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MOTOR SPORT

THE EDITOR

# "The best racing drivers can 'up-surge' their brains to control speed"

LAST MONTH *MOTOR SPORT* DECAMPED TO THE LONDON Institute of Engineering and Technology for our first *Game Changers* evening. These live talk shows allow us – and of course our readers – to get close to stars of the track who, through natural talent, force of personality or technical genius have made a significant difference to the sport we all love.

The event featured Red 5 himself, Nigel Mansell, and he managed to set the bar high for those who will be coming after him (although Gordon Murray, who took to the stage a couple of weeks later, predictably rose to the occasion). In any case Nigel covered much ground – from Williams to Ferrari via IndyCar – but one anecdote stood out and I would like to repeat it in full here for the benefit of those of you who were not there.



In 1979, when Nigel is laid low after his F3 crash at Oulton Park, he receives an invitation from Colin Chapman to an F1 test at Paul Ricard. Things didn't start well.

"I was totally demoralised. I was six seconds off the pace. One or two is bad... six is catastrophic! Peter Collins [Lotus team manager] was marvellous. He said: 'Nigel, this is your first time ever in an F1 car, so download your brain tonight because we all have a conscious brain, but it is the sub-conscious brain that's the one that you have to programme with repetition. Race car drivers don't just get the ability to race. They get it by practicing [so much] that it actually starts to programme the subconscious brain'.

"So, Collins was trying to explain things to me, but it was going over my head. I was depressed. I was thinking I could be a F1 driver but the realisation of just how inadequate you are hits you like an atom bomb. That evening I went back to the hotel and said I don't think it is for me. It's been great but I'll be coming home.

"I had a bad night's sleep but woke up and headed to the track. Colin took me to one side and said: 'How you doing?'.

"I said: 'I'm very grateful, but it's probably not for me.'

"He looked at me really strangely and said, 'Why on earth would you say something like that? Just go out there and do your thing.'

"Anyway, to this day I can't fathom it, so I will share it with you. When you drive an F1 car for the first time two things inspire you, the acceleration and the terminal speed you get up to where if you look sideways [it's all a blur].

"So I'm doing 200mph down the straight and all of a sudden it was like a bird, a brick, a hammer, hit me in the head and I was startled because I was going flat-out and I wondered what had hit me. But nothing had hit me. Something phenomenal had happened to me as a human being and a person.

"The only way I can describe it is that everything was rushing past and instantaneously it all slowed down. And what had happened – I discovered after talking to a lot of people – was the brain had up-surged to the new speed. It had slowed things down so it could control speed. That is what great drivers do – they control speed. So 200mph now seemed like 60mph. When I got to the corner, I had time to brake, to change gear... And the next lap I was six seconds faster."

Mansell goes on to explain that it is this moment that proved to him that he was an F1 driver. And indeed a few weeks later he tested for Chapman at Silverstone and smashed the lap record. The rest, of course, is history.

The story reminded me of the classic Gerald Donaldson interview with Ayrton Senna after his 1988 qualifying lap at Monaco: "I was no longer driving the car consciously," said Senna. "I was driving it by instinct, only I was in a different dimension... It frightened me because I realised I was beyond my conscious understanding."

Some believe such out-of-body experiences are what separates great drivers – and sports people in general – from the merely good. Some years ago I raised this with Don Macpherson, a sports psychologist who has worked with several F1 drivers as well as Ryder Cup golfers and Wimbledon tennis champions.

"Two elements have to be in place for the phenomenon to occur," he said. "The first is high levels of concentration and the second is an element of danger. When there is significant danger, the normal mind – which is used to analysing things – jams up, so your natural instinct takes over. Your brain starts working differently, operating on deep memory, which in the case of racing drivers accesses all their training and practice.

"Drivers reach a different state of consciousness and in extreme cases can feel completely separate from their physical selves. In many ways this is the perfect state to be in when driving – you are channelling all your years of training directly to the car without your brain getting in the way. It can result in the 'perfect' lap."

Whatever the truth of the brain's 'up-surge', us mere mortals will probably just have to take Mansell's word for it.



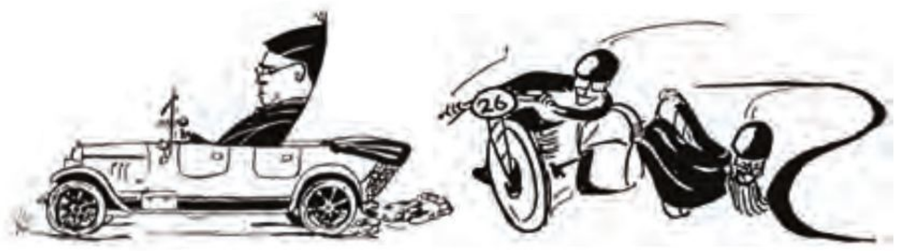
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**NEXT ISSUE:** OUR DECEMBER ISSUE IS ON SALE FROM OCTOBER 30

MOTOR SPORT

IN THE SPIRIT OF BOD AND JENKS



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# Details matter.



The sparse beauty of simple, driver-focused design. The dashboard of the monstrous Porsche 917/30, which we drove for our cover story this month, featured just three dials to feed information to its pilot – rev counter, oil temperature and pressure gauge. We say just three, because how any racer – even one such as Mark Donohue – found any time to glance at the two boost gauges on the far left is frankly beyond us...

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# MATTERS *of* MOMENT

Charles Leclerc became the first Ferrari driver for a decade to win the Italian Grand Prix



# A star is born

IL LEONE, IL GRANDE JOHN... IL BAMBINO? It seems just a matter of time before Charles Leclerc earns a Ferrari sobriquet after he won the Italian Grand Prix at Monza last month.

The young Monegasque resisted intense pressure from both Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas to secure Ferrari's first home victory since Fernando Alonso won in 2010. It played out in front of an ecstatic home crowd who have clearly taken Leclerc to heart - a fact cemented when he answered podium questions in Italian rather than English.

It also raised yet more questions over the future of Ferrari team leader Sebastian Vettel, who spun on his own and then clipped Lance Stroll's Racing Point when rejoining, copping a stop-go penalty that left him a disappointing 13th.

Leclerc, who took his first victory at Spa in the previous grand prix, now joins an exclusive club of just eight other drivers - Hamilton, Mansell, D.Hill, Häkkinen, Ascari, Collins, McLaren and Arnoux - who have doubled up immediately after their maiden victory.

His drive earned favourable comparisons with arguably Ferrari's most famous son, Michael Schumacher.

According to Ross Brawn, who was technical director of Ferrari for 10 years during which Schumacher won five world titles, Leclerc's combative drive brought to mind the single-mindedness of the brilliant German. "The Ferrari man did not back down and was on the limit of what the rules allow, as great champions always are and always have to be," said Brawn. "The thing that impresses me most about him is how quickly he learns from everything he does, getting better all the time, as a driver and as a man.

"The last Ferrari driver to do this [win Spa and Monza back-to-back] in these two races was Michael in 1996. Maybe history is beginning to repeat itself."

Schumacher dominated Formula 1 for Ferrari between 2000 and 2004. Leclerc, who turns 22 this month, has time on his side.

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

ISLE OF WIGHT SPEED TRIALS

# Racing return for Isle of Wight

MOTOR SPORT WILL RETURN TO THE Isle of Wight roads for the first time in 60 years after a new sprint event was confirmed for 2020.

The Solent and the Isle of Wight Car Club have joined forces to run the first Sandown Sprint on March 28/29 next year, which will feature cars making timed runs along the coastal roads of the seaside town. It will mark the first time competitive motor racing has taken place on the island's streets since the introduction of speed limits across the UK during the 1960s. Before this, motor rallies and sprints regularly took place on the dramatic roads around the island.

Two years of planning have gone into the event, with the Sprint following a similar format to the Goodwood Festival of Speed. It will see cars run along the main seafront road of Culver Parade.

The event is the latest product of the change in the UK's closed road legislation, as successfully lobbied by Motorsport UK in an effort to bring controlled live motor sport back to British roads.

"We've had a lot of very positive feedback and support for the Sprint," said chairman of the Isle of Wight Car Club Malcolm Smith. "Many of our members will be looking forward to competing alongside those that we expect to join us from the mainland."

Event promoter Tim Addison said the process was long, but the event would be enjoyed by all: "Our aim is to run a safe and enjoyable sprint for the competitors, that is also great fun to watch. Sandown not only provides a spectacular backdrop for the racing, but the enormous advantage of being able to allow visitors to safely enjoy the action."

# Bentley brings back the Blower

ONLY FOUR SUPERCHARGED 4½ Bentleys were built as works racers for Sir Henry Birkin's semi-private race team, but they are about to be joined by 12 new examples of the company's famous 1929 Blower.

Announced at the Salon Privé concours in September, the continuation cars will be assembled by the company's Mulliner department in Crewe and will be based on Tim Birkin's own team car, No2, better known by its registration number UU5872. That car is owned by Bentley, and it will be taken entirely apart by restoration specialists who will catalogue each part, then scan them into a 3D digital model. From there Bentley will combine new and traditional manufacturing techniques to build a dozen exact replicas.

It is a laborious, painstaking process and the Crewe firm is making much of the accuracy of its recreations, including the four-cylinder 16-valve engine complete with Villiers Roots supercharger.

Although the supercharged cars were not in fact very successful, Birkin's charge in the 1930 Le Mans race paved the way for the Barnato/Kidston Speed Six win.

Incidentally, although the Union flag displayed prominently on the car's right side may appear to be upside down - the symbol of distress - it is in fact correct for a flag notionally streaming backwards.




**Tim Birkin's original 1929 Bentley Blower is the pattern for the continuation cars**




**VW's ID.R set the benchmark for the beautiful Tianmen Mountain climb**

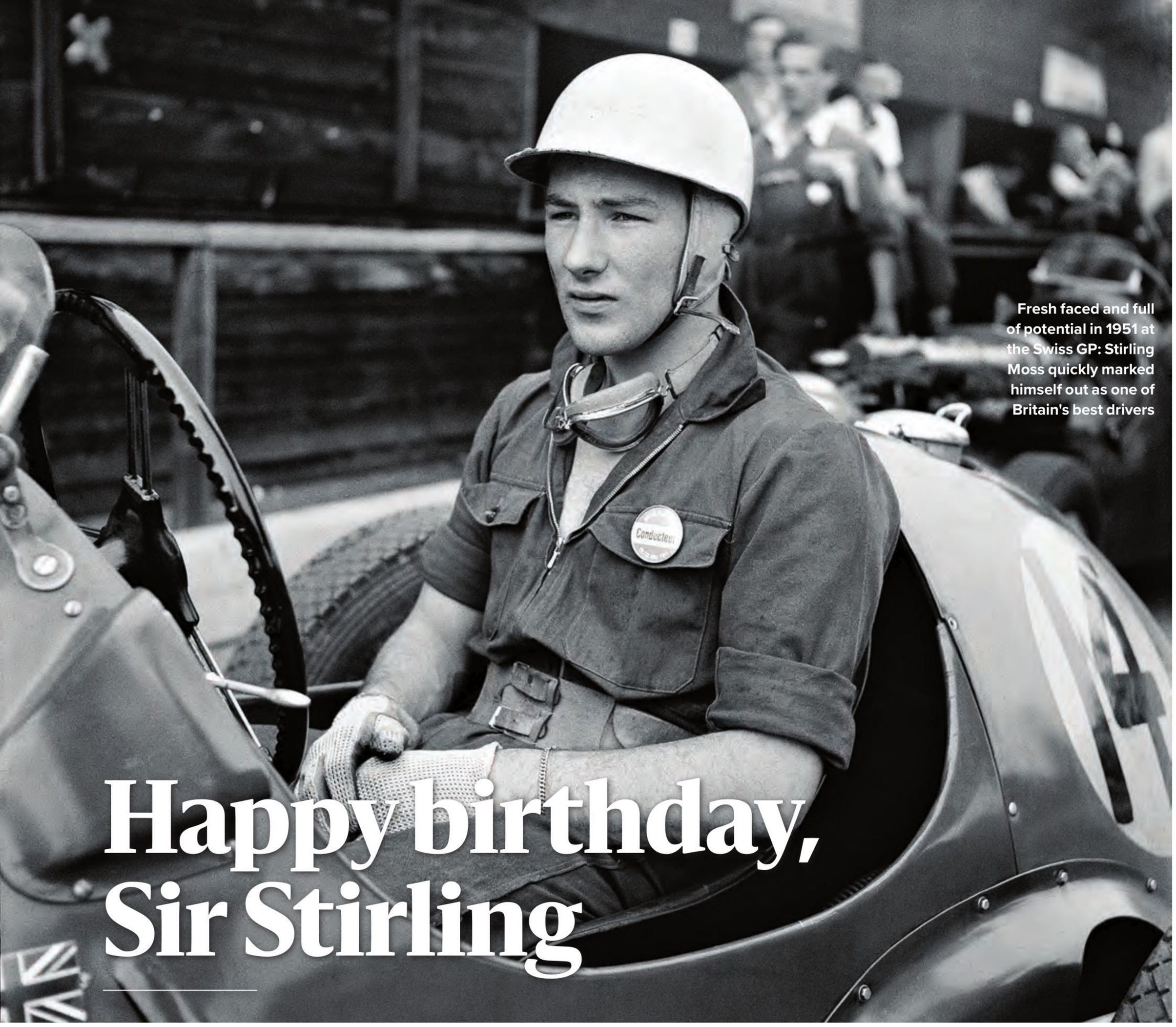
# VW runs out of road

VOLKSWAGEN TEST DRIVER ROMAIN Dumas described his record-setting run up the Tianmen Mountain in China as "my most spectacular outing" after setting yet another hillclimb benchmark in the electric ID.R prototype.

Having already beaten the records at both Pikes Peak and Goodwood, and broken the electric lap record of the Nürburgring, VW opted to be the first to run a car competitively up the 11km (6.8-mile) 'Big Gate Road' that climbs the mountain toward Heaven's Gate - a 131.5-metre natural arch.

Dumas completed the 99-turn run in 7min 38.585sec to establish the record. After the run, Dumas said: "The road is incredibly narrow and winding, but the drive was unbelievably fun. The huge torque of the ID.R was a big advantage on the short straights, while the aerodynamics helped on the fast sections."

Currently there are no further plans to run the ID.R, posing the existential question for VW of what to do with a record-breaking car when there are no more records around to be broken?



Fresh faced and full of potential in 1951 at the Swiss GP: Stirling Moss quickly marked himself out as one of Britain's best drivers

GETTY

# Happy birthday, Sir Stirling

ONE OF THE ALL-TIME MOTOR RACING legends, Sir Stirling Moss, celebrated his 90th birthday on September 17, prompting a wave of good wishes from all regions of the sport.

Moss remained at his London home to celebrate his milestone birthday, as he continues his fight against health issues that brought about his retirement from public life at the end of 2016.

