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Grand Touring cars of speed and presence, past and present. Illustrations: Paul Laguette



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Steven Lee/LAT



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Chris Owens

“I walked away from a very well-paid acting job to go racing in the WEC. Is that serious enough for you?”

PATRICK DEMPSEY



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Richard S. James

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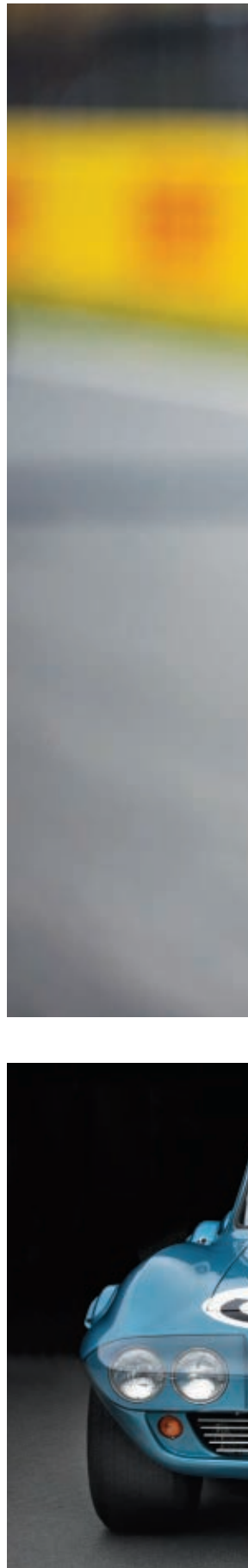
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Samo Vidic/Red Bull

He's chosen open-wheel over rallying, but Carlos Sainz Jr. has inherited his father's talent. (BELOW) JP Montoya's new old flavor. (BELOW LEFT) The Corvette of unfulfilled potential.



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Peter Hamodt

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Michael Levitt/LAT

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Ford

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24h LE MANS

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Ford's back! Four of its new GT supercars will race in GTE Pro in next year's 24 Hours, a half-century after Ford's first overall win in 1966 with the iconic GT40 (LEFT). Ganassi Racing will also field two cars in the TUDOR Championship.

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Outside the U.S. and Canada (949) 417-6700
Fax (949) 417-6116 **Website** www.racer.com

RACER (ISSN 1066-6060) is published eight times per year by Racer Media & Marketing, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Irvine, CA 92619, and at additional mailing offices.

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Postmaster send address changes to:
RACER
 P.O. Box 231
 Congers, NY 10920.
 Printed in USA

To subscribe call: (877) 425-4103
 Outside the U.S. and Canada: (845) 267-3047
 or e-mail racer@cambeywest.com
 or visit our Web site, www.racer.com

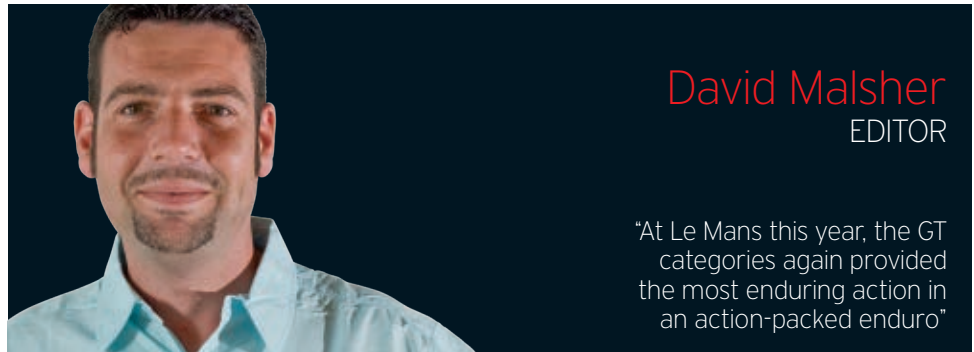
Subscriptions:
 Rates for one year in U.S. and possessions, \$49.95. Foreign rates on request.
 For address changes and adjustments, write to:
RACER
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 Congers, NY 10920.
 Allow 4-6 weeks for address changes and new subscriptions.
 Subscriber Help Line: (877) 425-4103

Manuscripts, photos and other material submitted must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope. *RACER* assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material.

RACER REPRINTS
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COLOR SEPS: QuadGraphics, Irvine, Calif.
 ELECTRONIC PRE-PRESS: QuadGraphics, Irvine, Calif.
 PRINTING: R.R. Donnelley, Pontiac, Ill.



David Malsher
 EDITOR

"At Le Mans this year, the GT categories again provided the most enduring action in an action-packed enduro"

This is always one of the the last editorial pages to go to press in each *RACER*, and we're sitting here the day after the 83rd running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans feeling pretty pleased with ourselves. Yet again the GT classes provided the most enduring action in an action-packed enduro, and several of the drivers we've featured in this GT-centric issue starred: Oliver Gavin won GTE Pro with Tommy Milner and Jordan Taylor in the Corvette Racing C7.R, while Pat Long and our new columnist Patrick Dempsey were second in GTE Am, sharing with Marco Seefried.

It's a pity we're not as prescient when it comes to picking lottery numbers...

Talking to race fans and *RACER* readers, many follow top-level sports car racing "mainly for the GT cars." While the Grand Touring machines don't have the outright speed of the prototypes, there's something about the concept of cars that are (theoretically) road-to-race-track that's captured imaginations for generations.

GTs also breed a marque loyalty that you just don't find in open-wheel racing, where fans get behind drivers rather than engine manufacturers. And while stock car and touring car aficionados still tend to support racers steering their favored brand, these



Richard Dooze/LAT

machines are usually confined to facsimiles of cars produced in the domestic market. GT racing, on the other hand, promotes exotica from all around the world, so just as a Corvette causes a stir in Europe, so a Lamborghini makes U.S. race fans weak at the knees. GTs create the most cosmopolitan and varied form of racing, and it's something that we love to celebrate in this issue.

Of course, we couldn't neglect the open-wheel world, where Juan Pablo Montoya has re-established himself as a major star with his win in the 99th Indy 500. But we also wanted to recognize one of those under-the-radar aces, too. Carlos Sainz Jr. has more than just a famous name: as the "other" Toro Rosso F1 driver, he's left everyone impressed. ■

editor@racer.com

CONTRIBUTOR



Reck Dooze/LAT

Oliver Gavin's fifth Le Mans class win puts him up with Derek Bell as the most successful Brit in the world's greatest enduro. He tells us what makes an elite GT racer.

STORYBOARD



Michael Levitt/LAT

Juan Pablo Montoya truly earned his second Indy 500 triumph after a showdown of epic proportions. We thank him and LAT USA's main man, Mike Levitt, for nailing *RACER*'s traditional morning-after photoshoot.

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Beth Paretta and Katherine Legge have both been pioneers for women in racing and are now giving back as well as charting new ground at Grace Autosport, which will take the first all-female team to Indy in 2016.



All the latest IndyCar news at **RACER.com**

REDEEMED BY THE SPECTACLE

After a controversial and worrisome Month of May, an exhilarating Indianapolis 500

> Rarely has the IndyCar fraternity faced concern, frustration, and even anger leading into an Indianapolis 500 like they did in 2015. This time the cause wasn't politics or technical disputes, but alarm over a spate of crashes and differing views on the appropriate response.

After Ed Carpenter became the third Chevrolet car to go upside down in a crash ahead of the first day of qualifying, IndyCar officials ordered major changes to the new speedway aero kits, required all cars to race in the same aero trim they used in qualifying - effectively eliminating



"WHAT REALLY MATTERS IS THE LAST 15 LAPS AND THAT WAS FUN AND SOME DAMN GOOD RACING"
JUAN PABLO MONTOYA

low-drag qualifying setups - and dropped the planned turbo boost for qualifying. Although qualifying was largely neutered as a result, it was thankfully incident-free - but then came James Hinchcliffe's brutal 125-g crash the following day (see separate story).

If all this created a sense of foreboding, the race relieved it with a safe (but for



David Letterman's retirement from late-night TV will provide more time for hobbies like his involvement with Bobby Rahal's IndyCar team, but it's lost the sport an invaluable portal to the prime-time entertainment world.



After the angst leading up to race day, the stars of Indy again demonstrated the confluence of speed, bravery and skill unique to open-wheel oval racing.

F. Pierce Williams/LAT

"DROUGHT" BUSTED

Roger Penske's road to 16 Indy 500 wins came six years after his last victory as a car owner. Outside his split-induced lost years, it was Penske's longest Indy winless streak since #2.

YEAR DRIVER

1 1972 Mark Donohue



LAT archive

- 2 1979 Rick Mears
- 3 1981 Bobby Unser
- 4 1984 Rick Mears
- 5 1985 Danny Sullivan
- 6 1987 Al Unser
- 7 1988 Rick Mears
- 8 1991 Rick Mears
- 9 1993 Emerson Fittipaldi
- 10 1994 Al Unser Jr.
- 11 2001 Helio Castroneves
- 12 2002 Helio Castroneves
- 13 2003 Gil de Ferran
- 14 2006 Sam Hornish Jr.
- 15 2009 Helio Castroneves
- 16 2015 Juan Pablo Montoya

STATE OF FLUX

The arrival of the aero kit era continued the recent trend of pass-happy action at Indy, but remained a far cry from 2013's almost-too-easy record number of passes for the lead.

LEAD CHANGES YEAR

68	2013
35	2015
34	2012 & 2014
29	1960
28	1923

minor injuries to a couple of Dale Coyne Racing crewmen in a pit lane collision) and spectacular sprint to the finish. After Juan Montoya came out on top in his late-race duel with Penske teammate Will Power, he made clear that whatever the specs, the core challenge of Indy remains.

"What really matters is the last 15 laps and that was fun and some damn good racing," said Montoya, whose second time drinking the milk came 15 years after his first, an Indy record. "I think we have a lot of respect for each other and we understand the risk."



Ryan Briscoe (pictured) and Conor Daly pinch-hit strongly at SPM while Hinch focused on recovery.

F. Pierce Williams/LAT

THE LUCKIEST VICTIM

After a cruel blow, the stars align to save Hinchcliffe

> Sometimes our greatest blessings are beyond our awareness. So it was for James Hinchcliffe (INSET) when a huge crash in practice inflicted devastating leg injuries.

Although he remembers nothing of it, Hinchcliffe was in the right hands. From the rapid response of IndyCar's Holmatro Safety Team, to the care led by Dr. Timothy Pohlman at Methodist Hospital, everything was

synchronized perfectly and, for the first time since Alex Zanardi in 2001, a driver's life was saved on the track.

"When I was still on a ventilator, communicating by pen and paper, one of my first questions was: 'When can I drive again?'" he said.

That won't happen before the end of the ICS season, but he was given medical clearance to travel to his home race in Toronto, less than four weeks after his shunt.



Ernie Mischel/LAT



Rear wheel guard blockers targeted the thorny issue of rearward lift.

Chris Jones/MS/IndyCar Photo

ROUNDING INTO SHAPE?

> After a fitful start at Indianapolis, IndyCar made further mods to its aero kits for Texas. Closure panels to the rear wheel guards aimed to reduce rearward lift.

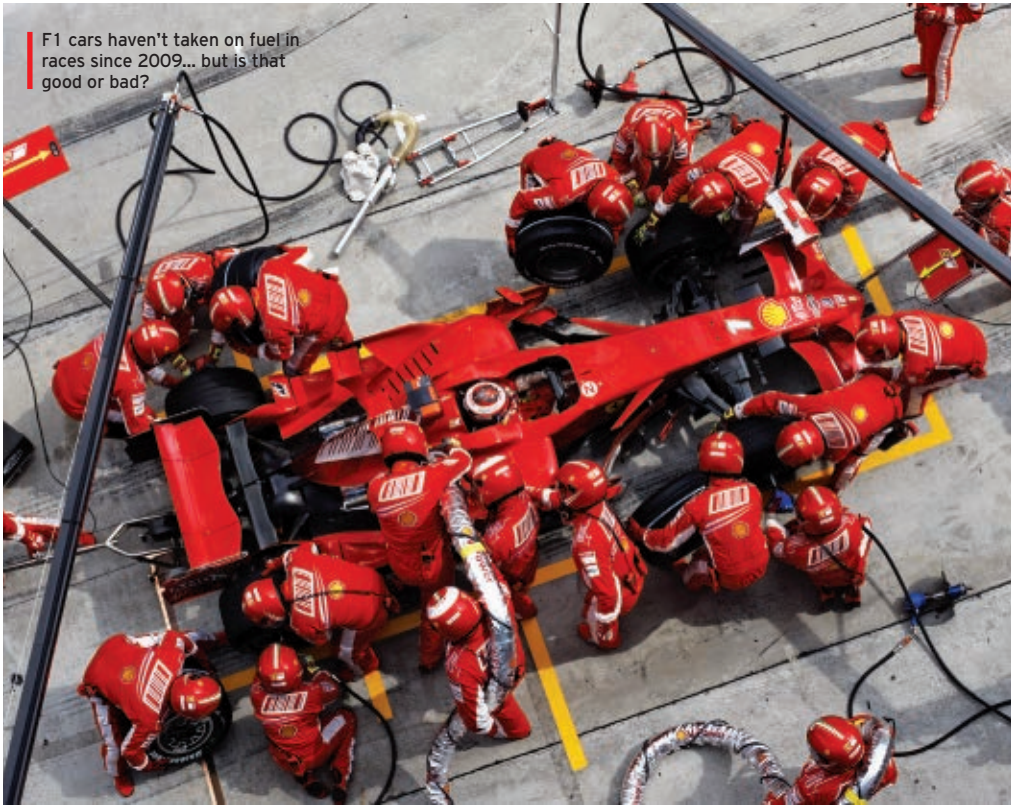
An unusually wide range of downforce level choices in the race produced an equally wide

disparity in performance, with the Ganassi team, led by Scott Dixon, getting it right and putting a whipping on the field. The race had just one caution (for debris), suggesting that the calibrations are reaching the sweet spot - if at the price of race-by-race tweaking.



Alastair Skelley/LAT

Snapping at his engineers that he was being made to "look like an amateur" during the Canadian GP when asked to save fuel furthered speculation about mercurial Spaniard Fernando Alonso's patience with McLaren-Honda...



F1 cars haven't taken on fuel in races since 2009... but is that good or bad?

Steven Tee/LAT



Steven Tee/LAT

THE NEXT BEST THING TO REAL COMPETITION

> Much of the push to change F1's status quo stems from the fact rival teams appear further away than ever from issuing a consistent challenge to Mercedes-Benz. Outside of Sebastian Vettel's upset win for Ferrari in Malaysia, Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg have had it all their own way this year. But in the best tradition of F1 melodrama, the team has still found ways of keeping things interesting.

Mercedes' pit stop strategy had helped Vettel's cause in Malaysia, and the Silver Arrows brain trust then really dropped the ball in Monaco via an ill-timed pit stop that handed an easy win for Hamilton to Rosberg (ABOVE). Yet "disaster" for Hamilton still meant a third place, and he rebounded with a flawless performance in Canada to head home Rosberg again as Ferrari's mooted resurgence seemed to ebb.

If Mercedes now has its mulligans out of the way, it looks to be a long second half for the rest of the grid.



Alastair Skelley/LAT

THE LOST BOYS

A year on from his breakthrough win in Canada, Daniel Ricciardo finished a lapped 13th for Red Bull. "I don't think we really know what we need right now or where to find it," he admitted.

TANKS FOR THE MEMORIES?

Refueling's the key to spicing up F1...or not, or maybe

> Formula 1's big, loud, dysfunctional family has a hard time agreeing on anything, so it's hardly a surprise that the ongoing efforts of F1's Strategy Group - tasked with generating ideas for how to spice up the increasingly predictable races - have been largely stalemated.

Among the changes bandied about for 2017 was a return to refueling, banned since '09. Several prominent drivers, including Fernando Alonso, spoke up in favor of the idea but, at a meeting ahead

chairman Sergio Marchionne to urge that refueling remain on the table (sidebar).

The circular debate was another example of the disputes over rules that have kept the F1 paddock deeply divided - and increasingly frustrated.

"Every team has its own agenda and is going to fight its own corner," lamented Red Bull team principal Christian Horner. Bernie [Ecclestone] and Jean [Todt, FIA president] need to get together and say, 'This is what we want the product to be, this is how it needs to be governed,' and then give us the entry form and see if we want to enter or not."

Ecclestone, F1's chief executive, indicated he too was wearying of the constant wrangling.

"We should stop mucking around and asking for opinions," Ecclestone said. "The problem is, we are running something that is too democratic. At last month's Strategy Group meeting nothing was decided - not even the date of the next meeting!"



Alastair Skelley/LAT

MARCHIONNE PRIMES THE PUMP

A straight yes or no on F1 refueling is too simplistic, argues Ferrari boss Sergio Marchionne. "You have to find out the impact of the combination of refueling, tire changes and what a variety of other changes are going to have," he insisted. "Singularly, it may not be the answer, but combined with other things it might be, so I am totally open."

"BERNIE AND JEAN NEED TO GET TOGETHER AND SAY, 'THIS IS WHAT WE WANT THE PRODUCT TO BE'"

CHRISTIAN HORNER

of the Canadian GP, team managers were unanimously opposed. They cited safety and cost concerns, but also pointed to a study that showed overtaking actually increased in 2010 following the ban on refueling. The whole idea then seemed set to disappear...only for Ferrari's

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Hollywood star Patrick Dempsey has brought endurance racing to the public consciousness, but he walks the walk, too, as proven by his second in GTE-Am at Le Mans. He's also joined *RACER*, and his first column starts on page 42.

Porsche's 919 Hybrids were super-fast and, in the No. 19 car's case, its drivers were also flawless.



BREAKING NEWS

17-YEAR WAIT FOR A 17TH WIN

Porsche back on Le Mans form and beating Audi in a multi-car duel



A NEW NICHE FOR NICO?
Nico Hulkenberg became the first active F1 driver to win Le Mans since Britain's Johnny Herbert in 1991. The Hulk and Earl Bamber were also the first Le Mans virgins to win since Laurent Aiello in '98, also in a Porsche.

> In 2014, the Porsche 919 Hybrids didn't look quite fast enough to take on Audi and Toyota at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Ultimately, they didn't prove reliable, either. Just 12 months later, the Weissach marque wasn't just the LMP1-H pacesetter at the enduro classic, it also dismissed the questions from so-called experts over its reliability. Porsche's 1-2-3 on the grid was converted into 1-2-5 on race day, and it was a couple of driving errors, not car fatigue, that settled the order.

Nick Tandy and Earl Bamber from Porsche's GT roster and Force India Formula 1 driver Nico Hulkenberg were error-free, but also relentlessly fast in the No. 19 car, especially at night. So when Brendon Hartley incurred a stop-go penalty in 919 No. 17 for a yellow-flag infringement, and Romain Dumas and Neel Jani each bounced the pole-sitting No. 18 car off a tire wall at Mulsanne corner, their chances of staying with the flying 18 were gone. Meanwhile, all three Audi R18 e-tron

quattros needed unscheduled pitstops, the car of three-time Le Mans-winning combo Andre Lotterer/Marcel Fassler/Benoit Treliuyer being last to falter, first with loose bodywork and then requiring a late oil top-up. While Audi weren't flawless enough, last year's Le Mans pacesetters Toyota were nowhere near fast enough. The TS040 HYBRIDS were six seconds per lap slower in qualifying, and despite no mechanical difficulties, the lead example finished sixth, a full eight laps behind the leader.



CORVETTE'S TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

> First the sentence, then the reprieve. When Jan Magnussen had his Corvette C7.R's throttle stick open through the Porsche Curves during qualifying for the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the damage from the subsequent crash was sufficient for Corvette Racing to withdraw the entry. This left the lone C7.R of Tommy Milner, Jordan Taylor and veteran ace Oliver Gavin to carry American pride against its Aston Martin, Ferrari and Porsche rivals in the GTE-Pro class. And the fairytale ending saw 'Vette victorious at Le Mans

for the first time since 2011. The last of its opposition to hit mechanical strife, the Ferrari 458 of Giancarlo Fisichella, Toni Vilander and Gianmaria Bruni, faltered with gearbox issues while leading the Corvette by just 10 seconds with two hours to go. In GTE-Am, SMP Racing's Ferrari won, but there were more reasons for American pride, as Pat Long and Marco Seefried co-drove Patrick Dempsey's Porsche 911 to second place, while U.S.-based Scuderia Corsa finished third with its lineup of Bill Sweedler, Townsend Bell and Jeff Segal.



Oliver Gavin's first Le Mans GT class win came in 2002, his first LM24 with Corvette Racing. His fourth came in '06, his fifth (finally!) in 2015.



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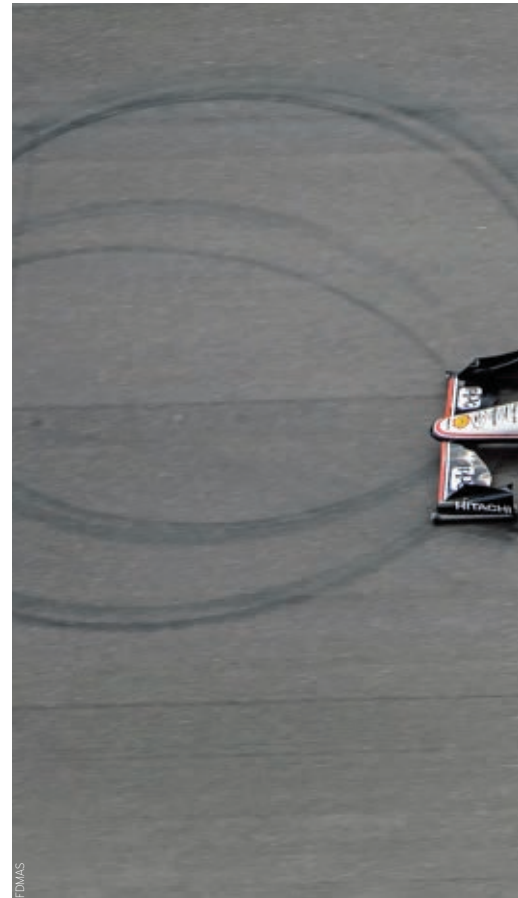
A strange blend of edginess but also confidence has long been part of Juan Pablo Montoya's personality, in and out of the car. And the results continue to speak for themselves.

TWO FOR JUAN



Fifteen years between Indy 500 wins, there are notable changes in Juan Pablo Montoya, but the shimmering talent remains as full of skills and thrills as ever.

| **WORDS** David Malsher
| **PORTRAITS** Michael Levitt/LAT



EDWARDS

Juan Pablo Montoya's carefully crafted facade of insouciance is cracking more and more often these days. As he crossed the line to win the 99th Indianapolis 500 in front of 250,000 cheering fans, an onboard camera showed him pumping his right arm in a manner so exuberant that it looked like the footage had been momentarily speeded up. He was once more the enthusiastic win-and-grin kid beating his rivals in a Formula Vauxhall race at a dank Silverstone, 20 years ago.



A broken right-rear wheel guard (LEFT) could have changed the course of the race for Montoya, but actually set the stage for an epic comeback drive. (RIGHT) "The Captain" watches Team Penske's 16th Indy 500 win unfold.

the fore, it was like he'd never been away. There was calmness after an assault from Simona De Silvestro that broke the right-rear wheel guard off his car during an early caution. There was the ability to pinpoint what changes his car needed for each stage of the race as track and traffic conditions fluctuated, hence the constant wing adjustments during pit stops. There was the gladiatorial skill in wheel-to-wheel combat with the best drivers in the series. And there was that simple indomitability.

“Winning this race is always huge, but when you have to fight and come out on top, it’s extra special”

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA

Five years on from then, when Montoya took his first Indy 500 win (see page 26), he was reigning CART Indy car series champ, had a 2001 Formula 1 contract in his pocket, and could do no wrong. The 24-year-old who dominated at IMS in 2000 could conquer anything and anyone, and his post-race demeanor reflected that. Indy was a milestone, but also a stepping stone.

It's very different now, 15 years later,

and again it showed. In the afterglow of his latest "500" triumph, Montoya showed exhilaration, delight, a hint of relief - and maybe even a degree of wonder at how total his Indy car rebirth has been. It's one thing to say in Oct. 2013 that you're sure you can still get the job done at this level and then hear echoes of similar confidence from your new employer, Roger Penske. It's a whole different deal to go out and prove it to yourself and the watching, waiting, anticipating world.

But that is precisely what Montoya has done. Winning Pocono last year was the warm-up; victory at St. Petersburg this year was a somewhat lucky bonus; but winning the 2015 Indy 500 brought so many of JPM's skills and in-built qualities to

WORTH THE WAIT

A.J. Foyt held the previous record for gaps between Indy 500 wins, waiting 10 years before becoming the first four-time winner in 1977 (BELOW). But Montoya's second came in only his third start...





TO BE EXPECTED

Since the Dallara DW12's arrival, Indy has produced thrilling fights like this in the closing stages. The aero kits added to that, with Montoya, Will Power and Scott Dixon all having different strengths and weaknesses.

