

LE MANS 2011

YOUR 44-PAGE GUIDE TO THE 24 HOURS



INSIDE



ASTON MARTIN
 Prodrive takes on the big guns with all-new prototype



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LOTUS IS BACK!
 But can the Evora challenge Porsche and Ferrari?



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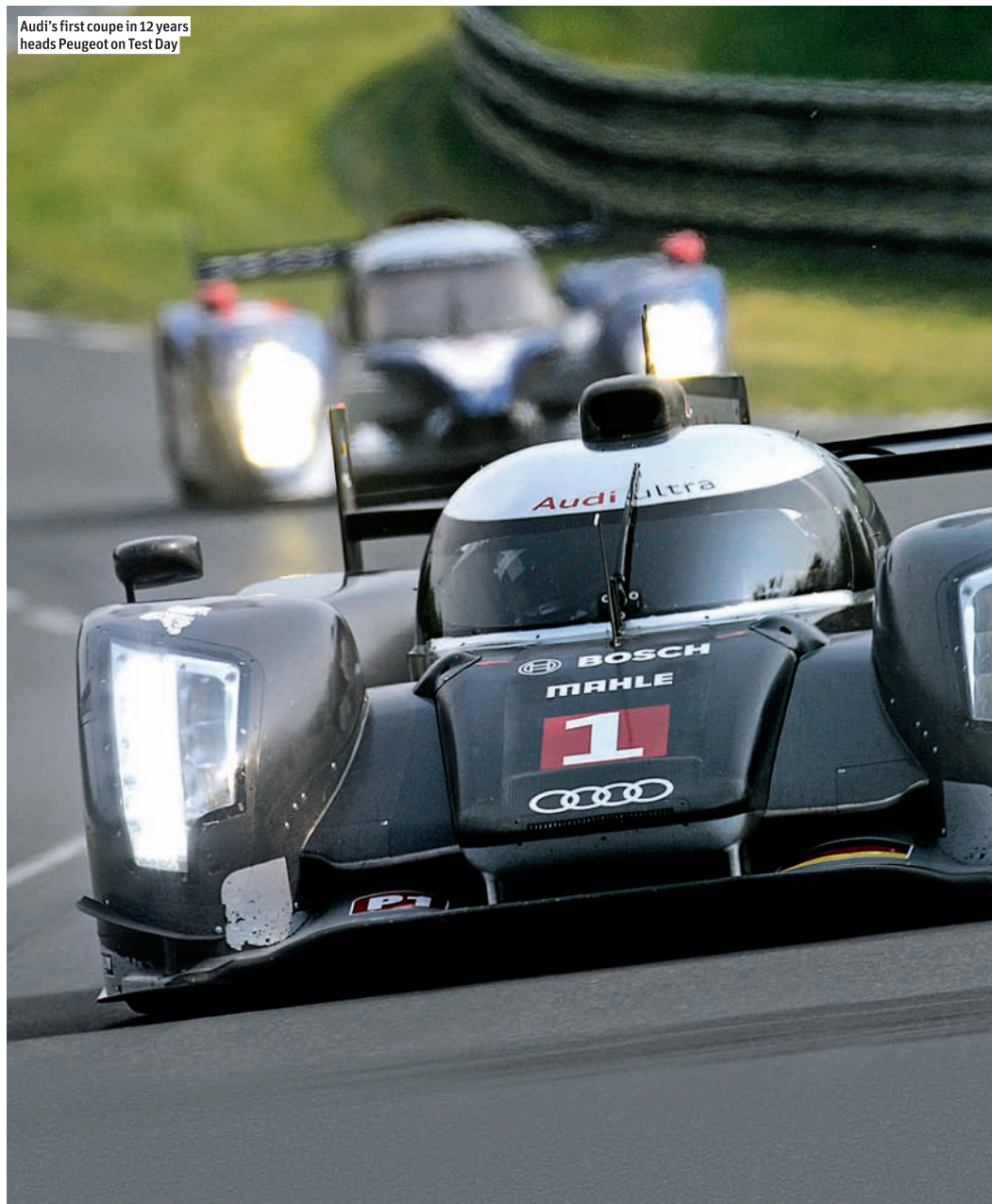
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AUDI v PEUGEOT: THE BIG ONE

Audi's first coupe in 12 years
heads Peugeot on Test Day





The closest fight yet

This year's race should be the biggest battle between Audi and Peugeot, says **Gary Watkins**

This could – or rather should – be the closest confrontation yet between Audi and Peugeot at the Le Mans 24 Hours. Every year since the two manufacturers first went head to head in 2007, one or other has had a clear advantage. All the evidence so far suggests that Audi's R18 TDI and the second-generation Peugeot 908 will, in the words of Audi driver Allan McNish, be "separated not by seconds, but by tenths".

You won't find anyone at Peugeot to disagree with that.

Marc Gene, winner of the race with the French marque back in 2009, reckons it's "going to be extremely close. I'm sure it will be one of the

"It's a compelling battle – the first time Audi and Peugeot have gone head to head with new cars"

closest Le Mans races of the past few years. One of the teams has always had a performance advantage: I don't see that for this year."

Tenths did indeed separate the best of the Audi and Peugeot turbodiesels at the Le Mans Test Day, which returned after a two-year break in April. There was only 0.2s between the two Audis at the top of the times, while the best of the Peugeots was hundredths behind in third.

The first meeting of the new cars in competition, the Spa round of the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup, ▶

AUDI v PEUGEOT A BRIEF HISTORY

2007

Audi dominates in second year of the R10 turbodiesel. Peugeot has the faster car in qualifying but is never in the hunt after detuning the engine for the race in an attempt to make the finish.

2008

Peugeot has the quicker car in the dry conditions, but the Audi comes from behind to steal victory. The R10 is better in the wet, Joest's tactics flawless and McNish, Kristensen and Capello imperious.

2009

Peugeot outperforms Audi in every department to score its first Le Mans victory since 1993. Its German rival struggles on speed and reliability with the new R15 after a weather-interrupted test programme.

2010

The 908 blitzes the revised R15+. The French manufacturer's lead car is cruising with a two-lap lead until engine failure hands an unlikely victory to Audi. Two more Pugs go out with the same problem.

AUDI v PEUGEOT: THE BIG ONE

McNish/Kristensen/Capello car led Audi charge at Spa

“If you want a car that’s consistently quick in traffic, you need a comfortable car that can change line quickly”



Audi chief Ullrich chats with Peugeot tech boss Famin (right)



◀ offered similar evidence, even though Peugeot was ahead nearly all the way in a race where it ended up one-two. The Joest-run Audis were ahead throughout practice and qualifying and the best of the R18s was on the pace for most of the event.

The battle for honours in the 79th running of the great race was always going to be compelling, because it’s the first time Audi and Peugeot have gone head to head with new cars.

Audi was well established at Le Mans and in the second-year of its turbodiesel programme when Peugeot returned to sportscar racing after 13 years away. By 2009, it was the French manufacturer that had the proven car in the original 908, and Audi was on the back foot with an unproven weapon, the R15. Ditto last year, when that car morphed into the R15+.

New regulations for 2011 mean all-new cars for Audi and Peugeot. The chassis rules are largely the same, but the downsizing of engine capacity, from 5.5 to 3.7 litres for turbodiesels to reduce power, inevitably forced them back to the drawing board.

Peugeot has confused the world by



Out with the old: R18 replaces R15 (top)



Peugeot’s 10-strong line-up (including reserve Vernay)



revealing a car with a clear family resemblance to its predecessor and then retaining the 908 name. In fact, the latest French car is new from the ground up and, according to company rhetoric, retains only the windscreen wiper from the original.

Audi has built its first coupe since the British-developed R8C of 1999, which raced alongside the 'German' R8R. The regulations, both technical and sporting, left Audi no choice but to follow its rival's lead. Less power means a greater emphasis on aerodynamic efficiency, and new pitstop regulations that came into effect in 2009, introduced too late to affect the design of the R15, mean there is no advantage of running an open-top configuration.

The look of the two cars may suggest that the French manufacturer has taken a conservative route. Yet Peugeot Sport technical director Bruno Famin argues that's not the case: "The cars look similar, but the aerodynamics work with what you don't see. They have nothing to do with each other in terms of the overall aero concept."

"The new 908 is clearly a low-downforce car designed with the four 200mph blasts in mind"



The new 908 is clearly a low-downforce car designed with the four 200mph blasts at Le Mans in mind. That much was evident at Sebring when the Peugeot Sport team persisted with trying to run without a rear-deck gurney, normally *de rigueur*

at such a high-downforce track, for much of free practice.

Audi appears to have gone for more downforce, which would be in keeping with its mantra of always going into the race with what it vaguely describes as a "safe car".

Joest technical director Ralf Juttner points out the imperative of negotiating the 50-plus cars that will take to the Circuit de la Sarthe for the 24 Hours. "If you want a car that's consistently quick in traffic, you don't want a car that is on the edge," he says. "You need a comfortable car, one that can change line quickly. Downforce gives you that."

Yet the speed-trap times from the Le Mans Test Day put Peugeot only marginally ahead of its rival. The best of the 908s outpaced the R18 through the Mulsanne trap by less than 3mph.

That suggests that Audi is ahead in the power stakes. The new 908 may not be the conservative design that it looks, but Peugeot has admitted that its new V8 powerplant is largely based on its previous V12. Audi, on the other hand, has gone radical.

It has chosen a V6 configuration ▶

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AUDI v PEUGEOT: THE BIG ONE

◀ because, says Audi Sport engine boss Ulrich Baretzky, “this offers more development potential”. Sources suggest it has already clawed back the horsepower deficit it was giving away to Peugeot last year. The new engine is a low-line 120-degree unit, with a single turbo mounted in the vee that exploits the variable turbine technology pioneered on the twin-turbo R15.

Peugeot has admitted that it investigated a similar configuration. But, according to Famin, “the necessary technology was not available from our turbo supplier”.

An engine glitch for Peugeot at the Test Day has been just about the only reliability issue suffered by either of

“It would be tough to rule out any of the three cars from either make, they are so finely balanced”

the new designs when running in public so far. Famin insisted the undisclosed problem would not be an issue come Le Mans week.

Both sides appear confident in the reliability of their new contenders. Peugeot, which got its car out on track four months ahead of its rival, has undertaken approximately six Le Mans simulations at circuits around Europe. Audi had only completed three prior to Spa – two at Sebring and one at Paul Ricard – and at that time suggested that there were no plans for another one ahead of the 24 Hours.

Juttner explains that the R18 had proven reliable straight out of the box.

“The first test at Sebring at the start of the year was surprisingly encouraging,” he says, “but you shouldn’t forget that Audi has now built many prototypes [a total of four not counting the R8C] and the knowledge that gives us is crucial.

