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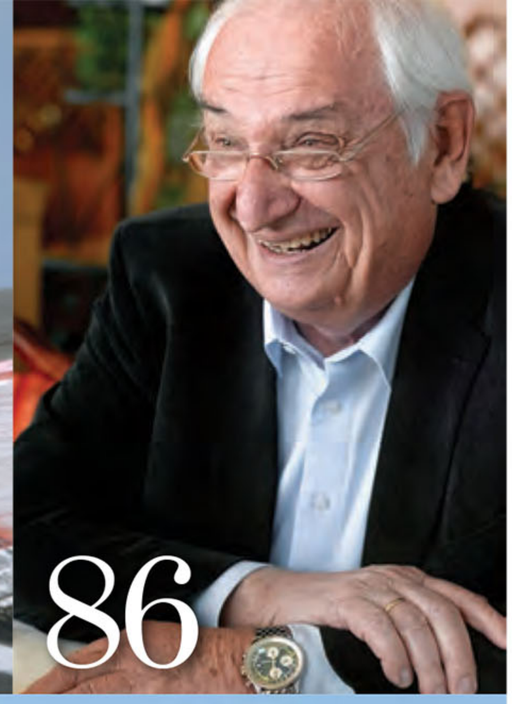


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MATTERS OF MOMENT

www.motorsportmagazine.com/author/dsmith



DAMIEN SMITH
EDITOR

'GREATEST SHOW ON earth', we proclaim on the cover. I'll admit to a little hyperbole, but judging by the mood of the moment I suspect most of you will forgive such enthusiasm for the World Endurance Championship and its Le Mans centrepiece, which we look forward to this month with obvious relish.

The Silverstone 6 Hours season-opener sprang into action just a few hours after the Chinese Grand Prix ended in Shanghai, and comparison was inevitable in the wake of one offering a thriller and the other a deflating stalemate. Deservedly, sports car racing soaked up the rays of praise that beamed down in the days that followed.

Our own Andrew Frankel was quick out of the blocks on the *Motor Sport* website, his opinion piece garnering a hearty thumbs-up for WEC and a raspberry for Formula 1 from the majority who took the trouble to respond. These are difficult times for Grand Prix racing, and the contrast to its buoyant long-distance cousin couldn't be starker. When Red Bull's own website then ran an article rubbing salt in the wound, the internet hummed with mischievous speculation: following Dietrich Mateschitz's repeated threats to quit Formula 1, was there a bigger agenda at play?

Of greater significance to me was a message from a man who graced both F1 and sports cars in a previous, simpler age. Vic Elford, one of motor sport's greatest all-rounders, doesn't tend to waste time getting to the point and was moved to put forth a few acute observations from his home in Florida.

"Just had the luxury of watching F1 China, WEC Silverstone and Indycars New Orleans on the same day," his email began. "F1 was OK, but pretty much predictable. Slightly more exciting than watching paint dry.

"Indycars… there is only one word for that race: what an absolute JOKE!

"But WEC…Wow.

"Forty years ago we had to look after the car in order to finish long-distance races. Now the cars are so bullet-proof they have to be driven flat out the whole way, and what racing it gives!

"What is really exciting from the spectator's point of view is the fact that Audi, Porsche and Toyota all arrive at their 1000-plus horsepower by totally different routes. Fabulous.

"Makes me wish I was 50 years younger!"

'Quick' Vic Elford in a Porsche 919? Now there's an idea.

❖

AHEAD OF BRITAIN'S GENERAL Election on May 7, what effect could a new government have on the world of motor sport? The question was posed by Motorsport Industry Association chief executive Chris Aylett. And Chris being Chris, he offered to answer it too…

Now, you don't care who I vote for, nor I you. But putting aside personal political inclinations, Aylett's observations as a seasoned lobbyist of parliament on behalf of motor racing interests warrant note.

"The business of motor sport struggled [in the UK] until 2010, with a negative relationship with government that dated back to Bernie Ecclestone and the £1 million 'bung' to the Labour Party before they came to power in 1997," he begins. It's a point worth repeating, particularly in reference to Silverstone's troubles to maintain the British Grand Prix, that Tony Blair's first crisis as PM left a stain on motor racing that made it untouchable in the eyes of most MPs and civil servants, following insinuations that Ecclestone's donation was in fact a bribe to prolong F1's tobacco advertising habit. "The damage it must have done to the industry is inestimable," says Aylett. "It was a tough period for the sport to be tarred by that case.

"When the new coalition government came in the civil servants were still cautious. In essence, it is for these reasons that the MIA exists, to lobby government on motor sport's behalf. Thankfully, this government did get on the case and did understand the industry. It has helped us prosper and we have had five years of growth. Employment, turnover, investment and expansion into new markets such as defence have all gone up in the motor sport industry. Now we want five more years of the same from the next government – whoever it might be."

He says modern motor racing's conscious move to fall in line with the wider automotive industry, particularly in this era of hybrids, helped its cause



The Silverstone WEC race underlined that Le Mans 2015 will be a close fight between Audi, Porsche (pictured) and Toyota







1961 FERRARI 250 GT SWB CALIFORNIA SPIDER Coachwork by Scaglietti; Chassis no. 2505 GT
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in Westminster. "This government was a good partner. They listened to the industry and incorporated our strengths as we hitched our wagon to the automotive sector, if you like – and our biggest calling card was our R&D on energy efficiency."

Aylett champions one policy in particular. "Take tax credits for R&D – that has changed the face of motor sport," he says. "Most of the turnover in motor sport companies is spent on R&D, because they don't actually produce very much [in terms of volume]. Everything they make goes back into R&D, and therefore those tax credits have been worth hundreds of millions of pounds to motor sport. Every British F1 team relies on them. The system wasn't designed for us, but we have been a great beneficiary."

F1 does a good job of appearing detached from reality. Turns out the truth behind the gloss means it's anything but.

❖

AT THE AGE OF 81, JOHN SURTEES is embarking on a new business venture. Throttle hand pinned back, right foot flat to the floor – pick your cliché.



He never has understood what it means to slow down.

The 1964 F1 world champion has owned the freehold of Kent kart circuit Buckmore Park for some time, but now he's stepped his interest up a gear by purchasing the business and assets of the operating company. Bill Sisley, a man who for decades has played a pivotal role in karting, not to mention the careers of such as Johnny Herbert, will retain a consultancy role.

I had to ask John: why?

"This isn't about finding racing drivers," he stresses. "Although if Buckmore happens to encourage talent, that's fine too. We'll keep developing the services it already provides, for six-year-olds to the corporates. But Buckmore also has a part to play in education. Environments are very important to youngsters. They need to be emotionally engaged with something to learn, and motor sport has that power. There are so many trades and professions in motor sport and we want to develop programmes as a way into engineering. We're talking to colleges in Kent, and others such as Oxford Brookes with whom I have a close relationship.

"There will be no changes to the name," he adds, "but there will be some subtle changes to the place. Also, I planned an extension some years ago and I'll be looking at that, too. Talks started back in 2005 when we rebuilt the clubhouse – although it's a different motivation since Henry died."

And there we have it. As with everything he does these days, the memory of his late son – whom he lost so cruelly at Brands Hatch in 2009 – is at the heart of this man's incredible energy. Most of us would have folded – and initially so did John.

What makes him stand apart is how he got back up again. Ⓜ



IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

60 years on: celebrating the Moss & Jenks Mille Miglia win

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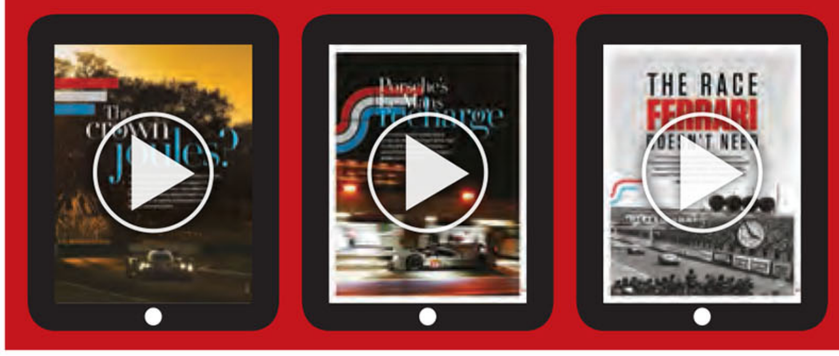
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LOSAIL, QATAR, MARCH 29
Valentino Rossi celebrates his first win of the MotoGP season, which began in the Middle East. The 36-year-old soon picked up a second, in Argentina, following a thrilling duel with defending champion Marc Márquez. It ended when the Spaniard clipped Rossi's rear wheel and fell.



LAT

BRISTOL, USA, APRIL 19
Matt Kenseth won a topsy-turvy, rain-affected NASCAR race that finished nine and a half hours after the scheduled start time. It was the first win of the campaign for a Toyota driver. The Hendrick Chevrolets of Jimmie Johnson and Jeff Gordon completed the top three.



LAT

LONG BEACH, USA, APRIL 19
Scott Dixon took his first Long Beach Indycar victory after passing the Penske Dallaras of Helio Castroneves, who was delayed by a slow pitstop, and series leader Juan Pablo Montoya. Dixon won by a couple of seconds, from Castroneves and Montoya.

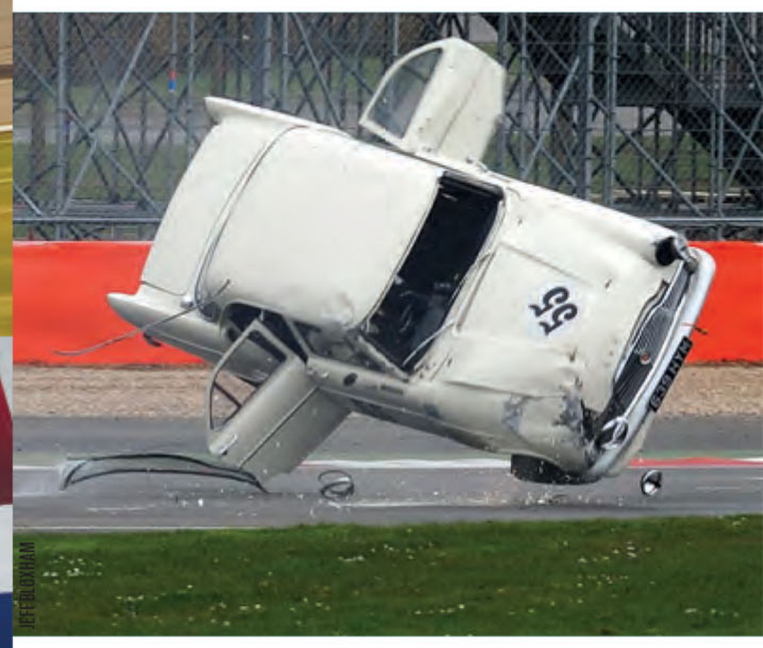


LAT

THE MOTOR SPORT MONTH

IN PICTURES





JEFF BLOXHAM

SILVERSTONE, ENGLAND, APRIL 4
Alistair Dyson's Ford Zephyr tumbled from the HRDC Touring Greats race after clipping a kerb, but the driver – who qualified third – was happily unharmed. After taking the shot, photographer Jeff Bloxham dashed off to cover an HSCC event at Thruxton...



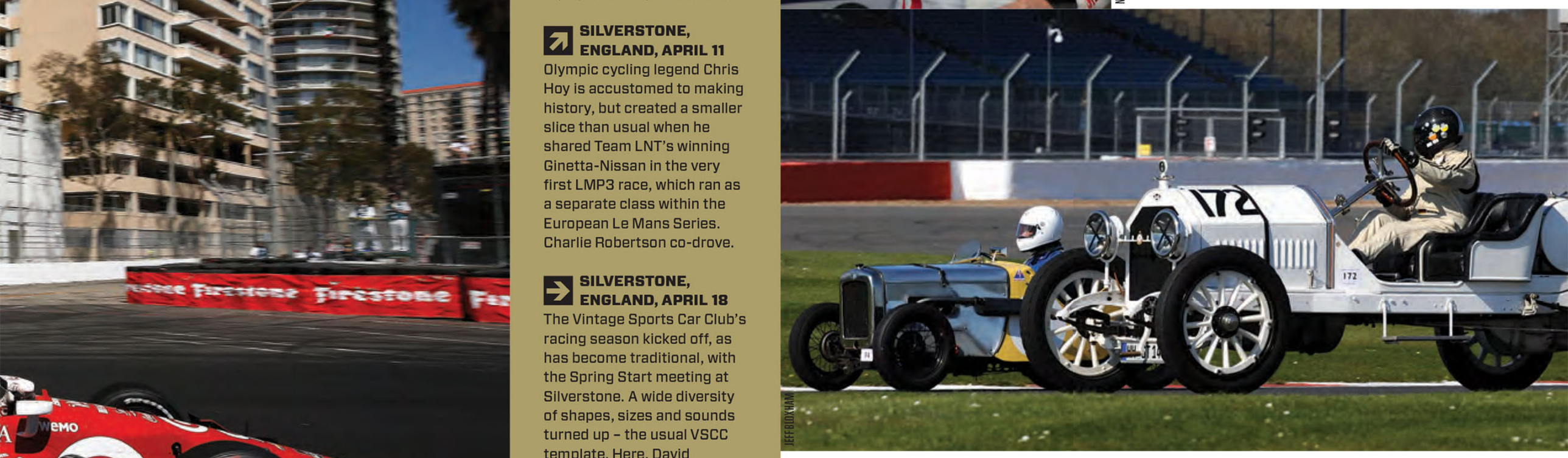
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DONINGTON PARK, ENGLAND, APRIL 19
Jack Goff (MG) and Sam Tordoff (BMW) come to grief during the second British Touring Car Championship meeting of the season, at Donington Park. Jason Plato (VW), Colin Turkington (VW) and Matt Neal (Honda) took a win apiece – and Neal took top spot in the points table.

SILVERSTONE, ENGLAND, APRIL 11
Olympic cycling legend Chris Hoy is accustomed to making history, but created a smaller slice than usual when he shared Team LNT's winning Ginetta-Nissan in the very first LMP3 race, which ran as a separate class within the European Le Mans Series. Charlie Robertson co-drove.

SILVERSTONE, ENGLAND, APRIL 18
The Vintage Sports Car Club's racing season kicked off, as has become traditional, with the Spring Start meeting at Silverstone. A wide diversity of shapes, sizes and sounds turned up – the usual VSCC template. Here, David Birnage's Austin 7 nips inside Rudolf Ernst's Stutz Bearcat.



JEFF BLOXHAM

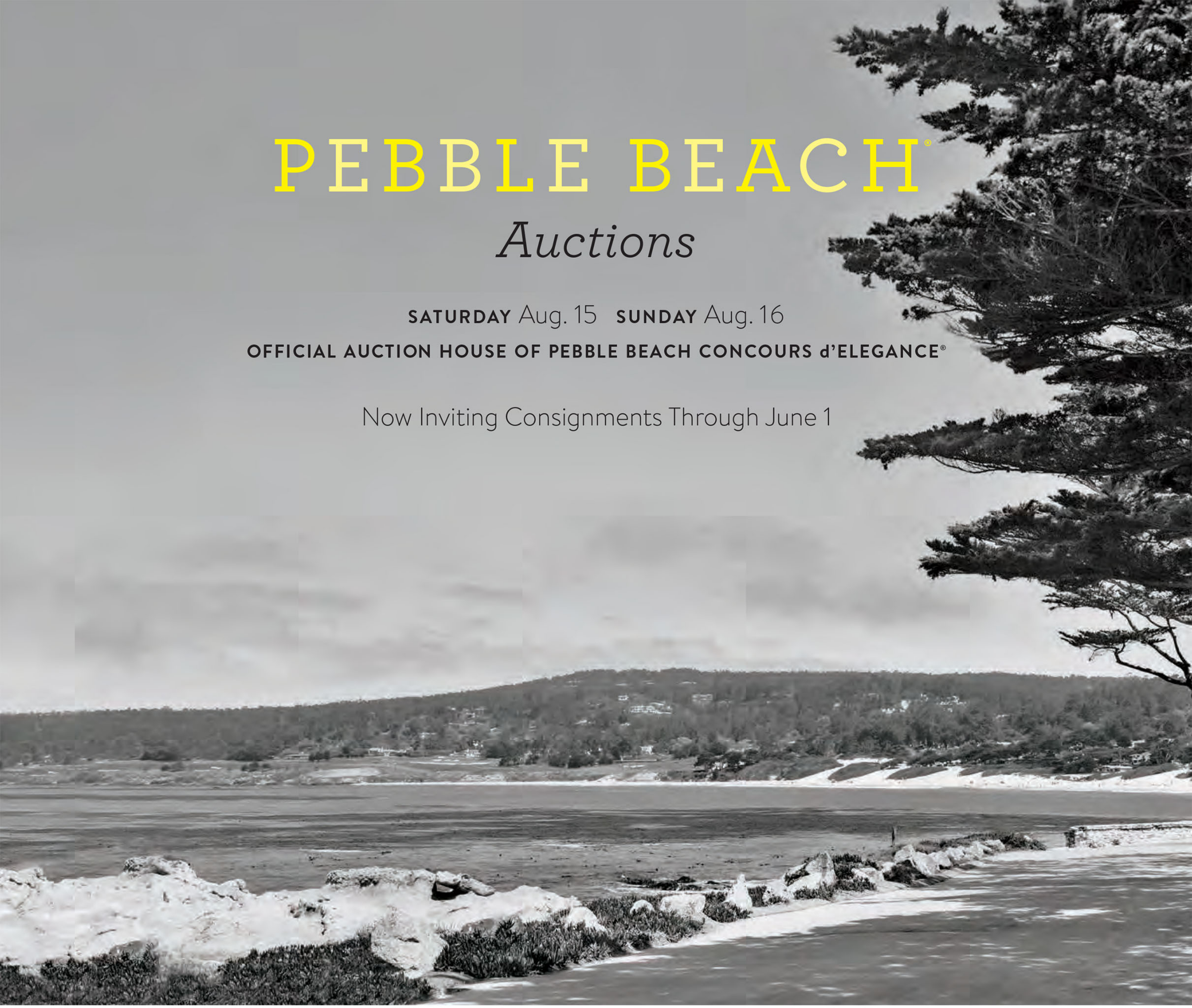
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REFLECTIONS *with*

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Nigel Roebuck

THREE-POINTED STAR

In Bahrain Lewis Hamilton scored his third Formula 1 win of the season for Mercedes, keeping clear of Kimi Räikkönen's late-race challenge to stretch his early-season championship advantage to 27 points. It took the Englishman's victory tally to nine from 11 starts.

LAT

REFLECTIONS *with* Nigel Roebuck

YOU WILL NOT, GOD KNOWS, NEED to be reminded that the General Election is almost upon us, and personally I cannot wait for the thing to be done, so weary am I of listening to humourless politicians and their empty promises of milk and honey should they get the nod on May 7.

Formula 1 will be in Barcelona on election day, and in the paddock the following morning there will doubtless be some debate of the result and its consequences for all – save Monégasque residents immune to such trifles, of course.

It won't be long, though, before the wider world is put aside, and F1 turns in on itself once more. Bernie Ecclestone, for example, will perhaps continue to wind us all up with his suggestion that Baku – that's in Azerbaijan – will be a fine replacement for Monza, all the while wondering why the hardcore F1 fan base is not what it was.

For the locals, the Barcelona weekend will be what is these days known as 'challenging', for while their hero – whose last victory came here two years ago – should be more competitive than in the races to date, he is assuredly not going to trouble the front-runners. Indeed, with Ferrari in the ascendancy, and McLaren-Honda struggling, it has recently been very much open season on Fernando Alonso, who could have been driving the one and is instead driving the other.

In Sepang Lewis Hamilton said he was glad to see Alonso back 'because you always want to compete against the best of the best', but of course Fernando was in no position to compete with anyone very much, let alone a Mercedes driver. Sundry folk came forth with their thoughts on the matter, some simply to gloat over his predicament, others to suggest that the Ferrari resurgence has much to do with his departure and Sebastian Vettel's arrival. I'd have thought there was a case to be made for James Allison and another hundred horsepower or so, but there you go.

Alonso is one of those drivers – like such as Senna and Mansell before him – who tends to polarise opinion, and in recent weeks not a few have been unable to pass up the opportunity to stick the boot in. Given its sources, most of the sniping has been inconsequential, but I'll admit I was surprised to see remarks critical of Fernando from Niki Lauda. He it was, after all, who in Montréal last year murmured to me, "Thank God Alonso is not in a Williams…"

According to Lauda, Alonso was 'selfish' in his years with Ferrari, and the team is now benefiting from Vettel's more relaxed approach to the job. It is of course not difficult to be like that when you're in a honeymoon period with a new team – Fernando himself was very much that way five years ago – and easier still when your car is right on the pace, but Red Bull people will tell you that Seb's behaviour, too, can deteriorate somewhat if things go awry.

The fact is that, to a greater or lesser degree, Grand Prix drivers are all like that. Perhaps, who knows, Lauda's remarks about Alonso were fuelled by the fact that he was being interviewed by an Italian newspaper, for they were negated only two or three days later – and by himself! In the aftermath of the Chinese Grand Prix, commenting on Rosberg's complaints about Hamilton's tactics, Niki came out with this: "Sure Lewis will drive selfish. These guys are egocentric bastards, and this is the only way to win a championship. It's the oldest thing…"

On the face of it, Lauda appeared to be saying it was fine for some drivers to be selfish, not so for others, but in fact the question is anyway academic, "You have to remember," Frank Williams once said, "that great drivers are *all* ruthless bastards! They might come across as nice guys, and quite often they are – until the other nice guy beats them…

"Back in the days when we had Jones and Regazzoni, there were no problems because Alan was the quicker of the two, and Clay – about the most unpolitical driver we ever had at Williams – knew it. But then we replaced him with Reutemann – a move that did *not* go down well with Jones! – and all the aggro started. Two bulls in one field, you see. Never underestimate the power of ego…"

The 'two bulls' scenario has only worsened, it seems to me, as Grand Prix racing has become more complicated. No one needs to be reminded of the conflict between Prost and Senna, but in their time F1 was still relatively simple. Yes, they had to do all manner of things long since taken over by software, but the cars themselves were comparatively straightforward, and there were far fewer silly little rules of which one could fall foul. Fundamentally it was still the same as it had always been: there's the car, there's the track, get on with it.

Now all manner of new 'ishoos' have been introduced, some by virtue of technology, some at the hand of 'health and safety', others yet by often misplaced attempts to enliven 'The Show'. It used to be the case, for example, that F1 tyre manufacturers simply built the very best product of which they were capable, but in recent times tyres have been seized upon as a simple means of making a race more unpredictable than it might otherwise be.

As I have said before, no blame attaches to Pirelli, who were asked by the powers-that-be to come up with artificially inefficient tyres, and accepted the brief. It still surprises me that they agreed to it, but they did, and in recent years 'tyre wear' has become of surpassing importance in the outcome of a Grand Prix.

When James Allison was at Lotus, the team may have struggled with budget problems (as it still does), but its cars were competitive, and a very high card in the hands of Räikkönen and Grosjean was remarkably light tyre wear. Now, in the Allison era at Maranello, it is a characteristic figuring strongly in Ferrari's attempt to get on terms with Mercedes.

In the early laps at Shanghai, Hamilton led from Rosberg, with Vettel and Räikkönen close at hand, and after 20 laps or so Nico was on the radio to his team: "Lewis is driving very slowly – speed him up…"

In relative terms, Hamilton was indeed driving slowly, and afterwards he said that – aware of Ferrari's advantage in this regard – his priority had been conserving his tyres. In the mind of Rosberg, though, what Lewis was doing was 'backing him up' to Vettel, who wasn't very far away. If he had closed up on the leader, he said, and got into his 'dirty air', his own tyres would have been swiftly destroyed.

Undoubtedly that was true, and if Hamilton's priority had been trying to ensure a Mercedes 1-2, he would have obeyed an instruction from the pits: "Lewis, we'd like you to pick up the pace a bit…" As it was, not surprisingly uppermost in his mind were his own interests, and he chose to ignore it, although he did respond a few laps later, when advised, "Lewis, pick up your pace – or we'll pit Nico first…"

If I had sympathy for Rosberg's plight, and could see his point, the inescapable fact was that Hamilton was trying to win a Grand Prix and had earned the right to control it by taking pole position, and leading from the start.

At the post-race press conference Nico suggested that Lewis had been thinking only of himself, rather than putting the interests of the team first, but racing drivers have done that since records began. Perhaps *in extremis*, when a world championship is at stake for their team-mate, they will sacrifice their own interests – as with Schumacher and Irvine at

Sepang in '99, or Massa and Räikkönen at Interlagos in '07 – but in the normal course of events your team-mate is *de facto* your major rival: as FW said, ego is a mighty powerful thing. It's not *impossible* for two bulls happily to co-exist, but offhand I can't think of any since Scheckter and Villeneuve 35 years ago.

So, did Hamilton drive 'selfishly' in the early laps at Shanghai? Of course he did, and we should have expected nothing else because that's what racing drivers do. On the one hand, he was saving his tyres, and on the other it was hardly against his interests to back Rosberg up to the Ferraris: Nico had virtually matched him in qualifying, and – as has been the case for more than a year now – constituted his major opposition.



German flag waves in Shanghai... as a German flags. Hamilton led while Rosberg gave vain chase

MERCEDES-BENZ

As things stand, though, that situation could be changing. Like many others, I reckoned that Rosberg would be even more of a challenge to Hamilton this year than last, but so far we have been proved emphatically wrong. Over the winter changes in Lewis's life – the end of his relationship with Nicole Scherzinger and the split with Simon Fuller's 19 Entertainment – might once have destabilised him, but in fact the very opposite appears to be the case. This season there seems to be an armadillo shell around him, a cheerful insouciance rarely in evidence before, and his driving is even better for it. More than any time in his career, he feels he is holding all the cards, and maybe he is.

For one thing, Hamilton is more of a street-wise character than Rosberg. He is fond of saying that he prefers to let his driving do the talking, but that is not always the case. After the controversy in Monaco qualifying last year, when Nico's trip down the escape road at Mirabeau robbed Lewis of his final shot at pole, he talked at some length, and it was the same at Spa, when a brush between the two Mercedes drivers left him with a puncture and out of the reckoning.

Granted, the outcome of that incident was disastrous for Hamilton, and it was the consequence of Rosberg's error, but I think Spa marked a turning point in their rivalry, both personally and in terms of the Mercedes team's attitude towards them. "Lewis came out of the team's post-race meeting," said Martin Brundle, "and announced to the world, 'Nico admitted he'd done it deliberately…' Now that was something of a play on words, let's say: I think he realised he could turn a negative into a positive – he's brilliant at playing the victim, just as Senna was. He'd seen and heard Rosberg being booed on the podium – which quite clearly ripped the guy to shreds, as it would most people. I also thought the instinctive reaction of Toto and Niki straight after the race – with the adrenalin flowing – was very telling. Nico's quite a sensitive soul, isn't he? Look at his body language at the next few races…"

In this PR-dominated age, I have been pleasantly surprised by the openness of Mercedes personnel, by their willingness to discuss topics that in other teams would be kept under wraps. Just as, during his years of running McLaren, Martin Whitmarsh was always unusually frank in response to questions, so the same is true of Toto Wolff, to say nothing of N Lauda.

After Spa both were harsh in their public criticism of Rosberg, but if he had undeniably ruined Hamilton's day, it wasn't as if he had deliberately pushed him off the road or whatever: as Alain Prost pointed out, it was a simple error of judgement such as we see in the course of any GP weekend. And although Nico came away from Spa with 18 points to Lewis's zero, in the longer term he was the loser that day. Mercedes people lay great emphasis on their wish to be even-handed, and in terms of equal equipment and freedom to race, no one doubts them – but at the same time many feel that, for all Rosberg's German nationality, fundamentally Hamilton is the favoured son.

"Last year in Abu Dhabi, for the championship decider between them," said Brundle, "Nico's car was in trouble from the start, and afterwards one of the senior team members said to me, 'That was our worst nightmare – but thank God it wasn't Lewis's car…' Mercedes knew that both world championships would have been buried in a flood of negativity if that had happened, and I'm pretty convinced they wanted Lewis to win the title – he's box office, isn't he?"

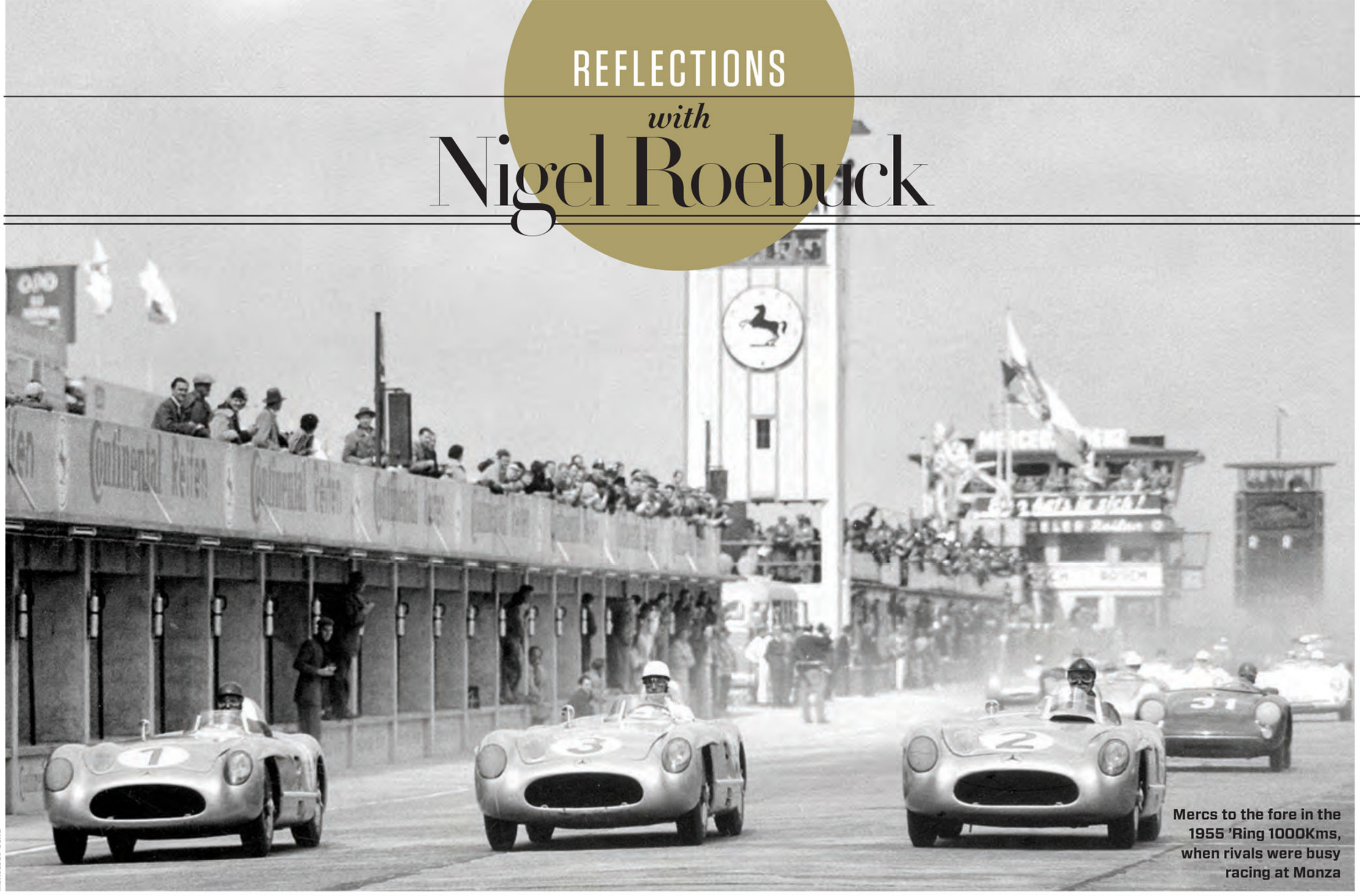
Yes, he is, just as Senna was, and today I can see in Rosberg's demeanour echoes of Prost those many years ago. Many a time Alain had cause to feel aggrieved by Ayrton's behaviour on and off the track, but as soon as he opened his mouth he was dismissed as a whinger, just as was Nico after Shanghai. 'As a rule of thumb, keep schtum' is a sensible motto for any Grand Prix driver: speaking out almost never works out for you.

All I'm saying, I suppose, about the Hamilton-Rosberg partnership at Mercedes is that the team, in its refreshingly candid way of dealing with the press, has always appeared rather more reluctant to be refreshingly candid about Lewis than about Nico. After Bahrain qualifying, for example, Lauda was blunt about the need for Rosberg to up his game: "The six-tenths gap between Nico and Lewis is worrying…"

Had he had the facts to hand – and were he not the polite lad that he is – Rosberg might have offered the rejoinder that in 1984, when the two McLaren drivers alone were fighting for the title, his team's non-executive chairman was on average 1.3sec slower than Prost in qualifying…

In turn Niki might point out that he still won the championship by half a point, and he would doubtless argue – rightly – that the times were different, that overtaking was more straightforward in those days, that qualifying was less crucial than now. It has been in qualifying, especially, that Rosberg has disappointed thus far in 2015, for it was on Saturday afternoons that he particularly excelled last season, taking many more pole positions than Hamilton.

REFLECTIONS *with* Nigel Roebuck



MERCEDES-BENZ

Mercs to the fore in the 1955 'Ring 1000Kms, when rivals were busy racing at Monza

So has the new, carefree Lewis got even better this year, or has Nico regressed – or is it a bit of both? That will become clearer as time goes on. Sooner or later something will go badly awry for Lewis, because that's in the nature of motor racing, and just how much his approach has truly changed will be apparent in his reaction to it. If he remains unflappable, the rest – not least his team-mate – should be very afraid.

Still, whether stung by Lauda's words or not, Rosberg will have taken heart from the race in Bahrain, for although Hamilton won yet again there were clear signs of the raw combativeness Nico showed through most of 2014. As well as that, Ferrari is unexpectedly in the Mercedes neighbourhood these days, and although Lewis may be already looking like a shoo-in for the championship, I'd leave it a while before putting any money down.

❖

WHEN STIRLING MOSS HAD HIS DAY OF DAYS, AT MONACO on May 14 1961, the Ferraris of Richie Ginther, Phil Hill and Wolfgang von Trips finished 2-3-4 behind the Rob Walker Lotus 18, and back in Maranello Enzo did not take it well. There was, though, a glimmer of satisfaction for him, for that same afternoon a further 'sharknose' Ferrari, in the hands of an Italian driver – Giancarlo Baghetti – won the non-championship Naples Grand Prix. Yes, that's right, two Formula 1 races on the same day.

The Old Man admired Moss as much as he had Tazio Nuvolari, and resolved that he could be without him no longer. At the end of the year Stirling indeed agreed to drive a Ferrari – to be entered, remarkably, by the Walker team – in 1962, but the plan sadly evaporated with his career-ending accident at Goodwood on Easter Monday.

That day he was driving a Lotus entered by the British Racing Partnership, and his patron was not even present, instead watching his own Lotus, driven by Maurice Trintignant, win the Pau Grand Prix.

Again, two Formula 1 races on the same day, a phenomenon inconceivable, even laughable, today. There was, however, a time when F1 cars were affordable and therefore plentiful: if, in 1961, Monaco and Naples were run the same day, so also were Zandvoort and Crystal Palace. Perhaps the most extreme example of date clashes, though, came the following year, when on Whit Monday British F1 fans were spoiled for choice: were they to go to Mallory Park, where John Surtees beat Jack Brabham and Graham Hill – or to Crystal Palace, where Innes Ireland won from Roy Salvadori and Bruce McLaren? Two F1 races on the same day in the same *country*…

Back then the international calendar overflowed with significant race meetings – hence, on April 7 1968, many of us were at Brands Hatch for the BOAC 500 when we learned of the death of Jim Clark in a Formula 2 race at Hockenheim.

Thirteen years earlier, two major sports car races were scheduled for the same weekend, and while Ferrari and Maserati were committed to Monza, so equally naturally Mercedes opted for the Nürburgring.

At his hotel Stirling Moss, down to race one of three factory 300 SLRs, wrote up his diary on Thursday, May 26. "The circuit feels very slippery. Four laps only. My best was 10min 19sec, Kling 10.19, Juan 10.16. Also did a lap in the GP car. Later a lap with Uhlenhaut in my 220. The SLR is overgeared, 2nd too high. Later, food at Adenau with John Fitch. Bed at 1am."

News travelled less quickly in those days. At some point later Moss added a footnote: "Heard the awful news that Alberto Ascari was killed in practice at Monza."

The previous Sunday, at Monaco, Stirling had written this: "Fangio then broke, and I led until the 81st lap, when I broke while 1min 38sec ahead of Ascari – who went into the harbour! Later called at the hospital and saw Alberto. Then reception and casino. Bed at 3am."

Two diary entries, then, covering a four-day period in which Ascari miraculously escaped one accident, then died in the other. And because we are coming up on the 60th anniversary of his death, he – and that time – have been much in my thoughts of late.

Ascari loved England and the English, and was hugely popular here, so I find it astonishing that there has never – in our language – been a definitive biography of one of the motor racing gods, considered faster than Fangio by Mike Hawthorn, believed *better* than Fangio by Denis Jenkinson. On occasion our sport has a way of evolving opinion into sacred truth, and I'll confess to being surprised when Jenks first came out with this, not least because in most people's minds to suggest any

contemporary superior to Juan Manuel amounts to heresy, just as years later Jackie Stewart would discover when he declared another driver – Prost – better than Senna.

It was Ascari's blend of pace and finesse that Jenks so much admired. "When I watch drivers," he said, "I sometimes think to myself, 'Would I sit on a chair at the exit of a fast corner with him on the track?' In almost every case the answer is no, not a chance, but with Ascari I'd have done it without thinking – even if he'd shaved my toes every time, I'd never have worried he was going to run over my foot.

"Of course Fangio was a great driver who had a lot of incredibly good qualities, but I always thought Ascari was better: in equal cars he could beat Fangio whenever he wanted. In my estimation he was the greatest driver of the '50s, and he belongs in my 'pantheon' list."

If it has been poignant, to say the least, recently to see a couple of world champions, Fernando Alonso and Jenson Button, starting Grands Prix from the back of the grid, consider the plight of Ascari in 1954: as with Alonso this year, but for a very different reason, Alberto – then the *reigning* world champion – wasn't even on the premises when the Formula 1 season kicked off in Argentina.

> "ASCARI WAS BELIEVED BETTER THAN FANGIO BY DENIS JENKINSON..."

For two years he had been essentially unbeatable. In 1952 he missed the opening *Grande Épreuve*, at Bern, for the very good reason that he was that weekend qualifying his 'Ferrari Special' for the Indianapolis 500, but thereafter he was undefeated. The '53 season was a mite less successful, with 'only' five victories from eight Grands Prix, but Ascari consummately kept his title, and only the name of Fangio was spoken in the same breath. Given that Ascari and Ferrari were considered synonymous, as would be Clark and Lotus a decade later, there was considerable shock in racing circles when it became known that they had come to a parting of the ways.

The problem was that Enzo, not for the first or last time, was threatening to withdraw from racing, complaining that he needed more financial support from an ungrateful country to which his cars had brought much glory. When Ascari and his close friend – and fellow Ferrari driver – Luigi Villoresi went to see him late in December 1953, he refused to commit to any firm programme for the following year, yet insisted that Alberto immediately sign a new contract. Ascari, who had told Ferrari of his offers from elsewhere, quite reasonably found this unacceptable. As well as that, in an era when even the top Grand Prix drivers were not highly paid, he had long been dissatisfied with his cheques from Maranello: he had been doing all the winning, after all.

Although driver and employer had always been close, there was no way out of a quite unnecessary impasse: Ascari, while wishing to be paid rather better, had no great desire to leave Ferrari, and the Old Man, for all his threats to withdraw, was always going to stay in racing, so why did he risk losing his star turn?

In the Monza paddock long ago an Italian friend introduced me to Villoresi, and on my behalf asked him if ever he had been able to shed any light on the matter. "He says that, as in so many matters with Enzo Ferrari, he never had any clue, and he still doesn't!"

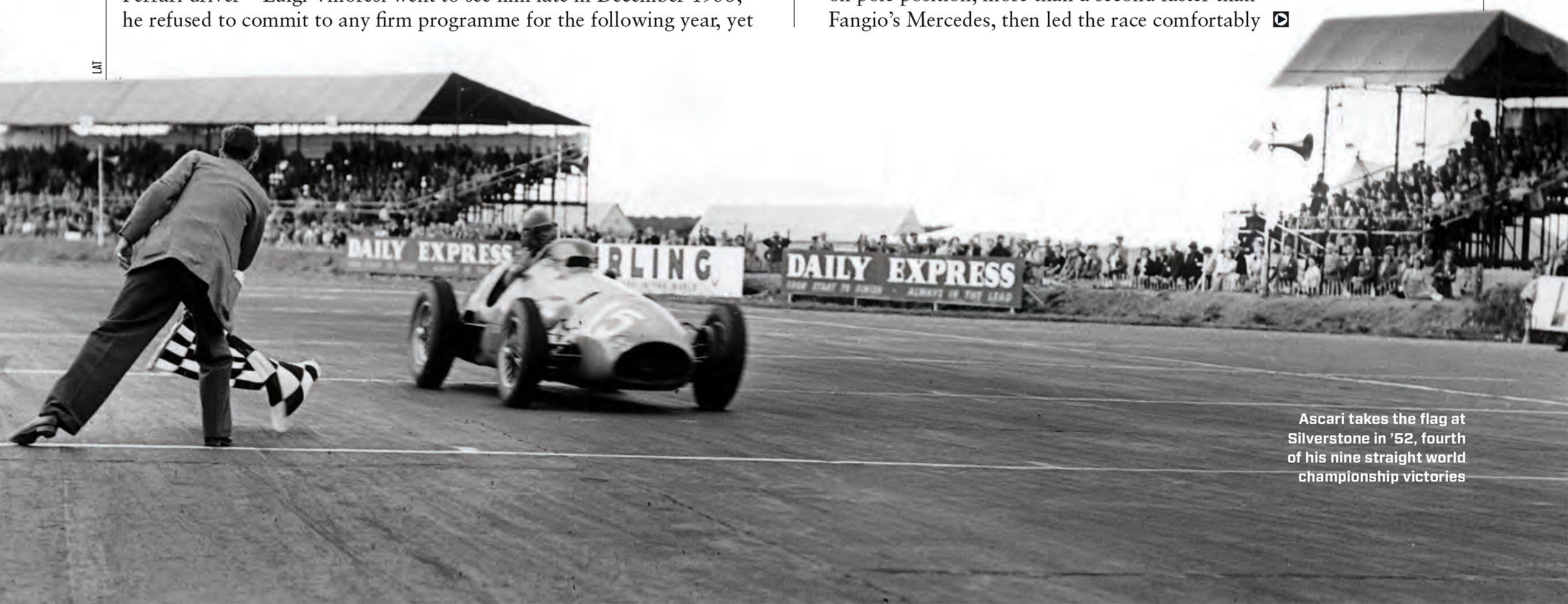
Whatever, Ascari and Villoresi at once went to Turin, where they signed contracts with Gianni Lancia, whose company was about to enter F1 with a car designed by Vittorio Jano. Ascari first drove the D50 in February, by when the first GP of the season had come and gone, and in the end it was considered race-ready only by the time of the last event, at the Pedralbes street circuit in Barcelona.

Having been long accustomed to racing most weekends, Ascari had therefore little to occupy him in 1954. Periodically he tested the D50, and although he hated the Mille Miglia to the point of excluding it from his Lancia contract, he agreed to replace the injured Villoresi in a factory D24, and readily won.

Following Fangio's mid-season switch from Maserati to Mercedes, Alberto was invited to drive a 250F at Reims, where he was on the front row, and at Silverstone where – shades of Alonso and Button – he started from the back, Maserati having arrived too late for official practice. In neither race, though, did he finish, and it was the same at Monza, where he made a one-off return to Ferrari, and was in the lead when his engine let go.

Finally the Lancia made its public entrance in Spain, and Ascari put it on pole position, more than a second faster than Fangio's Mercedes, then led the race comfortably ▶

LAT



Ascari takes the flag at Silverstone in '52, fourth of his nine straight world championship victories

before retiring with a slipping clutch. The Grand Prix season was over, and all Alberto had to show for it were a point for fastest lap at Pedralbes and half of one for a shared fastest lap (with six other drivers!) at Silverstone, where timing – believe it or not – was to the nearest second…

For all that, there was good reason to feel optimistic about the year to come. If Mercedes remained firm favourite for 1955, Lancia seemed most likely to trouble them. Ascari crashed on someone else's oil in Argentina, but was leading when it happened, and then won a couple of non-championship races at Naples and Turin before splitting the Mercs of Fangio and Moss in qualifying at Monaco.

In the race, of course, Alberto had his celebrated flight into the harbour, the Lancia going out of control – on oil, from Moss's blown engine – at the chicane, then charging through the flimsy barriers and into the sea. There was immense relief when he came to the surface, and began swimming towards a rescue boat. Apart from a cut nose he was fine, and after a precautionary night in hospital went home to Milan.

On the Thursday, though, Ascari was killed at Monza, taking an impromptu run in the new Ferrari 750S he had originally been down to share with protégé Eugenio Castellotti in the Supercortemaggiore sports car race that weekend.

Much has been made over time of the unsettling coincidences apparent in the deaths of Alberto and his father Antonio, who had lost his life 30 years earlier, in the 1925 French Grand Prix, also at the age of 36, also on the 26th of the month.

More striking to me, though, is that the younger Ascari, an intensely superstitious man, always regarded his helmet as a lucky charm, so that Villoresi and others were astonished immediately before his fateful run to see him donning Castellotti's helmet. He had, after all, gone to Monza that day simply to watch Eugenio test a brand-new car; as evidenced by the collar and tie, there had been no intention to drive.

A useful new rule from the FIA has been introduced this season to torpedo some drivers' puerile habit of turning up every fortnight with a different helmet design, confusing for commentators and spectators alike. At the time of his death, Ascari's one and only helmet – pale blue, without a peak – was being repaired, its chin strap having been damaged at Monaco.

The accident occurred at Vialone, later renamed 'Ascari' and these days preceded by a chicane, but then a flat-out left-hander. Although a mistake there, for a driver of Alberto's ability, was rightly believed out of the question, the cause was never definitively established.

