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MOTOR SPORT

FORMULA 1 | INDYCARS | SPORTS CARS | ROAD CARS | HISTORICS | KARTING

NIGEL ROEBUCK

50 years on: the 'blind ambition' of Ricardo Rodríguez

Kimi Räikkönen on his fast-track back to Grand Prix victory

By Adam Cooper

Rick Mears: '40 pole positions. But I never did the perfect lap'

By Simon Taylor

Targa Florio retro: Vic Elford reports

Andrew Frankel's verdict on the new McLaren Spider

Denny Hulme: F1's unassuming World Champion



EXCLUSIVE

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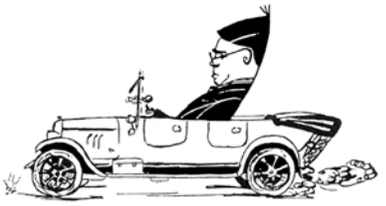
Brundle, Warwick, Brabham and Brawn on the 'F1' Big Cat that changed sports car racing forever

"It's the best car I've ever raced"

Martin Brundle on the XJR-14

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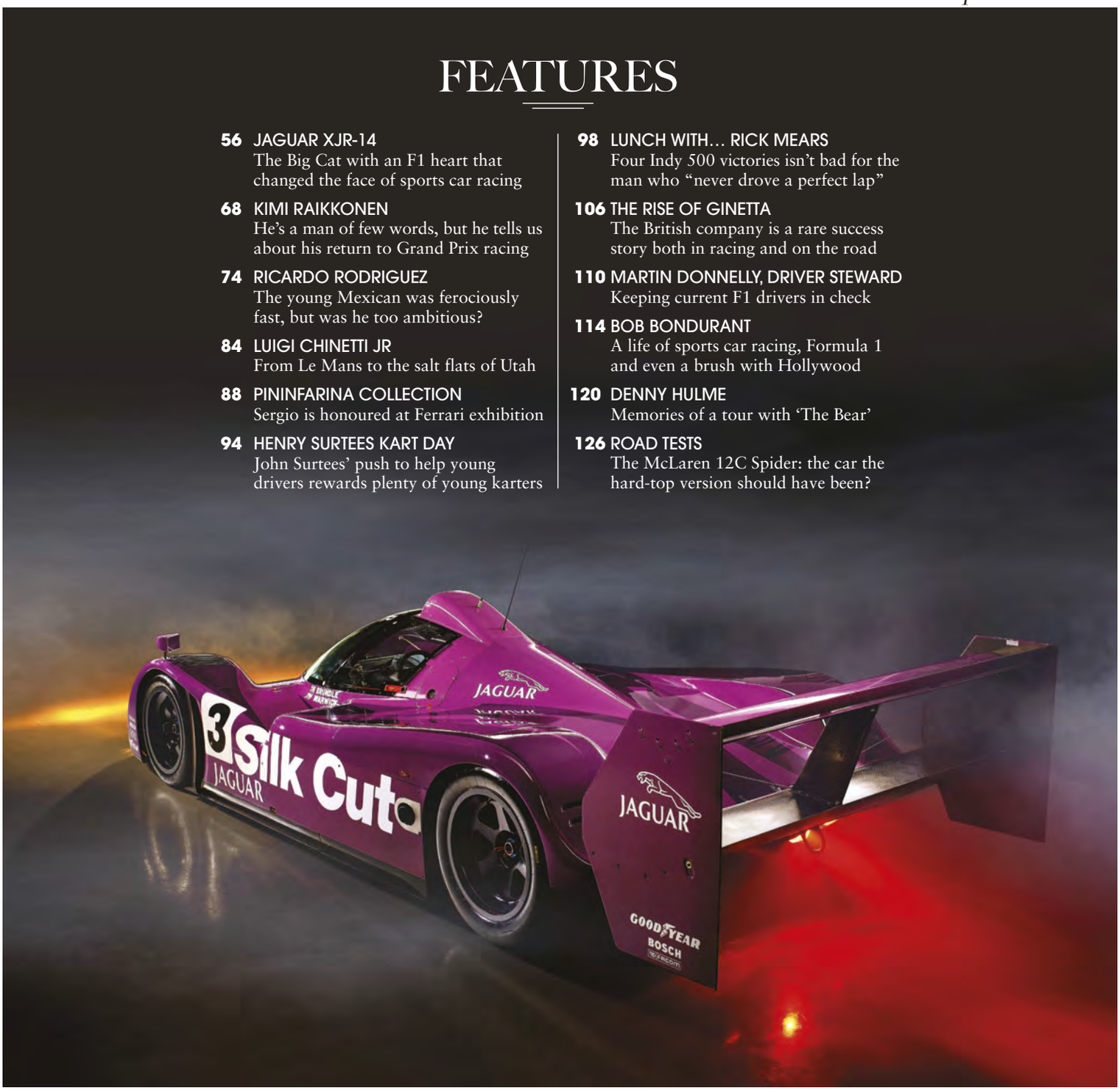
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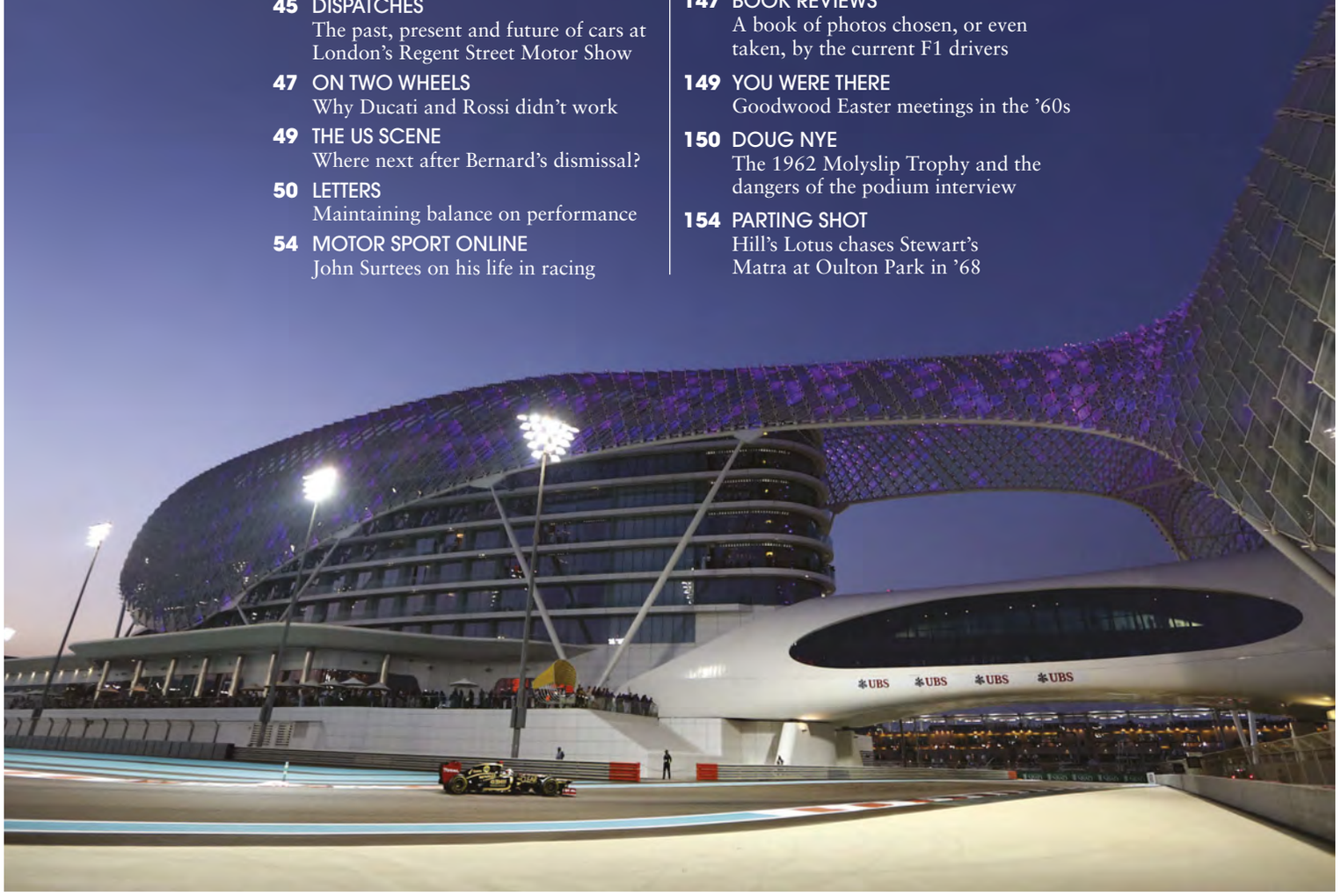
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Matters of Moment

If Lewis Hamilton is a *Motor Sport* reader, which I grant you is something of a long shot, there's a quote from his new boss in this issue which may cause him some cheer as he contemplates a potentially tricky 'fresh start' in Formula 1 for 2013.

Back in 1990, Ross Brawn stepped away from Grand Prix racing to mastermind the car that graces our cover and what turned out to be Jaguar's unforgettable swansong in Group C sports car racing. For anyone who witnessed the short-lived wonder that was the XJR-14, it was clear that things would never be the same again. That Group C wouldn't survive the era of 3.5-litre Formula 1 engines was a sad consequence, but it was hardly Brawn and Tom Walkinshaw Racing's fault. As Ross tells Gary Watkins this month, all he did was to adopt what he calls a "competitive interpretation" of the regulations he had to work with, in the time-honoured fashion of Chapman, Barnard, Murray and so on.



Damien Smith
Editor

So if Lewis is regretting his move from McLaren to Mercedes-Benz as much as Martin Whitmarsh has suggested he might be – which I strongly doubt – he can take succour from something I'm sure he knows only too well: that his new boss has a history of setting the agenda when regulations are rewritten.

"That Jaguar project provided a lesson about taking opportunities with new rules," Brawn tells us. "It taught me that when new regulations come along you can't start early enough on designing and developing a car. I think I can say it was probably significant in Brawn GP's success in 2009."

In other words, mighty Mercedes will already be well ahead in its plans for the new 1.6-litre turbo efficiency formula that will take its bow in 2014. Granted, with rules stability for the 2013 season Mercedes might struggle to claw back all of its lost ground for Hamilton's first year. But Brawn and his team are too good and have too much 'previous' to remain mired in the midfield. Nothing stays the same in Formula 1 for long. Lewis Hamilton is going to be just fine.

The success of the DeltaWing was one of the best motor racing stories of the past season. But will the tale continue into 2013 and beyond?

There are no guarantees at this stage, despite the Nissan-powered machine's headline-stealing performance at Le Mans, where it claimed the '56th garage' experimental entry for the 24 Hours. In October, the car survived being turned over in a collision with a GT Porsche during testing at Road Atlanta, to finish the 1000-mile Petit Le Mans fifth overall, albeit unclassified thanks to its unique status outside any rule book yet written. The thing clearly has potential.

The American Le Mans Series has kept the door open by creating a special invitational class for the DeltaWing in 2013, but despite the patronage of championship founder Don Panoz, and so much support and development work by both Nissan and Michelin, none of the parties have yet to confirm their continued support for Ben Bowlby's ground-breaking creation.

The British designer was on hand at the RAC in Pall Mall to pick up the Simms Medal, awarded for innovation that exemplifies a 'spirit of adventure', during a lunch at the club at the end of October. "The concept has proven more important than I realised when I started," he told me, with a fully justified glow of satisfaction. "I just wanted to show what you could do without a rule book. The interest in the DeltaWing shows that innovation appeals to the crowds."

Doubts that the car would even turn corners have long since been scotched, to be replaced by genuine worldwide respect. Bowlby dared to be different, to try something new – and it paid off. "It is very gratifying," he admitted. "People used to ask 'will it turn?', but now their question is 'how?'. It's a genuine story and it was »»»

MOTOR SPORT
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never a publicity stunt. Ulrich Baretzky once told me that the power of motor sport is that it can change people's perceptions of a technology, and that's what I hope we've achieved."

Audi's famed engine man knows of which he speaks, from four-wheel-drive rally cars to his own turbodiesel Le Mans game-changer. But it's always been this way, Bowlby citing Alec Issigonis's Mini and how it only really took off once the likes of Sir John Whitmore and Paddy Hopkirk proved the little car's worth on both track and stage. Racing improves the breed – if rules and budgets allow.

Bowlby reckons that had Satoshi Motoyama not been nerfed out of the race so early at Le Mans in June, the DeltaWing could have completed an incredible 10 stints on one set of tyres, such was its efficiency. And after only two races, there's clearly more to discover.



So where to next, if Bowlby has his way? "What I don't want to see is a bunch of cloned DeltaWings running around like a one-make series, because that goes against everything it stands for," he said. "I'd like multiple engine manufacturers to support it, for it to be a proving ground for the next direction on better efficiency. And it shouldn't just be about winning. Look at Nissan – they didn't win Le Mans and yet they got an enormous return on their investment."

No doubts, Nissan performed a golden PR coup in 2012. So who's up for some more of the same in 2013?

The world of F1 never ceases to amaze when it comes to showing how out of touch it is with the real world. As you can read on page 20, Bernie Ecclestone has proposed his teams should work to a new budget cap, to reduce costs and help secure their futures. Fine. It's not a new idea and most would agree that if restrictions can be properly policed, it makes sense. So what is Bernie's definition of a suitably stringent austerity measure? A sum of $250m. Yep, that's right – £155m. Yeah, that'll do it.

Forgive me, but I thought one of the benefits of a budget cap would be to allow the smaller teams to compete on more of an equal footing with the big guns? I've clearly got the wrong end of the stick. Take a team such as Marussia, which spends in the region of £60m a year. If the top teams can still spend more than double available to the minnows, the 'cap' is utterly pointless. Isn't it?

And just think about that Marussia budget for a brief moment: £60m in the real world is a massive amount of money, and of course it's way beyond the levels spent elsewhere in motor sport. To offer some perspective, a season in the FIA World Endurance Championship, for a two-car LMP1 campaign, would cost less than a tenth of what Marussia spends. Sure, there's more at stake in F1 and it should cost more if you want to join the elite. But the chasm between Grand Prix racing and the rest of the motor sport world is now unbridgeable. Which is probably exactly how Bernie likes it. Funny old world.

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GARY WATKINS


RICHARD HESELTINE


ED FOSTER


ADAM COOPER

CONTRIBUTORS

Endurance is **GARY WATKINS'** forte – he's been reporting on sports car and particularly long-distance racing since mammoths roamed the tundra. But 2012 was the first season he's had an endurance World Championship to write about. Very appropriate, then, that this month he dug deep into the origins and spectacular success of the last British sports car to collect such a world title, the Jaguar XJR-14, championship winner back in 1991.

We reckon there's a secret theme in every issue of this magazine – a subject that hasn't been mentioned for months suddenly crops up in three places at once. This time it's the name Chinetti, sparked by **RICHARD HESELTINE'S** amusing interview with 'Coco' of that ilk. Some subjects need a bit of coaxing, but not the talkative and enthusiastic Luigi Jr. Heseltine is now dining out on the stories he had to cut from this piece… Sadly we're too stingy to give prizes for spotting the other theme links inside.

You might think 'Ice Man' Kimi was a hard interview, but when our F1 newshound **ADAM COOPER** got the World Champion racer and rallyman alone, the normally curt Scandinavian spoke openly about his return to the top rank and the top podium step – and why small-scale Lotus suits him better than high-gloss McLaren.

Finally, **ED FOSTER,** our very own transport extravaganza. He's baled out his boat, bored out his bike and biffed his knee yumping a borrowed BSA, yet still made it to Kent to watch some of tomorrow's hopefuls in the Henry Surtees Challenge. Plus fitting in a quick shotgun lap of the 'Ring – and he's cleaned the office Lotus. No-one knew its wheels were silver…

FORMULA 1

2014 Ferrari seat for Nico?

Nico Hulkenberg's move from Force India to Sauber for 2013 is seen by many observers as a prelude to a possible future at Ferrari for the German.

Ferrari has extended Felipe Massa's deal for one more season, leaving the door open for a change in 2014. Despite denials from all parties, rumours continue to suggest



that Sebastian Vettel could be heading for Maranello, but if that doesn't happen, Hulkenberg would be a logical choice. The Italian team can keep close tabs on him at Sauber, where he will use Ferrari engines.

Sauber has not yet named Hulkenberg's team-mate, but Mexican sponsorship is likely to guarantee a seat for Esteban Gutiérrez, who logged more miles when he tested for the team in Abu Dhabi.

Meanwhile, Scuderia Toro Rosso has announced an unchanged line-up, with Daniel Ricciardo and Jean-Éric Vergne staying on for a second year. The pair are potentially in contention for a 2014 Red Bull seat, should Mark Webber move on.



Proposed budget cap would still be way out of reach for small F1 teams such as Marussia and Caterham

FORMULA 1

Bernie in concord with the president

While the battle for the title between Sebastian Vettel and Fernando Alonso has captured the headlines, discussions over the future of F1 have continued to keep the key players busy behind the scenes over recent weeks.

Jean Todt met with Bernie Ecclestone and the teams in Paris in late October where, in addition to the commercial details of the new Concorde Agreement, the bigger picture of governance was discussed.

A key element of the future is the Strategy Working Group, comprised of six representatives of the FIA, six from FOM, and six from the teams. The latter will be Red Bull, McLaren, Ferrari, Mercedes, Williams and whoever is best of the rest in the constructors' table.

This group will vote on rule changes which will in turn be passed onto a new 18-man F1 Commission. This will incorporate representatives of the aforementioned six teams plus those who scored points in the previous championship (Force India, Sauber and Toro Rosso), as well as representatives of the FIA, FOM, engine manufacturers and six promoters.

Todt has been keen to streamline the process of promoting change, and in both cases votes will be passed by a simple majority, whereas previously the F1 Commission required 70 per cent in favour.

He has also been keen to raise more funds for the governing body, as indicated by a new sliding scale for 2013 of entrant and driver superlicence fees, based on points scored this season. The big prize remains an improved Concorde deal with Bernie Ecclestone, a goal he appears to have achieved.

"I WANT A MAXIMUM AMOUNT A TEAM CAN SPEND ON F1 INCLUDING DRIVERS"
BERNIE ECCLESTONE

"I've agreed everything with Jean," Ecclestone told *Motor Sport*. "So everybody's happy now. He's got more money, so he can build a bigger office! He wants to be competing with the IOC and Sepp Blatter and be up there with them."

Ecclestone says he has no problem with the FIA getting a bigger slice of what is, after all, an ever-expanding pie: "No, it's alright. We are buying a little bit of freedom," he added enigmatically.

Meanwhile, the issue of keeping a lid on costs remains at the forefront of discussions, especially as the approach of the turbos in 2014 is putting pressure on teams that are already strapped for cash.

While the teams continue to argue about the Resource Restriction Agreement, from which many areas of spending are excluded, Ecclestone has called for a blanket budget cap which will encompass all

expenditure. However, the proposed $250m figure, (£155m) is beyond the reach of all but a handful of teams, so it remains to be seen what benefits it might have.

"I want a maximum amount that a team can spend on F1, including drivers," said Ecclestone. "Do what you like, but you mustn't spend more than this. Maybe it's a high figure at the moment, but once the principle's established, we can bring it down. I think they will agree. I think they realise it's probably the right way to go."

Red Bull has long been one of the key critics of the RRA, the team pointing out that it doesn't include areas where teams with manufacturer relationships – such as Mercedes and Ferrari – can benefit from R&D assistance.

"We are fully in favour of costs being controlled in the sport," says Christian Horner. "We just disagree with the mechanisms at the moment, how they are presented to control those costs and our concern is that different entities, different organisations, are treated differently. It doesn't include the engine, for example, so there's freedom to spend, at the moment, on that, particularly the new power train in 2014."

Clearly there are still some key issues to be resolved, but on the plus side the major players do seem genuinely keen to find agreement.

"The good thing is this isn't the old era, which was, I think, very confrontational and probably good for the media but less good for the sport," says McLaren's Martin Whitmarsh. "I think people are recognising that now is not the time to have wars, now's the time to be constructive, where necessary compromise, and find a way forward for the sport."

Adam Cooper



■ WRC

Ford won't rule out return to world rallying

Ford's departure from the WRC might not be forever.

Having ended its 16-year sponsorship agreement with preparation firm M-Sport recently, Ford's European motor sport manager Gerard Quinn hinted at a possible return when the WRC season drew to a close in Spain in mid-November.

"Ford won't be in the WRC in 2013, but that's not to say Ford won't be in rallying – we will continue to support the drivers of Ford rally cars around the world and who's to say that, in the future, we won't step back in," said Quinn.

Ford's withdrawal as the result of funding cutbacks in Europe has sent shock waves through the sport and leaves Malcolm Wilson's M-Sport organisation in a frantic search for commercial backing in order to continue in the WRC next season with its event-winning Fiesta World Rally Cars. The team will still enjoy technical support from the Blue Oval.

■ SPORTS CARS

WEC boost for privateers

The hope of LMP1 privateers competing in the FIA World Endurance Championship have been given a boost for next season.

The FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest at Le Mans have revealed that private P1 entrants will get a performance break for next season. The move has the support of the Audi and Toyota factory teams.

WEC general manager Gerard Neveu explained that the plan is to "give a bigger opportunity to the privateers without additional expense".

A number of ways to make the privateer LMP1s faster are under consideration: lowering the minimum weight of the cars, increasing the fuel capacity and giving them more power with larger-diameter engine air-restrictors.



The update could have been implemented ahead of the final three rounds of this year's WEC, but the privateers were unable to agree on a plan of action. Some are already on the minimum weight limit, others could not be fitted with enlarged fuel tanks at short notice and there were concerns from others about increased cooling demands with a power hike.

■ FORMULA 1

New Jersey door still ajar

Bernie Ecclestone says that he will "try and help" the promoters of the Grand Prix of the Americas to find the backing with which to hold the race in 2014.

The New Jersey street event has been dropped from the 2013 calendar, ostensibly for logistical reasons. In reality the funding was not in place and the original contract had lapsed.

"I'm disappointed, for a lot of reasons," Ecclestone told *Motor Sport*. "I'm disappointed with the guys who couldn't keep the commitment, which is a bit naughty. People shouldn't make commitments they can't keep.



All images LAT

"I think what happened was they thought they would get investment very easily. Also they pushed for 2013. The Russians were realistic and said 2014."

Ecclestone has opened the door for a French GP to be added to the 2013 calendar, with Magny-Cours a more likely candidate than Paul Ricard, which is badly lacking in spectator facilities.

The problem is that the likely date of June 23 is already occupied by Le Mans, which was moved to avoid a clash with New Jersey.

HISTORICS

Can-Ams at Canada meet

The history of Can-Am racing will be celebrated at Le Circuit Mont-Tremblant in Canada next July with a race dedicated to early Cam-Am cars during the Sommet des Légendes.

In 1966 the first Can-Am race was held at the track, then known as St Jovite. The Lola T70s of John Surtees and Dan Gurney that took the front row 47 years ago will be back at the track for the July 12-14 event.

"We're inviting all Can-Am cars, especially the early cars of 1966-68, and hope to have two Can-Am grids," said organiser Cris Vandagriff.



HISTORICS

Six-wheeler on display

The remarkable March 2-4-0 six-wheeled Formula 1 car is on show at the Donington Grand Prix Collection this winter. Never raced in period, the four-wheel drive system was mated to a March 751 chassis as a design exercise by March founder Robin Herd.

Over the past two seasons, owner Taff Smith has developed the car into a viable racer. Driven by his son Jeremy, it has enjoyed strong runs at events such as the Silverstone Classic. In the rain at the 2012 Oulton Park Gold Cup, the six-wheeler finished second in the Derek Bell Trophy race to record its first podium finish.



SPORTS CARS

GT plans open risk of class war

The majority of car manufacturers appear to be against plans to replace the GTE and GT3 categories with a single class for 2015.

The FIA and the Le Mans 24 Hours organiser, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, announced their vision for a new GT class in October. A number of high-profile sports car manufacturers and engineering companies which build GT racers have come out against the plan.

Porsche motor sport boss Hartmut Kristen said: "If you have professional and gentlemen drivers then you need different cars. The requirements for each are totally different. If they do what they are talking about, it will be the end of a GTE-type category."

Hans Reiter, whose company builds Lamborghini Gallardos for both categories, said: "It is a nonsense. By luck or by judgement we have found some regulations that work and have produced the phenomenally successful GT3 category, so why change it? The categories have different philosophies and require a different approach. What is the point of new rules that would force us to build new cars? Imagine if football changed its rules every other year."

Reiter thinks there is little support for the new class. "I have spoken to a lot of manufacturers and haven't found one that is in favour, so what is the point?"

BMW, which is looking at using a version of its V8-engined Z4 GT3 car in the American Le Mans Series next year, has suggested that it is in favour of the move to bring the regulations together.

The ACO and the FIA have stated that they want to combine the main tenets of the two classes: the traditional rulebook of the GTE class; and the lower costs of GT3.

The first meeting to discuss the new rules was scheduled for late November.

Ratel hatches new world series concept

Stéphane Ratel has reached a draft agreement for FIA World GT Series titles to be awarded across his new GT Sprint Series and the Blancpain Endurance Series.



The Frenchman announced his intention to apply to the FIA for some kind of world title when he announced in July that he would no longer promote the FIA GT1 World Championship in 2013. He has now revealed that he has reached an agreement in principle with FIA president Jean Todt for manufacturers' and teams' titles to be awarded on the basis of points scored in the 12 races that will make up the sprint and endurance series for GT3 machinery.

The only proviso from the FIA is that the seven-round sprint series must incorporate a second race outside Europe in addition to the opener in Abu Dhabi, which is set for February. Ratel said that races in India at the Buddh International Circuit and at Interlagos were possibilities.

Ratel (left) plans to encourage teams to race in both the sprint and the endurance series and claims that they will "only have to change their stickers" to do so. There will be a minimum of one clear weekend between rounds of each.

■ WRC

Kubica eyes rally future

Robert Kubica has moved a step closer to becoming a full-time rally driver.

The ex-Lotus racer has not competed in Formula 1 since the final Grand Prix of 2010 after suffering serious injuries in a crash on a rally in Italy, which he was contesting for fun, during February 2011.

Since a return to F1 is unlikely owing to the lack of mobility in his arms, Kubica is now set on a career in rallying, and tackled two events in a Citroën C4 WRC during November.

"Rallying is one of my favourite forms of motor sport," said Kubica, who was due to contest Rally di Como and Rallye du Var in the C4.

Kubica's agreement with Citroën is currently for two rallies only. The Pole has also driven a Subaru Impreza WRC in the past and had tackled selected events in a Renault Clio R3 before his crash in a Skoda Fabia S2000.



■ EVENT

Big show to honour Stewart

The Autosport International show, which will take place at Birmingham's NEC on January 10-13, has announced that it will honour founding member of the *Motor Sport* magazine Hall of Fame Sir Jackie Stewart.

The three-time Formula 1 World Champion will be there on both public days (12/13) and will talk about his career and work with the Grand Prix Mechanics Charitable Trust. A large display will celebrate his racing life with a selection of his Grand Prix cars including the Stewart-Ford from his days as a team owner.

The rally feature this year will celebrate 2001 World Rally Champion Richard Burns, and the seven-car display will include a Subaru Impreza WRC of the type that he used to seal the crown that year.

Both Derek Bell and Allan McNish, multiple winners of the Le Mans 24 Hours, are also due to attend.



BMW claimed DTM honours on its comeback season when Schnitzer driver Bruno Spengler sealed the title with victory at the Hockenheim series finale in October. The Canadian sealed the crown 23 years after the Munich marque's previous title, won by Roberto Ravaglia with Schnitzer.

MOTOR SPORT SINCE 1924 HALL OF FAME 2013

The build-up to the 2013 *Motor Sport* magazine Hall of Fame rolls on. Each year we host a star-studded night to honour great names of our sport and invite a selection from the past and present to join our club of heroes. Ahead of the big night on February 25, 2013 we have been asking those who are already members of the Hall of Fame whom they would choose to join them. This month we speak to the most successful motorcycle racer of all time, **Giacomo Agostini.**



"Mike Hailwood was a true great on motorbikes. He won nine world titles, he was talented enough to win in four different categories in one day and, above all, he was a very fair competitor, he respected the other racers. He also showed that he could race cars as well, winning the 1972 European Formula 2 Championship.

"As a second option I'd make Barry Sheene a member. He was also very talented and very open with the public to the point of being loved by so many. Also, we mustn't forget his real love... he found a beautiful wife!"



So who would you include in the Hall of Fame? Go to
www.motorsportmagazine.com
and tell us who we should make a member in 2013



HISTORICS

Costs scare for race series

Senior members of the European historic racing community are hopeful that a workable solution will be found to a potential hike in costs for running race series on an international basis in 2013 and beyond.

Plans from the FIA to levy new charges for series that run in more than one country caused alarm along many organisers of historic racing as most premier series have a pan-European schedule. The fees could run into thousands of pounds, with a sliding scale based on the power-to-weight ratio of the cars involved.

However, John Hughes, chairman of the FIA Historic Commission, has been working hard to resolve the situation and will now make recommendations to the World Motor Sports Council in December.

Hughes and other members of the FIA Historic Commission recently met with a range of leading figures from the historic motor racing world. Among them were the founder members of a newly formed organisation, the European Historic Motorsport Association: Bob Berridge (Group C), Ron Maydon (Masters), Carol Spagg (U2TC), Duncan Wiltshire (Motor Racing Legends) and Patrick Peter (Peter Auto).

"It was an extremely informative meeting," said Berridge. "There was an enthusiastic spirit to engage fully with the historic community and understand our concerns."

Although the signs are that a solution will be found for historic racing, the new fees structure could still have a significant impact upon contemporary racing. Championships such as the British Formula 3 series could be adversely affected, given that the calendar includes a number of races outside the UK.

Donovan top after thriving Group C season

Mike Donovan, a British F3 racer in the mid-1980s, is the 2012 Group C champion after a season packed with highs and lows in his C2-category Spice SE88C.

The Gloucestershire-based racer clinched the title with another category victory in the final race of the season at Imola, out-scoring the Sauber Mercedes of the C1 champion Gareth Evans, who missed the final round in Italy.

Donovan's car was badly damaged in an accident during the Le Mans support race in June and it took a mighty team effort to prepare it for the following race at the Silverstone Classic.

More than 40 drivers scored points during the season, which bodes well for the future of the category.

The provisional 2013 Group C calendar includes a return to the Silverstone Classic (July 26-28) as well as the Donington Historic Festival (May 3-5). Other tracks on the event schedule include Barcelona, Spa, the Nürburgring, Paul Ricard and Mugello.

HRDC to prune races

The Historic Racing Drivers' Club has dramatically cut its racing programme for 2013 after suffering significant losses during 2012 because of grids that proved smaller than anticipated.

The club's pre-63 Touring Cars, MGB 50th and Grand Touring Greats race series all underperformed in terms of grid size, and only the Pre-60 Touring Greats delivered viable fields.

To counter the losses, HRDC's founder, Julius Thurgood, has created a new partnership with the Aston Martin Owners' Club to run a five-race series for the Touring Greats. Cars from the other three classes will be mopped up in a three-race series titled HRDC Allstars.

Boucles to battle on

The organisers of the Boucles de Spa, the biggest historic rally in Europe, have pledged to run the event again on February 16, 2013, despite running up losses measured in tens of thousands of euros in 2012.

Charges from local councils for the costs of road repairs plunged the event into a heavy loss as a severe freeze and then rapid thaw broke up the asphalt in places.

"After much careful consideration, we have nevertheless decided to try another year," said Pierre Delettre of the RAC Spa. The 2013 entry will be capped at 300 cars with entry fees rising to €950 for the Classic category and €1500 for Legends entries.



Jim Houlgrave

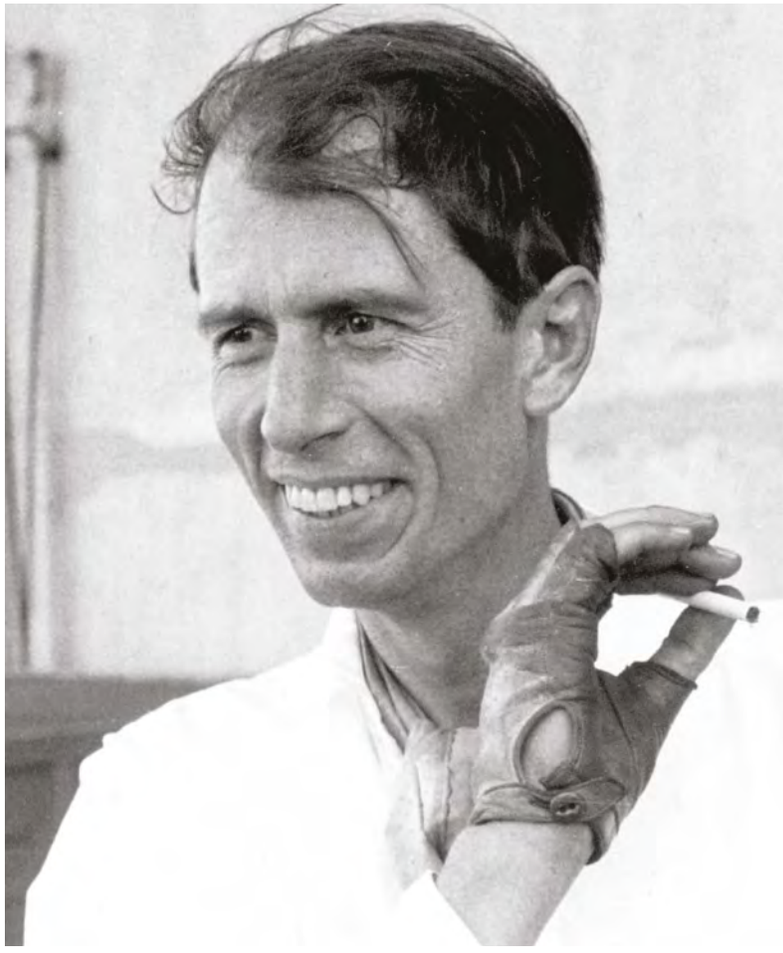
Historic triple family podium

Motor racing history was made at the Algarve Classic Festival in October when all three podium places in the Stirling Moss Trophy race went to father-and-son driver pairings.

The final race of the season for pre-1961 sports cars was a two-hour, two-driver race running into the dusk, and winners were Gabriel and Dion Kremer in their Lotus 17 Prototype, with the Lister Knobbly of Barry and Tony Wood close behind in second. Completing the podium was the Lister-Chevrolet of Mark and James Gibbon.

"We're not aware of it ever happening before," said Duncan Wiltshire of series organisers Motor Racing Legends.

Wiltshire was also central to a dramatic finish in the Pre-War Sports Car race as the Aston Martin Speed of David Allen beat the Bentley that Wiltshire had taken over from Clive Morley to the flag by a tenth of a second.



John Fitch
1917 - 2012

The death of John Fitch ends a long, adventurous life that would have been remarkable even without his time as a racing driver, which only occupied 18 of his 95 years. From an old New England family – an ancestor built the first successful steamboat in 1787 – he was a friend of the Kennedys, and dated JFK's sister. As a young man he sailed a schooner around the Gulf of Mexico, and then spent World War II flying P-51 Mustangs. He was the first to shoot down a Messerschmitt Me262, the early German jet, and was then himself shot down while attacking a weapons train, evading capture behind enemy lines for a couple of days before ending the war in a prison camp.

Back home he tried farming, then opened a car dealership, and began racing in his own MG TC. He won the 1951 Argentine Grand Prix in a borrowed Allard, earning a victory kiss from Evita Peron. For Briggs Cunningham he won the 1953 Sebring 12 Hours and was third at Le Mans, and then escaped unharmed from a huge, high-flying accident at Reims because, to the derision of the European drivers, he was wearing an aircraft safety harness.

In 1952 he'd persuaded Mercedes-Benz to enter the Carrera Panamericana, driving one of the three 300SLs himself, and in 1955 he was offered a place in the Mercedes sports car team. His 300SL was fourth overall and first GT home in the Mille Miglia; then he shared Stirling Moss' winning 300SLR in the TT, and was fourth in the Targa Florio. But at Le Mans he was paired with Pierre Levegh, whose tragic crash cost the lives of over 80 spectators, and it was Fitch who lobbied for the remaining works cars to be withdrawn after the accident.

He did the Italian Grand Prix twice, retiring his HWM in 1953 and borrowing Stirling Moss' own Maserati 250F in 1955 to finish ninth. In 1956 he was hired by Chevrolet to develop the Corvette into a raceable sports car, and his efforts culminated in 1960 with a class win at Le Mans and eighth place overall. He continued to drive for Briggs Cunningham in Jaguar, Lister-Jaguar, Porsche, Maserati, Cooper and Porsche, until retiring in 1966 at the age of 48.

The Le Mans tragedy affected him deeply, and he invented a highway safety barrier which was eventually adopted by the US authorities across America. He successfully marketed a Sprint version of the Chevrolet Corvair, and then designed and built the prototype Fitch Phoenix, a rear-engined GT car using Corvair running gear. Other projects included a waterless cooling system for cars, self-levelling suspension, and secondary braking for trucks and buses.

He was deeply involved in the Lime Rock circuit, which was close to the period Connecticut house where he lived for more than half his life. Despite the death three years ago of Elizabeth, his beloved wife of 60 years, his mental energy and rumbustious good humour remained undimmed, and he worked on a device to give back sufferers comfort in bed and on an ecologically efficient fireplace. His final motor sporting effort, aged 88, was a record attack on the Bonneville Salt Flats in a 50-year-old 300SL, although a faulty injector pump kept his speed down to 150mp. And in 2010, aged almost 93, he lapped the Le Mans circuit in the same Corvette in which he'd won his class 60 years before.

Gentleman racing driver, brave warrior, inventor, broad-minded sportsman: John Fitch was a polymath. In these days of specialisation, he was a fine example of a disappearing breed.

Simon Taylor



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See the iPad edition to revisit 'Lunch with John Fitch', first published in November 2010

Maserati plots ambitious growth



Maserati has released images showing its all-new fourth generation Quattroporte. Given that its predecessor was widely hailed as one of the best-looking saloons to be created by Maserati or indeed anyone else, it's a relief to see the styling of the new car is evolutionary.

Some might not like a tail that appears to have been influenced more by Audi than Maserati, but the profile is sleek and flowing, the nose unmistakably Maserati. The interior, said to be far more spacious than that of the old car, looks timelessly elegant.

But recent Maseratis have all been gorgeous to look at: it's finding a way of making that beauty run more than skin deep that's proven troubling. To stand a chance of selling in volume next to the top-of-the-range Audis, BMWs and Mercedes at which it will be pitched, the new Quattroporte must at the very least finally acquire acceptable ride quality, a decent gearbox, and engines designed to work powering a heavy saloon rather than a rev-happy sports car.

Maserati has released no technical details ahead of its global debut at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit in the New Year, but the car will sit on a new platform. As before, it will use engines cast and built for them by Ferrari.

The even more interesting news is what Maserati plans to do with its business over the next three years. In that time, if its plans come to fruition, Maserati production will grow from a little over 6000 cars at the moment to 50,000 units. To put this in perspective, that's as many cars as Porsche was producing at the time of the Cayenne's introduction in 2002. Looked at another way, while Ferrari took 26 years to double production to its current 7000 units, Maserati is planning an eight-fold increase in three years flat.

It seems implausible but stranger things have happened: Bentley grew its business ten-fold between 2003-07 thanks to the rapturous reception granted to the Continental GT.

But Maserati is trying to do something different. Bentley wasn't trying to reposition its brand, it was trying to release pent-up demand among those who'd always have been happy to spend a six-figure sum on a Bentley if only there'd been one worth buying. Maserati, by contrast, is attempting to transform itself from a niche player into one still premium but entirely mainstream, like Jaguar. And it won't get there by Quattroporte, no matter how capable it proves to be.

"MASERATI PRODUCTION WILL GROW FROM A LITTLE OVER 6000 CARS TO 50,000 UNITS"

It needs at least two entirely new product lines to come on stream and be established in all major territories around the world, both selling for sums that people who have hitherto only ever dreamed of owning a Maserati can now afford. One will be a smaller saloon, the other an SUV.

The results will be fascinating. Maserati, a company that has carefully picked its way around the major market classes, is now apparently to go head to head with the cream of the German premium players and do so with cars that surely cannot have had a fraction of the development time or money spent on them. There must also be diesel Maseratis and four-wheel-drive Maseratis – all new ground for this most traditional constructor.

Will it get there? The plan seems staggeringly ambitious to me. Bentley was able to develop the Continental GT to Volkswagen standards of engineering excellence because it was based on an extant VW design, the Phaeton. Porsche was able to create the Cayenne because beneath the skin it was just a VW Touareg with Porsche panels, running gear and suspension settings. Where within the Fiat Group will Maserati find its equivalents? Chrysler may provide the answer: the new Jeep Grand Cherokee is based on the current Mercedes ML platform while the 300C has a rear-drive configuration of approximately the right size for the smaller saloon.

But perhaps Maserati will confound its doubters and produce a credible range of smaller, more affordable cars and let that name do the rest. A Maserati for the price of an Audi Q7? That's a deal a lot of people will want to make. All Maserati has to do is give them the confidence that it's as good an idea in practice as in theory. Which is, of course, the most difficult thing of all.

New markets boost Ferrari

Italy may be in the economic doldrums but its most coveted car manufacturer is anything but.

Figures just released for the first nine months of 2012 show that Ferrari made €152 million profit on a turnover of €1.76 billion and delivered 5267 cars. If that rate is maintained Ferrari will have delivered over 7000 cars during 2012. To put this in some perspective, 10 years ago Ferrari built just 4236 cars.

Sadly for the home crowd, none of this growth is domestic. Twenty years ago Italy was regularly one of the top three markets for Maranello products, but with the crisis in Southern Europe and the emergence of powerful new markets right around the world, it now struggles to break into the top 20.



Caterham makes a French connection

In an apparently unlikely marriage, Caterham and Renault are joining forces to create a new generation of sports car to be sold both as Caterhams and Alpines.

The move not only resurrects one of the great sports car brands but crucially provides Caterham with a new direction it has been known to be seeking for years, if not decades. Production of the iconic Seven will not be affected.



The new cars, said to share common engineering but have their own brand identities, styles and set ups, should first reach the public eye some time in 2015. Little is known about what kind of cars they will be, though it is clear they will be standalone products in their own right and not merely used as brands to promote existing Renault models – a fate currently being suffered by that other great name at Renault's disposal, Gordini.

So expect a range of small, lightweight and rear-wheel-drive cars focused on providing driving pleasure to true enthusiasts but not blind to the desire of the more image-obsessed.