“Simulation techniques are also much better than they were 10 years ago; this year, one of cars was loaded with stress sensors at the Test Day.”



Six-hour Spa race was Le Mans hors d'oeuvres



Peugeot’s greater experience with its new charge could have been a factor in the advantage it had in tyre wear at Spa. “It seems that our car was faster over the second part of the second stint on the tyres,” explains Famin. “It’s not really a surprise, because it is one of the key points of the car.”

It is worth pointing out that the two 908s ran through the Sebring 12 Hours, the opening round of the ILMC, on the softest Michelins, whereas the revised version of last year’s R15+ Audi was running switched from the medium-compound tyre only when temperatures dropped in the evening.

McNish isn’t too worried about the events of Spa. “We struggled a little bit with tyre management, certainly more than we thought we would,” he explains. “We don’t believe it’s a fundamental problem; it’s more about understanding the car.”

Audi and Peugeot also appear evenly matched on fuel consumption. Peugeot managed to go 11 laps of the Circuit de la Sarthe on its new-for-2011 tank allocation of 65 litres at the Test Day, whereas Audi never bettered – or perhaps never attempted to better – 10 laps. At Spa, the Audi regularly went one lap further.

With the drivers also finely balanced, it would be tough to rule out any one of the three cars from either make – which is why McNish is looking forward to 3pm on June 11 quite so much. “It’s all set up for a nailbiting battle,” he says. “I’m predicting a race like Le Mans 1999.”

And that race, when BMW, Toyota – and, early on, Mercedes – slugged it out, has come to be regarded as one of the all-time classic Le Mans 24 Hours.

AMR-ONE DIARY



Aston AMR-One's first race was Paul Ricard LMS opener

Aston Martin's first prototype racer since 1989 came together quickly. **Gary Watkins** plays chronologist

WINTER 2009

Aston Martin Racing begins to sketch out plans for a successor to the Lola-based AMR coupe that wins the Le Mans Series. "It's hard to say exactly when we started," says AMR team principal George Howard-Chappell, "but we had conceptual stuff on the engine side going on in late 2009."

SUMMER 2010

Design work starts in earnest on an all-new Aston powerplant, the first engine to be designed from a clean sheet of paper at Prodrive (which runs AMR), to power its 2011 Le Mans 24 Hours challenger. "The design process had got pretty serious by the middle of 2010," reveals Howard-Chappell.

SEPTEMBER 12, 2010

Aston Martin Racing goes public on the biggest open secret in the sportscar paddock at the AUTOSPORT 1000km at Silverstone: there'll be a bespoke Aston prototype, the first since 1989, on the grid for the 2011 Le Mans 24 Hours. AMR hits the green light on the project after receiving "a clear commitment to a fair balance of performance" between petrol and diesel-powered cars, according to Aston chairman David Richards. There's a simple image of the car – in Gulf colours, of course – but no real details. All Aston will say is that its new car will have a petrol engine, and it won't have a roof like its Lola-based predecessor. AMR starts detail design of the chassis at this



Turner is longest-serving AMR driver

point. "It's one thing to be evaluating what you might do in the future," says Howard-Chappell, "and quite another to get the green light, put a design team together and start work on the car."

JANUARY, 2011

The still-secret Aston engine runs on the dyno for the first time at Prodrive HQ in Banbury. News seeps out that it's a two-litre turbo and that it has six cylinders.



MARCH 2, 2011

The wraps come off the new Le Mans challenger at Aston Martin's Gaydon headquarters in Warwickshire. It's called the AMR-One, but the big news is that it's powered by a straight-six rather than a V6 turbo powerplant. Asked about packaging that format in a modern racing car, AMR team principal George Howard-Chappell replies: "Wait until you see our engine!" The car bucks the trend in LMP prototype design in that it is not, says Howard-Chappell, "a single-seater with mudguards". He alludes to the engine configuration being central to AMR-One's aerodynamics. Andy Meyrick is announced as one of the drivers alongside Darren Turner, Stefan Mucke, Adrian Fernandez and Harold Primat.

KEEPING ASPIRATIONS IN CHECK

GEORGE HOWARD-CHAPPELL wasn't being evasive, just himself. The engineer at the helm of Aston Martin Racing, and before that Prodrive's Ford touring car and Ferrari GT programmes, isn't prone to hyperbole and doesn't do spin. So when asked about the aspiration for AMR-One on the launch of the car, he was typically matter of fact.

"I can answer that question with a statement," he said. "We will work as hard as we can at a sustainable rate and we will see where that brings us. We are not saying we will be disappointed if we don't do x or y."

He stressed that AMR needed "to get the car sorted and reliable". Only then, he said, could targets be set.

The target of outright success at Le Mans had clearly shifted away from 2011 by the launch.

"You're not going to see us at our best just yet," said Aston chairman and Prodrive boss David Richards. "It is going to take us six months to get experience under our belts

with this car."

Richards called AMR-One "another step in the right direction". And reread Howard-Chappell's comments from the launch, and Aston isn't committing to the AMR-One being the team's front-line racer for the full three years of the programme.

"Le Mans is a moving target," he said. "Whether that means you can have fundamentally the same car for three years, who knows? Peugeot nearly managed it and Audi almost did a new car every 12 months."

Howard-Chappell has also reminded his drivers that even Porsche – a 16-time outright winner at Le Mans, no less – needed to rework its first attempt at a prototype in half a dozen years. The second iteration of the LMP2 RS Spyder underwent a dramatic aerodynamic overhaul for its second full season, so much so that it required a new top half of the monocoque.

Major revisions to AMR-One, or perhaps even an all-new car, should not be discounted on the evidence of those words.

MARCH 12, 2011

AMR-One hits the ground for a shakedown at Prodrive's Warwick test track with Turner driving. ▶





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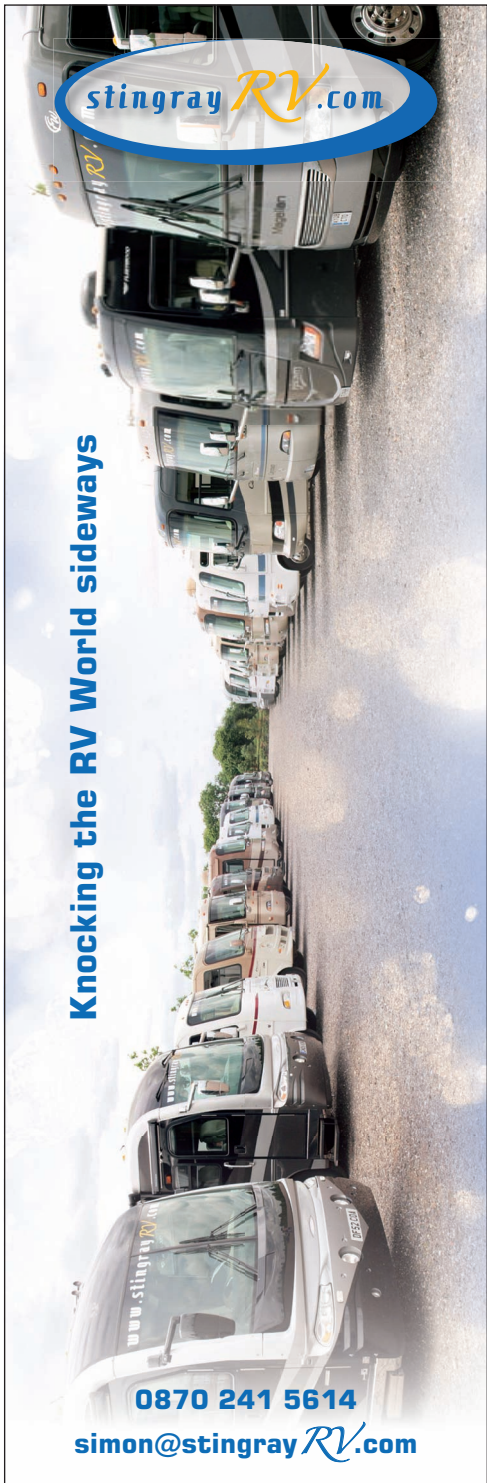
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ASTON BACK IN TOP FLIGHT



Klien (r), with veteran Fernandez, joined in March



Two AMR-Ones will race at Le Mans



Team is 'pushing' hard to sort car

◀ Approximately 40 miles of running are completed.

MARCH 15, 2011

The first AMR-One runs on a race track for the first time at Snetterton. Turner and Meyrick drive.

MARCH 18, 2011

The new Aston makes its public debut at Goodwood House. Turner runs up the hill in AMR-One at the Festival of Speed press day.

MARCH 23, 2011

Christian Klien, who was to have been Peugeot's reserve Le Mans driver, takes the final place in the AMR driver line-up.

MARCH 29, 2011

Test programme continues with a single day at Dijon as the team travels through France on the way to Paul Ricard for AMR-One's race debut.

APRIL 1-3, 2011

The new Aston makes its race debut in the LMS season opener at Ricard in what is billed as a test in race conditions by the team. Mucke ends up five seconds off the pace in qualifying. The car is still running at the end of the six-hour event after a long stop to fix a misfire. The team remains at Ricard for further testing.

APRIL 24, 2011

Both AMR-Ones take to the Circuit de la Sarthe for the first time at the Le Mans Test Day. The #009 car does two installation laps and is then parked with engine failure, while the lead #007 entry completes 13 laps in the hands of Turner and Klien with a best time 24 seconds off the ultimate pace and 15s off the best petrol car. The car is withdrawn at lunchtime to prevent a second failure. Richards describes the problem as "the liners stripping away from the block". He says that revised components – conventional nikasil liners rather than plasma coating ones – are already in the works. The engines are removed from the cars and taken straight back to Banbury ahead of the chassis.

APRIL 28, 2011

AMR decides to miss the Spa six-hour round of the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup in the wake of Test Day dramas.

MAY 10-11, 2011

More engine issues are encountered during a two-day test with both cars at the Motorland Aragon circuit in Spain, but progress is made. The car has "started to come alive", according to Turner.

JUNE 6, 2011

The two AMR-Ones are due in scrutineering in the Place des Jacobins in central Le Mans just after 4pm.

JUNE 8, 2011

Free practice begins at 4pm. ☒



L to r: Mucke, Turner, Meyrick, Primat and Fernandez at launch

ALL TO PLAY FOR

REALITY BITES - HARD

PlayStation game guru and Le Mans rookie Lucas Ordonez takes on AUTOSPORT's **Glenn Freeman**

So it can be done. Just three years after seeing an advert for a competition to turn a PlayStation driver into a real racing driver, Lucas Ordonez is gearing up for the Le Mans 24 hours.

Of course, the Spaniard has been a genuine racing driver since 2009, when he raced at the Dubai 24 hours as his prize for winning the European Nissan GT Academy competition based around the Gran Turismo 5 Prologue game. That one race alone



was an incredible prize, and to this day Ordonez can't believe how his life has changed.

