

# MOTORSPORT

## Gilles Villeneuve by Jody Scheckter

Life with the legend



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Andrew Frankel  
EDITOR

I APPLAUD DAMON HILL'S DECISION to leave Formula One. He will do so with dignity intact and a ratio of wins to starts more impressive than all but a handful of drivers. Moreover I admire the candour with which he has explained his retirement. It cannot be easy to go on prime-time television and volunteer that your driving is "not pretty" when any number of more convenient, if less honest, excuses would have been taken by colleagues of lesser calibre.

All I hope is that now he is retired from F1, he stays that way. Hill's problem is without solution; at 38, he is too old for Formula

One and it is now time for him to rest on his copious and well-earned laurels. Still, he should find comfort in the fact that he retires from the top level having achieved more than any he leaves behind save Schumacher; this despite the fact that when Damon was the age Michael is now, he was over a year away from his Grand Prix debut.



ON A MATTER ENTIRELY UNRELATED TO THIS MONTH'S COVER story and, indeed, even to MOTOR SPORT, I happened to spend a day with Jody Scheckter last week. I had been asked by my old employer, our sister magazine *Autocar*, to judge a driving competition between 17 drivers ranging from Lotus test drivers to the aforementioned former Ferrari World Champion. It will not be spoiling secrets or revealing results to say each was asked to execute a manoeuvre which required nothing more than two acts of devastating car control, one in a road car, one in a racer.

What I will say is that, of all the drivers there that day, it would have been easiest for Jody to conclude that it was he who had by far the most to lose, and to decline *Autocar's* invitation. Happily for us, Scheckter did not see it that way. He appeared at the appointed time at the track, chatted amiably with the other drivers while waiting his turn and duly did his stuff. And it was by having least of all to prove but coming anyway that, in my eyes and all results aside, he proved the most.



THE NEXT ISSUE OF MOTOR SPORT WILL, WE HOPE, BE rather special. Not only will it come complete with a supplement dedicated to the return of the greatest event in historic motor racing, the Goodwood Revival Meeting, but it will also carry a free Compact Disc on which have been professionally recorded the sounds of some of the greatest (and noisiest) cars ever to race at the Sussex circuit, from the BRM V16 to Ferrari 250GTO.

Next month will also see changes to the magazine which will transform the way it looks and feels in future. There will be better paper inside, while a fundamental change to the way we bind the magazine will not only make it look much better, it will also last much, much longer.



Cover: Gilles Villeneuve

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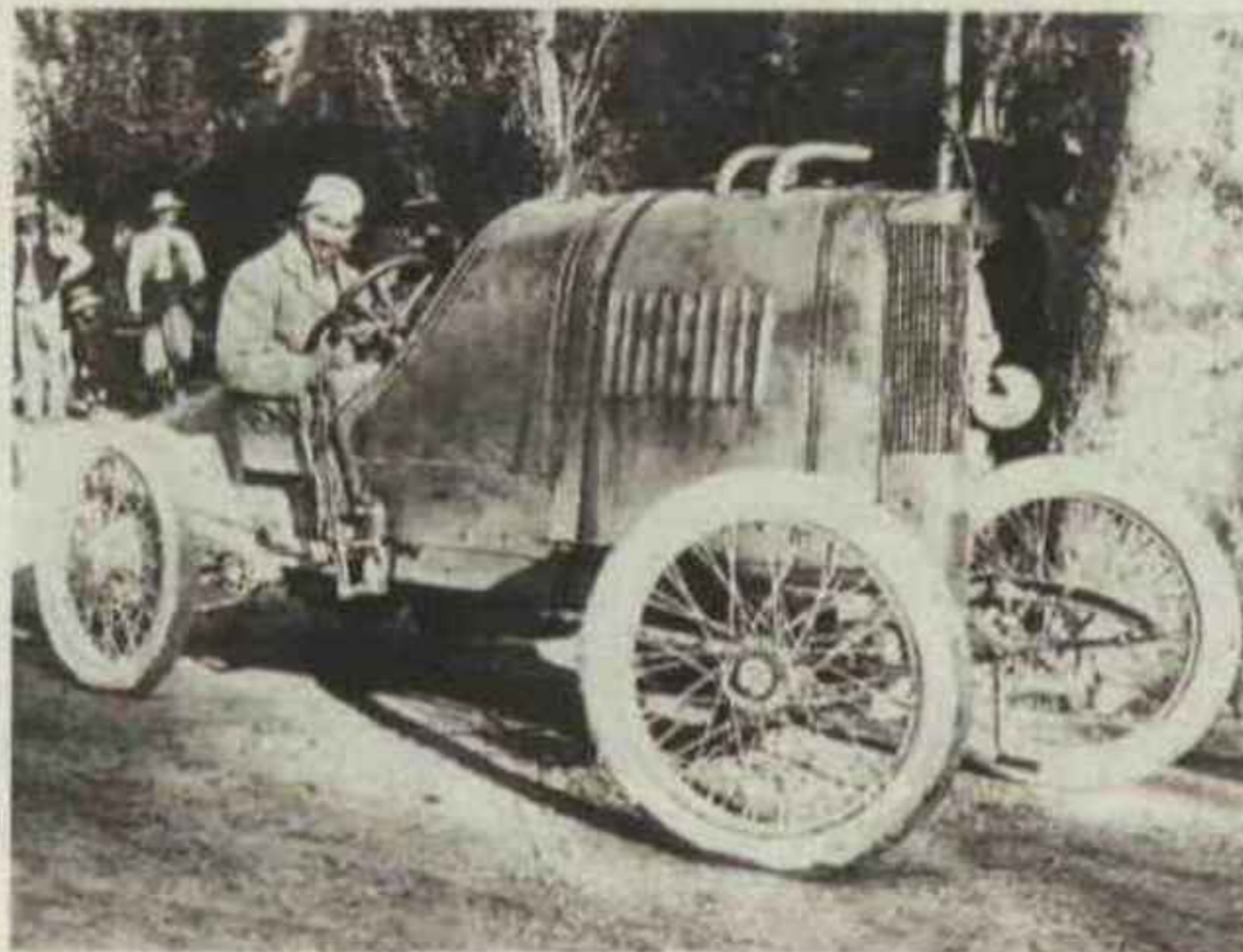
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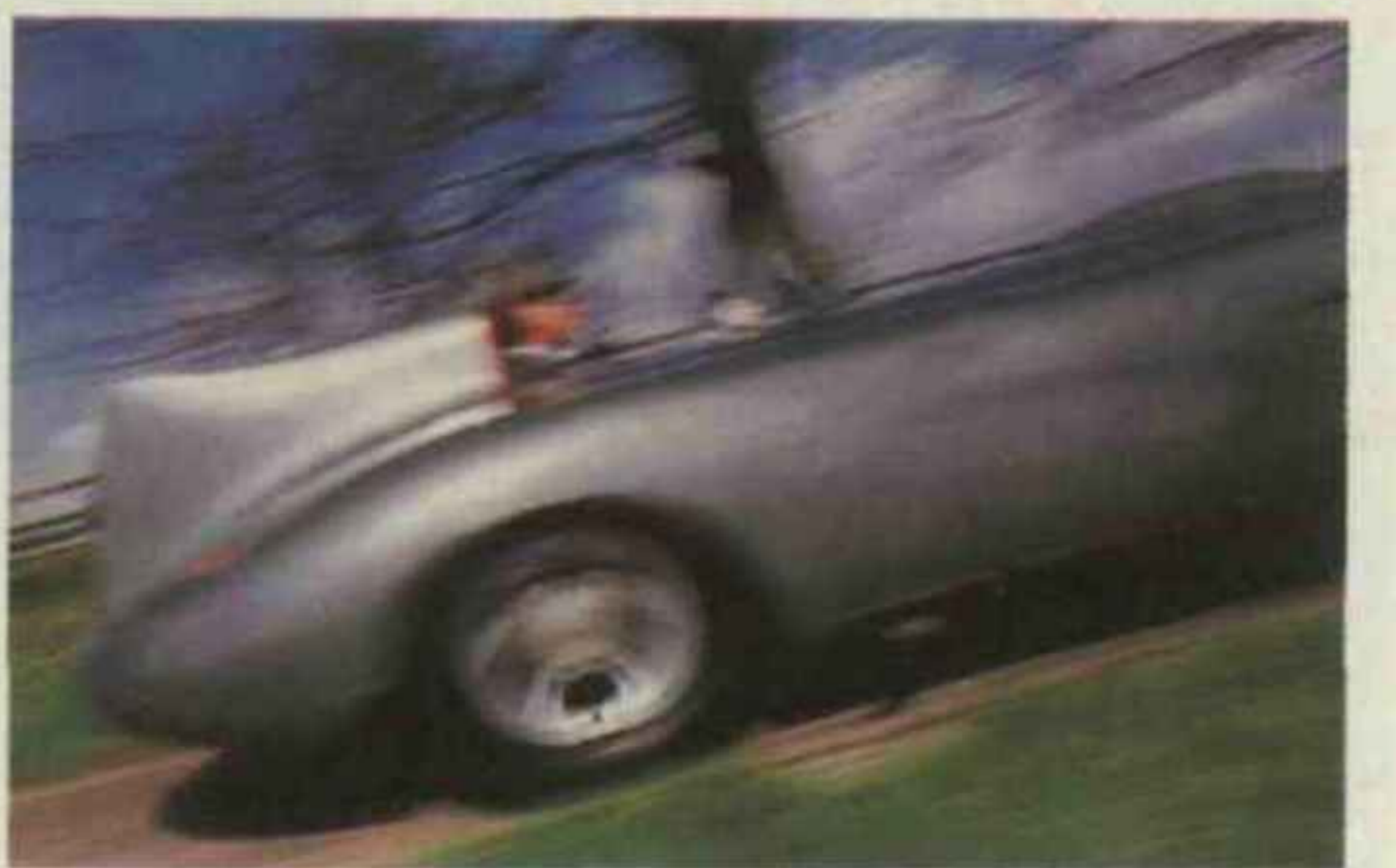
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# MATTERS *of* MOMENT

NEWS, VIEWS AND COMMENT



Bentley (above) seeks to recapture the Le Mans glory of the 1920s while Jaguar (below) is abandoning sportscars to pursue a works Formula One programme

## BRITAIN'S GREATEST MARQUES TO RACE AGAIN

TWO OF THE GREATEST NAMES IN BRITISH MOTOR-RACING ARE SERIOUSLY considering a return to Le Mans. Both Bentley and Aston Martin are, for the first time in years, actively evaluating full works Le Mans programmes and both accept there is little point going to make up the numbers.

For Bentley the question now is more when than if. Ferdinand Piech, the mercurial chairman of its Volkswagen parent has already stated publicly that it would be possible now for Bentley to return to Le Mans and it is believed that it is only a too volatile rulebook that is keeping the project back. At the moment Bentley perceives Le Mans to be too much of a lottery and does not wish to face the dilemma of being forced to withdraw, be uncompetitive or spend millions redesigning cars to meet the new demands of a continually changing rulebook.

Also, when Bentley returns to Le Mans, it will want to do so not only to milk its history but also promote its future; it is therefore unlikely that a Bentley will start the 24-hour race before its new range of smaller, more affordable cars start to come on stream, which will probably put back the date for the return back until to 2002.

But while Bentley will concentrate on Le Mans alone, if Aston Martin returns to the Sarthe it will likely be as part of a worldwide sportscar effort, which

would incorporate the American Petit Le Mans series, viewed as crucial to the on-going regeneration of the marque in the US.

Both marques have triumphed at Le Mans in the past, Bentley taking the honours in 1924 and then enjoying a straight run from 1927-30 while Aston Martin finally reached the flag first in 1959 with Carroll Shelby and Roy Salvadori at the wheel of a DBR1.

In the meantime Jaguar moves ever closer to its Formula One debut. The company is steadfastly refusing to deny the rumours while less official sources have been nodding and winking dementedly for some months now. The route will be through the recently acquired Stewart team which, from the outset,

has operated at only one step removed from a Ford works effort.

The thinking is simple: success in F1 brings credibility, kudos and prestige, three vital commodities to support Jaguar's global expansion into markets and market segments hitherto unvisited by the Coventry marque. Nor is Jaguar put off by its competition heritage coming from sports and saloon cars. As one insider put it: "If Mercedes entered a works team, the only news value would be if it didn't win. If Jaguar goes into F1 it will go to win but also with the knowledge that there is nothing like that level of expectation on us." AF



## DAMON HILL RETIRES

DAMON HILL'S ANNOUNCEMENT LAST MONTH THAT he would retire from Formula One at the end of the year came as no surprise, but his decision to quit with immediate effect following his poor showing in the French Grand Prix did.

Now as we go to press, and after much behind-the-scenes wrangling, it appears that Eddie Jordan and his sponsors have persuaded the 1996 World Champion to compete in the British Grand Prix.

While Hill denies he ever intended to miss the Silverstone race and apologised for "a reasonable degree of shenanigans", his appearance will appease his fans – and suppliers of D Hill merchandise. Nevertheless it has not gone down well with some drivers. Eddie Irvine was critical of the move.

"I don't feel he [Hill] has done it in very classy style," said the Ferrari driver. "He should have turned up, put in three demonstration laps in a road car and quit. If you look at his performances up to now – what's the point? If you have made up your mind to retire, you should do what Niki Lauda did – walk away the moment you've had enough.

"Motorsport is too dangerous if you don't care to do it. If I'd made up my mind to retire, as Damon has, I'd be scared in the car. You can knock on the door so many times before someone opens it."

Hill has said he wants time out, but feels he can still be of use to the sport. A man interested in its history, he will hopefully be tempted to compete in events like the Goodwood Revival meeting, where last year he raced his father's old Ferrari GTO. **MF**  
See *Modern Times*, p12.



13 October 1996 and Damon Hill is World Champion. He would only win one more race in his GP career



Silverstone '92, Damon struggles in the hopeless Brabham BT60D, qualifying and coming home last



Martin Stretton taking the Tyrrell P34's second ever win, 23 years after the 1976 Swedish Grand Prix

## BRANDS HATCH GP CIRCUIT GOES OUT ROARING

HISTORIC RACERS BADE FAREWELL TO THE BRANDS Hatch Grand Prix circuit at the HSCC's annual Historic Superprix on July 3/4 in one of the most thrilling meetings ever to greet the soon-to-be radically revised Kent circuit.

Formula One cars were the stars with Duncan Dayton and John Beasley's Brabhams sandwiching Paul Alexander's BRM P261 in a fascinating HGPCA Pre-'66 Grand Prix car encounter while 23 years after Jody Scheckter won the Swedish

GP in its predecessor, the '77-spec six-wheeled Tyrrell P34 of Martin Stretton struck gold in the FIA Thoroughbred GP round. Stretton was driving in typically spectacular style when Bob Berridge's leading Williams FW08 faltered for the first time this season, with spark box failure.

Charles Agg's Can-Am March 707 was set to win a stunning RJB Thundersports encounter when it became trapped among midfielders on the charge to the line. Having read the situation

better, Chris Johnson's Lola-DFV and Mike Wilds' gallant 2-litre Chevron dived past in the last dash to the flag.

Cooper Monacos dominated the busy BRDC Historic Sportscar event, last dress rehearsal for the Coys Festival showpiece. Frank Sytner won from John Harper, and the Lister-Jaguars of Gary Pearson and Nick Linney. Coys chairman Jeffrey Pattinson took over the points lead in his Aston Martin DB3S as John Clark's Cooper Bobtail crashed out.

The Demon Tweaks team's Jaguar E-type of Jon and Jason Minshaw won the annual Three Hour enduro from the consistent Alpine-Renault of Marc Peccolo/Gerard Besson which did not need fuel at the stop. Superb racing across the board typified the Historic movement's depth. **MP**



Full grids, full grandstands, great racing, huge fun



Richard Burns' Subaru was as fast as a Can-Am March, but no-one matched Heidfeld in 1998 McLaren; pre-war challenge fell to Lindsay's ERA Remus

## MCLAREN SMASHES GOODWOOD RECORD

MCLAREN-MERCEDES RISING STAR Nick Heidfeld annihilated the outright record for the 1.16-mile Goodwood Hillclimb course in a thrilling climax to the seventh annual Festival of Speed on June 20.

Driving Mika Hakkinen's 1998 World Championship-winning MP4/13, the 22-year old German slashed 3.4sec from Jonathan Palmer's 1996 mark, leaving it at 41.6s – an average speed of 100.38mph. "I could

have gone faster, under 40 seconds would be no problem," he said.

While Heidfeld graciously accepted the plaudits of a record crowd (106,000 spectators attended over the three days), Palmer kept a low profile, having crashed Honda's very original ex-Prost McLaren MP4/5 ignominiously en route to the start.

Jochen Mass was the only other driver to better 50sec, cutting 49.2sec in the 1990 Sauber-Mercedes C11

sportscar. Festival regular Marc Surer blasted an Arrows-BMW A8 turbo-car up in 50.8s, heading off Charles Agg who threaded his March 707 Can-Am car up in 51.08sec, equalling rally ace Richard Burns time in the Subaru Impreza WRC.

Pre-war rivalry was fierce, as ever, between Ludovic Lindsay in his ex-Bira ERA R5B 'Remus' and the intrepid Julian Majzub's Bugatti T35. Lindsay, inspired, stormed off the

line in a flurry of Dunlop smoke, his magnificent 59.27sec effort besting Majzub's breathless 60.03sec.

Forty years to the week since it won Le Mans, Aston Martin DBR1/2 flew up in 57.83sec with the exuberant Peter Hardman. And Phil Hill did a superb job demonstrating his 1962 Le Mans-winning Ferrari 330 TR. "I beat Piper and Pappalardo in their P4s," grinned the '61 World Champion. **MP**  
*Goodwood Pictorial Review - p56*



Jim Clark's Lotus 48 – here in Reims F2 race – has been restored and raced

## LOTUS TRIUMPHS IN HISTORIC RETURN

THE A1-RING SAW A TRIUMPHANT return to racing in June for the Lotus 48 in which Jim Clark won the 1967 Jarama F2 Championship round, and races at Zolder and Keimola. It was 29 years since its last outing.

First driven by Graham Hill in the Tasman Championship at Warwick Farm, Australia, in the February – where it wrecked its Hewland gearbox – chassis R1 subsequently fared better with a stronger ZF unit.

Jackie Oliver raced it in '68, placing second at Hockenheim, and then contested the Argentine Temporada

for new owner Gerry Kinnane, who gave John Watson his break at Thruxton in '69. He crashed, but the chassis was repaired in Belfast, reappearing with 48 R2 in Kinnane's Irish Racing Cars team.

Engine failure during practice at Thruxton 1970, with Barrie Smith driving, was its swansong. Owned privately since, the old warhorse was acquired in a dilapidated state by Ecurie Brisk's Bob Tabor in '97, and was restored by Simon Hadfield's team. Hadfield raced it to a class win Classic GP F2 in Austria. **MP**

## COYS FESTIVAL

THREE LE MANS-WINNING CARS WILL star among a tremendous grid for the BRDC '50s Sportscars showpiece race at the Coys International Historic Festival held at Silverstone from July 30-August 1.

Tiff Needell races the winning Jaguar C-type of Hamilton and Rolt in 1953, Lukas Hurni drives the Hawthorn/Bueb Jaguar D of '55 and Peter Hardman is in the Salvadori/Shelby Aston Martin DBR1 of '59.

An unprecedented gathering of more than 40 BRMs and BRM-engined cars celebrates the marque's 50th anniversary there, with 1952 driver Froilan Gonzalez back to drive one of three V16s. Tom Wheatcroft is sending a Mk1, plus a Type 25, P48, P67, H16, P139 and P180 from the Donington Collection.

The majority of the races (Pre-War Sportscars, '50s Sportscars, Pre-'64 GT, Pre-'61 GP cars, Pre-'66 GP and Tasman cars, Ferrari Maserati Challenge) will be decided over Saturday and Sunday legs. Sunday also features stand-alone events for Pre-72 Le Mans cars and F1/F2/F5000 machinery.

## MCLAREN'S NEXT F1

This modest pair of loud speakers, called F1 AvantGarde, is the latest offering from TAG McLaren Audio and come priced at £14,000 for the pair. They are apparently shaped to look like "two dancers who cannot stand still when the music plays". So now you know. **AF**





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# EVENTS OF NOTE

## JULY

16-18 RALLY OF NEW ZEALAND (NZ)  
FIA World Rally Championship, round 9.  
☎ 00 41 2254 44400

16-18 OSCHERSLEBEN (D)  
German Open single-seaters go into the old East Germany, where Sportscar stablemate races for six hours.  
☎ 00 41 22 348 3286.

17-18 NURBURGRING (D)  
FIA Thoroughbred Grand Prix series will wow 175,000 crowd at German Truck GP meeting once again.  
☎ 01451 810855.

17-18 MONDELLO PARK (IRL)  
Can-Am monsters and nimble Group 6 prototypes go head-to-head as Int'l Supersports Cup debuts at Martin Birrane's circuit, near Naas.  
☎ 00 353 45 860200

18 MALLORY PARK  
Local ace 'Mr Bob' Gerard remembered by the VSCC in



*AI-Ring hosts GP July 25*

blasts round the lake.  
☎ 01608 644777.

24-25 PEMBREY  
Classic and Historic Saloons invade the Canolfan Rasio Modur, near Llanelli.  
☎ 01264 772607

25 AUSTRIAN GP (AUT)  
FIA Formula One World Championship, round 9.  
☎ 00 41 2254 44400

29-1 POCONO (USA)  
Pennsylvania Vintage GP

beckons SVRA racers for a weekend of summer fun, including Corvette reunion.  
☎ 001 603 640 6161

30-31 ULSTER RALLY  
Motoring News Demon Tweeks Historic Rally counter runs concurrently with Mobil 1 British Championship round.  
☎ 0121 378 2828

30-1 SILVERSTONE  
BRDC Coys International Historic Festival presented by Chrysler. One of the motorsport calendar's unmissable events, on superb remodelled circuit.  
☎ 01327 857271

## AUGUST

1 GERMAN GP (D)  
FIA Formula One World Championship, round 10.  
☎ 00 41 2254 44400

1 BROOKLANDS  
The Brooklands Society's annual reunion celebrates the 60th anniversary of the last race meeting on the mighty Surrey speedbowl. Features racing car parades and Test Hill events.  
☎ 01344 844287

6/8 NURBURGRING (D)  
27th AvD Oldtimer Grand Prix meeting features FIA Touring, GT and Formula Junior series, plus biggest Group 4 prototype field of the season.  
☎ 00 49 2691 3020

7 CASTLE COMBE  
Classic Sportscars and Historic Formula Ford top annual nostalgia trip at the all-action Chippenham circuit, which draws Britain's largest club racing crowds.  
☎ 01249 782417

7 SILVERSTONE  
The Bentley Drivers Club's annual race meeting celebrates the marque's remarkable sporting heritage.  
☎ 01279 812661

7 1000 LAKES HISTORIC RALLY  
Round four of the FIA Historic Rally Trophy series revisits the legendary jumps of Jyvaskyla from which the fearless Finns learned to fly.  
☎ 00 41 2254 44400

7/8 MONDELLO PARK (IRL)  
Three-litre F1 field promises thriller as FIA Thoroughbred GP Car Championship makes its debut in Ireland on extended circuit.  
☎ 00 353 45 860200



*Coys Historic Festival returns to Silverstone starting July 30*

7/8 PRESCOTT  
Brooks-supported VSCC Hillclimb sees Thoroughbreds take on Hybrids in frantic race against the clock on tortuous path through the orchard. A marvellous day out.  
☎ 01608 644777

8 SILVERSTONE  
The hottest Aston Martins in the country do battle in FPD Savills and Inter-Marque races at the ever-popular St John Horsfall meeting. Mecca for AM people.  
☎ 01353 777353

8 MALLORY PARK  
Classic and Historic Saloon thrashes provide plenty of doorhandling at Leicester's friendly circuit.  
☎ 01264 772607

8 HARRY FLATTERS RALLY  
Safety Devices Rally Championship continues,

with Porsche man Nick Whale top dog.  
☎ 01562 827903

15 HUNGARIAN GP (H)  
FIA Formula One World Championship, round 11.  
☎ 00 41 2254 44400

20-22 NESTE RALLY FINLAND (SF)  
FIA World Rally Championship, round 10. Tommi Makinen continues the defence of his crown at home.  
☎ 00 41 2254 44400

21 OULTON PARK  
Flemings Thoroughbred Sportscars offer entertainment at the Cheshire track.  
☎ 01829 760301

21-22 ZOLDER (GB)  
Superb European Historic F2 Trophy and Pre-'72 Classic Grand Prix cars head to the Omloop Terlaemen, home of the Belgian GP in the 1970s, to celebrate its 25th Birthday.  
☎ 00 32 11 85 88 88

22 CADWELL PARK  
VSCC Shuttleworth, Nuffield and Williams Trophies Race Meeting is stern test of man and machine at Lincolnshire venue. Worth the trip.  
☎ 01608 644777

22 SNETTERTON  
Classic and Historic Saloons should be entertaining on the old airfield track.  
☎ 01953 887303



*Rally Finland sorts men from the boys in WRC this August*



LES PUR-SANG À LONGCHAMP

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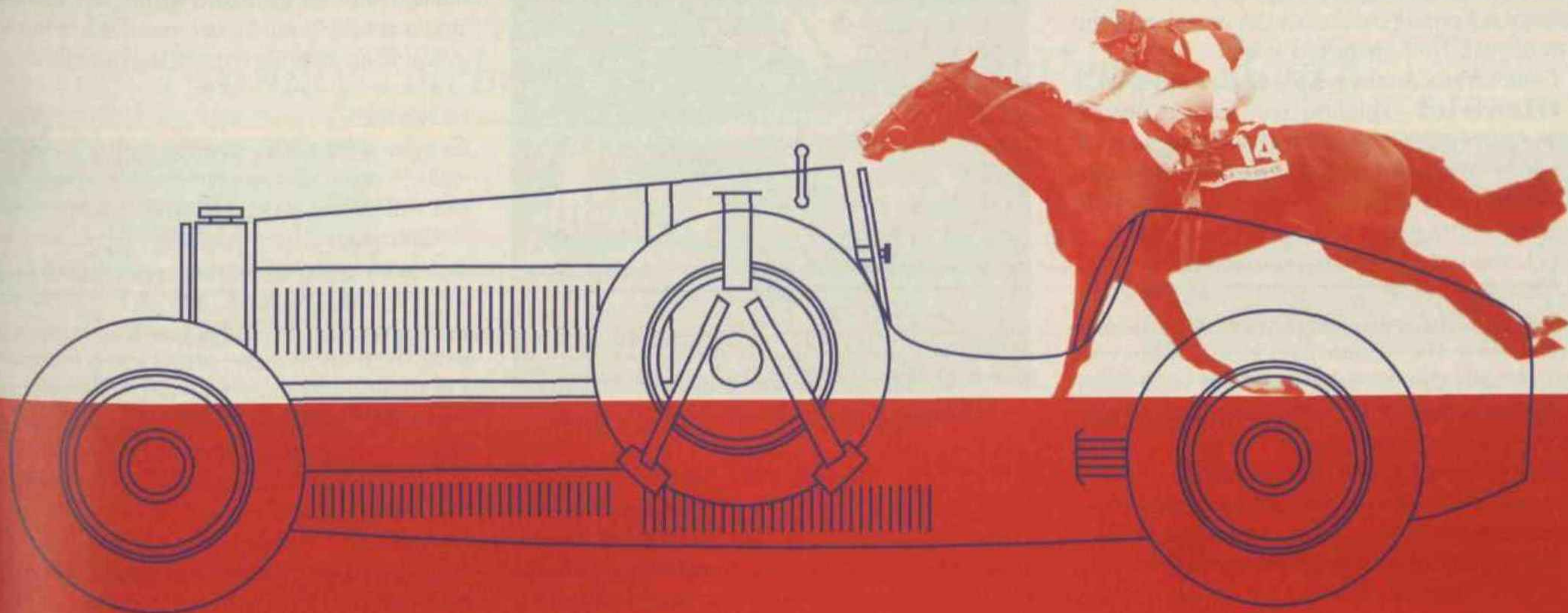
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At Brooks Europe's prestigious annual sale at the famous Longchamp racecourse in Paris, you can expect to find thoroughbred motor cars spanning generations.

Last year's auction saw Edwardian, Classic and the most contemporary of thoroughbreds achieve outstanding prices. The 1902 Mors sold for £336,000, a classic 1932 Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 saloon for £90,000 and an example of today's ultimate supercar, the McLaren F1, sold for £381,000.

Entries are invited for our 1999 sale, once again to be held in conjunction with France's leading auction house ETUDE TAJAN during the renowned Louis Vuitton Concours d'Elegance in the adjoining Parc de Bagatelle.

For further information or to enter a car please telephone Simon Kidston or Max Girardo on +41 22 300 3160 or our French representative François Degand on +33 494 8301 48.



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## ENTHUSIAST'S DIRECTORY No 14

# CLOTHING

# FOR THE MOTORIST

### GLOVES

Driving gloves are the most widely used clothing accessory and a large number of different makes are available. Most gloves have a cotton mesh back and leather palms, although they are designed for different purposes. For instance, racing gloves are as thin and light as possible, while ordinary gloves are designed for warmth before other considerations.

**Les Leston** – The GP driving gloves design is intended purely for racing and have thin cape leather palm with a cotton mesh air-vent back for keeping the hands cool. There are no large seams which is ideal from the point of view of preventing blisters in a long race. In fact, so comfortable are those gloves one forgets they are being worn after a short while. The gloves have elasticated wrists which meets the sleeves of racing overalls to prevent burns on exposed flesh. These gloves are entirely suitable for ordinary road driving, although they are not very efficient at keeping out the cold air prevalent at this time of year. They are priced at 25s.

Leston's Motor Accessories, 314 High Holborn, WC1.

**D Lewis Ltd** – This firm manufactures a pair of racing gloves of a similar pattern to the Leston GP gloves although using pigskin leather, which is slightly heavier. The fingertips are reinforced and the wrist has an elasticated insert. The price is 19s.

D Lewis Ltd, 124 Gt Portland St, W1.

**Slazengers Ltd** – Slazenger driving gloves are designed for the man who requires warmth with his motoring. They feature thick leather palms with double-layer cotton mesh backs and wool fabric linings for maximum warmth. Naturally, with such thick gloves having strong seams they would not be suitable for racing, but for the man who has an open tourer and who likes to travel with the hood down sometimes, these warm gloves will prove ideal.

Slazengers Ltd, Horbury, Wakefield, Yorkshire.

**G Waddington & Son Ltd** – This company produces a large range of general-purpose driving gloves for both men and women drivers, ranging from a pigskin leather palm type, unlined and with string back, at 21s. 9d., to a fleecy wool-lined pair at 43s. 6d. These all have open wrists and are not suitable for racing, but, having small seams, would not unduly hamper the fast driver. Once again, the unlined gloves do not keep out the cold in an open car or walking on the street.

G Waddington & Son Ltd., Newland, Hull.

### HELMETS

Generally speaking, use of helmets is restricted to racing, but some who drive open sports cars might benefit from the use of a helmet, which may result in a shorter stay in hospital.

**Les Leston** – A new design was introduced at the end of last season with extended side pieces for protection of the temples. Research indicates a glass-fibre shell with a cork lining is the best combination for maximum protection, and the Leston GP helmet uses a half-inch lining. The helmet has been submitted to the British Standards Institute for test and was found to have strength far in excess of requirements. It is interesting to note that the American space-man type helmet failed the BSA tests. Both Moss



*The new Leston GP helmet and overalls*

and Brabham have used the Leston helmet and others will probably do so next season. The new helmet is priced at £5 17s. 6d. Although we have no facilities for testing the strength of helmets, it is certainly comfortable and with a weight of around 1½lb is not unduly heavy.

**Slazengers** – The 6810 A type helmet is mainly intended for motor-cycling but could be used for racing. It is used by such experts as John Surtees and Geoff Duke. It is, if anything, lighter than the Leston helmet and offers a large degree of comfort.

### OVERALLS

**Les Leston** – Some drivers think it is an affectation to wear racing overalls but it is no exaggeration to

say several tragic accidents could have been avoided by the use of flame-proofed overalls. Leston overalls have always been flame-proofed and offer a high degree of protection. The intention of the one-piece overall is to cover as much of the body as possible, while the wrists, waist and ankles have elastic crepe inserts to ensure that the overalls will not catch on anything in the cockpit. Poplin is the best material, as nylon melts, and can cause nasty wounds. Poplin is easily flame-proofed by immersing the garment in a solution of 1 lb. of Borax with ¾lb. of Boric Acid powder boiled and added to a gallon of water. The garment to be flame-proofed should be immersed in the liquid, then mangled dry and ironed in the normal way. The overalls are priced at £5.

Leston's also manufacture a separate blouse and trousers to be used by the non-racing enthusiast. For protecting ordinary trousers they should prove ideal. These are available with open and closed ankles at £2 15s. 6d. A waterproof nylon suit is also available for wearing over racing overalls.

### GOGGLES

Goggles are important to the racing driver, especially in along-distance race, where a poorly-fitted pair will become very painful in the course of race.

**Octopus** – There is no better recommendation than to say than Stirling Moss wears them. He wears the 940 Octopus model which can be obtained with a large curved Triplex lens or a flat safety-glass lens. The frame is nickel plated and is mounted on a chamois-leather lined face-piece. The price of the 940 model is 64s. 6d. There are over 30 different types of goggles to choose from in the range.

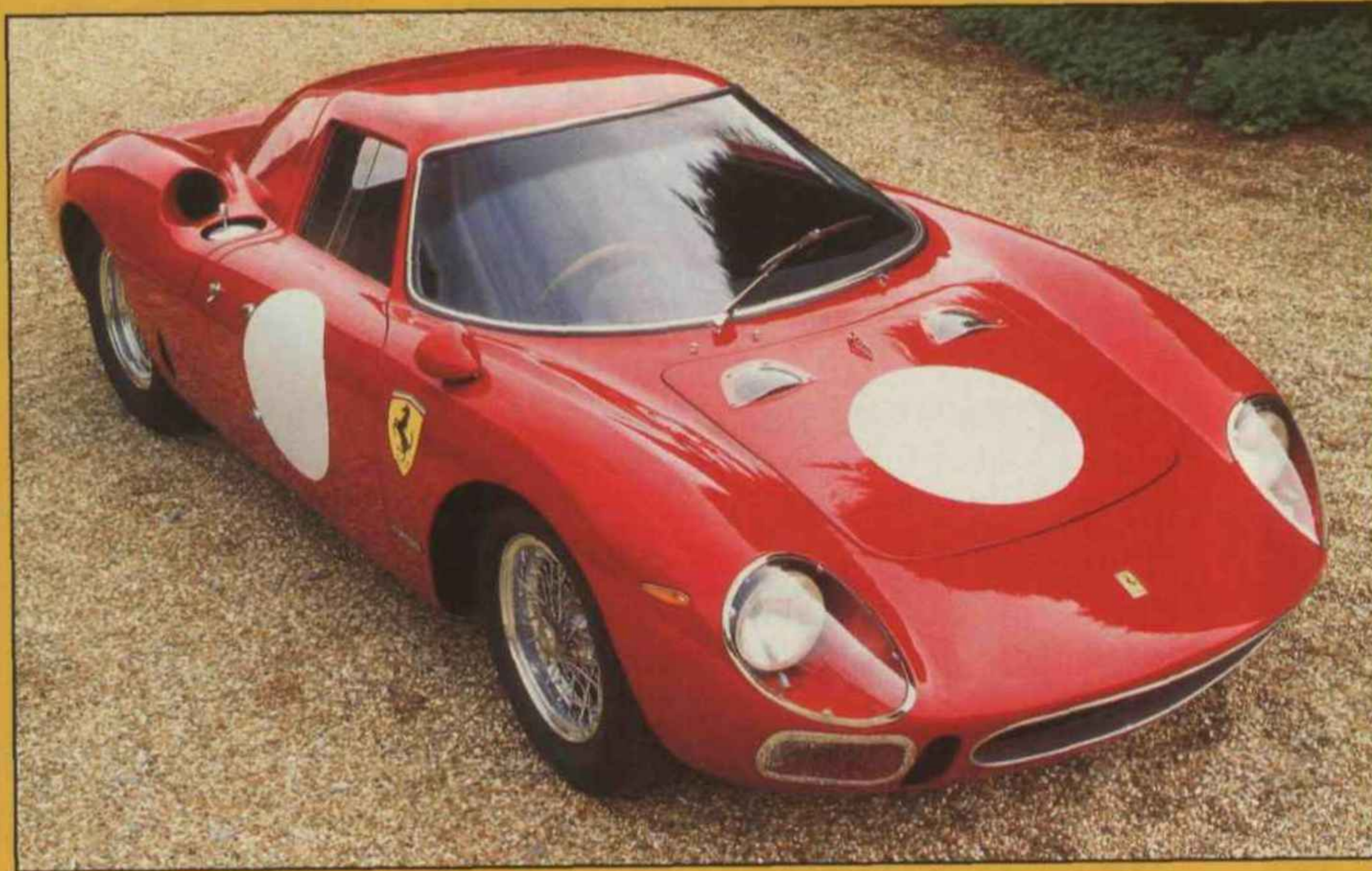
L & M Steiner Ltd, Charleville Road, London, W14.

**Leston** – Popular goggles with racing drivers are a modified version of the RAF Mk VIII pattern, which has angled lenses for all-round vision. These have been modified to fit the latest type of helmet. The lenses are made of Triplex laminated safety glass, which can be replaced with smoke-tinted lenses for driving in bright sunshine.

**Starlight** – The Starlight shield is intended for the saloon-car motorist to combat dazzle at night. From our own tests these glasses certainly do reduce the dazzle from oncoming headlamps and are a definite asset in night driving. They are priced at 9s. 9d. and can be obtained with either smoked, green or amber lenses. □

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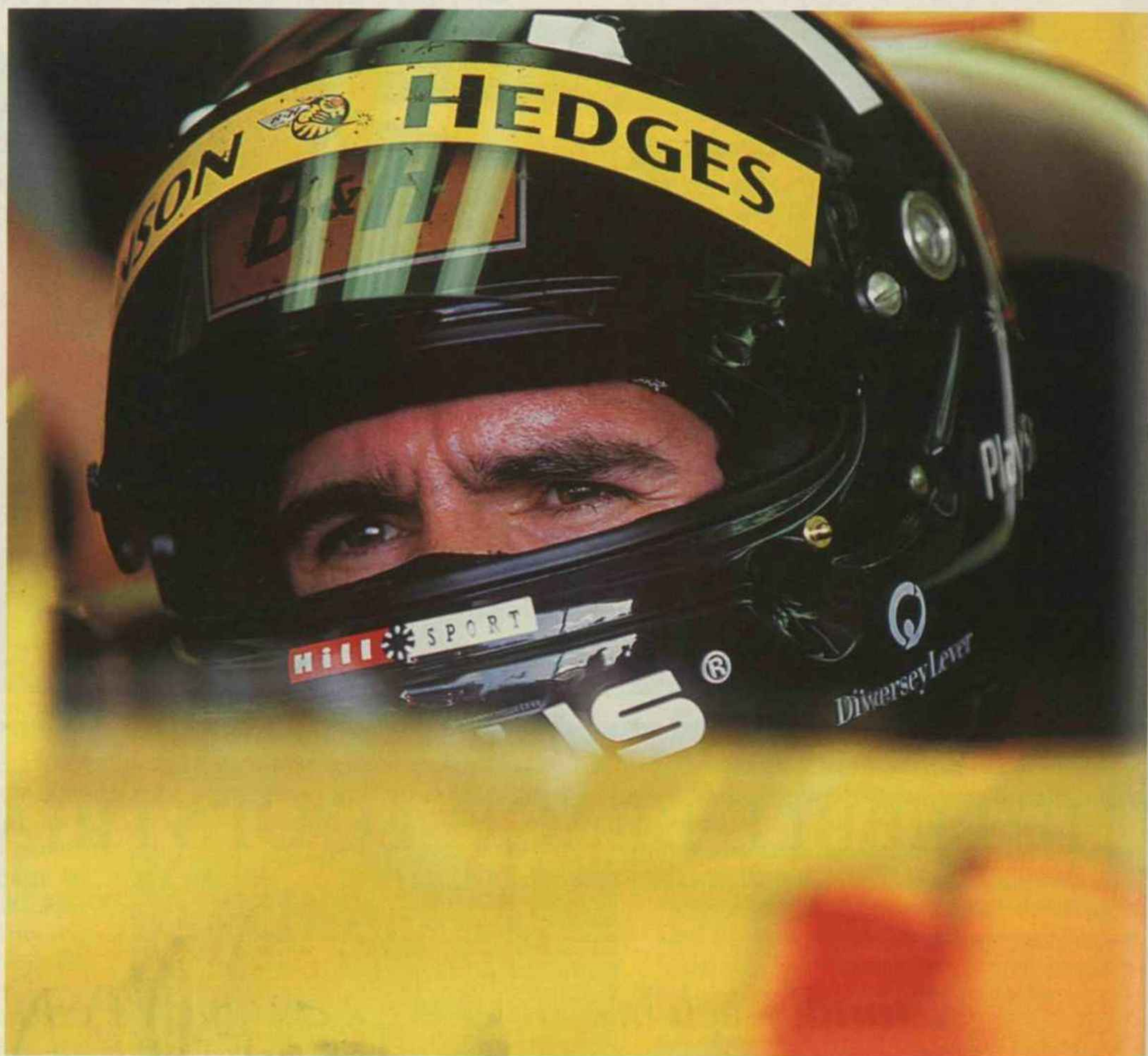
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*After his run of strong performances late last year, Damon Hill's loss of form has surprised and depressed him*

IN POLITICS, YOU'RE ONLY AS GOOD AS your last speech. In motor racing, too, memories are short. Happy the World Champion who chooses just the right moment to retire, while he is still remembered for his glories, and not for the afternoon drives of his career.

On 13th October 1996, in the mêlée of well-wishers, hangers-on and press that clogged the muddled area behind the Suzuka pits after his title victory, Damon Hill could have raised his glass and said: "That's it. I've achieved my life's ambition. I'm now retiring." If he had, he would have gone down in history as a great World Champion who'd won 21 Grands Prix out of 67 starts, a remarkable 31.3 per cent, statistically putting him ahead of Senna, Prost and Stewart and behind only Fangio, Ascari and Clark.

But, quite rightly, he didn't retire. Only one World Champion has ever

retired straight after winning his first world title. That was Mike Hawthorn, 41 years ago, when the huge financial rewards enjoyed by today's champions simply didn't exist. So Damon went on to earn £15 million from his next three years' work, along with the book signings, the TV chat shows, the pizza ads and the work for sponsors. You or I would have done the same.

But from then on, the only way for Damon seemed to be down. When he won that title he already knew that Frank Williams had decided to drop him: he'd found out the previous July, along with the rest of the world, when he read it in *Autosport*. At the time Williams denied it, and Hill only found out later that agreement had been reached with his replacement, Heinz-Harald Frentzen, the previous Spring. Such are the ways of modern Formula One. But that only redoubled Hill's

iron determination to win the title – an unconscious echo of the way Enzo Ferrari liked to unsettle his drivers, and set them off one against another, because he thought it made them try harder. (In those days the result of such pressure was sometimes fatal.)

As Heinz-Harald moulds himself into the happy environment of Jordan, we now realise the German was a great talent waiting to bloom. Yet in four years at Williams, Hill won 21 races: Frentzen, in his two years, won one.

Meanwhile Hill moved on, to lots of money and very few prospects at the wheel of an Arrows-Yamaha. First time out he failed even to complete the warm-up lap. Then, in this under-powered car, Hill brilliantly exploited a tyre advantage in Hungary, took the lead from Schumacher's Ferrari, and led for 66 laps. In the press room the tabloid boys prepared their biggest

headlines, but less than two miles from the finish a hydraulic leak stuck the car in third gear. He struggled home second, Arrows' best result for 13 years. This driver still had fire in his belly.

With his 39th birthday beckoning on 17th September this year, his two-year contract with Jordan for 1998-99 was widely expected to be his last F1 foray. And the first half of last season was if anything worse than his Arrows year. Then the car came right.

At Hockenheim Damon finished fourth, 7sec behind the McLarens and ahead of Michael Schumacher. He was in the points in every remaining race save one: if that six-race period had been the championship he would have finished behind only Hakkinen and Schumacher, third equal with David Coulthard. The culmination was that great win in the rain at Spa, Jordan's first Grand Prix victory – and Damon Hill's 22nd.

So you can't blame Damon for believing that 1999 could give him a swansong season with a little bit of glory here and there. From the start he was very uncomfortable with his car's behaviour on the new, harder, four-groove tyres, but in the first three races he qualified within a fifth of Frentzen, and in Brazil ahead of him. There were two annoying early-lap tangles, but at Imola he finished a strong fourth, with a best race lap quicker than Frentzen's.

I think the moment it all started to unravel for Damon was on Saturday

morning at Monaco, when he put the Jordan in the barriers at Rascasse. At Monaco you never regain time lost in a practice shunt, and he could only qualify the hastily-rebuilt car 17th, tripping over Ralf Schumacher four laps into the race as they squabbled near the back of the field. In Barcelona he qualified 11th and finished a lapped eighth. In Canada he qualified a full second slower than Frentzen, and hit the wall 14 laps in. Three days later he announced that he would race no more after the end of the season.

The French Grand Prix was worse and he wanted to stop at once, then relented to make his last appearance at Silverstone – seven years almost to the day since his first Grand Prix, when he managed to qualify the uncompetitive Brabham-Judd at last and brought it home 16th.

History, in assessing the past three months, may well try to consign Damon to the pile of champions who outstayed their welcome. But I applaud him for realising the fire was going out and stopping now, rather than plodding on to the end of the year just to take the money. James Hunt was another with the courage to stop mid-season: realising he'd lost the stomach for it, he left the Wolf team abruptly after Monaco in 1979.

But others found it hard to realise it was time to stop, tarnishing the memories of their greatness. Nigel Mansell left a sour taste with his

ludicrous sojourn at McLaren in 1995. He did just two lacklustre races before he parted company with the team, pulling into the pits to retire in Spain with "handling problems" just as he was about to be lapped by Michael Schumacher.

Alan Jones came out of retirement to become involved in the unhappy Beatrice/Carl Haas Lola project. He did 19 more races, netted plenty of cash, and earned just four points. Jody Scheckter stayed on at Ferrari after he won the title to drive the uncompetitive 312T5; but he'd clearly lost motivation, failing to qualify in his penultimate race and being lapped three times in his last.

Alain Prost was one who did retire at the top: the most prolific Grand Prix winner ever won his fourth title in his final season. Niki Lauda retired, then came back to win another title: and he won a race in his final season. So did Nelson Piquet. Mario Andretti, having started his first Grand Prix from pole, started his penultimate one from pole too – at Monza for Ferrari – before more success in America. Keke Rosberg nearly won his final Grand Prix.

One World Champion who, it has to be said, did go on too long was Damon Hill's father Graham. His F1 career lasted 18 years and produced two World titles, not to mention victories at Indianapolis and Le Mans: but his last three seasons produced only one championship point. The



James Hunt stopped mid-year too

final indignity came when he failed, aged 46, to qualify for the Monaco GP – a race he'd won five times before. Unobtrusively, he announced his retirement on the Friday of the 1975 British Grand Prix, and did a lap of honour on race day. Tragically, he was not able to enjoy his retirement and running his own F1 team for long. Four months later he perished, along with his young protégé Tony Brise and other members of the team, when his aircraft crashed at Elstree.

Damon is in a multitude of ways a very different man from his father. In my view – although such comparisons are invidious across different racing generations – Damon has shown himself the better driver. He is also more self-critical, more pensive, sensitive man altogether. But in adversity, in the set of the chin, the narrowing of the eyes, Graham's genes are there.

Neither father nor son was a born natural in the Clark or Senna mould. Both had to work for every lap time, and neither had an easy ride into F1. Graham, the mechanic, made it when he was 29; Damon, the motorbike courier, had to wait until he was 31.

Both showed bottomless determination and self-belief in the pursuit of their goals; both had to retain that self-belief when others had consigned them to the Out Tray. Both wrote themselves indelibly into the history books, not just as the only father-and-son to have been World Champions, but also for what are now rather unfashionable reasons: Graham the epitome of Battle of Britain gung-ho who, moustache bristling, brought glory to post-war Britain. And Damon the race winner and world champion who behaved like a gentleman, when his sport had become a business.

Damon, our thanks to you, and our best wishes to Georgie and your four children. May you be happy and successful in the chapters of your life that are still to come. M



Jody Scheckter had an unhappy final year in Ferrari's 312T5 which brought neither joy nor results

**Distant relatives beware.**



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# LE MANS 1999

**AFTER THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT RACE FOR YEARS, ANDREW FRANKEL LAMENTS THAT A FLYING CIRCUS DISTRACTED ATTENTION FROM BMW'S WIN, AND PREDICTS NEW PLAYERS IN THIS EVER-ENTHRALLING ARENA**



*Mercedes had disastrous Le Mans, this (left) being just one of three terrifying crashes; Toyota, Audi and BMW are still undecided on returning for Le Mans 2000*

I CAN'T REMEMBER EVER BEFORE FEELING SORRY FOR the team that won Le Mans, but as I left the track this year, my heart went out to Gerhard Berger, Charly Lamm, the drivers, engineers and mechanics of BMW's works Le Mans effort. They had won the race the way it is almost always won: by being slickest, not quickest. It was BMW's first win in the event and it came in the face of outstanding competition. And yet in the days since the flag fell, not one person, reader, colleague or friend has rung or written to discuss what was a richly deserved win. This despite the fact I cannot remember when the 24-hour race last provoked so much debate.

This was an unusually gruelling race, and the first of the recent era where fatalities were avoided more through good fortune than anything else. The event woke you up to the dangers of racing, and racing here in particular; by the end Thierry Boutsen, JJ Lehto and Peter Dumbreck, a representative from each of the top marques, all had cause to be thankful their races ended only in a trip to hospital.

Perversely, the BMW that won did so precisely by avoiding the headlines. Save one harmless spin, the BMW V12 LMR crewed by Jo Winkelhock, Pierluigi Martini and Yannick Dalmas circulated unobtrusively, rarely gaining a mention in the live coverage and yet never, ever putting a foot wrong. Ahead of it the considerably quicker sister car of Lehto, Kristensen and Müller fought it out with the Toyota of Boutsen, Kelleners and McNish for hour after hour, but when first one and then the other crashed, it was there to pick up the pieces.

It was as much flawless strategy and the best pit crew that gave the two-car BMW squad its victory against three-car entries from Toyota and Mercedes. That and the luck without which no car survives here. The drivers were pushed hardly at all; there were dozens of others there who could have done as much. And that was precisely the right strategy.

We know what happened to Mercedes strategy on June 12, just as we know how very easy it is to condemn with hindsight. This time, however, it

was different. After Mark Webber's two pre-race crashes, those I spoke to were unanimous: Mercedes should not race. The evident danger to drivers and possibly spectators was a given; most thought it was an unacceptable gamble. No one needed reminding that the worst racing accident in history resulted from a Mercedes becoming airborne at Le Mans. Unlike in 1999, Mercedes could not have had less to do with its car taking to the air in 1955, but the memory remains. Add the wounds caused to the marque's reputation when a couple of early A-classes turned over in extreme circumstances and it seemed Mercedes stood to gain little from taking the start of what was, after all, just another motor race.

That the Mercedes board, and indeed its drivers, thought otherwise is a matter of record, though it is hard to reconcile this with 1988 when Mercedes

**"I can't remember ever before feeling sorry for the team that won Le Mans"**

withdrew and sacrificed an arguably better chance of victory when one of its Saubers suffered an unexplained tyre deflation during practice.

Le Mans now is entering one of those twilight zones that have periodically punctuated its history. Usually such times come with predictions of the race's fall from grace and eventual demise but since, to date, every one of them has proved wrong, I am not about to don the sandwich board.

Even so, the works manufacturers from this year have all gone decidedly quiet. BMW is muttering about having to concentrate on its F1 programme so don't expect a works entry from Munich; Toyota awaits the outcome of its foray into F1, Mercedes has kept its mouth shut while Audi, though continuing to develop both its GT and prototype cars,

is still by no means committed to Le Mans 2000.

My guess is that few if any of the above will be back with full works teams next year, making the race a more tempting proposition than ever for the only manufacturer already committed to a full works programme in the top category: Cadillac. Porsche, however, never stays away for long, and there are at least two other phenomenally exciting works propositions eyeing the event: Bentley and Aston Martin.

Both these marques want to return to the Sarthe and with, respectively, Volkswagen and Ford behind them it is now only a matter of time before they do. Both marques perceive the event as core to their brand values and neither has missed the fact that Jaguar is still dining out on its Le Mans wins despite the last being almost a decade old. Now it seems that Jaguar will become the Formula One arm of Ford, while Ford takes on the rally world, it is natural that Aston should fill its traditional sportscar arena.

The agenda for Bentley is different and stems from the fact that its ultimate boss, VW supremo Ferdinand Piech, designed the Porsche 917 which won marque's first Le Mans in 1970. And what better marque to recapture the glory of old than Bentley, whose works record of five wins from seven attempts remains unrivalled to this day?

Nor would I be surprised to see a marque like Maserati return to Le Mans. Though not famed for its results in the 24 hours, few companies ever made sportscars more evocative and now Fiat has declared its intention to establish it between Alfa-Romeo and Ferrari in its hierarchy it would be hard to think of a more effective way of returning this marque to its place as one of the greatest names in motor-racing.

All this, however, is for the future. What is true today is that for all its troubles, Le Mans 1999 was an enthralling race. Those who say that 24-hour races must be tedious should go next year and see for themselves. From where I was standing there was more to thrill and amaze, more intrigue, heart-break and pure excitement in just 24 hours than you'll find in an entire season of Formula One.





# LETTERS FROM READERS

Write to: MOTOR SPORT, 60 Waldegrave Road, Teddington, Middx TW11 8LG, Great Britain. E-Mail: motorsport@haynet.com

The Editor reserves the right to edit all letters

## THE BRITISH MONACO?

SIR,

The thrust of your Brands Hatch vs Silverstone article (MOTOR SPORT July '99) seems to be that BHL are a bunch of greedy profiteers, and the BRDC are a bunch of high-minded intellectuals whose only concern is British motorsport. While I could not possibly comment on either, if it were true, who then is going to sell Silverstone to BHL? Is BHL making profits for shareholders any different than BRDC members making a profit for themselves?

The main arguments against Brands seem to be that it is tightly confined with little prospect of expansion, and that close proximity to residential areas will minimise testing opportunities. These are of course all true – but they have not stopped Monaco, which has the same constraints in spades, from being the classic Grand Prix that it is.

I don't believe this is the either/or situation portrayed in the article. Success or failure for Brands to host the GP will not affect the success or failure of Silverstone or vice versa. Years ago when there was a great deal less money in motorsport Britain regularly held two Grands Prix at two different circuits each year without too much difficulty.

I for one would love to see F1 racing return to Brands. It is that rarity among venues, both a drivers' and spectators' circuit.

I AM, YOURS, ETC,

KEN CLARK, BRITISH MOTOR RACING CIRCUITS

\* \* \* \*

## LEAVE WELL ALONE

SIR,

What struck me in the July issue about the battle between Silverstone and Brands Hatch for the British GP was the general view that, for both drivers and spectators, Brands Hatch is the more exciting.

Despite this, BHL seems determined to transform it into a circuit capable of attracting the F1 circus. The attraction is, of course, purely financial. Global TV coverage, global sponsorship deals and the monopoly of the main players means that anyone who wants a share has to play to their tune. But how sensible is this, when the future of F1 in its current form seems increasingly uncertain? The end of tobacco sponsorship is looming and the advertising which generates TV deals is in danger of destroying the spectacle.

The regulations which now try to reconcile performance with safety demand flat, open circuits with huge run-off areas. Television cameras can cope, but this increasingly isolates the track-side spectator from the spectacle. The spectacular setting and layout of Brand Hatch is simply too constrained to accommodate the speed and safety requirements of cars which rely on wings rather than rubber to maintain contact with the track.

So we are faced with the appalling prospect of a great circuit – one of the world's favourites – being butchered to mimic another, widely considered inferior, for short term, if substantial, financial gain.

We might hope that someone prepared to play the long game might decide to use the unique characteristics of Brands Hatch to promote the sort of racing that drivers and spectators enjoy the most. In doing so, it might remain popular and profitable long after the current Formula One, now depending on the weather to provide excitement, has fallen prey to the passing of sponsors and the casual TV viewer on to something more interesting. Some hope.

I AM, YOURS, ETC,

STEVE BEE, WINCHESTER, HANTS

\* \* \* \*

## QUESTION OF DEFINITION

SIR,

Your news item on the forthcoming sale of Lotus 49B R7 (MOTOR SPORT, July 1999) states that this 1968 car was the last 'privateer' entry to win a World Championship round. I can think of at least one suitable candidate who has done that since: Ken Tyrrell's March 701 when Jackie Stewart won the 1970 Spanish GP. Or is this car classed as a semi-works entry?

There have been other winners since 1970 who could claim to be 'privateer' entrants: Hesketh's 308 in 1975 when James Hunt won the Dutch GP, and Jody Scheckter's wins in 1977 with the Wolf. In both cases the changes in F1 since 1970 meant these teams had to build their own cars, but they both had a lot in common – one-car entries only and the team owner put up the bulk of the capital. On this last point alone, surely these teams should be classed as 'privateers'? I suspect at the end of the day the answer will lie in the definition of 'privateer'.

I AM, YOURS, ETC,

CYRIL DAY, BROMSGROVE, WORCS.

(An arguable point, certainly. However, to us, the term 'privateer' means someone who buys a car from a constructor, not someone who builds or develops their own car. GC)



Hunt wins for Hesketh in '75. Privateers or small constructors?

## 49 FACTS

SIR,

As the author of *Lotus 49: The Story of a Legend*, to be published this September, could I point out a couple of inaccuracies in your July piece on the Rob Walker Lotus 49? You stated that Lotus had loaned Rob Walker 49B R2 for the Race of Champions in 1968 and that it was subsequently destroyed by fire in Walker's garage. In fact, it was chassis 49/R4 – a standard 49 not a 49B, which Jim Clark drove to his 25th and final victory in the 1968 South African GP, which proved to be its one and only start!

It was then sold to Rob Walker and was crashed by Siffert in testing before the Race of Champions. The fire which destroyed it was started by a spark while it was being stripped down in Walker's garage. A recreation of 49/R4, sanctioned by Rob Walker, has subsequently been built and made its appearance last June.