History has not been kind either to Caterham or Alpine's more recent attempts to sell all-new models. The last Alpine, the A610, was vastly talented in almost all regards save its ability to find customers, sales ending after three slow-selling years. Caterham fared even worse with its attempt at a more civilised Seven, total production of the 1994 Caterham 21 stalling short of 50 units and a far cry from the original intention of 200 cars per year. If the new venture is to work, the Caterham/Alpines will need to sell in their thousands and pitch at the affordable end of the market.

Prior to this year's Monaco Grand Prix Renault demonstrated a new Alpine concept car called the A110-50 (above), whose sleek good looks won near-universal applause. That was based on the mid-engined Renault Mégane Trophy race car and used its 3.5-litre V6 motor, though it is likely the new cars will use their own architecture and tuned versions of Renault's four-cylinder petrol engines.

Production for both new ranges of cars has been allocated to Renault's Dieppe facility, the original home of Alpine and where the sporting RenaultSport models are currently assembled. A Caterham built in France? That may take some getting used to.

EcoBoost tech award

Ford's three-cylinder, 1-litre turbo EcoBoost engine has been awarded the coveted Dewar Trophy in a ceremony at the RAC.

The award is given for outstanding British technical achievement in the motor industry and was inaugurated in 1904 by Tommy Dewar of whisky fame.

The engine is a milestone in efficiency, offering similar or better power and torque than a conventional 1.6-litre four with 25 per cent better fuel consumption. Small enough for its footprint to sit on a sheet of A4 paper, it is also uncannily refined. A 202bhp version has been introduced in Formula Ford.

Insignia goes back to the '80s

Remember the Lotus Carlton? Vauxhall does. It may be 23 years since the 377bhp, twin-turbo super saloon was launched, but that has not prevented Vauxhall from invoking its memory for the new Insignia VXR Supersport.

The new car has a little less power (325bhp) and a slightly lower top speed of just 170mph, but at £29,995 it costs in real terms less than half the £48,000 asked for the Carlton in 1989. Indeed Vauxhall claims it's both the most powerful and quickest car on sale for under £30,000.

How has Vauxhall created this Supersport wonder child? Simply by removing the electronic speed limiter from the normal Insignia VXR and dropping its list price by nearly £4000.





AND THAT REMINDS ME...

A first-hand experience of Stewart's undimmed driving genius

EIGHT YEARS AGO I ATTENDED THE LAUNCH OF A new DVD whose title *Jackie Stewart – Triple World Champion* tells you all you need to know about its contents. Jackie was there of course, as was his son Mark whose MSP production company had made the film.

It took place in the BRDC Clubhouse at Silverstone and when all the pleasantries were completed I wondered if it might be possible to do a lap or two of the track with the great man at the wheel. At the time JYS was already eligible for his bus pass and had not raced a car for more than 30 years. Happily I had 400bhp of Noble M12 at my disposal so I just jumped in beside him and waited for the drama to unfold.

But there wasn't any. On his out-lap Jackie drove about as fast as I might; thereafter there was no comparison. I remember a sensation of the car feeling as if it were on tiptoes and of it drifting all the way up to but never beyond the track limits. I'd not expected armfuls of over- or understeer as this has never been the JYS way, but even when the car flicked sideways I was surprised by how little correction he applied: he just did enough to arrest the rate of yaw and then rode it out on the throttle, letting the car do all the work.

This performance stood out for two reasons: firstly, I'm not sure he'd ever sat in a Noble before, let alone driven one on the absolute limit; and secondly, from start to finish he never stopped talking, calmly and quietly, about what the car was doing and what he was doing to control it.

After it was over and as I fell somewhat thunderstruck from the car, Mark Stewart was good enough to come over and offer some form of explanation. "Don't worry, Dad has always had an advantage over everyone else," he ventured somewhat conspiratorially. What might that be, I enquired eagerly. "He just doesn't find it very difficult." That much I could see.

TO READ ANDREW FRANKEL'S LATEST ROAD CAR TESTS, TURN TO PAGE 126

Eco Targa Florio

by Vic Elford



'Quick Vic' (right) drove a 1956 Porsche 356 1600 Speedster



Evocative route took some historic liberties



Sicily, Italy

IN MAY 2012 I RECEIVED A LETTER OUT of the blue from Sandro Binelli, Chairman of MAC Group, inviting me to take part in a new historic presentation of the Targa Florio.

The Porsche museum from Stuttgart then decided to enter five historic cars, including a 1958 356 1600S Speedster for **Hans Herrmann** and a 1956 356 1600 Speedster for me. We would share three journalists as co-drivers rotating over the three-day event: Ed Heuvink from Holland, and Roland Löwisch and Kirsten Rehmann from Germany.

Entries ranged from a 1926 Amilcar and a 1927 Bugatti to a 1972 Alfa Romeo and a 1973 Porsche.

The day before the start we were invited to the opening of yet another new Targa Florio museum, this time at Termini Imerese – so now there are four! As is so often the case in retrospective race reunions, there was a certain amount of flexibility with the route compared with the past, as well as dramatic examples of the evolution of the automobile over the past 40 to 50 years. Leaving the official start at the University of Palermo, we were led out of town in groups onto the *autostrada* where Hans and I were not alone in being unable to keep up with our police escort on the way to the real start at the original pits at Cerda.

Leaving Cerda we followed the route of the Piccolo Madonie circuit to Caltavatura, then went through the mountains to begin a series of precision average speed tests on the Enna-Pergusa circuit. Hans and I are still quite good at going fast, but neither he nor I, nor any of our co-drivers, were much good at slow-speed tests, as shown by the final results. Hans finished 82nd while I was 100th out of about 110 cars





at the finish! My old friend and rival **Nanni Galli** was 98th.

A long afternoon and evening saw us to the finish of day one at the magnificent Donnafugata Castle and its beautiful resort hotel.

Day two started at the Ragusa marina and led through one of Europe's most beautiful little cities, Noto, before heading to the coast and what might well be Europe's most notorious permanent traffic jam, Siracusa. Getting to the city centre, doing a tour of the island and getting out again meant spending a solid hour in first gear. Definitely not a place for the meek.

From Siracusa, we had a couple of hours of heavy rain before climbing the hairpin-strewn road to Taormina and its incredible theatre, erected first by the Greeks and then built over by the Romans. Here the organisers produced a first surprise with the roadbook taking the competitors through the middle of the city on its tiny, narrow pedestrian street. I suppose the idea was to excite the tourists taking their evening stroll after dinner by seeing the cars in their midst, as well as to give the drivers a unique view of what is normally a car-free environment, but I am not sure that either group really appreciated it.

Saturday dawned bright and clear, but during a couple of long sections around the slopes of Mount Etna the rain soon returned; and because of the altitude, the cold came with it. I resisted the temptation to put the top up, partly so the spectators could see us but also because with the low windshield the canvas top really gives a feeling of claustrophobia in the tiny car. Descending from the masses of dark brown solidified lava that have poured from Etna over the years we found a warm welcome and wonderful buffet lunch awaiting us at the winery Santa Anastasia. Another urban trip had been planned for Cefalu but it was having its own mini carnival which closed the streets to traffic. Since they are even narrower and much longer than those of Taormina this was perhaps not a bad thing.

Along the coast to Cerda, and then we set off on the Grande Circuito Madonie: Cerda – Caltavatura – Castellana Sicula – Petralia Sottana – Geraci Siculo – Castebuono… but then instead of continuing the original lap through Collesano and Campofelice we went straight to the *Autostrada* and then back to the University of Palermo. Pity, because Collesano and Campofelice figured in both the short and long Madonie Circuits over the life of this famous race and both have magnificent museums dedicated to it.

It seems almost superfluous to announce a winner after such a wonderful tour. Going fast was not the way to win, but for many drivers it was definitely a way to enjoy the route and their wonderful cars.

The prize-giving ceremony took place in the beautiful Politeama Garibaldi Theatre in Palermo on Sunday and many trophies were awarded, the most popular being that for first place overall taken by **Giordano Mozzi**, guided by his stopwatch-wielding mathematical co-driver, his mother **Irene Guarnieri**.



GT3 cars provided great entertainment at Baku

City Challenge Baku

Baku, Azerbaijan

THE UNLIKELY CONCEPT OF motor racing in Azerbaijan became a reality in October as City Challenge hit Baku. The brainchild of German promoter Hartmut Beyer, the man behind the Bucharest street circuit, it took place on a track built in 11 days, measuring just over two kilometres and lined with nearly 1500 concrete blocks.

His idea was simple: take cars that people can get excited about. Hence, three days of activity centred around GT3 cars (for three races), Classic Grand Prix Cars (a mixture of proper F1 cars and Boss GP miscellany) and drifting. Off-track, there were concerts and entertainment for the younger fans, and while the Azerbaijani government had clearly spent many a euro on the occasion, it was rewarded with a cracking event and a big crowd. Even on Friday the stands were nearly full, as a curious audience delighted in a new sport it had never seen up close before.

The circuit was mostly first and second-gear corners but the drivers acknowledged it was a challenge, and the crowd cheered loudly throughout. Despite some heavy damage to a number of cars, the reaction of those involved was overwhelmingly positive. It was well-organised and they'd been given a warm welcome by a proud nation.

The only negative was a massive accident that befell **Abba Kogan** (March 761) after his throttle stuck open and he burrowed under a tyre wall, after which the car caught fire. Kogan thankfully escaped with minor burns.

Frédéric Makowiecki made history by winning the first race in the country in the Hexis McLaren MP4-12C, but the second race was stopped twice owing to oil on the track and accidents. Sunday's double-driver race was won by Makowiecki and his co-driver **Stef Dusseldorp**. *David Addison*

London to Brighton Veteran Car Run

London-Brighton, Great Britain

BRAVING AT TIMES TORRENTIAL RAIN, 372 of the 449 starters completed the 2012 edition of the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run, the oldest motoring event in the world.

Stars including **Sir Stirling Moss** and **Jochen Mass** were cheered on by thousands of fans despite the poor weather as the pre-1905 veteran cars drove from London's Hyde Park.

First to finish was **Ian Moore** from Hampshire, who crossed the finish line at 10.21am in his 1899 Panhard et Levassor (right), while the last competitor officially home was **Derek Payne**. He arrived at 4.38pm in a 1901 De Dion Bouton after many problems on the 60-mile route.

Other celebrity participants included Pink Floyd drummer **Nick Mason**, TV adventurer **Charley Boorman** and land speed record contender **Andy Green**. Along with Moss and Mass, all of them reached the finish. Mason, who has taken part every year since 1985, drove his 1901



Panhard et Levassor Roi-des-Belges, while Mass partnered **Dr Alexander Schroeder-Frerkes** in his 1904 Autocar.

Sir Stirling and **Lady Moss** were passengers with **Chris Jaques** in a 1903 Panhard et Levassor, a car that has taken part in around 35 London to Brighton runs. *Paul Lawrence*



As ever, the range of veterans was eclectic





Conservative run to third was enough for the Audi trio to secure the title

Shanghai Six Hours

Shanghai, China

AUDI DRIVERS **ANDRE LOTTERER**, **Benoît Tréluyer** and **Marcel Fässler** became the first world champions of endurance sports car racing in 20 years on a day that Toyota's TS030 Hybrid again proved superior to its German rival's R18 e-tron quattro. The Audi trio sealed the title with third place, but Toyota's **Alex Wurz** and **Nicolas Lapierre** dominated the final round of the FIA World Endurance Championship at Shanghai.

Lotterer, Tréluyer and Fässler took the title with a conservative run that was always going to be more than enough to secure the honours, despite finishing a place behind their rivals and team-mates **Allan McNish** and **Tom Kristensen**. That was the good news for Audi; the bad news was the domination of the TS030, which made it 3-3 in its head-to-head meetings with the R18 in the WEC.

Toyota was on top from the word go on a circuit that favoured the TS030 in both layout and surface. The predominance of slow corners followed by long straights played into the hands of its supercapacitor energy-retrieval system, while the car's high-downforce chassis looked after its Michelin tyres on Shanghai's smooth, low-grip asphalt.

The Toyota's drivers needed to make 40 seconds on the chasing Audis in order to make what has become its *de rigueur* final splash-and-dash fuel stop. It had built up that margin in the space of two hours.

Toyota's dominance over the second half of the WEC, in what was billed as a test and development year for the TS030, must make the Japanese brand favourite for next year's WEC and even its centrepiece at Le Mans. Audi has promised to react, but by its own admission it cannot produce the new car that many believe it needs.

Audi has stressed that its focus is the forthcoming 2014 rulebook and the all-new machine that will be required. That means it will race on with a further update of its R18 and its existing hybrid system, which it now admits is no match for Toyota's.

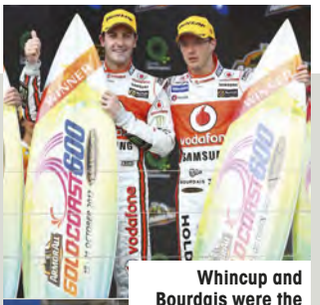
Part of that deficit is down to the so-called '120 Rule', which prevents stored energy being returned to the track through the front wheels below 120kph (75mph), but the WEC rulemakers have confirmed that there will be no change in this rule for 2013.

Yet even Audi admits that this is only part of the reason for its inferiority in the hybrid stakes. The Toyota system offers more of a punch because although it is bigger and heavier, that is compensated for by Toyota's petrol engine being lighter than Audi's turbodiesel powerplant.

Audi now faces a busy winter's development to try to claw back the gap to Toyota. *Gary Watkins*



Toyota's TS030 Hybrid proved the dominant force at Shanghai





Whincup and Bourdais were the standout performers

Gold Coast 600

Surfers Paradise, Australia

THE THIRD INSTALMENT OF THE V8 Supercars Gold Coast 600 delivered familiar yet inspired results during the unique two-race, 300km format which pairs 28 drivers of international repute with the 28 V8 regulars at Surfers Paradise.

Sébastien Bourdais and **Jamie Whincup** kept up their top form from last year by winning the first race from pole position. The star duo almost did the double, only to lose an 11-second lead during one of several questionable safety car interventions.

Ford Performance Racing's **Will Davison** and ex-Formula 1 driver **Mika Salo** would eventually triumph in race two, with Bourdais claiming his second consecutive Dan Wheldon Memorial Trophy, given in honour of the late Indy 500 winner to the international driver with the best average finishing position across both races.

A date conflict with the American Le Mans Series finale at Road Atlanta kept some regulars away but a number of new IndyCar Series names filled the void. **Marco Andretti** received high marks for his aerobatic displays over the chicanes. *Marshall Pruett*



Nigel Roebuck



REFLECTIONS
– The free spirit of Kimi Räikkönen
– Mental gamesmanship in Formula 1
– The remarkable life of Chris Economaki

It was just Kimi Räikkönen's luck that, after coming close on a number of occasions, when he finally won a Grand Prix for Lotus it had to be in a country where the attitude to booze is somewhat at odds with his own. On the podium over time Kimi has shaken the champagne in time-honoured style, but he always took care not to waste it all, taking a hearty draught or two before picking up his trophy and leaving the stage.

In Abu Dhabi he was plainly disappointed that the bottle contained only rosewater – what else could have explained the po-face?

Well, in fact it was just Kimi being Kimi, and I think we all long ago gave up trying to understand what makes him tick. Keke Rosberg reckons it's something to do with growing up in the Finnish hinterland: "For half the year it's dark most of the time, and there isn't much to do – people from there tend not to smile very much…"

It is hard to fathom, though, is it not? From the start of the race in Abu Dhabi Räikkönen was on it, slotting in behind Lewis Hamilton at the first corner, then taking a serious run at him when he made a mistake. Once the McLaren had retired Kimi was in the lead, and there was no doubting, be it from his brusque Fawlty-like radio responses to his engineer or the resolute way he held off Fernando Alonso's late charge, that he *really* wanted this race.

That being so, you'd have thought it would be impossible to keep from smiling on the podium, but he managed it.

A few weeks ago I chatted to Martin Whitmarsh about Räikkönen, a McLaren driver for five seasons, and while the relationship between Kimi and Ron Dennis



Rosewater on the podium rather than champagne didn't help Kimi break into a smile after victory

was always what may – in 2012-speak – be termed 'challenging', Martin has always got on well with him. Kimi, I mean.

"His driving hasn't surprised me this season," he said. "Maybe that very last edge has gone, but he's doing a bloody good job.

"Kimi's quite a misunderstood individual, I think. Yes, he certainly likes to party, but he's actually more disciplined about training than people realise, and he's also very intelligent – one of the sharpest drivers out there, in fact. Because he doesn't say much, and has a generally flippant demeanour, people wouldn't necessarily think that. Another thing is that, in my opinion, he's one of the best drivers when it comes to understanding the car, and to communicating that.

"To put 'communicating' and 'Kimi' in the same sentence might seem like a bit of a strange one, but I'm a big fan of his. How many mistakes does he make in racing? Very few. He can be very quick, and he's smart, so you have to say that he's got all the ingredients – apart from the dedication.

> "The only part of F1 that has ever interested Kimi is driving the car"

"I remember one year – a year he was fighting for the championship – when we were in Canada, and going on to Indy the next weekend. On the Sunday night Kimi was off to Vegas, to party with his mates. I remember saying to him, 'Kimi, you're an adult, you're an intelligent individual – you're going to do what you're going to do, and we can't stop you – but I just want to put this question to you…'

"This was before the days of DRS, when there wasn't a lot of overtaking, and getting on the front row was pretty important. I said, 'In Indianapolis, in six days' time, if you miss pole position by five thousandths of a second – which you could do – and you've flown from Montréal to Vegas, into a different time zone, partied and had some drinks, and then flown all the way back to Indianapolis, won't you want to kick yourself *really* bloody hard?' He

All images LAT

Nigel Roebuck

smiled and nodded – didn't say it, but seemed to indicate his agreement – and then an hour later he flew off to Vegas!

"Kimi is very insightful, and he's got a very dry sense of humour, which most people never see. I really like the bloke, but I found it *deeply* frustrating that he's as smart as he is, and has all that pace – and yet he compromises it. I don't think he's ever realised his potential…"

I'm sure Whitmarsh is right, and equally sure that Räikkönen couldn't care less, just as he's a nightmare to interview, because he couldn't care less about that, either. The only aspect of F1 that has ever interested him is driving the car, and I've no doubt that, in the PR-muzzled world of today, that accounts for his huge popularity. There is something fundamentally 'unmanageable' about Kimi, and fans always love a maverick. Time was when they were thick on the ground, but it's not like that any more: eccentricity, which was once something to be celebrated, is today regarded with deep suspicion. As far as I'm concerned, it can only be good that in 2012 there still resides a free spirit in Grand Prix racing.

> "It can only be good that there resides a free spirit in Grand Prix racing"

Years ago Jonathan Williams, the ultra-laidback '60s F3 star and sometime Ferrari driver, came out with a remark I've never forgotten: "Not much matters much," he beamed, "and the rest doesn't matter at all…" The words seem perfectly to sum up the philosophy of K Räikkönen.

You can't *threaten* Kimi with anything, that's the point. Through much of his time with Ferrari, he did justice neither to his team nor to his talent, a conclusion reached by Luca di Montezemolo, who ended his contract a year early, so as to bring in Alonso as soon as possible. Kimi wasn't thrilled, of course, but instead of dwelling on it he simply left the scene, and pushed off to drive Citroëns for a couple of years.

That didn't work out quite as he had hoped, and he began exploring other possibilities, including – briefly – NASCAR. Probably that was never going to work out – there are 36 races a year, apart from anything else – and, as he gave his engineer short shrift for talking too much during the race at Abu Dhabi, I wondered how he would have tolerated the 'spotters' in NASCAR, in his ear constantly: 'Go low, Kimi, go low…' It's not too much of a stretch to imagine his response: 'Who's driving the f***ing car – me or you?'

So NASCAR failed to hit the spot with Räikkönen, and although he had much enjoyed the physical sensation of driving a rally car, competing against the clock, he found, was less satisfying than *racing*. Thus he let it be known that he would be interested in coming back to F1, but had there been no offer that truly appealed, one feels, it wouldn't have been the end of the world: he would simply have gone off and done something else, perhaps – who knows – never to be heard of again. No one ever needed fame less than Kimi.

In Abu Dhabi he drove quite beautifully, as indeed did most of the F1 hierarchy. Lewis Hamilton had one of those weekends when he looked unapproachable, quickest by far in practice, qualifying and the race – until his McLaren let him down, just as it had done in Singapore.

Hamilton's future, with Mercedes, is something of an unknown quantity, and many think him nuts to have made the move, but there's no doubt that, since making his decision finally, Lewis has seemed like a happy man again. Of course he wants to end his McLaren years on a memorable note, but the failure in Abu Dhabi was nothing to do with him, and he was relaxed afterwards in the knowledge that he would have walked it.

Alonso, though, did not look relaxed. As in India the weekend before, he had driven another of his typically exceptional races, making up places on the opening lap as usual, and being in the mix throughout. In the late laps he closed on Räikkönen, and second place was a gratifying result for the fourth-fastest car in the race – actually, make that seventh-fastest, for there were two McLarens, two Red Bulls and two Lotuses, were there not?



Fernando may have talked things up afterwards, as he invariably does, but he had good reason to look pensive: for one thing, the raft of Ferrari updates brought to Abu Dhabi had signally failed to transform it, as hoped; for another, alongside him on the podium was his World Championship rival. Although Sebastian Vettel's last words to Christian Horner before the start had been, 'See you on the podium', no one could realistically have seen it coming. He was, after all, in the pitlane.

It was no fault of Vettel's that he was in that predicament, just as with Hamilton in Barcelona, where he had started last – having taken pole position – for the same reason. Like Lewis, his car had stopped out on the circuit at the end of qualifying, and the team was unable to provide the requisite litre of fuel for testing.



Räikkönen started well in Abu Dhabi, as Vettel waited in pitlane. Below: more Kimi excitement



In this circumstance a driver's qualifying times are wiped – but he is allowed to start last, either from the back of the grid or from the pitlane. In Spain Hamilton drove an exceptional race to come through from 24th to eighth, but he had started from the grid, and thus had exactly the McLaren he had driven in qualifying. In Abu Dhabi Red Bull wisely opted to start Vettel from the pitlane, this not only removing the possibility of involvement in a first corner *fracas*, but also allowing the team – quite within the rules – to make fundamental changes to the car.

Thus the 'parc ferme' aspect of contemporary F1 was to a great degree sidestepped, and Seb went into the race with a car greatly different from the one in which he had qualified. For one thing, he was on medium – rather than soft – tyres, and therefore free of the strategy his major rivals were obliged to follow; for another, he had a way longer top gear, enabling him to make best use of the DRS zones. On Saturday the Red Bulls were slowest of all on top speed; on Sunday Vettel's car was the fourth-fastest.

Since the end of the European season F1 had gone relatively into 'sleep' mode, thanks to various Red Bull updates which restored the car's superiority almost to 2011 levels, and thus we had once again a succession of Vettel victories in Asian races, which became virtually indistinguishable in the mind, one to another. Four victories on the trot wiped out Alonso's once formidable points lead, and Vettel appeared to be cantering to a third consecutive World Championship.

As I write there are two races to go, at Austin and Interlagos, and it will amaze me, frankly, if Seb does not emerge from them with the title: he is 10 points ahead of Fernando, and has a quantifiably quicker car.

After qualifying in Abu Dhabi, though, and the revelation that the stewards had put Vettel to the back, Alonso obviously saw an opportunity to make hay, perhaps even to emerge from the weekend with the championship lead again. Not so…

Of late it has clearly irritated Red Bull personnel that some have suggested that Vettel has had it too easy in recent years, thanks to the frequently overwhelming superiority of his car – let's face it, you don't find many engineers begging their driver *not* to set a new fastest lap, for the sake of it, in the closing laps! It's fact that often Seb has simply not needed to race, as with such as Jim Clark and Alberto Ascari in times gone by. Take pole, take the lead at the start – gone. »»

Nigel Roebuck

No one, I think, has ever denigrated his enormous talent, and for that matter he has sometimes been widely praised for his *racing* ability, as at Spa, where he started 10th and came through to second. After Abu Dhabi, though, some spoke as if this had been the drive of the century, but honestly I didn't see it that way.

Of course it was remarkable that anyone should pluck a podium finish from a race that began in the pitlane, but I thought Horner's pre-race assessment – "Seb should get into the points…" – on the mark. It goes without saying that it was a fine drive (albeit not without its glitches), but it should be borne in mind that Vettel's final position owed hugely to two safety car periods, each of which wiped a 20-odd second deficit to the leader.

As well as that, Sebastian made a second tyre stop (on to soft Pirellis, when all the other front-runners were on older, medium tyres) the very lap before the safety car came out for the second time, and was thus in perfect shape for the balance of the race. Add in that several of the quicker midfield drivers accounted for themselves – down the order there was some remarkably cack-handed driving in Abu Dhabi – and a script comes into focus that Vettel might have written for himself. At Barcelona – where there were no safety cars – Hamilton's drive, as we said, yielded only eighth place.

What you can say is that Vettel was mighty unlucky to start last, then mighty fortunate to finish third. The only front-runner he had to take on was Jenson Button in the late laps, and this surely was the highlight of his afternoon, for his pass of the McLaren was as audacious as it was perfectly executed.

In point of fact, I was a touch surprised that he went for it, for he knew by then that he had 12 points coming in, and third place would yield only another three. There again, at the time he also knew that Alonso was closing on Räikkönen – and that Button, as correct a driver as you will find, would not turf him off the road.

A sensational result for Vettel in Abu Dhabi, then, but not, I think, a drive for the ages. Sometimes the cards fall your way, and sometimes they don't. No wonder Alonso looked crestfallen.

Before the race in New Delhi, India, Alonso remarked that he had to face the fact that he was competing for the World Championship not only with Sebastian Vettel, but also with Adrian Newey.

A not unreasonable statement to make, it seemed to me, being clearly, abundantly true. Not for nothing is Newey paid more than most of the drivers, and if his genius – an over-used word, but no hyperbole when we speak of Adrian – has lately served to dampen the 2012 Grand Prix season, it's because he does his job better than anyone else. An arch-enthusiast he may be, but he's paid to make Formula 1 boring if he can, just as he was 20 years ago when Williams unleashed the FW14B, and Nigel Mansell and Riccardo Patrese strolled away with the season.

In India, too, Lewis Hamilton said he hoped Alonso would win the World Championship this year – he was the best driver, and he deserved it more than anyone else. Again, no surprise there: Lewis and Fernando may have had their problems five years ago, but it's no secret that each considers the other his major rival.

All this – together with renewed suggestions that Vettel had a future agreement with Ferrari – clearly got up the nose of Helmut Marko, who suggested that the intention of these remarks was to destabilise his boy Sebastian, and he gave the impression that it was all somehow a bit… horrid and underhand.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing – my god, it's all got so *precious*! Quite apart from the fact that Vettel, for all his schoolboy grin, is the toughest of nuts, well able to fight his own corner, even if this were some attempt to destabilise him a little, well… what else is new?

Everything, as we know, is minutely scrutinised these days – if you offer even a hint of criticism of anybody or anything, you are routinely dismissed as 'judgemental'. I have no information that Alonso and Hamilton were obliquely



Newey's scrutiny: Red Bull's genius doesn't miss a thing

trying to rattle Vettel a touch, but if they were, so what? It's a tactic that's been in motor racing – in various guises – for ever, and time was when it was seen for what it is: gamesmanship.

On rainy days, for example, Stirling Moss would rub his hands, as if relishing what was to come: "I didn't want it to be wet any more than anyone else – but I thought if I looked happy about it, it might give me a psychological advantage…" Similarly, on the grid at Monaco in 1961, Stirling stood at the back of Phil Hill's faster Ferrari, and shook his head slightly: "Old Phil was always a bit edgy before the start," he laughed, "and I thought it might wind him up a bit…"

And speaking of grids, what of Ayrton Senna's tactic at Magny-Cours in 1992? On the first lap, at the Adelaide hairpin, Michael Schumacher's Benetton tanked into the back of Senna's McLaren, putting both cars into the run-off area. While Michael was able to continue to the pits for a new nose cone, Ayrton was out on the spot, and not amused.

After 18 laps rain brought out the red flag, and the cars stopped on the grid, awaiting a restart. "Ayrton went to speak to Michael," said Jo Ramirez, "and he read him the *riot act* – I could see Michael nodding his head, saying, 'Yes sir, no sir...' Ayrton came back all satisfied with himself, saying, 'Great! Got him just before he got in the car again!' Within a couple of laps – at the same hairpin – Michael ran into Stefano Modena, and was out for the day…"



Martin Brundle tells the story of a brief encounter with one of his heroes, Dale Earnhardt, universally known as 'The Intimidator'. "I met Dale when I did the IROC series in 1990, and I think he said six words to me the whole time I was there. I won one of the races, and he says, 'Good job'. Then I was on pole for the last race, at Michigan, and if I won it I was champion. I passed his car as I walked to my own, and he murmurs, 'Don't forget your kids...' I *think* he was joking! Then, at the first turn, he passed me on a piece of tarmac that didn't exist..."

If you think about it, there have been endless attempts over time to try adversely to affect a driver's performance, some more… creative than others, as Marcello Giambertone, the manager of Juan Manuel Fangio, recounted in his biography of the great man.

"The afternoon before a Grand Prix Fangio was introduced to a charming French actress. We were staying in one of the best hotels in the town, and that night – just as Fangio had taken off his tie, and I was about to leave his room – a bell-boy arrived with an envelope on his silver tray. Juan opened it, and out came a card and a key, with the name of another big hotel in town… and a room number.

"We looked at each other in silence. 'I'd like to be in your shoes,' I said.

"'Take my place – you're my manager,' said Juan.

"After a moment he added, 'The invitation seems odd to me – the night before the race. It's certainly not a coincidence if a pretty woman sends me her room key. I have an idea it's been done on orders from someone who would like to see me worn out and short of sleep for the race tomorrow…' Faithful to his precept that battles are won by sleeping well the night before, he wished me goodnight, and went to bed peacefully.

"The next day Fangio won a brilliant victory. The French actress turned up for the start. She went away with a grimace when Fangio took the lead.

"A few weeks later the sporting director of a certain firm asked me with an innocent air, 'Is it true that Fangio is not interested in the Stage…?'"

One of the reasons I have always adored New York – my favourite city by far – is its inimitable humour. Remember the TV ad from years gone by when the woman says to the construction worker, "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" "Lady, you gotta practise…"

When I was there in June, I noted a huge ad for a storage outfit: 'Storing at your parents means having to visit…' And another from an investment company: 'Waiting for your rich uncle to die is sick. Plus it might take a while…'

Laconic is the word, and I never came across a better exponent of 'Noo Yark' story-telling than Brooklyn-born Chris Economaki, who died this autumn at the age of 91. Chris had been frail for a while, and some years have passed since I last saw him, but I'm glad I still have his voice, glad I thought to set the recorder going during a lunch in New Jersey in the late '90s.

Economaki was the owner of *National Speed Sport News* for more than 50 years, and continued to write his weekly column well into his eighties. Always referred to as 'The dean of American motor sports writers', for countless years he was also a TV commentator, as familiar to US racing fans as was Murray Walker over here, until being precipitately – fatuously – fired for a remark deemed politically incorrect by timid studio bosses. 'Never judge a man out of his time' should be a rule for the ages.

Economaki always considered himself a journalist, rather than a writer, and that was the essence of the chatty, snappy, style of his column: "Always," he said, "be aware of your strengths and weaknesses. I was never one for flowing prose – what I was good at was getting stories…"

Telling them, too. "I enjoyed my teenage years, when I worked as a helper on various people's race cars. I was Duane Carter's mechanic for the whole of the 1938 »»

Nigel Roebuck

season, and it was hard work. But then I became, for want of a better word, important in the business – we all have an ego, and I enjoyed that.

"From the point of view of fun, the '50s was a wonderful time, and I guess it'll always be my favourite. In those days the drivers would get together at night, and we were all one community. In Milwaukee, for example, the place everyone went was the Casinos Steakhouse – linoleum on the floor, with holes in it, but fantastic food. That changed a long time ago, though, because now the drivers were out with their sponsors, and all that stuff.

"It was a tough time, but the racing was phenomenal. What won races in those days was drivers, not cars – the man-machine equation was weighted in favour of the driver. There was little you could do to a car to make it go better: you changed the tyre pressures, and if it didn't do any good, you changed the spark plugs; if *that* didn't help, you changed the driver…"

If I became besotted with Formula 1 in childhood, so I also came under the spell of American racing – not only the glorious front-engined roadsters that ruled at Indianapolis, but also sprint cars, then still raced by the major stars of the day. NASCAR may be all-powerful now, but back then it meant nothing north of the Mason-Dixon Line, and 'open-wheel' racing still reigned supreme in the land, its gods such as Jimmy Bryan, Tony Bettenhausen, Pat O'Connor, Bob Sweikert, Rodger Ward, and later A J Foyt, Parnelli Jones and Mario Andretti. It took Tony George and the IRL to subdue – if not quite extinguish – my love of Indycar racing.

The golden age of sprint car racing was undoubtedly the '50s and '60s, but if the racing was phenomenal, as Economaki said, perhaps there was never more lethal a time in any branch of the sport, and he lost an enormous number of friends. As one who has worked in F1 for 40-odd years, I have known tragic times, too, but I couldn't imagine how it had been for Chris.

"You were inured to it, Nigel – it happened every week," he said, and he went on to point out that while there were wealthy individuals who raced sports cars in America on a strictly amateur basis, *his* kind of racing – Indycars, sprint cars, midgets – was still predominantly a blue-collar sport, wherein the drivers raced to feed their families.

"Take a guy like Jud Larson, who was one of Mario's great heroes. Larson was an artist in a sprint car, but he was forever broke – if he needed money, he would drive far better than if he had $20 in his pocket!

"At the Minnesota State Fair one time I was the announcer, and Larson beat Don Branson by this much. I went down on the track with my microphone, 27,000 people in the stands, and I said, 'Jud, that was a fantastic victory. How much trouble did Don Branson give you?' 'Oh, he was no problem, I had him covered,' he says. 'Come on, Jud, the guy was alongside of you for 20 laps – don't tell me you had him covered.' He says, 'Oh, yeah, I could have left him.' 'Well, why didn't you?' 'Well,' he says, 'it's Saturday night – I got places to go, and things to do. I didn't want to get tired!'"

If they were apparently fearless, these people, perhaps that owed something to the fact that many had survived bloody campaigns in World War II, so anything afterwards was a bonus. They lived hard, drank hard, raced hard.

"Take a guy like Mike Nazaruk – he'd been through Iwo Jima, so nothing after that was going to frighten him too much. I was the track announcer at Langhorne the day he was killed, on May 1, 1955 – the same day Stirling Moss won the Mille Miglia. Nazaruk was a friend of mine, and I went to his funeral. He was a Slav, and he had all these women from the Slavic countries… one of them got in the coffin with Mike at the funeral home, trying to prove she loved him more than the rest… well, it was one way of doing it, I guess…

"One of the reasons there were so many fatal accidents was the way the cars were made. They all had solid axles, so when a car ran over another car's wheel, instead of something breaking and the wheel coming off – as they would do on an F1 car, say – it would start a series of over-and-over rolls. There were no roll-over bars in the '50s, of course, so if you got upside down, it was a





Tough characters such as Bob Sweikert (above) and Jud Larson ruled the open-wheel scene

roll of the dice whether you survived.

"They had seat belts of a kind, but they were primitive: usually a lap strap, and another strap across one shoulder – and made of leather, which could tear. You know how seat belts started in racing? It happened when Joie Chitwood – a native Cherokee Indian, very bright guy – went to Indianapolis for the first time, in 1940. Back then the track was surfaced in brick, of course, and very rough. Joie had a problem keeping his foot on the gas, because of the bumps, and he figured if he could find a way to do that, he had to go faster. So he put this lap belt in the car – and all the other drivers revolted!

"The belief of the time was that if you had an accident, your best chance was to be thrown out, and they were concerned about running into a car that was upside down, with the driver still in it. They petitioned against his seat belt, but he told them the reason he wanted it was nothing to do with safety, and then they accepted it! They were different times…

"One of my closest friends was Johnnie Parsons, who won the Indy 500 in 1950. He told me once about advice he'd given to another driver, Edgar Elder, who wasn't getting the job done. He'd told him he had to be more aggressive – that no one ever made it in racing without being that way: when you see a hole open up, put a wheel in there… Elder comes back to Parsons, and he says, 'Johnnie, I took your advice'. 'Oh, what happened?' 'Remember you told me that if I spotted a gap, I was to stick a wheel in there, and something would open up for me? Well, I did that the other night, and I'll tell you what opened up for me – the door to the goddam ambulance!'"

Economaki's heart may have been with American track racing, but that didn't mean that he had no interest in a wider world, and he was always well versed in the goings-on of F1. In the late '80s for a time he attended every Grand Prix, doing the TV commentaries for ESPN with David Hobbs. One day, in the paddock at Montréal, he said to me, "Hobbs isn't here this weekend – he's doing Le Mans. How about sharing the commentary with me?" And so I did – although I felt almost guilty about banking the cheque, for the only opportunity to speak came when Chris paused for breath, which wasn't often.

'Multi-tasking' is a much-used phrase these days, but Economaki was on to it long ago – journalist, track announcer, TV commentator, and also an entrepreneur.

"Every March I used to charter a 'plane down to Sebring for racing fans. I was the press agent for a race promoter named Sam Nunis at the Trenton Speedway, and one year I took Sam with me – he was a hell of a promoter, but he'd never seen any sports car races. Sam was nonplussed – but also impressed with all the colour and pizzazz, and he said, 'Let's get into sports car racing'.

"I set up a meeting with Phil Hill, Peter Collins and Nunis in a New York hotel. This was 1958. I'd looked closely at the USAC Indycar regulations, and, believe it or not, the Ferrari Testa Rossa met those regulations – it could run in an Indycar race! I told Sam this, and he said to me, 'Jesus, if we could get one of those cars to come to Trenton, we'd pack the place!'

"Therefore I arranged a test at Trenton – a one-mile oval – with Hill and Collins in the Testa Rossa. They ran around the track pretty good, but there was a problem with the constant left turns – the engine threw the oil out through the side, so in the end it came to nothing, which was a great shame.

"After he'd retired from F1, Fangio showed interest in doing Indianapolis, and maybe one or two other races. I got him to come to Trenton, to test, and it had to be private – so of course I leaked it to the press, and there was absolute bedlam, with people beating the doors to get in! Fangio was unhappy, though, because he'd wanted to try a roadster, and the car we got was a classic 'upright' dirt track car, Johnny Thomson's DA-Lubricant Special, which he didn't like.

"I really liked Fangio, but his manager was a guy named Marcello Giambertone, and God, he was tough to deal with! In those days we weren't used to dealing with agents and representatives, you know…"

The arrival of big money, Economaki believed, fundamentally changed the nature of the sport. "Back in the day racing in the US was constant needle – 'I'm going to blow you off tomorrow, why have you bothered to show up?' – that sort of thing. Only 18 cars would start in a USAC Championship dirt track race – 10 or 12 guys would go home, not qualified, and if you didn't qualify you didn't get paid. It was a hard school.



Sutton

"If you didn't qualify you didn't get paid. It was a hard school"

"In a way we have the opposite now, although there will always be exceptions to the rule – I mean, a guy like Mario would have raced as hard for a nickel as he would for a million bucks, because it's in his makeup. But Harry Hyde, the famous NASCAR crew chief, was the first man I ever heard use the phrase, 'the comfort zone': a driver races, and he starts winning, and all of a sudden he's got an aeroplane, he's got a boat, he's got a vacation home, an attorney, and a tax consultant – and now some kid comes down underneath him at 9000mph, and there's a big concrete wall over there, and he thinks, 'Well, be my guest...'"

Not long before he died, I telephoned a Paris hospital to speak to my great friend Jabby Crombac, and we both knew it was to say goodbye. "Don't worry about me, Nige," he said. "I'm not in pain, and I'm quite ready to go – I've had the most wonderful life…" The same, surely, may be said of Chris Economaki: "When I was 15 years old I saw Tazio Nuvolari win the Vanderbilt Cup on Long Island, and I knew my life was set…" Ⓜ

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DISPATCHES



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STREET CARS OF DESIRE

ON THE FIRST SATURDAY OF NOVEMBER, WITH CHRISTMAS shopping underway and under the 'festive' lights, Regent Street, one of the busiest thoroughfares in London, was closed to traffic. But not to cars.

They called it the biggest free motor show in the United Kingdom. That is no surprise, bearing in mind where it was, and that it cost not a penny for people to get amongst it. Tag lines aside, it was certainly an ambitious project, bringing together, in three separate zones, the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run, said to be the world's oldest motoring event, the RAC Future Car Challenge, one of the newest events on the calendar, and 'The Nation's Favourite Cars' which was essentially the best of British automobile design and engineering.

The marketing literature tells me that Regent Street is "where the world comes together" and that "time is always well spent" in Regent Street. Both of these claims, as I discovered, are true. The place was heaving with tourists, shoppers and curious passers-by. And it was time well spent, a nice relaxed little motor show in the early winter sunshine.

Imagine the red tape and paperwork involved in closing a main street. I was told this involved the Metropolitan Police, Westminster Council, the Chamber of Commerce, safety permits and no doubt the odd risk assessment or two. These things are not done on a marketing man's whim. The presence of DayGlo-jacketed 'Civil Law Enforcement Officers' (parking wardens to you and me) in a closed street was never explained.

There was even a Jubilee angle, this the display of cars built during the six decades that Queen Elizabeth II has been on the throne. The ones we found in Regent Street were, according to a readers' poll in a motoring magazine, the nation's favourite cars. Plenty of lovely Jaguars, Aston Martins, Bentleys, Rolls-Royces and MGs. There was loud 'live' music and a lot of chatter from a stage in Beak Street which I thought rather jarred with the tranquil business of just wandering around among some interesting cars.

There is something so fascinating about the London-Brighton run for those 'old crocks', a term of endearment for the cars that were built before 1905. What is amazing is that there are still this many, about 500 in all, that are capable of moving around, let alone moving from London to Brighton. November is not the perfect time for this run because cars didn't have heaters in those days and so most drivers and passengers were swathed in rugs. But that's all part of the joy of it, I think, why we stand and marvel at how far the motor car has come.

Both poles of the automobile's progress over the past century were represented once the entrants of the RAC Future Car Challenge arrived to line up beside the veterans, following their early-morning run from Brighton. Renault triumphed in the overall production car stakes on this third annual event for low-emission vehicles with its five-door electric Zoe, the so-called 'supermini' completing the journey in an allocated time with the least amount of energy used. Models from both Vauxhall and Mercedes-Benz also claimed class wins.

