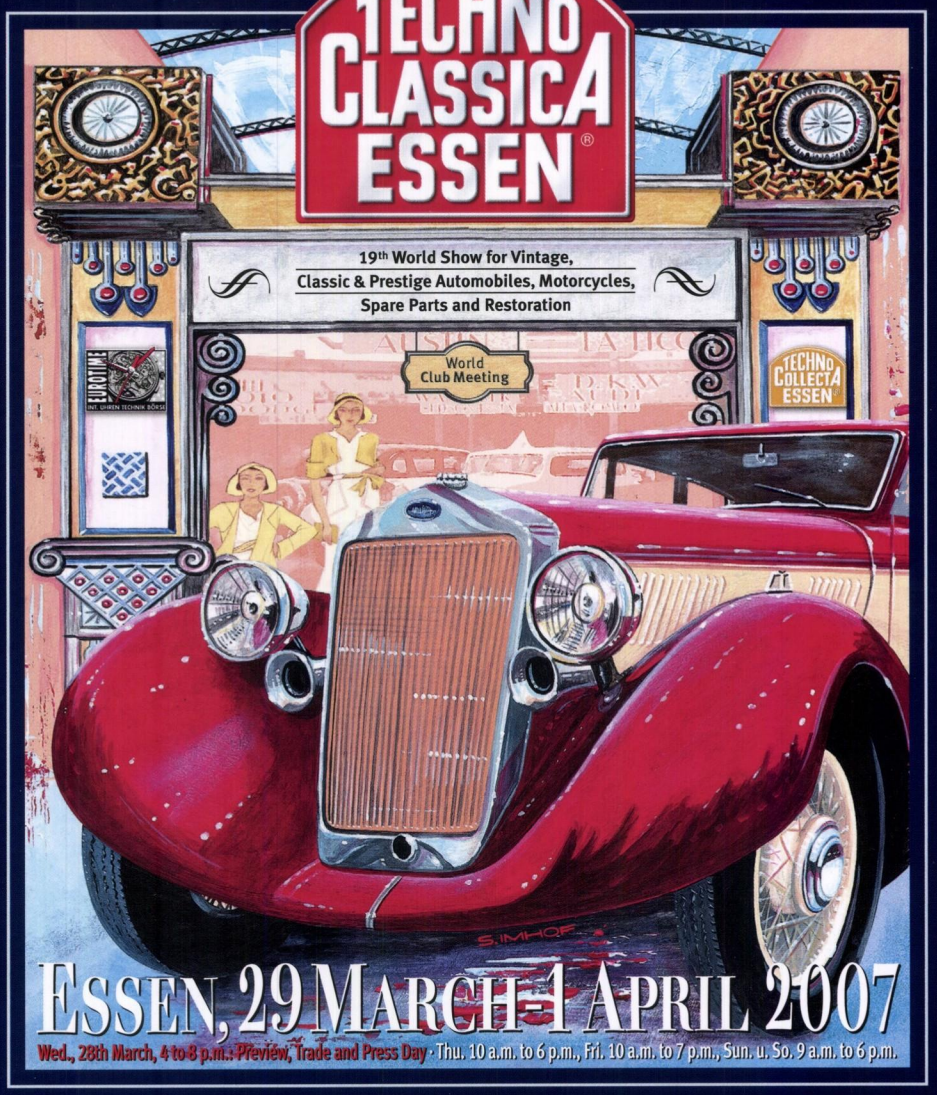


1971 Lotus Elan Sprint. Major renovation during 1993-1996. Exported to Sweden in 1984 and re-imported to England for sale to current owner in 2000. Successfully campaigned in the Midland Hill Climb Championship over the last 4 years. Eligible for Series such as Top Hat and Heritage. Road registered, MOT and road tax (exempt), 170bhp, special Arrow rods, Weber carburettors, new badges, new carpets, dashboard and roof lining. Many other items too numerous to mention. Superb condition throughout. Please telephone for full specification. £24,950

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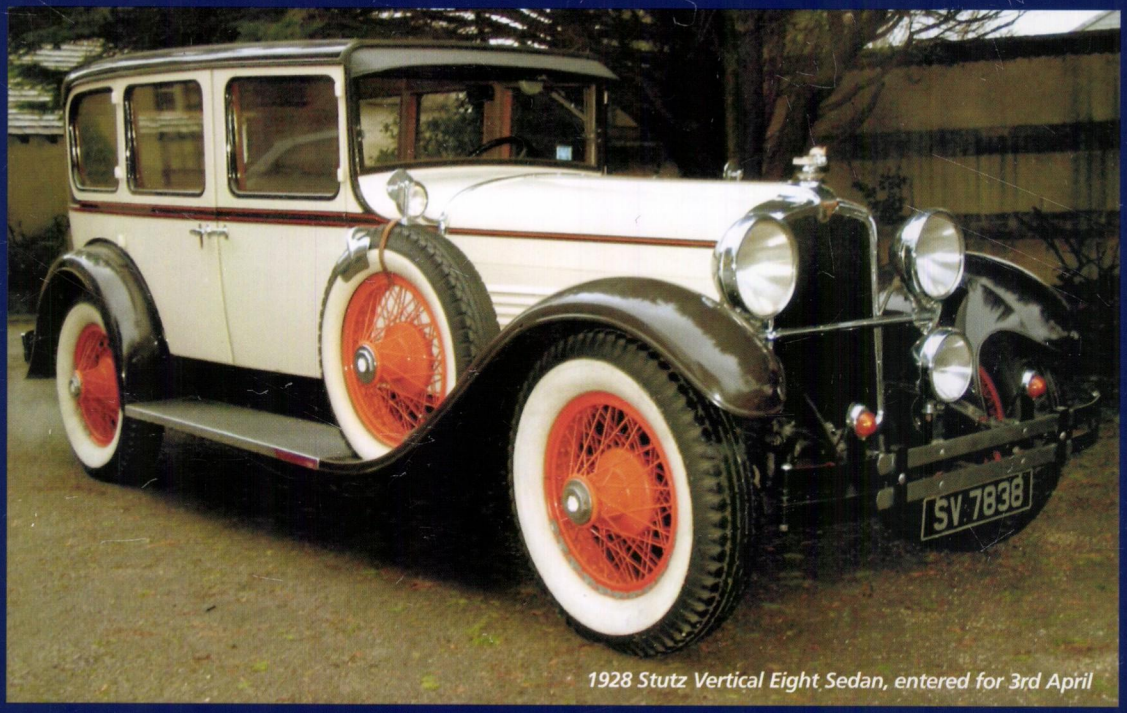
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