Certainly that particular Ferrari, which became known as the 750 Monza, was a car unloved by its drivers. According to Paul Frère, it was extremely unforgiving, and Phil Hill went further: "I always thought it was a malevolent car – if you took your eyes off it, it would kill you, sort of thing…"

In the opinion of Hawthorn, and supported by the evidence of marks on the track, the likelihood is that the Englebert tyres – too wide for the wheels on which they were mounted – simply tucked under as the Ferrari came through the corner, allowing the rims to gouge into the road, causing the car to somersault.

Whatever the origin of the accident, though, Ascari – that blend of fierce competitor and gentle man – was gone, and Italy still awaits its next great Grand Prix driver. As a young kid, I remember feelings of disbelief when I heard the news, having only just seen newspaper photographs of his harbour plunge in Monte Carlo and marvelled at his survival.

The vast majority of today's fans were of course not around in 1955, so it will be difficult for them to comprehend how perilous motor racing was in those times. As Stirling Moss said to me once, "Unfortunately it used to happen quite often, and I lost a lot of friends, but what people have to understand is that the world was very different in those days – for one thing, the war wasn't long over. Racing was dangerous, but our concern was always for the spectators – we knew what we were doing when we got in the car, but it was unacceptable for spectators to be put at risk. *Driver* safety, though, was never discussed – it never entered anyone's head that racing *could* be safe…"


LAT

Ascari inherited the lead at Monaco in 1955, but then plunged into the harbour

By any standards, though, 1955 was a year like no other, with the death of Ascari only the beginning of the most tumultuous period our sport has known. Four days later American motor racing lost its greatest star of the day when Bill Vukovich, leading the Indianapolis 500 in his quest for a hat-trick of victories, perished in a multiple accident not of his making. Sixteen of the 33 starters that day would ultimately die in a racing car.

The tragedies at Monza and Indy, though, were dwarfed by the catastrophe at Le Mans on June 11, when the Mercedes of Pierre Levegh flew into the grandstand opposite the pits, killing not only the driver but also nearly 100 spectators.

We were on holiday at the time, and someone in the hotel told us there had been a big accident at Le Mans, that 'a French driver' had been killed. I shudder now to remember feeling only intense relief at later learning that it hadn't been my hero, Jean Behra, but I don't think I was a callous nine-year-old: this was the sport – good and bad – I had fallen in love with and, as Moss said, those were very different times.

For all that, the enormity of the Le Mans accident soon began to sink in, so clearly was it on a wholly different scale from any that had gone before, and with all but one of the victims – as Stirling also pointed out – bystanders, there to enjoy a grand occasion, to have fun.

My late colleague Renaud de Laborderie, then a junior reporter, happened to be in the pit straight tunnel when the disaster occurred. "When I went into the tunnel," he told me once, "it was like a carnival, with everyone excited by the fight for the lead between Fangio and Hawthorn – and when I came out… you can't imagine.

"It was like wartime..."

When looking at the broad spectrum of motor racing history, there are days, I find, when it's difficult to care very much about the endless discussions between Hamilton and Mercedes over just how many noughts there should be on the next contract. M

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F1 FRONTLINE *with*



Mark Hughes

>> HOW FERRARI RECOVERED >> GP ANALYSES FROM MALAYSIA, CHINA & BAHRAIN

SILVER BULLETS

Lewis Hamilton leads away from pole in Bahrain, where he secured his third win of the year, as Nico Rosberg tries to wrest second from Sebastian Vettel. Ferrari's new signing won in Malaysia and the Italian team was a serious threat once again in the Middle East.

MERCEDES-BENZ



A wind tunnel dictatorship has for many seasons influenced the shape of Formula 1

DAIMLER AG

SOME YEARS AGO I WROTE A column outlining the case against wind tunnel use in F1, pointing out the horrendous amount of energy they consume, all essentially devoted to making racing less entertaining.
I suggested we switch 'em off. It was an idea that found no traction at the time, but if you wait long enough it's funny what comes around. Today it's being seriously considered – and the suggestion this time is coming from an ostensibly surprising source: the boss of the team that has ruled the aero roost to the tune of four consecutive world championships. Christian Horner has seriously proposed a ban on the technology that his resident genius Adrian Newey has used to dominate the sport.

To get it into focus, you need to stand back and see it in a different context. As part of the wider picture of what's happening in F1, it makes perfect sense that Horner is the one suggesting it. Behind the scenes, there is a lot of pressure being applied to render the sport's current governance structure null and void. The F1 strategy group that decides policy is effectively locked into dysfunction with no one person able to unlock it. The FIA has been deprived of its former power as part of the agreement that secured it a big income from F1 to spend on other projects, such as road safety and mobility in the third world, subjects close to the heart of president Jean Todt. Intertwined with the broken economic model of the sport – essentially it's way too expensive for what it offers and the money that's around is distributed in a way that's guaranteed to put several teams out of business – it's guiding F1 towards the rocks. There has been a growing acknowledgement of this from within in the past few months and now, with various parties applying the pressure, there is the prospect of European Union law being invoked to neutralise the damaging agreements.

STRAIGHT *talk*

Wind tunnels are great for aero work, but don't help the sport



Read more from Mark about Formula 1
@ THE MOTOR SPORT WEBSITE

To ward off possible EU investigation, the big teams are coming under increasing pressure to make serious concessions to smaller rivals. Handing over a greater share of the income is not a good option for them, given that the sizes of their facilities and employee base are formed around that income. So they are looking at what else they might be able to surrender. They cannot agree on what this could be, but Red Bull's suggestion is wind tunnels. Switching to full CFD design would be cheaper, would enable a swingeing cut to the cost bases of the financially pressured smaller teams – and might give F1's arguably most intuitive aerodynamicist, Newey, renewed scope and motivation.

Ferrari's James Allison is against the idea, saying: "We do our best as teams to take our technical budgets and turn them into lap time. Aerodynamics are a huge part of car performance and you need to be confident, when you're spending that budget, that you're going to deliver to your investors and your team the performance you hoped you would do. At the moment you wouldn't find too many aerodynamicists who would recommend developing using just CFD. It's too error-prone and you need the wind tunnel to keep dragging you back to reality. Without that you're at very high risk of spending your investors' money foolishly and not delivering."

I'm sure he's right. But, as a sport, do we care about the investors' return? Do we care if one team gets it badly wrong and another spectacularly right – creating competitive volatility unconnected with budget? That might be quite interesting…

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F1 FRONTLINE

with

Mark Hughes

How Ferrari recovered its

Now in his second spell at Ferrari, Englishman James Allison is a key cog in the team's bid to get back to regular winning ways... but there are other, broader reasons for its recently improved form



old energy

THE CULL WAS BLOODY LAST YEAR as Ferrari finally succumbed to the accumulated pressure of years of dashed hopes, of aspirations made folly by hard reality. But behind the headline firings and the playing out of Italian politics, there was a tight core of technical staff held together with calm authority by the slightly offbeat Englishman James Allison.

Now, what do you know? The 2015 Ferrari has proved a huge improvement on the mediocre F14T, doing in its second race what its predecessor had failed all season to come anywhere near – ie win. In Malaysia Sebastian Vettel inflicted the first fair and square defeat upon Mercedes since the hybrid formula came into being and the signs are that it just might be a viable world championship contender. The transformation came after the management cull – Marchionne in place of Montezemolo, Arrivabene replacing Mattiacci – and naturally the two things are being linked. But actually, the transformation would likely have happened anyway, as it was largely about the technical changes already initiated and overseen by Allison.

In September 2013 he was re-recruited to the Maranello factory at which he'd worked in the aerodynamic department between 2000-05. He's a guy that wears his stature lightly, a purist of an engineer, a reluctant front man in many ways, possessed of quiet strength and a competitive core; he's made of the right stuff to prosper, even within the intensity of F1. He claims never to lose his temper and has a shyly affable, slightly quizzical outlook and there is absolutely none of 'the big I am' about him. He understands deeply the notion that he's only as good as the people around him and has developed over the years an increasingly big-picture perspective of how to organise and get the best from those people. He makes no secret of how enormously influential the technical management style of Ross Brawn – under whom he worked at both Enstone and Maranello – has been upon him. "Ross had a very light touch in how he directed you," he says, "and I try to emulate that. There are lots of very talented people here and my role is to identify how to distribute the available resource and energy for the maximum gain in performance – and that's something else Ross did exceptionally well."

Allison joined as technical director, having fulfilled a similar role at Enstone (under Renault and Lotus guises), bringing his trusted chief of aerodynamics Dirk de Beer with him. The scale of challenge came to him in stages. What first struck him was the vicious circle the pressure of performance had imposed upon the design and aero teams. "There was a culture of throwing everything onto the car as fast as possible after finding its shortfalls at the start of the season. It was a manic development cycle where everyone was under big pressure and that would take focus off the following year's car, which as a result would begin the year off the pace, triggering the whole process all over again." Allison brought a calmer approach. "If I've had any effect it's to try to say which bits are worth lots of effort to make sure the pressure has been taken off people to deliver things and to work with a slightly longer timescale in mind. That frees up your hand to do a good job. It's very hard to do anything in F1 in a two- to three-month timescale. You have to build a programme over months and years, and not weeks."



ALL IMAGES LAT

But however much Allison's calming influence had a positive effect on a team predisposed to emotion, there was also the fact that the F14T was so badly and obviously flawed it was always going to be relatively easy to make a big improvement.

The timing of Allison's arrival meant he had no direct input on the philosophy of 2014's car, though even before the season began it was clear that Ferrari's knowledge of turbocharged direct injection engines was far from the cutting edge. Nor was there any significant hybrid expertise in-house, in contrast to Mercedes. Two basic flaws were designed into the 2014 car and neither could be rectified: 1) In the trade-off between aerodynamics and horsepower, Ferrari had failed properly to reassess the new authority of engine power under this formula. The design was skewed around maximising aero performance, just as everyone had done in the naturally aspirated era. So low heat rejection figures were prioritised, minimising the size of the radiators and shrink-wrapping the car around them. That in turn forced compromise upon engine power. 2) The turbo-compressor-ersH layout and size was hopelessly inadequate. As a result the ersH could not recover anything like enough energy. This was understood even before the season began, but such were the engine homologation regulations that they were stuck with it for the year.

The two most fundamental flaws of the old car were therefore easy

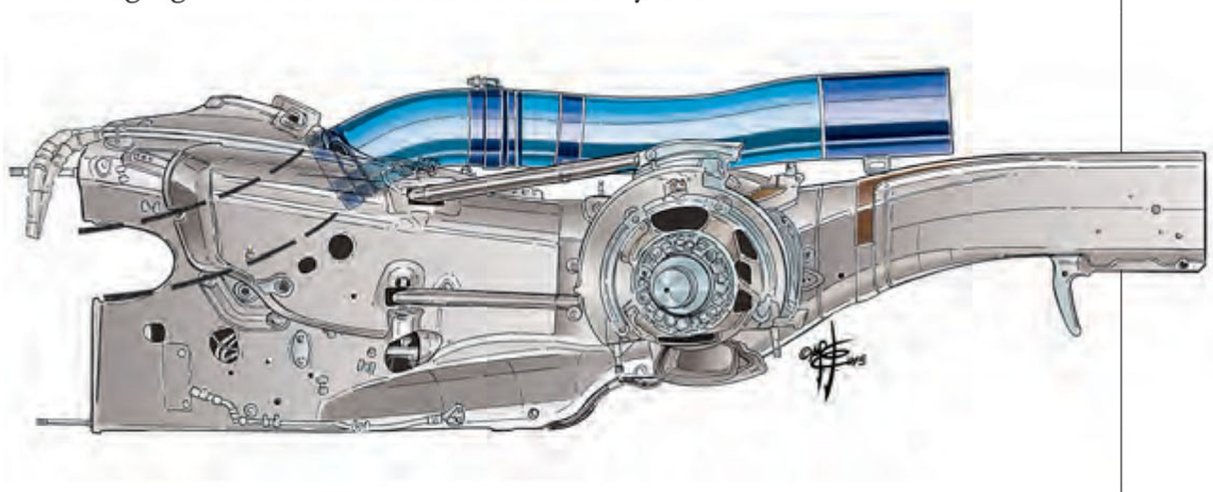


New faces at the Ferrari helm: technical director James Allison and, below, team principal Maurizio Arrivabene

fixes for 2015 – and so the performance jump was always going to be big, regardless of which management team was in charge. The actual influence – good or bad – of the management changes in the team's fortunes will only be seen over the longer term.

With the performance authority of the power unit reassessed in the concept of the SF15-T, a big part of Allison's task now became to invigorate a somewhat battered and bruised engine department, the chief of which, Luca Marmorini, had been lost in the panicked cull of the old management. Mattia Binotto assumed his former boss's role and was encouraged by Allison to be bold. "Having realised we were off the pace on the engine side, the vigour with which the problem was attacked has really been a splendid thing," says Allison. "We've got good performance there and they've had to do that a) by showing a lot of engineering skill and b) with a huge amount of courage, because engine stuff has an extremely long lead time and if you make a mistake you pay for it forever. Compared to a chassis person, engine people are, by necessity, more conservative. But they were extremely courageous and we are benefiting now from both their skill and their courage."

Modifying the turbo/compressor/ersH layout – the obvious change they would like to have made last year, but were prevented from doing by the regulations – brought significant gains, as did increasing the size of the compressor. The aerodynamic pain of doing that was counterbalanced by a highly original piece of technical thinking: the exhausts are routed through a hole in the gearbox casing (see illustration, below), taking them through a far less aerodynamically damaging route than the conventional layout.



GIORGIO PIOLA

There was original thinking in last year's car too, but it was misdirected. For example, the space in the gearbox casing now used for routing the exhaust was previously used to house the oil tank. This had been an intrinsic part of the old car's aerodynamic philosophy; moving the oil tank from between the rear of the cockpit and front of the engine allowed the engine to be shunted forwards within the wheelbase, creating a bigger diffuser venturi. This cleverly attempted to use the extra length of the gearbox casing – which had been necessary to create the longer wheelbase needed to accommodate the extra components of the hybrid units – for a secondary benefit. It turned out not to be achievable because the necessary volume of underfloor airflow could not be generated from the front of the car to take full advantage. For 2015, with the oil tank relocated to the conventional position, and the exhaust routed through where the tank used to be, that extra gearbox length has still been utilised to form a benefit.

Allison guided his team into creating a more aerodynamically benign car, with an emphasis on consistent downforce through a range of yaw angles, ride heights and rake angles, even at the expense of theoretical peak downforce. At the same time the engine department was working in close collaboration with Shell to create a more knock-resistant

combustion – the absolute key to engine power under this formula. Together, the efforts of the engine, aerodynamic and design departments have created a powerful, benign, driveable car that Sebastian Vettel and Kimi Räikkönen can lean on with confidence – and which is kind to the delicate Pirelli tyres.

This latter feature characterised the James Allison Lotuses of 2012/13 and, just as surely as those cars contrasted sharply with the dominant Red Bulls in their traits, so the SF15-T does with the Mercedes – and in much the same way. The Allison Lotuses and this Ferrari each struggle to generate tyre temperature quickly enough for the one lap of qualifying, but come on ever more strongly through a race stint as they hold onto their performance for longer than the qualifying pace-setters. There is a complex tyre mechanism driving this pattern, one that has allowed Allison to create competitive cars relatively quickly by following a slightly different philosophy.

Essentially, the Pirelli control tyres define much of the cars' limit. Beyond a certain point, more downforce creates tyre stress that limits stint lengths. The quality of the tyre puts an artificial ceiling on the benefits of more downforce. The extra downforce still delivers better one-lap pace, but beyond a certain point the benefits of that extra pace are negated by the shorter stint lengths needed because of the greater tyre degradation. Many times Red Bull would have to sacrifice some one-lap pace in its set-up in order to get competitive stint lengths. Now Mercedes has arrived at a similar point under the current formula. Just like the title-winning Red Bulls, the Merc is the outright quickest car but is now at that awkward point where accessing that performance in both qualifying and the race is exceptionally tricky – and leaves them vulnerable in the race to an Allison car with a much rounder, more accessible performance profile. Essentially the Lewis Hamilton/Sebastian Vettel Merc/Ferrari contests in the early part of this year are re-runs of the Vettel/Romain Grosjean Red Bull/Lotus contests of the latter half of 2013, with Vettel this time in the Grosjean role, terrorising an ostensibly faster car through better tyre usage and Hamilton in the former Vettel role of trying to eke out his car's greater performance sparingly.

At Lotus Allison's constraint was budget. At Ferrari it has been time. In both instances he's circumnavigated his constraints by configuring cars around the delicate traits of the Pirellis – a simpler and cheaper thing to do than creating from scratch a car with downforce levels that would work the tyres harder but give the track position advantage of starting from pole. In the longer term, he can build up the resources and initiate the programmes that might allow Ferrari to create such a car (if he decides it's preferable), while the competitiveness of this simpler car takes off the immediate pressure.



Vettel's win in Malaysia was Ferrari's first since Spain 2013

"EVERYWHERE YOU GO IN THE FACTORY, THERE IS EVIDENCE OF MASSIVE SUCCESS IN THE PAST"

Certainly budgets are not a concern here, Marchionne reportedly having allocated an extra £150 million to the team this year – and the development programme coming on stream for this car is aggressive, and excites Allison. The new-spec engine, using the token system to reconfigure the cylinder head, is set to make its debut in Montréal and reportedly has an extra 20bhp over a unit that is already vying with Mercedes as the most powerful. If there has been a benefit of the managerial changes it has been in creating a mercurial, transitional environment, with old boundaries knocked down, new habits not yet formed, the bravery of a new broom. In this environment, it's probably been relatively easier for Allison, as someone entrusted with the responsibility of improving things, to get pretty much anything he has requested.

Certainly, he gives the impression that much of the cull might have been necessary. "Any changes like that are not done lightly and not easily done, but they are done looking to the long term to try to make sure we have a team of people that we know can build for the future and just make us stronger month by month."

His excitement at what's coming is palpable. "There is something absolutely fantastic about this team. Every team works hard but at Ferrari they work especially hard and also have history and tradition bearing down on their shoulders. Everywhere you go in the factory there is evidence of their massive success in the past. Anyone who works there in a period when it is not successful is sort of cowed by that fact. They have that and then they have the weight of expectation of an entire nation and those pressures are something they soak up. And then when those pressures are released, boy does it feel good!"

With everything still malleable, roles not set in stone, everyone feeling their way after the cull, it has created the vacuum of opportunity for Allison to mould things the way he wants them – at least within whatever limits to his autonomy have been defined by the management. There is a deeper part of being in technical charge at Maranello though – and perhaps the most challenging one. Right now, he's delivering. He's turned things around, got the Scuderia back on the curve. But when things are going less well – as inevitably happens to all teams – the support, patience and autonomy he receives from the management will define whether this is the dawn of a new era for the Scuderia, or just a short-term flash. If Marchionne is wise rather than merely clever, he will recognise how these dynamics work and what his relatively small – though crucial – role should be.

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GRAND PRIX NOTEBOOK

MALAYSIA, CHINA & BAHRAIN

Rd 2 SEPANG, MARCH 29 2015

1	SEBASTIAN VETTEL	Ferrari SF15-T	1hr 41min 05.793sec
2	LEWIS HAMILTON	Mercedes W06	1hr 41min 14.362sec
3	NICO ROSBERG	Mercedes W06	1hr 41min 18.103sec

FASTEST LAP NICO ROSBERG Mercedes W06 1min 42.062sec
RACE DISTANCE 56 laps, 192.879 miles
POLE POSITION LEWIS HAMILTON Mercedes W06 1min 49.834sec

Rd 3 SHANGHAI, APRIL 12 2015

1	LEWIS HAMILTON	Mercedes W06	1hr 39min 42.008sec
2	NICO ROSBERG	Mercedes W06	1hr 39min 42.722sec
3	SEBASTIAN VETTEL	Ferrari SF15-T	1hr 39min 44.996sec

FASTEST LAP LEWIS HAMILTON Mercedes W06 1min 42.208sec
RACE DISTANCE 56 laps, 185.559 miles
POLE POSITION LEWIS HAMILTON Mercedes W06 1min 35.782sec

Rd 4 BAHRAIN, APRIL 19 2015

1	LEWIS HAMILTON	Mercedes W06	1hr 35min 05.809sec
2	KIMI RÄIKKÖNEN	Ferrari SF15-T	1hr 35min 09.189sec
3	NICO ROSBERG	Mercedes W06	1hr 35min 11.842sec

FASTEST LAP KIMI RÄIKKÖNEN Ferrari SF15-T 1min 36.311sec
RACE DISTANCE 57 laps, 191.530 miles
POLE POSITION LEWIS HAMILTON Mercedes W06 1min 32.571sec

WHETHER YOU MEASURE IT SINCE DRIVER COACHING OVER the radio was banned (Hungary last year) or since his clash with Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton at Spa, coming into the quick-fire Malaysia/China/Bahrain sequence of the 2015 season, Nico Rosberg had won just one race compared to the seven of Hamilton. He needed to turn things around. His strong mid-season challenge of 2014 had enabled him to take the previous title fight all the way to the final round and he became the first Hamilton team-mate to outqualify him over the balance of a season. In his ninth season of F1, Rosberg had finally got his hands on a championship-calibre car and he was making a very credible claim on being a championship-calibre driver rather than the 'number-one-and-a-half' status he'd generally been accorded. "I just need to work on my race performances a little bit," he'd said after conceding to Hamilton in Abu Dhabi, "but I know how I can do that – and I will do that."

But in Melbourne for the 2015 season-opener Hamilton's superiority had made Rosberg look like a number two. With Mercedes still the dominant team, despite the growing threat of Ferrari, these three races could be seen as possibly defining his whole career, how he will go down in the history books, how long a career he will have. He surely had to halt Hamilton's momentum, both in the championship and psychologically, if he was to prevent this season from getting out of his control – and how many more seasons in an F1 career that's already almost a decade old will a driver get to sit in such a car? His challenge coming into this vital phase was very clear-cut. But the defining of it and the doing of it, with a phenomenon of a team-mate on the crest of a confidence wave – possibly beginning to shift the whole internal emphasis of the team through sheer pummelling performance – are very different things.

MALAYSIA

FOR THE WATCHING WORLD, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT POINT about this race was that Mercedes was beaten fairly and squarely for the first time in the hybrid era. On the three previous occasions the Silver Arrows had failed to win, it was because they'd encountered a mechanical problem or crashed. This time Sebastian Vettel defeated them convincingly in just his second race for Ferrari, a victory that was rooted in a combination of the red car's superior rear tyre usage in the Sepang heat and its vastly improved engine performance since last year. But for Rosberg, of greater significance were the two factors that nullified his challenge to Hamilton: rain in Q3 and Marcus Ericsson's early-race spin that brought out the safety car and led to Rosberg losing 8sec to a very closely packed field by being stacked behind Hamilton in the pits. "That left me with just too much to do," he said afterwards.

He's not dictating his own destiny right now – and Hamilton's sensational form is the main reason. Never was this more apparent than in the early moments of Q3, which had been delayed as the afternoon's tropical storm arrived, the feedback loop of circulating heat and moisture being broken and causing the contents of the equatorial heat engine to drop its load spectacularly, with accompanying sound and lighting effects. On intermediate tyres everyone was feeling where the grip and standing water might be, but Hamilton felt at ease immediately and, as if by intuition, knew the parts of the track where grip could be found. He was 1.4sec faster than anyone on these first runs. Rosberg was driving like a normal mortal. "Which parts of the track is the fastest guy using?" said Nico over the radio, trying to circumnavigate the rule that forbids team-mate comparison information being given


"AS IF BY INTUITION HAMILTON KNEW THE PARTS OF THE TRACK WHERE GRIP WAS TO BE FOUND"
PETRONAS
Santander
PETRONAS
PETRONAS
44
PIRELLI
QUALCOMM
PETRONAS SYNTIUM

LAT

to the driver. "Sorry, I can't give you that information," replied his engineer Tony Ross. He'd have to wait until he returned to the garage. On the second runs, with the track drying, the plan was to do two laps on the fresh inters, the first of them relatively gentle, the second to take maximum advantage of the track at its least wet. There was a territorial mix-up on the first lap, Nico inadvertently baulking Lewis, and on the second flyer both had used up the best of their tyres – allowing Vettel's Ferrari, taking full advantage of the track drying, to split them. Hamilton's first run stood as pole.

In another repeat of 2014, Rosberg made a better start from the inside of row two than Vettel from the outside front row and made for the gap between Seb and the pit wall, with Vettel moving left to crowd him in, trying to intimidate. "Again, I just kept coming and prayed he didn't move any further," said Rosberg, clearly just as irritated with Vettel as last year. This time, though, Seb swooped around the back of the Merc and squeaked ahead on the outside into Turn One, chopping across Rosberg's nose with a rude little nudge of tyre walls. Vettel, tight behind Hamilton, was now in a position to use the Ferrari's ability to stop one time fewer than the Mercedes to beat Lewis in a straight fight. Instead, however, Ericsson dropped the Sauber into Turn One, the safety car came out and the three-stopping Mercs were brought in to change tyres while the two-stopping Vettel stayed out, now leading. Rosberg had to be stacked in the pit, waiting for Hamilton's stop to be completed then being delayed further waiting for a safe release. Upon resumption of racing Hamilton dealt with the traffic knife-through-butter style; Rosberg was rather more circumspect.


Hamilton had Shanghai under control from the start, though Rosberg had things to say about it

These circumstances only made it easier for Vettel to defeat the Mercs, which were not significantly faster than the potent Ferrari. Hamilton was 10sec behind at the flag, with Rosberg not too far adrift.

CHINA

THE MERCEDES-FERRARI TYRE USAGE GAME – AND HOW Ferrari is now close enough on pace for that to matter – again framed the circumstances of Rosberg's quest to beat Hamilton. Again, he failed in that quest and again it came from not being able to control his own destiny from the front. However, if there was a positive to take away from a trying weekend in which he became embroiled in a post-race public spat with Hamilton, it was the tiny margin by which he had lost pole position to his team-mate. Those four hundredths of a second meant he was consigned to have the pace of his race dictated by a tyre-conserving Hamilton, even with Vettel's Ferrari snapping at his heels. Crucial though those missing four hundredths were in dictating his weekend, they also suggested that a breakthrough switch between their fortunes – between Hamilton controlling the event and Rosberg doing so – was within reach. That was as close to a positive as he could take from Hamilton's eighth victory in 10 races.

The tyre equation, and how it plays out between Mercedes and Ferrari, is complex. In the era of Pirelli control tyres it is quite possible to have a car with too much downforce, and the Mercedes W06 sometimes nudges into this territory – just as the Red Bulls of the first half of 2012 did, when the rubber was particularly weak. The Pirelli medium (option) tyre was very much in equilibrium at Sepang with the forces the Ferrari was applying to it, whereas the Mercedes, in grinding the rubber harder into the track surface, was creating an imbalance between the surface of the tyre (too hot) and the core (not hot enough) – breaking down the chemical bonds and leading to greater heat degradation. This had been enough to allow Ferrari to do one stop less than Mercedes, the root of Vettel's victory. At Shanghai the emphasis shifts from the rear tyres to the fronts. The option tyre this time was the soft and in Friday practice it looked as though the Ferrari was getting it working better than the Mercedes, able to do more laps before the grip surrendered; not enough to allow one less stop this time, so unlikely to win Ferrari the race over a Mercedes that remains outright faster, but enough to apply the pressure. But the much higher track temperatures of race day changed that picture. Now that tyre was out of equilibrium on the Ferrari because the lower grip of the track needed the car to be grinding the rubber harder into the surface. Different compound, different track layout, it made for a different mechanism from Malaysia in terms of the ideal combination of downforce and track temperature. But the upshot was that, on race day, the Mercedes was better on its tyres than the Ferrari.

> "HE'S DRIVING TOO SLOWLY. GET HIM TO SPEED UP', ROSBERG DEMANDED OVER THE RADIO"

The crucial point was that on the eve of the race, this was all just theory – Mercedes' theory. Hamilton could not be sure that the pattern seen on Friday wouldn't be repeated. So once he'd beaten Rosberg away from the line, with Vettel slotting in behind the second Merc, Hamilton drove at a very controlled pace. Too controlled for Rosberg's comfort. "He's driving too slowly, get him to speed up," he demanded over the radio, concerned that at this pace he wasn't far enough clear of Vettel to be immune from being passed at the pit stops by the dreaded 'undercut'. As it happened, Rosberg need not have worried. Just as Hamilton upped the pace, allowing Rosberg to do the same, Vettel's fell away – the Ferrari's front tyres were finished. He was too far back to make the

undercut work – and this happened on the eve of both stops, ensuring a Mercedes 1-2.

Rosberg was openly critical of Hamilton's tactics; Lewis responded that he was looking after his own race and not Rosberg's – that if Nico had wanted to go faster he should have tried to overtake. Rosberg countered that it wasn't feasible because the tyres would only grain more as he got into Hamilton's slipstream. The performance of 17-year-old Max Verstappen – in which he made four stunning passes before the Toro Rosso's engine seized four laps from the end – would tend to undermine that argument. Rosberg's reputation was definitely not enhanced by the spat, but he needed now to go inside himself, to find strength from the idea that on Saturday he had been tantalisingly close to having the beating of the form man.

BAHRAIN

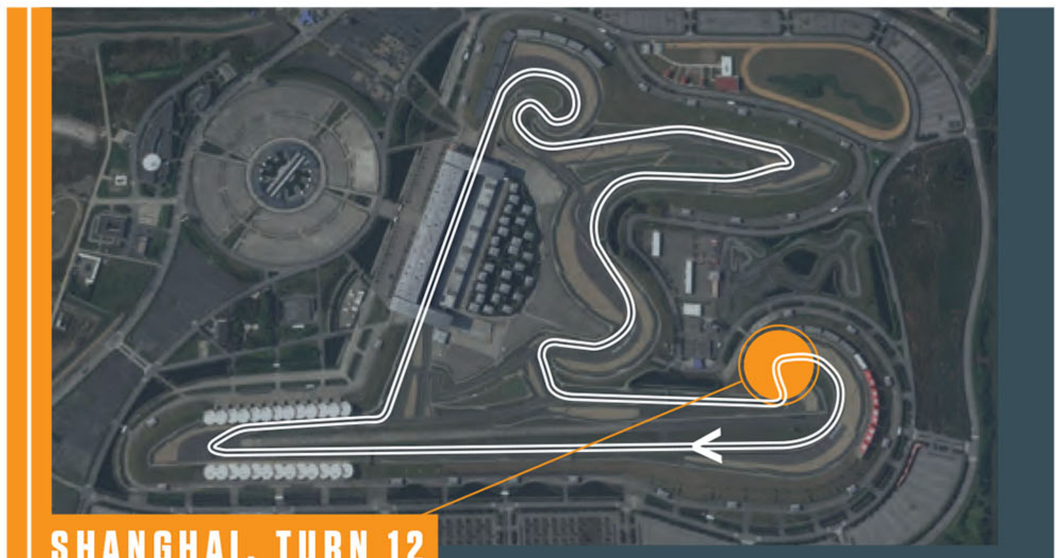
ROSBERG'S PREOCCUPATION WITH HAMILTON, WITH HOW he might finally beat him, actually worked against him here. The choices he made in qualifying – with the aim not of trying to out-qualify him, but to have a raceday advantage – backfired.

Tyres and Hamilton were again the overriding themes on Nico's mind as we came to the middle-eastern island, the tanks and armed presence less ubiquitous than in the previous few years, but still present. The way the patterns of performance played out around the floodlit track in the early evening, Rosberg's tyre/Hamilton conundrum was different from that faced in China, but has a similar outcome – one that wasn't in Rosberg's favour as Hamilton took win number nine from 11.

Bahrain's a big deal of a track for Rosberg. He'd sat on pole here for the previous two years and made his sparkling Grand Prix debut here in 2006, when he'd set the fastest race lap in his Williams. By contrast Hamilton had never sat on pole in eight attempts. Given the tiny margin by which Nico had lost out to Lewis in qualifying at Shanghai – and the crucial part that played in the outcome – in hindsight he should not have been blindsided by the tempting opportunity of going for a different approach.

It was to do with how much faster the soft tyre was than the medium – not only in qualifying but, on the basis of practice, over the race. There was a big advantage to be had by maximising the number of laps you could stay on the soft for the race. So tyre usage in qualifying – when you are allocated three sets of each, plus an extra set of the soft for those making the top-10 run-off – became very tactical. First of all, were the Mercs fast enough in Q1 to graduate without having to use a set of softs? No, not comfortably. Not given that the soft was more than 2sec faster. Even a bottom-five car on softs – a McLaren, say – might conceivably have gone faster than a Mercedes on mediums. So reluctantly Rosberg – just like everyone else – used a set just to ensure graduation to Q2. But he drove relatively gently, wanting to keep every precious grain of grip on every option tyre he had, ready to be unleashed in beating Hamilton on race day.

He used another set in Q2, but again did a very conservative lap, 1.2sec slower than Hamilton on the tyres he'd be obliged to start the race on. That left him with two sets for Q3 and, ordinarily, that would mean one banker lap and a second, more aggressive tilt at pole. But then Hamilton – whose turn it was this weekend to go out first in the running order – went out for his first run on a used set, meaning he was keeping a brand-new set for the race. Upon clocking that, Rosberg and his engineer Tony Ross chose to reassess. "I was thinking about the race too much,"



SHANGHAI, TURN 12

Trackside view

"Through the long, tyre-killing loop formed by Turns 11-12-13 there is a grudging balance to be made. It's defined by the momentum that can be maintained into 12, the beginning of the never-ending right-handed part of the sequence. From the exit kerb the cars dive for another apex and, between turn-in and that outer kerb, the challenge on this cool Friday Shanghai morning is to get the harder compound front tyres to bite soon enough to pivot the car at speeds too low for downforce to help.

How quickly that front loads up determines how much momentum you can maintain in that tight window, which determines your speed for the next kilometre. Because the loop precedes F1's longest straight. In the short straight up to the braking zone of 11 several drivers are weaving furiously, trying to induce the heat in the front tyres vital for that initial bite.

The muffled popping of part-throttle as they enter into that window of opportunity is the sound of frustrated anguish as they wait for that front to load up before they can pour on the gas. The Mercedes is the quickest to get that bite, sun glinting off silver as the W06 gets on with it the moment Nico Rosberg turns the wheel. Sebastian Vettel's Ferrari understeers here, but it's shallow and doesn't cost him too much momentum. Felipe Nasr's Sauber cannot live with those two but has found a novel way of compensating. He enters from a shallower angle, doesn't stay out as wide before turning in. It gives him momentum into the turn, though at the expense of making the corner last longer on exit. The Force Indias are bleeding lap time away here with front ends on a different wavelength to their drivers' ambition; after a few laps Nico Hülkenberg's frustration becomes obvious, as he allows the uncooperative machine to get out of line under power. But for drama, no one can live with Pastor Maldonado, compensating for the Lotus's understeer into Turn 11 by pitching it wildly broadside. It gets him to the desired point for the approach to 12, and with front tyres the limitation here, he can ignore the wear he's putting on the rears."

MAP DATA: GOOGLE, DIGITALGLOBE



Rosberg pulled off several aggressive passes to dislodge Vettel in Bahrain

said Rosberg afterwards. "I wanted not to take too much from my race tyres… In Q3, once Lewis went out on used tyres for the first run, then I had to do the same, otherwise I'd be at a big disadvantage to him in the race because there's a big offset between new and used. But the grip on the used was so bad, so much less than I was expecting, that I couldn't get a feel for the limit at all. So the first time in qualifying that I'd pushed at all hard was in the final run – and I just couldn't find the rhythm. I'd thrown myself out of my rhythm with my choices. Not very clever. It would have been an acceptable trade-off if I'd qualified second to Lewis with better tyres for the race. But Seb beat me as well, and that's not an acceptable trade-off."

"You have a choice which way you wanna do it," said Hamilton of the challenges of how much to take from your race tyres in Q2. "Sometimes they tell you to target a certain time. I just decided to get a good feel for it. But I think even if I'd gone a second slower in Q2 I'd have still done the exact same laps in Q3. I'd got my rhythm a long time ago from previous laps and through practice, so I think either way it wasn't going to be a problem for me." There spoke a driver with a more improvisational approach than Rosberg and one furthermore riding that wave.

Yet again, Rosberg was left unable to dictate his own destiny. One can only speculate on how it might have turned out had he simply followed the normal programme and not got distracted by trying to find 'the unfair advantage'. Would his natural affinity with the Sakhir track have overcome a deficit to Hamilton that in Shanghai had been so small? Had events of the season to date influenced this choice? "I don't think it's related," he said in the still-warm Saturday evening. "I think I was just looking at it as an individual event and thinking how to get the best from the weekend." But he still looked thoughtful afterwards. His demeanour remained pleasant, he still seemed together, didn't have the air of a beaten man. He seems like someone searching for answers and coming up short, but not even close yet to surrendering. He'd called this one wrong, but there was nothing to suggest he couldn't bat that away. The mental toughness of a top driver can be a remarkable thing to observe, close up.

Although Hamilton was always in control during the race, Rosberg was aggressive in dealing with the Ferraris – several times. He passed Kimi Räikkönen once and Sebastian Vettel three times. Ferrari twice brought Vettel in from behind Rosberg to undercut him ahead and each time Rosberg responded with aggressive on-track passes. Vettel eventually damaged his nosecone clattering over kerbs while trying to fend Rosberg off and had to pit for a replacement.

This left Räikkönen as the Scuderia's main hope. Both Mercs were marginal on brake cooling, but in addition Rosberg's suffered a brake-by-wire failure two laps from the end just as the newer-tyred Räikkönen was launching a late attack. With the pedal going suddenly soft, Rosberg only just got through Turn One – and Räikkönen went past. Hamilton's brake-by-wire then failed a lap later, though he was able to lift and coast his way to the flag still clear of the Ferrari. Rosberg was only third, but far from cowed. Ⓜ

> "I COULDN'T FIND THE RHYTHM. I'D THROWN MYSELF OUT WITH MY CHOICES. NOT VERY CLEVER"



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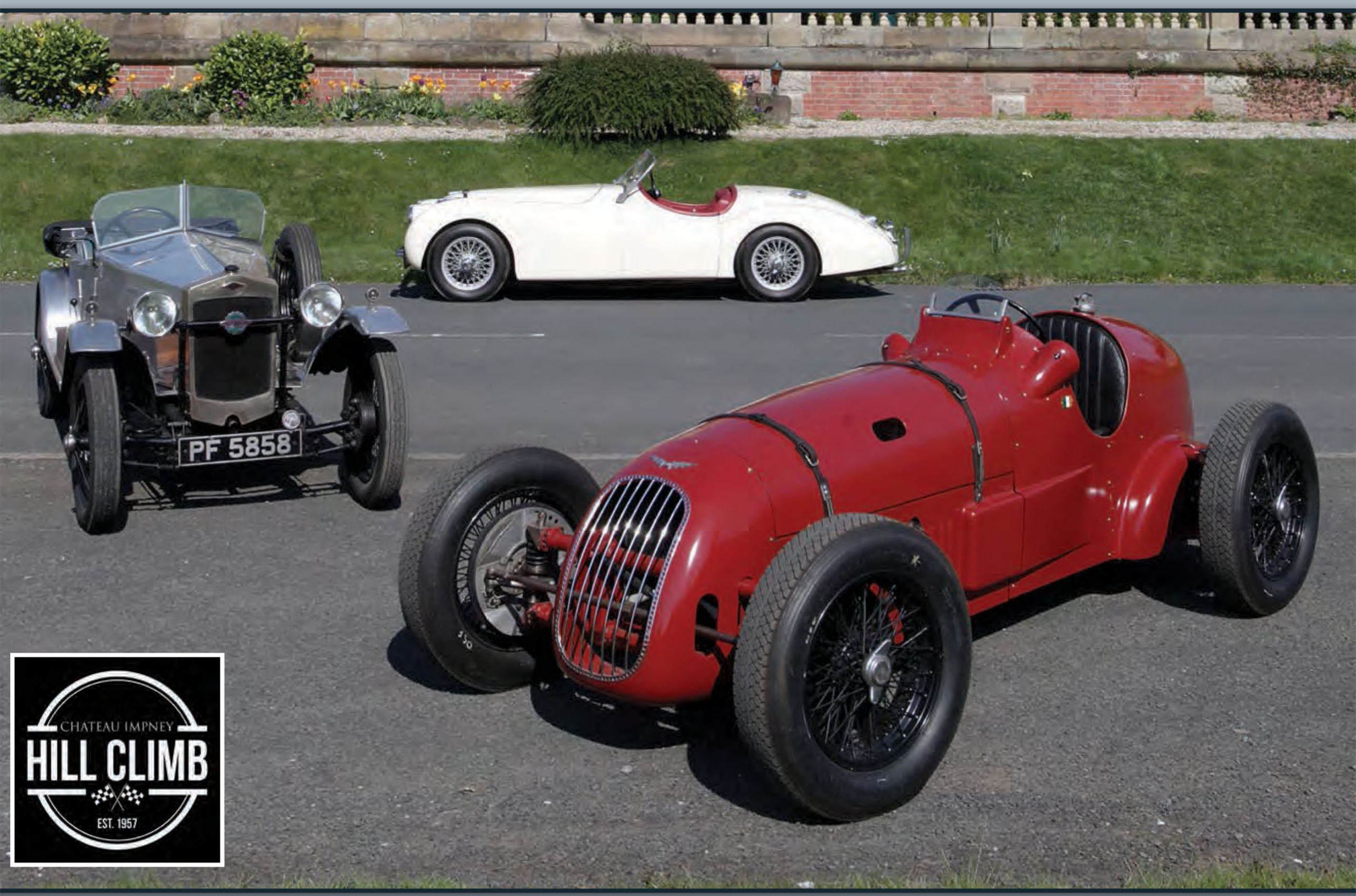
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F2 variety at Mallory Park, 1972: Reutemann (Brabham) leads Peterson (March), Scheckter (McLaren) and winner Morgan (Brabham)

FIA ponders F2 options

Will reborn category eschew the one-make norm? | BY GARY WATKINS

COULD THE NEW FORMULA 2, devised to be the final stepping-stone to Formula 1 when it is introduced at some unspecified point in the near future, be an open category fought out by multiple chassis and engine suppliers, just like its forebear in days of old? The FIA isn't saying as much, but the idea is one of a number on the table as it works towards outlining its F2 plans.

Should it decide to allow competition between chassis and engine suppliers, the FIA would buck a trend that stretches back to 1996 and the introduction of one-make Formula 3000 for a spec Lola chassis and Zytek/Judd engines. In the years since then, both GP2 (effectively F3000's replacement from 2005, though not an FIA category) and Formula Renault 3.5 (which started off as the Nissan-backed World Series in 2002) have become the pre-eminent proving grounds for F1 talent. And they, of course, feature single-make chassis and engines.

THE COST CONCERN

Many believe that a free formula would not be workable in the current economic climate. Just ask the bosses of the two British teams that have a representation on various steps of the single-seater ladder in Europe and beyond.

Trevor Carlin, head of the eponymous team that competes in both GP2 and FR3.5, says: "I'd love it to be an open formula, but whether that is achievable, I don't know. It is probably not the right way to go, because the danger is that costs would spiral out of control. I'm sure F2 will work, but I can't see it being open to multiple constructors and it isn't crucial."

Richard Dutton, whose Fortec squad was a race winner in FR3.5 last season, is more forthright in his opposition. "Do I think an open formula would be workable? I definitely don't," he says. "The only way a constructor could keep the costs down is to build a lot of cars; and there's a big difference between building five cars and the 30 required to make it viable."

The boss of Italian constructor Tatuus, which builds the Formula Renault 2.0 spec chassis, agrees that open competition between constructors would inevitably lead to higher costs. "Open formulae always mean greater costs," says Gianfranco De Bellis. "And if you did make it an open formula, it could be that one constructor would dominate and have a monopoly."

"I'd love it to be an open formula, but whether that is achievable, I don't know."
Trevor Carlin, Carlin team chief

"Do I think an open formula would be workable? I definitely don't,"
Richard Dutton, Fortec Motorsports

The last point is a reference to Formula 3. The category has remained open to competition between chassis makers, but Dallara has enjoyed a near-monopoly – certainly in terms of success in Europe – since the mid-1990s.

A CHOICE OF ENGINES

If you accept that F3 is a de facto one-make formula in terms of chassis, it might offer a template for F2. Multiple engine suppliers are allowed and the category is supported by manufacturers in its last two remaining strongholds, the FIA F3 European Championship and the All-Japan F3 Championship.

One possibility under discussion by the FIA's Single-Seater Commission as it works toward unveiling its F2 concept at the July meeting of the World Motor Sport Council, is the use of the 2-litre direct-injection turbo engines introduced into Super GT in Japan last season and due to arrive in the DTM in 2017.

That would open up F2 to six manufacturers – three each from the DTM and Super GT – and the potential support that comes with the involvement of major car firms. The freedom of engine supply works in F3 because manufacturers support the category to varying degrees. The same is true in Super Formula, the spiritual successor of F3000 in Japan, which runs a Dallara one-make chassis and Super GT-based engines from Toyota and Nissan.

THE NEED FOR SUPPORT

Without manufacturer backing, the idea would probably be a non-starter. Nick Langley, who was heavily involved in F3000 before and after it became a spec formula during his long stint with Lola, points out that engine costs are as significant a proportion of a season's budget as the purchase of a chassis.

"What gets lost in the discussions is that the chassis costs make up a fairly insignificant part of running a team,"

says Langley, who went on to work for Dallara and Zytek and now has a role at Multimatic Motorsport. "All the focus is on that one item, but it is not where they are spending all the money. Engine costs are normally quite a lot higher than chassis costs."

THE LMP2 MODEL

This point has been identified by the rule makers of the LMP2 prototype division, another category that could offer some inspiration to the group led by former Ferrari F1 boss Stefano Domenicali, the new president of the Single-Seater Commission.

LMP2 is successful and allows for competition between engine suppliers at the moment, but when a new rule book is introduced for 2017 there will be a spec engine across all the category's arenas with the exception of the United SportsCar Championship. The FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest at Le Mans believe this is an area where significant savings can be made.

It is an obvious move, even to someone who stands to lose by it. Bill Gibson, whose company is one of the major suppliers of engines (Nissans) under its former name of Zytek, says: "If I was looking at it from the outside, I'd probably think it was a good idea. It is the obvious way to reduce budgets."