One of my favourite snapshots of the show was an Austin-Healey 3000 rally car parked alongside the new McLaren MP4-12C. The Healey looked as fast and purposeful as the McLaren though they were built half a century apart. Meanwhile, the Ferrari store, which is a permanent fixture along Regent Street, was doing brisk business in a line of shoes and shirts branded with a Prancing Horse, and young lads had their photos taken sitting in a Grand Prix car.

But the biggest crowd was drooling over the veteran cars as they got up steam for their run down to the coast. Lots of good smells and sounds here. The Brits love their fix of nostalgia and so, it seems, do the visitors from the far reaches of the globe.

Mat Oxley

ON TWO WHEELS



Ducati

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WHY ROSSI LOST HIS BET

VALENTINO ROSSI WILL BE A DIFFERENT MAN IN 2013 – FOR the first time in his glittering career he has failed to achieve what he set out to achieve.

His two seasons with Ducati produced but three podium finishes, two of them in the rain, and not a single victory. Now reconciled with his former employer Yamaha, Rossi has been man enough to admit that "we lost the bet". But why did his Ducati gamble fail?

Ducati must take most of the blame, even though Rossi declared at the outset of the relationship that bike *and* rider had to change if they were to succeed. After all, Casey Stoner had already won a world title on the factory's Desmosedici.

"Ducati have to make a bike that is not only fast, but also easier to ride," said Rossi in February 2011. "For my part, I'm going to change my riding style so I can exploit it to the maximum."

Famous for Stoner's success, the Desmosedici was already infamous for bringing several immensely talented riders to their knees. Men like former 250 World Champion Marco Melandri, who never did better than fifth on the bike. Ducati tried to snuff out that particular PR fire by suggesting the problems were all in Melandri's mind and that he should see a shrink. They couldn't get away with that kind of nonsense when Rossi arrived, so Ducati worked hard to fix the bike, but in two whole seasons they achieved little. However Rossi adapted his riding technique he was tormented by lack of front-end feel, understeer and furious power delivery.

Front-end feel is vital in bike racing. If you can't feel what the front tyre is doing in a corner you will be slow, or if you dare to push on, face dire consequences. "I don't understand the feeling of the front… so I crash," said Rossi, whose accident rate increased three-fold aboard the Ducati. Even last season the front-end problem still caught Rossi unawares on several occasions, while the other difficulties proved entirely insurmountable.

The understeer pushed Rossi wide through corners, so he couldn't get on the throttle hard enough and early enough. Ducati's fiery engine – "we have a lion under the fairing" – exacerbated the understeer because when he did get on the throttle the bike became unstable. Perhaps Ducati relies too heavily on electronics to tame its very revvy V4.

It seems remarkable that a company like Ducati – always steeped in racing – has failed to fix the Desmosedici, despite some radical changes. For 2012 the company renounced its unique carbon-fibre monocoque chassis in favour of a conventional aluminium unit. However, experiments with different chassis stiffness, geometry and centre of mass gained little advantage, so at the end of the two years Rossi was no closer to winning – and sometimes even further away – than he had been at the beginning. He finished his first race on the Ducati 16 seconds behind the winner and suffered the ignominy of getting lapped in his last race on the bike.

"We more or less have the same problems we had when I first tested at the end of 2010," said Rossi. "Sometimes you have the feeling you've wasted your time."

The changes Ducati made were too little, too late; possibly due to pride, though some accuse factory engineers of arrogance. Then again, there's no doubt that Rossi did ease off at times, though who can blame him for surrendering to the front-end fear?

"After two or three moments with the front, I didn't want to crash again, so I just cruised," he said after another miserable race.

Rossi says he returned to Yamaha because he wants a competitive 'bike for what will be his last few seasons in MotoGP. But I'm sure there's another reason he hasn't mentioned – he was fed up with getting flung to the ground and battered about.

Bloodied and slightly bowed by the last two years, MotoGP's Italian darling is already back up to speed on Yamaha's superbly rider-friendly YZR-M1. He will surely win more races in 2013 and 2014. Another title, however, is another matter.

THE US SCENE



LAT

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LOOKING FOR A LEADER

AT THE END OF OCTOBER, RANDY BERNARD WAS FIRED from his job as IndyCar's CEO. Bernard (above) was thrown into this lion's den of a task two and a half years ago and was frankly destined to fail. He tried hard, but made many mistakes because he didn't understand the racing industry or the people and the giant egos who populate it. As I write in early November there was no hint of who might replace Bernard, so I turned to top team owners Chip Ganassi and Bobby Rahal to discuss IndyCar's future.

"Too many people are focusing on the negatives and not on the positives," Ganassi said. "I think we have a lot of good things going on. We have good racing, good sponsorship, and good partners in the engine manufacturers and the tyre company. We had great racing all year. We had the best season for a long time, and we needed it on the heels of what happened at the end of the previous season (Dan Wheldon's fatal crash).

"I think the days are gone where you have one guy who's the magic bullet. I don't know that it's the right question to ask what are the talents that one guy needs to have. I think it takes a team of people with a lot of different skills, and there's no question that a lot of different areas could use help in Indycar racing. It's not somebody that *has* to know racing, but there are certain parts of it where it is important. I think Randy had some good qualities and I think he lacked some qualities."

In general, Rahal agrees with Ganassi. "I think there was a lot of negative baggage including a bad TV package that Randy inherited. But having said that, I think that to have a little better understanding of the technical issues and owner dynamics would have been a good thing.

"I'm still very positive about the series because I think what makes anything popular and successful is the product, and I think the product is pretty damn good. We've had a lot of entries in the past several years. It's never been consistently that strong since I've been in Indycar racing. But the promotion of the drivers and the races, the TV, the merchandising and marketing of the series and the drivers is still badly underperforming. That to me has been the Achilles heel.

"Whatever the plan may be, the key is going to be how the series really ramps up those areas to make it more successful. You have to promote the product and the drivers and the series. I hope in this changeover that there's a commitment to do that above and beyond what has been the case in the past.

"We're off the radar screen. We need a very aggressive, very proactive PR department. I think there are a lot of dynamic stories out there and you've got to get them out there, and that just hasn't been happening. There's a lot to work with. It's just a matter of Indianapolis and IndyCar committing themselves to focusing in those areas at a level that's never been seen before.

"I think the biggest thing is that whoever succeeds Randy has to be a very strong person who has the confidence and the support of the board and of the series itself. And IndyCar has to be honest with the owners on all levels. The owners shouldn't involve themselves in areas that they shouldn't be involved with. That needs to be put under control.

"Hopefully this time around the organisation is going to give whoever comes in the chance to do his job. It's like Roger (Penske) said, no company can have a revolving door in the chief executive's office and expect to be successful.

"Hopefully they will get a guy that we can all get behind and make the series go forward. We've got to build the fan base, we have to do better TV and we have to have a lot better promotion. We need more print media coverage, more radio – the whole nine yards. We will do whatever we can to support whoever comes in to lead the charge."

Letters

Racing's balance of power

Sir,

Rob Widdows' story on the Bentley GT3 (December issue) succinctly makes the case for the Balance of Performance in this class of racing. Without it, there is no way a physically large, 1.6-tonne, front-engined Bentley could ever be competitive with the tiny, 1.2-tonne, mid-engined GTs such as the Ferrari 458.

It was therefore a surprise to read the editorial comment that Balance of Performance is not real racing. In truth BoP, to various degrees, is the basis of *all* forms of racing today: Formula 1, LMP, Indycar, NASCAR, WTCC, GT2, karting. In most cases, the job is not too difficult, in that the car configurations within a formula are pretty similar. LMP, with two fuel types and now hybrid power trains permitted, and WTCC with FWD and RWD are two of the hardest to balance. However, GT is in a class of its own in terms of difficulty: front, mid and rear engines, and big differences in mass and frontal area make it extremely hard to balance the performance of the cars, particularly as the weight and weight distribution differences significantly affect tyre performance. The success of balancing a wide variety of GT cars' performances is the basis of such a successful class. It provides a variety of competitive cars for mainly amateur drivers to race competitively, and it provides manufacturers with profit centres, by enabling them to sell and support large numbers of relatively low-cost racing cars, rather than establish large and expensive development programmes for just a few cars to achieve competitiveness in GT racing.

Historically, GT racing was a rules-based formula. Exciting cars emerged, blossomed and then caused GT racing to collapse because of the cost of being competitive. Watch a GT3 race or ask the competitors – it is real racing, it's spectacular due to the wide variety of cars, and it's very popular!

Peter Wright, Presteigne, Powys

Mystery guest

Sir,

I attended every Grand Prix at Watkins Glen, and Gordon Kirby's story about Glen Motor Court, as I recall it (November issue), reminds me of my most memorable GP.

In 1966 I went to Europe to attend some races. After Monaco I went to Cheshunt where I picked up my first Lotus Elan. From there I drove to Ian Walker Racing to improve the Twin Cam's performance, for £135. Near the end of my two-week vacation I ran out of money and called my boss asking for a few bucks to put the car on a ship for home. He sent me a big cheque and told me to keep going to races until the money ran out! My vacation stretched to five weeks!

That year at Watkins Glen I naïvely decided to have dinner at the packed Motor Court the night before the race. Two well-dressed men came in and one asked if I had a reservation. When I said 'no' he said I would not be eating there that night. Then he paused and said that their two friends wouldn't be coming and would I like to join them.

We had a great dinner as they knew of my boss, who had been the official Ferrari interpreter when Alberto Ascari came to run in the Indianapolis 500. My new friends were also interested in my trip as James Garner was filming *Grand Prix* at the races I attended.

As we finished, one by one Grand Prix drivers came over to say hello to my friends, who then introduced me to them. I was in heaven but managed to keep my cool. It turned out one of my new friends was the accountant for Luigi Chinetti, sports car driver, Ferrari importer and owner of the NART racing team.

When my new friends left, a young lady newspaper reporter rushed across, asking 'Who are you? Are you famous?' It took me a while to convince her that I was just a race fan who had some dumb luck.

Richard Yagami, Ridgefield, Connecticut, USA

Gentleman Dan

Sir,

Following Nigel Roebuck's Reflections on Dan Gurney (November), here's a little story about this great man, that says more about him as a person than a racing driver.

In 1964 I was a 20-year-old 'gofer' for the Carroll Shelby Racing Team. At Le Mans two Cobra 'Coops' were entered, to be driven by Chris Amon and Jochen Neerpasch, and Bob Bondurant with Gurney. The Amon/Neerpasch car went out in the night, but the two American boys just kept going and were leading the GT class. At the last 'splash and dash' pitstop Bob came in as planned to hand over to the more experienced team leader Gurney to finish the race. But Dan just leant to his ear, and said 'You carry on and enjoy it'. You should have seen the smile on Bob's face. He could not believe it. Here was the 'new boy' about to cross the line and in effect win the first race in Europe for the Shelby Racing Team. What a gesture, what a gentleman. I don't suppose many people saw it, or even paid attention to it, but I did.

Bruce Dowell, Somerton, Somerset

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Write to: Motor Sport, 38 Chelsea Wharf,
15 Lots Road, London SW10 0QJ
or e-mail: editorial@motorsportmagazine.co.uk

(Please include your full name and postal area)

Gurney sacking shock

Sir,

Your November issue shows a Ferrari 250 Tour de France – this is the car that my dad got his California driver's licence in! It was Tony Parravano's at the time, and is also the car Dan Gurney went off the road in at Willow Springs. My dad, Dickie Green, had met this kid called Dan in a leather jacket riding a Triumph who came to Parravano's to hang and chat to him. Dad got him the test, and Dan blew the gas tank out of it on a rock! Dan told me at Willow Springs in the mid-90s, when I was racing a Ducati and he came to watch, "That was the only job I got fired from!". My mum (Doreen Sherwood, who was John Wyer's secretary) told me that Tony went off the deep end and was cussing up a storm as always.

"Get the goddam kid out of my sight!"

Michael Green, Livermore, California, USA

The puzzle of de Cesaris

Sir,

I much enjoyed 'The bigger picture' about Andrea de Cesaris in the October issue. Rob Widdows sums the man up as an enigma – a too-frequently used word these days. On checking the meaning of this word in my dictionary I see that Rob is spot on as it refers to a puzzling person (or thing).

After meeting him at Brands Hatch back in the 1980s I could not agree more. I used to go to all the British Grands Prix at Silverstone and Brands to collect autographs of the drivers and other personalities. For the meetings at Brands I would make my way to the car park reserved for the drivers. Here I was able to speak to many of them and most readily signed the book. But on one occasion Andrea de Cesaris pushed past with head bowed and refused

Letters

to acknowledge us at all. I tried again on the Saturday morning, but he pushed past and made it very clear that he would not sign an autograph for anyone.

At the 1000Kms Group C race the following weekend I was sitting on a row of tyres in the pitlane when he sat down next to me, asked if I was collecting autographs, and then asked if I had his in my collection! After signing the book I told him about the previous weekend. He was genuinely very upset about this and apologised profusely, but explained that during the Grand Prix weekend he was at the beck and call of the sponsors and he had no time for pleasantries. He seemed very upset when our conversation had to come to an end.

An enigma? Certainly. Despite his reasoning, I could not believe how a man could be so rude one weekend and the most friendly fellow the next. I like to think that the man at the GpC race was the true Andrea de Cesaris! Thanks, Andrea, for the autograph and the memories.
David Keen, Seville, Spain

Loosening F1's grip

Sir,

Bravo to *Motor Sport* and Gordon Murray on his piece on F1 design (September issue). His points are things I've thought for years – but so eloquently voiced by Gordon. If you take some of the aero 'fiddly bits' out of the equation and simultaneously allow more mechanical/engine freedom, speed could be more dependent upon mechanical grip, and thus driver skill. Lower cost and more excitement would result, improving both the show and the business. Bravo again!
Chet Kolley, San Diego, California, USA

It brought a tear to the eye

Sir,

I well recall the Brooks, Collins, Mercedes demonstration at Oulton Park (Doug Nye, November). That thunderous exhaust note, the stabbing of the throttle as both drivers explored the power of these legendary GP cars, and of course the boot polish aroma that everyone had heard or read about; all of this within the authentic surroundings of the magnificent Oulton Park circuit. The enthusiasm and awe of both drivers for the power at their command was clear from their interviews afterwards. Sadly, all of the above are received memories gleaned from my father, a long-serving steward at VSCC meetings, and from *Motor Sport* and the Sound Stories LP of the event, as I was 250 miles away at school in Hampshire. No amount of pleading had worked!

Some years later I experienced racing at close quarters with a W125 when Colin Crabbe raced his car. Exiting Woodcote on one occasion in my Cooper-Bristol just behind the Mercedes I followed the black marks on the road through the cloud of tyre smoke and was left wondering how drivers in the Thirties raced for three hours with the eye-watering effects of the fuel.
John Roberts, Prevessin-Moens, France

Snap decision

Sir,

Just back from Fontana Speedway. Fantastic Indycar race under the lights, 500 miles, over three hours, real motor racing. Can't wait for 2013, tickets already ordered. F1 – no thanks.
B Palmer, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs

Hold it, please...

Sir,

I was impressed with both the modesty and quality of Roger Hoyle's photo of Sears' Cobra and David Piper's 250GTO (Letters, November) from the 1964 Brands Grand Prix meeting – it is positively professional compared to my own Kodak Instamatic shot (right).
John Day, Ferring, W Sussex



Signs of disagreement

Sir,

The Jaguar pit signage at the far right of the image in Parting Shot (November) indicates that the photo was from the 1985 race, not 1983 as you stated. The number 1 factory Porsche in shot is actually strolling to a 10th place finish piloted by Ickx and Mass. 'Dinger', paired with Hans Stuck, was in number 2 and finished third, several laps down.
Simon Cartwright, Northwich, Cheshire

KEEP IN TOUCH

The *Motor Sport* website is *the* place to discuss motor racing past, present and future. Don't miss the opportunity to comment on blogs, video and audio podcasts, and read Nigel Roebuck's newsletter and the editor's monthly letter. To get involved in the discussion simply log on to **www.motorsportmagazine.com** and tell our writers exactly what you think!
Also, don't forget that if you have any images which would be suitable for our You Were There feature in the magazine, please send them to the office (address on p50).

Anything but Alex...

Sir,

Loved your piece on Alex Zanardi (November). I remember fondly the day I attended a public relations event in California early in Alex's tenure with Ganassi. He was seated next to Jimmy Vasser and seemed almost shy. I received a cap with the signatures of both drivers and treasure it still. The story goes that when Alessandro Zanardi arrived at Ganassi he was asked how he wanted to be addressed. He reportedly replied, "Call me anything except Alex". Of course, we know the result. His joy in competing is palpable, never more realised than in executing 'the pass' at Laguna Seca [in '96]. Now he confirms his competitive spirit yet again with his victories in Paralympic competition. I wait to hear the deal to bring him to Indy is done. Forza Zanardi!
Erik Karlsson, Florida, USA

Quiet please!

Sir,

I've been keenly interested in racing for many years, and was at the very first race at Silverstone on the 'figure of 8' circuit, which gives some indication of my age. With the passing years I now resort to watching F1 on TV, and although I'm aware that F1 commentators are nice blokes with first-hand racing experience, why do they believe not a millisecond must pass without them talking? Immediately one stops, the other jumps in!

Honestly chaps, viewers don't need to have everything pointed out, eg 'he's trying to overtake', 'he's on the grass', 'he's got past at last', 'the safety car will be ready if called!' and other 'fillers' such as forecasting the outcome and reminiscing about the past. The incessant talk can become a sort of 'audio wall-paper' to which one no longer listens. I'm not alone in switching off the sound to enable me to concentrate on watching. Come on chaps, give us a break and let's hear the engines every now and again!
Alec Forty, St Andrew's, Guernsey

WEB SPIN

What we're all talking about @ www.motorsportmagazine.com



PODCAST EXTRACT

JOHN SURTEES ON HIS ROUTE TO FORMULA 1

JOHN SURTEES: I didn't want to be committed to anybody so I bought a Formula 2 Cooper, which meant that I went to Weybridge and met John Cooper. He'd somehow arranged for Ken Tyrrell to be there. Out of the shadows stepped this tall gentleman who said 'I've entered you for Goodwood in my Formula Junior, I've spoken to the RAC and they'll get you a licence.'

I duly turned up, I managed to put it on pole and then I had a dice with a certain Jim Clark. I forgot the car had four wheels when I was getting to St Mary's, when we were passing someone, and I ended up on the grass. I dropped back to third or fourth, but managed to pick up again to second place. Jim had just pipped me.

NIGEL ROEBUCK: Hang on John, because that was the very first car race you had been to.

JS: True, I'd never seen one before that. I suppose it's the best way – get dropped in the deep end.

After that it was off to Oulton Park [with the Cooper F2 car] and we finished ahead of all the other Formula 2s and behind the works Lotus of Innes Ireland. Then it was the International Trophy at Aintree where the all-conquering Porsches came. I did finish in front of all the British entries. Upon which Colin Chapman called up and said 'come and try a Formula 1 car'.

ONLINE WITH OUR WRITERS

ROB WIDDOWS
BTCC champion Gordon Shedden

"I used to watch people like Cleland and Soper at Knockhill and that's what got me excited about touring cars. Back in 1999 I think the one-make Fiesta series cost me about £10,000, but that was a big load of money for me then. A decent budget for Formula Ford would have been £100,000 and that was just telephone numbers."



PAUL FEARNLEY
Räikkönen: a long wait for victory

"Lotus-Renault boss Eric Boullier has said that he looked Kimi in the eye before employing him. Beneath the frosty exterior, behind that cool, calculating racing brain, he spotted the glowing coals, the unspoken deep-seated desire to return – and to win. Take a bow, Monsieur Boullier."

NIGEL ROEBUCK
F1 teams and their driver needs

"All in all, I was surprised by McLaren's decision to go with Sergio Pérez, for while he has undoubtedly excelled occasionally – Sepang, Montréal, Monza – so also there have been weekends when his presence in a race has gone unnoticed, and over time I have been more impressed by the potential of Paul di Resta and, particularly, Nico Hulkenberg."

ON THE FORUM

KIMI RÄIKKÖNEN AFTER HIS WIN IN ABU DHABI

JJRHYTHM: **I loved his radio calls. "Kimi, we need you to keep all four tyres warm". "Yes, yes, yes, I'm doing all of that ..." What a class act.** JP SARTI: If he carries on like this and a seat at McLaren or Ferrari becomes available I can see them eating humble pie and trying to get him back. ROBBO: **I like Kimi and was delighted with his win. He's the nearest thing to a good old fashioned racer these days.** PHILIPRAINFORD: He was somewhat fortunate to win the championship with Ferrari in 2007 and his performances the following two years were mixed to say the least. But he is the driver I would share a beer or two with. ROBBO: **It might end up as a bottle of vodka or three given Kimi's reputation.** JMD1000: Kimi's ability, especially in fast corners, can still take my breath away. As a comeback season it must make old Schuey wonder if he should have gone to Enstone!

TOP TWEETS

@Damien__Smith I love Lewis's forthright opinion that he doesn't put Vettel in the same class as Alonso. That must bug SV, which is exactly the point.

@matoxley Finally, new tech rules for 2014. No control ECU. In other words, Ezpeleta blinked before Nakamoto. Protos get only 20 litres of fuel, CRT get 24.

@Damien__Smith "It's not about the fans," says Eddie Jordan. Nice. Bernie's mouthpiece sums it up. How depressing.

@dariofranchitti This weekend's project: suspension and brake cleaning on my 911 hot rod. I'm a total novice at this, but learning!

@Andrew_Frankel Anyone else find Maserati's aim of 50,000 units by 2015 a mite optimistic? Sold just over 6000 last year. That's a load of SUVs to shift.

@dariofranchitti End of an era today with @ therealdcf1 (David Coulthard) hanging up his helmet. Top man DC! #AlwaysUnderrated

@Ed__Foster Should increased safety mean more Tarmac run off areas? I don't think so... Monaco/ Singapore/Val are still on the calendar without them.

@matoxley Marquez the merciless – that was a joy to watch. Genius rider on best bike. Some think his team cheats, I don't. Great team with good budget.

@Andrew_Frankel The Caterham/ Alpine alliance is official. Could be incredible. But will customers believe in a Caterham built by Renault in France?

@olivergavin The ALMS trophy is in the cabinet, front and centre. 2012 is done! Very happy with the season :-)

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Purple Reign

Jaguar's sports car with a Formula 1 heart blazed a trail, then burned out within one season. But the XJR-14 was a 'game-changer'. The impact of the last great racing Big Cat caused tremors that still echo today

BY GARY WATKINS



Greg Pajo


Silk Cut King Size
Castrol
King Size
3
Silk Cut
JAGUAR
FACOM
BOSCH
TWR
GOODYEAR





LAT



Ross Brawn (top left, with Tom Walkinshaw) arrived with a brief to interpret the rules "competitively". New car (left) immediately saw off its rivals (main)

The engine note didn't waver. Not one iota. And the team hanging over the pitwall to catch a glimpse of their new creation's first flying lap thought there was a problem. Sports cars didn't take the final corner on the old Silverstone South Circuit flat. Which explains why they turned tail or ducked. But there was no accident, no grassy moment, not even a hint of oversteer. Just a driver flat on the throttle and laughing in the cockpit in the knowledge that he had one hell of weapon for the coming season.

The machine Derek Warwick was so overjoyed to be driving that day in March 1991 was the Jaguar XJR-14. The TWR organisation's take on the new 3.5-litre Group C rules for the 1991 Sportscar World Championship would live up to expectations. Nearly 2.5 seconds quicker than its nearest rival in qualifying at the opening race at Suzuka the following month and then four clear at round two at Monza, it would go on to claim both the SWC drivers' crown and the manufacturers' title.

Not only did the last of the Walkinshaw Jaguar Group C cars stand head and shoulders above the pack when it hit the track, it has been put up on a pedestal by just about everyone who had the good fortune to drive it. Warwick, Martin Brundle and David Brabham all count it as the best car they have ever raced. Not just the best sports car, the best *racing car*.

Tales of the XJR-14 are the stuff of legend. Anyone who had anything to do with the project has one to tell.

"I did an installation lap, and came in and said to Ross [Brawn], 'This car is f***ing amazing'," says Warwick of the shakedown. "I went back out, and I could feel the grip.

"The South Circuit had a pits of sorts and just before that was a fast right-hander, which wasn't flat. I came through there so fast and completely flat that everyone was ducking behind the Armco. Ross told me afterwards that they thought the throttle had stuck open."

The XJR-14 was a car that made headlines. Anyone who was at the British Empire Trophy at Silverstone, round three of the 1991 SWC, can't possibly have forgotten Brundle's stirring solo comeback drive.

The XJR-14 was fast, but it was fragile – at least around the edges. Starter motor failure and an electrical problem at Suzuka had handed victory to the porpoising Peugeot 905, and this time a throttle cable snapped on Brundle after two laps. The nine minutes lost while the secondary cable was attached left him six laps down. Two hours and 12 minutes later, the moonlighting F1 driver had made it up to third, just four laps down on the winning Jag shared by Warwick and Teo Fabi.

Brundle revelled in the machine he had under him on that day: "The XJR-14 was such an amazing car: corners like Copse and Becketts were extraordinary. I remember laughing the



first few times I went through Bridge – it was flat when you got used to it."

One race earlier, Brundle had been so fast that his team had blinked and missed him. The previous year's Le Mans 24 Hours winner had started from the pitlane at Monza after a late engine change. Even so, he crossed the line at the end of lap one in eighth place.

"The team came on the radio asking if there was a problem," he recalls. "They hadn't expected me to come around so high up. That first lap was like a video game. I was zig-zagging between cars on a damp track with rooster tails streaming off the rear slicks.

"The XJR-14 was a game-changer," continues Brundle. "It was, if you like, the first modern sports car. It was the first prototype I ever drove that, when you turned the steering wheel, was willing to go with you."

The 3.5-litre Group C formula encouraged a new breed of sports car based around F1-spec engines, but it didn't mandate it. The chassis rules were largely the same as for the old fuel-formula Group C machines, save a new weight limit of 750kg, down from 900kg, and a concession to allow perspex windscreens.

What wasn't the same was the mindset of Brawn and the design team he had established at TWR after his recruitment from Arrows after the end of the 1989 F1 season with instructions to spend a whole year designing the car around Cosworth's Ford HB V8.

"The starting point was the question: How keenly can we interpret the regulations?" explains Brawn today. "We took a very competitive interpretation of the rulebook from a structural and aerodynamic perspective."

Just look at the XJR-14 in our photos, resplendent in surely the best of the Silk Cut liveries. It looks like nothing that came before it.

Group C sports cars of the day had doors. The XJR-14 had windows that popped out – a mechanic was assigned to play catch at pitstops. It was central to the concept of creating what chief designer John Piper calls "a fat F1 car".

"There was a regulation stipulating the size of the [side] window and the size of the door," he explains. "We made them the same thing. That meant you didn't require a dogleg in the tub, which meant you could have a narrow, high-sided and very stiff monocoque."

The narrow chassis allowed the TWR technical team to move the radiators out of the nose and into the sidepods, freeing up the nose for aerodynamic gain. Here again, TWR came up with a novel interpretation of the rules to get sufficient airflow behind the front wing that distinguished the XJR-14 from its forebears.

Brawn again: "We checked the crash-test regulations and it stated that there could be no damage to the survival cell beyond the pedal line. That meant there was a large chunk of the chassis that you could damage and that allowed us to achieve the short nosebox."




Castrol
Silk Cu
King Si
JAGUAR

Original silk

This Jaguar is the most original of the three XJR-14s that raced in period: one was taken out of service by TWR after Davy Jones crashed at Road America; the other became the double Le Mans-winning Porsche WSC95.

Chassis number 591, the first of the three built, claimed pole in Derek Warwick's hands at Suzuka, won at Monza in the hands of Warwick and Martin Brundle and was the car in which Brundle produced his heroics at Silverstone. It was then retired to become the spare before finishing second at the Autopolis season finale courtesy of a solo drive from Warwick. It was part of TWR Inc's 1992 IMSA campaign in the US before Jones crashed it early in the season at Lime Rock.

The car was returned to the UK and subsequently used for show purposes. It is now owned by a private collector and is looked after by the Chamberlain-Synergy Motorsport squad. It is on course to compete in the Group C/GTP Racing series in 2013.

Our thanks to Bob Berridge
www.chamberlainsynergy.com

Jaguar's Ford-powered "fat F1 car" even did without doors – pop-out windows provided a suitable aperture

The XJR-14 chassis, produced by TWR's in-house ASTEC composites company, didn't quite make it through the test as planned. The damage to the monocoque was more extensive than envisaged, which meant the pedals had to be moved backwards.

That wing was crucial – though never entirely successful — in trying to balance out the massive amounts of downforce generated from the underside of the car courtesy of another bit of clever rulebook interpretation.

Piper: "The rules stated that you could have a two-element rear wing, but there was no regulation on the distance between them. So we put the second plane down level with the diffuser, which effectively gave us a massive extension."

That explains downforce numbers that were, according to Brawn, "an order of magnitude more than were being achieved in F1 at the time". He can't recall the figures, but points out that the Jag was capable of lap times that would have qualified it on the back of an F1 grid. "You could work it out," he says. "We were nearly 250 kilos heavier than an F1 car, and today that weight would equate to 10 seconds."



Sutton



LAT

Starter trouble in Mexico cost Warwick the title; the XJR-14 later saw action in the US (top)

The clever design solutions on the XJR-14 didn't stop with the structure and the aero. Piper came up with a bespoke longitudinal transmission with the gears ahead of the rear-axle centre line. That brought the weight forward without the aerodynamic penalty of a transverse 'box.

Piper also came up with a novel gear linkage. That's something else the drivers still talk about today, though not in the same hushed tones as the car's handling. The selector mechanism was taken off the top of the gearbox and through the vee of the engine and the fuel tank. The result was a left-hand gear change that wasn't popular with the drivers.

"Using a left-hand gearstick ran contrary to everything I'd done through my career," says Warwick. "None of us ever got used to it."

Warwick, though, didn't take much getting used to the XJR-14. Straight out of F1, he had no problems adapting. His full-season team-mate Teo Fabi, by his own admission, struggled.

"It was not easy to understand that car, to comprehend the limits of the car," says the Italian. "It required commitment and I was coming from a not very successful season in CART, where the cars had less downforce and reacted more slowly."

Fabi had come into the Jaguar fold after finding himself without a CART ride in the US in the wake of Porsche's withdrawal. He contacted TWR operations director Roger Silman, with whom he had worked at March in his Formula 2 days.

Yet Fabi's inclusion in the team wasn't universally supported, says his engineer that year, Steve Farrell. Ironically, it was Farrell's opposite number on Warwick's car who argued Fabi's case.

"It was Jock [the late John McLoughlin] who pushed for Teo," he recalls. "We knew him from his Benetton days and Jock would spend his tea breaks telling us how good he was."

Silk Cut Jaguar went into the 1991 season with the plan to use just three drivers for its two cars in the new-length 430km (267 miles) races. Warwick and Fabi would lead a car apiece, with a floating driver lending a hand to each.

John Nielsen had been the original choice until the change to the pedals rendered him too big to fit in the cockpit. Brundle, a full-time Jaguar driver in 1990, had a four-race deal with TWR in '91 and ended up doing the first three SWC rounds. Then David Brabham, who'd impressed Walkinshaw in the opening round of the JaguarSport Intercontinental Challenge at Monaco, was brought in for the second half of the season. TWR's decision to go for this three-driver line-up eventually decided the destination of the title. Warwick had returned to TWR after a difficult season in Grand Prix racing with Lotus – "I was losing my appetite for F1 a little" – because Jaguar needed a British driver to replace Brundle. And there was no doubt in Farrell's mind that Warwick's nationality made him a clear number one.

"We were absolutely the number two car," he says. "There wasn't much difference in the cars, but I remember discussions about instructing Teo to let Derek past if the need arose."

The need never did arise, but the focus on Warwick did result in the championship going Fabi's way. Brundle started Warwick's Jag at Silverstone and should have handed over to his fellow Brit, but courtesy of the car's early delay, it was Fabi's car into which Warwick eventually climbed in order to maximise his points score. Or so TWR thought.

"I remember saying to Tom, 'I don't think this is legal'," recalls Warwick. "He said to me,

In-house design

Ross Brawn was recruited from Arrows because Tom Walkinshaw had seen the writing on the wall with the 3.5-litre formula and realised he needed an in-house design facility to replace the freelance arrangement he had with Tony Southgate. At least, that's the line TWR put out at the time, but it is disputed by the designer of all the V12 TWR-Jaguars.

Southgate had decided that he needed to leave Walkinshaw's employ "to earn some big money" and handed in his notice ahead of the 1989 Le Mans 24 Hours.

"Ross didn't appear on the scene until after I decided to leave," says Southgate, who remained with TWR until Le Mans 1990. "Tom thought I was bluffing and it was only after he realised I wasn't that he started looking around for someone else."

Southgate almost ended up designing a car that could have stopped the XJR-14 project dead in its tracks. He'd agreed, but not signed, a deal with the Proteus Technology team to design a 3.5-litre Aston Martin. Ford already owned Aston and when it bought Jaguar over the winter of 1989/90, there was only going to be room for one Le Mans project.

The job Southgate had lined up disappeared, but he quickly found a new one with Toyota and went on to design the TS010 Group C car of 1991-93.

'You worry about the driving, laddie, you're getting in the car."

Warwick completed an easy victory, only to be relieved of his 20-point haul in the stewards' room. He hadn't been entered in Fabi's car and therefore couldn't score.

"That cost me the World Championship," claims Warwick, who finished seven points behind his team-mate in the final reckoning. Yet he actually lost the title twice over. The points that disappeared at the penultimate round in Mexico City would also have been enough for him to pip Fabi.

Headed for second place on a drying Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez, he pitted for slicks in the belief – the radio was malfunctioning – that he also needed fuel. That didn't cost him the title, but the failure of the car to restart did. The starter motor problems of earlier in the season reared their head despite a re-design.

The other professional disappointment of 1991 for Warwick was not driving the XJR-14 at Le Mans. There was never an intention to race the car at the 24 Hours, the team instead relying on a quartet of updated XJR-12s.

"Cosworth wanted a lot of money to develop the engine for 24 hours and Tom wouldn't pay," says Brawn. "But he did want to go for pole with a high-profile qualifying run."

That duty fell to Jaguar old boy Andy Wallace, who was loaned back to TWR by new employer Toyota. Despite minimal practice and a Monza set-up (*sans* front wing) and gear ratios, he came within tenths of beating Jean-Louis Schlesser's Mercedes-Benz C11 to the top of the time sheets.

"Our gearing was only good for 200mph," recalls Wallace. "It seemed it sat forever on the limiter on the straights. We were doing 320km/h, when the Merc was doing 350. We shouldn't have stood a chance, but the thing was so quick in the Porsche Curves."

Ironically, it was one of Wallace's team-mates who spoiled the lap that Wallace has absolutely no doubts would have leapfrogged him ahead of the Mercedes. "I caught Davy Jones in one of the V12 cars," says the '88 Jaguar Le Mans winner. "He tried to get out of the way, but I got bottled up behind him."

> "Cosworth wanted a lot of money to develop the engine for 24 hours and Tom wouldn't pay"

The Jaguar would still have started from pole (the front of the grid was reserved for 3.5-litre cars), but Walkinshaw withdrew the car. There had never been any intention to run it beyond a stint or two.

When the SWC returned to its semi-sprint format after Le Mans, the game had changed. Peugeot gave a reworking of its 905, known as the Evo 1 bis, its debut at the Nürburgring, where it wasn't far off the XJR-14's pace. A month later Peugeot was on top, and the Jag wouldn't win another race in the SWC. Brawn doesn't mind admitting that Peugeot, aided by aggressive development programmes from suppliers Michelin and Esso, had caught up.

"We did hardly anything to the car development-wise from day one," he says. "Tom would never spend money he didn't have to. And the same goes for Goodyear."

The Jaguar XJR-14's star had shone brightly, but was now fading after barely six months. Silk Cut's long-running sponsorship deal with Jaguar was coming to an end and so too was the SWC, at least if you believed the FIA – it cancelled the '92 championship in the autumn.

It was revived following protestations led by Peugeot, but there would be no Jaguars on the grid. There were some on the entry list thanks to Alan Randall, a Jaguar restorer from Kent, whose promised money from the Middle East and then the US failed to materialise.

But the XJR-14 did race on. It appeared in the All-Japan Sports-Prototype Championship just a week after Fabi sealed the SWC title at the new Autopolis circuit. The Jag won at Sugo with Fabi and Brabham at the wheel, and would notch up a further two victories in the following year's US IMSA GTP Championship with Davy Jones driving.

TWR Inc boss Tony Dowe admits today that he didn't even want to run the car, at least in SWC specification. "We wanted to continue with the XJR-16, because we thought the turbo car would be the better bet against Nissan and Toyota," he explains. "But we were told by Tom in no uncertain terms that the money was only available if we ran the XJR-14. What we really wanted to do was put the turbo engine in the 14, but we couldn't make it work."

Jones ultimately fell short in the championship race to All American Racers driver Juan Manuel Fangio II. The turning point of the season, says Dowe, was Dan Gurney's arrival with a 'twin-wing' on the back of its Toyota-Eagle two-thirds of the way through the season.

Imitation, they say, is the sincerest form of flattery, but the legacy of the car was much more than a few copy-cat rear wings, and that's not counting the projects that it spawned (see overleaf).

It set Brabham on the road to sports car stardom by teaching him vital lessons about the discipline at an early stage. "Derek and Teo had such different set-ups and I had to jump between the two," he says today. "I learned a lot about the compromises you have to make in sports car racing. And it's still the best car I've driven."

Brundle is adamant that his Silverstone comeback drive was pivotal in his landing a Benetton seat after TWR took a stake in the F1 team. "It got me the Benetton deal, no doubt about it," he says. "I know it impressed Tom and Ross, and I was signed by the summer."

Brawn puts the successes of his short-lived foray in sports car racing up there with his achievements in F1, and even suggests that some of his F1 glory can be attributed to the XJR-14 project.

"That project provided a clear lesson about taking opportunities with new rules," he reveals. "It taught me that when new regulations come along you can't start early enough on designing and developing a car. I think I can say it was probably significant in Brawn GP's success in 2009."

XJR-14: what happened next…



1992
MAZDA **MX-R01**

Tom Walkinshaw had helped run Mazdaspeed's 1981 and 1982 Le Mans 24 Hours campaigns and the relationship was re-forged ahead of the 1992 season at short notice. The Jaguar XJR-14s were re-engineered to take the first sports car iteration of the long-serving Judd V10. The 14 design finally got to race at Le Mans, coming home fourth despite a gearbox change, and the project would have continued, remembers Mazdaspeed team manager Pierre Dieudonné. "All the planning was done for 1993 and beyond," he says. "There would have been an update for '93, including a gearbox more suitable for Le Mans, and an all-new car for the following year." The death of the SWC put paid to that plan.



1992
JAGUAR **XJR-17**

This unraced car (at least in period) was a TWR parts-bin special conceived for the new FIA Cup category, effectively a rebirth of Group C2, introduced for the 1992 SWC. It was built around a design that raced variously as the XJR-10, 11 and 16 and its 3.5-litre twin-turbo 'Metro' engine, only in normally aspirated form. The aero loosely followed XJR-14 thinking, explains project leader Dave Fullerton. "We took the radiators from the front and put them where the intercoolers would have been," he recalls, "and in that way we could have a 14-type front wing." Alan Randall's RM Motorsport squad and Dave Prewitt's Gee Pee Motorsport squad were both touted to run the car, but their deals never materialised.

THE JAGUAR THAT BECAME A MAZDA, A PORSCHE AND A NISSAN...



1995-98

PORSCHE **WSC95**

It seems strange to think that a double Le Mans-winning car should be born out of the remnants of a project from two years before. In July 1994, TWR Inc boss Tony Dowe was given six weeks to find a project to save the company he'd run since October 1987. "I walked around the workshop and the only thing we had was a Jaguar XJR-14," he says. "I thought that would make a lovely car for IMSA's new World Sports Car class." Dowe's team mocked up a car out of chassis 791, *sans* roof, and persuaded Porsche that it had a bona fide WSC project on the go. How that car, the Jaguar in which Warwick and Brabham had won at the Nürburgring in 1991, ended up scoring two Le Mans victories is the stuff of legend.



1997-98

NISSAN **R390**

The Jaguar heritage can clearly be seen in the Nissan R390 TWR built for Le Mans in 1997. The chassis owed a lot to the XJR-9 through to 15, but time was so short that the suspension was produced from dusted off XJR-14 drawings. "It was all so quick and dirty that the uprights were virtual carryover," says former TWR engineer Steve Farrell. "We also got out all the old wishbone drawings and just rubbed out dimensions and scribbled NTS (not to scale) on them." A few months after Nissan and TWR's unsuccessful Le Mans bid, it looked again to the 14. An open-top prototype based on the Jag, but with Nissan's twin-turbo V8 in the back, was one option for '98. In the end Nissan opted for a re-worked, long-tail R390.



Leave him He knows

alone. what he's doing

Kimi Räikkönen's single-minded victory in Abu Dhabi was vindication for his Formula 1 return. At least, that's true for Lotus. Not for the man himself. He couldn't care less what any of us think

BY ADAM COOPER

LAT

Is Kimi Räikkönen the most polarising character in Formula 1? His disengaged demeanour in public leaves some observers as cold as his Ice Man nickname, and yet at the same time it has won him an army of fans who enjoy his straightforward approach both to life and to motor sport.

He's attracted a lot more support during his remarkable comeback season with Lotus. Even before his popular victory in Abu Dhabi he had silenced the sceptics with a string of solid performances that propelled him into an unexpected third place in the World Championship. No one could have predicted that at the start of the year, even Kimi himself.

Off-duty, he comes alive as the heart and soul of any social gathering, particularly when surrounded by loyal friends from his native Finland. Readers of this magazine can be assured that they would enjoy a late night conversation with Kimi about the sport we all love. He is after all the man who wore a replica James Hunt helmet in this year's Monaco GP.

He's a throwback to the multi-disciplined past in other ways, too, and during his two-year hiatus from Grand Prix racing he was willing to try his hand at disciplines as diverse as rallying and NASCAR. For Kimi it's the pure competition that matters – and eventually he came to the conclusion that F1 was still the ultimate challenge.

experience, and the prospect of an endless schedule of Vodafone PR appearances had limited appeal. The other inescapable issue was that Ferrari was paying him a lot of money not to drive in 2010, and signing for someone else would have voided that.

"I could have raced, but I couldn't get the deal done. OK, the money is not everything, but it's a bit pointless to do it that way. I was pretty happy at that time to do something else. But it doesn't mean I didn't like the racing – I always enjoyed the racing, but all the other bullshit around it unfortunately is not the most interesting thing in F1."