After the Race of Champions Chapman loaned Rob Walker 49/R2, the ex-Clark Zandvoort winner – a standard 49 not a 49B – as there was no other chassis available to sell to him! Siffert made his first appearance in the car at the International Trophy meeting in April 1968 and drove it until the Walker team took delivery of 49B/R7, just in time for the British GP.

On its return to Team Lotus, R2 was resprayed in Gold Leaf colours and high wings and nose fins added for Jackie Oliver to drive at Brands. This was because he had written off his 49B in a huge accident at Rouen-les-Essarts in practice for the French GP. Apart from the wings, this was still a standard 49, with ZF box and original suspension, which made Oliver's performance in the race against Hill in the latest specification 49B all the more creditable. Incidentally, it is this very car, converted to 49B spec immediately after the British race, which was sold the next year to American Pete Lovely, who still owns and races it today.

I AM, YOURS, ETC,

MICHAEL OLIVER, WITNEY, OXON

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## MANY A SLICK

SIR,

I am enjoying Keith Howard's series on technical innovations very much (along with the rest of MOTOR SPORT). The July article on slick tyres interests me, not least because tyres have so much affect on racing and so little is written about them. David Tremayne wrote an article in *Autosport* in 1998 that seems to contradict the 'first raced' theory in Keith Howard's article. It says that Goodyear raced them at Kyalami, and that Firestone had them ready for the next round in Spain on April 18, the race before the Monaco race quoted in your article.

I AM, YOURS, ETC,

TREVE WILLIS, VIA E-MAIL

# LETTERS FROM READERS

## GROUND-BREAKING KARTS

SIR,

Like most people who have written about the development of the slick racing tyre, Keith Howard has failed to include one vital element – karting.

Slick tyres were used in karting as early as 1960. In fact Blue Peter, the remould firm, would turn worn grooved tyres into slicks for 30 shillings (£1.50) and by 1961 slicks were common.

Karts not only turned corners on rails, but their tyres served as their main suspension medium. I am not suggesting that the technology of kart tyres is directly relevant to F1 rubber, but the principle was established ten years before slicks appeared in F1. Furthermore, there were people in F1 in 1970 who had raced karts.

As for Ronnie Peterson using slicks at Monaco in 1971, these were qualifying tyres. According to an interview with Robin Herd which appeared in *Autosport* a few years ago, March was at such a low ebb that they took a gamble and Ronnie raced on qualifying rubber.

In finishing second to Jackie Stewart's Tyrrell in the race, Peterson and March proved the case for the slicks.

I AM, YOURS, ETC,

JOHN BELL, CHICHESTER, SUSSEX

\* \* \* \*

## DATING GAME

SIR,

Keith Howard repeats the assertion that slick tyres first appeared in F1 in 1971.

Smooth tyres have been utilised for track racing as well as LSR and drag racing for many years. In fact, I can think of a couple of false starts in this direction as long ago as 1959, when *Motor Racing* magazine reported on the new F1 Scarab testing at Riverside. The car used 'slicks' without any tread pattern – but where did the idea come from?

I can only guess that the inspiration came from Roger Ward winning a Formula Libre race at Lime Rock in a track-racing midget some months earlier on its regular track type slicks against Chuck Daigh's Maserati 250F.

Michelin supplied Alpine with slick tyres for the 1967 Le Mans 24 hours and then provided the Matra F2 team with some to try in practice at Reims two weeks later. Johnny Servoz-Gavin expressed himself delighted with the slicks, saying that they were worth "a second a lap".

I AM, YOURS ETC,

DAVID COLE, OAKHAM, RUTLAND

\* \* \* \*

## DOUBLE STANDARDS

SIR,

Is it true that the Monza banking has not been used for racing since 1961 (*MOTOR SPORT*, July 1999)? I seem to remember that it was still being



Look after your ears at the race track. You won't get another pair

used for sportscar races as late as 1968 or 1969.

In those days, of course, drivers competed in more than one class, and I am pretty sure that someone (probably the ubiquitous DSJ) remarked in *MOTOR SPORT* how strange it was that as Grand Prix drivers, they refused to race on the banking, while as sportscar drivers, they did so.

I AM, YOURS, ETC,

PHILIP TAIT, LONDON

\* \* \* \*

## OVER THE EDGE

SIR,

I guess that Mr Frankel threw his dummy out of his pram after he wrote the July Editorial.

In a bad mood was he?

I AM, YOURS, ETC,

GARRY TAYLOR, VIA E-MAIL

\* \* \* \*

## ENTHUSIASM v OBJECTIVITY

SIR,

I find it difficult to believe that your correspondent Mr Cracknell (July 1999) has taken four decades to realise that Denis Jenkinson was an enthusiast rather than an objective reporter. That is surely the whole point!

Presumably Mr Cracknell believes that the legendary account of the Mille Miglia is flawed by the lack of objectivity? Very few fellow enthusiasts agreed with the point that Jenks made but that did not devalue his work – rather it enhanced it. If I am re-reading a Grand Prix report from 20 or 30 years ago I want to relive the atmosphere of that race, not remind myself that some no-hoper had retired on lap 38. I would also like to comment on Mr Steve Williamson's robust criticism of those spectators and marshals who wore ear defenders at the Donington VSCC meeting. Like Mr Williamson I adore the sound of racing engines and have indulged this passion so much that I am now well on the way to being stone deaf.

In 1996 I suffered the ignominy of having a perforated eardrum while watching the Grand Prix practice at Silverstone. The offender was Pedro

Diniz and his Mugen-Honda V10. After several months of tests I was told that I had lost a significant part of my hearing in both ears – I now struggle to hear both alarm clocks and birdsong!

Apart from the physical discomfort, for several months I was reduced to driving my Caterham 7 while wearing ear defenders – this looks less than cool. Listen to racing engines by all means – but be prepared for the consequences of prolonged exposure!

I AM, YOURS, ETC,

JOHN ASTON, THIRSK, NORTH YORKSHIRE.

\* \* \* \*

## FUEL INTERJECTION

SIR,

I thought Simon Taylor (*Modern Times*, July) was unduly harsh when he remembered F1 cars in the 1500cc era as 'far from being the most technically advanced'. In fact, this era saw the introduction of monocoque chassis technology, wide-tread tyres, multi-cylinder engines, four valves per cylinder and the universal application of fuel injection.

True, these technical developments would have taken place anyway and fuel injection had been around for some time, but the fact remains that they were introduced or became the norm during this period. While many people dismiss the 1500 cc F1 as irrelevant, I find it a fascinating period and have been collecting information together over the last couple of years with a view to producing an in-depth record of the period.

Returning to fuel injection, I was intrigued by the photograph accompanying Simon's article. By 'coincidence' this shows Michael May in his smoking Scuderia Colonia Lotus 18 on the way to retiring from 1961 Monaco Grand Prix. The same Michael May who, as a fuel injection specialist, worked with Porsche and then Ferrari, laying the foundation for John Surtees' 1964 World Championship.

I AM, YOURS ETC,

MARK WHITELOCK, FLIMWELL, EAST SUSSEX

\* \* \* \*

## FORMULA MOGADON

SIR,

For many years I have watched, either in person or on TV, every Grand Prix. I have watched Stirling Moss, Graham Hill, Nigel Mansell and Damon Hill. I have shouted and screamed when my favourite caught up and passed someone. I have even arranged my holidays so that a race wasn't missed.

However, during the Spanish GP recently I fell asleep. The only part worth watching was the first 200 yards. What has happened to racing? There isn't any. I doubt I will ever again pay £200 to visit the British GP only to wait for hours trying to leave.

Do other fans share my views, or am I just being an old fart?

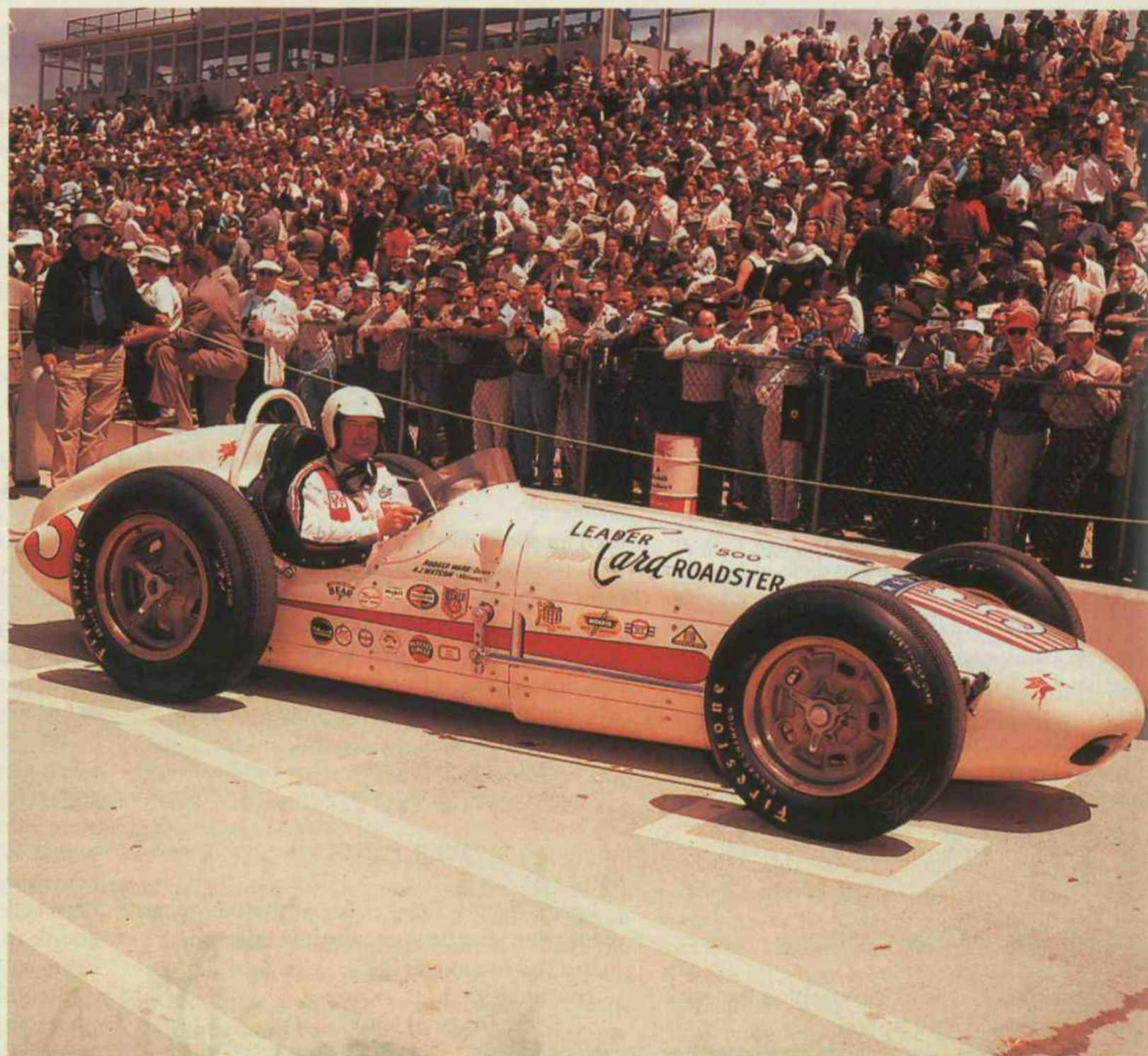
I AM, YOURS, ETC,

MICHAEL WHITTLE, MANSFIELD, NOTTS



# LEGENDS

## RODGER WARD



Indianapolis 1959 and well might Rodger Ward smile – he's just won his first Indy 500 in a Watson-Offenhauser

"BACK IN 1964, I WAS DOING A TYRE test at Trenton, New Jersey, and there's this young guy there, driving a roadster for Clint Brawner. I got a little careless, and brushed the wall, so that was the end of my tyre test. Brawner says to me, 'I've got this new kid here, and I don't know if he's going to be any good or not. Will you take a ride in the car?'"

"Well, I ran about three laps, and that was enough. I says, 'Clint, I'll tell you one thing: this kid may be the greatest race driver in the history of the sport. That car is such a shit-box I can't believe it! I don't know how he was even able to keep it in line down the straightaway...'"

"Anyway, I showed him what he should do, changing the roll-bars and stuff. And the next time I see him, we're at Phoenix, Arizona, and I'm leading – and who d'you think is trying to pass me? That goddam Wop!"

In that damn roadster!

"I enjoyed Mario Andretti from day one. Such a great driver, and such a nice guy. A lot of people thought he was over his head in his early days, but I never thought that. You'd just keep saying to yourself, 'Nobody can be that good'. But he was..."

Just when you start to believe that the tentacles of political correctness have strangled the humour out of motor racing, you meet Rodger Ward. Two-time winner of the Indianapolis 500, among the greatest oval drivers in history, and, at 78, still plainly a tough old boy, speaking of his racing days with a refreshingly salty tongue.

Round the calendar, Goodwood's Festival of Speed is ordinarily my most enjoyable weekend, and this year, given my obsession with 'the roadster era' at Indianapolis, I was in clover, for Ward, Parnelli Jones and Johnny Rutherford were all there.

All are best known for their 500 victories, but many believe Jones would have been a topline Grand Prix driver, had he accepted Colin Chapman's offer to join Lotus in 1965. "Parnelli," Ward quietly said, "was the quickest guy in a race car I ever saw."

As it was, PJ never did take part in a Formula One race, while Ward did – albeit at the wheel of a somewhat unconventional car. When Formula One first took itself across the pond, in 1959, Rodger wanted to be part of the inaugural US Grand Prix.

It was run at Sebring, familiar already to many of the F1 drivers, who ran there each March in the 12-hour sportscar race. For the Grand Prix the organisers made efforts to tart it up.

Stirling Moss was disappointed. "They've knocked the bloody trees down!" he commented sadly, "changed the whole appearance of the place..." Well, things were different back then.

"And where was Fitch? 'Well, I only lapped him three times – and each time I went by, I saluted him, of course.'"

Moss, Jack Brabham and Tony Brooks were there to settle the World Championship, and, remarkably, they qualified 1-2-3, though Brooks did not make the front row, for Harry Schell achieved third fastest time – by means of taking a short cut!

At the other end of the grid was Ward, driving a midget, such as he had raced on dirt ovals throughout his career. To enter this car, he says, seemed like a good idea at the time.

"Earlier that year, I drove one in a road race at Lime Rock, Connecticut. As I had won Indy that year, the promoters wanted me there. I guess they figured, 'Well, we'll get him up here to a road course, and we'll show him how to drive'.

"They gave me the numbers of several people who had sportscars. I called these guys, and their attitude was, 'Well, Rodger, we know you do that roundy-roundy thing pretty good, but road courses are a little different. I got pretty discouraged.' Then Ward got a call from Chris Economaki, doyen of American racing journalists. "Chris says, 'Rodger, there's a guy here in New York, and he's got a new Cooper Monaco, with a 2-litre Climax engine – it'd be perfect for Lime Rock'. I says, 'Wonderful! What should I do?' He says, 'When can you get to New York?' I says, 'Tomorrow too soon?'

Getting a flavour of how Ward tells a tale? "We went to Rene Dreyfus's restaurant, *Le Chanteclair*, for lunch. I

said to the guy, 'Well, what I would like to do, sir, if I might, is get over and see the car, and make sure the pedals are where I can reach them,' and he says, 'Well, the truth of the matter, Rodger, is that we've got a problem.'

"I said, 'Well, what might be the problem?' And he says, 'Well, the fact is that one of the truly great road racing drivers in the world has made himself available to me. They're very expensive, these cars, and I've got to go with the driver who's going to give me the best chance to win...'

I said, 'Well, who might that be – Moss? Brabham?' 'No – John Fitch.'

"I said, 'John Fitch? That turkey came to Indianapolis – he couldn't get going fast enough to get warm!' I said, 'Let me tell you this, I don't know what I'm going to drive, but if I get something, *he* is the guy I'm gonna beat!'"

Problem was, no suitable car was available, and Ward put Lime Rock out of his mind. "Then Economaki called again: 'Rodger, there's this midget...'. I said, 'Obviously, you have to be kidding – I'm not going to Lime Rock in a midget, and embarrass myself'. He said, 'Well, a midget might not do too bad up there'. I said, 'Chris, give me a break...'

"Anyway, the car owner called me, and he's a clever guy, right? He says, 'Rodger, you can't imagine how honoured we'd be to have a great driver like you...'. How're you gonna tell

that guy no? So I called the promoter, and made him double my deal, thinking, 'Well, if I'm gonna be embarrassed, I'm gonna get paid for it!'"

When he got to Lime Rock, Ward found this a very superior midget, and in practice found himself backing off for the others at the entry to corners.

"The premier driver in this race was George Constantine, who had a factory Aston Martin. In qualifying, he broke the track record and of course the applause was unbelievable. I was next out – I broke his track record by half a second, and you could hear a pin drop on the grass..." This was emphatically a 'sportscar' crowd.

"They ran the race in three heats, and in the first I had too low a gear in – I could pass Constantine almost any place, but down the long straightaway he'd smoke me off again. Well, we raised the gear before the second heat, and from then on it wasn't even a contest. We won the race, kind of going away."

And where was Fitch? "Well, I only lapped him three times – and each time I went by, I saluted him, of course. As I was getting the trophy, his car owner walked by. I said, 'Pardon me, sir, but next time you need a *real* race driver, let me know – I'll introduce you to somebody...'

Rodger's car was a standard midget, with 1.8-litre, four-cylinder, Offenhauser engine. How many gears? "One! That was all you had in

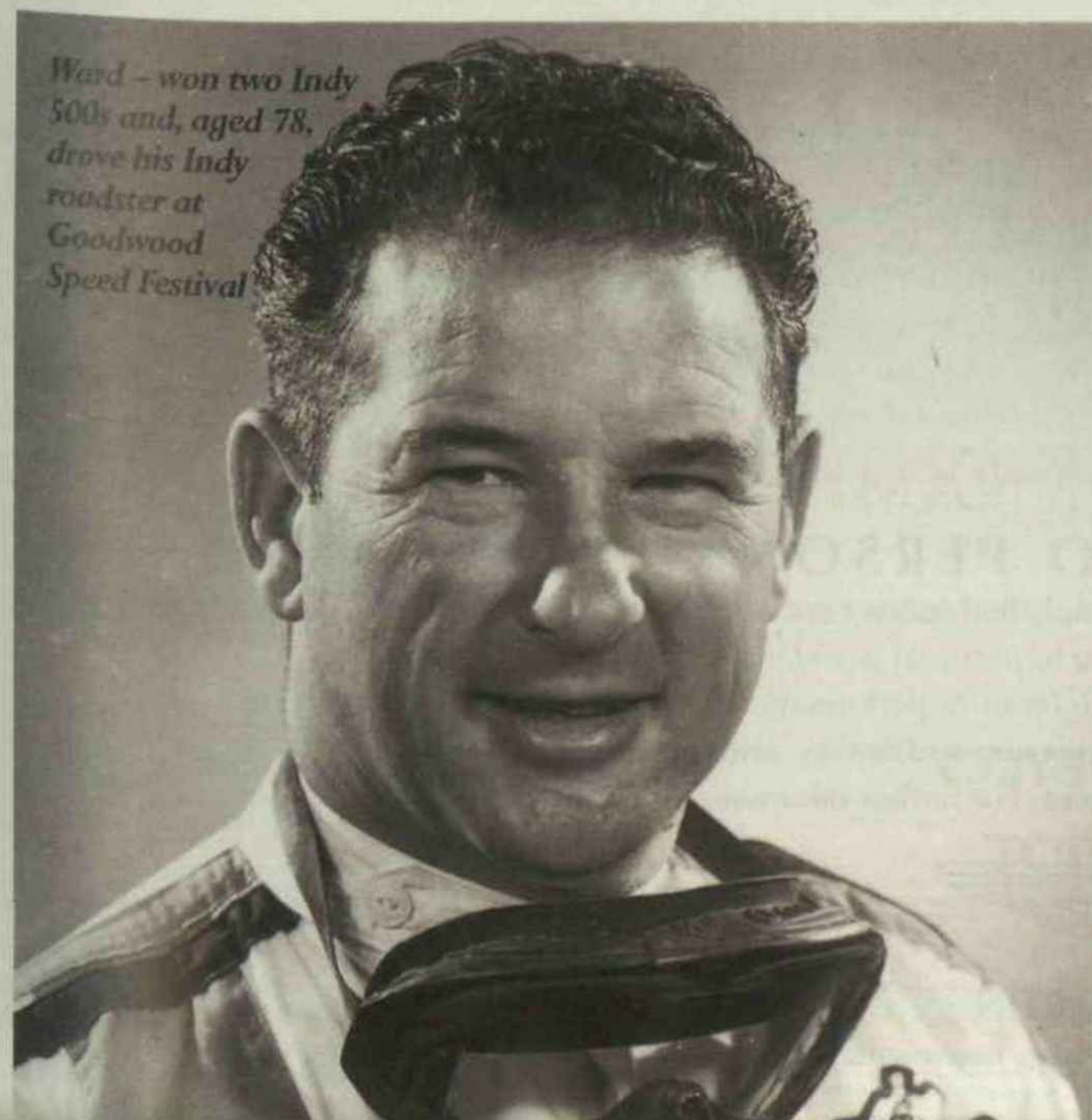
those things. It had drum brakes, too, but in a midget you didn't use the brakes that much – you just threw it sideways into the turns."

Flushed with his success at Lime Rock, Ward decided to chance running a midget at Sebring. "It belonged to Bob Wilke, for whom I was driving at Indianapolis. And we did some work on this car; we actually put a clutch in it, and a two-speed diff, together with a two-speed gearbox, so it was like we had four speeds. To meet the F1 rules, we also had to run on gasoline, which was not that great for an Offy engine."

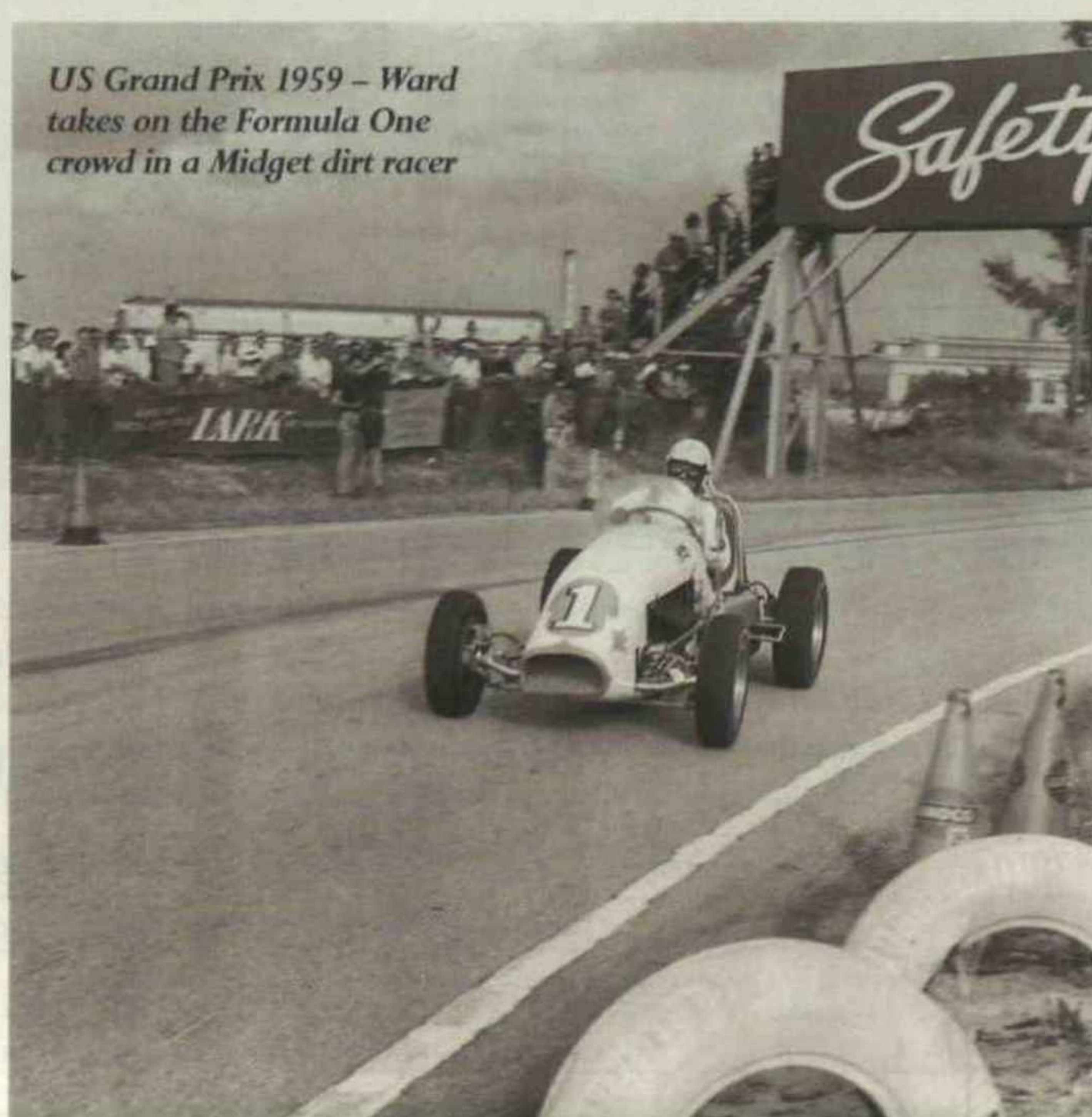
The bare facts are that Rodger qualified 19th, and last, for his one and only Grand Prix, and retired after 21 laps, clutch done. For all that, though, he remembers it with pleasure.

"We had a lot of fun down there. I was getting up to 140mph on the straightaways, which was quite something in one of those midgets. I wasn't really surprised by how quickly the Formula One cars went. I knew they were great cars – and it was absolutely not the same as racing against George Constantine!"

"What I remember most about Sebring was meeting Jack Brabham. He became World Champion at that race, and we were to become close friends. In fact, I told him he should take that Cooper to Indianapolis, and a couple of years later he did. And that, of course, was the beginning of the end for the roadster..."



Ward – won two Indy 500s and, aged 78, drove his Indy roadster at Goodwood Speed Festival



US Grand Prix 1959 – Ward takes on the Formula One crowd in a Midget dirt racer



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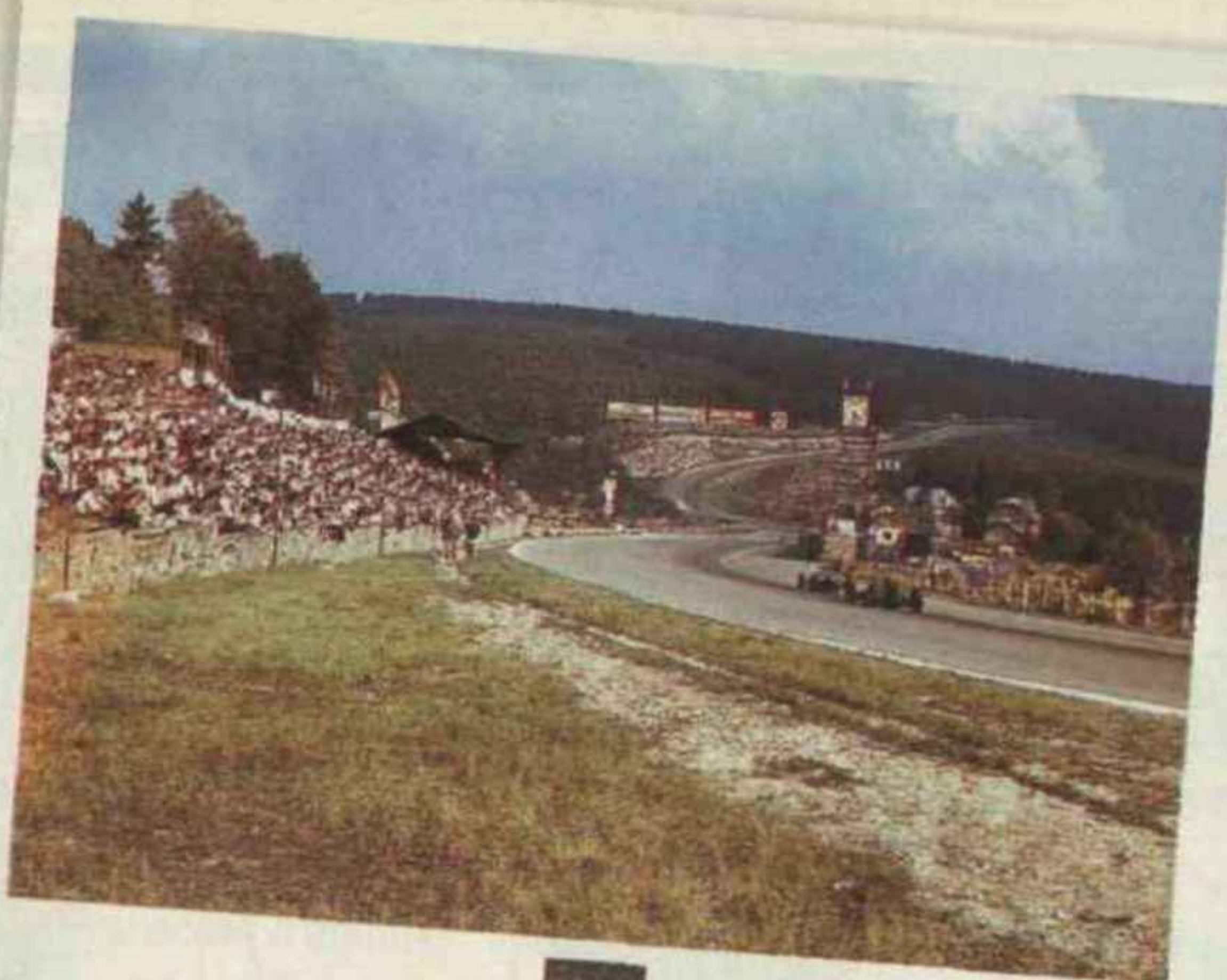
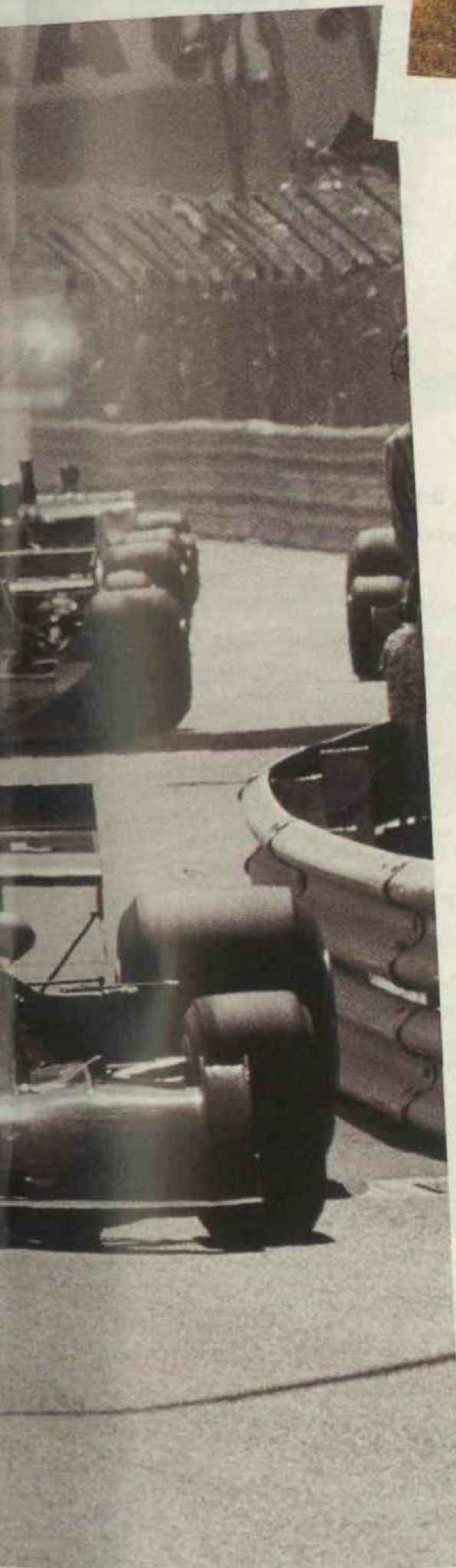


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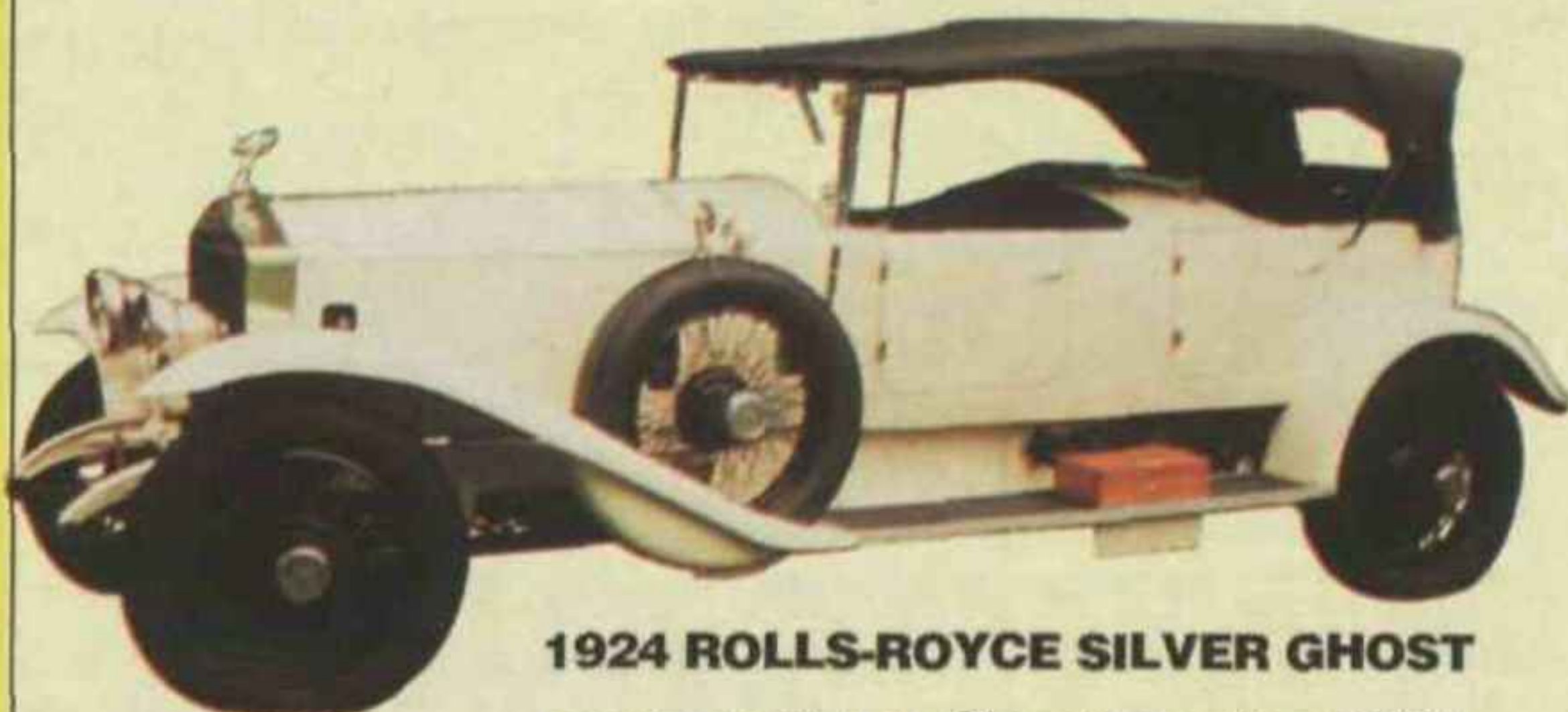
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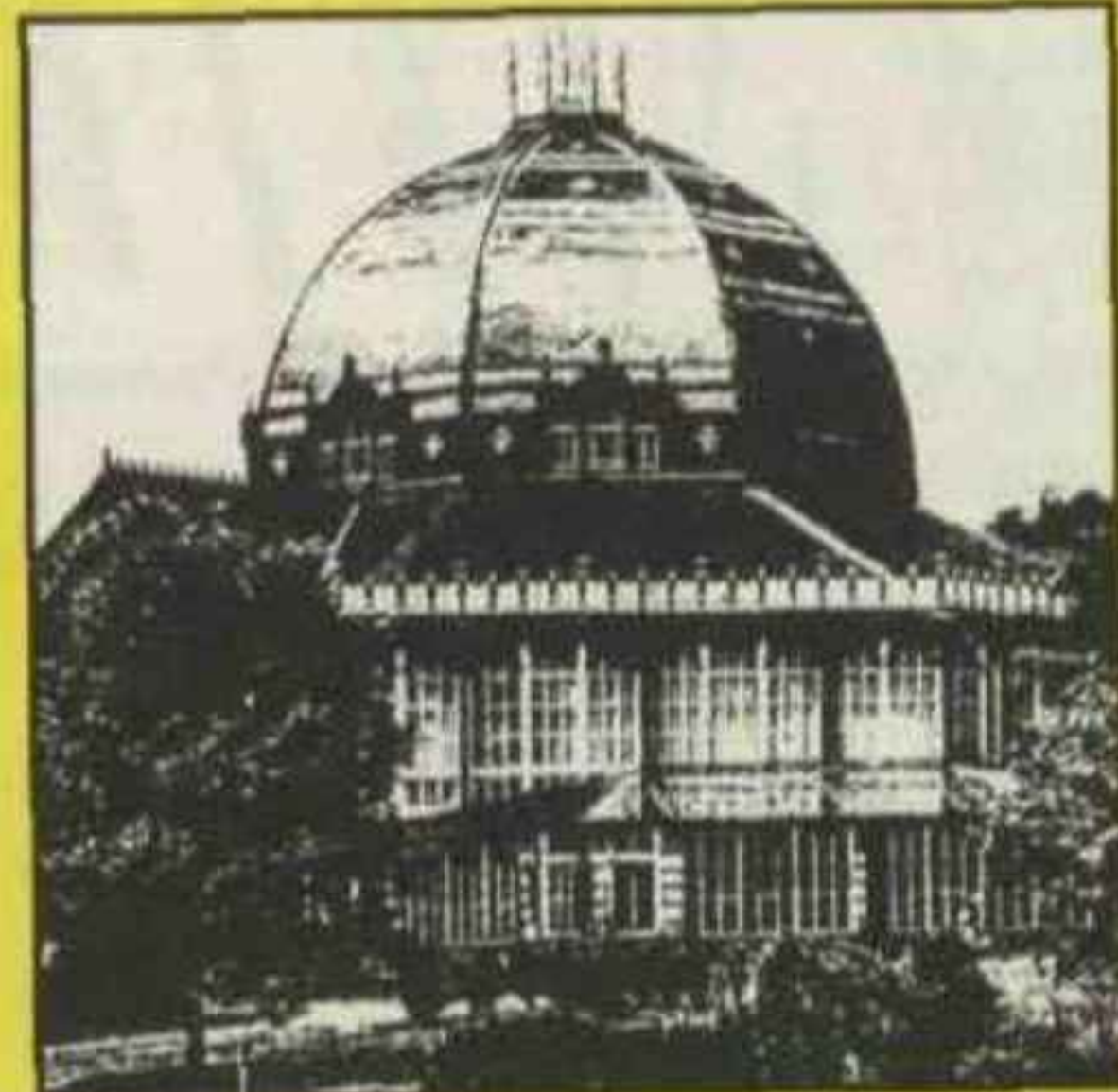
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# Gilles

by  
Jody Scheckter



*THERE IS PERHAPS NO NAME MORE CHARISMATIC IN MOTOR RACING THAN THAT OF GILLES VILLENEUVE. HE WAS TAKEN FROM US TOO SOON BUT, WHILE HE WAS AT THE TOP JUST ONE MAN WAS TRULY IN A POSITION TO JUDGE HIS ABILITIES: HIS FRIEND AND TEAM-MATE JODY SCHECKTER*

**H**ow good was Gilles? Well, he didn't win the World Championship. He was capable of it, no question but he was always trying to be the fastest, not worrying about winning the title, and he paid for it. If he wanted to be World Champion and concentrated on that, he would probably have lost this image of being a daredevil.

Gilles might have won the title in 1982, and Ferrari was certainly capable. But you never can tell; he was still at that early stage of his career. At one time I was more aggressive, but as you grow older you realise you've got to finish races. The way the points work, that's how you become Champion. Some people never lose that stage. Gilles thought fastest laps were important and, in a way, they were; the press loved it when he put on qualifiers and went quickest.

I guess I wasn't surprised by what happened to his popularity after he died. People liked his image and I suppose if you get killed in the middle of it all, you get bigger, not smaller. But I think it's gone away a little recently, especially since Jacques has come along. Gilles is getting more forgotten now, and Jacques has achieved more than his father ever did.

I signed for Ferrari at the end of 1978 and at the time it wasn't clear who'd be leaving the team. Carlos Reutemann was driving with Gilles. I met Carlos in France, and I said, "I'm going to be number one, because that's my agreement. If you stay that's fine with me, we can work together." I think after that meeting he ran away and signed for somebody else! So my team-mate was Gilles.

The team orders were simple. Whoever was in front stayed there as long as you weren't going to lose a place. If you were first and second and the third guy was a long way back you'd stay there, and if you were fifth and sixth and nobody was trying to pass, you would stay there. In other words you didn't fight when it wasn't necessary, and we stuck to that.

I didn't really know Gilles at the start of '79, and in fact I don't remember the early races. Quite often you get people that come in to F1, and you don't really notice them until they start to beat you. I suppose the first time I really paid attention was when he beat me in South Africa.

I should have won very easily, but he ended up winning it. It was painful. I went out on dry tyres, and it was slightly wet. It

**"All of a sudden I was under massive pressure; I was number one but he'd won two races. This was tough"**

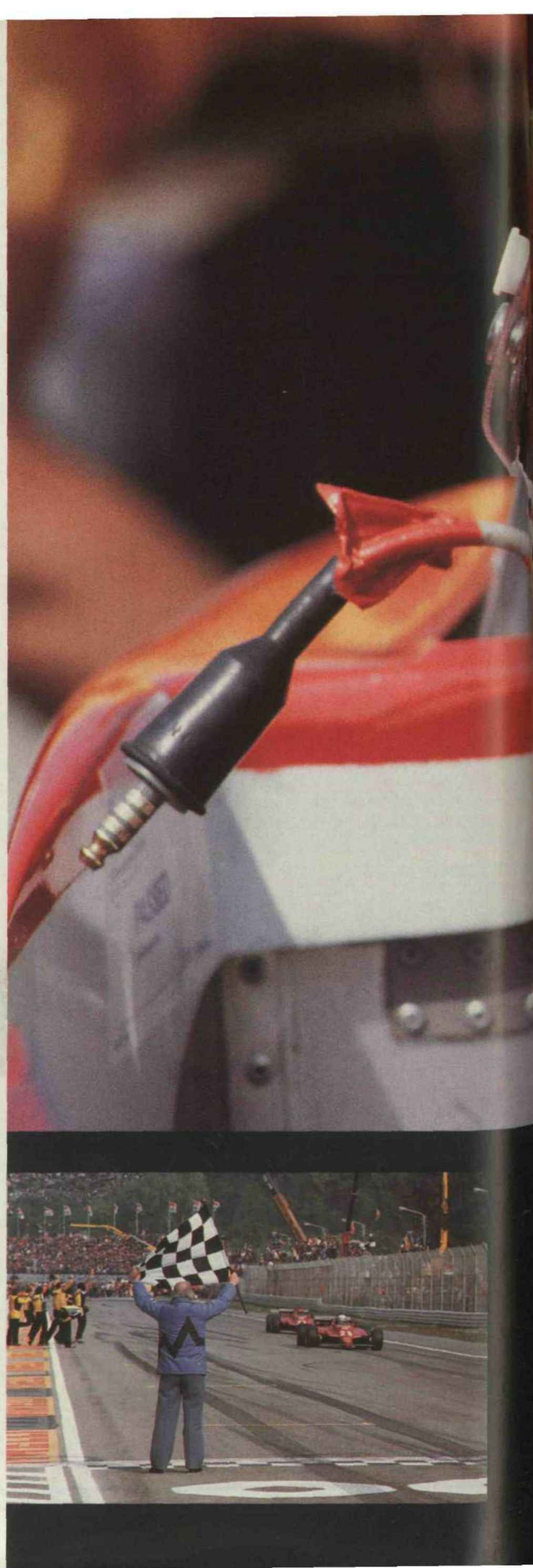
was the right decision, and I was 30 seconds ahead. He started on wets then changed to dries. But my dries went off – the Michelins weren't very solid – so the car became undriveable at the end.

He caught me up so I went in and put on a new set of tyres and started catching him again, but it was all over by then. It was at that stage that team orders came into being. He then won in Long Beach. So all of a sudden I was under massive pressure; I was the number one, but he'd won two races. This was tough stuff.

However, I always worked very well with Gilles. We had an honest and open relationship, which was part of our success. There was no bullshit: if he made an adjustment and went quicker, he'd tell me and I would tell him. That's what kept us in such a good relationship, and was part of us winning the championship.

Ferrari drivers were traditionally always fighting each other, and that's what the press liked. Part of our skill was to keep working as a team. Gilles had a good relationship with Enzo, and I would say it was friendlier than mine. He certainly had a lot of respect for Enzo; I never remember anything other than that.

We spent a lot of time together in Monaco. He liked to ➤







LEFT: THE FATEFUL MOMENT AT IMOLA WHEN PIRONI STOLE VICTORY FROM UNDER VILLENEUVE IN DIRECT CONTRADICTION TO THEIR AGREEMENT. VILLENEUVE VOWED NEVER TO SPEAK TO HIS TEAM-MATE AGAIN AND DIED IN PRACTICE FOR THE NEXT RACE AT ZOLDER, TRYING TO OUT-QUALIFY PIRONI

RIGHT: HAPPIER TIMES. GILLES CLINCHES SECOND PLACE IN '79 FRENCH GP FROM RENE ARNOUX'S RENAULT AFTER THE MOST TITANIC BATTLE IN MODERN GRAND PRIX RACING. ALMOST UNNOTICED JEAN-PIERRE JABOUILLE HAD WON THE RACE, THE FIRST FOR A TURBOCHARGED FORMULA ONE CAR



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**512 BB Rosso Corsa,**  
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**Testa Rossa, Rosso Corsa,**  
crema hide, one owner, £53,500

**355 Spider F1 Rosso Corsa,**  
Crema hide, Rosso carpets, challenge rear grille,  
supplied and serviced by us, £102,950

**355 Spider Giallo Modena,**  
nero hide, £91,950

**355 GTS choice of (3)**

**355 B Choice of (5)**

**348 GTC Rosso Corsa/Rosso**  
cloth, 3 owners, £57,950

**348 TB Metallic Nero,**  
grey hide, £44,950

**328 GTS Metallic Nero or Rosso**  
choice of (2)

**308 GT4 Argento/Crema hide,**  
good history, £22,500

**Maserati Ghibli Auto Verde Tundra,**  
Nero hide, one owner, £37,500

**GTD 911 Turbo speed,**  
yellow, black hide, 430 bhp, one owner, £69,950

**BMW 23 M,**  
silver, one owner, £34,950

**Jaguar E-type,**  
floor roadster, chassis number 170, silver grey,  
red hide, full restoration 1988, £32,950

**Lamborghini Diablo VT Roadster,**  
Scuro blue Metallic, one owner, £122,950

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## On the Road to Success?

It's hard to believe, but 20 years have passed since a Ferrari driver last won the World Championship with Jody Scheckter and the 312 T4. For the greatest F1 team of all, that's a long time in the wilderness.

Today, Ferrari has the passion and ability to correct 20 years of under-achievement. With men the calibre of Luca di Montezemolo, Jean Todt, Ross Brawn and Michael Schumacher, rarely has Ferrari enjoyed better management, designers and drivers, and just as importantly, such stability among key personnel. After coming so close in 1997 and 1998, is Schumacher on course in 1999 to match Scheckter's success of 1979?



Jody Scheckter. 4th at 1979  
Spanish GP Ferrari 312 T4

Both drivers suffered disappointing starts to their seasons, with neither Scheckter nor Schumacher scoring in the first round (at Argentina in 1979, and Australia this year). Matters improved somewhat in the second race, with Scheckter picking up a solitary point for 6th, while Schumacher brought his Ferrari home in 2nd to register his first points of the season.

At least Schumacher has not had to contend with driving an outdated car for the first few races of 1999, as Scheckter did at the start of his championship year. Lotus had dominated the previous season with the radical ground-effect Lotus 79, and as rival teams developed their own second-generation ground effect cars, Ferrari were in danger of being left behind. The new Ferrari 312 T4 couldn't come soon enough.

When the new car did arrive on the scene for the third round of the championship in South Africa, the impact was immediate. From second and third on the grid, the Ferraris blitzed the opposition, Gilles Villeneuve heading Scheckter home for a Ferrari 1-2. After a slow start, the Ferrari championship challenge was back on track.

Schumacher, too, was back on course in the third round of the championship, dominating the San Marino GP to give Ferrari their first Imola win for 16 years. A sublime performance at Monaco

brought Schumacher another ten points.

The fourth round of the 1979 Championship was a street race at Long Beach, USA. The 312 T4s proved durable as well as quick to score the second consecutive 1-2 for Ferrari, Villeneuve again edging out Scheckter. The Ligier-Ford of Patrick Depailler interrupted Ferrari's run of wins in the fifth round in 1979 with Scheckter trailing home 4th at Jarama, Spain. This year's fifth race in Spain also proved a disappointment for Schumacher, though third place at Barcelona was enough to maintain his championship lead.

However, rounds 6 and 7 really cemented Scheckter's challenge for the championship, with consecutive wins at Zolder in Belgium and in Monaco. Schumacher's championship, by comparison,

has suffered a couple of set backs. The Canadian Grand Prix ended in the wall, while two points for fifth place was a disappointing haul from the French Grand Prix.

There are parallels between Scheckter's championship year and the first part of Schumacher's 1999 campaign. Both drivers failed to score in the opening round, and both men saw their team-mates win first. And in 1979 and 1999, the Ferrari team leader won convincingly at Monaco.

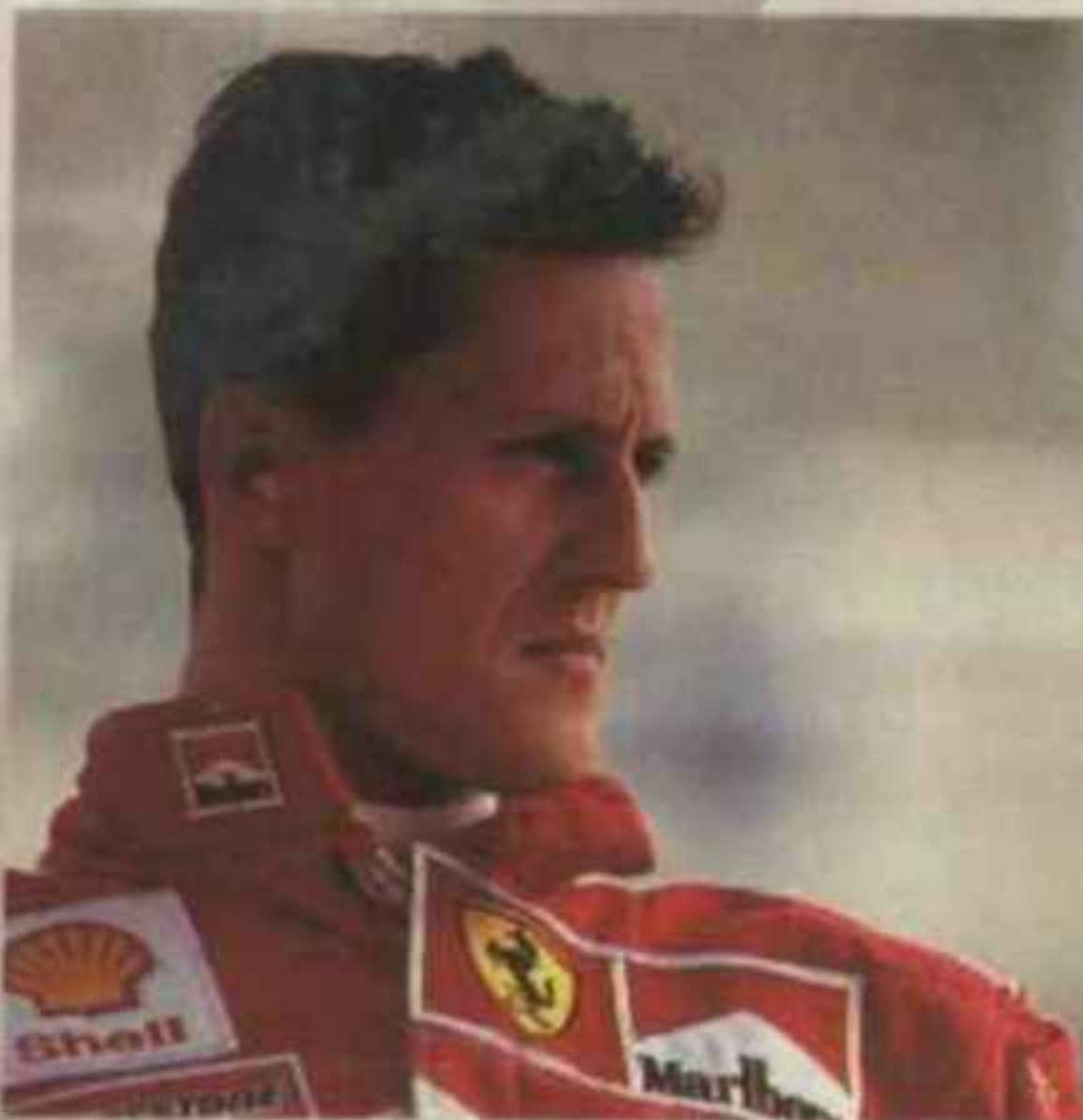
Crucially, however, after 7 rounds of the championship Scheckter held a lead he was never to lose, while at the same stage of the season Schumacher is eight points adrift of the championship lead. Michael still has his work cut out if he wants to match the achievements of 20 years ago.



Michael Schumacher celebrates his  
victory at the San Marino GP



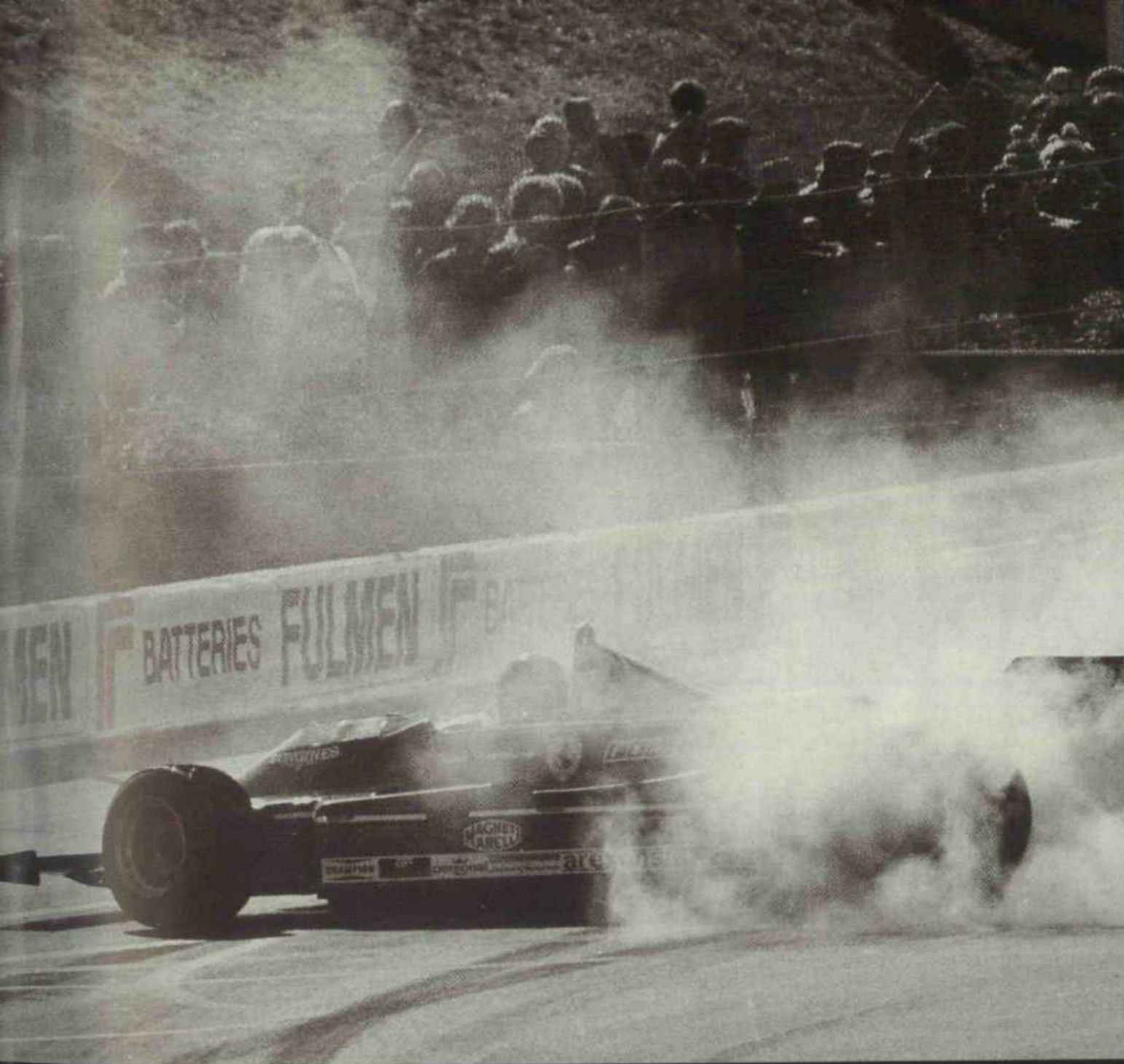
Jody Scheckter. 1st at Monaco  
1979 Ferrari 312 T4



Michael Schumacher. Will he be  
World Champion in 1999?