"I heard about the competition in a magazine in 2008, so I bought the game and a steering wheel," he says before the two of us go head-to-head around Le Mans on Gran Turismo 5. "After a month and a half of practising for two to three hours a day, I went to the Spanish final. After that it was the European final at Silverstone, with real tests in single-seaters and GT



Ordonez has swapped games console for pukka LMP2 racer



Freeman (left) faces Ordonez in virtual-reality showdown

cars. I beat 25,000 people back then, and now here I am looking forward to the biggest race in the world."

Following Dubai, Ordonez finished second in the FIA GT4 European Cup in 2009 and 2010, and he made his prototype debut in the AUTOSPORT 1000km at Silverstone towards the end of last year. That led to a full-time LMP2 drive with the Signatech Nissan squad for this year, and his dream opportunity to race at Le Mans.

"When I entered the competition, the Dubai 24 hours was my dream. Then I targeted racing in GT4 and it happened. I remember two years ago I was uploading pictures of Le Mans on the PlayStation. Now I just can't believe I am going there to race an LMP2 car. You can never expect that from playing the PlayStation you can go to Le Mans – it's incredible."

Fortunately for AUTOSPORT, the busy schedule of a racing driver means Ordonez is a little out of practice when it comes to Gran Turismo these days. Unsurprisingly, we're racing at Le Mans, and he picks the Nissan GT-R from the Japanese Super GT championship as our weapon with which to face each other.

Our first two-lap encounter is little more than a chance to get a feel for things, and Ordonez explains just how realistic the track has been recreated on the game. Just after he has commented on how the uneven surface of the public roads is so accurate, his car veers across the track into mine on the run to Indianapolis, triggering a massive accident. Once we rejoin he pulls away, and after a bit of creative licence with the Ford

"You can never expect to go from PlayStation to Le Mans – it's incredible"

Lucas Ordonez

chicane it's 1-0 to the pro.

Things heat up for race two, and we're side by side heading into the first of the chicanes on the Mulsanne straight. Unlike Ordonez, I don't know where the braking point is, so I wait for him to hit the anchors. Sure enough, his reference point from the real track is spot on in the game, and we both make the corner after a bit of door-banging. We keep it clean all the way to Indianapolis this time, and there's room for me to have a little nibble at his car's right rear corner into Arnage. That pressure pays off when he drops a wheel onto the grass on the entry to the Porsche Curves, sending him into the gravel and handing me a victory.

"OK, no waiting for you this time!" he proclaims ahead of the decider. But there's nothing in it. We swap the lead countless times down the long straights, and once again we're neck and neck at the scene of Lucas's off from the race before. But it's later in the Porsche Curves where trouble strikes this time. As I understeer off at the second left hander, Ordonez spins on the exit! We both bounce off a barrier each and then collide in the middle of the track. It's now a sprint to the line, which the Gran Turismo master wins by 0.4 seconds. He hasn't forgotten all the gaming tricks just yet. ☒

GIANCARLO FISICHELLA

The reluctant GT fanatic

Giancarlo Fisichella wasn't sure about endurance racing, but he's coming round. By **Gary Watkins**

Giancarlo Fisichella was never the most talkative driver in the Formula 1 paddock. But he didn't have to be: his body language told the world what he was thinking. Nothing's changed now he's moved over to the more-relaxed climes of sportscar racing. When the Italian pitched up with the AF Corse Ferrari team at the start of last season, his demeanour suggested he really didn't want to be there.

But ask him now if he's enjoying his twin assaults on the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup and the Le Mans Series with the new 458 Italia in 2011, and you get a reply, albeit a one-word reply, in the affirmative: "Absolutely."

Push him a little harder, and he says: "I'm enjoying the racing and sharing a car with team-mates. I like the two championships I'm doing and the relaxed atmosphere."

That's not PR spin, he really is enjoying it: you can tell from the way he conducts himself. For a start, he's more visible in the paddock, not habitually tucked away in the motorhome *a la* F1. And you may even spot him wandering about the Le Mans paddock with a smile on his face.

A year ago, he looked plain bored. A season in the LMS with fellow F1 veteran Jean Alesi and Toni Vilander clearly wasn't his choice after he signed up as Ferrari F1 reserve and test driver at the end of 2009. And he comes close to admitting it.

Pose that question, and he screws up his face, ums and arghs for a while and thinks again before answering. Eventually he settles on a tactful: "It wasn't in my plan."



Fisichella won Spa class

"You need more time than you think to learn how to drive these cars. It's not an easy category to learn"

"Ferrari was pushing for it," he continues. "They told me that it was a very important programme for them, so in the end I thought I'd try it. Why not?"

The winner of three grands prix admits that the switch to sportscar racing in one of AF's Ferrari 430 GTs was a bit of a culture shock. Which may have explained his demeanour at the early-season events.

"You need more time than you think to learn how to drive these cars," he says. "It's not an easy category to learn, especially when you are jumping straight out of an F1 car."

Fisichella wasn't the first Ferrari tester to struggle after being sent to the GT ranks. Marc Gene had a disastrous time in a handful of American Le Mans Series appearances with the Risi Competizione team and chose not to return, then had the good fortune to be picked up by Peugeot for the 908 prototype programme. Fisichella persevered, and by the end

of last season was on the pace.

A short stint with Risi in the US certainly helped, as his efforts to acclimatise to the new discipline were held back by the lack of seat time afforded by running three drivers in his LMS car. "Doing the extra races in America was a big help," he says. "After that I felt more comfortable and confident in the car."

Fisi and his team-mates might have been on the podium in the first two races of 2010, but the Italian's own performances didn't come good until the final two LMS rounds. He qualified second at the Hungaroring and led the first stint, then posted arguably his most competitive drive of the season in the AUTOSPORT 1000km at Silverstone in September.

"I feel like I'm improving all the time," he says. "Now I am on the pace of my team-mates, and they are the masters of the category."

The end-of-season form clearly convinced Ferrari, which has paired Fisichella with the most complete driver on its GT roster, Gianmaria Bruni, at AF Corse for 2011. Fourth places at Sebring (aboard the old 430) and Paul Ricard (his first race in the 458) were followed by a maiden victory in the Spa ILMC race in May.

"Winning in F1 is one thing, this is another, but it is still fantastic," says Fisichella, who is reunited with Vilander for Le Mans. "This is the championship I'm doing, so it's important to try to do as well as possible. My mission is to win both championships, the LMS and the ILMC, for Ferrari and, of course, the Le Mans 24 Hours."

And would he like to get his bum in a prototype?

"Prototypes are closer to what I know, but I'm a Ferrari driver," says Fisichella. "Ferrari is my present and, I believe, my future, so I think GT racing is also my future." ❧



INSIGHT: LOTUS EVORA

LOTUS takes on the **BIG GUNS**

F1, Indy? All very well. But taking on Porsche and Ferrari in the GTE class? That's a toughie...
By **Gary Watkins**



If something had to give in Lotus's all-encompassing assault on the international motorsport scene, then why not its bid to take on Porsche and Ferrari at the Le Mans 24 Hours? After all, it would be trying to beat cars that roll out of the showroom with in excess of 600bhp with one that starts life with a mere 280bhp. Yet postponing the British marque's Le Mans comeback in the GTE class and waiting for the arrival of the LMP2 prototype was never an option.

Producing an Evora for the class formerly known as GT2 is a matter of common sense, according to the man charged with masterminding programmes ranging from a Formula 1 sponsorship deal down to an entry-level GT4 racer. Claudio Berro, who was appointed Lotus Motorsport director in October 2009, explains that its presence in the class with the Evora can be explained by its aspirations in the marketplace.

"We need to be racing the big sportscar manufacturers, including Ferrari and Porsche, at the highest level possible, and that means racing in the GTE class at Le Mans," says Berro, who has overseen a number of Fiat Group sportscar programmes, including the long-lost F50 GT1 and the never-to-be-forgotten Maserati MC12. "The Evora will be our GTE car for the next three years until the arrival of the Esprit [which is due to hit the road in 2013]."

The Esprit, with a longitudinal five-litre V8, will be an altogether more-suitable basis for a GTE contender than a relatively low-powered lightweight car with a transverse 3.5-litre V6. So much so that the sceptics argue that Lotus is entering the most competitive arena in sportscar racing with one hand tied behind its back. You won't get anyone at Lotus to go quite that far, but the designer of the Evora GTE admits that the starting point of the car explains an "aggressive design philosophy".

Nicola Scimecca, whose Ycom engineering company in Italy has been charged with designing the Evora GTE and building the first cars, explains that "everything that could be changed



Scimecca led design team

under the regulations has been changed" from the street version.

"You could say that the Ferrari 458 Italia and the Porsche 911 GT3-RSR are much more conservative because they retain a lot of road-car components," says the Italian, who was well known to Berro from his days leading the design team on the MC12 at Dallara. "On this car, we have kept only the aluminium chassis and the door sills.

"You could say the Ferrari and Porsche are more conservative - they retain road-car components"

its LMP-style uprights to a new Xtrac transmission that has its roots in the gearbox designed to handle the big torque numbers from the SEAT Leon turbodiesel World Touring Car Championship challenger. Scimecca estimates that "between 70 and 80 per cent of the components" on the new car have been made by Ycom and its suppliers in Italy.

That design-and-build process has been compressed into little more than five months. The green light for the project wasn't given until the start of November, after the Austrian Jetalliance squad stepped up to the plate and ordered the first two cars.

Berro reckons "the lead time on a project like this should be 10 to 12 months". That goes some way to explaining why Lotus has modest aspirations for its first Le Mans start since the Elise-based GT1 took part in the 24 Hours in 1997. "Reliability," he says, "is our first target."

The other reason is that the Evora's Toyota-based engine, now developed into a four-litre by Cosworth, gives away power and torque to its rivals. Berro put the deficit at "20-25bhp" ahead of an air-restrictor break in the wake of the Evora GTE's race debut in



Two cars competed in Spa 1000km race

"When we started the programme, we looked at the Evora GT4 Cup developed by Lotus, but we quickly realised that we couldn't carry anything over because the GT4 is essentially a road car. A relatively short-wheelbase car with a transverse engine is a bit of a compromise, so we knew we had to push hard in every other area."

That explains some of the stunning detail on the Evora GTE, from its carbon-composite bodywork through

the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup round at Spa. A reduced base weight should also help ease the Evora up the timesheets.