The LMP2 category will remain an open chassis formula when the new rules come into force, but with a twist. The number of constructors granted licences to build cars will be limited. The plan is for this number to be four, with one spot to be reserved for a US company, although this has yet to be confirmed. For Gibson, whose organisation is also a supplier of chassis, it is an unnecessary limitation, working on the 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' mantra.

A statement from the ACO talks about creating a sustainable business case for the constructors who need to build a significant number of cars to amortise development costs. But Gibson suggests that some chassis are being sold at a significant loss, pointing out that one in the paddock "is a million-pound car".

These are just some of the issues that Domenicali and his group will be facing as they strive to come up with the F2 concept in time for the summer. D-day is the July meeting of the FIA World Motor Sport Council.







From the top, Roberto Moreno leads Pau F3000 race in 1988 – the 'open era'. One-make FIA F2 ran from 2009-2012. F3 has engine variety, but Dallara has effective chassis monopoly

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LAT

GORDON KIRBY

JIM HALL'S CHAPPARAL MEMORIES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JIM HALL AND HIS Chaparral team dominated American road racing. Hall and partner Hap Sharp won the Sebring 12 Hours in March aboard their Chaparral 2-Chevy and went on to sweep the United States Road Racing Championship, winning eight of nine races between them. Hall won at Riverside, Laguna Seca, Watkins Glen, Bridgehampton and Seattle, Sharp at Castle Rock and Mid-Ohio. They drove together to win the 500-mile finale at Elkhart Lake.

The Chaparral 2 evolved quickly, sprouting high wings in both 2G Can-Am and 2F long-distance sports car configurations before becoming the sport's first ground-effect car, the 2H. The Chaparral story remains a remarkable chapter in racing history and includes an epilogue in the beautiful 2K Indycar, which Johnny Rutherford drove to win the 1980 Indy 500 and CART championship.

Hall and Hap Sharp, oil men both, were equal partners. "Hap was wonderful," Hall says. "He had lots of ideas. We talked cars all the time. He was a smart guy and a talented driver. At Riverside in '65 I had a problem with our new car and Hap went out in our older car and I'll be damned if he didn't beat Jimmy Clark."

Chaparral Cars was based in Hall's hometown, Midland, on the west Texas plains, and the little team comprised no more than five men – Hall and Sharp, chief mechanic Franz Weis, ace fabricator Troy Rogers and engine man Gary Knutson.

Next to the shop Hall and Sharp built a test track called Rattlesnake Raceway, a key element in building powerful working relationships with Chevrolet's R&D department and Firestone. "We did a lot of test work for Chevrolet and they paid us for doing it," Jim says. "It was a great thing for us to have. It was a business relationship that didn't have much to do with racing. We got to know a lot of people who were shakers and doers in Detroit. We worked hard for them."

Hall tested a variety of experimental GM cars at Rattlesnake and his relationship helped foster the Chaparral's automatic transmission and rapid aerodynamic development. Further technical and financial support came from Firestone as Hall's team played its part in a design revolution as wider, low-profile tyres arrived. "We started the year on six-inch tyres and by the end we'd gone to 12-inch tyres on the rear and 10s on the front," Hall says.

In 1966 and '67 Hall and Sharp ran a car in Europe's long-distance world championship sports car races against factory teams from Ferrari, Ford and Porsche. In 1966 they won the Nürburgring 1000Kms with Phil Hill/Jo Bonnier driving a 2D and the following year a high-winged 2F driven by Hill and Mike Spence won the Brands Hatch 1000Kms.

"I'm really proud that we were able to pull off those wins," Hall says. "That was a really fun deal. Somebody told me after that race at the 'Ring that it was the first American car to win a major European road race in 40 years and I thought, 'Wow'."

Hill also scored Chaparral's only Can-Am series victory at Laguna Seca in 1966. "Phil was a wonderful man and a real talent," Hall says. "He was a really good driver and a gentleman and he was also a wonderful guy to be around. I'm proud that he drove my car and won his last race [Brands Hatch '67].

"I've been lucky in a lot of the things we did," Jim adds. "You can't just think you did it all yourself. It's the people that help you and the talent that you have working for you. That's what it's all about. I've got an awfully strong feeling for people like Franz Weis and Troy Rogers, who helped make it all work."



Audi's victorious Silverstone pace was hot, though Oliver's car lost time after a collision

AUDI

OLIVER JARVIS

SO FAR, EVERYBODY'S WINNING!

IT'S GREAT TO HAVE GOT MY FIRST FULL FIA World Endurance Championship season under way! By the time many of you read this, I'll also have competed in the second race at Spa-Francorchamps – it's incredible how quickly time has passed since the announcement that I would step up to replace Tom Kristensen.

Before the recent Silverstone race I was continually told, "It must be great to start the season at your 'home' track." While this is true in geographical terms, modern motor sport works in such a way that it was actually only the second time I had raced at Silverstone in nine years. I'm more accustomed to competing at Oschersleben in Germany than I am at Silverstone!

I get the feeling that Audi Sport Team Joest surprised a few people with its performance throughout the Silverstone weekend. While our sister car won, things unfortunately didn't go quite to plan on my side of the pit garage. Despite a strong qualifying performance and a good start to the race, we eventually wound up fifth after an early collision caused us to lose four laps.



But the real winners of the weekend were surely the 45,000-plus crowd, the worldwide television audience and of course sports car racing as a whole. It must have been the best possible advertisement, showcasing how much endurance racing has developed over the past 10 years. Gone are the days of looking after the tyres or brakes and nursing the car to the finish. It has become a cliché, but it really is now a sprint from start to finish, with every second counting and non-stop action all the way. I often get asked why we, as drivers, fight so hard with our competitors so early in an endurance race. The reply is simple: in 2011 the Le Mans 24 Hours was won by the incredibly narrow margin of 13.854sec and the opening race of 2015 at Silverstone by just 4.610sec. This kind of close finish is becoming the norm rather than the exception, so the drivers' approach has changed significantly since I first started watching Le Mans as a child. Everybody now pushes the car to its absolute limit on every lap of every stint. The result is the best racing with which I have ever been involved (or, indeed, have witnessed). Even when I'm not in the car, I'm glued to the TV screen watching events unfold. Is there currently another series in the world that can offer such action and quality as we saw at Silverstone?

The other thing that became apparent during the weekend was the huge progress all manufacturers have made. It's incredible to think that, in such a short period of time, performances have improved by more than three seconds per lap. This year's fastest race lap at Silverstone, set by the winning Audi, was 1min 40.83sec. In 2014, the same crew – Marcel Fässler/André Lotterer/Benoit Tréluyer – was similarly quickest, on 1min 44.21sec. From a driver's perspective, performance gains of that scale are almost unimaginable.

What's even more fascinating is the current performance gap between Formula 1 and LMP1. Until we have both raced on the same circuits within the same year it is hard to draw any direct comparison, but Lewis Hamilton posted the quickest time in last year's British Grand Prix, a 1min 37.16sec. It's incredible to think that the difference might be less than four seconds, despite LMP1 cars being 250kg heavier. I would be very interested to compare average lap times between the two if traffic could be removed from the equation. Could we have reached a point where the current race pace of an LMP1 car is quicker than that in F1? M



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OULTON PARK

Where The Writer Meets The Road

A collection of articles, broadcast intros and profiles

Sam Posey

There aren't so many drivers who can write, or vice versa, but Sam Posey competed in top-level events – Indy 500, Le Mans and Grands Prix – and had a parallel career at the typewriter, writing for *Road & Track* from its inception, and at the commentary mike.

This is a compilation of writings – programme entries, on-air bios, thought pieces – which bring a different slant to the racing business, whether it's succinct word sketches of Jim Hall and Mark Donohue, atmosphere pieces about the Speedway Motel, or memories of his Challenger having a new roof welded on overnight when it proved over-etched.

All are short, making this a good lunchtime dip when you'll find background to the Calder BMW Art Car he drove (the team was so pleased with the publicity they planned dinner on Saturday, expecting the car to fail) or the throwaway comment that while driving a Ferrari 512 down Mulsanne in those scary-aero days he looked over at the 917 of Pedro Rodriguez "white as a sheet, steering like mad with no response..." Despite some erratic layout, an entertaining read. **GC**

Published by David Bull
ISBN: 978-1-935007-27-2, $29.95

First Principles

The Official Biography of Keith Duckworth

Norman Burr

Blackburn was something of a boom town during the UK's industrial revolution and seems an appropriate place of birth for an industrial revolutionary such as Duckworth, who died 10 years ago but whose influence continues to be felt. Cosworth, the company he co-founded in 1958, might no longer have its name on the cam covers of a modern Grand Prix engine, but it supplies many components at every level of the sport, is heavily engaged in a number of performance road car programmes and continues to provide the loudest heartbeat at many a historic event.

The story begins with an anecdote about his future mum taking a sidecar trip along Southport Sands (upsetting a couple of po-faced *Daily Mail* readers in the process) and goes on to plot the career of a man whose exceptional achievements earned him an OBE without the wider public every really knowing a great deal about him.

Author Burr has done a very good job of stitching the various bits together and there is much, much more within the covers than the book's compact dimensions imply: the type is particularly small – so much so that it looks almost Dickensian.

Worthwhile, in a word. **SA**

Published by Veloce
ISBN: 978-1-845845-28-5, £35

Joey Dunlop

King of the Roads

Stephen Davison

It seems barely possible that 15 years have elapsed since motorcycle racing lost Joey Dunlop, the Isle of Man TT king who perished while taking part in a minor 125cc race near Tallinn, Estonia.

Originally published in 2000, this largely pictorial work draws on the wonderful archive of road-racing photographer Stephen Davison, who was but a young boy when he first watched Dunlop in action. His images pick up the story in 1977 – when Dunlop scored the first of his record-breaking 26 TT wins – and take us through to the time of his passing.

Davison covered a great many of Dunlop's races, but admits they didn't speak terribly often. Each went about their own business, a few steps apart, and the candid portraits are absolutely dripping with character. Compared with any contemporary motor sport equivalent, driver or rider neatly groomed, sponsorship patches just so, obligatory cap masking facial features, those of a grime-stained Dunlop are vastly superior.

And the action shots? They're pretty inspiring, too. **SA**

Published by Pacemaker
ISBN: 978-1-84717-685-1, £12.99

The Porsche 924 Carrera

Evolution to excellence

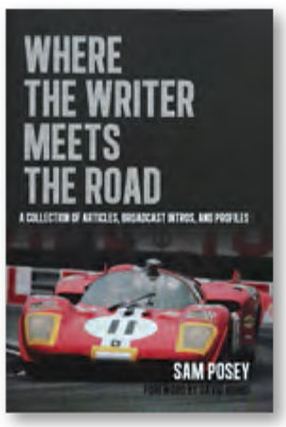
Roy Smith

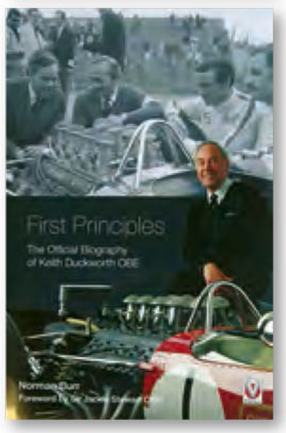
In publishing terms this is arguably as niche as 'niche' gets. That might explain the limited print run (just 1500 copies) and a price of significant heft.

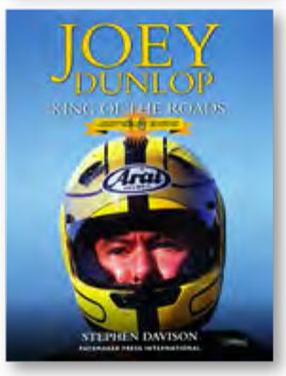
The 924 Carrera was an attractive car, on road or track, but was designed as a stop-gap and never destined for a long shelf life. Given which, its life story was passably busy. Author Smith has left few nuts or bolts unturned through more than 300 pages, his prose bisected with graphs, technical documents and photos of everything from 924 Carrera GTs at Le Mans to pressure sensors and transaxles.

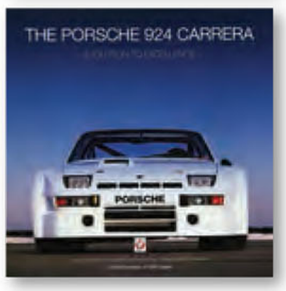
Thorough, then. **SA**

Published by Veloce
ISBN: 978-1-845846-45-9, £75

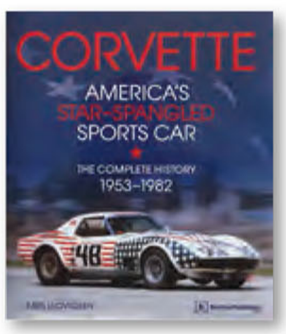












The Racing Car: Ferrari 250 GTO

Doug Nye

This is the first interactive e-book I've read – viewed – consumed – what is the right verb? Anyway, once you've downloaded it it becomes very like our digital magazine version, combining running text with photos that turn into video – and of course sound. And if there's one element that brings the mental picture of Ferrari's glorious GTO into focus, it's the spiralling shriek of that V12 filling its lungs. Even through laptop speakers.

With respected historian Nye as author it's a comprehensive story, with inside detail from a man who has driven several of the beasts plus a fine spread of images. While conventional in structure – driving sensations, the genesis, technical outline, race history etc – this production also lets you zoom into a cutaway drawing to see close-up photos or watch onboard footage of a GTO racing. It's more than just pictures that move, though: here it's the author, or owner Nick Mason, talking to you, a degree of involvement no book can offer. Cheaper than print; for Mac users only, though. **GC**

Published by Monza
iTunes e-book, £8.99

Corvette

America's Star-Spangled Sports Car

Karl Ludvigsen

Let's get the obvious out the way first: if you're not a Corvette fan, this 750-plus page book probably won't have a lot to interest you. But even if you've only got a passing fancy in the history of Chevy's sports car or GT racing in general, there's a huge amount of information contained within.

Ludvigsen deftly weaves through the car's different eras, moving from the many Corvette concepts via GM's marketing campaigns to John Greenwood's lairy race-prepared versions. Although the motor sport angle is a big attraction, one of the most interesting aspects of the Corvette's history is its design stages – the general impression of the American car industry is that it ignored European achievements for too long, but even in the 1960s GM's designers were looking to Porsche et al for inspiration.

Reasonably priced for a book of its size, Ludvigsen's effort might still be expensive for the non-enthusiast. But there's a wealth of fascinating history inside and that makes it well worth a look. **ACH**

Published by Bentley
ISBN: 978-0-8376-1659-9, £37.50

OVERTAKING ADVERSITY

Ignoring life-changing injuries, a crew of ex-Paratroopers is at the core of a new team tackling the BTCC – and the aim is to turn out a competitive touring car driver





IT'S NO SECRET THAT motor racing will always be a challenge. Since its inception in the late 19th century, the sport has tested the human spirit like few other pursuits. Balance, mental stamina and determination contribute to the successful conquest of speed. But there are sometimes other factors too, and few teams illustrate the point as eloquently as Infiniti Support Our Paras Racing.

New this season to the ultra-competitive, 30-race Dunlop British Touring Car Championship, Infiniti Support Our Paras Racing is a project with a difference. A not-for-profit organisation, it has been set up to increase awareness of the hardships suffered by severely injured former Paratroopers and their families – and to help raise money that will provide them with essential support.



To this end, seven injured ex-Paras will take key roles within the team. Initially they will work on and prepare two Infiniti Q50s for experienced touring car drivers Richard Hawken and Derek Palmer. The end goal, however, is to coach an ex-Para to race, and guide them through motor racing's junior classes to the point that they will in future be able to compete for Infiniti Support Our Paras Racing.

Devastating injuries are not necessarily a barrier to a career in motor racing – and there are several high-profile examples. Alex Zanardi, a former F1 Grand Prix driver who lost both legs in a racing accident, has gone on to compete successfully in international sports and touring car events and will this year contest major endurance races (including the Spa 24 Hours) for BMW. When not busy with his motor sport activities, the Italian also won a couple of hand-cycling gold medals at the London Olympics in 2012… Dane Jason Watt was regarded as a potential F1 driver until he suffered paralysing injuries in a motorcycle accident, but he later won the Danish Touring Car title and has since run his own team for injured war veterans.

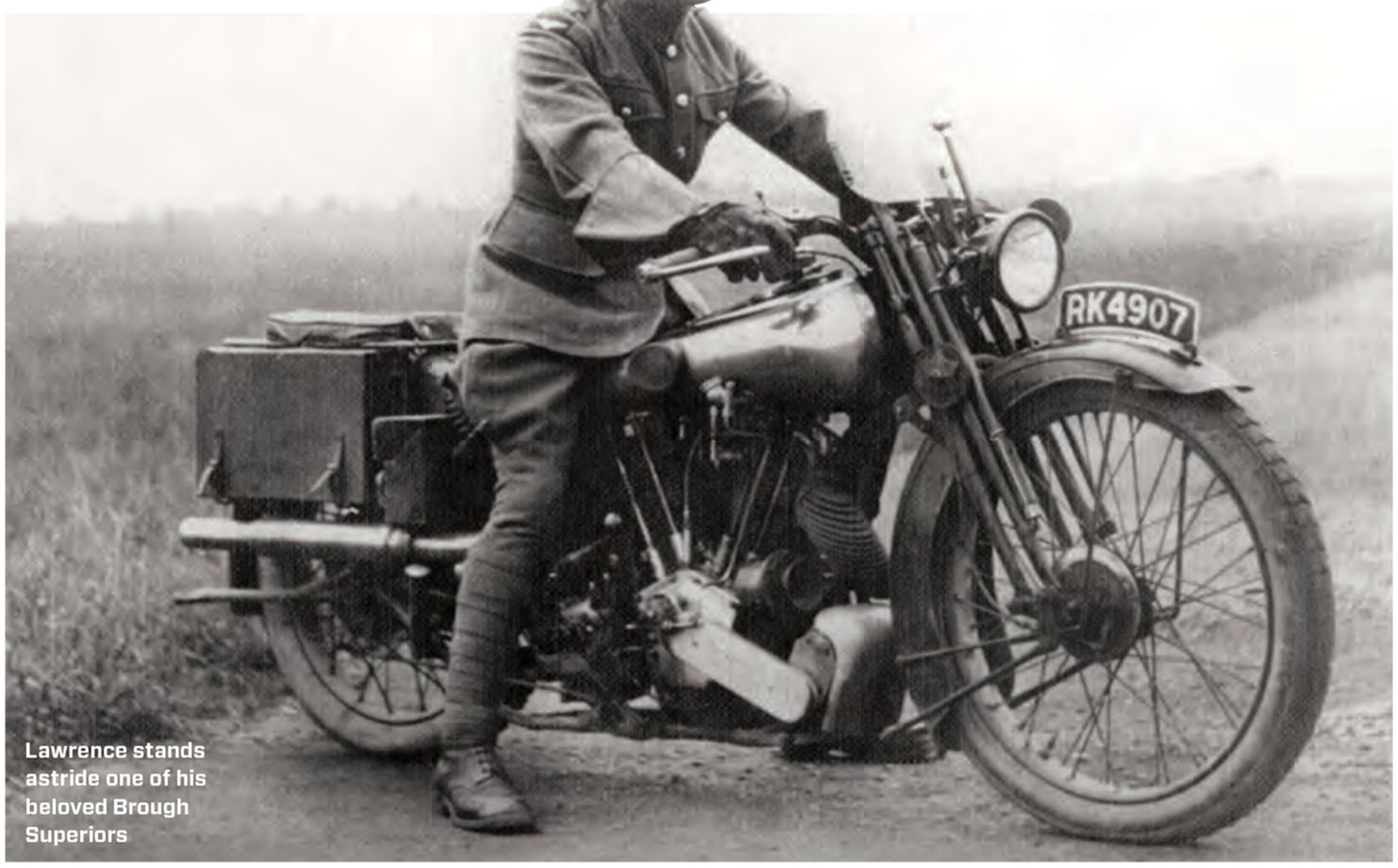
Inspirations, both.

This carry-on-regardless approach is shared not just by Infiniti Support Our Paras Racing, but also by key sponsor TENA Men, which offers a range of discreet, comfortable products that help men deal with urine leakage.

A common experience, one in four men over 40 in the UK will have urine leakage at one point and TENA Men allows men to keep control and carry on with their everyday lives, whatever comes their way.

Raising awareness is a key part of TENA Men's engagement with Infiniti Support Our Paras Racing: two partners, one complementary attitude. Ⓜ

- **The British Touring Car Championship is the UK's highest-profile racing series and every race is broadcast live on ITV4.**
- **For more information on Infiniti Support Our Paras Racing, *www.parasracing.com***
- **For more information on TENA Men, *www.tena.co.uk/men***



Lawrence stands astride one of his beloved Brough Superiors

GETTY

MAT OXLEY

REMEMBERING LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

THE WORLD'S GREATEST MOTORCYCLIST died 80 years ago this month. He wasn't a racer; he was, in the words of Winston Churchill, "One of the greatest beings alive in our time. I fear whatever our need we shall never see his like again... His name shall live in English letters, it will live in the annals of war, it will live in the traditions of the RAF and in the legends of Arabia."

Riding motorcycles wasn't what Thomas Edward Lawrence did to achieve greatness; he fought a war and wrote books. His contribution to Britain's cause in the First World War was immense: he led an Arab revolt against the Germans' Ottoman allies, which earned him the appellation Lawrence of Arabia. His literary masterpiece *The Seven Pillars Of Wisdom* was described by Churchill as one of "the greatest books ever written in the English language".

If I dared suggest Lawrence was the first celebrity motorcyclist, I believe he would (and quite rightly) come back from the dead and slit my throat. However, there's no doubting his fame, nor his enthusiasm for two wheels.

Lawrence adored motorcycling and was addicted to speed. During the post-war years he built a close relationship with Brough Superior motorcycles and their creator, George Brough. In all, he owned seven of these mighty machines, named George I to George VII. He had an eighth on order when he crashed and lost his life in May 1935.

Some people said that Lawrence had it coming. He rode very fast over long distances to visit a circle of friends that went all the way from the establishment to bohemia and back again. Churchill idolised him but he felt more at ease in the company of fellow writers such as Thomas Hardy and George Bernard Shaw, who stumped up the money for George VII when Lawrence was running on empty.

Lawrence wrote much and beautifully about the joy of riding a motorcycle at speed. Indeed he's never been beaten at this. After reading his words I wonder why I bother writing this column, or anything else.

"I'd feel the earth herself moulding under me. It was me piling up this hill, hollowing this valley, stretching out this level place: almost the earth came alive, heaving and tossing on each side like a sea. That's a thing the slowcoach will never feel. It is a reward of Speed. I could write for hours on the lustfulness of moving swiftly."

Lawrence's choice of Brough Superior was a good one – they were the superbikes of their day. The company's top of the range SS100 was tailor-made to individual customer specifications at the Brough works in Nottingham and powered by a 905cc overhead valve V-twin engine, built by JAP in north London. Each SS100 was officially timed at 100mph at Brooklands before delivery to its lucky owner. The bike featured a monster wheelbase of six feet six inches (around two feet longer than a modern superbike] which gave Lawrence the tenacious high-speed road-holding he required. In the late 1930s a Brough held the motorcycle land-speed record at 169.79mph.

Lawrence adored his Broughs. "A skittish motorbike with a touch of blood in it is better than all the riding animals on earth, because of its logical extension of our faculties, and the hint, the provocation, to excess conferred by its honeyed untiring smoothness."

There was, however, a problem with Lawrence's love of speed. He found more than sheer joy in fighting his way down a 1920s country road at one hundred miles an hour. He also found release from reality, like an alcoholic finds release through drinking heavily.

After the war, when the British people adopted him as a national hero, he enlisted in the ranks of the RAF under an assumed name to escape the fame that stalked him wherever he went. It's probably also safe to suggest that he was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. In other words, he had a lot from which to run away.

"When my mood gets too hot and I find myself wandering beyond control I pull out my motorbike and hurl it top-speed through these unfit roads for hour after hour. My nerves are jaded and gone near dead, so that nothing less than hours of voluntary danger will prick them into life: and the 'life' they reach then is a melancholy joy at risking something worth exactly 2/9d a day."

In fact the drudgery of lowly military life seemed to suit Lawrence. He wanted to let his mind be quiet for a while, so he needed the boredom and obscurity as much as he needed the speed. During his time in the RAF he fettled aeroplanes and worked on the development of high-speed powerboats. He hoped that these new areas of knowledge would complete his journey "from ink to oil".

By all accounts he was a superb rider, able to control a motorcycle at speed in very difficult circumstances. However, following his death, Shaw was moved to admit that his gift of George VII "was like handing a pistol to a would-be suicide".

Lawrence crashed two months after leaving the RAF in the summer of 1935. He fell after swerving to miss two boys riding bicycles on a country road in Dorset and suffered fatal head injuries. He wasn't wearing a helmet, as was perfectly normal at that time, and died several days later, without regaining consciousness.

Lawrence's book *The Mint*, covering his years in the RAF, contains his most famous piece of writing about riding, *The Road*, which tells the story of his race with an RAF Bristol Fighter plane. It is required reading for anyone who loves to feed their emotions from the rush of speed.

"I'd feel the earth herself moulding under me. It was me piling up this hill, hollowing this valley, stretching out this level place: almost the earth came alive, heaving and tossing on each side like a sea."

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Ian Beveridge and other drivers of older cars will boycott rallies if stage conditions are likely to be too rough

PAUL LAWRENCE

Review sparks rally fears

New ruling likely to keep classics from forest stages | BY PAUL LAWRENCE

THE FUTURE OF CATEGORY 1 cars in gravel rallying is in doubt, following an MSA ruling that rally fields can no longer be split into more than one group.

Traditionally, the pre-1968 cars in Category 1 have run first on the road in gravel rallies to ensure they enjoy the best stage conditions, before more powerful machines cut up the surface. However, one of the outcomes from the Scottish government's review on motor sport safety is that there should be no gaps in the field and that the fastest cars should always run first. The review followed fatalities to spectators and onlookers on events in Scotland and comes at a time when the Forestry Commission is scrutinising safety records.

Faced with running towards the end of the rally, behind more than 100 other cars, many Category 1 drivers are unwilling to risk damage to increasingly rare and valuable cars.

"Clearly the future of forest rallying would be at stake if nothing was done following the safety review," said Ian Beveridge, who campaigns a 52-year-old Volvo PV544. "It does, however, seem to have been a hasty reaction. It will surely lead to the demise of Category 1 as I don't think many people will want to drive 50-year-old cars over rough roads."

Porsche 911 driver Rikki Proffitt, winner of Category 1 on the opening two rounds of this year's Mintex MSA British Historic Rally Championship, has similar views. "I've no plans to do any more gravel rallies," he said. "I'm sure that will go for the majority of competitors. It will be the ruination of Category 1."

Fellow Porsche 911 driver Dessie Nutt is likely to switch to asphalt events while Graham Waite (Volvo Amazon) and Clive King (Mini Cooper) have both indicated that they are unlikely to continue with gravel rallies.

When *Motor Sport* asked the MSA for a response, a spokesman said: "The withdrawal of dispensation – and it was only ever dispensation – to run multiple fields in stage rallying addresses a safety concern at a time when enhancing safety is right at the top of the sport's agenda and essential to securing its future. As stated in our announcement of this withdrawal, 'We will of course monitor the effect of this decision so as to ensure that the perceived safety benefits are actually achieved'."



Star car in the GT90s demonstration sessions at this year's Silverstone Classic will be a 1997 Mercedes CLK GTR. The car won that year's FIA GT Championship with Bernd Schneider. About 30 GT cars of the era are expected to take part in the demonstrations, including at least one Porsche 911 GT1.

Rossi heads for Goodwood

VALENTINO ROSSI, THE MOST successful MotoGP racer of all time, will make his Goodwood Festival of Speed debut this year (June 25-28) to mark Yamaha's 60th anniversary.

The Italian legend will be the star attraction at the 23rd Festival and has not ruled out driving up the hill, as well as riding his Yamaha YZRM1. Rossi will compete in the Dutch TT at Assen on Saturday and then fly to Goodwood for Sunday.

"This will be my first time at Goodwood, but I know the event pretty well," Rossi said. "I have read so many stories about the Festival and I have also seen many videos. The atmosphere looks gorgeous. I'll ride my Yamaha but might also drive a few cars."

Five Grand Prix teams – Mercedes, Red Bull, Williams, Ferrari and McLaren – will all be in action, while other features include seven Mercedes-Benz 300 SLRs marking the 60th anniversary of Sir Stirling Moss's 1955 Mille Miglia victory. The racing career of local hero Derek Bell will be celebrated with a special class of at least 12 cars, including a Mirage GR8 from his first Le Mans win in 1975.

Barilla back to Formula 1

LE MANS WINNER AND 1990 Minardi Grand Prix racer Paolo Barilla has joined the FIA Masters Historic Formula 1 Championship field with a Williams FW07C.

The 53-year-old has raced a Martini Mk34 Classic F3 car in recent seasons and has stepped up to the ex-Alan Jones Williams, although his debut at the Barcelona series opener in April was scuppered in testing by a blown engine.

The Italian won Le Mans in 1985 at the wheel of a Joest Porsche 956 and retired from full-time racing at the end of 1990.

Ex-Fisher Sierra returns

THE FIA'S MOVE TO ADMIT CARS from up to 1990 into historic rallying continues to gather momentum in Ireland, where the new category has been adopted for the Irish Historic Rally Championship.

US-based Irishman Frank Cunningham has acquired the Ford

Sierra Cosworth made famous by local rally legend Bertie Fisher. Elsewhere, Englishman Nick Whale has had a BMW M3 rebuilt to period rally trim.

"When the FIA allowed a car like this into the FIA Historic Championship I made a short-list of cars," said Cunningham. "A Ford Sierra Cosworth was at the top."



SIMON ARRON

Maki set to race again

THE JAPANESE-BUILT MAKI F101, crashed by Howden Ganley during the 1974 German Grand Prix, could race again following a total rebuild by Richard Taylor at Autotune.

Following the accident at the Nürburgring, which left Ganley with leg injuries, the team withdrew to Japan and returned briefly the following season. The crashed car remained in Europe and passed through several owners before Taylor and his father Anthony acquired the project. "The eventual plan is to race it," Richard said. Another Maki chassis resides at the Spa museum in Belgium.

Late-era demos for Classic

HIGH-SPEED DEMONSTRATION sessions for 1990s and early 2000s Grand Prix cars will be a new feature of the Silverstone Classic (July 24-26), which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. A group of pre-2004 F1 cars, including the ex-Michael Schumacher Benetton of Lorina McLaughlin, will be demonstrated each day.

In contrast, the oldest cars in action will contest the Kidston Trophy for Pre-War Sports Cars. Named in memory of 1920s Bentley boy and pioneer aviator Glen Kidston, winner of Le Mans in 1930, the race is attracting extensive interest as the pre-war cars return to the event after a six-year break.

■ **Frank Lyons has been elected as new chairman of the Historic Sports Car Club. Lyons is a well-known racer and has been particularly involved in promotion of the Formula 5000 class. Lyons, who also races in Historic F1 and Group C, takes over from Chris Sharples, who spent almost a decade at the helm.**

■ **An MGB that contested the 1968 London to Sydney Marathon is being restored by the MG Car Club's MGB Register after it was found in a scrap yard in Southampton. UMD 534F finished 42nd in the hands of Jean Denton and Tom Boyce and was the only sports car to complete the 10,000-mile rally.**

■ **Northern Ireland race car manufacturer John Crosslé MBE will be remembered by the naming of the John Crosslé Chicane at his local Kirkistown track. Crosslé died at the age of 83 last August, but the company continues to build and restore cars under the guidance of marque enthusiast Paul McMorran.**

PRODUCTS



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STAR LOT @ RM SOTHEBY'S

1962 SHELBY 289 COMPETITION COBRA
{ Fort Worth, Texas May 2 }

Headlining RM's Texas sale is the first race-prepared Cobra Shelby ever sold to the public. Having been under single ownership for more than 40 years, chassis CSX 2011's race history ends in the '60s with a successful run in the SCCA. It's been restored to the exact condition in which it appeared at Daytona in 1964 – including the scratch it acquired during the race. Estimate: $2.2-2.6 million.

UNDER THE HAMMER

Classic and racing auctions from around the world | BY ALEX HARMER

RM Sotheby's

@ FORT WORTH MAY 2

The Andrews Collection



1962 Chevrolet Corvette
1962 SCCA production champion. Driven by Dick Thompson for the Gulf Oil team
Estimate: $2-2.75 million



1963 Meskowski Sheraton-Thompson dirt car
Twice USAC champion. Driven by AJ Foyt
Estimate: $550,000 - $700,000

1959 Lister-Chevrolet
Winner of Sussex Trophy at Goodwood and BRDC '50s sports car champion. All-time lap record holder in its class at Goodwood, Oulton Park and Spa
Estimate: $500,000 - $650,000



1965 Fully functional Chevrolet Corvette demonstration stand
Estimate: $1-1.4 million

1965 Shelby GT350R
1966 SCCA Southwest Division & production champion. Winner in the hands of Pedro Rodríguez
Estimate: $850,000 - $1 million

AUTOMOBILIA

AT FORT WORTH SALE



Bronze busts of Charles Rolls and Henry Royce
Estimate: $35,000 - $50,000



Duesenberg Model J engine model, no28 of 175
Estimate: $3000 - $5000



Sun 200 tune-up tester
Estimate: $6000 - $7000



Mr Bibendum reading lamp
Estimate: $1500 - $2500



Blower Bentley pedal car
Estimate: $6500 - $8000

Bonhams

@ NEWPORT PAGNELL MAY 9

The Aston Martin Works sale

2010 Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT2
Campaigned by Villois Racing
Estimate: £110,000 - £130,000

Aston Martin V8 'Evo'
Built by Marsh Plant. Co-designed by current Ferrari F1 engineer Jock Clear. Raced by Gerry Marshall
Estimate: £60,000 - £80,000

Aston Martin DB7 GT
Chassis 002. Built by Marsh Plant and RML
Estimate: £60,000 - £70,000

@ SPA MAY 24

The Spa Classic Sale



1990 Porsche 962C
Seventh at Le Mans in 1993. Driven by Otto Altenbach, Loris Kessel and Jürgen Oppermann
Estimate: €1.45-1.85 million

1969 McLaren M6 GT
Chassis MGGT-2
Estimate: €190,000 - €230,000

Two ex-Mika Häkkinen karts
Both €8000 - €12,000



1986 Birel T17 & 1982 Finn Kart SFA1



1981 BMW 530i
Run by Joosen Racing. Class winner at 1981 Spa 24 Hours. Driven by Jean-Claude Andruet, Eddy Joosen and Dirk Vermeersch
Estimate: €120,000 - €160,000

AUCTION CALENDAR

MAY

2 RM SOTHEBY'S
Fort Worth, USA

4 SHANNONS
Cheltenham, Australia

7-9 AUCTIONS AMERICA
Auburn, USA

9 BONHAMS
Newport Pagnell, UK

12-17 MECUM
Indianapolis, USA

16 COYS
Ascot, UK

18 SHANNONS
St Leonards, Australia

23 BONHAMS
Brussels, Belgium

23 SILVERSTONE AUCTIONS
Silverstone, UK

23 RM SOTHEBY'S
Lake Como, Italy

24 BONHAMS
Spa, Belgium

31 BONHAMS
Greenwich, UK

JUNE

2 CCA
Silverstone, UK

5-7 RUSSO & STEELE
Newport Beach, USA

6 HISTORICS AT BROOKLANDS
Weybridge, UK

13 COYS
Athens, Greece

13 OLDTIMER GALERIE
Zürich, Switzerland

15 BARONS
Esher, UK

20 BONHAMS
Oxford, UK

20 H&H
Stamford, UK

22 ARTCURIAL
Paris, France

26 BONHAMS
Goodwood, UK

JULY

9 DVCA
Dorchester, UK

11 COYS
Woodstock, UK

11 H&H
Droitwich Spa, UK

17-18 AUCTIONS AMERICA
Santa Monica, USA

25 RM SOTHEBY'S
St John's, USA

25-26 SILVERSTONE AUCTIONS
Silverstone, UK



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DREAM GARAGE

CITROËN SM

BRAVE. INNOVATIVE. CONTROVERSIAL. Not words you want the press to attach to your new grand tourer, but then Citroën didn't used to worry what people thought. A 'sporting DS' sounds like an oxymoron, and with that model's four-pot powerplant it could have fallen flat on its suspension gas bags. Sensibly though, Citroën decided to buy into engine technology from someone with a name for it – Maserati – and somewhat less predictably dropped a pokey V6 into its hydro-pneumatically sprung, power-everything, front-wheel-drive four-seat coupé. And then clothed it in, shall we say, unusual lines.

A startled world took one step back from the crab-tracked high-speed cruiser, then split into two camps – unbelievers and addicts. But launched into the fuel-strapped 1970s it was all over in five years, so the SM wasn't and isn't a common sight. A reputation for complexity scares buyers, but this one was fully restored last year and, says Ludovic Parayre of Lap63, everything works.

A keen SM man since 1970 when his father took him out and did the ton in the new model, Ludovic says the key is to have these cars done by a specialist. "A lot were bodged up which produced only problems, but now we know what went wrong, and how to sort out those things." He cites the Maserati engine's sodium valves, which dissolve and have to be replaced with modern ones.

The result, Ludovic says, is a neglected classic: "They're great fun to drive once you understand the very direct steering and the very sensitive brakes. They're fast, stable and quiet, they don't use too much fuel and if they're properly maintained they're reliable too."

A fan, then – which is why he's excited by his next one, first owned by Mike Hailwood. "It's coming from New Zealand and I'm sending it to *the* SM guy, Andrew Brodie. He knows all the improvements to upgrade an SM, and this one is going to be a concours car. Hailwood was well known for driving it; he even modified the engine. We'll have to investigate that."

Meantime the gold car awaits one of the select band who can happily adapt to the super-fast steering and on-off brake button. A good SM gives a blissful ride in a luxurious leather-lined cocoon, pampered by features the rest of us wouldn't get for years – self-levelling suspension, steerable headlamps and rain-sensing wipers.

"People don't realise how advanced they were in their day," says Ludovic. "But the movement has started – prices are on the rise."

FACTFILE

YEAR 1970
ENGINE 2.7-litre Maserati V6, 170bhp
TRANSMISSION five-speed manual
SUSPENSION hydropneumatic; front: double wishbone, rear: trailing arms
TOP SPEED 135mph
NUMBER BUILT 13,000
PRICE £60,000



McLaren's 570S undercuts some rivals – and new entry-level 540C (below) is on the way

McLaren breaks cover

205mph Sport Series tipped to boost sales | BY ANDREW FRANKEL

McLAREN HAS UNVEILED ITS MOST important new model since the 2011 MP4-12C turned the Woking marque into a fully fledged car manufacturer.

Called the Sport Series, it uses the same carbon-fibre monocell as other current McLarens, and variants of the same 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8. Like them it is also available only with two seats and rear-wheel drive and in time will spawn both a spider and a more sporting, stripped-out 'GT3' version.

For now, however, what's most different is the cost. The staple model of the new series is called the 570S, a reference to the 570PS (562bhp) power output and it has been priced at £143,250, undercutting not only the extant 650S by more than £50,000 but, in all likelihood, the new Ferrari 488GTB by a similar amount. Indeed with even the Lamborghini Huracán costing almost £40,000 more, it is hard to find a clear rival on price alone. The closest on power and price is the Porsche 911 Turbo S (552bhp, £142,120), although it lacks the McLaren's exclusive image and carbon-fibre construction, while the 570S has neither the rear seats nor the all-wheel-drive hardware of the Porsche. Both make the £110,000, 503bhp Mercedes-Benz AMG GT appear rather good value.



It requires just 3.2sec to hit 60mph from rest and 6.3sec to hit 100mph, identical times, as it happens, to those recorded by the McLaren F1. Top speed is 205mph.

It is possible McLaren has been very clever here. It is well known that the number of people prepared to spend £150,000-£200,000 on a car is a tiny fraction of those willing to pay between £100,000-£150,000, yet it arrives on such apparently fertile ground without obvious opposition. To make the most of the point, by the time you read this McLaren will also have launched at the Shanghai Motor Show a still less expensive 540C, retailing for £127,000 where it will undercut even the likes of the Aston Martin DB9 and the entry-level Bentley Continental GT.

McLaren has saved the money in a number of areas. Most obviously, the 570S and 540C lack not only the outright power of the 650S, but the active aerodynamics and interlinked suspension system. Instead the 570S has a fixed rear wing and passive double wishbone suspension, albeit complete with electronically controlled dampers. And for those fearing it might not perform quite as you might hope a McLaren should, it requires just 3.2sec to hit 60mph from rest and 6.3sec to hit 100mph, identical times, as it happens, to those recorded by the McLaren F1. Top speed is 205mph.

The car poses two distinct questions. First, how is McLaren to stop it stealing sales from the presumably far more profitable 650S? McLaren's answer is that the 650S is effectively the original 12C incarnate and, as such, not that far from being replaced itself. McLaren always said its original architecture would support three model series of which the Sport Series 570S is the third after the Super Series 650S and Ultimate Series P1. So within the next year or two at the most, expect not only a new 650S, but for it to be based on all-new architecture too.

Perhaps more tantalising is how, if at all, Lamborghini and Ferrari will react. Lamborghini is perhaps in the trickier position, because that price point is shortly to be occupied by the forthcoming all-new Audi R8, which already uses the basic structure and powertrain of the Huracán. But there is nothing to stop Ferrari moving into this territory should it choose. If the Sport Series increases McLaren sales from around 1500 units per year at present to more than 4000 units, is this an opportunity Ferrari can afford to ignore? Or will it prove unable to resist the temptation to do battle with the old enemy and finally produce the new Dino that has been discussed for so long?

Internal strife at VW

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT THAT nothing could interrupt the apparently inexorable rise of the Volkswagen Group, open warfare has broken out in the boardroom.

On one side is VW CEO Martin Winterkorn, a man widely regarded as the architect of the group's extraordinary recent successes. On the other is that perennial *eminence gris*, Ferdinand Piëch, who chairs the supervisory board. The spat is a result of what Piëch sees as disappointing profitability for the Volkswagen brand relative to that of Porsche and Audi. VW has invested massively in



engineering new, expensive, state-of-the-art platforms designed to be shared across many VW-owned brands, resulting in a paring back of the profit margins. By contrast Porsche and Audi, with their lower volumes and higher prices, are enjoying a period of extraordinary profitability. It has been reported that last year Porsche made more money (€2.78 billion) selling 200,000 cars than did VW selling six million…

Even so, Winterkorn's time at the helm has transformed the business, with sales almost doubling in less than 10 years and overall profits at an all-time high. Some see Piëch's public criticism of Winterkorn as manoeuvring ahead of the latter's likely retirement next year, when he will be 68 years old.

Who will win? Winterkorn is greatly respected by the industry in general and VW's investors in particular. But Piëch is massively feared by precisely the same people and that might prove the stronger draw, especially if Winterkorn's days are already numbered. History tells us that those who take on Piëch – the grandson of Ferdinand Porsche, let us not forget – usually lose. Winterkorn himself owes his appointment to a falling-out between Piëch and former incumbent Bernd Pichetsrieder, but Piëch's biggest scalp was undoubtedly that of former Porsche boss Wendelin Wiedeking, who had the temerity to attempt to take over the VW Group. That cost Wiedeking his job and Porsche its once cherished independence.



More power for Boxster

PORSCHE REVEALED ITS NEW Boxster Spyder (above) at the New York show in April. The most powerful Boxster yet, it's the first to feature the 3.8-litre motor more normally found in the 911 Carrera S and more recently located behind the seats of the new Cayman GT4. Where the motor produces 400bhp in the 911 and 385bhp in the Cayman, it has been tuned to develop just 375bhp in the Spyder, though whether these differences are more strategic than real is not known.

Like the 2011 Spyder, the new Boxster is intended to be used in dry weather so features a somewhat fiddly temporary roof, though unlike the last it won't fly off if you exceed 120mph. This, thin seats and the absence of radio or air-conditioning from the standard equipment list (they're no-cost options) counter the additional weight of the engine, larger wheels and new rear deck, so there's a total saving of 30kg over its closest relative, the Boxster GTS. The 0-62mph sprint takes 4.5sec, fully half a second quicker than the GTS, while top speed rises from 175mph to 180mph. The Spyder is priced at £60,459, £6587 more than the GTS.

Porsche is keen to point out that the Spyder is not the sister of the Cayman GT4, despite sharing an engine, but is instead a product of the main Porsche engineering team rather than the Motorsport operation. That said, the firm has been shocked by the strength of demand for the Cayman GT4 with the result that Porsche is now considering both a GT4 version of the Boxster and a still more hardcore Cayman GT4 RS.



Mercedes-Benz has unveiled its rival to the BMW X4. Ostensibly a concept, Mercedes admits the GLC coupé was shown in Shanghai in 'near production standard' form. Like the BMW and the already shown GLE coupé, the car aims to combine the rakish looks of a traditional sporting coupé with the high driving position and rugged appeal of an SUV. BMW has attracted considerable criticism for the appearance of its X4 and X6, but the X6 has been wildly successful in the showroom and the X4 is likely to follow, so Mercedes is understandably anxious to capitalise on the opportunity.

Good news for Lotus

LOTUS IS CELEBRATING THE Elise's 20th anniversary by releasing a Special Edition model. It weighs 10kg less than the Elise S upon which it is based, the same 217bhp supercharged 1.8-litre motor and comes with forged alloy wheels, a leather interior, a revised sport mode and 20th anniversary logos on the seats and wings.

Meanwhile, Lotus sales continue to recover, albeit from a shockingly low base. Custom increased by 55 per cent in the last financial year, from 1296 sales to 2015. Sales in the UK, France, Germany and China have more than doubled. The figures are the best since those before the 2008 financial crisis and keep Lotus on course to reach its stated aim of 3500 sales per year by 2017.



Special Edition Lotus celebrates 20 years since the Elise arrived



FERRARI CALIFORNIA T

It's turbocharged rather than traditional, but the news isn't all bad | BY ANDREW FRANKEL

EVEN BEFORE IT WAS chosen to mark the point at which Ferrari abandoned its near life-long devotion to normal aspiration, it was easy to be sniffy about the California. This is the least expensive Ferrari on sale, the entry-level Ferrari, the Ferrari you buy because you cannot afford any other. It's also a convertible designed not with that laser-sharp focus on driving dynamics that comes as standard in any other two-seat Maranello product, but a rather misty *mélange* of considerations.