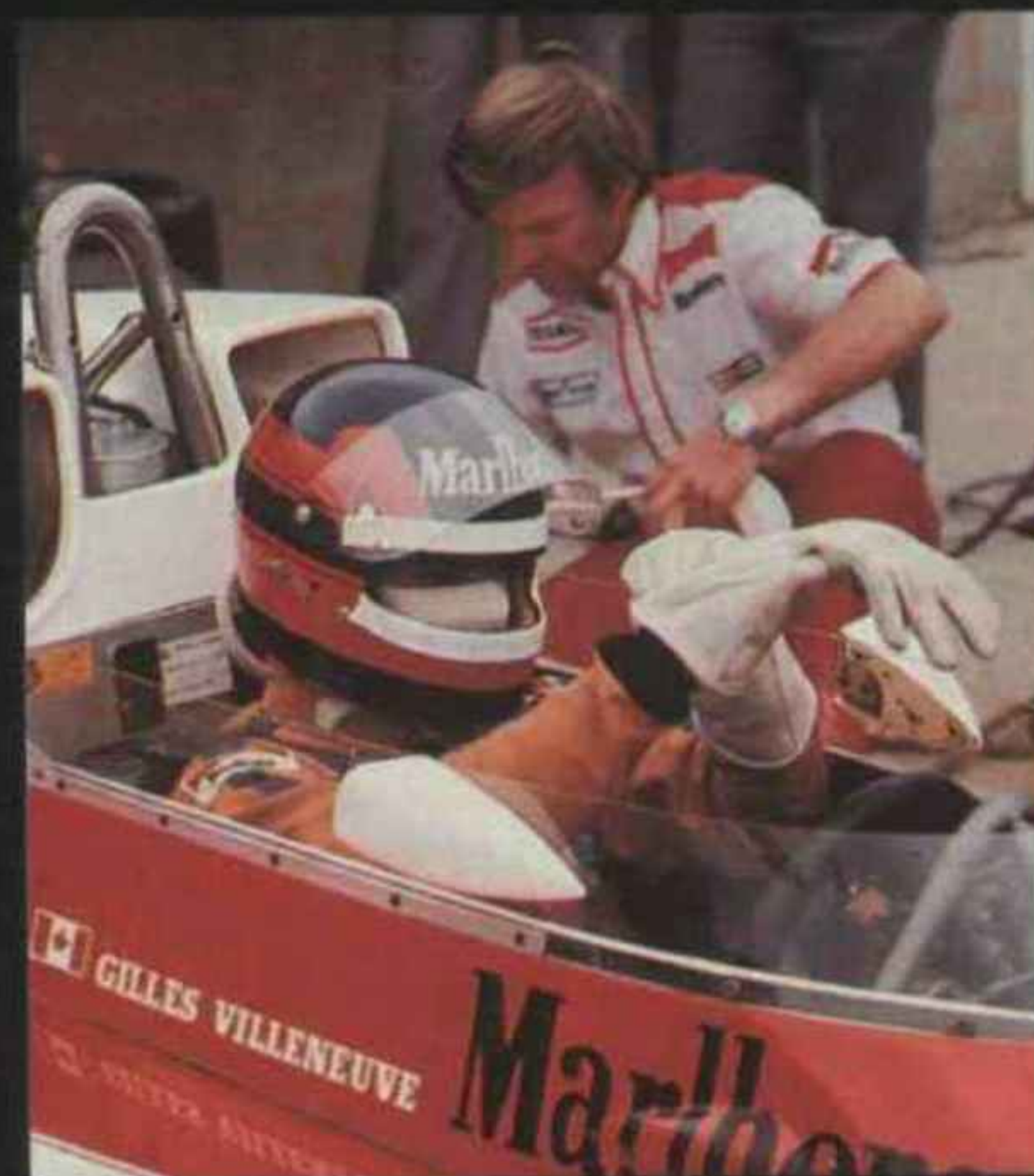
Jody Scheckter. Ferrari F1 World  
Champion 1979



John Townsend/F1 Pictures

**LEFT: GILLES WAS NEVER LESS THAN SPECTACULAR, NEVER ACCEPTED A CAR HAD BROKEN UNTIL IT WOULD NOT MOVE ANOTHER INCH. HE HAD SPINS AND ACCIDENTS BUT MORE RAW CAR CONTROL THAN ALMOST ANYONE IN THE SPORT**

**BELOW: GRAND PRIX CAREER WAS NOT ONLY WITH FERRARI. THIS IS HIS DEBUT AT SILVERSTONE IN '77 DRIVING M23 MCLAREN. HE AMAZED THE GRAND PRIX WORLD BY QUALIFYING NINTH**



dance and he liked girls. He was fun, intelligent and he was a mate. But more than anything, there was mutual respect between us.

But I always felt he didn't care about the *tifosi*. I think in his part of Canada they looked down on Italians, and I think he had that attitude. I always used to think it was funny that they liked him so much. Perhaps he was putting it on, and inside he did like them a lot, but outwardly he would make the odd remark...

One story sums him up – he had air-conditioning and a fire so he put both on. He wanted to do photography, and bought thousands of pounds worth of equipment he hardly used. Then he wanted tools, because he used to work as a mechanic. He went to Beta and bought a whole garage full of the best stuff, and never used them!

I then won in Belgium and Monaco, which put me back on track but he was dominant over me was Dijon. I battled like mad, but he was quicker, and I couldn't really work out why. That was the race where he had the fight with Arnoux. I thought what they did was stupid. I told Gilles, and I think he knew it was stupid.

I was the President of the Grand Prix Drivers Association at the time, and Gilles really worked with me. From a safety point of view he was very responsible. I think we both wanted to make it as safe as possible. That didn't mean to say we were driving carefully; you still drove with aggression. But you felt that if something happened, you wanted to have a chance.

I don't think he tried to do things that put him in uncalculated danger. I think from that point of view he was a responsible driver. He always had this image of being crazy, and he wasn't really. He was only crazy when he wanted to be, it was his image.

I always tell the story about driving from Monaco with him. I didn't want to do it, because I hated to be a passenger. But the whole time he drove perfectly, until we got just outside Modena, and soon the wheels were spinning and he started

sliding around and everything. That was the proof of what I felt.

I also remember going with him in his helicopter, and again once we got over Modena he started his tricks again. I stopped that really quickly. I hated flying. He was going down and then up. I said you better stop now or I'll wring your neck. He knew I meant it.

Zandvoort was really the turning point that year. I messed up the clutch at the start, and dropped to the back. He was at the front, and then his tyre went down, which was pretty spectacular. I went through the field and came second behind Alan Jones, and that really put me into a dominant position.

I had it under control in Monza. What gave me confidence was I knew Gilles was doing these silly things to keep his image

**“He always had this image of being crazy but he wasn't really. He was only crazy when he wanted to be”**

up and that gave me comfort. He was testing qualifiers and getting the quickest times, and I was sticking to hard tyres and testing bits of the car I knew would help me in the race. In qualifying I think that was the biggest gap between us all year, and in the race I was quicker. As soon as Jacques Laffite dropped out, I cut my revs back and sat ahead of Gilles. Only on the last lap did I accelerate away again. Although I trusted him, I didn't want to take a chance; it was too important a thing to take a chance with!

I think we were professionals. We tried as hard as we could and the one who came out in front, won. There were lots of times when he was faster than I was, and times when I was faster than he was.

We raced hard, and I beat him. I won the Championship ➤



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
A STUDY OF CONCENTRATION IN THE FERRARI  
312T4; OFF THE TRACK BUT NOT YET OUT OF THE  
RACE AT ZANDVOORT IN '79; HE WAS UNBEATABLE  
IN THE WET, DISAPPEARING FROM THE FIELD AT  
WATKINS GLEN WHILE SCHECKTER LEAVES THE  
TRACK; ON THE LIMIT IN THE AGEING 312T3 IN  
1978; IMOLA IN 1982: PIRONI HAS STOLEN THE  
RACE AND VILLENEUVE'S FACE SAYS IT ALL. HE  
WOULD NEVER TO SPEAK TO HIS TEAM-MATE  
AGAIN; IMOLA AGAIN, THIS TIME IT'S 1980 AND  
THIS IS ONE OF GILLES' BIGGER ACCIDENTS. NOTE  
BACK OF CAR ON RIGHT HAND EDGE OF SHOT.  
HE WALKED AWAY; WITH YOUNG SON JACQUES





because in the races that counted I got out in front, and was in front when it settled down. At that stage there was no point in fighting. There were no circumstances where he had to give up a place to me, so I don't think it was frustrating for him.

The 1980 car was a disaster. Gilles had very good performances in it. I didn't. I was more advanced in my career, and found it very difficult racing for tenth place, whereas he just drove. He brought it near the front a few times, which I couldn't do. I announced my retirement halfway through the year, and felt out of place soon after I did that. The cause wasn't there, like it had been before. You were retiring, you were last year's driver.

After I retired there was talk of Gilles starting a team. I don't think he ever felt tied to Maranello. Gilles would have left Ferrari if he felt he could go where he would win races. From that point of view I don't think he was particularly sentimental. There was supposedly a sponsor – a cigarette company – that had masses

**“We had a bit of an argument over something personal and I didn't see him for a year...”**

of money to help him start this team. I think he would have liked his own team, and he was quite excited doing something like that, and the idea was that I was going to be team manager.

I volunteered to look into it, and found out this guy was nobody, a bullshitter basically. I came back to Gilles with the news. If the sponsor was real, it could have happened.

Later we had a bit of an argument over something personal, and I didn't see him for a year. However, after Didier Pironi overtook him at Imola in 1982 to steal the win, he called and we went to Modena in his helicopter. I suppose a relationship ➔

## SECOND OPINIONS

JOCHEN MASS

Four years before Gilles' accident, I had an incident with Bruno Giacomelli at Zolder, coming over the crest. He went to the right at the bottom, and I wanted to overtake him on the right. I didn't hit him because I braked so hard I went into the barrier.

In '82 I was cruising back to the pits, going over that hump. I saw Gilles in the mirror. The normal line was on the left. I stayed right, to let him pass on the left, and have the line. But he decided to pass me on the right because he wasn't sure if I had seen him. I should have perhaps taken that into consideration, but you can't know.

Next day I retired where the accident had happened, so I got stuck there for the race. I had a sense of guilt but it was not that I blamed myself entirely for the accident. There were not too many accusations.

Pironi was an enigma. He was tremendously fast, and would have been the first French F1 champion that year. I regretted the way he ended up; it was tragic but he was asking for his accident. He was driving blind into spray, just nailing it. He should have known better. Gilles took his risks, and sometimes he overdid it, and so did Pironi.

PATRICK TAMBAY

Gilles was nice, a generous man, very loveable. He didn't get to be an old fart, so we just keep the memories. I didn't speak to him after Pironi snatched victory from him at Imola, but I knew he felt cheated and betrayed. I think his behaviour at Zolder was one of revenge and bitterness and rivalry.

After I joined the team, Pironi never mentioned the dispute. Never once a word on it. It was kind of a strange relationship we had, because we'd been friends, but he knew that I was very close to Gilles. I'm sure in the back of his mind, he knew a little bit what I thought about that.

"Pour  
**FERRARI**"  
250 GT TdF



Automatic Chronograph. £2,750.

**GP**  
**GIRARD-PERREGAUX**

MANUFACTURE DEPUIS 1791

THE MANY FACES OF GILLES VILLENEUVE. THE MAN WAS AN ENIGMA, BOTH SEEMINGLY CRAZY ON THE TRACK YET, AT THE SAME TIME CARING DEEPLY ABOUT IMPROVING TRACK SAFETY THROUGH THE GRAND PRIX DRIVER'S ASSOCIATION.

HE ALSO HAD A WONDERFUL SENSE OF HUMOUR, WAS FIERCELY LOYAL AND A MAN OF TOTAL INTEGRITY. THE REASON FOR THE ODD EXPRESSION IN THE PHOTOGRAPH BELOW IS SIMPLE: IT IS A SELF-PORTRAIT



is worth more than one argument; at least that's what I felt.

We talked a lot. He hated what had happened at Imola. He realised what a good relationship we'd had, and that we never double-crossed each other, and we were very honest and open, and that Pironi hadn't been that way with him. I don't think he ever thought that it could ever happen.

Gilles was a really genuine, honest guy, and in fact if he had a weakness he was honest to the point of being naïve. He trusted Pironi. It would have affected him badly for quite a while, and I say that because very honest, naïve people are shocked when something like that happens to them. Crooks think that's the

## **"Gilles was an honest guy... If he had not trusted Pironi could he have avoided that situation? Probably"**

way it should happen. If he had not trusted Pironi, could he have avoided that situation? Probably.

I think at Zolder he was under massive pressure to beat Pironi, who had been faster than him in early qualifying. In F1 we all had problems with that sort of situation; I well remember nearly smashing into a TV cameraman at Monaco, because I thought Gilles was quicker than me, but it turned out I had been quicker. You're trying so hard, you get so aggressive.

I certainly got angry in a racing car a lot of times. You get to the end of practice and are so wound up and wanting to go for it, you do stupid things. I don't know exactly what happened at Zolder, but it seems to me that's the most likely reason for the

accident. Gilles took a chance that didn't pay off. He went for a gap that wasn't there, and he got caught. I've done it myself, and got away with it.

That weekend I was in Monaco, and had just had an operation. I got a call from Zolder, I went straight to see his wife, Joanne. My wife went to Belgium with her. A couple of days later we all went on a Canadian Air Force plane to Montreal for the funeral.

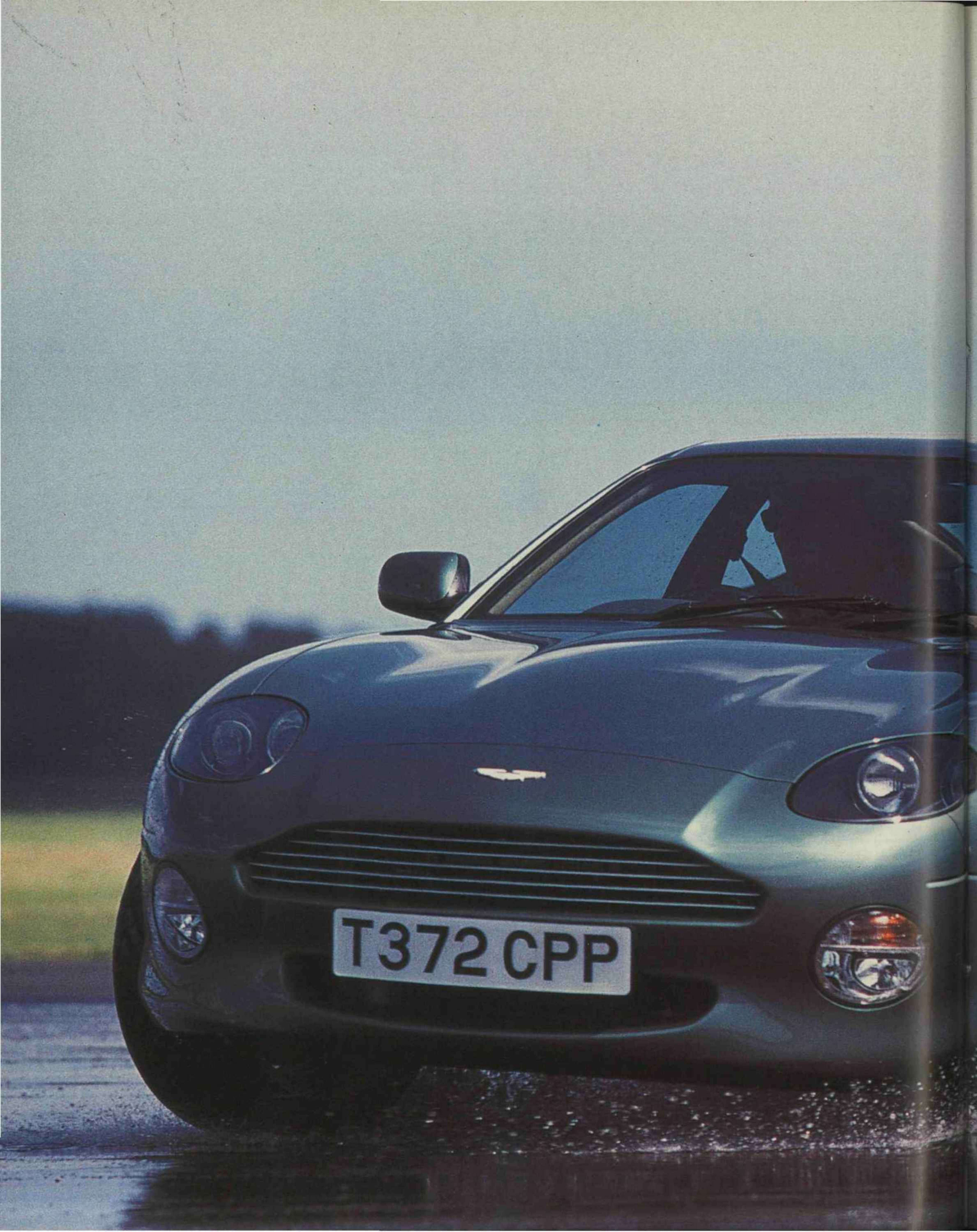
I spent a year after he died working on his sponsorship deals, getting all the money I could for his family. I suppose I took it upon myself as my task. I had a cause and negotiated with Ferrari for a massive amount of money and got rather more money than I really should have done, by putting pressure on them.

For a long time I really didn't keep in touch with Joanne and the family and I had no contact with Jacques until I met him in Monaco when he was doing Formula Three. He was complaining about how difficult everything was and I thought to myself, "You'll never make it!" The next time I remember seeing him is on TV in America, after he won the Indy 500. I thought, "Boy, that is incredible." I felt good for him. His father would have been proud.

I think poor Jacques is completely run out on questions about Gilles. It's nearly become a complex for him, or at least that how it seems from the outside. There's nothing that really stands out in terms of similarities between them; you wouldn't know they were father and son. In a way it almost seems that Jacques is trying to do the opposite to his father.

I wouldn't have thought that Gilles would like Formula One in 1999. He was a racer, and he probably would have got into the grooved tyre argument. But if he had the same spirit he would probably have still made holes in places where there weren't any...  
*Jody Scheckter was talking to Adam Cooper*





T372 CPP



# THE BEST ASTON MARTIN FOR 40 YEARS

*IT'S CALLED VANTAGE BUT DO NOT THINK THIS IS JUST A FASTER DB7. ANDREW FRANKEL SPENDS TWO DAYS ON THE ROAD TO DISCOVER THE BEST NEW ASTON MARTIN SINCE THE DB4*

photography by Andrew Yeadon



## THE BEST ASTON MARTIN FOR 40 YEARS

**I**t takes startlingly little time, as long as you need to turn a key and press a button, to know this Aston Martin DB7 Vantage is dramatically different. Different not simply to the car upon which it is based but also to whatever your expectations of such a car might be. Expect the Aston Martin DB7 Vantage to be a quick DB7 and you'll miss its point by a mile. Expect it to do as much as previous Vantage models have for their parents and you'll still not be close. Expect, instead, a new car merely wearing a familiar suit and you'll approach this Vantage from the right direction.

This is no illusion. The quad-cam, 48-valve, 6-litre all-alloy V12 motor in its nose is simply the most

if I can be blunt, if you're shopping in that market you would be nuts to deny yourself a car which is so much more able and engaging.

Let us, therefore, start at the beginning. This Aston Martin has a new engine. It has new suspension, brakes, transmissions, fresh bodywork, a stiffer monocoque and a revised interior. Like I said, this is a new car.

The Cosworth-built motor itself is a masterpiece of pragmatic engineering. It is, at its core, two Ford Mondeo V6 motors merged into one. The result displaces 5935cc and has a relaxed 10.3:1 compression ratio to provide 420bhp at 6000rpm, backed by a solid 400lb ft of torque at 5000rpm. Aston Martin are swift to point out that such statistics merely hint at this engine's potential. When this

is the work of ZF and already serves in BMW's 750i.

The suspension system has also been entirely overhauled, with new upper and lower wishbones at the front and revised spring and damper rates front and back while colossal new Brembo brakes with Teves ABS anchor fresh wheels and Bridgestone S02 tyres. Those Bridgestones, incidentally are the finest high performance boots money can buy.

Upon first acquaintance, little of this is obvious. The DB7's designer, Ian Callum, has done little to interfere with the car's still exquisite lines. Even so, there was a need to provide a greater air-flow over the new motor so the basis of the changes to the body involve providing a larger air intake, which in turn provided the opportunity to incorporate

**"The Cosworth-built motor is a masterpiece of pragmatic engineering. It is, at its core, two Mondeo V6 motors merged into one"**

obvious of a range of changes so extensive it's a wonder Aston didn't drop the old name altogether and christen this the DB8. And do not doubt this will be its role. Aston Martin already admits to expecting 90 per cent of the DB7s it will sell for the rest of this year to be V12-powered and my guess is this figure will rise to within a whiff of 100 per cent next year. The simple fact is that, at £92,500 the Vantage costs just £7500 more than the six-cylinder car, a tiny increase which bears no relation to the improvement to the car. Frankly, if you can afford a new Aston Martin, you can afford a DB7 Vantage and,

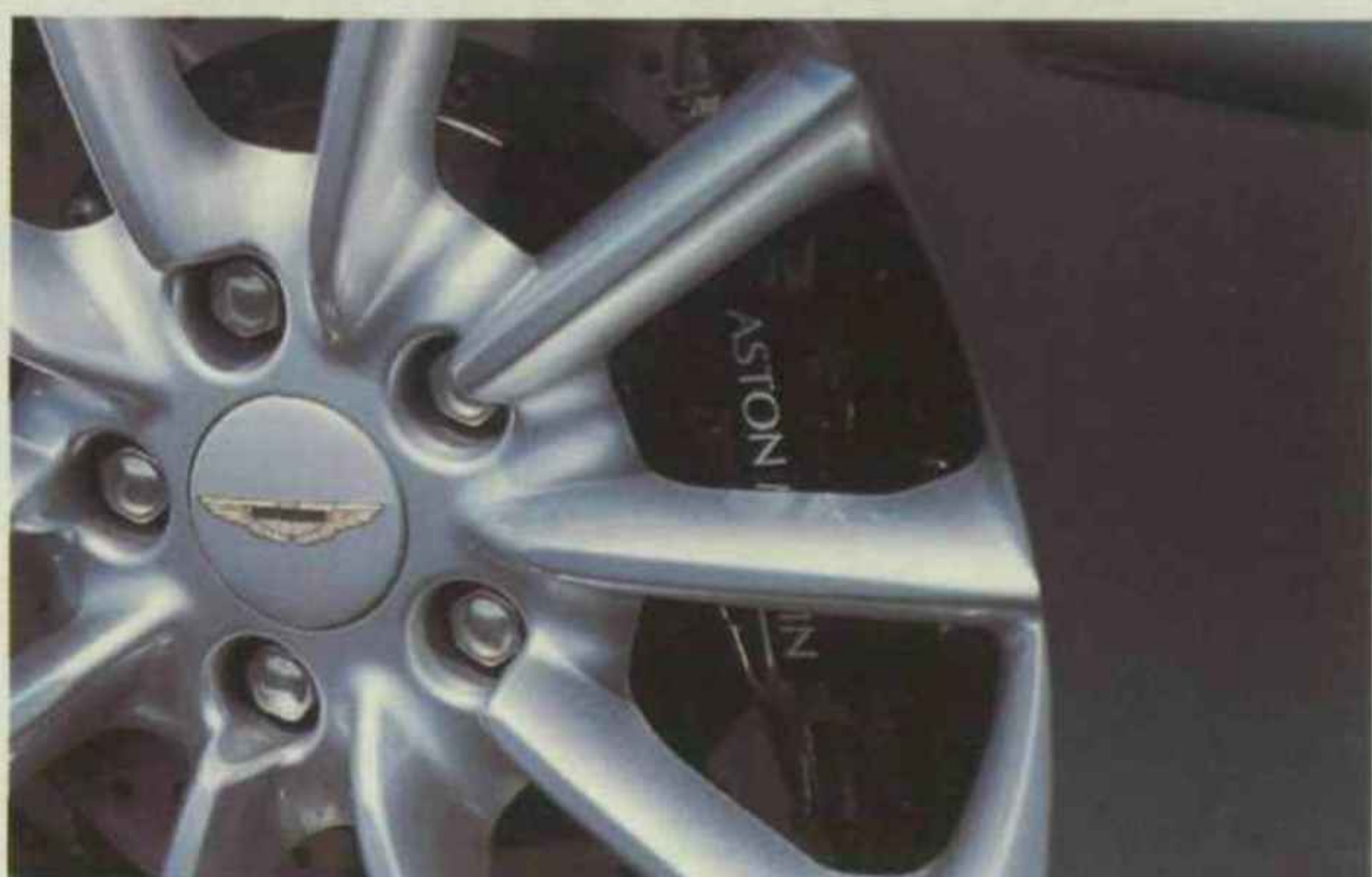
car finally replaces the DB7 (as it surely will) and calls come for a Vantage Vantage, believe that the required 500bhp will be ready and waiting. Better still for Aston, no-one else on this side of the Atlantic is going to be allowed to use the V12, something of a relief in Newport Pagnell now its Ford-owned stable mates include Jaguar and Volvo. Only Lincoln in the US is in the frame for the powerplant.

It runs through a choice of transmissions, both new to the DB7. The manual is a radically revised iteration of the six-speed 'box first offered a decade ago in Chevrolet's Corvette while the five-speed auto

driving lamps allegedly reminiscent of the Project 212, 214 and 215 racers of the early '60s. The remaining changes simply balance those at the front and extend to beefed up sills and a new rear bumper which incorporates larger diameter tailpipes.

Sit inside and you'll not miss new and attractive instruments, nor will you fail to notice a red button on the console. Turning the key alone will not start the V12; only when you thumb the button will it ignite. It is, of course, a silly piece of marketing, as is the blip of the throttle that accompanies the motor's awakening, but in an Aston, or this one at least, it

*Clockwise from top left: new instruments incorporate 200mph speedo; headlights unchanged but driving lights added; new V12 motor is jewel in the crown; smart new wheels hide powerful new brakes*



works. It sets the scene, makes a promise that today is going to be different.

And so it proved. I spent two days with the car with no route to follow, no agenda or timetable to stick to. I climbed aboard in London in the thick of the rush hour and emerged for the last time in Paris, a thousand miles the wiser. There was no itinerary, though I could not resist flinging it down the hill past the pits on the old Grand Prix circuit at Rouen and sliding it out of the still cobbled Nouveau Monde hairpin at the bottom; most of the time, however, I just drove. Which is exactly how it should be.

Too often in the recent past, such a trip would have flecked with disappointment. I remember testing the first Virage back in 1990 and being shocked by

learned in those two days is that two Ford V6 engines make a more charismatic V12 than any made by Ferrari today. It's not quite so smooth as that fitted to a 550 Maranello but if it's that multi-layered V12 symphony you're after, that which Ferrari used to make its own, you'll now find it under the bonnet of an Aston Martin. This is one of the world's great powerplants, flexible, urbane and unobtrusive when needed, sharp edged and snarling when wanted. It doesn't kick like a turbo-motor or even respond from idling with the alacrity of a supercharged engine like the 3.2-litre straight six in the stock DB7; what has instead is good old fashioned V12 relentlessness.

Despite the aluminium engine and bodywork, this DB7 weighs a hefty 1780kgs but the V12 copes

I do not doubt Aston's claimed 185mph. Volante and automatic and versions are limited to 165mph, the former by aerodynamic resistance, the latter by the certification limit of the ZF box.

If that were it, if this were no more than the old DB7 with a heaven-sent engine, the extra money would be justified. In fact, this is just the start. If you want to know how good this car's chassis look no further than those who created it. First, there is Bob Dover, Aston's chairman, whose final job with his last employer was the Jaguar XK8. On development drives on road and track in Europe and America I saw first-hand how he turns raw material into a finely honed finished product. One technique was to employ Mike Cross, a driver with car control that

## **"The first thing I learned in those two days is that two Ford V6s make a more charismatic V12 than any made by Ferrari today"**

how flabby and dull it was – and the Volante was even worse. The later Vantage variant was fabulously fast but so harsh at first I couldn't imagine how anyone could live with it, least of all when the Ferrari 456GT was available for less. And even the DB7, the car that saved the company, came with so many manufacturing faults at launch that I wondered whether I could recommend a theoretically good car that often proved irksome in reality. So often in Aston's recent history, the car has failed to live up to our expectations of the marque.

No more. The first of many surprising things I

effortlessly with its bulk. Changing at 7000rpm, it dismisses the first three of its six gears sufficiently quickly for there not to be enough time to savour the shove. By the time you're in fourth, 60mph has passed in less than five seconds and 100mph in about the same again. But fourth is the gear, batting you between 70-120mph with contemptuous ease, allowing your hands never to stray from the wheel, surging you onward until prudence dictates you back off. I can't tell you how fast it ultimately is, only that at 160mph there was still the remains of fifth and all of top to go; judging from the acceleration

amazed Jackie Stewart and one of the most intuitive chassis engineers of all. Then he went to Lotus to see former F1-driver John Miles, who is one of the reasons that Lotuses handle better than anything else on the road, and Alastair McQueen, a chassis man with more car control than any other I've met. Finally, there is Richard Parry-Jones, vice-president of Ford and the man who turned Fords into the best riding and handling cars the mass market has to offer. Every one of them played a part in the development of the DB7 Vantage.

The results are astonishing, not for anything ➤

*DB7 Vantage not simply faster and more enjoyable than standard car, it is also more comfortable and refined on a long run thanks to superior suspension and the new classier, quieter powerplant*



## THE BEST ASTON MARTIN FOR 40 YEARS

as crude as the speed at which the DB7 will take a given corner, but for the subtlety and proficiency of a chassis which knows that, for every empty open A-road there will be a dozen or more congested streets and motorways. This DB7 has a refined and thrilling chassis that rides as well as it handles.

It's not an easy balance to reach. Too many sports cars fail to involve the driver these days, leaving the impression you are no more than a programmer issuing instructions for a computer-controlled device to execute. And while the Aston is not averse to electronic intervention *in extremis*, most of the time it's clear that you call the shots. At once involving and relaxing, there's nothing manic about its progress, no matter how fast the pace, yet, through

### "The only losers are those who have recently taken delivery of a standard DB7"

the chassis, this Vantage talks to you.;

Ultimately, however, it can't disguise its weight and understeers with or without traction control unless provoked violently to do otherwise; for some this will disappoint. This is not a car to be driven on the limit, fluently balanced on the throttle; it is too big, too heavy and lacks the reactions and steering feel for such treatment. Then again, this Aston is not that sort of car; it is a ground coverer, one which will deliver you to your destination with the maximum involvement available for a minimum effort. An alternative to the Ferrari 360 Modena it is not.

It is, instead, a rival for a Ferrari 456GT, and the very fact that this DB7 can stand up straight in the same sentence as the finest GT car yet to be built is praise enough. In fact the Aston is damn near a match for the Ferrari. Certainly its engine, performance, handling and ride are at least as good, it's undeniably prettier and it is vastly cheaper. Counting against it is the Ferrari's superior interior room, better build (the test Vantage still had a few irritating faults that have no place in a car costing nearly £100,000), much snappier gearchange, a considerably more stylish interior and a bigger boot.

This is to be celebrated. It has been 40 years since Newport Pagnell had a car to genuinely rival its opposite number from Maranello; 40 years since

the DB4 kicked the stuffing out of the 250GT. Now Aston is back with its best car in two generations, one which exceeds the remit of its Vantage badge to take Astons into the next century in better shape than you would credit.

The losers are those who have recently taken delivery of a standard DB7, a car I rate below the cheaper Jaguar XK8. But if you are still in the queue for one of the 600 DB7s to be made in the next year and your order form doesn't say Vantage, do yourself a favour: put down this magazine right now, pick up the telephone and change it. **M**

## SPECIFICATIONS

### Aston Martin DB7 Vantage

#### ENGINE

Type ... ..	12 cyl, dohc, 4 valves per cylinder,
Capacity ... ..	5935cc
Bore/stroke ... ..	88 x 80mm
Comp ratio ... ..	10.3:1
Fuelling ... ..	Visteon engine management
Max power ... ..	420bhp at 6000 rpm
Max torque ... ..	400lb ft at 5000 rpm
Specific output ... ..	71bhp/litre
Power/weight ... ..	236bhp/tonne
Transmission ... ..	6-speed manual

#### CHASSIS

Brakes (f) ... ..	355mm ventilated discs
Brakes (r) ... ..	330mm ventilated discs
Suspension (f+r) ... ..	Unequal length wishbones, coils springs anti-roll bar
Wheels ... ..	8x18in (f), 9x18in (r), cast alloy
Tyres (f/r) ... ..	245/40 ZR 18 (f), 263/35 ZR18 (r) Bridgestone SO-2

#### DIMENSIONS

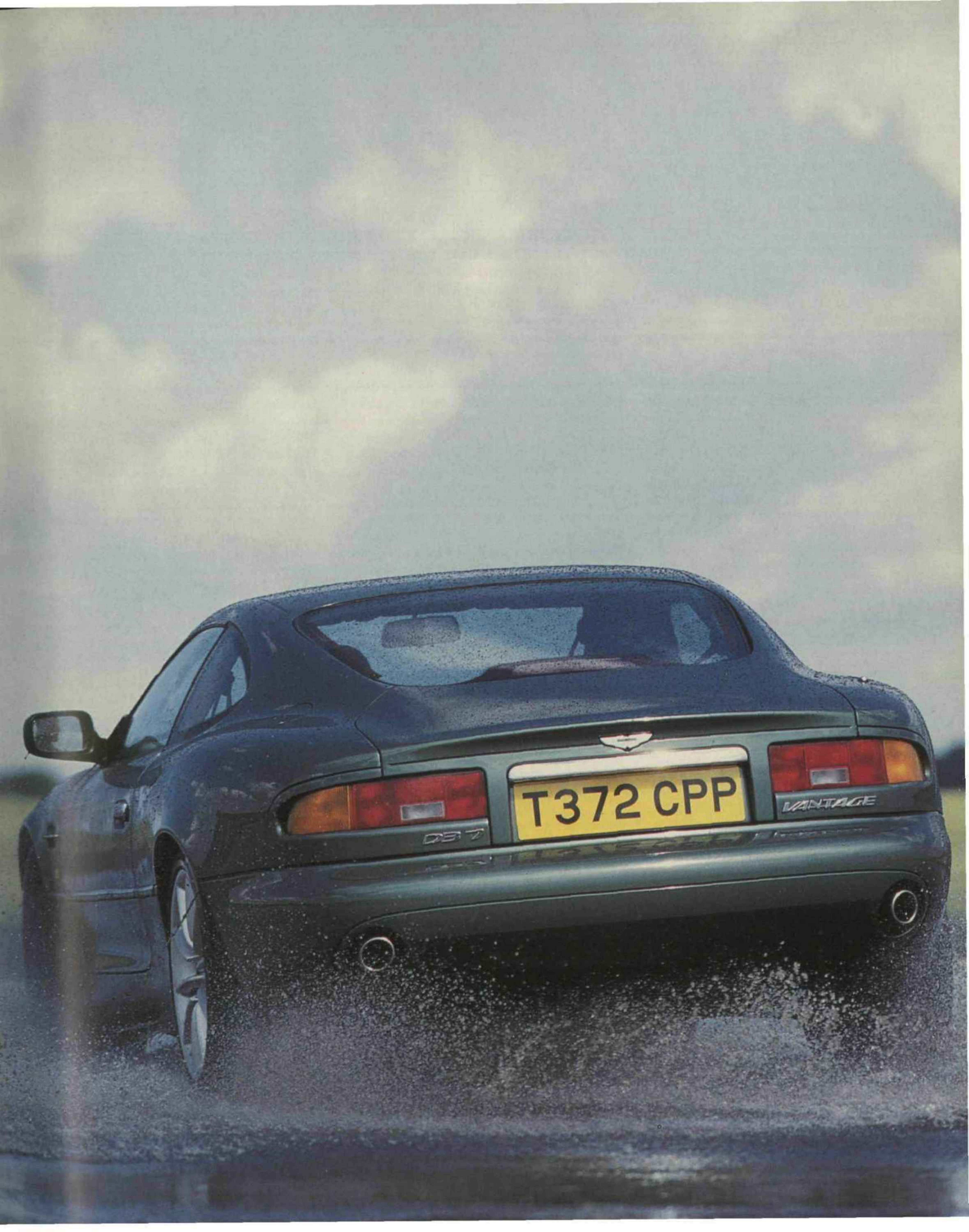
Length ... ..	183.7in
Width ... ..	72.0in
Height ... ..	48.7in
Wheelbase ... ..	102.0in
Track (f/r) ... ..	60.0in/60.2in
Kerb weight ... ..	3921lb

#### ESTIMATED PERFORMANCE

0-60mph ... ..	4.9 sec
Top speed ... ..	185mph

*Vantage handles precisely for such a heavy car, with an agile chassis but slightly dull steering. Body control over humps and dips is beyond reproach while even wet conditions scarcely slow progress*





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THE WORST CAR I EVER DROVE

# DOUBLE AND QUILTS

**WALTER ROHRL** AUDI SPORT QUATTRO/OPEL KADETT GTE

*GIVEN THE LENGTH AND VARIETY OF WALTER ROHRL'S CAREER YOU MIGHT THINK HE'D FIND IT DIFFICULT SELECTING THE WORST OF THEM ALL. IN THE END, HE GOT THE LIST DOWN TO JUST TWO. BY DAVID MOTTON*

A CAREER ENCOMPASSING TWO WORLD RALLY Championships and numerous successes on the race track might leave Walter Rohrl struggling to name a 'worst car'. But no driver is immune from those disasters which make triumph all the sweeter, and Walter has a few he'd rather forget. However, one surprising machine makes his shortlist.

For the 1984 rally season, Rohrl left Lancia to join the works Audi squad. The previous year, the Quattro had been the car to have, but in 1984 a new generation of purpose-built four-wheel drive machines put the original Quattro under pressure. Peugeot's 205T16 in particular brought into question the wisdom of continuing to compete with a car so closely related to a production model.

Audi responded with radical evolution of the original Quattro: the Sport. Lighter, shorter and more powerful than the original, the Sport Quattro should have re-established Audi's superiority. It did

not. "The Audi Sport Quattro was not a good car. When Audi told me about the short wheelbase, I was sure it was the wrong decision as I knew it would ruin the handling. But Hannu (Mikkola) tested the car and said, yes, he liked it. Really it was massively nervous. The balance of the car was terrible," recalls Rohrl today. When reliability did not let it down, its behaviour saw the Sport disappear into the scenery with depressing regularity. After crashing out of the San Remo Rally, Walter branded the car dangerous.

In spite of its problems, the Sport's first victory in the Ivory Coast Rally secured Stig Blomqvist the Drivers' Championship and made Audi the most successful World Rally Championship team ever. Nonetheless, it was clear Audi had their work cut out if they wanted to turn the Sport into a regular winner. With the Evolution 2 version, the Ingolstadt team sought to address the short-wheelbase car's problems. "The result was much better. We had a

very talented suspension engineer working on the car, the weight was moved away from the front, and many wings and spoilers were added. The balance of the car in high-speed bends was totally changed, although the spoilers didn't make much difference in tight corners."

With the right tool, Rohrl duly got on with the job. Returning to the San Remo Rally, scene of the previous year's debacle, Walter gave the Evolution 2 its only World Rally win by over six minutes from Timo Salonen's T16. Could the Evo 2 have gone on to even better things? "I think so, it was a very good car. We could have been very competitive in 1986. But of course, after the accidents that was it."

Following a crash in the 1986 San Remo Rally, in which the Ford RS200 of Joaquim Santos left the road and killed four spectators, Audi retired from rallying. When Henri Toivonen and Sergio Cresto were killed in their Lancia S4 on the Rally of Corsica,

*Short-wheelbase Audi Sport Quattro meant to combat Peugeot T16, but initially was a nightmare to drive*





*Opel Kadett GTE looked great on paper but was underpowered and unreliable on the stages*

the authorities stepped in to ban the Group B four-wheel drive supercars. Perhaps the Sport Quattro never did show its full potential.

Walter's difficulties with Audi's problem child pale into insignificance next to the ordeal suffered in his final choice. "Now I think about it, there is no doubt at all. The Opel Kadett GTE was the worst car I ever drove."

At the opposite end of Rohrl's career from the disappointing Sport, the Kadett nearly sank Rohrl's ambitions as a World Rally Driver. "I was European Drivers' Champion in 1974, and had won my first World Rally on the Acropolis in 1975, both in the Opel Ascona. So when I first saw the new Kadett, I was very optimistic. It was smaller and lighter than the Ascona, and I was convinced it would be even more successful. It was a proper, nice looking car."

All seemed to be in place for Rohrl to make the transition from coming-man to championship challenger. But the mixture ended up badly underdone. "We were supposed to have a new 16-valve engine for the Kadett, but it was not ready for the first rally at San Remo. So we continued with the old cross-flow engine. In the end it didn't matter, because the car broke." Rohrl endured a succession of gremlins until a failed propshaft joint eventually put him out.

A difficult debut could be forgiven, but the 1975 San Remo Rally established the pattern which almost all others followed. "We never made the car reliable. There were always problems. When we put the 16-valve engine in the car, we had to go back to the old cross-flow engine, just to look after

the transmission. So then we had maybe 160-170bhp – the Stratos had 270bhp.

"Underneath the problems was a great handling car. At that time, remember, rallies were not as they are today. One had to drive for 30 or 40 hours with little sleep. In such rallies, it's not possible to concentrate as hard at the end of the event as in the first ten hours. The Kadett was so easy to handle, it was possible to drive quickly without mistakes even when tired."

To make matters worse, while the factory based Euro-Handler team self-destructed their way through 1976, the efforts of national teams and privateers saw Opel placed second in the championship to Lancia. Why were private Opels chasing the Stratos at rallies the world over while the Russelsheim cars seemed destined never to finish? "For whatever reason, GM did not like motorsport at this time. It was difficult

even to get permission to go rallying. The members of the board at Opel were never really behind the Euro-Handler team, so we never got out hands on the budget we needed to mount a proper challenge. Everything was always 'half throttle'.

"Normal production engineers made the Kadett. They had no experience of competition, so they did not understand how to develop a strong, reliable rally car. Everything always looked good on paper. The engineers always told me things would be fine. I wanted to be given the car, to drive it, to test it. But there was never any budget to go testing."

Rohrl stuck with the Euro-Handler team through 1976 and for most of '77, despite continued interest in his services from other teams and manufacturers. "I really did not want to leave Opel. They had given me my first chance to go professional. I had been with them three years, and we had enjoyed some very good times and had a lot of success. But I knew I had to move on if I wanted to win again." Fourth place on the 1976 Monte Carlo Rally and outright victory in the (European Championship) 24 Hours of Ypres were rare highlights in a ignominious run of mechanical failures.

"I did not want to leave Opel, but it was the right decision. I still remembered the better times I had enjoyed at Opel so I was very happy to drive for them again in 1982 with the Ascona 400. The attitude in the team was very different to what it had been five years before. At last the Opel was properly developed, and I won the Drivers' Championship." Loyalty, finally, received its reward. ■

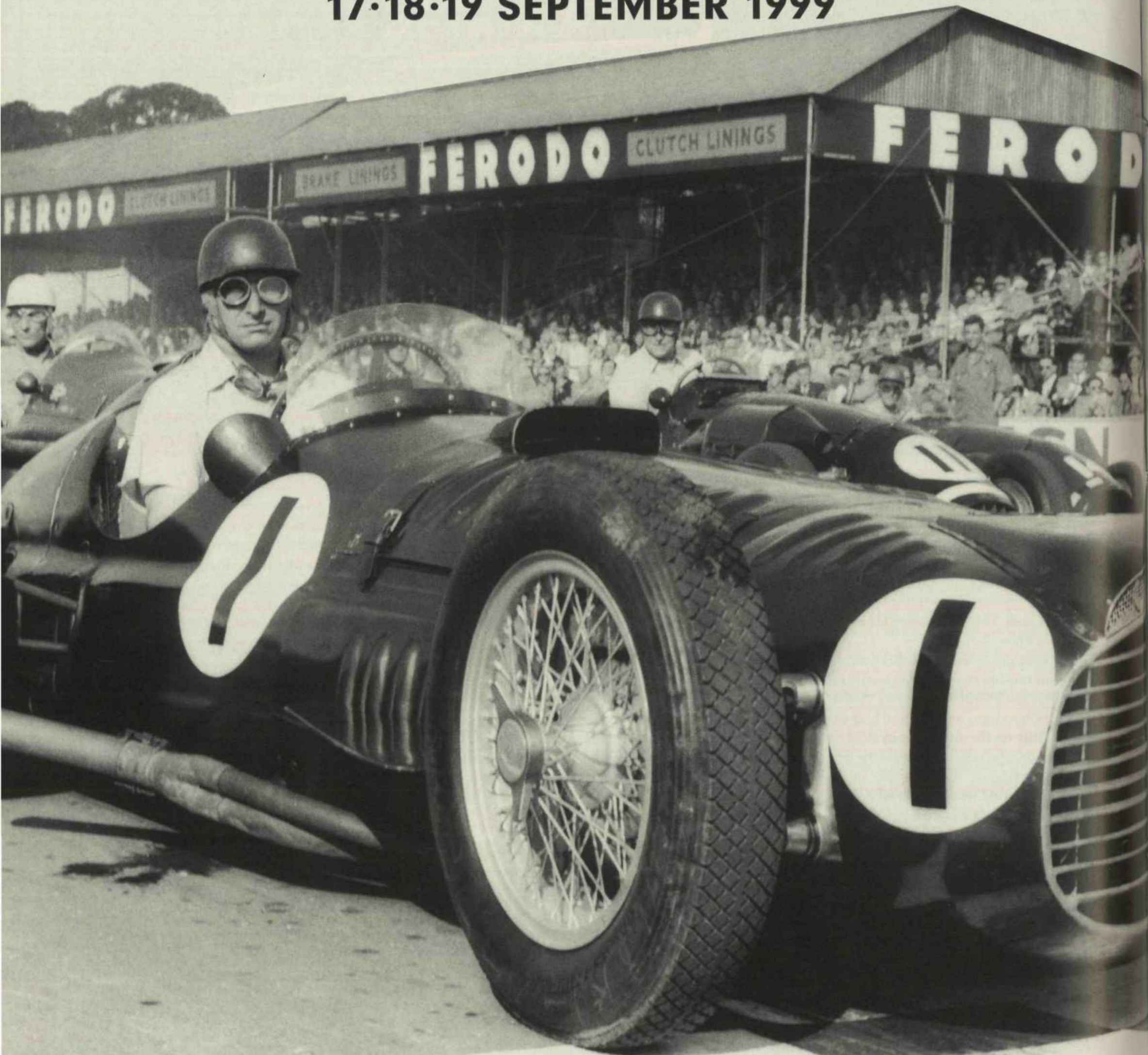


*Rohrl: loyalty to Opel finally brought success*



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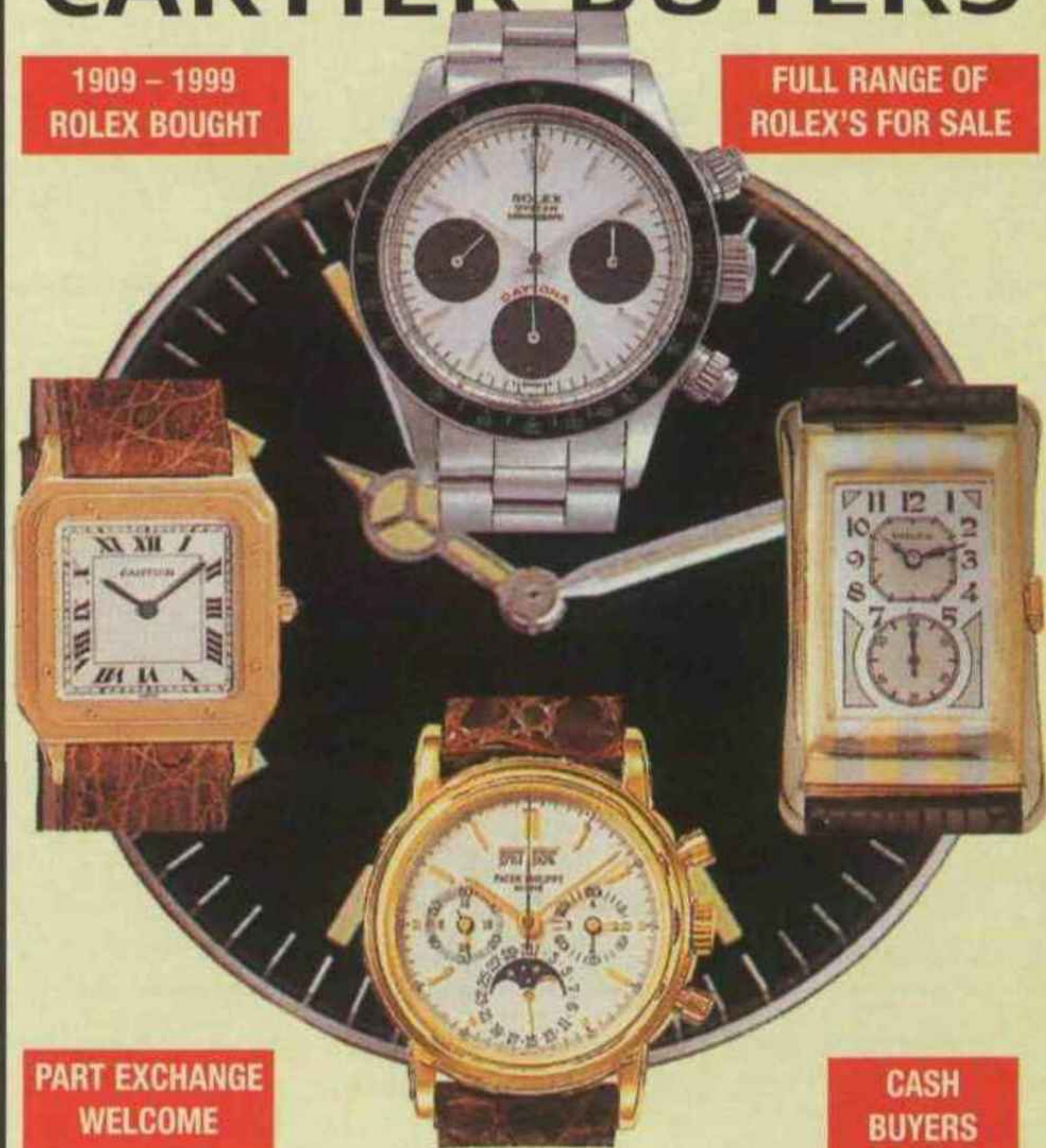
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# The Trials of Sammy Davis

**BILL BODDY IMAGINES HIMSELF IN THE SHOES OF ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN OF JOURNALIST-RACERS, AND PONDERES THE LESS REMEMBERED SIDE TO HIS MOTORSPORTING ACTIVITIES**

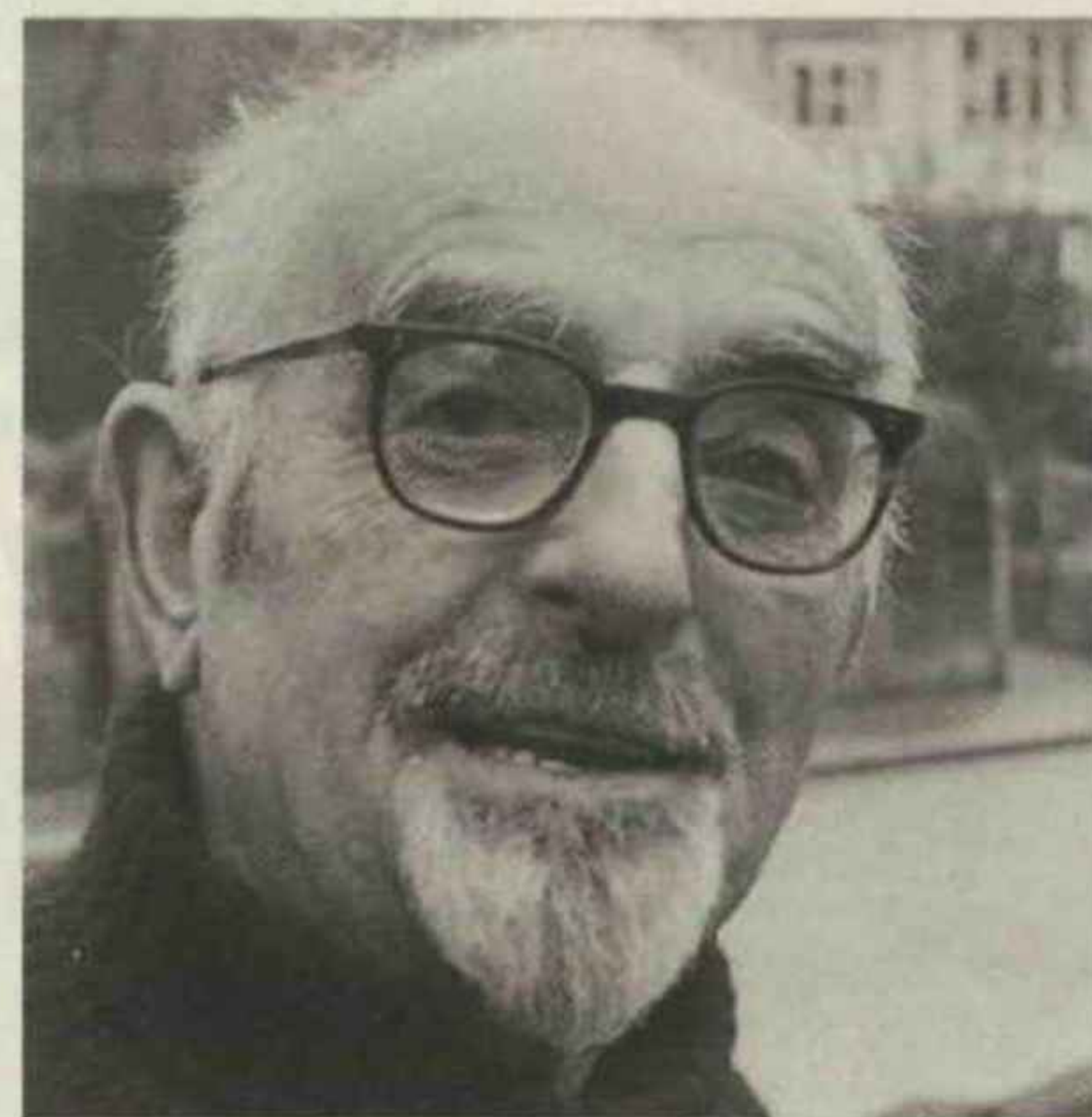
WHO WOULD I MOST LIKE TO HAVE BEEN, GIVEN a choice? SCHD (Sammy) Davis, the popular Sports Editor of *The Autocar* before the second World War. He was so versatile, in the sport I thought the greatest of all. Davis had considerable influence, serving on many important committees, co-founding the VCC, becoming first VSCC President, etc. But it was the range of events in which he took part, in a fascinating variety of cars, which made his motoring career so wonderful.

His passion for motor racing began at Westminster School. Apprenticeship to Daimler's long before WWI followed, and a spell at the Slade sharpened Sammy's cartoon skills. By 1907 he was riding a motorcycle in trials with WO Bentley and others and his writing led to visits to GPs and trials in 'impossible' cars like a Cummikar and a friction-drive Pilot. War ended that, Davis serving in the RNAS and on aero-engine development. After racing recommenced he drove an AC in the 1921 '200', and a wild ride in an unsuitable Miller with Zborowski in the 1924 French GP whetted his appetite for road racing.

The opportunity broke when he drove, with Jean Chassagne, for Coatalen, a 3-litre Sunbeam to second place at Le Mans in 1925. After which WO took Sammy into the Bentley team, and although he went into the Mulsanne sandbank in the only remaining, brakeless Bentley 20 minutes before the finish of the 24 hour race in 1925, there was the dramatic victory at Le Mans in 1927 with Dr Benjafield, after the 3-litre had survived the infamous White House calamity. By now proven to be a sound, intelligent racing driver, Davis then had a FWD Alvis for Le Mans in 1928 (ninth with Dykes) and drove a works Riley 9 in the first Ulster TT, only to crash avoiding other cars.

Sammy Davis then had an s/c Lea-Francis for the Phoenix Park Race (second) and a works Riley 9 again for the TT, with which he won the 1100cc class, his mechanic Major LV Head, who as 'Caput' to Davis's 'Casque' was also an *Autocar* staffman, who went on many of the SCHD adventures. The BBC then flew Davis to England in a DH Moth to tell of the race. Le Mans 1930 saw a Davis driving a Speed Six Bentley with Clive Dunfee whose turn it was to retire, dug into a sandbank. At Phoenix Park in 1930 Davis had a Bertelli Aston Martin (seventh) and in that year's TT he drove a privately entered Lea-Francis with Frank Hallam but it was too slow. After which his Invicta accident on the Mountain Course in the wet at Brooklands early in 1931 sent him to hospital and curtailed his road racing, although he resumed in 1935, only to be involved in the remarkable triple-crash of the Singer 9s with steering breakages.

At Brooklands Davis shared a GP Bugatti with George Eyston in the 1927 RAC British GP; they finished, delayed by a seized supercharger. In the Essex MC Six Hours he had won with an Alvis, and in the 1928 Six Hours Davis raced a speed Model ➡



*SCH Davis, in his beloved beret, tackles Blue Hills Mine in an Aston Martin during the Lands End Trial of 1929*

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## THE TRIALS OF SAMMY DAVIS

Riley 9 until a big end failed. Now an established 'Bentley Boy', SCHD competed in the first JCC Double-12 Hour race in a 4½-litre Bentley with Sir R Gunter (second), and was a fine second lapping at over 126mph in the first BRDC '500', with Clive Dunfee, in a 6½-litre Bentley two-seater which he took over at short notice, no one else wanting to drive it. For the 1930 'D12' the same pair had a works Speed Six, coming a good second to Bamato and Clement. A contrast to 1929, when with the Earl of March, Davis won the 1930 '500' in a s/c Ulster A7. Not a bad show for a driver who year after year wrote his *Autocar* column and many articles, seemingly having trained a secretary who was very knowledgeable, which I discovered as a schoolboy when I posed difficult motor racing questions.