"Winning this race is always huge," growls Montoya the following morning, his voice shredded from yelling ever since he crossed the yard of bricks for the 200th and final time the day before. "But when you fight and come out on top after a big battle like we had with Will [Power, his Team Penske teammate] and Scott [Dixon of Chip Ganassi Racing], it's extra special.

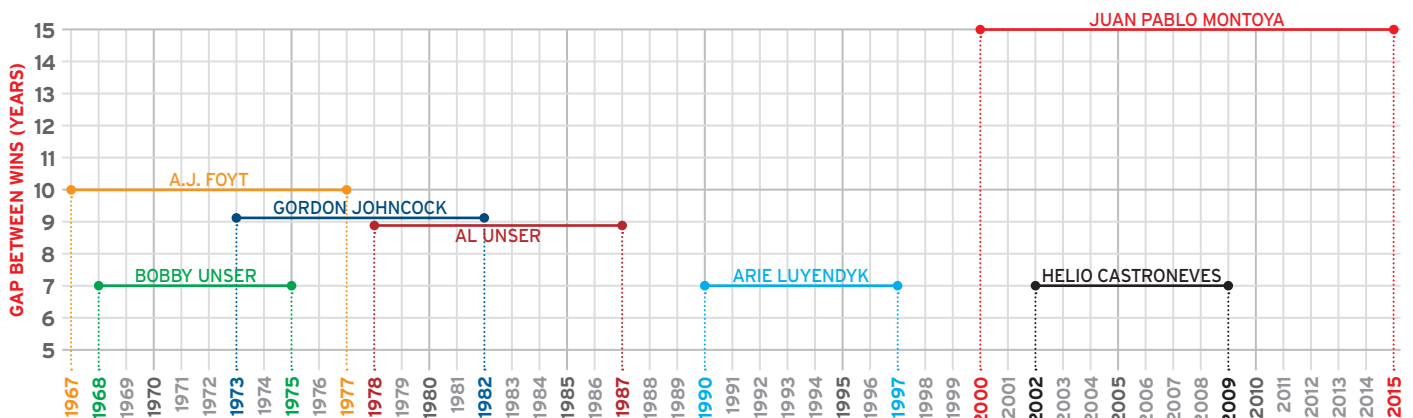
"I think our cars were evenly matched, so it was all about making the right moves...and you never know which are



Ernie Mascia/LAT

the right moves until you make them, you know? You get to a point where you *have* to make a move, but you don't know if it's the right or wrong one until you do it. But you've got to go for it. No choice."

That's Juan in Modest Montoya Mode. Racing champions like him know when to charge and when to hold back, and JPM has a strong instinct for both. Qualifying may have resulted in a disappointing 15th on the grid, compared with second, third and fifth for teammates Power, >





Simon Pagenaud and Helio Castroneves, but there wasn't a hint of panic from the Colombian, according to Penske Racing president Tim Cindric.

"Juan was disappointed obviously," he says, "but he knew it wasn't down to him. We missed the balance and the gearing on that car, but he's been around long enough to know that it's a 500-mile race, and he knew he had a strong racecar."

From the purely objective spectator viewpoint, that guaranteed us a battle to

"I'd attribute a lot of our consistency on ovals to Juan. He showed us all what was possible"

TIM CINDRIC

rely on May 24, 2015. And, as expected, Montoya executed in style. He fought like a warrior, but kept his head like a general.

He needed to. Juan recalls: "I thought my day was over when I saw in my mirror the part hanging off my car after Simona hit me. I said, 'That's it, we're going to go a lap down. All over.' So I was grateful that she hit me hard enough to cause debris on the track which delayed the restart.



The team was able to change the whole rear assembly and it was fine."

Fine, yes, but still needing work.

"Yeah, we made a lot of changes at every pit stop," he says. "I think the last stop was the only one for just tires and fuel. It's all based on feel, not experience of this track. I've only done this race three times, remember. But the track was so hot, I just felt we needed more downforce."

Feel. It's the crucial word here, and is a big reason why Montoya has long been one of racing's elite. It's partly why he started shining in the Verizon IndyCar Series so soon after his return to this form of racing. It's why the sight of him at full flight on any track is as thrilling as

ever. But he's got other high cards to play beyond pace and feel and determination. Like sheer hard work.

"Juan puts on this act of not caring, but he does his homework," says Power. "He knows everything about the car before he reaches the track, and knows what he wants from it when he gets there."

And what Montoya wants is helpful in pushing Team Penske forward, as team members have acknowledged.

"Even last season, I'd attribute a lot of our performance consistency on ovals to Juan," says Cindric. "He showed us all what was possible on ovals, how to drive through certain characteristics of the car. It gave our other guys confidence that they could do it too. Juan's worst actual finish on an oval [he crashed out at Iowa] was fifth. That tells you a lot about his abilities, because ovals had been our team's weakness over recent seasons."

Montoya's race engineer Brian Campe who, like Montoya, arrived at Team Penske from NASCAR in the fall of 2013, agrees. He adds: "Right away, I was impressed by Juan's prowess on an oval in an open-wheel car. Watching him from afar, shining on the few road courses in NASCAR and recalling how good he was in Formula 1, I'd kind of forgotten how >

(ABOVE LEFT) Even on the penultimate restart, it was very obvious who the final shootout would be between. Power, JPM and Dixon leave the rest behind as Stefano Coletti, Jack Hawksworth and Sebastian Saavedra crash out behind.



A WINNER, A LOSER

As Marco Andretti once said, nowhere does finishing second matter less than at the Indy 500. Will Power concurs after losing to Montoya by 0.1046sec. He says, "It's *sooo* aggravating, I'd rather finish fifth. Well, maybe not, but runner-up at Indy totally sucks."



Winner's milk - a continuous tradition at Indy since 1956, but actually started in 1933 by three-time winner Louis Meyer. And out of interest, Montoya chose whole milk (LEFT).

PENSKÉ BACK TO ITS BEST

ROGER'S SWEET SIXTEEN

Between 2009, when Helio Castroneves scored his third Indy win and Team Penske's 15th, and this year's triumph for Juan Pablo Montoya, team owner Roger Penske has had a torrid time at the Brickyard. Some years, the Penske cars just didn't look fast enough, and other times it seemed like the pressure of trying to earn the Captain his next "500" triumph was too much to bear for the drivers, who'd earn drive-through penalties, or the pit crews, who'd send cars out with loose wheels or with a fuel hose still jammed in the car.

This year, despite the addition of a fourth car over the 2014/'15 off-season, there appeared to be no dilution of talent in the pit crews. Roger's team looked '80s/'90s vintage - utterly formidable - and all four cars seemed fast enough to win. Indeed, the newest driver to the team, Simon Pagenaud, had probably the strongest car in traffic, able to sit behind other cars and save fuel. Only a late skirmish in the pack that broke his front wing prevented him from being part of the shootout at the end.

As for Montoya's crew, they not only performed a flawless change of rear end after his early assault by Simona De Silvestro, they also kept their heads when he overshot his pit marks. And that coolness under pressure was a hallmark of Team Penske at Indy in 2015. Roger's first Indy winner in 1972, Mark Donohue, would undoubtedly have approved.



Power's pit crew executed flawlessly, often sending him out having gained at least one spot over their competitors.



FRANCHITTI-STYLE
 Montoya's second Indy win bore a strong resemblance to the final "500" win of old rival Dario Franchitti in 2012: Qualify mid-grid, drop to the back through someone else's error, slice through the pack, then prevail in a late-race duel with a teammate.

good he was on ovals. And I think he arrived in IndyCar with a fresh perspective that was helpful to Penske as a whole."

The total transparency between drivers, as enforced by Penske protocol, has even increased JPM's appreciation of the team aspect of the sport and his gratitude for the startling chance he received after being cut loose from Chip Ganassi's NASCAR team. While in the one breath Juan says, "I race for me, not for what others think of me," in the very next



Michael Levitz/AT

"I told Roger Penske, 'Thanks for delivering me, thanks for letting me show people I could still do it'"

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA

sentence he acknowledges that bringing Roger Penske his 16th Indy 500 win after a six-year wait was very special.

"I know how much it means to him, and I feel I'm part of something bigger at Penske," he says. "I'd have been disappointed for me if Will had won, but it would still have been a win for Team Penske and for Roger. That's how I feel. So I told Roger yesterday, 'Thanks for delivering me, thanks for

letting me show people I could still do it."

And then some. Obviously, Indy is an entity on its own, but no less impressive in 2015 was the fact that at the halfway point in the IndyCar Series season, JPM was at the top of the points standings.

"He's coming to each race with the full package," agrees Cindric. "His biggest weakness last year was qualifying on the road and street courses, or looking after the red [softer compound] tires in races. But he'd make it through the field and he learned on the job. This year, the biggest change has been his starting positions."

Campe says: "Last winter, Juan came to North Carolina for a few days and we did nothing but look at our weaknesses from 2014. We went through data from

ourselves and the other [Penske] drivers. We watched video of them, compared our setups. Juan's one of those guys who, if you set him a task, it happens! One of the hardest working drivers I've ever seen."

So that's two trusted sources revealing Montoya's "don't give a crap" persona is mainly a charade. Yet, there are times when its genuine...and appreciated.

"After the bad quali run at Indy, I was pretty down on myself," admits Campe, "but Juan was reassuring. He said, 'It's OK, I don't care where I qualify here; I can run up front.' He doesn't get mad in those circumstances; he just wants to move on and figure out how we deal with it. To me, that's the voice of experience.

"It's the same thing with knowing when to take his chances and when not to. From the cockpit, he reads a race a lot better than most drivers and sees the big picture."

On Memorial Day Weekend, Montoya saw the biggest picture in racing, stole the scene, and appreciated it in a manner that he hadn't done a decade and a half earlier. Expect a similar reaction should he go on to add the IndyCar Series title in August. Even one of the sport's greatest talents takes nothing for granted these days, and of course that's precisely why he remains at the very top of his game. ■

(CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) Montoya reacquaints himself with an old friend; the best kind of selfie in racing; "Thank you boss!"; genuine exuberance, both in and out of the car.



One more time for *RACER*, please... It's the morning after his second Indy 500 triumph, and Juan Pablo Montoya is happy to pose with the winner's milk and wreath again for our photographer, Michael Levitt.

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

When Juan Pablo Montoya first won Indy, he was as welcome as a fox in a chicken coop.

WORDS Robin Miller
MAIN IMAGE Phil Abbott/LAT

The 2000 Indianapolis 500 was perceived, at least in Gasoline Alley and by the Indy Racing League faithful, as a battle of good vs. evil. The rank and file of Tony George's little guys against the big, bad CART champions of Target Chip Ganassi Racing.

Since "The Split" in 1996, there really hadn't been any polarizing force in the Indianapolis 500, because Team Penske wasn't around and half the IRL field looked like Goodwill should be their sponsor.

For better or worse - and that was an easy call judging by the loss of ratings, crowds,

sponsors and prestige - the Indy 500 had become more of a club race than "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing." Sure, it featured talent like Tony Stewart, Arie Luyendyk and Kenny Brack, and deserving starters like Steve Kinser, Mark Dismore, Billy Boat, Donnie Beechler and Jack Hewitt. But it lacked a plot, if not a reason to care, and it was badly missing someone who race fans could either pull for or root against.

Enter Juan Pablo Montoya...

The 24-year-old Colombian was the antithesis of what had transpired at >





LAT archive

RAY REIGNED IN QUALIFYING...

Montoya flanked by IRL stalwarts, polesitter Greg Ray (1) and Eliseo Salazar. The CART "intruder" was saving his very best for race day...



"Later, guys...". Such was the ease with which he lapped IMS, Montoya begged the Ganassi team to alter his setup to make the car faster.

THEN AND NOW: 2015 vs. 2000

When Juan Pablo Montoya says his second win was tougher, he isn't lying. In 2000, he was *the* alpha dog. A decade and a half later, he had to prove himself as the most rabid among the howling pack.

2015		2000
Juan Pablo Montoya	WINNER	Juan Pablo Montoya
0.1046sec	MARGIN OF VICTORY	7.194sec
37 between 10 drivers	LEAD CHANGES	6 between 4 drivers
161.341 mph	AVG. RACE SPEED	167.607mph
6 for 47 laps	CAUTIONS	7 for 39 laps
226.712mph (Charlie Kimball)	FASTEST RACE LAP	218.494mph (Buddy Lazier)
4 times for 9 laps	LAPS LED BY MONTOYA	3 times for 167 laps
\$2,449,055	MONTOYA'S WINNINGS	\$1,235,690
226.760mph (Scott Dixon)	POLE SPEED	223.471 mph (Greg Ray)



PHIL ABBOTT/LAT



READY FOR F1: THE BRICKYARD GETS A FACELIFT

After an eight-year absence from U.S. shores, Formula 1 was to make its return at the most prestigious track of all in 2000, and the signs of change at IMS were clear by Indy 500 time. The old scoring tower had been replaced by a 10-story "pagoda" (BELOW), F1-style garages arrived in place of the old Tower Terrace section, and many of those garages were used as hospitality suites during the Month of May. To improve the fan experience, bleachers were installed on top of the garages, with a view of pit lane, while a new press center also had an authoritative view of pit lane.



Indianapolis during the 1990s. He didn't come from dirt tracks or sprint cars, and had no knowledge of Troy Ruttman, Bob Sweikert or Jimmy Bryan. He couldn't tell his "Back Home Again in Indiana" from his Tom Carnegie. Simply, he was a foreign road racing champion being groomed for Formula 1, and Indy was never on his radar.

But, after winning the 1999 CART title as a rookie with a dazzling display of car control and *cajones*, Montoya and teammate Jimmy Vasser were summoned by Ganassi and issued their orders: They were to race in the following year's Indy 500. No CART team had ventured to 16th & Georgetown since the open-wheel war broke out in '96, so this was definitely crossing into enemy territory.

On his way to the 1996 CART title, Vasser had won the U.S. 500 (CART's once and done attempt to run a "spoiler" race at Michigan International Speedway on the same day as the Indy 500) and had made a controversial statement in victory lane - prompting an unpopular refrain all through the Month of May.

"People constantly yelled at me, 'Who needs milk?'" he recalls with a grin. "We certainly didn't feel welcome."

Ganassi would be running different cars with decreased horsepower from its CART engine, and 1998 Indy 500 winner Eddie Cheever had issued the challenge that he'd like to see what would happen if any CART guys would come run with "our cars, our engines and our style of racing."

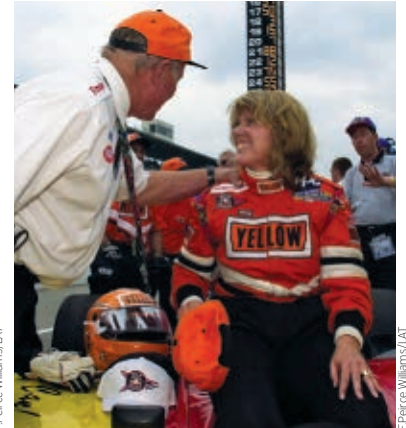
Well, the early indicator that JPM



Also in 2000 (from TOP) - Return of Al Unser Jr., last top 10 for two-time runner-up Scott Goodyear, and debut of future winner Sam Hornish Jr.

ANOTHER MILESTONE IN 2000

The 84th Indy 500 was the first time two women had started the race - Sarah Fisher (LEFT, car 15) made her debut, and Lyn St. James (BELOW) started for the seventh and final time. Unfortunately, they collided just before half-distance.



might not be intimidated by Indy's constant speed and the new equipment came in his first test. He was wide open around the Speedway in a couple of laps. "No power, easy flat. Hell, my mom could drive this car," he replied when asked about his initial laps at The Mecca.

That sounded beyond cocky, if not downright disrespectful to most IMS railbirds. But if you knew Montoya, you knew he was just being his blunt, honest self. It was 300hp less than his steady ride and packed plenty of downforce. It was easy for a man of his abilities, but it was hard for a lot of people to accept.

Two-time Indy winner Al Unser Jr. said they would take Montoya out of the Speedway in a body bag if he didn't show proper respect, which prompted a shrug of the shoulders from JPM and a quip that the only time he expected to see Unser was lapping him.

The combative spark that had been missing from qualifying since '95, when Team Penske inexplicably missed the show, returned full bore in 2000. Montoya held the pole position until late in the afternoon, when Greg Ray knocked him off it. That set off an impromptu celebration of IRL drivers high-fiving Ray because he'd claimed the first scalp in this war within the race.

"They cheered almost as loud when we lost in the first round of the pit-stop contest on Carb Day," says JPM's then-engineer Bill Pappas.

For the traditional front-row photo the day after Pole Day, Ray was an hour late >



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RAY OF HOPE

Dallas-born Greg Ray was the 1999 IRL champion, but was left forever frustrated at the Brickyard. As well as his pole in 2000, he started from the front row three other times, yet his best finish in the "500" was eighth in 2003.



(LEFT) Chip Ganassi's "raid" on America's biggest open-wheel race started a trend of CART teams trying to beat IRL at Indy. (FAR LEFT) Montoya and Ganassi teammate Jimmy Vasser.

and apologized to Montoya.

"He said, 'Sorry to hold you guys up,' and Juan shot back that, 'It would be the last time you'll hold me up because you won't see me again,'" recalls Ganassi team manager Mike Hull.

The race started with Ray leading the first 26 laps, before Montoya muscled past in a nifty move splitting a couple of lapped cars. And that was it - game, set and match as he led 167 of the remaining 173 laps and stretched his lead to 13 seconds while constantly begging his team to take some push off his car so he could run faster.

Buddy Lazier closed to within a few car lengths, before JPM vanished again in traffic and then had a little fun at his Ganassi team's expense. "Juan called in frantically and said the water temperature was pegged," says Hull, grinning at the memory of Ganassi's expression. "Then he radioed back and said, 'Just kidding...'"

The "rookie" took the checkered flag seven seconds in front of Lazier and then managed a big smile in Victory Lane. But he hadn't gone crazy in the cockpit or on the

radio during the slow-down lap. Frankly, he didn't act all that excited - it was almost like he'd expected to win.

"He'd already visualized winning the race," says Hull. "I think people underestimated how mentally strong Juan was at that age; he was like a human simulator."

Four-time Indy winner Rick Mears, spotting for Jason Leffler that day, called JPM's performance flawless, while the Indy 500's biggest name paid a huge tribute afterwards. "That Monterier is a helluva talent," said A.J. Foyt.

So that was it. Montoya headed back to the CART wars in Milwaukee, while the IRL licked its wounds and went to Texas without the newly-crowned Indy winner to promote.

Some 15 years after that stunning stomping of the IRL, JPM was back in Victory Lane at the Speedway following a spirited duel with teammate Will Power. It was obvious from his emotional cool-off lap that this one meant more.

"And it was a lot tougher than the first one," he exclaimed. ■



BACK AT THE DAY JOB...

FORMULA 1 BECKONS

Juan Pablo Montoya's 1999 CART Indy car championship had been Chip Ganassi Racing's fourth in a row with the Reynard-Honda package, and he'd scored seven wins, seven poles and led 954 laps. None of his rivals led much more than one-third that number. But for 2000, Chip switched to Lola chassis and Toyota engines, and while Montoya again dominated in terms of pace - seven poles and 820 laps led - he finished only eight of the 20 races. That limited him to ninth in the CART points table with just three wins (not including the IRL-sanctioned Indy victory).

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, Formula 1 team owner Frank Williams was already convinced that Montoya was the guy to have on board to partner Ralf Schumacher in 2001. In fact, it was during Juan's winning weekend at the Brickyard that the Sir Frank announced he'd signed the Colombian to replace Jenson Button the following year. JPM had caused an even bigger stir in CART Indy cars than his predecessor, Alex Zanardi, who'd struggled to come to terms with the demands of F1 in his one-year stay at the Williams team in '99. Montoya, who as recently as 1998 had conquered F3000, would have less to adapt to.

And so it proved. Over the next five years, Montoya proved the only guy who'd regularly take the fight to Michael Schumacher and Kimi Raikkonen.



By December 2000, Montoya was back in Europe and learning the finer points of driving the Williams-BMW Formula 1 car.



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May 24, 2015: It's the final few minutes before the start of the 99th Indianapolis 500. Excitement is building and so is data usage as thousands of race fans call, text and share on social media.



Michael Levitzki

HIGH-SPEED CONNECTION

Verizon's leading-edge technology and skilled engineering teams ensured that tens of thousands of race fans at the 99th running of the Indianapolis 500 could call, text and share the moment on social media.

Ever been to a race track for a major event and tried to use your cell phone, only to find it has no signal? So much for posting that image of you with your favorite driver to your Facebook page, or calling your buddies to let them hear the roar of engines at the start and make them jealous they're missing out.

Today, if you're a Verizon customer at a Verizon IndyCar Series race, that problem is fast becoming a thing of the past. Since it became the series' title partner in 2014, Verizon has steadily improved its 4G LTE signal at all IndyCar events. In fact, for the 99th running of the Indianapolis 500, May 24, Verizon provided its customers with the largest network footprint in the country for a single event.

"At the Indy 500, there are some 250,000 people condensed into a fairly small geographic footprint who are all using their wireless devices at roughly the same time," says Verizon spokesperson David Samberg. "For example, think about the start of the race, when all those people want to text or send images out. Our goal was to provide the network



Scott R. LePage/LAT

Watching 220mph-plus racecars at the Indianapolis 500 is an experience that fans love to share.

capacity necessary to avoid making the experience a frustrating one.

"Of course, it doesn't stop there. All of the great features of Verizon's INDYCAR15 app could be used throughout the race with minimal lag time, so there wasn't any disconnect between what fans were able to witness on track and the data they were able to consume through the app."

Data usage by fans on Race Day at the

Indy 500 increased by 200 percent, with more than three terabytes of data moved exclusively over Verizon's 4G LTE distributed antenna system (DAS) inside the Indianapolis Motor Speedway between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. The volume of social media connections included 6,251 on Twitter, 17,357 on Facebook, and 145,025

"Think about the start of the race, when all those people at the track want to text or send images out"

DAVID SAMBERG

on Instagram. That's a lot of "Don't you wish you were here?" moments.

To put it in perspective, 1 terabyte of data can handle 472 hours of broadcast quality video, 150 hours of high-definition recording and enough words that it would take five minutes for every adult in America speaking simultaneously to say them all.

To meet the high demand, Verizon engineers spent almost a year designing >

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

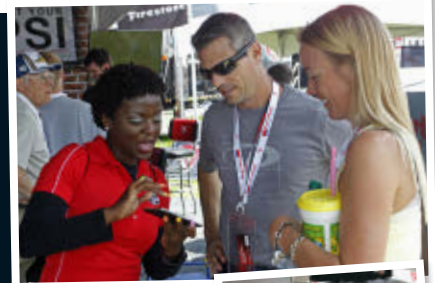
BUILDING A BETTER FAN EXPERIENCE

The IndyCar Fan Village is the place to go to find out more about how Verizon is enhancing the fan experience. It's also where you might get a sneak peek of what's coming in future editions of the app.

"Since we began our partnership with IndyCar, we've made continuous improvements to the app and the technology we bring to the race, and that will continue," says Verizon's David Samberg. "We plan to add further refinements and features to the app, as well as increase the network capacity at IndyCar events down the road.



For more on the features (exclusive and basic) available on the INDYCAR 15 app and to view compatible devices, go to verizonwireless.com/indycar



Ernie Masche/LAT



Gregg Elman/LAT

Russell Labounty/LAT



Michael Levitt/LAT



F. Perce Williams/LAT



Ernie Mische/LAT



Scott R. LePage/LAT

“We want to enhance the experience for Verizon IndyCar Series fans no matter where they are”

DAVID SAMBERG

and creating a custom wireless network facility for the Indy 500 that included nearly a dozen small cells around the exterior of the track, and added 20 new antennas to the DAS, bringing the total inside The Brickyard to more than 200.

But Samberg points out that Verizon’s commitment to delivering a great IndyCar fan experience isn’t exclusive to the track.

“We want to enhance the experience for IndyCar fans no matter where they are: at home, at the in-laws, or even in line at the grocery store,” he says. “There’s no reason to miss the race. With the INDYCAR 15 app, fans watching the race on TV can go deeper with in-car camera views and other telemetry. There’s never been more ways to interact with the race in real time.”

It’s not only fans who are better able to interact with the activity on the track.

Teams and drivers are making use of Verizon technology, too. In some cases they are on the leading edge of innovations that will eventually be available to fans. For example, Verizon is working with teams and drivers by offering camera angles and views that aren’t available over the broadcast network. While some of that is now accessible by Verizon customers, the greater ability to multicast is one area where Verizon is pushing development.

Access to as much information as possible is critical to the teams, and Verizon is working closely with them to meet their needs. Just like race fans, drivers are now using the INDYCAR 15 app on tablet, saving precious time by viewing real-time data while still buckled into their cars in the pit lane.