A Le Mans finish would be a good result for Lotus in year one of the programme. British fans should have a more competitive Evora to cheer in 12 month's time, and probably more cars to boot. That would be a nice appetite whetter for the arrival of the Lotus LMP2 coupe in 2013. ❧



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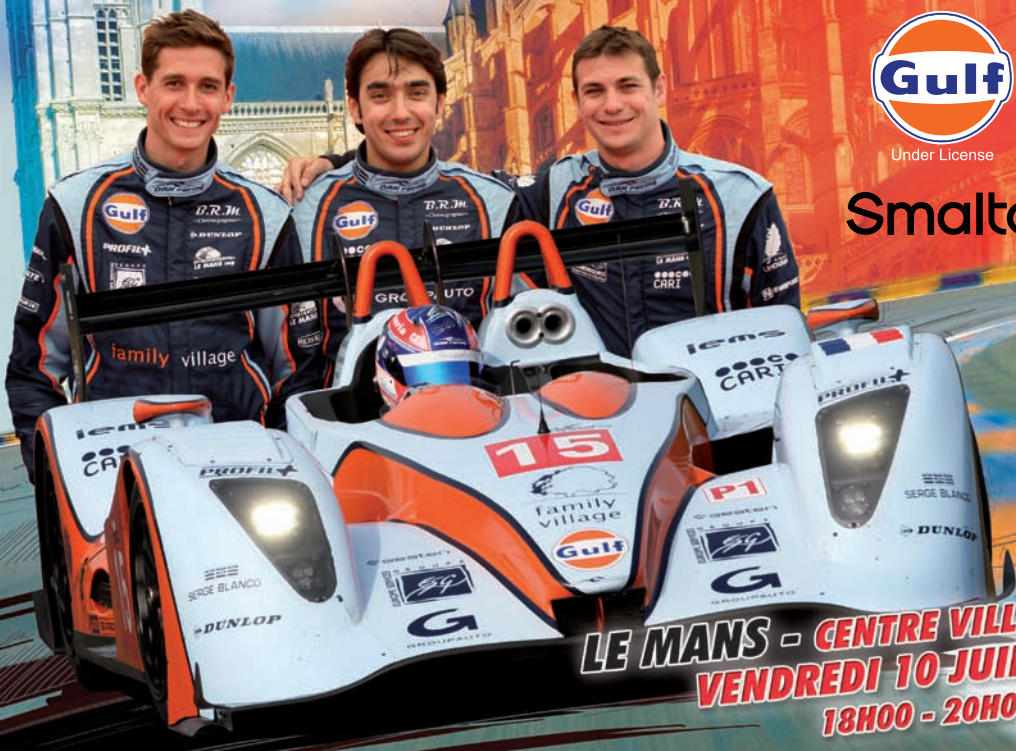
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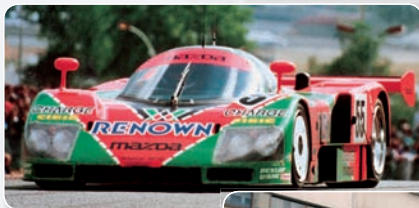
Défilé des équipages-pilotes

avec remise des trophées **LE MANS 2011**

Plaques « **POLE POSITION** »,

Trophée **SGS «MEILLEUR CONCURRENT GT»**,

Trophée « **ROOKIE OF LE MANS** »



avec la participation des orchestres

Gracia (Pologne)

Kanira (Mexique)

Calips Atlantic (France)

Kompbrass (France)

Bellevue Brass Band (Le Mans)

Les Saulnières (Le Mans)

Rétrospectives

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MAZDA'S 1991 VICTORY**THE
ROTARY
CLUB**

How significant was ORECA's involvement in Mazda's 1991 victory?

Gary Watkins asks around, 20 years on

Think Le Mans 1991, and what comes to mind? The green-and-orange Mazda winning, of course. Perhaps Johnny Herbert flaking out and missing the podium celebrations. Or the screech of the car's rotary powerplant. Only sportscar aficionados will probably recall ORECA's role in the Mazda's victory with Herbert, Bertrand Gachot and Volker Weidler. Which begs the question: was ORECA a bit player in one of the most surprising Le Mans wins ever or did it play a pivotal role?

It's a matter of debate that's still raging 20 years on. One driver involved in the programme suggests that the French team merely "provided a garage to park the cars", pointing out that the winning Mazda 787B and the sixth-placed car were run by the Japanese firm's own engineers and mechanics. Others suggest that team, which this year has another shot at victory with a semi-works Peugeot, was crucial in turning Mazda into a team capable of slugging it out with Mercedes and Jaguar.

ORECA had been signed up by the Japanese manufacturer's competition arm, Mazdaspeed, as its European partner in December in place of Alan Docking Racing, which was dropped ▶



The #55 Mazda took a surprise victory 20 years ago



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MAZDA'S 1991 VICTORY



Weidler (l) and Gachot celebrate without Herbert

◀ after a disappointing 1990. The drive for a change was led by six-time Le Mans winner Jacky Ickx, who had been brought on board at Mazda as a consultant, and according to long-time Mazda driver Pierre Dieudonne there were “discussions with several teams”.

Dieudonne, who raced for Mazda every year bar one from 1984-91, remembers Ray Mallock Limited being one of them. The boss of the team, whose sportscar stock was high after leading at Le Mans in '90 with a Nissan run under the American NPTI banner, recalls believing that he had the deal in the bag.

“We were very close; I thought we'd got it,” says Ray Mallock. “I was disappointed not to be chosen, especially when the Mazda ended up being a great little car.”

ORECA, which had had success with Ickx and Lada in rally raids, ended up getting the gig and would provide support for Mazdaspeed at Le Mans.

“I made lots of calls to Japan to convince Mr Ohashi that we had to try again”
HUGUES DE CHAUNAC

The French team would be in charge of the manufacturer's third-string car at the 24 Hours, as well as masterminding Mazda's solo entry in the Sportscar World Championship.

Team boss Hugues de Chaunac calls the relationship between Mazda and ORECA a “partnership”. He insists that Mazdaspeed was “one team” at Le Mans, but reckons the big part it played in the '91 victory unfolded in the months leading up to June.

“Mazda came to our facility at Paul Ricard and stayed for three months,” he explains. “We did all the testing together.”

Dieudonne remembers de Chaunac's

legendary attention to detail coming into its own during that period.

“Hugues said that there must be at least two endurance tests,” remembers the Belgian. “But then the Gulf War erupted and the first test scheduled for February was cancelled.

“The April test was plagued by bad weather and electrical problems and the Japanese were ready to go back home, but Hugues said, ‘No, we have to find a solution’.

“Hugues pushed for new parts to be sent from Japan and we went again and completed the test. That was perhaps ORECA's biggest contribution to the success at Le Mans that year.”

De Chaunac recalls long conference calls with Mazdaspeed boss, the late Takayoshi Ohashi, in Japan.

“I remember lots of conference calls to Japan trying to convince Mr Ohashi that we must try again,” he says. “I kept telling that we had to try again, you must believe me. ▶

MAZDA'S 1991 VICTORY



Herbert (centre) finally made the podium climb in 2002

HERBERT'S CHAMPAGNE-FREE WIN

JOHNNY HERBERT THOUGHT HE was OK. Asked to turn a double stint into a triple to complete the race for Mazda, he indicated it wouldn't be a problem. And it wasn't – until he climbed out of the car after taking the chequered flag.

"I remember stopping, flipping the door open and feeling a bit funny," he says. "I got out, walked around the car and collapsed, right into the arms of my dad."

Herbert was carted off to the medical centre and stuck on a drip, which is why you won't spot him in the photographs of the Mazda team celebrating up on the new Le Mans podium.

Looking back, Herbert acknowledges that his absence from the post-race celebrations was his own fault.

"It was really down to a misunderstanding of what was required and that was partly down to the fact that the longest races I'd done were grands prix and some 1000-kilometre races

in Japan," says Herbert, whose first Le Mans the previous year had ended early. "I didn't realise you had to take on the fluids."

"I also struggled to eat much during the race. The only thing I could get down were Japanese pot noodle things, which probably had no goodness at all."

Herbert also failed to get any proper sleep over the course of the 24 hours.

"I remember trying to have a snooze, but I couldn't because you could always hear those bloody Mazda rotaries. I think I worked out which one was my car and I was listening out for it every 3m50s or whatever."

Herbert did get onto the Le Mans podium a decade later, and three times in a row in 2002-04. His problem was that he was always one step down from where he should have stood in '91.

"I think that's why I regret not making it up there in the Mazda year," he says. "At the time I wasn't too bothered, but looking back it would have been nice."

◀ "We did the test and it was a big success. We did 24 or 26 hours without a problem. At that moment we really felt we had become part of the team."

ORECA's big input into Mazda's Le Mans victory, still the only triumph by a Japanese manufacturer, came relatively late. The first seeds of victory had been sown long before it became involved. On the eve of the 1989 24 Hours to be precise.

"I'd been asked by Yasuo Tatsutomi, one of the big Mazda bosses, what we needed to win," says Dieudonne. "My reply was 100bhp more."

The result was the R26B four-rotor powerplant that replaced the R13J that had been used in 1988-89. A third spark plug and variable-length inlet trumpets helped Mazda achieve its power targets, but the engine was late. That contributed to the poor 1990 performance.

Not only was the B-spec version of the 787 a more reliable car courtesy of ORECA, but it was also a much more competitive proposition than it had



The '90 787 failed in the 11th hour. Gachot investigates

been in 1990, for two reasons.

The original car had been conceived before confirmation that the Mulsanne Straight would be cut into three by the addition of two chicanes. That meant Mazda arrived at Le Mans with a low-downforce car unsuitable for the revised circuit.

"We didn't have enough downforce," says Briton Nigel Stroud, designer of the 787. "All the aero work had been done when we learned that the chicanes were going in."

Stroud, who had also been responsible for the 757 and 767 Mazda Group C cars, had a chance to redress the problem for '91, but the car also got what would now be called a performance-break courtesy of the skills of Ohashi in the smoke-filled rooms of the rule-making committees.

This was the year that the new breed of 3.5-litre Group C car was meant to be in the ascendancy. Previous-generation fuel-formula cars would be penalised to that effect, which meant the Mercedes and Jaguars were forced to run at



"In the big strategy meeting I remember Jacky [Ickx] saying, 'Let's go balls out'. Once Mazda heard it from him, it sealed it. To them, he was God" NIGEL STROUD

1000kg, yet Ohashi somehow managed to persuade the powers-that-be that his rotary-engined cars needed help. While its rivals went hot heavier, Mazda got a 50kg weight-break, meaning its three cars could run at 830kg.

It was a political masterstroke that owed much to Mazda's disappointing 1990 race, according to Dieudonne.

"We had a much better engine for that year, but because of our problems people didn't notice the increased performance," he says. "If someone had looked closely at the figures, I'm sure they would have realised."

Mazda now had a reliable car and a competitive one. It also had a new mentality, courtesy of Ickx.