Sammy was involved with record work in Aston Martin, Wolseley Ten, the '500' A7 and a fierce Morgan three-wheeler at Monthéry, besides track tests of cars as diverse as the 350hp V12 Sunbeam, K3 MG Magnette and R-Type MG Midget, and for fun got his 'gold' in the 1925 JCC High Speed Trial in a fully crewed 10/23 Talbot. Then there were the arduous but exciting events like the tough 1937 Alpine Trial in the Siddeley Special team, and Monte Carlo Rallies from 1930 to 1939 in cars such as the Daimler Double Six, Armstrong-Siddeley, and open Railtons. On the RAC Rally Davis drove Alvis, Raymond Mays V8, Rover, Singer, Triumph and Armstrong-Siddeley cars.

Yet for all that, SCHD was a regular supporter of the MCC reliability trials which those days provided publicity for new cars and were generously reported in the weekly motor magazines. A reborn WB could not have aspired to the races and rallies but would have relished these trials. For the London-Edinburgh, revived in 1919, Davis had a 10hp AC, trouble-free except for punctures and loss of a throttle connection. For the 'Exeter' there was an 11hp McKenzie, its makers hoping for good publicity; it

finished, but no award. By 1920 Davis had one of Grenville Bradshaw's air-cooled flat-twin ABCs on the Lands End. It was a good run (gold medal). 'Ebby' the Brooklands handicapper, started an entry of nearly 400 in the Edinburgh, the ABC winning another 'gold'. Trust Davis not only to have improved his ABC but fitted a clockwork route-recorder, oil lamps to save the battery when stationary, and enough rations for four full meals.

A gold again for the ABC in the 1920 Exeter, then the MCC's 1921 Lands End brought disaster for Davis's ABC, with a warped cylinder on the first famous hill. A 12hp Deemster was used for the 'Edinburgh', an 870-mile out and out home run, in which another 'gold' was won, although the little car's springs broke up. The Exeter was then a 24-hour return event; for this, *Autocar's* man had a rugged Ruston Hornsby tourer. Failure on the new terror Salcombe resulted in only a silver medal.

SCHD drove one of three ABCs on the 1922 Lands End, but after vindicating air cooling on several of the hills, Davis stopped on Porlock. Afterwards one good car had to be made from the parts of all three for the return home. To be fair, six out of seven ABCs finished, two with Golds. Davis missed the Edinburgh, but was back for the 1922 Exeter in a Palladium, a sporting car which its makers liked to run full of white-coated occupants to advertise "four seats, four cylinders and 4WB". Davis had made the crew practice many tyre changes, so when a skid into a bridge bent a wheel it was dealt with in 7½ minutes.

So another gold, another season ahead. For the 1923 Lands End the ABC 'Grandpa' was used. Time had not wearied it, Sammy said. It had been overhauled at 37,000 miles, and ➤

**"Now an established 'Bentley Boy', SCHD competed in the first Double-12 Hour race"**

*Sully leaves his HE to confer with Sammy in the Palladium during the 1922 Exeter Trial. Davis collected another Gold medal*



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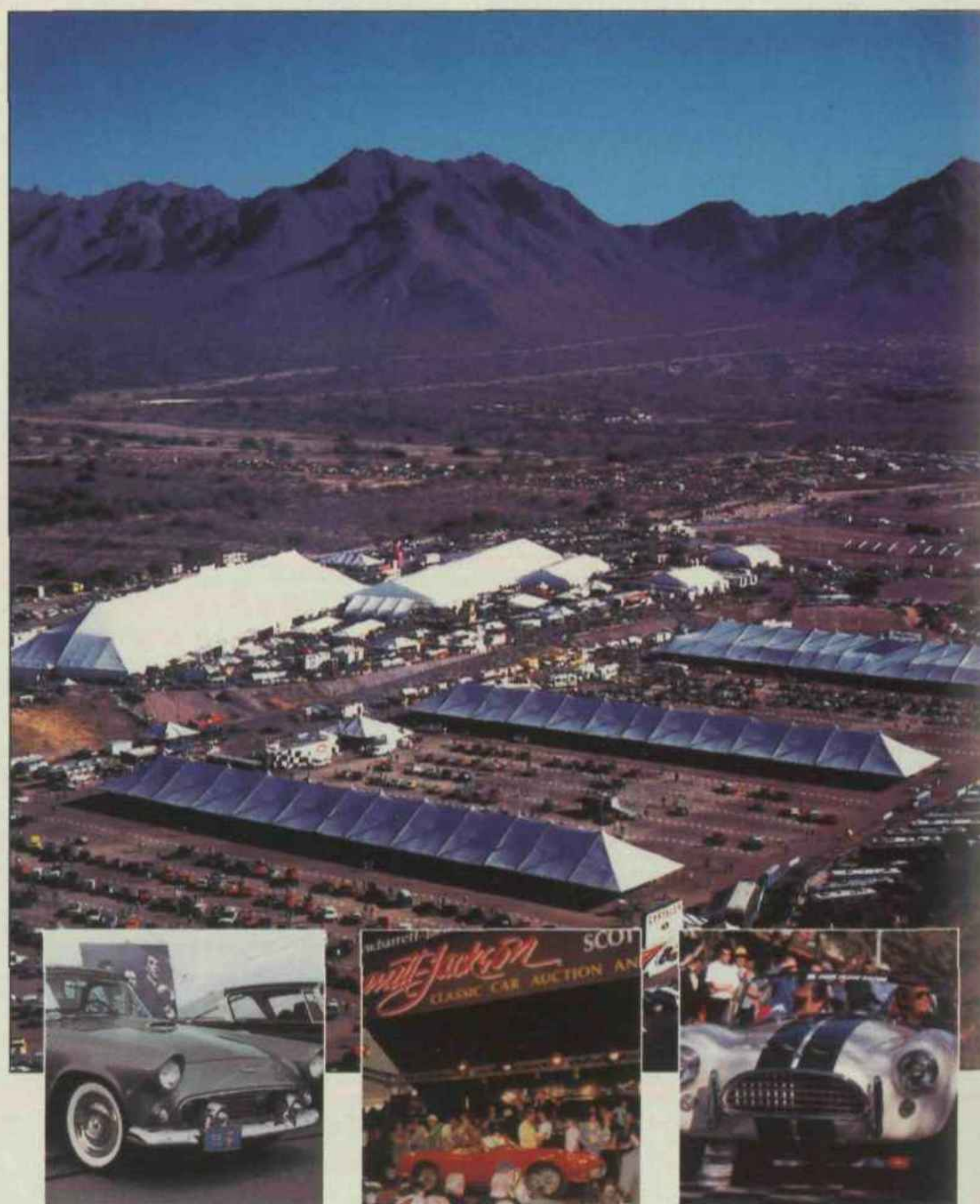
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**“Davies listed many accessories including gloves with little red and white lights in them”**

had a new body and a Claudel Hobson carburettor replacing two thirsty original ones. It romped up Porlock, Lynton and Beggar's Roost. Davies listed many accessories including gloves with little white and red lights in them. I sense journalistic freebies...

The Edinburgh saw Davis in a sports-tourer Riley – two more golds for his collection. It was back on the Sunday via Hadrians Wall – SCHD loved history. The year closed with a 1925 Waverley for the Exeter, facing rain, cold and fog on the outward run, but despite boiling, Davis's car had no trouble. Both Waverleys took golds. The 1924 Lands End saw the 'veteran' ABC win Gold again (*Autocar's* report ran to 11 pages). Davis ran an ohc Wolseley 10 for the next Edinburgh, Kirkstone Pass still signed “Impossible for Motors”, but a gearbox spigot seized. The Exeter in a hurricane saw Davis in an Austin 12/4; using chains on the hills it drew Gold.

Untiring, SCHD took the ABC on the 1925 Lands End; it seized on Porlock but finished (awardless). Le Mans kept him out of the Edinburgh, but Davis was back for the Exeter, using a 12/25 Humber (Silver), and the fast Frazer-Nash he had for the Lands End got the same award having failed on Porlock due to “a dog-too-high”. Some took Bluehills Mine when lit by flares.

His ABC too noisy for the JCC High Speed Trial, Sammy was back for the 1926 Exeter in one of the first 3-litre Invictas; petrol, starvation set in and he got only a Bronze medal. An A7 fabric saloon on the 1927 Lands End jibbed at the 1in3½ Beggar's Roost,

but it got steadily up Bluehills Mine (Silver). Bentley racing then took over – what a contrast – and snow cancelled the Exeter.

What a remarkable variety of cars Davis drove in these MCC trials and how excellent that the events continue. HS Linfield, *The Autocar's* road test writer, joined SCHD in the 1928 Exeter with a Taylor-bodied A7. Davis drove a four-seater FWD Alvis. Seemingly a bad bet for a trial, it romped up all the very slimy hills with ease, two Le Mans races having much improved the cars. An 80mph Le Mans Aston Martin was wonderful in the Lands End (another gold), while an MG Six made the Edinburgh just as easy. The never-bored, ever-entertaining, indefatigable Sammy D continued to support vintage MCC trials: he had a six-cylinder Lagonda

in the 1930 Exeter, its sump too low and its exhaust pipes removed by a rock, so silver medals for it and Linfield's Citroën Six Tourer. A low-slung Speed Model Riley 9, which some thought as silly for the task as the FWD Alvis, gave Sammy his best Land's End, almost a race, at 4500rpm up the observed sections, but very cold (Gold of course). On the home run the racy Riley was followed for miles by a motorbike policeman, so had to go “as Agag walked”. Sammy also drove his 1898 Bollée ‘Beelzebub’ in many Brighton runs.

By now Davis had ceased to compare these adventures with the late war, mythology, or historical items on the trials route. Le Mans kept him away from the Edinburgh and rallying from the Exeter, but Linfield had an MG Six in the former, so *The Autocar* was well represented. What fun all of these trials must have been. Had I been SCH Davis I think I would have managed some of them, and most certainly would have greatly enjoyed them. ■



*Inset: Davis pinned under the Invicta at Brooklands in 1931. Below: In the Ruston Hornsby on Salcombe Hill in the 1921 Exeter*



## GOODWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED

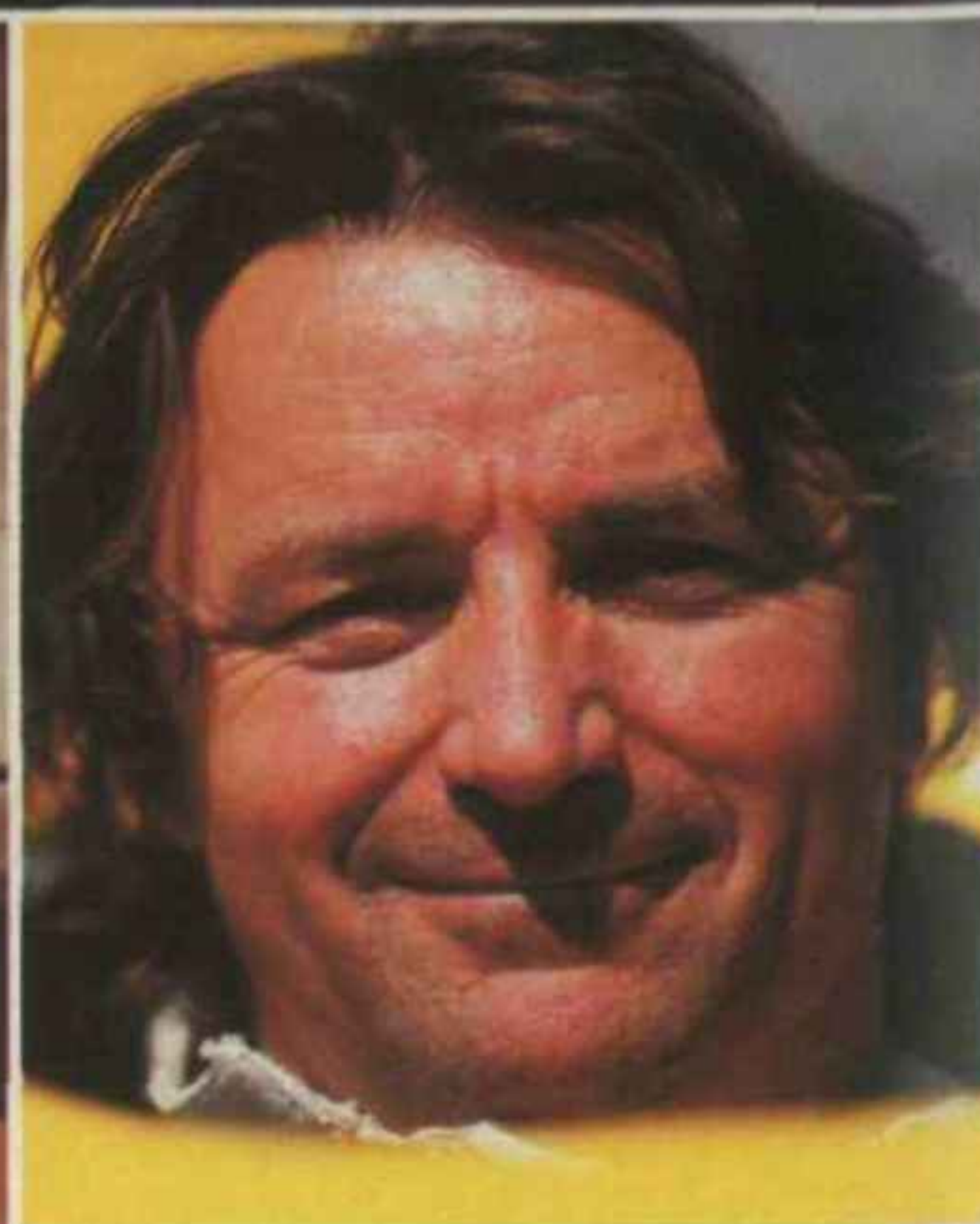
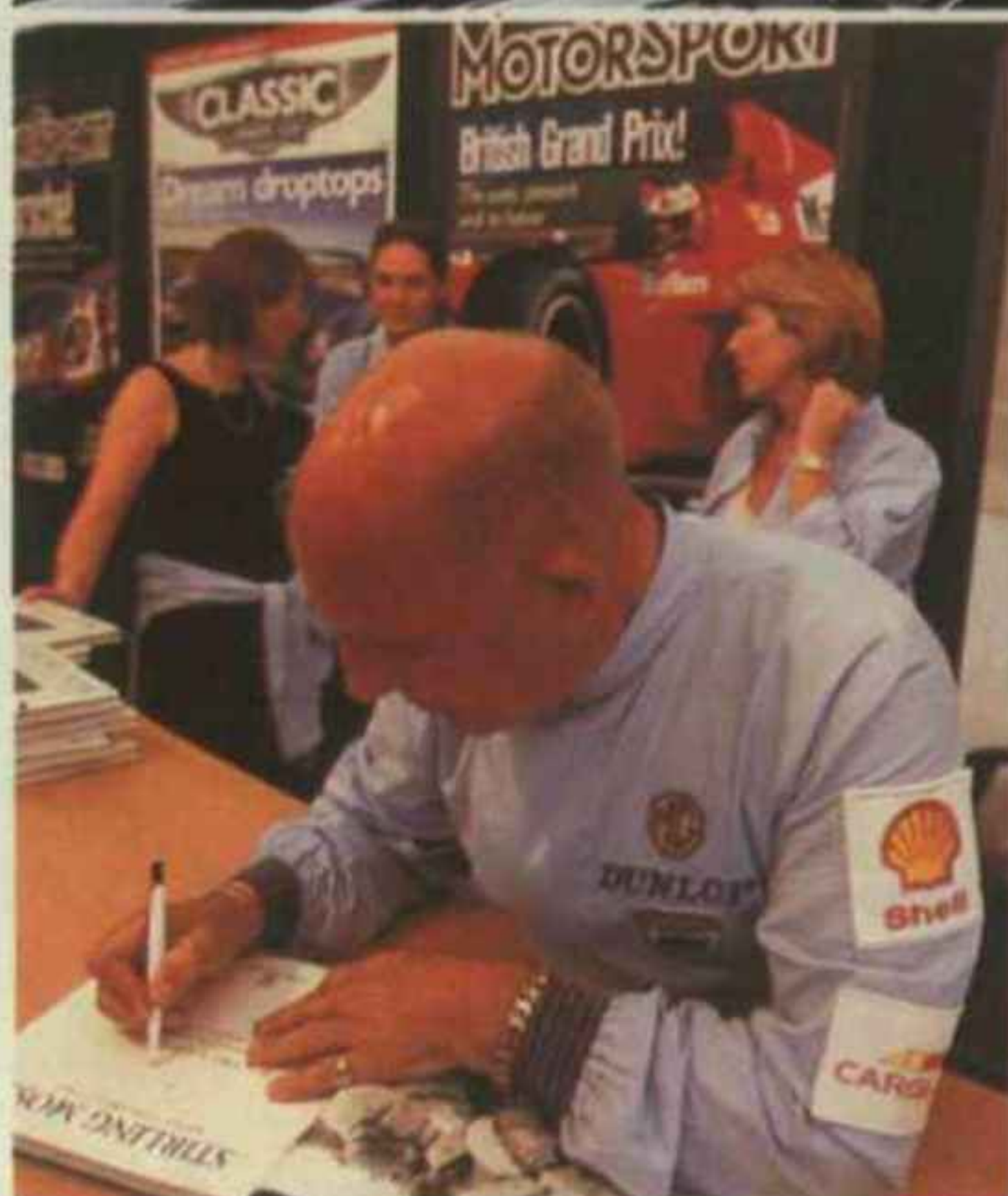
Seven years on, and the spectacle continues to amaze. Whether it was the dramatic sight of visual masterpieces like the immaculate Dan Gurney Eagle-Weslake, the aural assault that emanated from Audi's display of Auto Unions or simply the paddock-wide aroma of Castrol R, Goodwood's annual homage to the world of motorsport matched all expectations.

For once the weather was worthy of the weekend and crowds again flocked in record numbers to watch a 'Millenium of Horsepower'. Roman chariots provided a taste of the earliest action, but the true gladiatorial contest was between modern F1 and World Rally cars. Laurel wreaths were eventually awarded to McLaren's test driver Nick Heidfeld in last year's MP4/13 after a record-breaking run of 41.6sec.

Ben Redgrave & LAT



TOP: NICK HEIDFELD ON HIS WAY TO RECORD IN McLaren MP4/13  
 ABOVE: CUMMINS ONLY DIESEL TO HOLD POLE AT INDY 500  
 BELOW: EXQUISITE ENGINEERING ON EAGLE-WESLAKE  
 BOTTOM: STIRLING MOSS ON MOTOR SPORT STAND; RENE ARNOUX





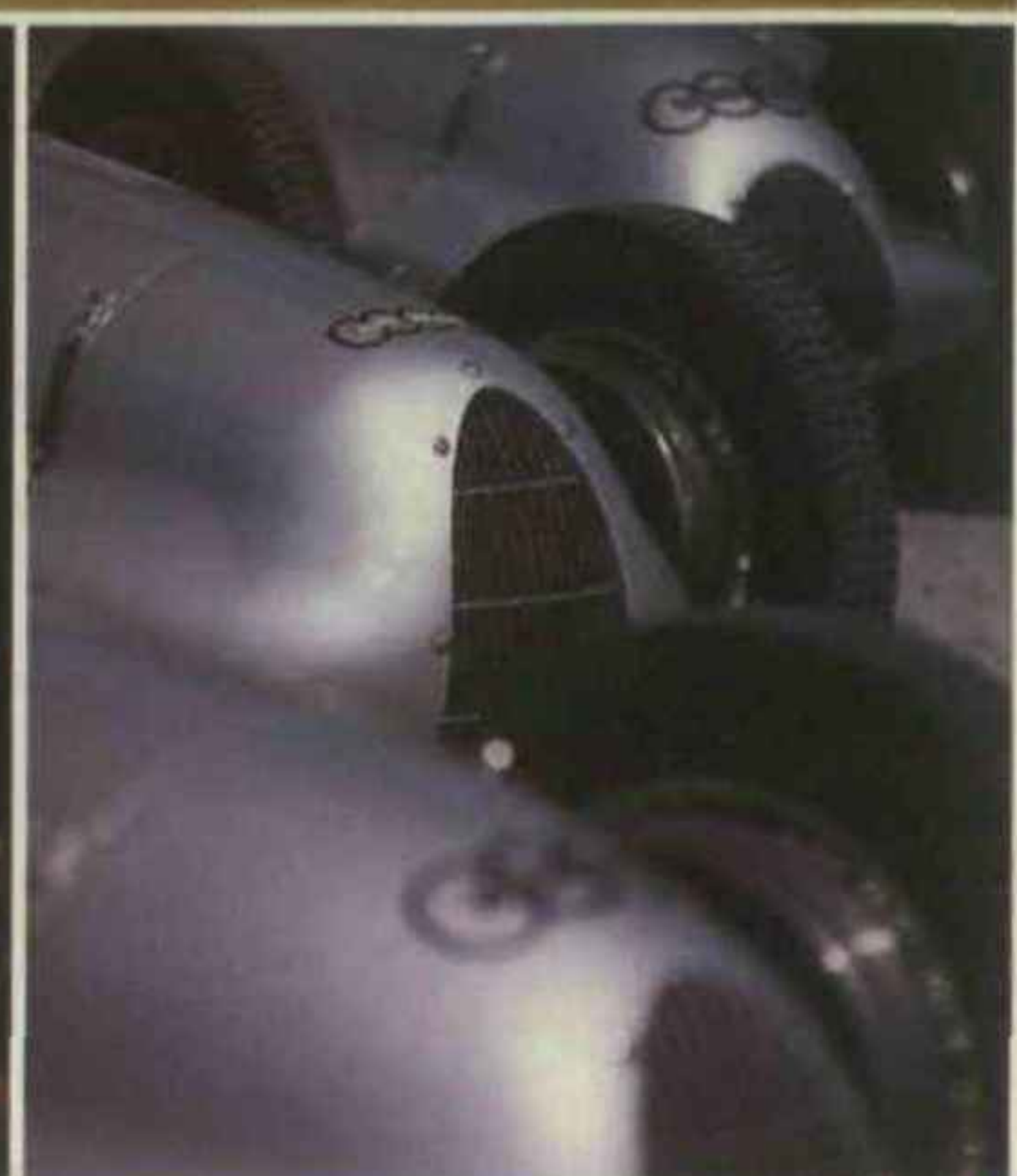
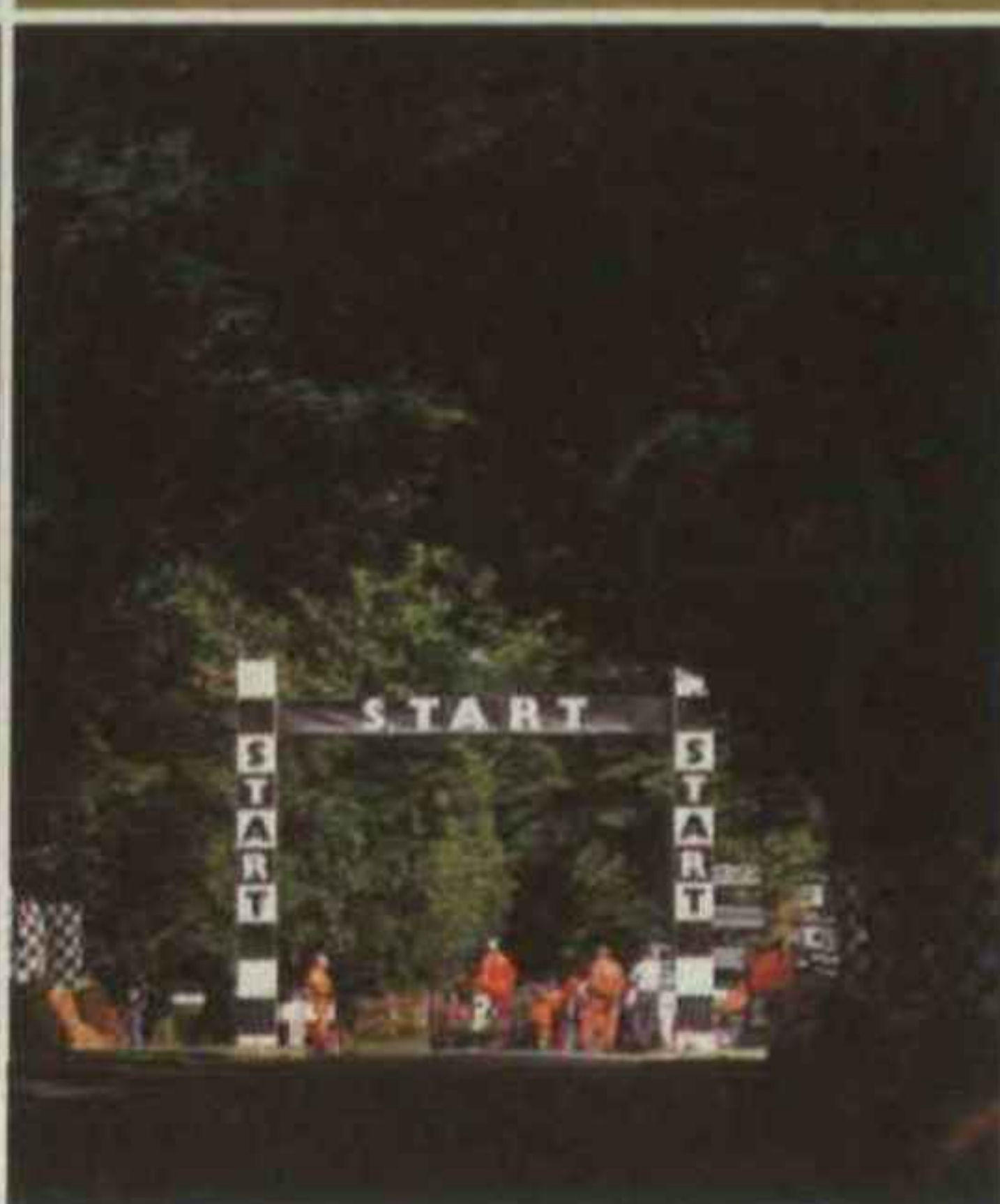
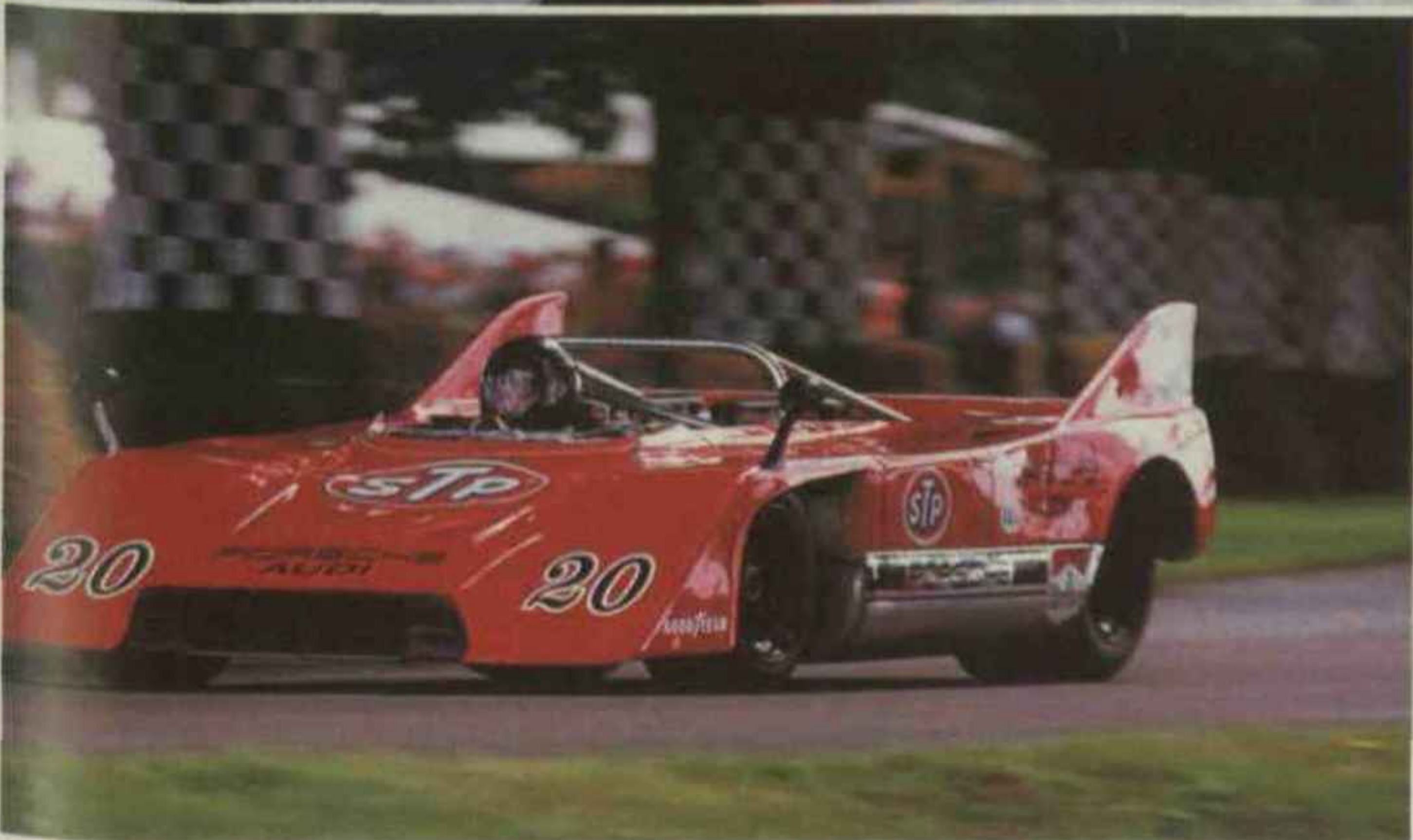
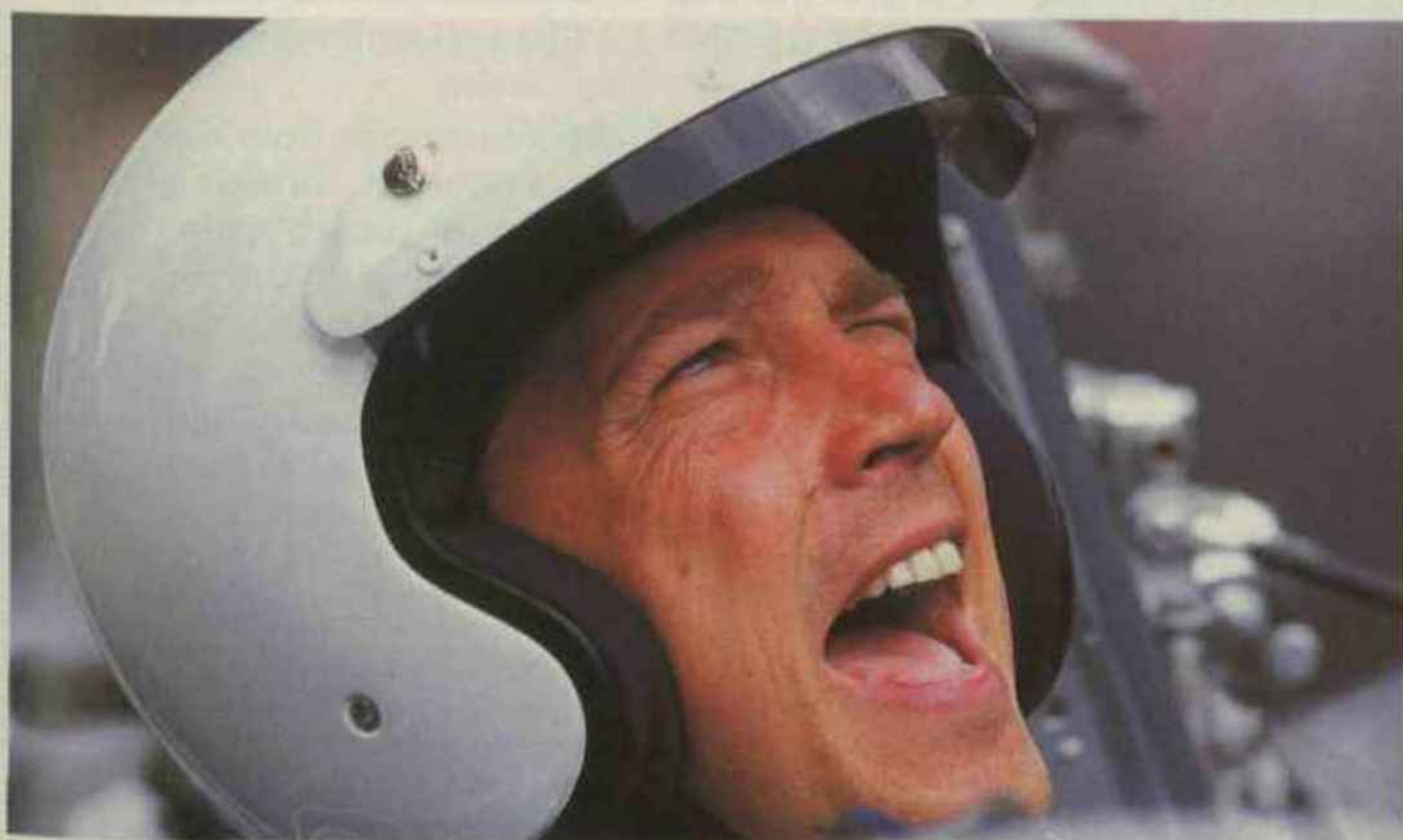


TOP: JOHN SURTEES IN HONDA RA300 WHICH WON '67 ITALIAN GP

BELOW: LORD MARCH DEMONSTRATED BRABHAM-BMW  
BOTTOM: WILLI KAUHSEN'S PORSCHE 917/10 CAN-AM

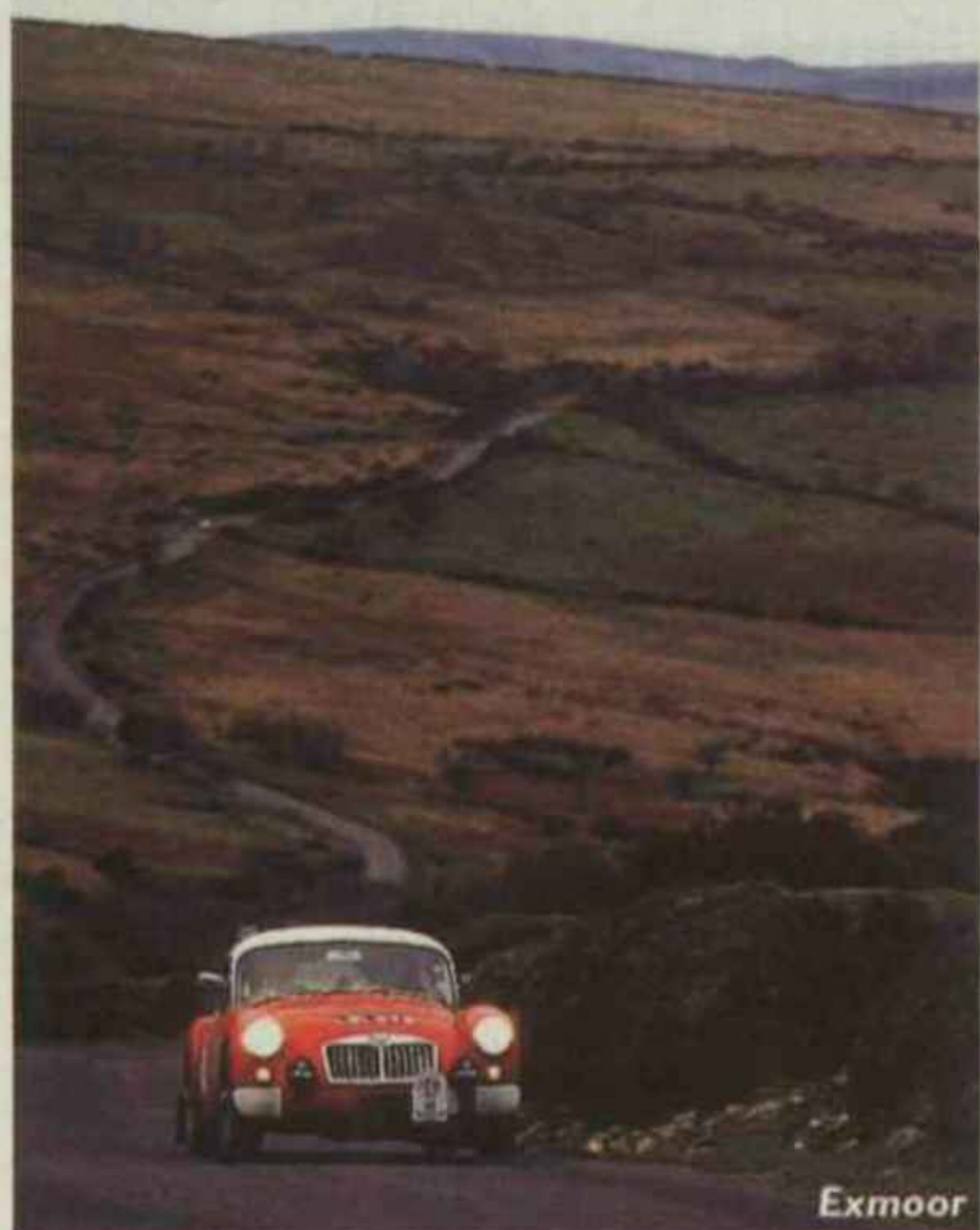
BELOW: JACKY ICKX IN FERRARI 512M

BOTTOM: LOTUS 25 DRIVEN BY CEDRIC SELZER; AUTO UNIONS



# HEROics

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Exmoor

## LE JOG latest

As we go to press, places on LE JOG have been booked by over 90 crews. The strong contingent of pre-war cars includes



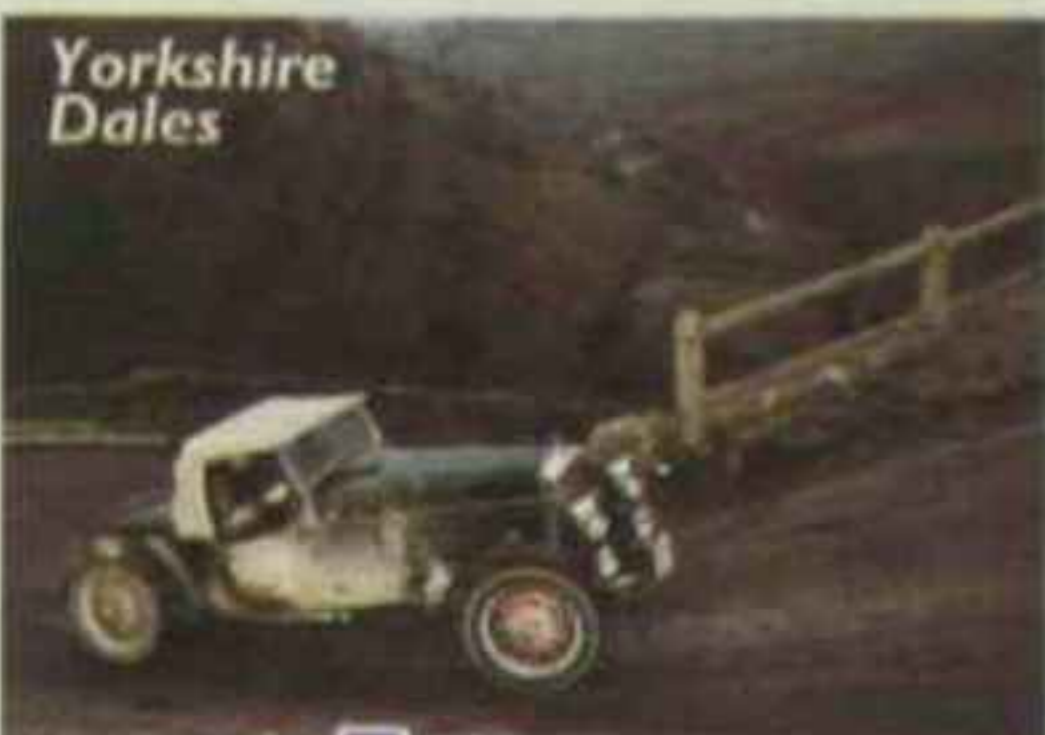
Stanhope Ford

Chris Podger's ex-Brooklands Alvis, 'The Green Car'. Double Gold Medallist Phil

Surtees is forsaking his Jeep for the comfort of an Austin A90, and is adding no less than Nigel Raeburn to his long list of navigators.

There's the usual healthy entry from the Continent, including John aan de Stegge's popular Thunderbird, and the Volga of Czech Cape Town veteran Petr Janda – first time on a British rally?

The route will return to some old favourite test sites not used for a few years, including Porlock Toll Road. There are a few great new venues, too. The Welsh night leg will be as demanding as ever.



Yorkshire Dales



John o'Groats at last!



All three London - Cape Town Gold Medallists plan to enter HERO's grand tour of South America, the Inca Trail. John Blanckley, Anthony Ward and Alastair Caldwell were all present at the recent London launch. Blanckley and Ward will use the same Austin A90 and Allard M-type, seen below with co-drivers Tony Davies and David Reville. The 22,000 km event starts in Rio de Janeiro on 7 October 2001. Regs and other details are now available from HERO, and on their website [www.hero.org.uk](http://www.hero.org.uk)



LE JOG – full title the Land's End to John o'Groats Reliability Trial –



is Britain's toughest event for vintage and classic cars, and the country's longest motor rally of any kind. It starts from Land's End at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday 4 December, and finishes just 72 hours later, after three days and two nights on the road.

Full details are available from HERO, or can be downloaded from [www.hero.org.uk](http://www.hero.org.uk)

## Malts memoirs

The Scotch mist (and worse) that blanketed much of May's Classic Malts Scottish Six Day Reliability Trial did not dampen competitors' enjoyment of the superb scenery, wonderful drivers' roads and tests, halts at great places, and lively social programme – some reckoned that it was the best event they'd ever done.



Gold for Jayne and Mum



The premier award for best Marque Team went to the MGA trio of Nick Pryor / Lesley Stockwell, Geoff McGladdery / Andy McGladdery, and

Mike Pickersgill / Elaine Pickersgill.

Jayne Wignall's Tiger, ably navigated by her sprightly mother Beryl Neate, once more won a Gold Medal, along with Pryor's MGA and the cavernous but well conducted Alvis 4.3 Charlesworth saloon of Stan Williams / Tony Davies.



Denzel in distillery

Many of the 83 competitors came from the Continent, bringing some superb cars, including Peter Denzel's Denzel, the Chrysler Royale of Håkan Victorin, and the beautiful Ferrari 250GT swb of



Monster Chrysler at Loch Ness

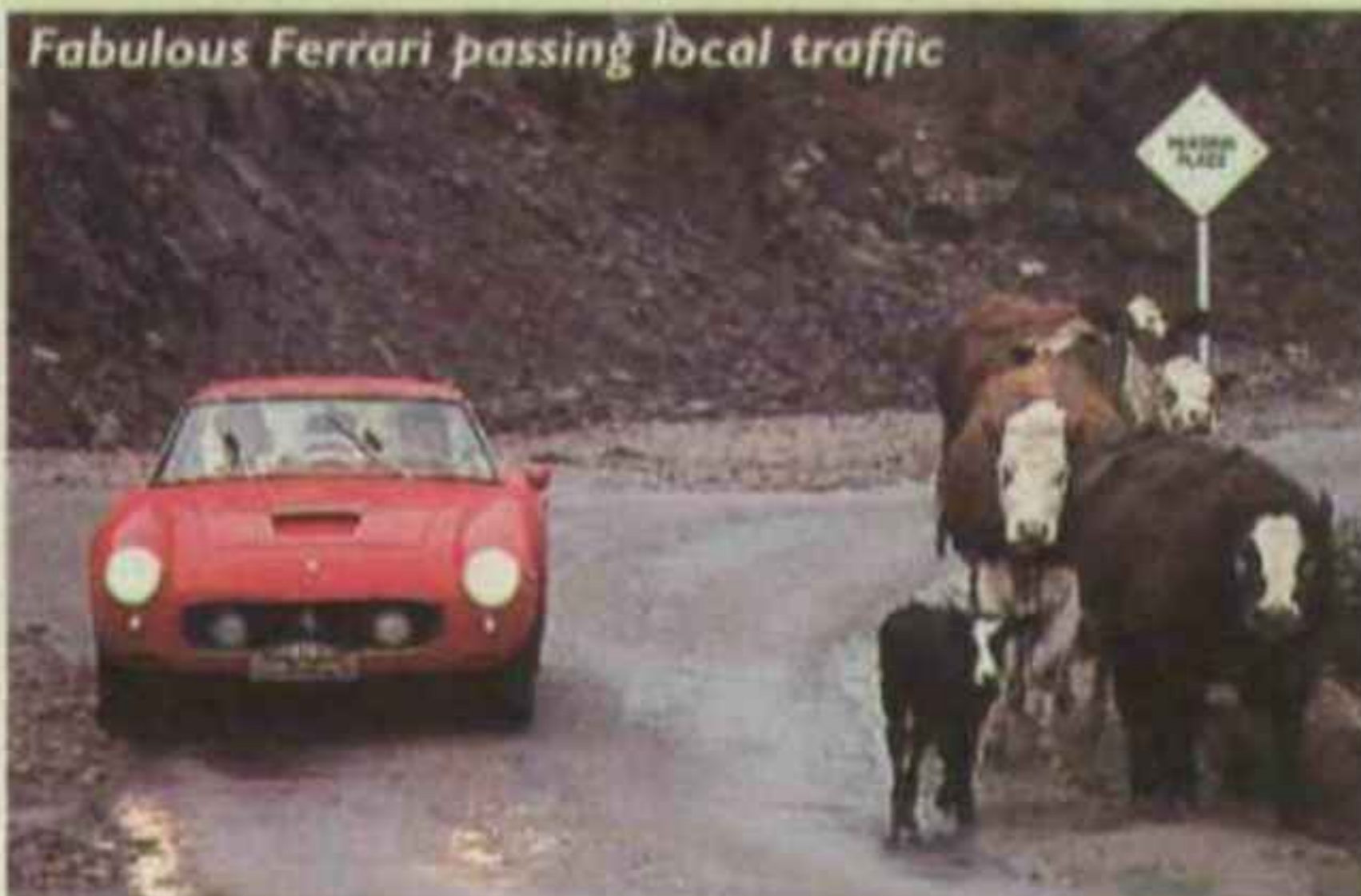
Christine Laidlaw. Federico Schoellhammer's immaculate drophead Rolls Royce Silver Cloud took the Concours.

Planning is already well under way for an even better Millennium



Jag tours Dunrobin

Malts next May. Put your name in to HERO now if you want to book a place.



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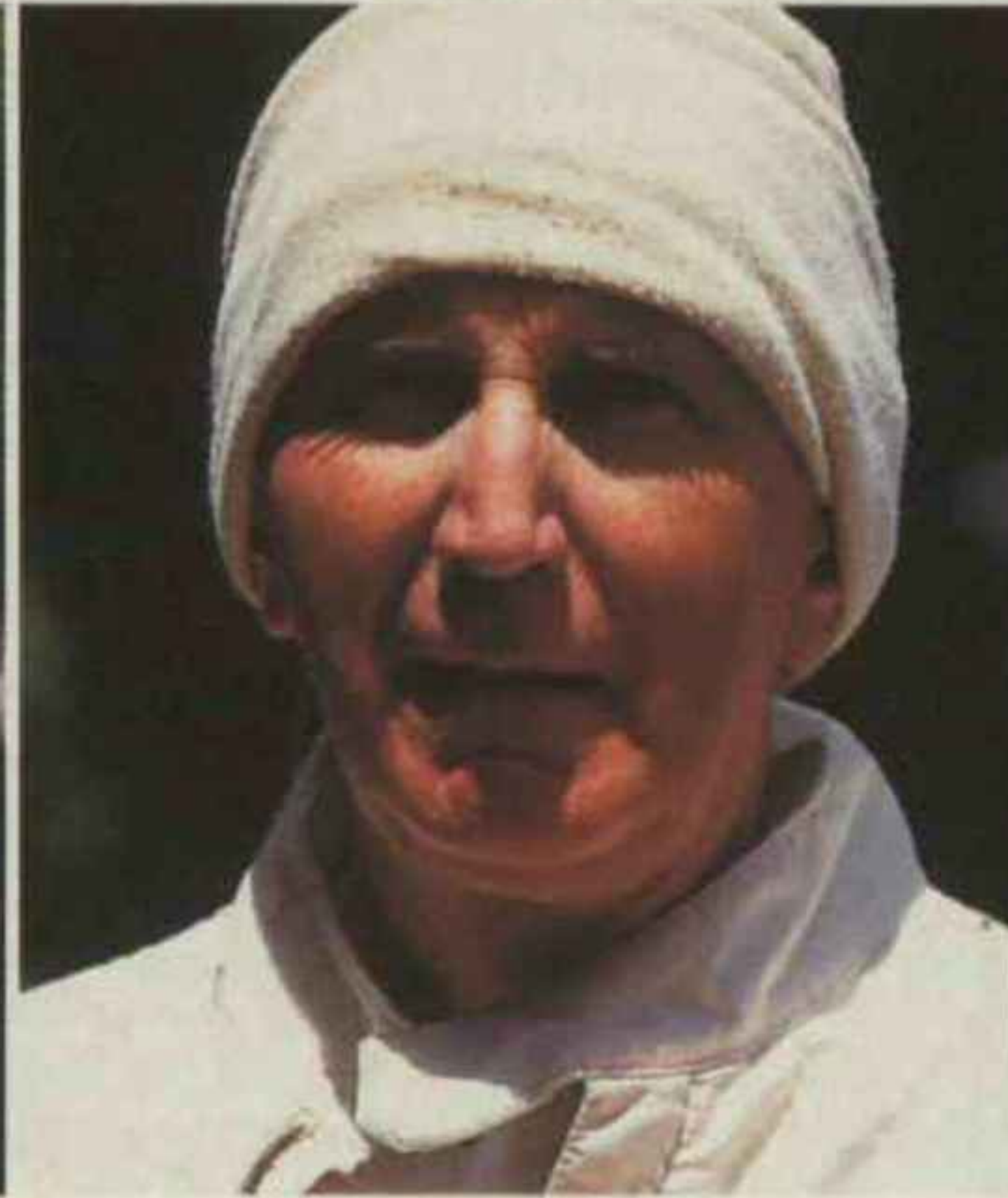
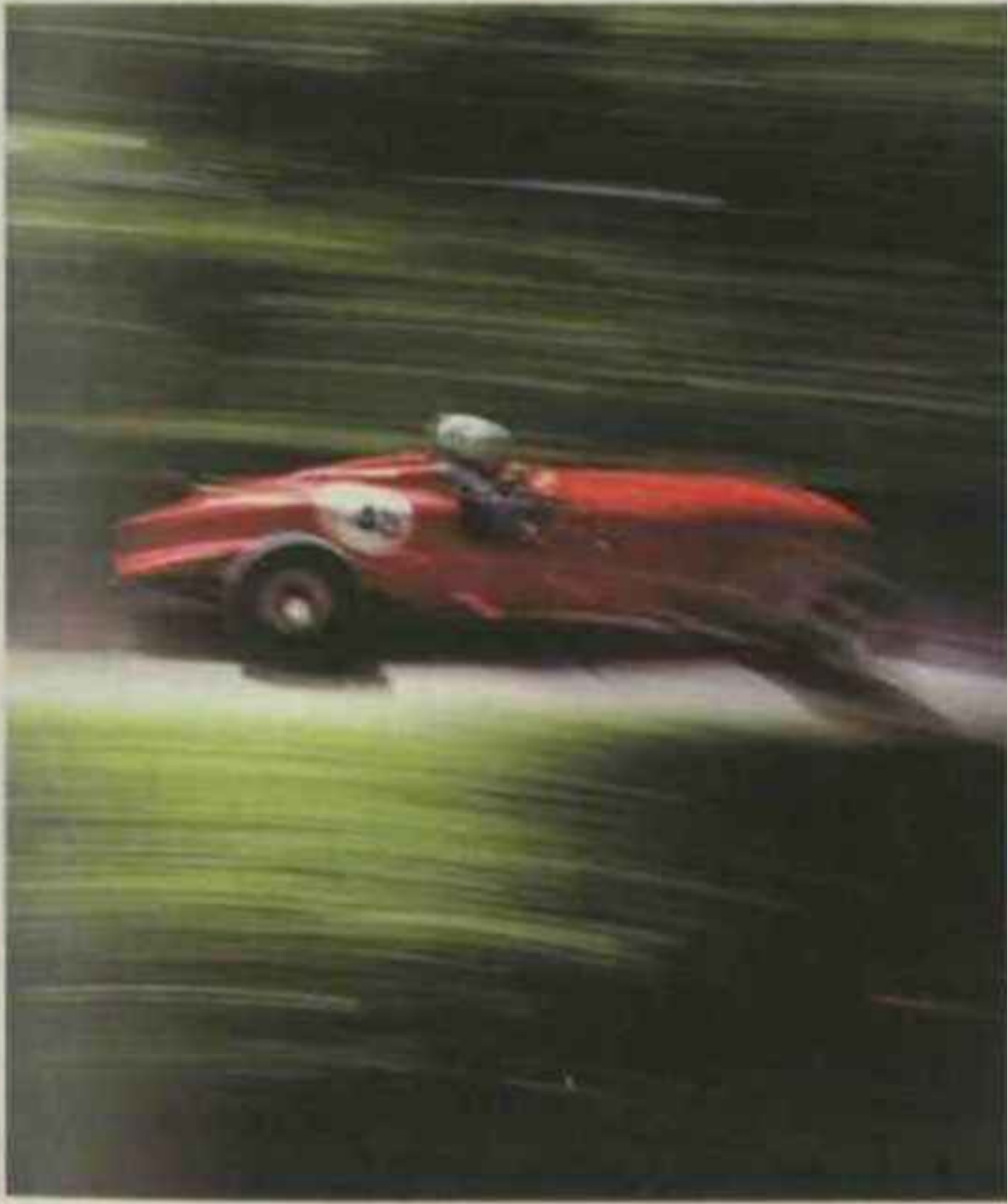
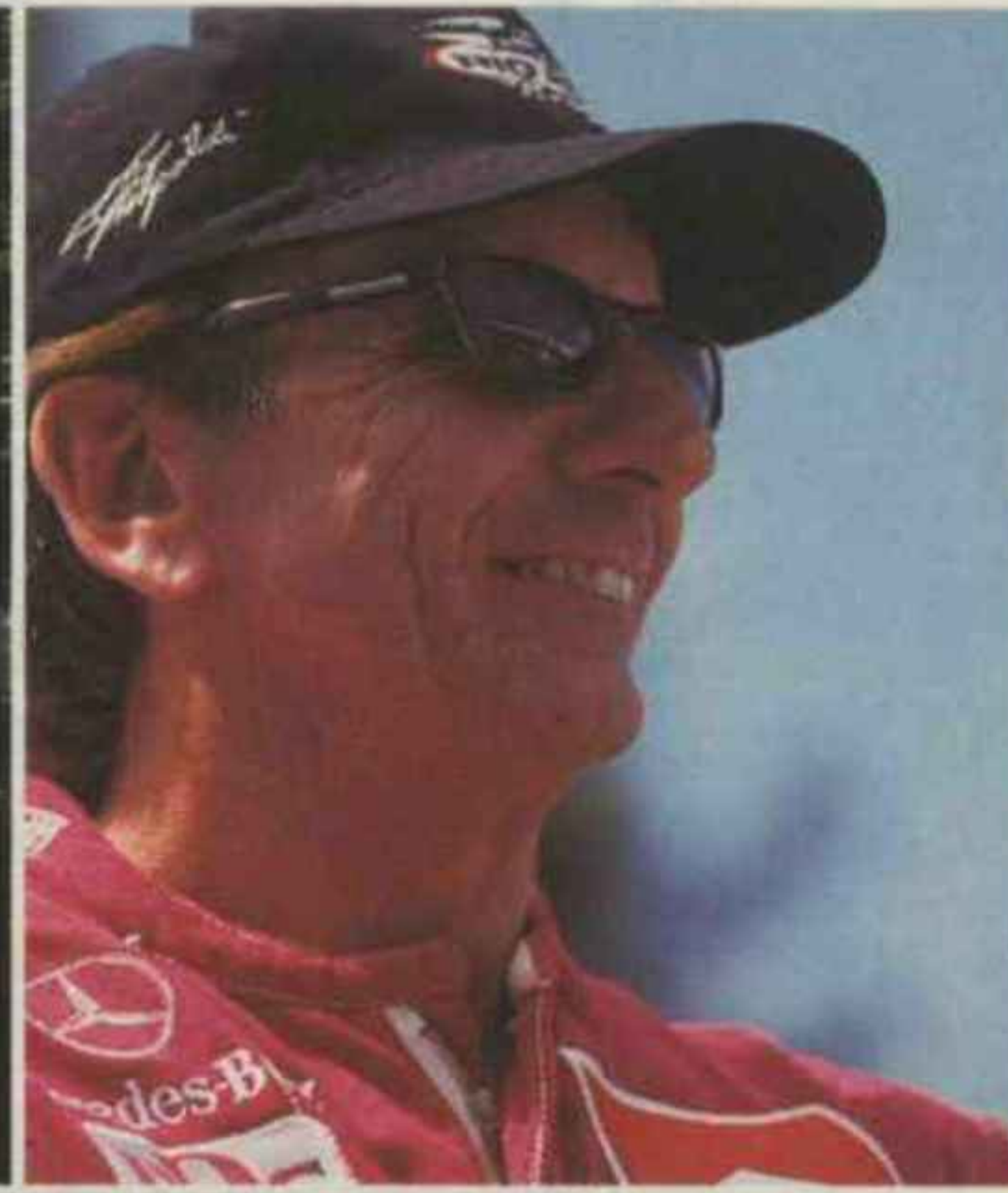
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TOP: HANS STUCK DRIVES AUTO UNION C/D V16

ABOVE LEFT: GEORGE DANIELS IN BIRKIN'S SINGLE-SEATER BENTLEY

ABOVE RIGHT: JOHN WATSON

BOTTOM: COLIN McRAE'S FORD FOCUS WRC

TOP LEFT: EMERSON FITTIPALDI

TOP RIGHT: GEOFF DOVEY IN NAPIER-RAILTON

ABOVE: JACK BRABHAM



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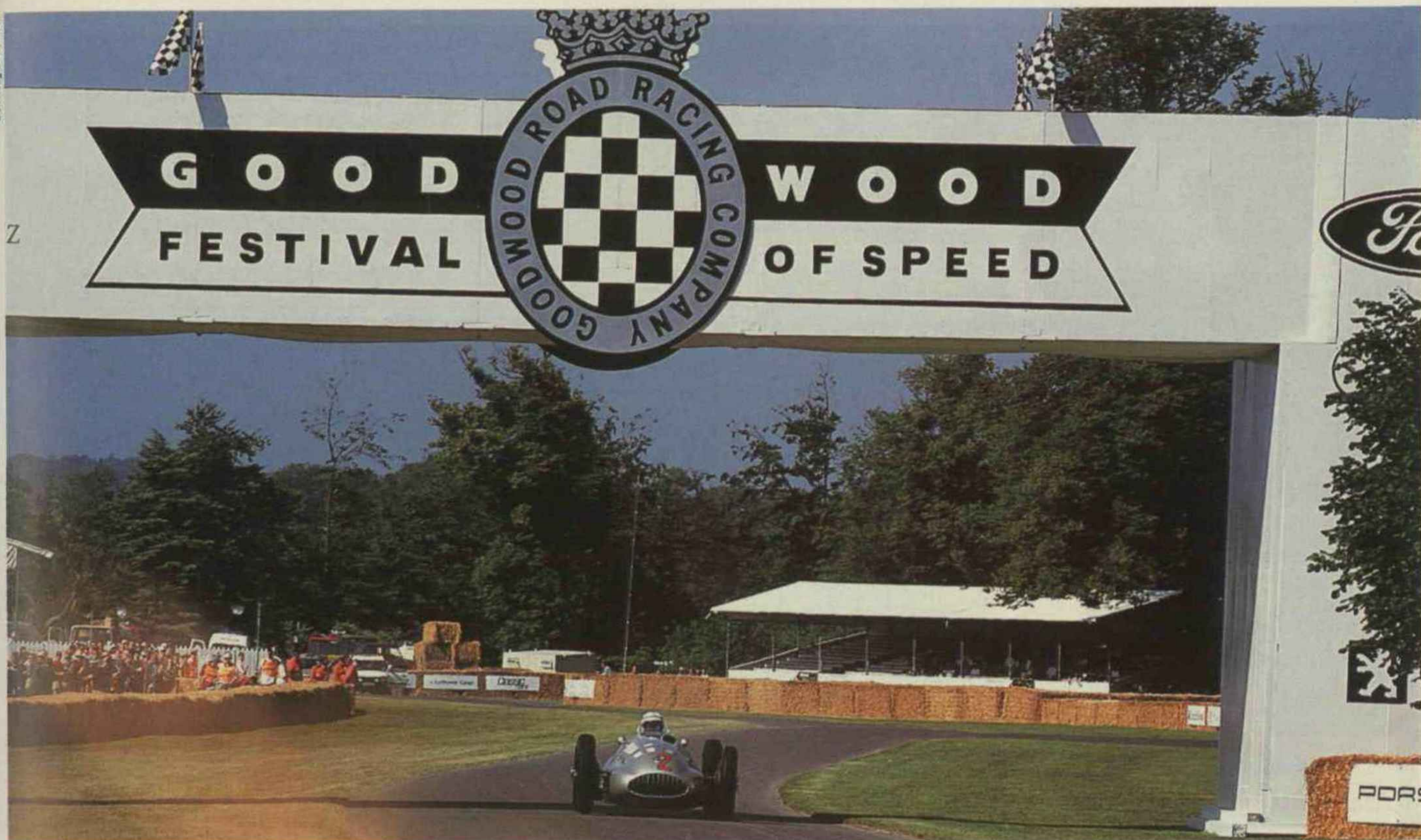
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TOP: MERCEDES W154 IN HANDS OF JOHN SURTEES

BELOW: JAGUAR XJR9 TOPPED LE MANS PARADE

BOTTOM LEFT: RICHARD BURNS, MICHELE MOUTON, COLIN McRAE

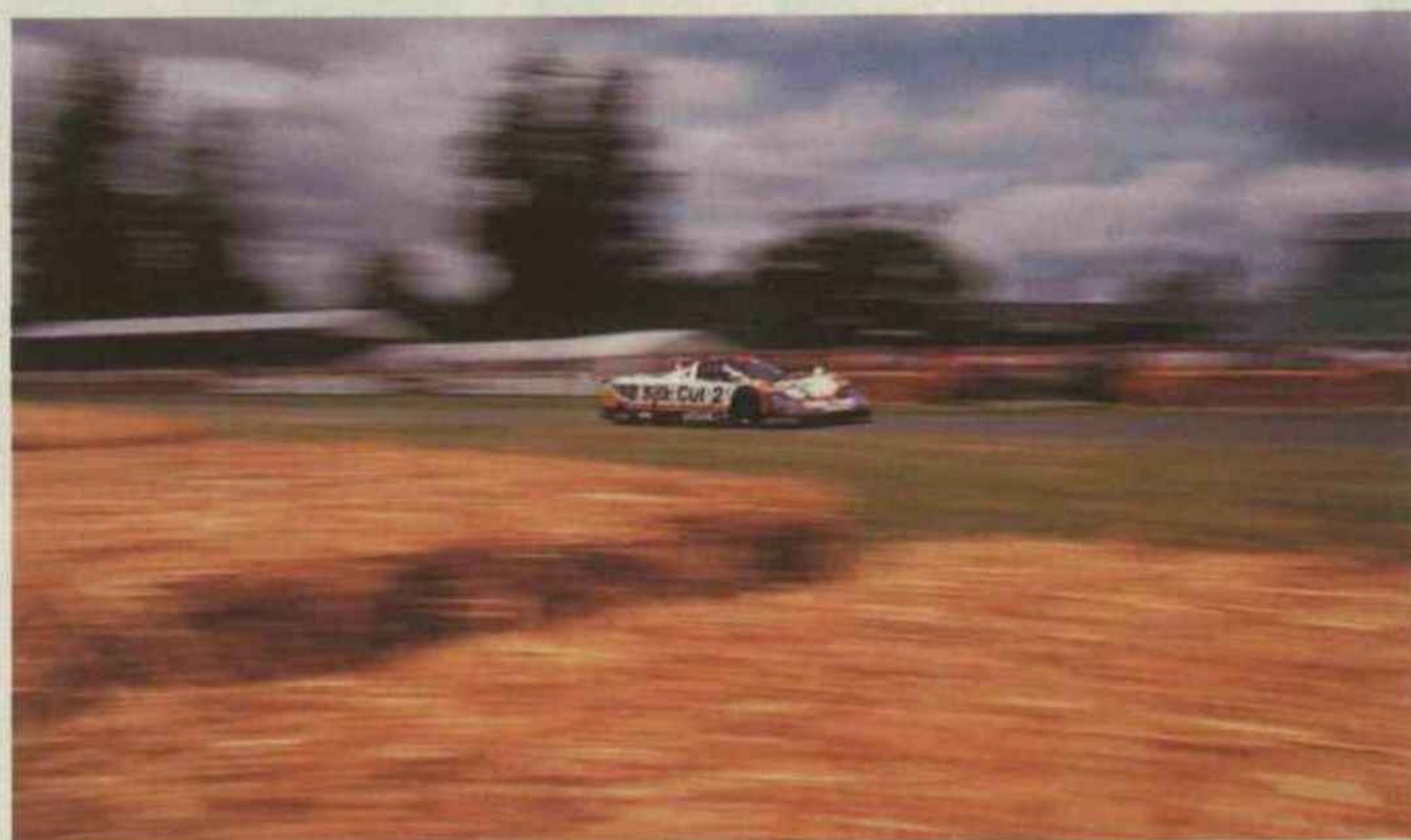
BOTTOM RIGHT: FANGIO CHEVROLET DRIVEN BY JUAN MANUEL II

## BARRICHELLO ON GOODWOOD

It is the popular refrain of several wizened old hacks, I know. Young drivers of today, they assert, have no passion for the history of the sport in which they compete. Talk to fellow Formula One driver Rubens Barrichello at Goodwood, however, and you might just get the feeling that those hacks are becoming a touch too cynical.