On paper at least Kimi's rally career was not a great success story. He finished a humble 10th





Combative first lap put Räikkönen in a position to win the Abu Dhabi race after Hamilton retired

"I wanted to come back purely for racing, that's the only reason," he says. "If you would have told me before the 2012 season that we would be in this position, then of course we would have taken it. But when you do well, you want to do better and better all the time."

Räikkönen remains something of an enigma, even to his fans. He may not enjoy opening up in front of the TV cameras, but get him on his own and you find a man who thinks long and hard about every aspect of his racing, and yet doesn't allow it to completely take over his life. There is no 'BS' with him, no hidden agenda – he just wants to drive fast cars. There are good reasons why he has no enemies in the paddock, and is popular with his fellow drivers. He's a guy they can trust both on and off track.

It's easy to forget now that his absence was never planned, and was instead forced upon him by Ferrari. Kimi was struggling through a difficult 2009 season with a hopeless car when the Maranello management sought a way to force him out to make way for the incoming Fernando Alonso. It was a messy situation.

"There could have been a much different way of doing things from their side, but it's past," he recalls. "I know the reasons. I still speak to people when I see them, most of the guys I still have very good relationships with. Certain people could have been more normal..."

Kimi could have remained in F1 in 2010, and he had a chance of returning to McLaren in the seat that ultimately went to Jenson Button. But he was a little burned out after the Ferrari

in the WRC in both seasons, running at the back of the top 10 in most events, with a best result of fifth in Turkey in 2010. But there were flashes of speed, and the fact that he was able to occasionally compete with the very best in such a tough discipline was itself impressive. Most importantly, he enjoyed himself.

"I wasn't expecting to do well. I think I did pretty well comparing the knowledge and experience that I had. Of course when you've won races and championships in F1 they expect that you should win rallies, but the fact is that it's a completely different sport, so you will not have a chance to win there.

"They are the guys doing it for a profession for many, many years, and I would never expect to be on the level that they are.

"We were getting better all the time, the last year especially. We should have done many years more to compete with them. We could do well on one stage, but they do it every stage, and every rally."

He also had his fair share of crashes, but intriguingly it was the element of risk that appealed to Kimi: "It's a different thing, you pay the price when you make a mistake. In F1 you lose one lap, usually in a rally you lose the whole rally or the test or whatever.

"You have to put much more effort in a rally, and concentration, than you have to in F1. You have more things that you have to do at the same time, listening [to a co-driver] and so on, more things besides the driving. In F1 you know what's coming, in a rally you go towards new things every corner."



Grand Prix racing seemed far away when in May 2011 Kimi turned his attention to NASCAR, and competed in Craftsman Truck and Nationwide events at Charlotte. He made a big impression and enjoyed the US scene, and the return to wheel-to-wheel competition reminded him of what he'd been missing in the WRC. But rather than pursue opportunities in America, he looked to F1 as the means of getting that buzz back.

Since the line-ups in the top teams were to remain unchanged, conversations began with Williams and Renault. Due to become Lotus in 2012, the latter outfit had endured a tough season, stymied by the novel side-exit exhaust that restricted development. However, Kimi could see the potential of a team that had won the World Championship as recently as 2006.

Crucially, he quickly established a good rapport with team principal Eric Boullier and owner Gerard Lopez. They understood that Kimi needed some leeway to live his own life away from the track, and that he didn't want to be tied down to the sort of endless PR commitments that a McLaren or Ferrari driver faces. He was duly confirmed as a Lotus driver immediately after the last race of 2011 in Brazil.

"We didn't really speak to anybody else except Williams and Lotus. I think either one of them, it wouldn't have been much difference. I'm very happy where I am now. The people are nice, and I think the decision was made because it came very easily together. Most of the people have been there many years, they have the tools to build the car, and they have the people who have the passion now to do it.

"I think the understanding was similar on both sides, and it was quite easy, how to go forward with no more bullshit. I mean, they wanted me and I wanted to race, and I thought it's a good place and I could get my own engineer from the past. So it wasn't something completely unknown, he knew the team and he knew me and I knew him. So I tried to put myself in a position to at least have the best chance to do well."

> "Bahrain we should have won. If it was now I would have been much more aggressive"

As ever with Kimi, views on his return were mixed. Many media folk questioned his commitment, and pointed to his supposed lack of it during his last year with Ferrari, seemingly forgetting that he had somehow dragged an uncompetitive car to victory at Spa.

"They are always full of bullshit, they don't know what you're doing, they don't know what's going on in my head, if I'm interested or not. They always think they know everything, but they have no idea. But it's been like that ever since I've been in Formula 1, and I don't expect it to change.

"It probably changes for a while when you do well, but when races don't go so well they start saying you have no interest any more, or no motivation. I don't know where they come up with the stories, but I don't mind. I do my own thing.

"Of course sometimes it doesn't go as well as you expected yourself, and you're not happy with what you have done, when you haven't had the strongest weekend. But that's life, and you go forwards."

To give himself a head start, Kimi tested an old Renault. It was his first chance to sample Pirellis, albeit in 'demo' form rather than proper race compounds.

"I'd been doing different things so I wasn't sure how it was going to be. That's why I wanted to do it, to at least see how it is, and give some time before I do the first proper test to see if the neck is OK, and all those things. After a few laps I felt very normal, as if I'd just been away for one winter and started again.

"Then when I drove the 2012 car the first time I knew straight away after the first laps that it should be pretty good, no major issues, and that's how it worked out."

It was a correct call. From the start of the season Räikkönen and team-mate Romain Grosjean demonstrated that the E20 was capable of challenging for podiums. Remarkably up to Abu Dhabi he had scored in every race except China, where his tyres fell off the 'cliff' and he dropped out of the points.

Abu Dhabi aside, second places in Bahrain and Hungary were highlights, although he received some criticism after the first for failing to get past eventual winner Sebastian Vettel: "Bahrain we should have won, we got one chance, and if it would have been now at the end of the season I probably would have been much more aggressive. But that's how it goes."

That's a fascinating admission, but given that Melbourne was his first Grand Prix weekend for 28 months it's perhaps not surprising that it took him a while to get fully into the groove. Apart from the tyres he also had to adjust to heavy fuel loads – when he left, races were still sprints between pitstops. However, getting everything together in qualifying proved the biggest challenge.

"We're still making small mistakes with different things, we don't get the best out of qualifying sometimes. It's a case that if we get the car and everything right, and if we get one lap out of the car, it will be good."

After the summer break Lotus lost its way on development. New parts for India provided a boost, but a set-up change for qualifying didn't work and left Kimi frustrated.

In Abu Dhabi a week later, everything finally came together. Promoted from fifth to fourth on the grid by Vettel's relegation for a lack of fuel in qualifying, Kimi showed plenty of aggression as he burst past Mark Webber and Pastor Maldonado off the line. When



Abu Dhabi win came days after Kimi was confirmed at Lotus for 2013

Lewis Hamilton retired he took the lead, and put in a faultless race to the flag.

The victory came just a few days after Kimi was formally confirmed as a Lotus driver for 2013. He always had an ongoing deal with Lotus, but his form had not gone unnoticed elsewhere in the pitlane. Both McLaren and Ferrari had made serious approaches, and the fact that they wanted him back says much about the man and the high regard in which he is held by his former employers.

A return to Ferrari might have been a little awkward, given the way they left off, but it was by no means impossible. In the end Kimi had no intention of going elsewhere. He's comfortable at Lotus, and is also aware that as one of the team's biggest assets, he can help it to survive tough economic times. He's always been loyal to those who support him.

"This team has done very well, if you look where they were last year and the year before. I think they definitely have the people and the hunger and the passion to push forward, and I don't see why it shouldn't improve for next year.

"OK, we don't have the budget or as many people as the biggest teams to improve, but we're still doing a good job, and I think they are going to push very hard next year. I don't see any reason why it should be worse, so it's up to us to build a good car again and be up there."

He's had an extraordinary career, and the transition from his mercurial arrival in F1 with Sauber in 2001 to his current status as elder statesman has been a remarkable journey. And at 33, it's not over yet. Does he have any regrets about how it turned out?

"No, I've been doing my things like I want. And I'm happy. If I feel like I'm not happy, or I want to do something else, I will do it. I don't see any reason to spend all your life and all your career doing something you don't like. I have no regrets. I won the championship. If I won more, it's nice, but it's not everything.

"It's something I enjoy doing, and it's been part of my work, but there's an awful lot more interesting things in life than just F1. If something suddenly happens and I'm not in F1, it's OK, it's not like I'm desperate for F1. There are plenty of things in life that are good fun. I'm happy how things have gone. Maybe I'll go back to rallying, or do nothing. I don't know."



INSIGHT

INSIDE TEAM KIMI

Räikkönen's management knew his comeback would be a success

Nobody knows Kimi better than Steve Robertson (above), the former F3 racer and Indy Lights champion who with his father Dave has served as his manager for many years. Even after their contract expired Kimi remained loyal to the Robertsons, asking them to negotiate his Lotus deal.

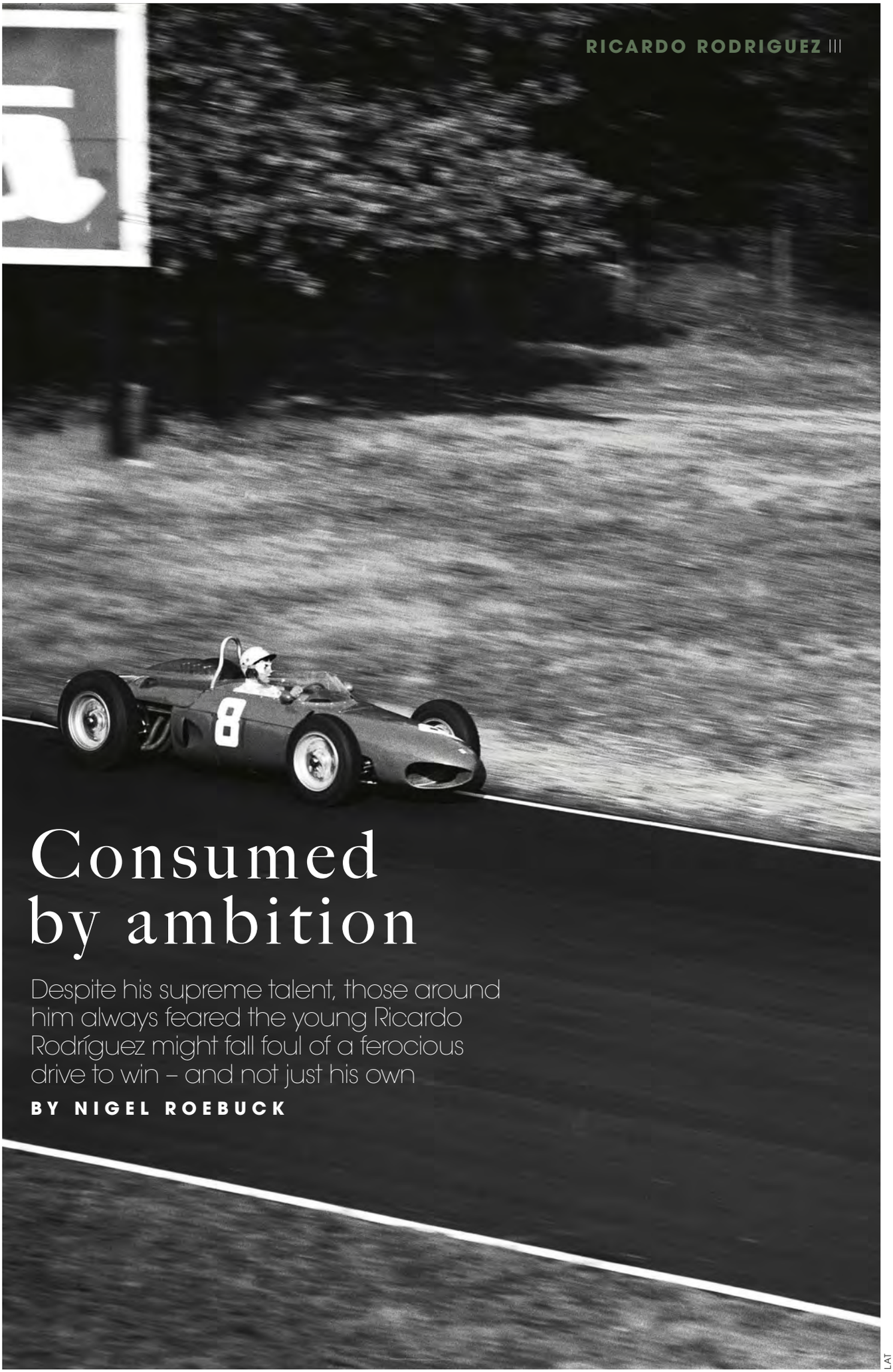
"I spoke to him after the first test in the old car," says Robertson. "He said, 'After two laps it felt slow to me.' As soon as he said that I knew it was OK. He doesn't overcomplicate things, everybody knows that. I think some drivers can be over analytical about tyres and so on. With Kimi it's, 'They're black, they're round, I can drive.' He's got a natural feel for it, he was born to drive an F1 car.

"In Abu Dhabi he showed why he's been a World Champion. He brings it home, he knows when to go for a move, and when not to go for it, and that's the difference between taking a real pro and a young guy with money. He brings home the points, which at the end of the day brings in the money. Kimi can deliver when he's under pressure, and that's what he's proved on so many occasions.

"He's happy at Lotus. Eric Boullier summed him up: he's a wild animal sometimes, and you've got to let him roam free."


EURS





Consumed by ambition

Despite his supreme talent, those around him always feared the young Ricardo Rodríguez might fall foul of a ferocious drive to win – and not just his own

BY NIGEL ROEBUCK

LAT



'For sure he would have been World Champion…'

Down the years column inches without number have been given over to young racing drivers who appeared to have it all, yet perished before their potential could be realised, leaving behind only thoughts of what might have been. One thinks of such as Chris Bristow, killed at Spa in 1960, or Stefan Bellof, who died at the same circuit a quarter of a century later, or Tony Brise, whose life was lost in the light 'plane crash that also claimed Graham Hill and other team members in 1975.

There is every reason to believe each of these three would have reached the heights, and another of their number – some would say to a greater degree – was Ricardo Valentin Rodríguez de la Vega, who died 50 years ago, on November 1 1962. The younger brother of Pedro (himself killed in a racing car, in 1971), Ricardo was routinely described as 'a prodigy', and for once the word appears not to have been overblown.

Perhaps a single sentence tells it: on his Formula 1 debut in 1961 – in a Ferrari, at Monza, so no pressure – Rodríguez, still five months shy of his 20th birthday, qualified second.

As a kid I remember reading about Ricardo, about this Mexican only a few years older than myself, and he became a sort of mythological figure to me. I read that he and Pedro were the sons of a very rich man, who spent freely on their careers, buying them Corvettes and Ferraris – but could it possibly be the case that, at 15, Ricardo, in a Porsche RS, was competitive with the likes of Ken Miles? Or, come to that, that already he had dispensed with motorcycle racing, having become Mexican Champion?

Well, it was all true. In 1958, now 16, he planned to partner Pedro at Le Mans, but the Automobile Club de l'Ouest turned down his entry on grounds of age. In '59, though, the Rodríguez brothers indeed shared an OSCA in the 24 Hours, and the year after that, sharing a North American Racing Team Ferrari 250 TR with André Pilette, Ricardo finished second to the factory car of Gendebien/Frère.

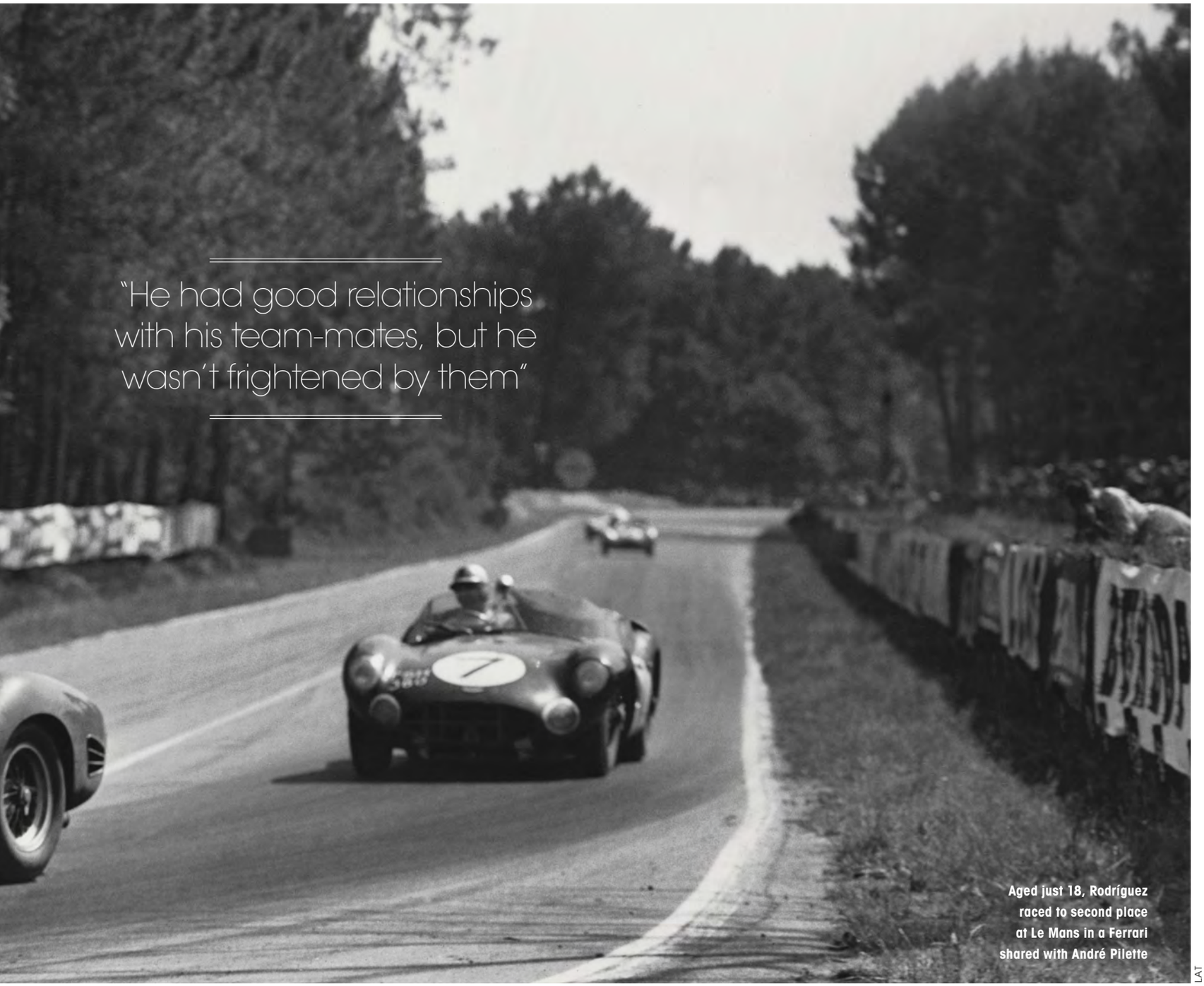
Luigi Chinetti, the NART founder and longtime friend of Enzo Ferrari, was a firm believer in the Rodríguez brothers, and not only because of their father's largesse. Ricardo was rightly regarded as the more naturally talented of the two, and Chinetti persuaded Ferrari that here was a World Champion in the making. At Le Mans in 1961, the brothers raced their NART Testa Rossa hard against the works car of Hill and Gendebien, and were leading when they retired after 15 hours.

If there were anything to make the Old Man rub his hands, it was a youthful charger threatening the established stars, and at the Italian Grand Prix – where Enzo traditionally entered a platoon of cars – the younger Rodríguez was nominated to drive alongside Phil Hill, Wolfgang von Trips, Richie Ginther and Giancarlo Baghetti. No matter that Ricardo's car had the less powerful 60-degree V6 engine (compared with the newer 120-degree version): in qualifying he was beaten only by von Trips.

Come race day, Rodríguez retired with engine failure only 13 laps in, and indeed Hill's was the only Ferrari to finish, Phil winning the race and also clinching the World Championship, for von Trips – his only rival – was killed in an accident on the second lap.

"It was a tough start to Ricardo's F1 career," said Jo Ramirez, who had become a close friend. "He got on very well with von Trips, who was always kind to him, and gave him bits of advice – which surprised him, because senior drivers aren't always like that! He was terribly upset when Wolfgang died…"

Ramirez, at 20 a few months older than Rodríguez, was still in Mexico at that time. The two had met at kart meetings, but while one had plenty of money the other had none; by the end of 1961 Jo had vowed to go to Europe, somehow to find work in motor racing, and through the following year he worked as a gofer for Ferrari – unpaid, save in accommodation and food – and was thus at all the races in 1962 with Ricardo and his wife Sarita. The first such was the Targa Florio, which Rodríguez won, sharing with Gendebien and Mairesse.



"He had good relationships with his team-mates, but he wasn't frightened by them"

Aged just 18, Rodríguez raced to second place at Le Mans in a Ferrari shared with André Pilette

LAT

Through the '61 season – the first of the 1.5-litre F1 – Ferrari had been dominant with the V6 'sharknose' cars, but the following year was rather different. In sports car racing Ferrari remained the class of the field, but the Grand Prix cars – still essentially unchanged from the year before – were overwhelmed by superior British chassis, and by new V8 engines from BRM and Coventry-Climax. To make matters even worse, through the summer of '62 Ferrari was beset by occasional strikes, which meant that some races were missed.

On top of all that, Enzo Ferrari still persisted in his practice of signing more drivers than he had cars, pitting them against each other, so that team leader Hill was the only one sure of having a drive at the next Grand Prix. Rodríguez got along well with all his team-mates, but still it didn't make for a settled environment for a rookie.

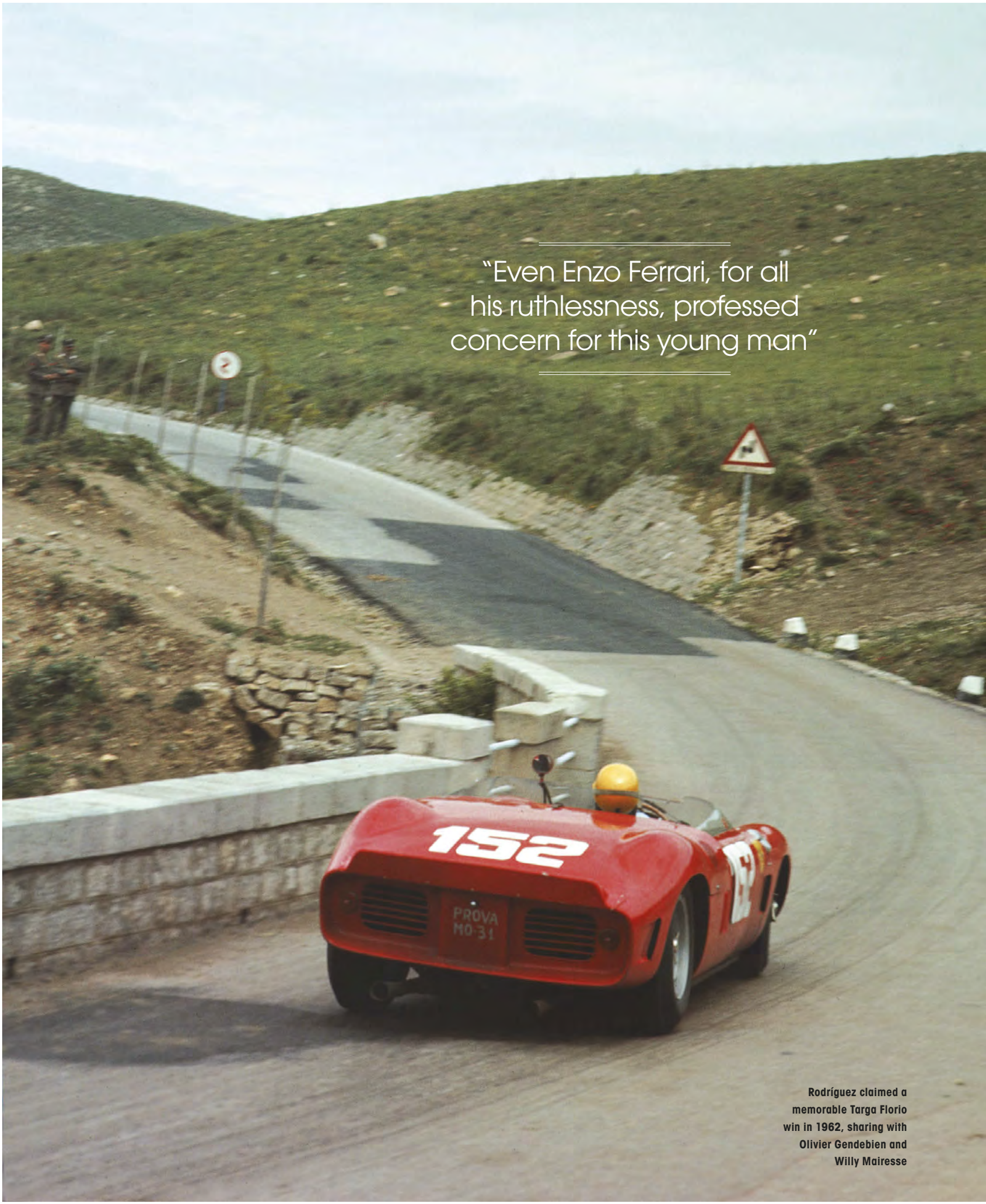
As well as that, a shroud of sadness hung over the '62 season, for Stirling Moss was gone from the sport after that accident at Goodwood on Easter Monday. "That same day," said Ramirez, "Ricardo was racing at Pau and finished second to Maurice Trintignant, who was driving Rob Walker's Lotus. He was happy about that – but then distraught to hear about Stirling, whom he worshipped. It made him very sad – apart from anything else, he so much loved the idea of racing against him.

"Ricardo, you know, was full of charm – one of those people who just gets on with everybody. He was always in a good humour, always laughing. OK, he'd get upset if he didn't finish a race because his car broke, but later he'd be at the party. He absolutely lived life to the full – whereas Pedro was much more of an introvert, and didn't really form friendships with other drivers, Ricardo was friends with all of them, not least Jim Clark, of whom he was very fond. He had good relationships with his team-mates, but he wasn't frightened by them at all – he was quite sure he was quicker than they were."

He had good reason to feel that way, too. Ferrari may have been off the pace in 1962, but at Spa – a circuit new to him – Rodríguez ran the whole race in company with Hill, who was renowned there, and had won the race the year before. They finished third and fourth, with Ricardo, according to his friend, observing an order to finish behind his team leader.

At the Nürburgring, too, he excelled: if his car allowed him to finish only sixth, he was comfortably the fastest Ferrari driver. The quality, indubitably, was there.

Rodríguez's bravery – fearlessness, in fact – worried many of his fellow drivers, though,



"Even Enzo Ferrari, for all his ruthlessness, professed concern for this young man"

Rodríguez claimed a memorable Targa Florio win in 1962, sharing with Olivier Gendebien and Willy Mairesse

LAT



Above: Rodríguez kisses his father's hand before embarking on his final drive. Below, clockwise from right: Brothers were close off-track, rivals on it; family connections brought sponsorship from both Pepsi and Mobil 1; Ricardo and Pedro in their first motorcycle helmets; Opel touring car was his first steed









Ed McDonough

just as with Bristow a couple of years earlier. "I liked Ricardo a lot," said Hill, "and thought he had tremendous talent – but I also thought, 'If he lives, I'll be surprised…'" Even Enzo Ferrari, for all his ruthless willingness to put pressure on his drivers, professed concern for the young man.

In his memoirs – not for nothing entitled *My Terrible Joys* – he wrote: "I think if he learns to control his enthusiasm, to refine his style, he could have tremendous success. I said to him, 'Ricardo, I'll be frank with you. You'll only be the great racer you want to be if you learn control. If not, I'm not sure how much longer your talent for improvisation will save you'.

"Ricardo flashed that smile of a kid who has grown up too fast, and said yes, he had got the message. But I was worried. I knew he was being eaten alive by blind ambition, that he was dangerously eager. And I also knew his family was kindling his ambition, rather than trying to cool it – in fact, I wrote to his father about it."

Probably that had rather little effect. Hill once told me how astonished he had been by the behaviour of both Rodríguez's parents: in their blind ambition for their son, he said, it seemed never to cross their minds that he might hurt himself.

"No," agrees Ramirez, "it's true – it never did. Don Pedro was a very dominating character, and completely fearless when it came to his sons, but in that respect Ricardo's mother was probably even worse than his father. She would wave a handkerchief at him every time he went by – and it was always, 'Faster, faster, faster!'"

From contemporary reports Don Pedro comes across as a shadowy figure, and Ramirez admits that he never knew exactly where all the money came from. "He had a lot of businesses and a lot of land in Acapulco… people said he also had a chain of brothels in Mexico City… certainly he had very good 'connections', let's put it that way! There was no doubting, though, that he was prepared to spend whatever it took to help his sons in their racing careers."

Rodríguez's last race for Ferrari was the Italian Grand Prix, one year after his F1 debut, but this time the sharknose beauties were nowhere. That weekend at Monza Ricardo learned that the team would not be entering any more races in 1962, including not only Watkins Glen and East London, the last two rounds of the World Championship, but also the inaugural non-championship event in Mexico City. Distraught at the thought of not racing in his own country, Rodríguez approached Rob Walker, who readily agreed to let him drive his Lotus 24.

"Ricardo was so full of enthusiasm," said Ramirez, "to race at his home track, in front of his own people. I remember taking him to the airport in Milan – I was so sorry I couldn't

go back with him, but at the time I just couldn't afford the fare.

"We were talking about the future, and he said how much he was looking forward to driving Rob's car. Like everyone, he really liked Rob because he was such a gentleman, and he was unsure about what was going to happen with Ferrari – he really wasn't very enchanted with his first year there, because there had been so many political problems. I felt sure Ricardo was going to leave Ferrari and drive for Rob in 1963, but I remember he said, 'Whatever I do, don't worry, you will come and work with the team…'"

Race day in Mexico was Sunday, November 4, with two days of practice beforehand, but because the circuit was new to all save Rodríguez, a further 'test day' was organised for the Thursday.

Even though the Walker Lotus was a 24, rather than the monocoque 25 which almost instantly usurped it, Ricardo was absolutely enraptured with it, finding it superior in every way to the Ferrari he had raced all season.

For most of that day – November 1 – he was quickest, and according to a watching Frank Faulkner, was the only driver taking the banked Peraltada turn flat. Jack Brabham, said Faulkner, was one of many who couldn't get over how rough was the surface there: "You think, 'This is ridiculous, going round here so slowly – next time I'll speed up'. But next time – and every time – you don't, because you steer and nothing happens, at least until the wheels come down for an occasional pitter-pat on the surface…"



Porsche

"Some people said that the suspension had broken, but we'll never know"

In late afternoon, when Rodríguez, thinking his day's testing done, had changed into civvies, John Surtees, also at the wheel of a Lotus 24 (entered by Reg Parnell), set a time slightly quicker than Ricardo's.

"It really shouldn't have mattered," said Ramirez. "It was only a test day. Apparently, though, Ricardo's father said, 'No, no, you have to be quickest – get back in the car…' Knowing his father, I could believe that."

So it was that Rodríguez, after crossing himself and kissing his father's hand one last time, went out again, and on his first flying lap crashed at Peraltada.

"A friend of mine – Roberto Ayala – was there that day," said Ramirez, "and he telephoned me almost immediately, very upset because he had seen the whole thing.

"It seems that Ricardo just touched the guardrail on the outside of the corner, bounced down the track into the inside barrier, and then back up to the outside again – where the car went under the guardrail, and he was thrown out, and almost cut in half between the dashboard and the guardrail. My friend was there, trying to help, and he told me that Ricardo was pleading, 'Please don't let me die', but there was nothing anyone could do, and in fact he died in the ambulance almost immediately. Awful.

"Some people said that the suspension had broken, but we'll never know. Certainly the track was very bumpy, and just before where he went off there was a little undulation, and they said that when Ricardo went through there something failed on the car. Who knows? It didn't really matter, did it? The fact was, he was gone."

Mexico was thrown into mourning, for Rodríguez had been regarded as a national hero, and only shortly before his death had been declared the country's Athlete of the Year. The president attended his funeral.

In the aftermath of the tragedy there was some unpleasantness, spawned by Don Pedro Rodríguez, who was quoted in *Paris Match* as saying that Walker's Lotus had been responsible for his son's death. Rob, having been assured by his legendary mechanic Alf Francis that nothing had broken on the car, was extremely angry, and revealed as much in his memoirs.

"Ricardo was the first driver ever to be killed in one of my cars, and it was pretty traumatic for me. Alf assured me that the accident had been caused by driver error, and this was confirmed by the scrutineers, who examined the wreckage very carefully and could find no evidence of mechanical failure. I think Ricardo was simply overcome by the intense emotion of the situation, and he was trying too hard in a car that was notoriously difficult to drive near the limit.

"At that time I had substantial life insurance cover for all my drivers, and for tax reasons the policies were set up to compensate me for the loss of the driver's services. I could then pass on the money to his next of kin, tax free, at my discretion. I told Don Pedro that unless he retracted this accusation I would keep the insurance money. Of course he retracted it at once.

"Don Pedro had many friends in high places in Mexico, and although he had become very rich he behaved in the most ungenerous way towards Ricardo's widow, Sarita, ostracising her completely after Ricardo's death, and leaving her absolutely penniless. It must have made Papa Rodríguez very angry when I paid the insurance money to Sarita, rather than to him. She was a great friend of ours, a spectacularly beautiful girl who adorned our pit whenever we raced in Mexico in later years…"

"It's true," said Ramirez, "that the family behaved dreadfully towards Sarita afterwards. Horrible. I liked Sarita – she was a nice girl, full of fun, totally besotted with Ricardo. It's hard to understand: this girl loved their son, so how could they treat her so badly? Sarita died a few years ago. It was a very sad story. I'd see her at the Mexican Grand Prix each year… in the end she was completely destitute."

On Thursday, November 1, 2012, Jo was among those present at a simple ceremony to remember the life of Ricardo Rodríguez. "We all congregated at Peraltada, the corner where he lost his life, and at eight minutes past five – exactly the time of the accident – we had a minute's silence, and then we walked the last 200 metres, to complete symbolically his final lap.

"Even now, fifty years on, it still seems so sad. Ricardo didn't even live to see his 21st birthday, but he did more in his life than people three or four times his age. Those of us who knew him, who were close to him, believed he would be one of the greatest – he was so gifted – but we all wondered if he would live long enough…"

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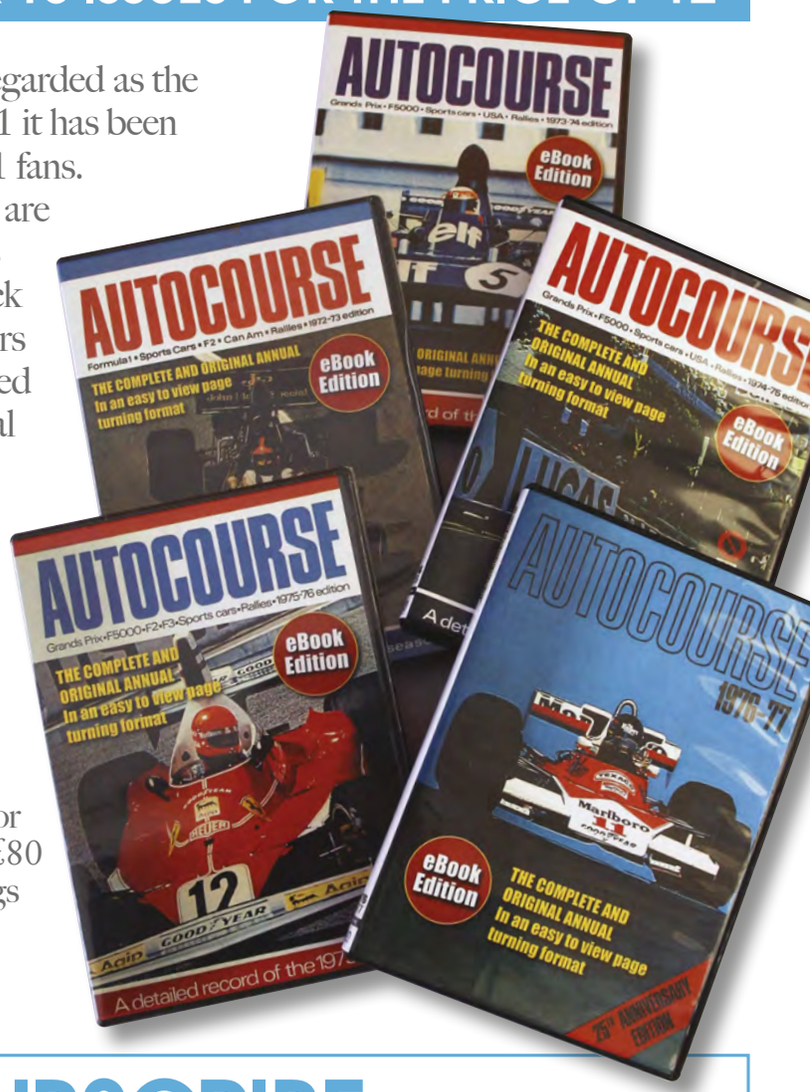
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"Call that a career?"

Luigi Chinetti Jr may be the only racing driver in the world who downplays his results, and the other colourful elements of a varied life. But then, he only finished fifth at Le Mans…

BY RICHARD HESELTINE

This clearly is not a yes-man. Warm, animated and quick to laugh, Luigi Chinetti Jr is winningly indiscreet. He has just voiced his opinions on the (over)usage of the Cavallino Rampante on products unbecoming of Ferrari's heritage and is now ruminating on the evils of PR speak. He is, in short, excellent company. But then his opinions are formed from experience. As variously a Ferrari concessionaire, racer, designer and son of multiple Le Mans winner Luigi Chinetti Sr, he has plenty of it.

In Modena to oversee assorted restoration projects, 'Coco' also lets slip that he's working on a new coachbuilt Ferrari which will lead to a revival of the NART name. "I was thinking on my way over here," he muses, "what am I, an adolescent masquerading as a man, or a man masquerading as an adolescent? I'm 70 years old and still messing around with cars. One of these days I'll get a real job."

Somehow we doubt it, but then in many ways Chinetti was indoctrinated from the start. "You know, my mother never wanted me to get involved in the whole car thing," he counters. "Nor did dad, at least to begin with. You have to remember what it was like back then. Dad came over to the US during the war – he was part of Lucy O'Reilly Schell's Indy 500 team and, just like René Dreyfus, he never went home. In those days you needed a sponsor during the naturalisation process and Dad's was [illustrious Chevrolet engineer] Zora Arkus-Duntov; can you believe that? But it was tough and I swear if Dad hadn't have been a famous racing driver, having an Italian surname would have been a difficult obstacle for me to overcome. Italians weren't real popular in the States at that time. Anyway, I grew up in New York and, at my mother's insistence, I attended one of the best schools; my classmates included General MacArthur's son and one of the Guggenheims. We then moved to Connecticut when I was 12. Anyhow, Dad won Le Mans for the third time in 1949, which was also Ferrari's first victory in the 24 Hours, and he pretty much established Ferrari in the US. Then in 1958 he set up the North American Racing Team. It was hard not to be influenced by that."

More than 100 drivers raced for this often underfunded équipe, active until 1982, with the NART acronym also being applied to several show cars conceived by Chinetti Jr. "I didn't so much get involved in the business as butted in. Dad introduced me to driving without upsetting my mother: he went on a business trip and left a car in the garage with the key in the ignition and dealer plates on the passenger seat. What was I supposed to do? I was 17 years old and it was a gold Ferrari 250GT Pininfarina coupé, that I remember. From there I got involved at the shop, first as a broom pusher and then as a valve grinder. I eventually became a demonstration driver which was an important position. One of our customers once asked me, 'What's the pedal on the left for?' I replied, 'It goes with the stick in the middle…'"

With equal predictability, it wasn't long before he embarked on a racing career of his own. "You call that a career?" he scoffs. "Before I did any road racing I entered the '65 Shell 4000 rally in a Ferrari 330GT 2+2 and seem to remember being disqualified for driving across someone's lawn. Anyway, my first proper race was at Watkins Glen in our old 275P

the following year. I then shared it with Charlie Kolb at St Jovite. That thing was outgunned, but we were running second to Lothar Motschenbacher's McLaren when an Elva crashed in front of me and I drove through his fire. The P got burned up, but not too badly. I still own the car.

"My aspiration, if you can call it that, was to be a good second driver. I was happy to be a number two guy to a really good number one. I thought I had the potential to be pretty good, but I did relatively few races." It's just that those he did start tended to have the names 'Le Mans' or suchlike somewhere in the title. "I took the view that if I wasn't able to race all that often, and don't forget NART only entered a small number of races each year, then I would make the most of any opportunity that presented itself. The thing is, after the accident at St Jovite, I didn't race again until the Daytona 24 Hours in 1970."

NART had hedged its bets that year, entering six cars for the January classic. "People would ask me, why are you driving a 250LM? I mean that thing was *old*. I would answer 'It's all I got'. That was true. It was just an obsolete racing car that was sitting in the shop. I swear nobody wanted it, but then I convinced Gregg Young to take it on for about $9000. When we got to the Speedway, the car was jumping out of gear and the brakes didn't work. The gearbox specialist from the factory rebuilt it but he told me quite bluntly that ours wouldn't be a long race. The gearbox in the LM always was the weak link and ours began to jump out of gear again soon after the start. The damn thing then resolved itself, but I swear the 'box went bye-bye the second the race was over. We did OK, I guess." They finished seventh overall.

"A few months later, I shared our 312P coupé with Tony Adamowicz in the Sebring 12 Hours, but the water pump shaft broke so our race was run pretty quickly. I couldn't see well out of the coupé and realised that both ends of the car were too heavy so we set about modifying the whole thing. We came up with a really light spider body. Nestor Garcia-Veiga, Alain de Cadenet and I were fifth in the '71 Daytona 24 Hours in it and I finished fourth overall and first in class in that year's Sebring 12 Hours sharing with George Eaton. That was a wonderful car."

He has rather less affection for the 365GTB/4 Daytona in which he made his Le Mans debut in '71 alongside Bob Grossman. "It was an OK taxi, but a bit of a comedown after the prototypes. That was a really difficult race for me as I was on Dad's home field. He was a legend at Le Mans and I was a wannabe. I was so slow in practice, it was embarrassing; what



"People would ask why I was driving a 250LM. I would answer 'It's all I got'"

Lyndon McNeil

a cold shower. The night before qualifying I called my wife and told her about my problem. She then told me, 'That's not your only one – I'm leaving you'. For good reason, I might add.