It must be quick, for sure, but it must also offer the outside world the best possible view of the predominately middle-aged men masquerading as cool cats at its wheel. It must ride well enough not to annoy your passenger on long journeys, and offer sufficient luggage space because at this level it's not a given that you'll be able to send your things ahead. Most of all, though, it must be packaged in such a way that the entire metal roof section can fold and stow behind the seats leaving a vast aperture, regardless of the deleterious effect this might have on weight and structural rigidity. This is not merely Ferrari's cheapest car, it is by some distance Ferrari's most compromised.

And that was before they turbocharged it. I wonder who took that decision. It was made on di Montezemolo's watch but has the whiff of Fiat, or Fiat Chrysler Automotive as we must now call it, behind it. Porsche is quite open about being railroaded into forced induction by VW insisting it must bear more than its fair share of the drive to reduce corporate emissions, and I wonder if the same is true at Ferrari. I wonder too, now that Maranello is to be spun off and back into effective independence, how long the policy will last. Lamborghini has steadfastly and heroically resisted the urge to pervert the performance of its cars and time alone will tell whether Ferrari's move to turbocharge all its V8 models was correct. Before I drove the California I simply couldn't see the sense in losing all that rev-range, that throttle response and that noise, simply to eke a few extra notional miles from every gallon of petrol. Now I am not so sure.



FACTFILE

£154,490

ENGINE
3.8 litres, 8 cylinders

POWER
552bhp@7500rpm

TORQUE
556lb ft@4750rpm

TRANSMISSION
seven-speed paddle shift, rear-wheel drive

0-62MPH 3.6sec
TOP SPEED 196mph
ECONOMY 24.1mpg
CO_2 273g/km

The car looks like a merely facelifted iteration of the machine that made its debut some six years ago and has since found 10,000 homes, more than 70 per cent of them belonging to people who have never owned a Ferrari before. But Ferrari says it's more than that, claiming only the windscreen and folding roof mechanism have survived the transition. But it's still the same size give or take a nip here and a tuck there, and while better-looking, is far less striking than any other Ferrari model, which is probably intentional.

The new engine displaces 3.9 litres, exhausts via two turbochargers and produces some 552bhp, a 70bhp rise on the output of the old, normally aspirated California. Predictably, and in theory at least, there's more torque and far lower down, though because Ferrari has elected to mete it out bit by bit, increasing the amount available in each

gear but only allowing maximum torque to be reached in top, that's not how it transpires in practice. Ferrari says this has nothing to do with transmission preservation and everything to do with trying to make a turbo engine feel as if it were normally aspirated.

And that would be a neat trick. Ferrari has kept a high red line of 7500rpm and retained a flat-plane crankshaft as found in all its road-going V8s (save the 3-litre motor used by the Lancia Thema 8.32; I'll get my anorak).

The cabin design is beautiful, even if ergonomically it remains something of a nightmare: putting all the major controls on the steering wheel has never looked more out of place than in this softest and slowest Ferrari, while the emasculated *manettino* switch – which has been reduced to a mere three settings – serves to do little else than remind you that this is very much the junior model. The test car did however come with the ability to integrate my iPhone so totally that all its relevant icons appeared on the screen, which meant I was able to use Google maps rather than Ferrari's own eccentric navigation for a trip down to the South Devon coast.







California T cabin is a paragon of elegance, but not as functional as it might be. Steering wheel is home to all the major controls

The moment you fire it up, something unexpected happens. It doesn't whoosh, whirr or rumble as you might expect a turbo car to; it barks. Like a Ferrari. This is encouraging. You pull a paddle (there's still no manual option) and ease away wondering if you've managed to misjudge this car before driving it a mile. The first straight provides the answer where, with just the merest pause to gather breath, the California cannons up the road, engine now snarling as you throw one instantaneous gearshift after another at it. This is clearly the slowest car Ferrari makes, but that does not make it anything less than one hell of a fast car.

In fact the powertrain I'd worried so much about is actually perfect for this car: you don't need race track throttle response in a California, but you do need plenty of torque and a rousing soundtrack and it has both. I'll wait to be convinced that turbo power remains the right way for a pure Ferrari sports car to go, but for a quick cruiser like this it might actually be better than the normally aspirated engine it replaces. And I never thought I'd write that.

For me greater question marks surround its chassis ability. Ferrari is asking a lot of a design whose convertible architecture is inherently prejudicial to structural rigidity, but on smooth Italian roads I imagine it would still prove up to the task of providing both the handling and ride quality you'd hope for from such a car. In the UK, on bumpy and often wet roads, it gave a good account of itself, but not the dynamic *tour de force* you might presume came as standard with any car with that horse on its nose. Ferrari has judged the set-up well, but not even the best-damped suspension could stop occasional structural shimmies on poor B-road surfaces. And while the chassis is well balanced, it's held back by Ferrari's ongoing insistence of fitting needlessly quick steering with only limited feel. In the wet, however, it was highly entertaining, offering just enough softness for proper traction followed by any amount of oversteer you like, at least until your passenger's patience runs out, which in my case was not long.



The California is many things Ferrari won't want to read. It is not just Maranello's least expensive car, it is its least desirable too, and probably its most flawed. In the UK at least it cannot occupy with conviction the twin roles of sports car and grand tourer. I have no doubt that a 911 Turbo Cabriolet is a quicker, more capable car.

But I liked it, both the way it looked and the way that new engine makes it drive. It felt genuinely special, as all Ferraris must, and for those looking for the image of a convertible Ferrari without the hullabaloo, it will probably serve Maranello better than ever.

www.motorsportmagazine.com/author/andrew-frankel

SMART FORTWO & FORFOUR

Uprated runabout that drips with urban charm... at a price



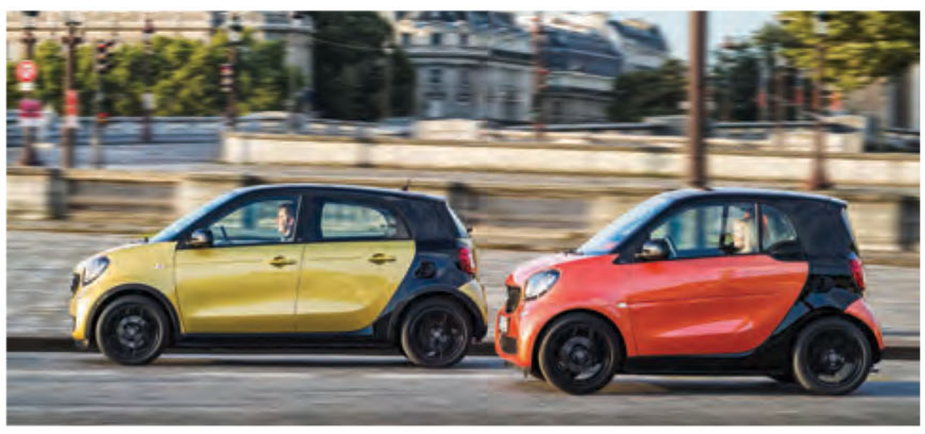
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER it is a Land Rover Defender or a Porsche 911 GT3 RS, I love cars that know what they're here for and feel, at the very best, nothing more than apathy towards those which do not.

But mine is a minority view. Were it not, Smarts would have sold by the million over the years and so-called crossovers or soft-roaders not at all. The truth is that the small car revolution, which Mercedes promised when it launched its first Smart way back in 1998, never turned up. Across successive generations the car failed to sell in the numbers expected, and you sense that almost any company other than Mercedes would have cut its losses years ago. But having been seen to fail with its stewardship of Chrysler and the relaunch of Maybach as a brand in its own right, perhaps Mercedes was always looking for a way to relight the Smart fire.

Renault provided the spark, for it was also looking for a new Twingo, a car that once also commanded a reputation for being different and interesting. So a joint venture was drawn up to yield two Smarts – the two-door ForTwo and four-door ForFour – and one Twingo.

All Smarts come with three-cylinder engines, either a 1-litre normally aspirated Mercedes engine, or a 900cc turbo motor from Renault. They live out of sight beneath the boot and emit an engaging thrum in use.

Of the two I much preferred the ForTwo. The ForFour is expensive and, save for its commendably tight turning circle, doesn't really offer anything dramatically different for those looking for a compact four-seater. Ideas you might have about it handling like a 911, thanks to its engine position, can be put straight back to bed: it's not as disappointingly stodgy as a Twingo, but has been set up to ensure that there are no known geographical or climatic conditions that will make it oversteer.



Smart ForTwo 1.0 Proxy

FACTFILE

£11,820

ENGINE
1.0 litres, 3 cylinders

POWER
70bhp@6000rpm

TORQUE
67lb ft@2850rpm

TRANSMISSION
five-speed manual, real-wheel drive

0-62MPH 13.9sec
TOP SPEED 94mph
ECONOMY 68mpg
CO_2 93g/km

The ForTwo is expensive too, very much so to my way of thinking, but at least that money is buying the most highly adapted four-wheeled city dweller that has probably ever existed, and I include the Renault Twizy because that only makes sense in decent weather.

It's not just the abbreviated dimensions (just 2.7 metres long), but clever front suspension geometry that provides a turning circle so tight it makes a London taxi look like a tanker. The previous Smart was actually quite disappointing in this regard. As an owner of a 50-year-old Fiat 500, I thought I knew just how small a space a car could fit, but the Smart's in a different league. Indeed you may never do a three-point turn again: if a road is wide enough to have a white line in its middle, it's wide enough for the Smart to turn, usually with considerable space to spare. There's only a little additional room in the boot but it's fine for shopping. The car is wider, too, therefore less cosy for large occupants.

Out of town it's better but not transformed. The manual transmission is an improvement on the old semi-automatic and there's a double-clutch option for those who want it. Its handling won't give the VW Up! anything to worry about, but the ride has been considerably improved.

Is it worth it? Put it this way: if all I ever wanted was to drive off-road, it would not even occur to me to have anything other than a Defender. And if all you want is a car to drive in town, the Smart ForTwo is the best there currently is. Those seeking a broader talent base should look elsewhere.

A vintage summer is in prospect, with three Vintage Sports-Car Club festivals at MSV circuits providing a glimpse back to a pioneering age of motorsport. Cars that raced at Brooklands, Le Mans and the Mille Miglia return to the track to battle rivals from the Edwardian era to the immediate post-war years.

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LAND ROVER DISCOVERY SPORT

Solid start in a brave new world, but hang on a minute...



EVEN THOUGH IT REMAINS a minnow compared to the big German producers, car manufacturers around the world are in awe of Land Rover, and in particular the way it has managed its brand. Or, I should say, brands. Because today Land Rover itself seems more like a holding company than the marque it once was and the brands are now Range Rover, Discovery and Defender.

For that is where the company is heading. Range Rover now has its flagship model plus the Sport and the Evoque, while the first of the new Discoverys, also called Sport, is before you now. A replacement for the actual Discovery is on its way as, you will know already, is a clutch of all-new Defender models.

The Discovery Sport is essentially a replacement for the old Freelander and in certain respects is less changed than it looks. Visually it draws heavily on the wildly successful design language of its Range Rover stable-mates, but deep underneath there still lies a heavily adapted version of the old Freelander platform that was itself a version of the old Ford Mondeo's architecture. And the engine – for there is just one for now – is still a Ford/PSA 2.2-litre diesel.

On the other hand, Land Rover claims the car is new from the B-pillar rearward and, most significantly, has brand-new rear suspension designed to enable the fitment of a sixth and seventh seat – the first time three rows of seats have been available in a Land Rover of this size.

The interior is as plush as an Evoque's, as it needs to be given what Land Rover has done to the price: the least expensive Discovery Sport now costs £32,395, a substantial rise over the £27,765 charged for the entry-level Freelander (even taking into account additional feature content).

In parts it's impressive to drive, especially considering it weighs more than a long-wheelbase Jaguar XJ limousine. It has that fine supple ride that seems to be a hallmark of JLR cars, accurate steering and excellent body control both on and off the road. Given the additional practicality of those extra seats, plus the appeal of its looks, I'd understand anyone racing towards their dealer to snap one up.

But I wouldn't. Not yet at least. Quite shortly Land Rover is going to ditch the old, expensive, off-the-pace Ford/Peugeot engine for its new home-grown Ingenium powertrains. Expect performance and refinement to be transformed, and fuel consumption and CO_2 emissions to plummet. Remember, too, the company has previous in this area: it put the Jaguar XF on sale in 2008 with a 2.7-litre diesel without bothering to mention the superior 3-litre unit that would replace it the following year. I strongly suspect also that, at the same time, Land Rover will introduce JLR's new electronic architecture already seen in the Jaguar XE, finally consigning its current obsolete navigation and entertainment system to history.

In short, the new Land Rover Discovery Sport is an excellent example of its type, possibly the best in its class. But don't buy one.

Land Rover Discovery Sport HSE auto

FACTFILE

£39,395

ENGINE 2.2 litres, 4 cylinders, turbo diesel

POWER 187bhp@3500rpm

TORQUE 310lb ft@1750rpm

TRANSMISSION nine-speed automatic, four-wheel drive

0-62MPH 8.9sec

TOP SPEED 117mph

ECONOMY 44.8mpg

CO_2 166 g/km



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AUDI TT S

Pleasing to behold, but not yet a match for the Golf R

THOUSAND HORSEPOWER hypercars aside, the best car I tested last year was the Volkswagen Golf R: a scintillating driving machine, wrapped up in an ever-so sensible shell.

Well the Audi TT S might not be quite so spacious, but what it loses in practicality it more than makes up for in its attractive appearance. But what really whetted my appetite for the car was the knowledge that it, too, was powered by the same 306bhp 2-litre motor that brought the Golf R to such vibrant life, and the same ever-so-clever all-wheel-drive system that, in theory at least, can send up to 100 per cent of engine torque to either axle.

Ah yes, you may say, but this is Audi, the company with a long history of failing to make decent driver's cars out of the most promising of raw materials.

Well you can relax. I enjoyed driving the TT S very much, so much more than any other TT (including the old TT RS) that further comparison is pointless. The car is quick and grippy like other fast Audis have been in the past, but it is also accurate and poised as all too few of them have been. It offers differing driving modes too, from sharp and sonorous, to soft and refined. The car I drove had the standard six-speed manual gearbox and had no problem matching the high dynamic standards set by the rest of the car.

Even though its rear seats are still all but unusable and despite the fact I still don't like the new electronics (these transfer the navigation map and any other read-out to the same space occupied by the instruments, so you often have to press a button that shrinks the dials to give you a better idea of where you are going), the TT S will prove an attractive and invigorating yet easy and effective car with which to live.

So it pains me to have to write the next bit, but it needs to be said. I'd still far rather have the Golf, not to mention £10,000 in change. While the TT S is undeniably good to drive, the Golf R is a riot. Audi has come down on the sensible side of the stability/agility equation and the result is a car that is actually less engaging than its visually far more staid stable-mate.

There's another issue too: by asking close to £40,000 for the TT S (or more if you choose automatic gears) Audi has brought the car within the range of another in-house opponent, the terrifyingly brilliant Porsche Cayman. And good though it is, there is nothing the front-engined, four-wheel-drive four-cylinder Audi can do to even approach the levels of engineering inspiration reached by the mid-engined, rear-drive, six-cylinder Porsche. Unlucky for Audi, too, that the TT S also falls into the crosshairs of the far less expensive BMW M235i, a car that for the money is one of the best BMWs I have ever driven.

But at least there is now a TT that delivers properly on the promise of its looks. If you just want a car that drives really well and don't need high-rev histrionics or impeccable feel on the limit, the TT S had a lot to say for itself. Almost as much as a Golf, in fact. Ⓜ

FACTFILE

£38,945

ENGINE
2.0 litres, 4 cylinders, turbocharged

POWER
306bhp@5800 rpm

TORQUE
280lb ft@1800 rpm

TRANSMISSION
six-speed manual, four-wheel drive

0-62MPH 4.9sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
ECONOMY 38.4mpg
CO_2 168 g/km

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Non-viewing figure

I did not bother to watch the first few Grands Prix on television. I could just be getting old and grumpy, but even so am puzzled by my new indifference after following F1 for many 50 years. Three pieces in your May issue are relevant.

I agree with Nigel Roebuck that the structure of the actual races – who wins and by how much – hasn't changed much. Nigel is right that none of us objected when Clark and others dominated. There were close races and not so close races, just as there are now.

But correspondent Peter Phillipson is surely also right that drivers used to be more interesting as people. He writes of the youth of Verstappen and others, but there is more to it than that. Corporate interests that come with money don't like too much boat-rocking.

In the course of his lunch with Simon Taylor, Frank Williams told us that "Bernie came down from heaven". Ecclestone brought money, which is what the teams wanted and still do, but all money-based businesses lead to a reduction in variety, dominance by one or two players and increasingly difficult barriers for would-be competitors – currently engines. It is the logic of the system. New entrants will have a hard time: ask Honda. So the money, which is to say television, has resulted in technical dominance by, currently, Mercedes. Good for them.

As with many other sports businesses (soccer, the Olympics), this requires subsidy not just by car manufacturers but by governments in need of some favourable PR. So, no French or German Grand Prix? Hello, Vladimir. Some of us find this distasteful.

For the sake of the sport I hope that my disenchantment is just that of someone who remembers different times and thinks them better, with all the faults of recollection. But those viewing figures don't look too healthy.

Alan Jessop, Cleatlam, Co Durham

Cole's corner

"For the first time since 1955 the Formula 1 World Championship will be without a German Grand Prix this year…" (*Motor Sport*, May). No doubt you'll already have received plenty of reminders about 1960, but it is interesting to note the different reasons.

That time the Germans chose to run their race for F2, effectively the new 1500cc F1 a year early. The theory was that there would be a German team – Porsche – inheriting the Auto Union half of the Silver Arrows tradition, which would bring out crowds of patriotic spectators in a way that the British and Italian cars never could. Times change…

As for the unhappy Sauber saga at Melbourne, it reminded me of the case of RAM Racing back in 1976, when John MacDonald decided to drop driver Loris Kessel halfway through the season even though the Swiss had brought much of the sponsorship money to get the team into F1.

Also in the May issue, Nigel Roebuck wrote, "Formula 1 never lacks for folk wishing to stick the boot in, and God knows I can be as critical as anyone if I perceive something ill within it." I wouldn't argue with that! In fact, I found myself in total agreement with almost all his opinions in *Reflections*, not least his views – shared by Mark Hughes – on the leading lights at Red Bull and their attitudes to the new F1.

But as long as they are campaigning for the FIA to change the engine regulations to hobble Mercedes, or slagging off Renault for not measuring up, they are not accusing more successful teams of cheating.

I suppose that is progress of a sort…

David Cole, Oakham, Rutland

High rise? Flat…

With the collapse of the German Grand Prix, attention is once again turning to ticket prices, sideshow events fans want when they visit a race weekend and, of course, the obligatory finger of blame pointed at Bernie Ecclestone and CVC.

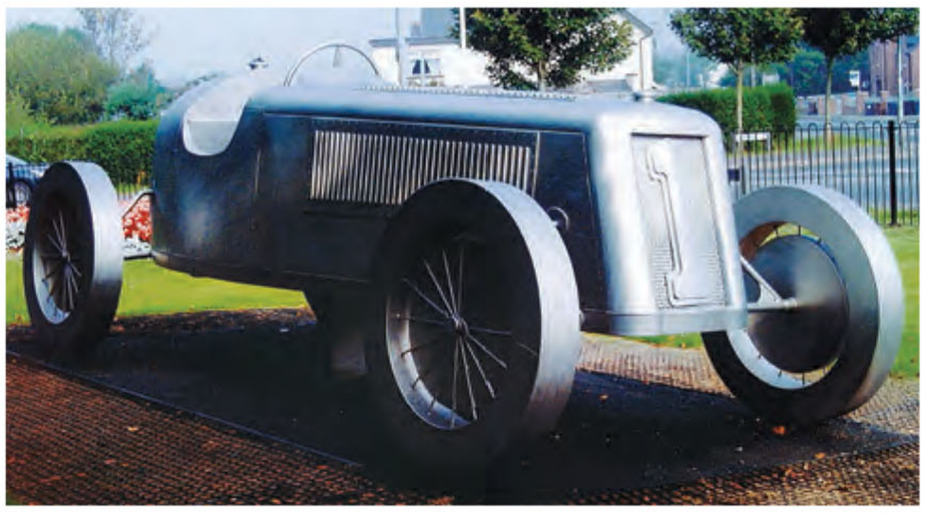
There are valid points to be made in relation to all of this, but there is one thing I have yet to see mentioned – that of the additional costs associated with Formula 1 race weekends. I attended the resurrected Austrian GP last year and, like seemingly everyone else, was very impressed with the ticket prices. How praise was lavished upon Red Bull! But let us not forget this is a marketing company and the race was a marketing exercise. Having gone to the concert area on both Friday and Saturday nights, I can assure you that, alcohol apart, with no other drink on sale than their own, it is reasonable to assume they made back whatever money they missed out on from the race tickets. Given the price of said drink, I am also certain they will have made a profit.

But it doesn't stop there, does it? We all know everyone's prices go up for race weekends. The smallest snack costs an hour's wage, campsites suddenly become unaffordable, airline tickets go up as far as the aeroplanes, every small player in every nearby town doubles or triples their prices on everything. Do they, too, not share the blame for people turning their backs on race attendance?

I have no doubt the same tactics took place in Germany and now, after crowds dwindled, the race has gone and no locals will be making any money.

It isn't just the people whose names we love to hate that make a killing out of Formula 1. Thousands of other business do likewise, and they should ask themselves how long they can squeeze their race weekend dry before it, too, is abandoned.

David Herron, Washington, Tyne and Wear



Vague approximation of an ERA now stands at the site of the old Ballyclare circuit's pits. Prince Bira is among those who won races at the Antrim venue

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Artist known as Prince

I was interested to read Gordon Cruickshank's Prince Bira article in April's issue. As a 14-year-old I saw him race in the 1947 Ulster Trophy races on the Ballyclare circuit in Co Antrim, where he drove the ERA. He won that race, beating Bob Gerard to the flag. On a visit to the Goodwood Revival in 2013 I was pleased to see Bira's ERA still being campaigned.

Parts of the Ballyclare circuit still exist, but road improvement schemes and housing development have rendered the circuit unsuitable for racing. However, the local council has erected a not-quite-authentic aluminium replica of Bira's ERA on the site where the pits were located.

William Woodside, Ballyclare, NI

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Feast of endurance

In a recent piece on your website, Andrew Frankel was spot-on in his assertion that Formula 1 could learn a few lessons from the World Endurance Championship.

With F1's restrictive engineering rules leading to a reliance on wind tunnels, why not ban all aerodynamic bodywork except for small wings fore and aft? Combine this with different engine configurations and the cars wouldn't all look and sound the same. Using the current fuel-flow monitor would give the equivalence in power.

Group C sports car racing was obliged to use F1-derived engines before, but in the early '90s they were not reliable enough for long distances. Nowadays, a swap the other way could give us open-wheelers powered by Audi and Toyota!

'Blink and you miss 'em' pitstops have become an irrelevance. Again, do it Le Mans-style and limit the crew to the jackmen and two mechanics changing the wheels. That might make the stops more exciting.

Stephen Jones, Eastbourne, East Sussex

Lella remembered

With regard to Paul Fearnley's recent piece on Lella Lombardi, I remember seeing the 'Tigress of Turin' driving a Matich at Oran Park in 1974. She made the newspapers as an international star racing in Australia. Sadly, the Matich was not up to the task as the Lola T330/332s were the cars to have at the time. I saw her in the paddock area and was impressed by her professional approach to getting the car ready and set up – a real racer.

David Karonidis, Bermagui, Australia

Nice one Ceril

As a reader of *Motor Sport* since 1947 I enjoy articles that retrace the history of racing – and Gordon Cruickshank's piece about Princess Ceril brought back memories.

In the early Eighties I was compiling the story of ERA racer Pat Fairfield (published later in your magazine). I contacted Princess Ceril at her home on Lake Garda and she was extremely helpful, giving me personal insights into her life plus those of Bira and Chula. I have about 10 hand-written letters from her, as well as Christmas cards.

Princess Ceril sent me signatures from both Chula and Bira, which she had cut from personal letters. She also sent me small box camera shots of the Fairfield Memorial, when it stood in their London garden before being moved. She was most humble and helpful, telling me that Pat had been the role model for Bira and that they were close friends.

Andrew Embleton, South Africa

View from Pedro's balcony...

I recently went to Monza for some American TV work and stumbled across the Hotel Fossati. It's not even five miles away from the track and is oozing motor sport nostalgia from when the hotel opened in the 1960s. There are pictures all over the walls of everyone who has stayed there.

These are a who's who of motor racing through the decades; too many to list here, but hopefully some photographs here give you an idea. Most of them are signed.

"It all started when Jo Siffert wanted a room for his F2 mechanics," manager Vittorio Fossati told me, "but my father said that as a driver he needed a room too, so gave him a room for free. After that more and more drivers came along. I was lucky growing up around them. One time I went along to Monaco as a teenager, but couldn't get a ticket for the paddock and so wandered around Casino Square. Pedro Rodríguez came out of the Hotel de Paris en route to the paddock and asked what I was doing. I explained, so he threw me his room key and I watched the Grand Prix from his hotel balcony.

"It has always been fun. Senna stayed here in his Lotus days, but mechanics got the key to his room and totally emptied the furniture. Many of the other drivers often used the beds for more than sleep. There was one famous guy who would come back from the track on a scooter after morning practice for a 'lunch session' upstairs here. He'd come down in the lift, zip up his overalls and go back to the track for first qualifying."

Vittorio told me it is still popular with the modern drivers, too; good to hear some have a connection with the history of Monza and the sport.

I could have stayed all night speaking Ital-glish with him, but we had to crack on. On my next visit I will make time to while away a bottle of wine with him, but I urge anyone passing the area to do the same.

Toby Moody, Himbleton, Worcestershire







History hotel: owner Vittorio Fossati with Toby Moody, top. Past guests include Joann Villeneuve and a young Jacques, above right





1

PETE WAINWRIGHT

Having slept rough for his first GP, Aintree in 1961, Pete upgraded to hotels for many Monaco trips over 50 years. "We often stayed at the Helvetia, as did Allison, Halford and Tim Parnell. We made many friends, especially Rosie Bernard who ran the Chatham Bar, famous watering hole for drivers." **1** Eventual winner McLaren (14) and Mairesse escape first-lap crash in '62 **2** Dapper Hill and muffled Brooks talk to Tony Rudd at Aintree **3** Surtees practises lifeboat drill in Ferrari, Monaco '65 **4** Three greats: Farina, Fangio and Moss converse **5** '65 victor Graham Hill's BRM heads team-mate Jackie Stewart



2



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Ferrari up in lights

New film to portray Enzo

Enzo Ferrari is set to be depicted in a biopic starring Robert De Niro. Producer Gianni Bozzacchi has revealed that the film will be titled simply *Ferrari*. "It will be based on an epic story," he said. "It will have a high budget and will cover a wide span – from 1945 to the '80s in a twisted game of eras and episodes."

De Niro added: "It will interpret the life of the great entrepreneur who founded the most famous car manufacturer in the world. The film will turn around soon,



mostly in Italy, and has absolute priority over all my other projects.

"It's an honour and a joy for me to tell the life of an extraordinary man who revolutionised the automotive world across different historical and social periods, from fascism to democracy, from war to economic well-being," said the actor. "It is a story based on creativity and courage, and it's destined to thrill audiences of every country and every age."

Clint Eastwood has been tipped to direct.

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KEEPING AN EYE ON THE TIME: NEW RELEASES IN THE WATCH WORLD

by Richard Holt

OMEGA

If man was going to get to the moon by the end of the Sixties, he needed a watch capable of accompanying him. Over a number of months in the middle of the decade, NASA subjected chronographs by Rolex, Longines and Omega to a series of punishing trials involving extremes of temperature, pressure and humidity. They were shaken, shocked and magnetised to see which was tough enough to cope with whatever the cosmos might throw at it.

The only one to survive with all its functions intact was the Omega Speedmaster. This came as no surprise to some, as there had already been Omegas in space – the first belonging to astronaut Wally Schirra, who had taken his personal Speedmaster onboard Mercury Atlas 8 in 1962. But in 1965, NASA certification made it official: the space watch was born.

Making the Omega standard issue meant it was with the astronauts every step of the way. Well, almost every step. Both Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were wearing Speedmasters on Apollo 11 in 1969, but Armstrong left his watch in the landing module while he took the giant leap for mankind. It wasn't an oversight, he left it behind as a back-up for the module's electronic timer in case the walk into the unknown inflicted some damage that the NASA testing hadn't anticipated.

So while Armstrong may have been first man out of the module, Aldrin's Speedmaster was the first watch on the moon. It worked perfectly, timing the astronauts to make sure they didn't moonwalk for too long.

The remarkable thing is that the watch wasn't some beefed-up special edition. The astronauts just used off-the-shelf Speedmaster Professionals. And that was a watch intended for a very different purpose. The first edition had come out in 1957 and was designed as a cutting-edge stopwatch for motor racing and other sports where precision timing is crucial. The dial design was based on sports car dashboards of the era and featured the world's first tachymeter bezel, a device that allowed the user to measure average speed over a set distance.

That basic dial layout has remained largely unchanged and continues to be a big seller for the Swiss firm. The Dark Side of the Moon collection pays tribute to Apollo 8, the first mission to leave the earth's orbit and go around the moon. The watches are made from highly durable, scratch resistant ceramic and feature silicon balance springs and the co-axial escapement – a revolutionary feature invented by the British watchmaking genius George Daniels.

Four new black additions to the collection were among the most striking watches unveiled at this year's Baselworld watch fair. The Vintage Black (pictured) in laser-engraved brushed ceramic on a retro brown leather strap perfectly captures what the Omega Speedmaster is about: celebrating the past, but not living in it.

www.omegawatches.com



OMEGA SPEEDMASTER
Dark Side of the Moon in Vintage Black £8205



The Speedmaster's tachymeter bezel is laser-engraved

MÜHLE GLASHÜTTE

The small Saxony town of Glashütte is known as the birthplace of German watchmaking and is home to brands such as A Lange & Söhne and Glashütte Original. Mühle Glashütte traces its origins to the late 19th century, when a company founded by Robert Mühle began making precision measuring instruments for the town's watchmakers. In the 1920s the firm expanded into making clocks and car speedometers, but with war and the subsequent occupation of East Germany the company was dismantled. In 1994 Robert Mühle's great-grandson Hans-Jürgen formed Mühle Glashütte. The company built on the family's reputation for precision with a series of marine chronometers and wristwatches. A distinguished new addition to the range is the Teutonia II Big Date Chronometer, which is limited to 500 pieces.

www.muehle-glashuette.de



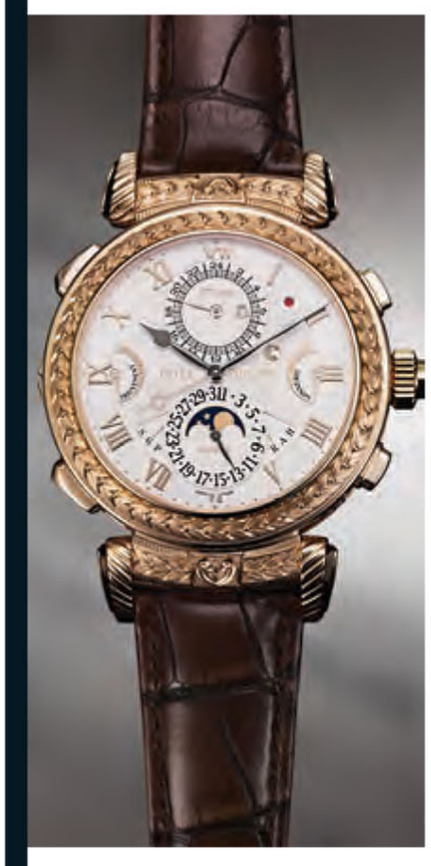
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PATEK PHILIPPE

The extravagantly titled Watch Art Grand Exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in London promises to be a spectacular end to the year-long celebration of Patek Philippe's 175th anniversary. As well as plenty of historical pieces and interactive experiences, Patek will be displaying some astounding anniversary creations such as the Grandmaster Chime (pictured).

This twin-faced watch is a technological marvel assembled from more than 1500 parts and featuring 20 complications such as a chiming minute and date repeater, a four-digit date display and dual time zones. Just seven will be produced, six going to loyal collectors with a couple of million pounds to spare, and the seventh going to the Patek Museum in Geneva.

www.patek.com



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LE MANS 24 HOURS SPECIAL

It's a universal touchstone, part of motor sport's tapestry since 1923. Talk of Le Mans turns one's mind not to the city's imposing cathedral, nor to a well-preserved old town with its winding cobbled alleys and charming restaurants, but to an annual endurance race that this year takes place for the 83rd time. Once an exercise in conservation, the Le Mans 24 Hours morphed some years ago into a flat-out sprint and its competitive zest is arguably about to reach its zenith: Porsche is chasing a 17th outright win, Audi its 14th, reigning world champion Toyota its first… and the evidence suggests there will be little to choose between them. And then there's Nissan, late to the ball with its radical, front-wheel-drive GT-R LM NISMO. In the pages that follow we unravel the significantly different approaches that underpin their ambitions. It might just be the season's finest race… in this or any other category.

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ADRENALMEDIA

"After you've slugged it for a while, mutual

Switching from Formula 1 to endurance racing requires drivers to embrace an alien culture based on honesty, integrity and a willingness to help those who were previously sworn enemies. Toyota's world champions Anthony Davidson and Sébastien Buemi talked to fellow racer JOHNNY MOWLEM about this attitudinal shift

photographer
JAMES MOY



it out you develop "respect"

MOST SUCCESSFUL racing drivers, professional or amateur, have certain things in common, not least an extremely healthy ego and large dollops of self-interest. This is most obvious when looking at the working relationship between Formula 1 team-mates, but it is prevalent in all forms of motor sport. The need for a driver to establish a clear team pecking order is paramount, to ensure success and also to boost future employment prospects. Not beating a team-mate can seriously jeopardise a professional racer's livelihood.

Over many years competing in single-seaters and sports cars, I have always been fascinated by the psychological dynamic between team-mates – and nowhere more so than in endurance racing, where the need for drivers to work together, potentially helping a team-mate to improve, is a vital component that flies in the face of every racing instinct.

Before the World Endurance Championship began, I sat down at Paul Ricard with Toyota's defending champions Anthony Davidson and Sébastien Buemi, to discuss how drivers are able to cast aside the innate selfishness that is part of every racing driver's mindset.




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Johnny Mowlem In single-seater racing it's often like a civil war between team-mates. Starting with Seb, because you were most recently in F1, did you find it easy to be open with information when first you came into sports cars?

Sébastien Buemi [laughing] It took a bit of time…

Anthony Davidson At first he treated me like [former Toro Rosso Formula 1 team-mate] Jaime Alguersuari!

SB But also we had a strange year in 2012, with Ant having a big accident at Le Mans. The first real year for us was 2013, when we shared the car for the whole season. Initially you need to find your place in the team. Last year it worked really well, because we really started helping each other. Now we just need it to work with the third driver! But Kazuki [Nakajima] is a good guy so I am sure we will be fine.

AD Kazuki fights as hard as anyone when out on track, but he is also a very humble character so I am sure he'll fit in well. At the end of last year Seb and I got to the stage where we didn't even need to say anything to each other, we just knew that we had the same game plan and we approached race weekends identically. Every challenge we had, I would see from his driving and my driving that we were attacking in the same way.

SB In the last three races especially, we felt really good and that it would be difficult to beat us.

JM I could see that happening even as an outsider. Do you think that the WEC qualifying format helps, where two drivers are used and an average lap time is taken, rather than one guy being the hero who sets pole? Does that help you gel?

AD I think our car was stronger with that format, rather than it being one driver over one lap.

SB With the old system it was difficult to beat Porsche over one lap.

AD We had fun trying though…

JM It sounds as though both of you cared only about the opposition and that neither of you was worried about who was quicker in your own car. Would you agree?

AD Yes, although obviously you never want to be the slower one…

SB But when you are so close to each other, as we were last year, it is impossible to say exactly who was quicker.

AD You know every dog has its day and that one driver might suit a different track or conditions slightly better. You get to learn each other's strengths and weaknesses.

SB But when you are so close it doesn't really matter any more. What you don't want is to find that someone is really a long way off, but this never happened.

AD Psychologically it was important to remain upbeat and on the same page all the time. Last year there was no longer any competition between us, to show who was the fastest. We were in it together. In 2013 I think maybe people were trying to mark their territory.

JOHNNY MOWLEM CAREER IN BRIEF

Having cut his teeth in Formula Ford, Formula Vauxhall and F3 during the early 1990s, Johnny Mowlem switched to GTs and won back-to-back Porsche Carrera Cup GB titles in 1996/97 (taking 17 wins from as many starts in the second of those campaigns). In 1998 he stepped up to the American Le Mans Series, the dawn of a long international career that has included 10 starts at the Le Mans 24 Hours. He has taken part in all the world's major endurance races and credits include class victories in the Rolex 24 at Daytona and the Sebring 12 Hours, and in 2013 he became European Le Mans Series GTE champion with Matt Griffin. In 2015 he is racing in the North American Endurance Championship.

Davidson and Buemi have gelled together, developing mutual trust and confidence







"IT LEADS TO A DESIRE TO SEE THE OTHER DRIVER DO WELL – COMPLETELY AT ODDS WITH THE RACER'S MINDSET"



SB Yeah, but after that it then worked really well for 2014. What we both understood was that the relationship takes time. We didn't get there straight away.

AD When Seb first joined I could see that he was fresh from F1, I could sense that he felt he had a point to prove! I spent a lot of time as an F1 test driver, where you had to be quite selfless in tuning the car and then giving it up for someone else to race. Seb didn't really do that part in F1, he was always racing for himself and came into sports cars very much with that attitude.

JM Especially I guess for Seb, because he was coming into sports cars after an F1 season under pressure from Red Bull to keep his drive. That must have been pretty intense?

AD [laughing] Yeah, Helmut Marko staring you down every lap! Not an easy environment. I could sense that he was slightly sensitive when he arrived – the Red Bull driver programme can be quite vicious and he had gone through that and come out the other side, a bit beaten up by it mentally.

SB You really have to show what you can do, all the time.

AD You could almost see the insecurity, where he felt he needed to show the world what happened in Toro Rosso was not fair. That's what I sensed, anyway.

JM Ant, is that a little bit what you also felt when you first came into sports cars? I know you dabbled with GTs quite early on.

AD I could fall back on my F1 testing experience and slip into the sports car mindset quite easily, but you did feel like a youngster racing against older drivers and that you had to prove you were faster than them. Seb and I went through a rocky period, probably around the time of our first Shanghai race together. Things came to a head and we had a chat, as we both knew it couldn't go on like that. Instead of trying to bring each other down and tell each other the negatives, the things we weren't doing well, we developed a mutual respect for the things we *were* doing well.

JM I think with most team-mates, especially ones that are evenly matched, that process has to happen. A quick team-mate comes in and you are almost like boxers, walking around the ring eyeing each other and then battling it out to try and establish a clear pecking order. But after you've slugged it out for a while you develop that mutual respect and, in my experience, you can develop an even closer friendship with that team-mate. Not only have you established mutual respect, but it can lead to a genuine desire to see the other driver do well, which is completely at odds with the normal default mindset of a racing driver. But this always takes time and some drivers never achieve it.

AD We had enough fights or moments on track and realised that, however hard we tried, there was never going to be one person who clearly came out on top! So we might as well work together. But, as Seb says, when we now see one or the other is struggling, perhaps because the set-up needs to be improved, we don't see that as a negative. You just think, 'If I were in that car I wouldn't be able to do any better, so there must be something wrong'. That's how we both look at it now.

JM From talking to you both together, I feel this positive relationship is a large reason for your success. The dynamic between you appears very strong and healthy. It appears that Toyota provides a good working environment for its drivers.

AD It is good. It is an engineering-driven team, but I mean we are still under pressure and we still get reports…

SB Yes, we still get reports and know who is quicker, but they don't want us to fight. They just show the facts. But we are good enough together now that if one of us is not happy, we can change the programme. The two of us are really strong like that. When I came into sports cars I was straight up against Ant as the benchmark, you could argue the quickest, so it was not easy.

AD Not that I ever saw it like that…

SB No, but it was good because straight away you see where you are, but it was also hard. The more we drove together, the better it got.

AD Initially in 2013 we were only supposed to do two races, which then became three, and because of our performances, even though we hadn't completely gelled, we ended up together all the way to the end.

JM By working so well together you two have created an increased value for yourselves as a duo. It's no good having three people in a car with one superstar and two unhappy drivers, you need everyone to be happy.

AD Exactly, and that is what we are very keen to achieve this year.

SB Normally, when you are sat on the pit wall watching your single-seater team-mate and he is being really, really strong, you hate that. You get that horrible feeling in your stomach. But last year things started to work really well for us. I often took the start while Ant would do the first part of qualifying, and we started to get into a rhythm. He was really good at extracting the maximum from the new tyres and I got quite good with the older tyres, and that was basically the only chance we had to fight Porsche for pole position.

AD With that qualifying format, if you really wanted to be a little bit spiteful and your ego got the better of you, you would maybe intentionally go a little bit off line on your in-lap to get pick-up on the tyres, or you could scrub the tyres a touch too hard to generate a little bit too much temperature. There are evil little things that you could do, but for our mutual benefit I made damn sure that I didn't push too hard on the in-lap. I wanted to get my two laps done cleanly and not take a third, to give Seb the best possible package for his laps. He'd get in the car, I'd give him a big slap on the back and send him on his way!

SB Because he kept doing this, we kept the same format and that helped us against other teams as many of them kept changing things around.

AD When you're fighting for a championship, you find another level and I think we both found it last year.

SB When you see there is a chance, you just keep pushing, sometimes even when it looks like the chance to win has gone.

JM Both of you seem to have found a really good balance.

AD Yeah, he's keeping me younger! Seb is only 26 and, when I think back to myself at that age, I wasn't as mature as he is. I wouldn't have been ready to drive in this type of environment. I feel like I'm more towards my peak and I'm excited for Sébastien to see how far he can go and how much more he can improve.

SB I think this also helped us to make virtually no mistakes on the track last year.

AD It's funny because it was only in Brazil, when we had already won the championship, that we admitted to overdriving slightly and maybe a few small errors crept in, although we nearly won that race!

SB Yeah, we said we'd push harder than ever before and both went off at different times.

JM Circumstances led to there being just two of you in the car last year [Nicolas Lapierre stood down before the season's end]. Did that help your relationship in terms of both bonding and performance?

AD There are pros and cons.

SB It is better for the six-hour races, because you get more mileage in free practice, you get more new tyres. In the six-hour races there are almost no negatives. The only thing was in Austin, where it was hard for two drivers because it was so hot….

AD And also maybe in Brazil…

SB Yes, but for Brazil it was really good. By the time we were back in for the third stint, we were really up to speed, whereas the other cars had their third drivers getting in and they took a few laps to acclimatise. We were gaining up to 10 seconds.

AD Yeah, because it was taking about five laps for them to get themselves fully dialled in.

SB The only downside is how much you lose at Le Mans by not having someone who has done the whole season, so isn't fully sharp. For Le Mans the three drivers have to feel good. You can't test much and it is the biggest race.

AD You can do as many endurance tests as you like, but it still is not the same as being at a race with all the pressures and it is still

"SEB TOLD THE TEAM THE CAR WAS PERFECT. I COULDN'T BELIEVE HE'D BEEN DRIVING A CAR THAT BAD FOR TWO HOURS"

But for circumstance, Davidson and Buemi could have won Le Mans 2014. Right, Toyota celebration – Wurz, Davidson, Sarrazin, Conway and Buemi

difficult to gel as a threesome.

SB You take away the maximum for the six-hour races to make sure things are perfect at Le Mans. Theoretically you could say that the best option would be to have three drivers up until Le Mans and then finish the championship with only two.

AD The only thing to remember is that, physically, the LMP1 cars are becoming more and more like F1 cars to drive, so with the closed cockpit and high ambient temperatures they can be quite physically demanding.

SB Compared with F1, the impressive thing is not so much our speed but more how long we stay at the wheel. The performance of an F1 car is impressive, yes, but you drive it for only an hour and a half. We have nearly the same level of car performance but you keep going for so long.

JM How do you reckon you'll split driver duties with Kazuki Nakajima who is joining you as your third driver for the year?

AD We don't know! Kazuki had pole position last year at Le Mans and won the Super Formula championship outright in Japan, so his confidence is high. But he's not the type of guy who is going to put his hand up and say he wants to do qualifying.

SB We don't want him to feel any extra pressure because he is joining the current champions. He has nothing to prove to us. Generally we are really open. If someone is not feeling great then we can change driver rotations or whatever, we don't have to stick to a set plan we decided two weeks beforehand.

AD Two years ago I pulled out of qualifying in Austin and let Stéphane Sarrazin do it, because I wasn't feeling quite right.

JM That shows maturity from which many drivers could learn. Most would rather suck on a razor blade than give up a chance to qualify.

AD I suppose so! This year will be different, going back to three drivers, although obviously we know Kazuki and he knows us and the team.

JM Will the two of you be involved in any readjustment?

SB We decide almost everything. The team leaves it pretty much up to us. If we say that we feel better doing things a certain way, like me doing the start and Ant starting qualifying, nobody will go against us.

JM That is really supportive. I have driven for teams that are not like that, which can be detrimental. I think drivers should be allowed to decide between themselves how they break up the weekend, as this helps keep the harmony.

AD It is good. I am already thinking about Kazuki potentially doing qualifying for Le Mans, because he was on pole in 2014 and has always gone well there.

JM But pole position at Le Mans? That's one to tell the grandkids…

AD Yeah, but it's all about winning.

JM To be fair, pole position at Le Mans is all about getting that clear lap when you've got the new-tyre/low-fuel run.

SB The only problem at Le Mans is that you need to be lucky.

AD For the whole event…

SB When we looked at Kazuki's qualifying lap last year, we just laughed! He took the slipstream everywhere, he just caught and overtook cars in all the right places. It was incredible.

AD Equally, we don't want him to feel pressured, to feel that he has to come and repeat that feat.

JM Would you give up winning the world title again if someone said you can win Le Mans but not the championship?

AD Yeah, for sure.

SB With the way the points work, if you win Le Mans because you were fast, rather than lucky, you will probably also win the championship. I think it was a one-off last year that the Le Mans winners didn't also take the championship.