The Stewart-Ford driver was scheduled to drive two cars – one Mario Andretti's Lotus 79, the "first car I remember seeing when I grew up watching F1 on TV" – and the other Ayrton Senna's McLaren-Honda. It was an opportunity that left Barrichello feeling humble.

"I just hope that when I get into Ayrton's car I don't cry when they fire it up," he said when we talked on the Friday. "It means so much to me drive his car." Sadly, mechanical gremlins meant Rubens never got the chance to attack the hill in anger in his mentor's car but his time in the Lotus brought a smile to his face. "People always say that we are crazy, but those guys really were. I asked what the bar hitting my knees was and they said it was the steering rack! But those fat tyres are fantastic. We need those in F1 today..." **MF**





# B. BIRA

## SIAM'S PRINCE OF RACING

**PRINCE BIRA WAS MUCH MORE THAN A ROYAL WITH A PENCHANT FOR RACING: HE WAS A GIFTED DRIVER, A TALENTED ARTIST AND THE INSPIRATION TO A GENERATION OF PRIVATEER RACERS. BY ROBERT EDWARDS**

TO PASSERS-BY AT BARON'S COURT UNDERGROUND STATION, two days before Christmas 1985, he was just an elderly man, but by his appearance not a local one. That he had seen better days was clear; that he had died from a heart attack was a fact which emerged only later, as did his identity. When it was confirmed, and the obituaries posted, there were smiles of regretful recognition; and so indeed there should have been – for this had been a famous Prince, of Royal blood. He died a few hundred yards from his bed, but a long way from home. He had been born in the Purabha palace in Bangkok on July 15, 1914, a cousin of the King of Siam. His full given name was Birabongse Bhanutej Bhanubandh. For those who knew of him through motor racing though, he was known only as B. Bira.

To many, Bira exemplified that elusive Brooklands ideal; the agreeable toff with the common touch taking on all-comers and winning; no need to practice. Just two years out of Eton, in March 1935, he had started racing a Riley Imp, which was followed by a blown MG Magnette, but he achieved little success with either.

Bira was in many ways a Renaissance Prince. While he raced he studied sculpture under the noted Charles Wheeler; it was a medium in which he became very well-regarded, and he exhibited consistently at the Royal Academy from 1936 until the war. His skills would later be called upon under more depressing circumstances.

Bira had long admired Raymond Mays, Britain's Mr Motor Racing; he had first seen him at Brooklands in 1933, and a year or two later clapped eyes on Mays' new ERA making its debut on the Isle of Man. But it was probably Pat Fairfield, one of the first and most successful exponents of Mays' new car, who persuaded Bira this was what he needed; neither the Riley nor the MG had been competitive, but Fairfield proved the ERA was in a class of its own.

So, after some lobbying, Bira managed to convince his older cousin Prince Chula Chakrabongse to buy him an ERA for his 21st birthday. Chula, acting *in loco parentis* since the death of Bira's father, was his financier as well as mentor in London; they shared an elegant apartment



and, thanks to a generous stipend from Thailand's equivalent of the Civil list, lived well. They were not that closely related, being first cousins once removed, and Chula was definitely the senior.

Above all, the ERA project was to be managed properly. The premises were in Dalling Road, Hammersmith, which became the headquarters of the cousins' racing team, the White Mouse Stable. Chula ran it, and with the assistance of skilled mechanics including Stan Holgate and Lofty England, the enterprise thrived. Their ERAs became famous – Romulus, Remus and Hanuman.

It was clear that the ERA was altogether of a higher order than his previous conveyances, and also that as his car improved, so did Bira's skill. In fact he emerges

as the single most successful ERA exponent in voiturette racing. Of the two dozen rated races which the marque won, Bira accounted for no less than seven, the first at Monaco in 1936, driving Romulus.

As well as being a driver of the first water, Bira also brought much needed style to motorsport. In this, Mays was possibly his inspiration, but even that elegant mainspring

of ERA could not bring himself to sport blue Thai silk overalls, however much he might have been tempted.

But there was another car which made Bira well-known; the Maserati 8CM which the fabulously rich American Whitney Straight had ordered new in 1934. It had been modified by Reid Railton with a distinctive heart-shaped radiator and a preselector gearbox. It was brutally quick and Straight had had huge success with it. Upon his retirement from racing, the car was sold to Harry Rose, who sold it to Chula in 1936. His first act was to paint it the colour which became known as 'Bira blue'.

Without Chula, it is unlikely that Bira could have accomplished as much as he did. The older cousin was a formidable organiser, a details man, whose ceaseless efforts behind the scenes ensured the cars were prepared as well as could be. Chula was still more cosmopolitan than his cousin, being half Russian, and they cut an exotic dash through the tweedy world of '30s racing.

"The right crowd and no crowding", a catchphrase unimaginable at Indianapolis, applied in spades to ➤

*Bira made his name as a driver and won his best races in the famous White Mouse ERAs – Romulus, Remus and Hanuman*



LM

the White Mouse Stable. The forelock-tugging which went with the presence of the Princes in the paddock at Brooklands afforded them a degree of flexibility lost to commoner folk; they were treated to the type of fawning adoration Brits do so well, and were seldom disturbed by the intrusions of the press.

Bira's artistic skills were called upon in the saddest circumstances, when Pat Fairfield died after a crash at Le Mans and the BRDC asked Bira to design a fitting memorial. He did that and more, endowing both the Fairfield Memorial Trophy and the Siam Trophy to the BRDC, to be awarded to the winner of the British Empire Trophy race.

All in all, Bira was hugely, undeniably successful; he won the BRDC road racing gold star three years in a row and set new standards at many levels. He was the first driver to lap Phoenix Park at over 100mph, and set 1500cc records at Donington and Crystal Palace which were never beaten before the war. It is possible, given the competition which he had with Richard Seaman when they raced in the same class, that he might have gone as far as a major Grand Prix team, but the ex-Straight Maserati sufficed to keep him both occupied and happy.

His racing made him extremely popular in Thailand; not only did he win (Thailand was not over-endowed with international sportsmen) but he acted as *ex-officio* ambassador with some success. The cousins were held

up as illustrations of all that was sound about both the country of their birth and the public schools which taught them to speak so languidly.

The onset of the war put racing on hold, and the cousins exiled themselves down to Cornwall, to Helland Bridge near Bodmin. Here, having little else to do, they scribbled furiously, an activity at which Chula proved the stronger. Hopes of returning to Thailand evaporated as Japan joined the war, for Thailand, under Japanese

occupation, was forced to declare war upon Britain, which made the pair, technically, enemy aliens. Under such circumstances, Cornwall made more sense than London. Both decamped, with their British wives.

Perhaps such enforced proximity soured their relationship, for by the end of the war they were not getting on, and when Bira sought to resuscitate his career, he did so without his cousin. It was a great pity; the White Mouse stable had in many ways established a blueprint for how

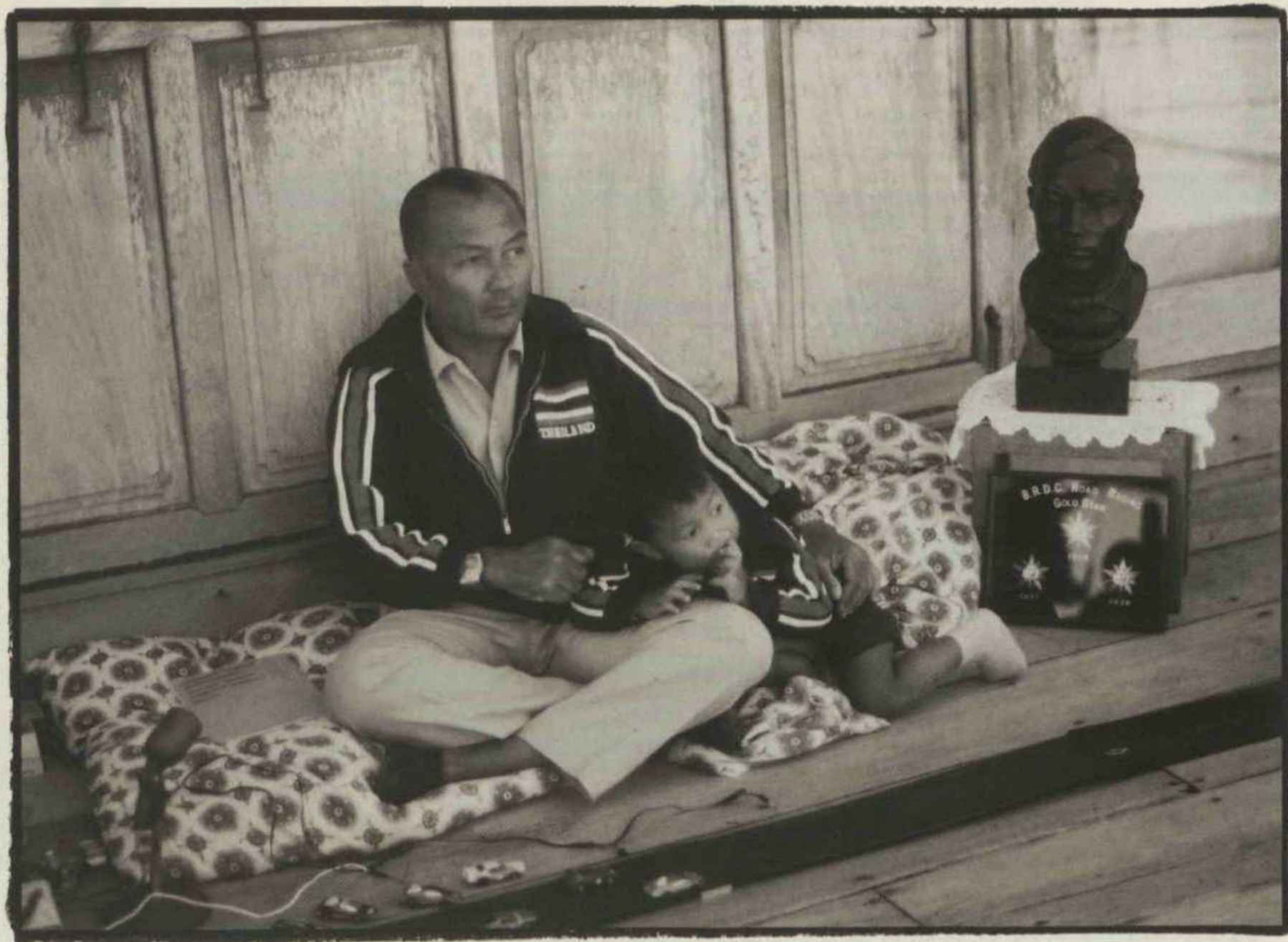
private teams should be run. Certainly, that was Lofty England's view when he looked at both Ecurie Ecosse and Lister much later on – neatness, presentation, attention to detail, all these he prized.

Post-war, competition for drives was naturally intense as the sport re-invented itself, but it was a reasonable veterans' market. Pleasingly, his old mechanic England helped him with a drive in the new Jaguar XK120, and he partnered Clemente Biondetti and Leslie Johnson



Top: Bira was a sculptor of international repute; above: racing at Brooklands in the ex-Whitney Straight Maserati 8CM





LAI, John Dugdale/Ludvigsen Library

in one of its inaugural events at Silverstone.

But post-war it was different. Brooklands was gone and with it the agreeable social environment. A generation of drivers whose boyhood had been a wartime one were on the rise. "The right crowd" was an expression which meant less than nothing; beating cabbage-chewing foreigners however, did, almost as an extension of the war.

For Bira, then, it was back to Maserati. He had bought a 4CL for the 1947 season and had some success with it, winning the Formule Libre race at Chimay, Belgium, in May. He was one of the prized, so far as car builders were concerned, a private racer. He looked forward to a reprise of his pre-war career, but his source of income had been terminally degraded by the depredations of the Japanese Army. He campaigned the car in 1948 as well, winning at the inaugural Formule Libre race at the new Zandvoort circuit.

This was all rather promising, but without the full support of Chula or the Thai treasury he found the organisation tedious. He still had the services of Stan Holgate and for 1949 he effectively leased his 4CL to Roy Salvadori for the princely sum of £2000 per annum, as he had himself been offered a drive in a works-prepared 4CL entered by Enrico Platé. Bira's own car was destroyed in September of that year in a fiery crash at the Curragh; Salvadori was unhurt, and the car, happily, was insured.

For 1950, he stayed with Platé, for whom he entered

four Grands Prix, coming fourth at Bremgarten, preceded by fifth at Monaco, the scene of his first victory.

For 1951, he tried an OSCA V12 engine in a 4CL chassis; it proved a dog and he entered only one GP with it, in Spain, where it expired on the first lap. Tellingly, it was entered under the Ecurie Siam banner, confirming that Chula and the White Mouse outfit were no longer a part of his professional life. He had been pencilled in as a BRM driver for the French Grand Prix in July, but, embarrassingly, the cars were not in a fit state to appear. By the time they were, the rules had changed.

The Formula Two interregnum of 1952-3 created an unseemly rush for the 2-litre marques and caused a small surge in the fortunes of the Gordini company, among others. Bira split his efforts between Gordini and Connaught with little success (the period was a Ferrari walkover) until Maserati's new effort, the 250F, was announced and ready.

Well, almost ready. Swamped by orders, Maserati converted a small run of A6G single-seaters with 250F power to placate impatient owners, of whom Bira was one. Confusingly, and to the later lipsmacking delight of the dark side of the motor trade, they were given 250F chassis numbers. He entered his car under the for the inaugural 2H-litre race in Argentina. And, although it came nowhere, he did manage to win at Chimay again before selling the car and putting its engine into the ➤



Top: Bira in later life (this is 1978) failed to succeed in business as he had in racing; above: the white mouse on a Maserati 4CL

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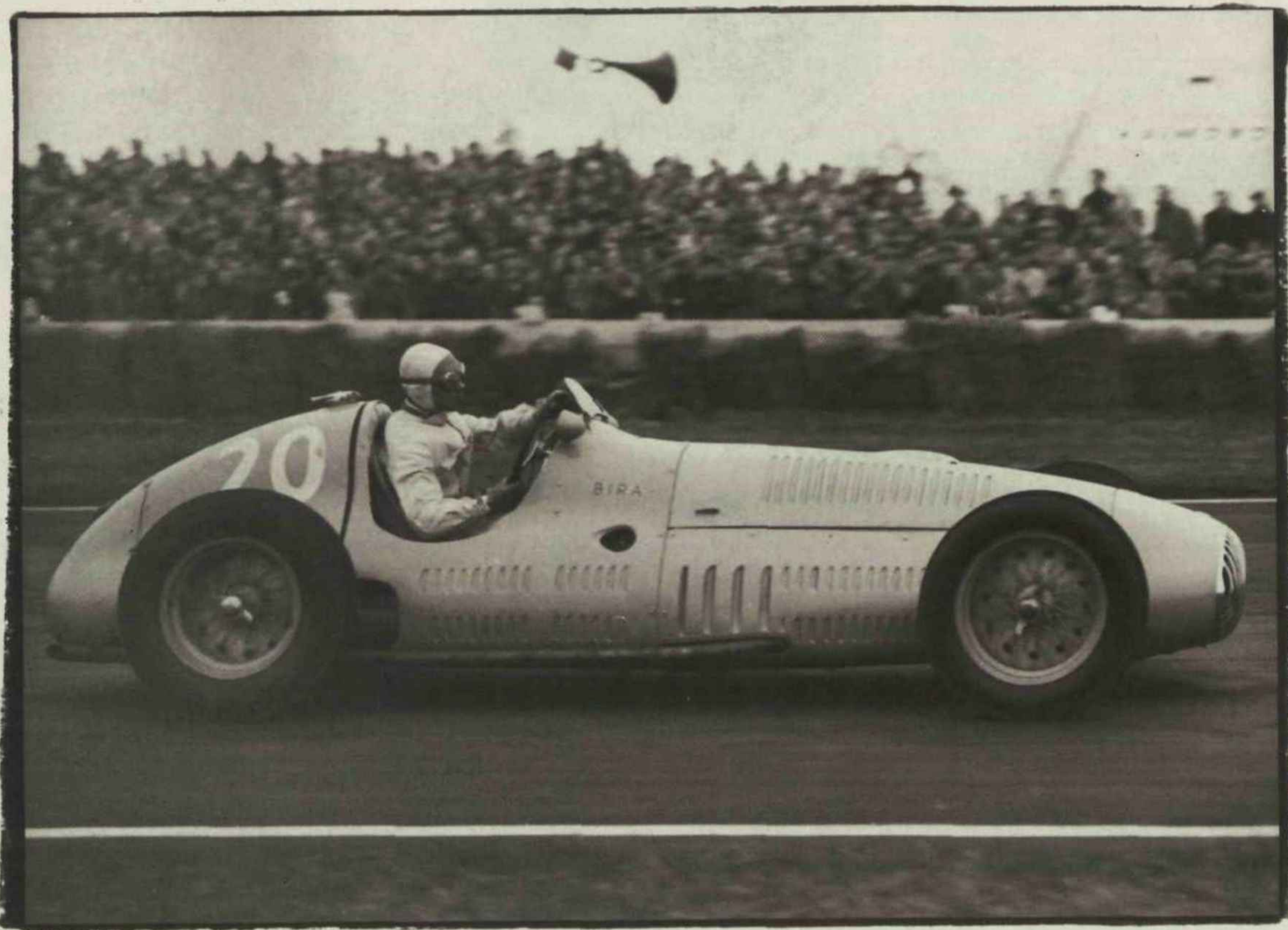


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LT

250F chassis which was now ready.

The 1954 season was his last and it was hard going. A fourth place in the French Grand Prix was about it for the championship, but he took the 250F to New Zealand for the winter races at the end of the season and won the New Zealand Grand Prix at Ardmore, followed by a third at the International Trophy at Teretonga.

He had now decided to retire. It was certainly not the same as it had been with Chula, and he leased his 250F to Horace Gould, on a similar basis to his deal with Roy Salvadori, before selling it to Bruce Halford. His career had begun in 1935 and he had accomplished a huge amount. More important, he was alive, unlike his friends Seaman, Fairfield et al, so he should have been happy.

He was not. His alienation from Chula lowered him, and his first marriage broke up, whereupon he started to behave rather oddly. Whether it was in imitation of Yul Brynner in the King and I that he shaved off his hair we cannot tell, but he did, and embarked upon a volatile business career, which was itself punctuated by bouts of both celibacy and indulgence which irritated and embarrassed the dignified and conservative Chula.

Chula, who could be rather grand when he wanted to be, had strongly objected (as had the rest of Thailand) to both the Rex Harrison (1946) and Yul Brynner (1956) cinematic characterisations of his Grandfather King

Mongkut, to the point of it becoming a personal issue between himself and Harrison, who was a good friend. Bira, the junior cousin, had taken the issue rather less seriously, which had not helped their relationship at all.

But by 1963, Chula was diagnosed as suffering from cancer and died at the end of that year, mourned by all who knew him. Bira's business career was basically a

disaster; the same sea-change in society which had made him just another racing driver also conspired to make him merely another businessman. Europe was awash with minor Royalty already, and many of them seemed to be trying to do deals. To a cynical marketplace, one displaced Prince is very much like another, particularly if he is endeavouring to position himself between the wall and the wallpaper, and with no business training whatsoever, he floundered in a morass of optimism and tight credit. His sunny nature and varied sources of borrowing,

often from friends, kept him afloat, but often only just.

By 1985 he was 70 and tired. There were always deals in the air, but in the air they tended to stay. His business life had become that of a peripatetic Mr Fixit. He had been staying with friends and suffered his fatal coronary while setting out to do his Christmas shopping. This noble prince, fine racer and man who helped inspire a generation of private teams died, unrecognised, less than a mile from the old site of the White Mouse garage. ▣



Top: success continued post-war, winning at Goodwood in '51 in an OSCA and (above) in New Zealand in '54 at end of his career

CLASSIC  
AND  
HISTORIC



# When Experience Really Counts!

## STRONG OPENING IN 1999 FOR BCA

With the gloom of the Winter well behind us, the busy mid-season for classic car sales is truly upon us. Activity has been brisk across the board with low budget classics selling well and the upper market showing some strong form. Looking back over the early part of the season, BCA's ability to offer cars for all tastes and pockets was underlined in their opening sale of 1999. In the February sale, a charming and original 1962 model of the Renault 4 was sold for £1,375 - a super buy when you consider it is eligible for the period transport fleet at the Goodwood Motor Circuit Revival meeting in September. The same sale saw BCA move on a beautifully renovated 1964 Lotus Elan S1 for £12,050, a restored 1949 Bristol 400 at £16,375



and a sensational 1997 AC Cobra Mk.IV with just 3,246 miles on the clock for £32,100. All prices included BCA's highly competitive sales premium of just 7%. Moving on, the BCA's Spring sale on the 12th April saw the fabulous 1932 Chapron bodied Delage D8SS tourer sell for £75,975, a well restored 1929 Nash Series 430 tourer finding a new home at £15,000, a well presented example of the always popular Jaguar 3.8 Mk.II snatched up at £12,350 and an expertly built Ferrari 250 GTO replica guaranteeing to impress the boys down at the local for £6,200. (All inclusive of a premium).

## BCA SPRING RESULTS PREDICT A HOT SUMMER FOR CLASSICS

BCA's ability to read the market and cater for customer's

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# CLASSIC AND HISTORIC



requirements has resulted in repeating their popular summer evening sales which kicked off this year with a successful event on 21st June with a further sale on 16th August. This evening sale gives ample opportunity for prospective customers to view the entries at their leisure and creates a strong platform for sales interest being backed by BCA's extensive facilities at Blackbushe. The popularity of this evening sale was underlined in the June sale with another important Delage, again Chapron bodied but this time a 1934 pillarless coupe on a D8 15S chassis, selling for £25,700 - prompting Robin Lawton of BCA's Classic and Historic Automobile Division to remark: 'Surely this handsome Delage represents a logical alternative to the more common Derby Bentley and the price achieved certainly confirms it's status as a worthy long-term investment.' Despite the classic car press currently talking the price of the Jaguar E-type down, the BCA team were encouraged by a strong £26,100 for a well restored, early 'flat floor' roadster proving that when presented in a proper environment,

good cars will make their money - endorsing BCA's continued policy of constant review and improvement of their service to buyers and vendors alike. The June sale also saw a handsome 1923 Vauxhall 14/40 Princeton Tourer sell for £15,000 and a well restored MGC roadster achieving £12,000, maintaining BCA's excellent selling record for this model.



## DIARY DATES

BCA will move on to their fourth sale of the year with another summer evening event at Blackbushe on 16th August and entries are now open for this sale. The Classic and Historic Automobile Divisions Robin Lawton and Marcus Ross will be pleased to discuss your entry to this sale in person. Call on 01252 878555/877317 or fax on 01252 878741. The Autumn sees a welcome return to the Bridgwater, Somerset venue on the 11th October. The BCA season will close with an afternoon sale back at Blackbushe on the 6th December.



## THE ROD END BEARING

AMONG THE WRECKAGE OF A GERMAN FIGHTER PLANE WAS FOUND THE FUTURE FOR RACING CAR SUSPENSIONS. KEITH HOWARD REVEALS THE ORIGINS OF THE ROSE JOINT

photography by Charles Best

**C**ompliance. If you had to encapsulate the essential difference between race car and road car suspensions in a single word, that would be it: compliance, the reciprocal of stiffness. Road car suspension systems require carefully applied compliance to achieve acceptable ride quality and provide isolation from the noise and vibration generated at the tyre contact patch. So they make liberal use of elastomeric suspension bushes, meticulously positioned and dimensioned in modern cars so as to cause minimal compromise of wheel control. In a racing context, by contrast, refinement is barely an issue and accurate wheel control paramount, so rubber bushes are anathema.

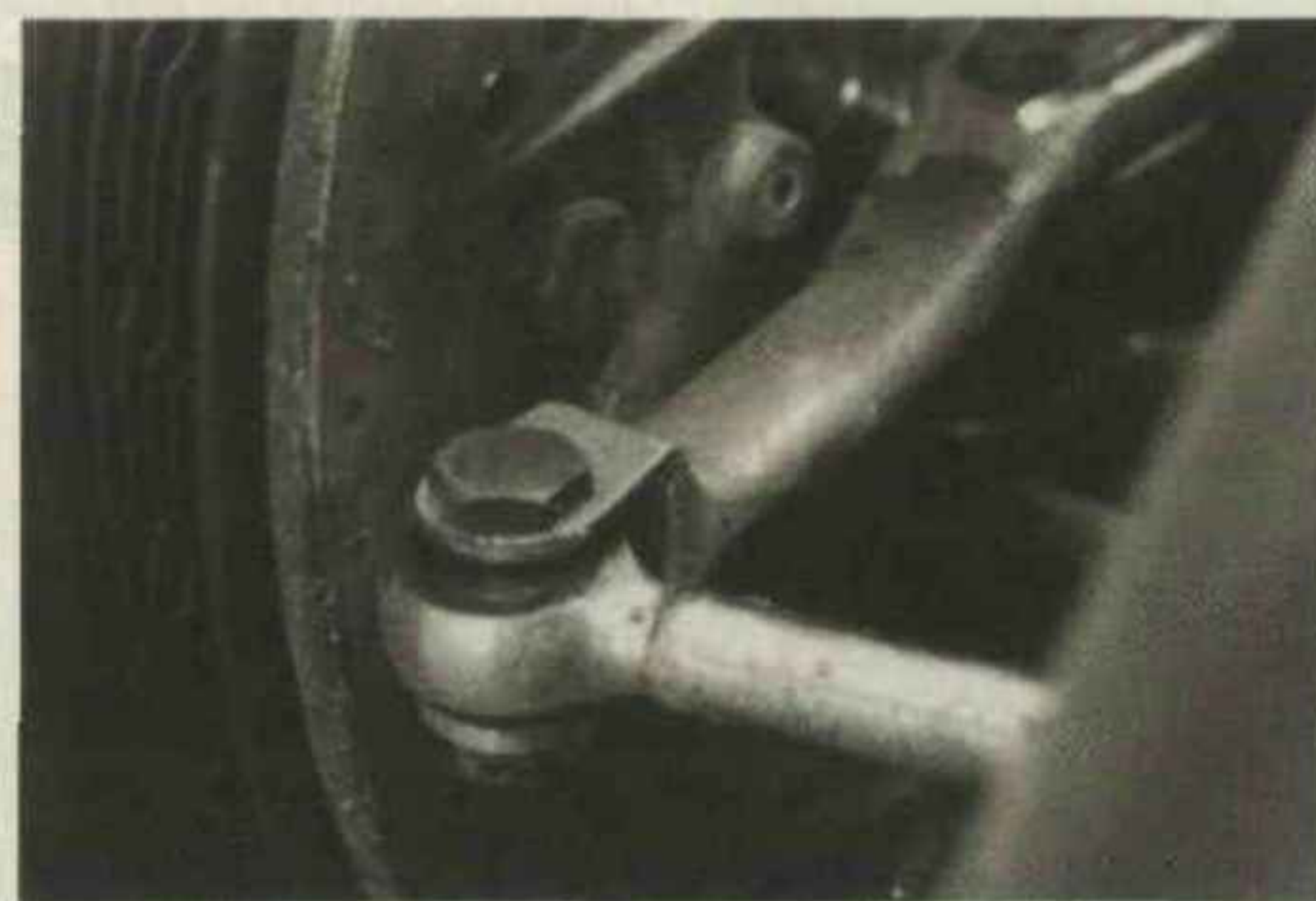
Look closely at any modern race car, particularly from the senior formulae, and you'll find it littered with a component which has become truly ubiquitous because of this: the rod end bearing. It is used to pivot suspension arms, at either end of anti-roll bar drop links, in gear linkages, on pedals: anywhere, in fact, where a low friction, very low compliance, zero play and, above all, adjustable pivot is needed.

Reel back 40 years, however, and the rod end bearing – although already widely used in aircraft – all but disappears from view. Right into the late 1950s/early 1960s even Formula One cars more commonly used (horror!) rubber bushes in their suspensions, albeit stiff ones. It was the desire to eliminate this parasitic suspension compliance, particularly with the development of wider, grippier tyres, and to incorporate increased suspension adjustability that brought the rod end into the picture – and how.

In essence the rod end is delightfully simple, comprising two, or at most three, principal components: a pierced ball with flattened poles which provides the articulation; a banjo-shaped housing into which the ball is secured during manufacture; and, in the most sophisticated types, a thin, usually PTFE-based, self-lubricating liner which is interposed between ball and housing to ensure low friction. What attracts the race car designer to the rod end is that it is able to sustain high radial loads and, thanks to the male or female screw thread incorporated into its shank, is inherently adjustable, making it an ideal pivot in suspensions and elsewhere.

The origin of the rod end bearing has an edge of intrigue about it. Reel back another two decades to the first year of World War II and the desperate days of summer 1940. One of the first Messerschmitts to be shot down – presumably a Bf109E, although I haven't been able to confirm that – crashes into a field, where its wreckage is pored over by Air Ministry experts. They are surprised to find a component in the flight control system that nobody in Britain has ever seen before: the rod end bearing.

It's such a simple, elegant, effective device that Rose Brothers, later Rose Bearings Ltd, is asked to copy it for British aircraft to use. In due course, the same happens in the US with the HG Heim company. So intimately do these two manufacturers become associated with the rod end that to this day it is still commonly referred to as the rose joint or



*Vanwall was first team to adopt rod end bearing*

heim joint on either side of the Atlantic, the loss of capital letters a sign of how the names have become generics. Both companies still exist, albeit now as part of larger groups, and both still manufacture rod ends.

The first race car to employ a rod end bearing may well have been the Vanwall. Rose Bearings has a record of supplying a special order to Vandervell in 1957 (and to Rover a year earlier – but for what?) and photos of the front suspension of the 1958 car clearly show a rod end at the outboard extremity of its long radius arm. Later Rose made bearings to order for Cooper (1958) and Lotus (1960) among others, but the list is inevitably incomplete: as well as there being other sources of rod ends, Rose may have supplied off-the-shelf items of which there's no record. In the US rod ends were certainly in use by 1959: the Watson-Offy Indy car of that

year had them at both ends of its rear radius arms.

It's all somewhat academic anyway because the rise of the rod end was gradual, as a perusal of early '60s Formula One cars shows. By 1961/2 when the Lotus 25 was designed, for instance, rod ends were more widely deployed: Chapman used them at the outboard end of the lower front wishbone and rear radius arm, at both ends of the upper and lower rear lateral arms and at either extremity of the rear anti-roll bar drop links. Five years later, in the Lotus 49, the rod end was truly entrenched – it was used virtually everywhere it could be.

Prior to the rod end's adoption the Metalastik bush had held sway: two coaxial metal cylinders, the smaller to carry the mounting bolt, the larger to press-fit into the wishbone eye, separated by a thin layer of rubber. An odd choice, you might think, given that today a solid metal bush would be preferred, as it is in road cars adapted for track use. But rubber served an essential purpose in those days of gas-welded wishbones and suspension pick-up brackets: it provided enough 'give' to accommodate manufacturing tolerances.

The articulating ball of the rod end was likewise forgiving of dimensional inaccuracies, and without the cost to wheel control introduced by rubber. Also it facilitated, for the first time, the wide-ranging adjustability of suspension geometry we now take for granted – although whether the teams and drivers had much idea how to juggle all the new variables at their command in those early years is another matter. Today the rod end continues to perform essentially the same functions, largely unchanged, although some F1 constructors are now incorporating spherical bearings – basically rod ends without the shank – directly into their carbon fibre composite push rods and suspension arms.

The next time you tuck into a Cadbury's Roses chocolate would be an apposite time to reflect on how the simple rod end bearing transformed racing practice. Because, believe it or not, the name of the chocolates that grow on you derives from the fact that the clever machine originally developed to wrap them was designed by Rose Brothers – the very same whose name would later become synonymous with the rod end. ■

*Our thanks to R G Bearings for providing the NMB E-series stainless steel rod end used in the photograph. 'Rose joint' is a registered trademark of Rose Bearings Ltd.*

# THE GREATEST DRIVERS OF THE CENTURY - A PERSONAL VIEW

*WELCOME TO PART TWO OF MARK HUGHES' ASSESSMENT OF THE TOP 100 GREATEST DRIVERS OF ALL TIME. ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES YOU WILL DISCOVER THE WINNERS OF SEVEN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, TWO CURRENT FORMULA ONE DRIVERS AND TWO OR THREE WHOSE NAMES YOU MAY NOT EVEN RECOGNISE*

## Part 2 (80-61)

### THE STORY SO FAR:

100 HANS STUCK SNR  
99 RUBENS BARRICHELLO  
98 PHILIPPE ETANCELIN  
97 ALBERT CLEMENT  
96 STUART LEWIS-EVANS  
95 PATRICK DEPAILLER

94 GIUSEPPE CAMPARI  
93 RENE DE KNYFF  
92 ELIO DE ANGELIS  
91 WOLFGANG VON TRIPS  
90 GERHARD BERGER  
89 KENELM LEE GUINNESS  
88 DENNY HULME

87 CHRISTIAN LAUTENSCHLAGER  
86 JO SIFFERT  
85 LUIGI VILLORESI  
84 JEAN BEHRA  
83 JEAN ALES  
82 RICARDO RODRIGUEZ  
81 LOUIS RENAULT







### DAVID COULTHARD

David was on the verge of something by the end of 1995. He'd got the Williams-Renault finely honed to his driving style and had cast aside the understandable caution of inexperience, liberating his natural racecraft and lightning starting ability. Had his confidence steamrollered from there he could have so easily been the new Niki Lauda; quick, cool, unflustered and always in control of himself and his car. But he went to McLaren where adversity and the speed of his team-mate betrayed his strength as brittle.



80

79



### JOHN WATSON

If the wind had turned, his face would have changed. That was Watty, a slave to a psyche too delicate for a racing driver, and a mind that was perhaps a mite too imaginative. When his environment was right, and his dander was up, he could be a Tasmanian Devil scything through the pack, his fingertip feel and faultless judgement making him one of the best overtakers the sport has seen. A few races of this and he would surf the waves – he could do no wrong. Then something, the slightest little thing, would change.



### VINCENZO LANCIA

When he climbed aboard his monster Fiat, the blood rushed to the head of Lancia the meticulous engineer as he morphed into Lancia the driver with the devil on his back. A furious all-out attacking style with back-from-the-brink car control made him the most exciting driver of his day (1904-08). Yet it was as if his mechanical understanding evaporated in the heat of competition, all that fury often mute by the roadside as less audacious racers passed quietly by.



78

77



### PHIL HILL

The amiable Californian seemed to spend his career in turmoil, tangled between his love of his chosen sport and his increasing conviction that it was going to snatch him from this world. He was like a dog angry at itself for being stupid enough to chase its tail, while all the time doing just that. He drove always with impeccably contained fury, but unsurprisingly burnt himself out early. Ironically his world title for Ferrari in 1961 came to him just as the sport was beginning to relinquish its hold on him.



### TONY BRISE

Monza 1975, and car 23's limits were transcended more completely than any in a sublime demonstration of car control. The driver, also 23, had yet to complete his first F1 season but virtually every time he sat in the car he did something extraordinary. Even before F1, he'd outpaced Andretti in a one-off F5000 race. Tony was the Schumacher prototype: speed, aggression, intelligence and towering self-belief. Time would have smoothed the few rough edges had it not ended in the shattered wreckage of Graham Hill's plane.



76



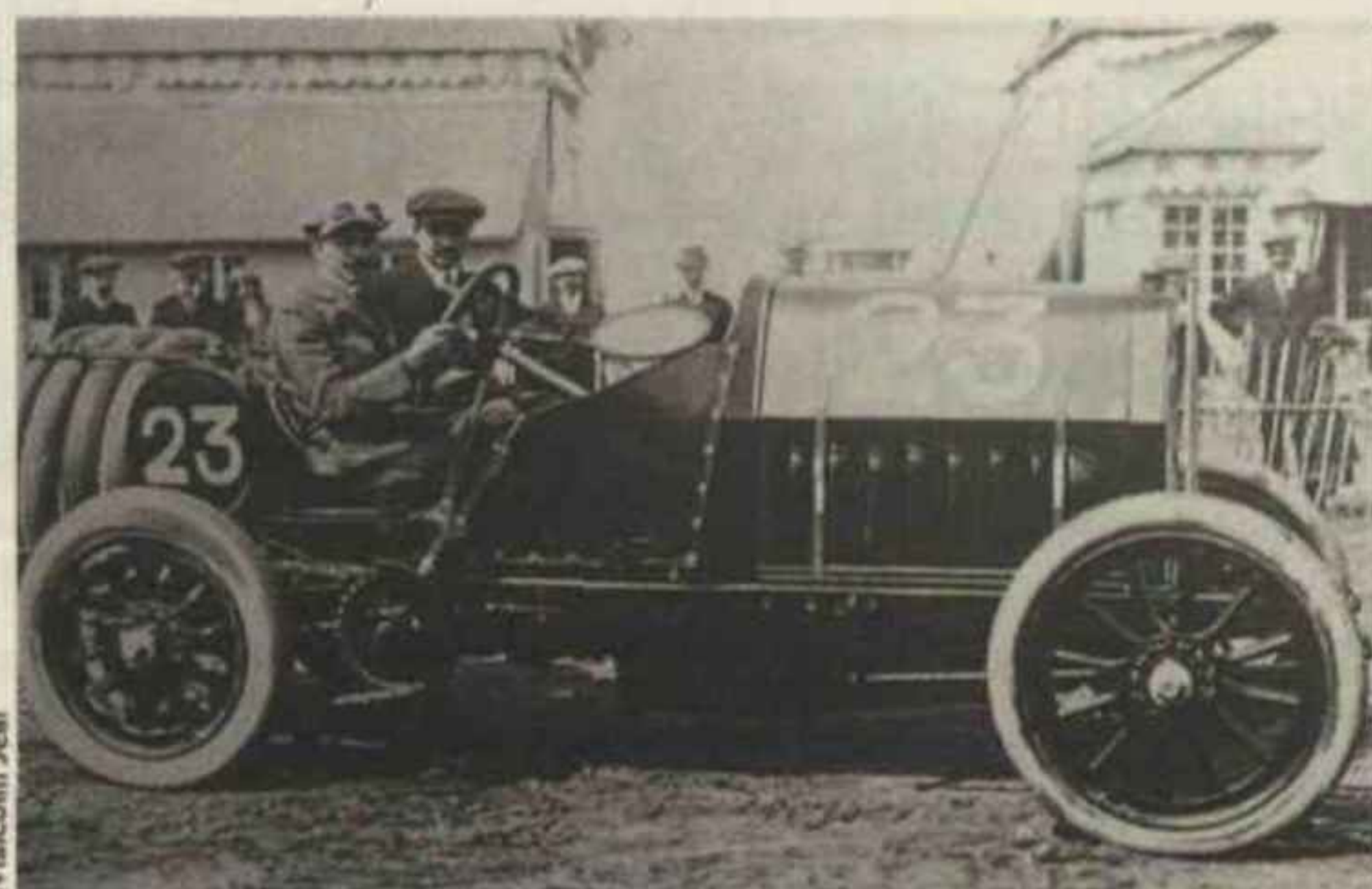
CARLOS PACE

Did he have the steel of a champion? He had flair and tenacity, the ability to break the Nürburgring lap record in a Surtees, and back-to-the-wall determination. But steel? That which lets a driver make the right move under pressure, which directs energy to push everything in the right direction. The former looked suspect when pressed by Lauda at Anderstorp, the latter masked by Ecclestone's patronage. The verdict was still out when he took his fateful plane ride in '77.



75

74



LOUIS WAGNER

The thing with Louis Wagner was that he was always around: not only could this be a fitting epitaph of a frontline career that stretched from 1905 to 1927, but it captures accurately his biggest asset in a race. When all the dust had settled and the showcase heroics of others had all been played out, Wagner tended to be there when the most significant fight was to be fought – the one at the end. He didn't always win it, but if he couldn't, he always made sure that whoever did at least had to work for it.



PETER REVSON

Born into the Revlon cosmetics dynasty, he could have spent a life 'floating on a sea of Intimate'. That would have been poison to this feisty, intelligent and fiercely independent man. His driving was imbued with a grit and bravery a million miles removed from the east-coast society pages in which he was such a name. The longer he did it, the better and faster he became, and at the time of his fatal accident in 1974 he was among the elite.



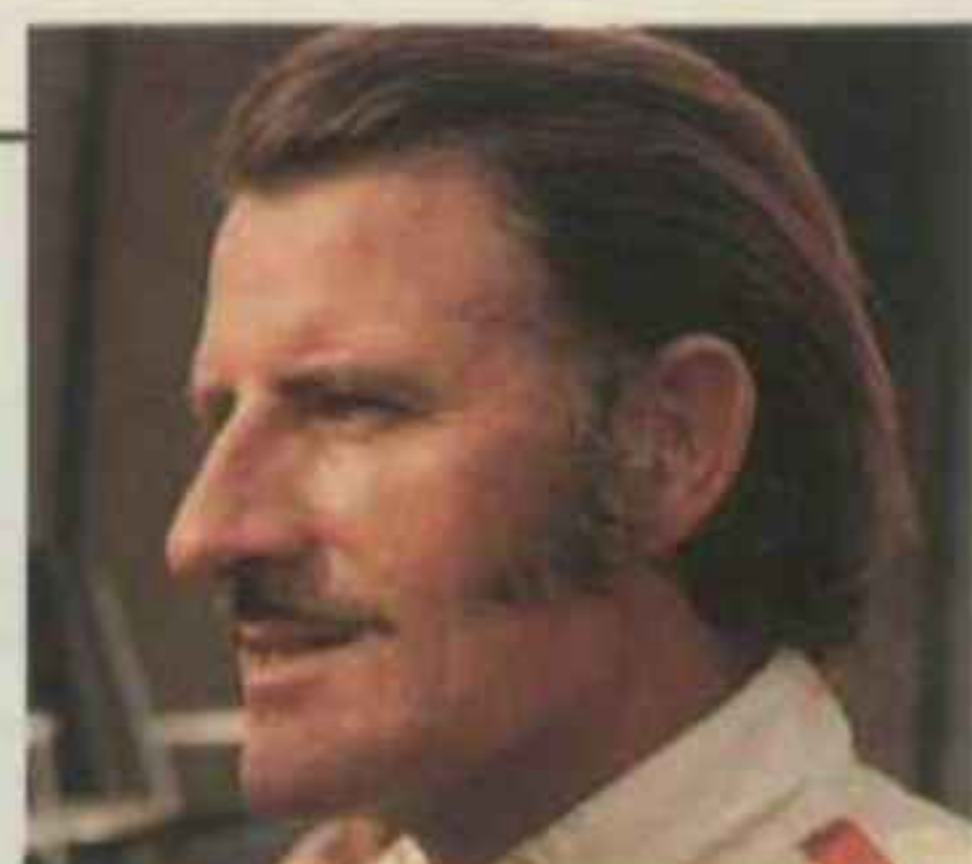
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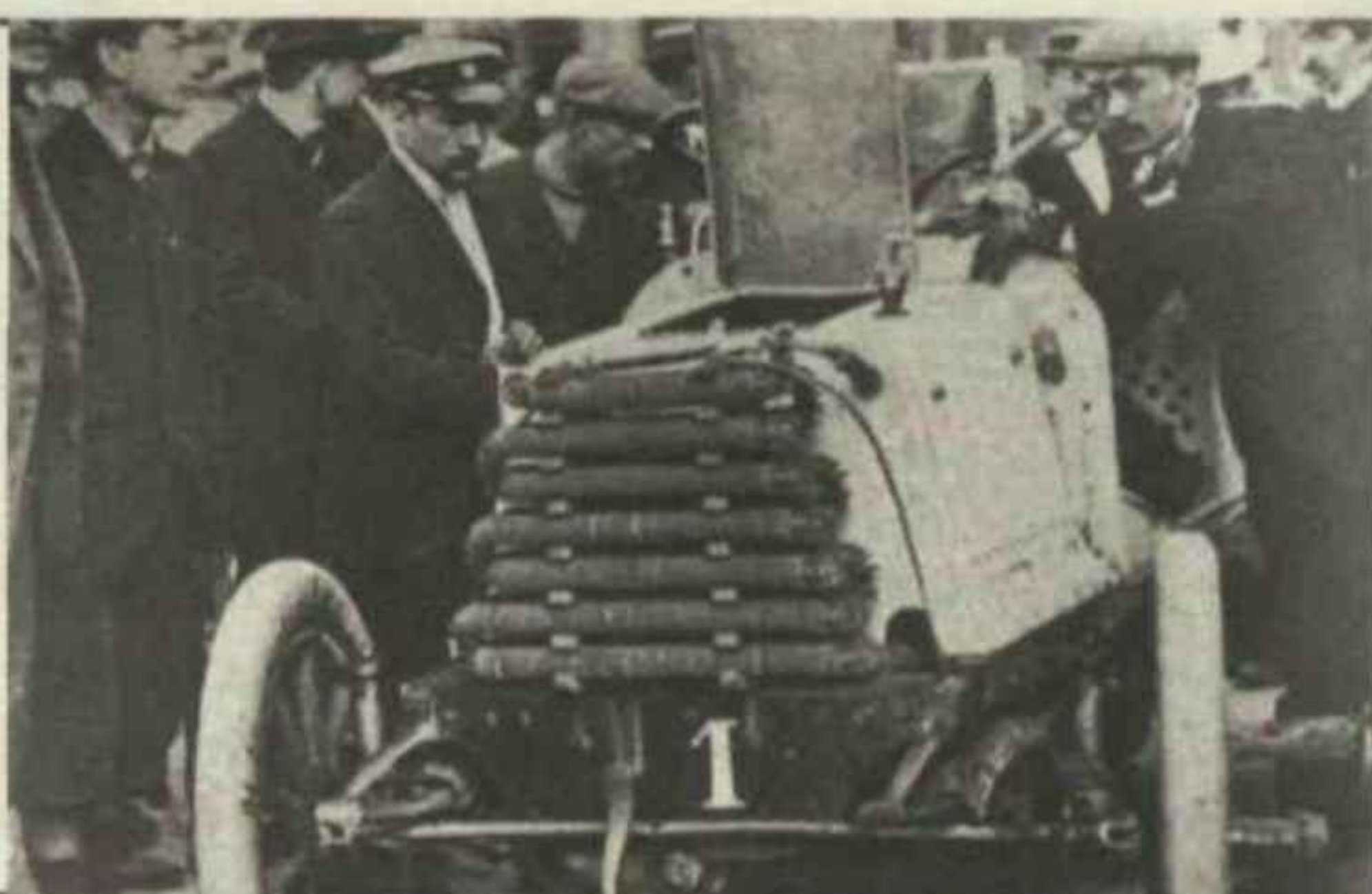
GRAHAM HILL

He was the perpetual bogey man of his rivals' nightmares; the double world champion who just kept coming back at them, who would never stay down. There was an invisible spring connecting him to the back of whoever the pacesetter was, one which didn't go soft until after his Watkins Glen accident in 1969. Whatever level someone else set, he could, given time, usually match it. Sheer will rather than pure talent. Sometimes, and five times at Monte Carlo, he'd use his spring to catapult ahead and stay there.



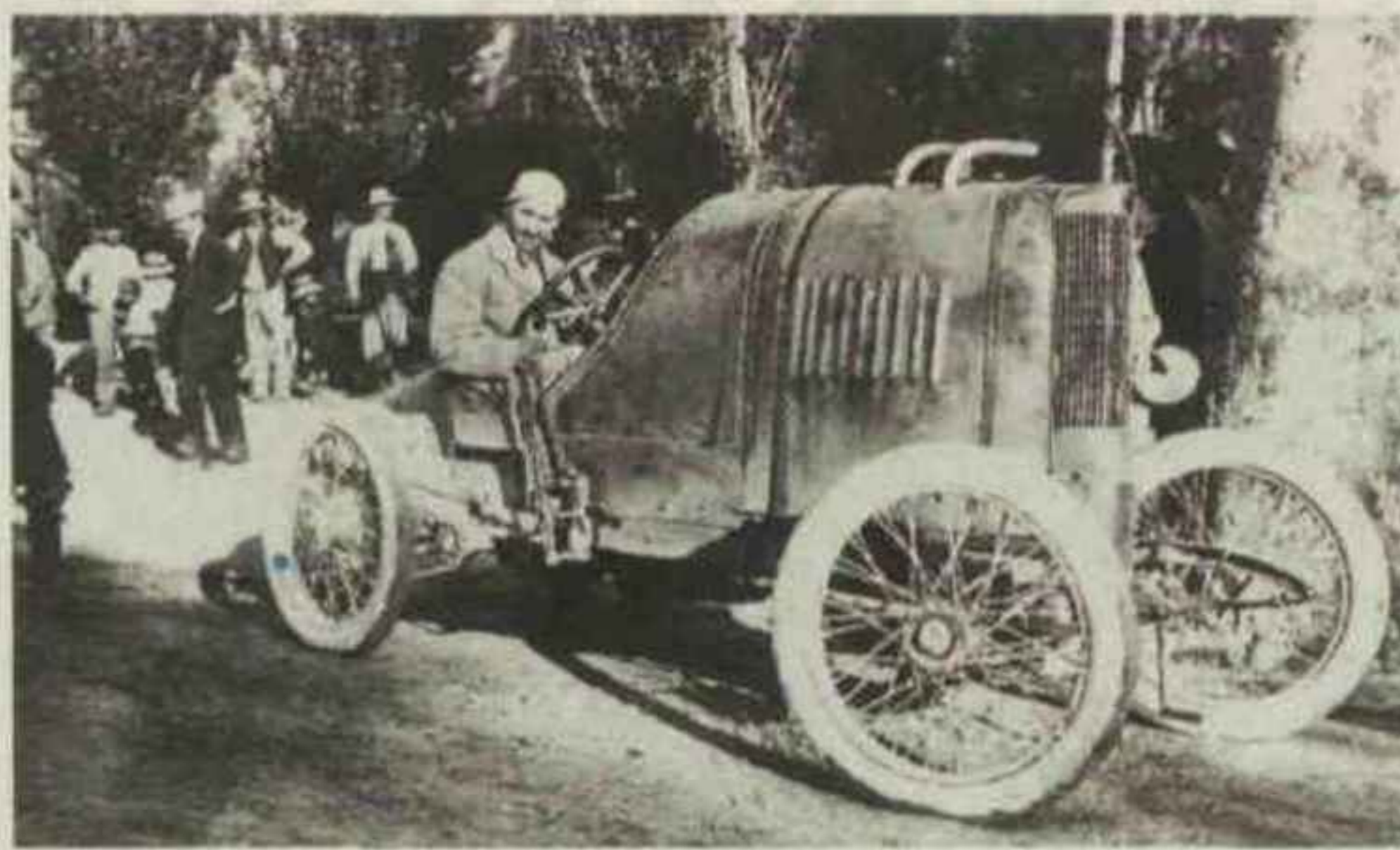
FERNAND CHARRON

Motor racing's very first 'man to beat'. At the turn of the century, former cycle champion Charron was indeed hot property. No-one combined better than the hair-trigger Fernand a racer's instinct with the bravery bordering on foolhardiness necessary for success in the insanely hazardous city-to-city races at the turn of the last century. And it was his efforts that helped make Panhard the dominant marque of the time. But four years of this burnt him out, and by 1902 he was also perhaps motor-racing's first 'has-been'.