"We'd always been pushing to run



faster, but the Japanese had always been so conservative," recalls Stroud. "I remember the big strategy meeting on the Friday and Jacky saying, 'Let's go balls out'. Once they'd heard it from him, it sealed it. To them, he was God."

Bertrand Gachot describes the strategy: "We were told to go for it. All three of us drove flat-out all the way, as though it was a 24-hour grand prix."

Mazda got lucky, of course. The Mercedes C11 was the quickest car and was on course to win when the engine failed on the leading Sauber-run car driven by Jean-Louis Schlesser, Jochen Mass and Alain Ferte after 22 hours. And the Mazda was there, buzzing along in second, ready to capitalise.

The stars had converged to give Mazda an unlikely victory. It had the speed, courtesy of the new engine, and that weight break. It had the tactics thanks to Ickx. And it had the reliability, and for that ORECA must take credit. The problem for ORECA, though, is that its name wasn't above the door. The name on the entry list was simply Mazdaspeed. 🏎️

LMP1

LMP2

GTE

TEAM BY TEAM

Who's sharing with who - and in what?

Gary Watkins assesses every car and crew in LMP1, LMP2 and GTE



WHAT'S NEW IN THE RULEBOOK

LMP1

- **Turbodiesels down to 3.7 litres, normally-aspirated petrol cars to 3.4 litres and turbos to 2 litres**
- Cars with old engines can be 'grandfathered' and their performance reduced
- **Fuel capacity reduced from 90 to 75 litres for petrol cars, and 81 to 65 for diesels**
- Diesels' weight down from 930 to 900kg
- **F1-style sharks fin mandatory on new designs**

LMP2

- Only production-based engines allowed, including in old 'grandfathered' cars
- **New cars cost-capped at €400,000**
- Weight increase from 825 to 900kg for all cars
- **Fin mandatory on new designs**
- Fuel capacity reduced from 80 to 75 litres



GTE



- **Former GT2 class, now called GTE, becomes sole category for production cars after GT1 cull**
- Class split into two - GTE Pro and GTE Am - respectively open to full professional line-ups and crews including two semi-pros or amateurs driving year-old cars

AUDI SPORT TEAM JOEST/AUDI SPORT NORTH AMERICA AUDI

DRIVERS

#1 Timo BERNHARD (D)
 Romain DUMAS (F)
 Mike ROCKENFELLER (D)

#2 Marcel FASSLER (CH)
 Andre LOTTERER (D)
 Benoit TRELUYER (F)

#3 Allan McNISH (GB)
 Tom KRISTENSEN (DK)
 Rinaldo CAPELLO (I)

AUDI APPEARS UNCONCERNED by the manner of its defeat at the hands of Peugeot at the Spa Intercontinental Le Mans Cup round last month, both in terms of the inconsistency of the all-new R18 and an uncharacteristic error-strewn performance by its drivers.

Yet the pace of the car at the April Test Day suggests the Audi coupe is a match for the Peugeot and there's evidence that the Germans are ahead in the engine department. All three of the Audis can win this one, though when the chips are down, you'd always put your money on McNish, Kristensen and Capello.



» **WE SAY** SECOND FAVOURITE ONLY BY DINT OF A DISAPPOINTING SPA **RATING *******

PEUGEOT SPORT TOTAL/TEAM PEUGEOT TOTAL PEUGEOT 908

DRIVERS

#7 Anthony DAVIDSON (GB)
 Alex WURZ (A)
 Marc GENE (E)

#8 Franck MONTAGNY (F)
 Stephane SARRAZIN (F)
 Nicolas MINASSIAN (F)

#9 Sebastien BURDAIS (F)
 Simon PAGENAUD (F)
 Pedro LAMY (P)

PEUGEOT ARRIVES AT LE MANS as the narrowest of favourites ahead of Audi after its dominant one-two victory in the Spa six-hour race and great experience of its 2011 challenger. Any of the three cars could do the honours

for the French manufacturer. The all-French crew of Montagny, Sarrazin and Minassian, which was heading for victory last year until engine failure, looks the best line-up on paper, but Davidson and Wurz were on fire at Spa.



» **WE SAY** PEUGEOT WON AT SPA, BUT LE MANS WON'T BE SO EASY **RATING *******

ASTON MARTIN RACING ASTON MARTIN AMR-ONE

DRIVERS

#007 Darren TURNER (GB)
 Stefan MUCKE (D)
 Christian KLIJEN (D)

#008 Adrian FERNANDEZ (MEX)
 Andy MEYRICK (GB)
 Harold PRIMAT (CH)

A TOUGH BUILD-UP FOR A project that didn't start in earnest until September means Aston's objective of challenging for Le Mans victory has had to be

delayed for at least 12 months, but there's no shame in that. Engine issues that beset the early running of the AMR-One had not been solved at press time.



» **WE SAY** DON'T EXPECT THE ASTON TO BE EITHER RELIABLE OR QUICK **RATING ***

LMP1

LMP2

GTE

TEAM ORECA MATMUT PEUGEOT 908 HDI

DRIVERS

- #10** Nicolas LAPIERRE (F)
Loïc DUVAL (F)
Olivier PANIS (F)

LE MANS STALWART ORECA returns with the first-generation Peugeot 908 turbodiesel for a full ILMC assault in 2011. The team won the Sebring 12 Hours, but Le Mans will be an altogether harder nut to crack for a team using a so-



called 'grandfathered car'. That means it has to run in the aero spec from last year, which has a detrimental effect on straight-line speed now its 5.5-litre V12 has been robbed of 150bhp or so. A weight break of 15kg should help its cause, but the team knows it can't match the factory cars on pace and will be focussing on having the kind of clean run that gave it victory at Sebring.

» **WE SAY** WILL PICK UP THE PIECES IF THE FACTORY CARS FALTER

RATING * * * *

REBELLION RACING (SEBAH) LOLA-TOYOTA B10/06

DRIVERS

- #12** Neel JANI (CH)
Nicolas PROST (F)
Jeroen BLEEKEMOLEN (NL)

- #13** Andrea BELICCHI (I)
Jean-Christophe BOULLION (F)
Guy SMITH (GB)

REBELLION RACING – FUNDED from Switzerland, but run from Surrey – takes a big step up for its third year in the LMP1 ranks. There's a customer engine deal with Toyota to use the Japanese firm's Super GT-based V8, a

new bespoke aero package for its pair of Lola coupes and an uprated engineering structure at the team. Former Lister and Creation man Ian Smith has joined as engineering and operations manager while famed F1 engineer James Robinson has come



on board to work on the Jani/Prost/Bleekemolen car. The team is slowly unlocking the potential of its new package, but it has yet to find the reliability it has always missed.

» **WE SAY** THE PACE WILL BE THERE BUT QUESTION MARKS REMAIN

RATING * * * *

PESCAROLO TEAM PESCAROLO-JUDD 01

DRIVERS

- #16** Emmanuel COLLARD (F)
Christophe TINSEAU (F)
Julien JOUSSE (F)

THE NAME HAS CHANGED, BUT this is the same team that led the privateer charge at the 24 Hours through the noughties after Le Mans legend Henri Pescarolo regained control of his squad last winter. It fields one Pescarolo



chassis, upgraded to the aero spec it would have run last year (had the team's new owners not pulled the plug before the race), and a five-litre version of the proven Judd V10. Victory in the Paul Ricard LMS race and its Test Day performance suggests Pescarolo will be right in the petrol-honours fight. The Rebellion Lola-Toyota may have the edge on pace, but Pescarolo should score on reliability.

» **WE SAY** PESCAROLO STARTS FAVOURITE TO BE BEST OF THE REST

RATING * * * *

RUNNERS & RIDERS LE MANS 2011

LMP1
LMP2
GTE

HOPE RACING ORECA-LEHMANN O1

DRIVERS

- #5** Jan LAMMERS (NL)
Casper ELGAARD (DK)
Steve ZACCHIA (CH)

THE SWISS HOPE RACING SQUAD, which as Polevision ran Roland Asch to second place in the

inaugural V8STAR series in 2001, is bidding to become the first team to run a hybrid in the 24 Hours after engaging in a partnership with the British Flybrid company. Teething problems for a project that kicked off late had restricted running at press time.



» WE SAY BEING ON THE GRID WILL BE AN ACHIEVEMENT IN ITSELF

RATING *

QUIFEL - ASM TEAM ZYTEK O9SC



SOMETIME BRITISH F3 RACER

Antonio Simoes' team steps up to the P1 ranks after five seasons as a frontrunner in the LMP2 class of the Le Mans Series and has upgraded the Zytek it ran in P2 to that effect. The high-speed Circuit de la Sarthe isn't

DRIVERS

- #20** Olivier PLA (F)
Miguel AMARAL (E)
Warren HUGHES (GB)

natural territory for the high-downforce Zytek and there have to be question marks over the car's reliability.

» WE SAY UNLIKELY TO CHALLENGE REBELLION/PESCAROLO FOR PETROL WIN RATING **

OAK RACING OAK-PESCAROLO-JUDD P01

JACQUES NICOLET'S OAK TEAM, now based at Le Mans, returns to LMP1 with two Pescarolos powered by Judd's 3.4-litre V8. Its bid has been severely compromised by two big shunts at the Test Day and the Spa 1000km.



DRIVERS

- #15** Guillaume MOREAU (F)
Pierre RAGUES (F)
Tiago MONTEIRO (P)
- #24** Jacques NICOLET (F)
Richard HEIN (F)
Jean-Francois YVON (F)

» WE SAY LOOKING TO RECAPTURE SEBRING FORM AFTER RECENT SET-BACKS RATING ***

KRONOS RACING LOLA-ASTON MARTIN B09/10



THE LOLA-ASTON ENTERED BY

Signature last year has been placed by its collector owner for 2011 with the Belgian Kronos squad, which subsequently agreed terms with FIA GT1 team Marc VDS to run the car at Le Mans. That explains the presence of

DRIVERS

- #22** Maxime MARTIN (B)
Bas LEINDERS (B)
Vanina ICKX (B)

GT1 comingman Maxime Martin and Bas Leinders in the car alongside Vanina Ickx, which all adds up to a decent line-up.

» WE SAY THIS CAR COULD BE A SLEEPER IN THE UNOFFICIAL PETROL CLASS RATING ***

PICS: GRIFFITHS, STALEY, GIBSON/GRPZ

RUNNERS & RIDERS LE MANS 2011

LMP1

LMP2

GTE

SIGNATECH NISSAN ORECA-NISSAN 03

THE SUCCESSFUL SIGNATURE single-seater squad returns for a third year in sportscars, this time under the Signatech banner. It has swapped its Lola-Aston for an ORECA, stepped down to P2 and forged a relationship with Nissan.