And that expanded network capacity? It comes full circle with the drivers who are better able to communicate in real time with their fans via social media postings - as Verizon Team Penske driver Will Power demonstrated on the Grand Prix of Indy podium, snapping a selfie with Juan Pablo Montoya and Graham Rahal that went straight to his fans on Twitter at the speed of Verizon 4G LTE. ■

(TOP) Information is key in racing. Verizon Team Penske driver Juan Pablo Montoya checks out lap times in-car on a tablet.

(ABOVE, left to right) Will Power makes a young fan’s day; Power’s podium selfie from the GP of Indy was quickly posted on Twitter; a lot of fans need a lot of network capacity.



INDYCAR 15 FEATURES

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The app also offers live streaming in-car camera feeds and radio broadcast. Combined with extras like real-time leader boards with 2D marching ants and car telemetry, individual driver-pit crew communications during races, podcasts, driver Twitter feeds, news and alerts, and track layouts, the INDYCAR 15 app has evolved to become essential to IndyCar fans.

You can download INDYCAR 15 at Google play or Apple’s App Store.



Find out more on the INDYCAR 15 app at verizonwireless.com/indycar

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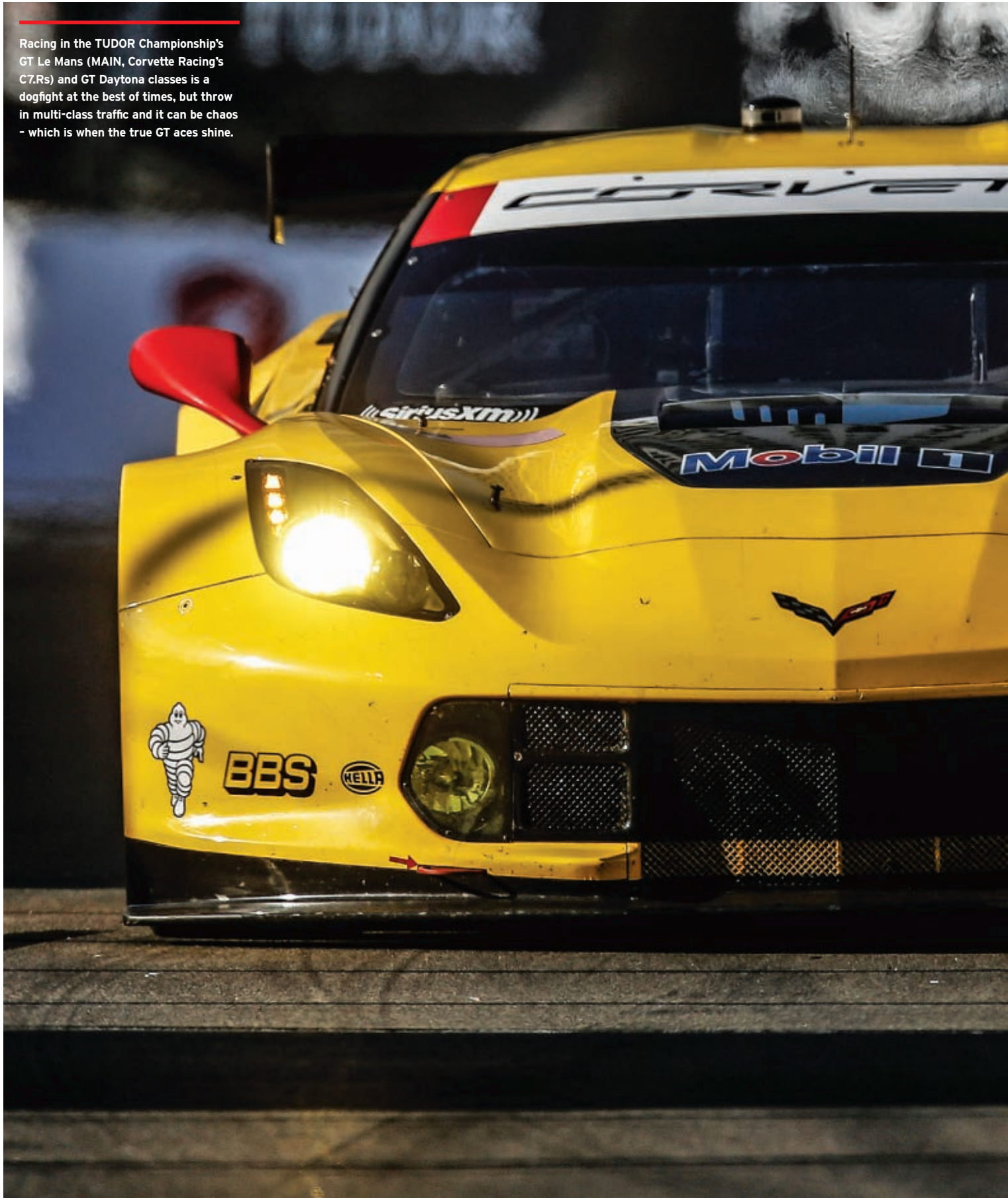


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Racing in the TUDOR Championship's GT Le Mans (MAIN, Corvette Racing's C7.Rs) and GT Daytona classes is a dogfight at the best of times, but throw in multi-class traffic and it can be chaos - which is when the true GT aces shine.





THE SPECIALISTS

Being the complete GT driver isn't just about being quick over a few laps. We asked some masters of the art what separates the great from the good.

WORDS Marshall Pruett
MAIN IMAGE Michael Levitt/LAT



“I’d define an elite GT driver as someone who can manage their own race and perform at the highest level throughout, but all the while having one eye out the windshield and one in the rearview mirror,” says Corvette Racing’s Oliver Gavin as he contemplates the ingredients that separate the GT goods from the GT greats.

No question, the Brit is among a short list of great GT pilots, and while many of his rivals have achieved huge success, few have reached the hard-to-define status of the five-time Le Mans class winner. It’s not easy to pinpoint the many factors that differentiate the true GT aces from the rest but, like unicorns and UFOs, you’d definitely know one if you saw one.

While multi-tasking tops the list for Gavin, Andy Lally puts the ability to drive within a fraction of assured destruction without losing control as his defining factor.

“You need to be so close to the edge all the time, yet maintain total control,” says Lally, who earned his place in the GT elite with a record-setting Grand-Am

career and currently drives the Magnus Racing Porsche 911 GT America in TUDOR Championship GTD. “The guys at the pointy end of the grid, week in and week out, make incredible car control while charging hard look like second nature. It’s an amazingly fine line: you have to drive at 99.9 percent to keep the tires alive for the stint, but still be right on the limit to not leave any grip on the table.”

Porsche factory driver Pat Long adds in mental capacity and control as another key differentiator for GT excellence.

“What defines most drivers you’d classify as elite status is the ability to drive at the limit, manage everything that’s going on around them, but still have enough bandwidth left over to record what’s going on with the car, so that they can communicate with the engineers and develop a plan to make the car even faster,” says the Californian ace, whose 2015 program includes a WEC campaign with Dempsey Racing-Proton.

“If you’re all-consumed by what’s



Richard Dowe/LAT

OLIVER GAVIN

Almost made his F1 debut with Pacific Grand Prix in 1995, but was denied a Super License. He won the '95 British F3 title, raced for Opel in the '96 ITC, drove the F1 safety car in '97-'99, then moved to sports cars in 2000.

happening on the track, you’re just fighting to survive,” he adds. “You see in the best GT drivers the ability to lead the session with the best lap, lead the team with the feedback that will make the car better, download what they just experienced to their teammates, and look relaxed while doing it. The best ones make it look easy, and that’s because - at least for them - it really is.”

There’s one more item agreed upon by these titans of GT racing, and that’s traffic management. With waves of prototypes carving mercilessly through the field, and Pro-Am drivers leaving fractions of time behind under braking and in the turns, you need to be in control as the chaos unfolds.

“Traffic is where you really earn your money,” Gavin declares. “Imagine this: You’re coming into the Turn 2 hairpin at Laguna and you’ve got three GTD cars ahead all fighting over their positions. You’ve got a GTLM Porsche all over your backside, and then you’re aware there’s a couple of DP cars coming up quickly from



MULTI-FACETED CHALLENGE

(MAIN) The GTLM field (and GTD interlopers) squabbles over the same piece of asphalt at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. The trick is having a plan to come out of the turn in a better position than you entered it. (BELOW) Faster prototype traffic is a constant factor for the GT cars. (LEFT) Corvette Racing's slick pit work doesn't matter a jot if its drivers can't deliver on the track, and in modern GT racing that means driving close to the limit, every single lap.



behind. You know it's going to come down to positioning your car at the right spot, at just the right time to get a good run off the corner, so you can speed past a couple of the GTD cars and put some space in between you and the Porsche.

"And, hopefully, the DP cars see how they are going to pick their way through without ruining your momentum and helping the Porsche go by. That's an

"Controlling the guy behind you when things aren't panning out in front of you is a real veteran move"

PAT LONG

every-lap scenario we're expected to handle without any mistakes, but all the top drivers are good at it. We know how to set these things up, read the situation consistently, and get ourselves a bit further up the road."

And there's more to successful traffic



A seasoned pro like Andy Lally is ready for most scenarios, but hitting an errant opossum in the Magnus Racing 911 GT America in the Rolex 24 at Daytona wasn't on the list...

management than getting through a cluster of cars without losing time.

"Managing traffic is the biggest thing that differentiates a young, hungry GT lion who can do the same lap time as you, versus the guy who's spent a decade behind the wheel of a factory-level GT car," Long adds. "The young guys often think of traffic as something to carve their way through. The part they're missing is how to back up a guy when you see you're going to get hosed. Controlling the guy behind you when things aren't panning out in front of you is a real veteran move."

GT elites are also measured by the effectiveness of their teammates. In a Pro-Pro GTLM dynamic, the style and speed variances are granular as two or more drivers execute at similar levels; in the Pro-Am construct, by contrast, the variables are often too vast for a Pro to overcome.

"If you're lucky, your Pro teammates want the same kind of setup you use, and since you're usually the one being hired and placed in the car, it's up to the manufacturer to look for similarities and pair you with a like-minded driver," Long explains. "You don't want to put an 'understeer' guy with an 'oversteer' guy, and if the mix is off, you're limited. Knowing who's a match takes time, and the veterans work the situation from the inside to make sure they get the right guy in the car with them."

Lally's status as one of the supreme Pro-Am coaches makes him a crucial element at Magnus Racing. Team owner and co-driver John Potter has grown into one of the most impressive Pro-Ams in GTD, and with Lally as his professor and co-pilot. >

The pace of endurance races such as the Rolex 24 at Daytona (LEFT) and the 12 Hours of Sebring (BELOW) is just as intense as a shorter sprint. The difference comes in the way a driver weighs up risk versus reward in a given scenario. (FAR RIGHT) Pat Long believes mental capacity and an ability to communicate efficiently with race engineers can elevate a driver's effectiveness.



F. Pierce Williams/LAT



Richard Dole/LAT



Richard Dole/LAT

ANDY LALLY

The 40-year-old Long Island native is a four-time Rolex 24 at Daytona class winner and 2006 Grand-Am GT champ. His résumé includes winning the NASCAR Sprint Cup Rookie of the Year title in 2011.

it's a case of nature versus nurture – the natural nurturing a less experienced student with a mutual goal in mind.

"It's nice to have ability and speed and talent, which John has, and where I come in is sharing the experience that would take him decades to get on his own," says Lally. "Pro-Am drivers tend to only see what's in front of them; they miss the 'big picture' stuff. So if we're going to win races, it's my job to show when and how to push, where to take calculated risks, or avoid a blind lunge.

"When you've done it right, your co-driver's armed with situational awareness and speed. The ones who don't have it rarely bring the car back in one piece, and in many ways, that's on you."

Versatility is a prerequisite for GT racing's upper echelon. Short street courses, extended road courses, and events lasting from 100 minutes to 24 hours fill the calendar, and the ability to seamlessly switch between the objectives at a concrete-lined Long Beach, or the

country roads in Le Mans, forms another separation point among GT drivers.

"There used to be a big difference in how you drove the different races, but technology has changed a lot of that in the past few years," Lally reveals. "As strong as these cars are now, I drive just as hard in the Rolex 24 at Daytona as I do in a 100-minute race in Detroit.

"The only thing that still changes a little bit is risk versus reward. If it was the last 100 minutes of the 24 Hours of Daytona, I'd drive exactly the same way as if it was a sprint in Detroit. But if there's still 22 hours to go and someone's making a move up my inside, I'll think twice about fighting extra hard to hold them off. In my head, I know that there's a risk of some sort of contact, which wouldn't be great with 22 hours left. You've got to be smart enough and, let's say, humble enough to be able to think, 'OK, this guy's got to run.' Whether he's better than me, or dumber than me, or just willing to stick it up the inside, I'm prepared to lose this

"It's about racing with the right amount of confidence and aggression, but having the smoothness, too"

OLIVER GAVIN

battle to try and win the war."

Gavin, Lally and Long have all raced high-downforce, high-grip prototypes, yet the knowledge gained in DPs and P2s serves little value in a comparatively heavy, slow, and softly-sprung GT car.

"My first victory at Daytona was in a prototype, my only podium at Le Mans is in a prototype," Lally confirms, "and they're amazing to drive. But it's just too different to take something from there and apply it to what a GT car needs from you. If there's one thing, it might be how hard you have to attack; I know that helped me, but you're always attacking in GT cars now, so it's no longer something the younger generation can only get



Scott R. LePage/LAT



Jakob Ebreyl/LAT

PATRICK LONG

After racing in karts and junior open-wheel series, Long was spotted by Porsche and placed in its Supercup junior program in 2003. He's been on the factory roster ever since, and is a two-time Le Mans class winner.

from racing prototypes."

Asking our three GT experts about whether they view themselves as specialists - those who've found their niche driving one type of racecar - or as all-rounders who just happen to thrive in GT exotica earns responses that range from predictable to unexpected.

"Many of the best in GT came to these cars from wherever - Formula 1, LMP1, or some other series where they drove much faster cars - but I wouldn't consider them specialists," says Gavin. "Age and experience can be a factor. As in, if you do this long enough, and you're in the same type of car, I guess it's only natural to be considered specialized. Some of the younger, faster GT drivers are getting their start here; it's really all they've done, and you could say they're specialists because it's the one thing they know."

"I went into GT because I was out of money to keep running open-wheel cars, and out of luck, and then Porsche came calling," says Long. "I do think there are



Michael Lewis/LAT

true specialists in these cars, and if that's what people think of me as, I'll take it as a compliment. But the part that could be unclear is that your average GT style of car just happens to fit how I like to drive.

"I like driving in the dirt at Baja, and I enjoy V8 Supercars where you have no tire and a bunch of power. When you're dealing with weight and you don't have a lot of electronics or downforce, it's more down to the driver to extract the speed out of the car. I'm at my happiest place in a car that doesn't do a lot of the work for me, and that just happens to be the case

in GT racing, where I earn my living."

Lally rejects the notion of being a GT specialist, but that's what you'd expect from someone who races cars, competes in street luge, and fights in mixed martial arts.

"I think the across-the-board mentality is similar, regardless of what you're driving," he declares. "It's a car, it's got tires, some aerodynamics, and it's up to you to get in and get the maximum out of it. Those driver traits are in the top guys in GT cars, stock cars...or monster trucks. I go out of my way to compete in whatever I can find, and by doing that, it makes me better in everything I do.

The GT pugilist might be unwilling to accept his stature in sports cars, but Gavin is willing to own the hard-won skills that place him at the top of the game.

"It's about racing with just the right amount of confidence and aggression, but having the smoothness to go along with that, too," he says. "If you possess all three of those traits as a GT driver, I think you do have something special." ■

2015 PETIT LE MANS

THE FALL CLASSIC

Ah, Petit Le Mans. Not quite 20 years old, but firmly entrenched as a sports car racing classic. Coming where it does on the calendar - this year from Sept. 30 to Oct. 3 - you're either taking in the last swigs of summer, or the first nips of autumn, and quite probably both. The change of seasons foreshadows what is likely to be a title showdown for all four classes of the IMSA TUDOR United SportsCar Championship.

It all comes down to the final 10 hours of what will have been a hard-fought season of some of the finest sports car racing anywhere, which makes for an electrifying event. But even without the title battles, Petit Le Mans powered by Mazda has always had that something

special going for it. It generally attracts a blockbuster field of prototypes and GT cars, luring teams from far and wide to come to take on the sinews of Road Atlanta.

Finishing a couple of hours after night fall, Petit Le Mans powered by Mazda has the right party atmosphere to send sports car fans into the off-season satisfied just enough to hold them over until the next one commences.

The cars seem faster with headlights and brake rotors ablaze. The fireworks shine brighter against the inky black sky when the winner takes the checkered flag. And if you've never sat at the apex of Turn 6 during the night practice or portion of the race, then book your trip now and do it. You'll be amazed.

Petit Le Mans has an atmosphere all its own. And with titles set to still be on the line at Road Atlanta, it all adds up to an unmissable finale for the TUDOR Championship.

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EXCITEMENT OVERLOAD

• In addition to the TUDOR Championship, other series racing include the IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge (BELOW), the Cooper Tires Prototype Lites powered by Mazda, the Lamborghini Blancpain Super Trofeo, and the Battery Tender Mazda MX-5 Cup Presented by BF Goodrich Tires.



Michael Lewis/LAT

- Petit Le Mans powered by Mazda is the final round of the Tequila Patrón North American Endurance Cup that also includes the Rolex 24 At Daytona, 12 Hours of Sebring and the Six Hours at the Glen.
- Car corrals from many of the manufacturers competing at Petit Le Mans powered by Mazda bring out a bevy of gorgeous cars to show some "team spirit."
- One of the highlights of the weekend is the grid walk (BELOW), staged on the start-finish straight, in anticipation of the TUDOR Championship race. Any fan with a ticket is invited to rub elbows with the teams and drivers on the grid before they take the start for the final time in 2015.



Richard Dore/LAT

- The Sports Bar and Club Patrón located in Road Atlanta's infield will have drinks, food and a live race feed, which makes for a great place to hang with friends and raise a glass to the winners.



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A RACING JOURNEY

PATRICK DEMPSEY



F. Pearce Williams/LAT

LM GTE-AM PODIUM FINISHER,
2015 24 HOURS OF LE MANS

"Mr. Dempsey, are you *serious* about racing in the World Endurance Championship?" Those words, coming from the WEC chief steward, almost made me laugh. Fortunately, despite my jet-lagged state, I managed to contain my humorous view of both the question and the situation, and simply answered, "Yes sir."

The reason I was called to the "principal's" office: I missed the mandatory driver's meeting as well as the first practice session for the 2015 WEC opener at Silverstone. And the reason for that? I was filming my last day as Dr. Derrick Shepard in *Grey's Anatomy* on location in Seattle. I think most people would look at leaving a hit TV show (not fired, contrary to the media feeding frenzy) as demonstration of serious intent...

It's been quite the journey to get on the WEC grid as part of the Dempsey Proton Racing Porsche team. I grew up a race fan, and still remember listening to the Indy 500 on the radio in the back of the family car. My dad loved racing and taught me to love it, too.

At a young age, my competitive fire was stoked on ski racing in my home town in Maine. I had enough determination and drive to win a state slalom championship.

It was the day-to-day preparation necessary to be a successful competitor that drew me in. I remember reading as a kid about a ski racer who worked on balance by riding a unicycle; naturally, I learned to ride one. Then my shop teacher at school taught me how to juggle, which helped improve my eye-hand coordination. I got so good at juggling that I started to perform, which led to acting, which led to theater, movies, television and a career as an actor.

Fast forward two decades. I was experiencing the typical highs and lows of a Hollywood acting career, and still spending most of my downtime watching auto racing on TV. Then a gift from my wife and family greatly changed the direction to the next chapter of my life: a three-day course at the Skip Barber Racing School. This led me to enroll in the Panoz Racing School, where I met Charles Espenlaub and Joe Foster, who became my racing coach, co-driver, and team partner for a decade.

Shortly after, in 2005, both of my passions ignited almost simultaneously. The pilot for *Grey's Anatomy* aired mid-season and became an overnight hit, which in turn opened doors in the racing world and allowed me to form the Dempsey Racing Team. I was also experiencing what I couldn't see from a TV screen, the camaraderie and sportsmanship on and off the track. From the get-go, racing felt like home.

My next meaningful partnership came when Charles Espenlaub introduced me to Jim Jordan. Jim was working in Mazda's marketing department and one of his responsibilities was motorsports marketing. He managed to align Mazda's motorsports and marketing objectives and my own desire to grow as a racer through a very interesting program.

"I think most people would look at leaving a hit television show as demonstration of serious intent"

I would provide voice over work for Mazda's TV advertising in exchange for an RX-8 Grand-Am GT racecar! Like a drug pusher, they even gave me spare parts and just enough cash to get me into trouble!

Dempsey Racing grew into a competitive team and my two professions complemented each other more often than not. Racing gave me what the acting world lacked...control. On a broader scale, acting became a piece of a larger picture and, in a sense, I never felt like I had ownership. Racing has always been tangible to me. Something I could hold onto. I often found myself returning to set after a race feeling refreshed, focused and excited to work.

The balance on and off the track has always been challenging for me. To do anything well, you must be as focused as possible. Having too many things on your plate is very difficult to manage.

On the track, I was able to lead races and we were a defective battery away

from winning the 24 Hours of Daytona (we still ended up third). The team won races. But, like all racers, I dreamed of Le Mans.

In 2009, I was able to make my first trip to France to race at Le Mans and placed ninth in class. We were all amazed by how much attention our efforts received and by the reaction of the French fans. It was completely unexpected and rewarding, too. My only goal then was to get back to Le Mans. Every day we worked to figure out a way to not only get back, but also be in the position to win.

Joe Foster and I spent a season developing and racing a Lola P2 car, hoping to put a Mazda motor in the back and return to Le Mans. We began documenting this for a Velocity TV show called *Patrick Dempsey Racing Le Mans*. When Mazda decided to go a different direction, we got together with Porsche and Proton Racing, which took us back to Le Mans in 2013.

That was an amazing race. After 24 hours, Joe, Pat Long and I were less than a minute from the podium, and five minutes behind the winner. One less problem, and we would have been on the podium - and

a perfect race would have meant victory.

Long term, the best part of that 2013 race was being able to deliver a strong showing in front of Porsche. We led several times and I drove one of my best races. Finishing fourth was heartbreaking, but we did make Porsche sit up and take notice. I continued to race a Porsche in the American Le Mans Series' GTC class, but we'd already started planning another Le Mans effort, again with Proton Racing.

2014 didn't go as planned. We finished fifth, which in some ways was easier than fourth. But unlike 2013, we were never really in the race. We didn't have the pace, we made too many mistakes, and it ended up being a frustrating experience. I realized it was just too tough to drive one car in the U.S., another at Le Mans, and have any hope of winning. I knew I needed to make some tough and painful changes.

Unfortunately, I knew a sacrifice had to take place on a personal and professional level, but also felt that there was the opportunity of a lifetime close at hand. I needed to introduce the same control I had behind the wheel of a racecar into

my acting life, so I started Shifting Gears Productions. We acquired the rights to the Phil Hill Formula 1 epic, *The Limit*, as well as a number of other great projects. This new venture has given me more flexibility and also allows me to spend more time with my family when I'm home from racing.

Now I had the time to do what I needed to do to reach my full potential as both a racer and actor. My partnerships with Porsche, TAG Heuer, Spyder and Beautyrest Black gave me the resources to take the plunge and take on the world. For 2015, my new focus became Dempsey Proton Racing, Dempsey Wright Racing, and the FIA World Endurance Championship. My focus in acting became developing shows that I could control at Shifting Gears Productions. Looking at these two paths, I can say that my life journey has never looked better, and also has never been more challenging.

So, yes, I am serious. I've been moving in this direction for more than 10 years. I changed my approach to racing and walked away from a very well-paid acting job to race in the World Endurance Championship.

Is that serious enough for you? ■

Patrick Dempsey's prime focus for 2015 is racing the Dempsey Proton Porsche 911 RSR (BELOW) in the FIA World Endurance Championship's ultra-competitive LM GTE-Am class.