A veteran of 67 Formula 1 grands prix between 1951-1961 - scoring 16 wins in that time - Moss remains known as 'Mr Motor Racing', even if his front-line career ended nearly 60 years ago when he retired from racing at the age of 32 following a major accident.

However, Moss's career stats remain remarkable. He entered a total of 529 races between 1948 and 1962, winning 212 of them - the vast majority using British-built machinery from marques such as HWM, Vanwall, Jaguar, Cooper and Aston Martin.

Considered by many as the greatest driver never to win the world championship - he was either second or third every year from 1955 to '61 - Moss's anniversary was marked by a very special presentation at the recent Goodwood Revival, attended by Moss's wife - Lady Susie Moss - as well as racing luminaries such as Tom Kristensen, Derek Bell, Dario Franchitti, David Brabham and NASCAR ace Jeff Gordon.

**"He had God-given talent to match the most natural of drivers"**

The Duke of Richmond paid tribute to one of the sport's greats, saying: "Seventy-one years ago, on September 17, 1948, an aspiring young racing driver celebrated his 19th birthday. The following day the Goodwood Motor Circuit opened for the first time and Stirling Craufurd Moss entered his first motor race.

"Driving a Cooper-JAP, Stirling didn't just win, he overwhelmed the opposition. In a three-lap race lasting just over six minutes, he won by nearly 30 seconds. It was the shape of things to come and the birth of a legend. He had God-given talent to match the very greatest natural drivers. He combined that with a fierce professionalism and will to win that made him almost unbeatable from 1958 to 1961. If he didn't win, the car had let him down."

Five-time Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton also lauded Moss on his birthday, saying: "Stirling is a great ambassador for the sport and the UK. He is a living legend."



# Bugatti breaks 300mph barrier

Andy Wallace managed to coax the modified Chiron to above 300mph on the run in Germany

BUGATTI HAS BECOME THE FIRST manufacturer to break the 300mph barrier with a near-production vehicle after recording an astonishing 304.77mph run with a modified Chiron.

British driver Andy Wallace – who was part of the 1988 Le Mans 24 Hours-winning Jaguar XJR-9 team – recorded the highest Vmax ever for a road-going hypercar at VW's Ehra-Lessien testing facility last month.

The track's straight is nine kilometres (5.6 miles) long, allowing Wallace to stretch the legs of the reworked, pre-production, near-1600bhp Chiron. Wallace's benchmark eclipses the 284.55mph achieved by a Koenigsegg Agera RS back in 2017.

Bugatti has worked with Dallara and Michelin on the project, and to achieve the top speed the group made some key tweaks to the Chiron. The car's length was extended by 25cm to essentially make it a 'long-tail', and laser-controlled ride height fitted. The rear wing and trademark airbrake were also removed a replaced with a static, sculpted version, and the quadruple exhausts were reworked into a redesigned rear diffuser.

The eight-litre quad-turbo W16 engine was also tuned up to 1578bhp, although it retained a standard gearbox and four-wheel drive. The design is a forerunner to a full production Chiron SuperSport 300+ model, costing around £3.1million.

Stephan Winkelmann, Bugatti's president, said the record was a big feather in the cap for the brand, before adding that it would likely be its last speed attempt.

"Bugatti has entered previously uncharted territory with this Chiron," he said. "We have shown several times that we build the fastest cars in the world. In future we will focus on other areas."

# Longest F1 season ever

THE 2020 SEASON INCLUDES A RECORD 22 grands prix, although the sport's own rules stipulate 21 as a season maximum. All teams collectively agreed to the increase, which adds to the 2019 list (minus the German GP) the Dutch GP at Zandvoort, after a 35-year absence and a new street circuit in Hanoi, Vietnam. It's the first new race to be negotiated by Liberty Media since it took over running the sport in 2017.

Opening in Australia on March 15, the season runs until the Abu Dhabi round on November 29 and now includes seven of the unpopular 'double headers' when teams must race on consecutive weekends. Britain's Silverstone round takes place on July 19.

While it's the longest championship season ever, it's not the largest number of Formula 1 races in a year: for example, in 1963 there were 24: 10 championship races and 14 non-title F1 events, and in 1966 there were 22 non-championship races alone. But 2020's championship record could yet be broken, as despite worries from team personnel the sport's leaders have stated their hopes of expanding to 24 title rounds in future.




The Dutch Grand Prix will return to the calendar for the first time since 1985 as one of the new events




"The Top Fuel champions on two continents were female"

From left: Susanne Callin, Maja Udtian, Jndia Erbacher and Anita Mäkelä starred at Santa Pod

MATT WOODS

# Top fuel's top guns

THE ALL-FEMALE W-SERIES MAY BE gaining the plaudits, but the macho world of 10,000bhp drag racing appears to be streaking ahead when it comes to women in motor sport.

Visitors to Santa Pod, the home of British drag racing, for the FIA Championship last month saw a thrilling battle between the top three - all of them women - in the highest Top Fuel category.

Finnish veteran Anita Mäkelä was bidding to secure her fourth FIA championship in the sport's premier class, pursued by young rivals Maja Udtian (Norway) and Jndia Erbacher (Switzerland). Sweden's Susanne Callin - once the world's first 300mph teenager - was making her second start after 14 years out of the Top Fuel cockpit while she was bringing up her family.

Udtian reset her own European record at 3.806sec to qualify on pole over the 1000-foot course (reduced from the classic quarter-mile for safety reasons). Erbacher was second at 3.880sec with Mäkelä only third (3.903sec).

Mäkelä scythed through the eliminations, however, with a trio of 3sec passes, beating Britain's (male) Liam Jones in the final to seal both race victory and the FIA title.

Mäkelä's semi-final time of 3.821sec was her new career best.

Udtian's 315.52mph run was the event's highest speed.

Drag racing has a rich history of women champions. In 1977 Shirley Muldowney won the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Championship in America for the first time. She repeated the feat in 1980 and 1982. And last year the Top Fuel champions on two continents were female: Kelly Bettes in Australia and Anita Mäkelä in Europe. Brittany Force also won in America in 2017.

Santa Pod's Caroline Holden commented: "Women drivers have been excelling at all levels of drag racing for decades, and we are delighted to see other forms of racing at last beginning to catch on."



The now-traditional Friday evening Kinrara Trophy was a suitably storied start to this year's Revival

# Franchitti's comeback highlights the Revival

DARIO FRANCHITTI MADE AN emotional return to the race track under cloudless Sussex skies last month at the wheel of a Ferrari 250 GT SWB/C. His nostalgic race proved one of the highlights of this year's Goodwood Revival.

It has been six years since Franchitti's competitive career came to an end after a crash at an IndyCar race in Houston. He left the sport having won the IndyCar series four times, the Indy500 three times and Daytona 24 Hour once. After getting the all-clear from doctors for Goodwood, he qualified in 23rd position for the Kinrara Trophy after the car failed to complete the practice session. He then battled through the field to finish in eighth position with owner John Hugenholtz. The race was won by Gary Pearson and Andrew Smith, in their 250 GTO.



**"The competition is what I've missed, being wheel-to-wheel again"**

"That was really good fun, just being wheel-to-wheel again and basically not screwing it up," Franchitti said afterwards. "The competition is what I've missed... it was just wonderful. It was in at the deep end but it was alright."

The 2019 Goodwood Revival was blessed with good weather and a strong turnout as crowds queued to celebrate racing stars and cars of yesterday.

Highlights included a star-studded Barry Sheene memorial race featuring John McGuinness, Dani Pedrosa and Peter Hickman. The eclectic St Mary's Trophy races included drivers such as Tom Kristensen, Jochen Mass and Peter Dumbreck going head-to-head with Christian Horner, Stuart Graham and eventual winner of race one, Emanuele Pirro.

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MARK HUGHES

# "Congratulations Charles, all is forgiven," said Ferrari after Monza

IT WAS A REFERENCE TO WHAT HAD gone down in qualifying when Ferrari sided with Sebastian Vettel over Leclerc's less than full assistance in repaying the tow favour to Vettel during the crazy timed-out final laps of Q3 in Italy.

The parallels between what happened inside Ferrari at Monza and at McLaren in Hungary 2007 are quite striking. In each case, a young driver whose junior career had been underwritten by the team broke out of the role of grateful protégé to fight his own corner. Even if it meant pulling a fast one over his multiple world champion team mate and taking censure from the team for doing so. A victorious performance in the race the following day brought forgiveness - and a decisive swing towards the youngster in the internal dynamics of the team. In both cases, they were essentially making the team their own. Ruthless behind the innocent fronts in both cases.

Just like in 2007, it was an internal team policy of alternating favours in qualifying that triggered the controversy. In Hungary 2007 it was Fernando Alonso's turn at McLaren to lead the Q3 burn-off laps. Remember those? Back then, the cars would qualify with whatever fuel load the team had decided it would run for the first stint of the race. But you were allowed to replenish after qualifying according to how many laps you had run in Q3, at a predetermined fuel weight per lap. So the cars would 'fuel burn' for a few laps before coming in for their new tyres near the end of the session, then go for a time. To make it fair, the drivers would go out together and complete the same number of fuel burn laps. But to create the required 12sec gap between them as they pitted for their new tyres (so that the second car wasn't delayed), the lead car would run the fuel burn laps at a faster pace than the following car and would be fuelled slightly heavier to allow for the greater consumption of running faster. So, for a given first stint fuel load, the second car, running 2-3sec slower, would run lighter in the burn-off, so that when both were replenished the weight would be re-equalised.

It was Alonso's turn to lead the burn-off and so he was fuelled heavier than the rookie Lewis Hamilton. Except Hamilton had concocted a plan with his engineer. He made sure he got out of the garage before Alonso - against the team plan - and sat ahead of him at the end of the pit lane. When the green light came on, he didn't pull over and wave Alonso through. Instead, he went haring off into the distance, using as much fuel as possible. Alonso instantly knew what Hamilton's game was. Starting lighter, he'd still be lighter at the end - and so would likely be able to take pole position. So Alonso came in one lap early. Meaning, of course, that he was now back in front. He waited even after his tyres had been changed, even after Hamilton had arrived on his tail waiting to be serviced. They couldn't service Hamilton until Alonso moved out the way. Which he refused to do - until there was just enough time to get out there and get to the chequer to begin his qualifying lap. Hamilton meanwhile could not do so - and so had to rely on his earlier time.

**"Ron Dennis radioed to say 'That's what happens when you don't do as you're told' "**

Ron Dennis was furious. His drivers had gone feral and he'd lost control of them. Hamilton had assumed Dennis had orchestrated Alonso to stay stationary in order to punish him for his burn-off trick. He'd done nothing of the sort - Alonso had acted on his own initiative. So as Hamilton failed to make the line before the chequer and Dennis had radioed, 'That's what happens when you don't do as you're told!,' Hamilton took that as confirmation of his suspicions and replied with some very fruity and disrespectful language. Alonso subsequently had his pole time disallowed for impeding another competitor, putting Hamilton on pole, the basis for a race-winning drive the following day.

Hamilton had already cleared the air with Dennis before delivering a victory on the Sunday. "I apologised and said it wouldn't happen again," said Hamilton. "Ron said he respected my views and that what I had done was better for me and that he understood it was part of my personality." Alonso, meanwhile, had unwisely tried to force Dennis into supporting his championship campaign over Hamilton's. From that moment, Hamilton was the focus of attention at McLaren and Alonso was on borrowed time at Woking.

It was an extraordinary sequence of events. But read the Monza race report in this issue (*page 32*) and see the main parallels 12 years later. Again, it was a qualifying time-out situation. Again the junior driver - in this case at Ferrari - had not kept his side of the bargain. Again the senior driver - and the team - was furious about it. Again, the junior driver had assertively demonstrated his willingness not only to fight his corner in his efforts to be top dog, but even to initiate the fight. Even over a multiple world champion team mate. Again, the junior driver just let all the controversy simply wash over him before he delivered a perfect drive to victory the following day. And all was forgiven.

**Since he began covering grand prix racing in 2000, Mark Hughes has forged a reputation as the finest Formula 1 analyst of his generation**
*Follow Mark on Twitter @SportmphMark*



# MAT OXLEY

# "The Márquez family are a group that plays together and stays together"

MARC MÁRQUEZ HAS BEEN the dominant force in MotoGP since he graduated to the premier class from Moto2 in 2013. During the last seven seasons the extravagantly talented Spaniard has won five MotoGP championships and is currently on his way to a sixth. Meanwhile his younger brother, Álex, leads the Moto2 world championship, with plans to join his big brother in MotoGP in 2021.

The pair and their father Julià have been a familial presence in the MotoGP paddock for nearly a decade. They are a family that plays together and stays together. When Marc wins a race the first person to hug him in pit lane is Álex, and it's the other way around when Álex wins.

When the brothers are at home in the Catalan town of Cervera they spend a lot of time training on motocross bikes and flat-track bikes. Márquez the elder is known for not taking prisoners whenever he's on a motorcycle, so the riding gets rough.

"Sometimes in flat track we crash into each other, but it's no big deal," Álex grins. "We ride like that because we enjoy it. In motocross Marc is really, really fast, but in flat track I can push him, if I fit new tyres. We've always been close because since we were kids we've always been at the racetrack. We have more or less the same hobbies but we're not really similar. I'm a bit more calm, whereas Marc has more energy to burn."

The Márquez family is a motorcycling family. Father Julià, a digger driver by trade, did marshalling duties for their local enduro club, while mother Roser made the sandwiches. No wonder that Marc and Álex were soon riding and racing.

In 2014 they made history as bike racing's first simultaneous sibling world champions, when Marc won his second MotoGP crown and Álex took the Moto3 title. That same year they also became the first siblings to win grand prix races on the same day.

Álex followed his brother's footsteps into Moto2 in 2015, but had a topsy-turvy first four seasons in the intermediate category: three grand prix victories against 71 crashes. Finally, this year he has come good, largely thanks to the championship changing its spec engine and spec tyres. The greater torque of Triumph's 765cc three-cylinder engine and the improved grip of Dunlop's latest Moto2 rear slick suit his technique.

"Everything now comes more naturally to me, because of the extra torque and the bigger rear tyre," explains the 23-year-old, three years his brother's junior. "Also, the balance of the Triumph engine means I can stop the bike better, so I can use a softer front tyre. The soft tyre gives me a lot more feel, especially on-edge grip. With that extra confidence to stop the bike better I can now turn it at the right moment and pick it up faster to accelerate earlier."

Álex's four grim seasons in Moto2 – 19 crashes in 2015, 18 in 2016, 15 in 2017 and 19 last year – took him into some very dark places. Luckily his big brother was around to guide him out.

"I crashed many, many times. In 2016 I crashed out of eight races, or something like that. During those moments I stopped with my brother at home. I said, 'wow, what can I do?' Because I was pushing, crash, pushing, crash, pushing, crash. Then when I didn't crash I finished 20th. Then when I tried to push again: boom, crash? What can I do?"

Although he didn't stop crashing his results did improve, from 14th and 13th overall in his first two seasons in Moto2 to fourth overall in 2017 and 2018. Of course, it wasn't only his brother that helped him; there were also technical reasons.