71

70



## JULES GOUX

His deft touch took little out of his cars, his mind was quick to adapt to any race and his mental strength saw him through unscathed even when paired with the mercurial Georges Boillot. Had it been bound together by steely ambition, his could have been a mighty career. As it was, he sporadically won Grands Prix from his debut in 1912 to his Indian Summer of '26. He may not have left a trail of sparks, but when the race was run many a rival pondered, "who was that man?"

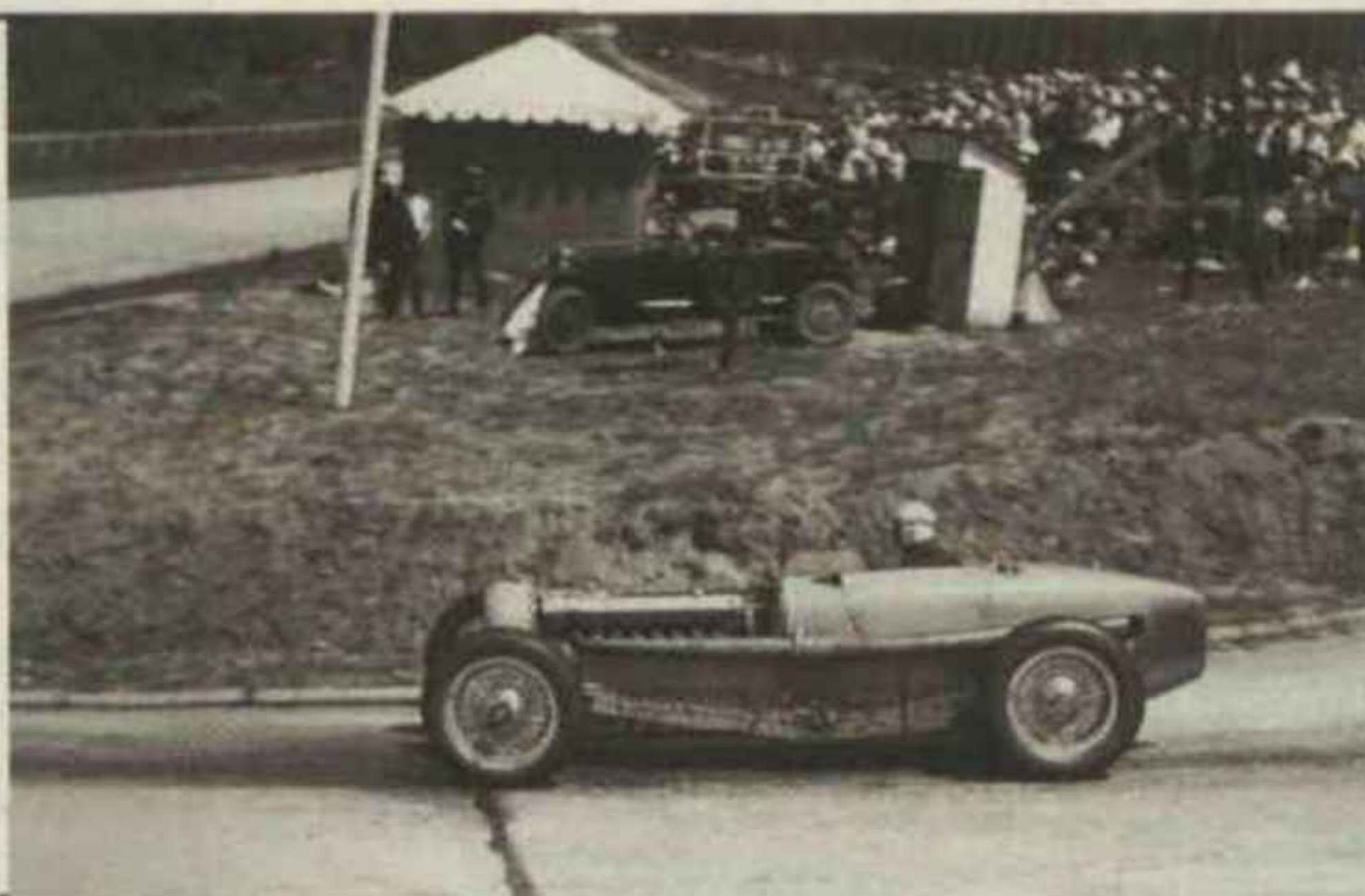


Mickie Kat



## ROBERT BENOIST

No-one else won a major Grand Prix in 1927. Benoist's Delage took them all. Alright, it wasn't the most hotly contested of seasons and he never approached such success again, but those victories came from a silken style and multiple layers of determination within his small, wiry frame. His reserves of fight and courage really did have no end, as he demonstrated so ably throughout the war until he paid the ultimate price – he was executed by the Gestapo in 1944 as a member of the French Resistance.



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National Motor Museum

## GIULIO MASETTI

The M218 of 1924 was a clanger from Mercedes with twitchy handling and peaky power. But Count Masetti alone – double winner of the Targa Florio – kept in sight Antonio Ascari's superb Alfa P2 during the Italian GP; the rest floundered behind this magically fast driver. Next year in France his was the only Sunbeam to figure near the front. Had he driven an Alfa he would have enjoyed a glittering career rather than just a tantalisingly promising one.



National Motor Museum



## PETER COLLINS

The sunny disposition told of a driver at ease with himself; he accepted he wasn't the fastest – which is why giving up his car and a title to Fangio in '56 was the act of a moment – but he knew too that he was plenty good. It translated into a man who was easy on cars, who could stalk a race, know when to strike and who, as a consequence, regularly won. When Enzo Ferrari disturbed that equilibrium, he uncaged a tiger: in his win at Silverstone '58 he transcended his previous skill – but ultimately it was to prove fatal.



67

66



LAT

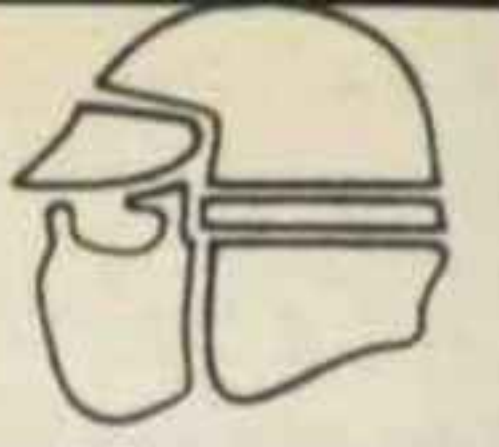
## DAMON HILL

The affable Damon is the one who struggles to lift his head above mere competence. But there's another Damon in there, one tortured with unresolved questions. But when these demons surface he faces them off, digs deep into his soul, and leaves that ordinary man far behind. In these times his inner strength, like his speed, is awesome and he can reach places with ease that seemed beyond him before. And he can even sustain this level until the questions are seemingly answered. Formula One will miss him.





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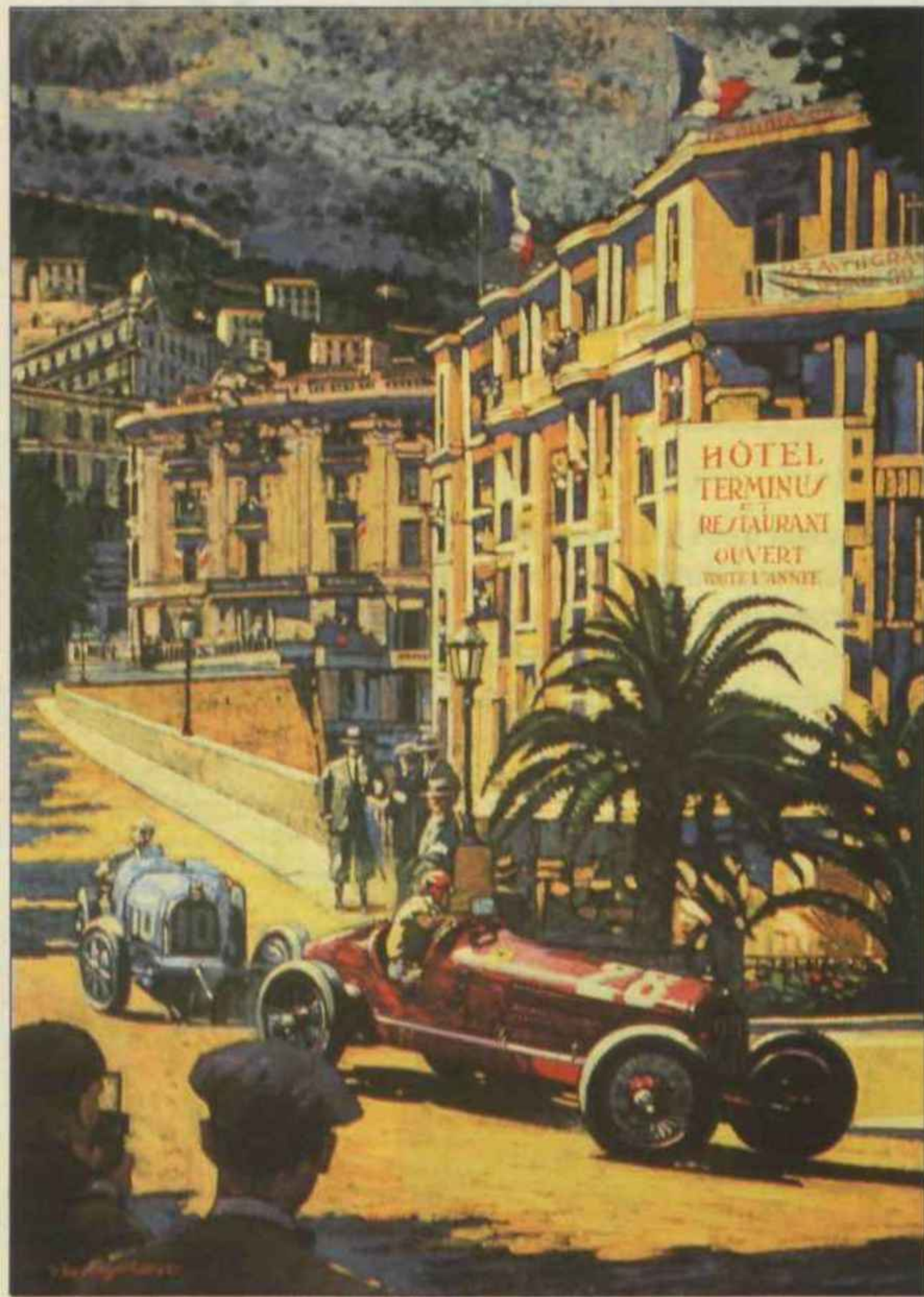
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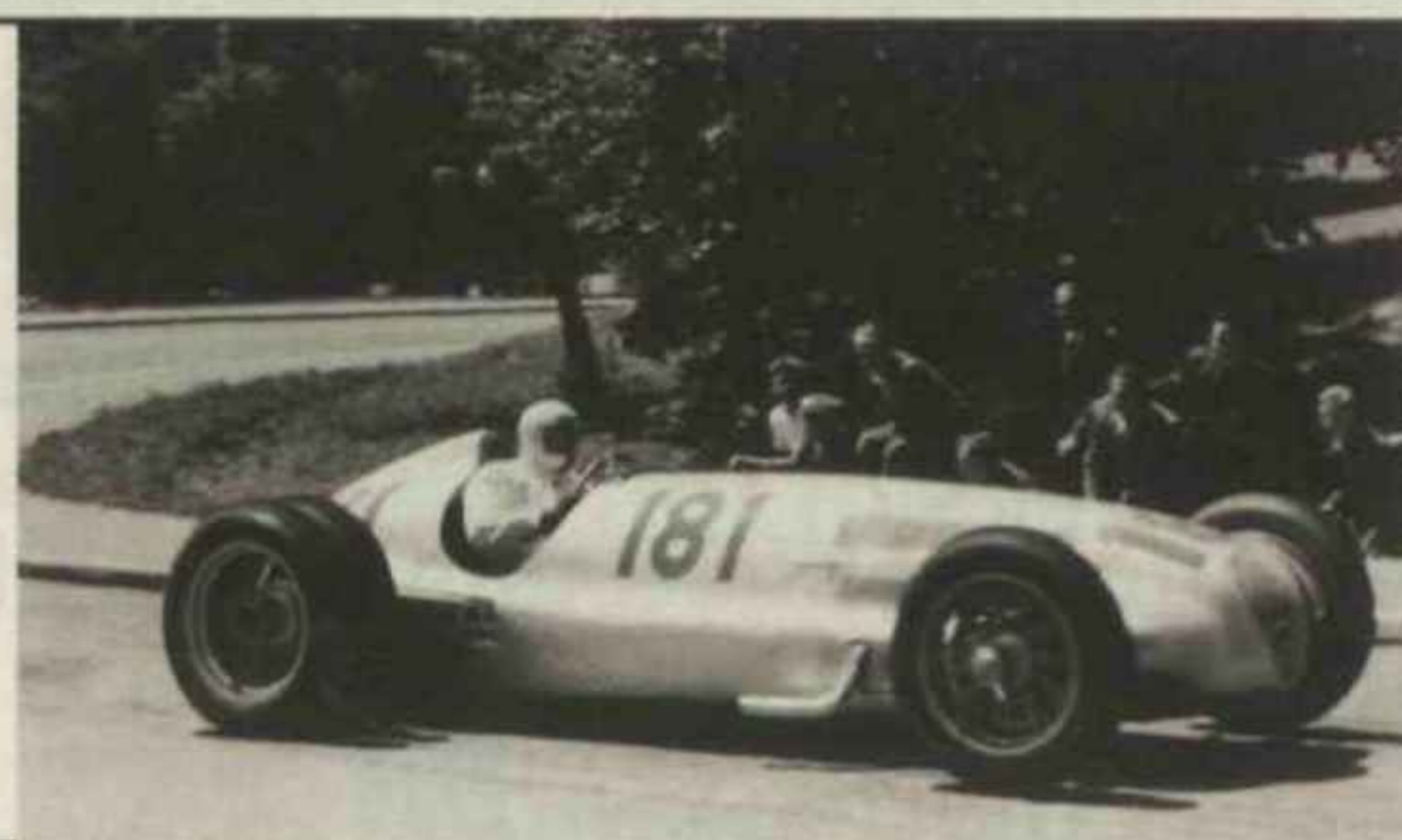
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HERMANN LANG

"Champagne," said von Brauchitsch, "oh, and a beer for Lang." This mechanic-made-good never did hit it off with that particular team-mate. But he lorded it over him on the track. Improving like a level-headed apprentice, he gained confidence through experience rather than intuition. But when finally he was ready to pull together all he'd learned, he was fast, focused and, in '39, close to invincible. The war took his best years but he returned to win Le Mans in '52.



65

64



LAT

TOM PRYCE

He had the greatness of the innocent and a talent as deep as the mines of his native Wales. He could make a toy of any car, a playground of any track and had the ability to oversteer his mediocre machine fast enough to fight for pole in only his third F1 drive and think nothing of it, because it was as easy as punting a tractor round the fields. Gentleness and loyalty meant he never tried cars better than the mid-70s Shadows before he was killed, but, boy, if he had...



LAT



LAT

RENE ARNOUX

René had a special place he would visit sometimes, when boost was sky-high and one-lap-qualifiers fitted. Then he would stare into the abyss, and dance with fate. Eighteen times this gave him a pole lap that was scary to behold. The way he bullied his Ferrari from the back up to second at Dallas '84 – a 180mph bronco flailing between the concrete walls – was awesome. And only Arnoux could conceivably have fought that legendary fight with Villeneuve at Dijon.



LAT

63

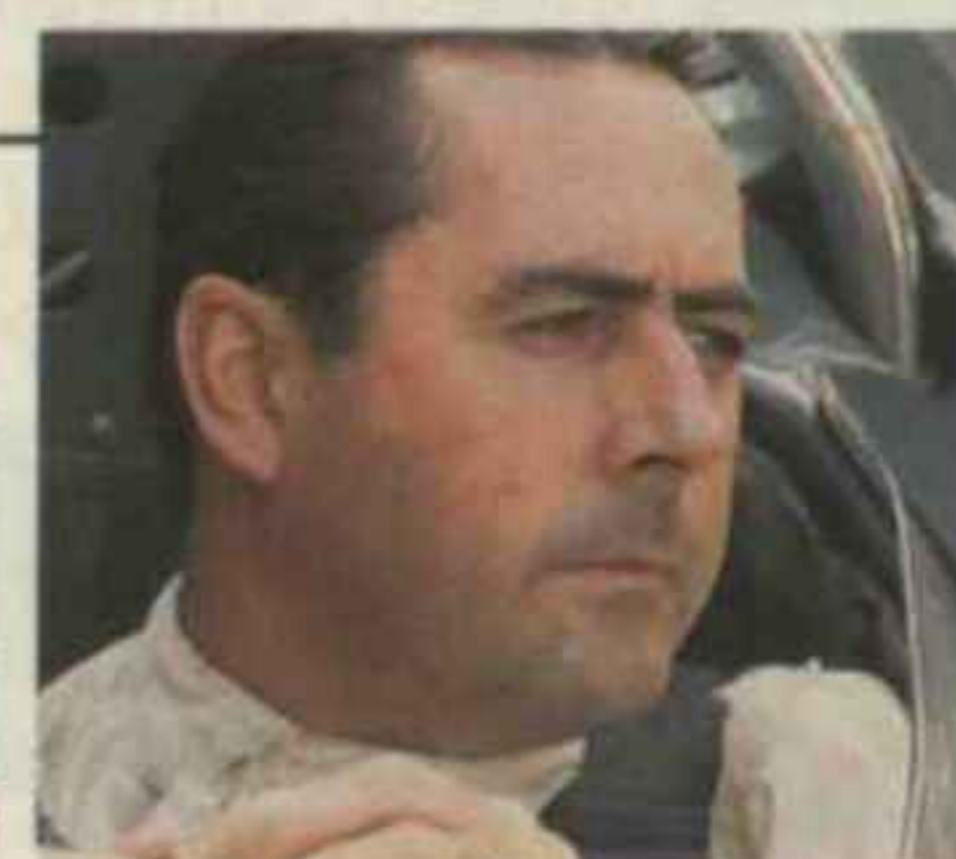
62



LAT

JACK BRABHAM

Black Jack probably didn't even know there was only meant to be one line through a corner – he had loads, and they all worked. Not that he was about to discuss it – he lived in his own world, occupied by welding torches and suspension geometries. His very lack of a consistent approach made him all the tougher to race against, and while he lacked the natural speed of some, his cunning, guts and head-down charge more than made up the difference.



LAT



HENRY SEGRAVE

He dipped into racing in the early '20s, won at the highest level, then left as suddenly as he'd appeared. Yet there was nothing of the dilettante about Segrave; the concepts of fear and failure seemed alien to him as did the learning curve – he was outstanding from the out and won Britain its first international Grand Prix just a couple of years later. His performances displayed unflinching confidence, determination and judgement, though only sometimes inspiration.



LAT

61

NEXT MONTH: SCHECKTER, SEAMAN, CHIRON, CEVERT AND THE FIRST OF THE VILLENEUVES

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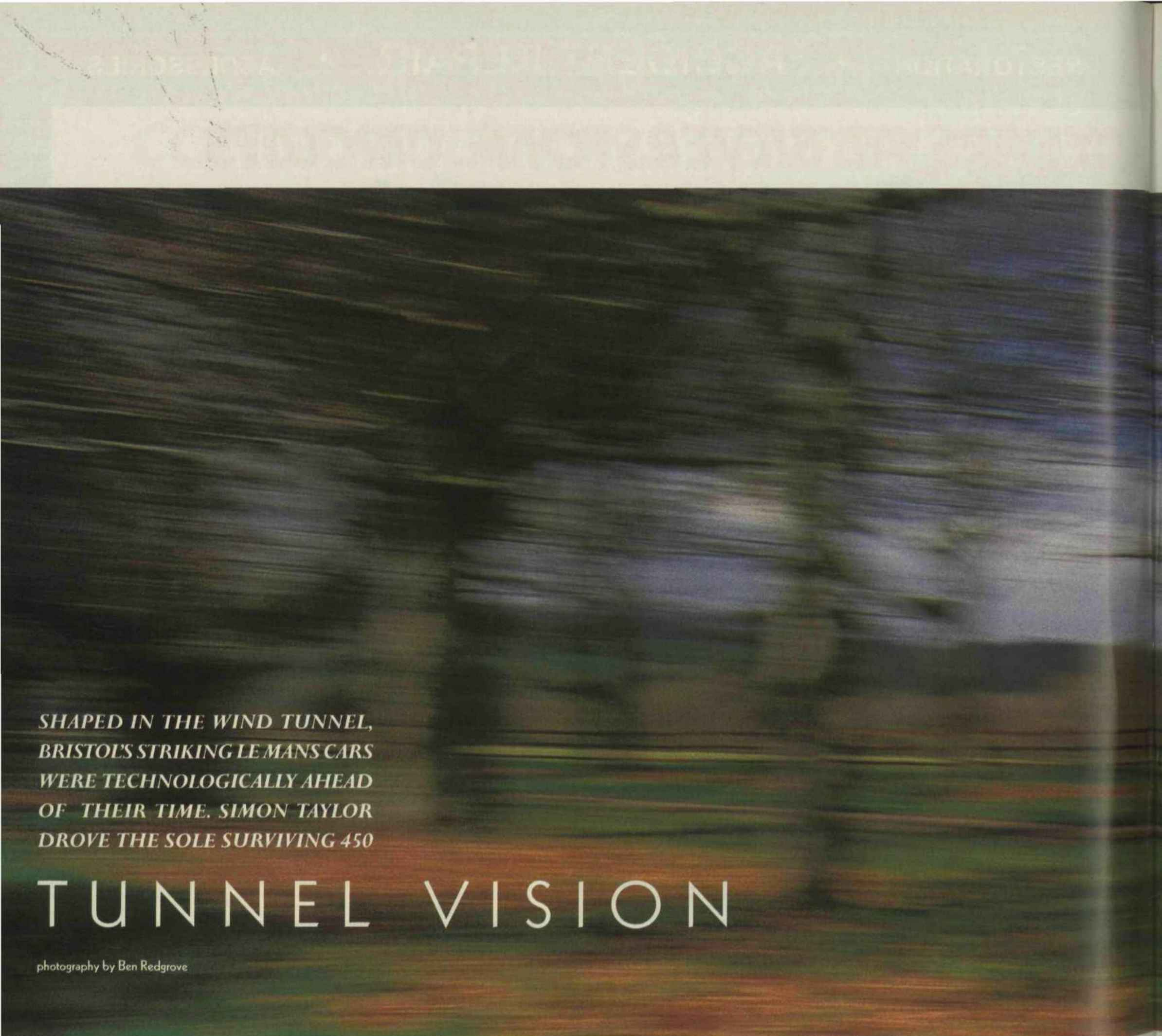
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*SHAPED IN THE WIND TUNNEL,  
BRISTOL'S STRIKING LE MANS CARS  
WERE TECHNOLOGICALLY AHEAD  
OF THEIR TIME. SIMON TAYLOR  
DROVE THE SOLE SURVIVING 450*

# TUNNEL VISION

photography by Ben Redgrove

MOTOR RACING HISTORY IS FULL OF FASCINATING little culs-de-sac, and the Bristol 450 is one. A quality road car manufacturer decides to go racing for the first time, and builds three cars. They are raced just five times, but achieve three prestigious class victories and two team awards, as well as several long-distance records. Then an order is given to destroy them all, and the firm never races again.

But this story really begins with Leslie Johnson's ill-starred attempt to revive the ERA name in 1952. His plan was ambitious: a 2-litre Grand Prix car with

a twin-cam engine based on four Manx Norton units, an advanced chassis by Eberan von Eberhorst of Auto Union fame, and Stirling Moss in the cockpit.

As it turned out the engine never got built (although Vanwall used the Norton idea soon after). Instead, ERA followed Cooper and others by using the Bristol engine. Then von Eberhorst moved on, leaving the project to his assistant, a clever young Cambridge graduate called David Hodkin.

Von Eberhorst was always keen on twin-tube frames (Jowett Jupiter, Aston Martin DB3), and the

G-type used big oval-section members made of Elektron alloy, cross-braced to produce an exceptionally stiff chassis. To gain a high polar moment of inertia the wheelbase was long (8ft 1in) and the track narrow (4ft 3in), with the engine well forward and the clutch and gearbox at the back directly in front of the diff, driven by an engine-speed propshaft. Adjustable suspension was by wishbones and coils at the front and a de Dion tube rear while the rigid chassis, allowed by the prevailing standards of the time, softer springing with firm damping.





Unsprung weight was reduced by using wheels that were merely rims bolted onto hub spiders, with inboard brakes at the rear. The driver sat offset to the right, between the propshaft and the frame tube, with the fuel tank alongside him where it would not affect weight distribution full or empty.

The Bristol engine, with its long stroke and down-draught carburettors sitting above the valve gear, was very tall. Hodkin dry-sumped it to lower the bonnet line, and did a lot of other work on the engine in search of more power. This was probably

the G-type's undoing. Moss found the car handled, steered and stopped excellently, but it was heavier and bulkier than the Cooper-Bristols, and it was seriously unreliable. He drove it in three 1952 Grands Prix – Spa, Silverstone and Zandvoort – and retired from all of them with engine trouble, and he fared little better in its four British events. At the end of the season, frustrated, Moss turned his F2 attentions to a bespoke Cooper-Alta special (which was to be even more unsuccessful) and Johnson, worn out and ill, put the whole project up for sale.

In October 1952 came the surprising news that the G-type ERA and all that went with it had been sold to the Car Division of the Bristol Aeroplane Co. A month later Bristol announced it would take part in the Le Mans 24 Hours the following June – the first time it had been involved in racing as anything other than an arm's-length engine supplier.

The new racing department at Filton, managed by Vivian Selby and with David Summers heading the design team, built three fresh chassis. These followed the ERA design but were of steel (which →



From top: huge fin adds Mulsanne stability; ERA G-type with designer Hodkin; spider's smooth nose contrasts with lumpy initial shape of coupé

turned out to be no heavier!) with circular-section members rather than oval. To allow room for a regulation passenger the single fuel tank was replaced by two panniers behind the front wheels, and the chassis was clothed in an extraordinary coupé body.

As aeroplane manufacturers, Bristol had their own wind tunnel, and their contemporary road cars, the 403 and 404, were adventurously aerodynamic for their time. The aim with the 450 programme seems to have been to demonstrate the speed and reliability of the Bristol running gear, and to learn more about automotive shapes. At first the 450 had a wide, almost bloated body which bore little relation to the narrow track, with a slender cabin perched on top and two immense fins that ran down the whole length of the sloping tail. Forty-five years ago it looked like something from another planet. The four lights at the front seemed almost an afterthought, and fuel and oil fillers, bonnet straps and cooling slots all broke up the surface. In the claustrophobic cockpit all was painted matt-black, with instruments heavily cowled against reflections, but well-trimmed leather bucket seats and even carpeting were provided.

Two cars were entered for the 1953 Le Mans, driven by Lance Macklin/Graham Whitehead and Tommy Wisdom/Jack Fairman. Despite being overgeared they were quick – Macklin comfortably set fastest 2-litre lap – but both retired with identical engine failures when crankshaft balance weights became detached. On both occasions the cars caught fire and crashed, Wisdom being slightly injured.

Nothing daunted, three weeks later the less damaged Le Mans car and the spare were at Reims for the Twelve Hours. Not only had the crankshafts been rapidly redesigned but also the nose of the car was much smoother. Whitehead's transmission broke at the start, but the other car, driven by Fairman and Peter Wilson, ran like clockwork, finished fifth overall and easily won its class.

Apart from an autumn trip to Monthéry, which earned a clutch of 2-litre world records – like 200 miles at 125.87mph and six hours at 115.43mph – the cars did not reappear until Le Mans and Reims the next year. By now the bodywork was much improved: it was narrower and smoother at the front, with ducted sides to draw hot air away from the front brakes. The Lucas Le Mans headlights were sunk into deep tunnels under perspex covers, and fuel and oil fillers, bonnet straps and five-inch spot lights were all carefully faired in. Painstaking work in the wind tunnel found further speed and stability by slightly raising the roof panel between the tail fins. Now the 450 looked just as it should have done in the first place: futuristic, functional, and utterly

individual. It was a shape that an entire generation of small boys was able to enjoy, for Dinky Toys produced a 1/43rd version which was a big seller.

Engine man Percy Kemish also found more power for 1954, with a 12-port head filled by three twin-choke Solex carbs and emptied by paired exhaust manifolding that crossed under the car to exit three three pipes in front of the left rear wheel. On the conservative compression ratio of 8.5:1 demanded by dubious French fuel, the engine now produced 155bhp at 6000rpm.

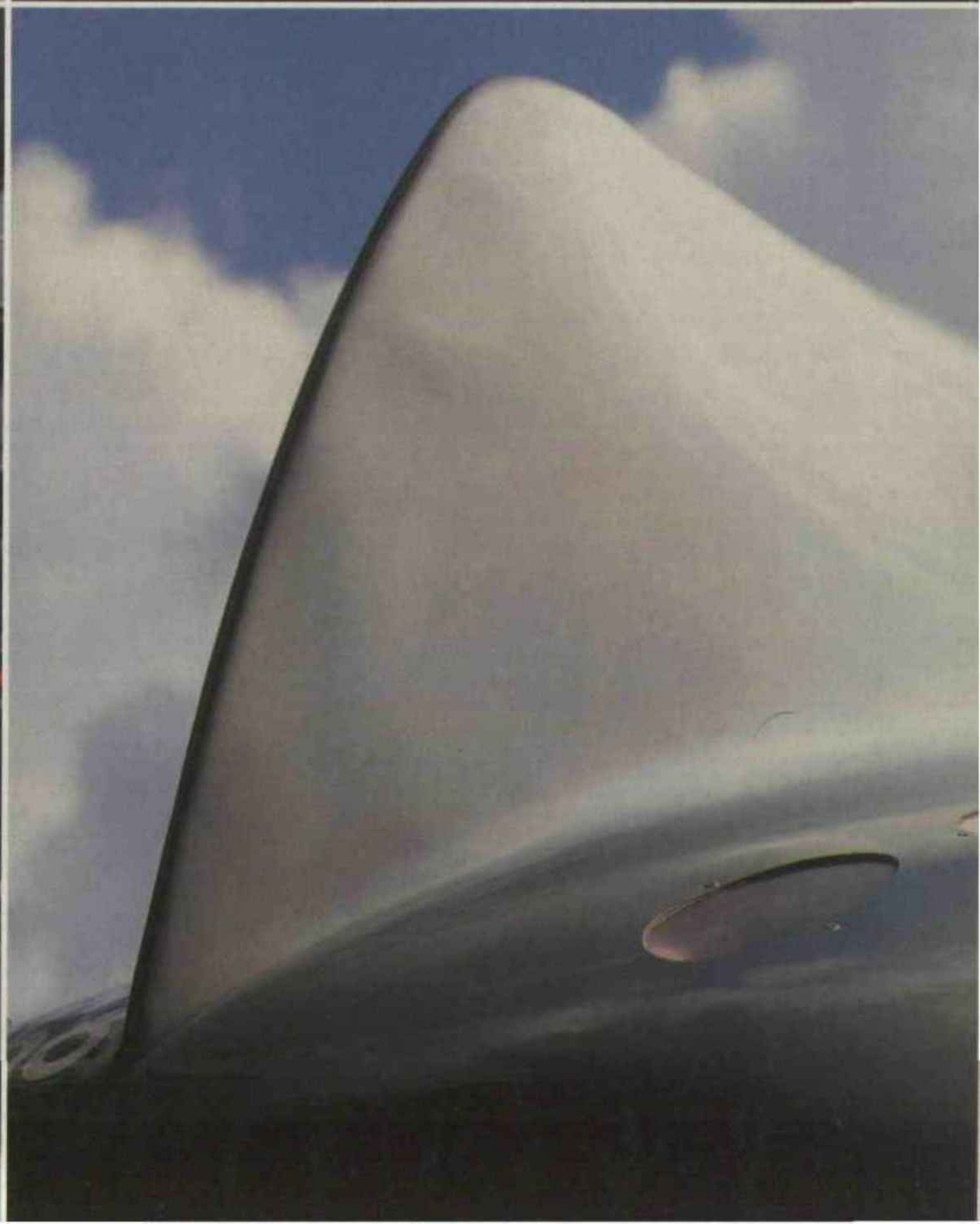
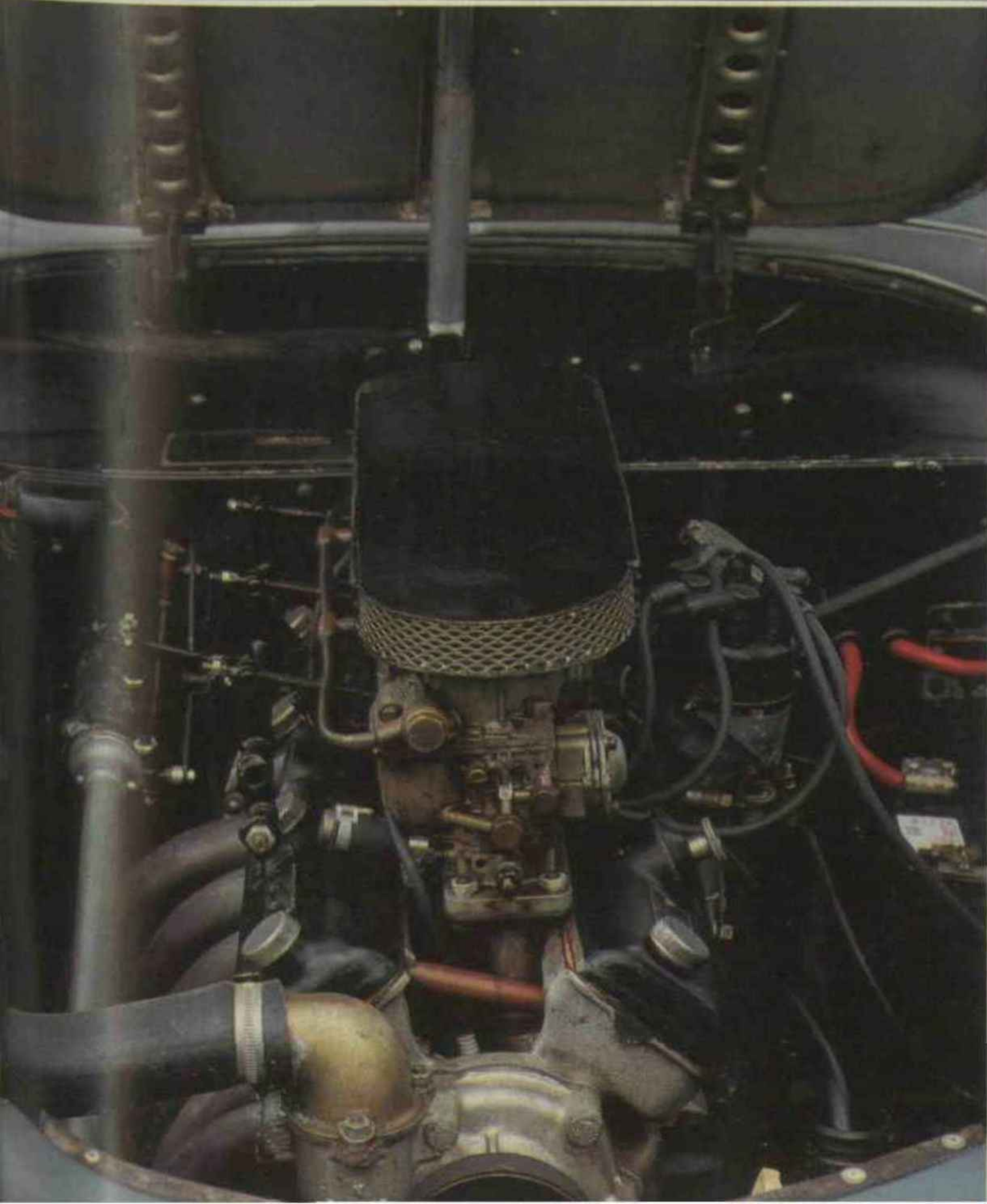
**“Forty-five years ago, with its two immense fins, it looked like something from another planet”**

All three cars were entered for both French races, driven by Fairman/Wisdom, Wilson/Jim Mayers and Mike Keen/Trevor Line. Le Mans was torrentially wet that year, but the cars ran magnificently, finishing 7th, 8th and 9th overall and scooping the 2-litre class and the team prize. This was despite Fairman having to dive off the road to avoid someone else's accident, necessitating a pitstop for some emergency panel-beating. At Reims all three finished again, and they won the team award, but a 2-litre Ferrari just pipped them for the class win.

One more race lay ahead for the 450, but that twin-finned coupé shape was never seen again. More work in the wind tunnel showed that the reduction in frontal area achieved by chopping the roof off would more than offset the increase in drag. So for Le Mans 1955 the cars looked a little more conventional, with the same dramatic nose but a neat open cockpit with aeroscreen and driver's headrest, topped by a large fin à la D-type. The triple exhaust pipes now fed into a single exit. The drivers were the same six, with as reserve young David Blakely, who'd been going well in British events in his Emperor-HRG. But Blakely never made the trip to Le Mans: a couple of months earlier he was shot dead by Ruth Ellis outside a London pub.

Le Mans 1955 is unforgettably notorious for the dreadful accident that killed Pierre Levegh and 83 spectators, but for Bristol it all went according to plan. Wilson/Mayers averaged an astonishing 100mph for the first half of the race before being slowed on team orders, and the three cars once more took the flag in line astern, 7th, 8th and 9th overall, winning both their class and the team award. Once again it was a crushing demonstration of reliability: the Wilson/Mayers 450 spent just 15 minutes out of the 24 hours in the pits.

Their prize money was unobtrusively donated to victims of the disaster, Reims was cancelled ➤



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(Right) 1999 Blenheim 2

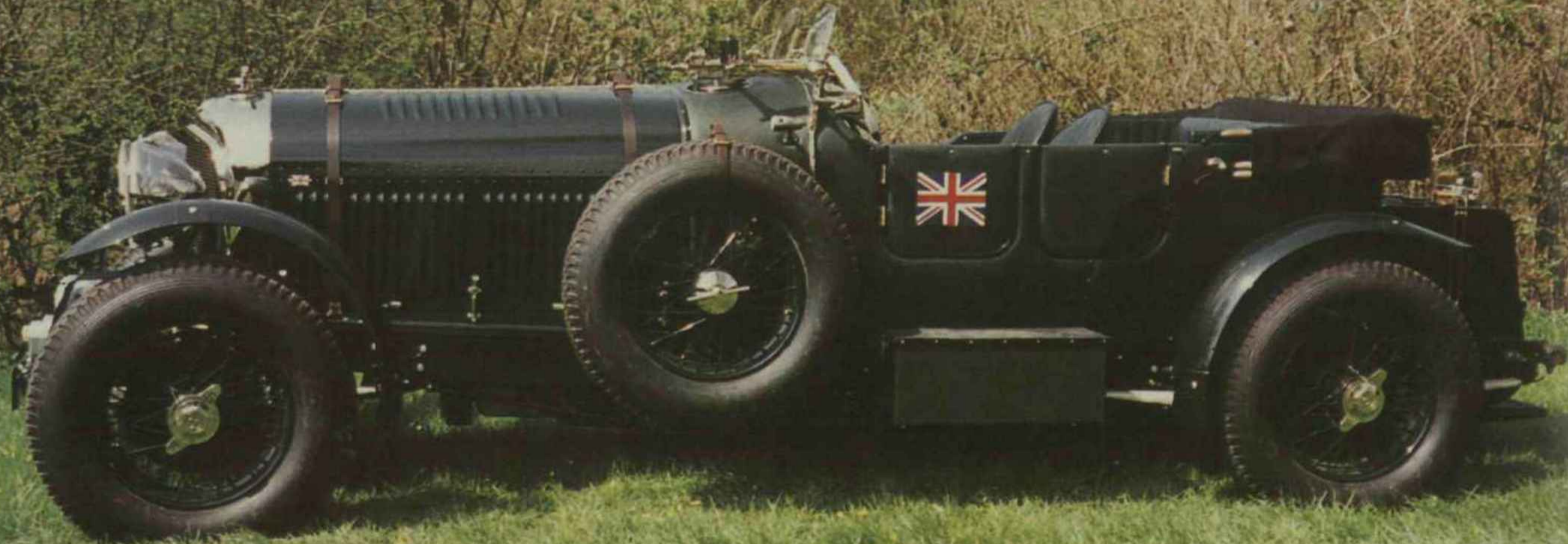
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in the recriminations and arguments that followed, and the 450s were put away. By September Mike Keen and Jim Mayers were both dead, killed in unconnected accidents at Goodwood and Dundrod. The Bristol directors decided to withdraw from racing, and – not wishing the cars to fall into private hands and possibly race with less reliability and success – ordered that they should be cut up.

Then, before all the 450s were lost, the order was amended. It was decided that one car should be kept for posterity, and an apprentice was told to build up

## “Not wishing the cars to fall into private hands, the directors ordered that they should be cut up”

one car out of the best bits of the three. What remained was indeed destroyed: but the survivor lived on in the care of Anthony Crook, repainted in his old racing colours of metallic maroon until Simon Draper finally persuaded him to part with it.

Simon's magnificent collection of Bristols runs from a 400 to a new daily driver Blenheim, and it is impossible to imagine a more appropriate custodian for this unique car. It has been restored at Filton, correct in every detail (although the Le Mans engine with its twin-choke carburettors is no longer with the car) and returned to its original metallic green.

It looks marvellous. Apart from all the delightful details – the counter-sunk bonnet straps, the side and rear lights under tiny Perspex fairings, the flush fuel and oil filler caps, the neat trunking for the carburettors – the whole shape of the car is wonderfully fluid, from its dominant headlight tunnels to its tall fin. Yet aesthetics have played no part in the design. It's not beautiful in any conventional automotive sense, but it's uncompromisingly functional, and all the better for that. Like all of Simon's cars apart from his single-seaters, the 450 is kept road-registered, taxed and MoT'd. I had my doubts whether a car built only to race successfully at Le Mans, and based on an unsuccessful 1952 Formula Two car, would be enjoyable on the highways and byways of Sussex, but I couldn't have been more wrong.

To start with, the rear-mounted gearbox and forward engine position mean the cockpit is surprisingly roomy. Open the single featherweight door – the body is made of very thin aluminium – and you find the red leather-trimmed bucket seat is very comfortable. The matt-black dash sits neatly under the three-spoke wheel, with a big Jaeger chronometric tachometer, a full complement of minor instruments and the necessary switches to hand. The aeroscreen wraps snugly round your head, the headrest is upholstered, and those carpets are still there.

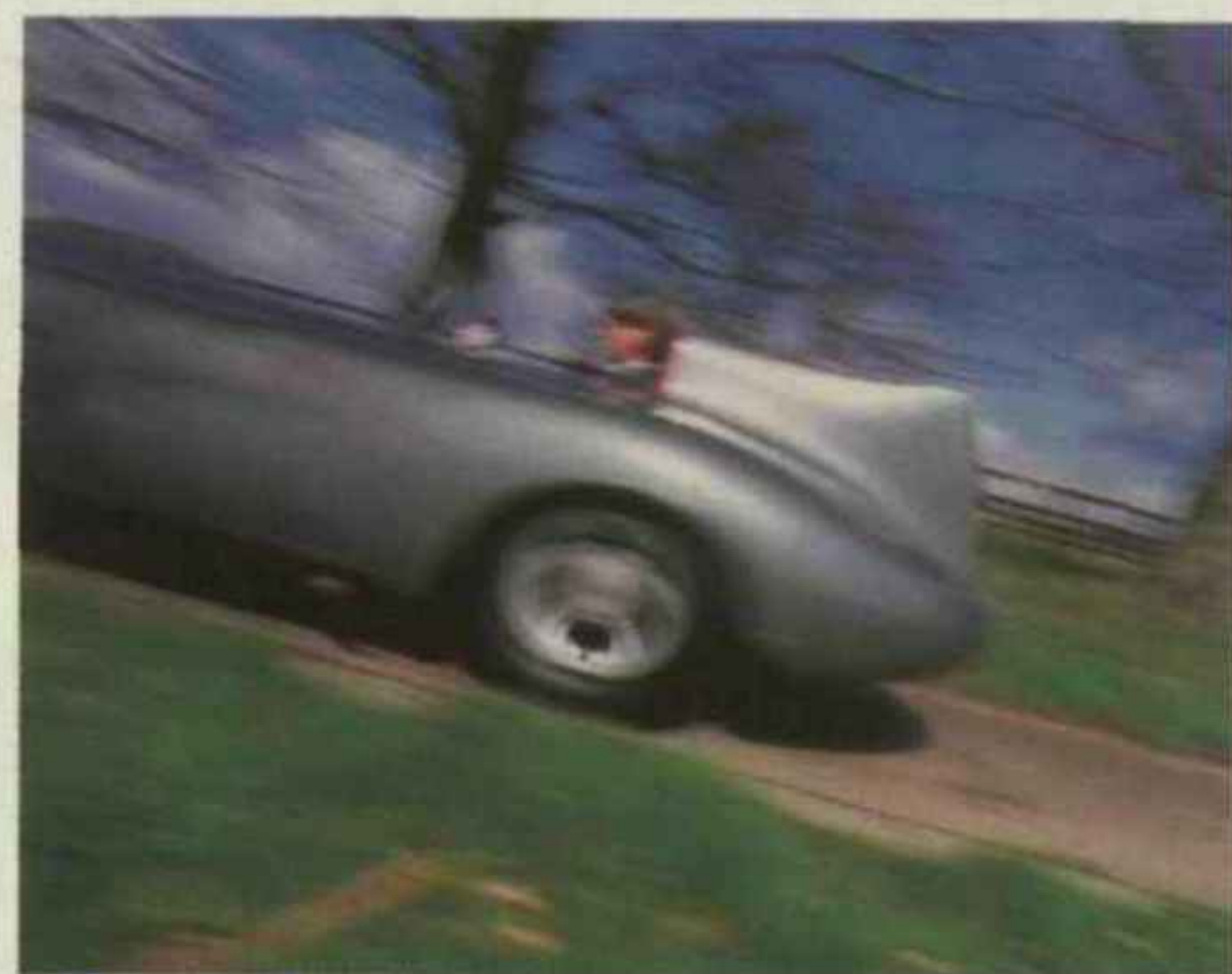
Flick down the aircraft ignition switch, pull the starter, and you are assailed by an almost indescribable noise. The sound of an unsilenced race-spec Bristol six is a chart-topper among all mechanical music, a hard, smooth arpeggio as you blip the throttle, a crescendo as you drive off up the gears, rising to a shriek once the tacho needle flicks beyond the big five-O. Blasting through the countryside for a sunny hour or two, changing up and down just to hear the sound, I could just about stand it without ear-plugs. But I hate to think what it must have been like in a 24-hour race – particularly in the closed coupé...

There's plenty of go to go with the noise. The open 450 weighs about 1450lbs, and a strong Bristol racing engine gives 140bhp plus, so the power to weight ratio is about the same as your average Porsche 911. Too much prod at low speeds makes the engine cough and die, but it's quite docile on small throttle openings. As the revs rise, the power starts to pour in, although it's not until the needle passes 4500 that the 450 really starts to sing. But it's no hardship keeping the revs up: Bristol gearboxes are always a pleasure, and this one, with the remote linkage working backwards, feels no different from the best of them – short travel, nice ratios, quick, light action. A manual guard has to be lifted to select reverse.

The steering is remarkable: through the delicately thin, leather-rimmed matt black wheel it is accurate, precise and very light, although not particularly high-g geared. Together with the slick gearbox, you can drive this car with your fingertips. The clutch is light, too, but the brakes are like good brakes on any old racing car with competition linings: tiny travel, hugely heavy – and, when you push hard enough, very effective.

The long wheelbase/narrow track makes the 450 feel very stable in a straight line, which must have helped at 140mph on the Mulsanne Straight. Cornering briskly the bias is towards understeer, although driving this unique piece of history on public roads I was a long way from the limit of the 600L-15 Dunlop Racing rubber. But it didn't take much imagination to turn the Sussex B-roads into Tertre Rouge, Mulsanne and Arnage, and I could well understand how the three 450s were able to reel off the laps smoothly and reliably and win those team prizes.

In fact, it makes a splendid road car. The passenger seat matches the driver's, although some work would need to be done to the tonneau cover in order to make it habitable for a passenger. The spare-wheel compartment has room for a tiny holdall, and you could pack emergency waterproofs in those bulging body sides. With a couple of pairs of ear-plugs, you and your passenger could go far in a Bristol 450. ■



From top: headrest faired into fin; revised coupés took 1954 LM team prize; removal of roof in '55 reduced drag, helped towards repeat team prize

# Johnny Rutherford

Indianapolis 500, 1974

**HE'D TRIED TEN TIMES AND NOT ONCE EVEN FINISHED THE INDY 500 BUT IN 1974 NOTHING, NOT EVEN A SUPER-DETERMINED AJ FOYT, WAS GOING TO KEEP JOHNNY RUTHERFORD FROM VICTORY LANE**

THE INDY 500 I ENJOYED THE MOST WAS MY FIRST WIN IN 1974. THAT was also the first year I ran the full distance. It was my eleventh 500, and I'd never even finished until I won it.

I went to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for the first time in 1963. I qualified 26th, and dropped out with a broken transmission after 43 laps. The following year I was caught in the crash that killed Eddie Sachs and Dave MacDonald. Because of an accident I missed the '66 Indianapolis race and the rest of the season. In '69 I sprung an oil leak after 24 laps. And so it went on; I was starting to think I was jinxed.

It got better in 1973, when I went to Team McLaren. Teddy Mayer stayed in Europe and ran the Formula One team, and Tyler Alexander ran the Stateside operation, while Teddy would come over for the big races. We had a lot of fun and a lot of good times.

In '73 we set a new track record and started on pole, but again we had some problems that kept us from winning. That was the year of the rain, three false starts, and the bad accidents. By the time we ran the race everybody wanted to be done with it.

The next year we came back, and the car was perfect. It's so good when you have a good car and everything happens right. However, that year the energy crunch was on in the US, and people were saving fuel. So they condensed the two weekends of qualifying into one. The first half of Saturday counted as Pole Day, and the second half counted as the second day, and so on.

Unfortunately we blew an engine in final practice on the Saturday morning, right before qualifying. The guys went back to the garage to change the engine; usually that would not have been a problem.

Harlan Fengler, the chief steward, always said that as long as you were there when your turn came up to go through the tech inspection and go out and qualify, it was OK.

However, that year a new chief steward, Tom Binford, replaced Harlan. His interpretation was that when practice was over, you got in line for qualifying right then at 11am, or you lost your place and went to the back.

Well, we didn't know that. After we changed the engine we came out with the car to put it in line. Because of Tom's ruling, we wound up going to the end of the line, and got stuck in the third day of qualifying. So we didn't even get a shot at pole.

We got really upset about that, because AJ Foyt and I should have been racing for pole. I eventually did the second quickest time in the whole field, but because we were counted as third day qualifiers, we could only start 25th! We didn't even try hard. Our effort was just to make it into the race; if we had hopped it up and done the usual things to extend it a little bit, we could have been quicker than AJ. Al Unser had blown an engine as well, and

he was in the same boat, so he started beside me in 26th spot.

On race day the car was just so good, and very quick through the turns. They dropped the green and I just started passing cars and drove right up through the field to third on the 12th lap. It was just a matter of passing them when I came to them. I raced everybody all day, and didn't have a challenge until I reached AJ.

We raced hard in the middle stages of the race, both taking turns in the lead. He had the Ford V8 overhead cam, and his car was a little faster down the straightaways than mine. But I was all over him through the turns. He could be half way through the turn when I was just entering it, but then I'd be on his tail going across the short chute that followed.

It was frustrating when a car like that has just enough torque or strength to get down the straightaway a little quicker than you, but I knew if I kept the pressure on him I would either run him out of right rear tyre, or engine. I stayed right there and tried to pass, then I'd drop back and wait a little bit, and try again.

Finally his engine started leaking, and it just covered my car with oil. I had to back off about 50 yards or so just to get out of the spray, and I was watching the track just to make sure I didn't hit any solid oil that would make me spin.

Eventually they black-flagged him, and when he pitted I went into the lead. He came out and ran a couple of laps, and it was smoking. He came in again and turned left into Gasoline Alley, and that was it.

You never know you've got it won until you crossed the line, but I knew we pretty much had it unless the car broke. You hear the stories about how guys start hearing

noises, notice things they haven't noticed before, and look for problems. Well, you do! You look at the gauges and think is that higher than it was a while ago? You just try to keep it straight, keep out of trouble, and watch for oil on the track which might give you problems.

The finish was great. It doesn't sink in right away because you're still busy in the car. Coming into the pitlane you're shifting gears and slowing down while waving to the crowd, because they're going crazy. But you've also got to look for Victory Lane when you haven't been there before. It was in front of the scoring tower, and you had to turn up the ramps onto the platform, which had a chequered flag carpet.

When the celebration was over, they moved my car. AJ had sprayed all that oil onto it and while I was racing it was glued there by the air pressure. When I stopped it all poured off, so there was a perfect outline of my McLaren on the carpet – the wing, the nose and everything!

Ever since the 500 became a 33-car affair in 1934, only one man had started further back and won the race. That was Lou Meyer in 1936, who started 28th. It was everything I ever hoped it would be; to get your image on that Borg Warner trophy means a great deal. ■



Rutherford's McLaren M16C at 1974 Indy 500

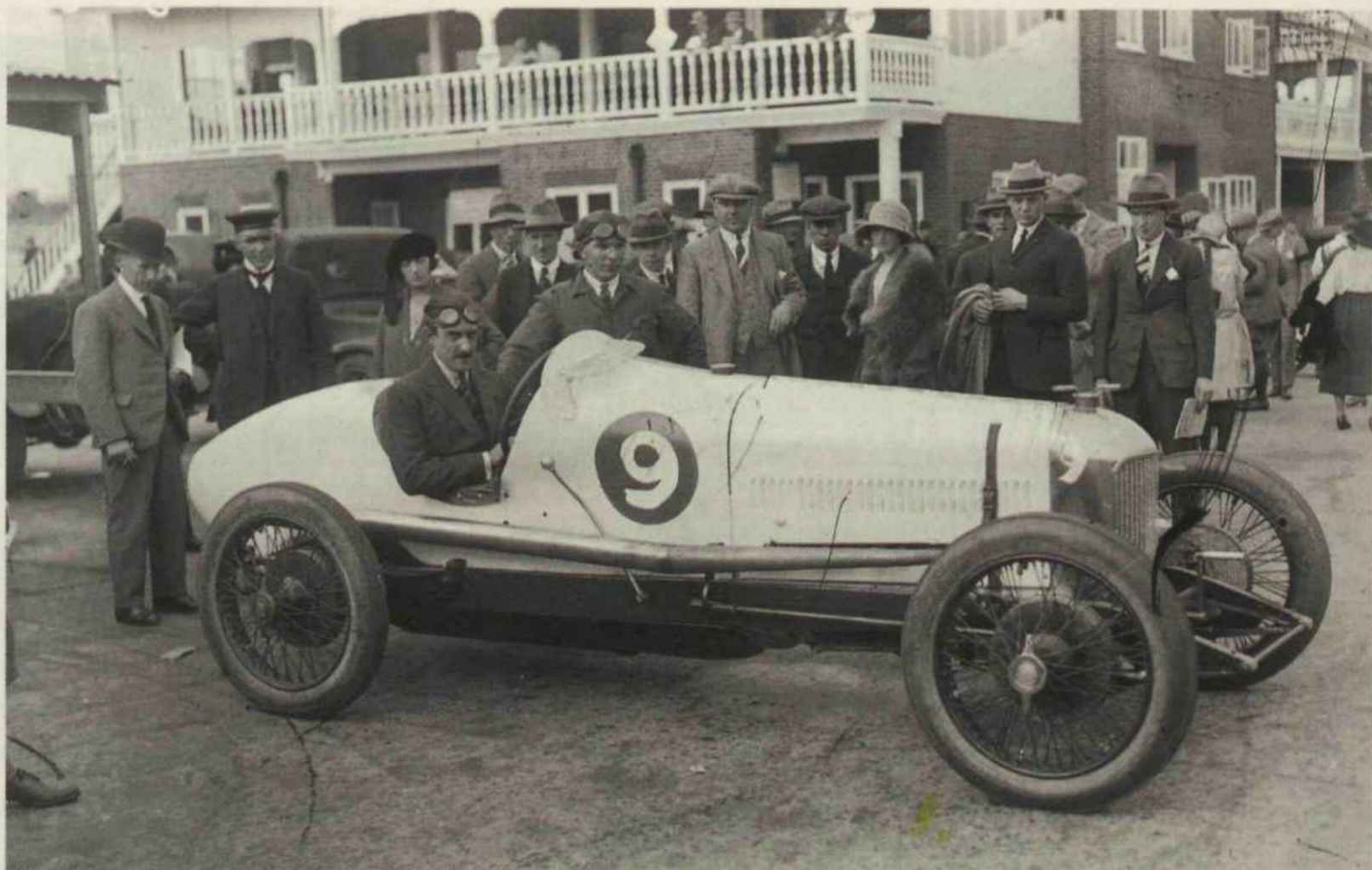
Indianapolis Motor Speedway

"They dropped the green and I just started passing cars and drove right up through the field to third on the 12th lap"



Eleventh time lucky: Rutherford finally gets his hands on the famed Borg-Warner trophy for the first of his Indy 500 victories

Indianapolis Motor Speedway



Zborowski's long-awaited Miller finally arrived at Brooklands in 1923. Below, a rare shot of the car at Sitges, Spain

## The Miller that came to England

MOTOR RACING FOLLOWERS AFTER WWI WERE AWARE OF the beautiful cars built by Harry Miller in the USA. Miller-engined cars had won the great 1922 Indianapolis 500-Mile Race and finished 1,2,3 in 1923. Consequently when Brooklands supporters heard that the mercurial Count Zborowski, who had thrilled them with his Chitty-Bang-Bangs and the Big Benz, was to appear with one of the 2-litre straight-eight Millers, anticipation was high.