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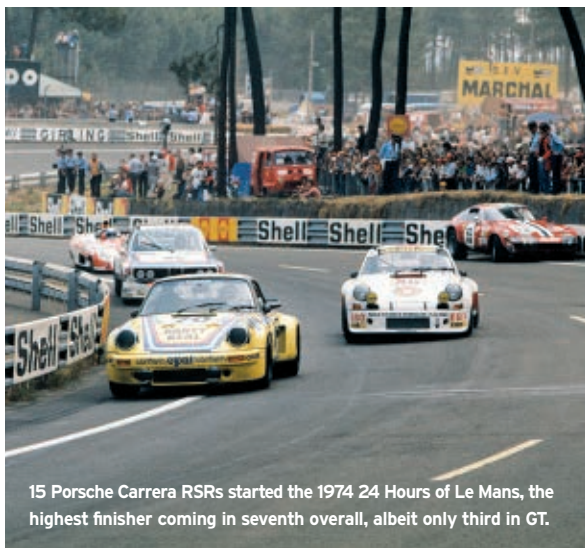
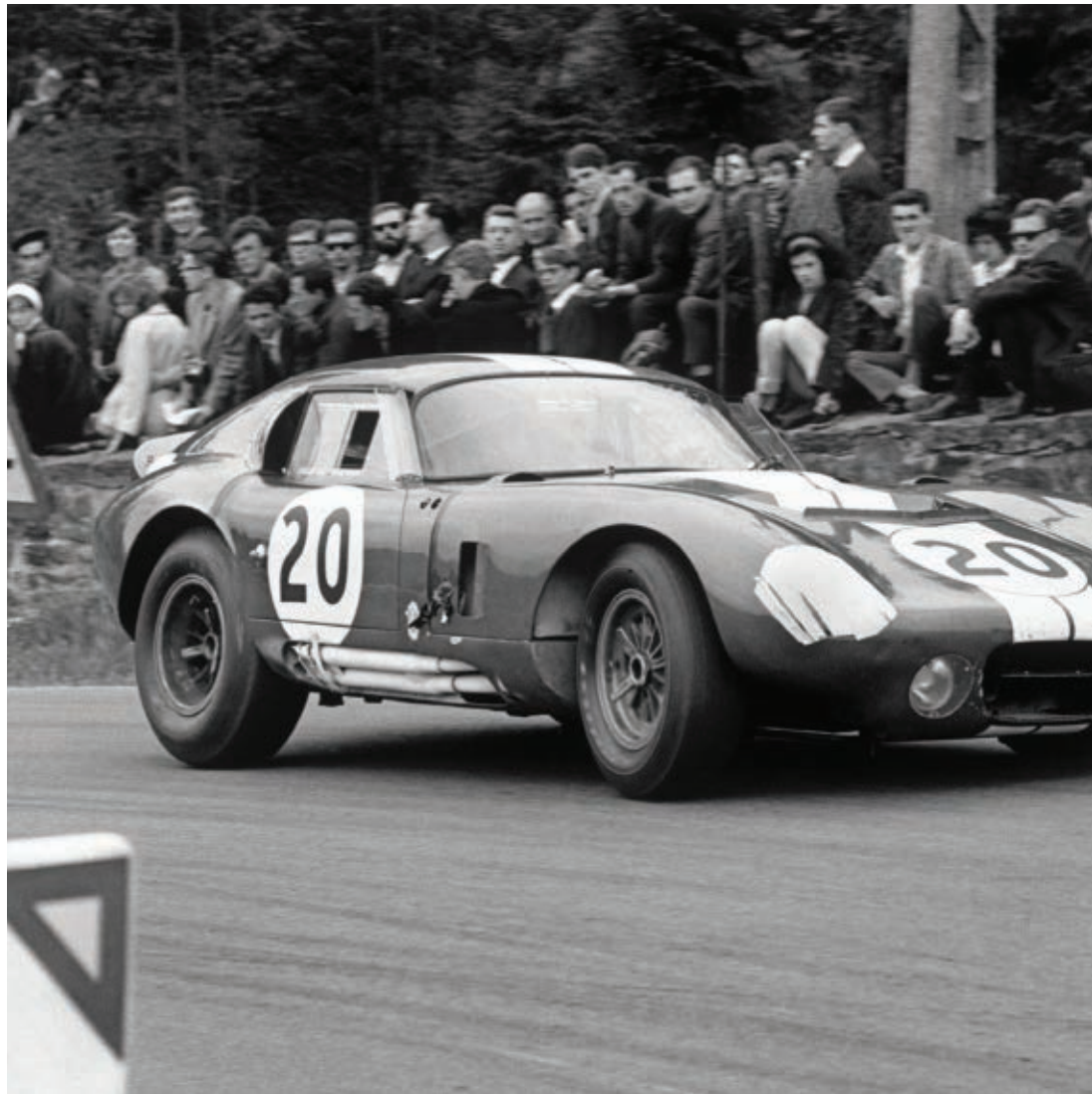
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LIFE LIMITLESS

GT5

Whatever the topic, picking the greatest of all time is a highly subjective undertaking, and cause of many a huge argument. But we figured we'd give it a go for Grand Touring cars. In no particular order, here are our choices for the five greatest GT cars of all time. Criteria include what they achieved, what they paved the way for, and how cool we think they are. And please feel free to disagree...

WORDS Gary Watkins
IMAGES LAT archive



15 Porsche Carrera RSRs started the 1974 24 Hours of Le Mans, the highest finisher coming in seventh overall, albeit only third in GT.

1973-'75 PORSCHE CARRERA RSR WEISSACH'S FIRST "HOMOLOGATION SPECIAL"

The Porsche 911 Carrera RSR can claim to be the most important racecar the German manufacturer ever built. It was the first homologation special 911, and that makes it the father of a line of turn-key customer GT racecars to roll out of Weissach over the past 40 years. That's thousands of cars, right up to the latest 991-shape 911 to carry RSR badges and a new 911 GT3-R due to come on stream next season.

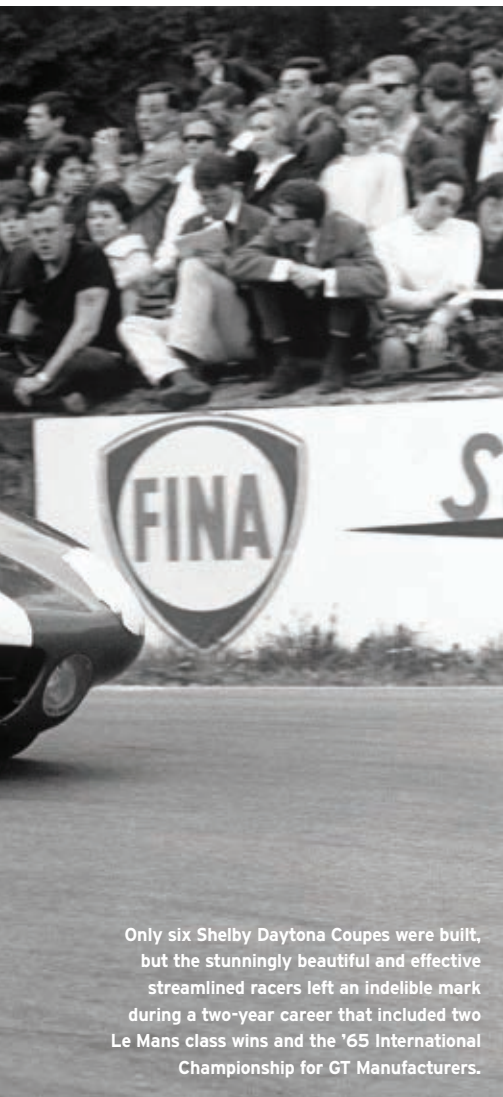
The RSR was conceived in 1972 out of a desire to maintain Porsche's presence in sports car racing after rule changes had successively killed off the 917 in the World Sportscar Championship and Can-Am. It also fulfilled the needs of a growing band

of privateers plying their trade with the 911 in international GT racing.

Based on the lightweight 911 Carrera RS 2.7 road car, the FIA Group 4-eligible RSR received a slight displacement increase to 2.8 liters, wider rear wheels and flared arches, and 917-derived brake rotors in readiness to go racing in 1973.

The RSR was a powerhouse in the FIA GT Championship and similar series, where customers such as Georg Loos' Gelo Racing team and Kremer racked up the wins. But it also claimed a couple of unexpected wins in the classic enduros.

Its victory on its race debut in the '73 Daytona 24 Hours with the Brumos Racing



Only six Shelby Daytona Coupes were built, but the stunningly beautiful and effective streamlined racers left an indelible mark during a two-year career that included two Le Mans class wins and the '65 International Championship for GT Manufacturers.

1964-'65 SHELBY DAYTONA COUPE CARROLL GETS HIS FERRARI BEATER

Carroll Shelby, his helmet now firmly on the peg and replaced by his trademark Stetson, had a dream, and it was to beat Ferrari in international GT racing. It wasn't so much a dream, in fact, as a mission. And that's how he ended up turning to a small British sports car manufacturer in a leafy suburb of London.

AC Cars built the chassis, Ford provided engines and Shelby and his team brought the intent. The result was the V8-engined AC Cobra. The original 4.7-liter roadster was potent on the short straights of most American tracks, and the Cobra would dominate the United States Road Racing Championship from 1963 to '65. But the higher-speed European tracks - and competition from Ferrari's 250 GTO, among others - called for something more extreme.

The Cobra, even in hard-top form, had proved slow down Le Mans' long Mulsanne Straight in '63. A coupe had to be the answer, and Shelby charged employee Peter Brock with designing the new shape. With its truncated rear end going against conventional thinking, Brock's design proved a low-drag revelation, and a legend was born in the Shelby Daytona Coupe.

Straightline speed jumped 30mph, to more than 190mph, and the successes flowed. The Daytona Coupe would win the GT class at Le Mans in both 1964 and '65, the first year yielding a fourth place overall for Dan Gurney and Bob Bondurant in a Shelby American-entered car. A year later it was a car fielded by AC Cars and driven by Jack Sears and Richard Thompson.

Head to head with Ferrari, Shelby would just miss out on the title he so craved in '64. But it was mission accomplished the following season, trouncing the Scuderia in the Over 2-liter class of the International Championship for GT Manufacturers - the first American constructor to do so.



AMERICAN DREAM
Dan Gurney and Bob Bondurant took a GT class win and fourth overall at Le Mans in 1964. Bondurant went on to anchor Shelby's '65 International Championship for GT Manufacturers triumph, winning seven of the 10 races.

squad came in the prototype class because the car had yet to be homologated, while its win in the Targa Florio the same year was also as a prototype entry. But the factory had chosen that route in order to develop the car for the future.

That spawned 1974's 3-liter RSR with the tea-tray rear wing and yet more success for Porsche's customers, including a second Daytona 24 Hours win for Brumos Racing, Peter Gregg and Hurley Haywood.

RSR 3.0 production ended in 1975, but the car raced on for several more seasons, with many privateers choosing the nimble machine over its turbocharged 934 and 935 successors. >



PORSCHE PARADE

When Peter Gregg and Hurley Haywood won their second Daytona 24 Hours in 1975 (LEFT), they headed a Porsche Carrera RSR 1-2-3-4-5-6, with RSRs finishing eighth and ninth, too. Sole interloper in seventh was NART's Ferrari 365 GTB/4.

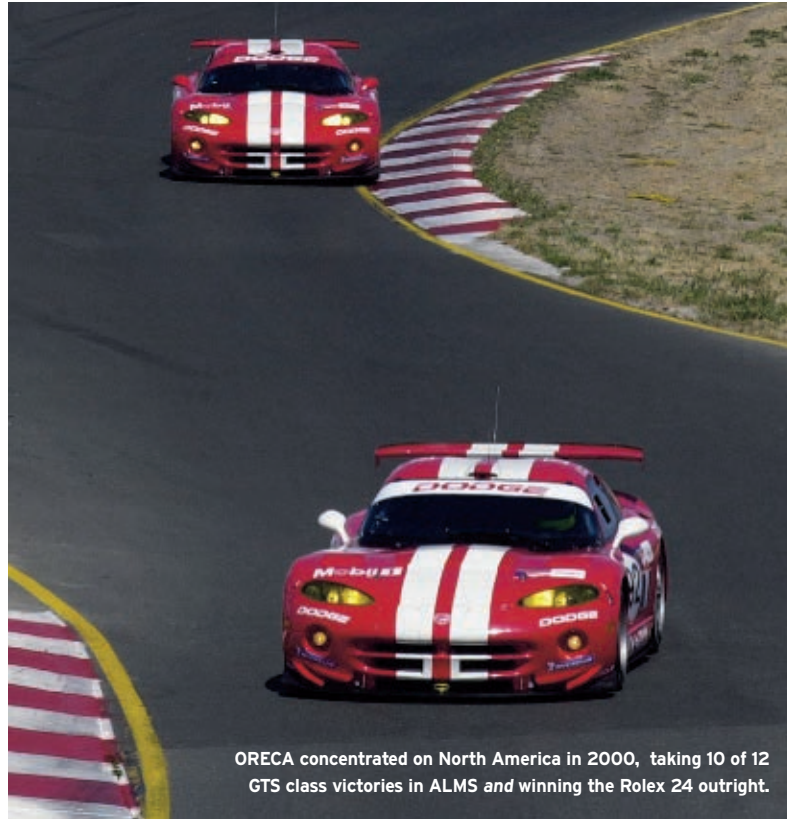
1996-2000
DODGE VIPER GTS-R
TEN-CYLINDER TOTEM

Chrysler and its Dodge brand had big aspirations for the race version of its V10 truck-engined Viper muscle car. Inspired by McLaren's outright victory at Le Mans in '95 (see page 50), the Viper GTS-R was entered in the GT1 class with an eye on the big prize when it first pitched up at the Circuit de la Sarthe in 1996. But things had moved on and the GT-R was re-homologated as a GT2 for '97, going on to have a phenomenal career.

The Viper was developed in-house at the same "skunk works" that conceived the road car. Partnerships were forged in Europe with Reynard for aerodynamic input and ORECA for its credentials as a race team. The French organization would subsequently mastermind the success of the Viper both on the track and in the marketplace.

The Viper won everything it should have. It took the class crown at Le Mans three times, claimed multiple titles in the FIA GT Championship and the American Le Mans Series, and was still winning the Nurburgring 24 Hours in its dotage. And then it won something it shouldn't have: the 2000 Rolex 24 at Daytona. Overall!

Factory input in the program ended in 2001, but privateer teams were still winning with Vipers in various national GT series until the middle of the decade.



ORECA concentrated on North America in 2000, taking 10 of 12 GTS class victories in ALMS and winning the Rolex 24 outright.



Michael Levitz/AT

FANGS A LOT!
 The ORECA Viper squad's victory in the 2000 Rolex 24 at Daytona came after a race-long battle with the factory Corvettes. It became a fight for the overall lead after the faster prototypes ran into trouble.



As the new-for-2003 Daytona Prototypes wilted in Daytona, the 911 GT3-R of The Racers Group just kept on going.

1999>
PORSCHE 911 GT3-R
PUNCHING ABOVE ITS WEIGHT

Porsche might have been out of top-flight sports car racing during the noughties, but it was still notching up outright victories in major enduros. That was thanks to the 996-shape 911 GT3-R and its derivatives. And a little bit of good fortune, of course.

The GT3-R, which evolved into the RS and the RSR, took two against-the-odds triumphs in 2003, first in January's Rolex 24 at Daytona and then in the Spa 24 Hours seven months later. Neither could have been predicted, but they did owe something to the inherent traits of the benchmark GT2 racer of its time: reliability and user-friendliness.

This 911 was introduced for a new class, initially known as GT, instigated by the ACO at Le Mans in 1999. The FIA adopted it the following year, coming up with N-GT as a name. The successes for the GT3-R came immediately.

It had to wait for the big ones, however.

The Racers Group would triumph at Daytona in the first year of the Daytona Prototypes by doggedly outlasting them. The German Freisinger team then came through a wet race at Spa to beat GT1 cars such as the Dodge Viper and the Ferrari 550 Maranello. >



GOING THE DISTANCE
 Michael Schrom and The Racers Group team boss Kevin Buckler (ABOVE) were joined by Porsche factory drivers Jorg Bergmeister and Timo Bernhard for their 2003 Rolex 24 win.



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1995-'98

McLAREN F1 GTR

A COST-EFFECTIVE TRIUMPH

The McLaren F1 supercar wasn't conceived with the race track in mind. And nor was the first competition version, the GTR, designed for 24-hour racing. Yet a car that had been little more than an idea 12 months earlier pulled off one of the most amazing Le Mans wins of all time in 1995.

JJ Lehto, Yannick Dalmas and Masanori Sekiya beat an admittedly underwhelming selection of prototypes in a race held in mostly wet conditions. But it wasn't a fluke for the car entered under the Kokusai Kaihatsu Racing banner and run by a mixture of personnel from the McLaren factory and the British Lanzante squad. The two McLarens run by David Price Racing led for much of the way, the Harrods-liveried version finishing third, and two more GTRs came home fourth and fifth.

It was a triumph against the odds, aided by wet conditions that not only leveled the



McLaren's route to a 1995 Le Mans victory with the F1 GTR (MAIN) was made easier by amazing raw materials in the F1 road car.



POWERED DOWN
Nine F1 GTRs were built for 1995. GT1 rules restricted power to around 600hp, but an F1 GTR hit 236.742mph on the Mulsanne Straight at Le Mans.

playing field, but eased the stresses on the weak link of the car, the transmission. But it was also a cost-effective triumph. The development budget for the GTR was just £750k (\$1.2m), and a few hundred thousand more to develop a Le Mans kit.

"Not much was done to the car," recalls Jeff Hazell, program manager for McLaren Cars. "We took the rubber out of the

suspension and the engine subframes, put a cage in, bolted on a wing, and went racing."

The original short-tail version of the F1 GTR deserves its place on this list not just for its against-the-odds Le Mans triumph. It put the BPR-run Global Endurance GT Series, which it went on to win in 1995 and '96, on the map and was central to the rebirth of GT racing in Europe. ■

CLOSE, BUT NO CIGAR...

NOT QUITE...AND NOT ALLOWED

Surely no one can argue with two Porsches making the top-five GT cars of all time. Yet some might complain that there are only two. There are any number of other candidates, of which the 993-shape 911 GT2 of the late 1990s deserves mention. It was the car that took the fight to the increasingly competitive Dodge Vipers.

The 935, in all its iterations, might have made the list, but an onus on real production GTs explains its absence. The

scope of the Group 5 silhouette regulations in Europe and the closely-related GTX regs in the U.S. led to wilder and wilder creations that ever distanced the car from its road-going roots.

Same reasoning why there's no room here for the likes of the Mercedes-Benz CLK-GTR, winner of the FIA GT Championship in its glory year of 1997, or the ultimate example of the late-'90s breed of GT1 machinery, the Toyota GT-One. They were prototypes in all but name

Chevrolet fans might be disappointed to see that the C5-R, the first in a line of ultra-successful racing Corvettes to roll out of Pratt & Miller's workshops, hasn't made the top five. Its achievements as a factory racer almost rank alongside those of the Dodge Viper, and it also notched up an overall win at Daytona, but it didn't have the same success with privateers. And then there's the fact that the C5-R wasn't built around a production Corvette chassis...



Viper-baiting Porsche 911 GT2 of the late 1990s was a "close, but no cigar" decision when it came to getting on our top-five list.



The Chevrolet Corvette C5-R had a spectacular competition career, but didn't really deliver with privateer teams.



Toyota GT-One? A fantastic machine, but a GT car in name only. Ditto for Mercedes-Benz's gorgeous (though prone to flying) CLK-GTR.



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Nissan proudly congratulates Bryan Heitkotter, 2011 Winner of the North American GT Academy. He successfully competed to win 3 consecutive races in the Pirelli World Challenge® GTA series so far this season. Nissan wishes Bryan and the entire Always Evolving/AIM team continued excellence.



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FORCE MULTIPLIER

A potent combination of K-PAX Racing, Flying Lizard Motorsports and McLaren GT is making its presence felt in Pirelli World Challenge.

WORDS Richard S. James
MAIN IMAGE Bob Chapman/Flying Lizard

Did you hear the one about the Volvo repairman, the California race team and the British supercar manufacturer?

You should, because while the punchline hasn't been particularly funny for the competition, it's a heck of a story, especially when you throw in the French hotshoe and the rising star from Colorado.

K-PAX Racing is a nomad team, one without a real home; yet far from being lost in the wilderness, it's enjoyed a notably successful history, winning three Pirelli World Challenge Drivers' Championships with Randy Pobst.

It began back in 2007, when K-PAX owner Jim Haughey, who ran a Volvo repair business in Northern California, wanted to start a racing team, but not run a second business and deal with the associated headaches of finding space, hiring crew and buying equipment. He

(MAIN) K-PAX Racing/Flying Lizard Motorsports McLaren 650S driver Kevin Estre took the second of three early-season Pirelli World Challenge GT class wins on the sweeps and undulations of Barber Motorsports Park.

partnered with Colorado's 3R Racing and won two championships in Porsches, before building its all-wheel-drive Volvo S60s and winning another.

When World Challenge began its full transition to FIA GT3 specifications, the team chose McLaren and its 12C GT3 car for Alex Figge and Colorado racer Robert Thorne, who'd been racing a Volvo C30 for the team in the Touring Car class.

"We looked at all the different FIA GT3 cars that were available," says Haughey. "We developed spreadsheets - we looked at how they'd done, the support, the prices, the capabilities of the car. Everyone put their two cents in and McLaren won. We also like the McLaren heritage and the McLaren name."

And even though the team has now switched to the apparently more capable, new-for-2015 650S, it's still the only



ESTRE IN DEMAND

As well as being one fifth of McLaren GT's factory roster, 26-year-old Kevin Estre has raced in 2015 for Porsche Team Manthey in GTE Pro at Spa's WEC round and shared one of OAK Racing's P2 Ligiers at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

team campaigning McLaren GT racecars in North America.

The switch of cars was one change K-PAX made for 2015. Two significant others were bringing McLaren factory driver Kevin Estre on board to join Thorne (courtesy of McLaren GT's policy of loaning its contracted drivers to customer teams), and hiring Seth Neiman's Flying Lizard Motorsports to run the program.

The effect of those changes was felt immediately; Estre put on a command performance in the rain in the second round at Circuit of The Americas, and has since won two more races to hold second in the Drivers' Championship behind Olivier Beretta as the series headed to Road America for rounds 11, 12 and 13 of the 18-race championship.

Like K-PAX, Flying Lizard Motorsports has its own illustrious history, winning a >



BUILDING MOMENTUM

“Hired gun” Kevin Estre was within striking distance of the PWC GT points lead after three wins from the first 10 races, but teammate Robert Thorne’s growing familiarity with his McLaren 650S GT3 (LEFT) has made him a consistent threat, too. A 1-2 result with Estre at Barber (BELOW) was the 25-year old’s standout performance as the series reached its season mid-point.



couple of American Le Mans Series GT titles as a team, plus three GT Drivers’ Championships. Last year the team raced in the inaugural TUDOR United SportsCar Championship season with GTD Audi R8 LMS customer cars, and follows it up with a limited, enduro-oriented schedule in 2015. As solid as the Lizards’ credentials are, its expansion into PWC was about convenience and pragmatism as much as anything else, according to Haughey.

“The primary reason was that K-PAX was racing out of Colorado, but I live close to San Francisco,” says Haughey in explaining his decision to go with the Sonoma Raceway-based Lizards. “I was having to do a lot of travel, a lot of phone discussions. I just wanted to bring it closer to home. I’ve known about and followed Flying Lizard, and we had an opportunity



The rear-engined 650S is limited to approx. 500hp by GT3’s Balance of Performance rules. That’s 150hp less than the M838T turbo V8 produces in road car trim.

this year with Seth Neiman not driving in the TUDOR Championship. We were both kind of looking for partners and it just worked out.”

For Flying Lizard, what made it attractive wasn’t only linking up with K-PAX, but with the third vital element of the partnership as well - McLaren Automotive and its racing arm, McLaren GT.

“McLaren has been a very good manufacturer partner,” says Darren Law, Flying Lizard’s program manager and a Rolex 24 at Daytona winner as a driver. “They supply engineers and we work very closely with them on a regular basis for all the different needs of the program. They also supply Kevin Estre from their pool of factory drivers. It’s a very close relationship and they’re very keen to make this project successful.”

It’s tough to assign percentages to changes and their effect on K-PAX’s success this year vs. 2014, but the addition of Estre certainly has to be considered one of the biggest. The versatile French driver has provided a big boost to the team and is in the thick of the championship hunt. So far, he’s enjoying and adapting well to PWC. >

THE LIZARD DIVERSIFIES

RETURNING TO ITS ROOTS

While its partnership with K-PAX Racing and McLaren in Pirelli World Championship is Flying Lizard Motorsports’ main focus in 2015, the team will continue to run select events - four, maybe five - with its Audi R8 in the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship’s GTD class.

“But those with memories of Flying Lizard’s roots will always associate the team with Porsche,” says Flying Lizard Motorsports program manager Darren Law.

“And so, partially in conjunction with K-PAX, the team returns to its roots with customer racing efforts in Porsche Pirelli GT3 Cup USA and Porsche Club of America club racing.”

With Flying Lizard’s new focus on customer racing, and with a number of Porsche racecars already in its inventory, that’s an entirely logical move.

What the future holds for Flying Lizard Motorsports is intriguing, especially as the

TUDOR Championship transitions to full FIA GT3 spec for its GTD class. Will its partnership with K-PAX mean running McLaren GT3 cars in IMSA races?

“We need to see what’s within our budget,” says Law. “We need to look at what we want to do, and what McLaren wants to do. I don’t know if we could run both series in their entirety, but I would love to pick and choose specific events that are important to us.”