"Anyway, the next day things happened in a big way. I asked Teodoro Zeccoli, who had raced for us previously, what gear he was using for Maison Blanche. He said he was taking it near flat in fifth. Great – I was in the upper end of third! Anyhow, I managed to qualify and remember Dad telling me how to nurse the engine to last the distance when Masten Gregory interrupted, saying, 'Coco, you listen to your old man. He knows this goddamned place.' Coming from someone who who'd won there for us in 1965 – which was Ferrari's last win in the 24 Hours, let's not forget, well… At any rate, we finished fifth overall and got the Index of Thermal Efficiency prize. I didn't really care for GTs, though. When we were running prototypes, we'd treat them as mobile chicanes: we'd cut them up, do awful things. It was a different story when you were on the receiving end! Later on, we built a Daytona with a 'cheater' nose: if you looked closely, it didn't have front fog lights. There wasn't room for any. We raised the back a little, too, but nobody ever figured it out."

And it was aboard this car and the team's 512M that Coco would enjoy one final hurrah as a driver. "I did Le Mans three times, Daytona and Sebring a bunch of times, but there never was any money. NART was a small team, and we rarely had the latest equipment. I think there were maybe four or five mechanics.

"Anyway, my hero growing up was the record breaker Ab Jenkins and, over a few drinks back in early 1974, a group of us came up with the idea of going to Bonneville. We had the cars just sitting in the shop. We went to our sponsors and told them it would cost about $30,000 and we'd return the money if we didn't set any records. No pressure! We then started looking for drivers. There was Milt Minter and me and then we thought, 'How about Paul Newman and Graham Hill?' We went to NBC but they didn't think we'd get Newman, but he was just great and it was through him that we got the CBS TV deal.

"Of course, we got out there and it was big! We had a 10-mile oval course on the salt and the highways department put up stakes so you had at least some idea of where you were going. They also dragged the course to eliminate as best they could the bumps, holes and cracks in the salt. It was like driving on gravel. I went out there in the 512M and the left rear tyre blew: it took out a chunk of bodywork. I was going flat out – about 220mph – at the time. Our guys managed to patch it together again, though." The team left Utah having set International Class C records at 10 miles (174.763mph), 500 (171.255mph), 500 miles (166.173mph), and 1000 kilometers (166.445mph).







"We had a blast. I remember us travelling back to base in Wendover, 15 miles away from the salt. The M went on the trailer, and I drove the Daytona on the road. There was a gas tank where the passenger seat would have been and I was driving to the hotel with my then-girlfriend wedged in somehow. The road was as straight as a die and I was going through the gears when in the distance I just about made out the shape of a car – it had a gold shield on the door and a light on the roof. By the time I went past it I was flat out. We got to the hotel and I shouted to the guys, 'We've got problems!' They took the car into the garage, jacked it up and took off the wheels. They were underneath the Daytona and I was in my room by the time the cop arrived. He was madder than hell!"

While the NART squad would continue into the following decade, Chinetti sold the US Ferrari concession in the mid-70s. "We had nothing to sell," he says. "Seriously, nothing was homologated for the US aside from the Dino 308 GT4. One arrived in the shop, finished in brown with a mint green interior. I just stared at it and thought 'How has it come to this?' I knew the game was up."

In the meantime, Coco has continued to intermittently release NART-bodied Ferrari road cars, past collaborators including the likes of Giovanni Michelotti and Alfredo Vignale. "I loved those guys. They were true artists but really humble, too. They wouldn't stick their noses in the air at guys like me. It was the same on the racing side. The true greats, guys like Colombo, Lampredi and Forghieri, would never crow about their achievements."

Nor, it must be said, does Chinetti. "I have no idea how I'm perceived," he ponders. "I guess – hope – that anyone who is interested in racing history will acknowledge that I did some interesting things and that I didn't disgrace the family name. I'm just glad I had the chance to do those races and that I can say, 'I was there and I did that'. That's pretty nifty…"



Top: Daytona was a Le Mans come-down – but came fifth. Above and right: with Paul Newman at Bonneville, along with 512M – note tyre blowout damage

The night before the opening of 'The great Ferraris of Sergio Pininfarina' exhibition in Maranello, Luca di Montezemolo launched his political manifesto for social change in Italy. The Ferrari president plays down his aspirations to become a leader of greater significance beyond the running of a humble (!) car company, but since he is a high-profile and popular national figure, such declarations from his Italia Futura 'think tank' are taken seriously in a country still in recovery from the last days of Prime Minister Berlusconi.

But at the Museo Ferrari, di Montezemolo batted away journalists' questions on politics. He claimed he was here to talk only about cars, and pay tribute to one of the great figures of automotive design.

Still, it is true that Sergio Pininfarina, who died earlier this year aged 85, fitted the template of what di Montezemolo's 'think tank' believes Italy needs right now: that is, entrepreneurs who make a greater contribution to their country beyond their own interests. As his company produced some of the most beautiful cars ever seen, Pininfarina also took his place in public life as an active politician. That fact surely won't have been lost on Ferrari's self-aware, modern-day president.



Sergio's son, Paolo, joined di Montezemolo and Piero Ferrari at the launch of the new exhibition. "It describes my father as a designer, as an engineer, as an entrepreneur and more than all, as a man," he said. "This exhibition is the life of my father."

The design house was founded in 1930 by Paolo's grandfather, Battista 'Pinin' Farina, and the company's defining relationship with Ferrari was forged in '52. The collaboration has resulted in more

than 100 of the most beloved models in the world of motoring, and 22 of them are on show in this collection at Ferrari's official museum in Maranello. They include wonderful experimental designs that sit among the classic road and race selection, and we present the most eye-catching here.

Di Montezemolo paid tribute to the "team effort" that existed between the Turin coachbuilder and the Modena powerhouse, describing each model as "pieces of art". The president has a point: these automotive sculptures, created to inspire innovation and of course to be driven hard, transcended their original intentions long ago.

The exhibition runs until January 7, 2013. The Museo Ferrari is open seven days a week from 9.30am to 6pm, except Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Go to www.museoferrari.com for more information.

Collage of art & design

A new Ferrari exhibition pays tribute to a master of Italian automotive styling. The late Sergio Pininfarina was never afraid to experiment with both function and unforgettable form

BY DAMIEN SMITH



1968 P6

P for 'prototype' and spawned from the legendary P3 and P4 sports-racing cars. One of two concepts (P5 now resides in Japan), its influence on 1970s production jewels the BB and 308 GTB can be seen in that wedge nose and those fighter-plane air scoops.



1970 Modulo

Inspired by Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, this mid-engined craft cocks a snook at all convention. As for functionality, what place does that have in an obsession to uncover the automobile's 'ideal form'? Wall-mounted wooden buck shows pride in traditional craftsmanship.



1969 Sigma

Safety was still a dirty word for some in Formula 1, but not for Sergio Pininfarina. This futuristic Grand Prix 'monoposto' was a collaborative result with *Revue Automobile* and carries features that are standard today, but were groundbreaking at the time, including multi-layer fuel tanks, a multi-point safety harness, wrap-around bodywork for extra protection and to stop wheels interlocking, and onboard fire extinguishers. It even features a moveable mid-wing. Just imagine how striking it would have looked in Ferrari red.



1980 Pinin

What should Pininfarina do to celebrate Ferrari's 50th anniversary? Build a 'quattro porte' saloon powered by a V12, of course! A four-door first for the Prancing Horse, it didn't catch on. But the single-frame front grill, flush glass windows and sleek tapered tail would be seen again. It could have seen the light of day beyond this prototype, had Enzo Ferrari himself not put a halt to the madness.



1989 Mythos

This one has dated. It's post-Enzo late 1980s excess at its best – or worst depending on your point of view. The Testa Rossa, immortalised in white by TV cop show *Miami Vice*, provided the platform, and you can tell. Although its imposing rear is more bullish Lamborghini than equine Ferrari.



1967 330 GTC Coupé Speciale

A favourite of Sergio Pininfarina, this unique version is claimed to have once been the property of Lilian, Princess de Réthy of Belgium. Its Dino parentage is obvious.

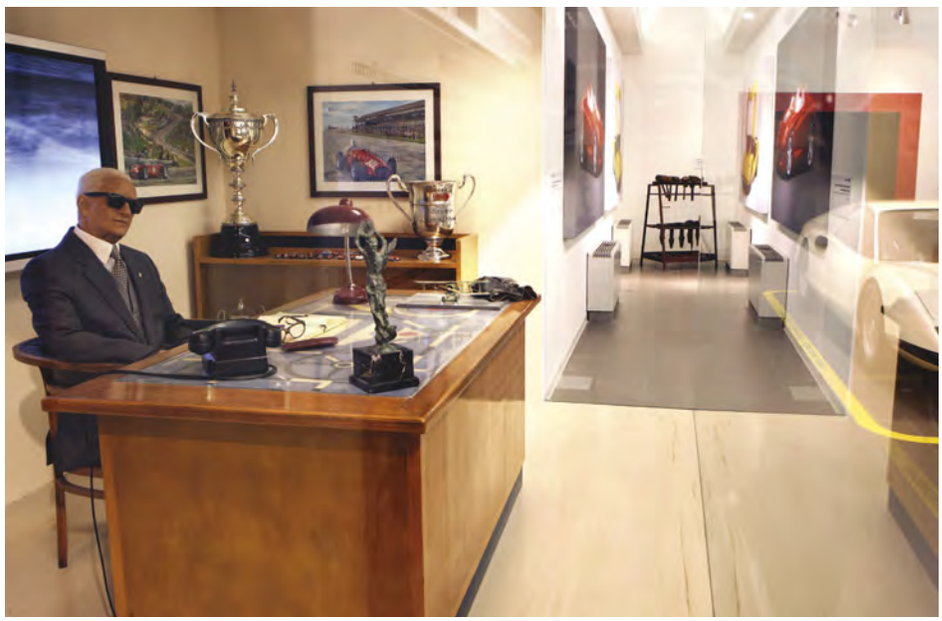
308 GTS

Ferrari red has turned to an odd orange, but the significance of this particular example of a classic design will never fade. This was Gilles Villeneuve's car, in which he set a record that is unlikely ever to be broken. It was in this 308 that he made the fabled run from Monte Carlo to Maranello – that's 432km (268 miles) – in an astounding 2hr 25mins.



Enzo in his office

A startling recreation, especially when you're not expecting it (the first glimpse of the waxwork made us jump on our visit). It's based on the Old Man's famous office in the house at Fiorano.







No.8 BRM V16 Crankshaft

Tom Wheatcroft loved to assemble the finest examples of British engineering in his Donington collection. He was the first brave man to get one of the V16 BRMs back into running order, giving enthusiasts the chance to hear once again the piercing shriek of this beautifully engineered machine with its centrifugal supercharger, a noise most had only heard on old recordings. This is the complex 10-bearing crankshaft of one of those 16-cylinder extravaganzas. The engine is effectively two 744cc V8s linked in the centre, where pinions drive a vertical geartrain to the camshafts. Drive is also taken from the centre, via an output shaft running below the crank. Claims of 600bhp for the 1500cc machine proved optimistic, and by the time the car was reliable the Grand Prix world had moved on.

The Donington Grand Prix Collection is the world's largest museum of Formula 1 cars. It is open seven days a week, 10am to 5pm.
Log on at www.donington-park.co.uk or call 01332 811027

Donington
The heart of British motorsport

Dom Romney

PRIZE PUPILS

John Surtees has a vision of how Britain should promote its young driver talent. And through the Henry Surtees Challenge he's starting to make it happen

BY ED FOSTER



The kart challenge drew 45 entrants, raised funds for charity, and spotlighted the talent of Jack Aitken, left



In our November issue, John Surtees made very apparent his views on what the motor racing ladder should look like. In short, there needs to be a clear route to the top and if you win a championship, Surtees believes you should also win a scholarship for the following season in the next series up the ladder. This way real talent is guaranteed a chance, regardless of financial backing.

Typically, Surtees is not content just to voice an opinion. He wants to make a difference to young drivers himself, and that's where the Henry Surtees Challenge comes in, in the form of a karting event held at Buckmore Park in October, pitting a bumper crop of young drivers head to head for an amazing selection of prizes.

The rewards on offer were what every aspiring young racing driver dreams of (see right), and 45 hopefuls paid the £500 entry fee to take part. "This is one of the most competitive fields of karters I've seen here," said Buckmore founder Bill Sisley, a man who has been involved in karting since 1973, helping the likes of Hamilton, Button, Wheldon and Herbert along the way. The field was so competitive that some seasoned single-seater racers didn't make the A Final (the field was split in two, the slower half competing in the B Final).

At the front was Jack Aitken, a 17-year-old who has been competing in the now-defunct InterSteps series. He set fastest time in his qualifying session, finished third in the first final, and then won the main final by an

impressive 7.9 seconds. The prize he chose from the 12 on offer was the GP3 test with Carlin Motorsport in Portugal. "They probably won't be offering me a drive off the back of the test," he said with a smile after the prize-giving, "but it's the contacts that are so important. It's good to get to know the team as Carlin's right up there and GP3 is a premier series."

The list of entries for the Henry Surtees Challenge was impressive – from 2012 KF2 European Champion Ben Barnicoat to the likes of GP3 racer Alex Brundle and 2012 Formula Renault BARC Champion Scott Malvern. But Sisley, who is based at Buckmore every day, wasn't surprised the quiet Londoner won by such a margin. "He's got the raw pace," he said. So, I asked, why hasn't Aitken won any championships in karts? He came second in the 2010 Super 1 Title, and in cars he has yet to really stamp his mark. "His parents insisted that he had a good education," Sisley explains. "He goes to Westminster school and that's had priority over his karting. He's always had natural speed, but he maybe hasn't had enough time to spend testing like the rest of them do.

"There's so much potential there, though. If you take some of the other racers, they've had the best of the best from when they were six years old – I'm not knocking them, I'm just explaining why some have been very successful. They've had the results because they take it more seriously and everything else comes second to their karting career. I'm not saying Jack's parents aren't ambitious, because they are. I agree with the way they've done it, I would have done it the same way."

The focus on school is paying off – this year Aitken got 10 A*s in his GCSEs. However, 2013 isn't an exam year so Sisley expects him to start producing the results. "He's been driving for Fortec Motorsport this year [in InterSteps] and they're in discussions with various teams to move into BARC FRenault next year. I think he's going to be a lot more committed.

"He has the pace, but he needs to eliminate certain aspects of his driving. There have been instances when he was a little too aggressive. Having said that, though, I'd rather someone was aggressive and had crashes rather than not, because if they don't, they're not trying hard enough. It's quite common with young drivers – Lewis Hamilton is a classic example. I'd say he's that type of driver, a seat-of-the-pants fast one."

Aitken was certainly fast at Buckmore, as the other podium finishers will surely admit after losing sight of him within a matter of laps. "I didn't really come into this thinking too much about a result," he said afterwards, "because it's for a good cause [all the £22,000 raised went to the Henry Surtees Foundation's fund for the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance]. It was just going to be a fun day out. In the end the others made it quite easy for me. A few laps in I thought they were on my tail, but I looked behind and no one was there! I had the pace, my fastest lap proves that, but I think I was pretty lucky as well." Indeed – the scrapping behind him meant Aitken could relax, take the racing line and focus purely on setting good lap times.

Within five minutes of chatting to Aitken talk turns to the complexities of making it to F1 in today's financially driven world. "It's almost like planning a race," he said of his route up the racing ladder. "You can't really firm it up because you never know what's going to happen. I think the single-seater world is a bit of a mess at the moment. If you look at America they have a clear ladder, whereas here in Europe it's all a bit spread out, and no one's really governing it at the moment.

> "The idea of scholarships is how it works in the US. It really seems the way forward"

"John Surtees' idea of scholarships is how it works in America. It really seems the way forward. The only reason why that isn't happening here is because too many different organisations and people are trying to pull it in different directions. You do have people being picked up by F1 teams and programmes like the Racing Steps Foundation, but for drivers who don't have that support it's very difficult. I've got my parents to thank for making it this far, but there will come a stage when you have to say 'this is too expensive'." Aitken hopes he'll be picked up before that happens.

"It's too early to say whether he's the next Hamilton or not," says Sisley. "But what you can say is that he has potential. He has a good chance of making it because he's got the speed – if you don't have that you might as well go home – and he's intelligent, which some aren't. What he does lack is experience. I'd say he's a rough diamond in the sense that he has the attributes, he just needs to be finished off."

Some praise, considering just how many great racing drivers Sisley has watched come through karting. Such words won't be enough to get Aitken to his dream of F1, but combined with the spoils of the Henry Surtees Challenge, they certainly will help.

PRIZE LIST

REAPING REWARDS

Winners collected impressive and career-boosting prizes

- A simulator pre-test in the UK plus GP3 test with Carlin Motorsport: **Jack Aitken**
- Formula Renault Eurocup Test with Manor Competition: **Simon Rudd**
- National B Formula Renault BARC test with Hillspeed Racing: **Jacob Stilp**
- Shell Pilota Experience at Ferrari, Maranello, Italy, driving on the Fiorano test track, plus a visit to the F1 facility – donated by Shell: **Paul Janes**
- A visit to Red Bull Racing in Milton Keynes with simulator time and evaluation by an F1 race engineer – donated by Christian Horner of Red Bull Racing: **Jack Harding**
- Falcon Motorsport BMW test at Silverstone: **Luke Reade**
- An Arai GP6 S helmet prepared and painted to the driver's own design: **Andrew Johnson**
- A pair of VIP F1 tickets for the British Grand Prix including paddock entry – donated by Bernie Ecclestone: **Charlie Eastwood**
- A session on a simulator at iZone – donated by Andy Priaulx: **Scott Martin**
- A supply of Teng Tools worth £1000 – donated by IQ Supplies: **Darryl Evans**
- Motor sport custom-fit driver communication earpieces together with hearing healthcare package – donated by Hearing Electronics Limited, valued at £500: **David Pittard**
- Custom website designed and developed to subject's specific needs – donated by 5gcreative: **Ben Barnicoat**
- Fastest Lap: **Jack Aitken** 46.157sec ('H' trophy plus 2 tickets to *Autosport* Awards)
- Hard Luck Award: **Laura Tillett** ('H' Trophy plus guest column in *Motorsport News*
- Over 80kg Award: **Tom Ingram** ('H' Trophy plus two Mercedes-Benz World Experiences and lunch)



Gary Hawkins


TEAM
PENSKE
1988

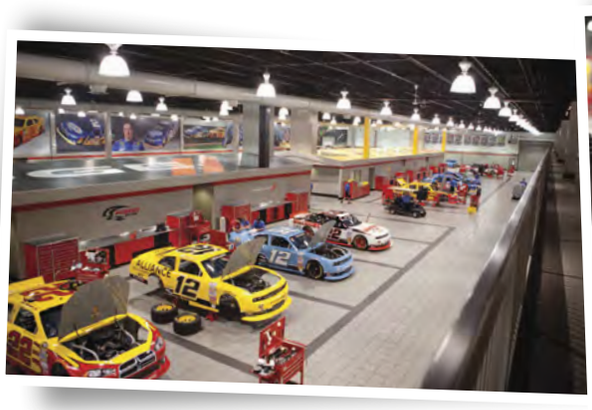


Jessica Milligan

Lunch with...
RICK MEARS

The great American racer not only won four Indianapolis 500s, but remains one of the most modest men in racing to this day

BY SIMON TAYLOR





These *Lunch With*.... pieces start out as long and often colourful one-to-one conversations, over a pleasant meal. But they end up in black and white, as printed words. So I can give you what the man says, but sometimes it's harder to communicate how he says it. When I ask Rick Mears to talk me through his career, he can hardly avoid his four Indianapolis 500 victories, an unbeaten tally equalled only by two others, AJ Foyt and Al Unser. Then there are his record six Indy 500 poles, and his 25 other major Indycar victories. But he describes it all with such laid-back modesty, such self-deprecating humour, that what on paper may sound arrogant or self-satisfied is in fact the very opposite. You have to remind yourself that you're sitting not with a studious schoolmaster, or a sympathetic family doctor, but with one of the greatest American racers of all time.

Something else that singles Rick out is that he never used his success as a lever to move on in search of ever greater demands and dollars. He spent 15 years, his entire racing career apart from a couple of apprentice seasons, with the same team. And today, 20 years after he retired, that team – Penske Racing – still retains him as a valued consultant and driver advisor. So it's at the Penske headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina that we meet, in a crisp, businesslike conference room. Rick tells me we can take our time: he has set aside all day to talk to me.

He was born in 1951, the younger of two brothers, in Wichita, Kansas, where his father was a mechanic at the local Chevy dealership. Bill Mears supplemented his income by racing jalopies up to six nights a week on local fairground ovals and dirt tracks: he'd turn up, find a car to drive, and split the winnings with the owner. In 1955 the family moved west to find a new life in California, ending up in hot and dusty Bakersfield where Bill found work as a backhoe driver. A backhoe is what we Brits would call an excavator, a piece of heavy earth-moving equipment with a scoop at the front and an articulated bucket at the back.

By 1960 Bill had saved enough to buy his own backhoe, and turned away from racing. Rick remembers: "One night he won the hundred-lap main event, won the trophy dash, set the fastest lap, and all that earned him was just $60 to split with the owner. He knew that if he broke an arm and couldn't operate the tractor, he couldn't put food on the table. He decided it wasn't worth the risk for 30 bucks."

But Bill and his wife Skip were also into motorcycles. At weekends the family would take off, Rick on the back of Skip's Ariel Square Four and elder brother Roger on the back of Bill's 500 Matchless, and Rick was still a

junior in high school when he started racing motocross bikes. "One night somebody went down in front of me, I came off, somebody else ran me over. So Mom told Dad she'd be happier if I had four wheels and a roll cage around me. We'd seen sprint buggies racing at Ascot Park, the half-mile dirt oval south of Los Angeles, and when we looked around the paddock I didn't realise that Dad was working out who was running quick, and exactly what they were running, because at heart he was still a racer. In the car going home Dad says, 'I'll make a deal with you. Give up racing motorcycles and we'll build a racing buggy.'"

One buggy became two, so Roger and Rick both raced the VW-engined machines. In his second year, still only 19, Rick won a local championship, and then some long-distance desert events, culminating in the Baja 500. But funds were tight, and if Rick or Roger didn't win any prize money one weekend they couldn't afford to run the next – which helped to hone Rick's silky-smooth style, because he always knew he had to make it to the finish. Meanwhile Bill taught Roger and Rick how to operate a backhoe, and the boys dug ditches all week to pay for their fun. "Desert racing is far more demanding than people realise. It taught me so much. You can't memorise a 100-mile lap, and you have to adapt to surfaces that vary from asphalt to sand to dirt to mud, even snow. After that Indy racing seemed so easy: nice smooth surface, no ruts or holes, and just four hours, when I'd been used to 10 or 12 without a break."

In 1972, when Rick was still only 20, he was invited to compete in an off-road race in Japan, styled the Japanese Grand Prix and run on a dirt course around the Oshima Island volcano. "I'd never been in an aeroplane before. Parnelli Jones, my boyhood hero, had retired from Indy racing but was still doing off-road. Well, I won that race. Parnelli was second. I consider it my first big win." Meanwhile, brother Roger took his VW-powered buggy to the famed Pike's Peak hillclimb and won it outright, nimbly beating all the big alcohol-fuelled V8 single-seaters. In 1976 Rick followed him, winning in a Porsche-powered buggy. "Pike's Peak was wonderful: rushing into those tight corners on the loose and all you could see ahead was blue sky and clouds. Almost all of it was dirt, but they've ruined it now, most of it's paved."

One day, passing the old Ontario Speedway, Rick and Roger paused to watch practice for an upcoming USAC race. They'd never seen Indycars before. "I didn't even dream of getting into one of those things: way, way out of my league. But a friend said, 'Why not take my old Formula Vee to the SCCA school at Riverside and get your licence?' When I get there this SCCA guy leans into the cockpit and says, 'Listen, son, this is a lot different from just bouncing across a few rocks in the desert.' But it seemed pretty straight-forward to me. The second day it rained. I'd never run hard on pavement in the rain, but I'm going around OK and they pull me in, tell me I'm going too fast. I thought that's what we were there for."

In 1976, after some good races in that old Vee, Rick was offered a ride in a SuperVee, duly won the local championship, and qualified for the Road Atlanta run-offs at the end of the season. But, thanks to racewear tycoon and racer Bill Simpson, he never got there.

"Simpson's one of those guys, either he likes you or he doesn't. It seems the Simpson's desert rep kept saying to him, 'You got to watch this kid Mears.' Finally the rep got me to a trade show to meet Simpson. Simpson turned round, looked at me, grunted, 'Don't tell me, another of those damn' off-road racers.' I thought, 'What a jerk.' Then I saw him at Willow Springs, I was testing the SuperVee, and he was going round in his Formula 5000 car. Next day he's on the phone. 'Hey, Mears, can you get off work next Wednesday? I want you to test my 5000.' I said, 'Yeah, I think I can get off work'.'

"I'd never driven anything with power; my tongue used to hang out looking at Formula Atlantics. But with the F5000 I just listened to what the car was telling me. I went quicker and quicker, and Simpson said, 'This boy's going to go off at Turn 9.' Sure enough, two laps later I went off at Turn 9. But what sold Simpson was I went off, got on the dirt, never lifted, got back on and kept going. I was at home on the dirt, it didn't really bother me." Simpson was no slouch – he managed 11 top-ten finishes in Indycar – but he was amazed when the young backhoe worker ended up 2.5sec a lap faster than him that day.

"So Simpson says, 'I want to sign you up on a contract. F5000 and/or Indycar. Ten years.' I'd never had a contract with anybody in my life, but it sounded pretty good, so I signed. Then in my first race for him the F5000 swapped ends on the first lap, and I crashed. I was mortified. Next day he calls: 'Quit beatin' yourself up, we found what happened.' Between qualifying and the race they'd moved the rear suspension pick-up points to try to improve the understeer. First time I stood on it the wishbones fouled the exhaust headers and the rear wheels came off the ground. After that I never cared about a crash, as long as I knew why it had happened."

Then Simpson put Rick down to drive his back-up Eagle in a major Indycar race, the California 500 at Ontario – where, barely two years earlier, Rick had first seen an Indycar. At first USAC President Dick King refused to let Mears run, citing his lack of experience. "So Simpson said he'd pay for any damage I did. USAC made him put up his house as collateral! I finished eighth. The big horsepower didn't worry me. You can never have too much power. To me that was the fun part, trying to keep things hooked up. Today, with all the driver aids and aerodynamic grip, I think we miss out. We'd be better off with less grip and more power, to put things back in the driver's hands."

Simpson sold the Eagle to Art Sugai, on condition Mears drove it, and Rick prepared for his first Indy 500. "I told my landlord, 'I'm going away for a month.' He said, 'Well, don't bother coming back, we're selling the apartment.' And I said to the guy I was working for, 'I have to take a month off, I'm doing Indy.' He said, 'That's great, but you won't have a job when you get back.' By then I had a wife and two kids. If something like that happened to me today I'd probably hang myself, but I was young, and I reckoned when the money ran out I could always find a backhoe somewhere. So I packed our world into a U-haul trailer behind our old Chevy, and set off for Indiana.

"But Sugai didn't really have the money to run the team properly. Parts were tired, things started breaking, engines failed, and I didn't qualify for the race. In fact it was a blessing, because I'd just have been another also-ran, or another retirement. Better to come back next year, qualify on the front row and get Rookie of the Year. [Which he did.] But I was really demoralised. I tried to qualify using a borrowed engine, and I was about one mile an hour away from making the show. I was sitting on the wall trying to figure out what to do, and Roger Penske walks by. He says, 'Hey, how you doing'? I say, 'It doesn't matter what I do, I'm a mile short, and we only got one more shot.' He says, 'Well, best thing would be, just don't hit the wall.' Then he walks on. That was my first conversation with Roger.

"With today's driver aids we miss out. We'd be better off with less grip"

"After that I had no money, no job, no house, no nothing. Rick Galles, who owned a dealership with Bobby Unser down in Phoenix, Arizona, said he'd give me a helping hand until I got myself set up, so I became a car salesman. As you can imagine I'm no salesman, so when people came into the showroom I just left them alone. That's the way I like to be sold to. And a good few cars did get sold. Then Simpson sold his McLaren to Teddy Yip, and got him to run me for the rest of the season.

"Driving for Teddy my strategy was always to finish. I thought, if I can't out-run 'em I have to out-live 'em. So I never hit the fence, I



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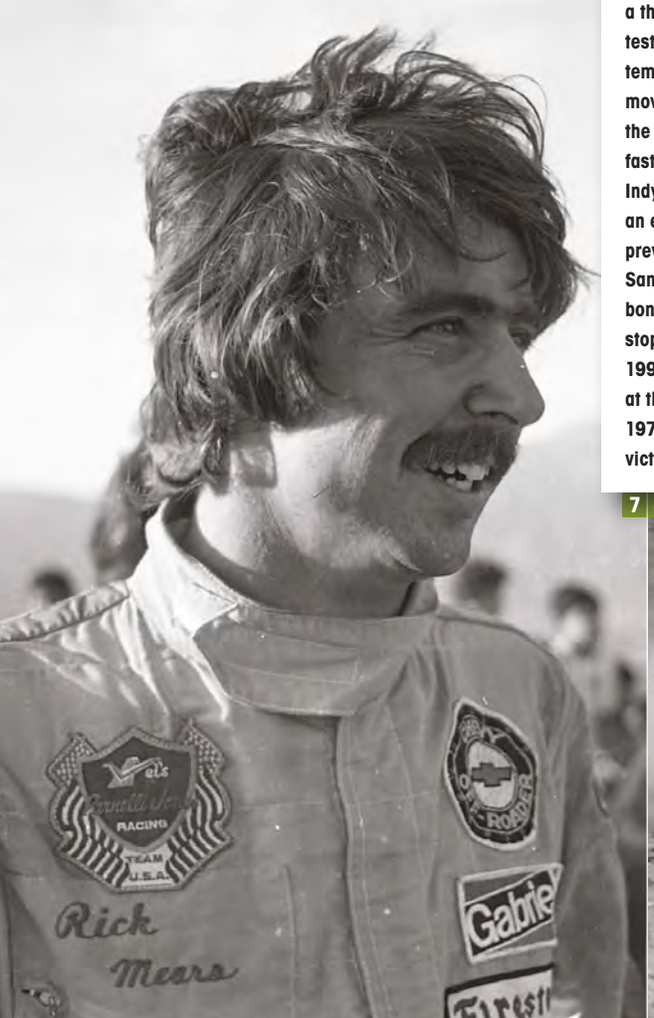






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[1] and [2] Indy '88: After falling to 10th due to handling problems, Rick recovered to win the race for a third time [3] Brabham test organised by Ecclestone tempted Mears to consider a move to F1 [4] He impressed the team by going 1sec a lap faster than Piquet [5] 1985 Indy 500: getting about on an electric buggy after the previous year's crash at Sanair [6] More broken bones in his foot couldn't stop a fourth Indy win in 1991 [7] Moustachioed Rick at the Baja Internacional in 1977 [8] On his way to victory in the 1973 Baja 500



7 8



LAT, Trackside Photo, John Rettie & Dan Boyd

either finished or broke. On the one-mile oval at Milwaukee AJ Foyt, who was pretty much the King then, came up to put a lap on me. I saw him in my mirrors and thought, 'OK, I'm not going to do anything stupid, I'm going to keep to my pattern, so he knows where I'll be'. So it takes Foyt a couple of laps to get by, then he goes on and wins the race. I've finished fifth, my best race to date, I'm all excited and happy, and my guys say, 'Man, what did you do to Foyt? He came by ranting and raving.' He said, 'You tell that Mears, if he ever tries that again ah'm gonna stick him in the fence'.

So now I've got the King mad at me, and I'm quaking in my boots. I see him at the next race, he's surrounded by fans signing autographs, and I hear, 'Hey, Mears!' I think, 'I'd better get this over with', so I walk up. He puts an arm around me and says, 'God, we had a helluva race out there in Milwaukee, didn't we!' That's when I realised his bark is worse than his bite. He hates it when I say this, but Foyt's just a big teddy bear.

"All this time Penske was watching me. Roger's always thinking 10 years further down the road. I guess he thought, 'Maybe we should give this kid a shot, he hasn't been sticking it in the wall every time out'." Penske needed a third driver for his USAC team alongside Mario Andretti and Tom Sneva, because of Andretti's F1 commitments. But first there was the little matter of that 10-year contract with Simpson. According to Simpson, "I told Penske, 'You put that boy in a good car, he'll win Indy for you.' Penske said, 'Those are pretty bold words. What about this 10-year contract'? I said, 'If you want him, I'll give you the contract for nothing. I just want to see Rick in a good car'. And Rick went on and kicked everybody's ass."

Penske summoned Rick to his farmhouse by the Michigan Speedway, one of the tracks he owned. "He asked me for breakfast. I was so keen I got there two hours early, and everybody was still in their pyjamas. Roger said, 'It's a part-time deal, because of Mario's F1 clashes. I'll guarantee you at least six races, including the three big 500-milers.' Well, I'm sitting there trying to act all professional, so I said, 'Sounds great. Can we get it on paper?' Roger said, 'What for?' 'Well, something I can take back and, um, get my people to look at.' I didn't have any people, of course, but I didn't want to sound like I just fell off a backhoe. So Roger produced a simple letter, three pages at most, took me through it so I knew what it meant, and I said, 'Great, let's go.' That's been pretty much the extent of our contract ever since, for 35 years."

> "He hates it when I say this, but AJ Foyt is just a big teddy bear"

It didn't take long for Penske's trust in the youngster to be vindicated. That first season he qualified on the front row at Indy – "doing a 200mph average in the PC6 was far less scary than doing 182 in the Sugai Eagle" – and was Rookie of the Year. Then he scored superb victories on the ovals at Milwaukee and Atlanta. And, to show he was equally at home on road circuits, he came on the USAC two-race trip to England, finished second to A J Foyt at Silverstone and then won at Brands Hatch, half a minute ahead of team leader Sneva after 100 dizzy laps of the short circuit.

The 1979 season was Rick's first as a full-time Penske driver, alongside Bobby Unser, who replaced Sneva as team leader. "Bobby wasn't so much of a team player over setup and stuff, he kept his cards close to his chest. He said, 'I wasn't put on this earth to make Mears go fast.'" But it was Mears who won a sensational victory in the Indy 500 from pole, and then won at Trenton and Atlanta. And it was Mears who was crowned that year as CART Champion. As the poles and victories piled up, he took the championship twice more in the next three years. Key to this success was the relationship he built with Penske, closer than any other of Penske's drivers save Mark Donohue, who had been killed in 1975.

"Roger never put pressure on me. He knew no-one could put more pressure on me than I did myself. Because of his reputation people used to say to me, 'He must be tough to work for'. But all he ever asked was you put your best foot forward. Money was never an issue between us. When it was time to renew my contract Roger'd say, 'This is what I was thinking.' I'd say, 'Well, I was kind of thinking that.' And Roger'd say, 'OK'. At the time bonuses were coming in for some drivers, so much for a top three finish, for winning Indy, for winning the championship. But I didn't need a bonus to make me drive faster. I told Roger, 'If a bonus makes me do anything I'm not doing already, I should be fired.'"

Word of Rick's smooth speed carried far beyond the American racing world, and one day Bernie Ecclestone called. "He wanted to test me in an F1 Brabham. Roger said, 'Hey, I'm not going to stop you.' So with his blessing I went to Paul Ricard, and I did a test alongside Nelson Piquet, who was the Brabham No 1 then" – and would be world champion for Brabham twice in the next three years. "To me, a race car is a race car. To get the best out of any car, you have to listen to what it says to you. I don't think there are any supermen on this earth. Everybody, even an F1 driver, puts his trousers on one leg at a time. A good driver can be good in anything, even if it may take him a couple of laps to understand what an unfamiliar car is telling him."

Different car, different culture, but Rick was straight on the pace. At Ricard he ended up within 0.5sec of Piquet's best time. Bernie took note and a few weeks later, when the F1 teams were in the USA for the Long Beach GP, there was a further test at Riverside. This time Rick outpaced Piquet by a full second. Herbie Blash, now a senior FIA race director but then at Brabham, believes Rick was a world champion in the making. Gordon Murray, then Brabham's designer and technical director, remembers his smoothness, and his intelligence.

So Bernie made a firm offer, and Rick went home to think about it. "That Brabham [the normally-aspirated Cosworth-powered BT49] didn't have the brute horsepower of the Indycars, but its cornering speeds, braking and grip were much greater. I loved it. And Bernie's deal was good. But I wasn't sure about some of the egos in F1. Or the extra travelling, and maybe living in Europe. I'd proved to myself I could drive an F1 car as quick as one of the top guys. I didn't need to prove it to anyone else. And I felt so comfortable with Penske. So I took my decision: I told Roger I was staying."

Rick was leading Indy in 1981 when he came in for his second refuelling stop. "What followed was the scariest moment of my life. When you crash there's no time to get scared: you're busy, trying to lessen the consequences until you hit. But that day I was on fire for 32 seconds, which is a long time when you can't breathe.

"I'm in the cockpit, hands on the wheel ready to go, when fuel sloshes over me. Then it all goes up. I'm struggling to release my belt, and I can feel the fire going up inside my helmet and down my throat, so I stop breathing. I jump out of the car, I'm trying to keep my eyes shut, I feel somebody's hands on my neck, but then they go away because I've set that guy on fire too. You won't believe this, but in 1981 fire marshals in the Indy pitlane didn't have to wear fire suits. And methanol burns with an invisible flame, you can't see it until the paint on the car starts burning and smoking. My dad was in the pit, he knew I was on fire because I don't move that fast for anything. He grabbed a fire extinguisher and put me out.

"After I got my helmet off I put my hand up to my face, and my nose came off in my glove. Four of us went to hospital, because three of the crew were quite badly burned too. I was having my nose rebuilt and getting my eyelids to heal, so I missed the next race, and the gossips were saying I would retire. I thought, 'I'm just getting started here'. The next race was on the big oval at Atlanta, four weeks after



Mears and Penske first met 35 years ago and have been working together ever since

the fire and I was still all bandaged up, and we won that. I said, 'How's that for retirement?' I won four more rounds that year, and took the Championship again.

"I loved the high-speed ovals, they seemed to suit my style. On a speedway, smooth is the fastest way. The closer you can get to the limit on every lap and stay smooth, the higher your average will be. On road courses you have to get more animated, more physical. Being quick on the ovals is about experience, it doesn't matter who you are. Finding the last one or two per cent takes seat time. When Fittipaldi came from F1 he got out of the car after his first try and said, 'I've got a lot to learn.' That's when I knew he'd do well.

"I always liked the hands-on stuff, making changes to the car to make it run better. Today you pretty much do it all on screen, but back then we didn't have computers, so the driver's job was to be better than the next guy at making the car work. I've never liked driver aids. Your right foot should be your traction control, and your ABS. The more you take away from the driver, the fewer tools he has to beat the rest. It's like a bumpy track. Take a bump away, you're making it easier for everybody else. Leave the bump there, deal with it better than the other guy, there's another advantage. Same in the race: you work out what changes you'll need at the next stop, knowing a turn and a quarter on the front wing may solve a problem, but a turn and a half will be too much."

In 1984 Rick had the worst accident of his career, on the Sanair tri-oval in Canada. Trying to get a clear lap in practice, he found himself squeezed between Bobby Rahal and Corrado Fabi, who was just leaving the pits. "I was keying myself off Bobby's back wheel and I thought I'd be clear, but Fabi stood on it and the gap closed". Rick's car clipped Fabi's, and he hit the wall. Typically, he blames himself. "In a race I might put myself in that situation and hope it worked out, but in practice it was just dumb." In a huge impact the front of his March went below the bottom of the guardrail, tearing off the pedal box and the front bulkhead. Then, with his feet protruding, it rebounded, and smashed into the rail again.



"After that I only remember bits and pieces. On the stretcher I was aware of Roger and my wife, and Roger shouting, 'What's my name? What's my name?' Then my feet, my feet killing me. I was screaming with the pain. They couldn't give me pain killers yet because they didn't know what other damage there was, they didn't want to rattle my cage. Where my right foot should have been I saw a football, with five tennis balls attached to it. You have 28 bones in each of your feet. In my right foot every one was broken, or smashed. In my left about half of them were broken. My Achilles tendons were severed, too. The doctors said, 'There's nothing we can do with these feet, we're going to have to amputate both'. Lucky for me Roger was there, and Steve Olvey, the CART medical director, and

they said, 'We're not having that. We'll take him somewhere else.' Then I remember helicopter blades, like a scene from *M*A*S*H*, Penske's private jet, ambulances, just bits and pieces.

"A few years earlier I'd have lost my feet, but Dr Terry Trammell at the Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis was at the cutting edge. He had the technology to deal with my smashed bones, using lots of pins and screws and wires. I was in hospital for over three months, I had a lot of operations, and then we had more issues with the heel. All the tissue was gone, you could see the screws holding the tendon. You can't grow grass where there ain't no dirt. Harry Buncke, a pioneering micro-surgeon in San Francisco, worked on that using new techniques for tying blood vessels together.



"During all this I'd have one bad day, then two good days. But when I looked down and saw my feet were still there I said to myself, 'Mears, you're going to drive again'. My worry was, how long would it take me to get back to where I should be? Roger helped by stopping by to say, 'How d'you feel about adding two more years to the contract?' He told me not to rush things. After five months I was at Phoenix for a test. I couldn't walk yet, so they lifted me out of my wheelchair, carried me to the car, and pushed me down into the cockpit. Simpson had made me a special pair of padded driving shoes.

I did a couple of installation laps, they checked the car, then I went out and leaned on it. Did 15 laps, came back in, all the guys clustered round, 'How is it? How is it?' I said, 'It's a little loose comin' off of Turn Four'. They just fell about laughing. What they meant was, 'How were my feet?' But for the first time in five months I wasn't thinking about my feet, I was thinking about the car."

The following May Rick did the Indy 500, getting around the pits and paddock on a little electric buggy. He qualified 10th, and was running with the leaders when the gear linkage broke. Second time out, at Milwaukee, he finished third. He took pole for the Michigan 500, only for his transmission to fail. Then at Pocono, 11 months after the crash, he took pole – and won. "People had been saying I'd never be able to do it again, to the same level. That was a big monkey off my back."