DRIVERS

#26 Franck MAILLEUX (F)
Sohel AYARI (F)
Lucas ORDONEZ (E)

» **WE SAY WILL HAVE PACE BUT RELIABILITY DOUBTS**

RATING * * * *

LEVEL 5 MOTORSPORTS LOLA-HPD B11/80

BIG-SPENDING AMATEUR TUCKER runs a single-car ILMC assault – with GP3 team Status – and a two-car ALMS campaign. The Lola-HPD doesn't appear to be a match for the ORECA-Nissan despite a performance break for the V6 turbo.



DRIVERS

#33 Christophe BOUCHUT (F)
Joao BARBOSA (P)
Scott TUCKER (USA)

» **WE SAY STRONG TEAM BUT NOT FASTEST PACKAGE**

RATING * * *

OAK RACING OAK-PESCAROLO-JUDD/BMW P01

TOOK UP BOTH ITS GUARANTEED P2 entries so has four cars. That's why it's teamed up with another local top sportscar team, DAMS, which will run the #49 car.



RATING * * * *

DRIVERS

#35 Frederic DA ROCHA (F)
Patrice LAFARGUE (F)
Andrea BARLESI (B)

#49 Shinji NAKANO (J)
Nicolas DE CREM (B)
Jan CHAROUZ (CZ)

RML HPD ARX-01D

RML HAS ENDURED A DIFFICULT start to the season. It found that its new acquisition, the turbo-engined HPD ARX-01c, was behind the eight ball on power and then Newton had a tub-destroying shunt at Spa.



DRIVERS

#36 Tommy ERDOS (BR)
Mike NEWTON (GB)
Ben COLLINS (GB)

» **WE SAY A LESSER TEAM MIGHT NOT EVEN MAKE IT**

RATING * * *

PECOM RACING (AF) LOLA-JUDD/BMW B11/40

COMPANC AND RUSSO, WHO HAVE raced with AF in GTs since 2008, step up to P2 with the team. They have opted for the open Lola and Judd's BMW-based V8, which has been given a restrictor break ahead of the race.



DRIVERS

#39 Matias RUSSO (RA)
Luis COMPANC (RA)
Pierre KAFFER (D)

» **WE SAY POTENTIAL THERE, BUT UNPROVEN**

RATING * * *

RUNNERS & RIDERS LE MANS 2011

RACE PERFORMANCE ORECA-JUDD/BMW 03

THE SWISS RACE PERFORMANCE team has gained an entry by right this time after getting moved up from the reserve list at the last minute last year. For this year it has replaced its Radical with a new ORECA.



DRIVERS

#40 Marc ROSTAN (F)
Michel **FREY** (CH)
Ralph MEICHTRY (CH)

**» WE SAY ORECA-JUDD
COULD OFFER ADVANTAGE**

RATING * * * *

GREAVES MOTORSPORT ZYTEK-NISSAN Z11SN

FORMER TEAM BRUICHLADDICH returns under the name of owner Tim Greaves with Ojeh's well-travelled Zytek, now with Nissan power. Victory at Paul Ricard LMS opener proved potential of the car, at least over six hours.



DRIVERS

#41 Tom KIMBER-SMITH (GB)
Karim **OJJEH** (KSA)
Olivier LOMBARD (F)

**» WE SAY UP THERE IF
TEST PACE IS ACCURATE**

RATING * * * *

STRAKKA RACING HPD ARX-01D

LAST YEAR'S LMP2 WINNERS won't repeat 2010's fifth overall; the class has been slowed too much for that. If a revised HPD V6 is anywhere near the Nissan V8 in power, then Strakka will be up there.



DRIVERS

#42 Danny WATTS (GB)
Jonny **KANE** (GB)
Nick LEVENTIS (GB)

**» WE SAY HPD RELIABILITY
COULD BE CRUCIAL**

RATING * * * *

EXTREME LIMITE AM PARIS NORMA-JUDD/BMW

TEAM BOSS PATRICE ROUSSEL, a one-time class winner at Le Mans, fulfills his ambition of fielding a car at the 24 Hours. To that effect he has graduated from the VdV with the Norma run by Pegasus in 2010.



DRIVERS

#44 Fabien ROSIER (F)
Philippe **HAEZBROUCK** (F)
Jean-Rene DE FOURNOUX (F)

**» WE SAY BOLD ATTEMPT
BY NEWBOYS**

RATING *

TEAM ORECA MATMUT ORECA-NISSAN 03

ORECA FIELDS ONE OF ITS OWN Nissan-engined P2 cars for a line-up including ousted Audi DTM/sportscar man Premat. It needs to prove to customers that its design is a reliable proposition.



DRIVERS

#48 Alexandre PREMAT (F)
Dominick **KRAIHAMER** (A)
David HALLYDAY (F)

**» WE SAY EXPECT PREMAT
TO SHINE**

RATING * * * *

RUNNERS & RIDERS LE MANS 2011

LMP1
LMP2
GTE

AF CORSE

FERRARI 458 ITALIA

THE NEAREST THING TO A FERRARI works team fields two new 458s, the fastest thing in the category, in the GTE Pro class and an old 430 in the Am division.



DRIVERS

- #51** Gianmaria BRUNI (I)
Toni VILANDER (FIN)
Giancarlo FISICHELLA (I)

DRIVERS

- #71** Michael WALTRIP (USA)
Robert KAUFFMAN (I/USA)
Rui AGUAS (P)

- #61** Piergiuseppe PERAZZINI (I)
Marco CIOCI (I)
Sean BRESLIN (IRL)

» WE SAY LEAD CAR STARTS FAVOURITE FOR GTE HONOURS

RATING * * * * *

BMW MOTORSPORT (SCHNITZER) BMW M3

TEST-DAY PERFORMANCE

suggests BMW and Schnitzer will put their disastrous 2010 Le Mans well and truly behind them. The revised M3 wasn't far off the pace of the Ferrari, and sceptics suggest it didn't fully show its hand.



DRIVERS

- #55** Augusto FARFUS (BR)
Jorg MULLER (D)
Dirk WERNER (D)

- #56** Andy PRIAULX (GB)
Dirk MULLER (D)
Joey HAND (USA)

» WE SAY IF BMW WAS SANDBAGGING, IT'S RIGHT IN THE HUNT

RATING * * * * *

LUXURY RACING FERRARI 458 ITALIA

NEW FRENCH TEAM, INCLUDING ex-Prost F1 personnel, steps up from national Carrera Cup (which it won with Makowiecki) and GT Open with a pair of new Ferraris. Poor reliability has so far held back this ambitious team.



DRIVERS

- #58** Anthony BELTOISE (F)
Jean-Denis DELETRAZ (CH)
Francois JAKUBOWSKI (F)

- #59** Stephane ORTELLI (MC)
Frederic MAKOWIECKI (F)
Jaime MELO (BR)

» WE SAY STRONG LINE-UP IN SECOND CAR HAS POTENTIAL TO SHINE

RATING * * * *

LOTUS JETALLIANCE LOTUS EVORA GTE

LOTUS RETURNS TO LE MANS

with this Austrian team – no longer with the personnel that made it a winner in FIA GTs – and the Evora GTE developed in Italy. The #65 car is effectively a Lotus factory entry to aid development.



DRIVERS

- #64** Oskar SLINGERLAND (NL)
Martin RICH (GB)
Kristian POULSEN (DK)

- #65** James ROSSITER (GB)
Johnny MOWLEM (GB)
Jonathan HIRSCHI (CH)

» WE SAY RULE TWEAKS WILL HELP SPEED, BUT A FINISH IS A BIG ASK

RATING * *

RUNNERS & RIDERS LE MANS 2011

JMW MOTORSPORT FERRARI 458 ITALIA

JMW, RUN OUT OF ESSEX AND financed from Belfast, returns to the Ferrari fold after a year with Aston Martin. The team is already a winner on Dunlops in the LMS.

RATING *****



DRIVERS

- #66** Rob BELL (GB)
Tim SUGDEN (GB)
Xavier MAASSEN (NL)

» WE SAY BRITISH TEAM HAS THE POTENTIAL TO KEEP AF HONEST

CORVETTE RACING CHEVROLET CORVETTE CR.R

THE TEAM THAT SHOULD'VE WON GT2 last year is back after an off-season overhaul. It missed the Test Day for financial reasons but took over Larbre's car to test new parts.

RATING *****



DRIVERS

- #73** Olivier BERETTA (MC)
Tommy MILNER (USA)
Antonio GARCIA (E)

- #74** Oliver GAVIN (GB)
Jan MAGNUSSEN (DK)
Richard WESTBROOK (GB)

PROSPEED COMPETITION PORSCHE 911 GT3-RSR

THIS SLICK BELGIAN SQUAD THAT took the FIA GT2 crown back in 2009 mounts its first proper bid for Le Mans honours as one of Porsche's factory-blessed teams.

RATING ****



DRIVERS

- #75** Marco HOLZER (D)
Marc GOOSSENS (B)
Jaap van LAGEN (NL)

» WE SAY MAY NOT BE THE LINE-UP TO KEEP PACE WITH FELBERMAYR AND LIZARDS

IMSA PERFORMANCE PORSCHE 911 GT3-RSR

ANOTHER TEAM WITH PORSCHE backing has opted to focus on one car, rather than the two it runs in the LMS. Pilet and Armindo are out of the top drawer.

RATING ****



DRIVERS

- #76** Patrick PILET (F)
Nicolas ARMINDO (F)
Raymond NARAC (F)

» WE SAY COULD BE A GOOD OUTSIDE BET IF NARAC IS ON FORM

JOTA ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE GT2

THIS KENT-BASED TEAM RUNS A GTE Aston in the middle season of its three-year assent to the LMP1 ranks. Reliability has marred its debut season at this level.

RATING **



DRIVERS

- #79** Sam HANCOCK (GB)
Simon DOLAN (GB)
Chris BUNCOMBE (GB)

» WE SAY DIFFICULT TO SEE JOTA MAKING AN IMPRESSION

RUNNERS & RIDERS LE MANS 2011

LMP1
LMP2
GTE

TEAM FELBERMAYR-PROTON/PROTON COMPETITION

PORSCHE 911 GT3-RSR

PORSCHE-BACKED TEAM HAS trio of factory drivers in lead car in bid to repeat 2010 win. Tandy has been placed in second car.



DRIVERS

- 77** Marc LIEB (D)
Richard LIETZ (A)
Wolf HENZLER (D)

- 88** Nick TANDY (GB)
Abdulaziz AL FAISAL (SA)
Bryce MILLER (USA)

- 63** Horst FELBERMAYR JR (A)
Horst FELBERMAYR SR (A)
Christian RIED (D)

RATING ****

TEAM FARNBACHER FERRARI 458 ITALIA

GERMAN SQUAD IS BACK FOR A third season with a Ferrari on South Korean Hankook tyres. After Paul Ricard and Spa races, the Hankooks seem a match for the Michelins and Dunlops on the rival Ferraris except perhaps in very hot conditions.