**"I crashed many times, and when I didn't crash I would finish 20th"**

For the 2017 season top Moto2 chassis constructor Kalex built a more forgiving chassis, while Öhlins improved its Moto2 suspension. "From that moment everything was better." This year the new engine and rear tyre squared the circle for the youngster.

Álex now has a clear plan to graduate to MotoGP at the end of next season. Inevitably the media is already spending ink on imagining the ultimate sibling rivalry, but the younger Márquez isn't having any of it.

"It's one thing to go to MotoGP and it's another to compete with my brother. He is the fastest rider and the most complete rider, with a lot of abilities. So I don't know... My dream is to share the track with him in the premier category of motorcycle racing. Then we will see. For sure he will be a lot of help for giving me advice."

Some years ago, before his Moto2 career went awry, Honda was keen to bring Marc's younger brother into its MotoGP squad. Now that seems less likely, but it's no problem.

"Nowadays we are lucky because there are many factories with which you can fight for the championship. Already you can win races with Suzuki, Yamaha, Ducati or Honda. And even in a satellite team you can have a really good bike and equipment. So at the moment I don't have a preference. I'll wait to see who I can get offers from and then I will decide: Okay, this bike is better for my riding style and I believe in that project. But I've got no offers so far."

If Álex does work out how to extract the maximum out of a MotoGP bike it will quite something to watch two brothers battling.

**Mat Oxley has covered motorcycle racing for many years – and also has the distinction of being an Isle of Man TT winner**

*Follow Mat on Twitter @matoxley*

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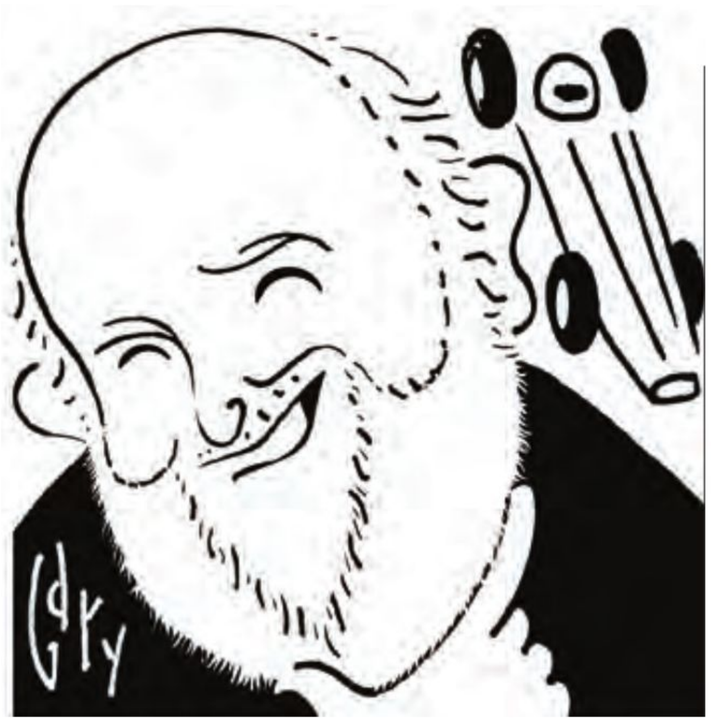
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# DOUG NYE

# "The inside of the truck was more like a scrapyard than a race team"

On the Monday following the German GP the Renault Sport F1 team's weekend went from bad to worse. Having lost both cars from the race, the next day one of the team's transporters crashed off the motorway near Gyor en route to the Hungarian GP outside Budapest. Thankfully its driver escaped major injury.

It's quite a long time since a leading Grand Prix team experienced such a mishap, but in pre-motorway days such upsets were quite common. One of my early motor racing loves was the HWM team. Headed by George Abecassis and John Heath it earned respect within Continental Europe for campaigning a full team of cars driven by some really good promising young hands, such as Stirling Moss, Peter Collins and Lance Macklin.

This was at a time, 1950-52, when the immensely over-hyped BRM team became something of a laughing stock due to repeated failure to fulfil race entries. In contrast HWM would relentlessly fight all manner of disasters to contest every Continental race entered.

Early in 1952, three new HWMs were despatched from Walton-on-Thames to the Pau GP in southern France for Macklin, Collins and French rent-a-driver Yves Giraud-Cabantous. Walton to Pau was a tough drive, but Heath directed chief mechanic Frank Webb to detour some 600 miles to collect new ZF limited-slip differentials from the Friedrichshafen factory in southern Germany. Their transporter was a converted ex-Oxford City AEC bus, in which - once having collected those new diffs - they then faced another 800 miles to Pau. The plan worked reasonably well, apart from coasting downhill in neutral - both to gain speed and save expensive fuel - proving to be a bad idea. Coasting rapidly the AEC refused to re-engage a gear. Mechanic Len Hayden recalled a major fright battling with that gearbox on a long incline into Nancy. The AEC won so HWM's finest found themselves streaking through the city centre - in neutral - at around 70mph. Fortunately, 1952 Nancy traffic around 5am was sparse...

Safely arrived at Pau, those new ZF diffs were fitted to the cars, and Macklin ran second in the race - splitting the works Ferraris - before a brake pipe split. Giraud-Cabantous spun off with brake problems, which also afflicted Peter Collins' new car. On the grid, his was found to have a leaking brake pipe. It was disconnected and hammered flat, so he took the start with only three working brakes, Heath intent upon earning the start money regardless.

The next race was 350 miles away, at Marseilles. En route, near Sète, the team stopped for a swim. Team junior 'Cass' Castell had been badgering Webb to drive. Frank finally relented, and initially the lad did well. But then a mosquito - or hornet - buzzed into the hot, fume-filled cab. Cass took a swipe at it, clipped the sandy verge and the AEC ploughed off into deep sand, struck some half-buried rocks, and its entire front axle was smashed back, the engine's sump shattered. The inside of the truck "looked more like a scrapyard than a racing team".

**"To avoid ramming the Fordson, he swerved, but the tow chain snapped"**

Webb found a telephone and called the team's Marseilles hotel. Collins took the call, recruited Macklin and the pair drove 120 miles to the rescue in a Ford Consul. Macklin was fluent in French and persuaded a local garagiste to lend two small pick-ups to carry two of the cars, plus tools and spares, while Webb drove the third. Formula 2 single-seaters did not feature lights, and he arrived in Marseilles near 11pm, and actually stopped to ask a couple of Gendarmes the way to the hotel. To their undying credit they not only pointed him the right way... but push-started him, too.

The cars arrived on the Marseilles starting grid, although only one would finish, seventh. Over the following days the boys ironed-out the AEC's damage, and the undaunted HWM crew began the long drive home...

Later that year - after Collins had finished fourth behind the Ferraris in the La Baule GP on the Brittany coast, Heath ordered the crew back to Walton to prepare the cars properly for the Italian GP, two weeks later. But some 75 miles from Calais, near Doullens, the AEC's back axle failed. Webb phoned Walton and asked his colleague Sid Yorath to bring out the old transporter, a Fordson, to tow them to the ferry. It arrived and a chain was connected to the AEC to tow it. But another big hill caught them out. The silent AEC ran out of brakes. Webb tried to avoid ramming the Fordson's tail. He swerved to overtake. The chain pulled taut, and snapped. Big transporter punted small transporter aside.

The Fordson struck a kerb, and toppled onto its side. The AEC careered downhill; narrow bridge at its foot. And the AEC was dragged to a halt jammed diagonally between the parapets. A recovery truck was summoned from Amiens.

They dragged the Fordson upright, popped the AEC from the bridge like a cork. The HWM lads judged both driveable, cobbled a rigid tow bar and headed to Calais. The AEC's back axle was replaced, two freshly-prepared cars loaded, then Webb headed off again - 850 miles to Monza, and the Italian GP - where neither car qualified...

HWM definitely had happier years than 1952, as Renault Sport has definitely had happier years than 2019.

**Doug Nye is the UK's leading motor racing historian and has been writing authoritatively about the sport since the 1960s**

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# ANDREW FRANKEL

# "Land Rover should be reminding people that it's not forgotten its roots"

I HAVE NO IDEA WHY IT MADE IT SO difficult for itself, but Land Rover has pulled off the coup of the year by nicking the Frankfurt Motor Show from under the noses of its German rivals. Launching its new Defender at what is regarded as the fortress of the German car industry was brave (some, including me, thought it foolhardy) but from what I've seen from the coverage at home and abroad, it appears to have worked.

The Defender has come as something of an antidote to a show otherwise dominated by electric cars from VW's crucial, Golf-sized ID 3, to the sleek and rather gorgeous Mercedes-Benz EQS concept. There sat the Defender, brand new, but at the same time angular, with a transfer box and rubber mats in its footwells. Having missed my first Frankfurt show in 18 years to drive the new McLaren GT (*page 36*), I have not seen the Defender in the flesh and will reserve judgement until at least then or, more likely, until I've driven it. But I admire Land Rover for having the chutzpah to launch it like that.

That said, the least anyone is going to pay for a new Defender is £40,000 (unless they can get the VAT back) and some models can be specced up to £100,000 with ticks in the right options box.

I understand that in the Defender Land Rover has a sub-brand that can do no ill right now, and that such a commodity can therefore be priced to make a swift return on investment. And I find it hard to be overly critical of the approach given the recently dire financial straits of parent company JLR. But I wonder how many people thought about how the car's predecessor built the brand, without which there would be no Defender at all. And it wasn't by appealing to wealthy fashionistas more concerned with a car's image than its substance.

The new Defender quite understandably seeks to exploit the authenticity of the original, a car built as a purely utilitarian vehicle. But surely there should be within the range cars that seek to do the same? I'm not just craving the old times here, I'm being brutally commercial. Just as Porsche maintains its brand credibility by building microscopic numbers of lightweight, driver-orientated GT 911s, so Land Rover should be reminding its customers that while it remains focused on the future, it has not forgotten from whence it came. It is the GT 911s that provide the brand legitimacy that makes people want to buy Porsche SUVs, and the it is Porsche SUVs that provide the profits to make and sell the GT 911s. It is the ultimate automotive virtuous circle and one reason why Porsche is, per unit, the most profitable car company on earth.

Even so, there will be versions of the new Defender built for military and humanitarian purposes, so perhaps there is in the pipeline a stripped-out, affordable variant that will reclaim sub-Saharan Africa and the Australian outback from the Toyota Land Cruiser. I certainly hope so.

I SPENT A QUITE DELIGHTFUL Saturday in early September, helping judge 50 or so Bentleys that had assembled on the lawn of Blenheim Palace for the Salon Privé concours. I should say now that while I like to think I know a bit about Bentleys and once wrote quite a long book about them, if I opened the bonnet of a 1927 3-litre and found an SU 'sloper' carburettor at not quite the right angle, I would not be able to tell. There are experts with clipboards and scoring sheets infinitely better placed to do that than I. But to just wander around spotting rare, important or just plain beautiful Bentleys made me a very happy boy. Most of all I was surprised not by the shininess of the cars presented, but the fact that most were as used as they were loved by their owners. Yes, there were one or two show queens there looking far better than the day they left the factory, but the vast majority of cars were not treated as ornamental artworks, but as cars that could never be enjoyed to the full without being driven. One owner of a gorgeous R-type Continental even turned up on a set of perforated wheels I did not associate with the type. Turns out he spends so much time charging around Europe at unpublishable speeds he had them specially commissioned because he didn't trust the originals.

IF I MAY BRIEFLY BOTH PLAGIARISE AND corrupt the famous Mark Twain saying, it seems that reports of the death of diesel have been exaggerated. I've noticed for a while that grandstanding politicians and ill-informed journalists in the mainstream media have fallen somewhat silent on the subject of late, but have been waiting for some empirical evidence to suggest that the tide, if not exactly charging back to shore, is at least turning back in diesel's favour. So I am grateful to Ola Källenius, the new boss of Mercedes-Benz, for providing it. Speaking at Frankfurt he revealed that sales of Mercedes diesel cars are actually on the rise, reversing a long standing trend. And quite right too: modern diesels are as clean as petrol motors while providing around 15 per cent better fuel consumption and, therefore, lower $CO_2$ emissions. As Källenius says, "the good thing about facts is that they are facts".

**"Reports of the death of diesel have been greatly exaggerated"**

**A former editor of *Motor Sport*, Andrew splits his time between testing the latest road cars and racing (mostly) historic machinery**
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JENNIE GOW

# "Half the paddock were crowded around to see the one who passed out"

PEOPLE OFTEN ASK ME WHAT MY favourite race is, or which is the best race to go to as a fan, and it's always hard to pick just one. There are so many good races on the calendar it really depends what you want from your F1 experience. If it's fan passion you want then it's Silverstone or Monza; if it's a great vibe downtown then you can't go wrong with Austin, but if you want to really experience glitz and glamour then it's either Monaco or Singapore – and if you add in the favourable cost and the sizzling temperatures, then Asia is a must.

As the BBC's F1 presenter, it's my job to paint the picture of a race weekend and for those who may never get to experience a race live, to take them as close to the action as I can, and I have to say the place I enjoy doing this most is the Singapore Grand Prix.

My first trip to Singapore didn't go brilliantly. I remember being on the aircraft, flying in and not feeling great. The next thing I knew I was on the floor at the back of the aircraft with my legs up on a cabin box and an oxygen mask over my face. It was 2012 and I was fairly new to the media pack – despite that, half the paddock seemed to be crammed into the back of the plane having a good look at the 'one who had passed out'. The humiliation didn't end there as I was ushered past the waiting masses at immigration and taken to the front of the queue in a wheel chair – my producer at this moment looked rather pleased – me, not so much. It wasn't exactly the best way to start my weekend.

As you drive into the city one of the first things you see is the Singapore Flyer – their version of the London Eye – and as you cross the bridge into the downtown area you drive straight over the top of the start/finish straight and the pit and paddock complex. It's a really cool way to start proceedings and gives you a good idea of what's ahead.

One of the strangest things about the Singapore race is that the paddock stays on European time, which can make life both surreal and a little difficult at times. You're going to bed at about 3 or 4am and trying not to wake up until early afternoon.

Most of the teams stay in hotels that understand the complexities of this challenge. We stayed in the same hotel as the Williams and Force India teams for several years and they organise breakfast to be served at lunchtime. In fact, there are hotels who block book whole floors for the F1 community so they can sleep in peace even though the rest of the hotel is running normally.

Singapore has some amazing restaurants but, like most countries, they close at around 10pm. This means that when majority of the paddock finishes work they decamp to one of several hawker stalls – informal groups of stands that serve the likes of spicy Singapore crab or flame-grilled satay sticks. Newton Circus is the most popular of these. Turn up on any night of a grand prix weekend and you will find a whole array of TV presenters, F1 media and team personnel who are lucky enough not to have to be working all night.