There were more wins, at Pocono again; at Indy for a third time; at Milwaukee, Phoenix and Laguna Seca. But the stand-out was his fourth Indy 500 win, in 1991. On the Friday before Pole Day, Rick's rear suspension failed and his Penske PC20 destroyed itself against the wall. A return trip to the Methodist Hospital revealed that two bones were broken in his right foot. "Only Roger knew, I didn't tell anybody else. My foot was hurting a lot when I moved it in the cockpit, either pushing down or lifting off, but I didn't want anyone to have a reason to stop me running. The boys got the back-up car ready, and changed the throttle springs and linkage to make the pedal as light as possible."

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And Rick took pole, his sixth at Indy, at a record 224.113mph. But mid-race he was slowed by bad understeer – and he was dealing with searing pain in his right foot. "I found that if I put my left foot on top of my right and pushed like that, it seemed to relieve the pain a little. And during the pitstops the crew tweaked the settings, so the handling came back." Rick recovered to fight for the lead with Michael Andretti, and with 12 laps to go he executed a brilliant pass around the outside of Turn 1. "Not just because of the foot, but also dealing with the handling problems, that was my most satisfying Indianapolis win of all."

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As mentor and advisor, Rick continued to play a major role. He's still doing so, 35 years on. Has there ever been a longer relationship between driver and team? "I go to all the Indycar races, and to a lot of the testing. Roger'll ask me what I think of a driver, or he may talk to me before he signs someone. When a new signing is learning to communicate with his engineer, I can act as a sort of interpreter. It helps speed up the process. If it's a younger kid, I'll help him learn to work with the team."

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PLAYING TO THE MASSES

Ginetta used to be described as 'niche'. Not any longer. Thanks to owner Lawrence Tomlinson, the British sports car company is growing up fast

BY ED FOSTER

Ginetta chairman Lawrence Tomlinson leans forward and puts his mug of tea down. "The thing is," he says, "we're absolutely passionate about GT racing."

It's a phrase you'd expect to read in a brochure, but anyone who knows Tomlinson will know that it's a statement of fact. The businessman bought Ginetta in 2005 and has since transformed the company, with the help of ex-MD Richard Dean, into one of the most successful British car manufacturers of today.

The past seven years could have been very different for the marque that has spent 50 years riding the waves and deep troughs of car production. Tomlinson, whose businesses include Ideal Care Homes, LNT Construction and Software and Solutions, was actually interested in buying TVR in 2004. However, a young Russian called Nikolai Smolensky outbid him and the rest, as they say, is history.

While TVR has foundered, Ginetta is aiming to build 300 cars next year – 150 racers and 150 road cars. It's an ambitious company nowadays and with such numbers is clearly growing out of its 'cottage industry' roots.

Currently Ginetta is selling two road cars – the £68,000 G60, formerly the Farbio GTS, and the £29,950 G40 R, featuring a full FIA roll cage, which can be driven to the track, raced and then driven home. As for the racing cars, youngsters can step into a restricted G40 at the age of just 14 and compete in the Junior series. For adults, there's the GT5 Challenge – which features unrestricted G40s – and then the G50 and G55 racers, which run in a two-class championship called the Supercup. All of this runs on the TOCA BTCC package. It doesn't stop there as the G50 can be homologated for GT4 racing and the G55 for GT3.

"We're pretty much there on the 150 race cars a year," Tomlinson says in between sips of tea. We're at Blyton Park and outside the Ginetta truck we're sitting in are numerous potential sponsors who are here to sample Ginetta's line up of cars. Despite this, Tomlinson is seemingly in no




GinettaCars.com
Not For Hire or Reward
MICHELIN
Lawrence Tomlinson

rush. "We've sold quite a lot of G40 Rs as well. Customers have just bought them off the internet – the first 10 went like that. The first one went to Chelsea and the next one to Kensington… but they're really nice, enthusiastic, multi-car customers.

"You know, I've got a lot of concern about track days and what people use on them. I'm not going to name any specific brands, but you get the guy who will buy a modern supercar and do a track day at Goodwood – you're asking for a shitload of trouble when he leaves the track. All our cars are designed with crashing in mind and there's a huge amount of safety built in so you have the same protection as a GT3 or a GT4 car with the G40 R."

There's no doubting the G40 R's credentials. "We took a long-term test car off to Cadwell Park [in July 2012] and won the 750 Motor Club race with it outright," says Tomlinson. "It was on road tyres, we drove it there and back, and it's still on the same set now." But the track-focused road car market is not an easy one in which to play. Lotus, Caterham and KTM all offer similar products and part of the G40 R's success will rest upon how fast it is against those cars. With a 200bhp, 2-litre four-pot in a 795kg car, it's not slow.

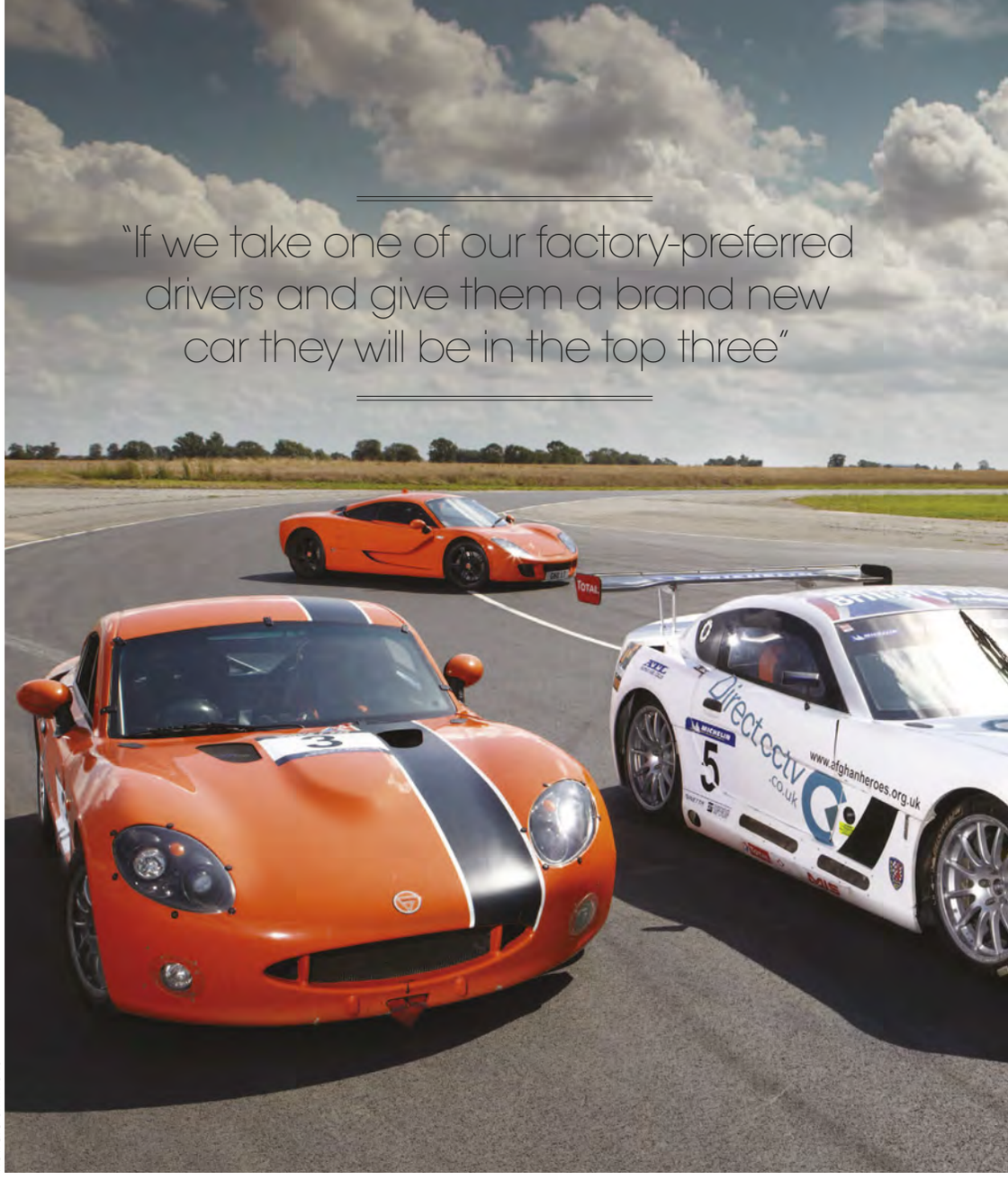
The G60 – a carbon fibre, 3.7-litre V6, 310bhp supercar – hasn't had such an easy birth, as after buying the Farbio GTS project in 2010 Ginetta soon realised that much of the car would have to be redesigned. Tomlinson sighs when he's asked about it. "People ask whether I would have been better off just starting my own car and the answer is yes. But we wouldn't have done it, so it's been something that's forced us to do that type of project." Despite the delay in production due to the new chassis, rear sub-frame, engine, gearbox, diff, clutch, drive shafts… deep breath… uprights, brakes, power steering, front geometry and body panels, there is considerable interest in the car. "We can't make enough of them. It's taken us a period of time to get into a rhythm of building race cars. We're now very good at it. I'm not being boastful – but the team's good and it's a natural procedure. It's not a natural procedure for us to build road cars at the moment. We're extremely close with the G40 R, but with the G60 we've still got work to do."

Motor Sport first met up with 'the new face of Ginetta' back in 2009, when MD Richard Dean – who has since gone on to found GT team United Autosports with F1 sponsorship guru Zak Brown – was one of the big players. The philosophy then was about providing the most affordable cars and keeping the cost of spares down. Things haven't changed, and Tomlinson is still adamant that by further reducing the cost of competing the old "lad and dad" teams will come back into the sport.

"It's not just about buying a car," says Tomlinson, "it's about the cost of running it." Next year the Ginetta Junior Championship will return to road rubber, which it used back in 2010, in a bid to cut tyre costs down to a maximum of £2640 for the season. In motor sport terms, it's good value for money. That price will cover a new set of tyres for each of the 10 rounds in the 2013 season and does away with the need for wets.

The prices for 2013 – which include leasing a car, entries, Friday testing, tyres, fuel, technical support and hospitality – range from £21,600 for the GT5 Challenge to £59,940 for a G55 in the Supercup. What these don't include is any accident damage, spares or team fees.

One major cost-cutter is the presence of Ginetta's mobile rolling road at every round of its series. "Whoever finishes first, second and third has their car put on the rolling road and it's dyno tested. We can see what the



Howard Simmons

The G60 hasn't been an easy car to get to market. "We've still got work to do," says owner Lawrence Tomlinson







output is. There's really no point in cheating or bending the rules.

"If we take one of our factory-preferred drivers and give them a brand new car off the factory line, with a factory set up, they will be in the top three in our series. It's about the driver. The teams can make some difference, but their input is based around our standard set up because when we designed the G40, G50 and G55 we had the likes of myself, Richard Dean, Danny Watts and Rob Bell developing the cars." Not all past Ginetta racers will share the same opinion. Indeed one that *Motor Sport* talked to was adamant that without spending enough to run with a top team, you don't stand a chance of making the podium.

When asked about how difficult it is to strike a balance between the professionals and amateurs in the one-make series Tomlinson is keen to point out that with the G50s and faster G55s running together there will always be a battle to be had. "There are races throughout the field. Andrew Long, my development director in the LNT Group, is 50 and he's been racing a G40. He's usually near the back, but he enjoys his racing and he usually ends up in a battle with the same five people. They go and have a few pints over the weekend, a barbecue and they love it."

Ginetta's one-make series are not all about pints and barbecues, however. The varying series are increasingly being used as a way into the higher echelons of the sport. Alice Powell, who raced for GP3 team Status Grand Prix last season, started her racing career in the Ginetta Juniors in 2008, while Damon Hill's son Josh won the 2008 Ginetta Junior Winter Series. Both are on their way up the single-seater ladder. What's more, Ginetta introduced a fully-funded drive in the BTCC as a prize for the 2010 Ginetta Supercup Champion: Frank Wrathall has since become a race winner in the tin-top series. He started racing cars in the 2007 Ginetta G20 Championship (the old version of the Juniors) and then did three years in the G50 Cup.

The GT3 programme, which was in its infancy when *Motor Sport* last talked to Tomlinson, has started to stamp its mark on various championships. It hasn't been without its problems, though, as the old V6 motor in the G55 struggled to provide enough power reliably. Ginetta now has its own engine shop and the company has designed its own V8, which has replaced the V6.

There have been multiple wins for the GT3 G55 in the Britcar MSA Endurance Championship and it has also shown well in British GT, while its GT4 stable-mate claimed the class title thanks to Jody Fannin and experienced pro Warren Hughes. The cars are definitely quick – not to mention a lot cheaper than many of their rivals – and once certain reliability issues are sorted, they will be a force to be reckoned with.

So what next? Ginetta is clearly capable of competing on the world scene, but is that enough to tempt it into GTE and Le Mans? "We're looking at the whole GT racing world at the moment as it's in a state of flux," says Tomlinson, who spoke to us before the ACO's announcement of its long-term plan to work on a universal class for the category.

"We want to go to Le Mans, we want to work with the ACO and we want to run in that environment. It would be wonderful if GT3 was GT racing because at the moment it's very difficult for crowds to discern the differences between GT2, GT3 and all the other variations.

"I would have loved to have continued doing LMP1 [which Ginetta did when it was the majority shareholder in Zytek from 2008-2011], but why would I want to get my arse kicked by Audi and Toyota? All you need is a sniff of a win, though. There's always LMP2, but then you can only ever win the class. We've got our own LMP2 engine now – with the GT3 V8 – so we looked at buying a chassis and we looked at developing our own. But you've only got to look at what's happened to Lola.

"Lola was already there, it had a kit, but they couldn't make it work. You've got to have your proposition to the client exactly right. We tailor everything around what we believe our customer base is. When you look at how many people are going to spend £1.2-1.5 million on a season of LMP2 they're pretty thin on the ground. The market at £30-50,000 for a GT car means you can sell to hundreds of thousands of people. We're only looking to sell 300.

"Also, in LMP2, who's going to sponsor you? You're not at the front and if you listen to the commentary it's Audi, Toyota and then 'oh yes, somebody's won the LMP2 class'. You're not promoting a car in P2 whereas in GT2 or GT3 you are. You're developing the product and the people who buy your road cars see it as a great shop window.

"Going back to Lola, it was a brilliant business, it did brilliant things and it's a shame what's happened to it. Ultimately, though, Martin Birrane wasn't going to just continue putting money into a company that was eating it up. The Lola chassis was a good car in LMP2, and it ran well with Aston Martin in P1, but they were never going to beat the Audis. The market gets eroded and you can't spread your costs over eight or 10 cars – it's just impossible to make money like that. Our model is so different to Lola."

Ginetta's model is different, and that's why it is where it is today. With a target of 300 cars a year it will be able to spread its costs enough to make things financially viable, but won't be producing so many cars that it isn't realistically possible. A GT car that can compete on the international scene will mean that Ginetta provides a car for every level of competitor, from the 14-year-old amateur to the hardened Le Mans professional. A great British success story? You bet.

With great power comes great responsibility

Martin Donnelly is one of a pool of former racers who have been called on to become F1 driver stewards. After the Korean GP he offered some insight into the pressures of calling the shots

BY SAM SMITH



LAT

Since the start of 2010 an ex-Formula 1 driver has joined the permanent race stewards to help call the shots, and in Korea it was Martin Donnelly's turn. It's the third such appointment for the former Arrows and Lotus driver whose own promising F1 career was so cruelly and violently cut short at Jerez in 1990. He also officiated at the corresponding race in 2011 and at Montréal this year.

"The Korean GP is much more relaxed than other races as there is less corporate and sponsor activity, so the drivers kick back a bit," says Donnelly. "Last year, Michael [Schumacher] even had a card school going which seemed to be good fun. He doesn't like losing at that either, though!

"On the Thursday this year, all the drivers got together and had a meal. Daniel Ricciardo tweeted a photo from the meeting, which



Sutton

Charlie [Whiting, FIA race director] helped organise. It was very interesting seeing them together and how they relaxed. That hardly ever happens and consequently you are very privileged to see it take place."

When the action starts, Donnelly is as professional as he was in the cockpit and prepares well for the job in hand. Gloves and helmet have been replaced with notepad and Dictaphone. Whiting gives each steward a detailed report before each race, which is essentially a re-cap of the penalties that have been handed out during the season, and offers a reminder that a variety of offences need to be looked out for once the track 'goes green'.

"You have to go into the weekend with a clear head in terms of what happened at the previous race," says Donnelly. "It's all about consistency and fairness. That is what we are aiming for throughout the race weekend.

"I attend the drivers' briefing. I can add points if I feel it necessary, but actually at Yeongam I saved it for the team managers' meeting instead because last year at Korea there was an incident where Rosberg hit Alguersuari leaving the pitlane, which certainly doesn't have the best exit I have ever seen because it is almost completely blind for the drivers."

The stewards' office is separate from race control but Donnelly is available to Whiting should his expertise be needed for an incident. Sitting alongside Martin is Paul Gutjahr, the chief steward from Switzerland, and Dr Enzo Spano, another permanent steward from Venezuela. There is also a communications expert, ensuring the stewards get immediate access to replays and pits-to-car conversations.

"We have the same feed that everyone sees on TV, but we also have all the communication channels that the drivers have. So all conversations are available, as is data, graphs and all the other information that can assist in understanding an incident. The conversations on the radios can get quite tasty and often the language needs to be edited, so it gets checked before it is released."

One man whose fruity language sometimes had to be edited out this season is Schumacher. Martin raced against the seven-time World Champion only in Group C in 1990, never in F1, but the Ulsterman saw plenty of the re-retiring German during the Korean weekend as he was reprimanded in practice for blocking and was also, albeit at the whim of his team, released into the path of Lewis Hamilton while leaving his 'box'.

When there is an incident, Whiting asks the stewards to investigate. They only look at it if asked directly. Martin and the stewards watch multiple replays and also view on-board cameras. Everything is taken into account. It may look black and white, but it's like piecing together every shred of evidence to solve a crime and it can take quite some time to resolve.

"It's so different from when I was in F1," says Donnelly. "You can't get away with anything now. There are cameras and telemetry everywhere and there really is no hiding place. I have some sympathy for the drivers as they have so much going on in the cockpit and I think one of the reasons for more incidents in the past few years is because there is so much the drivers have to take in. Then again, we had to change gear manually so maybe it's horses for courses in terms of what goes on in the cockpit from one generation to another."

The start of the race is always tense and drivers must strive to be at their most serene as their adrenaline rises, so that when the last red light goes out everything is in control and ready to go. In Korea, Donnelly listened in as drivers received help to get to this level from their teams via the radio, with instructions given on tyre temperature and ensuring the brakes were bedded in properly. In the stewards' room, the heart rates were also rising. "The start gets the old adrenaline pumping, that's for sure," says Martin. "You can't compare it to actually starting a Grand Prix as a driver, but I always say that if you don't get a tingle at the start of a race you shouldn't be involved in it, in whatever capacity."

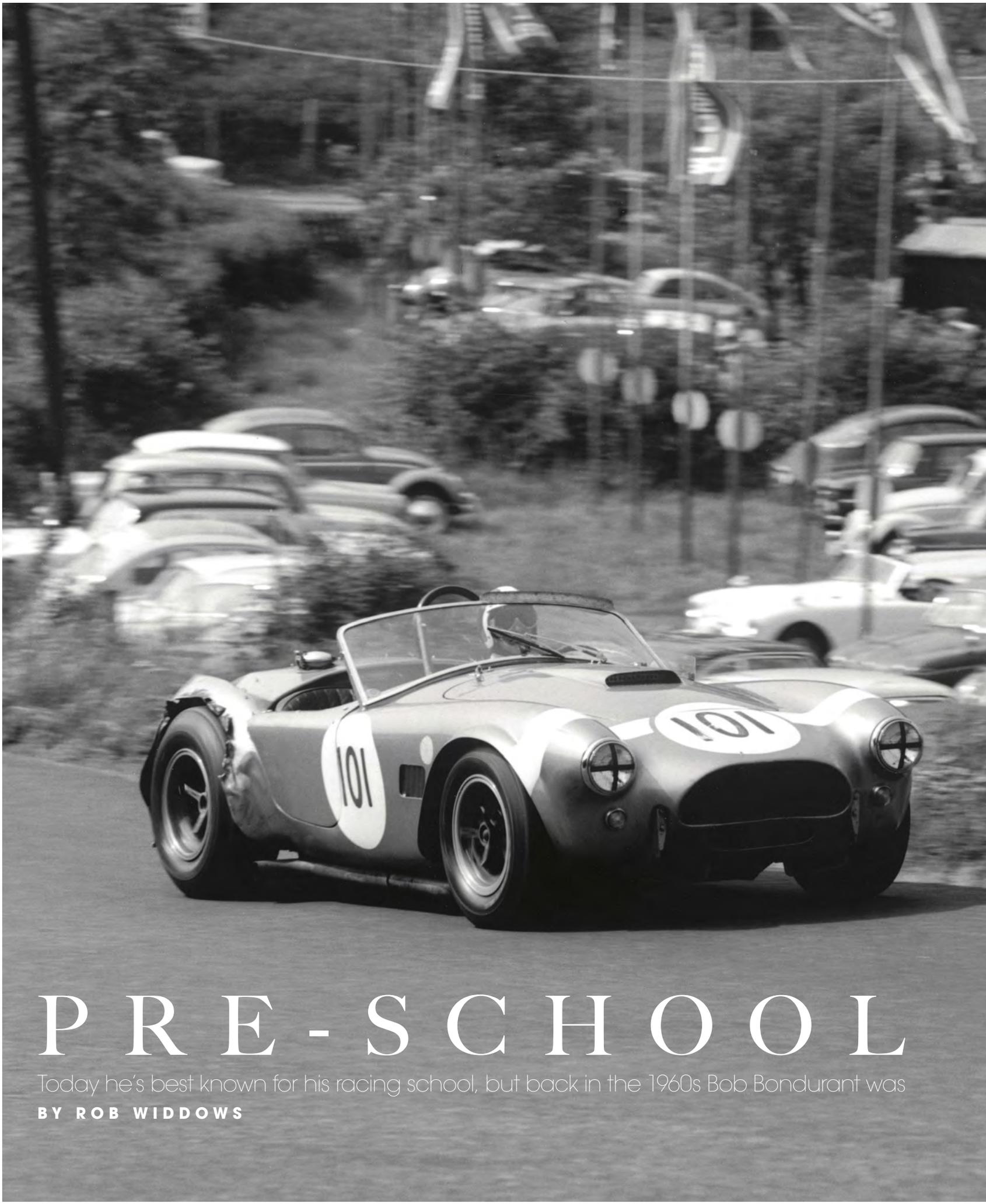
As it turned out, it was a relatively quiet race in the stewards office. A first-lap incident triggered by Kamui Kobayashi accounted for Jenson Button's McLaren and Rosberg's Mercedes. Donnelly was required to view the replays immediately. The Japanese firebrand was handed a stop/go penalty, which considering that it ended two protagonists' races could be considered somewhat lenient. Donnelly's old Arrows engineer Ross Brawn surely concurred.

Donnelly and the stewards also had to deal with the potential hazard of some loose AstroTurf on the circuit. "When Lewis got hooked up with it in the late stages the safety car was on standby," he says. "It was considered and there would have been a hell of a finish to the flag, but in the end Charlie advised McLaren to make Lewis aware he had that extra cargo on board via a radio message."

That decision was a relief to Donnelly. A mad four-lap sprint to the flag would have meant a high chance of at least one incident, and the prospect of much time spent spooling through more onboard camera footage.

Donnelly is bound by FIA agreements not to discuss penalties dished out, but the Ulsterman is forthright when it comes to first-lap incidents. "What I can't get my head around is the chances some of the drivers take on the first lap of a race, especially at a place like Korea where overtaking is relatively easy. When I had my own team there were several key rules, one of which was 'to finish first, first you have to finish'. There aren't really any excuses for going out of a race on the first lap."

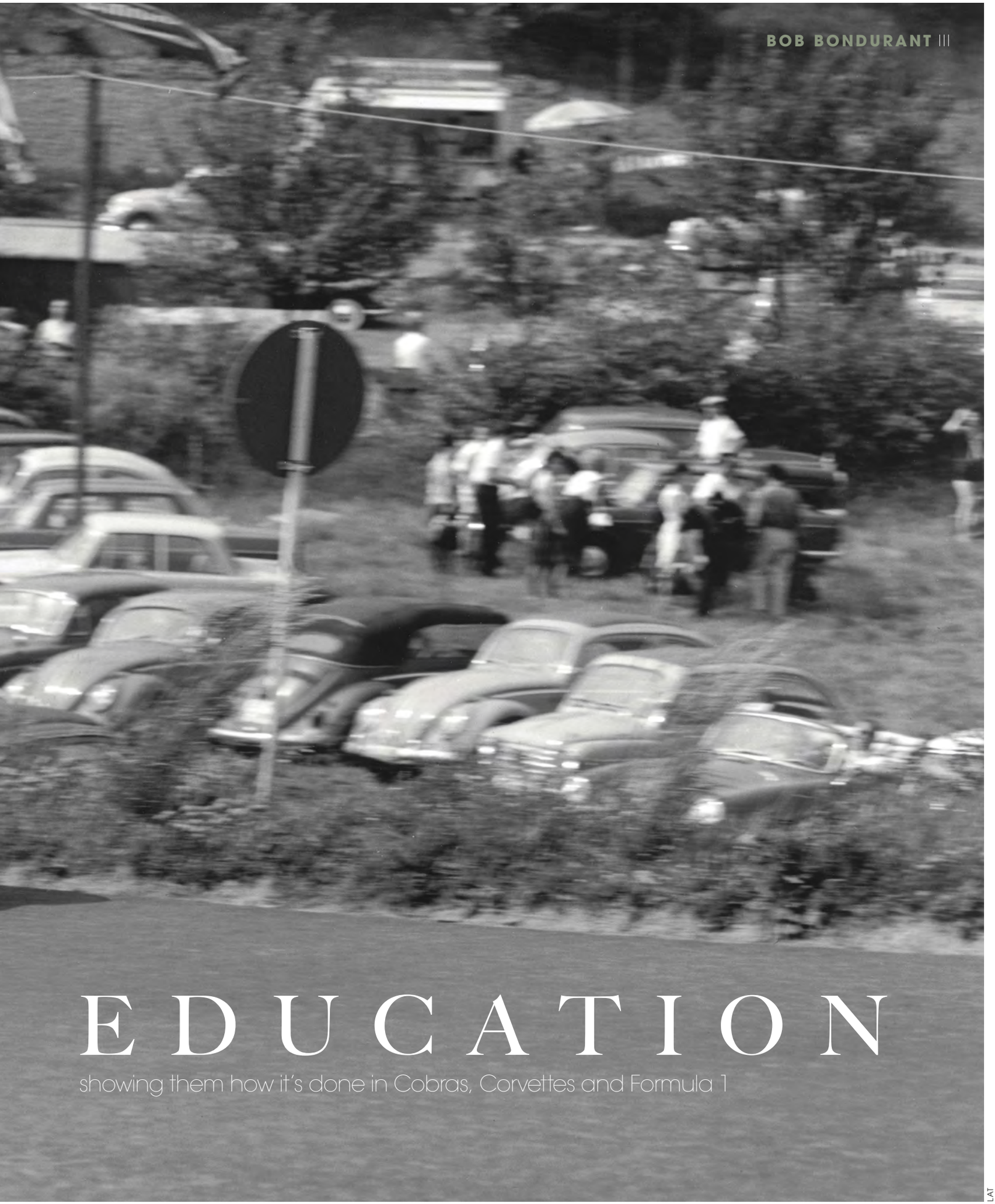
What if he were a driver now? How would he respond to the FIA driver steward and his judgements? "You have to be respectful but maybe that comes more with age, who knows? I think the 28-year-old Martin Donnelly might have had a few run-ins with the 48-year-old version. But the key word is respect and I feel that most of the drivers have it, especially for those like me who've been there in the cockpit and know exactly where they are coming from."



PRE-SCHOOL

Today he's best known for his racing school, but back in the 1960s Bob Bondurant was

BY ROB WIDDOWS



EDUCATION

showing them how it's done in Cobras, Corvettes and Formula 1

LAT



Mexican GP in a Parnell Lotus (22) ended in suspension failure



Sharing unusual GT40 Roadster with Sir John Whitmore at '65 Targa Florio



This man is not a superstar. He is not a household name in Europe. But you are about to get a glimpse of why he is part of American motor racing folklore. Say Cobra, say Corvette, and you say Bob Bondurant. But there is much more to this man who was a key figure in the development of one of the great American sports cars.

As a teenager in Illinois he raced bikes on dirt ovals. "You learn a thing or two doing that, I tell ya." But more from the man himself later. Switching to cars, and moving to the sunshine of California, he hooked up with Chevy dealer Shelly Washburn, winning 30 out of 32 races in Washburn's Corvette between 1961 and '63. Then Carroll Shelby called: he had a Cobra on offer, and in 1965 they won the FIA GT Championship, trouncing those "pesky Ferrari GTOs". Then came Formula 1, Can-Am – and a life-changing accident. That's the nutshell.

Bob doesn't hear too well these days, probably a result of all those exhaust pipes coming back past his seat on their way from big engines. But his memory is sharp, and when it's not, new wife Pat soon gets him back on track.

It was Carroll Shelby's mighty Cobra that made his name in America, he and Ken Miles doing the bulk of the early testing and development. Their task was to take the Cobras to the Corvettes, and beat them, and Shelby reckoned he'd found the car for the job.

"People said it would never happen, the Corvette was unbeatable, but Shelby had really hit on something. It was lighter for a start, and the brakes were a lot better. The Corvette wasn't great on the brakes; it weaved left and right, so you closed it down at the end of the straight." The yankee drawl is now in full flow, Bondurant recalling his early days with a grin.

"Yeah, I was racing Corvettes, then the Cobra came along and blew us all off, and the writing was on the wall. Shelby had told me he had a Corvette-beater and when I first drove it I realised it handled better than a Corvette. But it was a different driving style – you were in a four-wheel drift a lot of the time. It was exciting to drive, and when we got into the Daytona Coupé we beat the Ferrari GTOs. We'd tried to make the roadster more aerodynamic by tilting the windshield back!" He laughs at the memory. "But that didn't work, and the Coupé was kinda the obvious next step. The first one was built in California but the rest were made in Italy and the Italian fans weren't too happy when we beat the Ferraris.

"I remember Dan Gurney and I were seeing 197mph on the Mulsanne at Le Mans in that Daytona Coupé, and when in 1964 Ferrari took the first three places with their prototypes we led home the rest and won the GT class. That was a great feeling. Nobody told me you had to slow down over the finish line at Le Mans so when I came over the line there were all these people coming onto the track – that was a bit scary.



In 1966 Bondurant raced a private BRM P261 (pictured right, at Monza) and Dan Gurney's Eagle T1G. Here, at Watkins Glen, he was disqualified for receiving a push start







On the F1 grid with Hulme and Rindt in 1966 (above) and sharing a Ferrari 330 at Sebring with Mike Parkes

LAT, Pete Lyons & Sutton

"In '65 Alan Mann ran the cars and when he met me at the airport for the first race he said to me: 'You may want to go straight back to California – I have two English drivers, so you're always going to be coming third.' I thought: 'Hey, *screeeeeew* you' and sure as hell I went out at Monza and I was faster than both John Whitmore and Jack Sears. In the race I was ahead and they kept hanging out the boards telling me to slow down, slow down. So I slowed down past the pits and then caught back up again. I won the race, beat them both, and afterwards Jack said to me: 'Hey, why didn't you wait for us?' I was taken aback. 'Wait for you?' I said. 'I don't know how you guys race in Europe, but in America we race to win'. And I beat them a few times after that."

Bondurant's speed in the Cobra had come to the attention of Enzo Ferrari, who had not been at all pleased by the pace of the American interlopers. So after the American had won another race, this time at Reims, he summoned Bondurant to a meeting in Modena.

"Wow, the God of racing wanted to see me," chuckles Bob. "So I went to see him, and there he was behind this enormous desk with a kinda floodlight shining down on him, and John Surtees was there to translate for me. Ferrari asked me if I'd like to live in Italy and I said, '*Si*, if I'm driving *Formula Uno*,' and he said, 'Ah, no, first you drive *Prototipo*,' and then he took me into the Formula 1 workshop and showed me his cars, all lined up. I said, 'When will you let me know about driving for you? In a week, two weeks?' and he looked at me very sternly and said, 'I decide when I decide,' so I guessed it was time to shut my mouth."

> "Enzo said, 'I decide when I decide,' so I guessed it was time to shut my mouth"

A week later Bondurant went to Monza for Formula 3, having found himself a late entry in a Lotus 35 run by John Willment that people told him was underpowered. Amazingly he won.

"It was done in heats and we were four abreast through Curva Grande and slipstreaming most of the rest of the way round. Well, it had been pouring with rain and the track was still damp under the trees at the Lesmos. So I took it easy, and got up to second behind Andrea de Adamich. Then he went off through the hedge and I was leading, and I won. I couldn't believe it. After the race [Eugenio] Dragoni was there – not my favourite team manager – but he must have put in a

COMFORTABLY FUN

BMW's K1600 GT SE has air conditioning, a hi-fi system, heated seats and sports bike grunt. Martin Brundle calls his "a missile". Is it time to let go the belief that motorcycling has to be painful to be pure?

BY MAT OXLEY

Motorcyclists don't ride motorcycles for the luxury. If you want luxury, you drive a car. We ride motorcycles for adventure, for adrenaline, for bugs in the teeth and for the occasional bloodied knee (if we are very lucky).

But the things that make you happy change with the passage of time. When I was younger I used to look at touring bikes – huge, heavy and overladen – and scoff at them. They seemed to have been created for silver-haired bikers who were no longer cool or crazy enough to endure the ravages of several hundred miles on a sports bike. And I was right.

Its first fully-faired boxer twin – the R100RS – was a revelation to riders in the 1970s. I was never much of a fan of the various four-cylinder models that followed the twin, but the six-cylinder 1600 is something else. At first glance the bike seems like an exercise in excess. Why not just buy a car?

Only motorcyclists know the answer to that one. The BMW is as much of a provider of adventure and adrenaline as any bike. The only thing you'll have to do without is getting bugs in your teeth.

This is a fabulously luxurious motorcycle. Motorways are something you usually avoid on bikes, but the BMW will devour them for breakfast, lunch and dinner if you so desire. That blast to Spa was autoroute most of the way and hugely enjoyable: crank the cruise control up to 100mph, sit back and enjoy the wonders of Europe as a blur.

Going in a straight line on a motorcycle was never so much fun – the 1600's seat may just be the most commodious ever fitted to a bike. All that's lacking in the superbly appointed cockpit is a mounting point for a silver salver, so you can feed yourself grapes along the way.

I used to view 'gimmicks' such as cruise control and adjustable windscreens with scorn. Somehow they seemed impure – sullying the Spartan joys of motorcycling. I didn't expect to take much advantage of them aboard the BMW. In fact they helped make the ride.

Cruise control is helpful in a car. It turns

I knew something was up before I'd even got hold of BMW's six-cylinder 1600 GT SE. I found myself anticipating its arrival with more excitement than if it were a brain-curdling 190mph superbike.

A weekend trip to Spa-Francorchamps confirmed my worst fears. I loved every minute. It's official, then: I'm old.

But what the hell, with bikes like the BMW around, old age might be OK. That high-speed ride to Spa was something of an epiphany: you mean that riding bikes long distances doesn't have to be agony? Who knew? I didn't even have to go to my osteopath when I got home.

BMW has been the acknowledged master of the long-distance haul for several decades.

FACTFILE

ENGINE: 1649cc, liquid-cooled straight six
TOP SPEED: 155mph
PRICE: £15,740 OTR
POWER: 160bhp at 7750rpm
FRAME: twin beam aluminium, BMW Duolever front, Paralever rear
www.bmw-motorrad.co.uk



Jason Critchell

out that it's more than that on a motorcycle. Holding the handlebars and working the throttle hour after hour can be hugely uncomfortable, but it's such a part of motorcycling that you only realise it's a pain when you no longer have to do it. Engaging the cruise control allows you to rest your right hand, arm and shoulder; it also allows you to change your position on the bike, so your muscles don't fossilise on long rides.

The adjustable windscreen is another game-changer. Many bike riders don't like looking through a screen because it divorces you from the road, so you lose that immediacy which is one of the great joys of motorcycling.

Adjustability gives you the luxury of choice. At lower speeds you keep the screen down; then you thumb a button on the left handlebar to raise the screen as your speed increases. Fully raised, the screen keeps you out of the wind, so you can comfortably sustain ton-plus speeds all day. The effect on your state of being is huge – wind blast is a major factor in causing fatigue on long rides. Eventually, I found myself using this 'gimmick' all the time.

Most motorcycles aren't very adjustable, unless you want to get out the spanners and fiddle with suspension preload or ride height. The BMW has an embarrassment of adjustability: the screen, engine mapping, suspension, and the heated handlebars and seat, can all be electronically manipulated.

It may just be that adjustable suspension (an ex-works option at £710) is the making of the modern super-tourer. Back in the day, tourers ran soft suspension to make life comfy for the kind of rider who was most likely to buy such a bike. So the machines handed sloppily, dangerously even, for anyone who liked to push on a bit. You would find yourself hurtling into a high-speed autoroute curve, holding your breath and locking your arms against the handlebars, determined to prevent the wobble and weave from turning into anything more disastrous. Some touring bikes still don't handle that well. For example, Honda's flat-six 1800cc Gold Wing is heavier and sloppier than the BMW. The Wing was made for American roads, the BMW for European roads.

The 1600 has three suspension modes – sport, normal and comfort – which adjust both spring rate and damping. On the comfort setting the bike feels like a luxury blancmange, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. On the sport setting the 1600 doesn't quite handle and steer like a sports bike but it comes very close. Even hammering through bumpy motorway curves through the Ardennes the bike held its line.



The huge range of adjustment on the K1600 means that it can be a bike for all riders





Like many BMW road bikes the K1600 features wishbone front suspension, an evolution of the system designed and developed during the 1970s and '80s by Norman Hossack, a former McLaren engineer. Hossack's front end – two wishbones and a single shock – replaces the ubiquitous telescopic front fork and offers plenty of advantages, including improvements in stiffness, stability and geometry. I know this from experience, because I raced Hossack's TT F2 bike in the early 1980s.

I found the adjustable engine mapping a lot less useful than the adjustable suspension, simply because the six-cylinder engine could hardly be more usable in any of its three modes: rain, road and dynamic. Traction control comes as standard, as does ABS.

The 24-valve straight six is one hell of an engine. Peak power is a comparatively conservative 160 horsepower but torque is the number that counts. The six makes 70 per cent of its torque at 1500rpm and top gear roll-on from 100mph is impressive, provoking a huge grin every time you surge towards the horizon. Nought to 60mph takes just 3.2 seconds, about as quick as most 1000cc sports bikes.

An in-line six is not a small engine. It's wide, which is why the configuration isn't popular in motorcycling because engine width can compromise enthusiastic cornering. Sixes enjoyed a brief moment of glory during the 1970s, when lean angles weren't what they are today. Honda marketed the CBX1000 six, its engine designed by Shoichiro Irimajiri who had built the fabled six-cylinder 250/350 GP bike that took Mike Hailwood to glory in the 1960s. Kawasaki responded with its fantastically over-the-top Z1300 and Italian factory Benelli also got in on the act with the Benelli Sei.

Modern day lean angles rule out six-cylinder engines for sports bikes but engine width isn't such an issue for a tourer, which won't be reaching knee-on-the-ground cornering angles. BMW have worked to keep the six as slim as possible and they've also angled the cylinders sharply forward to keep engine weight low.

It seems in some ways that BMW has tried to replicate some of the characteristics of their beloved flat-twins: low centre of gravity and vibration-free running. The six is wondrously smooth, producing its power like a fast-running river, so you can execute instant overtaking moves as if you're on a sports bike. Really, there's more power available than you need, but it's great that it's there.

Formula 1 commentator Martin Brundle bought a K1600GT last year and he adores the machine. It may not be a coincidence that he is the same age as I am. Brundle got into bikes quite late, in the 1990s. His first proper bike – he had a Garelli 50 when he was 16 – was a Ducati 916, "which I was never in charge of, if I'm honest".

Since then he has travelled the same road as many motorcyclists. "If you're on a superbike your arse is up in the air and you're on your wrists. You're stopping for fuel every hundred miles or so, you're wet through and you hurt like hell. I travel a lot on bikes, but I never do short blasts. I'm always going somewhere, so the BMW is an awesome piece of kit for me.

"I love being on a bike because it reminds me of being in a race car; you're wearing a helmet, you have to read the road at all times and it hurts if you get it wrong. There's a real similarity between riding a bike fast and well and driving a racing car. I just love the freedom, and there's no such thing as a traffic jam."

Since the 916 Brundle has had a series of BMW tourers and sports-tourers and the 1600 is his favourite so far. "It's a missile, and it'll do more than 200 miles on a tank when you're pushing hard."

That's a huge range on a motorcycle. Most sports bikes won't go much further than a hundred miles on a tank. Even Honda's VF1200 sports tourer will only go 150 miles on a


"It's a missile and it
will do more that 200
miles on a tank when
you're pushing hard"



Long journeys on open roads pass in no time, although stereo extra is unnecessary

full tank, which is a joke for a machine that's designed to go places. When cruising at legal-ish speeds on the BMW (a difficult trick to pull off), the 24-litre tank will take you nearly 250 miles. When you do fill up you are once again reminded that BMW engineers have really thought about what they're doing. Many bikes feel top heavy with a full fuel tank. The 1600 doesn't because the fuel load is kept reasonably low.

That's not to say that the bike is light and easy to throw about. It's a big, heavy thing – 320 kilos fuelled up and ready to go, but probably nearer half a tonne when you're two-up and fully loaded. Looking on the bright side, at least this is a motorcycle that allows you to take a friend or a lover with you without them wanting to hate you for the rest of their lives.

At speed you barely notice the BMW's weight, but when you're trickling through traffic or parking you do become aware of its bulk and you need to know what you're doing. At very low speeds you must be nice and smooth, keeping mass transfer to the minimum when you apply the brakes.

Incidentally, Honda's Gold Wing features a reverse gear to simplify parking. Well, a 'pretend' reverse gear, powered by the bike's starter motor.

The BMW will happily tackle traffic jams, so long as you mind the gap when you're lane-splitting because the machine is exactly one metre wide with panniers fitted. An Issigonis Mini is only 40cm wider.

Such dimensions make it impossible to chase scooter kids through traffic jams, but this isn't a huge price to pay for what counts as Babylonian luxury on a bike. And you just know that any scooter kids will swoon with jealousy when they slip past the BMW and hear it pumping out the sounds, like it's the world's biggest ghetto blaster.

