

Autosport

GRAND PRIX GUIDE 85

LIGIER

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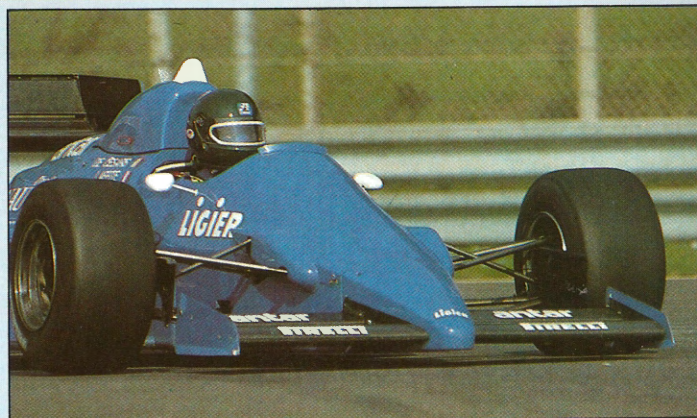
Back to basics

For Guy Ligier the world has turned virtually a full circle. An accomplished sportsman and businessman, Ligier turned his hand to the production of motor cars back in 1968. He employed Michel Têtu as designer of a road-going sports car. Racing versions of the car soon followed, while in 1976 he entered Grand Prix racing as a constructor. Jacques Laffite was his choice as driver.

Now, nine years later, both Têtu and Laffite are reunited with a new-look Ligier Formula 1 team. Têtu has joined as chief designer, having spent recent seasons in charge of chassis development at Renault, while Laffite returns after two years with Frank Williams.

Ligier has been around the Formula 1 scene for almost 20 years now, either as driver or team owner. He established a very successful earth-moving and construction business, responsible for building many miles of *autoroute* in France, but Guy had always enjoyed a taste for excitement. A former rugby player of distinction, Ligier raced motor cycles before turning his hand to four wheels during the early 1960s. He entered Formula 1 in 1966 with a Cooper-Maserati before acquiring an ex-works Brabham-Repco for the following season, during which he scored his only world championship point through finishing sixth in the German GP.

Never among the top contenders, Ligier stepped back into Formula 2 for 1968 with a McLaren, although was moved to retire as a driver after long-time friend and business partner



Jacques Laffite is reunited with Guy Ligier's F1 team for the '85 season.

Jo Schlesser was killed while making his Grand Prix debut in a Honda at that year's French GP.

Ligier had by this time embarked on building an exciting sports GT road car. In withdrawing from regular competition, he was able to concentrate all his efforts on the project, Guy retaining his loyalty to Schlesser by incorporating the initials 'JS' in the designation of each and every one of his cars.

The Têtu-designed JS1 was powered originally by a Ford Cosworth FVA engine. Larger Ford and Maserati motors were also used, however, the latter forming the basis of the JS2, which went into full production and was to be distributed by Citroën.

Ligier's first proper racing car was the JS3, also designed by Têtu, which ran well within the top 10 of the 1971 Le Mans 24 Hours race before a long

stop to rebuild the gearbox. Patrick Depailler co-drove the Cosworth-powered sports prototype with Ligier himself. The involvement with Citroën accelerated during the next few years, modified versions of the pretty JS2 *coupé* often running strongly, even if out-classed by the pukka sports racers.

A return to Cosworth power in 1975 enabled the otherwise all-French team — under the direction of former Matra team manager Gerard Ducarouge — to claim second place overall, after which Ligier switched his sights to Formula 1. Ample sponsorship from Gitanes, who also backed the sports car effort, led to the development of an all-new challenger, the JS5, which first appeared in testing towards the end of the 1975 season.

Andrea de Cesaris begins his second year with the Ligier-Renaults, here beginning the test programme with Michel Têtu's new JS25. The team will now be running on Pirelli tyres.



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The swoopy lines of Guy Ligier's first F1 car, the JS5, here with Jacques Laffite aboard in the 1976 Dutch Grand Prix.