While at Indy with a team of T30 single-seater Bugattis in 1923, the Count had ordered a 4WB two-seater Miller (engine HM8, chassis No 15), which he entered for the 1923 Brooklands August Bank Holiday Meeting. But it was far from ready, so non-started, and spectators had to wait until the Essex MC race day late in September. Its too-large wheels restricted it to 102mph, when 120 was expected of it. The engine revved only to 4000rpm instead of its 5000 potential, and the springs, right for Indy, were too hard for the Weybridge track. Miller's top mechanic, Riley Brett, was sent over to England to sort it out.

Some of those crowded round the car thought it had eight vertical exhausts pointing down behind the chassis rail. In fact these were the carburettor inlet pipes, one for each cylinder. The dry-sump lubrication, Delco coil ignition and unit gearbox would all have been noted. Much work had been done; one odd item was misfiring of two cylinders, found eventually to be due to the distributor cap being for a six-cylinder engine; whether a prank, sabotage or carelessness we will never know.

But when it eventually ran, the crowds were not disappointed. In the 'Lightning Short' handicap, it ran beautifully, to win at 93.47mph. In the longer race the Miller lost ground until it warmed up, then began to

devour slower cars, running high on the banking before Zborowski sportingly pulled down to let Parry Thomas' big Leyland come through to a most exciting 100mph bunched finish, the Miller second despite oil-pump faults.

The ever-keen Zborowski next took the car to the European GP at Monza. Again the oil pump failed, and a con rod broke after he had got up to seventh. It was a 1,2,3 Fiat victory, but Murphy's Miller came fourth, Algaza's sixth, the two being sent direct from New York to Genoa.

Zborowski brought the Miller out at the 1924 BARC Whitsun races but after a lap it fizzled out. Determined to do a proper road race he ambitiously entered it for the 1924 French GP at Lyons, with *The Autocar's* Sammy Davis crammed in beside him. Quite unsuitable, it retired after its front axle had practically fallen off. The Count intended to drive it in the Italian GP, but after joining the Mercedes team, he was then fatally injured.

By 1926 H Wright had the Miller and Dudley Froy drove it at Brooklands, but it lapped at under 78mph. At the final 1926 meeting it threw a rod. A consistent non-starter, it did some sand racing before being exported to New Zealand.





# An Exeter re-enactment

WITH THE WORRIES OF THE MILLENNIUM approaching, one bright idea stands out. On January 7/8 2000, the MCC is to re-enact the London-Exeter Trial first held in 1910. The route will follow much the same form, with a 90-mile night run, no unsurfaced hills (except for an optional ascent of Fingle Bridge) and an entry of mainly pre-1961 vehicles, the older the better. In 1910 the thing ran from London to Exeter and back, starting on Boxing Night, but the tamer 2000 scheme is wildly attractive.

It recalls my "Boxing Night Exeters" which I ran from 1953-61, with the approval of the then-Secretary of the MCC Jackie Masters – well, at all events he lent me the old route cards... The idea was to eschew competition licences, entry fees, protests and prizes, on this 'follow me' event. We had a good response, but as Jenks said, on a winter's night only the truly enthusiastic will turn up; and so it proved. I started the first run at the time a car like my 1922 8hp Talbot-Darracq had left; the route used was

the 1922 one, embracing the correct hills. In 1954 National Benzole laid on free petrol and hospitality, and by 1955 I was trailed by 16 keen "competitors".

The Suez crisis made it no-go in 1956, and from 1958 I used my 1924 12/70 Calthorpe, the start being changed, again correctly, to Slough Trading Estate for the 1961 Run. By 1960 we had 36 starters. When my own vintage cars were unwell I went in Trojans and the NMM's 1921 AC. When a TV crew wanted to film us they got, to their astonishment, a firm "no".

The Runs died because when I issued a simple route-sheet so that stragglers would not miss the lorry-drivers' cafe breakfast halt, or the 'sections', the RAC insisted I was running an event calling for competition licences; and the old informality had gone, so we gave up, although I believe a few enthusiasts continued the frolic for a few years. In view of the fun we had, I wish the MCC every success with its more official Exeter re-run in Millennium year.



"Only the truly enthusiastic will turn up", warned DSJ, but the popularity of trials persists

## Cars in Books

I READ EMMA TENNANT'S MEMOIR *STRANGERS* thinking it might include something on David Tennant's Beardmore and a racing 'Sascha' Austro-Daimler, or the ownership of Leyland Eights. Not so, and as the book, a good recall of life in England before and after WWI blends fact and fiction, one cannot be sure about the cars it *does* refer to.

Lord Glenconner's new Lanchester which arrived in 1912 is there, as is "the old Wolseley" in which David Tennant left the family's

Scottish mansion when WWII began, and an Hispano-Suiza which David Tennant drove, as did his sister Clare at "breakneck speed".

But the car which Clare drove so fast it went off the road and nearly made her late for Christopher Tennant's wedding to Pamela Paget in Wells Cathedral is described as a "Hawk-Ellis". There is mention of Wansford Manor, the Tennants' house near Salisbury, where I think the Leyland Eights were garaged, and before that David's Alvis "that could reach Salisbury in 15 minutes," although a carriage was still in use for local journeys as the groom could not cope with a car.

## miscellany

WE ARE USED TO TV camera shots from cars in today's races. But who did it first? Certainly a cameraman with a cine-camera rode with Parry Thomas in the Leyland 8 at Brooklands in a race in September 1923 with a lap at 116.36mph. It was said that the cine-chap was quite relieved not to ride again with Thomas in a later race, when he lapped at 118.58mph.

IN THE VSCC'S VERY FULL and varied fixture list the Scottish Trial took place on May 15. It was won easily by Barry Clarke's 1928 A7. Best in the opposite class was Paul Cassidy (1929 Riley), these drivers respectively taking the Campbell and McCosh Trophies. The Sammy Davis Cup for best Scottish-domiciled entrant went to Stewart Gordon (1929 A7).

SHIRE PUBLICATIONS HAVE issued revised editions of their A7, MG and Jaguar *Shire Albums*, these well illustrated, expertly written books costing only £2.95. Their list of such albums covers most makes; free catalogue: 01844 344301.

A NUMBER OF TANKARDS etc awarded to the late EH Diamond have been found in an old bungalow in Berkshire. They relate to his performances in MCC, MG CC, Brighton & Hove MC, Sunbeam MCC and Singer OC in the mid-1930s, together with a picture in oils of the driver and a Lord Nuffield card-holder issued to him in October 1934.

THE I MECH E COVENTRY Shakespeare Run for Veteran to Classic cars takes place on September 5. Entry forms from IFS (UK) Ltd, Vintage House, Kings Lane, Broom, Alcester, Warwicks B50 4HB (01789 772298).

THE HANTS & BERKS MC continues to keep in touch with its long-standing members with informal lunches at traditional venues from its past, but also by running up-to-date events with titles which also recall the Club's earlier days, such as scatter rallies and the Holland Birkett Night Trial, etc. It also supports the Eight Clubs Silverstone race meeting, which has its 50th Anniversary on September 11. Secretary: Bill Bonney, 283 Lodden Bridge Road, Woodley, Berks (0118 969 7591). He would be pleased to hear from any ex-members.

THE SUNBEAM MCC commemorates its 75th birthday at Westerham, Kent, on September 19.

THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE withdrawal of leaded petrol next year may cause rumble on and on. Broughtons of Birmingham are quoting £99 for converting a Bentley or R-R to unleaded, including collection and delivery, and an additive ad refers to the cost of conversion of Bentleys, Bugattis and Alvis Speed 25s with fixed heads. Sympathy goes out to those whose last-named beautiful cars have welded head to block!



Jenks investigates the springing on WB's economical road-test 375cc Citroën Deux Chevaux in 1954

## A two horse tale...

READING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE OF THE *Citroënian*, the Citroën's CC excellent magazine, reminded me of the great French make's history and my association with some of these cars, which were in production until only a couple of years ago. On MOTOR SPORT's road test of the 375cc Deux

Chevaux in 1954 I took it over the two routes of the 1924 RAC Small Car Trial, which it did at 56.3mpg. Going to the cinema one evening we had a bit of bother restarting on damp plugs, but before going to bed I read the instruction book – there was a little blind we should have clipped on

the front, to keep the rain out. From that moment I was in love with the 2CV.

Then, returning one evening from Silverstone in a Jowett Jupiter, we saw a broken-down 2CV, and as one did then, stopped to help. The driver said if he could get to Slough he could obtain a new coil. So off we went and at the gates he said "blow the horn". The gates opened, he went in, and returned with a new coil. Back at his car, in which his wife was waiting to go to a dance, he removed the duff one with a lead at each end, threw it over a hedge, fitted the more conventional replacement and drove off. I later discovered he was the top engineer at Slough. Road test cars were expedited by this episode – DS19, ID19, Ami 6, several DS21s, Dyane 6, Visa Club, and CX 2400GTi, apart from a number of 2CVs.

I recall a boring fuel consumption test in 1956 up and down Bwlch-y-Groes innumerable times in another willing 2CV and, much more exciting, being driven by Bernard Cahier from his house high in the Cote d'Azur down the hairpinned Lower Corniche in his 2CV, the wheel rims scraping the road on the corners as he tried to frighten me. I remember we wanted to photograph the road test 2CV beside two horses, but had to settle for one downcast nag pulling a scruffy cart.

The first one I drove, before the 425cc model, gave over 60mpg on flattish terrain, and in an economy run, coasting allowed, another came second at 83.7mpg, after I had persuaded co-driver Holly Birkett not to drive as if in a GP, by telling him if we won I would divide the cash prize with him! The Citroën Club has over 400 members who still run these little cars. It makes me almost want to go out and buy myself a two-pot.

## Low-cost veteran motoring

IN VIEW OF THE PRICES THE OLDER CARS NOW FETCH, it is refreshing if frustrating to think back to old times. I am thinking of a 1903/4 two-cylinder Panhard bought for £4 at auction soon after WWI. It had lain in a stable, tyreless, since 1910. It cost its new owner an extra £18 10/- for repairs, lamps and tyres. He made a few modifications, like removing the tonneau seats and lowering the front ones, but kept the Krebs carburettor. The brakes were relined and a couple of used driving chains bought for 2/6d (12½p) as spares, along with a 30/- (£1.50) 870x90 Dunlop tyre.

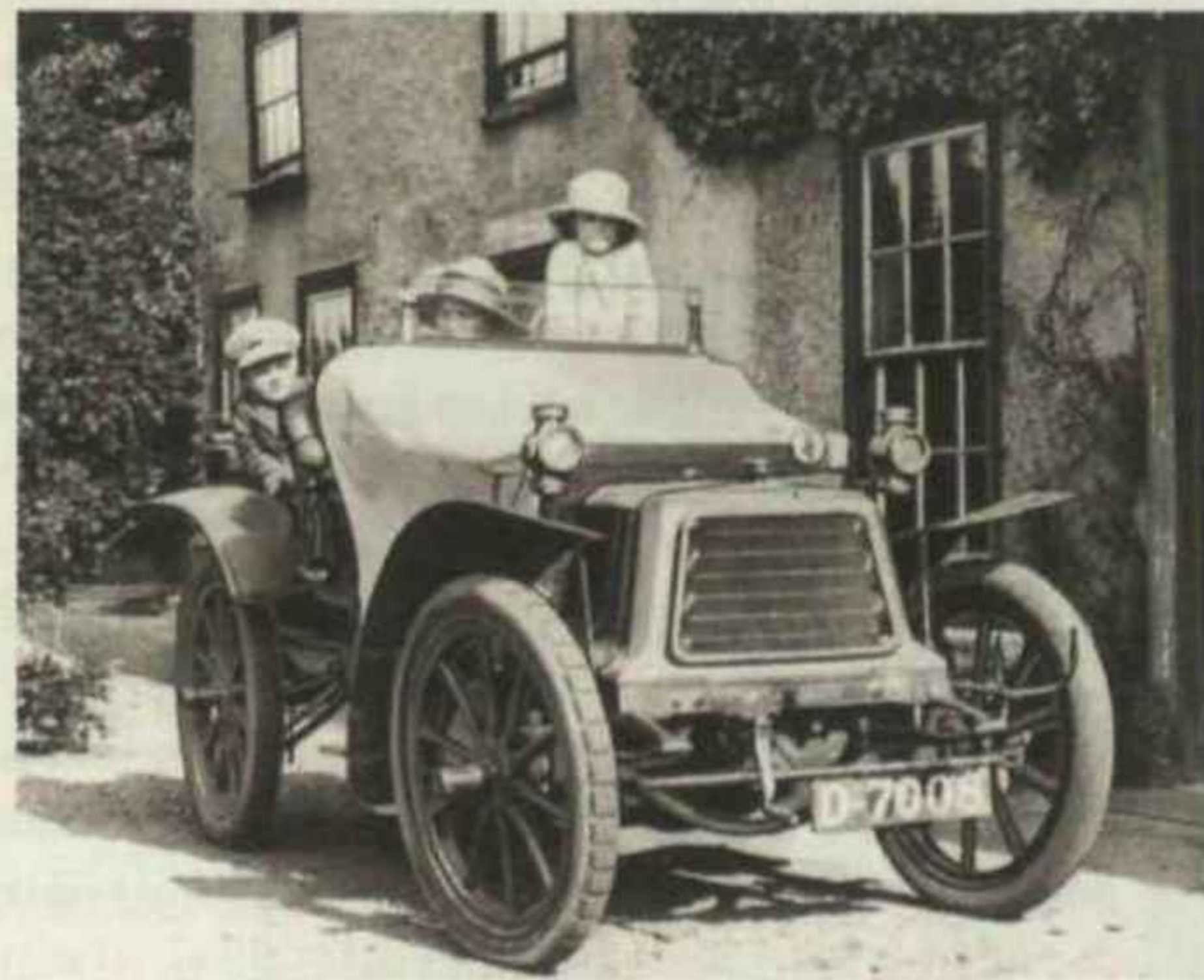
The first run was for 50 miles along the Bath Road. The low-g geared veteran, on the new 875x105 Dunlop cords, gave 30mpg and averaged 17¼ mph, doing 23 miles in its best hour, and fully laden could do at least 30mph.

I wonder whether D7008 survived another war and the scrap drive. Its invalided ex-army owner said such oldsters were practical if you could use simple tools (rules me out), understand cars

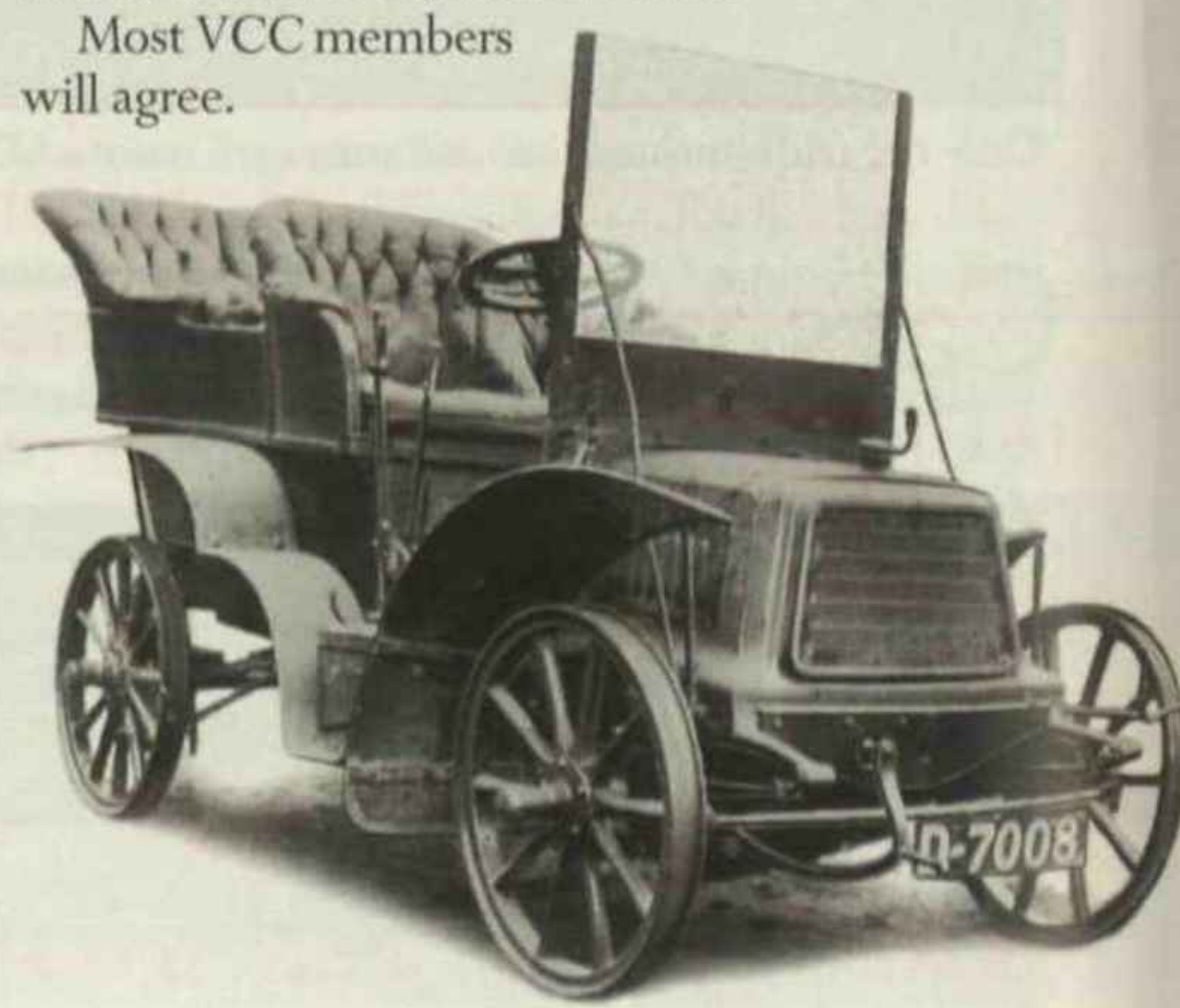
mechanically, not expect to start from cold with a couple of pull-ups (such engines need to be swung), are able to change gear on a crash gearbox, don't stop the engine involuntarily or drive on the brakes and are able to diagnose any new

noises the car warns you with, and not to object to crowds gathering when you park, as when this Panhard went to Holborn in 1923.

Most VCC members will agree.



The ancient Panhard in the 1920s...



...after resuscitation from this fading wreck

# Longevity

IN THIS AGE OF SOMETIMES SHODDY commodities it is good to have some things that have worn well over the years. In my case I can point to a 1920's Smiths swivel-fronted dashboard clock taken from a 1914 Hispano-Suiza. It gains some minutes a week, but as this is when you rewind it, no problem, and the spring action feels as new. Which reminds me of a very low-cost Smiths stop-watch we were sent to try in the 1950's. It has lain in a drawer ever since but still functions perfectly and the timing against much more costly watches remains accurate. Then there is the Short and Mason



glass-cased barograph acquired at about the same time. A letter to the makers confirmed that it was supplied to the Brooklands ARC in 1906. Both clockwork and bellows are in good working order after more than 100 years. Finally there is the English made Eversure Fillacan with filter and a very convenient hinged spout (metal of course) which Teesdale gave me when I was road-testing cars for MOTOR SPORT. (I used to prefer to run a tank dry rather than use the brim-to-brim method, but this resulted in stops at awkward places.) The thing dates back to the mid-50s and is quite rusty, but I still use it.

# Homologation

IN MY BIRKIN BLOWER 4½ BENTLEY PIECE IN the June issue it was not explained that the 50 Bentleys of this kind, which Birkin got W O to make against his better judgement, were required for homologation for the 1930 Le Mans race. The ruling was to ensure that only catalogue, indeed production, cars ran in the 24-hour sports car race.

At first the regulations required that duplicates of the entered cars should be bought to the circuit; later that the entrants had to swear *on their honour* that they had built and sold, or at least stocked, 30 similar cars.

The complexion of the race was changed in 1949, when prototype sports cars were accepted. However, standard cars continued to have their place, provided it was declared that at least ten of the kind raced had been sold. (The 50 rule came in later, hence the Birkin request to W O in 1929.) Then the number required rose to 100, with 12 consecutive months allowed for these catalogue cars to be completed. In fact only five Blower Bentleys were sold before the

race in June 1930, the remainder by September 1931, with one exception.

One has to assume that the smallest of French manufacturers complied, for they wouldn't cheat, would they? However, French officials have sometimes managed to eliminate those they felt were a threat to French successes, as with the 1908 GP Austins, unacceptable with their Rudge detachable wheels, Colin Chapman's 743cc Lotus 23, with which he hoped to win the 1962 Le Mans Index of performance, was rejected at the last moment as "not in the spirit, and unsafe", when it looked likely to spoil a Panhard handicap win, and you will recall the disqualifications of the victorious Minis in the 1966 Monte Carlo Rally because of a supposed lighting infringement.

The battle for the Brooklands lap record between Don (Sunbeams) and Birkin (Bentley) got a bit obscure in my story; it went actually went: 1929, Don, 134.24mph; 1930, Birkin, 135.34mph; Don, 137.58 mph; 1932, Birkin, 137.96mph.

# Aerial Sunbeams

ONE HAS TO ADMIRE THE LARGE AMOUNT OF research which Alec Brew must have done before writing *Sunbeam Aero Engines* (published by Airlife, with 160 large pages, and copious illustrations, ISBN 1 84037 023 8 £39.95) It describes critically the 26 different Sunbeam aero-engines, the aeroplanes

and airships in which they were installed, and the Sunbeam Bomber, gives a history of the STD organisation, and lists nine racing or LSR cars powered by Sunbeam aviation engines, reminding me of the research I did on these cars for my *Aero-engined Cars at Brooklands* book.

# miscellany

THE VSCC OF AMERICA has added selected cars made before 1960 as eligible for its events, plus some later ones if specially approved, as well as pre-war cars. The list includes post-war HRG, Jowett Jupiter, SU-carburettored Morgans, Peerless GT, Swallow Doretti, Veritas and some TVR, Turner and Tojeiros. My hope is that the VSCC will never copy...

\* \* \*

THE MORRIS REGISTER IS fortunate to have historian Harry Edwards as editor of its *Journal*. In the Spring issue he has erudite articles on petrol and oil centenaries, with pictures of Jack Elliot Duckham and his chauffeur-driven Morris 16/6 saloon with Perkins Wolf diesel engine, and of Alexander Duckhams in his s/c 1939 Morris 8 tourer.

\* \* \*

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH says one Boeing 747 crossing the Atlantic creates more pollution than 40,000 vehicles travelling from London to Leeds. Aeroplanes do not have catalytic converters, and when fuel is dumped in an emergency the pollution factor is many times more than from i/c engines.

\* \* \*

AT THE VSCC COLERNE speed trials, a straight-line sprint, Andrew Day's s/c 8-litre Bentley made FTD in 23.01sec, beating all the more modern entries. The fastest lady was Sarah Baker, in the 1917 Th. Schneider aero-car (30.84sec). Class winners were (vintage/overall, R = record): D Venables (1929

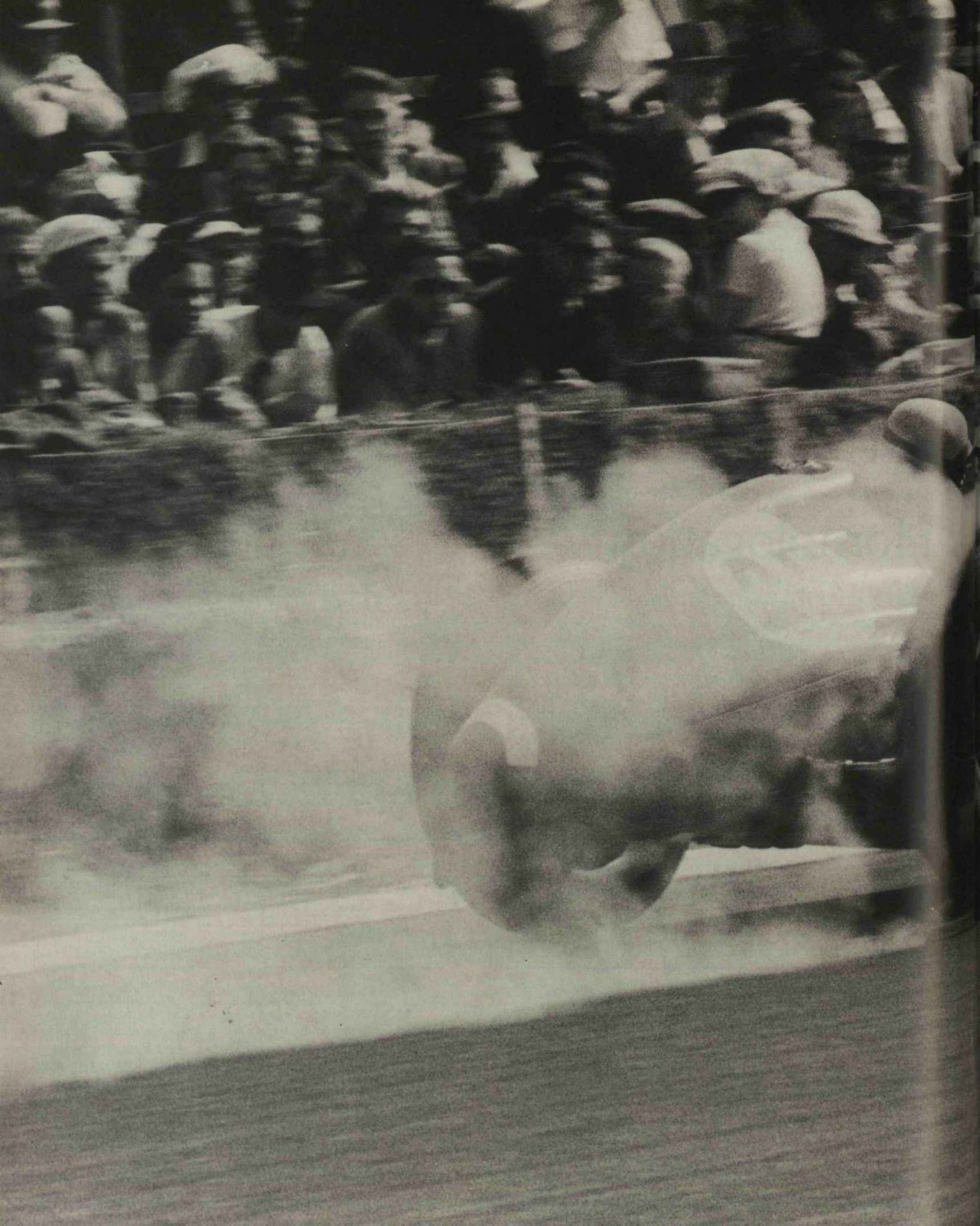
Frazer Nash)/P Evans 1937 HRG); E Goldsmith (1926 4½ Bentley)/A Pugh (1939 FN-BMW); T Delaney (1928 Lea-Francis)/J Mowatt (1936 Morgan Spl)R; A Day (1928 Bentley Spl)/ditto, R; Miss P Barwell (1930 A7)/A Painter (1934 MG); T Crowther (1930 Rally)/N Mason (ERA R10B)R; S Goodman (1929 Bugatti)/R King (1938 Delage); J Wilton (1961 Cooper)/B Eastick (1955 Jaguar)R.

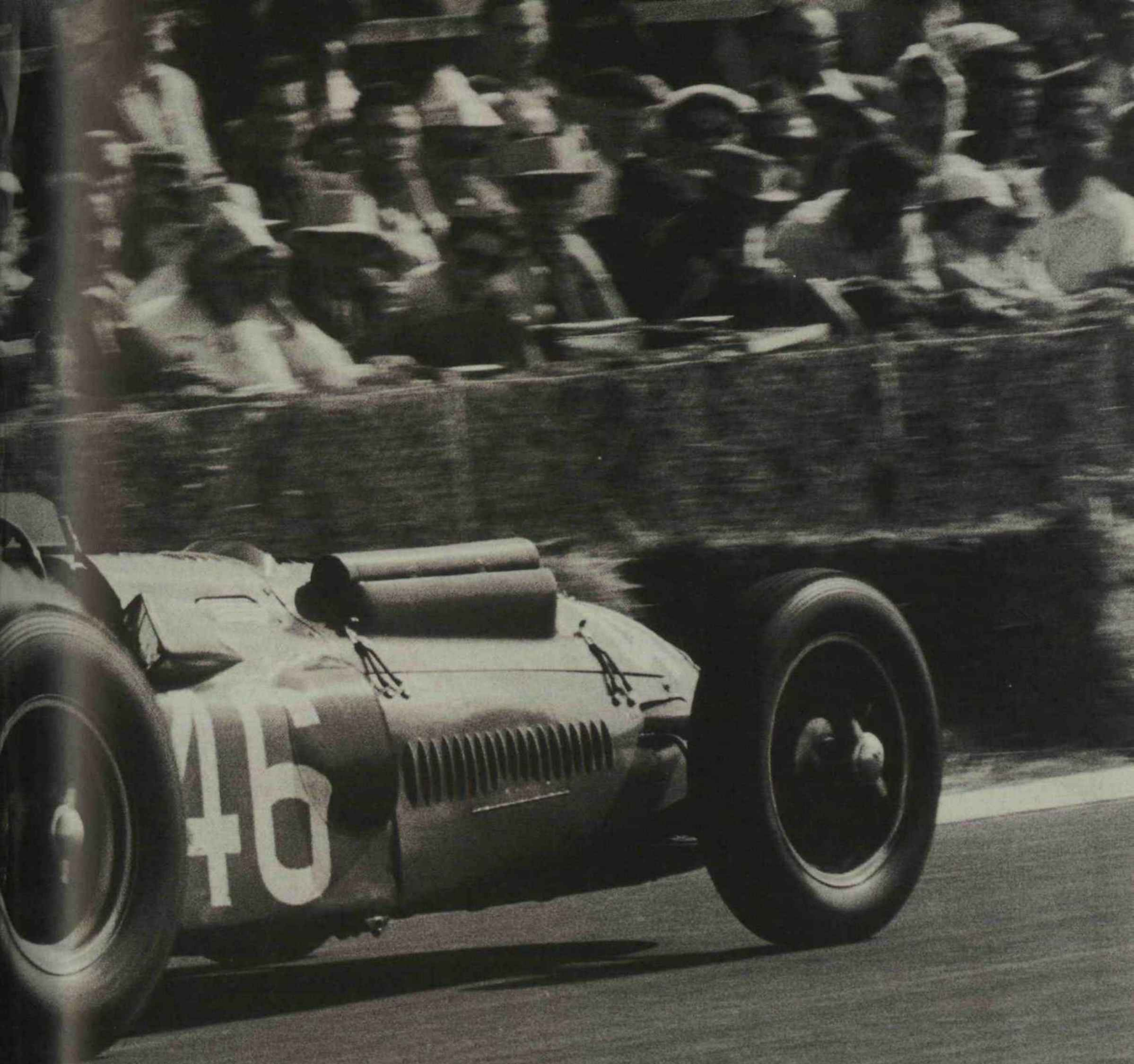
\* \* \*

THE JUNE ISSUE OF *Aeroplane* had a picture of Elly Beinhorn (Frau Rosemeyer) at the air show to mark the opening of Chigwell Aerodrome in September 1936, where she demonstrated a Messerschmitt Bf108. She was of course the wife of the famous Auto Union driver who won the 1938 Donington GP. Did he fly from Germany with her, or was he too busy winning GPs for A-U?

\* \* \*

BROOKLANDS BOOKS, being privileged to reproduce articles from the leading motor papers, have branched out into volumes recording particular races. Following their Le Mans and Mille Miglia books, Brooklands now has three on post-WW2 Targa Florio races, a hardback at £34.95, covering 1948 to 1973, the reports including those from *Autocar* plus *MOTOR SPORT*, so you get the accounts exactly as written after each Targa, and the results are also listed. Soft-cover books on the same race from 1955 to 1964 and 1965 to '73 are also available, for £13.95.





## PARTING SHOT

1951 FRENCH GRAND PRIX  
Yves Giraud-Cabantous driving  
his Talbot-Lago T26C

LAT Photographic

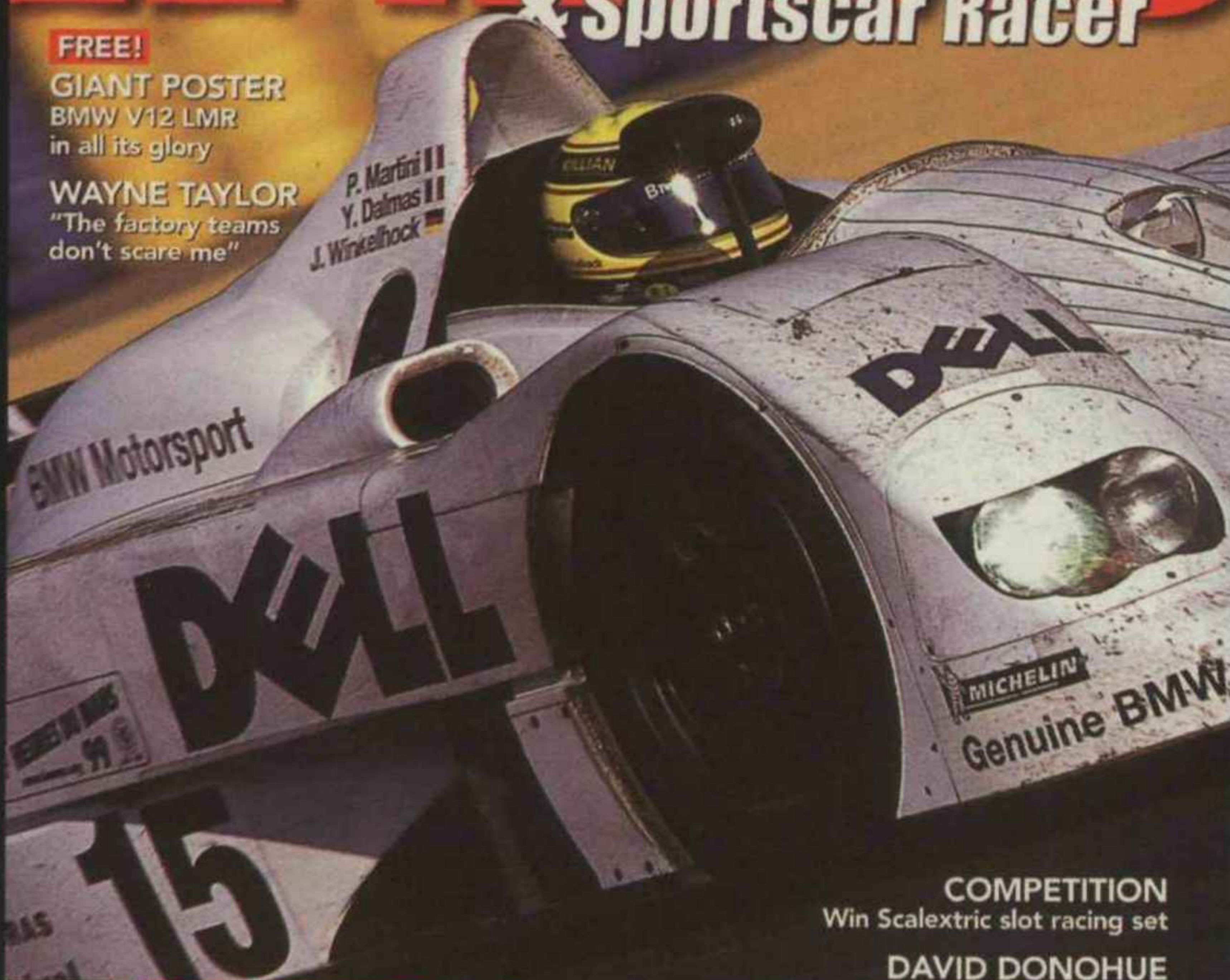
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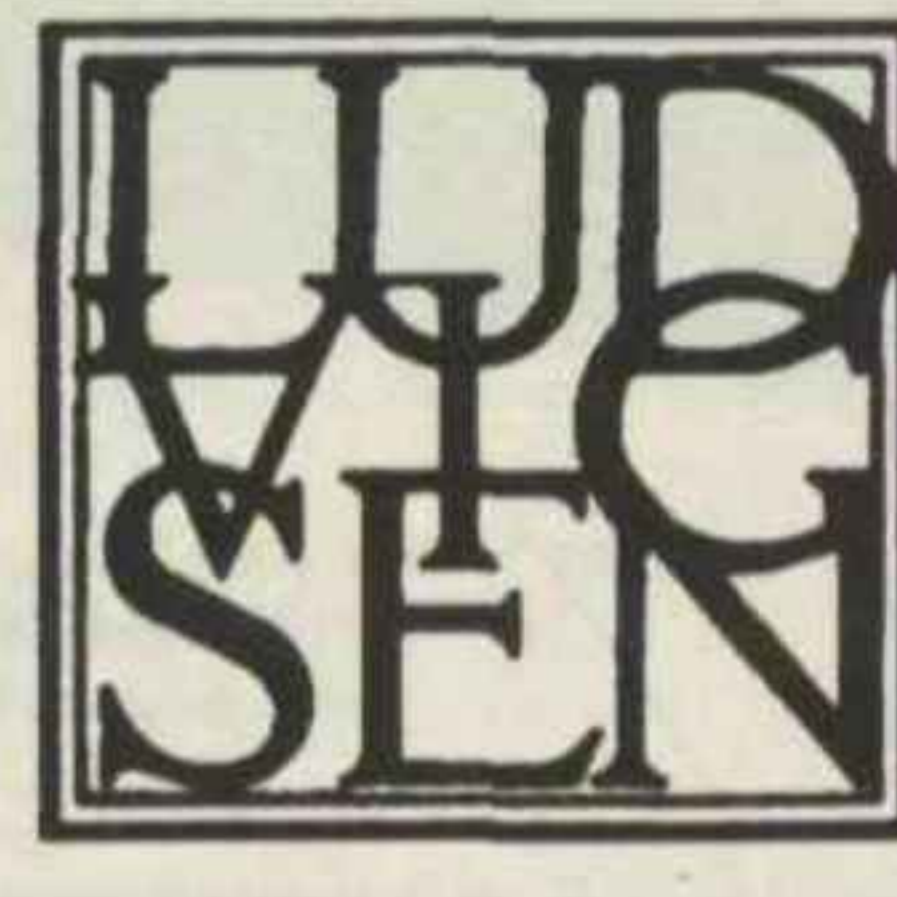
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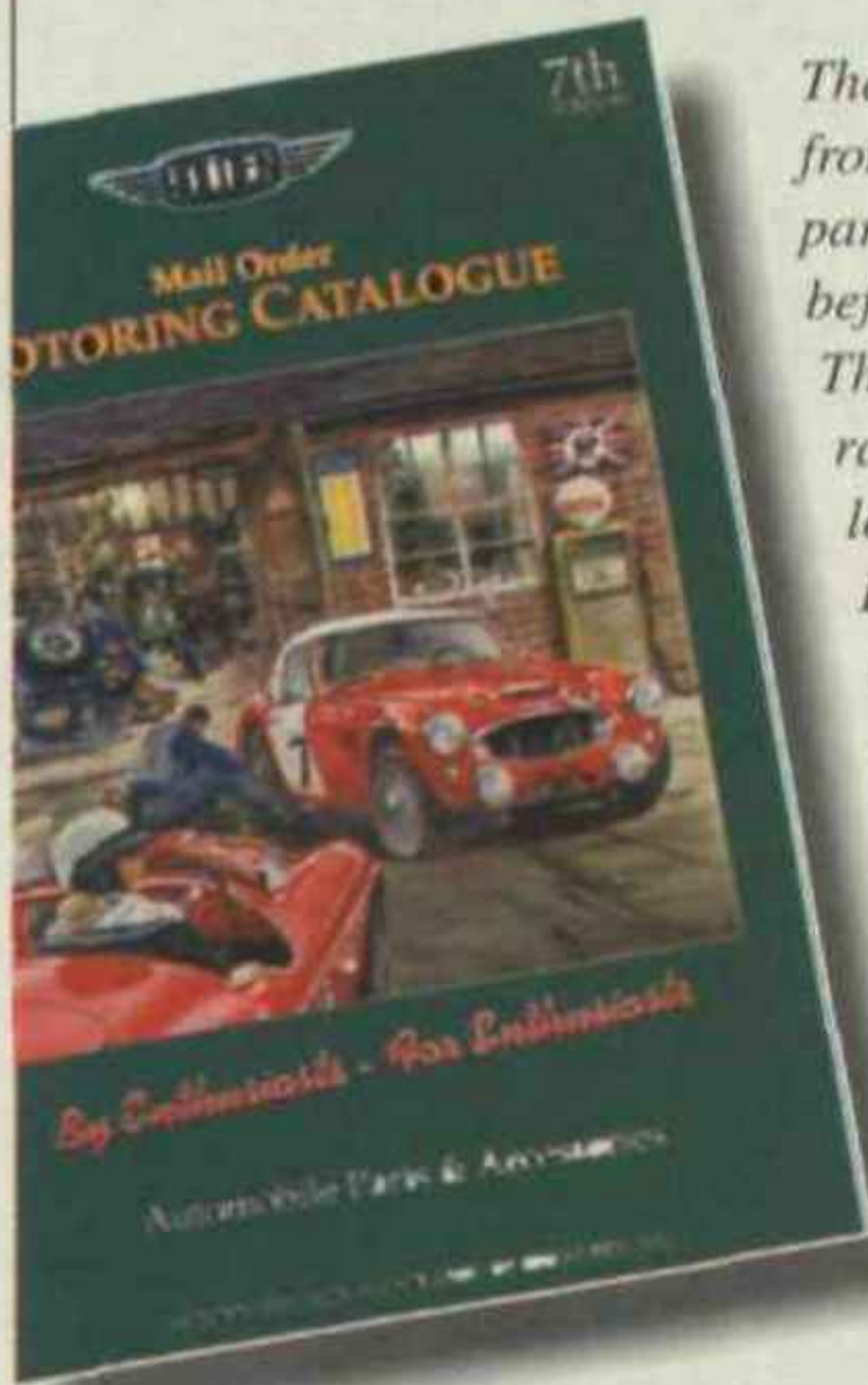
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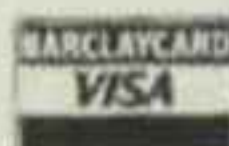
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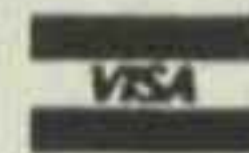


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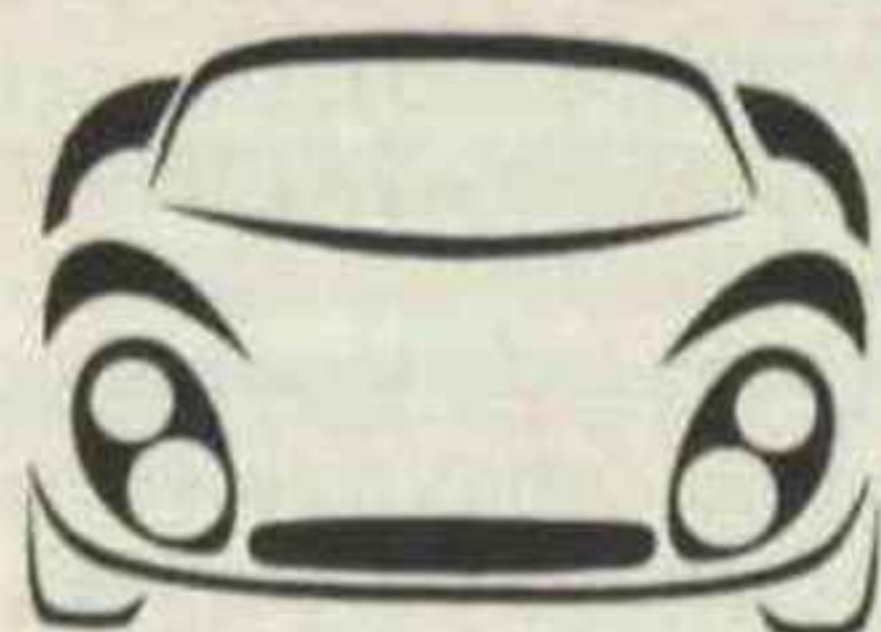
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Arguably the greatest Honda driver of all, the late Ayrton Senna

**T**he year is 1948. In Maranello, Italy, Enzo Ferrari is preparing for the debut of his first Grand Prix cars. Ferdinand Porsche is putting the finishing touches to the prototype of his new sports car, and in England Colin Chapman has just started work on his second trials machine. Thousands of miles away, another motoring visionary is beginning his own remarkable story.

Soichiro Honda was born in November 17, 1906, the eldest son of a village blacksmith. At the age of eight, a chance sighting of a Model T Ford on a dusty country road near his home fired Soichiro's imagination. He was determined to work with cars when he left school.

An apprenticeship at a Tokyo garage followed, where

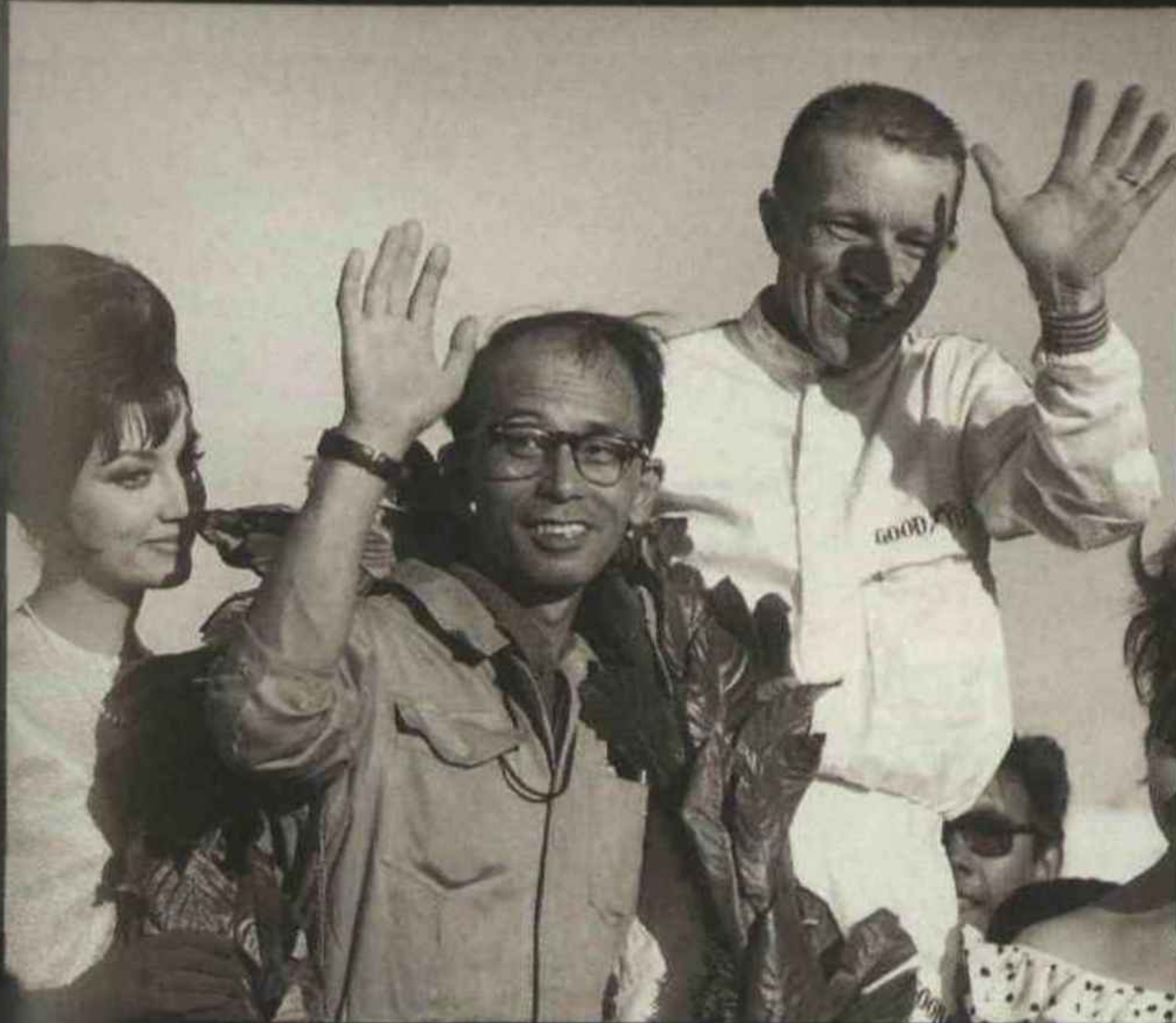
an understanding boss encouraged the young man's interest in racing cars. Soichiro built his own car using an old 8-litre Curtiss aircraft engine, and he raced with considerable success until almost losing his life in an accident in the All-Japan Speed Rally of 1936.

His passion for speed and remarkable engineering ability went hand in hand with a sharp business acumen. In 1937 he founded Tokai Seiki Heavy Industry, supplying Toyota and the Nakajima Aircraft company until an earthquake all but destroyed the factory in January 1945.

Defeat in the Second World War brought about a profound crisis in Japan. In a time of grave economic difficulty and social upheaval, the country needed hard-working and dynamic men of vision. Soichiro Honda had his part to play in the process of recovery: he would

## HONDA

## TEAM OF DREAMS



Richie Ginther and engineer Yoshio Nakamura celebrate Mexico City, 1965



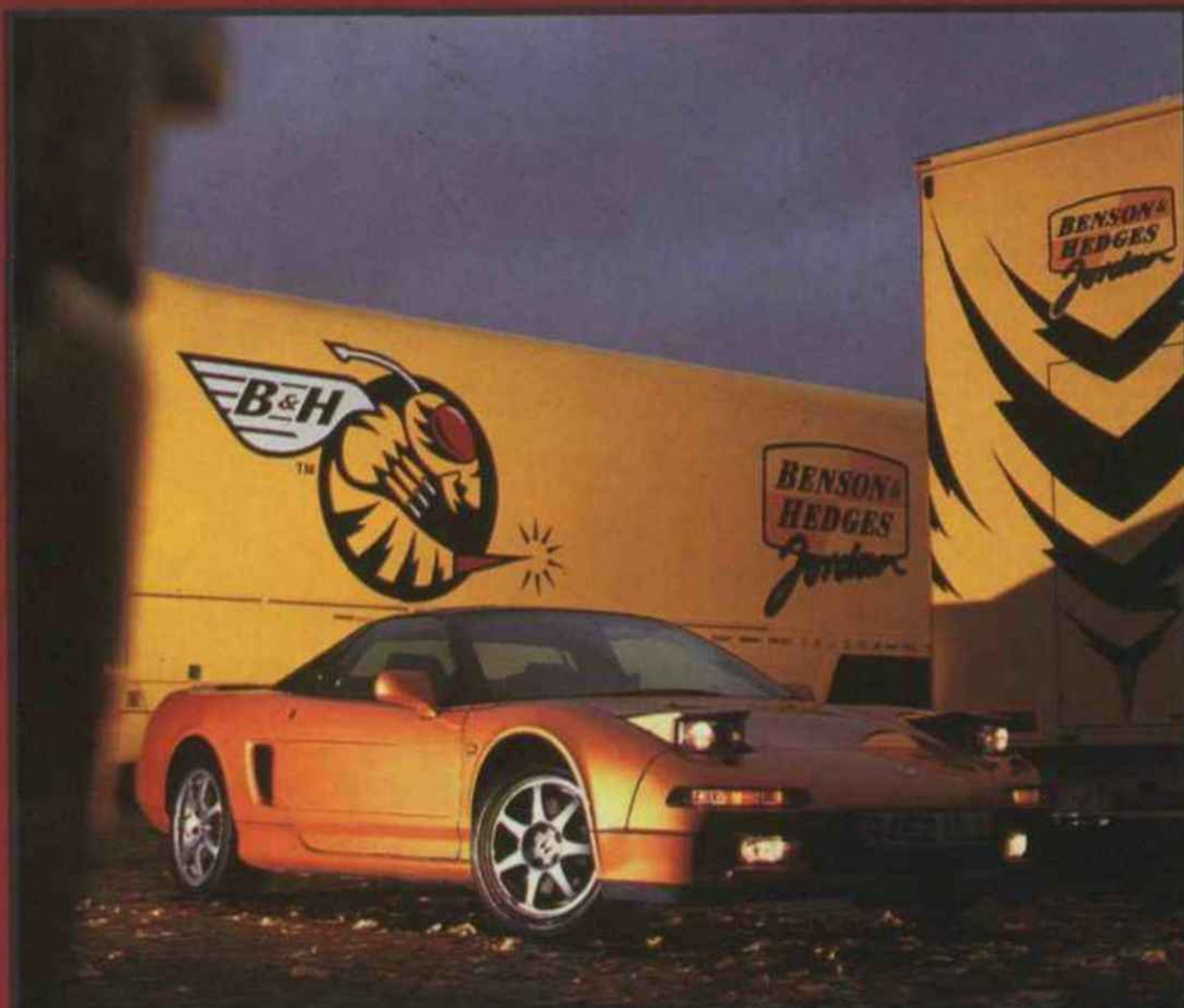
Honda's innovative RA272 proved unbeatable in the last race of the 1.5 litre F1

put Japan back on wheels.

The Honda Motor Company was set up in September 1948. While Ferrari, Porsche and Chapman pursued their own destinies on the roads and tracks of Europe, Soichiro Honda set out to make his country mobile again. Early Honda's were little more than bicycles with crude engines attached, but post-war Japan was hungry for any form of transport, no matter how unsophisticated. The Model D of 1949 was the company's first real motorcycle, but it was the 'Dream E-type' of 1951 which cemented Honda's reputation for durability and technical excellence. The new four-stroke machine set records for speed and for levels of production. Within ten years, Honda's production efficiency and advanced technology had put all but four of its domestic rivals out of business.

Fast forward to 1964. In Japan, Hondas continue to reign supreme on two wheels, and since 1954 Soichiro's machines have been winning bike races the world over. But memories of that Model T all those years ago and the races behind the wheel of his own aero-engined monster still linger in Soichiro's memory. The love of cars, and of racing cars in particular, burns undimmed. Honda's first road car, the S360/500 convertible, is rolling off the production lines, and the first Honda Formula 1 car is lining up on the starting grid.

The fearsome Nurburgring in Germany was no place for team and driver to make their Grand Prix debut. The inexperienced American racer, Ronnie Bucknum, hustled the underdeveloped RA271 round the 'Ring in eleventh place until crashing out four laps from the ►



The electrifying NSX, Honda's performance flagship



The S2000's spiritual ancestor, the legendary S800



Ayrton Senna's last Honda powered victory: McLaren-Honda MP4/7A, Hungarian GP 1992

finish. The next race, the Italian Grand Prix at Monza, offered some encouragement. Bucknum ran as high as fifth before the Honda's engine overheated. The American lasted 50 laps before retirement beckoned again at the US Grand Prix at Watkins Glen.

Three starts, three retirements. Not the stuff of which racing legends are made. But Honda's experience in motorcycle racing showed that success could not be expected over night. After all, this was the very pinnacle of motor racing. To break into the sport's elite would take time, money and determination.

What was the Grand Prix world to make of this upstart moped-maker and its little V12 racer? Certainly, the early outings in Formula 1 did not suggest that one day, Honda-engined racers would humble Ferrari. The

potential, however, was there to be seen. Honda's reputation on two wheels showed the established European teams that the Japanese company could make engines to match or beat the best in the world. The 60 degree V-12, with its four valves per cylinder, roller-bearing crank and 12,000rpm rev ceiling, was a radical design, pushing out some 220bhp. With better reliability, and a more experienced driver, RA271 could really have given the racing establishment something to think about.

Undeterred, Honda were back in 1965. The luckless Bucknum was joined by new number one driver, Richie Ginther. As test driver for Ferrari and BRM, Ginther knew how to develop and set-up a race winning car. His sensitivity and ability to describe the minutiae of a car's behaviour were precisely the kind of qualities Honda's





Honda's return to F1 with Spirit at the 1983 British GP was low-key, but provided valuable lessons for a more aggressive programme with Williams in 1984



Honda's latest sports car, the stunning S2000



So near... A puncture in the Adelaide finale denied Nigel Mansell the 1986 world title

race engineers needed from a driver. Consistent and capable, Ginther would help them to develop a truly competitive machine.

The RA272 was not a radical departure from the '64 car. Rather, it built upon its strengths while seeking to iron out its weaknesses. Power increased still further, with 240bhp developed at 11,000rpm, making Honda's compact V-12 the most powerful engine of the 1.5-litre era. If RA271 had failed to achieve much, here was a car with the potential to show the world the way home.

The season began in disappointing fashion. Ginther qualified poorly in Monaco and retired on the first lap. Matters improved at the Belgian Grand Prix at Spa, where Ginther finished sixth. The French Grand Prix brought more disappointment, both Hondas retiring short of the

chequered flag. Better times were just around the corner.

Ginther started from the front row at Silverstone, and briefly held the lead before being sidelined with engine problems. The supremely powerful Honda was ideally suited to Silverstone's long straights. Ginther led again at the Dutch Grand Prix among the dunes of Zandvoort, before dropping back to finish sixth.

The team lost form over the next few races, missing the German Grand Prix altogether before retiring at Monza and finishing seventh and two laps down at Watkins Glen. After the highs of the British and Dutch Grands Prix, it seemed that the momentum of RA272's development had been lost.

The teams assembled for the last Grand Prix of the 1.5 litre era in Mexico City. The 7,000ft altitude starved ►



A touring car for the road: Honda's exhilarating Accord Type-R



The stunning — and stunningly quick — Honda Integra Type-R

engines of oxygen, but the super-efficient Honda V-12 coped admirably.

Ginther took the lead from the second row and was never headed. In spite of constant pressure from fellow American Dan Gurney in a Brabham-Climax, Ginther crossed the line to win by three seconds. History had been made. This was not only Honda's first Grand Prix win, it was the first ever victory by a Japanese marque. Ferrari, Porsche and Lotus had all been left trailing in the Honda's wake. Soichiro Honda had achieved a dream.

Victory at Mexico City should have been the springboard for great things, but RA272's greatest race was also its last. Honda would need a completely new engine and chassis for the new 3-litre Formula 1 of 1966.