**"You can get much closer to the action than usual at the Singapore Grand Prix"**

There's a wonderful old Singaporean lady who has worked there for years. She rushes around serving beer and shouting at people. It's a great experience and they stay open until the sun starts to whisper that it may be about to rise. It's a fantastic place to while away the hours until you can acceptably go to bed.

The weather is always hot and humid. The walk to the track, either on the roads that are still open or through the bustling streets and then into the air-conditioned shopping malls, is something unique to Singapore. At no other venue do you see mechanics walking in full team kit. The only people usually seen around town in team colours are fans wearing merchandise. If you just happen to be in the right place at the right time, and you're loitering near the track, it's not so rare to see the drivers making their way in on foot, too. It's a good track for selfies and autograph hunters.

The stars who come to the grand prix are always impressive too, whether they're playing gigs in the fan zone or just parading on the grid. One of my favourite interviews for the BBC in those 30 minutes before the race starts was when I stuck a microphone between Bernie Ecclestone and David Beckham and had a chat with them about football and F1. Beckham was like an excitable schoolboy, looking at all the cars and fanboying the drivers.

But you don't have to be a celebrity or spend thousands of pounds to drink champagne and eat lobster in the Paddock Club to have fun. A normal ticket can bring you really close to the action and you can amble your way around the track getting far closer to the action and the teams than any other race on the calendar.

In this respect, I can't help feeling that despite being a relatively new addition to the F1 calendar (it arrived in 2008 – also the race in which Nelson Piquet Jr controversially crashed in an accident that was later found to have been deliberate), Singapore is closer in spirit to how grand prix racing used to be. I just hope I don't pass out on the plane again...

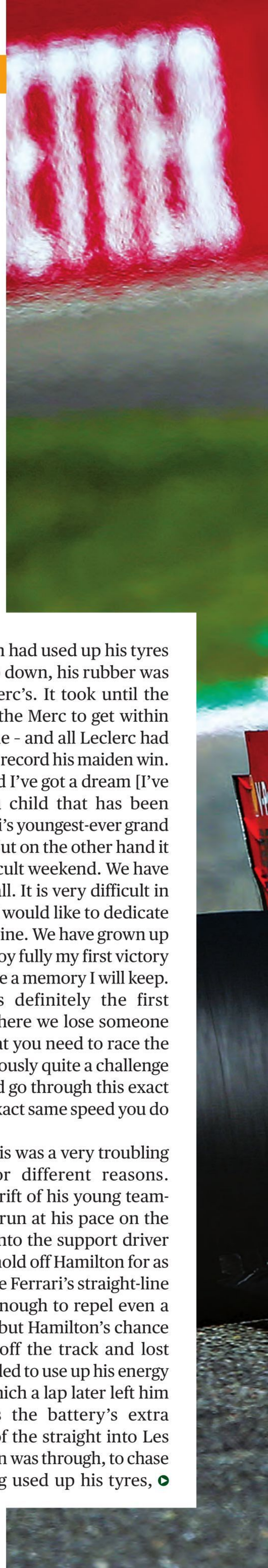
**Jennie Gow has been a staple of the BBC's Formula 1 broadcasting team since 2011, working across both TV and radio**

*Follow Jennie on Twitter @JennieGow*

Belgian GP Italian GP

# The return of the red army

Charles Leclerc led Ferrari to its first grand prix wins of the season, but in doing so heaped pressure on his more experienced team-mate, says **Mark Hughes**



SPA AND MONZA WERE realistically going to be Ferrari's final opportunities of the year to win a race. The lap time reward for the SF90's horsepower advantage/low drag were greater than at all the other tracks – and the punishment for its relative lack of downforce was at its absolute lowest at Monza.

That much was known going into these back-to-back races. But once the wheels began turning at Spa there was surprise at Mercedes at just how much faster the red car was in a straight line. It was way more than a proportional advantage to the length of the straights; there is something about the car that exaggerates its speed advantage as everyone takes a lot of drag off their cars.

At Spa that was countered by the twists of sector two where the Ferrari was losing 0.4sec to the Merc. That still put it 0.7sec faster overall – but only over a qualifying lap. The way the rear has to be mechanically compromised in order to give the car a balance because of its aerodynamically weak front meant it heat-degraded its tyres faster than the Merc. So the Ferraris had track position, but the Mercs – or that of Lewis Hamilton at least – were faster in the race.

Within this dynamic, one Ferrari was potentially going to be the Hamilton-blocker while the other escaped. The escapee was Leclerc, who duly won his first grand prix, a breakthrough within a tragic backdrop, given the death of his friend and karting rival Anthoine Hubert in Saturday's F2 race.

Sebastian Vettel simply could not live with Leclerc at Spa. But that shortfall was quite possibly what won Ferrari its first race of the season. It allowed Leclerc to build up a useful lead that would form a cushion later on as Hamilton eventually got past Vettel.




Monza wasn't kind to Vettel, who spun and then made a rookie error while rejoining

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By the time Hamilton had used up his tyres cutting that 6sec gap down, his rubber was no better than Leclerc's. It took until the penultimate lap for the Merc to get within the leader's DRS zone – and all Leclerc had to do was stay cool to record his maiden win.

"On the one hand I've got a dream [I've held] since being a child that has been realised," said Ferrari's youngest-ever grand prix winner, at 21. "But on the other hand it has been a very difficult weekend. We have lost a friend first of all. It is very difficult in these situations, so I would like to dedicate my first win to Anthoine. We have grown up together... I can't enjoy fully my first victory but it will definitely be a memory I will keep.

"For me it was definitely the first situation like that where we lose someone on track – a track that you need to race the day after. So it's obviously quite a challenge to close the visor and go through this exact same corner at the exact same speed you do the day before."

For Vettel too, this was a very troubling weekend, albeit for different reasons. Qualifying 0.7sec adrift of his young team-mate and unable to run at his pace on the Sunday thrust him into the support driver role. Helping Vettel hold off Hamilton for as long as he did was the Ferrari's straight-line speed advantage – enough to repel even a DRS-assisted Merc – but Hamilton's chance came as Vettel ran off the track and lost momentum and needed to use up his energy store to regain it. Which a lap later left him defenceless, minus the battery's extra 160bhp at the end of the straight into Les Combes and Hamilton was through, to chase after Leclerc. Having used up his tyres,




Charles Leclerc's stout defending may have divided opinion, but it helped him become the first Ferrari driver to win in Italy for a decade

Vettel was forced into a second stop, which allowed Valtteri Bottas to pass for the final podium place. Vettel didn't appear at the team's post-race press conference...

THAT WAS THE DELICATE DYNAMIC AS THE Scuderia decamped to Monza for its home race. Vettel desperately needed to rebound with a performance around a track at which he has shone so often in the past. His underlying pace was good, the Spa chasm to Leclerc was gone. In qualifying it was all going to come down to the tow. This is where it all went wrong for Vettel at a moment he could ill afford it, through a combination of circumstance and Leclerc's ruthless streak. To understand exactly what happened in Q3 that left Vettel so angry (and Ferrari siding with Vettel), requires an explanation of the nuances of the slipstreaming procedure.

At Spa and Monza – tracks at which there is more lap time to be had from a drag reduction than a downforce increase – the tow is more important than ever with the current cars. The bigger, taller rear wing creates a lot more drag and so a) the car ahead punches a bigger hole in the air and b) the car behind loses more drag than it did with the previous wing. Get it right at Monza and the tow can be worth 0.7sec. With maybe only 0.1sec between Ferrari and Mercedes here it could not be ignored, hence the in-team agreements about which driver would be towed and which would be towing. Both teams alternate races for each driver to decide where he wants to be in the final Q3 running order, ahead or behind. Ahead is better on the downforce tracks, behind is favoured for the low-drag tracks.

Which meant at Monza that the driver whose turn it was to be doing the towing at the end of Q3 both needed to maximise his first Q3 lap when it was his turn to be towed and ideally needed to find a tow from another team's car on his final Q3 lap, as he was towing his team-mate along.

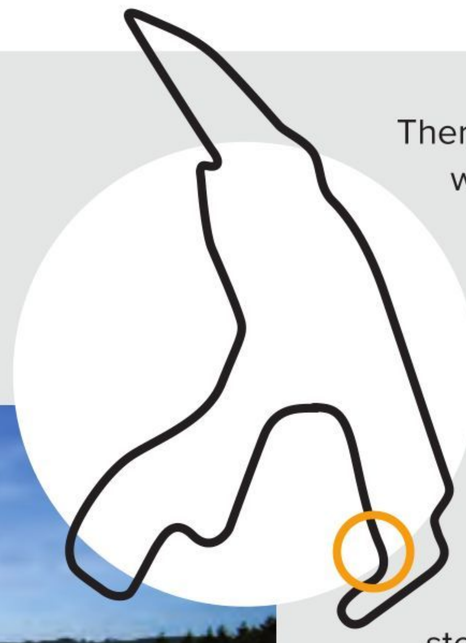
It was Vettel's turn to choose the order in Q3. So for the final runs – when the track is theoretically at its quickest – he chose to be towed. For the first Q3 runs, therefore, he was to tow Leclerc.

# Trackside View

## Turn 9, Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium



It's not 'no name', it's Liege, and it's a great place to watch the dynamics of top cars in action



The conflicting demands of Spa – the long straights of sectors one and three but the downforce-rewarding middle sector – are made even more awkward by the downhill contours of Rivage and the shortly-following Liege (erroneously sometimes called 'no name') as the track makes its way down into the valley.

This is where those cars that have struggled down the straights begin to claw back time, none more dramatically than Max Verstappen's Red Bull, which brakes outrageously late for Rivage, then dismisses the bump halfway across the track's width in the braking zone, so smothered in downforce is the RB15.

There's the briefest millisecond where Max is neither braking nor accelerating and it's then that he gets the final bit of angle change into the turn. From there, he is hard on the gas to the exit. Some cars have trouble getting to the other side of the track for the perfect approach to Liege; not this one. Verstappen aggressively steers hard right and it follows, then just as hard left into Liege. Viewed from head-on, the car's yaw builds as he enters not fully on the throttle and then just as it's at the ideal angle – well before the apex – he's back hard on it. It looks so simple compared to every other car, even the Mercedes in which both Hamilton and Bottas are rounding off the edges on turn in, not building up the forces so abruptly. It's never less than well balanced, but doesn't have the alacrity of the Red Bull.

There are a few 'Class B' cars that are performing quite nicely – Renault has plenty of front end, Haas looks flowing and balanced. The Ferrari doesn't have as good a balance as either of those lesser cars, its understeer always visible. But it's all happening at a higher speed.

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It has become customary at the 'towing' tracks for other teams to wait until Mercedes sends out its cars before they then follow. So to prevent Ferrari using the Mercedes tow for its lead car, Merc had repeated its Baku 'dummy' in the first Q3 runs, pulling off to the practice start apron at the end of the pitlane after setting off and triggering the others into following, but with no room to line up behind the Mercs on the apron. Hence in those first Q3 runs Vettel was without his own tow as he towed Leclerc around to a provisional pole. Bottas was set to eclipse that time with his Hamilton-aided lap, but was forced to back off when Kimi Räikkönen crashed his Alfa at Parabolica.

That's how it was poised for the final runs, with nobody wanting to be first on track, everyone trying to leave it until the last moment, so as to pick up a tow. It became a game of Mexican stand-off - and at the last possible moment, everyone went out together, headed by Nico Hülkenberg's Renault and Lance Stroll's Racing Point. As Stroll fell back, so Carlos Sainz's McLaren was side by side with the Renault, both crawling along, wanting the other to go first. They were in effect blocking the track at a crawl and in so doing ensuring not everyone was going to make it to the line in time to begin their final laps. Vettel was dismayed to note that Leclerc opted to back off in response rather than force his way through, apparently using the Hülkenberg-Sainz blockage as a convenient excuse not to be in a position to tow himself off provisional pole. Vettel accelerated past his team mate - and then the Renault and McLaren in a desperate bid go get to the line in time. As Leclerc eventually followed him through - and was therefore in a position to receive the tow from Vettel - he was instructed to overtake and give the tow, as agreed. Vettel had to back off to enable this - allowing Sainz to re-pass and be the only one who made it to the line in time to begin a lap. Hence Leclerc's previous attempt stood as pole - with Vettel's un-towed time leaving him only fourth, behind Hamilton and Bottas.

Nobody, least of all Vettel, was convinced by Leclerc's 'what could I do?' stance and the team debrief was reportedly stormy.

As Leclerc danced off to his second win in seven days, brilliantly - and occasionally robustly - withstanding a two-pronged attack from Mercedes, Vettel spun out of fourth at Ascari early on, then snagged Stroll as he rejoined, requiring a stop for a new front wing. A subsequent stop/go penalty for the incident left him nowhere - and with many questions hanging over him. Is he a victim of the turning of the generations?

Scuderia boss Mattia Binotto hailed his young driver's victory: "Congratulations Charles, all is forgiven." And like that, it may have turned.

# Word on the beat

## Rumour, gossip and news from the F1 paddock

● Newly-promoted to the **RED BULL** team in Spa, **ALEX ALBON** reflected upon his previous karting run-ins with new team-mate Max Verstappen.
"It was in 2010, wasn't it? We did the European and World Championships together. We had a few crashes together, do you remember?"
Verstappen: "A few touches, yeah."
Albon: "We had a good rivalry going. Max was the young guy, I was the experienced one – which is a bit weird. I mean, I'm older than Max but he's a bit more experienced than me in F1. So, yeah, we started like that."

● The confirmation of the **SPANISH GRAND PRIX** has allowed the full 2020 F1 calendar to be announced. It will be the first 22-race season in the championship's history.

● **FERNANDO ALONSO** has reportedly been in extensive contact with both **FERRARI** and **RED BULL** in recent weeks, campaigning to return to F1. Red Bull was interested, but its engine partner Honda rather less so... Ferrari boss Mattia Binotto has repeated that the team's current Vettel/Leclerc line-up will be unchanged into next year.
"Maybe things change, and 2021 may be a good opportunity," Alonso said to Sky at the Italian Grand Prix about his future F1 prospects.



● The funeral of F2 race winner and reigning GP3 champion **ANTHOINE HUBERT** (*left*) took place on the Tuesday after the Italian Grand Prix. The driver who collided with Hubert's car in the Spa F2 race, **JUAN MANUEL CORREA**, suffered serious leg injuries and subsequently respiratory complications after being transferred to a British hospital. He has been placed in a controlled coma and at the time of writing was reported to be in a 'critical but stable' condition.

● At Spa it was confirmed that Mercedes reserve driver **ESTEBAN OCON** will be replacing **NICO HÜLKENBERG** at **RENAULT** from next year. Concurrently, **VALTTERI BOTTAS** extended his contract with Mercedes for another year. **SERGIO PÉREZ** has signed a three-year extension of his current Racing Point deal. At the time of writing Hülkenberg was in strong contention for a place at Haas, probably replacing **ROMAIN GROSJEAN**, although discussions between Hülkenberg and Alfa Romeo are also understood to have taken place.