LIGIER GRAND PRIX CARS			
Type	Years raced	Engine	Drivers
JS5	1976	2993cc Matra MS73 V12	Jacques Laffite
JS7	1977-8	2993cc Matra MS73 V12 & 2993cc Matra MS76 V12	Jacques Laffite, Jean-Pierre Jarier
JS7/9	1978	2993cc Matra MS76 V12	Jacques Laffite
JS9	1978	2993cc Matra MS76 V12	Jacques Laffite
JS11	1979	2993cc Ford Cosworth DFV V8	Jacques Laffite, Patrick Depailler, Jacky Ickx
JS11/15	1980	2993cc Ford Cosworth DFV V8	Jacques Laffite, Didier Pironi
JS17	1981-2	2993cc Matra MS81 V12	Jacques Laffite, Jean-Pierre Jarier, Patrick Tambay, Jean-Pierre Jabouille, Eddie Cheever
JS17B	1982	2993cc Matra MS81 V12	Eddie Cheever, Jacques Laffite
JS19	1982	2993cc Matra MS81 V12	Eddie Cheever, Jacques Laffite
JS21	1983	2993cc Ford Cosworth DFV V8	Raul Boesel, Jean-Pierre Jarier
JS23	1984	1492cc Renault EF1 V6 turbo	Andrea de Cesaris, François Hesnault



Didier Pironi showed blinding speed with the 'ground-effect' JS11/15 during 1980.

LIGIER FORMULA 1 VICTORIES			
Year	Car	Driver (Nat)	Event
1977	Ligier-Matra JS7	Jacques Laffite (F)	Swedish GP
1979	Ligier-Ford Cosworth JS11	Jacques Laffite (F)	Argentine GP
	Ligier-Ford Cosworth JS11	Jacques Laffite (F)	Brazilian GP
	Ligier-Ford Cosworth JS11	Patrick Depailler (F)	Spanish GP
1980	Ligier-Ford Cosworth JS11/15	Didier Pironi (F)	Belgian GP
	Ligier-Ford Cosworth JS11/15	Jacques Laffite (F)	German GP
1981	Ligier-Matra JS17	Jacques Laffite (F)	Austrian GP
	Ligier-Matra JS17	Jacques Laffite (F)	Canadian GP
Total: 8			

Ligier's most recent Grand Prix victory came during 1981 with the Matra-engined JS17 as Jacques Laffite mounted a late challenge for championship honours.



JS7, but the attractive blue cars were already well-established within F1 circles.

The interim JS7/9 — Ligier now designates his cars with only 'odd' numbers — and the JS9 continued to provide good service for this patriotic all-French team, although they were never quite able to achieve the sort of pace and consistency necessary to challenge for major honours.

Thus, in 1979, when Matra withdrew their engines, Ligier switched to the ubiquitous Ford Cosworth DFV power supply. He also took the opportunity to enter a second car, thanks to continued sponsorship from Gitanes. Laffite at last realised his and the team's full potential by scoring victories in each of the first two Grands Prix in 1979, while new teammate Patrick Depailler also shone. The new 'ground effect' JS11 was very much the car to have. The French government were impressed, too, finally relenting to continued requests from the Vichy-based team to provide funds for further development. By mid-season Ligier were pressing hard for the World title but then Depailler was badly injured in a hang-gliding accident and, for various reasons, the French team lost their way. Laffite could not reproduce his early-season form and finally slipped to a disappointing fourth in the drivers' table.

Didier Pironi joined forces with Laffite for the 1980 season, Ligier remaining in contention but having to settle for fourth and fifth in the drivers' championship, runners-up in the Constructors' Cup to the all-conquering Williams team.

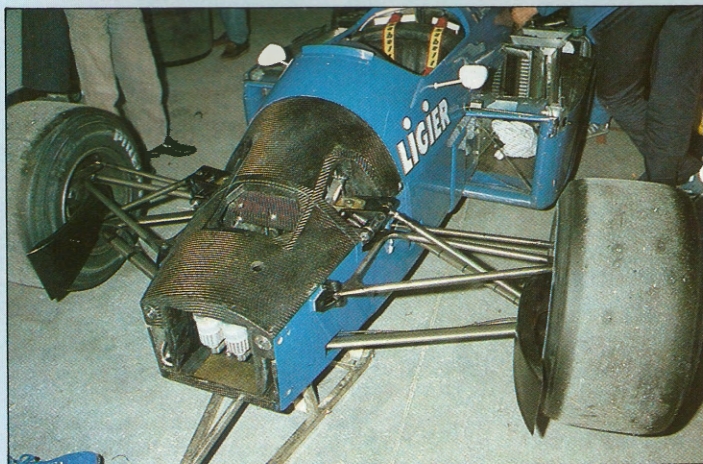
Matra made yet another comeback in 1981, the ageing V12 suitably updated, and Laffite posted some fine performances in a car-engine combination that clearly wasn't the most competitive around. He claimed a couple of victories in a late charge for the championship but again had to settle for fourth.