The only problem with the stereo (another ex-works extra) is that you really need to be a scooter kid to enjoy it, because unless you're 17 you shouldn't feel the need to share your music with the rest of the world. And anyway, even if you do turn it up to 11 you can't really hear above 50mph. The system definitely isn't worth its £690 asking price. I preferred to use my iPod with earphones; this isn't usually much use on a bike because of wind noise, but with the BMW's screen fully raised you can listen all the way to 100mph.

For the record, Brundle's favourite riding music is 1970s heavy rock. "I never thought I'd listen to music on a bike but I find a bit of Deep Purple or Led Zeppelin really enjoyable."

The 1600 has too many knobs, buttons and gizmos to go into here. I never used the heated seat or handlebar grips, but I did use the 'air-con', a very non-digital system that consists of two ducts that swivel out to funnel cooling air towards you when you're lucky enough to be riding on a hot day. Simple and highly effective.

There's only one feature on the 1600 BMW that didn't make me smile: the transmission. It is so hellishly clunky that I can only assume BMW's gearbox engineers had just returned from several days of over-indulgence at the Munich beer festival.

Yet this is a motorcycle I always looked forward to riding. Not only that, it's the kind of bike that will have you dreaming of longer trips, the kind of journeys where travelling means more than arriving.

Brundle is already planning his biggest trip on his 1600 – to the Monza Formula 1 round. "You can fly along on the thing. So far I've been to Spa and the Nürburgring on it, and I've come home from Nürburgring on the Sunday night. That's the beauty of the bike – you can do a 500-mile ride after a long weekend's work. I'm already looking at going to Scotland on it, then Monza is next on my list. That would be a good ride."

And that surely has to be the ultimate compliment for any touring bike: even when you're back at home, it has you poring over maps of Europe, wondering where to ride off to next. The 1600 reminds me of an advertisement for a (much, much less efficient) Yamaha tourer of the late 1970s. The ad read: "Sometimes we took the plane and sometimes we flew."



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The Bear truth

Twenty years ago Denny Hulme died of a heart attack while racing at Bathurst. For one onlooker, it made memories of a reflective three-day tour with the man they called 'The Bear' all the more special

BY MICHAEL STAHL

In streaming rain on Bathurst's 190mph Conrod Straight, the yellow BMW M3 appeared to aquaplane gently onto the grass verge. It glanced the wall and crossed the track, still clearly under control, to be braked safely to a halt.

It was October 4, 1992, on the 33rd lap of the Bathurst 1000. At the wheel was the 1967 F1 World Champion, Denny Hulme. The 56-year-old had suffered a fatal heart attack.

Twelve months earlier, Hulme had driven a similar BMW M3 to fourth at the mountain classic. The following day, he and I travelled to Tasmania to tour the route of the inaugural Targa Tasmania road rally.

'The Bear' was in a mellow phase. Life had dealt him an unimaginable blow in 1988, with the loss of his 22-year-old son Martin in a diving accident. Denny and Greeta, his wife of 28 years, were latterly living apart.

But over three days of relaxed driving in a borrowed Porsche 911 the quiet, giant Kiwi reflected warmly and openly on his career.

Born Denis Clive Hulme in 1936 in rural New Zealand, Denny covertly taught himself to drive in his father's sand-hauling trucks by the age of 15. At 18, apprenticed to a local garage and shovelling sand on weekends, he was able to buy a new MG TF. The beach, and the TF's tight pedal box, both encouraged Hulme to drive in bare feet; a habit he would take to England five years later.

It wasn't until 1957 that Hulme began dabbling in local hillclimbs. The first proper race was an all-MG handicap at the 1957 New Zealand GP. Hulme scrapped from last on the grid to win by two seconds.

In early 1959, Hulme bought the Cooper T45-Climax 2-litre driven in that year's New Zealand GP by Bruce McLaren. Hulme spent the winter months rebuilding it and impressed by qualifying fifth for the 1960 race. In that southern summer, Hulme and Whangarei carpenter George Lawton, in another T45, emerged as series favourites. At stake was a scholarship to send one driver to Europe.

"They couldn't choose between us, so they sent both of us," Denny recalled. "Up 'til then I really hadn't had any intention of leaving New Zealand, but it seemed like a good opportunity."

Their Coopers ran in 1.5-litre Formula 2 spec. "The very first F2 race we went to was Easter [1960] at Goodwood [the Lavant Cup], and I remember being quite overawed. Dan Gurney was there in a Porsche, and Rob Walker had a Porsche for Stirling Moss. Jack [Brabham] was there, and Roy Salvadori, Innes Ireland [who won in a Lotus]…"

At Snetterton's Norfolk Trophy, Lawton and Hulme finished first and second. Hulme shrugged his shoulders at it all. "I was just out there enjoying myself; it was always my attitude just to go and do your own thing. I just felt that we were having a reasonably good season."

It changed tragically in September's Danish GP at the Roskildering. "George, who was just in front of me in his Cooper, somehow spun, tagged a bank, flew up in the air… It threw him out, came down on top of him and killed him.

"That was a real blow. I was sort of wandering around England without a friend or a partner, other than the team manager, and I thought, 'Well, hell, this is all a bit rugged'."

Hulme would be distracted by a trip home for the 1960-61 summer season, taking a rented Yeoman Credit Cooper 2.5. He returned to England and took up John Cooper's open invitation to build a chassis for 1961.

"In the Cooper book, there's quite a few chassis numbers that aren't there, and it's because these cars didn't have chassis numbers, as such – they were cash under the table."



With Kiwi journalist Eoin Young, Hulme set off on the continental tour in a Ford Zephyr MkI. It was a great adventure, but lean times later in the year pushed Hulme into a mechanic's job at Jack Brabham Motors – working on Triumphs and Sunbeams, not single-seaters.

In mid-1962, however, Hulme got his lucky break; if a less lucky one for Formula Junior driver Gavin Youl, who snapped a collarbone in a crash. "Jack came in one day and said, 'Well, we can fix the car – how 'bout you taking your hat to Crystal Palace and driving it?'"

Hulme was an immediate front-runner. On Boxing Day 1962 he took an updated BT2 to victory at Brands Hatch. "It was snowing! But that was the first Brabham ever to win a race, and I was home and hosed then."

Ascending to the status of works driver, and third-car Grand Prix status from Monaco in 1965, did not endanger Hulme's gritty practicality. "We were able to make bits and pieces to put on our own cars, and I'd certainly feel happier if I'd made and fitted it."

The arrival of the 3-litre Repco Brabham engine in 1966 took even Hulme by surprise, and Dan Gurney's departure delivered the big opportunity he needed. His first full F1 season began with the Climax, but even after getting the Repco, he recalled, "It just didn't go well in '66. I wasn't really close to having a win. And then in 1967, everything changed." He snapped his fingers. "As quick as that."

The first race was at Kyalami. "I just bolted. I couldn't believe, not how *easy* it was – although, I thought Jesus, this isn't bad – but I just cleared out from the rest. I was leading by almost a lap, and the brakes quit on me."

He won just two races that year, Monaco and Germany, but sealed the championship over his team leader at the season closer in Mexico.

"Keke Rosberg, all those years later, only won one," he pointed out. "But if you look at the second and third places I also picked up, through reliability, it all added up. I didn't devise it, it wasn't my idea, I just came out with more points than anybody else.

"Ford had come along with the DFV Cosworth, and that was gonna be a very hard thing to knock over. But I do believe that Jack's car handled better than the Lotus."

Hulme admitted he perhaps wasn't the most approachable of champions. The British press nicknamed him 'The Bear', and not only for his wrestler-like physique.

"I, ahh, used to get pretty bloody grumpy with the way they behaved, and I still do," Hulme chuckled. "I just wanted to be around the car, working on it, getting it onto the circuit.

"When I set out, I only wanted to race cars quicker than anybody else. The World Championship didn't mean anything. It was just a day at the races. But it's true that, once you get halfway through the season and you find that it's within your grasp, you don't let too much slip by you."







Relaxing after a win in the 1967 German GP. Top right: threading Brabham BT11 through the streets of Monaco in '65. Right: McLaren M19A at Brands in '72

Hulme's reign as champion would be rocked by a loss many had thought impossible. Jim Clark and Denny had more in common than their quiet, rural backgrounds. The two would very often dine together and fly to races in Clark's plane.

"He'd come to New Zealand and you'd go deer stalking or water skiing with the guy. There was no great thing for him to rush off and tell the press how bloody good he was, or find the nearest TV camera. Jimmy just wanted to relax, lie on the beach of Monte Carlo.

"He was so easy going, you really wondered how he drove so fast. Jimmy would whistle into a corner and you'd think, 'He's never gonna get round'. And it would, like it was on rails. There were never big slides, he was just so fast."

When Clark went to Hockenheim, "where I think they were paying him a substantial amount of money to go", Hulme picked up his drive in the Ford P68 for the BOAC six-hour race at Brands Hatch. "So I was standing in Jimmy's shoes. It was pretty devastating alright. Jimmy didn't make mistakes. At all. You never knew Jimmy ever flicking it off the road."

By this time, Hulme had left Brabham for his friend Bruce McLaren's team. They enjoyed a lucrative partnership via the 'Bruce and Denny Show' in Can-Am.

"I got more fun out of driving the Can-Am cars than I did out of F1. I used to feel quite pumped up when I got back to England on a Monday because I could go and win $25,000 in an afternoon driving Can-Am, and only $5000 or something if I won a GP. So I used to think, y'know, stuff this Grand Prix business."

Remember, this was well before F1's currency changed to 'Bernie Dollars'. "I can remember that Chris Amon got, I think, £68,000 to drive for Matra [1971]. He was the highest-paid F1 driver at the time. I couldn't believe that. Most people got, if they were lucky, £10,000. Chris promptly went out and bought an aeroplane."

McLaren, though 10 months younger than Hulme, had taken his countryman under his wing. Hulme recalled being skint at a Formula Junior race in Reims, 1960. "Bruce just put his hand in his pocket, found 100 quid to get me home to England. Me and my MkI Zephyr, Bruce in his E-type Jaguar. That's how it was."

Hulme got a lesson in McLaren practicality at his first GP for the team, Kyalami 1968. "Bruce said, 'I'm not going to South Africa, haven't got enough cars. We'll get a V12 BRM, drop it in the back of this chassis, and you can go and contest the South African GP.' 'Umm, righto, how's the car gonna get there, Bruce?'"

The story covered more than trains, planes and rented automobiles, and a McLaren-BRM on the end of a tow-rope back and forth along the Pretoria Main Road.

"Everything was terribly simplistic to him. You had to use your initiative. It wasn't any good if you just turned up at a circuit, 'cause you wouldn't find your bloody race car there."

Hulme had made annual visits to Indianapolis from 1968. He netted fourth on his maiden outing, driving one of Gurney's Eagles after his and Bruce's troubled turbine cars were withdrawn before the race. In 1969 he ran as high as second in an Eagle, before retiring.

For the 1970 Indy, while the boys at Colnbrook were finishing construction of the second M8D Can-Am car, Bruce and Denny headed off to Indy with the purpose-built, Offenhauser-powered McLaren M15.

Hulme recalled the front suspension which allowed the driver, via what he described as motorcycle brake levers, to tilt the chassis into each corner. Hulme found it effective, but hard work. The car also had Monza-style fuel caps, which the officials forced them to modify before practice with a different spring.

The first sign of the failed fuel cap springs was 'rain' on Hulme's windscreen. "And the next thing – boof! She's on fire... at 220mph. [The methanol] had gone back to the turbo, and the fire just came forward, against the

wind pressure of 220mph. I just find that amazing, that the flame went 'whoof!' up to the front of the car."

Hulme's hands and feet were badly burned. "They bandaged me all up and I went home with Bruce in the plane. When we got back to London they had arranged for me to go straight up to Harley Street. Bruce said, 'Oh, I'm off to Goodwood to test your car'."

Hulme had just disembarked at Surbiton station when he heard the news on the radio.

"Jesus, it was bloody devastating. I was on my own, in total bloody bewilderment. Hands both all bandaged up from the surgery I'd had. I'm standing there looking like a mummy, and I hear that Bruce had been killed. It was bloody heartbreaking from there on.

"See, I'd had no reaction from my own accident at the time. It was just an accident, I was conscious all the way through it. Then suddenly, the team manager had gone; the boss, friend, everything.

"I turned to rubbish then, I just... I couldn't contain myself at all after that. I would have given Bruce an arm if he would come back to life. But it wasn't to be. Here's this dedication to his Can-Am cars, and the bloody thing should bite him. He was the most generous person in the world with those things."

Just five days later, Piers Courage would die in the Dutch GP at Zandvoort. Hulme's anger and frustration reached critical mass.

"Piers had the big off and the car's upside down and it's all on fire. I stopped at the pits and tried to get the clerk of the course to stop the race. And they just said 'humph!' and threw their hands in the air.

"I thought, 'Christ, what else can I do? I'd better keep racing, 'cause that's what I'm there for.' Maybe I should have thumped the guy, but it seemed that this was the standard."

Hulme joined with Jackie Stewart and BRM boss Louis Stanley as one of the more vocal advocates for better circuit safety. They were far from universally admired for it, but the reserved, intimidating figure of Hulme was an asset to the movement.

"It was very difficult. I just couldn't understand the mentality of [the organisers and promoters]. The younger drivers were pleased to be in F1 and didn't want to rock the boat. But we were never very far wrong."

> "I would have given Bruce an arm if he would come back to life. But it wasn't to be"

Then there was a small but intense light on the horizon. "Bernie Ecclestone said, 'Listen, we'll disband the drivers' union and I'll run the show. I've probably got a bit more clout than you.' Initially, it didn't seem like it was going to work. We were still a bit sceptical of Bernie, but it wasn't long before everything was 101 per cent.

"I'd been seeing the problems, and I always made a point of going to the funerals. Although I hated it. But unless you go and do these things, you can't get up on the soapbox and thump your fist and change it."

Hulme witnessed it all. He had been deeply affected by the appalling death of François Cevert at the 1973 season-closer at Watkins Glen; 1974 was book-ended by the losses of Peter Revson at Kyalami and 25-year-old Helmuth Koinigg at the Glen.

Denny Hulme, by then 38 years old and with 112 Grand Prix starts, eight wins, one world championship and a blown engine, went home.

As we spoke, 17 years almost to the day since that final GP, Hulme was still actively racing in everything from touring cars to trucks. Countless images have remained with me when I think of those three days with Denny: the patches of wax paper skin on the backs of his hands; the voice with the resonance of furniture wheeled across a wooden floor.

For Hulme, I know there was at least one image from that tour that truly tickled him – which said much about the modest, gentle giant.

We were fuelling the 911 in a tiny town beyond Launceston. With its lush hills and grazing sheep, it must have looked very much like home. Denny climbed from the Porsche, stretched and wandered into the small shop.

The young petrol attendant walked over to me. "Who's that guy?" he asked, a faint look of admiration as he nodded towards Hulme. "That's Denny Hulme," I beamed. "But I don't suppose you get many Formula 1 World Champions through here, do you?"

He looked at me blankly. "I don't know. But we don't get many Porsches."



'The Bear' on his way to victory, from second on the grid, in the 1972 Can-Am Challenge Cup at Watkins Glen

Road tests

BY ANDREW FRANKEL



McLAREN 12C SPIDER



Naturally no one is saying so officially, but if you informally put it to McLaren that the MP4-12C supercar it launched last year wasn't quite the finished item, you'll not find many of its staff rushing to disagree with you.

Supplier issues meant it's only very recently that a functioning navigation system has become available, but more fundamentally than that there was something not quite right with the way it drove. In isolation, each major area of the car seemed fully fit for purpose: the engine delivered pulverising acceleration, the gearbox cog swaps so swift the period of time between one clutch disengaging and the other taking up the drive was undetectable. And the chassis appeared to give superpowers to the car, enabling it to do things no other car in history could have managed. I remember driving it down a B-road made legendary among road testers for its terrible surface, schizophrenic cambers, sharp crests and vicious dips and knowing a Rolls-Royce Phantom would have been less composed.

And yet when you considered these systems not in isolation but as a whole, something was missing. The car was beaten by the slower Ferrari 458 in every comparison test I read, and it was not hard to see why. The package failed to gel, like a slew of Hollywood A-listers being



FACTFILE

ENGINE: 3.8 litres, 8 cylinders, petrol, twin turbochargers
TOP SPEED: 207mph
PRICE: £195,500
POWER: 616bhp at 7500rpm
FUEL/CO2: 24.2mpg, 279g/km
www.mclarenautomotive.com

gathered together to make a film and discovering they have no on-screen chemistry at all.

So it's fortunate that the arrival of the Spider version afforded an opportunity to revisit the car a year on, a year in which it's clear McLaren has been very busy indeed, and not just with the business of slicing the roof from the car.

In fact turning the 12C into a Spider (mercifully McLaren has dropped the 'MP4' prefix) appears to have been an almost entirely painless process, far from the engineering nightmare usually presented by turning a coupé into a convertible. The reason is simple: in structural terms the 12C was already a convertible onto which an unstressed roof panel was added to create the coupé. So



New three-cylinder incarnation of Renault Clio restores the old zing

RENAULT CLIO TCE EXPRESSION +

REMEMBER WHEN SMALL French hatches were joyous little vehicles, brimming with character and a riot to drive? I cut my motoring teeth in an era of Peugeot 205s, Citroën AXs and Renault 5s and loved the lot. Now look: the 208 is improving but still an also-ran, the Citroën C3 is utterly mediocre and the Renault Clio as dull now as this generation has always been.

What hope, then, for the next Clio? It is almost as if Renault saw the pit into which it was falling, flung out an arm at the last moment and heaved its way back not simply to credibility, but to somewhere closer to excellence. The new Clio, when fitted with a terrific 900cc turbo petrol three-cylinder engine, is one of those cars you don't need to analyse area by area. You get in it, you drive it, you like it. It's that simple.

If you want specifics, the new engine is a marvel, the chassis as sparkling as the old one was dull and the looks a French classic. The quality is there too. It bodes extremely well for the new RenaultSport version. I didn't enjoy hearing that it will now use a 1.6-litre turbo in place of a normally aspirated 2-litre motor and liked even less the news that it will be paddle-shift only. But if the same people who turned the dull old Clio into the scintillating RenaultSport for the current generation are let loose on this new one, the result may yet be a landmark for fans of fast French hatches.

FACTFILE

ENGINE: 900cc, three cylinders, turbocharged
TOP SPEED: 113mph
PRICE: £12,995
POWER: 90bhp at 5250rpm
FUEL/CO2: 62.8mpg, 105g/km
www.renault.co.uk



there was no loss of torsional rigidity, no need to add hundreds of kilos of underbody bracing and no need to entirely re-engineer the suspension to cope with a far heavier, far floppier platform. The 12C's weight has risen by 40kg, but that's all in the electric motors required to make the two-piece roof panel slot elegantly behind the seats. Chief test driver Chris Goodwin told me they embarked on a programme to see what chassis changes might be required and realised almost immediately there would be none.

So given that it was always designed to be an open car it is a little odd to discover that when you drive it, the convertible component of the 12C Spider is now its least successful. When you chop the top off a car this fast, you do so fully expecting customers to drive it fast with the roof down. But McLaren has not got the wind management right and at only a small fraction of its potential pace voices need to be raised, hair starts to plait itself and buffeting in the cabin makes you want to either slow down or put the roof up.

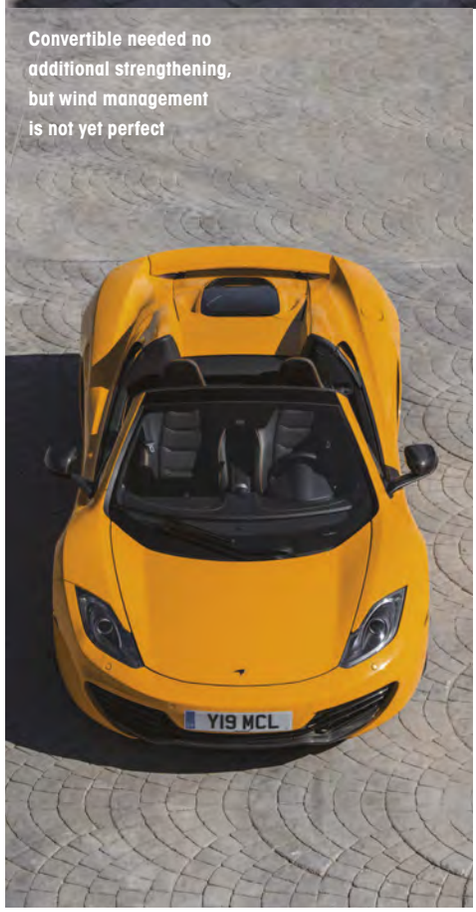
Then again I'm probably missing the point. Do you buy a convertible McLaren to put you in closer touch with the elements or to let every passer by see exactly who's so much richer than them? Happily McLaren provides a clever compromise that allows you to drive with the roof up but the rear screen down, so you can continue on your way in anonymity and comfort but still bathe your brain in the sounds of the 616bhp, 3.8-litre V8 motor.

But it's not really the roof that interests me, it's what's happened to the rest of the car that really caught my attention in two delicious days in Spain with the 12C Spider.

The most apparently needless modification was the extraction of a further 25bhp from the Ricardo-designed V8, achieved not by raising the power curve but simply extending it: it just keeps going that little bit longer at the top end. I can't say you can feel the extra shove that now allows it actually to out-accelerate the once presumed invincible McLaren F1, because when you're being flicked from rest to 62mph in scarcely more than 3sec flat, your mind tends to be on other things. All I can say is that if the extra weight of that roof blunted performance to any discernible extent, the extra power more than makes up for it.

Far more noticeable is how the engine behaves, how it now relates to the gearbox and how these changes in turn change the way you feel about the entire car. The throttle response is now so sharp that while you'd never mistake it for anything other than a turbocharged car, no longer do you have to micro-manage the lag by applying the throttle in anticipation of the arrival of power. Similarly the gearbox software has been transformed: the changes were always





Convertible needed no additional strengthening, but wind management is not yet perfect



quick in themselves but often dispatched some time after your fingers had given the command. No longer: so swift is it to react you can convince yourself it must have known when you were going to pull the paddle.

I guess all this could have been predicted, just by knowing how much work has gone on in Woking to address the 12C's shortcomings. What I failed entirely to foresee is how radically these modifications to the car's powertrain would affect the way the 12C handled.

McLaren is insistent, you might say adamant, that no revisions have been made to the 12C's unique interactive, computer-controlled, anti-roll bar-free suspension. And yet the last one I drove on the track needed to be driven in a very



certain, methodical and precise manner if it was not to start being difficult. I resented the fact that I had to tailor my driving style to suit the way it had been set up. Yet after many laps of the fabulous full and fearsome circuit at the Ascari Race Resort, it showed an entirely reformed character. It understeered a touch more than I would like but it provided me with the confidence you simply have to have if you're going to brake hard at the exit of a quick curve, or lob a mid-engined car with over 600bhp into tightening apex on a trailing throttle. In short, it was as rewarding and reassuring as the last 12C had seemed awkward and aloof.

I have therefore to conclude that it is the new-found immediacy and consistency of the engine and gearbox that are responsible. Simply put, when every twitch of your toe and flick of your finger affects the attitude of the car, the more instantly the powertrain answers to your commands, the more reliable will be the response of the chassis.

This is a very long way of saying the 12C is now the car it should have been from the start. You can take or leave the convertible element – and I'd definitely leave it – but as a supercar to go head-to-head with the best that Ferrari can offer, I'd say it is now and at last supremely fit for purpose.



It's able, and pleasant – but is the Countryman JCW a Mini?

MINI COUNTRYMAN COOPER JCW

RECENTLY I DROVE A standard Mini Cooper hatchback from Wales to the northernmost tip of Denmark without stopping. Drive any car 1100 miles in a day and I guarantee you'll arrive with strong feelings about it. And I did. I thought it was brilliant: completely unsuited to that particular task thanks to its stiff ride, limited performance and tiny fuel tank but a car that, much like the original, charmed its way into my heart and made me forgive its many shortcomings.

I am quite confident I could drive the Mini Countryman Cooper JCW twice around the world without it eliciting a similar feeling. Taller and, absurdly, more expensive than a Volvo V70 estate, calling this car a Mini is to call Mitt Romney a Democrat.

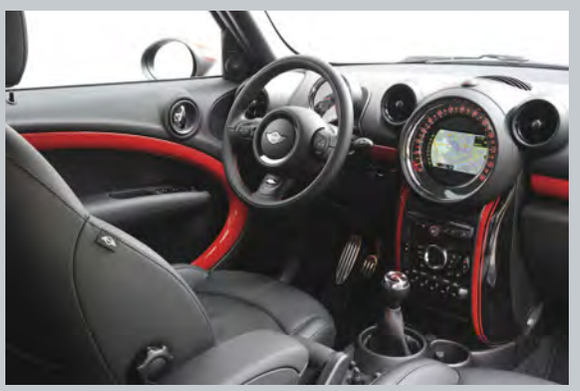
It combines the two things I dislike most about today's Mini: the Countryman body and the John Cooper Works package which, to plagiarise W O Bentley's words about Birkin's supercharged cars, serves only to pervert its design and corrupt its performance.

And yet this Countryman was better than I'd expected. It's not fast, despite a 208bhp engine, and its handling is merely able rather than actively engaging, but that talent present in every other Countryman or JCW I've driven to date – an almost infinite capacity to annoy – has gone. In fact if you forget the price it's quite pleasant, thanks largely to Mini's decision to ease off the ridiculous spring rates it usually fits to JCW cars. The reason is the Countryman JCW with its all-wheel-drive hardware is intended more as an all-season all-rounder than a back-road blaster.

But it's not nearly enough to gain a recommendation on pages such as these. The brilliance of the standard Mini is that it provides the style and image wanted by the fashionistas backed by the driving dynamics to lend the package credibility and combines the two at an affordable price. I guess you can argue the toss about the looks of the Countryman, though I think it looks pretty awful, but so far as the rest is concerned, it offers far too little for far too much.

FACTFILE

ENGINE: 1.6 litres, four cylinders, turbocharged
TOP SPEED: 140mph
PRICE: £28,595
POWER: 215bhp at 6100rpm
FUEL/CO2: 38.2mpg, 167g/km
www.mini.co.uk





BMW was slow to join the four-door coupé club, but got it right with ease

BMW 640D GRAND COUPE

SOME CARS YOU JUST have to drive before they make sense, and BMW's new four-door Grand Coupé is a fine example. On paper it's a 6-series coupé, stretched like a strip of liquorice until it's all but as long as a 7-series limousine. But what's been done with that extra space? I sat in the back and reckoned there was less room than you'll find in a 1-series hatch.

But over the course of a week and many hundreds of miles, and despite several other choices, I found myself increasingly unwilling to be parted from it. I found myself liking it for all sorts of reasons that don't usually register with me at all: its looks to name but one. I'm interested in what cars do, not how they appear but I still caught myself gazing at the BMW more than any other mass-produced car I can recently remember.

This didn't happen when I first drove its very close cousin, the 6-series coupé, but that extra 115mm stretch between the wheels and the addition of a B-pillar has turned a handsome coupé into something I had trouble tearing my eyes from. It's not a beautiful car like the original Mercedes CLS, but it is exceptionally handsome, especially in profile. And I can't recall when I last felt that about any BMW.



FACTFILE

ENGINE: 3.0 litres, six cylinders, turbocharged
TOP SPEED: 155mph
PRICE: £62,085
POWER: 309bhp at 4400rpm
FUEL/CO2: 50.4mpg, 148g/km
www.bmw.co.uk

It's good to drive, too. Together it and I did two major journeys: 300 miles on motorway to and from a business appointment, then 300 miles mainly cross-country for a Goodwood track day. What better ways to reveal its true character?

On the first journey it was better than a 7-series: quieter and far more deftly suspended. I left it in 'D', dialled up the most efficient mapping modes for engine and gearbox and drove from the Wye Valley to Cambridge with both car and driver on autopilot. On the return I was caught in vicious traffic but swaddled in deep seats and entertained by a vast array of digital radio stations, I was surprised by how little bothered I was. Total fuel consumption? 42.2mpg.

The second journey was, if anything, more instructive still. With almost three metres between the front and rear wheels, this was never going to be an exactly nimble machine, but what it lost in the corners, it soon regained on the straights. BMW engineering has brought us to a point where it can put a 3-litre diesel engine in a car as vast as this and still coax it past 62mph in 5.6sec, yet still prove sufficiently frugal to return over 50mpg. Ten years ago, a petrol 645i was slower to accelerate yet used almost exactly twice the fuel. Despite a relatively modest 70-litre fuel tank, it dispatched both journeys without requiring a fuel stop.

I don't know why it took BMW so long to come to the four-door coupé party. Unlike Mercedes, which invented the category with the CLS back in 2004, Porsche with its Panamera or Audi with the A7, BMW didn't need to design an all new car, it just had to elongate an existing one.

But this too provides a problem: why will anyone purchase a standard 6-series coupé any more when for just £1800 more you can have a Grand Coupé that's better looking, practical and spacious? For BMW, that is one of the nicer problems it could have.



Sidetracked
WITH ED FOSTER



WACKY RACING

The popular, eclectic VLN is one of the most important endurance series in Europe thanks to its links with the famous Nürburgring 24 Hours

We can't see anything and we're doing 140mph – there's so much standing water that all we can do is just listen out for other cars. *Whoompf*, a Porsche 997 GT3 R blasts past us on the left.

The driver of our slightly worn out BMW M3 quickly moves to that side of the track just in time to miss a struggling Opel Corsa. There's something else coming… you can hear the V10 roar long before the Audi R8 LMS cruises past us on our right. We're heading down the Tiergarten straight on Nürburgring's Nordschleife *during* open practice for the VLN race. I can't imagine this happening in any other race series in the world.

The diversity and – I'm sure no one will mind me saying it – madness of the VLN series is what makes it so appealing. Not only can you blag a passenger ride during practice, you also get to watch everything from GT3s to Renault Clios. What's more, there are 180 cars on the track at once, every race is on the Nordschleife and there are 12 rounds a year. Welcome to Germany's answer to endurance GT racing.

The VLN (it means Veranstaltergemeinschaft Langstreckenpokal Nürburgring) was founded in 1977 as a way to unite various touring car

championships and it has survived to this day as one of the most important endurance GT series in Europe. While that may seem like a bold claim, in order to race in the fabled Nürburgring 24 Hours you must race in the VLN. The 24 Hours is a stand-alone event, and doesn't count towards the championship, but in Germany it's considered almost as important as its better known cousin in France. "We just do the VLN races in order to prepare for the 24 Hours," Martin Ragginger, the driver of the Falken Motorsports 997 GT3 R tells me. "The 24 Hours ranks above everything else. If you win a VLN race or finish on the podium of course it's a success, but…"



180 competitors and over 30 classes make for plenty of traffic





This presents its own problems, as Bernd Hütter, the ex-Renault German motor sport coordinator and long-time VLN specialist, points out. "In the first three races of the year no one ever shows their true performance because they want to do as well as possible in the 24 Hours. We run a balance of performance series and that's done with different size restrictors on the engines, extra weight, smaller tanks and slower refuelling. The results of those first three races of the season count towards the 24 Hours in terms of performance balancing, as does qualifying." No one wants to be given a smaller restrictor just before the 'big one'.

"What the VLN is always looking for is slower pole times. At the moment top teams are doing 8.26-minute laps and the idea is to slow down to just over 8.30min. However, the teams are so professional they always find ways to claw back the time. It's difficult running a balance of performance and you will have Porsche complaining, Audi, Mercedes, everyone. Although if everyone's complaining you've got it just about right."

In 2012 it was the line up of Christian Krognes, Dominik Brinkmann and Ullrich Andree that won the series with their ex-works VW Scirocco. You may wonder how a Scirocco can beat the likes of McLaren MP4-12Cs, Mercedes-Benz SLS AMGs and Aston Martin Vantages. That's thanks to the scoring system, which means that the more cars in your class, the more points you get. It's all part of the current philosophy – everyone gets the same chance whether they spend €500,000 on the season or €50,000. It works, because the grids are still at 180 cars and for the 24 Hours, there are crowds of 200,000 people.

There are big names in the VLN as well – you'll find Fabrizio Giovanardi, Frank Biela and Nicola Larini on the 2012 entry lists – and the fact that there are so many competitors and over 30 classes (yes, seriously) means the real challenge is making it through traffic. As Audi sports car driver Olly Jarvis told me back in 2010 after competing in the 24 Hours: "I'll probably pass more cars here on a lap than I would in a whole year in the DTM. I mean, it's crazy out there."

> "If everyone's complaining, you've got performance balancing just about right"

The VLN insiders know that it is one of the championship's great calling cards, however, and are more relaxed about the speed differences, although not so relaxed that they didn't ban the class for Daihatsu Charades and classic Minis in the 24 Hours. "You've got the same thing everywhere in the world," said Ragginger when asked about the traffic. "The Le Mans 24 Hours has different classes and you'll have the prototypes overtaking you. Here, we are the prototypes." Hütter is even more straightforward: "If I go to an event and I see that there is a Porsche GT3 at the front and a Volkswagen Polo at the back then I know that beforehand. There aren't any surprises…

"The VLN has been going for 35 years and if we weren't successful then we would only have 100 cars on the grid. There are economic problems all over Europe and every organisation has tighter budgets with less money from the teams. We still have 180 cars on the grid – you've got to say that's a success."

The future looks bright for the VLN series and the Nürburgring 24 Hours, which are both attracting more manufacturer interest every year, despite the shadow cast by the circuit's new buildings and the debt they have produced. "As far as I know," said Hütter, "the VLN and the 24 Hours have a contract for next year. Yes, the circuit has problems due to the finance of the new buildings. Indeed we wouldn't be in the red if it weren't for those new buildings. It also wants to be cleared of the F1 race, which costs the circuit about £10m a year. I think there was a real fear that a rich Russian or Saudi would come and buy the whole place and make it into their own personal playground, but that will never happen."

That's good news for the Nürburgring, the 24 Hours and the VLN championship. Both will continue to be dominated by German teams, cars and drivers. However, that's no bad thing because if British, French or Spanish GT3 teams were to compete we'd no doubt lose some of the less professional outfits. And it's those that make it so exciting.



FAST FORWARD
WHEN THE RULES ARE OPEN

The VLN's absence of restrictions on tyre development has made it the perfect testing ground for a manufacturer with its eyes on the ultimate prize

ONE HUGE ATTRACTION OF THE VLN series is that it still offers an open arena for parts development, unlike so many other international series these days.

The top VLN cars are all close to standard European GT3 machinery. However, not only are the brake pad materials, springs and dampers all open, but so too are tyres. This is where VLN is set apart from many GT championships, which use a single tyre supplier.

Not only are tyre manufacturers free to keep improving their rubber throughout the season, they also have one of the best test circuits in the world at their disposal. That's why Falken Tyres – which also had a presence in the American Le Mans Series in 2012 – has competed at the Nürburgring 24 Hours since 1999.



Sven Schnabl (right), the team principal of Falken Motorsports, makes it clear that this is where they will find the most time and the best way to win the 24 Hours. "We use all the VLN races as tyre tests," he told me. "We'll use one race before the 24 Hours as a proper test in order to do pitstops, refuelling and so on, but the rest of them are all about getting mileage on the car and the tyres.

"Sometimes you have a tyre that's brilliant on the Grand Prix circuit (which forms part of the lap in the VLN), but as soon as you get onto the Nordschleife it's a disaster. Sometimes it's the other way round. What you really need is a tyre that's best out on the Nordschleife and a little less good on the GP circuit.

"You'll find a few tenths fine-tuning the suspension, dampers and brakes, but if you get the tyres right you will find a second or two. Maybe even three. The performance gains are getting smaller because it's impossible to have a perfect tyre for the Nordschleife as the conditions are too difficult. You'll find a perfect tyre for Hockenheim, but not for here.

"The other thing is that we know we have a good base set up from Porsche and we know what the other teams are doing. That means our focus can be solely on the tyres."

Every time the Porsche 997 GT3 R comes in from a session all the data is handed over to Shigetaka Ikeki, the Falken tyre development engineer, who then goes about improving the compound and structure of future tyres. The process is so fast that the best tyre from one race will always be the second-best at the next. This is helped by Ikeki heading out onto the Nordschleife and taking plaster casts of the track surface, which are then sent to Falken's HQ in Japan.

"At the Nordschleife it's so different because you don't even always have four contact patches thanks to the bumps," Ikeki told me. "You need to have a very different construction compared to other circuits since at other places you can just design a tyre for peak performance. The tyres here have to work in any conditions." Not only do Falken need to supply slicks and wets, but it also brings four different compounds to each race so that it can run in both warm and cooler temperatures.

While race tyre construction is not directly transferable to the company's road tyres, the bead on its FK453 road rubber is identical to that used on the race tyre. The compound technology, on the other hand, is very transferable, so there is also the marketing side to consider and if you look at a company like Hankook then it's safe to say that the Nürburgring 24 Hours is a good platform to tell the world about a tyre maker. In 2011 the Hankook-shod Ferrari 458 did a lap 6.6 seconds faster than the rest of the field in the first part of qualifying (an achievement which was rewarded with 25kg ballast for the race). In the race it ran into rear axle problems, which meant a 47-minute delay, but it set fastest lap on its way to eighth. Since then Hankook, the seventh-largest tyre company in the world, has become the tyre supplier to the entire DTM field.

As for Falken Motorsports, it is adamant that it will win the 24 Hours, even if it might take another three years. You will no doubt be hearing a lot more from this company if it does.



ARE YOU READY TO GO APE?

A new race series for the Piaggio Ape will provide some exciting racing in 2013. Just don't expect it to be particularly fast

WE'VE DRIVEN SOME UNLIKELY race cars here in the *Motor Sport* office. Deputy Ed Gordon Cruickshank once drove a racing truck, while I've been 'lucky' enough to race in the Citroën 2CV 24 Hours. None of us has yet sampled racing lawnmowers, but even those would seem positively sporty next to the Piaggio Ape (pronounced a-pay). Built to fill that tuk-tuk-shaped hole in the Italian market for a two-stroke truck, the Ape was launched in 1948.

You won't believe this, but Ape race series already exist, just not in Britain. That's because the Ape has never been officially imported here. Now, 64 years after the first version was built, it has finally made it across the Channel. Piaggio has set up a race series for these beasts and in 2013 the first World Championship comes to Rye House kart track. Yes, you read that right. There will be four two-hour endurance races and the season is priced at £6000, which includes the Ape, entry fees and petrol.



I did a 15-lap stint at Rye House and can safely say that it will be the most exciting slow race in the world. Malossi kits transform the 50cc engines to 102cc, but thankfully 45mph is the top speed. I say thankfully because you have to work extremely hard to stay upright on corner entry. The diff cuts the power if you've only got two wheels on the ground coming out of a corner, foot on the throttle, but not when you turn in. All in all, it's a wonderfully ridiculous form of motor sport.



Historic Scene
WITH GORDON CRUICKSHANK



Without restoring and even replicating historic cars, such sights would be impossible

RESTORE, REVIVE, RECREATE

The debate on where to stop when rebuilding your precious piece of automotive history

How much should you restore a car? It's a question that gets plenty of exercise, not least in these pages over many years. For a snapshot of current thinking, the RAC recently ran a seminar where a panel presented various points of view for debate, and if it didn't settle on one answer, it did help explain why some people or institutions sometimes make restoration calls we wouldn't all make.

Evert Louwman, whose Louwman Museum at the Hague is stacked with motoring treasures, put the purist viewpoint. He argued that if there is only one of something, it's a sin to duplicate it. Citing the famous Spyker, the first mechanical 4WD car built, he said "we will never, ever build the second one!". Someone brought up the Lancia D50 recreations, built exactly to type, containing original elements. In Louwman's view a unique car should be viewed as an artwork, pointless to copy. Yet most of us were thrilled to see one of these cars run at Goodwood, an experience which surely matches what 1950s spectators saw. The chances are that an original car is never going to run in public again; without such recreations we wouldn't have the chance to hear that brassy V8 shrilling across the paddock. And in a way recreations preserve the original: cars wither if not used, so where does that leave the owner of a vehicle which is the only one in existence? Every time it runs it's consuming itself. Not that Louwman is pedantic about this: there are cars in his collection he says they will never run, but he had brought the 1903 Gordon Bennett Napier over for the Brighton run.

Doug Hill of the National Motor Museum pointed out a conflict facing collections like his – the public like shiny cars which run. He agreed that there is an argument for certain historic vehicles to be left alone permanently as a reference – the Louwman collection has chosen not to restore the only pre-war Toyota in existence, which it found in Manchuria in a bad way – but that you need to exercise even very historic vehicles. Of course the NMM always sends cars out on the Brighton Run, accepting that over the years this means replacing worn parts, but they now have a 'parallel collection' of sacrificial pieces they can allow schoolchildren to get hands-on with.

When the conversation moved on to 'which state should you restore a vehicle to?' opinions differed, especially on competition cars. Aim for 'factory fresh', or 'most famous period', or keep it in its final form? Racer and Bonhams auction expert Robert Brooks gave the example of the Lance Macklin Austin-Healey. It had a notable works career before it was involved in the 1955 Le Mans tragedy and a substantial club racing history after that, so how should it end up now? Interestingly, this was one case where the room seemed to be in consensus: it's not a unique car and it is significant for one event above all, so 1955 Le Mans spec is appropriate. Which is what its new owner plans for it.

Brooks also offered up matching Astons, presented in different states: one gussied up with big engine, electric doo-dahs and air-con, one highly original with minimal intervention. "Is one of these 'wrong?'" he asked. He thought not; they're not rare and were simply what the owner wanted to drive. He added a third: a barn-find needing huge amounts spent. "We estimated £150,000," he said. "It went for £300,000." Once only a historically important car would merit rescue from dereliction. Now it is a way in for an owner who wants to know he's bought originality and isn't scared of costs.

All of which led on to what 'originality' means. Collector and restorer Daniel Ward pointed out that while restoring a very early Decauville he had to decide whether to remove a conversion added by a previous owner – Sir Henry Royce. Not an easy decision. Similar choices face anyone with a historic vehicle they wish to enter for events such as the Mille Miglia, particularly when the temptation of high-profile concours such as Pebble Beach looms large.

Of course it's far easier to build a new body than repair old metal, and today you can buy brand-new Bugatti Type 35 and Alfa 8C engines. As the money in the business spirals, more 'mysterious' vehicles appear, with ever-better replication. Toby Ward, chairman of the VCC dating committee, says he's more than once had to disappoint owners by informing them their

supposedly veteran car was manufactured three years ago. "It's hard telling someone their baby is ugly," he laughed. But the VCC has a new weapon – a hand-held spectroscope which can instantly analyse metal and compare it with known period items. Which was especially interesting to me: I'm writing this on the day of the Brighton Run, and last night I had dinner with a trio entered on the event. One is a restorer who has been offered a supposedly original Alfa 8C engine, resurfacing after years lost. The real thing would be a precious discovery, and my pal reckons he can tell from the crank if it's Thirties or new. But as the copiers get cleverer we'll need new technologies to distinguish their work.