DRIVERS

- 89** Dominik FARNBACHER (D)
Allan SIMONSEN (DK)
Leh KEEN (USA)

» WE SAY COULD IMPROVE ON LAST YEAR'S SECOND

RATING ****

LARBRE COMPETITION CHEVROLET CORVETTE C6R

THIS FRENCH TEAM HAS SEEN IT and done it at Le Mans, including winning the poorly-supported GT1 class with a Saleen last year. It is now running an ex-works Chevy Corvette and has already been on the GTE Am podium at Spa.



DRIVERS

- 50** Patrick BORNHAUSER (F)
Julien CANAL (F)
Gabriele GARDEL (CH)

» WE SAY MUST BE IN THE HUNT FOR 'AM' HONOURS

RATING ****

KROHN RACING FERRARI 430 GT

THE 'AM' CLASS MIGHT HAVE been tailor-made for Tracy Krohn, who's raced Risi-run Ferraris under his own banner at Le Mans since 2007. He's switched his team from Daytona Prototypes to ILMC and already won the class at Sebring.



DRIVERS

- 57** Tracy KROHN (USA)
Nic JONSSON (S)
Michele RUGOLO (I)

» WE SAY HEAVYWEIGHT TEAM COULD BE NEAR FRONT

RATING ***

GULF AMR MIDDLE EAST ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE GT2

AMATEURS GOETHE AND Wainwright have set up a squad after testing the waters in 2010. Running under a UAE licence, it's based in the UK in the former David Price Racing workshops and team managed by 'Pricey'.



DRIVERS

- 60** Fabien GIROIX (F)
Roald GOETHE (F)
Michael WAINWRIGHT (GB)

» WE SAY PACE DOUBTFUL. SO IS RELIABILITY

RATING *

RUNNERS & RIDERS LE MANS 2011

CRS RACING FERRARI 430 GT

THE BRITISH CRS SQUAD HAS finally landed a Le Mans entry, but in the year that its focus has turned to developing the new McLaren GT3 it has chosen paying drivers, though Ehret is one of the best 'gentlemen' around.



DRIVERS

62 Pierre EHRET (D)
Roger WILLS (NZ)
Shaun LYNN (GB)

» WE SAY THIS TRIO IS
UNLIKELY TO CHALLENGE

RATING **

ROBERTSON RACING FORD GT-DORAN

THE HUSBAND-AND-WIFE DUO have achieved their ambition of gaining an entry for the 24 Hours courtesy of four years of support for the ALMS. Dick Barbour Racing, which finished second in the 24 Hours in 1979, runs the car.



DRIVERS

68 David MURRY (USA)
David ROBERTSON (USA)
Andrea ROBERTSON (USA)

» WE SAY NOT A LEADING
RUNNER BY ANY STRETCH

RATING *

LARBRE COMPETITION PORSCHE 911 GT3-RSR

LARBRE HAS GONE BACK TO its roots by running a Porsche alongside its Chevrolet. It has taken over the Imsa 911 GT3-RSR that took class honours at Spa, so the Rouen-based team can focus on its factory-backed Porsche.



DRIVERS

70 Jean-Philippe BELLOC (F)
Christophe BOURRET (F)
Pascal GIBON (F)

» WE SAY NOT A CONTENDER
ONCE BELLOC CLIMBS OUT

RATING **

JMB RACING FERRARI 430 GT

THE PAUL RICARD-BASED JMB team that flies the Monaco flag is back for its 11th 24 Hours (three as JB) with a handy 'Am' line-up that includes FIA GT3 race winner Rodrigues and F3 Euro Series podium finisher Marroc.



DRIVERS

83 Manuel RODRIGUES (F)
Jean-Marc MENAHEM (F)
Nicolas MARROC (F)

» WE SAY TEAM AND
DRIVERS HAVE FORM

RATING ***

FLYING LIZARD MOTORSPORTS PORSCHE 911 GT3-RSR

MULTIPLE ALMS CLASS-WINNING team finally gets chance to go for a result at Le Mans, because new Am class means owner Neiman moves over to second car.



DRIVERS

80 Jorg BERGMEISTER (D)
Patrick LONG (USA)
Lucas LUHR (D)





81 Darren LAW (USA)
Spencer PUMPELLY (USA)
Seth NEIMAN (USA)

RATING ****

Vital statistics

Essential information on how to get to Le Mans and how to follow the event once you get there

MAP KEY

-  Spectator area
-  First aid
-  Toilets
-  Camping areas



USEFUL NUMBERS

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www.lemans.org/en/tickets

Tel (33) 2 43142340

BREAKDOWN COVER

www.theaa.com/breakdown-cover/european-breakdown-cover.jsp

0800 072 3279

LE MANS TAXIS

Radio Taxi du Mans Tel (33) 2 43249292

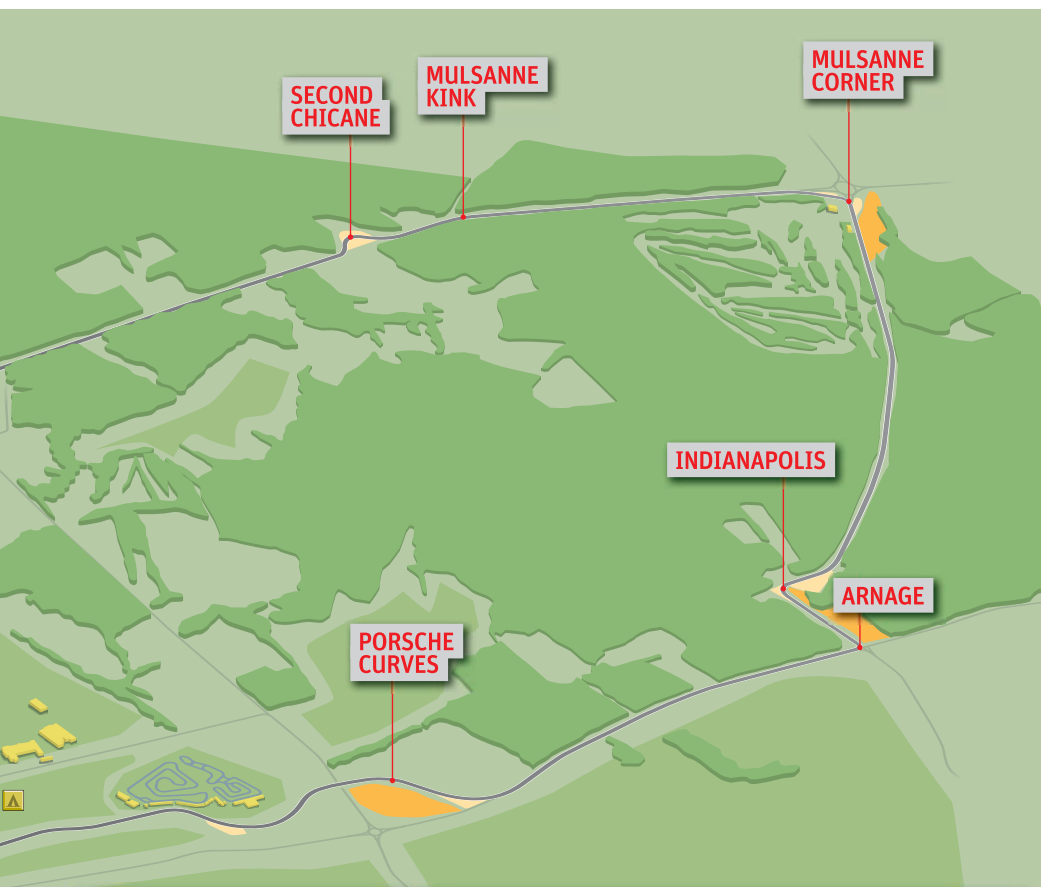
Taxis Stations Gare Tel (33) 2 43249999

Le Mans Taxi Radio Tel (33) 2 43820707

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TIMETABLE

SUN JUNE 5

1430-1900 Scrutineering
(Place Centrale des Jacobins)

MON JUNE 6

0930-1730 Scrutineering
(Place Centrale des Jacobins)

WED JUNE 8

1600-2000 Free practice
2200-2400 Qualifying

THUR JUNE 9

1900-2100 Qualifying
2200-2400 Qualifying

FRI JUNE 10

1000-2000 Pitlane walkabout
1800-2000 Drivers' parade
(city centre)

SAT JUNE 11

0900-0945 Warm-up
1500 79th Le Mans 24 Hours

FOLLOWING THE LE MANS 24 HOURS

Radio Le Mans 91.2FM
www.autosport.com
www.lemans.org
www.radiolemans.com
www.lemanslive.com

GETTING THERE

www.eurotunnel.com/uk/tickets

Tel 08455 191523

www.poferries.com

Tel 08716 642121

(from France 0825 12015)

www.ferrybooker.com

Tel 0844 3718021

www.selectmotorracing.com/Le_Mans/

info_lemans.htm

www.motorsport-tours.com

www.motorracinginternational.uk.com

WATCH IT LIVE ON



LES VINGT-QUATRE COURSES DU MANS

A slice of Alsace comes to Le Mans



RELAIS D'ALSACE - TAVERNE KARLSBRAU
La lande du Camp, Zone des Hunaudieres Antares
72230 Ruaudin
Tel (33) 2 43 61 06 01
lesrelaisdalsace.com

This Alsatian restaurant chain has opened a new branch almost within sight – and very much within earshot – of the Mulsanne Straight. The food is well-priced and plentiful and there's a good range of beers. Don't feel obliged to order the sauerkraut; foie gras is also a speciality of Alsace-Lorraine.

Make a meal of it

British race fans will no doubt want to sample some of the finest cuisine on offer in Le Mans and its environs. So here are some old favourites, and haunts of the teams and drivers who work in and around the Sarthe region

LE PARVIS SAINT HILAIRE

7 Place Saint Hilaire
72000 Le Mans
Tel (33) 2 43 28 92 55

This tiny restaurant, complete with an outdoor terrace overlooking the Sarthe river, nestles in the heart of the city. Its size and reputation mean you may have to book ahead, but your reward will be an adventurous menu. Fish and seafood excellent, but don't expect your waiter to speak much English.

RESTAURANT LE BEAULIEU

3 Place des Ifs
72000 Le Mans
Tel (33) 2 43 87 78 37
restaurantlebeaulieu.com

This posh restaurant – the best in Le Mans, according to some – is in the centre of town. A Michelin star means it's not cheap.



Maison d'Elise: pretentious address but near scrutineering

LA MAISON D'ELISE

8 Rue Doyenné
72000 Le Mans
Tel: (33) 2 43 47 85 11
restaurant-lamaisondelise.fr

This restaurant is located in the old town, overlooking the Place des Jacobins where scrutineering takes place. A new slightly pretentious address, but very 'à la mode' with refined cuisine.