Flying Lizard kicked off a limited 2015 TUDOR Championship GTD program for its Audi R8 LMS with the Daytona and Sebring enduros.



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The one that got away? Race two of Detroit's double-header was cancelled due to torrential rain. Race one dominator Kevin Estre (LEFT) would have started fourth... (BELOW) Flying Lizard program manager Darren Law pores over data at CoTA's PWC season-opener.

Bob Chapman



Bob Chapman

ROBERT THORNE
Having started karting as an eight-year old, Thorne got his first racing license aged 15 and earned a 2006 Formula BMW Scholarship.

"I really like the format of the races," he says. "It's a 50-minute, single-driver sprint on some really cool tracks. Right from the start, you're pushing the whole time, just relying on the setup and the driver and not having to think about how good your teammate will be or how good the strategy is. It's different from what I do in Europe, so it's great to have both things on my calendar, and it's great that the 650S is already winning races."

That's the third big change for 2015, the switch from the 12C GT3 after a single year of competition to the new 650S.

With a wider track, revised suspension geometry, enhanced aerodynamics and cooling, and an all-new, six-speed sequential transmission for the 3.8-liter, twin-turbo V8, McLaren GT's first iteration on its GT3 car was devised to improve on the 12C, which first raced in 2012, in every key area - except perhaps one.

The K-PAX drivers can cite many improvements, with Estre enthusing that the 650S has noticeably more aero downforce and chassis grip. But more downforce means more drag, and it lacks straight-line speed compared to the 12C.

"The 650S is more fun to drive, but on some tracks it makes it harder to race," says Estre. "I think we've been quicker on



Bob Chapman

"I feel like we're already very close to having the best cars in the field on a consistent basis"

ROBERT THORNE

almost every track this year, but in races it's really difficult because some of our opponents have huge straight-line speed."

Thorne notes a lot of improvement at the front end, both in downforce and the robustness of the bodywork. "We were always struggling with understeer, as well as fragile bodywork that wouldn't keep some of the tougher cars out of the tires, so we had a lot of flats," he says. The 650S is a big improvement in that regard.

As a relative veteran with K-PAX (he first

joined the team in 2012), Thorne is well placed to see how the team has evolved. He notes some changes in operation with Flying Lizard running the program - a more modern approach, he calls it - but there is continuity, too, with Will Moody once again serving as his race engineer.

Given the success the team has had so far this season, with Estre's early wins at CoTA, Barber Motorsports Park and Detroit (which could easily have been a Motown double, had the second race not been cancelled due to torrential rain), and Thorne making it a one-two at Barber, the competition would probably not like to hear Thorne's declaration that the program is only getting better.

"Every weekend feels like a big step forward," he says. "Every weekend we have new equipment, new guys and there are improvements to the way things are done and the pace of the car. McLaren's also contributing a lot this year and bringing new developments every single race. I feel like we're already very close to having the best cars in the field on a consistent basis, and I feel by the end of the season we'll be a very tough program to keep up with."

There's a lot to be said for stability; sometimes, though, change is good. ■

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SUPPORT STRUCTURE

K-PAX is blazing the trail for McLaren's racing in the U.S., but it's not having to do it in complete isolation.

With fleets of GT3/GTD Audis, Porsches, Ferraris and BMWs running in Pirelli World Challenge and the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship, McLaren's two cars in PWC seems small-scale by comparison. For K-PAX Racing/Flying Lizard Motorsports, being sole custodians of the 650S GT3 in U.S. racing has its positives, but also its challenges.

On the negative side, K-PAX has nothing to measure itself against, or be compared favorably to. While direct comparisons can be drawn between teams running R8s, for example, there's no clear frame of reference for what K-PAX is doing. Is success or failure down to the cars, the team, both or neither?

Sure, McLaren's racing in, say, Europe's Blancpain GT Series can be a limited frame of reference, but a 50-minute PWC sprint on a bump'n'squirt U.S. street course pretty much defies direct comparison...

On the other hand, UK-based McLaren GT is all about selling and supporting customer cars, so it wants other teams to run its cars in the various U.S. series where it is - or soon will be - eligible. So success by K-PAX is good



Chris Berou/USA

FACTORY SOURCED
Bruno Senna (LEFT) is the latest addition to McLaren's driver roster. The five factory aces are loaned to customer teams, with K-PAX getting Kevin Estre for the 2015 PWC.



Phil Cox/Getty

EUROPEAN SUCCESS

Customer team Von Ryan Racing fields a pair of 650S GT3s in the Blancpain GT Series, winning round two at Silverstone.

for McLaren. As a result, there's engineering support, plus a factory driver in Kevin Estre to help ensure results.

"There's great engineering support in these kinds of championships," Estre says. "There's an engineer who comes over from the UK to support the electronics for Pirelli World Challenge - for example, the launch control - and keep the cars updated with new stuff they've developed in Europe."

The support McLaren GT gives its customers was a key factor in K-PAX choosing to race the 12C last year and continue with the 650S for 2015.

"The engineering support and commitment they have to our program - they want us to do well," says K-PAX principal Jim Haughey. "They haven't had any teams racing the McLaren in the U.S. before, so this is an opportunity they wanted to fully support."

That support becomes even more critical as the TUDOR Championship adopts GT3 regulations for the GTD class in 2016. McLaren may not have the quantity of some other manufacturers, but they certainly have the quality...and the desire.

McLaren GT developed its GT3-spec 650S through 2014, before releasing cars to customer teams prior to the '15 season.





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ART & SOUL

The early 1960s was a golden era for Grand Touring in its purest sense. The GT machines competing and winning at the highest levels weren't merely based on their road car brethren - give or take a few tweaks, they *were* road cars. They also seemed to be imbued with a national identity, as these three classic examples from Italy, the UK and the U.S. demonstrate.

WORDS Laurence Foster
MAIN IMAGE Peter Harholdt



.....
Pininfarina's 250 GT SWB fastback body, elegantly rendered by coachbuilder Sergio Scaglietti, remains a work of wonder.

1961 FERRARI 250 GT SWB ITALY

The culmination of a concept, but also the end of an era, the 250 GT SWB epitomized everything that Enzo Ferrari wished his road cars to be - Jekyll and Hyde machines that could win on the race track, then whisk a movie starlet to her latest premiere. Same car, same specs. Le Mans and *La Dolce Vita*.

The 250 GT SWB made its debut in 1959, SWB referring to its short wheelbase - at 94.5in, some 7.8in less than previous

250 GTs. Combined with a constantly refined 3-liter V12 engine, Pininfarina's organic, ever-evolving fastback coachwork, and the revelatory stopping power of disc brakes (the first on a Ferrari), the SWB was nimble enough and powerful enough to rule the GT roost at the start of the 1960s.

Six 250 GT SWBs started the 1960 24 Hours of Le Mans. Two retired; the other four finished 1-2-3-4 in the GT class, with

a best overall placing of fourth.

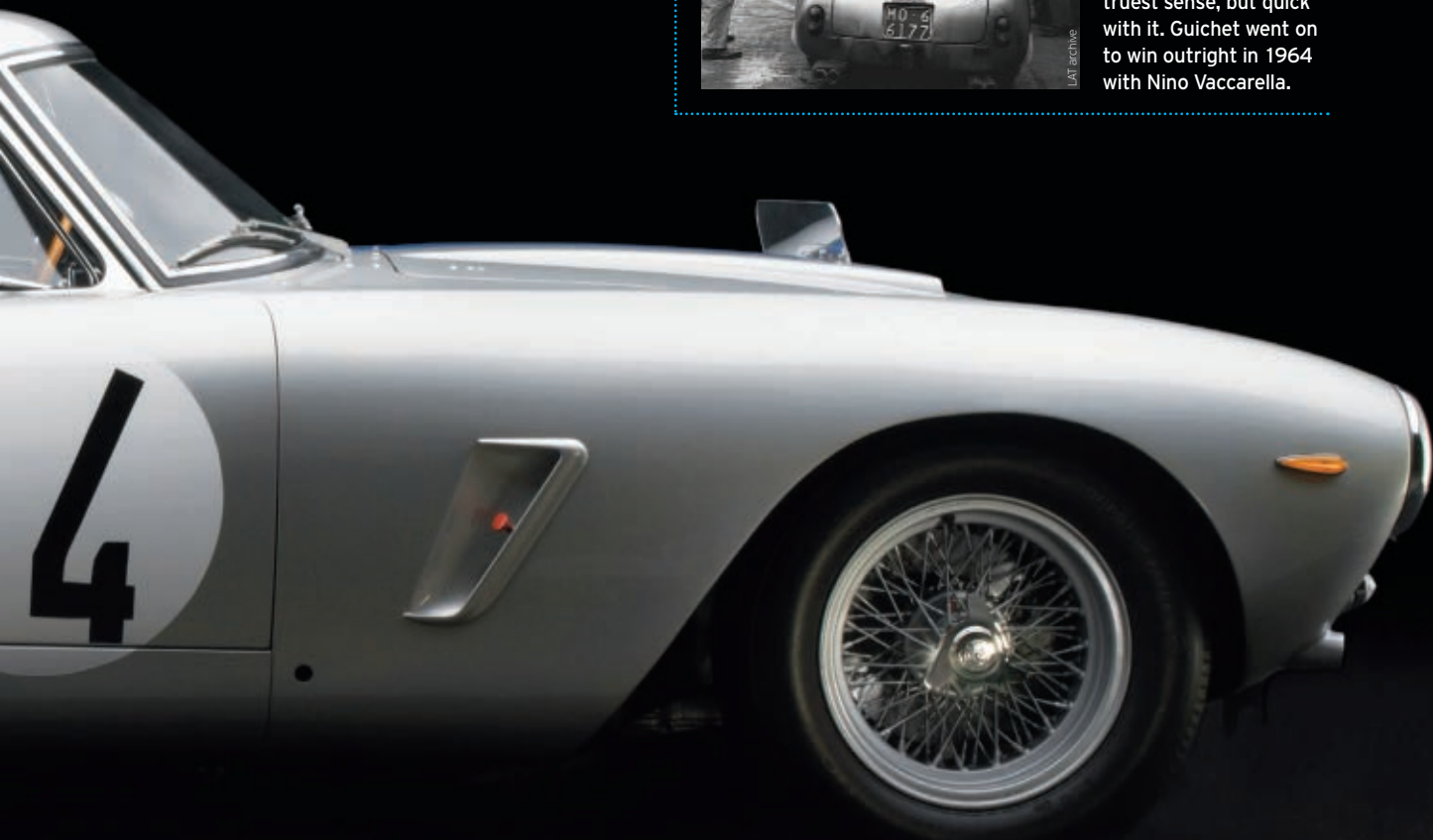
A year later, Pierre Noblet and Jean Guichet went one better, putting their SWB (our studio car) on the podium in third overall.

But the writing was already on the wall for the dual-purpose GT cars. For the '61 race, Ferrari had to build the so-called "SEFAC Hot Rod" SWB, with lighter body, plexiglass windows and a Testa Rossa-spec engine as its rivals began to build increasingly track-specific GT racers.



LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

Industrialist Pierre Noblet and naval repair yard owner Jean Guichet (LEFT in 1961) were gentlemen drivers in the truest sense, but quick with it. Guichet went on to win outright in 1964 with Nino Vaccarella.



Courtesy of the Bruce Meyer Collection



(MAIN and BELOW) Under the hood of the 250 GT SWB beats a 3-liter Tipo 168B. (BOTTOM) Interior confirms Ferrari's drive it/ race it ethos - and this is the SEFAC version!

A LIFE BEYOND LE MANS

Bested by the race-specific Ferrari 250 Testa Rossas at Le Mans in 1960 and '61, the 250 GT SWB came into its own on twistier tracks and long-distance, open-road races, where a more nimble, user-friendly machine was an asset.

Rob Walker-entered Stirling Moss gave the SWB its first major win in the 1960 Tourist Trophy held at Goodwood, England, then followed it up with victory in the Redex Trophy at Brands Hatch.

A podium sweep in the grueling, 3,000-mile plus Tour de France followed, with wins in the Paris 1,000km on the partially banked Montlhéry track and at Nassau Speed Week merely confirming the 250 GT SWB's credentials.

The brain trust behind the SWB reads like a who's who of Ferrari design greats, with Giotto Bizzarrini and Carlo Chiti ably assisted by a rising star named Mauro Forghieri. The young Forghieri would succeed Chiti as chief designer of Ferrari's racecars in 1962, penning such classic Formula 1 cars as the 158 and the 312T family of 1970s championship-winning machines.



1961 FERRARI 250 GT SWB TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Configuration front-engine, rear-wheel drive, two-door coupe

Body/frame Aluminum body over Tipo 539 steel tube chassis

Weight 2,315lb/ 1,050kg

Engine Ferrari Tipo 168B; aluminum block 3-liter, 60-degree V12 w/ single overhead camshaft and two valves per cylinder

Power/torque 280hp @ 7,000rpm;

Transmission Ferrari 4-speed manual

Brakes Discs front and rear

Suspension Front: double wishbones; Rear: live axle with semi-elliptic leaf springs

CHECK YOUR SHED...

A total of 176 Ferrari 250 GT SWBs were built, in both steel and aluminum bodies. Recent auction prices have touched on \$10m, but that pales in comparison with the \$28.5m paid in February for a 250 GT Spyder California SWB "barn find."

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1962 JAGUAR E-TYPE UNITED KINGDOM

Despite some hints to the contrary by Jaguar boss Sir Williams Lyons at the E-Type's public reveal in the spring of 1961, the Coventry marque never intended the car to follow in the footsteps of its three-time Le Mans-winning D-Type.

Jaguar believed the E-Type's sexy looks, bargain price and impressive 150mph performance would be enough to make it fly out of dealerships - and so it proved.

But Briggs Cunningham couldn't resist the temptation to take the grooviest car of the 1960s to the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

The wealthy American had become a Jaguar proponent in the mid '50s, fielding the winning D-Type in the '55 12 Hours of Sebring. His roster of entries at Le Mans

in '60 included Jaguar E2A, the prototype for the E-Type, driven by Dan Gurney and Walt Hansgen.

With the cat out of the bag and on sale to the public in 1962, Cunningham entered one of three privateer E-Types at that year's 24 Hours of Le Mans. With Roy Salvadori and Cunningham himself at the wheel, the feline GT finished fourth overall, behind the winning Ferrari 330 and two 250 GTOs, and ahead of another E-Type driven by Peter Sargent and Peter Lumsden.

In the wake of this unexpected success, Jaguar built a dozen, aluminum-bodied "Lightweight E" racers for sale to privateers, but fourth at Le Mans in '62 remained the E-Type's sporting highwater mark.



E FOR EFFICIENT

Running in the over-3-liter GT class, Briggs Cunningham's privately entered E-Type proved impressively competitive in the 1962 24 Hours of Le Mans. Running like a train, it finished just four laps shy of a podium and averaged 108.87mph.

Small "mouth" and glass-covered headlights show that Briggs Cunningham's '62 Le Mans E-Type is a Series 1 car. The speed stripes are Cunningham's invention - and subsequently widely copied.





Courtesy of the Bruce Meyer Collection



Jaguar's long-stroke inline-6 had served the D-Type well at Le Mans, powering it to three wins in 3.4-liter guise. But the 3.8 in the original E-Type was beginning to feeling its age.

SUBSTANCE AND STYLE

Famously described by Enzo Ferrari as "the most beautiful car ever made," the E-Type had been conceived as a lot more than a thing of aesthetic wonder.

Famed aerodynamicist Malcolm Sayer, who'd brought aerospace thinking to Jaguar's C- and D-Type racers, had designed the E as a Le Mans contender from the start. His take on function over form resulted in a car that ranks among the most beautiful ever, but perhaps that was its undoing as a racecar?

When Jaguar's management saw the car, they instantly decided it would sell on its looks alone (70,000 bought would seem to confirm that) and didn't need a money-eating racing program to supply it with credibility.

Had Briggs Cunningham managed to finish even better than fourth in 1962, the story might have been different - after all, everybody loves a winner. But the car's weakness was its ageing, long-stroke, twin-cam, 3.8-liter inline-6. No amount of lightening and aero tweaking could make up for a lack of grunt relative to Ferrari's 3-liter 250 GTO.



**1962 JAGUAR E-TYPE
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

Configuration front-engine, rear-wheel drive, two-door coupe

Body/Frame Central steel monocoque with front subframe

Weight 2,688lb/1,220kg

Engine 3.8-liter, six-cylinder inline w/ double overhead camshafts, two valves per cylinder; Lucas fuel injection

Power/torque 300hp @ 6,000rpm;

Transmission 4-speed manual, non-synchro

Brakes Dunlop discs front & rear

Suspension 4-wheel independent

BRIGGS & THE E-TYPE, TAKE TWO

After his near-standard E-Type punched above its weight at Le Mans in 1962, Briggs Cunningham returned the following with a trio of Lightweight Es. Cunningham and Bob Grossman did at least finish in the top 10, coming home ninth. But a heavy crash and gearbox problems consigned the other two Jags to the DNF list.

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1963 CHEVROLET CORVETTE GRAND SPORT

USA

When legendary Corvette chief engineer Zora Arkus-Duntov came up with a plan in 1962 to create a lightweight version of the 'Vette to take on the likes of Ford, Ferrari and Porsche in international GT racing, he knew his biggest challenge would be getting it past GM's guardians of corporate policy.

The General had signed up for the Automobile Manufacturers Association's 1957 ban on direct involvement in racing, and the suits in Detroit were still holding fast

to that as Arkus-Duntov secretly put plans in place for the Corvette Grand Sport.

Key to making the car competitive was losing weight - lots of weight - and giving it some decent braking power.

A Shelby Cobra weighed 1,000lb less than a Corvette, so Arkus-Duntov's team pared 1,300lb by replacing the steel cabin frame with aluminum and fitting paper-thin fiberglass body panels and cast magnesium wheels, slimming it down to 1,900lb.

Disc brakes replaced the original drums, and the car was ready to race. Except...

For FIA GT homologation, 125 cars would need to be built. But when GM boss Frederic G. Donner got wind of a Sebring shakedown test, he called an immediate halt to the program. Officially, it was game over. However, a "privateer" three-car entry in the 1963 Nassau Speed Week teased the Grand Sport's potential with a Cobra-beating performance (see page 70).



Chevrolet Corvette Grand Sport No. 004 was one of three sent to the 1963 Nassau Speed Week. Their performance against the Shelby Cobras was spectacular, leading to a big "what if...?"



LIGHT AT THE FRONT...

A trait the Corvette engineers were working to cure before the Grand Sport project was scuppered by GM was front-end lift at high speed, due to air pressure in the engine compartment and the car's high, wide nose. A louvered hood was the potential fix.





(MAIN) Purposeful fender flares accommodate 9in. wheels. (BELOW) A quartet of 58mm Weber carbs help the 377cu.in. small block develop 485hp.

A SUCCESSFUL “VACATION”

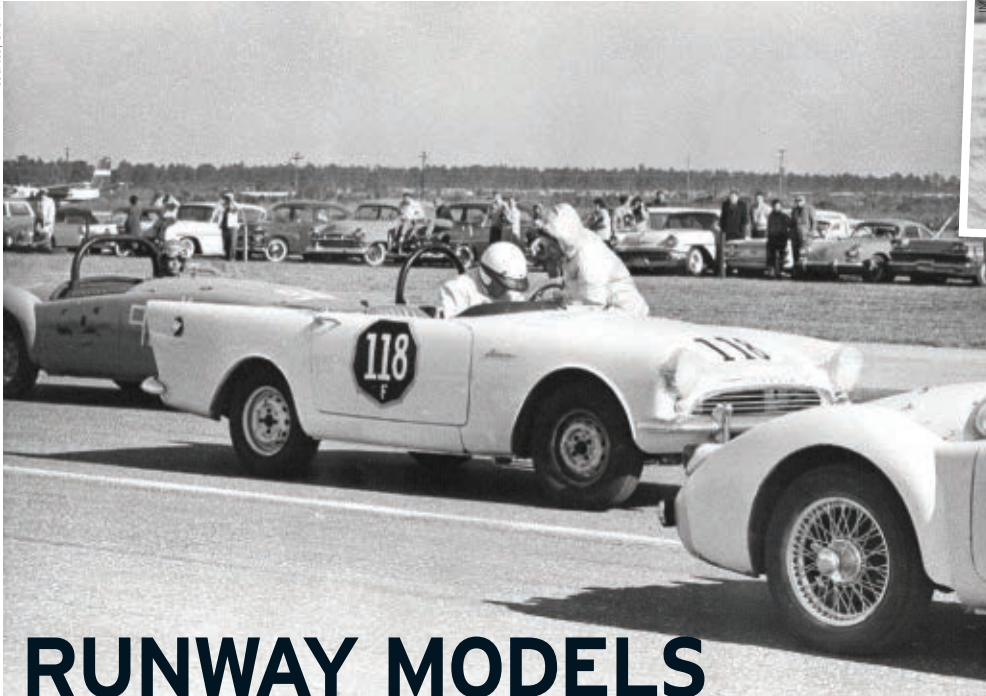
After the GM brass scuppered plans for the Corvette Grand Sport as a factory project, two cars were loaned to privateers for racing in SCCA events. Lessons learned were applied, including improved cooling and 9in. wheels with fender flares. GM’s 377cu.in. aluminum small block V8 was also fitted, putting them near to intended final spec for the first time. Three were sent to the Bahamas to race in December ‘63’s Nassau Speed Week, entered by John Mecom. With no FIA GT homologation, the ‘Vettes were entered as prototypes, but would get to race head to head with the Cobras for the first time. Overheated differentials caused DNFs in the opening race. But by a very happy coincidence, several Corvette project engineers were “vacationing” in the Bahamas and fitted additional coolers. In the final two races of the week, the Grand Sports finished comfortably ahead of the Cobras, but that merely alerted GM that the project hadn’t been scrapped as requested. Now, the cars were ordered to be destroyed...



1963 CHEVROLET CORVETTE GRAND SPORT TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- Configuration** front-engine, rear-wheel drive, two-door coupe
- Body/frame** Fiberglass over steel tube frame and aluminum cabin frame
- Weight** 1,900lb/863kg
- Engine** 377cu.in (6.2-liter), aluminum small block Chevrolet V8 w/ four 58mm Weber carburetors
- Power/torque** 485hp @ 6,000rpm
- Transmission** BorgWarner 4-speed manual
- Brakes** Girling discs front & rear
- Suspension** 4-wheel independent

DESTROY THEM? NOT SO FAST...
Of the five Corvette Grand Sports built, three were surreptitiously handed over to privateers after the orders had come from GM management to destroy them. The other two, converted to roadsters, were kept hidden within plain sight at Chevrolet, before being sold to Roger Penske in 1966. The ‘Vette in our shoot, car No. 004, currently resides in The Collier Collection at The Revs Institute in Naples, Fla. (revsinstitute.org).



Courtesy of Amelia Island Concours/Neil Paschoa

(LEFT and TOP) Racing at Fernandina Beach is something that stretches back more than 50 years. (ABOVE) The chance to turn a visit to an SVRA event into a week-long trip to also see Amelia Island Concours should not be missed.

RUNWAY MODELS

If you love the heritage of the sport, watching great racing on airport courses, and seeing in the spring in Florida, SVRA has an idea for you...

In the 21st century, the number of Sports Car Club of America autocross events held at airport/ex-airport venues is still healthily into triple-digit figures. The number of actual road races held on airport courses? Well, that's a single-digit sum. Yet it wasn't always the case, and one of the most popular airport venues in the 1960s was at Fernandina Beach on Amelia Island, Fla.

These days, Amelia Island is known to car lovers worldwide as the venue for a prestigious Concours d'Elegance, which draws over 250 rare vehicles from collections around the world to The Golf Club of Amelia Island and The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island. Knowing the area's racing history, Tony Parella, CEO of the Sports Car Vintage Racing Association, spoke with Bill Warner, founder and chairman of the Amelia Island Concours (and an SVRA member since its inception) about a combined event.

Thus, next March 17-20, just four days after the Concours d'Elegance ends, a three-day SVRA event will take place on a 2.4-mile course using

Fernandina Beach Municipal Airport, creating a seven-day extravaganza in paradise for all who love classic cars.

"It is an absolute honor to launch our Amelia Island Vintage Grand Prix at Fernandina Airport within a week of the prestigious Amelia Island Concours d' Elegance," said Parella. "I am also in awe of the accomplishments of the Concours Foundation and its tremendous charitable work.

"I know the SVRA can produce a worthy complement to The Amelia Island Concours d' Elegance. More importantly, this is going to be a big treat for people who love cars, planes, bikes and their history."

Hang on... Planes? Bikes?

Yes. One of the runways at the airport, where racing luminaries such as Roger Penske and Peter Gregg once competed, will remain open for vintage aircraft to be part of the show. And the SVRA, not content with breaking new ground with its venue, will add motorcycle racing to its roster that weekend.

"I have raced with SVRA since its



Go to **SVRA.com** for news bulletins, event schedules, membership info and all regulation details.

inception in the late 1970s," said Bill Warner. "Tony Parella runs a superb organization and brings a world class racing event. It will be a perfect addition to March on Amelia Island."