The VCC device depends, of course, on a reliable database of known cars. The club has extensive records and expertise increases all the time, but as Toby Ward pointed out, this too can bring problems. "A lot of our early certificates are now plainly wrong," he admitted, "but for political reasons we won't be revisiting them." Imagine the squeals as a Brighton-worthy car suddenly crosses the 1905 date line and snaps from pension fund to chicken feed.

Closing the day, RAC chairman Ben Cussons asked if an international authenticity certificate was a desirable goal. You can get paperwork from FIVA, the MSA, clubs such as the VSCC and manufacturers, for example the controversial Ferrari Classiche scheme, which variously say a car is old, or one of ours, or safe to race, but there is no overall authority on originality. All, though, agreed that this task is simply too big for one body to police. Leave it to marque experts and disinterested historians, was the feeling.

So if there was a conclusion, it was only that these debates will bubble on as long as metal lasts. But while we all have our own positions – and I will always prefer a survivor with cracked paint, shabby seats and well-maintained running gear over any concours-winning 100-point restoration – it was a useful reminder that the other guy isn't *necessarily* wrong.

UNE PETITE **ERREUR**

It's never wise to answer back to a French policeman – even if he's made a 'gauche' mistake

A FRIEND HAS JUST RETURNED from a trip to his French holiday house, having had a narrow squeak with the *gendarmerie* – merely given a lecture, not escorted to the cash machine. It made me think of a touring holiday I once spent in France in my GTV6 Alfa, during which I used up all the brakes exploring the old public road Charade circuit at Clermont-Ferrand, (I'd like to claim that all that Ferodo went west due to my supreme talent behind the wheel, but most of it actually turned to smoke when a milk lorry drove across a crossroads I didn't see coming…)

Later, away from the track, I was 'making good progress' on a sweeping Auvergne road when I heard the breathless tootle that passes for a French police summons. Once I'd stopped and the van had caught up, two large black moustaches loomed at the passenger window and a tirade of angry French began – but aimed at my pal in the left-hand seat.

Suddenly Gendarme Deux, standing silently behind, nudged Gendarme Un and I heard him hiss "the other one's the driver – the one with the steering wheel!"

You've never seen a moustache go from bristle to droop so fast. I wasn't fined.



ROAD-BOOK FOR THE FUTURE

As the number of historic rallies blossoms, two organisations aim to tidy up the calendar

THE NEWS THAT TWO HISTORIC rally organisations, HERO and the Classic Rally Association, are to form a joint venture made me wonder who was taking over whom. But "nobody's taking over anyone," CRA's Jeremy Dickson tells me. "We've collaborated with HERO for a long time to avoid date clashes; this is a way of sharing some resources and planning ahead."

Thanks to new backing, HERO has shifted the business up a gear, with its own fleet of rally cars on top of core events such as LeJog and Scottish Malts. CRA is pretty much a two-man show with no formal office. Despite that, CRA runs major rallies – among others the Classic Marathon, which in 1988 confirmed historic rallying as a thriving new sport. That was created by Philip Young, now running the Endurance Rally Association which organises seriously long-distance bashes such as Peking-Paris. So tidying up the field makes sense. The two partner outfits will retain their own identities and events while sharing admin and offices. "Competitors won't see any difference," says Jeremy, "And from 2014 we'll look at perhaps alternating the big, complex events – maybe a Marathon one year, LeJog the next."

But there's one sure date for CRA: 2013 will be the 25th anniversary of the first Classic Marathon, and I'll be there. I navigated for the late Don Pither on that seminal first challenge, in his ex-works Sunbeam Tiger, and I still recall my ankles burning with the heat from 4.7-litres of Chrysler exhaust as we bellowed up and down gravelled Alpine passes. I've even dug out my original-issue 1988 Marathon sweatshirt ready for the day.

DREAM GARAGE

WHAT WE'D BLOW THE BUDGET ON THIS MONTH

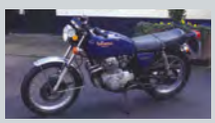


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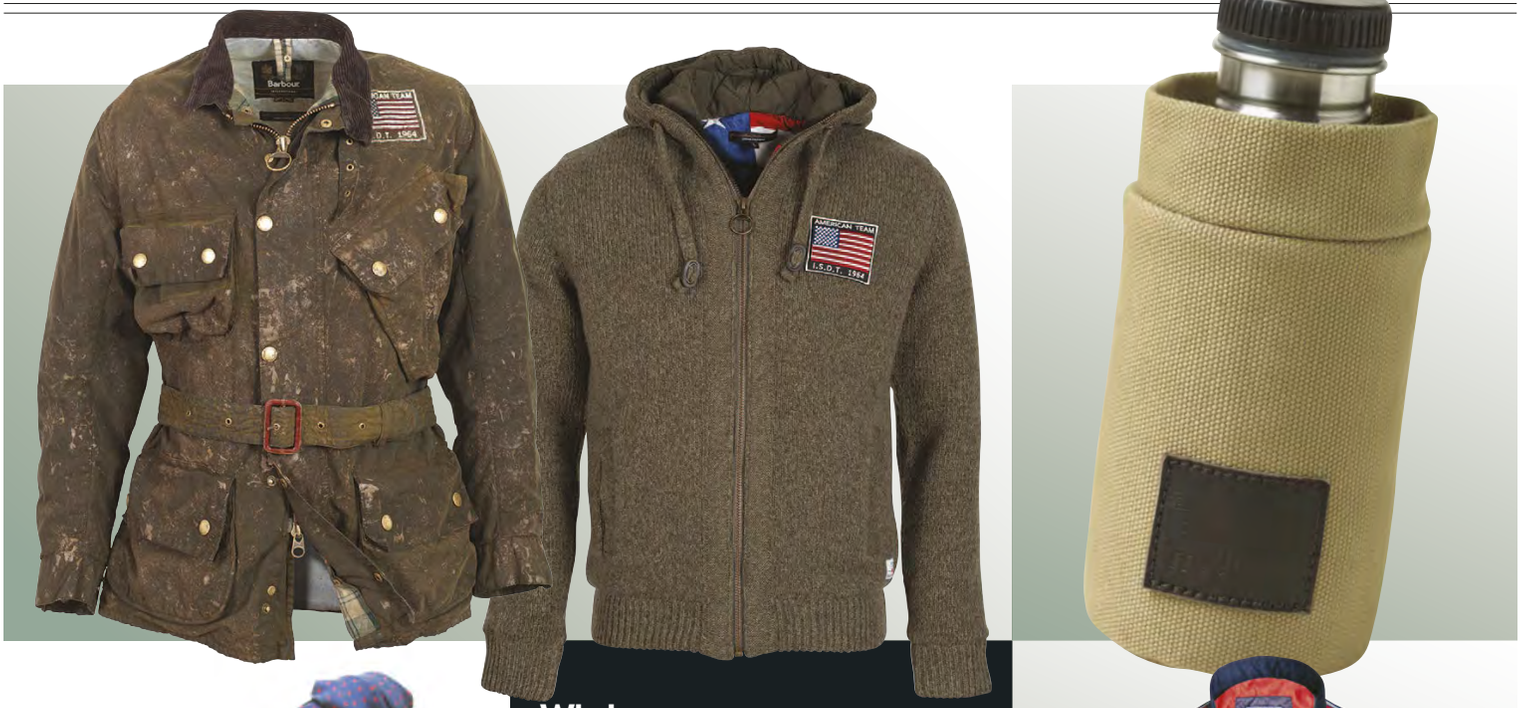
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CLASSIC TEAM LOTUS Gold Leaf team jacket, £90
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GOODWOOD hooded sweatshirt, £45
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GREYCAR 'Birkin Spot' pure silk scarf, £35.99
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Ex-Nuvolari Alfa Romeo 6C was sold for £784,000

Around the houses

NEWS FROM THE MAIN AUCTION HOUSES AROUND THE WORLD

– RM AUCTIONS –

As was the case in 2011 a Ferrari 250GT Tour de France stole the show at RM's London sale on October 31. The 1959 example at this year's auction contributed £1.96 million to the overall sale total of £14.26m.

Despite some claiming that the car line-up wasn't as spectacular as it has been in recent years there was an ex-Nuvolari, Tourist Trophy-winning 1930 Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 GS Testa Fissa, which went for £784,000, and a 1973 Stratos Stradale, which reached £249,000.

Two-wheeled machinery was well represented on the night, with a near-perfect 1926 Brough Superior SS100 Alpine Grand Sports going for £280,000 and a 1952 Vincent Series C Black Shadow for £78,975. Heady prices for the superbikes of those two eras.

Elsewhere there was a 1998 Ferrari F300 (£400,000), a 1970 Lamborghini Miura P400S (£397,600) and an ex-Paul McCartney 1964 Aston Martin DB5 Convertible (£632,800). Over £600,000 is a serious price to pay for a DB5, but rewind two years and Bond's example went for £2.9m at the same sale.

One car that didn't sell was the headline 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing even though it reached a high bid of £2.4m.

If you're looking for a small town runabout and don't fancy something like a Polo, G-Wiz or Fiat 500 then it's worth looking at RM's sale on February 15-16 in Madison, Georgia, when it is selling Bruce Weiner's collection of microcars. There's everything from a 1964 Peel P50 to a Mivalino, Goggomobile Transports, Voisin Biscooters and even a 1955 Kleinschnittger F-125. There are 200 microcars being offered for sale, making this a two-day auction.

– ARTCURIAL –

Automobiles sur Les Champs on November 11 was a "really good sale" according to Artcurial. It brought in nearly £2.9m for the French auction house and while many of the lots were road cars, there were a couple of interesting racers also sold on the day.

The 1976 Group 4 Lancia Stratos we featured in the December issue went for £288,600, which was below its top estimate of £320,000. The 1953 Arnolt Bristol, which was raced in several US rallies during the 1950s, sold for £126,219.

– BONHAMS –

The annual sale of veteran cars on November 2 provided proof, if needed, that this era of design is as popular as ever. All of the lots sold and they amassed £1.7m.

The world's oldest surviving Vauxhall, built in 1903, contributed £94,460 to the sale's total while the 1904 Wilson-Pilcher soared on to £203,100. The latter is thought to be the sole surviving example and was built by Walter Wilson, who patented the pre-selector epicyclic gearbox after World War I.

Back in October Bonhams hosted its Stafford sale for motorbikes, and in it was a 1929 Grindlay-Peerless JAP 500cc Hundred Model. We mentioned this rare item back in our November issue (it is an example of a type that lapped Brooklands at more than 100mph) and unsurprisingly there was plenty of interest. It eventually sold for £67,580. Eighty-seven per cent of the lots sold, yielding £1.33m.

Staying with motorbikes, on January 10 Bonhams is offering for sale a 1902 Rambler Model B. Over 110 years old, this bike is still in great condition and even has its original paintwork, making the pre-sale estimate of £35-50,000 look entirely achievable.

– H&H –

It seems there are serious prices being paid for motorcycles everywhere this year. In H&H's case it was a record price when it sold 'Old Bill', the 1922 Brough Superior SS80, on October 23. The hammer finally fell at £291,200, making it the most expensive motorcycle ever to be sold at auction. The bike, which was owned and raced by George Brough, is now part of a "significant overseas collection". No doubt it will be a popular centrepiece.

– GRAHAM BUDD –

On November 5/6 Graham Budd Auctions held a sale of sporting memorabilia, which included Nelson Piquet's 1990 Benetton Formula 1 race suit (£900) and a collection of 1930s drivers' autographs. Campari, Nuvolari and Seaman were all included and the collection fetched £720. However, Barry Sheene's 1978 Suzuki leathers, which carried an estimate of £10-12,000, failed to sell.

DEC 1 RM AUCTIONS *The John Staluppi Collection,* Cars of Dreams Museum, North Palm Beach, Florida, USA Tel: 001 (519) 352 4575

DEC 1 OLDTIMER GALERIE *100 Classic Cars & Motorcycle,* Toffen, Switzerland Tel: 0041 31 819 6161

DEC 3 BONHAMS *Collectors' Cars and Automobilia,* Mercedes-Benz World, Brooklands, Weybridge Tel: 020 7447 7440

DEC 4 COYS *True Greats,* Royal Horticultural Halls, London Tel: 020 8614 7888

DEC 5 H&H *Classic Cars and Registration numbers,* Newbury Racecourse, Berkshire Tel: 08458 334 455

DEC 6 DVCA *Classic Collectors Cars and Automobilia,* Templecombe, Somerset Tel: 01963 363 353

DEC 6-8 MECUM *Muscle Cars & More,* Kansas City Convention Center, West 13th Street, Kansas, USA Tel: 001 (262) 275-5050

DEC 18 BARONS *Annual Yuletide Classic,* Surrey Hall, Sandown Park Exhibition Complex, Surrey Tel: 023 8066 8413

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Reviews





THROUGH THE EYES OF FORMULA 1

PERSONAL IMAGES AND INSIGHTS FROM THE STARS OF F1 RACING

This unusual work is the brainchild of Formula 1 industry journalists Christian Sylt and Caroline Reid. Thinking it was time for a new approach to the subject of charity auctions, they came up with the idea of getting F1 drivers, designers, team owners and well-known people associated with the sport to contribute by taking personal photographs which would be signed and then sold.

Earlier this year the photographs went under the hammer at Coys in London, with all the proceeds going to the Great Ormond Street Hospital. By purchasing this book, or any of the photos featured as limited-edition prints, you will make a contribution to an excellent charity.

Nothing in F1 happens without Bernie Ecclestone's support, so it's pleasing that he not only writes a personal introduction to the book, but also supplies a couple of photos of his statues and another of a Turkish cart! This gives you an indication of the weird and wonderful subject matter that everyone contributed. Particular oddities include Daniel Ricciardo's quad bike and Adrian Newey's holiday snap of an Indian tractor, while a running theme seems to be racing people and their love of the canine breed: Mark Webber snapped his dogs, as did Sergio Perez and Christian Horner (above).

For a snapshot of what makes F1 people tick, this is an original approach. **DC**

Published by Dennis Publishing Limited, ISBN 978 17810 6108 4, £20



THE GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO MOTORING

by Vic Darkwood

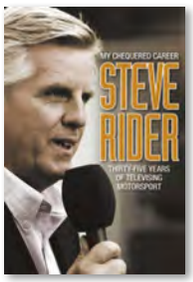
Although this may look like a republished Highway Code from the early days of motoring, it's far from that. As Darkwood admits on the back cover it's a "radical redrafting".

His argument is that we have lost some of the adventure, romance and pleasure that marked motoring's golden age; it has become "vulgar" and traffic jams are interspersed only with stops at soul-sapping service stations. This is his attempt to reintroduce some of that romance.

His view on the rules regarding when to use your car's horn reads as follows: "This is the most galling effrontery, especially if one happens to be the owner of a car of an older vintage equipped with a generous brassy hand hooter."

Anyone looking to learn the rules of the road in order to take their test will have to look elsewhere, but for everyone else it's an amusing read. **EF**

Published by AA Publishing
ISBN 978 07495 7275 4, £9.99



MY CHEQUERED CAREER
STEVE RIDER

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF TELEVISING MOTORSPORT

The measured assurance and wry humour that Steve Rider perfected as the host of the much-missed *BBC Grandstand* transfers seamlessly to the printed page in this autobiography dedicated to his love of motor sport.

Golf and rugby were specialities too, but it is in motor racing where Rider has made perhaps his biggest broadcasting contribution. His part in the Beeb's increasing interest in Formula 1 and the BTCC was significant in the 1980s and '90s, and his insight into the sport's TV boom is revealing. He switched sides to ITV to helm its F1 coverage from 2006, and now has a bit part on Sky F1. But his days as a high-profile frontman are behind him – which allows him to say exactly what he thinks of both the BBC and ITV here. Neither side comes off well, and Rider exposes a conceited and hypocritical world behind the cameras. It won't be comfortable reading for a long list of television execs. **DS**

Published by Haynes Publishing
ISBN 978 0 85733 273 8, £19.99



SECRETS OF THE SPITFIRE

by Lance Cole

This came to us because it refers briefly to Bill Boddy, but as anyone who likes cars also likes aircraft we soon found ourselves reading it and finding more automotive connections. Beverley Shenstone was the other man behind R J Mitchell's Spitfire fighter; he shaped the plane's signature elliptical wing, and, while focusing on the famous fighter, this is his life story. It's highly technical and very keen to fight an internet theory that the Spit copied a German plane's wing (firmly disproved by Cole), but in among the figures it answers the aero-ignorant like me who say 'but wasn't the Me109 just as good?'. Now I see that the German plane was a brutal F5000 to the Spitfire's F1 delicacy. Car shapers Andreau and Paulin widen the elliptical web in a book which if you skip a few facts gives a detailed picture of both man and plane. **GC**

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YOU WERE THERE

Scenes from Goodwood's Easter meetings this time, which always offered a diverse spread of racing, attracting all the big names of the day



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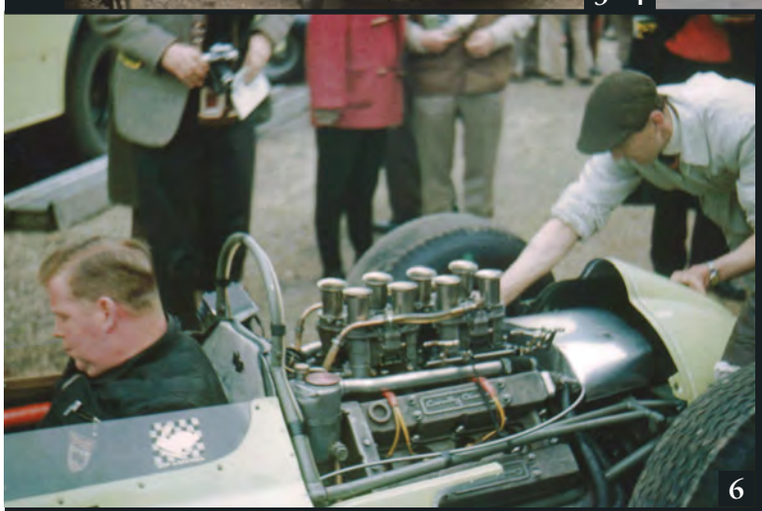


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ROB RENNIE

Mr Rennie was so keen on Goodwood that he'd cycle from Leatherhead – a 90-mile round trip. "My big thrill," he recalls, "was being invited to Rob Walker's workshops to meet Alf Francis and see Moss's Cooper being prepared for the Argentine GP – which he won! {1} Easter '62: Wolfgang Seidel warms up Porsche {2} Hugh Dibley's Lola on two wheels {3} 1964: Piper's GTO at pumps {4} '65: new lap record fell to Stewart's BRM {5} '62: Keith Greene's Gilby, fourth in Lavant Cup {6} Tony Robinson warms up Moss Walker 18/21 {7} Moss in UDT Lotus 19 {8} Trio of Walker cars at scrutineering in '61


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New BMC metal (below) supported the *Autosport* 3-Hours at Snetterton in 1962 when Jim Clark starred in tricky Lotus 23

BOYS WILL BE BOYS

What happens when you let some of the greatest drivers of a generation loose in 1100cc saloons?

One-make races, as regular readers might already have noticed, are not my favourite thing. Once in a while they were regarded by some motor manufacturers as a usefully headline-grabbing one-off promotion.

Fifty years ago, right at the end of the 1962 racing season, BMC ran just such an event for the Molyslip Trophy, a 15-lap supporting race to the *Autosport* 3-Hours at Snetterton. While the feature event was quite sufficiently unusual at that time, by starting in evening light and running into the dark, the Molyslip Trophy was for saloon cars, but not just ordinary, run-of-the-mill saloons. Instead, the field comprised a dozen of the then brand-new BMC ADO16s or Austin and Morris 1100s. At one stage early in the race Christabel Carlisle led the entire pack but the battle developed with Graham Hill and Michael Parkes making the running, their twin 1100s just inches apart, ferociously pursued by Graham Warner, Sir John Whitmore, Jack Brabham and the rest. Rally star Don Morley drove one of the cars, Jimmy Clark another, while Alan Hutcheson – a Riley 1.5 regular who had a somewhat controversial reputation at the time for aggressive manouevring, a precursor of almost any modern BTCC contender – was also in that unruly pack.

I guess within such a scenario someone had to draw the short straw, and in this case it was the Cooper F1 team's No 2 driver Tony Maggs who found himself, as one report put it, "…on the end of a multiple lateral evasive manouevre on the Home Straight. He was forced onto the grass where he went flat-out head-on into an earth bank put there to protect the flag marshals. The car was badly lozenged and the mountings for his safety harness were strained to the utmost, but his straps held him long enough(!) to ensure that he was completely unscathed. Scratch one 1100. Shortly after this Alan Hutcheson got into difficulties" – presumably he spun – "…and Jimmy Clark and Roy Salvadori, who had earlier been right up at the front but were delayed in the Maggs incident, became unavoidably involved in the ensuing shunting match, which resulted in their retirement…".

John Whitmore always had an ability to make the most out of low-powered saloon cars, never scrubbing off speed he could not retrieve, and as the 15 laps ran out he "got to the front, time and time again, and actually led across the timing strip on the last three laps, finally getting the decision from Graham Hill by little more than the thickness of a tyre".



George Philips

Graham Warner – head of the Chequered Flag dealership and racing team – and Michael Parkes finished third and fourth. Just in case it's of interest, John got his 1100 around the old Snetterton circuit in a fastest-lap time of 2 minutes 24.2 seconds, 67.65mph. From my recollection of the 1100 that's remarkable. I guess over Snetterton's ripples and bumps the self-levelling, roll-controlling Hydrolastic suspension must have worked pretty well.

That year's 3-Hour race itself fell to Michael Parkes's dark-blue Equipe Endeavour/Maranello Concessionaires-entered Ferrari 250GTO, but Jimmy Clark had starred in John Ogier's Essex Racing Team Lotus 23 despite progressively losing gears after stripping first as he popped the clutch at the start. As his car staggered off the startline, the potential dangers of a brand-new RAC diktat were highlighted.

The Snetterton pit straight was quite wide and starting grids there had habitually been

arranged to allow five cars abreast, 5-4-5-4. The RAC had already condemned that pattern as posing unacceptable risk, instead making event organisers line up their cars 4-3-4-3. But when the organisers for that year's 3-Hour race had applied for their permit, they had asked for an increase in the previous maximum number of starters. The RAC's response had been to allow the increase, while specifying instead a 3-2-3-2 grid pattern with a minimum 20 yards between rows. This placed the back row way down around the old Paddock Bend, which became the site of the Russell chicane in later years. The consequence that Jimmy's terrible start highlighted was that as he staggered off the startline he was being passed on both sides by cars which had been accelerating for several hundred yards before ever reaching him, so they were flashing past him within mere inches at a differential speed of 80-90mph and rising…

Jimmy later admitted that this had been one of the most terrifying experiences of his entire career. Had the track been wet and his Lotus hidden within a cloud of spray it could have been catastrophic. As it was he got away with it, and after just five laps he had taken third place and two laps later was poised to take the lead. But at Riches Corner the Lotus 23's fuel filler cap sprang open and a plume of spilling fuel followed the car down into The Hairpin. Jimmy tried to reach out and shut the cap, but with fuel splashing onto the rear tyres his car spun and he lost five places.

At 30 laps Jimmy had recovered to take the lead from Parkes's Ferrari, but as darkness fell he began losing more gears. Under braking into The Hairpin his Lotus was then suddenly, literally, lit up at the rear as leaked oil surged onto the hot exhaust and ignited, only for sharp acceleration to blow out the fire. Dick Protheroe's E-Type Jaguar briefly helped light the pits by catching fire there. But after three hours Michael Parkes won for Ferrari, amongst 24 finishers from 35 who had started. Just ten seconds before the maroon was fired to signal the finish, the PA system's main electrical cable was accidentally severed – so the event ended in silence, to widespread confusion amongst those hardy spectators who had stayed on.

Somehow, that 1962 3-Hour meeting had just about seen Snetterton at its best. Certainly Jim Clark would remember it, as indeed did Tony Maggs… and, no doubt, BMC's bean counters, too. One third of their brand new promotional race field had just ended up bent and one written off. So tell me, Hoskins, whose idea was this?



GP Library

Clark's last ground-breaking Lotus

JIMMY CLARK'S LUCK MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN THAT DAY at Snetterton as his Lotus 23 stripped first gear on the over-long starting grid, yet somehow everyone found a way past without smashing into him. We all know how the Scottish genius finally ran out of luck at Hockenheim on April 7, 1968, and I have just been reminded of it by finding a photograph of Jimmy with the last ground-breaking Lotus that he ever got the chance to drive – but never race – at Indianapolis during early testing two weeks earlier.

That ground-breaking Lotus was of course the gas turbine-powered four-wheel-drive Type 56, and here (above) is Jimmy standing with it between STP boss Andy Granatelli and experienced turbocar driver Parnelli Jones, with Firestone racing director Bill McCrary and Colin Chapman – arms around one another – to the right.

Colin often lampooned Granatelli to me as 'Groticelli' – because their long (and often lively) relationship would finally end in tears in 1969 – while Andrew Ferguson (long-time Lotus team manager) recalled how tense the Italian-American could become during the STP Turbocar period 1967-68, when he was locked in constant dispute with the Indy-organising United States Auto Club. For example, Andrew recalled how on one Chicago-to-Indy flight, Andy's airliner was forced to turn back for an emergency landing, prompting the STP chief to exclaim: "Kee-rist, ah've lived by the turbine and now it looks as if ah'll die by it!"

Jimmy had flown in to Indy direct from the Tasman Championship races in New Zealand and Australia. Andrew was on stop-over in the St Regis Sheraton Hotel on New York's Fifth Avenue while returning home from negotiating marketing rights for model Lotus cars with a new design rights outfit in California – who were paying the bill (Lotus-paid hotels were infinitely more modest). Jimmy called him there on the telephone. It was the first time they had talked for nearly two months, the last time having been during frantic negotiation over the politics of applying Gold Leaf tobacco livery for the first time to the Lotus 49T Tasman cars before the Lady Wigram race at Christchurch in January. They nattered for ages before Andrew suddenly realised the call had gone on for over an hour. He later wrote: "Suddenly it occurred to me that for Jimmy to talk this long was not in character.

"'Is this a collect call?' I asked.

"There was laughter at the other end. 'No. I'm just feeling generous,' he said, then after a long pause: 'Actually it's on the Indy garage bill so you'll pay for it in the end!'" A good Scot, indeed.

They discussed the two F2 races on Jimmy's schedule, Barcelona at the end of that week and Hockenheim the weekend after. Jimmy had the alternative offer of a drive in the Ford F3L at Brands Hatch in the BOAC 500, and would have been free to accept it, but Ford team chief Alan Mann had promised Jimmy that he would call him to confirm during the Tasman tour: "'…and I haven't heard a dicky-bird. I'll do Hockenheim instead…'"

When the call ended, neither knew it was the last time they would ever speak to one another.

Shades of Depailler on the Abu Dhabi podium

IN THE ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX, LEADER KIMI Räikkönen's testy response to his race engineer's radio offer to keep him informed of the gap from his pursuers will surely pass into Formula 1 legend.

I am delighted that the Finn's comeback victory is not, by and large, being added to the true Lotus tally accumulated between 1960 and 1987, for apart from the same lettering and the brand projection the modern Renault team based in Enstone has sweet Fanny Adams to do with Colin Chapman's great creation. Their 'Lotus' Grand Prix victory should statistically stand alone.

But I could easily imagine the self-possessed Räikkönen's testy "Leave me alone – I know what I'm doing" being uttered by the equally curt and abrupt Jochen Rindt if only ship-to-shore radio had ever been in use between him, out on circuit in the Lotus 49 or 72, and either Colin or another of Team Lotus's finest in 1969-70.

It's always a delight to see a cool, concentrated sporting winner expose hyped-up TV excitability for being just that. I wouldn't describe the race engineer's well-meant offer as being due to excitability, but David Coulthard's podium interview for global TV in Abu Dhabi certainly bordered upon it when he rashly encouraged Kimi to expound upon how "he felt" upon achieving this first Grand Prix win since he had only returned to Formula 1 at the start of the season. Fairly recently retired racing drivers really ought to know better, especially when a winner as cool as the unimpressable Finn stands before them. Kimi's refusal to gush for the cameras, or to enthuse for poor David, was entirely predictable and the Scot's evident discomfort – I must confess – was quite entertaining to watch.

In fact it reminded me very much of a genuinely quivering Jackie Stewart – who really was bursting with excitement – brandishing the TV microphone under Patrick Depailler's nose immediately after the little Frenchman had won the Monaco GP for Tyrrell in 1978. Jackie was thrilled not only because it was Patrick's maiden Grand Prix victory, but it was also the first for Tyrrell at Monaco since JYS himself had won there four years previously.

"Patrick!" Jackie bawled in such an excited Clydeside falsetto you could hear the exclamation marks: "You've just won the world's most glamorous Grand Prix! Tell us how you feel! This must be the greatest day of your life!"

And dear old Depailler, at that time the consummate Mr Cool, adopted a contemplative expression before he thoughtfully replied: "Nooo – I don't think so. I 'ave 'ad better…". I think he possibly mentioned the birth of his son…

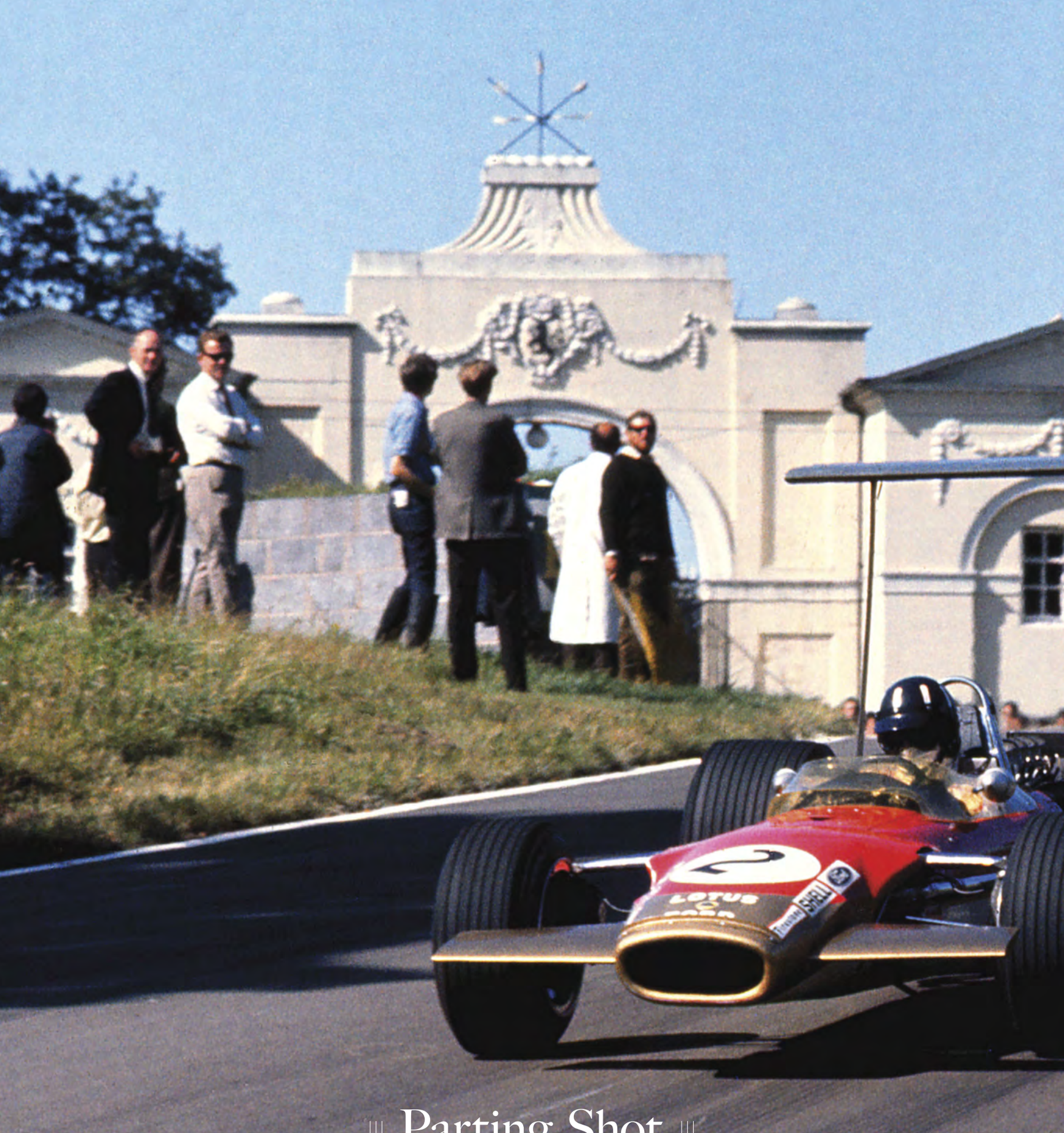
Note to TV interviewers, remember the measure of your man before asking bloody silly cliché questions. And let's hear it again for Kimi Räikkönen – a grown man's racer.



David Coulthard struggles on the Abu Dhabi podium (above); in 1978 Patrick Depailler (below) gave Jackie Stewart's excitement short shrift



LAT

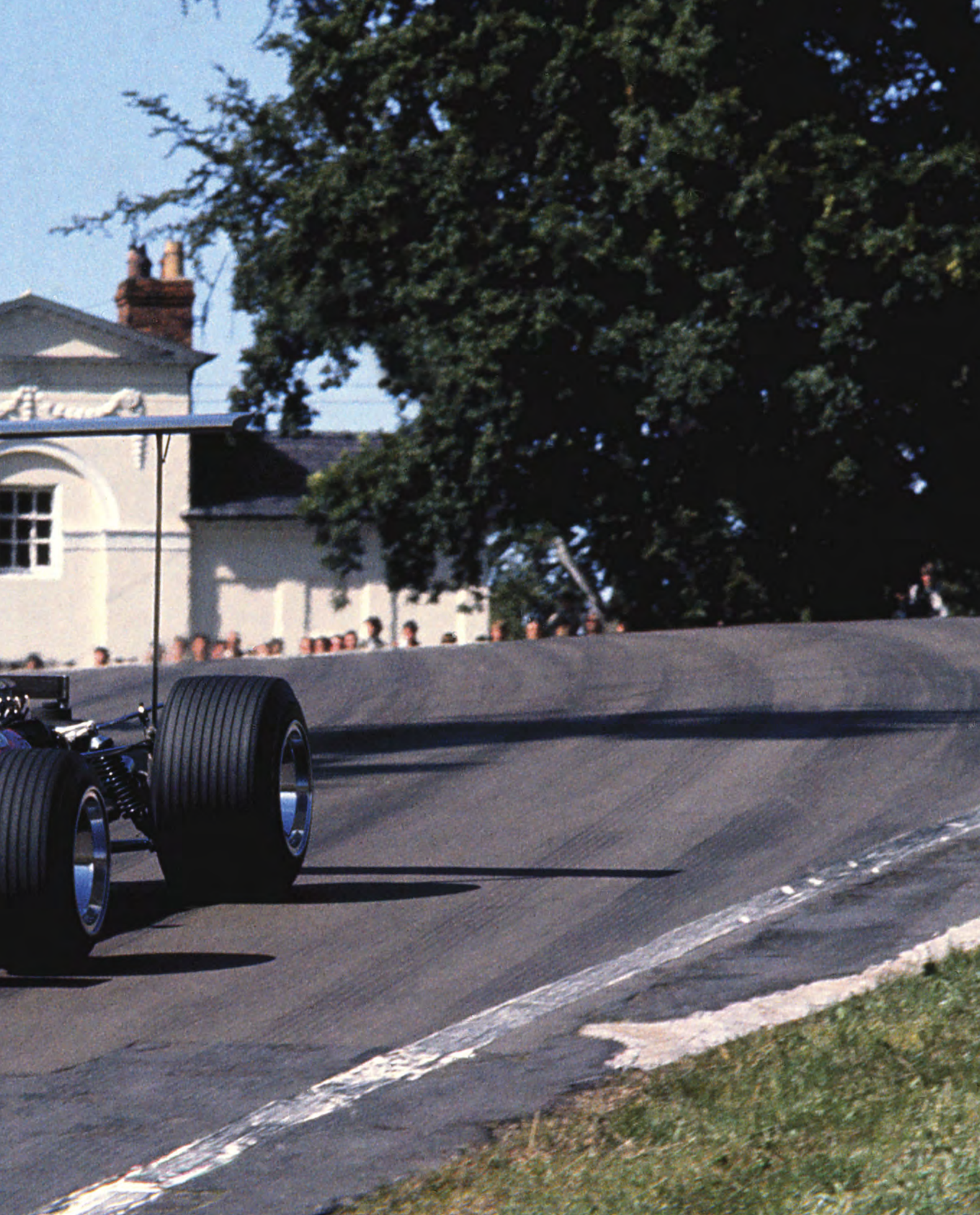


Parting Shot

International Gold Cup, Oulton Park, August 17, 1968

Graham Hill's high-wing Lotus 49B/R5 exits Lodge Corner on the plunge to Deer Leap. His chase of leader Jackie Stewart's Matra-Cosworth MS10 will come to nothing when his transmission breaks after seven laps, leaving victory to the Scotsman

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good word because Ferrari signed me for my first Grand Prix, at the end of 1965, at Watkins Glen [as substitute for the injured Surtees]. I'd never driven there before. They gave me a Dino with the V8; it felt real good and I got up to sixth, but my goggles blew down in the rain and I had to hold them on, steering with one hand, which put me right back. Ferrari seemed to like what I did, but Lodovico Scarfiotti drove the car in Mexico. It was dry there, and he did a better job. I raced a Lotus 33 for Reg Parnell in Mexico but it didn't go so well."

Earlier that year Ken Tyrrell had entered Bondurant for the Formula 3 race at Monaco in a Cooper T76-BMC. "'You're not going to be as quick as Stewart,' he told me, but he gave me the drive and I knew I could learn a lot from him."

Bondurant took pole for his heat and battled for the lead, in a very wet race, with Roy Pike.

"Yeah, I was road racing in the States, did well, but I always wanted to go up against the best in the world. Europe was where every American wanted to be, racing the top guys, and they respected you for that. I had some success and I learned a lot. And I guess that's how I got into the movies."

The movies?

"Well I was an F1 driver, right? So John Frankenheimer called up and said he wanted me to teach James Garner how to drive F1 cars for his movie Grand Prix. We had a lot of fun. We used the Jim Russell school in England for some of it – I'm not sure Jim liked me being Garner's teacher, but we got round it and Garner got pretty good by the end. That sequence at Monaco was very successful, I think. Later on we did some work with Paul Newman, Clint Eastwood and Tom Cruise." As you do.



Bob was reunited with his first winning Cobra at Goodwood

Sutton

"It was pouring down with rain and after about 14 laps I'd passed Peter Revson in a pretty crazy move out of the tunnel and was pushing Pike for the lead," he recalls. "Then he spun in front of me. I had to put it sideways, and we collided, which was a shame because I knew I could beat Pike that day. I was fired up because in the paddock the day before Pike told me he was the fastest driver out there and he won all the races.

"Well, I thought, 'We'll see about that,' and we very nearly did. Ken had said to me before the race: 'If you keep pushing him [Pike], he won't be able to stand it,' and Ken was right. In those days, if you won the Formula 3 race in Monaco you were assured of a Formula 1 drive, and that's what I wanted."

And he made it, in 1966, with drives for a privately entered BRM and for Gurney's new Anglo American Racers team. But his best result was a fourth, in the BRM at Monaco, and he finished the year with just three points.

This year Bob was a guest at the Goodwood Revival for the 50th anniversary of the AC Cobra. Predictably he was in seventh heaven, surrounded by some very familiar machinery along with many of his old rivals and buddies.

"Yeah, I guess sports cars were always my big thing and it was just great to be at Goodwood. The Cobra is my car, you know, and I drove car 98, the red one which was the actual Cobra I first won with in the 1960s. The new owner was pretty surprised when I told him. I tell ya, I felt like a kid again – the vibrations, the noise, the feel of those cars. The car wasn't set up the way I remember it, I told the guys who were running it, and...

A good-natured jab in the ribs interrupts his flow. It's his wife.

"Hey, Bob, *you* aren't set up the way you used to be either..."

"Anyway, the set-up on the Cobra. Ken Miles and I did so many miles of testing, we knew those cars inside out, back to front. Sitting in old 98 I looked around me, saw Dan Gurney, Jack Sears, all those guys, and I don't see them how they are now, I don't see the grey hair and stuff, I see them as I knew them back then. That's a kinda special feeling. So, yeah, Goodwood was just so great, to be back with those cars and all those friends, to see people like Jacky Ickx who was a hero of mine."

At this point wife Pat interjects again.

"His real hero is Juan Manuel Fangio. An entire wall of his office is just covered with pictures of Fangio."

"You know, he was standing there in Monaco when I crashed with Pike in that F3 race and afterwards he invited me to do the Temporada Series in Argentina. That was something, especially the old circuit in Buenos Aires."

Not everything in the life of Bob Bondurant has been quite so hunky-dory. In 1967 a steering arm broke on his McLaren in a Can-Am race at Watkins Glen. The car rolled; he was badly hurt, and he was told he'd probably never walk again. But while recuperating he had an idea.

"I thought about the teaching with James Garner and reckoned I could start a pretty decent driving school under my own name. So we started at Orange County Raceway and Nissan came in as a partner," he tells me, handing me a card for the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Arizona where Chevrolet and Goodyear are now his partners in what is still a very successful venture.

Now 79 years old, Bondurant only recently married the aforementioned Pat.

"Why don't you tell him about our wedding, honey?" she says to him but looking at me.

And what is interesting about a wedding? Well, it's about *where* they got married. We're back in Monaco again, and Bob is laughing.

"We'd been invited to the race and Pat went looking for a local wedding planner. I said, let's get married on the track. I always loved the place, so we went to see Bernie. 'It'll never happen, Bob', he said. 'It just won't happen, there's no way'. But hey, the circuit was open to foot traffic on the Friday, so we did it, got married out there on the track just before Rascasse. How about that? The following day I knocked on Bernie's door, told him we did it, and he was amazed. I told him, 'Bernie, you should know racers never give up.' I had to tell him, the pictures were already in the local newspaper, and there were a lot of people there."

As he says, racers never give up, and this one shows no sign of giving up any time soon. He has been called 'America's Uncrowned World Driving Champion' and while that may be something of an exaggeration, Bob Bondurant has rightly taken his place in the USA's pantheon of top-line international racers. Ⓜ