# Everyday excitement

## McLaren's new GT may be user-friendly, but hasn't lost its edge, says **Andrew Frankel**



McLaren says the GT is almost entirely new, and that you can fit in more luggage than an E-Class can handle

In many ways, McLaren Automotive is entering the most critical stage of its young life since its birth eight short years ago. It has come an astonishing distance since the botched launch of the MP4-12C and produced some landmark cars along the way – the P1, 675LT and 720S to name just three. Sales are on course to hit 5000 units this year, and it only wants to reach 6000 by 2025.

Yet every one of those cars has been a mid-engined, two-seater with a carbon tub, a twin-turbo V8 engine and a seven-speed double-clutch gearbox. But Ferrari offers cars with two, two-plus-two and four-seat configurations, with front- or mid-engine locations, eight- or 12-cylinder motors, one fully convertible model and, soon, an SUV. By considerable contrast, McLaren has stuck rigorously to the formula upon which its greatness has been built.

But you only need look at this new McLaren GT to sense the desire building within Woking to let the brand branch out, now that its roots are down and its core is strong. It has already spoken of its intention to offer hybrid versions of every model and it's a poorly kept secret that it's developing a new V6 motor with this in mind. I get the impression too that a McLaren with more than two seats is no longer one of many ideas flying around the ether, but something that's been grasped, evaluated and is now being actively considered.

In the meantime the GT's aim is to be McLaren's most user-friendly car yet, a car that takes the ball lobbed by the 570GT and runs with it over the hills and far away.

As the name implies this is the car McLaren wants people to think of as its Grand Tourer, a car in which you can cover vast distances, but which will still be fun to drive when you reach your destination.

To that end almost two-thirds of its components are not shared with any other McLaren. Indeed the company says it doesn't even belong to one of the Sports, Super or Ultimate Series families, although I also get the impression the company is tiring of that nomenclature, so it may be no surprise it's not adding to the respective numbers.

At the heart of the GT lies a new iteration of McLaren's carbon monocell as used in the 570S and 600LT, but with the 4-litre engine from the 720S and Senna, albeit with a bespoke tune to flatten its torque curve and restrict its output to 612bhp. Its suspension has its own settings, as do its steering and brakes, while its Pirelli tyres have been specially developed for this car alone.

Most importantly, says McLaren, the engine has been lowered to provide more luggage space while its ride height has been raised to improve ground clearance. It can carry up to 570 litres of clobber in its front and rear compartments, which is more than you'll fit into the boot of a Mercedes-Benz E-Class saloon.

To maximise comfort on the road the suspension has been softened, valves inserted in the exhausts to limit noise on part throttle and sound-deadening material strategically placed to damp out undesirable noise sources such as those from the wind, road, and some elements of its powertrain.

And yet, when you climb in, fire it up


It's not a GT as we know it, with a more raucous engine and smaller cabin, but the drive is sensational



# "In performance terms, its rivals wouldn't even see which way the GT went from point to point"

and aim the GT up the road, it feels instantly like a McLaren, different in certain aspects for sure, but a McLaren long before it is anything else – including a Grand Tourer.

The cockpit feels better-built from more premium materials, but the amount of space it offers has not changed: it's snug like a supercar, not spacious like a Grand Tourer. I offer this neither as praise nor criticism, just as something worth pointing out. Likewise the engine is more sharp than sonorous. Like all McLarens, the V8 with its flat-plane crankshaft has a voice more urgent than musical and, in my view, more suited to a supercar than a comparatively lazy and luxurious Grand Tourer. Which is why its rivals from Bentley and Aston Martin offer large-capacity 12-cylinder motors despite having very little additional power.

In fact and in performance terms, such competitors would not see which way the McLaren went from point to point, not least because even the Aston is over a third of a tonne heavier. This may be McLaren's GT model, but it's still an electrifying way to travel from one place to the next. The motor lacks the 720S's more psychotic tendencies in the upper reaches of its rev range, but it responds faster from lower down and requires fewer gear changes to keep it on the boil. And its handling bears no relation to that of any other GT I've driven, despite its at times bizarrely absorbent ride quality. There's no need to be conservative with entry speed, you just dive in, trust the fabulous grip and the chassis's ability to minutely adjust its line, and then exploit its mid-engined traction away from the apex. Drive it like that and you will not think this car is a GT.

If I have a concern with this car, it is that it will be misunderstood. People will look at that GT name and make a number of understandable assumptions as a result. They will then discover a car with, by GT standards, quite a small cabin and quite a raucous engine. It doesn't really feel like a GT. Think of it instead as a supercar designed with the real world in mind, where people who do distances also carry luggage, and suddenly it makes perfect sense. And at £163,000 it also seems reasonably priced in comparison, given the performance on offer and the brand that is providing it.

## McLAREN GT



- **Price** £163,000
- **Engine** 4.0 litres, eight cylinders
- **Power** 612bhp **Weight** 1530kg
- **Power to weight** 400bhp per tonne
- **Transmission** seven-speed double clutch, rear-wheel drive **0-60mph** 3.2sec **Top speed** 203mph
- **Economy** 23.7 mpg **$CO_2$** 270g/km
- **Verdict** A McLaren, but more usable

# Better late than never

Porsche finally gives its SUV the coupé makeover, but why?

THERE IS ONE THING, AND ONE thing alone that is surprising about the Porsche Cayenne Coupé, and that is simply the amount of time Porsche took getting around to building it.

It's been over a decade since BMW launched the X6, and despite people like me pointing out that no one would pay more money for less space while proving they have no taste, it sold brilliantly. Since then Mercedes has jumped on the bandwagon and Audi, too. Now Porsche has joined them.

So the Cayenne Coupé offers less rear headroom and a smaller boot than the standard car for which Porsche will, in the case of this Turbo model, charge an additional £3574, presumably because it can. That said, the Cayenne has taken to being turned into a coupé far better than its BMW and Mercedes opposite numbers so, unlike them, the result remains visually reasonably harmonious. And I guess if any SUV can stand up the concept of being turned into a sporting coupé, it's this most sporting of SUVs.




The Coupé looks good and drives well, but has less space and costs more

To drive it is as the Cayenne Turbo is: remarkably adept and agile for a car weighing 2.2 tonnes, but still a 2.2 tonne car. The 4-litre twin-turbo V8 is as impressive as ever and the interior as technologically bamboozling. If you like this kind of car and are of a mind to shed a six-figure sum on one, start your search here. Me? I'd just get the standard Cayenne.

**PORSCHE CAYENNE COUPÉ TURBO**

- **Price** £104,729
- **Engine** 4.0 litres, 8 cylinders, turbo
- **Power** 542bhp at 5750rpm
- **Weight** 2275kg
- **Power to weight** 238bhp per tonne
- **Transmission** eight-speed automatic, four-wheel drive
- **0-60mph** 3.9sec **Top speed** 177mph
- **Economy** 25.0mpg **$CO_2$** 258g/km
- **Verdict** Less room, but more costly

# Modified wonder

Derived from the GLC, the EQC surprises in many ways




THE EQC IS NOT, I WOULD imagine, the car with which Mercedes-Benz would have chosen to launch its new EQ sub-brand of all-electric cars. My guess is that in an ideal world it would have done as Porsche has and gone with a car designed from scratch to be electric and nothing else. But with Jaguar and Audi joining Tesla with all-electric offerings, further delay probably seemed even less palatable.

And given that it was developed from the existing GLC SUV, Mercedes has done an outstanding job. I'd say it was positioned between the Jaguar I-Pace and Audi E-tron – less sporting but more comfortable than its British rival, but better to drive and only slightly less cosseting than its neighbour's product. It has a smaller battery than either and reduced range, but not dramatically.

It's a very easy car to understand and drive, but don't go thinking that because it has over 400bhp it's going to be fun to drive because it also weighs 2.5 tonnes. But it's a pleasant thing to steer from place to place.

Which means that if you're considering an electric car, it deserves to be on your list and near the top. But make sure you're awake to the charging issues: the bloke delivering it to me tried six public chargers before he could found one that worked and when I plugged it into a three-pin socket and left it charging for 10 hours, it added just 44 miles.

**MERCEDES-BENZ EQC 400 AMG**

- **Price** £74,530
- **Engine** 2 asynchronous electric motors, 80kWh battery pack
- **Power** 402bhp **Weight** 2495kg
- **Power to weight** 161bhp per tonne
- **Transmission** single speed, four-wheel drive
- **0-60mph** 5.1sec **Top speed** 112mph
- **Range** 259miles (WLTP)
- **Verdict** Great, but be charge aware

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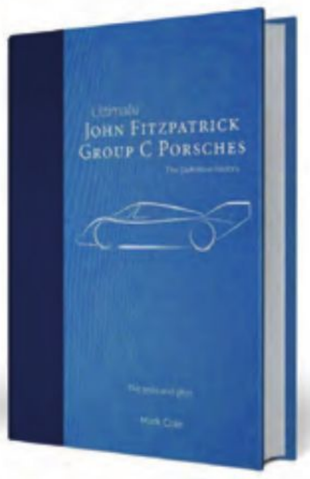
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# Independence days revisited

**Robert Ladbrook** looks at a retelling of John Fitzpatrick's Group C efforts





**JOHN FITZPATRICK GROUP C PORSCHES: THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY**
*Mark Cole*
**Published by Porter Press, £225**
**ISBN 978-1-907085-88-8**

I KNOW, I KNOW... NOT ANOTHER BOOK about the Porsche 956/962! Few racing cars in history have inspired such a flood of literary works, but stick with me here, because this one is rather different.

Here at *Motor Sport* we are blessed with heaving bookshelves of titles from hundreds of different authors, their works dedicated to manufacturers, models, drivers, events and venues from all walks of the sport. Porsche dominates our collection, largely thanks to the swathe of 911 titles on the market, but the 956/962 runs that topic a close second.

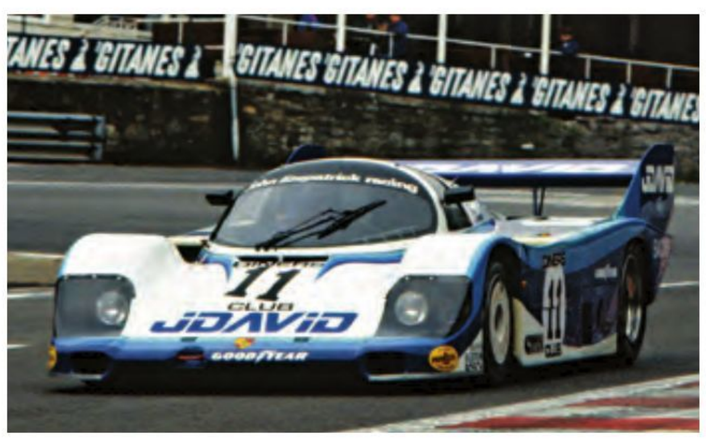
Therefore, to stand out from the crowd, any new title has to do something different, to find a new angle. And that's exactly what author Mark Cole has gone for with *John Fitzpatrick Group C Porsches - The Definitive History*.

As the title suggests, this work is angled around John Fitzpatrick, the driver, team boss and outright most successful customer during the 956/962 era. Acting as part biography, part technical history, part archival race report and part novelty piece, few books cover as wide a spread of life as a privateer in Group C racing as this.

During his many years as a journalist, Cole was tasked with covering the World Endurance Championship during the early days of the Group C era, meaning he attended every WEC event John Fitzpatrick Racing entered - barring one - making him rather well placed to be the leading authority on this particular topic.

He clearly has a strong relationship with Fitzpatrick, as there are nuggets of behind-the-scenes information sprinkled liberally throughout, adding some much needed perspective to the trials of being the leading privateer of the era. The book also doesn't have to flatter manufacturers or series, like some more sanctioned titles do. Such an example is exposing the tactics of IMSA founder John Bishop - by now sick of Porsche winning everything - and his deliberate wording of the GTP regulations to exclude the new 956 on the technicality that its pedal box was located 12cm ahead of the front axle. Unfortunately for IMSA, Porsche moved it backwards by extending the wheelbase of the later 962 design to comply, and promptly carried on winning everything after its enforced two-year hiatus.

The book opens, as you'd probably guess, with a biographical look at Fitz's storied racing career - covering his early success in Minis prior to becoming the youngest-ever winner of the British Saloon Car Championship, then on to Porsche and GT racing before finally settling on big-power sports prototypes. It's a predictable, yet useful opening that tells the story of his career path and interactions with leading names like the Kremer brothers, Tom Walkinshaw, Dick Barbour and many more. But the rest of the work is much more than a simple love letter to the man in its title.




**John Fitzpatrick and David Hobbs on their way to third in the 1983 WEC race at Spa in a 956**

As you'd expect, the development story of the 956 and 962 is covered, as is the rise of the Group C era as sports car racing sought to lure more manufacturers in, whilst also boosting privateer involvement through the advent of turn-key prototypes. These were the days when you could buy a top-line racing Porsche for good money and know it would be identical to those of the works team.

The real meat of the piece is the super-detailed story of when Fitzpatrick opted to go it alone and form his own team from 1981 onwards. Each of the team's 66 Group C entries and 44 WEC races between 1983-86 is covered in detail, telling the story of the plucky British squad's efforts against the




Against the might of the factory teams, John Fitzpatrick Racing held its own. Here the Fitzpatrick/Guy Edwards/Rupert Keegan Porsche 956 battles to fifth at Le Mans in 1983

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

# "IMSA – by now sick of Porsche winning – re-wrote the rules deliberately to exclude the 956"

factory big guns. Each specific event is also accompanied by an artwork on the page – whether it be the programme cover or a promotional poster, which adds a nice collectable touch to the whole package.

Key members of Fitz's squad are also put into the spotlight, with mini biographies on drivers such as David Hobbs, Derek Warwick, Peter Brock and Guy Edwards, to team managers Keith Greene and David Prewitt – who would go on to form their own GP Motorsport team, having used the JFR organisation as a springboard.