Parella will focus the invitation-only SVRA race events on racecars from pre-war to about 1980, avoiding heavily aero-dependent machines. But if the car selection is exclusive, the spectator viewing will be open to all. Has a week in Florida in March ever been so tempting?



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MAGIC MOMENT

The cars alone are enough to make grown men weak at the knees, but the SVRA Brickyard Invitational in June at Indianapolis also saw a quintet of Uners reunited - Al, Bobby, Al Jr., Johnny and Robby.

2015 SVRA SCHEDULE

<p>JUNE 25-28 THE VINTAGE GRAND PRIX OF MID-OHIO Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Ohio</p> <p>JULY 9-12 PORTLAND VINTAGE RACING FESTIVAL Portland International Raceway, Ore.</p> <p>JULY 23-26 GLENORA WINE CELLARS U.S. VINTAGE GRAND PRIX Watkins Glen International, N.Y.</p> <p>AUG. 20-23 POCONO VINTAGE FESTIVAL with INDYCAR Pocono Raceway, Pa.</p>	<p>SEPT. 18-20 CORONADO SPEED FESTIVAL with SAN DIEGO FLEET WEEK Naval Air Station North Island, Coronado, Calif.</p> <p>SEPT. 24-27 HEACOCK CLASSIC GOLD CUP Virginia International Raceway, Va.</p> <p>OCT. 8-11 MARDI GRAS IN OCTOBER with CVAR NOLA Motorsports Park, La.</p> <p>NOV. 4-8 U.S. VINTAGE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP Circuit of The Americas, Texas</p>
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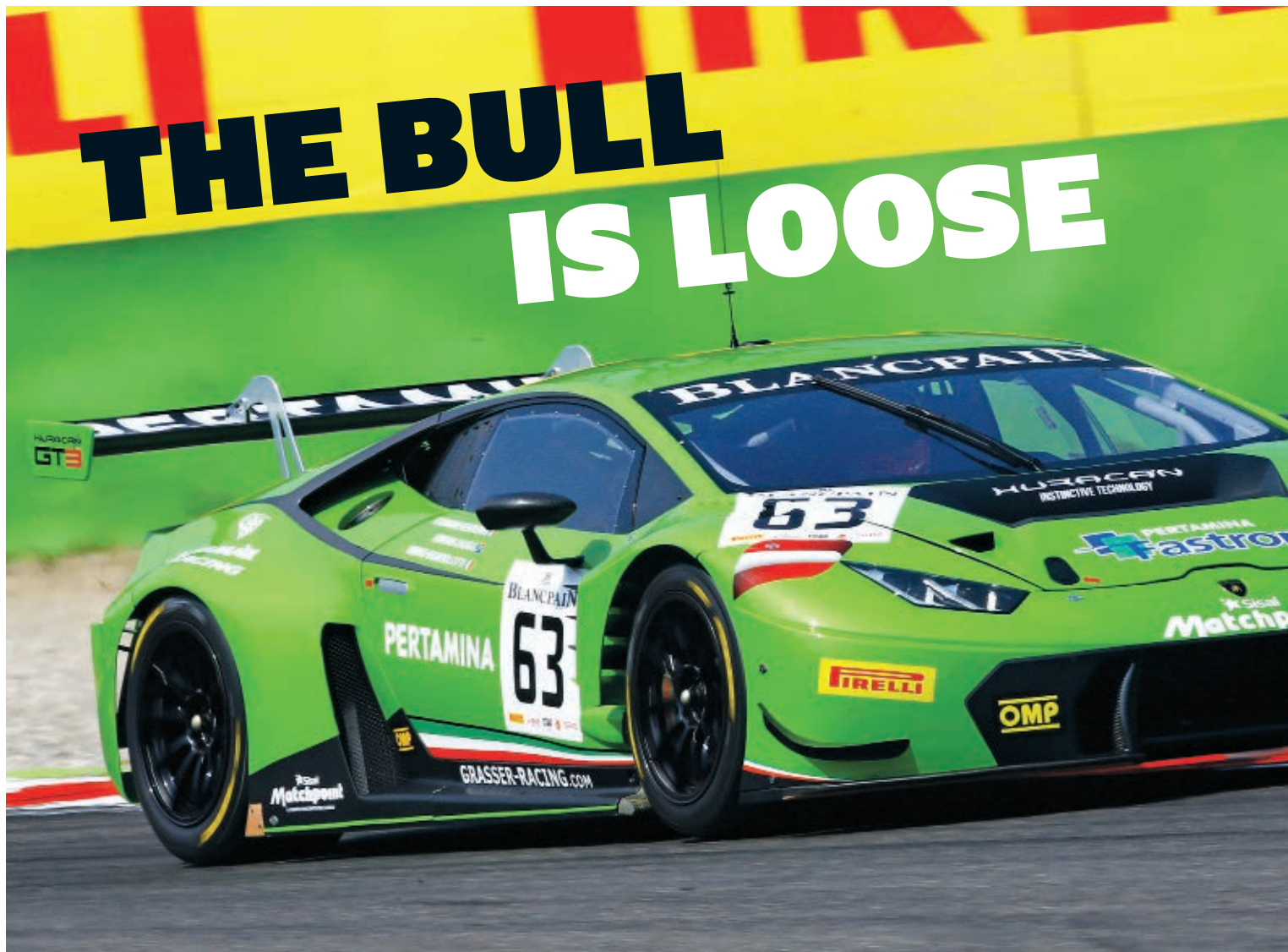
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Racing barely featured in Lamborghini's first half-century of building supercar exotica, but that's changing rapidly as the Italian icon unleashes its first in-house GT3 car.

WORDS Richard S. James
MAIN IMAGE Olivier Beroud/VSA

Men of a certain age will remember the poster that every boy who became a car nut (and many who didn't) had on his wall - a Lamborghini Countach, usually red, and often with a scantily clad woman sprawled on the hood. The Countach was low, powerful, impractical... It was the perfect icon of late 1970s and '80s excess and the most outrageous car anyone might conceive. Those lucky enough to see one in person probably can remember to this day where and when they first laid eyes on the Marcello Gandini-designed beast.

Where they weren't spotted, in all likelihood, was on the race track. While most performance car manufacturers participated in motorsports to prove their product - and in the case of Enzo Ferrari,

built road cars to finance the racing - Lamborghini never showed much interest, even though the car company was inspired by Ferrari himself. The story goes that tractor builder Ferruccio Lamborghini was so tired of his Ferraris breaking, and so incensed by Ferrari's response to his complaints, that he launched his own car company.

Yet despite building some of the most powerful, fastest cars on the planet, racing was never in the cards, at least from a factory standpoint. True, there was the short-lived Formula 1 engine program while the company was owned by Chrysler (see page 74), but it never saw success. After Chrysler jettisoned the supercar maker to a group of Indonesian



Brian Cleary/LAT

MULTIPLE PRESENCE

(FAR LEFT) Lamborghini's new GT3-spec Huracán was conceived as a two-wheel-drive racecar from the start. (BELOW) Huracáns in the one-make Super Trofeo retain the all-wheel-drive of the street car. (LEFT) The Gallardo GT3 remains a competitive proposition in Pirelli World Challenge GT.



Richard S. James



Richard S. James

A PROVEN TRACK RECORD

Before taking on the role of Lamborghini's head of motorsport in Jan. 2015, Giorgio Sanna was its chief R&D test driver. The 39-year-old was the 2011 Italian GT Champion.

investors, Volkswagen took an interest, and made it part of the Audi Brand Group. That changed everything.

It started with product, first the Murcielago and then the Gallardo, which provided the platform for the Audi R8 road car a few years later.

The R8, given its namesake, was envisioned as a racecar from the start, so why not the Gallardo, too? It began with a one-make series, which blossomed into a GT3 car built by Reiter Engineering, a German race-prep company which had already built race versions of the Diablo and Murcielago. The program fully bloomed with the creation of Lamborghini Squadra Corse in 2013, and even more so with the introduction of the Huracán, an



Edrew/LAT

Reiter Engineering-built Lamborghini Murcielagos (LEFT, the LP670 RS-V) were popular with privateer teams, but things really took off with the Gallardo GT3's debut in 2007.

aluminum-composite hybrid chassis with a 610hp V10 and all-wheel drive, developed alongside the newest iteration of the R8.

"Starting from 2013, when we decided to create Lamborghini's Squadra Corse, the first motorsports department in our history, the company has decided to >



Richard S. James

GT3: NO GO FOR AWD

All-wheel drive is the norm for Lamborghini's recent road cars, but FIA GT3 rules allow only two-wheel drive. That negates any wet-weather advantage for the Gallardo GT3 (LEFT) or the new Huracán GT3, but hasn't prevented Lambo from being a popular choice of privateer teams globally.

consider motorsport as one of the assets of the company from the marketing point of view," says Giorgio Sanna, who was named earlier this year as head of motorsport for Lamborghini Squadra Corse and is himself a noted test driver and GT racer. "It's quite easy to see the effort in the motorsports activities is completely different and increased compared to the past.

"We have to say that we are basically



Oliver Berouti/VSA



Richard S. James

(FAR LEFT) The Grasser Racing team celebrate a first win for the Huracán, albeit a short-lived one for now. (LEFT) One-make Super Trofeo is thriving on three continents.

"From a marketing point of view, our one-make series is an incredible tool to promote the street car"

MAURIZIO REGGIANI

customer racing, not factory racing," he continues, "so we invest in the product, the new Huracán. We planned two or three years ago to create a new platform, a racing product based on the Huracán - the new Super Trofeo and the Huracán GT3."

Yes, customers raced Lamborghinis before, with the Gallardo being the most-raced model to date. But the step forward with the Huracán is big. Racing was on the collective mind as the car was developed - not only in the one-make Super Trofeo, but for the burgeoning GT3 scene as well. While the Gallardo had to be re-engineered, going from all-wheel drive

to two-wheel drive to make it legal for FIA GT3 and all the national and international series that use the specification, the Huracán was conceived as both an AWD road car and a two-wheel-drive GT3 racecar from the get-go.

"From the beginning, by working with Giorgio's team, we were thinking about all the versions of the new car," says Maurizio Reggiani, director of R&D at Automobili Lamborghini and the father of the Huracán. "From a marketing point of view, our *monomarque*, our one-make series, is an incredible tool to promote the street car by using it in racing. But we also want to show the competitiveness of the car compared to other manufacturers and their cars. That means GT3 racing in Europe and, next year, also in the U.S.

"From the outset we made design decisions which allowed us to build the GT3 racecar in two-wheel drive, and that's a little bit different to how we did it with

the Gallardo in the past. Our strategy was very clear: from the outset, we wanted to develop a car for racing; one that fulfills all the rules of the FIA and IMSA and is able to prove that, as well as being the best in class with four-wheel drive, it's also the best in class as a two-wheel-drive GT3 car."

The Huracán is the first GT3 car produced directly by the factory, using partners such as Dallara, MoTeC, Bosch and Öhlins. Plus, Squadra Corse has a hotline to Audi Customer Racing, sharing components and information as Audi develops its latest R8 into an endurance racing star (and winner of the 24 Hours of Nurburgring on its debut). The results have been impressive and immediate, with the GRT Grasser Racing Team Huracán of Fabio Babini, Andrew Palmer and Jeroen Mul crossing the line first in the Blancpain Endurance Series 2015 opener at Monza. The car was later excluded due to the fueling restrictor being out of spec (the >

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Reiter Engineering has sold more than 100 Murcielago (LEFT) and Gallardo racecars. Lamborghini hopes to build on that success with its in-house Huracán. The new car is currently active in Super Trofeo (BELOW LEFT) and, in GT3 spec, Blancpain GT (BELOW), but could be racing in the TUDOR Championship and PWC in 2016.

exclusion is under appeal), but it was still compelling proof of its potential.

It's also interesting to note the driver lineup of the car that provisionally won at Monza. Babini is a two-time Super Trofeo Europe champion; Mul was second in last year's series points; and Palmer was the 2013 winner of the Super Trofeo World Final. It potentially illustrates two points. Firstly, that Lamborghini is eager to



“GT3 is the most important category in terms of cars on the grid and race series - if we exclude Le Mans...”

GIORGIO SANNA

promote the stars of its one-make series; and, secondly, that Super Trofeo is not just a series for wannabes with more money than they know what to do with.

The three Lamborghini Blancpain Super Trofeo Series - Europe, North America and Asia - offer a variety of pro and amateur classes, and culminate with a head-to-head at the World Final, which this year takes place at Sebring International Raceway, Nov. 21-22. Huracáns make up the bulk of the grids, but the Gallardo is still included in a separate class.

There is another level in addition to GT3 and Super Trofeo, and that's the

Accademia programs. This includes Track Accademia, where participants get professional instruction in Lamborghini automobiles at race tracks across the world. The Winter Accademia takes the opportunity to show off what 700hp and all-wheel drive can do on snow and ice. Both programs provide participants an opportunity to push a Lamborghini to its limits in an atmosphere fitting what the company's customers would expect.

With a three-tiered, bottom-up approach to motorsports, one wonders what's next. While the next logical step might be a GTE car for Le Mans and its associated championships, that's not on the cards for Lamborghini at the moment.

“We are a young department, so we have to grow up step by step,” explains Sanna. “At the moment, looking at our plan, we are focused only on the customer racing and we have to do our best in this scenario. Then we will see.

Already the GT3 is a big effort from our side. It's a big challenge because now the GT3 can run worldwide. It's the most important category in terms of cars on the grid and the race series - if we exclude, of course, Le Mans...”

While Sanna appears to be leaving the door open for future GTE involvement, right now Lamborghini's program with the Accademia, Super Trofeo and GT3 is a full plate, as well as a logical progression. The GT3 program, especially, has lots of potential for growth and it's expected, based on interest expressed so far, that the Huracán GT3 will be on IMSA TUDOR Championship grids in the near future, and possibly Pirelli World Challenge, too.

It's a big step for a company that virtually ignored racing for its first half-century of existence, but one that authentically reinforces and showcases the high-performance substance that goes with Lamborghini's undoubted style. ■

LAMBO IN F1: FIVE YEARS OF NOT VERY MUCH

Chrysler-owned Lamborghini entered Formula 1 as an engine supplier in 1989, enduring five underwhelming years with a rotating cast of mid- to back-of-the-grid teams.

The 3.5-liter V12 powered Larrousse, Lotus (BELOW), Derek Warwick mulls his plight in 1990), Ligier, Minardi and Modena. Best finish was third for Aguri Suzuki (Larrousse) in the '90 Japanese GP.

McLaren tested the V12 in '93, but chose Peugeot's similarly lame V10 for the '94 season.



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WON AND DONE

BMW's awesome V12 LMR prototype and V8-powered M3 GTR competed only briefly in the ALMS, but both cars left their mark.

WORDS David Malsher
MAIN IMAGE Richard Dole/LAT



Three years, two cars, one initial aim and major collateral success. That's how BMW's return to a *werks* effort in U.S. sports car racing should be remembered.

First came the mighty 580hp BMW V12 LMR which, built by the Williams F1 team, operated by the legendary Schnitzer Motorsport squad, and driven by talents such as JJ Lehto and Jorg Muller, seemed to have the right stuff...

"It's fair to say that the V12 LM of 1998 had not been a success at Le Mans," says Schnitzer's team manager since 1978, Charly Lamm, "but it's also true to say that it was done in a big rush. So Gerhard Berger, who had become competitions director with BMW, made an agreement with Frank Williams and Patrick Head to build the V12 LMR car as a precursor for their Formula 1 program together.

"It was fantastic. Williams provided a group of engineers in an extra facility -

really good, smart people - and we delivered the engine. Gerhard, who had raced for us very successfully in European Touring Cars in the 1980s, appreciated our ability to run cars in endurance races. We'd won the 1985 Spa 24 Hours together."

But even with all these stars aligned, it was a shock to win first time out in the 1999 American Le Mans Series, conquering the 12 Hours of Sebring (see sidebar, RIGHT). For BMW to go on and finish second in the championship, despite missing two rounds due to its pursuit of 24 Hours of Le Mans glory, was no less impressive.

At Le Mans, Sebring winners JJ Lehto, Tom Kristensen and Jorg Muller missed out on a win when a stuck throttle caused Lehto to crash, but the sister V12 LMR of Yannick Dalmas, Pierluigi Martini and Jo Winkelhock was able to claim the honors ahead of a factory-packed field.

Post-Le Mans, Lehto and Steve Soper

I WAS THERE... CHARLY LAMM



Malcolm Griffiths/LAT

“That 1999 Sebring win with the BMW V12 LMR was a surprise and now a great memory! BMW of North America and [ALMS founder] Don Panoz had been very excited by the idea of the car competing there as preparation for the Le Mans 24 hours.

“We went to Homestead earlier in March to test and we experienced some gearbox issues, so the phone lines were hot between us and Xtrac and the Williams team. Eventually a fix was found but we still had worries, so we did not run much in free practice and qualifying, yet our two cars still started on pole and third.

“The LMR was not ideal for Sebring, but we consciously decided to leave it in low-downforce trim to help prepare for what we would find in Le Mans. Unfortunately we lost the Yannick Dalmas/Pierluigi Martini/Jo Winkelhock car in an accident, but the JJ Lehto/Tom Kristensen/Jorg Muller car ran fantastically - gearbox, drivetrain all reliable.”



Rick Dorer/LAT



Gavin Lawrence/LAT

SEBRING SURPRISE

How many racecars win such a prestigious and grueling race as the 12 Hours of Sebring on their debut? The BMW V12 LMR did in 1999, driven by (left to right) Tom Kristensen, Jorg Muller and JJ Lehto.

JJ: EVERYTHING BUT LE MANS...

JJ Lehto wasn't in the V12 LMR that conquered the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1999, but he co-drove the model to all six of its American Le Mans Series triumphs.

ALL FIRED UP! (2001)

Jorg Muller and JJ Lehto scored four ALMS GT class wins in the flame-spitting, 4-liter, V8-powered M3 GTR. Dirk Muller and Fredrik Eklblom took another, and the PTG team's M3 GTR added two more, including Petit Le Mans. BMW Motorsport also won the GT Teams' Championship.

added three more ALMS wins, falling just two points short of a Teams' title for BMW.

In 2000, Lehto and Jorg Muller claimed two more ALMS wins for the V12 LMR, but there was a new plan brewing: The M3 GTR with a flame-spitting 470hp V8 at its heart...

Says Lamm: "That decision was made in August 2000 as F1 was now the frontline championship for BMW in Europe. But BMW of North America was keen to continue, as the M3 and 3-series are so popular in the U.S. A one-off GT homologation rule allowed a road-going version of the E46 M3 with a 4-liter V8 instead of the inline-6. That gave us a fantastic car for beating Porsche in '01.

"We borrowed six-cylinder M3s from Tom Milner's PTG team to pick up points in the first race because the timeline for the V8 had been frantic - the project only started in December 2000! Then the V8 GTRs were shipped to the U.S. - we'd had a team facility in Los Angeles since 1999 -

and they were great. The V8 gave the M3 more power and better weight distribution."

While Porsche 911s took the first three rounds of the 2001 ALMS, M3 GTRs won the other seven - five and the prestigious GT Teams' title for Schnitzer-run BMW Motorsport, and two for PTG. The initial plan was to continue in ALMS, but the Balance of Performance rules for '02 would have stifled the M3s, so the decision was made to withdraw. Still, the GTR had accomplished its mission, and Lamm looks back with fondness on Schnitzer's three-year U.S. adventure.

"Racing in America is fantastic," he says. "Open paddocks and a strong connection to the fans. They would thank us for coming all the way from Germany! Very friendly."

Some 15 years later, it's clear that BMW and Schnitzer captured not only prestigious trophies, but also the hearts and minds of North American race fans with a brief, yet very sweet ALMS success story. ■

M3 HAS RACING IN ITS DNA

Six generations and 40 years on from its debut, the BMW 3 Series rules the sports sedan class. It's BMW's bestseller, and has motorsport pedigree, at the apex of which is the M3.

The latest M3 (sedan) and M4 (coupe), while able to carry up to four passengers and a trunk full of groceries, also remain great track day weapons. A carbon fiber roof, driveshaft and engine brace, along with carbon-ceramic brake rotors, saved 180lbs over the previous model to help increase the power-to-weight ratio by nine percent.

Coupled with a more efficient twin-turbo engine, a rear subframe bolted directly to the body without rubber bushings, integrated lap timer and more, the M3/M4 line begs a question: "Where's the nearest race track?"



THE FIRST FOUR DECADES

BMW of North America is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2015. Find out more about BMW Motorsport and what makes BMW the Ultimate Driving Machine at bmwusa.com



The Ultimate Driving Machine



POSITIVE **SAINZ**

As fellow Toro Rosso rookie Max Verstappen got the hype and headlines, Carlos Sainz Jr. made his Formula 1 debut under the radar, but has proved impressive.

WORDS Adam Cooper | MAIN IMAGE Charles Coates/LAT

Reflected glory... Carlos Sainz Jr.'s Toro Rosso STR10 threads its way to a 10th-place finish on the twisting streets of Monte Carlo. It was the F1 rookie's fourth points haul in his first six grand prix starts.



NO COMPARISON
 Carlos Sainz Jr.'s F1 debut with Toro Rosso came after five seasons in the junior open-wheel ranks. Sure, that's four more than his teammate, Max Verstappen, but the 2014 Formula Renault 3.5 champ isn't fazed by comparison with the 17-year-old phenom.

Barcelona, May 2005. Fernando Alonso has won the past three grands prix and, as leader of the World Championship, he's started to put Formula 1 firmly on the map in a country hitherto dominated by soccer and MotoGP. Spanish motorsports royalty meet in the Renault pit garage as two-time World Rally Champion Carlos Sainz catches up with the country's new star. Sainz's awestruck 10-year-old son, Carlos Jr., is delighted to be introduced to his hero.

Barcelona, May 2015. Alonso is having a tough time with McLaren-Honda, qualifying a frustrated 13th for the Spanish GP. However, disappointed Spanish fans have a new star to cheer, for starting a surprise fifth in his first home race is Sainz Jr. Now aged 20, he's already making a mark with Toro Rosso.

"Barcelona was special," Sainz Jr. tells *RACER* with a smile. "I fell in love with F1 at Barcelona 10 years ago, when I was a kid, and Fernando was like my idol, my hero."

"Then I finally made it to F1 after 10 years of fighting, turned up to my first Spanish GP, and qualified P5 with Toro Rosso - the kind of grid position that Fernando has so often been sitting in for the past few years. It was very special for



Alastair Skelley/LAT

"I fell in love with F1 at Barcelona 10 years ago, and Fernando [Alonso] was like my idol, my hero"

CARLOS SAINZ JR.

me, a really incredible feeling..."

Given that he grew up in an environment dominated by cars, you might think it was inevitable that Carlos Jr. would gravitate toward motorsports.

"It wasn't obvious, because I didn't take the decision to go racing seriously until I was 10 years old," he says. "Sure, I was playing around in karting with my dad, but

I was also playing a lot of tennis, a lot of soccer, I was doing motocross. I enjoyed doing every sport. But then when I turned 10, and I came to see the Spanish GP and saw the world of F1, I made my decision."

So why not follow his dad into rallying, given that Carlos Sr. was one of the all-time greats? (See sidebar, page 83.)

"It's very simple. When I was 10 years old, my dad retired, and rallies were not on TV in Spain. As a child I just watched TV and went to school! And what was on TV was this guy called Fernando Alonso, racing for the Formula 1 World Championship. So I had racing in my blood, I liked cars, I liked F1, and I said, 'I want to be like Fernando.'" "Although Sainz Sr. had done some open-wheel racing early in his career, he knew nothing about karting, so there was a limit to what he could contribute. What he did know about was how to be a winner."

"The basics are the same, especially in terms of attitude, mindset and behaviour that you need to have," says Carlos Jr. "I think I'm very lucky to have a double World Rally Champion to teach me the attitude to become a champion. But even if my father was champion of badminton or >



Andrew Hone/LAT

A decade ago, Sainz Jr. had been in awe of meeting Fernando Alonso. (ABOVE) Now, he's on the same grid as his countryman. (LEFT) Max Verstappen leads Sainz in Monaco GP practice. But come the races, the Spaniard has easily out-scored his Toro Rosso teammate in the early part of the 2015 season.

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Mark Thompson/Red Bull

It looks spectacular, but as Carlos Sainz Jr. noted after the Monaco GP, the challenge for an F1 rookie is more mental than physical, given the complexity of the current-gen power units.



Dieckerik van der Laan/Dutch Photo Agency/LAT



Dieckerik van der Laan/Dutch Photo Agency/LAT

MORAL SUPPORT

Racing for the crack DAMS team (ABOVE), Carlos Sainz Jr. dominated the 2014 Formula Renault 3.5 Championship. His father, former World Rally ace Carlos Sr., supplied moral support and advice on the mental side of competing.

tennis, it would have been possible to have that. In terms of actual driving and all that, he didn't teach me anything. He believed this was coming from talent.