AD But Le Mans is one of those races that you can win by being lucky. And that helped me deal with not winning last year. Plus I didn't realise how good it would feel to win the World Endurance Championship. I spoke to cyclist Mark Cavendish and he likened it to the Tour de France. Yes, it's a massive race, but the people in his sport regard the world title as more prestigious because it means you were performing for the whole season.

JM With Le Mans, the more times you do it, the more you feel you'll take a win any way you can get it.

AD I already feel like that. In a way I'm kind of 'over' the race. I know it's fickle, so if I luck into winning it this year it will justify all the times that I feel I should have won it on merit.

SB At Le Mans you just need to make sure you do your stuff right. It is so big and everyone attaches so much importance to it that you put extra pressure on yourself. We must try to do it as we would any other race.

AD We looked back at last year's race and worked out that [without Lapierre becoming involved in a time-consuming three-car accident] we would have won the race by six laps…

SB More! Even more!

AD And we were the lucky ones in terms of reliability. That was a bit frustrating.

SB After the accident our car was not very good, with the steering like this [holds his hands at 45 degrees], the brake pedal shaking and a strange noise from the hybrid. I'd not heard it before and haven't since. I was thinking, 'I am going to do one straight and it is going to explode'.

AD And it kept going! I jumped into the car after Seb had first driven it following the accident, expecting it to be OK. He'd told the team it was 'perfect'. I couldn't believe he'd been driving a car that bad for two hours…

JM Well let's hope you have better luck this year! All the very best for the championship and, of course, for Le Mans. Ⓜ



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July 1993 | *Irvine v Boutsen, last lap at Le Mans*
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The crown joules?

Audi scored another Le Mans victory in 2014, but faltered elsewhere. This season it's armed with more power, more electrical energy and a steely determination to succeed at all points of the compass

writer ROB WIDDOWS

IN A CLOUDLESS FLORIDA SKY, the buzzards soar and swoop on the hot air rising over a hot and humid Sebring. Traditional aerodynamics in action. Down below, on the bumpy track, the front end of the new R18 e-tron quattro hugs another apex and powers away, smooth and stable. New aerodynamics in action.

Audi Sport no longer races here, but this punishing, dusty aerodrome circuit is the perfect proving ground ahead of a new season. If the newly revised R18 doesn't break during 6000 kilometres of testing at Sebring, it is unlikely to fail anywhere else it goes this year.

The car's new aerodynamics are clear to see and will be crucial this season as the team strives to re-assert its dominance. The move from two to four megajoules, an increase in electrical power at the front axle, and improved combustion might not be enough. To stay with or beat Porsche and Toyota (running respectively in the eight- and six-megajoule classes), Audi hopes its new aero package and legendary reliability will pay dividends. Last year Audi won Le Mans for the 13th time in 15 years, but Toyota stole the World Endurance Championship from under its nose. The 2015 WEC season will be tougher than ever.

"Last year we did not achieve all we wanted," says director of motor sport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. "It was important to win at Le Mans, but in the championship we were not as

competitive as we hoped. But it's good that we remained motivated, and we don't want another season like that. We did not have the best pace, but we did all the rest perfectly and reliability has been one of our strengths.

"We lost the championship at Silverstone, came away with zero points from the first round, and this must not be repeated *[it wasn't. They won – ed]*. We haven't always had the quickest car, but when the rulebook was written we didn't see a possibility for a four-megajoule KERS system in the car because of the weight. So, compared with the six- [and eight-] megajoule cars of the others, we had a clear disadvantage in available power. The car was efficient, good aerodynamically, but in the end it wasn't good enough and we struggled to keep temperature in the tyres, so we lost grip. This was not a good circle to be in. Now we have found some ways to save weight, Michelin has done excellent work on the tyres, we have more efficient aero and the drivers already seem happy with the car."

AS EVER AT THE START OF A NEW campaign, it's a question of whether Audi has done enough. Can it stave off the increasing threat from Toyota? To be beaten is not in the Audi lexicon. It is not discussed. Every waking minute is used for one thing. Winning.

"We must not fail but we cannot take a bigger step," says Dr Ullrich. "Because of the given weights of the diesel engine and the petrol engine, we cannot carry a six-megajoule system. We are still convinced that the flywheel system is the most efficient at two and four megajoules, but at six the battery system begins to make sense. The diesel is heavier than the petrol [engine], so we might always be one class lower than the others. It could happen that we have to rethink – can we continue with diesel and still be competitive? If we see that we can't be competitive any more, then that's a difficult decision for the Audi Group as we have diesel engines in our road cars and we pass on the new technologies. That's why we go racing. I cannot tell you what we will do in future."

I have to ask Dr Ullrich if Audi is considering a move away from the WEC. Might the firm be tempted into the new hybrid Formula 1? I do not expect the answer to be yes. Or no.

"Right now it is not a scenario we have in mind," he says. "We are already developing the WEC car for 2016, so we see the route ahead for the next years. But… we look at all the possibilities, what fits well with Audi, with the technologies we develop, and – if the day comes when F1 is the right thing to do – then I think it could make sense. Until now there has been no reason to do it."

Getting back to the 2015 season, Audi anticipates an extremely hard-fought battle with Porsche and Toyota, while the radical front-engined Nissan remains an unknown quantity – some would say a mystery. Thomas Laudenbach, head of electricals, electronics and energy systems at Audi Sport, speaks optimistically about developments over the winter, in particular an increase in power from the R18's hybrid system.

"We will have more power, more energy at the front axle as a result of moving up a class," says Laudenbach. "We will be in the area above 200 kilowatts and energy storage will be about 800 kilojoules, and the weight density is much better than last year – but our competitors in the higher megajoule classes obviously have more. For an engineer the WEC is much less restrictive than F1 and there's no doubt that – if you compare the two sets of rules – the WEC is far more focused on pure engine efficiency.

"The FIA gives an incentive to the higher energy classes to push the technology forward, so we had to step up and in future there might be further steps. It's a challenge because of the weight of the diesel and, as things are today, it would be difficult to make a six- or eight-megajoule system work with a diesel. But new ways of saving weight are always coming, so maybe it's possible in future.

"For now, we need to have an efficient and driveable car because in a long-distance race the drivers need to deliver good lap times constantly, not just for a few laps. I'm surprised to see Nissan doing something so risky, but if they succeed then hats off to them."

FOR AN OVERVIEW OF THE NEW R18 WE turn to Chris Reinke, Audi Sport's LMP project leader. In concept the car is not a big step, although the only carbon components that carry over from last year are the monocoque and the gearbox casing. The devil, as ever, is in the detail.

"As you can see, there's a new concept as to how we send the airflow around the front wheels, the way we use the diffuser more effectively as a front wing, and a smoother, neater tail section. What we do with the airflow at the front benefits the whole car, gives us more downforce. The rest is all about the energy storage, the hybrid system, and that in turn is all about the weight limits. The new car is an evolution; we believe we can make performance gains without building a completely new car, and we will have more electrical power this year. We have four different energy classes and all the manufacturers are trying to recover, and re-use, as much of that energy as possible. It's going to be tough, and even if Porsche was testing here at Sebring we would just focus on what we were doing, preparing the car for the season and aiming, as ever, to win Le Mans. That is important to us."

So the trusty R18 has been 'optimised' – to

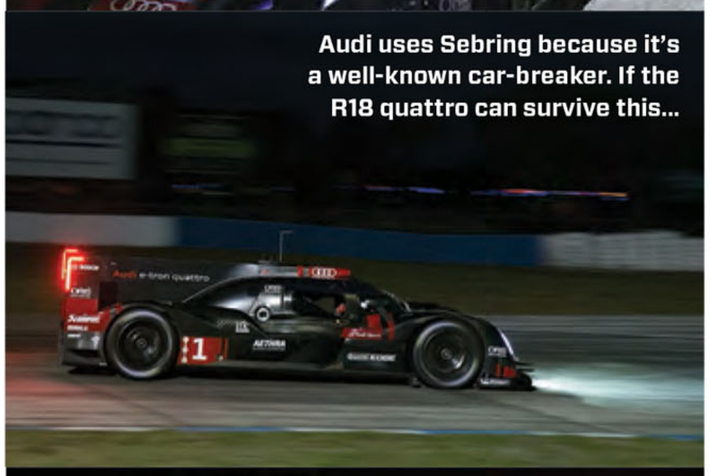




Testing, testing: before the season began, Audi covered 6000 kilometres in Florida







Audi uses Sebring because it's a well-known car-breaker. If the R18 quattro can survive this...





Audi hopes the R18 will be brisk enough to secure a 14th outright Le Mans victory... and reclaim the WEC title

See the 2015 Audi R18 e-tron quattro put through its paces at Sebring, and hear its new, harsher exhaust note

@ THE MOTOR SPORT DIGITAL EDITION

"AT SEBRING THE CAR WAS OUT IN THE OPEN FOR ALL TO SEE, BUT MANY OF THE NEW TRICKS LIE DEEP INSIDE"

use a buzz word from this most complex of sports. At Sebring the car was out in the open for all to see, but many of the new tricks lie deep inside. We were not allowed to venture inside a huge white shed full of computers. The car sounds different, with a harsher exhaust note, and it looks different. Plus, there's a new driver on board this year.

"It is a dream come true for me," says Oliver Jarvis, who replaces Tom Kristensen as a full-time LMP1 driver. "And yes, he's a hard act to follow. Tom is a legend at Audi, and at Le Mans, so there's a bit of pressure – but when I was trying to get here, into this car, it was worse. Now I have lots of opportunities to show my potential, doing the whole championship, and I just can't wait to start racing.

"Only six guys in the world drive for Audi in LMP1 [through the whole season], so it's been a lot of hard work. My family has made some sacrifices along the way from karting, through the lower formula, and has taken some tough decisions – but now it's all paid off. Success is expected, so it's going to be demanding and it's a great honour to be here. I'm sure Dr Ullrich had plenty of other names in his inbox when it came to choosing the new driver. I dreamed of getting to F1, of course, but there's another world out there, apart from single-seaters, and you can have a very good career in sports cars. I earn a living from being a racing driver. I love my job, so for me that's what I always wanted."

So how was testing going amid the heat, dust and bumps of the old Sebring circuit?

"Well, it's hot and humid, and very demanding on the car, a punishing place, so if the car stays together here you'd hope it will last for 24 hours at Le Mans. It's very physical for the driver, quite tough, so we don't do long stints of the kind we'd do at a smoother track. We spend a lot of time on physical fitness, mental fitness and team building, so what you see here is the result of all that, a great team, good relationships, and that's important when three drivers are sharing the same office. We're all very competitive people, but Audi creates this atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable as a team, where we work together to win. I think the evolution of the R18 is a big step forward – and it will need to be because I'm sure that neither Toyota nor Porsche will have been standing still. It will be my toughest year, for sure. Anyone can win the championship and whoever wins it will deserve it. As Tom [Kristensen] always says, 'There's no short cut to any place worth going'."

As darkness enveloped the circuit, the black Audi kept pounding around, its dazzling headlights piercing a path between the barriers. Behind closed doors, out there in the white shed, engineers sat glued to their computers. In the claustrophobic confines of the cockpit the drivers skipped and danced over the bumps, searching for the limits. Nights and days like this will pay off as the new season unfolds.

It is no secret that the team from Ingolstadt is intensely focused on Le Mans in June. That's the big prize, the one Audi has made its own in recent years. But will a shortage of megajoules allow Porsche or Toyota to steal the prize?

It's going to be a vintage campaign. Ⓜ

FROM THE MOTOR SPORT ARCHIVES

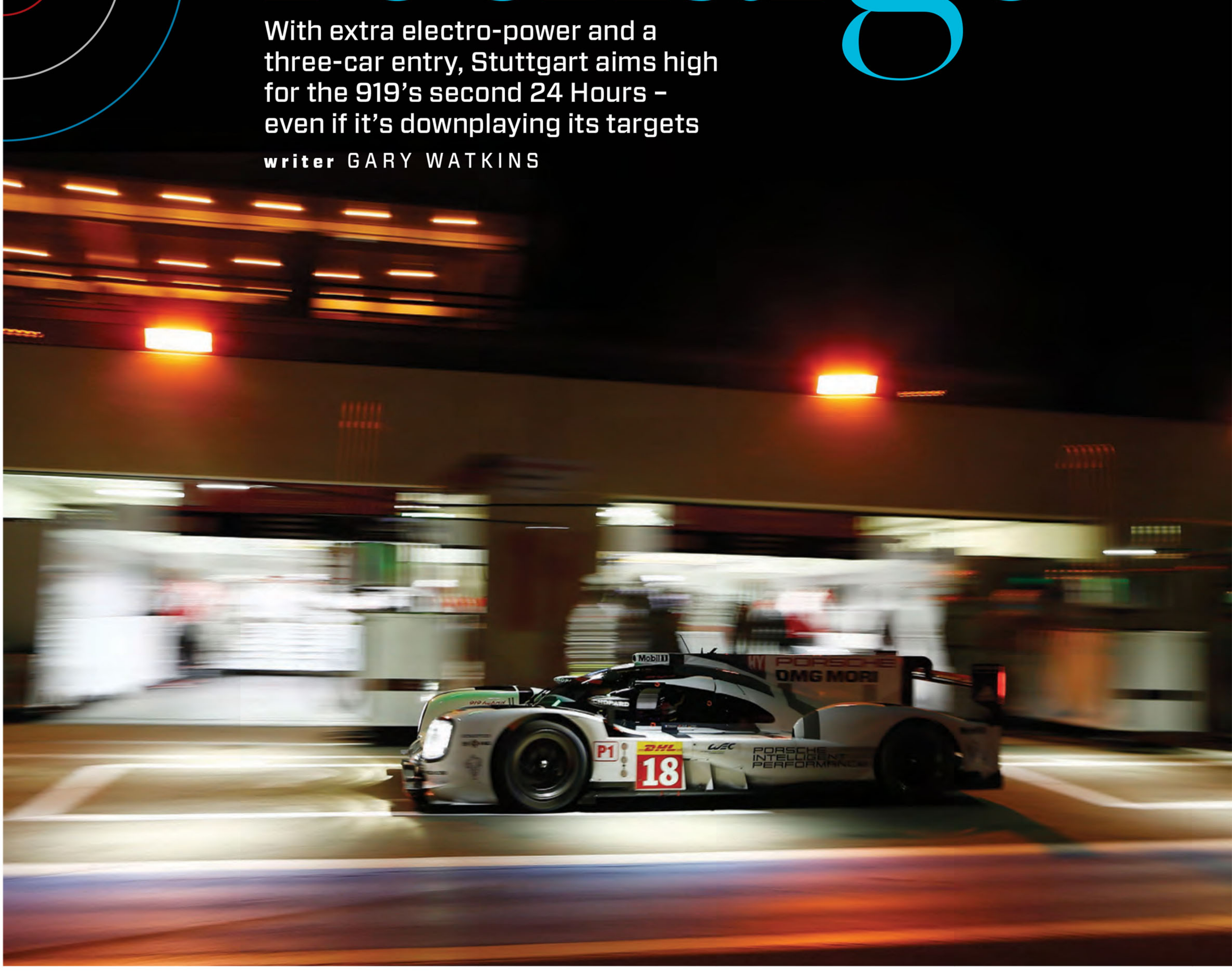
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Porsche's Le Mans recharge

With extra electro-power and a three-car entry, Stuttgart aims high for the 919's second 24 Hours – even if it's downplaying its targets

writer GARY WATKINS



IS THIS THE YEAR THAT Porsche adds to its record tally of 16 victories in the Le Mans 24 Hours? And perhaps launches a bid for a first world title since 1987 off the back of success in the middle weekend in June?

The German manufacturer is playing down its chances in public as it maintains the respectful rhetoric with which it joined the World Endurance Championship last season. But the reality is that Porsche, as a newcomer to the series still, has more to gain than its rivals. Which is why it could, or perhaps even should, be ahead of Toyota and Audi when it arrives at the Circuit de la Sarthe in June.

The LMP1 prototype that Porsche is racing this year retains the 919 Hybrid moniker of last year's WEC challenger, but in fact it is an all-new machine. The concept of the car and its hybrid powertrain haven't changed, but it has undergone a complete redesign right down to its carbon-composite monocoque. The decision to build a new car wasn't a reaction to the failings of the original 919, rather an admission, explains Porsche LMP1 technical director Alex Hitzinger, that a new group couldn't be expected to optimise "its first design shot" in year one. A new car for season two was in the plan as long ago as 2011.

Porsche believes it has hit its performance step-up targets, but there are three crucial areas in which the 2015-spec 919 is an improvement: it is kinder on its Michelin tyres; it is on the weight limit; and it has more hybrid punch.

FOR THE 919'S MAIDEN VICTORY IN last November's WEC finale at Interlagos, a new high-grip track surface (laid for the Brazilian GP earlier in the month) masked the car's appetite for its tyres, levelled the playing field with Toyota and allowed Neel Jani, Romain Dumas and Marc Lieb to claim Porsche's first world championship endurance victory since 1989. Porsche was able to turn the one-lap pace that it had shown from the beginning of the season into the required speed over a stint, and then double-stint a set of Michelins when it mattered at the end.

Hitzinger explains that this has been addressed by "changing the suspension and optimising the structure of the whole car", which included increasing the overall stiffness. Porsche's drivers immediately reported that the new 919 was more balanced through a corner and that the underlying trait of mid-corner understeer had disappeared. Nevertheless the design boss suggests that there is "still work to do over a long run".

Porsche's hard work on its hybrid systems has paid off. It hasn't changed the concept of front-axle kinetic and exhaust-driven retrieval and battery storage, but it has moved up from the sub-class that allows for six megajoules of retrieved energy to be deployed to the highest division that permits eight. That has taken it clear of reigning champions Toyota, which has opted to remain in the 6MJ class with its updated TS040 HYBRID, and maintained the megajoule gap to Audi, which has gone from two to 4MJ with its heavily-revised R18 e-tron quattro.

Hitzinger says the advantage of running in the higher class is likely to be maximised at Le Mans, where Porsche is confident that it will be able to regenerate the full amount of energy over the long 8.47-mile lap. It is less sure that it will hit the maximum on other circuits. The boosting level at the seven other tracks on the WEC schedule is determined by dividing the track length by that of Le Mans and multiplying the result by a factor of 1.55. That means the recuperation required per mile is significantly higher than at Le Mans.

"I am confident about the 8MJ at Le Mans, but less so for the other tracks," says Hitzinger. "But there is obviously a break-even point and I'm confident that we will be above that in terms of the performance gain at the other tracks."

"IT WOULD BE NAIVE TO SAY THAT WE COULD WIN LE MANS IN YEAR TWO"

The real triumph of Porsche's design team for 2015 is achieving the jump in hybrid power while keeping the new 919 under the 870kg weight limit. "The perfect scenario," is how Hitzinger sees it. "More performance for less weight." This represents gains that its rivals will, says Hitzinger, "have to find somewhere else".

The second-generation 919 is 30kg lighter than its predecessor, which ran at about 900kg throughout last season.

"We were overweight last year so by stepping down that is performance in the pocket," he says. "And 30kg is quite a lot of lap time. The same goes for the move up in recuperation – it's time in your pocket because that is how the regulations are written."

The redesign of the 919 aerodynamic concept includes a visibly revised profile to the nose, but Hitzinger says that the significant tweaks are "the ones that no one sees". And by that he means the revisions under the bodywork.

The engine has a new turbocharger to reduce lag and improve response and a new lighter crank. While Porsche was at it, a few extra cc were added to its V4 petrol-powered engine. The direct-injection powerplant should still be regarded as a 2-litre, but a lengthening of the stroke has taken it from just below to just above that mark.

PORSCHE IS ALSO UPPING ITS GAME FOR Le Mans by running three cars in the 24 Hours, and as preparation in the Spa WEC round in May. It was a big decision, because it didn't want to compromise the two regular series entries (Jani, Dumas and Lieb and Mark Webber, Timo Bernhard and Brendon Hartley), or simply turn up with a third car that was some kind of afterthought.

Porsche admitted early last season that it was considering an additional car but the final decision, taken at board level, didn't arrive until the end of November.

"We always said that if we went to Le Mans with a third car it would have to be a strong car," says Porsche LMP1 team principal Andreas Seidl of the entry to be driven by Force India Formula 1 driver Nico Hülkenberg and two graduates from Porsche's GT squad in Briton, Nick Tandy and New Zealander Earl Bamber. "We want them all on an equal level, which is why we have been rotating the three crews for each car through testing."

Even with a new, improved car and an expanded programme, Porsche is remaining humble in its expectations both for the season and Le Mans.

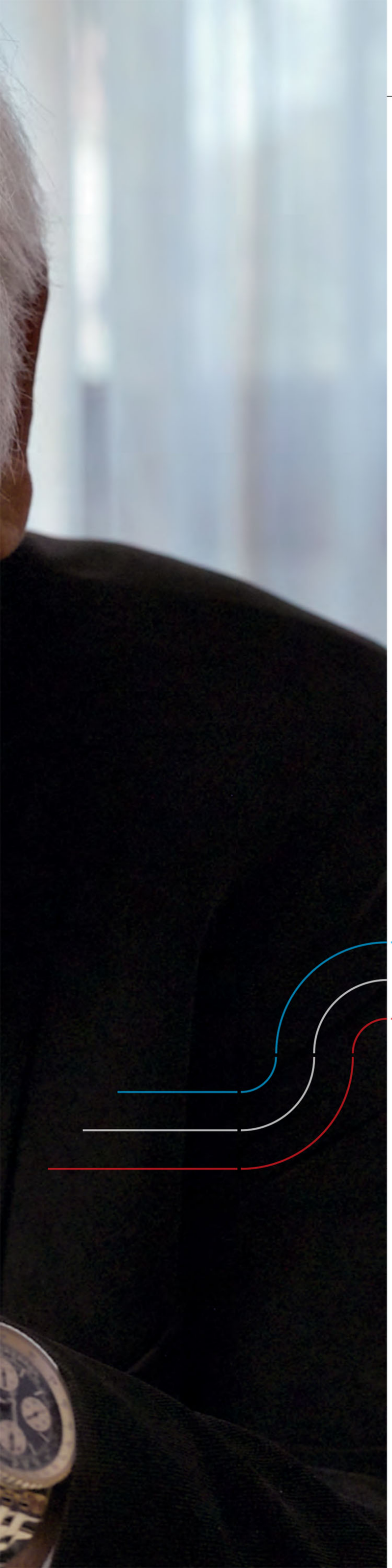
The first version of the 919 led Le Mans and was on course for second position early in the penultimate hour, but you won't find anyone within the race team to go on record in suggesting that win number 17 — and a first since 1998 — might be possible in 2015.

Porsche talks about winning more podiums – Webber uses the term "grabbing some low-hanging fruit" – than the six pieces of silverware it collected in 2014 as well as being, says Seidl, "in a position at least to challenge for victories" in the regular six-hour races. Its stated targets for Le Mans are slightly more modest and don't stretch beyond a podium.

"Getting at least two cars to the finish would be a major achievement," continues Seidl. "It would be naive to say that we could win Le Mans in year two."

It would be wrong for Porsche, with its rich Le Mans heritage, to start talking up its chances ahead of the 24 Hours. But to suggest that it has built an all-new car to go to France with the aspiration only of making it onto the podium can't be right. Porsche's preparations for 2015 mean it has to be considered a contender – whether it admits it or not.





{ LUNCH WITH }

NORBERT SINGER

For 40 years he was the architect of Porsche's sports car racing success all over the world. But one race always mattered more than any other

writer SIMON TAYLOR | **photographer** JAMES MITCHELL

THE EARLIEST USE I CAN find in print of the expression "Racing improves the breed" dates from 1835. It refers, of course, to racehorses: breeding from winners could produce more winners. The first time it was applied to cars seems to have been in 1908: "Just as horse racing improves the breed of horses, so do automobile races improve the quality and construction of (everyday) motor cars." Le Mans certainly made this true of the 1920s Bentleys, for example, and in the 1950s it hastened Jaguar's disc brakes and Mercedes' fuel injection.

Today the cliché is trotted out more than ever, but it is far less true. Road car development can be more rapidly and cost-effectively achieved behind locked doors, away from the prying eyes of competitors and the public, and motor racing has taken on the more disparate role of marketing the brand. Today it's "Win on Sunday, sell on Monday."

But for a handful of car manufacturers through the 1970s and into the '80s, motor racing was a major driver of technical development. Marketable fame was secondary. There is no better example of this than Porsche, and no better proponent of it than Norbert Singer, who spent more than 40 years developing and directing racing Porsches. His involvement spanned an extraordinary 16 Le Mans victories in 29 seasons.

Norbert is 75 now, and lives not far from Zuffenhausen, the northern suburb of Stuttgart that is home to Porsche. He has not quite retired: poacher turned gamekeeper, he is a consultant to the Le Mans 24 Hours organisers. I meet him at his favourite Strohgäu restaurant in Münchingen for veal cordon bleu and crêpes suzettes: a friendly, good-humoured man, but modest. He tells his tales as from a team, not an individual.

Norbert's original ambition was to be a rocket scientist, but during his university engineering course he found he had the wrong passport. Americans build spaceships, he was told; Germans build cars. But cars, and particularly racing, also fascinated him.

"In 1965 a friend of mine and I got ourselves to the Nürburgring Nordschleife to watch Jim Clark's Lotus 33 win the German Grand

Prix. But on that circuit you only saw the cars pass 15 times, and I knew that at Monaco they did 100 laps. So in 1967 we drove my old Opel Kadett all the way there. By dawn we'd made sure of our place by the track, and it was fantastic. But that was the year poor Lorenzo Bandini lost his life, and after that the race was cut to 80 laps.

"After university I planned to join Opel, because they offered new engineers two years with General Motors in Detroit. But when I heard that Porsche was looking for a youngster in its racing department, I applied. My father was horrified: 'Porsche? A small company like that? Borgward is gone, Glas is gone, BMW is in trouble. How long can Porsche last?'

"AFTER MY INTERVIEW WITH PORSCHE in February 1970 they said they would write to me. But I heard nothing. On Monday March 2 they phoned: 'Why are you late for your first day at work?' They had forgotten to send the letter. I rushed to Stuttgart and found digs, and on Tuesday morning I was in the little racing department. It was 14 weeks to go to Le Mans. I was the new boy, and at once I was told to rethink the fuel system. The Porsche had a long, narrow tank, and everything sloshed back and forth under acceleration and braking, requiring several heavy suction pumps. I made up different baffles and reduced the pumps.

"The 917's real weak point was the gearbox, which had no oil radiator and had to be cooled by the air spilling around it. As the ambient temperature went back up on Sunday morning the oil would overheat. Make it run cooler, they said, but don't add any weight.

"Space around the gearbox was tight because of all the chassis tubes, but I designed some larger ducting. There was nobody to make the moulds, so I made them myself with modelling clay I pinched from the styling studio. Then I went with Hans Herrmann to the Nürburgring to test the changes, and it was fine. That was a few weeks after I joined: you could say I had to jump into the deep end of the swimming pool. I wasn't asked to go to the 24 Hours, but Hans won it with Richard Attwood, so I felt I had played my own little part in Porsche's maiden Le Mans victory.

"The first time I was actually in charge at a race was the following year, in Austria. Porsche made its own brakes then, and our technical boss Helmuth Bott wanted us to use an ABS system we'd come up with. We tested it a lot and it worked more or less, but with so many mechanical parts it was never going to be right. Today ABS is all-electronic, so it's completely different. In Austria we ran it in one car, and Gérard Larrousse confessed to me afterwards that he turned it off before the end of lap one.





NORBERT SINGER
CAREER IN BRIEF

Born: 16/11/1939, Eger, Germany
1970 Joins Porsche motor sport division from university. Team scores maiden Le Mans 24 Hours win three months later **1971** Manages team for first time at Österreichring 1000Kms **1972-1988** With Porsche's racing division until its withdrawal from racing **1989** Worked in Porsche's road car division but dabbled in racing **1994** Back at Le Mans with Dauer Porsche **2010** Left Porsche, began working as an ACO consultant



"More or less by accident, I started to make a speciality of aerodynamics. As a young engineer in a small department you have to be able to do lots of things. I was given the old riddle: reduce the drag without reducing the downforce. In 1969 the long-tail 917 for Le Mans was very twitchy at its highest speeds, so I had to find less drag, more downforce, better balance. Porsche didn't have its own wind tunnel then, so I used the tunnel at Stuttgart University. I was free to try anything I wanted, and many of my ideas didn't work, but we learned a lot. Finding speed through aerodynamics is all about changing little details: big steps are more difficult.

"After three or four days of hard work I had improved the drag and stability without losing downforce – we didn't have a lot of downforce then, of course – and I'd added little tail fins. The key was the Mulsanne kink. In those pre-chicane days, if your drivers could take the kink flat, you had done your job. At the April test weekend Derek said it was now flat for him and Jo Siffert. I asked what revs he was pulling, and he said 8100rpm. I did some slide rule calculations with allowance for tyre growth, and when Derek insisted I told him, I had to say: 396kph. That's 246mph.

"Ferdinand Piëch's idea with the 917 was to run with two teams, JW Automotive and Porsche Salzburg, to double the chance of victory. John Wyer had been developing his own bodywork too, and Derek and I spent a dark, wet day at Hockenheim comparing three tails: JW's, ours and the short one as a baseline. We used a speed trap on the long return straight, missing out the infield, and our tail was fastest. It was getting dark as we did the last runs, and Derek was doing nearly 200mph when a man on a bicycle came wobbling across the main straight, obviously taking his daily short-cut home from work. Derek got just a flash of his horror-struck face as he missed him by inches.

"We also did some aerodynamic work with the French firm, SERA. The challenge was to find a shape with the drag of a long tail and the downforce of a short tail. They made all the bodywork curves of bigger radius, which was good in theory, to keep the vortices down. But although the downforce was OK the drag was worse. The car had a bloated look, and somebody said it was like a pig. So Tony Lapine, our styling boss, had it painted pink with dotted lines and names of pork joints across it like a butcher's diagram. I don't know what Dr Piëch thought about it. It retired from its only race, but today it probably attracts more photos in the Porsche museum than any other car.

"We won Le Mans again in 1971, but for 1972 the sports car rules changed, and for the 3-litre limit against the Ferraris and Matras the 908 engine was not powerful enough. The

LAT & PORSCHE



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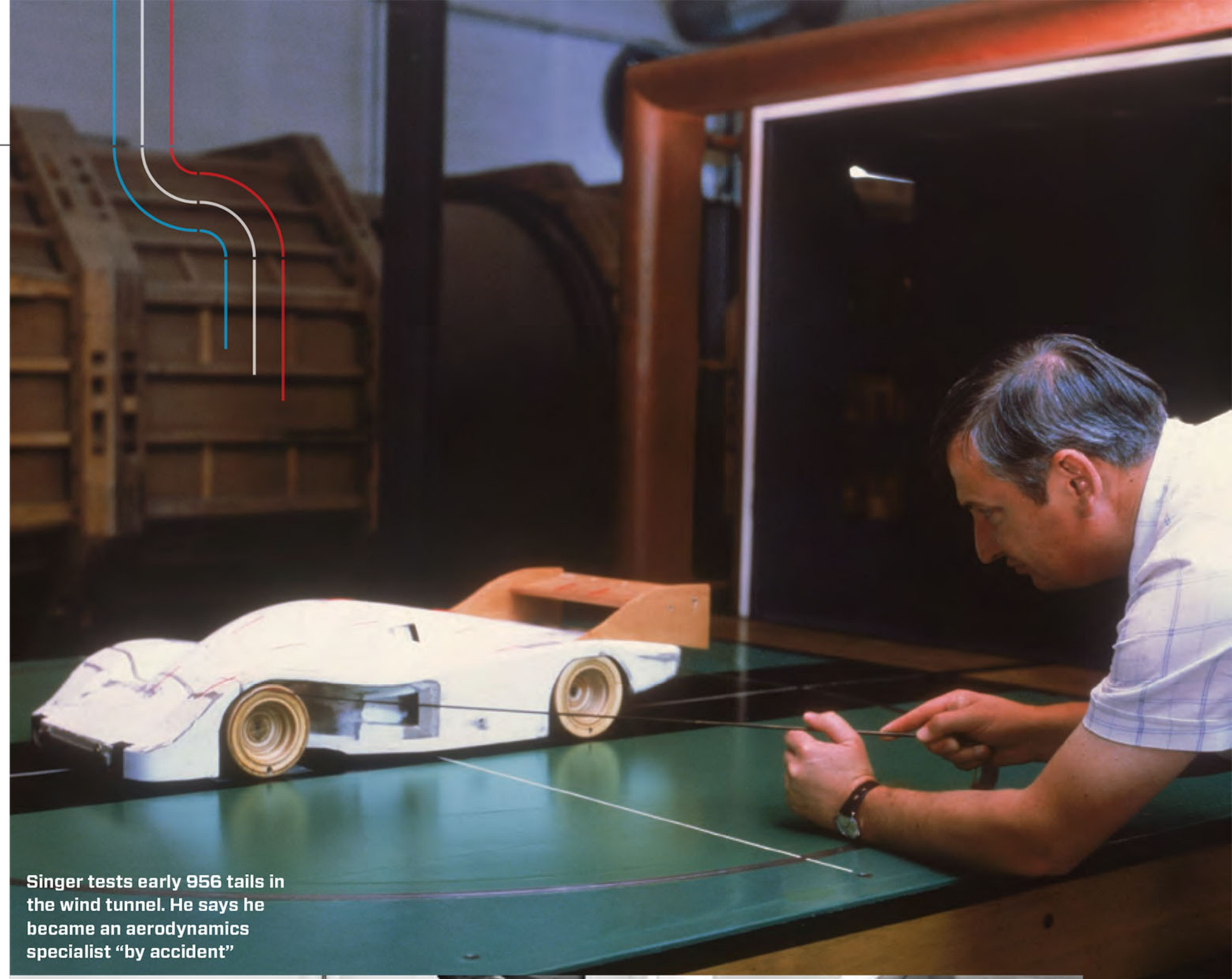
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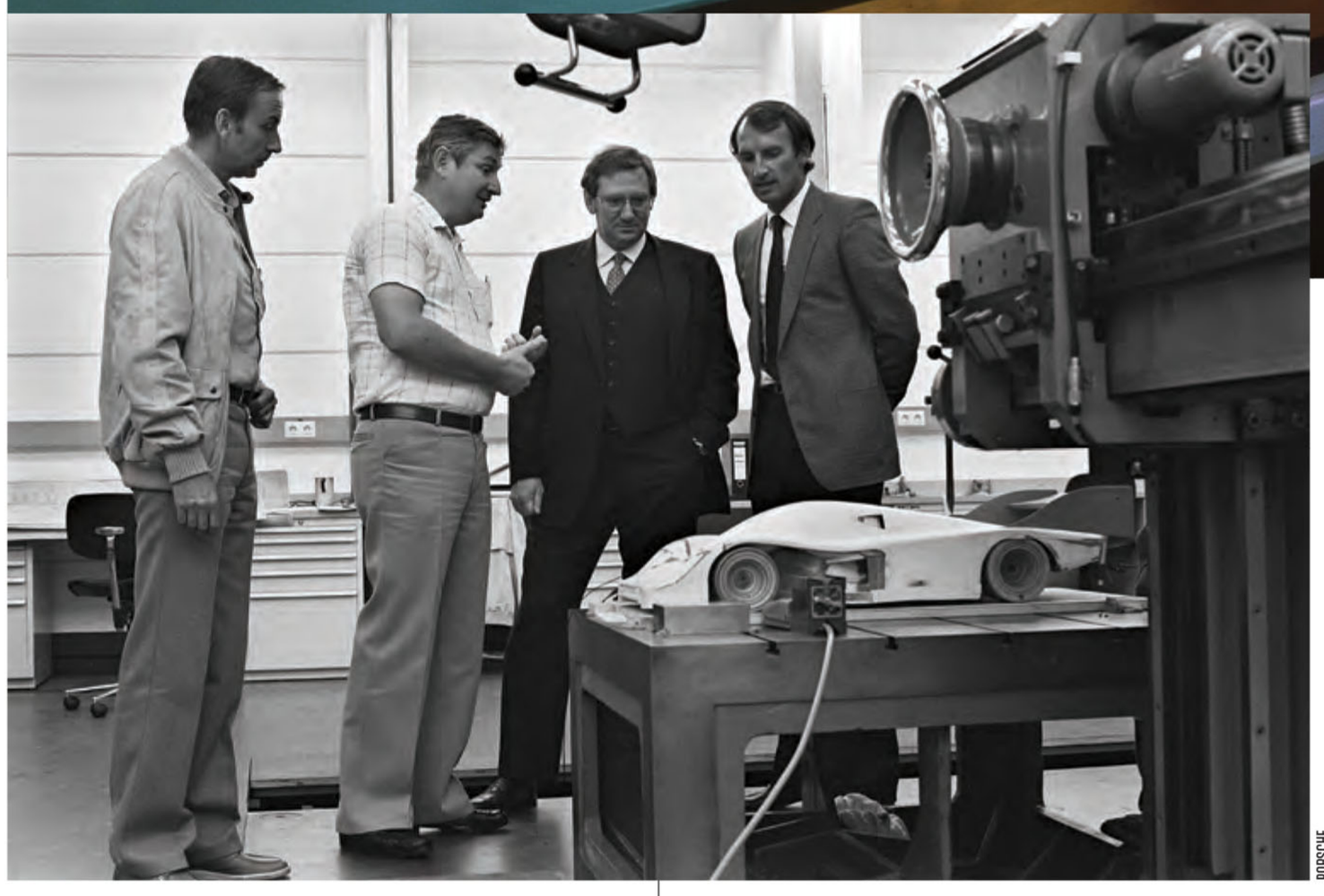
1 Singer discusses tactics with engineer Walter Näher **2** Tail variations were a theme with 917 at Le Mans **3** RSR prototype wins 1973 Targa Florio for Müller/van Lennep **4** Though Jaguar took '87 world title, Le Mans fell to a 962 **5** Ultimate 911: Moby Dick, the 800bhp 935-78 **6** Over 40 years Singer was involved in 16 Le Mans victories **7** Pink Pig raced once but remains memorable **8** 936 left museum to grab 1981 win with Ickx/Bell **9** Ferocious 917/30 toppled McLaren from Can-Am glory **10** GT1 exploited GT rules for 1998 Le Mans victory

American market was becoming important for Porsche, and Jo Siffert told us about the Can-Am races he'd done in his own 917 Spyder. To take on the McLarens we clearly needed a bigger engine, so we made a flat-16 from two 908 engines. It was unbelievably heavy: the bare crankshaft weighed 33 kilos. Then somebody suggested turbocharging. Turbos had been used in aircraft and ships and other applications but, apart from some unsuccessful American compacts in the 1960s, not much on cars. We worked with a turbo flat-12, which was much lighter than the 16. My aerodynamic brief was: find as much downforce as you can, and don't worry about drag, because we have a lot of horsepower and the American tracks are twisty.

"Roger Penske ran our car, and that first year the 917/10 had no problems with the corners, but the McLarens still had too much power on the straights. So the engine guys reduced the turbo lag and increased the horsepower, to more than 1000bhp. The rear tyres were 19 inches wide. Once again my task was keep the downforce but reduce the drag, and we adapted my Le Mans tail. Mark Donohue easily won the championship, so the McLaren reign was over."



Singer tests early 956 tails in the wind tunnel. He says he became an aerodynamics specialist "by accident"



PORSCHE

NORBERT WAS SENT TO THE DAYTONA 24 Hours in 1973 because two teams were running the 911 which had been developed into a serious racing car, the RSR. "The cars were run by Penske and Brumos. I was introduced as the engineer from the factory. The Penske boys were not impressed, but Peter Gregg of Brumos seemed to take note of my suggestions. In the race all the prototypes retired, and the battle between the two RSRs became the battle for the lead. Then the Penske car lost its flywheel. Now the Brumos car was on its own, but Gregg was still driving flat out. Bob Snodgrass of Brumos got on the radio to tell him to ease up, but he took no notice. Then Bob hung out a board that read 'SINGER SAYS SLOW'. Gregg lifted off at once, and he and Hurley Haywood still won by 22 laps.

"The last Targa Florio was the same year, and we ran the RSR as a prototype so that we could try out more modifications. We put 917 brakes on it and a larger spoiler that we called the Mary Stewart, because big pieces came around the sides rather like the neck on the dress of your Mary Queen of Scots. The sports-prototypes from Ferrari and Alfa all had problems, and Herbie Müller and Gijs van Lennep in our lead car won. It was Porsche's 11th win in the Targa since Maglioli and von Hanstein in 1956."

By 1976 the road-going 911 turbo was in production – the best example yet of racing improving the breed – and the FIA's new Group 5 had come in. "That was our best season so far. We ran the 911-shaped 935 in the World Championship of Makes and, when the FIA decided late in the day to institute a Group 6 World Sports Car series as well, we quickly came up with the 936. We won both titles: and our third Le Mans.

"But we were unlucky at Daytona – that's a race I should tell you about. The 935 of Jacky Ickx and Jochen Mass was leading easily when Jochen had a blow-out on the banking and hit the wall. The right side of the car was smashed, the door was torn off, and it took us an hour to repair the oil cooler, the wastegate and other bits. When we sent him back out with no door, the race officials said we could not race like that. So we borrowed one from a privateer 935 that had retired and slapped that on. Then they said we needed a red rear light. We taped on a pocket torch and smeared the bulb with lipstick borrowed from a girl. The car rejoined in 42nd place, 22 laps down, and Jacky and Jochen went hard at it all night. When the sun came up we were back up to second place, and we were going to win. Then Jochen had another disastrous blow-out on the banking, and this time he could not bring the car home. A private RSR won."

Norbert has stories from every season, almost from every race. In his lexicon the world championship titles are important, of course, but the actual race wins matter more, and the Le Mans victories matter most of all. The 936

was victorious again in 1977, back-to-back wins for Jacky Ickx, and that year the DRM, the German Championship, had a new contender. "Each DRM round consisted of two separate races, up to and over two litres. We had the over 2-litre races all sewn up, but the under 2-litre class attracted much more interest because it was a big battle between BMW and Ford. So the big boss, Dr Fuhrmann at that time, said, 'We must do that class too. Make a baby Porsche.'

"To hit the 1.4 equivalency formula we put together a 1425cc turbo that gave 370bhp, and we built a very light 935 for it. In fact we made it too light, and had to fill some of the chassis tubes with lead to get it up to the limit. It was all done too quickly, and in the first race at the Norisring, in front of 80,000 spectators, the car was slow and Jacky Ickx retired. We decided to do a detailed rethink and miss the next round at Hockenheim. But Dr Fuhrmann wouldn't hear of it: 'I don't care. We go racing.' So we worked night and day, and we just got to Hockenheim. Jacky took pole by 2.8sec and won by almost a minute. I sent a message to Dr Fuhrmann suggesting I should get a pay rise for this. He said, 'No, I get the pay rise, because I insisted you go to Hockenheim'."

The ultimate 935 was the ferociously long, low 935-78. "We got nearly 800bhp out of that. It was the first time we'd used water as a cooling medium. We'd had some head gasket failures, so we welded the heads to the block and just cooled the heads via a water radiator. The rear wheels were 19-inch diameter, 16-inch rims, and the car was 6½ feet wide. When it

ICKX'S 1977 LE MANS WIN DESERVES A special mention over our lunch table. "Our lead 936, Jacky Ickx/Henri Pescarolo, went out when a conrod broke. The No2 car had already retired, and the No3 car seemed totally out of it, having lost nearly an hour in the pits with a blown head gasket and fuel injection problems. It was now in 41st place. So on Saturday evening we put Jacky in. He spent nearly 11 of the remaining 19 hours in that car, including 6½ through the night. He broke the lap record again and again, and by 10am on Sunday he was in the lead." During that drive, which Jacky said years later was the hardest of his life, he lost more than a stone in body weight.

"Then we stood Jacky down, and the car's original drivers, Jürgen Barth and Hurley Haywood, took over to drive to the end. We now had a huge lead: but the story wasn't over yet. In the final hour it came in wreathed in white smoke: blown piston! We took the fuel and spark out of that cylinder, and held the car in the pits waiting for the end of the race. The rules say that the lap time of each of the last two laps has to be within a given percentage of the other, so at 3.52pm we sent Barth chugging out again. We taped a watch to the steering wheel so he could ensure his two laps were roughly constant, and also to avoid crossing the line just before 4pm, which would have committed him to another lap. It all worked out, and that was our fourth Le Mans win.

"Part of our routine at Le Mans was Teloché,

roads, getting stuck in the spectators' traffic jams. When we finally got to the paddock the engineers said, 'We have very high temperatures here. This is not what we want before a 24-hour race.' After that we worked out of a big tent in the paddock.

"In 1979 Ickx stopped on the Mulsanne Straight during the night when a fuel injection pump belt came off. We always put a temporary spare in the car, to get the car back to the pits, but in the dark Jacky couldn't see to put it on right and when he started the engine it flew off and disappeared. We sent a mechanic out to him with another belt, but when he got there he found he was on the wrong side of the track, so he threw the belt across the road. Jacky picked it up and fitted it, and got back to the pits; we did the job properly and sent him out again. But of course this had all been reported to race director Alain Bertaut. He summoned me: 'We know you took a spare part out to your car.' I said, 'Sorry, I don't speak French.' He switched to English, and I pretended not to understand that either. So he found a German translator, and the game was up." But Porsche still won Le Mans again that year, thanks to the Kremer 935 of Klaus Ludwig and the Whittington brothers.

By 1981 the 936 had been pensioned off, but it came out of the museum to be fitted with an adaptation of a 2.6-litre turbo flat-six that Porsche had produced for Indy racing with Danny Ongais' Interscope campaign. It was the 50th anniversary of the foundation of Dr Ferdinand Porsche's company, and his son Dr Ferry Porsche was at Le Mans that year, so the whole team was very relieved when Jacky and Derek had a perfect run to victory. It was the first of an unbroken run of seven Le Mans wins.