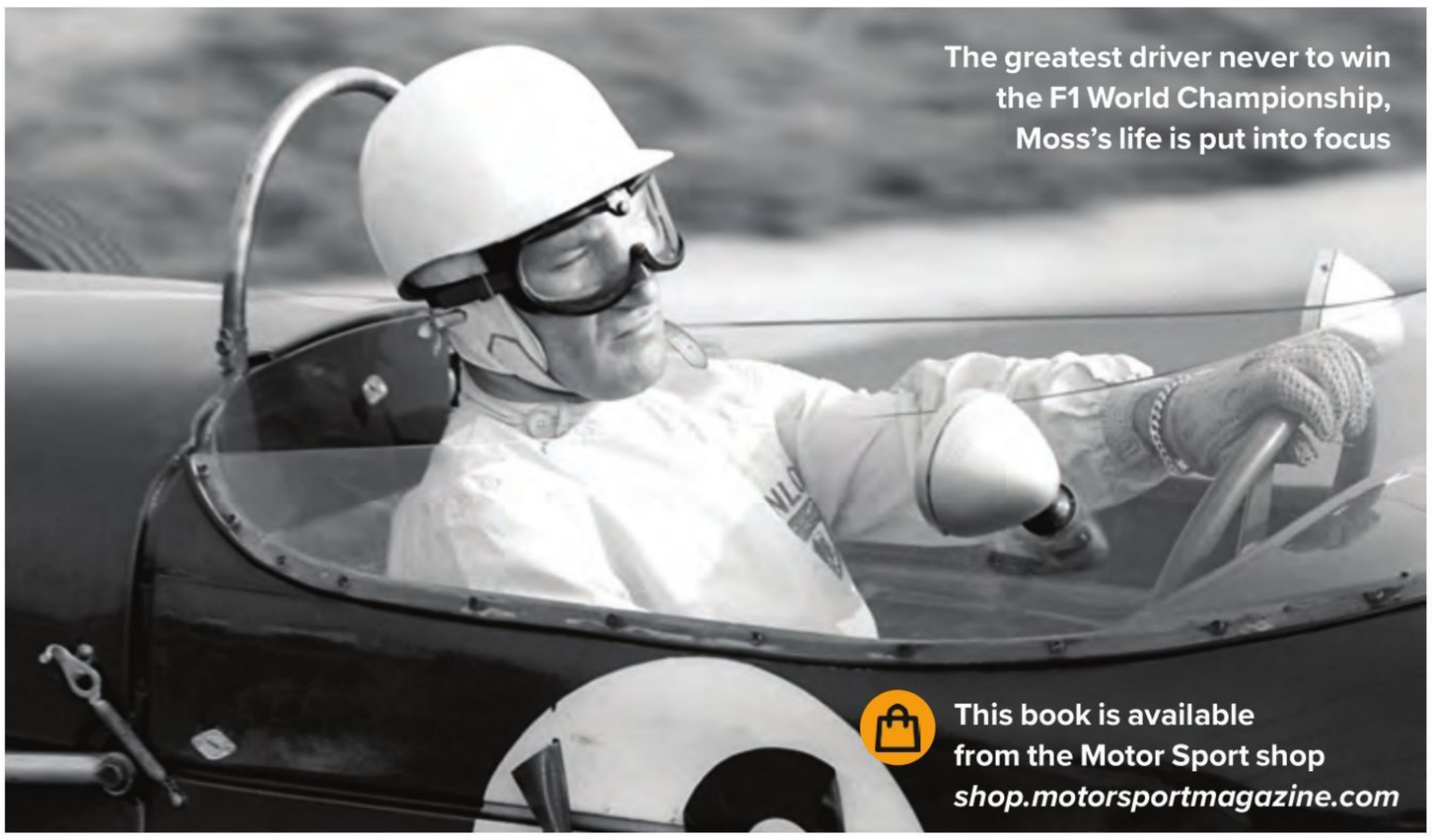
A more surprising addition is a chapter with Henry Pearman, the notable Group C collector and historic racer, who makes both his impassioned story and impressive range of classic Porsches available. It also touches on his work establishing the Eagle marque that pushes out modern evocations of E-types.

There's also a nice feature with leading Group C restorer/preparer Katana Limited and its founder Trevor Crisp, which gives intimate technical detail on the operation and maintenance of 956/962s and covers the sometimes dull nuts and bolts section with a fresh and entertaining twist.

Throughout the book is dripping in beautiful imagery, sourced from leading archives like LAT, Sutton, Getty and Revs Institute, plus more than a few of the author's own shots, too. There's also a lovely section purely reserved for detail photographs and studio imagery, plus an extensive chassis history of the five JFR cars – all of which still survive – where and when they raced, what they achieved and where they can be found today.

It's an all-encompassing work that sheds a light on a different side of the now well-trodden story path of the 956-962. It may be more niche than a general 956/962 work, and the reader needs to have more than a smidgen of admiration for Fitzpatrick's career to get the most from it. But overall, it's a beautifully presented, well written and refreshing take on a defining section of sports car history.

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# Living with a legend

*Ciao, Stirling* is an enlightening glimpse into the private life of one of Britain's greatest sportsmen, says **Gordon Cruickshank**

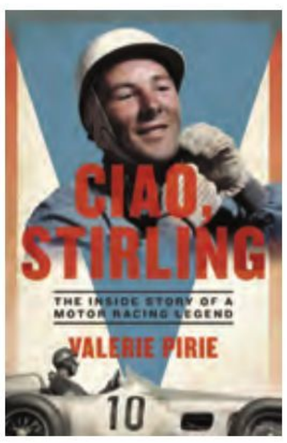
WHEN YOU'RE 17 AND your very first secretarial job is working for the great Stirling Moss at the height of his career, it must be seriously daunting. But Val Pirie quickly learned to give as good as she got from the impatient, demanding racing ace, and soon became indispensable to his lifestyle. Pirie became travel organiser, chauffeur, house build overseer and racing team manager, and more importantly his confidant and friend. Sixty years on, here is her riveting memoir of working with, socialising with and, frankly, putting up with the man who 57 years after his mainstream career ended remains Mr Motor Racing.

Anyone who has had dealings with Stirling will recognise the man she portrays - angling for discounts as he equips his gadget-laden new house, splitting a restaurant bill into 'who ate what', cramming in as many events as possible, and always rushing, rushing to the next venue, whether a race or a date in a nightclub. What this frank and sometimes funny book also shows is Stirling unwinding, off-duty, looking after others in his circle. While bickering about petty cash he lends money to friends and pays for a holiday for Val to recover after a car crunch. (She notes casually that "Fangio and Jim Clark both winced" when she admits the crash, expecting Moss to explode.) She often collected her boss from the airport (because he'd lost his road licence, again) and the late-night Chinese meals when Moss dissects his last race and computes possible improvements on scraps of paper are telling.

Over the years they became very close, though never 'an item'; instead Val was one stable element in Moss's urgent life, whether supporting him when his marriage broke up or fending off the press. One of the most famous men in the world, he was hounded everywhere, and there's a tale of him adopting a false moustache and glasses to visit an exhibition.

Life in the office was rarely calm. In fact, she resigned frequently, but as he relied too much on her to let her go she remained a key part of his inner circle. She also sat by his bed talking to him for hours to rouse him from his post-accident coma, and relates that his first word was not "Mum" as reported, but "Bastard". It's the sort of human detail that makes this absorbing memoir a fascinating and illuminating picture of a great man.

*For extracts from this book, see page 86.*




**CIAO STIRLING – THE INSIDE STORY OF A MOTOR RACING LEGEND**
*Valerie Pirie*
**Published by Biteback, £20**
**ISBN 978-1-785-9063-9**

## TAKEN BY SPEED

*Connie Ann Kirk*

Unusual offering this, given that Kirk's own intro serves as a keen answer to the question of why an author so dedicated to the biographical research and analysis of historical poets and authors such as Emily Dickinson, Jane Austen and Sylvia Plath should change tack to motor racing literature.

But the finished product is a refreshing look at some of the biggest personalities to have sadly been lost in the sport. There's a section analysing quite why human beings have been so drawn to the sport and its dangers, before each chapter focuses on one of the sporting legends who sadly met their end at the wheel, from Alberto Ascari to Bruce McLaren, via Ayrton Senna and François Cevert. There's also a lucky escapes section with input from Stirling Moss, Jackie Stewart, Brian Redman and the late Niki Lauda. It's well researched, and there's a sprinkling of images throughout, but many are rather uninspiring. Still, it's an entertaining read. **RL**

*Published by Rowman & Littlefield, £25*
*ISBN 978-1-4422-7761-8*

## BLACK & GOLD: THE STORY OF THE JOHN PLAYER SPECIALS

*Johnny Tipler*

Any book is the better for having an insider as author, and during the John Player Special Lotus era Johnny Tipler was part of the JPS promotion machine. And what a machine it was, eclipsing with style Marlboro's huge budget. Lavishly illustrated and impressively produced, this hefty work describes how the branding evolved and spread from motorhomes to lighters – and even an Allegro. With extensive examples of promotional items, the book interweaves car facts, racing history and interviews with everyone from Andretti to the motorhome crew, shining fresh light on the subject, including that the only paperwork was an annual letter to Chapman saying "We'd like to sponsor your cars. How little will it cost?". Shock news: the 'gold' was never gold – it was yellow! **GC**

*Published by Coterie Press, £50*
*ISBN 978-1-902351-63-6*

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## Product of the month

# Sitting comfortably?

Why every self-respecting office should have Ferrari chairs

FERRARI IS NO STRANGER TO EXOTIC MARKETING SPINOFFS, BUT THIS DESIGN COLLABORATION is one of its more unusual projects. The Prancing Horse has teamed up with luxury Italian furniture firm Poltrona Frau to create this run of Cockpit office chairs, which are modelled on the interior styling of Ferrari's road car range.

The process was overseen by Flavio Manzoni – Ferrari's head of design – and two different models are on offer. The President, described by Poltrona Frau as "the managerial model" features the higher backrest, whereas the Executive – which could otherwise be known as the common-as-muck model – has a lower, more narrow backrest.

Both models feature a carbon fibre external shell and are covered in fine leather in the best-selling shades of Ferrari's current options list. The swivel base is designed to resemble the mechanical elements of a steering wheel and can be finished in either polished or matt aluminium. They're not cheap though...

***President €10,000, Executive €7500, poltronafrau.com***






### JOEL CLARK 3D SCULPTURE

**These beguiling works of art are the kind of thing you'll look at repeatedly and notice something new each time. Artist Joel Clark takes replicas of a door or body panel from a notable car, and applies vinyl on top to create the distorted reflections that would have been seen on the real things in period, from images to streaks of light used to convey the feeling of speed. This is our favourite, using a Porsche 908 door and coloured vinyl to reflect the scene of the La Source hairpin from the 1968 Spa 1000km.**

***£2550, historiccarart.net***

### SEND US YOUR PRODUCTS

**If you have any products that might be suitable for these pages, why not send details to Robert Ladbrook at editorial@motorsportmagazine.co.uk**




## WILLIAMS FRONT WING COFFEE TABLE

**If your current coffee table is lacking in downforce, then consider this officially licensed offering from Williams, built around a repurposed wind tunnel model. The wing is 60 per cent scale and was originally part of Williams' wind tunnel model used to develop the 2009 FW31 cars, which were driven by Nico Rosberg and Kazuki Nakajima. The model has since been liveried with the design of the 2011 FW33 cars – of Rubens Barrichello and Pastor Maldonado. Comes complete with a certificate of authenticity from the team.**

***£9500, mementoexclusives.com***



## MINI JCW PLAYING CARDS

**Arguably the funkiest set of automotive-themed playing cards we've seen this month, this Mini JCW deck certainly offers something to liven up your poker nights, or even a simple game of snap. Each card features a twist on the traditional design, and the deck comes complete with a Nappa leather holder, embossed with the JCW logo.**

***£35, shop.mini.co.uk***



## BENTLEY CENTENARY NAPKIN RINGS

**You can imagine the board meeting now. Design department meets directors over lunch in a swanky restaurant to discuss product tie-ins to celebrate Bentley's 100th birthday. The table is immaculate, barring some unsightly furled napkins... bingo! Of course, what the firm needs is a set of gold-plated napkin rings! Sold as sets of two, each has the traditional Bentley Knurling pattern on the outside surface and a laser-engraved Bentley logo inside. There's also a matching centenary tealight candle holder, as presumably the restaurant they met in also had a power cut.**

***Napkin ring twin pack £85, Tealight holder £44, shop.bentleymotors.com***







## RETRO HONDA JACKETS

**Honda has a long and illustrious relationship with motor racing, both on four wheels and two. As a way of celebrating its fuel-soaked lineage, Honda has commissioned this new line of heritage clothing in partnership with Vintage Culture Style. There's T-shirts, jumpers and jackets. Our pick would be these classic soft jackets, the black one being styled on vintage mechanics' overalls and the grey one being a recreation of the classic Honda Motor Tokyo jackets worn by drivers and riders of a bygone era.**

***From £65, vintageculturestyle.com***

**MEMORABILIA, MOTOR SPORT TEAPOTS**

Enhance your brew with these teapots steeped in racing history. Yes, really...




### CARTERS OF SUFFOLK

Handmade in Suffolk, this pays tribute to the likes of Moss, Fangio and Ascari. Also available in a smaller single-cup version.

***£79, cartersofsuffolk.com/shop***



### RENAULT YELLOW TEAPOT

Made to mark the 40th year of its turbo RS01 – nicknamed the yellow teapot – these carbon-handled beauties are used at the L'Atelier Renault Café and periodically turn up for sale.

***€129 (originally), atelier.renault.com***



### SADLER OKT42

From the brilliantly titled 'OK, T 4 2' range of the 1930s. This came in a range of colours with the numberplate up front

***£150, premierantiques.co.uk***




Team BMW has led the way so far, but there are no guarantees in the BTCC

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

# Tin-top showdown

The hugely popular British Touring Car Championship reaches its climax on the legendary Brands Hatch GP Circuit

**October 12-13, Brands Hatch, Kent, Great Britain**

**MINI BREAK**

There are few finer sights in British motor sport than standing in the woods at Brands Hatch, watching a roaring pack of race cars haring into view, and with all of the aural delights that brings echoing between the trees around you.

Use of Brands' GP loop is very heavily restricted during the year - track owner MotorSport Vision can only use it for 20 days all season due to local noise restrictions - so when you get the chance to take a wander into the Kentish woods to watch cars, it always gives you a special feeling.

Having hosted big events like the DTM, British GT and Blancpain GT so far this year, the longer track signs off for 2019 with the tense three-race showdown for the British Touring Car Championship, and it's set to be a belter of an event.

Colin Turkington, Andrew Jordan and the West Surrey Racing-run Team BMW spent the first half of the year looking near-unbeatable as Turkington chases his fourth BTCC crown and Jordan his second. However, since the start of the second half of the year the new BMW 3 Series has had its turbo boost trimmed, and that's changed the picture somewhat.

We're likely to see a four-way title fight arrive at the finale, with Team Dynamics Honda's Dan Cammish and BTC Racing's Josh Cook both also at the sharp end.

One thing is for sure, you won't want to miss the 32-car grid running door-to-door down Dingle Dell with nothing to lose.

### LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

- **HOW TO GET THERE** Set your sat-nav for DA3 8NG, or alternatively you can find the circuit well signposted off both the M25 and the A20 in Kent.
- **ALSO GOING ON** MSV always has you covered for off-track entertainments, with big car displays planned, a funfair, go karting and various trade stalls and shops
- **DON'T MISS** Get yourself out into the woods! The Brands Indy Circuit may offer great viewing, but 'out the back' it feels like a totally different circuit. Take a wander through the rally course (check it's not being used first!) and find yourself out by Sheene Curve and Stirlings Bend for a great up-close view.

## WRC: ROUND 12

**October 3-6, Llandudno, Wales**

The World Rally Championship returns for Wales Rally GB with a title battle between Toyota's Ott Tänak, Citroën's Sébastien Ogier and Hyundai's Thierry Neuville. The National event this year features our own Dominic Tobin...