"For my dad it was tricky, because at the same time I was learning about karting, he was also learning. We were always saying, 'Imagine if we'd known this two years earlier, we should have gone to this team, or used this engine, or used these tires.' But as we both had no experience, we learned at the same time about this."

Inevitably, his famous name meant that, from the very beginning, Sainz Jr. was in the spotlight: "This was always going to happen," he says. "It happened to me, to Nico [Rosberg], to everyone else who has a well-known father. What I know is that for the first four years of my karting career I was 'the son of,' and I couldn't stand it! I didn't have a name, I was just the son of Carlos Sainz.

"I worked really hard to take this out of myself and one day be Carlos Sainz in my own right, and be myself. There's a lot of pressure. As soon as you do a mistake or something there's a lot of criticism, and a lot of eyes are watching you. It's not as

easy as people might think..."

Fortunately he had the talent, and he soon began to impress in karts. In late 2009, having only just turned 15, he was invited by Red Bull to test a Formula BMW car. He did a good job and, along with Daniil Kvyat, was picked up for '10.

Of course, the name was part of the appeal, but as we've seen over the years, Red Bull drivers have to perform. Carlos

"I worked really hard to be Carlos Sainz in my own right, and be myself. There's a lot of pressure"

CARLOS SAINZ JR.

was a solid fourth in Formula BMW Europe in 2010, and then in '11 he beat Kvyat and Stoffel Vandoorne to the Formula Renault NEC title. He graduated to F3 in 2012, and in '13 ran both GP3 and a part season in Renault 3.5, although both years a title challenge eluded him.

"For me, it's been a perfect career, where I've never repeated a full year in a >

EL MATADOR

THE ORIGINAL CARLOS SAINZ

Carlos Sainz Sr. was a competitive force in the World Rally Championship for almost two decades.

Carlos Sainz Sr. is without doubt one of the biggest names in the history of the FIA World Rally Championship, and he'd attained legendary status in his native Spain long before Fernando Alonso ever sat in a Formula 1 car.

Born in 1962, his first love was circuit racing. Having competed in Renault 5 one-make racing, he contested the '83 Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch, England, as a complete unknown after winning Spain's Marlboro Challenge talent search. He impressed by finishing fourth in his heat - his first open-wheel race - before picking up radiator damage in the next round.

Rallying then became his focus, and he entered his first WRC events with a Ford Sierra RS Cosworth in 1987, taking top-10 finishes in Corsica and Britain. He moved to Toyota in 1989, and soon began an amazing streak that saw him win the WRC title in 1990, finish a close second to Lancia's Juha Kankkunen in '91, and win it again in '92.



LAT archive

WRC'S IRON MAN

Carlos Sainz's WRC career spanned 19 years and 196 rallies, ahead of Petter Solberg (188) and Sebastien Loeb (169).



Marcelo Wazoon/Maxi Pini

STILL COMPETING

Sainz is still active in cross-country rallies. He currently drives for Peugeot, but won the 2010 Dakar Rally with VW (ABOVE).

He then ill-advisedly left Toyota at the end of 1993 for the privateer Jolly Club Lancia team, before switching to Subaru in '94.

While he would never win another title, "El Matador" remained a serious contender for the next dozen years. He was championship runner-up with Subaru in 1994 and '95, and again on a return to Toyota in '98. He was also third on five occasions, making a total of 11 top-three WRC Drivers' Championship finishes, the last with Citroen in '03.

In total he scored 26 WRC event victories between 1990 and '04, and he ranks fourth on the all-time winners list. He still tops the table for WRC events contested, 196, and is third in the all-time stage wins list with 757.

His last WRC start was the 2005 Acropolis event in Greece, but he didn't stop there, carrying on in raid rallies and winning the FIA Cross-Country World Cup in 2007, and the grueling Dakar event in '10, both with Volkswagen.



Carlos Sainz took the second of his two World Rally Championship titles with Toyota in 1992. Portugal (ABOVE) wasn't one of his four wins that year (he was third), but we couldn't resist this "big air" moment.

LAT archive



Sama Vlac/Red Bull

SPAIN IN F1: A RELATIVE SUCCESS...

With Carlos Sainz Jr. and Manor's Roberto Merhi joining Fernando Alonso in the 2015 Formula 1 lineup, Spain accounts for 15 percent of the grid, matched only by Germany and Great Britain.

But there's still a long way to go before it gets even close to the Spanish presence in MotoGP.

Eight of 25 full-season riders in the top class are Spanish, including two-time champs Marc Marquez and the in-form Jorge Lorenzo (BELOW).

By the way, five Italians also grace the 2015 MotoGP roster, including points leader and legend Valentino Rossi. That compares to a big, fat zero in F1. Go figure...



Motorstar/Yamaha MotoGP

category," he says. "Every year I've made one step up. So I was always kind of a rookie, and it was always a new challenge for me. I would say I had two very strong first years in 2010 and '11, where I made my name and started to show a bit what I was capable of. In 2012 and '13, I struggled a bit more. I was still shining sometimes, but never in a consistent way."

Kvyat made faster progress, but Carlos retained Red Bull support, and the energy drink giant was repaid in 2014 when he won the Renault 3.5 title.

"Finally I put it all together for 2014," he says. "I learned a lot, and I said, 'This is my year; it's time to win a championship.' For me, winning that championship was everything. I knew that coming second I was out of the picture for Toro Rosso, so it was all or nothing. I had to win that, and not only win it, but do it in a special way. And that's exactly what happened."

Sebastian Vettel's departure for Ferrari was the key that opened the F1 door. Kvyat was promoted to a Red Bull Racing seat for 2015, leaving a vacancy at Toro Rosso alongside Max Verstappen, who'd been announced in Aug. 2014. Sainz was



Mark Thompson/Red Bull

"Everyone's looking at how much Max [Verstappen] is going to be quicker than Carlos, so it's not easy"

CARLOS SAINZ JR.

finally confirmed as an STR driver Nov. 28, just days after testing for RBR in Abu Dhabi. He'd shown he was ready.

"When you're with Red Bull, you don't just need to do a good job, you need to show them something else, something that not everyone else has," says Carlos Jr. "You need to send messages that you have something different. So it's not only

Toro Rosso's rookie lineup of Verstappen and Sainz Jr. (BELOW), average age 18.5, was a big storyline coming in to 2015. But Carlos (ABOVE) hasn't let it become a distraction.

winning a championship, or winning a race, it's really trying to get their attention."

So far, he's had a strong start to his F1 career, earning points in four of the first six GPs. Given the hype around Verstappen, it's easy to overlook the fact that Sainz is also a rookie, and is still finding his way.

"This is what people forget, I'm very young, I'm still only 20," he says. "At 20 you enter the list of some of the youngest points scorers ever in F1. But people still think that I'm old! Max is 17, he's a huge talent, a really, really good driver. But it doesn't mean that if he's good, I'm not. We can be two good drivers at the same time."

Does Sainz face less pressure than the high-profile Dutchman? He doesn't think so.

"In Spain everyone is trying to compare us," he says. "Even internationally, everyone is looking at how much Max is going to be quicker than Carlos, so it's not easy. People will say I have less pressure, but in the end (Red Bull driver development boss) Helmut Marko, (STR team principal) Franz Tost and all the people here expect me to perform at the same level as him, so the pressure I feel is pressure from my bosses. And my bosses are pressuring me to do the same as him." ■



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GRIP FOR THE LADDER

Cooper Tire is sole supplier for the Mazda Road To Indy. It's a complex undertaking, but a successful one.

How many companies does it take to mount and balance 1,400 tires per race weekend for a three-tier, open-wheel ladder system? Just the one.

Findlay, Ohio-based Cooper Tire, the sole provider of race tires for the Mazda Road To Indy, handles it all and has done since before the formalization of the Andersen Promotions-run system that includes Indy Lights, Pro Mazda and USF2000.

Its remit is to provide a unique tire, specific to the demands for each of those series, in separate road course and oval track constructions. Accounting for front and rear sets, plus dry and wet weather iterations, that comes to 18 different tire specifications. Feeder series or otherwise, it's a truly massive undertaking.

"We bring between three to five 53-foot trailers filled with tires, plus our service

truck, to every Mazda Road To Indy event," says Chris Pantani, director of motorsport for Cooper Tire. "On a given weekend, when all three series are racing, it's as many as 60 different cars that need tires."

Cooper Tire manufactures all of its race tires in Melksham, England, and it's a continuous operation with the team that's Stateside to juggle as many as four shipping containers of tires that come across the pond every month. To what end?

Well, there's obviously the business interest in selling the tires, but Cooper Tire gives back to the series in spades as thanks for that business. Over \$100,000 worth of scholarship tires are awarded to the champions of each series to be utilized the following year, whether they move up a rung within the system or stay where they are to defend their title.



For Cooper Tire, the race track is a laboratory and testing ground for technology that will feed back into its street tires.

There's also an abundance of training that all participating teams and drivers get in seminars hosted by people such as Johnny Unser, who is a technical consultant for Cooper Tire, or through active IndyCar drivers like James Hinchcliffe and Simona de Silvestro, and even Dario Franchitti, that range in topics from tire tech, to driver fitness, to media training.

"We first began supplying tires to the USF2000 series in 2006," says Pantani. "When Pro Mazda came together in 2013, we began supplying a spec tire for that series as well. The last piece of the puzzle fell into place once Dan Andersen, Mazda and IndyCar added Indy Lights under a unified system. Cooper Tire was awarded that tire supply contract in 2014 and then worked in conjunction with Andersen Promotions and Tony Cotman on the

Images: Chris Owens



(FAR LEFT) And every one of them needs tires... Seeing the three Mazda Road to Indy series lined up on Indy's start-finish straight is a vivid reminder of the scale of Cooper's task at every event. (TOP) Its role as sole supplier has been well earned, but three series doesn't mean only three different tires required. Each one requires fronts and rears for wet and dry road courses, plus oval-spec tires (LEFT). In total, that's 18 different specs.

AT-TRACK SERVICE

THE ART OF EFFICIENCY

A Mazda Road To Indy weekend requires a tremendous amount of coordination and efficiency to ensure drivers have the tires needed for a shot at victory. Which is where at-track service from Cooper Tire comes in.

The Cooper crew sets up a production line that maximizes efficiency on both sides of a 53-foot transporter. Teams drop used tires on one end, and a new set is mounted and returned at the other end. In between is a bead-breaker station, six mounter stations and a balancer station.

"We expect to give teams a complete set of tires every time, versus splitting fronts and rears or lefts and rights in multiple deliveries. Our 10-member crew is obsessed with efficiency to help us meet our goal," says Rodney Stauber, director of trackside operations.

Most weekends start with a pair of 12-hour days, which then get a little shorter as teams receive their tires. Later on, the Cooper Tire service area often turns into a refuge for team members to get away from internal team pressures and enjoy a cup of coffee or some friendly conversation.



The Cooper Tire at-track team prides itself on the efficiency of its operation. And with up to 60 cars to service, it needs to be.

"On a given weekend, when all three series are racing, it's as many as 60 different cars that need tires"

development of the new IL15 chassis. It's a true definition of a ladder system and we're proud to be a part of it.

"In addition, our involvement in the Mazda Road To Indy supports our capabilities in the high performance consumer tire segment. We already have a tremendous amount of market share and name recognition in the off-road and light truck segment. Racing in the Mazda Road To Indy is enabling us to attain the same level of recognition with our high-performance passenger car tires by showcasing what we

can do on the track. Then we convert that on a consumer level with our at-track activation that follows most of the races."

Beyond the marketing, there's a technical angle as well. Tire engineers from the Melksham Technical Center will eventually move to the consumer tire category, and the motorsport training and know-how follows along with them. The race tires are the innovation lab that tries new concepts, and those learnings filter into the construction and production of the tires that we buy for the street.

Yes, it's a lot of logistics and work, but as Pantani concludes, "At the end of a race weekend, we're a giant family between ourselves, the teams, the sponsors and the series organizers. Together we all play a part in developing the next generation of IndyCar drivers." ■

TIRES FOR PEOPLE...

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PRO LITE NEW WAVE

A pair of Pro Lite rookies have taken different paths to the class and are undergoing different experiences, but both are having a lot of fun doing it.

WORDS & IMAGES Richard S. James

Rookie. Rookie.

As a word, it's both a badge of honor and an insult. On the one hand, it signifies a bold new venture, the next step on the journey. On the other, it says, "I may not know what the heck I'm doing, so probably best avoid me..."

Sometimes, though, that's just not possible. Take the season-opening rounds of the Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series at Lake Elsinore Motorsports Park, for example. There was no avoiding Pro Lite rookie Brad DeBerti, who left the weekend with a pair of victories in his maiden outing in the national series and took the Pro Lite points lead ahead of veterans such as 2012 title-winner RJ Anderson, defending champ Sheldon Creed, Jerrett Brooks, Casey Currie and Ryan Beat.

Make no mistake, DeBerti has some of the best equipment in the form of Brian Deegan's championship-winning truck, coaching from the multi-time champ himself, and a lot of testing under his belt - but he still had to drive the thing under pressure, get it out front and keep it there, with many of those veterans trying every trick to keep that from happening.

DeBerti is one of several rookies in Pro Lite, which is the norm for the class. Some of the others include Trophy Kart graduates Cole Mamer and Brock Heger, Quad racer Dustin Nelson, drifter Sarah

Burgess and UTV veteran Mark Patridge. But DeBerti and another rookie have stood out so far, for the fact that both are relatively new to the sport, and also for some other, different reasons.

Taylor Atchison is tough to miss in a crowd. In fact, finding a Pro Lite that would fit his tall frame was a matter of chance. But it's the big Tonka branding on his truck that makes him stand out - that and the fact that as soon as he gets it off the track, he jumps into his similarly liveried Pro Buggy for another go. He's not the first to do it, but right now Atchison is the only LOORRS racer doing both Pro Buggy and Pro Lite. While many others double up, doing those two particular classes always presents a challenge because Pro Buggy immediately follows Pro Lite on an event schedule, making it an especially tough way of going the dual route (see sidebar).

These two rookies came from different routes, but both share a passion for a sport they've only recently become involved in, and both are determined to make a mark.

DeBerti says it was only a year ago he and his father decided to go to Chandler, Ariz., from their Pismo Beach, Calif., home and watch a LOORRS event at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park after catching the series on TV. What began as a lark soon became an obsession.

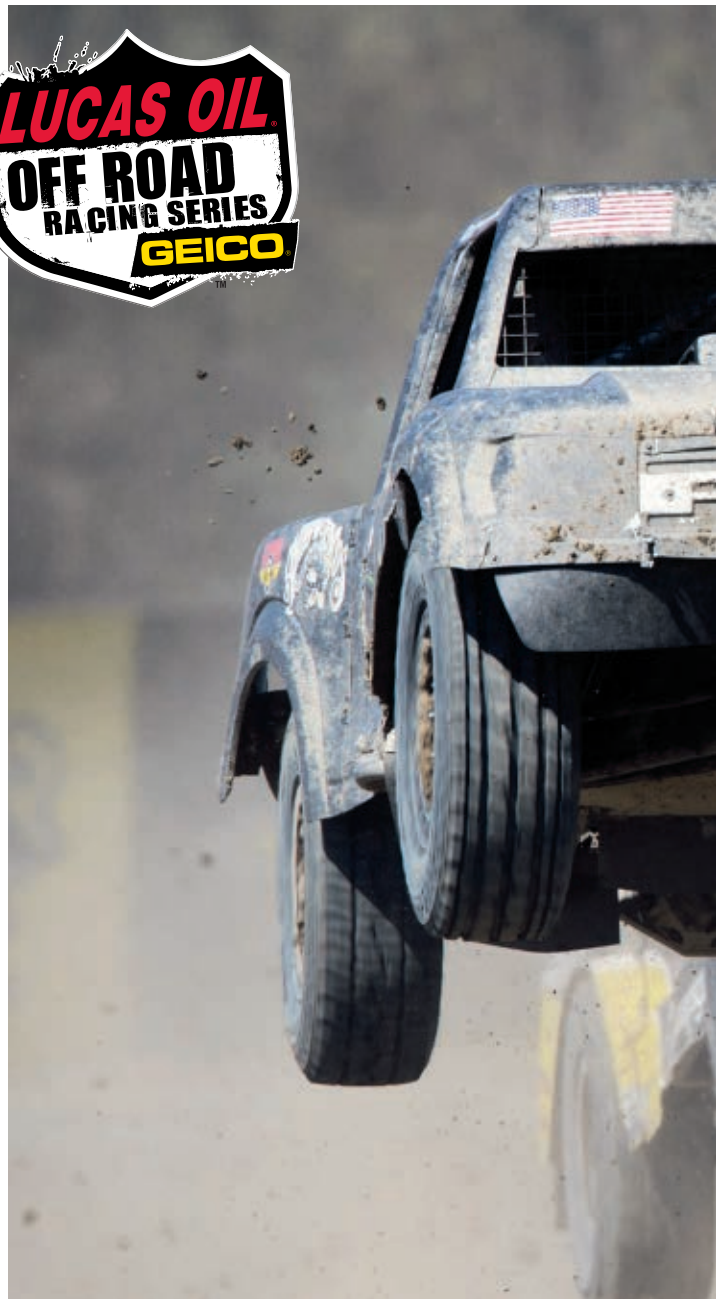
"The first things out were the Trophy



Karts," he explains. "My dad and I were looking at each other with eyes wide open. Then we watched the big trucks, and said, 'Holy cow! We have to do this.'"

By chance he met Brad Person, who had a Pro Lite for sale. The DeBertis bought it and Brad DeBerti started racing the Lucas Oil Regional Racing Series in Southern California, taking a podium on his debut.

After doing well for several races in the regionals, he sought better equipment and bought Deegan's truck. "It was tough selling it," says Deegan, who is replacing his Pro Lite program with Pro 4 in 2015. "But they're a good family and I really

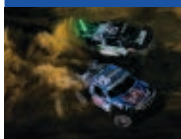




(MAIN) Brad DeBerti has mixed it with the Pro Lite veterans from the off, taking a double win in the Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series season opener. (BELOW) Taylor Atchison will be putting in serious race miles during 2015.

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The Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series delivers double-header, multi-class action until late October. You can catch extended highlights from every event on MAVTV, CBS and the CBS Sports Network. Better still, go and check it out for real. Adding to the amazing spectacle of LOORRS live, the final events are all night races. For the latest news and results, plus tickets and TV info, go check out lucasoiloffroad.com



wanted to help him because he was so excited about learning and racing. He really didn't have much of a background in racing, so I went out to test with him and help him set up everything." DeBerti has a big "Deegan 38" logo on the hood as thanks for the help, and not much other sponsorship. But a pair of wins in the first two races and a second-place finish in Round 5 could change that - especially if he keeps up the momentum. "I think he'll give it a run," says Deegan. "He'll be a contender as long as he doesn't make too many rookie mistakes. There are things he needs to

"You just have to have a smile on your face no matter what happens, because what we're out here for is fun"

BRAD DEBERTI

focus on, which will come with time." DeBerti learned how rough things can get back in the pack as the series went to Wild Horse Pass for Rounds 3 and 4, when Jerrett Brooks practically drove over the top of him. He didn't leave Arizona with the points lead he arrived

with, and saw what a couple of little mistakes in a race could mean. And he was irritated until his father reminded him why they were there. He wants to win - it shows in his commitment to study the sport, his passion for consistency and meticulously prepping his own truck - but more importantly, he's there to have fun. "You can't have a perfect performance every single time," he says, showing wisdom beyond his 20 years. "That's why you just have to have a smile on your face no matter what happens, because what we're really out here for is fun. If you're going to get mad because you don't finish >



on the podium, it's not worth it."

He was smiling as he approached Brandon Arthur after Round 5 at Lake Elsinore. The two had just finished a torrid battle for second that included door-banging contact over one of the front-stretch tabletops. They shook hands, laughed and relived the race while waiting for the podium celebrations to begin. That's the sign of someone enjoying what



(ABOVE) Taylor Atchison's vivid, Tonka-backed Pro Lite truck is a new addition for 2015. (LEFT) Brad DeBerti's move to the national Pro Lite ranks has resulted in quickfire success.

"Bringing a Pro Lite truck on board, I guess I'm trying to get as much driving time crammed in as I can"

TAYLOR ATCHISON

they're doing, even when they don't win.

Atchison appears to be having fun as well. He also kind of fell into Pro Lite after running Pro Buggy in his first season of racing in 2014. He'd been knocking around the idea of Pro Lite when friend Casey Currie called with the news that Midwest short course racer Keegan Kincaid had a truck for sale, and Kincaid and Atchison are of similar height - as in, tall. So Atchison doubled his workload.

But it also made an appealing proposition to Tonka. The manufacturer of built-tough toy trucks was coming into Pro 4 with Eric Barron after a couple of years of sponsoring Myan Spacarelli in Pro 2. Atchison's double program offered Tonka a chance to be in every class, and it was an offer it couldn't refuse. So, only a year into his racing career, he finds

himself with one of the higher profile sponsors in the series, and he's aiming to make the most of the opportunity.

"In the first year racing the buggy, I started off not knowing anything at all. But on a 1 to 10 scale, I think I was pushing maybe 8 or 9 at the end of the season. I learned quickly and it went really well. So, bringing a Pro Lite truck on board, I guess I'm trying to get as much driving time crammed into one year as I can. We're going for it this year. I needed a challenge!"

Atchison progressed quickly in Pro Buggy. He was a regular in the top five in the second half of the season, earned a podium finish and ended up sixth in points. He's already achieved a podium in 2015 and is looking for a Pro Buggy win. Pro Lite progress, though, will be a little tougher with the depth of competition in the class. But Atchison is up for the task.

Rookies come and go. Some fade away quickly and some leave an indelible mark on their chosen sport. It's early days, but it seems likely these two Pro Lite newcomers fall into the latter category and are on the road to becoming fast-rising stars. ■

DOUBLE SHIFT

ADDING PRO LITE TO PRO BUGGY CALLS FOR QUICK TURNAROUNDS BY THE GUY AT THE WHEEL.

Competing in multiple classes in the Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series is nothing new, but usually it's Pro Lite and Pro 2, or Pro 2 and Pro 4. Rarely does a racer tackle both Pro Buggy and Pro Lite - Bradley Morris was doing both before he was injured in a mountain biking accident last year - and it's a tough row to hoe.

With the two classes next to each other on the schedule, Taylor Atchison, the lone driver running both in 2015, has to make a quick switch from truck to buggy, and it's not a simple one.

"I'm still sweating and out of breath after the Pro Lite race and I have to hop in the Pro Buggy," Atchison explains. "You can't really train for that. It's an automatic with three gears in the Pro Lite, and then a 5-speed manual in the Buggy. I really have to think about what I'm doing. The buggy, you try to drive it through the corners, and the Pro Lite you throw it into the corners. I'm getting them all mixed up."

With less power, but lighter weight, the buggies tend to have shorter and lower flights than the trucks, and have a softer landing with more suspension travel. The buggy has a turning brake, and the truck is steered more with the throttle.

"The truck's a little more violent than a buggy - I found that out real quick. We're figuring it out as we go."

And if he proves as fast a learner in his rookie year of Pro Lite as he did in his inaugural year of Pro Buggy, he'll get it soon enough.



Pro Buggy (ABOVE) comes immediately after Pro Lite on the LOORRS timetable, meaning a quick recalibrate for Atchison.

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LIFE'S A ROAD TRIP. COME ON, LET'S GO.™



WORDS Philip Royle
MAIN IMAGE Sean C. Rice

THE NIGHT SHIFT

SCCA's Track Night in America is set to turn race track access on its head.

It calls to all with gasoline in their veins: You and your car, an hour of track time during a 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. window, on a weeknight - all for just \$150. And rulebooks? They don't exist. Run what you brung, have a blast, repeat. It's a winning formula. At least, that's what SCCA's latest program is gambling on.

SCCA's Track Night in America driven by Tire Rack offers low-buck, convenient track time, luring enthusiasts into the SCCA fold with low-stress, low-commitment, easily accessible time on the race track in just about any street car. But this isn't just another day at the track.

Track Night's journey from concept to reality was not a short one, explains SCCA's Director of Experiential Programs, Heyward Wagner: "The idea was born in

"We would love to see Track Night as a tool to introduce SCCA to people who may not have been involved before"

HEYWARD WAGNER, SCCA

SCCA's marketing department about five years ago," he says. "At that time, we didn't have a department to execute a program of this scale. When the Experiential department was created last spring, Track Night was one of the very first ideas that was brought to us, and we loved it."

The first Track Night took place April 6, 2015 - one year and six days after Wagner's department was formed - and

was made possible in large part thanks to a grant from the FIA and sponsorship from longtime SCCA partner Tire Rack.