The next three seasons were to prove frustrating. The new 3-litre engine was potent but overweight, and RA273 rarely looked competitive. The RA300 of 1967 was as beautiful as it was powerful but suffered from the same weight problem as its predecessor. Matching the mighty Honda engine to a Lola chassis brought some success, with 1964 World Champion John Surtees taking victory at Monza in one of the most thrilling races of the decade. Beating Ferrari on home ground was satisfying, but fundamental problems remained.

The RA302 of 1968 failed to turn around Honda's fortunes, and when Frenchman Louis Schlesser was killed at Rouen, the team lost heart. Honda withdrew from F1 at the end of 1968.

In a short space of time, Honda had achieved much. The company had won races, and created the most powerful and technically advanced engines of the day.

But the final step, from race winner to champion, had proven difficult. For Honda, Grand Prix racing was to remain unfinished business for nearly two decades.

Dominance on the track would have to wait. Building up the road car business came first. The S360/500 sports car had evolved into the S800, with an engine that revved to 8,000rpm and put out 70bhp from just 791cc. Technologically, the S800 was light years ahead of its antiquated British opposition.

But it was the Civic of 1972 that really established Honda as a big motor industry player. Its neat front-engined, front-wheel drive packaging gave fine road manners and a roomy interior, while Honda's pioneering of Compound Vortex Controlled Combustion gave exceptionally low emissions. In Europe and the USA, the Civic sold by the shipload.

The Accord saloon and Prelude coupé continued Honda's remarkable expansion. Sales continued to rise as the company teamed up with British Leyland in Britain and opened a new factory in Marysville, Ohio.

The race for commercial success was being won. But the urge to race for real was still strong. Soichiro had stepped down from the company presidency in 1973, but his successors recognised the tremendous value of Grand Prix racing, both as an image builder and as a proving ground for Honda's technical brilliance. The return to Formula 1 was inevitable.

Honda was back on track for the British Grand Prix of 1983. In truth, the Honda Spirit car, driven by Stefan Johansson, was a toe in the water in preparation for a more serious effort the following year. The car



The infamous end to the 1989 championship at Suzuka, Japan: Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna collide, making Prost World Champion for the third time

competed in six Grands Prix that year without conspicuous success, but the experience gained was invaluable.

From 1984 to 1987 Honda competed in partnership with the Williams team. The first season was not an easy one. Formula 1 had altered beyond all recognition from the sport of the '60s. Sponsorship, ground effect, downforce and turbo engines had all changed the face of Grand Prix racing, and Honda's early efforts with its 1.5-litre turbocharged V-6 demonstrated the difficulty of combining competitive power with reliability. In spite of the problems, it was not long before Honda was winning again, with Keke Rosberg taking victory in the ninth race of the season, the US Grand Prix in Dallas.

For 1985, both Williams and Honda made great progress. Nigel Mansell now partnered Rosberg, and the

pair enjoyed a tremendous run of late season success. The V-6 turbo unit had been thoroughly redesigned, and although problems persisted in the first half of the season, when the Williams-Honda hit form the results were spectacular. Rosberg and Mansell won two races apiece and ended the year on a high. The achievements of the '60s had already been eclipsed. Could Honda go one step further, and challenge for the championship?

The Williams-Honda was the class of the field in each of the following two seasons. Mansell was now partnered by Brazilian Nelson Piquet, and if their off-track relationship was spiky at best, it certainly produced some spectacular racing. Mansell won five races and Piquet four, comfortably winning the 1986 constructor's championship. The driver's crown eluded Mansell by just ▶

## BRINGING RACE TECHNOLOGY TO THE ROAD

'Racing improves the breed' may be the oldest cliché in the book, but it's a basic rule of thumb for Honda. The same passionate commitment to quality and high-tech performance shown on the racetrack applies to every Honda car.

Throughout the great Grand Prix successes of the '80s and early '90s, Honda regularly moved its engineers between the racing campaign and the production line in order to infuse the

whole company with racing know-how.

The fabulous NSX is the obvious example. Ayrton Senna had a hand in the development of the only supercar that was as easy to drive as a super-mini.

But you don't need the thick end of £70,000 to enjoy the benefits of Honda's racing experience. The Civic, Prelude and Accord ranges are powered by engines as advanced and efficient as those of any track car. The company's VTEC power-

plants combine the best of all worlds: tractable and economical at low speeds, yet lively and powerful at high revs.

The Accord Type-R has quickly won a reputation as a touring car racer for the road, while the limited edition Jordan Honda celebrates Honda's continued success at the highest level of motor sport.

Whichever Honda you choose, race-bred engineering comes as standard.

# 50 YEARS OF HONDA



Honda plucked Ronnie Bucknum from sportscar racing for its low profile F1 debut with the RA271, seen here in the ex-Marine's hands at the German GP 1964



Austrian great Gerhard Berger made a key contribution to Honda's success



Alain Prost was a crucial asset in Honda's 1989 World Championship

two points after a spectacular tyre blow-out in the final race of the season.

In 1987 Honda was even more dominant, now supplying both Williams and Lotus. With the Honda's turbo V-6 now providing a balance of power and reliability which was the envy of the field, Honda-powered cars took 11 victories from 16 races, two for Ayrton Senna, three for Nelson Piquet, and six for Nigel Mansell. The driver's championship for Piquet was the icing on the cake, with Honda powering its way to a second consecutive constructor's championship.

Already, Honda had little more to prove. In four years, the company had won 25 Grands Prix, and comprehensively beaten the world's finest teams. Just as at Mexico City in 1965, the great European marques

had been left trailing. Incredibly, better still was to come.

In 1988 Williams was replaced with a new partner: McLaren. The season that followed was unprecedented, and its like will probably never be seen again. With the best car, the best engine, and the best drivers, McLaren-Hondas won 15 of 16 races. Senna won eight times and took the first of his three drivers' titles, with team-mate Prost finishing second with seven wins. With a scarcely believable 199 points, the constructors' cup went to a Honda-powered team yet again.

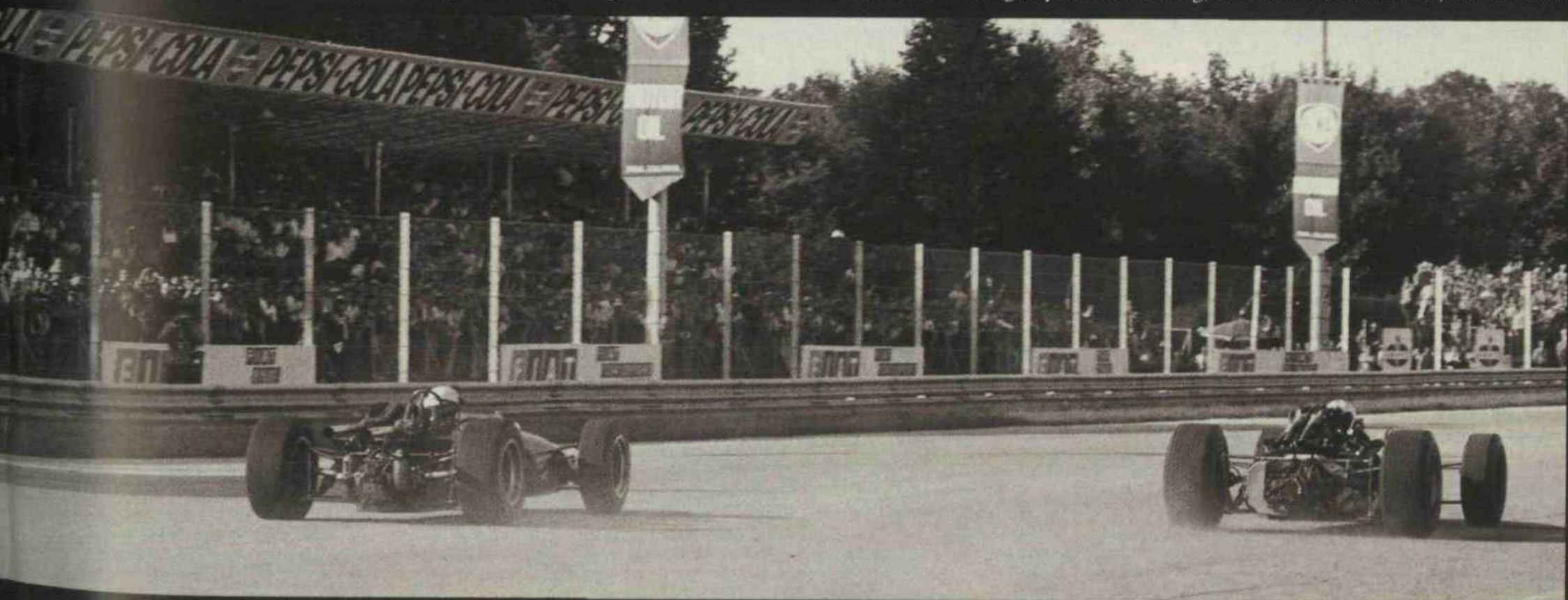
Honda had proven itself undisputed master of the turbo era. If rivals hoped the change to the 3.5-litre naturally-aspirated formula in 1989 would slow the company down, they were to be bitterly disappointed. Ferrari, Renault and Lamborghini had all fallen behind



On the top step of the podium: Ayrton Senna, Hungarian GP 1992



A return to winning ways: Keke Rosberg, Williams - Honda FW09, US GP 1984



Mating Honda's engine to a modified Lola T90 Indianapolis chassis produced a dramatic victory for John Surtees and the 'Hondola' at Monza in 1967

schedule in the development of their non-turbo powerplants, and struggled to be ready for the first race of the new season. It is a testimony to the depth of Honda's commitment to Grand Prix racing that their V-10 was race-ready as early as October 1988.

The superiority of the McLaren-Honda was almost as crushing as it had been the year before, ten victories giving Honda its fourth consecutive constructors' championship. It was Prost's turn to take the title, after a controversial collision with Senna in the Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka. Honda's V-10 powered Senna to the title once again in 1990, while a new V-12 unit brought another championship in 1991.

At the end of 1992, Honda withdrew from F1 racing, job done. From the dreams of a young blacksmith's son

had grown a world-beater. The company which once attached two-stroke engines to bicycles had become manufacturer of some of the best engineered and technologically advanced cars on the road, and an undisputed Grand Prix great. The achievements in Formula 1 speak for themselves. From 1984 to 1992, Honda-powered cars entered 144 Grands Prix, and won 69 of them. In the same period, Ferrari won just 15 times.

But Honda is not resting on its laurels. Mugen, 40% owned by Honda, prepares Formula 1 engines for the Jordan team for whom Heinz-Harald Frentzen won the recent French GP at Magny-Cours. The new British American Racing team will receive full factory power plants in 2000.

Watch out, Formula 1. Honda hasn't finished yet. ■

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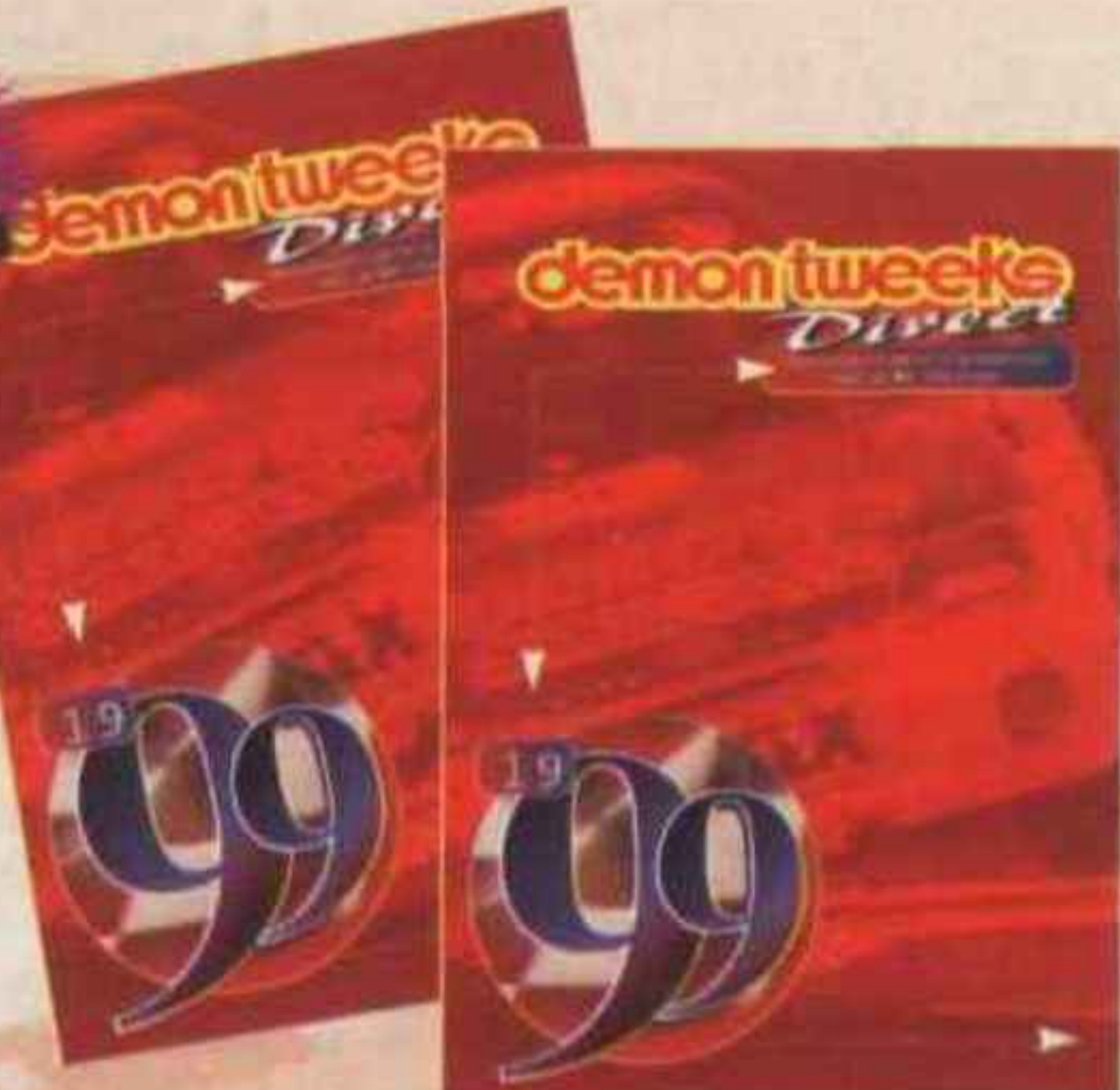
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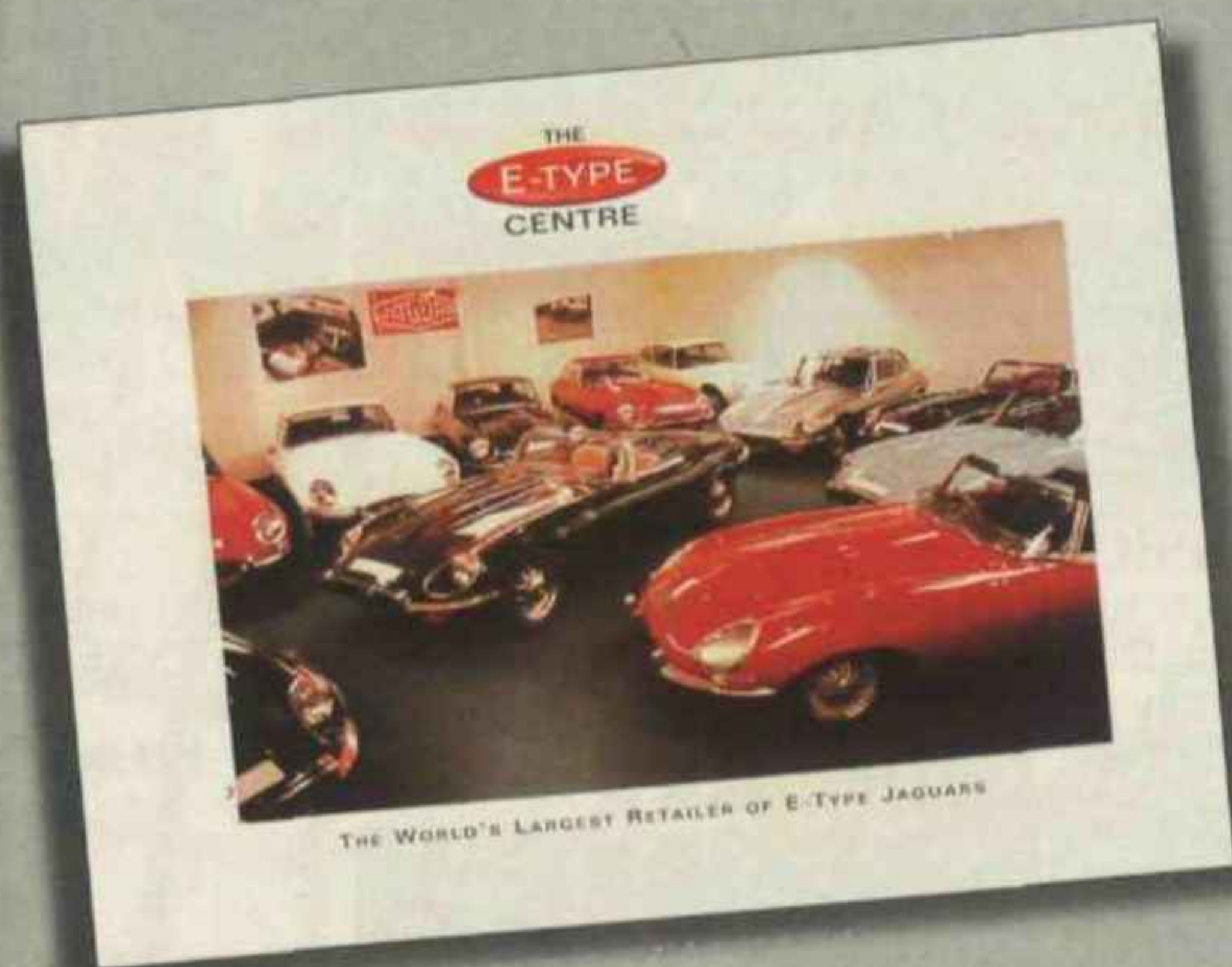
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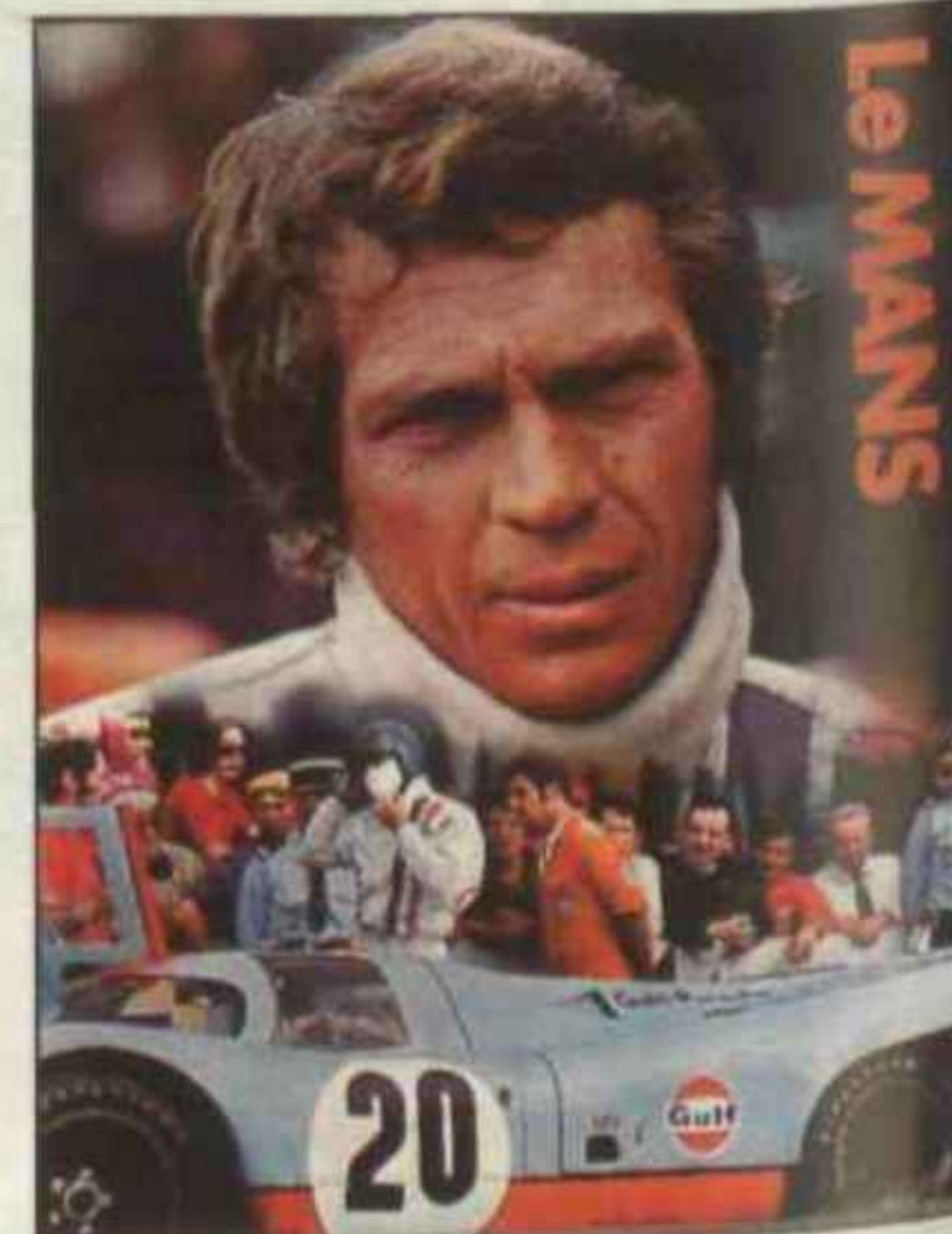
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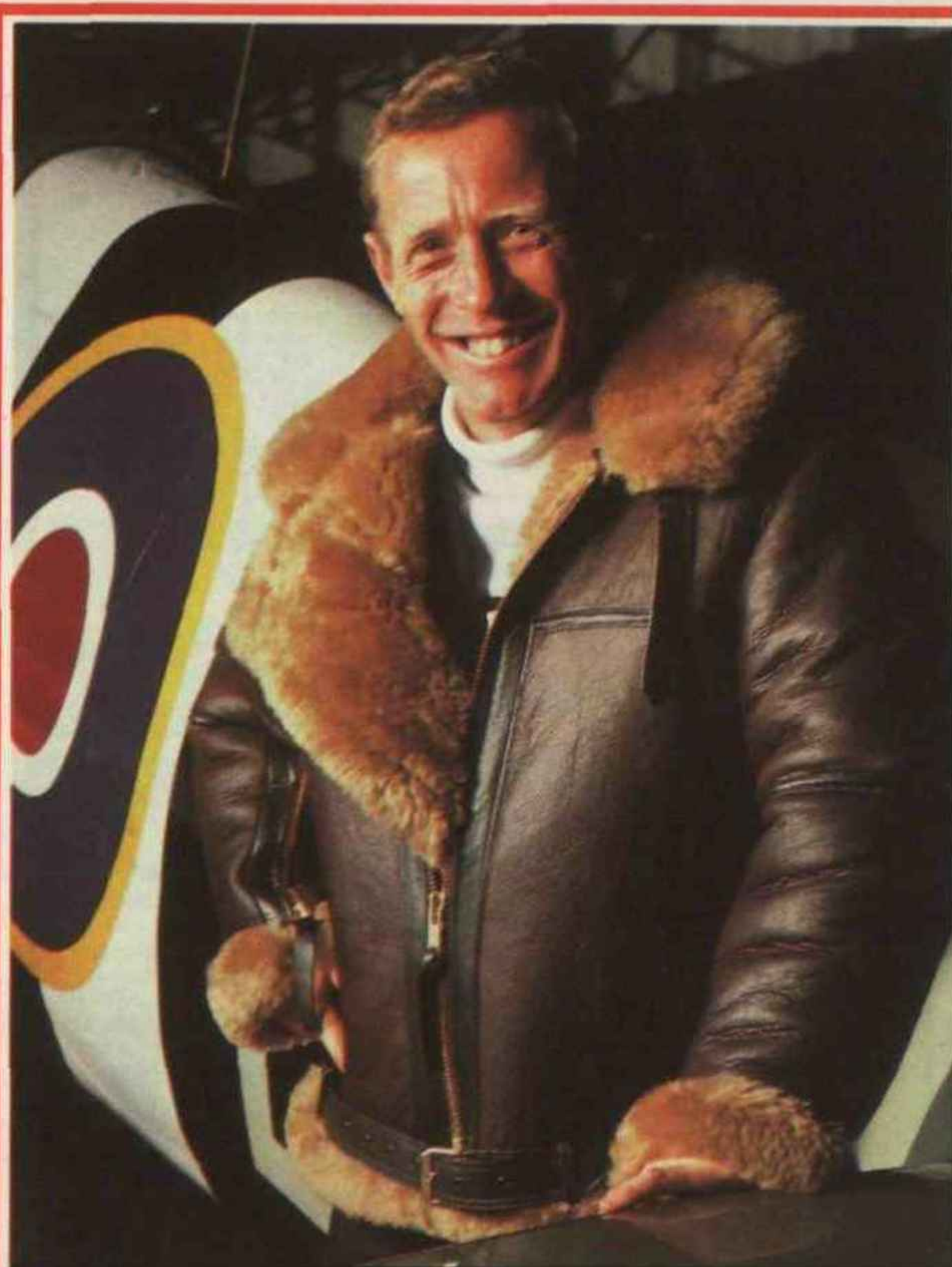
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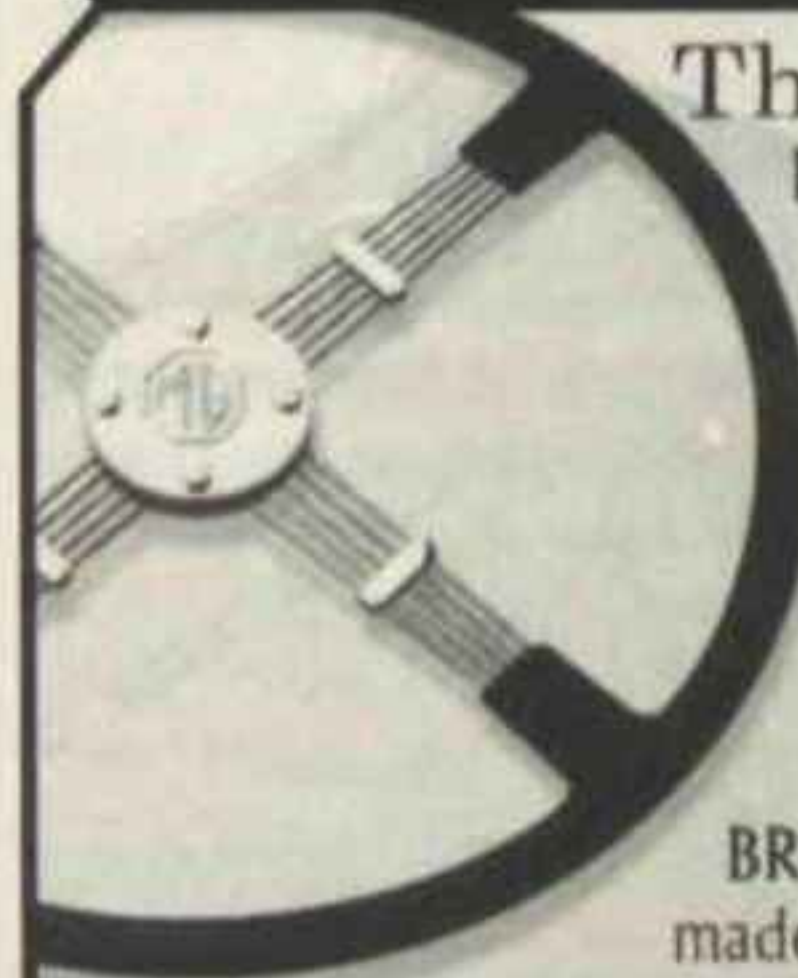


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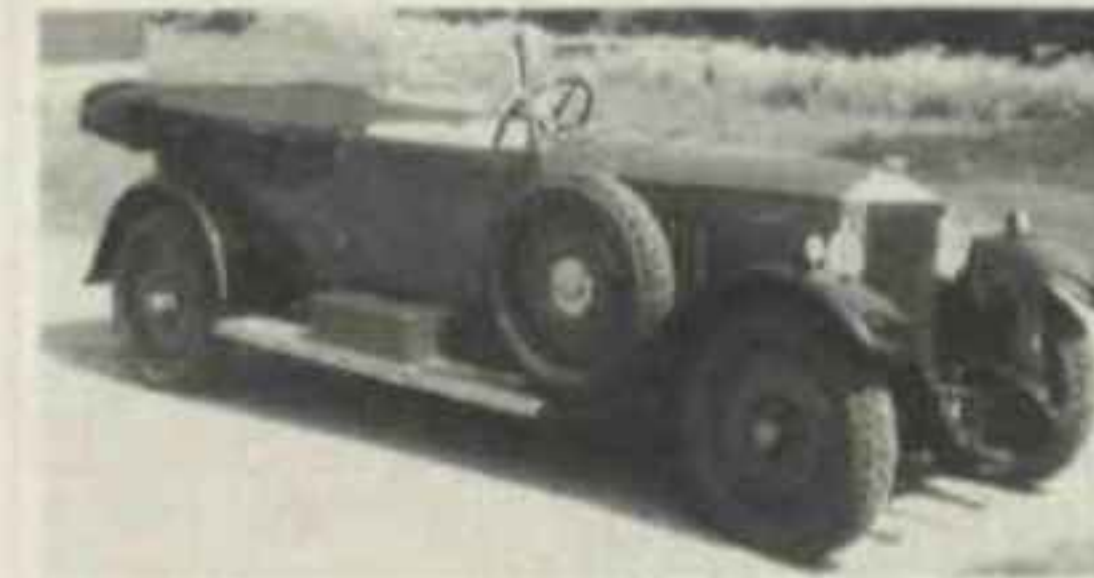
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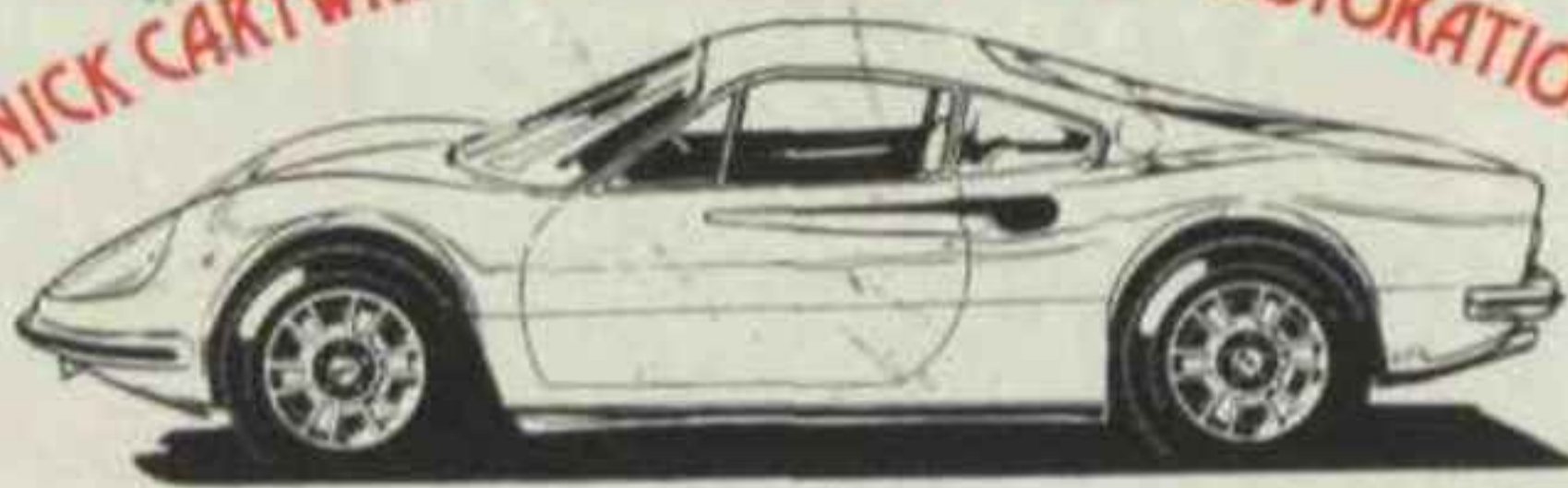


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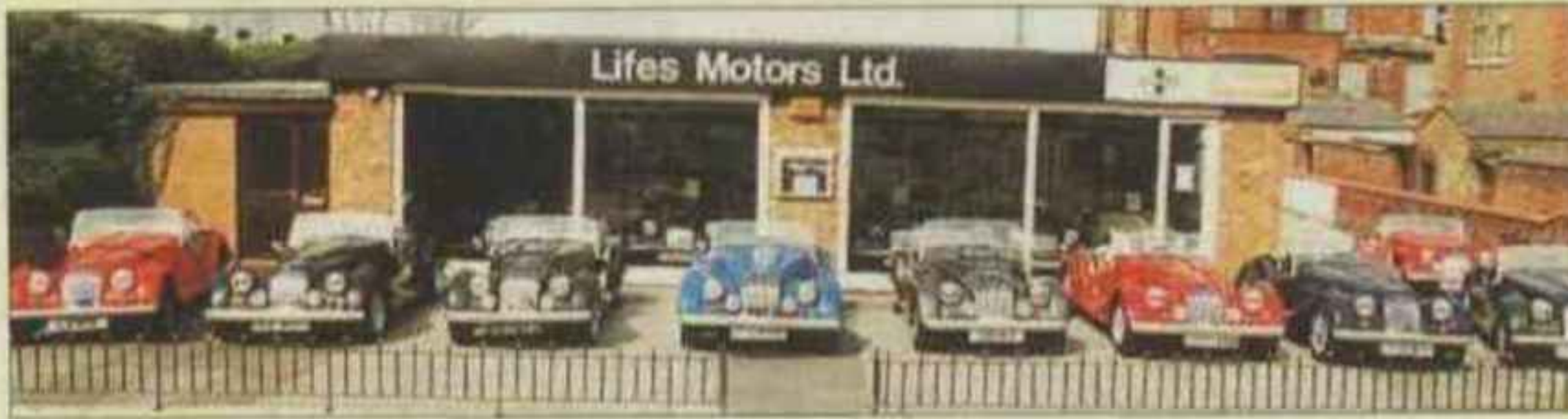
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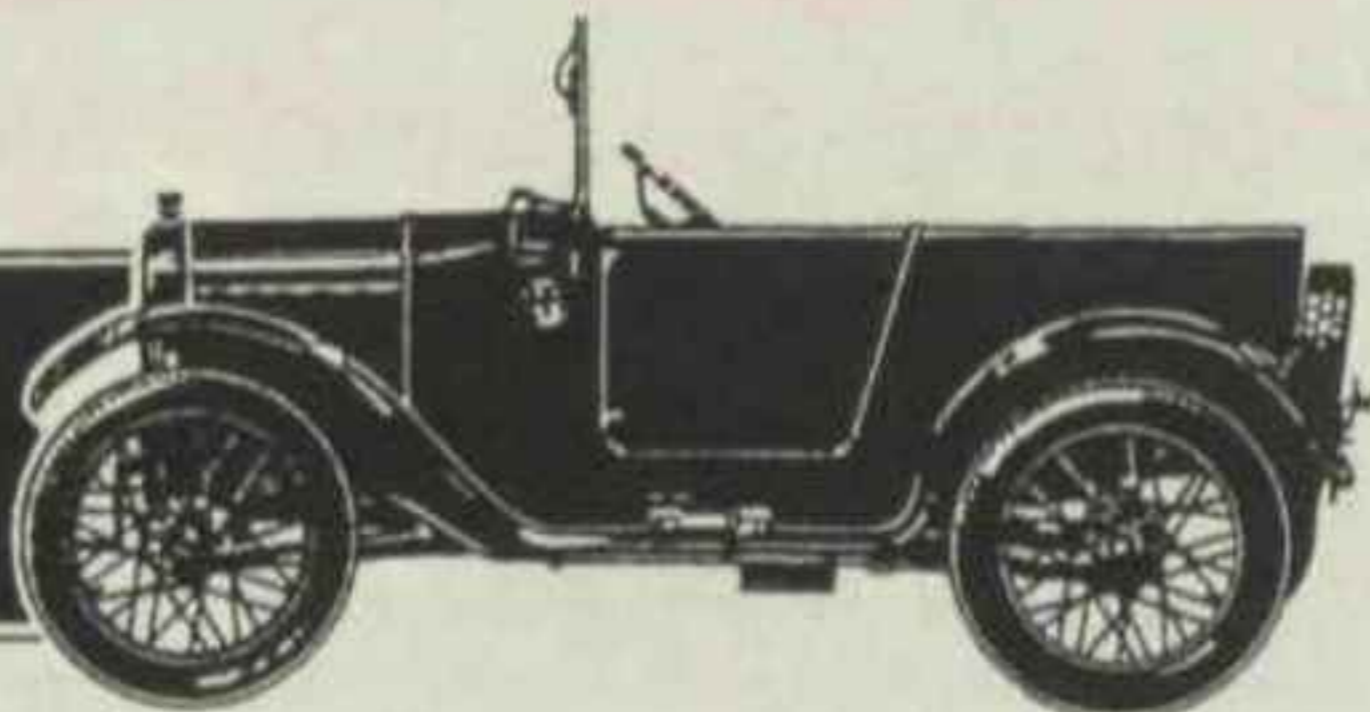
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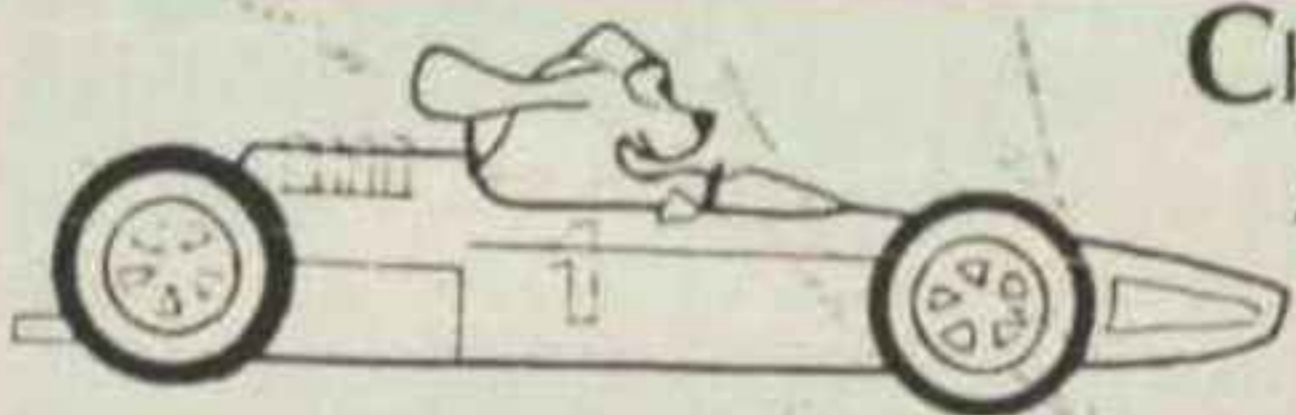
by finishing a fighting second to James Hunt's McLaren. Another determined drive in the Italian Grand Prix at Monza brought similar rewards, with Regazzoni hounding Ronnie Peterson to finish just 2.3 seconds adrift of the Swede's March-Ford.

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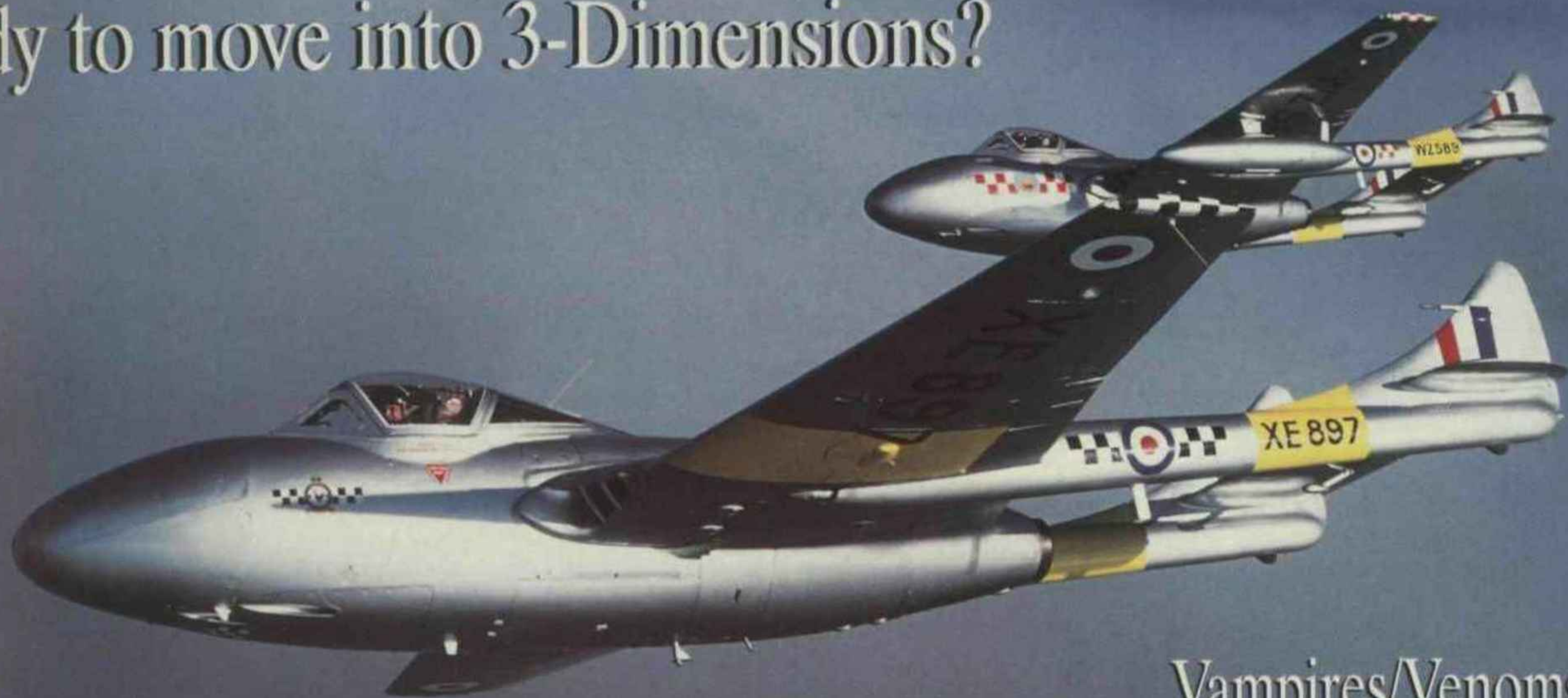
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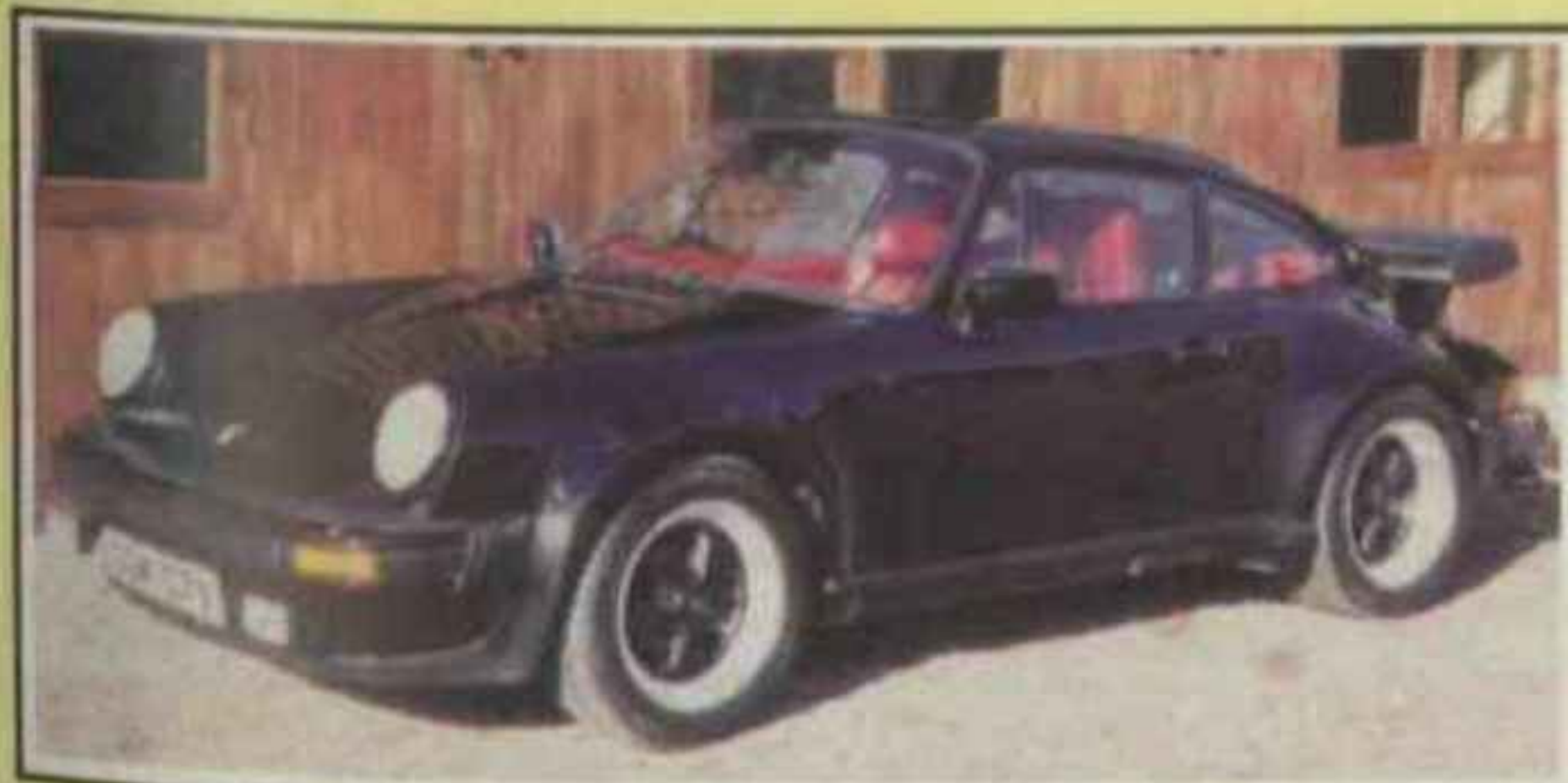
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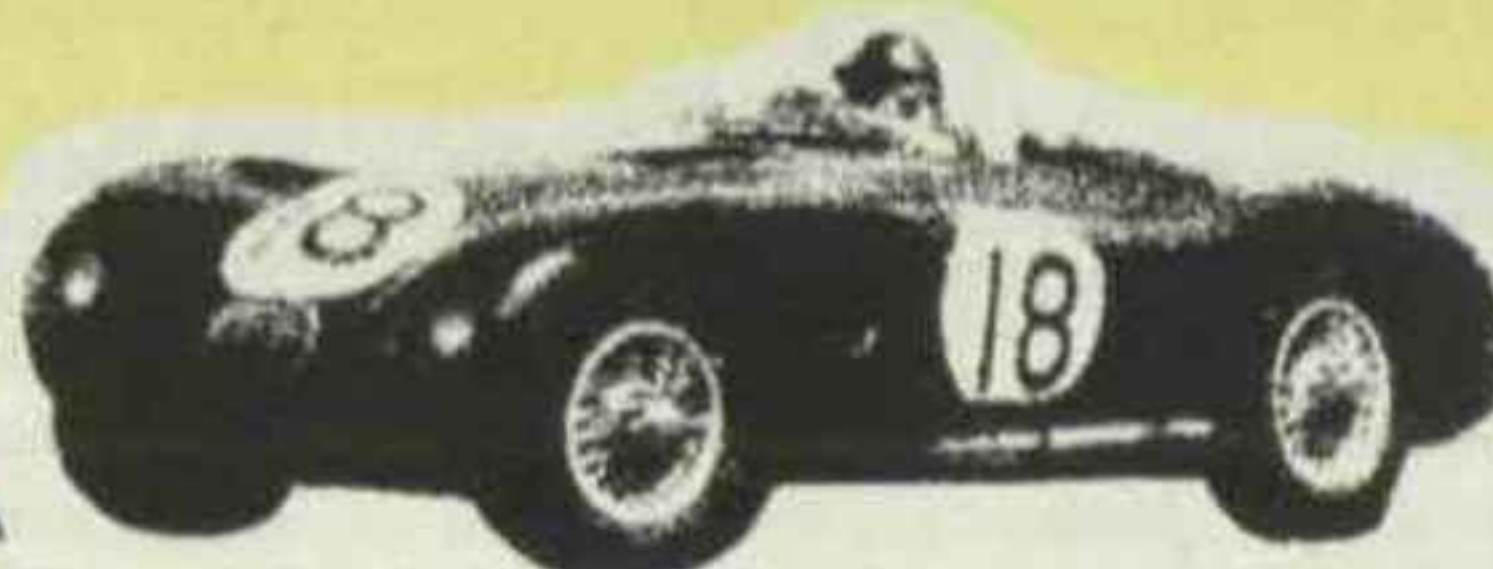
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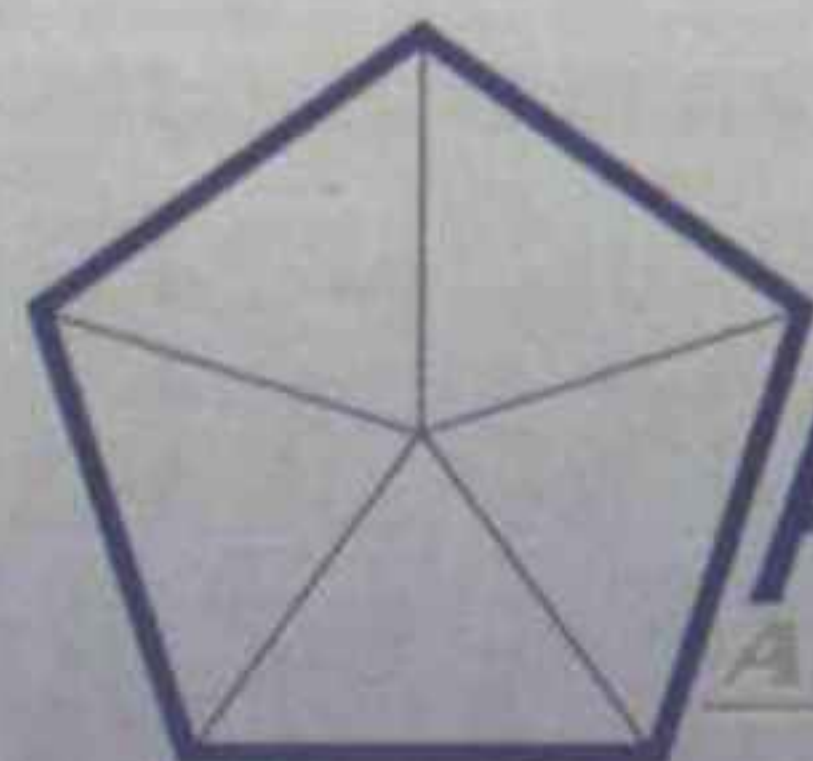
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- 1992 911 C2 CAB BLUE 39000 miles
- 1990 911 C2 CAB RED 52000 miles
- 1990 911 C4 CAB BLACK 33000 miles
- 1990 911 C4 COUPE MET GREY 39000 miles
- 1989 911 SPORT COUPE SE BLACK 56000 miles
- 1988 911 SPORT COUPE SE RED 55000 miles
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- 1988 911 TURBO TARGA BLUE 29000 miles
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- 1994 348 SPIDER RED 24000 miles
- 1992 348 tb RED 25000 miles
- 1991 348 TB BLUE 17000 miles
- 1992 348 ts RED 12000 miles
- 1991 348 TS RED 21000 miles
- 1990 MONDIAL CAB 3.4T RED 43000 miles
- 1988/9 412i BLUE 45000 miles
- 1988 TESTAROSSA RED 13000 miles
- 1986 328 GTS RED 26000 miles
- 1983 308 GTS QV RED 61000 miles
- 1983 308 GTS QV RED 31000 miles
- 1980 308 GTS CARB RED 45000 miles
- 1979 512 BOXER RED 24000 miles
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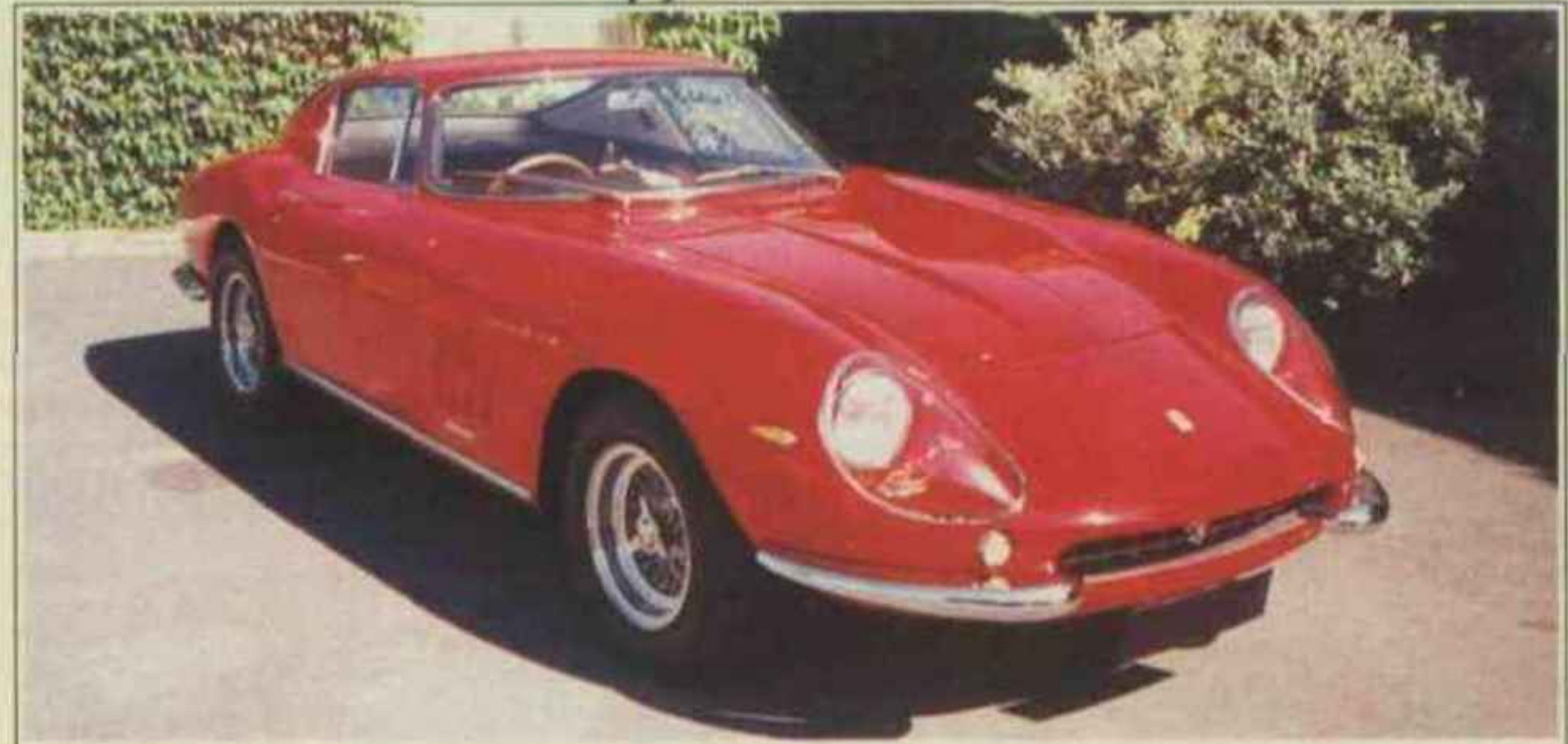
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| 97 Ferrari 456 GTA Blue Swaters/Tan, 6,000 miles, CD, Exceptional.....                             | £109,950     |
| 94 Ferrari 348 GT Competizione Red, 1 of Only 10 Built 6,700 miles.....                            | £67,950      |
| 85 Ferrari 288 GTO Red, Red/Black Interior, AC, 16,000 Kms, Outstanding.....                       | £179,950     |
| 73 Ferrari Daytona Blue Chiaro, Tan Hide, 19,000 miles, Original Car.....                          | £89,950      |
| 97 Lamborghini Diablo VT Metallic Dark Green, Beige Hide, 1 Owner, 5,300 Kms.....                  | £99,950      |
| 99 Porsche 996 Coupe Zenith Blue/Grey Hide, 18" Wheels, S/Roof, Good Spec.....                     | £67,950      |
| 99 Porsche 996 Convertible Silver/Black Hide, Alloys, CD, Hard top, 1,500 miles.....               | £69,950      |
| 98 Porsche 996 Guards Red, Black Hide, Sport Pack, Roof, 5,500 miles.....                          | £59,950      |
| 89 Porsche 911 Turbo 33 LE Grand Prix White/Blue Hide, CD, Climate, 1 Of 50 Cars 12,000 miles..... | £36,950      |
| 98 Porsche 711 Turbo '4' Silver/Black Hide, A/Con, Sports Seats, CD, 4,000 miles.....              | £87,950      |
| 95 Porsche Carrera 4 Coupe Arena Red/Grey Hide, S/Roof, 34,000 miles.....                          | £42,950      |
| 98 MORGAN +8 Black/Magnolia Hide, Full Mohair Hood, 1,500 miles, Big Saving.....                   | £35,950      |
| 99 VW Golf 2.0 A/Garde Cabriolet, Silver/Black Leather, Air Con, BBS Alloys.....                   | £22,950      |
| 92 Mercedes 300 24V Met Green/Beige Hide, S/Roof, Air Con.....                                     | £19,950      |
| Un-Reg Jaguar XJ220 Black/Grey Hide, CD, A/Con, Rare RHD Version.....                              | £169,950     |
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| 91 Rolls Corniche Convertible, Bordeaux/Magnolia, Stunning.....                                    | £79,950      |
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| 99 VW Golf A/Garde Convertible Silver/Black Hide, A/Con, CD, Total Spec.....                       | £22,950      |
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