By 1982, in the face of mounting opposition from turbo-equipped teams, the Ligier-Matra was hopelessly outclassed. The French engine manufacturer had declined to follow the turbo path in direct competition with the Renault.

Originally it had been intended to use Ford Cosworth engines but connections with Matra eventually led to their return to Formula 1 after an absence of three years.

The gorgeous-sounding V12 was tested in the prototype JS5 — designed jointly by Ducarouge and fellow Matra engineers Michel Beaugon and Paul Carillo — by Jean-Pierre Beltoise and Henri Pescarolo, former Matra Grand Prix team drivers both, although it was reigning European Formula 2 champion Jacques Laffite who was eventually contracted to lead the team into Formula 1 for the 1976 season.

Laffite lost no time in proving the combination's competitiveness, recording several top six placings that year and achieving one pole position at Monza. The team had to wait until Sweden in 1977 before netting their maiden Grand Prix victory with the



The new JS25 features a carbon fibre monocoque and new pushrod suspension.

There followed an enforced return to Cosworth power, although Ligier's fortunes reached an all-time low in 1983, gaining not so much as a single championship point.

Renault V6 turbo engines were obtained for 1984 but results still proved hard to come by. New drivers Andrea de Cesaris and François Hesnault were often let down by mechanical unreliability, while the team itself perhaps even seemed to lack direction. Now, following the dismissal from the factory Renault team of Gérard Larrousse and Michel Têtu, who have agreed to join Laffite in a revamped Ligier team, perhaps the outlook is rather brighter. Young Italian de Cesaris stays on to partner the vastly experienced Laffite, who, incidentally, has displayed remark-

able loyalty during a Formula 1 career that has spanned 11 seasons and seen him only drive for two team owners, Ligier and Williams!

The team's new JS25 features entirely new front suspension but in essence represents a major rethink on the 1983 chassis rather than an entirely new car, primarily due to a lack of working time for Têtu. Nevertheless, both de Cesaris and Laffite ran encouragingly enough during tests before the opening Grand Prix at Rio. Ligier will undoubtedly benefit from the solid management that Larrousse and Têtu should be able to provide and their involvement has provided renewed optimism for the new season. It would be nice to see the blue cars back where they belong.

Guy Ligier (right) looks on as de Cesaris reports progress with the new car at Imola.



ANDREA de CESARIS

Nationality: Italian. **Born:** May 31, 1959, Rome. **Lives:** Rome. **Single.** **Career highlights:** 1976 World 100cc Kart Champion, successes in Formula 2 and Formula 3. Joined Alfa Romeo F1 team in 1980, moved to McLaren in 1981, back to Alfa in 1982 and then to Ligier in 1984. **GP starts:** 62. **First GP:** 1980 Canadian GP (Alfa Romeo), DNF. **GP wins:** none. **Best result:** 2nd, 1983 German and South African GPs (Alfa Romeo). **Points scoring average** (points/starts): 0.39 per race. **1984 World Championship position:** 16th = (3 points).



JACQUES LAFFITE

Nationality: French. **Born:** November 21, 1943, Paris. **Lives:** Stoke Poges, Bucks, England. **Married.** **Career highlights:** 1972 Formule Renault Champion, 1973 French Formula 3 Champion, 1975 FIA European Formula 2 Champion. Joined Williams F1 team in 1973 before moving to Ligier in 1976 and back to Williams in 1983. **GP starts:** 152. **First GP:** 1974 German GP (Williams), DNF. **GP wins:** 6. **First win:** 1977 Swedish GP (Ligier). **Points scoring average** (points/starts): 1.30 per race. **1984 World Championship position:** 14th = (5 points).

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