What's different about Track Night? For starters, unlike almost every other track day, Track Night takes place during weekday evenings, usually Tuesdays or Thursdays, with a sticker price of \$150 (less if you search online for a discount code). Track Night also encourages spectators, offers free parade laps halfway through the event, and welcomes groups - like SCCA Regions, local scouts, and so on - to host gatherings at the track for free. At most venues, Track Night will occur the same time each month for several consecutive months.

"The program is designed to be fun, easy and accessible for seasoned



Clark McInnis



Sean C. Rice

GETTING ON TRACK

PREPARE FOR ACTION

The schedule of an average Track Night has participants arriving at the track between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m., and being on the track soon thereafter. There are waivers and tech sheets, but that's a simple process that the Track Night staff assists with. There are some other things to know before heading to the track, however.

Bring long pants, closed-toe shoes, and a hat, sunscreen and water. Some tracks allow you to run in short sleeves while others mandate long sleeves - we'd recommend the latter. You'll also need a helmet with at least a Snell SA2000, M2000, K2005, K98, or FIA 8860-2005 rating. Should you not have a helmet, one can be purchased during Track Night's online registration at www.TrackNightInAmerica.com.

Your vehicle will also need attention. "Clean out all the miscellaneous junk in your car at home," advises West Coast Track Night Event Manager Eric Clements. From there, check all fluids, brake pads, and torque the lug nuts. "Less than two-year-old brake fluid is good - and if you're not mechanically savvy, it's a good idea to get a cheap or free multi-point inspection."

(TOP) Advice from instructors can help participants get the most out of their SCCA Track Night experience.



(MAIN) Want to have some fun in a car on a race track? Then you're the target demographic for SCCA's Track Night. (LEFT) Parade lap demonstrates the variety of vehicles on track. (BELOW) Even pro racers such as Randy Pobst can enjoy the experience.



Clark McInnis

veterans and rookies," says Wagner. Hosting the events on weekdays means that enthusiasts who are hyper-scheduled on weekends can break away from work a little early to hit the track.

"The target demographic is people who want to have fun with cars," he continues, noting that Track Night is

primarily designed to attract race track novices. "We would love to see Track Night as a tool to introduce SCCA to people who may not have been involved before. And, so far, we have been successful with this, as 57 percent of our first 1,000 entrants were not previously members." Of those, 42 percent were also less than 35-years old.

Around 80 SCCA Track Nights are slated to take place during 2015, with the program continuing into 2016.

"The FIA grant is only for 2015, but we are committed to the program in 2016 and beyond," says Wagner. "We would like to see an increase in events by 20 each year. That will likely include events in the off-season at some venues, as well as adding new tracks." ■

MAKING TRACKS

Skip Barber
Racing School



The SBRS Summer Series raced at Lime Rock (LEFT) and Road Atlanta. Next up are Road America, Homestead, Laguna Seca, Mid-Ohio, VIR and NOLA. Not a bad selection of venues...

DRIVEN TO SUCCEED

Skip Barber Racing School's Summer Series will find the most dedicated young racers.

> Andretti, Montoya, Hunter-Reay, Hinchcliffe... The upper echelons of racing are riddled with Skip Barber Racing School-trained drivers, and that's no coincidence. For four decades, evenly matched cars have meant the school's arrive-and-drive race series was determined by desire. While talent is also a catalyst to success, Skip Barber Racing School instructors know it's about more than that.

"In fact," comments veteran instructor Bob Ziegel, "the ultimate achievement level of our graduates and racers is more correlated to their desire and willingness to work than their initial showing of talent."

This year, the Skip Barber Racing School Summer Series talent pool contains a cross-section of driven racers who want to follow in the wheeltracks of the greats who were launched into IndyCar, Formula 1,

IMSA and European endurance racing.

Timo Reger is one example. He began racing in the Skip Barber Winter Series last year and won the title in grand fashion. He's using his prize winnings in the Summer Series, and although he hasn't raced on

"While talent is a catalyst to success, Skip Barber instructors know it's about much more than that"

the majority of tracks on the schedule, he's leading the point standings.

Californian Dakota Dickerson was the runner-up in the Skip Barber Karts to Cars Scholarship Shootout, and this near miss provided him more drive than ever

to win it all. Dickerson has already caught the eye of IndyCar team owner and Skip Barber alumnus Bryan Herta, who awarded him a \$10,000 Career Enhancement scholarship to continue racing.

Then there's the underdog, Chase Owen, who has already grabbed podium finishes this season and is working to continue building his momentum.

In addition to young racers pursuing their dreams, Skip Barber Racing School has seen an increase in the field of talented Masters Racers. But whether a newcomer to the sport or a veteran, the upcoming Summer Series will be nothing short of exciting as drivers strive for the chance to compete in the Championship Shootout - which offers \$200,000 in scholarships - to further their careers.

By Debbie Ebalobo



Timo Reger - one of the hot young prospects tackling the SBRS Summer Series after winning the Winter Series.

STERN STAYS SERIOUS

Masters Racer Jeffrey Stern, 67 years old, is a consistent top-three finisher. He says: "I began racing in karts in 1955, so my timeline is going pretty well. By the age of 80, I hope to be racing in the Indy 500... I've raced in other series and I can't replicate the competitiveness and camaraderie I feel racing at Skip Barber."





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JACK HARVEY

#42 Racing Steps Foundation/Curb Records
Schmidt Peterson Motorsports w/ Curb-Agajanian

AGE	22
BIRTHPLACE	Lincoln, England
RESIDENCE	Indianapolis/Lincoln, England
WEBSITE	jackharveyracing.com
TWITTER	@jack_harvey42
STATUS	Current series points leader with six podiums in eight races including two wins.



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WEIRON TAN

#22 Andretti Autosport

AGE	20
BIRTHPLACE	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
RESIDENCE	Houston, TX
WEBSITE	weirontan.com
TWITTER	@WeironTan
FACEBOOK	tan.weiron
STATUS	Fourth in the championship standings with four podiums including three wins.



**COOPER TIRES
FREEDOM 90**



JAKE EIDSON

#22 OMP/Bell Helmets/1st Bank/SafesFast/
Team USA Scholarship Pabst Racing

AGE	20
BIRTHPLACE	Memphis, TN
RESIDENCE	Littleton, CO/Destin, FL
WEBSITE	JakeEidsonRacing.com
TWITTER	@JacobEidson24
FACEBOOK	Jacob Eidson Racing
STATUS	Second in the championship standings with eight podiums including three wins.



MAZDA FREEDOM 75



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Martin Truex Jr. finally scored his first Sprint Cup victory for Furniture Row Racing at Pocono after having led the most laps in each of the preceding three Cup rounds and earning top 10s in 12 of the first 13 races.



**GUTS AND GLORY
IN MOTOWN**

Thunder, lightning, rain, a 25-degree temperature drop from one day to the next - IndyCar's Chevrolet Dual in Detroit had a little of everything. The elements made it hard on spectators, but those who stuck it out witnessed some brilliant driving by Race 1's first-time winner Carlos Munoz (LEFT) and teammate Marco Andretti in the difficult track conditions. The following day, experience reasserted itself as veteran Sebastien Bourdais took his first win of the year.

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

March 15	Australia	Lewis Hamilton
March 29	Malaysia	Lewis Hamilton
April 12	China	Sebastian Vettel
April 19	Bahrain	Lewis Hamilton
May 10	Spain	Nico Rosberg
May 24	Monaco	Nico Rosberg
June 7	Canada	Lewis Hamilton
June 21	Austria (Spielberg)	
July 5	Britain (Silverstone)	
July 19	Germany (Hockenheim)	
July 26	Hungary (Hungaroring)	
Aug. 23	Belgium (Spa)	
Sept. 6	Italy (Monza)	
Sept. 20	Singapore (Marina Bay)	
Sept. 27	Japan (Suzuka)	
Oct. 11	Russia (Sochi)	
Oct. 25	United States (CoTA)	
Nov. 1	Mexico (Mexico City)	
Nov. 15	Brazil (Interlagos)	
Nov. 29	Abu Dhabi (Yas Marina)	

VERIZON INDYCAR SERIES

March 29	St. Petersburg	Juan Montoya
April 12	NOLA	James Hinchcliffe
April 19	Long Beach	Scott Dixon
April 26	Barber	Josef Newgarden
May 9	Indianapolis GP	Will Power
May 25	Indy 500	Juan Montoya
May 30	Detroit 1	Carlos Munoz
May 31	Detroit 2	Sebastien Bourdais
June 6	Texas	Scott Dixon
June 14	Toronto	Josef Newgarden

June 27	Fontana, Calif.
July 12	Milwaukee, Wis.
July 18	Newton, Iowa
Aug. 2	Mid-Ohio, Lexington, Ohio
Aug. 23	Pocono, Pa.
Aug. 30	Sonoma, Calif.

**IMSA TUDOR UNITED
SPORTSCAR CHAMPIONSHIP**

Jan. 24-25	Daytona	S. Dixon/T. Kanaan/ K. Larson/J. McMurray
March 21	Sebring	J. Barbosa/S. Bourdais/ C. Fittipaldi
April 18	Long Beach	J. Taylor/R. Taylor
May 3	Laguna Seca	Westbrook/Valiante
May 30	Detroit	Cameron/Curran
June 28	Watkins Glen, N.Y. (6 Hours)	
July 12	Mosport, Ont.	
July 25	Lime Rock, Conn.	
Aug. 9	Road America, Elkhart Lake, Wis.	
Aug. 23	VIR, Alton, Va.	
Sept. 19	CoTA, Austin, Texas	
Oct. 3	Road Atlanta, Ga. (1000m/10hrs)	

NASCAR SPRINT CUP SERIES

Feb. 22	Daytona 500	Joey Logano
March 1	Atlanta	Jimmie Johnson
March 8	Las Vegas	Kevin Harvick
March 15	Phoenix	Kevin Harvick
March 22	Fontana	Brad Keselowski
March 29	Martinsville	Denny Hamlin
April 11	Texas	Jimmie Johnson
April 19	Bristol	Matt Kenseth



FEATURE RACE

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TICKET INFO

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WHERE & HOW

The picturesque circuit is situated near Lakeville, 150 scenic miles from Boston.

April 26	Richmond	Kurt Busch
May 3	Talladega	Dale Earnhardt Jr.
May 9	Kansas	Jimmie Johnson
May 24	Charlotte	Carl Edwards
May 31	Dover	Jimmie Johnson
June 7	Pocono	Martin Truex
June 14	Michigan	Kurt Busch
June 28	Sonoma, Calif.	
July 5	Daytona, Fla.	
July 11	Sparta, Ky.	
July 19	Loudon, N.H.	
July 26	Indianapolis, Ind.	
Aug. 2	Pocono, Pa.	
Aug. 9	Watkins Glen, N.Y.	
Aug. 16	Brooklyn, Mich.	
Aug. 22	Bristol, Tenn.	
Sept. 6	Darlington, S.C.	
Sept. 12	Richmond, Va.	
Sept. 20	Chicagoland, Ill.	
Sept. 27	Loudon, N.H.	
Oct. 4	Dover, Del.	
Oct. 10	Charlotte, N.C.	
Oct. 18	Kansas City, Kan.	
Oct. 25	Talladega, Ala.	
Nov. 1	Martinsville, Va.	
Nov. 8	Fort Worth, Texas	
Nov. 15	Phoenix, Ariz.	
Nov. 22	Homestead, Fla.	

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES

Feb. 21	Daytona	Ryan Reed
Feb. 28	Atlanta	Kevin Harvick
March 7	Las Vegas	Austin Dillon
March 14	Phoenix	Joey Logano

DECISIVE ACTION

Action Express restoked its IMSA TUDOR Championship fire with a hard-fought victory on Detroit's Belle Isle. Dane Cameron and Kevin Curran emerged triumphant after a bruising battle.



"I hated last year driving it because our car wasn't very good. But at the same time it was demanding, and I like that. It *needs* to be tough"

GRAHAM RAHAL on the evolving challenge of IndyCar racing at Texas Motor Speedway





TV & DIGEST JULY 2015



The Indy Lights Championship continues to play out on NBCSN as IndyCar's feeder series builds to a climax through the summer months. Air times will vary, so check RACER.com/TV for each event's times.

JULY 5 RESET TO ZERO

The fireworks of July 4 weekend will help ring in NASCAR's brave new TV world, as NBC launches its return to stock car racing with live coverage of the Coke Zero 400 from Daytona.

It would be hard not to know this was coming, of course, since NBC has been doing a full-court promotional press on NASCAR since the announcement in July 2013 of its 10-year deal to take over the second half of the Sprint Cup and Xfinity Series seasons from ABC/ESPN. After Daytona, though, Sprint Cup will switch over to NBCSN through the month of August, so it will be interesting to follow how the TV behemoth of American motorsports fares in the ratings.

DETAILS

7:45pm NBC: Coke Zero 400, Daytona Beach, Fla.



Lesley Ann Miller/LAT

ALL TIMES ARE EASTERN (ET); ALWAYS CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR LATEST AIR TIMES

FRIDAY, JULY 3

7:30am NBCSN: FIA F1 British Grand Prix practice, Silverstone (L)

SATURDAY, JULY 4

7:30am NBCSN: FIA F1 British Grand Prix qualifying, Silverstone (L)
 5:30pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing qualifying, Norwalk, Ohio (SDD)
 7:30pm NBCSN: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Daytona Beach, Fla. (L)

SUNDAY, JULY 5

7:30am CNBC: FIA Formula 1 British Grand Prix, Silverstone (L)
 1:00pm ESPN: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing eliminations, Norwalk, Ohio (L)
 4:00pm CBSSN: Pirelli World Challenge GT, Road America, Elkhart Lake, Wis. (D)
 5:00pm NBC: Red Bull Global Rallycross, MCAS New River, N.C. (L)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8

6:00pm NBCSN: Red Bull Global Rallycross GRC Lites, MCAS New River, N.C. (D)
 7:00pm CBSSN: Pirelli World Challenge TC, Elkhart Lake, Wis. (D)

THURSDAY, JULY 9

7:30pm FS1: NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, Sparta, Ky. (L)

FRIDAY, JULY 10

7:30pm NBCSN: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Sparta, Ky. (L)

SATURDAY, JULY 11

7:30pm NBCSN: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, Sparta, Ky. (L)
 10:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing qualifying, Joliet, Ill. (SDD)

SUNDAY, JULY 12

7:30am FS1: MotoGP, Sachsenring, Germany (L)
 12:00pm FS1: TUDOR United SportsCar Championship, CTMP, Bowmanville, Ontario (L)
 2:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing eliminations, Joliet, Ill. (L)
 5:00pm NBCSN: Verizon IndyCar Series, Milwaukee Mile, West Allis, Wis. (L)

SATURDAY, JULY 18

4:00pm NBCSN: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Loudon, N.H. (L)
 8:00pm NBCSN: Verizon IndyCar Series, Iowa Speedway, Newton, Iowa (L)

SUNDAY, JULY 19

10:00am FS1: IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge, CTMP, Bowmanville, Ontario (D)

1:30pm NBCSN: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, Loudon, N.H. (L)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22

9:00pm FS1: NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, Rossburg, Ohio (L)

FRIDAY, JULY 24

7:30am NBCSN: FIA F1 Hungarian Grand Prix practice, Hungaroring (L)

SATURDAY, JULY 25

7:30am NBCSN: FIA F1 Hungarian Grand Prix qualifying, Hungaroring (L)
 3:30pm NBC: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Indianapolis, Ind. (L)

CHANNEL GUIDE

ABC	ESPN on ABC
CBS/CBSSN	CBS/CBS Sports Network
CNBC	NBC Business News
NBC	NBC Universal
NBCSN	NBC Sports Network
ESPN	ESPN networks
ESPN-N	ESPN News
FOX	FOX Broadcast Network
FS1	FOX Sports 1 (formerly SPEED)
FS2	FOX Sports 2 (formerly FUEL)
TNT	Turner Network Television
VELOCITY	Velocity Channel
L	Live Program
R	Repeat Program
TBD	Start Time to Be Determined
D	Delayed from Earlier Day
SDD	Same Day, Delayed

All listings subject to change. Networks may broadcast programs at different times in different time zones. Check local listings.

6:30pm FS1: TUDOR United SportsCar Championship, Lime Rock, Conn. (SDD)
 11:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing, qualifying, Denver, Colo. (SDD)

SUNDAY, JULY 26

7:30AM CNBC (JULY 26) Formula 1 World Championship

F1 moves to CNBC in July, as the Hungarian GP precedes a lengthy summer recess.



2:00pm NBC: Red Bull Global Rallycross, Detroit, Mich. (L)
 3:30pm NBCSN: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, Indianapolis, Ind. (L)
 9:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing eliminations, Denver, Colo. (SDD)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

4:30pm NBCSN: Red Bull Global Rallycross GRC Lites, Detroit, Mich. (D)



McKlean/LAT

MAVTV is the U.S. TV home for the unique spectacle of the FIA World Rally Championship, including live and delayed coverage from each event. Check **MAVTV.com** for the latest air times.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1

- 1:00pm FS1: NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, Pocono, Pa. (L)
- 7:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing qualifying, Sonoma, Calif. (SDD)
- 8:00pm NBCSN: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Newton, Iowa (L)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2

- 1:00pm FS1: IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge, Lime Rock, Conn. (D)

**1:30PM CNBC (AUG. 2)
Verizon IndyCar Series**

With NASCAR Sprint Cup on NBCSN, IndyCar's ever-frenetic Mid-Ohio round moves to CNBC.



Michael Levitt/LAT

- 1:30pm NBCSN: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, Pocono, Pa. (L)
- 8:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing eliminations, Sonoma, Calif. (SDD)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

- 3:00pm NBCSN: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Watkins Glen, N.Y. (L)
- 11:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing, qualifying, Seattle, Wash. (SDD)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9

- 2:00pm FS1: MotoGP, Indianapolis, Ind. (L)
- 2:00pm NBCSN: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, Watkins Glen, N.Y. (L)
- 4:00pm CBSSN: Pirelli World Challenge GT, Mid-Ohio, Lexington, Ohio (D)
- 8:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing, eliminations, Seattle, Wash. (SDD)

**3:00PM FS1 (AUG. 9)
IMSA TUDOR Championship**

Catch the United SportsCar Championship live from Elkhart Lake's epic Road America.



Michael Levitt

MULTIMEDIA

ON THE RACER CHANNEL

IndyCar's oval aero tweaks



The RACER Channel on YouTube is your go-to source for video interviews and insights. At Texas, AJ Foyt Racing gave Robin Miller the scoop on the aerodynamic changes made for that event.

ON THE LOOSE

Toyota RAV4's dirty challenge



2014 Baja 1000 class winner Ryan Millen is stage rallying this year in a production-based 2015 Toyota RAV4 LE. It made its debut June 13-14 on the Idaho Rally. Follow Ryan's adventure on RACER.com.

ON TWITTER

@jpmontoya Follow along through the decisive final races with the Indy 500 winner as he aims to add a Verizon IndyCar Series title to his already-golden season. And being JPM, he'll be sure to have fun.



Philip Abbott/LAT

RACER.com

Robin Miller's Mailbag now also contains Marshall Pruett's answers to your technical questions. Send all questions to MillersMailbag@Racer.com

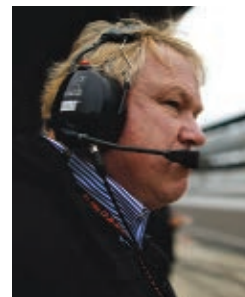
ANNIVERSARIES

JULY BIRTHDAYS



JIM HALL

LAT archive



Michael Levitt/LAT

**DALE COYNE
B. 7/8/54**

IndyCar's proudly low-budget team owner has rowed against tides for more than 30 years now.

Coyne got his start driving his own stockblock Chevy-powered cars in 1984 against the more powerful turbo cars and mega-dollar teams of CART. Against the odds, he continues the fight for the little guy against Penske, Ganassi and Andretti.

Peter Cunningham, 7/1/62; Richard Petty, 7/2/37; Rene Arnoux, 7/4/48; Jan Magnussen, 7/4/73; Warren Johnson, 7/7/43; Tom Kristensen, 7/7/67; Marino Franchitti, 7/7/78; **DALE COYNE, 7/8/54**; Jim Yates, 7/9/53; Jean-Pierre Jarier, 7/10/46; Frank Hawley, 7/11/56; Rick Hendrick, 7/12/49; Thierry Boutsen, 7/13/57; Jarno Trulli, 7/13/74; Oriol Servià, 7/13/74; Bill Alsup, 7/15/38; Chris Cord, 7/15/40; Wayne Taylor, 7/15/60; Barry Green, 7/17/52; Chris Aron, 7/20/43; Bernd Schneider, 7/20/64; Calvin Fish, 7/22/61; Scott Dixon, 7/22/80; **JIM HALL, 7/23/35**; Gordon Kimball, 7/24/52; Johnny O'Connell, 7/24/62; Fernando Alonso, 7/29/81.

WE REMEMBER



DAVID PURLEY

LAT archive



LAT archive

**JUAN MANUEL FANGIO
D. 7/17/95**

Hard to believe it's been 20 years since the death of the Argentine Formula 1 legend at the age of 84.

Fangio started racing in his native Argentina in 1938, but after World War II he moved to Europe and went on to dominate the first decade of the World Championship, winning the Drivers' title five times for four different marques.

Achille Varzi, 7/1/48; Bob Scott, 7/5/54; Onofre Marimon, 7/31/54; Luigi Musso, 7/6/58; Art Bisch, 7/6/58; Fireball Roberts, 7/2/64; Sparky Belmont, 7/4/68; Jo Schlesser, 7/7/68; Pedro Rodriguez, 7/11/71; Lance Reventlow, 7/24/72; Swede Savage, 7/2/73; Eddie Rickenbacker, 7/23/73; Roger Williamson, 7/29/73; **DAVID PURLEY, 7/2/85**; Rich Vogler, 7/21/90; Paul Warwick, 7/21/91; Al Loquasto, 7/31/91; Davey Allison, 7/13/93; **JUAN MANUEL FANGIO, 7/17/95**; Gary Avrin, 7/14/96; Jeff Krosnoff, 7/14/96; Kenny Irwin Jr., 7/7/00; Briggs Cunningham, 7/2/03; Rodger Ward, 7/5/04; Henry Surtees, 7/19/09.

WHO MASTEN GREGORY
WHERE FROM KANSAS CITY TO LE MANS
WHEN 1932-1985



The most beautiful ugly racecar of all time, the Ferrari 250LM was driven hard and fast by Masten Gregory and Jochen Rindt in 1965 to take Ferrari's final overall victory in the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Fifty years on, it remains one of the most memorable triumphs in the history of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, a classic tale that perhaps only this race can produce.

The North American Racing Team-entered Ferrari 250LM of Jochen Rindt and Masten Gregory had suffered ignition problems in the early stages of the 1965 race. Not only was the team on the verge of retiring the car, but Rindt was already in "civilian" clothes and ready to depart when Gregory tracked him down and convinced him to continue, despite the car now being 10 laps down.

Rindt's condition for staying - "only if we drive flat-out, grand prix-style" - was something Gregory readily agreed to, and together they raced their hearts out and into the history books, winning by five laps. The Ferrari's differential failed as it was pushed back to the paddock...

So who was this Masten Gregory guy? Well, a fast and seemingly fearless racer who started competing at the age of 20, in 1952, and hit the European sports car scene in the mid-'50s. Winning the 1957 Buenos Aires 1000km earned him a ride in the Scuderia Centro Sud-run Maserati



In the 1965 Indy 500, Gregory drove from the back row to fifth place before his BRP-Ford had to retire due to falling oil pressure.



Formula 1 highlight was starting third and finishing second in the 1959 Portuguese GP at Monsanto, driving a works Cooper T51-Climax.

250F in Formula 1, and he scored a remarkable third place on his debut in the Monaco Grand Prix.

This was backed up by fourth places at Pescara and Monza, yet despite these impressive showings, Gregory's F1 career remained piecemeal, never completing a season with one team. Twice this was because of injuries sustained in bailing out of a sports car at high speed as it headed for a shunt!

Still, a second and third place for Cooper in 1959, a non-championship F1 victory in a Lotus-BRM in 1962, and a strong showing in the Indianapolis 500 gave some indication of Gregory's open-wheel potential. However, it was in sports cars that he did his best work, winning the 1961 Nurburgring 1000km in a "Birdcage" Maserati T61, first in class at Le Mans in a Porsche RS61 Spyder, and winning the '62 Canadian GP in a Lotus 19 at Mosport.

After the death of Jo Bonnier at Le Mans in '72, Gregory quit racing to become a diamond merchant in Amsterdam. In November 1985, he died of a heart attack in his sleep while at his winter home in Italy, at the sadly young age of 53. ■

CHASING GRAHAM HILL'S RECORD

Only Graham Hill has attained victory at the Indy 500, Monaco Grand Prix and 24 Hours of Le Mans, but 16 others - including Masten Gregory - have tried all three and achieved victory in at least one. The first was Louis Chiron (Monaco winner in 1931, BELOW), but Rindt came closest to Hill's record, grabbing Monaco GP glory five years after his Le Mans triumph.



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