"THEY SAID WE NEEDED A RED REAR LIGHT SO WE TAPED ON A TORCH AND SMEARED THE BULB WITH LIPSTICK"

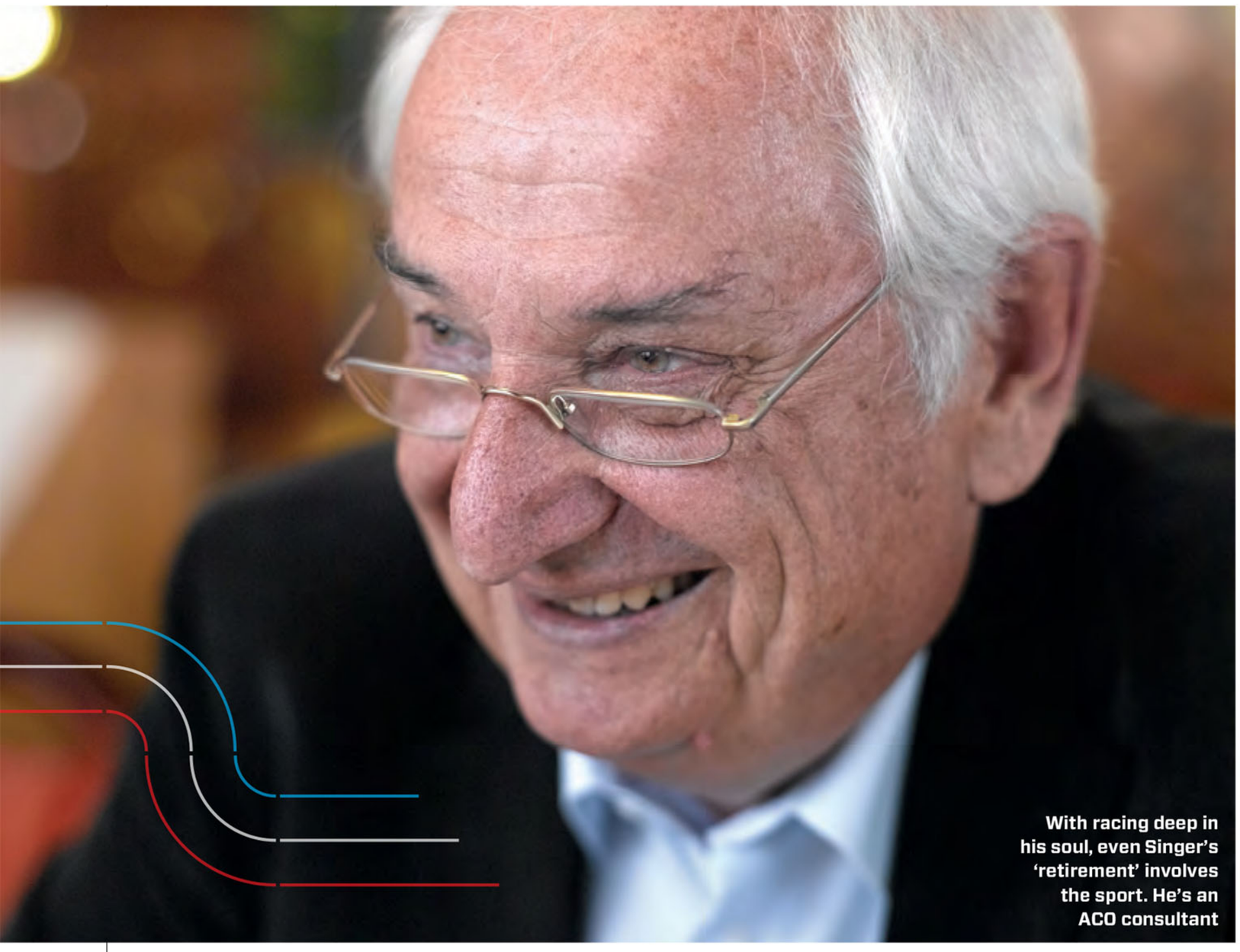
was in grey primer, before it got its Martini colours, somebody said it looked like a whale, so it was Moby Dick from then on. We only raced it four times, winning first time out at Silverstone by seven laps. At Le Mans, despite its big 911-shape shell, it did 227mph on the Mulsanne. The timekeepers' lists said only the Renault sports-prototype with its streamlined cockpit canopy was faster, by 1kph, and I expect that figure was political. We were in France, after all. But Moby Dick drank fuel. We were allowed 120 litres tankage, and we could only run 40 minutes between stops. Just as the mechanics finished clearing up the pit, the car would be coming in again – all through the day and night."

the little village south of the circuit, where Porsche always had its race headquarters. We took over the local garage for a week to prepare the cars. All of us (except the drivers) stayed in villagers' houses, each mechanic going back to the same family every year, and we ate at a long table in the local bar. On Saturday morning we would drive the race cars along the D140 public road to Mulsanne, and then onto the circuit and up to the pits. That was the normal procedure.

"But one year, with the 956s, we were a little late. When we got to the circuit entrance at Mulsanne Corner there was a young policeman who said, 'No, you cannot pass'. He could see our cars were race cars, but he could only think of his orders. So we had to divert around local

"THE 956 FOR 1982 WAS SOMETHING new: a monocoque. We hadn't done one before. Mr Bott was always in favour of a spaceframe because it was lighter; torsional stiffness was of second order to him. But without a monocoque we wouldn't have met the new safety regulations. We'd never done a monocoque before, so we had to learn it. And our first monocoque was actually just right, we never changed it through all the years of the 956/962. The longer-wheelbase 962 was built because of the IMSA regulations, which required the driver's feet to be further back, but it worked well in Group C also.

"Another development that emerged in racing but ultimately had major relevance for road cars was the dual-clutch PDK transmission. The gearbox guys first came up with the idea way back in the 917 days, but when we got a system built for a 962 we found it was half a second slower. The oil pumps were soaking up power. So we redesigned all that,



With racing deep in his soul, even Singer's 'retirement' involves the sport. He's an ACO consultant

"WERNHER VON BRAUN TOLD ME, 'FROM A SUCCESS YOU DON'T LEARN. BUT FROM EVERY FAILURE YOU LEARN A LOT' "

and then it was 0.7sec a lap faster around Ricard. We usually only ran one car with PDK because we weren't sure about its reliability: we won one race with it, Monza in 1986, and then we dropped it. Like the early ABS, so much of it was mechanical. Now it's all electronic, and it's in almost every 911."

In 1985, during a championship race at Hockenheim, there was a furious fire in the Porsche pit during a refuelling stop. "It was a very hot day. The 956/962 had a filler on each side: one guy put in the petrol, another put an empty bottle on the other filler to take the air pressure that was forced out. The air bottle guy fumbled his coupling and the fuel fountained out all over the rig. I was standing in the middle, and the fire covered me. Porsche always had their own doctor at the track, and he got me into the helicopter and off to the burns unit at Ludwigshafen. I had 35 per cent burns.

"I was in hospital for nearly three months, and had a lot of skin grafts. While I was lying there I had two pieces of bad news. Within three weeks Manfred Winkelhock and then Stefan Bellof were killed, at Mosport and at Spa, driving customer Porsches. The following year, at Le Mans, Jo Gartner, driving a Kremer car, hit the barriers turning onto the Mulsanne Straight and died instantly. On the Friday Jo had come up to me and said, 'My car is very loose at the rear.' I said, 'That's easy, just raise the rear wing.' He said, 'The Kremer people won't do that because of the extra drag. They want to do it with suspension settings.' Maybe the car was still a bit unbalanced, I don't know."



Porsche always worked closely with their favoured racing customers. "We had a separate department for that, run by Jürgen Barth, and teams like Kremer or Joest, rather than trying to develop their own equipment, could buy a front-runner for far less. It didn't earn us much money, but it more or less covered its costs, and it got the Porsche name to the front of more races.

"We developed a real family relationship with some of our drivers, and we had a code for the pairings on the pit boards. Bell/Stuck were BEST, Mass/Ickx were MIX, and so on. BEST meant what it said: Derek was the ideal endurance driver, very fast, very reliable, and he thought like the member of a team. Unselfish: during the Group C fuel consumption era, if his co-driver had used too much fuel, he would without complaint drive to get it back onto the programme. In 1986/87 he created quite a mark by winning the 24-hour races at both Daytona and Le Mans, two years running. Hans too: a spectacular and exciting driver, but he always followed instructions to the letter.

"In 1987 Jaguar won the Sports-Prototype Championship, but we still won Le Mans. We would have won it in 1988, too, but we lost it to Jaguar because Klaus Ludwig, sharing the BEST car, made a mistake. When the fuel light came on you knew you had one full lap left in the tank. He tried to do two laps, and ran out in the Porsche Curves. He managed to get back to the pits on the starter motor, but that lost us two laps. Hans and Derek made up a lot of the time, and at the flag we'd lost the race by 2min 36sec."

THERE ARE MANY MORE THREADS TO Norbert's Porsche career – like the Indycar project. "The space engineer Wernher von Braun told me, 'From a success you don't learn. But with every failure you have, you learn a lot.' He's right. If you make a car, and go out and race it, and win, what have you learned? In 1986 a Porsche Indycar programme was agreed. We built a 2.65-litre V8 engine and our own chassis, but after Al Unser Sr had done just one race Al Holbert, who was in charge of the American side of the programme, insisted we switch to a March chassis. We'd barely got the Porsche chassis shaken down, and later, in a back-to-back test with Teo Fabi at Firebird Raceway, we ended up with better times from the Porsche than the March. But by then the decision had been taken." Al Holbert died in an air crash in September 1988.

Fabi won a race at Mid-Ohio the following September, still using the March chassis, but in 1990 the programme was wound up.

LAP63

by Ludovic A. Parayre

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With Formula 1 engines there was success and failure. The TAG Porsche turbo V6 unit brought McLaren five world championship titles in three years, 1984-85-86. "John Barnard was involved from the start to ensure that car and engine were designed together." Then there was the abortive Arrows V12: "Too heavy, and the Arrows wasn't very good either, so Arrows blamed the engine and Porsche blamed the chassis."

In September 1988 came a bombshell. The Porsche board dictated a complete withdrawal from racing as a works team. "They said, OK, Norbert, no more racing. The competitions department was closed down, and I was moved to production car suspension development. It was like cutting off my legs. Two days later I had a call from Jean Todt, who was putting together the Peugeot endurance team, and wanted me to run it. I went to see him and got into it pretty deeply. We talked terms, I found a German school in Paris for my kids, but in the end I decided the language difference would make it very difficult. And though I had lost my racing role I was still, deep down, a Porsche man.

"In my spare time I started helping Reinhold Joest, who was running a 962: through 1989 and '90 I did some new wings for him and other details. I fitted it in somehow. Road car development was usually timeless, get it done for next month, maybe the month after. Racing work was always urgent.

"Then, when the new GT rules came in, Porsche decided it was appropriate to return, and we managed to homologate the Dauer road-prepared 962 as a GT car. At Le Mans we were going for the class win, but we got an unexpected overall victory. Then McLaren won with their F1 GTR in 1995, and a month later we got the go-ahead to start developing the GT1 to beat them. We took a 911, cut it in half, and turned the back around to put the engine ahead of the rear wheels.

"In 1996 our GT1s were second and third at Le Mans, winning the class and pushing the McLarens out of the top three. The actual winners were Joest in a car we'd originally engined for TWR for IMSA, based on a chassis Ross Brawn had done for Jaguar. But with our engine and gearbox, we were still happy to take it as another Porsche Le Mans victory. Our works GT1s were leading overall in 1997, but a broken driveshaft caused a crash that put one car out on Sunday morning, and late in the race a broken oil line set the other one on fire." But the Joest car won again, so that counted as the 15th victory.

Something more was needed for 1998, and Weissach came up with the carbon-chassis GT1-98. This time it all went right: two cars started, two cars finished, first and second. It was Porsche's 16th Le Mans victory in 29 starts. "And it was a particularly important one, because it was the 50th anniversary of Porsche producing their first car. Dr Ferry



"THOUGH I HAD LOST MY RACING ROLE I WAS STILL, DEEP DOWN, A PORSCHE MAN"

Porsche had died earlier that year, but his son Wolfgang Porsche was there, watching in the pits. They wanted me up on the podium with the drivers, but I refused: I said that Dr Wolfgang must go up. Porsche is not just a faceless company, it is still like a family, and that was a family moment.

"At Porsche we've never had one star name on the design team, or one star team manager. Sometimes in F1 you get a personality designer in a very good team: they're all doing their best but he gets the honour. Or if he really is responsible for much of a team's success, when he moves to another team maybe the success goes with him, almost as if the team cannot manage without him. At Porsche if we are building a car, and one of the mechanics says, 'Would it be a good idea to do it like this?' we will always listen, even if in the end there are reasons why his idea would not work. Everyone is a key team member, and their ideas must be heard like everyone else's. It's not, 'Shut up and do as you're told.'

"My work contract with Porsche ended in 2004, but I continued as a consultant, and worked with the customers. One race I remember particularly was the Spa 24 Hours in 2003, won by the Freisinger GT2 Porsche of Marc Lieb, Stéphane Ortelli and Romain Dumas. It was a tricky race weather-wise, like it often is at Spa, rain, dry, rain, dry. In those races you always seem to end up on the wrong tyres. But that day all my decisions seemed to be the right ones. Dumas was the team junior, and when Lieb brought the car in on slicks it was actually raining. I told them to put on a new set of slicks, and Dumas looked at me with his eyes big and round. But I said, 'Just take it easy for a couple of laps, you'll be fine.' So off he went on shiny new slicks. After two or three laps a dry line appeared, and he piled on the laps while the others were in the pits trying to decide which tyres to use. I realised then that Romain is one of the good guys. He's in the Porsche LMP1 team now, of course.

"I FINISHED WITH PORSCHE COMPLETELY in 2010, after 40 years. Then the ACO offer came up, so my relationship with Le Mans continues. I analyse the respective performances of all the cars, particularly in the GT classes, lap speeds, section speeds, top speeds. I pass on all this information with my comments, and what they do with it is up to them."

Norbert remains fascinated by the whole scene. Audi's Le Mans score is now 13 wins, and Porsche is keen to hold the gap. "Audi is still very strong, not so much in speed as in consistency. Today, if you have almost any sort of problem, you have lost Le Mans. Electronics have changed a lot of things, and today's cars are much more reliable. With three drivers doing short stints, you can go flat out all the time."

I ask Norbert who now does his old job in the Porsche Le Mans team. "I think it's a lot of people. In my day it was a small team, we all knew what was going on. A lot of the important decisions were taken on the staircase, in the canteen, walking briskly through the passages. If you needed some shop-floor information you'd talk to a mechanic. Today if there's a problem they have a meeting about it, someone takes the question away and comes back a week later. There is a lot of Formula 1 thinking, and I am not sure the new personnel remember all those 16 victories. Marketing decides racing policy nowadays, and the racing department is like an offshoot of the marketing department. The board decides on the effectiveness of a race programme compared to the cost of a television campaign, or some posters beside the road.

"But, to be fair, it's really the challenge of hybrid technology that has brought Porsche back. And, developing your road cars, even today you can't rely totally on simulations behind closed doors. You still have to see what happens out there, on the track. Even today, racing can still improve the breed." M

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Back to front thinking



Porsche, Toyota and Audi had already embellished the WEC with fascinating technological diversity... and then Nissan unveiled its radical new front-wheel-drive Le Mans challenger

writer GARY WATKINS

NISSAN GRABBED THE pre-season World Endurance Championship headlines – and gathered some more when it withdrew its radical GT-R LM NISMO from the first two rounds at Silverstone and Spa. The first tranche was undoubtedly positive, the second was clearly always going to be negative. So what reaction will the manufacturer receive when the front-engined, front-wheel-drive contender makes its belated race debut in the Le Mans 24 Hours?

If the Japanese manufacturer can hit its stated goals, then it has a fighting chance of more positive headlines. And those goals are now befitting of a manufacturer that has not only opted for such an unusual concept, but is also returning to the pinnacle of sports car racing after an absence that stretches back to 1999.

The outlandish claims that Nissan was going to win Le Mans on its comeback, made at the project launch last May, have disappeared along with the man who made them, former vice-president and now Aston Martin boss Andy Palmer. They were tempered at the time by the marque's global motor sport boss, Darren Cox. And a year on, his aspirations are much more modest: he wants the best of the GT-R LMs to qualify among its factory rivals from Audi, Toyota and Porsche, and then have at least one of its three entries still running at the finish.

"People seemed to have forgotten that Toyota missed the first two races when it returned in 2012," says Cox, who is calling 2015 a learning year. "We are in the normal process of developing a car and ours is a little bit different to everyone else's, which is why it is taking time."

That development hasn't been entirely straightforward. Nissan was forced to miss Silverstone because the car was not homologated in time after twice failing its crash test. It has also had to modify the monocoque design for a second reason. The rule makers insisted that a kind of bellhousing between the chassis and engine, which could originally be removed along with the twin Torotrak energy-storage flywheels that sit underneath the driver's legs, be bonded in place. It opted then to miss Spa as well in order to rack up the testing miles and focus on Le Mans, the race for which the GT-R LM was designed.

AT THE TIME OF ITS ORIGINAL PLANNED debut at Silverstone in mid-April, the car had completed just 3800km of running across a variety of circuits in the USA, including the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Sebring and, most recently, Chevrolet's test track at its Bowling Green facility in Kentucky, just down the road from the project's Indianapolis base. Ben Bowlby, both the architect of the car in his role as technical director and team principal of Nissan Motorsports, reveals that testing up to that point had been largely focused on getting the car's fully mechanical hybrid system built by Torotrak in the UK to work correctly. Only after Silverstone were the first endurance runs planned, also at Bowling Green.

The testing has all been undertaken with the regenerated power from the hybrid system returning to the front wheels. The car was conceived to deploy the retrieved energy at the rear wheels, but this system was abandoned in the interest of weight saving, according to Bowlby. Putting the power of the car's twin-turbo 3-litre V6 and the recovered energy – which together add up to 1250bhp, according to Nissan – through the front axle has inevitable consequences.

"If you are recovering eight megajoules [the amount Nissan was targeting] from the front axle, the size of the brakes is different from when you are only taking 4MJ, for example," says Bowlby, who wouldn't confirm that the car will run in the hybrid sub-class that allows for 2MJ to be deployed over the Le Mans lap. "It is true that we are running 18in wheels instead of 16in wheels, because we had to fit brakes that a 16in wheel wouldn't accommodate. That has had a huge knock-on effect on elements of the car."

Tyre wear would appear to be another one. Nissan and its drivers claim to have made major advances in this respect during early April.





Front engine sits low behind wheels, left, with energy storage flywheels under driver's knees

NISSAN

"Up to the Sebring test [in early March] we were struggling to get the laps, but we have made a big step," says Marc Gené, who will share the no23 Nissan with Max Chilton and Jann Mardenborough. "Now we are able to do long runs, which we couldn't before."

Olivier Pla, who drives the other regular entry together with Harry Tincknell and Michael Krumm at Le Mans, suggests the car is already light on its toes. "We were very surprised about how the car looks after its tyres," he says. "Over two stints the car was very consistent, which is quite promising, and there is more work to do with Michelin."

Bowlby remains optimistic for Le Mans: "Our engine is a beast, so you might say that we are playing to our strengths by going up in fuel allocation and down in energy recovery."

Yet he still reckons that it could be 12 months before his unconventional concept shows its true colours. "We have designed the whole car around a hybrid system that has to get to 8MJ," he says. "I think we'll be in a lot better shape in 2016."

"OUR ENGINE IS A BEAST SO WE ARE PLAYING UP TO OUR STRENGTHS"



Bowlby's theory is that a front engine offers more energy regain and increased aero potential

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HOW IT WORKS

Designer Ben Bowlby on why he overturned 50 years of thinking

GET BEN BOWLBY TO EXPLAIN THE concept behind the GT-R LM, and he'll have you believing by the end. He presents his theory in a simple, elegant and even charming way. It runs along the lines of, "If you do this, why not do that?" He makes it sound logical. Obvious, even.

The starting point, he explains, is the aerodynamic limitation imposed by the rule book at the rear of the car.

"If you begin to think about how you could differentiate yourself aerodynamically when the rear diffuser is so strictly controlled and the rear wing has to fit within a tight box, you basically realise that you would have to spend a fortune in detail work and fine tuning," he says. "It is much easier to find the downforce to make the difference at the front."

That isn't possible with a conventional car because, says Bowlby, "The footbox chassis rules cause the monocoque to be quite wide." The tub on a conventional rear-engined design means that the airflow under or through the car restricts aerodynamic gain. He adds: "We thought that if we moved the engine forward and used a vee configuration that is narrow at the bottom and then position the engine carefully, then we can make a very accommodating and effective shape aerodynamically to maximise the flow under the splitter around a nice teardrop shape and out the back of the car."

It is, says Bowlby, an "integrated approach". Moving the engine to the front allows the front-weight distribution to be brought forward to match the shift in aero balance over a conventional car in the same direction.

"It all started to piece together quite nicely and was sufficient for us to say, 'You know what, I think this could work'," he says. "It was no slam-dunk, but we started doing our simulations and thought it was a way to be competitive at the same time as being interesting and different."

The lateral thinking didn't stop there. Bowlby and his team could still have opted for rear-drive traction, but a propshaft and differential would have added weight.

"Making weight is extremely difficult with a big, powerful hybrid," says Bowlby. "It is probably the biggest challenge that the manufacturers face in designing and building these cars. So we said, 'OK, we will use our relatively low-powered internal combustion engine to drive the front wheels and boost acceleration by driving the rears'."

The forward bias of the aero forces and weight distribution will also aid energy recovery from the GT-R LM's front-axle kinetic system. "You want to recover from the front where you have the downforce and weight," says Bowlby. "That way you have a better chance of recovering a lot of energy."

The concept of the GT-R is to recover from the front and deploy to the rear to take advantage of the weight transfer under acceleration. "That seemed like an intelligent thing to do," says Bowlby. "And then you look at the duty cycle of the rears and the weight and aero distribution, and you think that it wouldn't be too bad to go for a smaller rear tyre."

That explains the GT-R LM's nine-inch rear wheels, five inches narrower than the 14 allowed, in the interests of drag reduction on a car that Bowlby makes no bones in admitting has been designed as a Le Mans special.

"If you can turn that wasted grip into aerodynamic efficiency, it isn't such a bad compromise," he says. "We are running at such high speeds for such long times at Le Mans that drag is very important. In the overall equation it looks like a decent trade-off."

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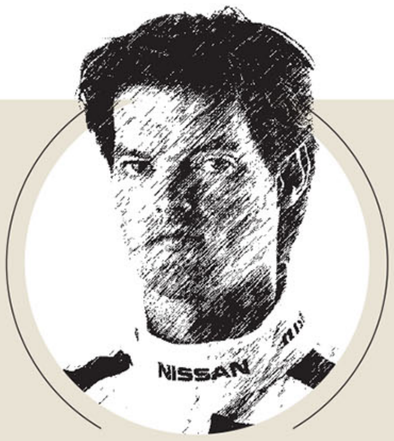
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Alex Buncombe

This son of a '70s saloon hero has beaten his own path to a Le Mans factory seat. But it's taken time, he tells Damien Smith

IS ALEX BUNCOMBE BEST KNOWN FOR twirling a bronze Jaguar C-type around Monaco and Le Mans or for his antics in modern Nissan GTs? That'll depend on where you watch your racing. What is certain is that he's a breath of fresh air, as current racing drivers go. A year on from winning three of his four races in JD Classic's hot C at Le Mans Classic, the 33-year-old will return to La Sarthe for the 24 Hours proper, this time as a fully paid-up member of a factory prototype team. Now that doesn't happen very often.

Buncombe's rise to the elite has been a slow burn. This third-generation racer – he is the son of popular 1970s 'saloonatic' Jonathan – plugged away in his older brother Chris's wake, first in junior single-seaters, before a chance encounter led to a fruitful alliance with Bob Neville's RJN concern when it was embarking on a high-profile GT campaign with Nissan. Eight years later, Buncombe finds himself rewarded with a berth in Nissan's radical front-engined GT-R LM NISMO.

Beyond the family interest, it was a future F1 champion who sparked the trail that led to Le Mans. "Chris and I started out in motocross until John and Jenson Button let us have a go in their kart at Clay Pigeon," he says. "We loved it."

The Jim Russell and La Filière schools fanned the flame, but not even backing from childhood friend Jenson would catapult Alex beyond intermittent Formula Renault campaigns. The brothers then changed tack, linking up with Worcester-based Chiron to try sports cars.

"In 2006 things started to kick off," says Alex. "Chris had driven JMB Racing's Maserati MC12 in FIA GTs, and that link led me to the Maserati Trofeo Cup. I did the first round at Monza and won, but then the sponsor pulled out.

"The next year Bob Neville asked Chris to do Spa in the GT4 Cup. It clashed with his LMP2 commitments, so I asked Chris to twist Bob's arm and get me a seat. I didn't have any money. It took some persuading, but in the end the answer was yes – and I finished second in both races."

Buncombe's subsequent alliance with RJN's Nissan Z-cars stepped up a mark with the advent of the GT Academy in 2008. Thanks to the faith of Nissan motor sport boss Darren Cox, Alex found himself central to the high-profile success story of taking PlayStation gamers directly from consoles to race tracks, partnering and mentoring Academy winners in the European Blancpain and British GT series. The most notable of these, Jann Mardenborough and Lucas Ordóñez, step up to LMP1 this year, too. "In the first year with Lucas I was concerned," Buncombe admits. "I wanted to do well for myself and was apprehensive having him in the car. We didn't know how fast he would be for real, but he was quick. We nearly won the GT4 series, and for a gamer to do that in his first year in a car that wasn't easy to drive…"

Since then, Buncombe has become a YouTube sensation thanks to in-car footage of a monster first lap at Monza and has tutored Britain's most successful Olympian, Sir Chris Hoy, as the cycling legend turns his focus to motor racing. The wide-ranging nature of Nissan's global motor sport interests has led him to Japan for Super GT and Australia for V8 Supercars.

And those historic racing exploits? "Initial contact with JD came through Jenson's manager, Richard Goddard," he says. "Chris drove one of their Group C cars at Silverstone Classic, but again had clashing dates. He convinced Derek [Hood, JD boss] to give me a go." No wonder he's so close to his brother. We think he owes Chris a pint or three. M



NISSAN

CAREER IN BRIEF

Born: 28/08/81, Taunton, Devon
1999 La Filière **2001** Formula Honda (champion) **2000-03** Formula Renault **2004-05** Britsport **2006** Maserati Trofeo (1 race, 1 win) **2007-10** GT4 European Cup **2011-14** Blancpain Endurance (GT4 champion, 2011), British & FIA GTs **2015** Le Mans (Nissan LMP1), Blancpain Endurance

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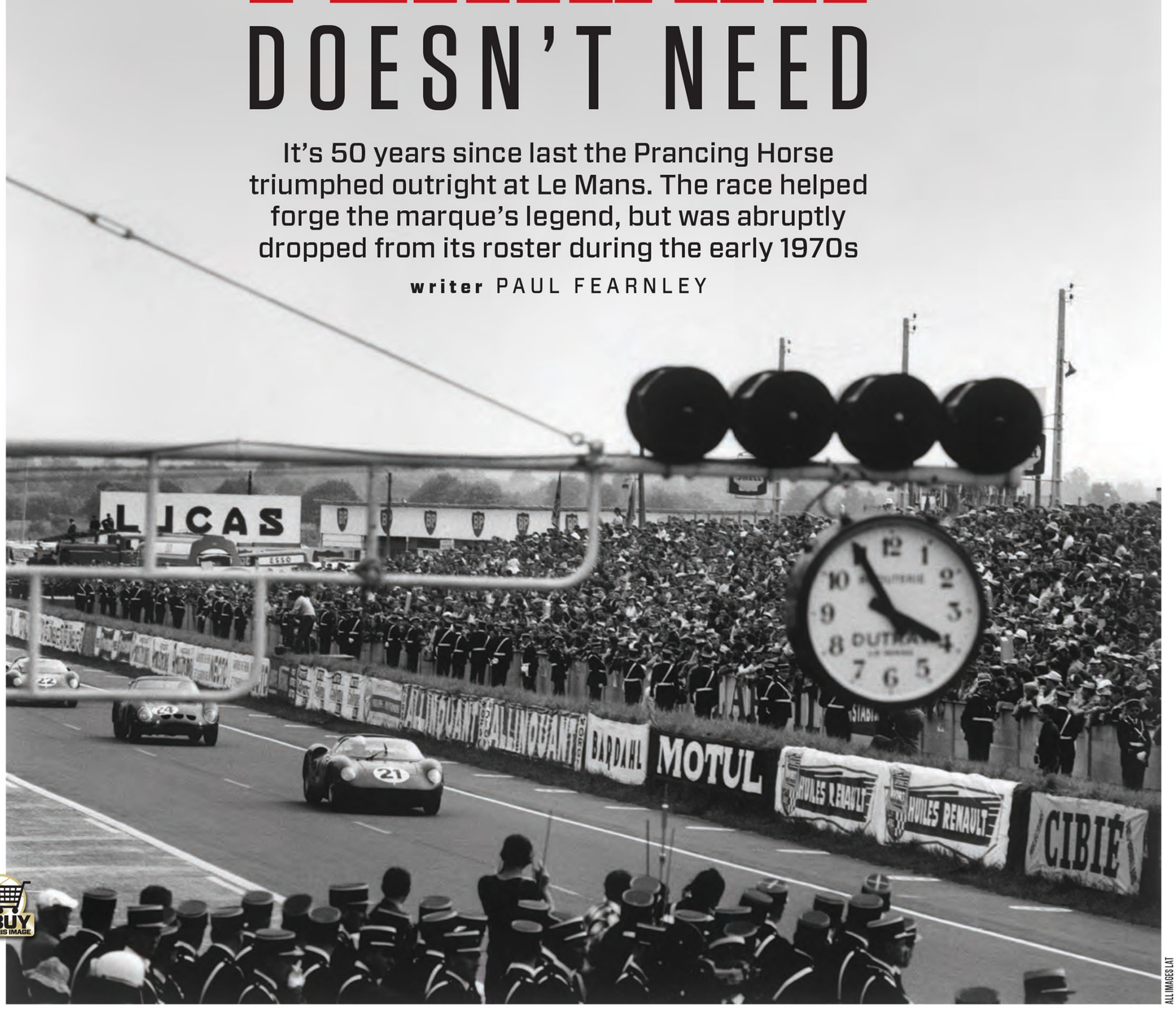
Ferrari claimed years of Le Mans triumph, but it came to a halt with the last works win in 1964 (Vaccarella/Guichet, 275P) and, right, the privateer victory of Gregory/Rindt (NART 250LM)

THE RACE FERRARI DOESN'T NEED

It's 50 years since last the Prancing Horse triumphed outright at Le Mans. The race helped forge the marque's legend, but was abruptly dropped from its roster during the early 1970s

writer PAUL FEARNLEY





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ENZO FERRARI thought him a Milanese chancer, a fair-weather lightweight who sold Alfa Romeos in frivolous Paris before ducking the war in prosperous New York. Now, here he was, a freshly minted American citizen slumming it in the country of his birth, seeking help. Luigi Chinetti had indeed taken his chance – and leave – by neglecting to return from Frenchman René Dreyfus' Indianapolis 500 campaign of 1940. Now, here he was, after a prodigious journey over ocean, snow and ice, offering help.

They would remember their meeting of Christmas Eve 1946 very differently.

According to chatty Chinetti, Enzo was maudlin and appeared and acted older than his 48 years as they sat, chilled to the marrow, in a factory that evoked the ghosts of races past. He'd arrived, via Constellation (to Paris) and Citroën (thence to Modena), from the Land of Plenty bearing the gift of a golden future, but was met by dusty dreams and musty memories.

Ungrateful Enzo would barely make mention of it. (His memoirs dispatched Chinetti with a stroke of a pen.) As far as he was concerned, he was being told something he knew: that adventurous and/or vain rich men liked to buy fast, glamorous cars. No, this weasel had dragged himself, his Yankee wife and child, halfway around a war-torn world because he, Ferrari, held the golden key. Chinetti had simply got wind of the new car – the ambitious, Gioacchino Colombo-designed V12 was nearing completion when he arrived unannounced – and was blustering like the wheeler-dealer he was.

Enzo, a salesman himself, held his cards – and car – close before a backdrop that was the chiaroscuro to America's Kodachrome. A half-lit unwelcoming workshop was the ideal setting for the increasingly reclusive role that he was perfecting. Probably he overplayed the wartime hardships – the wreckage of his, note, new factory at Maranello – and underplayed the money made by copying without consent German machine tooling. But his character was based on dark truths: friends and colleagues had been assassinated or kidnapped; bombs had been dropped and some had been dodged and others not.

Chinetti was bemused rather than shocked by these tales, not only because he knew Enzo through their extended pre-war association with Alfa Romeo, but also because he had not experienced the wearying effect of invasion, occupation and privation.

It's hardly surprising that they misread each other's signals: Chinetti's proposal, though businesslike, was genuine and flecked with sentiment, while Enzo was no doubt secretly proud to receive confirmation of a new and eager albeit distant market. The deal reached was tentative: Chinetti promised to sell five cars in America should Enzo choose to supply him; 20, if he felt so inclined.

Though loathe to admit it, Enzo was aware that his cosmopolitan acquaintance, energetic and engaging, would be useful. He soothed himself with the thought that Chinetti would have to dance to an occasionally discordant tune because he lacked the substance – the balls! – to build a car of his own.

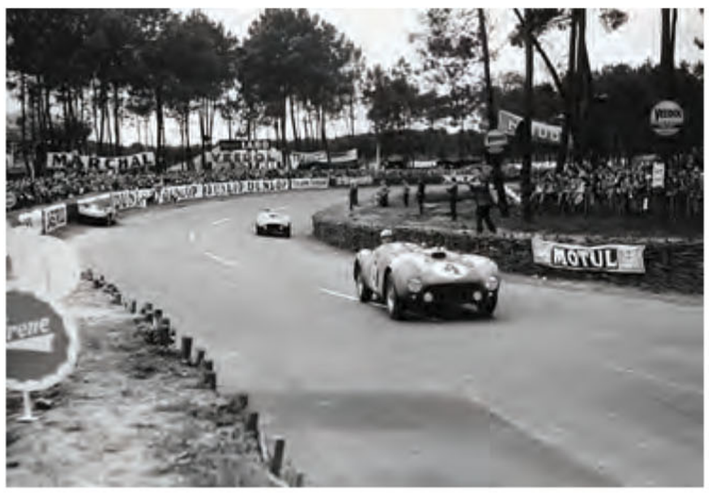
Chinetti, in turn, was no patsy. His repeated boast that it was he who pointed Enzo in the right direction and provided the initial impetus would have seen lesser men cut dead rather than merely undermined from time to time. He survived because it had foundation: Americans, though Enzo was disdainful, provided Ferrari with funds to go racing.

The Merzario/Pace 312PB finished second in 1973. Left and below, the winning Chinetti/Selsdon 166 and Trintingnant/González 375 Plus from 1949 and 1954

Plus Chinetti immediately walked the talk by winning the only European race – one for which Enzo had no time and never attended – possessing cachet on the wealthier side of The Pond. Ferrari's victories in the Paris 12 Hours (by Chinetti), Targa Florio and Mille Miglia simply did not cut the mayo. It had to be Le Mans.

ALREADY TWICE A WINNER THERE, with Raymond Sommer (1932) and Philippe Étancelin (1934) in privateer Alfas, Chinetti, acting younger than his 48 years, was relentless in 1949. With co-driver and car owner Lord Selsdon euphemistically 'indisposed' for its majority, and in sweltering conditions that melted the track, he won the first post-war running of the race by a lap. Thus he proved that this 2-litre, with its multi-cylinder siren song, light tubular frame and five-speed gearbox possessed both the speed and reliability to beat the larger cars of more-established marques. Procter & Gamble heir Briggs Cunningham raced his imported Ferrari at Watkins Glen in Upstate New York a few months later. The process had begun.

Le Mans would remain Ferrari's fundamental fixture for 20 years. John Surtees, its most



influential driver of the 1960s, was surprised by his first task: to test the new sports-racer. His experience of them ran only to some fun (but fast) laps in an Aston Martin prior to his switch to four wheels in 1960. Though he asked Ferrari to concentrate on F1, he soon realised that there were too many clients to keep happy and that single-seaters would remain second in the queue until June had passed. Enzo's heart lay with F1, too, but his head – and wallet – were in La Sarthe. That's why when jilted Henry Ford II threatened to 'kick his ass', he aimed where it would hurt most: Le Mans.

Not that wins came thick and fast after 1949. Ferrari was found wanting against more methodical Jaguar – and later Ford. In 1950 all five Ferraris retired for different reasons. Nine were entered in 1951 and, co-driven by Jean Lucas, Chinetti's eighth place in a 340 America – there's a clue in the name – was the best result.

All bar one of an unsettling variety of seven coupés and open cockpits, ranging from 2.5 to 4.1 litres, were done by 13 hours in 1952. The remaining 340 America of André Simon/Lucien Vincent finished fifth. Ferrari's world champion Alberto Ascari was more circumspect in 1953 yet set the fastest lap again and paid the price – a failed clutch after 20 hours – for his early chase of the disc-braked Jagu-hare of Stirling Moss.

That this sledgehammer approach finally cracked it in 1954 was due to a performance of delicious delicacy in atrocious conditions by bulky Froilán González and his pencil-slim, pencil-tached co-driver Maurice Trintignant. Their thunderous 4.9-litre 375 Plus suffered a late scare when a hailstorm scrambled its electrics – 'Trint' had not been advised of the driver-adjustable inlet flap – and Jaguar team boss 'Lofty' England chose not to protest the overeager extra mechanic who plunged illegally into the resultant panicky pitstop.

That karma reaped its reward when Jaguar's lightning-quick D-type won the next three on



Gendebien/Hill scored three Le Mans victories, the first of them in 1958 with a 250TR. Below, Gendebien and Paul Frère won in 1960

the bounce. During which time only two works Ferraris finished. The best of them, however, was co-driven by one half of the partnership that would calm a chaotic Scuderia and make it whole at Le Mans: Olivier Gendebien. An ex-paratrooper, this cultured, wealthy Belgian rose above Enzo's political peccadilloes to form one of sports car racing's most cerebral and successful partnerships with Phil Hill.

Both men, the American more so, were frustrated by their lack of F1 opportunity at Ferrari – but Enzo knew they were a precious commodity: fast, reliable drivers who were mechanically sympathetic and capable of putting their egos in a box for the common good. He had them marked as sports car royalty and, Hill's 1961 F1 world title notwithstanding, that assessment was correct.

In 1958, in a pontoon-bodied Testa Rossa that channelled rain into its cockpit, Hill drove without goggles at such speed as to cause team-mate Mike Hawthorn to marvel. Hill and Gendebien's winning margin was 12 laps. They might have won the following year, too, were it not for a water leak with four hours to go while holding a four-lap lead. It was left to Ferrari's Gran Turismo privateers to salvage third, fourth, fifth and sixth behind an Aston Martin 1-2.

By 1960 Enzo was insisting that GTs should become the race's future but, of course, he continued to build prototypes that refused to be killed off by half-cocked rule changes regarding luggage space, turning circle and windscreen. Hill and Gendebien were split up for some unfathomable reason, but the latter won with fellow Belgian Paul Frère as Ferrari swept the board in the absence of Aston.

Jaguar had long ago withdrawn and handed responsibility to its privateers – the race had worked its magic in America – and Maserati was financially crippled. Le Mans had become a one-horse race. Not that it mattered, such was the mystique of plunging into the dark of dusk and beyond to emerge through the morning mist. Ferrari constructed fewer than 300 cars that year and half were sold in America.

His share of those proceeds gave Chinetti the money to go racing with his North American Racing Team. The Rodríguez brothers would be a thorn in the Scuderia's side at Le Mans in 1961, ignoring all beseeching to slow down until a misfire ended a torrid 14-hour lead battle with the restored Hill/Gendebien.

Those rebellious young Mexicans were brought in-house for 1962 and Hill/Gendebien scored a comfortable victory, the last for a front-engined car. This signalled a sea change from without as well as within Ferrari. Gendebien retired forthwith and Hill, weary of the false fronts and backbiting, left the team at the season's end. So, too, did eight disgruntled senior staff. Some of the latter returned, tails



ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVING

The lack of a factory team has been no barrier to a string of Ferrari class wins

THOUGH THERE HAVE been Ferrari-free Le Mans races since 1973, non-works machinery has more often than not kept the Black Horse in its field.

Its muscularly handsome 4.4-litre V12 365GTB/4 Daytona dominated the GT category in 1972 and '73, when run by Charles Pozzi and driven by the likes of Jean-Claude Andruet, Claude Ballot-Léna and Vic Elford, then continued its run in 1974: Cyril Grandet/Dominique 'Segard' Bardini also finished fifth overall and won the Index of Thermal Efficiency in Raymond Touroul's car.

Porsche's Carrera 1975 RSR ended the Daytona's reign, however, and the only 'Ferrari' in '76 was a turbo V6 in the tail of a Lancia Stratos.

Luigi Chinetti's North American Racing Team, looking elsewhere for its Ferrari fix, hoped the mid-engined





365GT/4 Berlinetta Boxer, released for sale at the 1973 Paris Motor Show, would provide it. Although it used one of these 4.3-litre flat-12s as early as the 1975 Daytona 24 Hours, the model did not make its Le Mans debut until two years later – it finished 16th – by which time it had been superseded by the 4.9-litre 512BB.

All four of the newer model retired in 1978 – three with gearbox problems – and it was left to the older, albeit updated car to uphold what honour remained, François Migault/Lucien





Guitteny again finishing 16th.

Fuel injection for carburettors and a longer, more flowing Pininfarina body were introduced in 1979 for an LM version of 512BB, but it was no match for Porsche's 935 and BMW's M1 in the IMSA category. Fifth in class, 12th overall, was the best it could muster.

It improved to third in class, 10th overall, in 1980 – albeit again beaten by 935s – before turning the tables in '81 when the Pozzi-tended car of Andruet/Ballot-Léna/Hervé Regout finished fifth to win IMSA GTX by a lap.

Porsche regained its pre-eminence the following year, and that was that for Ferrari for quite some time.

After providing a twin-turbo V8 for the lovely mid-1980s Group C Lancia LC2, which was sufficiently fast to claim pole in 1984 but too fragile to challenge for victory, a bits-and-pieces era ensued: LC2s in privateer hands (Dollop Racing among them!), a turbo Ferrari-engined C2 Spice that failed to qualify in 1991 and some dainty 348s.

Then came the most likely Ferrari for 20 years: 333SP. Commissioned for IMSA's World Sports Car Championship rules of 1994, this open-top machine looked the part – thanks to some works input plus that of notable consultants Tony Southgate and Dallara – and sounded it, too, due to an F1-based 4-litre V12.

Though it would enjoy a long and successful career, winning the Sebring 12 Hours three times, it fell short at Le Mans: Eric van de Poele set fastest lap in '96; project catalyst Gianpiero Moretti, co-driven by Didier Theys and Max Papis, finished sixth in '97; and in '98 Doyle Risi Racing won Class LMP1 by finishing eighth overall.

Another subsequent lull concluded when Prodrive began its customer programme with the front-engined 6-litre V12 550 Maranello in 2003, having run a development car the year



before. Its battles with Chevy's Corvette and later Aston's DBR9, also developed by Prodrive, were fierce. The Ferrari held the upper hand in the GTS class of 2003 thanks to Tomás Enge/Peter Kox/Jamie Davies, but was overtaken in GT1, despite finishing ninth and 12th overall, in 2004/'05.

The replacement was a nimbler mid-engined machine: the V8 F430. Risi Competizione's Mika Salo and Jaime Melo, with help from co-drivers Gianmaria Bruni and Pierre Kaffer, won GT2 in 2008 and '09.

After a class defeat by Porsche in 2010, the 458 Italia, an update on the theme, replaced the F430. It, too, has butted heads with the 'Vettes: twice it has won the GTE Pro section of GT2 and twice it has been beaten. Amato Ferrari's AF Corse squad of Bruni/Toni Vilander/Giancarlo Fisichella achieved those victories in 2012 and '14.

The moral? If it non-works maybe you should leave it.





"ANOTHER LULL CONCLUDED WHEN PRODRIVE BEGAN ITS CUSTOMER PROGRAMME WITH THE 6-LITRE V12 550 MARANELLO"

between their legs, but new blood was infused: Mauro Forghieri was made chief engineer at 28, and driver/engineer Surtees and engineer/driver Mike Parkes joined within weeks of each other. The Englishmen clunked rather than clicked but made telling contributions that guided the team through transition.

This, however, came as little relief to Enzo. Failing health and complicated home lives plus Italy's troubled economy and troublesome unions had worn him down. That the annual production number had doubled was not entirely good news. Rushed cars, in jarring colours that were hard to sell, generated more complaints about dodgy electrics and dicky clutches, problems an enthusiast could live with but a stranded industrialist running late could not. Bustling Blue Oval men bristling with can-do efficiency, all clipboards and beady eagle eyes, were conspicuous in Modena and Maranello by April. Enzo was ready to sell.

The offer was $18 million for 90 per cent of the stock and all future rights. It was a good deal – more lucrative than the one Enzo would eventually agree with Fiat – but there was a sticking point: Ford wanted to dictate the racing programmes. Enzo refused to budge and eventually left 14 angry men agape around the table. Negotiations were through. This affront not only seriously pissed off 'Hank the Deuce', it gave Enzo a shot in the arm.



Scarfiotti/Parkes 330 P3 failed to finish in '66, although Pike/Courage were eighth overall and GT class winners in 275 GTB, middle right

FERRARI'S 1963 WIN, FOR ITALIAN DUO Lodovico Scarfiotti and Lorenzo Bandini, was unopposed but reliant on others' misfortunes. Sharing with Surtees, Willy Mairesse lost the lead when a half-shut fuel cap caused a hospitalising fire the first time he braked after a stop. Ferrari could still be slipshod.

Ford's arrival in 1964 altered the dynamics. Ferrari called on its privateers to help run six full-shot prototypes against three GT40s built, prepped and run by John Wyer's Ford Advanced Vehicles of Slough. Richie Ginther, another American relieved to have left the Scuderia – he was searched on the way out! – blew by three Ferraris on the Mulsanne Straight to lead the early stages, and team-mate Hill set the race's fastest lap. But ultimately Ford was let down by its Italian Colotti gearbox and victory went to the second-tier Ferrari of Nino Vaccarella and Jean Guichet.

The stakes were raised again in 1965. (Just about) pocket change for FoMoCo, this was a game of budgetary chicken that impecunious Maranello had no chance of winning – yet it rustled up a mix of 10 prototypes to Ford's six. Two of the latter were 7-litre Galaxie-engined MkIIs developed in Dearborn in response to the disappointment of 1964 and run by Shelby American. Hill gleefully put one on pole, by five seconds from Surtees, and set another fastest race lap. But again Ford faltered: all were sidelined before midnight. The battle had taken its toll on Ferrari, too, and it dawned that its victory might come from an unwelcome source.