## WEC: ROUND 2

**October 4-6, Shanghai, China**

It seems like the World Endurance Championship has only been away for five minutes, but the grid heads to Fuji just a few weeks after the first round at Silverstone. Toyota dominated there, but the GT battle is as tight as ever.

## MOTO GP: ROUND 15

**October 4-6, Buriram, Thailand**

The Chang Circuit, otherwise known as Buriram, is one of the lesser-used tracks, but provides great views and a tricky test. As Marc Márquez continues his march to another title can Álex Rins surpass Andrea Dovizioso for second?

## FORMULA 1: ROUND 17

**October 11-13, Suzuka, Japan**

F1's trip to Suzuka always throws up drama. Considered as one of the best tracks on the calendar – and one of the only remaining ones to truly test the limits of modern grand prix machinery – it's always worth a watch.



## FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL

**October 26/27, Brands Hatch, UK**

Hot on the heels of the BTCC finale comes Brands' second big event this month. The Festival enjoys over 50 years of heritage – 48 of those at Brands – and brings the best FF1600 racers out for the knockout contest.

### MORE OCTOBER EVENTS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Oct 3-5** | NASCAR, Dover |
| **Oct 4-6** | DTM, Hockenheim |
| **Oct 9-12** | IMSA, Road Atlanta |
| **Oct 10-13** | Aussie Supercars, Bathurst |
| **Oct 18-20** | MotoGP, Motegi |
| **Oct 24-27** | WRC, Spain |
| **Oct 24-27** | Formula 1, Mexico |

# THE OLD MUSEUM AT DONINGTON PARK

## NOW AVAILABLE TO LET

The Old Museum at Donington Park, formerly home to the famed Grand Prix collection, offers more than 3,000 m2 of flexible space across five separate halls with wide connecting links.

The Old Museum can be let as a whole, or the halls can be let individually or in combinations.

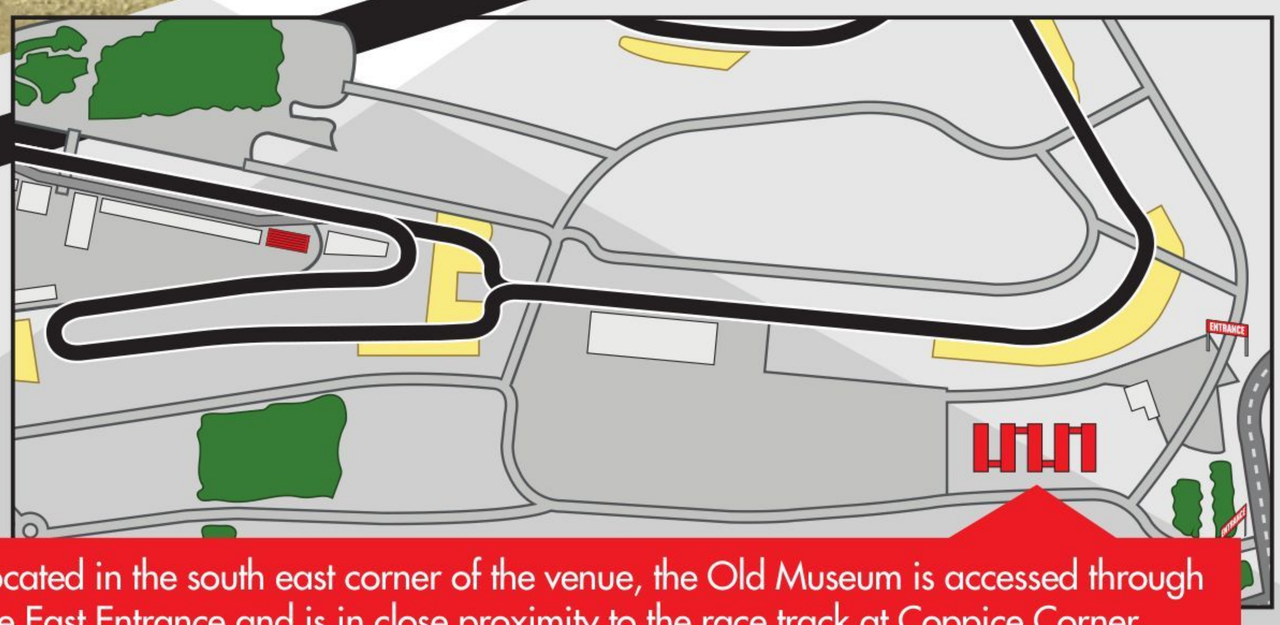
The building is suitable for various uses including workshops, storage, events and retail (particularly automotive), subject to planning.

The Old Museum benefits from excellent transport connections, ample parking, internal vehicle access and an abundance of local hotels. As part of Donington Park, which welcomes many thousands of visitors per year to its high profile events, the Old Museum also benefits from estate services including 24 hour security.








Located in the south east corner of the venue, the Old Museum is accessed through the East Entrance and is in close proximity to the race track at Coppice Corner.

For enquiries and further information please contact simon.macdonald@msv.com or 07850 602955

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The Jordans have raced together, won together, and are also now building historic race cars together. Right: A young AJ already wearing his BMW team gear

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

RACING LIVES

# Mike & Andrew Jordan

**THE JORDANS HAVE BECOME a British Touring Car Championship institution, having been racers, team owners and champions, and have also spread their talents into other regions of the sport. Mike's first BTCC entry came in 1989, but he properly committed to the series in 2006 when, having tasted success in GT racing, he brought his Team Eurotech squad in to run Honda Integras. Mike's decision to back away from driving to support Andrew's career paid off in 2013 when Andrew won the BTCC title. He's been a front-runner ever since.**

***Interviews by James Mills***

**MIKE:** "I was 21 and working as a trainee civil engineer, drawing structural steelwork, surrounded by 60-year-old blokes who'd grumble every day about how they didn't enjoy their work, and I thought, 'I need to do something else'.

One of my colleagues had just built a Morris Minor for the pre-57 Classic Saloon Championship. He did one race and decided he didn't like it! So I decided to buy the car from him. He wanted £750, and I didn't have any money, nor did my dad, so I went to three different banks and borrowed £250 from each, telling them that I planned to buy a classic Morris Minor, restore it and sell it on – so it wasn't exactly a lie…

I met Judith, my wife, in the first year of doing the classic saloon car racing. Her father was racing against me, in a Fiat Abarth 600, and I saw her at Cadwell Park, and the rest is history.

However, there was a test in our relationship early on. After that first year, I needed to rebuild the car during the winter. Judith lived in London, and I was in the Midlands, and I had to choose between travelling to see her and affording parts for the car. I'm not proud of this, but I just cut ties with her, spent the winter working on the car every evening, then two weeks before the first race at Silverstone the next year I phoned her up and said 'Okay, I've got through the winter; do you want to come racing again?' and we picked it up again. She regularly reminds me of it…

I thought I was going to be a grand prix driver. So I bought a Formula Ford from Andy Wallace after he won the pre-74 Formula Ford Championship in 1980, and raced that on and off for two years, before running out of money. There were four or five years that passed. Then Dad died, in

1986, and left me £8500, saying, 'That's everything I've got; you get on with yourself now.' By then I had knocked civil engineering on the head, and was working as a mechanic at a TVR garage.

I knew some guys at a Porsche specialist in Birmingham, and they had a Porsche 911E up for sale. They suggested I could borrow the car for the last round of the 1986 Porsche Club Championship, at Brands. So I picked it up, drove it on the road with Judith, arrived and won my class. The car was for sale for £8500, we shook on £8000. The next year Judith and I drove it to every round with my daughter in a baby seat in the back, and I won the championship, which led to people asking me to build them Porsche race cars. That's when I started Eurotech.

Between then and now it was great fun, with a couple of highlights. The Lister Storm was an amazing car. I raced it in British GT, and it was the best car in the championship, and I didn't have to come up with all the money, so it was relaxing.

Working with Laurence Pearce [then owner of Lister] was challenging, in the best possible way. I'd put the car on pole around Thruxton with a lap that I thought was peachy, and he'd come up to me and say, 'I've had a look at the data and I think you left a tenth on the table.' I learnt so much from him; it was a good relationship.

Andrew would be at the tracks, lending a hand, cleaning wheels and fetching tyres. But it was clear that school wasn't for him, so I made a deal with the headmaster that he'd come and work with me - you couldn't get away with that today.

It was the best possible move. He got his head down, and once he was 13 we got into rallycross. I told him that he's really good at it but so were plenty of other lads, some who had more money, too. So I kept him grounded, didn't let him get full of himself and pushed him.

The other moment was 2008. Andrew hadn't done all that well in the Clio Cup; he kept overdriving the car, was too aggressive. But for 2008 our sponsors took us to the BTCC - as the championship turned 50, I turned 50 - and Andrew and I were the first father-son team pairing. But it was draining, too. I realised I needed to take a step back from driving and put my energy into him.

We've now got ourselves set for the future, building and preparing historic race cars. It came about after we built an Austin A40 to race together. Just like in the Porsche championship, all those years ago, we started winning and people came knocking, asking us to build them a car. It feels great to go full circle, and do it together with Andrew this time round."

**ANDREW:** "I was always around cars. When I was born, Dad was racing, and I have vague memories of him practising driver changes with the guys he was running with in the Willhire 24 Hour race, driving a BMW M3 [in the early 90s]. I thought to myself, 'Why is that driver slamming the door? I'm always being told you aren't meant to slam doors.'

**"There was no better test of my mental strength than the 2013 BTCC title battle"**

Dad bought me a kart when I was eight, but he was never going to be one of those karting dads who pushed me into it; he wanted it to come from me. Weirdly, for someone who would become a professional racing driver, I didn't enjoy the first kart race. You are started at the front, with the faster drivers behind you, and I got knocked about quite a bit, and didn't like it.

I also didn't like school. I'm dyslexic and have a short attention span, plus I didn't like being told what to do. College came later and I much preferred the approach there, as it put the ball in your court. Now, looking back and thinking as a parent, I would say any young person should always have a backup plan if they set their sights on something like motor racing.

Dad took me under his wing. I learned a huge amount from him from the driving side, and as life-lessons go, the way you treat people and how you should conduct yourself in business and within a team.

Next came rallycross, and some people probably couldn't believe it when we went from 50 horsepower Minis to 550 horsepower Rallycross Supercars. Yet we won two events in our first year. I loved it.

Will Gollop mentored me. He's a serious guy, and taught me about the approach and mindset you need as a driver. Before he came along, as a 16-year-old lad I'd be joking around with the other drivers ahead of the start of a race, but Will taught me that you needed to view them as your competitors and that you were there to do a job: to beat them at all costs.

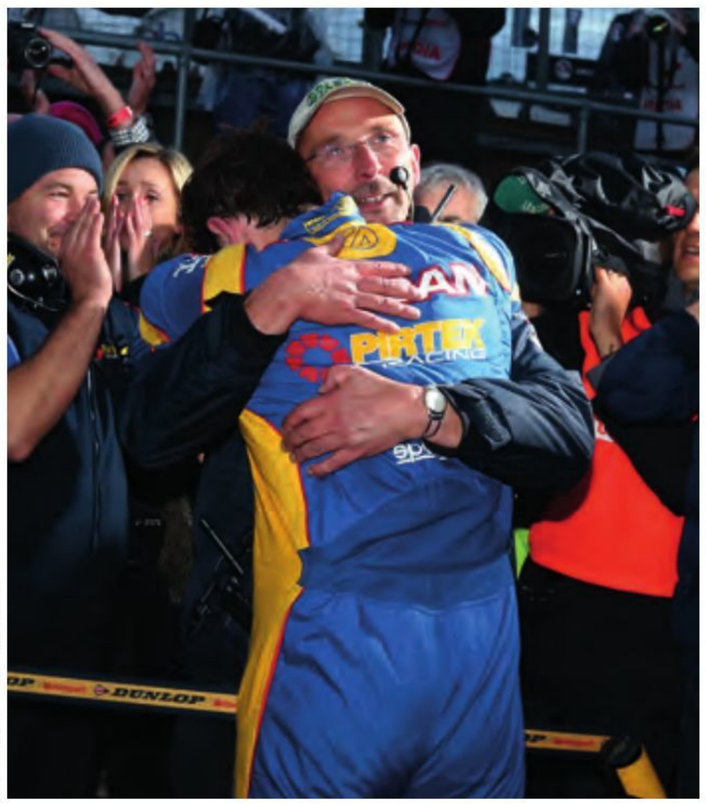
Another significant figure in my career is Don Macpherson [a mind coach]. I've worked with him since 2007, and in 2013 there was no better test of my mental performance than going into the final round of the BTCC season in the battle for the championship. It went down to the very last race of the day, and I was starting from the back of the grid, whereas Gordon Shedden, my rival for the title, was on pole position and there was no doubt he would win from that position. I focused on the finish I needed to achieve and sure enough, I took the title.

I have never felt more at one with a car than the Honda Civic I was driving that year. We bought it from the works Honda squad, Team Dynamics, and we had them beat in terms of car prep, me against their drivers; it was just a cracking year, with dad running the team and my brother in law - my best mate - running my car. It was like a bunch of mates having a great time together.

Now, at the end of a long period of sponsorship, I'm waiting to see if there is a paid seat with BMW or not. If not, I might make the move into the Porsche Carrera Cup, as a way into a sports car career. I've raced touring cars since 2008 and if I can't be in a position to challenge to win every event every weekend, which we are this year, I'd rather not do it.

Now, I love what we're doing with historic racing cars. I walk into our Jordan Racing Team workshop, and meet with customers, race some of the cars, and enjoy everything about it. It makes me proud to think that if someone decides not to have their car built by us, it's because of the cost, not the quality of our work.

It also means Dad has a bit more spare time to be a fantastic grandfather. My sister and I joke that he spends more time with the grandkids than he ever did with us, but that's cool with us!"



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

**The 2013 season was a hugely emotional one for the Jordans, as they beat the BTCC big guns**

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Racer, opportunist and businessman: Ralph Firman built the Van Diemen marque from scratch to become a Formula Ford institution

LYNDON MCNEIL

LUNCH WITH

# Ralph Firman

He ran drivers like Fittipaldi and Senna, built a prolific racing car business and remains active in the industry 50 years on. **Simon Arron** sat down with one of the sport's true elder statesmen.

HE MIGHT BE UNFAMILIAR TO the wider world, but Ralph Firman is one of the most distinguished figures in British motor racing. If you bought a car from him in the 1970s, chances are that you'd still recognise him instantly. Time's passage has not greatly altered his distinctive gait.

When *Motor Sport* arrives at the White Lodge, Attleborough, Norfolk he is sitting outside, small whisky to hand as he chats to long-time collaborator John Uprichard. "I hope you don't mind my bringing John along," Firman says. "He is very good at remembering the stuff I forget." As it transpires, though, he won't require any triggers. He orders fish pie as we repair to an indoor table, switches to neat water and reflects on a romantic liaison that led him into motor racing as a young man accustomed to servicing Ford Zephyrs.