LA PETITE AUBERGE

14 Route Nationale
72380 Saint Jean d'Asse

This restaurant is out of town – 10 or so miles north up the D338 – but comes highly recommended. It offers value-for-money dishes in a friendly atmosphere.

LE PONT ROUGE

Chemin Perrays
72100 Le Mans
Tel (33) 2 43 85 05 87
lepontrouge.fr

Thierry Robin, the owner and a former rugby player, does not like publicity. Nonetheless, away from the beaten track, this restaurant offers traditional taste and refined French cuisine. A discreet place, well-attended by teams and a sure favourite of local driver Sebastien Bourdais. Try the *ravioles de langoustines*. Incredible.



Le Pont Rouge: run by an ex-rugger player

LA GRANGE

240 Avenue Nationale
72230 Arnage
Tel (33) 2 43 77 15 09

This traditional restaurant, offering good food at reasonable prices, is worth a visit if you're out and about in Arnage. The vibe in the centre of town is great on Friday night, when you can drink (and eat) in the AUTOSPORT bar at L'Arlequin on the roundabout in the middle of town (tel 33 2 43 21 10 29).

LE VIEUX MOULIN

72190 Neuville sur Sarthe
Tel (33) 2 43 25 31 84
moulineuville.fr

This lovely restaurant in a converted mill to the north of Le Mans is described as "one of the best-kept secrets of la Sarthe".

LE MANS LEGENDS CAFE

9 bis rue du Port
72000 Le Mans
Tel (33) 2 43 77 15 09
le-mans-legend-cafe.com

This great little restaurant in the heart of the city is a regular haunt for British Le Mans fans. It's packed full of motorsport memorabilia (as the name implies), the food's not bad and it's handy if you're in town for the Parade on Friday evening.

RESTAURANT AUBERGE DES HUNAUDIERES

Les Hunadières
72230 Ruaudin
Tel (33) 2 43 84 98 14

This restaurant is a familiar landmark, even if these days tarpaulins on the debris fencing prevent diners from seeing the cars. It'll be tough to get a table during the race, but you can still pop along for a beer. To find it you'll need to get onto the N142, parallel to the Mulsanne, and follow the signs.

LE FAUTEUIL

39 Boulevard Pierre Lefauchaux
72100 Le Mans
Tel (33) 2 43 85 08 69
restaurant-lefauteuil.com

Le Fauteuil may be hidden away in the industrial zone of Le Mans, but this modern restaurant offering traditional French cuisine is close to the track – it's on the D147 running from the city to Arnage – and has an automotive theme, so try to get a table in view of the Ford GT40!

ENTRY LIST

No	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR
LMP1			
1	Timo Bernhard (D) Romain Dumas (F) Mike Rockenfeller (D)	Audi Sport Team Joest	Audi R18 TDI
2	Marcel Fassler (CH) Andre Lotterer (D) Benoit Treluyer (F)	Audi Sport Team Joest	Audi R18 TDI
3	Tom Kristensen (DK) Rinaldo Capello (I) Allan McNish (GB)	Audi Sport North America (Joest)	Audi R18 TDI
5	Steve Zacchia (CH) Jan Lammers (NL) Casper Elgaard (DK)	Hope Racing	ORECA-Lehmann (Swiss Hy Tech-Hybrid)
7	Anthony Davidson (GB) Marc Gene (E) Alex Wurz (A)	Peugeot Sport Total	Peugeot 908 HDi
8	Stephane Sarrazin (F) Franck Montagny (F) Nicolas Minassian (F)	Peugeot Sport Total	Peugeot 908 HDi
9	Sebastien Bourdais (F) Simon Pagenaud (F) Pedro Lamy (P)	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 908 HDi
10	Nicolas Lapierre (F) Loic Duval (F) Olivier Panis (F)	Team ORECA Matmut	Peugeot 908 HDi
12	Nicolas Prost (F) Neel Jani (CH) Jeroen Bleekemolen (NL)	Rebellion Racing (Sebah)	Lola-Toyota B10/60
13	Andrea Belicchi (I) Jean-Christophe Boullion (F) Guy Smith (GB)	Rebellion Racing (Sebah)	Lola-Toyota B08/60
15	Guillaume Moreau (F) Pierre Ragues (F) Tiago Monteiro (P)	OAK Racing	OAK Pescarolo-Judd P01
16	Emmanuel Collard (F) Christophe Tineau (F) Julien Jousse (F)	Pescarolo Team	Pescarolo-Judd 01
20	Miguel Amaral (P) Olivier Pla (F) Warren Hughes (GB)	Quifel - ASM Team	Zytek 09SC
22	Vanina Ickx (B) Maxime Martin (B) Bas Leinders (B)	Kronos Racing (Marc VDS)	Lola-Aston Martin B09/60
24	Richard Hein (MC) Jacques Nicolet (F) Jean-Francois Yvon (F)	OAK Racing	OAK Pescarolo-Judd P01
007	Stefan Mucke (D) Darren Turner (GB) Christian Klien (A)	Aston Martin Racing	Aston Martin AMR-One
009	Harold Primat (CH) Adrian Fernandez (MEX) Andy Meyrick (GB)	Aston Martin Racing	Aston Martin AMR-One
LMP2			
26	Soheil Ayari (F) Franck Mailleux (F) Lucas Ordonez (E)	Signatech Nissan	ORECA-Nissan 03
33	Scott Tucker (USA) Christophe Bouchut (F) Joao Barbosa (P)	Level 5 Motorsports	Lola-HPD B11/60
35	Frederic da Rocha (F) Patrice Lafargue (F) Andrea Barlesi (B)	OAK Racing	OAK Pescarolo-Judd/BMW P01
36	Mike Newton (GB) Tommy Erdos (BR) Ben Collins (GB)	RML	HPD ARX-01d
39	Luis Perez Companc (RA) Matias Russo (RA) Pierre Kaffer (D)	Pecom Racing (AF Corse)	Lola-Judd/BMW B11/40
40	Michel Frey (CH) Ralph Meichtry (CH) Marc Rostan (F)	Race Performance	ORECA-Judd/BMW 03
41	Karim Ojeh (SA) Tom Kimber-Smith (GB) Olivier Lombard (F)	Greaves Motorsport	Zytek-Nissan Z115N
42	Nick Leventis (GB) Danny Watts (GB) Jonny Kane (GB)	Strakka Racing	HPD ARX-01d
44	Fabien Rosier (F) Philippe Haezebrouck (F) Jean-Rene de Fournoux (F)	Extreme Limite am Paris	Norma-Judd/BMW M200P
48	Alexandre Premat (F) David Hallyday (F) Dominik Kraihamer (A)	Team ORECA Matmut	ORECA-Nissan 03
49	Shinji Nakano (J) Nicolas de Crem (B) Jan Charouz (CZ)	OAK Racing	OAK Pescarolo-BMW/Judd P01
GTE Pro			
51	Giancarlo Fisichella (I) Gianmaria Bruni (I) Toni Vilander (FIN)	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia
55	Augusto Farfus (BR) Jorg Muller (D) Dirk Werner (D)	BMW Motorsport (Schnitzer)	BMW M3
56	Andy Priaulx (GB) Dirk Muller (D) Joey Hand (USA)	BMW Motorsport (Schnitzer)	BMW M3
58	Anthony Beltoise (F) Jean-Denis Deletraz (CH) Francois Jakubowski (F)	Luxury Racing	Ferrari 458 Italia
59	Stephane Ortelli (MC) Frederic Makowiecki (F) Jaime Melo (BR)	Luxury Racing	Ferrari 458 Italia
64	Oskar Slingerland (NL) Martin Rich (GB) Kristian Poulsen (DK)	Lotus Jetalliance	Lotus Evora GTE
65	Jonathan Hirschi (CH) James Rossiter (GB) Johnny Mowlem (GB)	Lotus Jetalliance	Lotus Evora GTE
66	Rob Bell (GB) Tim Sugden (GB) Xavier Maassen (NL)	JMW Motorsport	Ferrari 458 Italia
71	Robert Kauffman (USA) Michael Waltrip (USA) Rui Aguas (P)	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia
73	Olivier Beretta (MC) Tommy Milner (USA) Antonio Garcia (E)	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C6.R
74	Oliver Gavin (GB) Jan Magnussen (DK) Richard Westbrook (GB)	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C6.R
75	Marc Goossens (B) Marco Holzer (D) Jaap van Lagen (NL)	ProSpeed Competition	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR
76	Raymond Narac (F) Patrick Pilet (F) Nicolas Armindo (F)	Imsa Performance Matmut	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR
77	Marc Lieb (D) Richard Lietz (A) Wolf Henzler (D)	Team Felbermayr-Proton	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR
79	Sam Hancock (GB) Simon Dolan (GB) Chris Buncombe (GB)	Jota Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GT2
80	Jorg Bergmeister (D) Patrick Long (USA) Lucas Luhr (D)	Flying Lizard Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR
88	Nick Tandy (GB) Abdulaziz Al Faisal (SA) Bryce Miller (USA)	Team Felbermayr-Proton	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR
89	Dominik Farnbacher (D) Allan Simonsen (DK) Leh Keen (USA)	Hankook Team Farnbacher	Ferrari 458 Italia
GTE Am			
50	Patrick Bornhauser (F) Julien Canal (F) Gabriele Gardel (CH)	Larbre Competition	Chevrolet Corvette C6.R
57	Tracy Krohn (USA) Niclas Jonsson (S) Michele Rugolo (I)	Krohn Racing	Ferrari 430 GT
60	Fabien Giroix (F) Michael Wainwright (GB) Roald Goethe (CH)	Gulf AMR Middle East	Aston Martin Vantage GT2
61	Piergiuseppe Perazzini (I) Marco Cioci (I) Sean Breslin (IRL)	AF Corse	Ferrari 430 GT
62	Pierre Ehret (D) Roger Wills (NZ) Shaun Lynn (GB)	CRS Racing	Ferrari 430 GT
63	Horst Felbermayr Jr (A) Horst Felbermayr Sr (A) Christian Ried (D)	Proton Competition	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR
68	David Robertson (USA) Andrea Robertson (USA) David Murry (USA)	Robertson Racing (Dick Barbour)	Ford GT-Doran
70	Christophe Bourret (F) Pascal Gibon (F) Jean-Philippe Belloc (F)	Larbre Competition	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR
81	Seth Neiman (USA) Darren Law (USA) Spencer Pumpelly (USA)	Flying Lizard Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR
83	Manuel Rodrigues (F) Jean-Marc Menahem (F) Nicolas Marroc (F)	JMB Racing	Ferrari 430 GT



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