It's difficult to imagine a more unlikely Le Mans duo than Masten 'The Kansas City Flash' Gregory and Jochen Rindt. Both knew one way: flat out. And neither was enamoured with the prospect of driving NART's uncompetitive 250LM for a day and a night. At the first sign of trouble Rindt was into his civvies and would have high-tailed it had his road car not been boxed in *[For another view, see p110]*. The misfire was in fact easily cured and, more than 20 hours later, Gregory persuaded Rindt to let him undertake the closing stint. The American had come too far not to win and knew that the younger, less experienced Austrian had no plan to moderate his approach.

Footage from Le Mans 1965, as the Gregory/Rindt Ferrari 250LM completes its 348th and final lap

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Ferrari was far from delighted. NART's car was on Goodyears, whereas the battling privateer 250LM of Pierre Dumay and co-driver 'Taf' Gosselin was on Dunlops, Ferrari's main supplier. No amount of bellyaching, berating or bribery could persuade Chinetti to rein back his chargers; they would have paid no heed in any case. He had forewarned Enzo about Ford muscle and surmised that this might be the last chance for a while for Ferrari to win. He was right. But he could never have guessed that it would today remain its most recent victory.

Ford, its Shelby Cobra Daytonas also beaten by Ferrari in the GT class, cancelled its programme. For a fortnight. It arrived in 1966 with an armada of eight MkIIs, and with official NASCAR arm Holman Moody and Britain's Alan Mann Racing bolstering Shelby American. In contrast, Ferrari sent just two of its new 4-litre V12 P3s. Though beautiful, they were outgunned as well as outnumbered. Surtees, who set the fastest time at the official test in April, was its only realistic hope and, though he qualified fifth, he planned to attack from the off.

At which point team manager Eugenio Dragoni, with whom he had an increasingly starchy relationship, told him that his co-driver, a journeyman in contrast, would be undertaking the opening stint. This was done to charm Scarfiotti's spectating uncle Gianni – Agnelli, that is, Fiat's new president. Surtees blew a gasket and dashed to Maranello to put his case to Enzo. He refuses to reveal what was said to end his Ferrari career.

That three Fords pitted at the end of the first lap gave Ferrari some encouragement. Twenty-four hours later three Fords swept across the finish in formation. Ferrari again took the GT honours, thanks to Maranello Concessionaires' eighth-placed 275GTB/C of Formula 3 tyros Roy Pike and Piers Courage, but there was no hiding from its hiding.

The agony continued in 1967. Ford's MkIV,





Posey/Zeccoli 250LM was best Ferrari in '69. Bell/Peterson 512S failed to last in '70, top

built in America by official subsidiary Kar Kraft, was a 220mph arrow through Enzo's heart. Though weight saved by its aluminium honeycomb tub was counterbalanced by the addition of a roll-cage in response to Ken Miles' fatal testing crash in the J-car predecessor, it had Ferrari's measure. Parkes failed in a cheeky but desperate attempt to goad leader Dan Gurney into an unnecessary dice – they parked nose to tail at Arnage for several seconds – and the latter's trend-setting spraying of champagne burst the Ferrari bubble at Le Mans.

No works Ferraris were entered for 1968, and not a single class victory was scored; Richard Piper's 250LM, co-driven by Richard Attwood, finished seventh. That same venerable model, intended originally to take the GT fight to the Cobras, scored the marque's best result in 1969, too: the NART version of Sam Posey/Teo Zeccoli finishing eighth. Ford's GT40, given a new lease by a change of regulation, won both times.

AN INJECTION OF LIRE FROM THE coyly courted and more understanding Fiat – 90 per cent for $11 million; 40 per cent now and 50 more upon Enzo's death – caused a Ferrari glut at Le Mans: no fewer than 11 512S models ran in 1970. But the magnificent 917, in long- or short-tailed form, was better, ultimately more reliable and scored a 1-2. This was Porsche's first win and already the race was doing for Stuttgart what it had for Ferrari. These great companies were at opposite ends of their Le Mans journeys.

Forghieri is to this day miffed that Enzo handed the 512M updates to his privateers for 1971. The designer's belief that it possessed the speed to scare the 917s was proved by the admittedly heavily reworked Penske car of Mark Donohue, but even that lacked the stamina for Le Mans and Porsche scored a 1-2.

Enzo's diktat, however, paid dividends in 1972 when the battle-hardened 3-litre flat-12 312PB Group 6 Prototype swept all before it – except at Le Mans. Rival Matra's decision to concentrate on that race led Enzo to retaliate by withdrawing the week before. For a second year in succession at Le Mans there would be no works Ferrari representation.

More of the same was expected in 1973, particularly as Matra had by now proved itself faster in the 'sprint' races of the World Championship for Makes. Ferrari, however, made a late decision to attend and a determined effort held the result in abeyance until the final 90 minutes; Jacky Ickx/Brian Redman were on the lead lap when valve-gear cooked earlier by a loose exhaust finally failed.

At least there was honour in that defeat. The same season's F1 campaign was arguably the most shambolic in Ferrari's history. Worse, it was completed using a monocoque chassis made in England. When new team manager Luca di Montezemolo suggested that F1 should be the sole sporting focus, he met with surprisingly little opposition. A momentous decision went through pretty much on the nod. Its withdrawal from sports car racing – the new car had been tested at Paul Ricard in December – stripped the gloss from a fading category that would require more than 10 years to recover.

Though Enzo's physical health was failing, his mental acuity was unimpaired. He saw that the deeper he receded into that half-light, the more famous he and his cars became. Those aspects that Chinetti had long ago perceived as weaknesses were blended to become a strength. It was a strange game – a mix of morbidity and lack of sentiment, plus vulpine cunning, ignorance and brute force – that Enzo played so well. Though eminently capable of braggadocio and vacillation, when finally he cut himself free from Le Mans, the resounding anvil that had shaped his company, he did so with dispassion.

F1 was where the commercial money lay. There was no grey. This was night and day. So much so that more than 40 years on – and 50 since its last win – we await the arrival of a new Ferrari dawn at Le Mans.

The truth, though, is this: the most famous manufacturer of sports cars does not need the most famous race for sports cars. Ⓜ

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Nothing but the truth...

NEVER LET THE truth get in the way of a good story. Forgive the second-hand wit, but Mark Twain's famous quotation could have been coined expressly for the 1965 Le Mans 24 Hours, a race that continues to be a hot-button topic for historians. It's a story of how a privateer team defended Ferrari's honour after the factory challenge faded; of how the outgunned North American Racing Team held out as Detroit firepower wilted; of alleged chicanery contributing to an upset win that left everyone taken aback, not least the Austrian-American duo who received the garlands. The thing is, peel back the mythology and what is left doesn't necessarily tally with the truth.

Or at least truth as we know it. The run up to the '65 running of the endurance classic was not without incident. Lloyd 'Lucky' Casner's luck ran out after he crashed his Maserati Tipo 151 during the April test weekend, the popular American perishing in the accident. Tommy Spychiger had been the fastest Ferrari runner aboard the Scuderia Filipinetti 365 P2, only to crash at the Parabolica that same month during the Monza 1000Kms. The Swiss-German died instantly. Come the race itself, it would be Ferrari old boy Phil Hill on pole – by five seconds – aboard his Ford GT40 MkII while further back, behind more fancied hardware, were five 250LMs fielded by various entrants. Fastest of them all was the NART car driven by Masten Gregory and Jochen Rindt.

Luigi Chinetti's squad had hedged its bets by also running a 365 P2 for Pedro Rodríguez and the previous year's winner, Nino Vaccarella. However, it would be the GT40 army that would lead the charge come 4pm on Saturday, June 19. It wouldn't last, transmission issues impairing the Ford challenge: Ferraris blanketed the top six positions as darkness descended with the NART 250LM running a distant third by the early hours of Sunday morning.

Come midday, just 14 of the 51 starters were still circling, with the Franco-Belgian 250LM partnership of Pierre Dumay and Gustave Gosselin seemingly on target to take a fairy tale win. The works challenge had now faded and the NART 250LM was running second with Rindt lapping considerably faster than Dumay. And then the leader's luck took a dive: Dumay managed to control his car as it picked up a puncture while travelling flat-chat down the Mulsanne Straight, but five laps were lost effecting repairs. There was no way the deficit could be overcome in the time remaining so Rindt and Gregory emerged triumphant, Chinetti adding a win as an entrant to the three he had famously accrued as a driver.

The thing is, the story behind this race has long since taken a swerve for the spurious. Nowadays, the 24 Hours is a ten-tenths sprint to the flag, but back then cars tended to be nursed, coaxed and sweet-talked into completing the distance and the 250LM's gearbox was a notoriously weak link. Just because you like doing something doesn't mean you have fun doing it, and much has been written about Rindt and Gregory deliberately thrashing their Ferrari in the expectation that it would be an early retirement. Why prolong the inevitable?

Then there is the story that gets keyboard warriors and tin-hat-wearing conspiracy theorists all riled up. Some state as gospel that

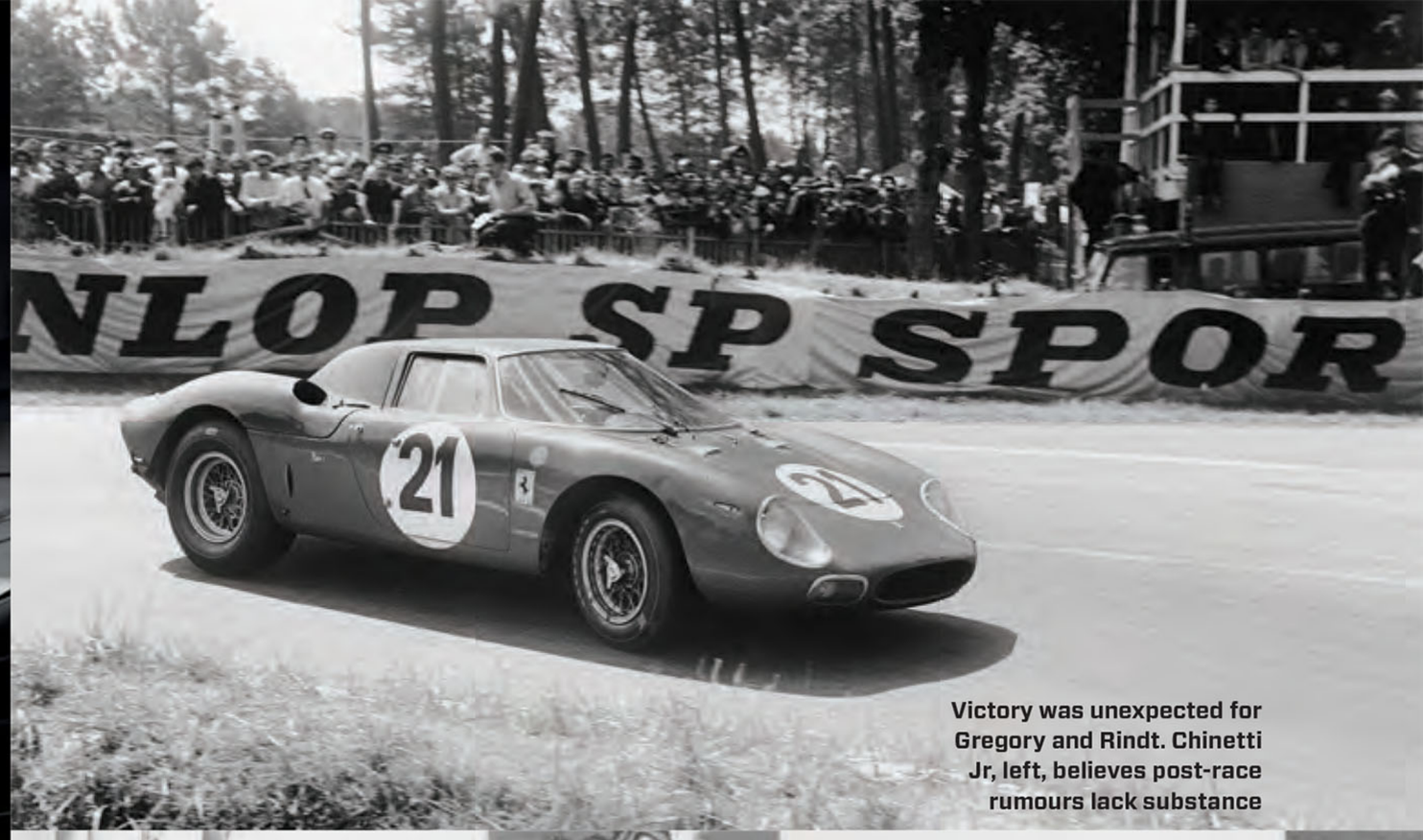




LAT

It's a result that sparked half a century of rumour and counter-rumour. Did the winning drivers receive illicit assistance? Luigi Chinetti Jr is well placed to dispel a few myths about Le Mans 1965

writer RICHARD HESELTINE



Victory was unexpected for Gregory and Rindt. Chinetti Jr, left, believes post-race rumours lack substance



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there was a third driver in the winning car. An aura of intrigue continues to surround claims that experienced sports car driver Ed Hugus picked up the slack during a night-time stint. His involvement was not trumpeted because it would have led to the car being disqualified...

Hugus was not a glory hound according to those who knew him, but his precise role in NART's victory remains a bone of contention to those who didn't. Apart from Hugus' own testimony, there is not even a trace of corroboratory evidence to suggest he drove the winning car. Even so, his account was widely accepted, with one much-prized masterwork stating his version as reality – and that is before we factor in the internet. And if you can't trust the internet, who can you trust?

LUIGI CHINETTI JR, WHO WAS A NART team member that year, offers some stout opinions: "I have heard the stories but that's all they are," he says. "People say that Gregory and Rindt tried to break the car. That makes no sense. Why would they do that? I mean, anyone who says that didn't know my dad. If he had suspected, if only for a moment, that they were deliberately trying to break the LM then he would have broken their asses. The 24 Hours was a race that everyone wanted to win, and Masten had raced with us several times before. He was a known quantity. He wanted to win. I don't believe for a second that he tried to break the car. As for Rindt, we never had any doubts over his desire to win. Why would we? The LM's transmission always was an issue. It was its Achilles' heel. I raced one myself [finishing seventh in the 1970 Daytona 24 Hours alongside Gregg Young] and it was a miracle that it held together for more than a few minutes. That Masten and Rindt kept their car alive for 24 hours should tell you more about their will to win than anything else."

And the question of Hugus being 'The Third Man'? "You know, I was in the pits the entire time. Hugus had been a NART driver off and on and, as I understand it, he is supposed to have driven during the night because Masten didn't want to be out after dark because of his poor eyesight; I think that's the gist of it. Again, people who say that didn't know my dad. He wouldn't have put him in the car if he thought for a moment that he wasn't up to it. They also didn't know Masten. I shared a Daytona with him at Le Mans back in '72. You know, that car was a taxi; not as quick as a 250LM, but it was still pretty damn fast. He never once complained about his eyesight or having to drive at night. It just wasn't an issue.

"As for Hugus, well he may have driven the car but I find it highly unlikely. I never once saw him in a race suit or looking like he had just driven. He was helping dad manage the team for the race, but that's all. He never said anything to me then or subsequently about driving the car. I mean, I could have been asleep when he went out. Hey, anything's possible, but dad never said a word about it to me either. Nor did anyone else. You would think that someone would have said *something*, either at the time or later. Nobody ever said anything."

A lack of proof doesn't mean something didn't happen, but without substantiation you have to question the legend surrounding 'The Third Man' and his role in NART's victory. But what is really telling isn't so much that a 250LM triumphed at Le Mans in '65, but more that Ferrari hasn't won there since.



Ensconced in a hospitality lounge with a view down the pit straight, Chris was able to capture the JWAE Ford GT40 of Ickx/Oliver taking a narrow victory over the Herrmann/ Larrousse Porsche 908



It was the first year of the Porsche 917 at Le Mans, but the German firm came within 120 metres of scoring its first Sarthe victory thanks to the factory 908 of Hans Herrmann and Gérard Larrousse

PRIVATE VIEW

A 'YOU WERE THERE' SPECIAL



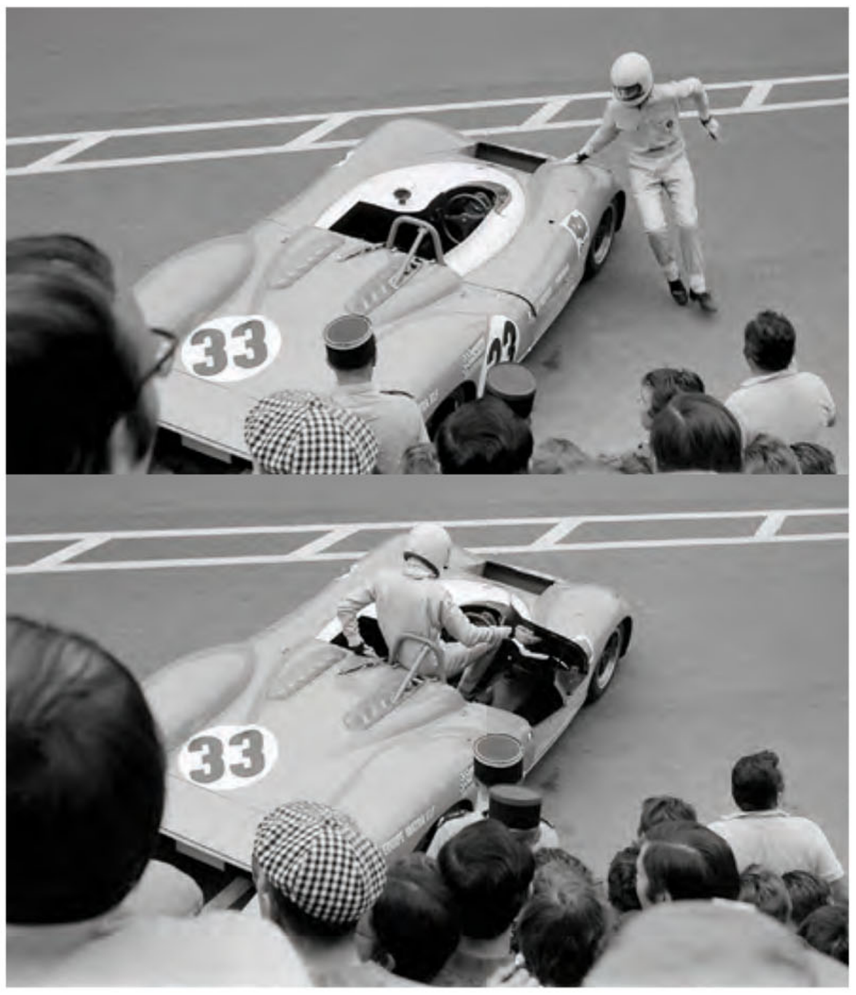
The battle-scarred Porsche 911T of Jean Egretaud and Raymond Lopez receives remedial attention. The all-French crew was forced to retire during the 20th hour, after completing 241 laps

Motoring PR Chris Wakley has been to Le Mans only once, in 1969, but enjoyed a privileged view from above the pits

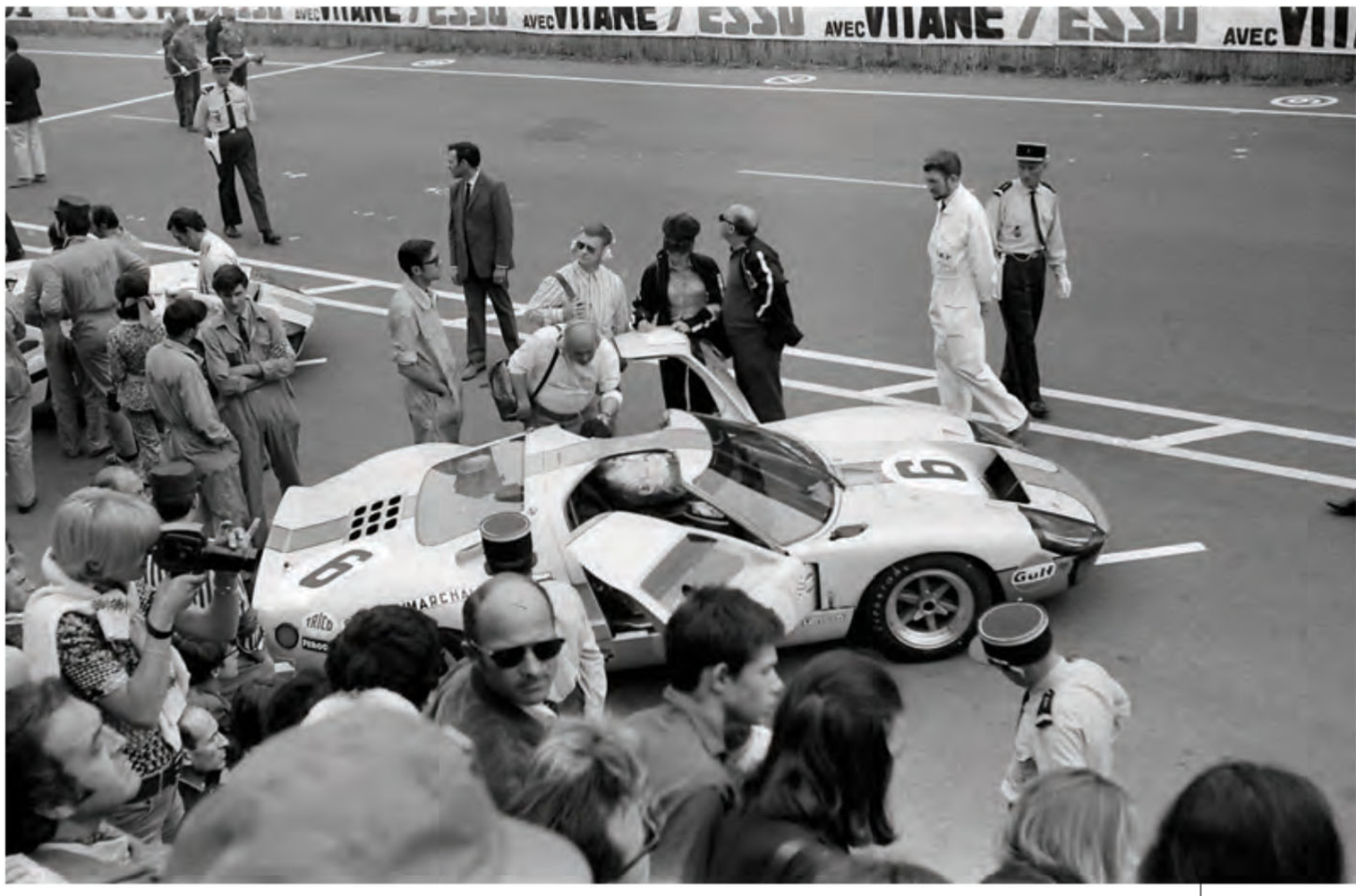
That there have been no repeat visits is, Chris admits, a matter of considerable regret. "I'm not sure why I haven't returned," he says, "but I'm very keen to do so. It's a project for the next year or two. I've always been a Lotus man – I owned six Esprits, none of which ever went wrong – but my wife wanted me to buy a sensible car, so I guess we'll go down in our Nissan Qashqai diesel automatic…"

In 1969 Chris drove to Le Mans in a Triumph 2000. "It was a press trip," he says, "and at the time I was working as a PR for the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. We arrived on Saturday and I watched most of the event from our pit lounge, because it was so convenient. I did wander, though, and we dined at the Auberge des Hunaudières – our plates shook every time a Porsche 917 came past. Fairly recently, a friend sent one of my shots to Hans Herrmann – and I received a lovely email by way of thanks.

"I really can't recall what type of camera I was using – it was just a nondescript old hand-me-down from my dad."



Piers Courage takes the running start. The Englishman shared a Matra MS650 with fellow Formula 1 star Jean-Pierre Beltoise. The pair went on to take fourth place, four laps behind the victorious GT40



The winning GT40 poised for action. Today, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest insists that even media must wear fire-resistant overalls and protective headgear in the pits. Things were more relaxed 46 years ago



The Porsche 908 of Rudi Lins and future Formula 1 entrant – albeit briefly! – Willi Kauhsen passes a pit complex that had still to be separated from the track by any kind of wall. That wouldn't appear until '71



Atmosphere of a kind that should be mandatory at every circuit. Then as now, a post-race track invasion is the very essence of Le Mans (albeit more comfortable if viewed from on high)

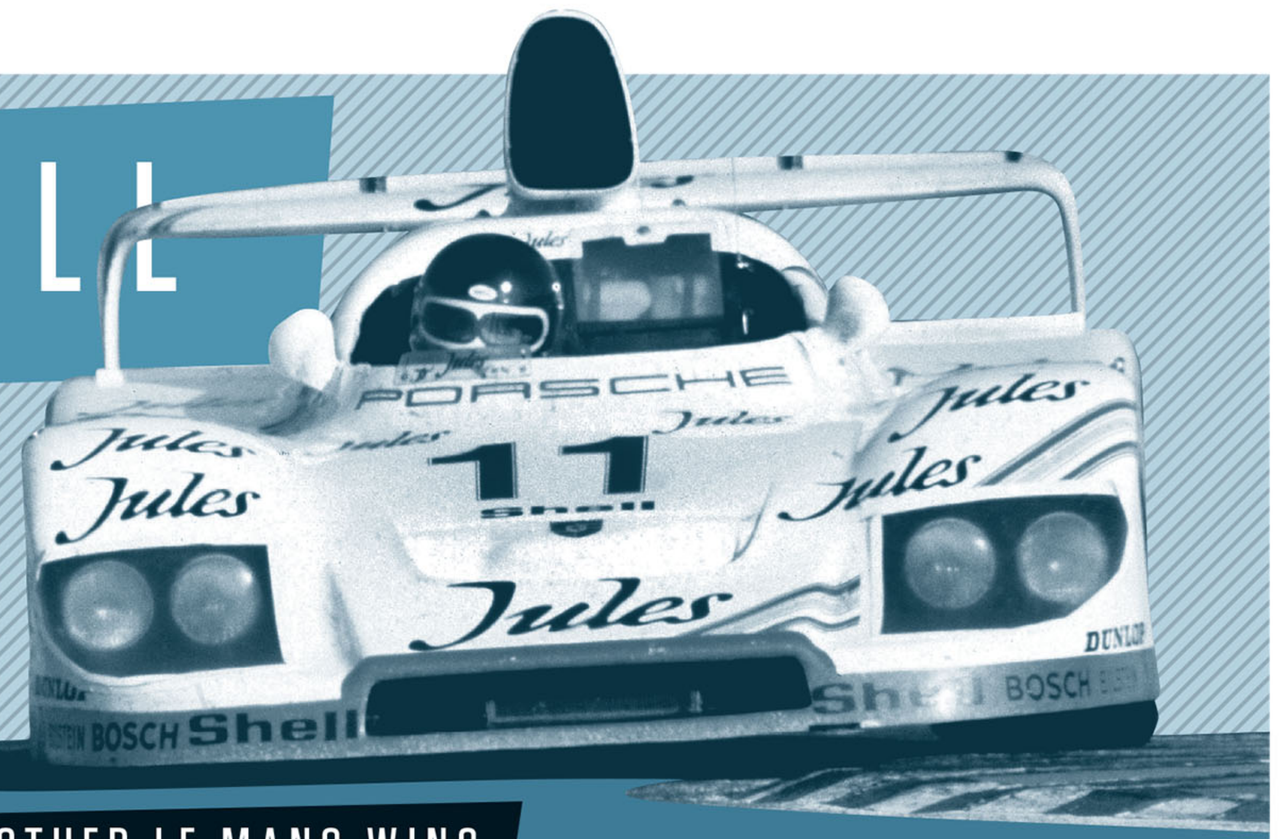


An object lesson in late 1960s crowd control? To the left of this pandemonium sits the GT40 of Helmut Kelleners and Reinhold Joest, who has gone on to do passably well as an entrant at Le Mans...

ICKX & BELL AT LE MANS

Torvill and Dean, Pinsent and Redgrave, Ickx and Bell... some partnerships in sport just work

writer PETER HIGHAM



LE MANS WINS TOGETHER

ICKX & BELL — 1975 · 1981 · 1982

OTHER LE MANS WINS

ICKX — 1969 · 1976 · 1977

BELL — 1986 · 1987

IT IS 40 YEARS SINCE THIS MOST famous of driver combinations joined forces at Le Mans for the first time. Jacky Ickx and Derek Bell teamed up for the endurance classic on four occasions – scoring three victories and being only narrowly beaten on the other occasion.

The winner in 1969, Ickx was experiencing a difficult time in Formula 1 when he shared the number 11 Gulf Mirage GR8-Ford with Bell in 1975. He qualified on pole and they ran in the top two throughout, winning by a lap to hand John Wyer his fourth and final Le Mans victory as a team manager.

Ickx joined Porsche in 1976 and won that year and the next – becoming the fourth driver to that date to win three successive Le Mans 24 Hours. Thoughts of retirement were put aside as Ickx combined with Bell for a second time in 1981 – their Porsche 936/81 running faultlessly despite a lack of pre-race testing to win by 14 laps.

The Porsche 956 was introduced in 1982 and Bell/Ickx led a 1-2-3 for the Rothmans-backed works team. They suffered a litany of problems during the 1983 race but still came within a lap of winning for the third year in a row – Bell bringing their brakeless 956 home in second position behind the sister Schuppan/Holbert/Haywood machine.

A six-time winner at Le Mans, Ickx scored back-to-back successes in the World Sports Car Championship in 1982 and 1983 and Bell (eventually a five-time winner at the Circuit de la Sarthe) took the title twice later in the decade.

STARTS BY MANUFACTURER

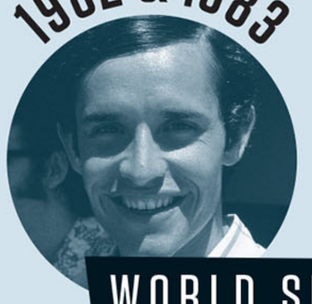
DEREK BELL

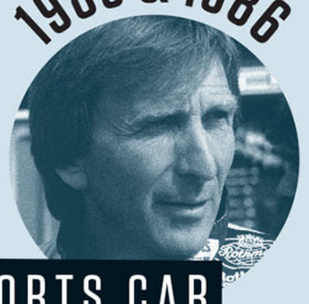
PORSCHE	13
MIRAGE-FORD	4
ALPINE-RENAULT	2
FERRARI	2
McLAREN-BMW	2
COURAGE-PORSCHE	1
FORD	1
KREMER-PORSCHE	1

JACKY ICKX

PORSCHE	9
FERRARI	2
FORD	2
MIRAGE-FORD	2

1982 & 1983 · 1985 & 1986 WORLD SPORTS CAR CHAMPIONS





Jacky Ickx and Derek Bell only won one other World Sports Car Championship round together – the 1982 Brands Hatch 1000Kms on the day that Ickx clinched the title for the first time.

MOST WINS AT LE MANS

DRIVER	STARTS	WINS	WIN RATE
TOM KRISTENSEN	18	9	50%
JACKY ICKX	15	6	40%
FRANK BIELA	10	5	50%
EMANUELE PIRRO	13	5	38.46%
DEREK BELL	26	5	19.23%
OLIVIER GENDEBIEN	8	4	50%
YANNICK DALMAS	12	4	33.33%
HENRI PESCAROLO	33	4	12.12%

WIN RECORDS 100%

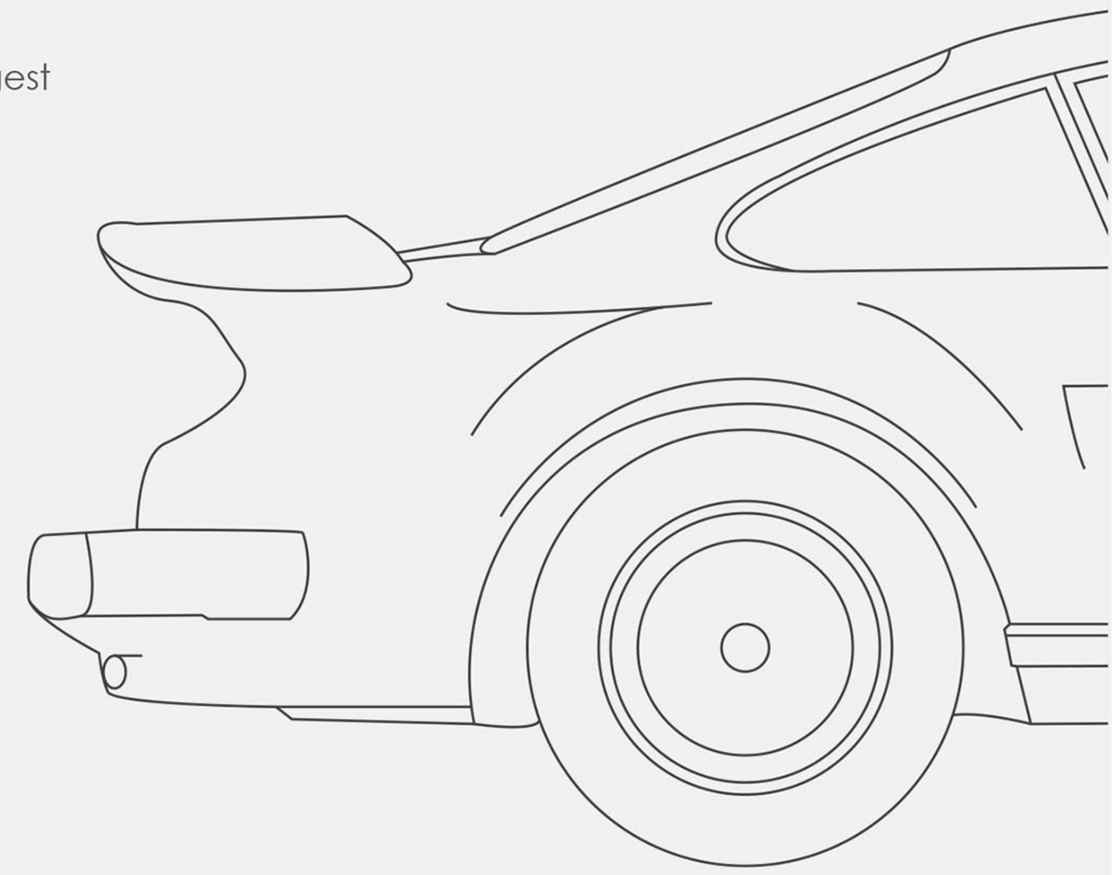
3 WINS Woolf Barnato
2 WINS Jean-Pierre Wimille
1 WIN Tazio Nuvolari, Luis Fontes, Hermann Lang and A J Foyt

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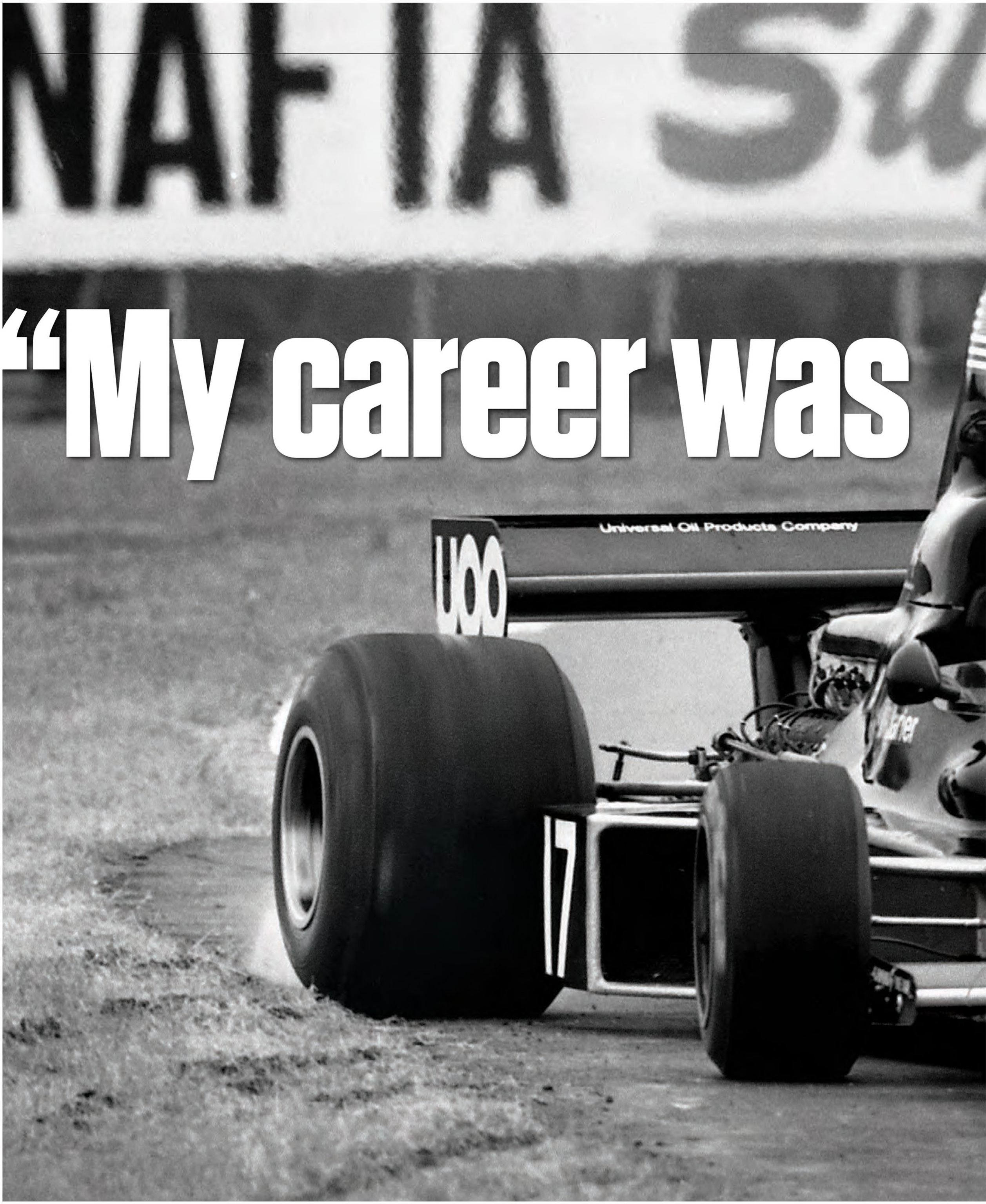
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“My career was

a failure...”

Those are his words rather than ours – and in any case we beg to differ. Jean-Pierre Jarier might not have won any of the 134 Grands Prix he started, but his CV includes world championship victories at the Nordschleife and the full, 8.7-mile Spa. Doesn’t sound much like ‘failure’ to us...

writer SIMON ARRON

DPPI


RODO
BP
FERODO
LUCAS GIRLING
GIRLING
Shell
Shell
Shell
Shell
Shell
Shell
Shell
Shell
Shell
GITANES
MATRA
SIMCA



Jarier scored several wins for Matra during the 1974 World Sports Car Championship, but this MS680 – shared with Beltoise – retired at Le Mans

BUY THIS IMAGE





Jarier dominated the 1973 Euro F2 season and scored his first major victory at Mallory

LAT

EARLY EVENING IS A GOOD TIME TO savour modern Goodwood. The crowd has dispersed so there are few distractions to mask row upon row of competitive elegance. The paddock is almost deserted and most of those remaining are waiting for the same man. Preparation specialist Hall & Hall's crew wants to make sure Jean-Pierre Jarier will be comfortable in his old Shadow DN5, the car he is due to demonstrate 40 years after he raced it, while I simply want to talk to him. But he's running late.

Jarier is based in Monaco nowadays and there are many direct flights to London from nearby Nice, but he chose a one-stop strategy, via Paris, and missed his connection. That seems somehow appropriate for a driver blessed with so much potential, yet for whom – in Formula 1, at least – the stars were never quite correctly aligned. By the time he arrives, chauffeured by Franco-Lebanese dental surgeon Greg Audi, the DN5's present owner, it is pitch dark and freezing but Jarier is ripe with good cheer. After a quick round of handshakes, he launches into a stream-of-consciousness delivery about the DN5's virtues. He seems quite pleased to be reacquainted, but it is now too late – and cold – for paddock interviews, so we repair to his hotel to chat over dinner.

I have three sheets of questions prepared, but most remain unasked as Jarier zig-zags through a sequence of anecdotes about his racing past, pausing occasionally to sip from a glass of red. And before we've even reached the table, the first subject he picks (without any prompting, honestly, despite my oft-expressed fondness for the place) is Mallory Park. That's perhaps not so strange, however, as it was the scene of his first major victory, in the opening round of the 1973 European F2 Championship.

"That day," he says, "I was behind [works March team-mate] Jean-Pierre Beltoise when his engine threw a con-rod. I saw something come through the block like a missile. It went straight through one of the race control tower's windows, covering officials with shards of glass. I don't think they were best pleased, but it was the only engine failure we had all season and I went on to win the race. I can't begin to tell you how happy I felt. It was my first international success…"

❖

BORN ON JULY 10 1946 IN THE PARISIAN suburbs, Jarier's upbringing was scarcely conventional. "My father was press-ganged into joining the German army during World War Two," he says. "It was either that or a bullet in the head. He was eventually stationed at Malmédy, Belgium, close to Spa. He and my mother separated when I was seven and I grew up close to the Bois de Vincennes in Paris, an area well known for its prostitutes. With my father absent and my mother often busy (she ran a small hotel), the prostitutes sometimes used to look after me…"

During his teens, a passion for matters mechanical took hold – motorcycles in particular, although Jim Clark was his racing idol – and he landed a job in a garage. "As luck would have it," he says, "the owner was nephew of racer and constructor René



LAT



With compatriot Beltoise at Watkins Glen in '74. Above left, GP debut at Monza

DPPI

Bonnet and consequently had lots of friends in the sport – including Luigi Chinetti, the Ferrari importer for North America."

After racing his motorcycle a few times, Jarier cut his teeth – like many peers – in the Coupe Renault 8 Gordini. He did well enough to attract support from Parisian furniture magnate Marcel Arnold, who eased his path into single-seaters through Formule France and, subsequently, F3. After finishing third in the 1970 French F3 Championship (behind fellow Jean-Pierres Jaussaud and Cassegrain), he was promoted to the Shell Arnold F2 team and notched up a couple of podium finishes. He also made his F1 debut in 1971, driving friend Hubert Hahne's freely loaned March 701 in the Oulton Park Gold Cup before entering the Italian Grand Prix.

"I needed an international carnet to take the car to Italy," Jarier says, "and an old school friend was very adept at producing counterfeit paperwork. He forged a carnet so that I could take the car to Monza. I had no money, no mechanics and no tyres, but McLaren lent me four Goodyears that were hard enough to last the whole weekend. And although I didn't have any mechanics, Vittorio Brambilla and Jean-Pierre Jaussaud stepped in – so I had two top-line racers as my crew. I couldn't afford a hotel for the weekend, either, so slept in the pits."

He was running at the end, albeit too far back to be classified. "The car was still in one piece," he says, "so I put it back on the trailer to return it to Hubert. I was apparently entitled to some starting money, too. When I went to collect it from the automobile club on Monday morning, I discovered that Max Mosley had claimed it as his, because I was driving a March!"

❖

HE KEPT HIS F2 SEAT IN 1972, BUT THE team was running low on funds and after four races José Dolhem turned up with some sponsorship to usurp him. That's when his former garage contacts came in handy. "I was told to head to Le Mans, meet Luigi Chinetti and drive one of his North American Racing Team Ferrari Daytonas," he says. "I didn't practise on the first evening, but was sent out late in Thursday's session. The car felt really heavy at first and I wasn't sure how anybody could drive it, but I settled down to some ballpark lap times and ended up within a second of Sam Posey, who was sharing the sister car with Tony Adamowicz. When I passed the signalling pit I could see they were waving in an effort to slow me down!"

He and Claude Buchet finished ninth overall, fifth in class, and his performance earned an invitation to drive NART's Ferrari 712M in a couple of Can-Am races. "I don't think any of the Americans wanted to drive it," Jarier says, "because it didn't handle and had no brakes." He finished 10th at Watkins Glen, then fourth at Elkhart Lake – beaten by the Porsche 917/10s of George Follmer and Peter Gregg, with François Cevert's McLaren M8F in between. "The UK press took notice," Jarier says, "and shortly afterwards I received a telex from Robin Herd, asking me to come back to develop and race his F3 cars." It was during this time that the nickname 'Jumper' would first surface, coined by Herd in reaction to his charge's appetite for the Thruxton chicane kerbs. Beyond lay a campaign as a works March-BMW driver in European F2, which takes us back to Mallory Park and the first of that season's eight wins. He would score 78 points, runner-up Jochen Mass just 42.

"There was a fantastic sense of togetherness in '73," he says. "The atmosphere within the team was magical. It ran almost like a military operation: we were totally focused on winning and felt absolutely unbeatable.

"To give you an idea, BMW had lent me a 3.0 CSL to drive to races. Heading to the Nürburgring, I saw a beautiful young woman by the side of the road – and she was trying to hitch a lift. I thought, 'I'm dreaming'. I stopped to pick her up, told her I was heading for Germany, and she said, 'That's OK, I'll come with you'. We got to the track and checked in to my room, but the following day the race team arrived – engineers, mechanics, everyone. They were all there to win the race and I'd

turned up with this fabulous girl, the most attractive you could ever wish to see. I told her she should carry on hitch-hiking, because I needed to be alone. That's where my focus had to be, because racing was absolutely a religion as far as I was concerned. I qualified on pole and took the lead, with Patrick Depailler not far behind, but on the long straight my rear suspension broke. There was no guardrail, I spun through 180 degrees and went off backwards into the undergrowth at about 150mph. I hitched my way to the pits and afterwards thought, 'I let that girl go, like an idiot. To do what? Lose the race, like an idiot'. But the whole March team was absolutely dedicated, under Ray Wardle and Robin Herd, and I was part of that.

"Six months later I visited one of my favourite jazz clubs, in Paris, and saw her again, on another table. She was even more beautiful than I remembered and I concluded that I was probably the biggest idiot in the world."

In the meantime, he carried on winning.

❖

"IN JULY THAT SUMMER, ENZO FERRARI invited me for lunch at the Ristorante Cavallino in Maranello. I arrived, ordered a red wine – he was drinking grappa – and we went on to take a look around Fiorano. I didn't speak much Italian, but he said he knew some beautiful female students who would help me to learn. He wanted me to drive in 1974 and said everything would be fantastic, that I'd win the world championship. I agreed, of course, but a few days beforehand I'd also signed a contract with March. I spoke to Max Mosley, told him that Ferrari wanted me and he said, 'No, you can't go – you're racing for us'. Max would have released me if Ferrari had bought me out, but the old man didn't want to do that and I certainly didn't have any money, so they ended up signing Niki Lauda instead. In one way that screwed me completely, but perhaps I wouldn't have survived if my career had taken a different turn and we wouldn't be having this dinner…"

He also contested 10 of 1973's 15 Grands Prix for March, but ironically – given Ferrari's interest – he didn't subsequently remain on board, being liberated from his commitments when the team initially announced that it was to quit F1. It didn't in the end, but Jarier went off to race for Shadow, recording his first points finish with third place in Monaco, and dovetailed that with a successful season for the title-winning Matra team in the World Sports Car Championship. He shared five victories in an MS670C (four with Jean-Pierre Beltoise, including the Nürburgring 1000Kms, and one with Jacky Ickx).

"Events like that were just wonderful," he says. "At Spa our winning average was almost 240kph (150mph) – and that's with a hairpin! The Masta Kink? We took it at about 195mph… Jean-Pierre thought Spa was by then too dangerous, so Ickx stepped in. I'd never raced at Spa and was a little slower than him in practice, but we lapped at the same pace in the race. He was the King of Spa and I don't think he liked that. I remember once coming back from Brazil with Jacky. My father had been based in Belgium for a time, remember, and held French and Belgian passports – and consequently I did, too. Jacky and I were queuing at immigration and my French passport had expired, so I was using the Belgian one. When he saw that, I said, 'See, you're not the fastest Belgian driver'…"

❖

FOR 1975 JARIER HAD THE TONY Southgate-designed DN5, his Goodwood demonstrator, and initially it proved every bit as fast as it looked, the Frenchman qualifying on pole for the season's opening two Grands Prix in Argentina and Brazil. "We should definitely have challenged for the world title that season," he says. "I dominated every session in Buenos Aires and was comfortably on pole, but the transmission failed on the warm-up lap. In Brazil, the fuel metering unit packed up when I was leading, I had an oil leak when running second to Niki Lauda in Sweden… we lost lots of potentially strong results." Despite so much latent promise, his best result would be fourth in the accident-shortened Spanish GP.

He is complimentary about his team-mates from that period, Peter Revson (killed at Kyalami in 1974, ahead of what would have been only his third race for Shadow) and Tom Pryce. "I always felt Peter was hugely underrated," he says. "He was probably wealthier than the rest of the paddock put together, as the Revlon heir, but he wasn't racing because he was rich – he was doing it because he was extremely talented.

"And I got on well with Tom – a very quick driver and a nice guy. The only thing I didn't like was that he and [team manager] Alan Rees often used to speak to each other in Welsh. My English was pretty good at the time – I'd understand if people were using slang, or even talking to each other in Cockney, but I couldn't do Welsh!"

Jarier quit Shadow at the end of '76, after a disappointing campaign with the DN5B, and went to drive for German industrialist Gunther Schmïd's ATS, initially in a Penske PC4 and in 1978 with the team's own HS1. "I thought Schmid a complete madman," Jarier says.

"THOSE RACES WERE CERTAINLY GOOD FOR MY REPUTATION, BUT BY THAT STAGE ALL THE TOP F1 DRIVES HAD GONE"



Montréal 1978: Jarier dominated from pole… until his brakes faded

DPPI

"He had a real ego problem. Those Penskes were fantastic cars, but he kept modifying them and making them slower. At Dijon in 1977, we had only one set of soft tyres for qualifying. In that situation the mechanics from most teams would cool the tyres with water after one run, so that they might be used again. At ATS, the mechanics tried to do the same with neat petrol, which of course spilled onto the hot front discs and ignited…"

He twice split with ATS in 1978 after arguments with Schmïd, the second time for good, and at the end of the year he was recruited by Lotus to replace the late Ronnie Peterson, as team-mate to confirmed world champion Mario Andretti.

"I paid my own air fare to America, made my way to the Glen Motor Inn – where all the drivers were staying, as if they were part of the same rugby team – and sat in the car for the first time the following morning," he says. "We hadn't done a seat fitting and I was very uncomfortable." Starting eighth, he dropped back after pitting with a puncture then stormed through to third before running out of fuel. His fastest lap was a 1min 39.557sec, 1.5sec clear of the rest. In Canada he streaked away from pole and built up a huge lead until pitting with fading brakes, the consequence of a leaking hose. People remember that day for Gilles Villeneuve's first F1 victory, but tend to forget the dominant cameo that went before.

"PAUL NEWMAN OFFERED ME A PLACE IN HIS CAN-AM TEAM AND I NEARLY SIGNED..."

"Those races were certainly good for my reputation," Jarier says, "but by that stage all the top F1 drives for the following season had gone. The only free seat was at Tyrrell. Paul Newman offered me a place in his Can-Am team, as lead driver, and I very nearly signed. I ended up with Tyrrell, though, at a time when it had no sponsor. That's just how things seemed to go. I think my career was a failure..."

There would subsequently be interest from Frank Williams, when his two drivers – Alan Jones and Carlos Reutemann – were both contemplating retirement. By then Jarier was tied up at the back of the grid with Osella and the timing to make an escape was never quite right. He was available when Williams thought it wouldn't need him, but not when it did.



Rolling back the years: Jarier reacquainted with the Shadow DN5 at Goodwood in March





JAKOB EBREY

The final straw with Osella came at Las Vegas in 1982, when he had a sizeable accident after losing a front wheel during practice – a slight variation on a theme, as he'd had a similar experience not long before when a rear wheel detached at Monza.

"Soon afterwards," he says, "I bumped into Guy Ligier, who suggested I should drive for him in 1983. He offered me three million francs – a lot of money at the time (circa £300,000), although nothing by today's standards. I agreed, then went back to my hotel and bumped into an American in the lift. He was a regular gambler and asked me to play cards for him that night. I told him I wasn't lucky – even if I had almost been killed that afternoon – but he insisted: it was his money, but we'd split any winnings 50/50. I agreed to play for five minutes, won $1500, then $2000, $2500, $3000 and decided to stop. I was tired, needed a shower, took my $1500 and left. I headed towards my room and met a Swiss lady who asked if she could come with me. I'd survived the accident, agreed a deal with Ligier, won some money at cards and now this… I'd never known a sequence of events quite like it."

❖

HE DID ONE SEASON WITH LIGIER, BUT the team's DFV was no match for the growing armada of turbos, and South Africa 1983 would be his final GP. Thereafter he competed in sports and touring cars, enjoying his racing and flirting with success from time to time (not least when sharing a Porsche 911 GT2 with Bob Wollek in the early 1990s). He also assisted Robert De Niro during car chase scenes in the movie *Ronin*. "It was a right-hand-drive BMW M5. He sat in the front passenger seat twirling a false steering wheel while I was on the other side, doing the hard work."

Whichever aspect of sport – or life – he's discussing, his delivery is infectious, his tone equal parts passion and affection. "I still watch racing," he says, "particularly MotoGP. But F1? I follow some Grands Prix, at the circuits I like, but if it becomes a race only for manufacturers, which is what Bernie seems to want, with Mercedes winning all the time…" Ⓜ

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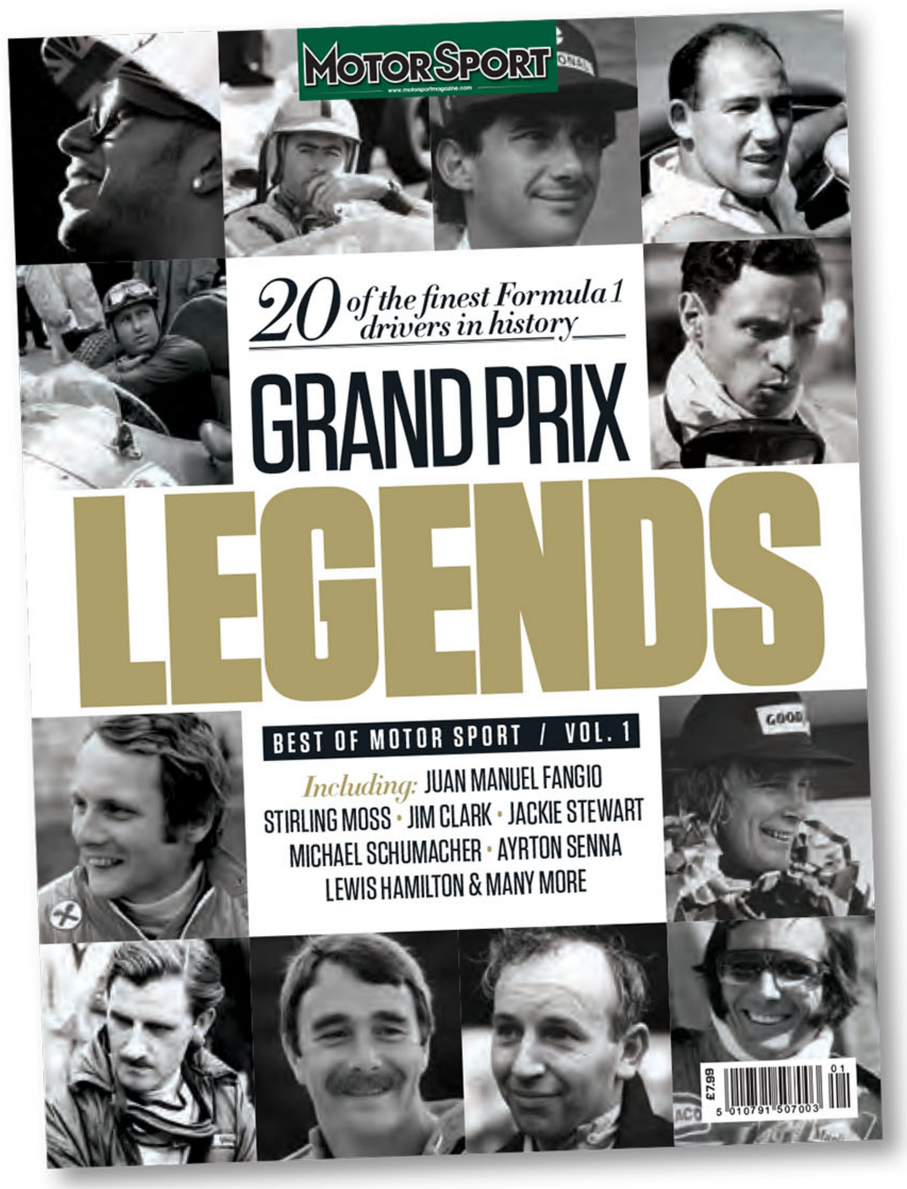
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EVENTS
OF THE MONTH

WEC SILVERSTONE 6 HOURS ❖ THRUXTON EASTER REVIVAL



The winning Audi stalks the Lieb/Jani/Dumas Porsche at the height of their duel

ADRENALMEDIA

"THE NIMBLER AUDI'S SUPERIOR BRAKING AND DOWNFORCE ALLOWED IT TO PASS IN PLACES IT REALLY SHOULDN'T. IT WAS MINI COOPER AGAINST FORD FALCON"

WEC Silverstone 6 Hours

AUDI'S MARCEL FÄSSLER, BENOIT TRÉLUYER and André Lotterer drew first blood in the 2015 World Endurance Championship, ending Audi's four-race winless streak during a thrilling Silverstone Six Hours.

They headed home the Porsche of Neel Jani, Marc Lieb and Romain Dumas and the Toyota of Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Kazuki Nakajima.

Porsche dominated qualifying, with Mark Webber and Brendon Hartley combining to take the first pole of the year ahead of their stable-mates. The Aussie made a perfect getaway on Sunday, while gearshift problems dropped Tréluyer into the GT pack.

As Webber built a sizeable lead over Dumas, the much-improved Audis harried the Toyotas. One of the Japanese cars was effectively removed from contention when Alex Wurz was stranded in the pits as the track went back to green

following a full-course yellow. With just one Toyota to chase, Tréluyer and team-mate Lucas di Grassi set a blistering pace to close on third-placed Buemi.

It was yellow to green that scuppered Toyota again when Tréluyer made an opportunistic move around the outside of a napping Buemi at Becketts. Di Grassi followed him through a few corners later at Vale and the Audis, after their own hairy duel, locked crosshairs onto the 919s. For Toyota, it was then about strategy. As the Audis began reeling in the leading Porsches, Webber disappeared into the garage and out of the race with a terminal drivetrain problem.

It will be no consolation to Webber, Hartley and Timo Bernhard that their



Webber/Hartley/ Bernhard led before retiring. Below left, Davidson/Nakajima /Buemi shared third





Le Mans-style start ceremony is now WEC norm. Right, three different marques on the podium



ADRENALMEDIA, AUDI & LAT



Winning TVR of Cox/Gardiner leads Guards GT field away. Above, Tim Davies scored HTCC double



SIMON ARRON & JEFF BLOXHAM

Thruxton Easter Revival

THE PADDOCK LOOKED RAMMED, EVEN IF some of the grid sizes didn't reflect as much, the mood was mostly convivial and any event at Thruxton is nowadays cause for celebration. The flowing Hampshire circuit is limited to just 12 competitive days per annum – six racing weekends, as its calendar is currently structured – and the Easter Revival set the ball rolling on April 4/5.

Introduced to great acclaim in 2013, the Historic Sports Car Club-run event has since been stripped of two halo events. The Martini Trophy fell from the roster last season and the Super Touring Car Trophy was absent this time around, so the meeting felt more like a standard HSCC clubbie (although there's nothing wrong with that, for it's a fine species). One or two entries were sparse, but some of the racing was customarily exquisite.

Ben Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20) won both Historic FF1600 races comfortably enough, thus denying himself an opportunity to keep an eye on the ferocious warfare beyond his slipstream. Max Bartell got the better of Tiff Needell in race one, during which neophyte Richard Mitchell (no relation to the winner) recovered from a spin to take fifth. Next time out, Mitchell R belied his inexperience to finish ahead of Bartell, Needell and Simon Toyne after a splendid battle. If ever you wanted to distil motor racing's true essence, this was it.

Things commenced with similar vigour in the opening FF2000 race, although Tom Smith (Royale RP27) won after Callum Grant and Andrew Park lost time with spins (Grant later parting company with his rear wing, although



G-Drive's Ligiers dominated all weekend in the LMP2 class, Rusinov/Bird/Canal beating pole-sitting team-mates Derani/Yacaman/Gonzalez by a full lap

retirement paved the way for one of the most memorable victory scraps in recent sports car history. Fässler relieved Tréluyer, Jani likewise Lieb, and they delighted the bumper crowd by swapping places – but no paint – almost every lap. The nimbler Audi's superior braking and downforce allowed it to pass in places it really shouldn't, and Porsche's imposing grunt dragged it back into the lead on anything resembling a straight. It was Mini Cooper against Ford Falcon. Utterly scintillating and, when the second Audi joined the battle to unlap itself, even more spectacular.

If it was Fässler and Jani who stole the headlines, it was Lotterer who stole the race for Audi and reasserted his position as the world's best endurance racer. He did in an incredible triple stint what Fässler couldn't: break the Porsche shackles. He was as consistent and strong as the Silverstone wind.

When he handed over to Fässler it appeared an unassailable lead, despite still needing a splash and dash. But a late stop-and-go with barely 15 minutes to go, for using too much of the expansive Silverstone run-off, ensured the fittingly close finish the race deserved. Jani closed to within five seconds at the flag and Buemi to within 15.

With Audi more consistent in terms of race pace, Porsche blindingly fast while economical (saving a pit stop on its rivals) and Toyota, as Davidson admitted, with some work to do, they are more than capable of entertaining while we await Nissan.

With LMP1 breathless, it was easy to miss a fascinating GTE Pro battle. The trio of Aston Martins that secured a 1-2-3 in qualifying lost out during full-course yellows, leaving Ferrari and Porsche to do battle. James Calado and Davide Rigon threatened triple world champion team-mates Toni Vilander and Gianmaria Bruni, but the class of the latter pairing shone through. The Porsche of Richard Lietz and Michael Christensen split the Ferraris late on.
Jack Phillips



Bruni and Wilander beat off Aston and Porsche challenges to win GTE Pro. Left, Aston took GTE Am honours thanks to Lamy/Dalla Lana/Lauda



Needell leads Bartell, Buckton, rookie Mitchell and Toyne during FF1600 scrap for second. Mitchell emerged on top

he still finished fourth). Race two was more straightforward, with Grant winning from Smith.

Tim Davies (Lotus Cortina) dominated both Historic Touring Car Championship races, from Peter Halford (Mustang) and David Tomlin (Cortina). Jonathan Lewis took fourth in the opener at the wheel of a newly built Mini Cooper (which used to be a midwife's road car), but lost third in race two when its rotor arm snapped. Dan Wray and Nigel Cox escaped without serious injury after inverting their Cortinas in practice and race one respectively: sadly, the same could not be said of their cars.

The first of two 40-minute Guards Trophy races (for GTs) produced one of the weekend's tightest finishes. Dan Cox (TVR Griffith) established an early lead, but Robert Bremner (AC Cobra) closed in during the race's final phase – after Mike Gardiner replaced Cox at the helm – and was less than half a second adrift at the flag.

Circuit manager Bill Coombs received a last-minute call-up to share Chris Drake's McLaren M1B, which he'd never previously driven, in the Guards Trophy for sports-racing cars. The pair waltzed to victory, but theirs was an invitational entry and Stuart/George Tizzard (Lenham Spider) were best of the Guards-eligible crews, from a phalanx of Chevron B8s headed by James Schryver.

Michael Lyons (Hesketh 308) won the notionally headline Derek Bell Trophy races, although Richard Evans (March 79B) and Mark Charteris (Mallock U2 Mk20/21) – second and third in both, ahead of much more powerful machinery – were the stars. On Saturday Charteris lost third gear and significant momentum, but not his position. He also won the Classic Clubmans race by about a fortnight, closest rival Michael Mallock spinning back to an eventual second after the pair touched early on. The race was curtailed prematurely after third-placed Mike Lane crashed his Mallock Mk20B heavily at Church: Lane was detained overnight in hospital, but released the following morning. The essential delicacy of the rescue operation left insufficient time to permit running of the last scheduled race, for Historic Road Sports.
Simon Arron

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THE MOTOR SPORT MONTH

IN PICTURES



LAT

APRIL 18, 2015

A flying start...

SAKHIR CIRCUIT, BAHRAIN

McLaren might be having trouble with its MP4-30, but one of its juniors began his year on a successful note. GP2 racer Stoffel Vandoorne leads Alex Lynn, Norman Nato and Raffaele Marciello en route to winning the opening race of the season. The Belgian came through from eighth on the grid to finish second in the following day's GP2 sprint.

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ON THE ROAD WITH

SIMON ARRON



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The winning Howard/Adam Aston leads the Ferrari of Eastwood/Carroll early in the second Oulton GT race

LAT

SLOW IN, FAST OUT

Oulton Park, March 28 & April 6: From 2CV to GT3, opposite ends of the performance spectrum showcased on successive weekends

"TEA OR COFFEE SIR? It's included in the price of your breakfast…" As welcomes to a fresh Oulton Park season go, that has to be among the warmest. There was a time when I seldom missed any event at the circuit closest to my childhood home, but professional obligations breed distance. It was a great privilege to spend 20 seasons covering Formula 3000 – and more than a decade as a full-time member of F1's itinerant society – but such commitments can isolate you from other of life's better things.

This year, for the first time since the early 1980s, I was free to attend the opening two meetings of an Oulton campaign. It involved quick-fire 450-mile return trips just nine days apart, but who wouldn't want to do that?

The curtain-raiser was more than just a slight throwback. In a corner of the paddock closest to the media parking meadow, the Citroën 2CV community was busy fettling lots of cars with hardly a straight panel between them – redolent of the Renault 5TS Championship of bygone years.

Some people are sniffy about the

SIMON ARRON

concept of 2CV racing, but few other categories generate quite so much regular, six-abreast competition. And while they might be a tad slow (Pete Sparrow conjured fastest lap of the day, his 2min 31.760sec equating to a 63.85mph average), they can also bite. The first race was interrupted for more than an hour after a first-corner pile-up and an air ambulance had to be summoned to ferry Sammie Fritchley to hospital. Her injuries proved not to be serious, but it's always a most uncomfortable feeling when a race track falls quiet and the silence is broken only by the whirr of incoming rotor blades.

The balance of the programme featured Legends, several strains of Caterham and the bewilderingly diverse CNC Heads Sports & Saloon Championship, involving everything from Saker GTs and Minis to a Citroën Xsara (about as far removed as you can possibly be, then, from the contemporary one-make stranglehold).



A helping push for Nick Clarke, above. John Mickel (below) won all three Legends races by a tiny margin. Bottom, Matt Sparrow leads the charge of the light brigade



The racing? That was uniformly close. John Mickel won all three Legends events, which implies dominance, but his victory margins were respectively 0.222, 0.119 and 0.166sec…

❖

LITTLE MORE THAN A WEEK later, a pleasing assembly of open trailers had dispersed to make way for the professional pantechnicons of the British GT Championship, to my mind the most spectacular high-profile series in the land. A little variety has been lost – there were no Audis or Nissan GT-Rs in the field at Oulton – but the 34-car field incorporated cars from Aston Martin, BMW, McLaren, Porsche, Ferrari, Mercedes, Lotus, Ginetta and Toyota, all of which look and sound the part. Competition was fierce, no matter whether a pro or an amateur was at the helm, the twin 60-minute race format kept interest alive and the performance split between GT3 and GT4 categories brought astute traffic management into play – proper endurance racing, easily digested.

But (and it's a sizeable 'but') you had to wonder about some of the driving. The opening race was one of the most chaotic I've seen in years – and McLaren racer Salih Yoluc was implicated in much of the pandemonium. On the first racing lap of the day, the Turk was involved in a collision that left three cars beached in the Cascades gravel. They were retrieved under the safety car and



Healthily diverse GT pack prepares for rolling start. Below, Salih Yoluc's day began badly... and got worse

LAT

he resumed three laps in arrears, shortly after which he was running just ahead of a multi-car lead battle. In the circumstances he should have yielded and driven his own race, but he persisted in trying to compete with the front-runners – and the queue behind grew steadily. He was a couple of seconds from the leaders' true pace, didn't always look wholly in control and finally outbraked himself at Hislops. Having cut across the grass, he rejoined right in front of the second-placed Gary Eastwood/Adam Carroll Ferrari – while travelling much more slowly. His actions triggered a chain-reaction collision that caused a fair bit of damage. Afterwards, the car was excluded from the balance of the meeting for driving that the stewards deemed "incompatible with safety". Race officials often stand accused of doing too little, but they got this one right (although 'balance of the season' might have been a more suitable cooling-off period). One experienced observer likened Yoluc's track etiquette to the kind of thing you might see during a computer game…

Eastwood and Carroll (one of many a fine racer who slipped through the single-seater net for reasons pertaining to cash rather than ability) won on the road, but were subsequently relegated to second. The rules mandate a minimum pitstop time and entrant FF Corse was a touch too brisk with its driver change: Carroll had to dawdle down the pit road to remain within the window, but in so doing impeded the Liam Griffin/Rory Butcher Aston Martin Vantage, which was later promoted to first place.

Andrew Howard and Jonny Adam completed an Aston double in the



ALL IMAGES SIMON ARRON UNLESS STATED



second race, partial compensation for the fact that they'd been eliminated from the first in the slipstream of Mr Yoluc's antics.

Will Palmer and Harrison Newey – sons, both, of F1 fathers – had finished first and second in Saturday's opening BRDC F4 race, while Chris Mealin and Jordan Albert took a win apiece on Monday. The racing was admirably close, but no more so than that at the front of the FF1600 SuperSeries, which suffered only from a poor field (odd, when there are so many cars around and this was a chance to compete in front of a sizeable crowd at a high-profile meeting).

Now in its third season, the BRDC F4 Championship has been a fine initiative... but there's still plenty of life in its spiritual forebear.



F4 tussle between Chris Mealin and Ciaran Haggerty



Keenan Armstrong leads Open 600 winner Sean Montgomery

THE RIGHT PRYCE

Brands Hatch, March 15: A reminder of how the motor racing landscape has changed since the 1970s...

GIVE OR TAKE A DAY, IT WAS 40 YEARS since Tom Pryce had been in action at Brands Hatch, coaxing his Shadow DN5 to a comfortable victory in the Race of Champions – the Welshman's only Formula 1 success in an all-too-fleet career.

It was a non-championship event, of course, and Ferrari was absent, but the field was decent, with 20 cars on the grid (four of them F5000 spec, admittedly) and Maurizio Flammini's Williams in the paddock, sidelined by a practice mishap. John Watson and Ronnie Peterson followed Pryce home, with Jacky Ickx fourth ahead of defending world champion Emerson Fittipaldi. Imagine that, a quality F1 field marauding through Kent in mid-March...

Nowadays the UK's car racing season tends to be a week away from ignition at this stage, but the motorcycle racing community tends to be unfazed by potential inclemency and this NG Road Racing event was Brands Hatch's second bike clubbie of the campaign. The weather was appropriately foul, the track neither wet not dry but just horribly greasy (so much so that one or two riders, rarely the most shrinking of violets, opted not to race), and there were arguably more competitors than spectators. It mattered not. There was still a nice buzz around the place, a sense of spring gradually reawakening to a predominantly two-stroke soundtrack. Given the conditions, the racing was admirably vigorous – and all credit to Yamaha 250 rider Darrell Higgins, who produced what will surely be one of the saves of the season by coming off his bike but somehow keeping everything upright.

Before travelling to Brands I'd risen early to watch F1 cars in action as the 2015 world championship commenced, 12,000 miles distant. There were 15 cars on the grid, with five sidelined in the paddock through technical, physical and financial mishaps.

Progress? Ⓜ





Pryce and Scheckter head the RoC grid at Brands. Right, Darrell Higgins pulls off a save 40 years later

LAT





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HISTORIC SCENE WITH

GORDON CRUICKSHANK



One wheel in the past: searching out what's new in the old car world

www.motorsportmagazine.com/author/gordon-cruickshank



Motor Sport Trophy winner Julian Grimwade in his Norris Special Frazer Nash

PETER McFADYEN

UP FOR THE CUP

Despite grappling with a new machine, Julian Grimwade came away with the *Motor Sport* Trophy

"THERE'S SO MUCH I'd love to do, but you can't do it all!" So says Julian Grimwade, apparently forgetting that last year he contested two dozen events in one car, netting him the Frazer Nash Race Trophy, the Parker Cup and – most prestigious of all, naturally – the *Motor Sport* Brooklands Memorial Trophy. And he only began racing in 2010.

He's been on the vintage scene for years, Julian tells me, building up a 1927 Bentley 4½ which has given much pleasure, but a few years back he had a moment of revelation.

"I used to organise big events for firms and after retiring in 2006 I missed the excitement. Then in 2010 I was invited to do the Cresta Run and I came away from that buzzing with adrenaline, thinking 'this is what's missing!' I used to watch the racing, but after that I thought, 'If I don't start now I'll never do it'."

He began with a Lagonda Rapier, "and I didn't know what I was doing. I probably should have started in sports cars". But it fell into place and he switched to a faster Rapier before deciding he wanted more power.

GORDON CRUICKSHANK



Grimwade at Prescott hillclimb, practising the new techniques a chain-drive 'Nash requires

PETER McFADYEN

"I prefer bigger engines – higher torque and fewer revs." What he chose was about the fastest vintage vehicle he could have found – the Norris Special Frazer Nash with which James Baxter has pulled off so many wins. It's a real Brooklands car, a 1934 'Nash that raced at the Track in period with an unreliable Gough engine, though since 1946 it has boasted 3.5 litres of Alvis Speed 25 muscle, installed by the Norris brothers. (It's especially good to see the award go to a car that actually raced at Brooklands.) It has worn various bodies, but has carried its present compact square-shouldered one-man cladding since the 1960s, when Guy Smith took it on. He raced it for years, adding to an amazing tally that Julian shows me – 399 events when we spoke, and in Baxter's fearless hands, 50 FTDs. In fact it currently holds about every pre-war VSCC record going.

It came with a big box of records and photos, and though it's well documented Julian is researching it further.

"It was a semi-team car, and it's been continuously raced since new. It's a bit intimidating buying a car with this reputation," he adds wryly. "I'd never driven a 'Nash so it was a big learning curve, and this is the quickest thing I've ever raced; I got it at Christmas and was out at the Spring Start where I broke a chain, but by our third outing things were going better."

The infamous 'Nash solid rear axle called for some new techniques. "Either one or both wheels are slipping in any corner. Some people slide them all the time, but I don't think that's the quickest way so I stick to more conventional lines," says Julian. It must work, as 2014 brought him a run of class wins and the odd overall victory in sprints, hillclimbs and races, garnished by those trophies. "It's okay for the first year… And having the *Motor Sport* Trophy is fantastic – the names that are on it!"

It was a close-run thing: Nick Topliss scored the same 78 points as Julian, with Morgan Super Aero pilot Duncan Woods a bare two points behind that, but on a count-back of best placings Julian got the nod. And to confirm the club's aura of friendly rivalry, during last season Julian shared Topliss' ERA R4A on the hills.

Grimwade works on the Norris himself, saying he has always played with cars, even building a Kougar kit, and enthuses about the VSCC atmosphere. "I had to learn about chain transmission in a hurry, but the club is fantastic – even your biggest competitor will help." He has his personal rivalries, of course. "Two guys I've been chasing for years – Pete Candy and Rob Compton in their Rileys. This car should be quick enough to get me there. And Eddie Gibbs's single-seater 'Nash is quicker at the moment – but we'll have to see what happens…"

He reckons he needs to calm down for this season and do fewer events, and isn't entirely happy with the club's new class divisions. "I'm in Set 2 which puts me up against full racers." But, he goes on philosophically, "It doesn't matter where you are in the field, you'll find someone to race against. Especially on the short, twisty circuits I like; Mallory is good because you can see everyone all the time, and Cadwell is a hoot in this thing."



Not a bad haul for the first year with the car! Below, powering to third overall at Loton

He hasn't regretted dropping straight into old cars. "Vintage racing is so cost-effective. Once the Lagonda was right I only paid for petrol and entry fees. The cars feel fast and look fast, everyone talks, drivers are happy to chat to spectators. Some entrants have money, some are on a shoestring but everyone mixes in together."

It's not all VSCC; he did the Etretat hillclimb in France last year, and he took the Lagonda to Angoulême ("Madness! But the 'Nash would be fantastic there.")

And yes, he does drive the Norris on the road sometimes, "But it attracts attention. And there's nowhere to put your sandwiches." So for Le Mans Classic naturally it's the Bentley, a rare replica of the 1928 bobtail team cars. "That's a keeper. I aim to drive her on her 100th birthday."

Meanwhile there's the challenge of extracting a fraction more from the Norris. "I'm down to 1min 14sec on Silverstone Club circuit, but when you're on the limit that last few per cent is really hard." By the time this appears Julian will have had a go looking for those few per cent at VSCC Spring Start – and despite his protestations, he'll probably have fitted in another half-dozen events too.



PETER McFADYEN

VETERANS HEAD NORTH

End to End challenge planned for pre-1919 vehicles

IF YOU'VE NEVER YET MADE IT TO JOHN O'Groats (a disappointing spot, and I say that although my roots are close to there), you're not in a hurry to arrive, and you have a veteran vehicle, you might want to sign up for the Bugatti OC's planned Veteran End-to-End challenge in June 2016.

The 10-day 1100-mile Lands End-John O'Groats trip offers a scenic route on roads suitable for veterans, in this case cars or motorbikes up to 1918, avoiding big towns. It's not a competition, except between car, crew and conditions, and the route avoids the traditional A9 – and thus the fearsome Berriedale Brae that used to terrify me as a lad in our family campervan... *www.lejoghistorique.co.uk*



Lovely Model T is an early entry on end-to-end challenge

INTO THE WOOD

London classic car gathering hits the street once more

ONCE AGAIN ST JOHN'S WOOD in London will echo to petrol power for the Motoring Extravaganza on Sunday June 21. Starring a Porsche 917 driven by Steve McQueen for the *Le Mans* film and the Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar D-type we featured last year, the day brings together vintage Bentleys, current supercars and classics of all ages in between, surrounded by the High Street's restaurants and shops plus a funfair to amuse the children. It runs from 11-5pm, and the proceeds go to charity.



Historic Marathon show will celebrate both 1960s events and the sport's 1988 rebirth

MARATHON REUNION

New rally show brings endurance cars and crews to Gaydon

IT'S A SAD REFLECTION THAT ENDURANCE rally promoter Philip Young will not be at the Historic Marathon Rally show on May 31, when those long-distance events of the 1960s and '70s will be celebrated.

Back then events such as London-Sydney and London-Mexico were headline news, with famous faces keen to subject themselves to weeks of gruelling driving, and the show will recall their exploits by bringing together drivers, navigators and cars which tackled these trans-continental contests. Displays and parades of period cars, crew reunions and interviews and Q&A sessions will entertain the public at this free show, which will also celebrate the early Pirelli Historic Marathons which Young started in 1988. Visit www.historicmarathonrallyshow.com for details.



At the same time you can see a selection from the enormous 543-strong Hull collection which Jaguar bought last year, despite the closure of its own museum at Browns Lane. About 140 of the cars, originally all housed in one vast industrial shed (below), were Jaguars. While some of those are now in use with the company's Heritage Experience days, four have been added to the firm's display at Gaydon, including a Coombs-modified E and an SS Airline saloon. In addition Jaguar has loaned another dozen British flag-wavers from the Hull cars, including a Bentley R-type Continental, a Graber-bodied Alvis, Sunbeam Alpine and an impressive woodie-bodied Allard P2 estate. Along with the JDHT Jaguar XJ13 and the 1988 Le Mans-winning XJR-9 already there, it's yet more reason to revisit this busy museum. Ⓜ



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FROM THE ARCHIVES WITH

DOUG NYE



Our eminent historian dips into the past to uncover the fascinating, quirky and curious



Twelve hours to go but the Siffert/ Herrmann 907 has the result in hand

LAT

FILLER UP, MISTER...

A highly original Porsche proves that its beauty survives – deep beneath a layer of body filler

IN 1968, THE SEBRING 12 Hours was dominated by Porsche's little 907 coupés such as those driven by Jo Siffert/Hans Herrmann and Vic Elford/Jochen Neerpasch, which cruised home 1-2. The works team's winning 2.2-litre flat-8 907 is recorded as chassis '024'. These cars are very rare today – most of them having seemingly been recycled into 3-litre 908s (despite the factory's protestations to the contrary) – but the Sebring-winning '024' has indeed survived, being a recent addition to the magnificent Collier Collection in Naples, Florida.

Miles Collier has run an essentially biennial Connoisseurship Symposium there since 2000, which (I am delighted to say) he has invited me to co-present since its inception. This year Porsche 907 '024' was one of the star cars under discussion. It was sold directly from Porsche to Jaime 'Jimmy' Ortiz-Patino – Franco-Spanish son of the Bolivian tin billionaire Simon Patino. Jimmy's 907 was to be campaigned as a private entry by his godson, Dominique Martin under their Team Zitro name – 'Ortiz' backwards – and after its retirement from racing it was retained by the family.

At some stage in the 1970s they

entrusted it to Swiss specialist Franco Sbarro for conversion into a road car. For reasons best known to himself, the former Scuderia Filipinetti mechanic opted to stiffen its film-thin glassfibre bodywork by larding it overall with filler. This went on fully a quarter-inch thick (and more), covering every surface apart from the screens and door windows, while internally the 907's originally translucent natural-GRP body panels were oversprayed in sticky black paint.

For some 40 years '024' survived in its one-family ownership within this eggshell cocoon of larded-on pug. Despite Sbarro's attentions, it was hardly used as a road car and thankfully was stored in plainly excellent conditions, but the covering's weight was so extreme it virtually collapsed the suspension onto its bump stops. When it was finally sold to Collier last year, another 907 – Antonio Nicodemi's '030' – also found a new owner after more than 40 years in a similar single ownership, though without 'benefit' of a Sbarro plastering...

Through the winter months into this year, the Collier restoration team – led by Miles himself – has spent literally hundreds of man hours carefully cracking open this amazing Swiss Easter egg.

The filler had been applied without first removing the Porsche paintwork, so happily it had not taken too firm a grasp on the car's underlying 4-5mm thick GRP skin. Eventually a pug removal plan evolved in which a burr was used in an electric drill to rout out parallel furrows in the filler, down to original skin level. With the car's outer surface striped with these grooves, a super-sharp wood chisel was then wielded to chip out the intervening filler strips. With care – and a lot of manual labour – they proved to crack off beautifully.

The black spray paint obscuring the panels' original inner finish was more difficult to remove, various solvents and strippers being tried until the original beige-yellow of 1967-68 GRP finally resurfaced. When we used to see the Porsche factory team cars being race-prepared, the whippy, willowy, flapping flexibility of the super-thin bodywork always impressed, and sunlight would glow straight through it. Porsche's priority was plain. Weight-saving for sheer performance was all-important. Cosmetic finish was utterly irrelevant.

And after all the Collier crew's work on 907 '024', how much filler did they remove? Well, as I write they have chipped away more than 200lbs, with maybe 30-40lbs more to come. No less. Now, after this cosmetic surgery-cum-crash diet, '024' is virtually back to its perfectly original Sebring-winning form.



LAT



GP LIBRARY

Somewhere under this there's a 907... Collier team chips away at Sebring winner to find original paintwork, as seen above

FORMULA 1 REACHES A DEAD-END

Our man Nye solves an exhausting puzzle in the Goodwood paddock

AT THE GOODWOOD '73' MEMBERS' meeting in March, apart from shivering in the bitter cold despite early-spring sunshine, I spent quite a bit of time studying the 2013 Mercedes-Benz W04 that Anthony Davidson was to demonstrate. Early that Saturday morning the car was sitting pretty much unattended. Its left-hand sidepod cowling had been removed, exposing all the beautifully packaged high-tech that makes modern

HAVE YOU GOT A LIGHT, MATE?

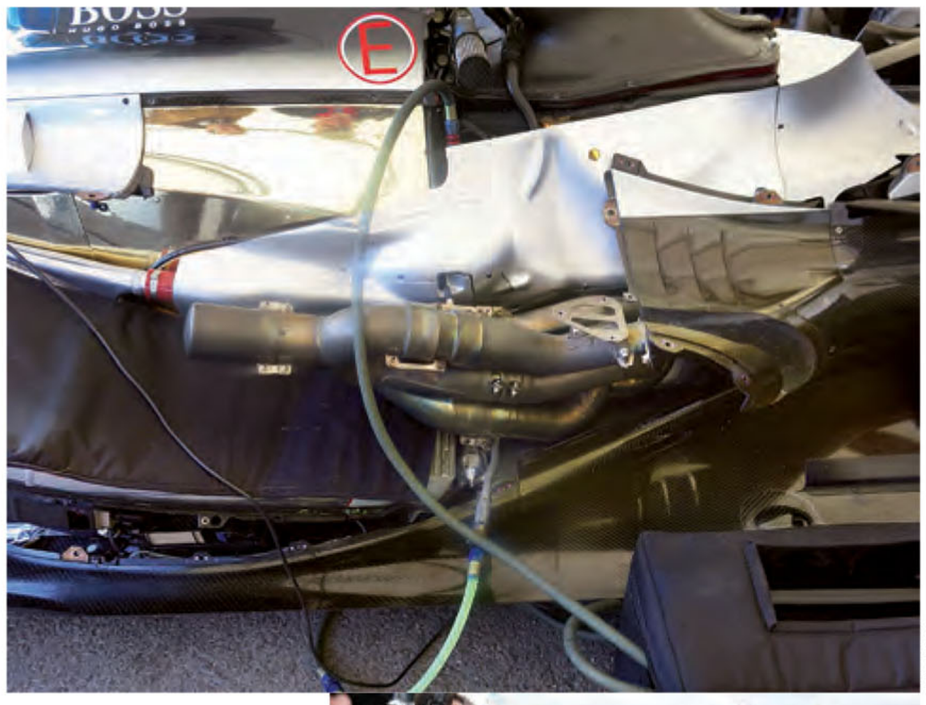
You don't normally need a cigarette lighter to start a car – unless you drive one of these

WE RAN A SELECTION OF EARLY 'brass headlamp' era pre-WW1 cars at the Symposium, the earliest being an incredibly original 1890s Panhard et Levassor with Daimler V-twin engine on hot-tube ignition.

It was on February 28, 1896 that Señor Dromceus of Antequera in the Spanish province of Málaga took delivery of this car.

British specialist restorer Eddie Berrisford demonstrated its start-up procedure. Amid some ceremony, he opened the doors on the front-mounted brass hot-tube ignition chest. Pinching ourselves to remember that this was the frontier technology of its era, we watched as he tweaked, turned, tapped and double-checked, before applying a cigarette lighter.

With a discreet wheeze of hot air the de-natured alcohol, or meths, ignited in the small cup at the base of each ignition hot tube.



GP LIBRARY



LAT

Grand Prix appendix, above: dead-end chamber smooths exhaust flow to boost downforce on Mercedes W04, right

major-league racing cars such compellingly fascinating machines.

I was gawping at its ancillary fixtures and fittings, its cabling runs, piping and electrickery when I got as far back as its 2.4-litre naturally aspirated V8 engine. Its exhaust system was fascinating. There is precious little space on each side of the engine bay, so exhaust system packaging had plainly given the design team – headed by Aldo Costa, Bob Bell and Geoff Willis – some sizeable headaches.

The primary pipes are all radical curves, first sweeping far forward before hairpinning down and round and back beneath themselves towards the underfloor tail-pipes. But what really intrigued me was what looks rather like a human appendix, projecting forward as a dead-end, capped-off, cul-de-sac. And just like a human appendix, opinion was divided on what on earth it could be for...

I thought at first it must have been some capped-off failed experiment, or maybe a stand-by test-car exhaust gas take-off for some obscure purpose. But this was a no-nonsense F1 racing engine, so what was this 'appendix' malarkey all about?

Finally, I was advised that this pipework dead-end was in fact a resonance chamber, adopted to smooth the individual pressure pulses generated by the 18,000rpm V8 engine. It was to provide more consistent exhaust flow from the tail pipes beneath the car's rear diffuser surface. I believe that swirl vanes were also placed within the tail pipes to put some leg-spin on the resonance-smoothed gas flow, and all to provide a higher-energy vortex spinning away into the car's slipstream from the tailpipes exiting on each side of the diffuser.

So why would they want to generate such vortices? To provide an effective air curtain, preventing outside ambient air from spilling in and reducing the low-pressure effect – the suck – generated between the diffuser's working underside and the track surface. In effect these vortices did the job that the solid sliding skirts used to do in early ground-effect cars of 1978-79. Just a fine modern-era detail – but intriguing to study for one more comfortable with earlier high-tech...

After two minutes, Eddie carefully cracked open the burner fuel (petrol) control, and, if he'd got his timing right, the burners would begin to roar gently like a tiny blowtorch. Once the tubes heated up to cherry red, it would be time to start cranking. The ignition would be effectively 'retarded' and, as Eddie explained, it's better to start cranking before the tubes become bright red when the ignition would be 'advanced' and the risk of a kick-back would increase.

Daimler originally made its hot tubes of platinum, but they proved prone to cracking and bursting, often necessitating 'an involuntary halt'. A period article recommended that: "Care must be taken that the new tube is of the same length and quality as the old tube, to ensure accurate timing of the ignition."

Due to the enormous cost of platinum, today a modern stainless steel is used which is much cheaper, far stronger when red hot and able to resist the explosion pressures. But with the high wind gusting around us off the Gulf of Mexico that day it took a while for Eddie to get a consistent flame, and even longer to heat the hot tubes adequately as the blustery wind was cooling them. Eventually, after some 10-15 tense minutes he judged the glow just about right for an exploratory hand-crank.

Ph-toompf. No effect. Ph-toompf. No effect. Adjust the brass ignition box doors to protect the area critique. Wait a while longer. Red glow. Hand-crank. Ph-toompf – but still no effect. A little while longer, careful adjustments to fuel flow, intent assessment of hot-tube glow colour. Try again. Ph-toompf. Nada.



GP LIBRARY

Eddie Berrisford tweaks the P-L's burner fuel flow – 19th century state of the art

Eddie turned to the eager audience and remarked in best Derbyshire: "Well, I never said these were great getaway cars...".

But then one more crank – ph-toompf, spit, ph-toompf, toompf-toompf-toompf...and the 115-year-old lady was quivering and rocking, boogie and bop, spirit lamps flapping like a pigeon's wings in time to the V-twin engine beat. And then ker-krunch into gear, and the Victorian-era automotive marvel tuf-tuffed into activity, cruising forward from beneath its sun shelter and out onto the Floridan tarmac drive. She lives! After such effort – a great moment.

We also ran the Museum's majestic 1908 Grand Prix Mors. No tuf-tuf, this monster – a 12½-litre four-cylinder. Every ear-splitting detonation in those 3.1-litre cylinders punches a 7lb 10oz (3.5kg) cast-iron piston, to thump 100 horsepower through the chain-drive to the rear wheels. Engage the clutch in gear and she lunges forward like a pouncing Tyrannosaur. Drum brakes (on the rear wheels only) barely rein it in, so that day it was a case of dodge the Mors for fun...

Now the Mors' hand-crank kick-back could put a man in orbit. In fact it's arguable that any man would have enough muscle to turn it over without the assistance of a half-compression device to ease the job. The Mors' camshaft comprises eight individual cams for the valves , plus four more to operate the low-tension ignition, all keyed and pinned to a hollow shaft.

Pre-start, the Mors' camshaft is slid back axially within its housing to bring into play a second cam formed on the back of each exhaust cam. Each one then holds its exhaust valve open for a little over two-thirds of the compression stroke, which is just about sufficient to make single-handed cranking feasible, while sliding the camshaft also retards the low-tension ignition. With ground-shaking concussion this early Grand Prix car thundered into life, and Eddie was away around the car park in a series of chain-drive lunges. Never doubt for one moment the sheer performance of such early racers. An 18,000rpm Mercedes-Benz W04 they are not, but a neck-bending 90-100mph artillery shell they most certainly are. I just love 'em all.


ECURIE
MONOPOLE

PARTING SHOT



JUNE 23-24

1951

LE MANS, FRANCE

Frantic efforts are made to retrieve the Monopole X84-Panhard of Jean de Montrémy/Jean Hémard from the foliage during the 19th Le Mans 24 Hours. The car eventually returned to the track and was classified 25th of 30 finishers, 73 laps behind the winning Jaguar XK120C of Peter Walker and Peter Whitehead.

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