"After leaving school," he says, "I went to work as a mechanic in an Ipswich garage - and that taught me a lot, because we serviced a huge variety of machinery. I had a lucky break, though, when my sister fell in love with and later married Jim Russell, who had established his racing school at Snetterton. He asked whether I fancied working there instead and it seemed like a cleaner option than mucking about with road cars, so I accepted."

# LUNCH WITH *Ralph Firman*

His duties included preparation of the school's single-seater fleet – and also converting Formula Junior and F3 chassis to look like F1 machinery when Russell landed a contract to supply dummy chassis for the filming of John Frankenheimer's *Grand Prix*.

Firman stayed there until 1967, when he took his tools to Anglo-Spanish Racing, which was running a pair of Brabham BT21s for Englishman Brian Classick and Spaniard Adam Czartoryski in European F3 races.

"They were fantastic days," he says, "and I lived in a big bus with other team members. It was all very hand to mouth, drivers using the start money they were paid at each race to cover the cost of getting to the next one. Some would complete three laps and then retire, having done all they needed to collect their cash, although our guys never took that approach."

THE FOLLOWING YEAR HE returned to his brother-in-law's more stable working environment – and in '69 he was tasked with building up a Lotus 59 F3 chassis. Brazilian Emerson Fittipaldi had arrived in the UK at the season's dawn and immediately set the track alight in Formula Ford, sufficiently so to trigger a mid-season promotion with Russell's team. "He was great," Firman says, "a genuinely nice fellow, as well as very quick. Although he scored quite a few wins, I particularly remember a meeting late in the season at Brands Hatch, the Motor Show 200 on the full circuit, when Emerson was quickest in practice. We had a warm-up session the following morning and, in the days of the 1.0-litre 'screamers', we used to change engines fairly regularly – I think that era of F3 explains why I'm slightly hard of hearing now. Emerson wanted me to take the timing board and stopwatch into the pits, but I said, 'No, just go out and do a couple of laps. This is the best engine we've got and I want to make sure it has no leaks.' But he wanted a proper run. It was one of those mornings when it was foggy around the far side of the circuit, and the dew was down, and on about his second lap Emerson came into Clearways, got on the kerbs and went straight off into the bank, writing off the car. I remember Jim turning up shortly afterwards and asking how things were going. I just pointed towards the wreckage at Clearways...

**"Emerson got on the kerbs and went off, writing the car off"**

"For 1970 we struck a deal to run Emerson in F2 but, typically, the bloody car wasn't ready at Lotus. So I worked flat out and ended up doing a 36-hour stint to make sure it was finished for the opening race at Thruxton, where gearbox trouble prevented him from starting. We then went over to Hockenheim and had a few more niggling problems, although he still finished sixth, but by now Colin Chapman was alert to just how good Emerson was and wanted him in his own fold, run by Lotus, and they took the car back.

"At that stage I thought it might be a good time to start running my own racing workshop, so Ralph Firman Racing Preparations came into being. In 1971 I did some F3 with Rikky von Opel – he'd raced in Formula Ford, then his father died and, according to the newspapers, he and his sister were in line for an £80 million inheritance [von Opel's great-grandfather Adam founded the car company], so Rikky had an absolute fortune to spend on racing. He and I got on fine and he wanted me to work for him on a full-time basis, but I was more interested in doing my own thing, with a variety of different people, so he went off



After running him in Formula Ford, Firman also helped Emerson Fittipaldi into F3. Here the Brazilian leads the 1969 Reg Parnell Trophy at Crystal Palace in a Jim Russell-entered Lotus 59

with Mo Nunn to drive an Ensign, won the Lombard British F3 title in '72, graduated to F1 and then fairly swiftly disappeared. I haven't spoken to him since. One day many years ago I phoned Mo to ask whether he had Rikky's contact details, but the last Mo knew was that he'd gone off to join some kind of commune."

FIRMAN CARRIED ON RUNNING F3 cars through 1972, but found it increasingly hard to keep his head above water. "With one thing and another I had bills that weren't being paid, the usual motor racing thing, so I said, 'Right, I'm going to build something' - and that turned out to be the first Van Diemen. I opted for Formula Ford because I'd always liked the category, the cars were reasonably cheap to build - and of course I had a good potential customer in Jim, who placed an order once he'd seen what we were building."

And the reason for the company name? Firman chuckles with the answer.

"Australian driver Ross Ambrose had a Merlyn F3 car and came over to tour around Europe," he says. "Ross wanted somewhere to prepare it and rented a bit of my workshop space. When he heard what I was doing, he took an interest and suggested that he should take over the business side and leave me to run all the mechanical stuff. He put in £250 and I had the machines and stuff, which we assessed were probably worth about £250, so that was our deal. As far as the name was concerned, Ross came in one morning, while I was busy hacksawing something or other, and said, 'What d'you think about Van Diemen?' I replied that I couldn't even pronounce it. He explained that all the English convicts had been sent to Van Diemen's Land, now Tasmania, and that's where he was from, so he felt it was a good choice to cover both of us... As far as I was concerned he could call it whatever he wanted, but I actually quite liked it once I'd worked out how to get my tongue around it."





Aside from the noted Brazilians, Firman also ran drivers like Tommy Byrne and Dan Wheldon

The company enjoyed a fruitful first season, Don MacLeod taking his Van Diemen FA73 to victory in both the BRSCC FF1600 Championship and the Formula Ford Festival, though Ambrose left at the year's end to pursue other business interests and that 'FA' suffix became 'RF'. Van Diemen's startling early success was not, however, initially maintained. "We'd run Don's car in 1973," Firman says, "but didn't really have a works team as such for the next couple of years. There were some race wins, but by 1976 Hawke had come up with the DL15 - a much better car than ours - and lots of drivers bought that. I knew we needed to move on, so I went to Birmingham to see David Baldwin, who had been working with the Fittipaldi F1 team, and told him I needed a new car. We sat there talking until about four in the morning before he eventually agreed to design it. I loved Formula Ford and could see the numbers we might be able to sell if we came up with something truly competitive."

The answer was Baldwin's Van Diemen RF77, with which Brazilian Chico Serra secured the 1977 BRSCC title before capping his campaign with a Festival victory. "We never looked back after that," Firman says. "It proved we could run cars well, so I decided we'd carry on doing our own thing and make sure we showcased our cars to the very best of their abilities, good or bad."

Wasn't it tricky selling cars when customers knew they'd be taking on an official factory team?

"I would never commit to a development without making enough to satisfy any customers that wanted them - and that built trust," Firman says. "It was obviously in my interest if they did well, so I didn't hold anything back and I think that gave them confidence. If a customer team could beat the works cars, it reflected very well on the product."

It was an ultra-competitive time for Formula Ford and Van Diemen faced stiff opposition from such as Royale, Hawke and Crosslé plus, just around the corner, Lola and Reynard. The company didn't win everything, but it achieved multiple championship and Festival victories with drivers such as Michael Roe, Terry Gray, Roberto Moreno, Ayrton Senna (or Da Silva, as he was known at the time), Tommy Byrne, Dave Coyne, Bertrand Gachot, Mark Blundell, Paul Warwick, Roland Ratzenberger, Eddie Irvine, Vincenzo Sospiri, David Coulthard, Jan Magnussen and Mark Webber, to name but a few.

"I've never compared drivers from year to year," Firman says. "I remember [Van Diemen race engineer] Micky Galter coming up to me early one season and saying, 'Wow, we've got a fantastic crop of drivers this season' - I think the top 10 or 12 on the grid were covered by little more than a tenth, but from my perspective they might all have been fantastic, average or perhaps even no good at all. You could never be certain from one season to the next.

"I was disappointed that Dave Coyne [1990 Festival winner] didn't progress higher up the ladder, though. He won a lot of



Firman (left) looks over plans for Senna's RF81 design alongside engineer Derek Wild

junior races but could have achieved so much more if he'd taken greater care of himself. He's an absolutely fantastic driver, one who really should have made it to F1, but he enjoyed the nightlife and a few drinks – absolutely his entitlement – but he had the ability to go all the way to the top."

THE FULL STORY OF SENNA'S 1981 Formula Ford season with Van Diemen was covered in the December 2018 edition of *Motor Sport*, but – by way of a refresh – was there anything in particular that made him stand apart from other drivers? "Ayrton was tough and hard on the track," Firman says, "as most of them are, but away from it I always just considered him a normal bloke. The main thing with him was his extraordinary focus – even during downtime. He'd win a race, then be in the office by 9am on Monday complaining that his engine hadn't been good enough. I'd reply, 'Jesus, you won by eight seconds' – but he still wanted me to contact our supplier Minister to ask for more power.

"We ran lots of South American drivers, but most settled in pretty well – even though I suppose Norfolk is a bit different from São Paulo. We looked after them and my wife Angela was very involved in all of that. We'd find them a house, rent them a TV, open a bank account... One or two came and went pretty quickly, either because they were homesick or else had money problems, but the serious ones all hung around."




Van Diemen had started producing cars for the higher-spec Formula Ford 2000 class in 1978 – "The first one wasn't that big a deal, we just added wings and a bigger engine to an FF1600 chassis" – and in the mid '80s was contracted by John Webb (then head of MCD, which controlled Brands Hatch and affiliated circuits) to produce chassis for a glut of new one-make series – Formula First, Formula Forward and Multisports.

"I never really agreed with one-make racing," Firman says, "but if we hadn't done the deal it would have gone to somebody else, so it was a sound business decision. Once you've built the car and sorted it out, beyond the first season you don't have to do a great deal apart from cleaning it. It didn't bring on young mechanics or engineers, but as a cash cow it was great for keeping a workforce busy.

"Those Formula First cars were little beasts, but at the time they were what people wanted – a dad and his lad could run one from a van and a trailer. FF1600 had already advanced beyond that stage – to succeed you needed to be running with a professional

# The human side of Eddie Irvine

## Firman and Duckhams handed the hard-up Ulsterman an early career boost, and got repaid... eventually

Ulsterman Irvine was as much a hard-nosed businessman as he was a racer, with a keen eye for a deal. Happy to play number two to Michael Schumacher at Ferrari in exchange for the handsome pay.

But in the 1980s, Irvine was a promising Formula Ford driver who rarely had the means to allow his talent full rein – and his pace brought him to Ralph Firman. A long-standing sponsorship deal with Duckhams enabled Firman to offer subsidised drives to those he regarded as stars of the future.

"I can't recall how much a factory FFord seat was worth in 1987," Firman says, "but it was significantly more than the £10,000 I'd asked. When the time came to pay, Eddie gave me a cheque for £2000 and promised to make up the shortfall when he could. That didn't happen, of course..."

Irvine won eight of the 12 British FF1600 rounds on his way to the title, then added the Festival win. It was a springboard to a plum drive with Marlboro-backed West Surrey Racing in British F3. He would make his F1 debut with Jordan late in 1993.

"Some years after, I met Eddie at the Autosport Show and, as we were chatting, he leaned over and slipped a bit of paper into my pocket – a cheque for the £8000 he still owed," says Firman. "I was very touched, though you can imagine his reply when I asked if he'd included the interest...

"One year, Eddie was also asked to present *Autosport*'s John Bolster Award for Technical Achievement. He's no fan of gala ceremonies, so he said he wouldn't do it... unless they gave it to me. But in 2003 they did and he did, which I thought was very nice. It underlined his appreciation for what we'd done for him."



**Irvine paid Firman back, and even presented his *Autosport* John Bolster Award in 2003**



Ayrton Senna, or Da Silva as he was known then, made his breakthrough at the wheel of a Van Diemen RF81



Mark Webber on his way to victory in the 1996 Festival, a result that sealed the marque's ninth win in 11 years at the event

team, to have an engineer and so on. The same thing had happened with F3 in the 1960s. That was the direction FF1600 took and by the end of the 1980s I'd say it was far too expensive - and then in 1993 they changed to the Zetec engine, which pretty much finished it for me. I didn't lose interest, but the cars were heavier with that bloody great lump in the back and the racing wasn't as good. It took us two or three seasons to get the chassis properly sorted, to dial out the understeer and stuff. I don't think it did the category any favours, but that's the way Ford wanted to go."

Uprichard: "There wasn't an awful lot to the old Kent engine. If you had a misfire or something, if a wire had come off the coil, it was easy to fix. As soon as you went to the Zetec it had an ECU, a wiring loom, all that kind of stuff - enough to stump any ordinary guy. It became difficult to run a car yourself."

While Formula Ford had conceivably lost its direction, the same could not have been said for one of its staunchest supporters. Van Diemen had consistently been building and selling more than 100 racing cars per annum - peaking at 170 when it landed John Webb's one-make deals - and had also branched out into other disciplines, building an F3 car for the 1992 season.

"We were so busy what with our regular production plus all the one-make stuff that had been coming in, then we started selling cars to racing schools in Japan and where have you," Firman says. "The F3 project was probably a mistake, because we had too much going on and my heart wasn't really in any jobs that we couldn't do properly."

Uprichard: "We'd built the Multisports car for Brands Hatch - and then Ralph commissioned somebody to do a concept study, to see what a road-going version might look like. Ralph had the idea of doing a road car, maybe a Caterham-type thing with Van Diemen badging, because the firm had such a good name at the time that we thought it might help it to sell. I think he was probably on his own, though, because everybody else in the place was dead keen on tackling F3, which was seen as such a big step forward."

Firman: "We were totally productionised with a fantastic machine shop and had invested heavily in the latest CNC [computer numerical control] tooling, and had good people running it. The fabrication shop was very efficient, too, but if I'm honest we were making stuff for peanuts. Really, we'd have done better if we'd stuck with the idea of a road car - I reckon we had a potential 4-5000 customers, who'd already bought Van Diemens. [Former Lola designer] Andy Thorby was working on the F3 programme and had got as far as drafting a new monocoque for 1993. I think ours was the first F3 car with a monoshock suspension system, a concept subsequently embraced to exceptionally good effect by Dallara, but we'd had problems with flexing at the rear of the 1992 car. To counter this, the tub of the proposed '93 chassis extended back much further than normal and featured a couple of holes for the driveshafts. We got as far as building one. The carbon structure came back as far as the gearbox, which I'm not sure anybody has done since, so we thought we'd have a super-stiff chassis, but I woke up one morning, went to the factory, apologised to Andy and told him I was canning the project."

And where is that monocoque now? "Good question," Firman says, "and one I asked only a few months ago. I haven't seen it for some time and have no idea what became of it."

Although Van Diemen continued to accumulate contracts during the 1990s - for instance landing a deal to build the new Formula Vauxhall Junior single-seater, ironically a direct competitor to FF1600 - that road car idea continued to bug him... and ultimately played a part in his decision to sell the business. "At one stage," he says, "we'd had to rely on winning races to generate business, but with the one-make

thing you could just bang out a load of cars – at least in the first year of a new formula. The way I saw it, we needed to expand – and probably to move into road car production, about which I'd started thinking seriously again. In that instance, if I were to reinvest it would be another 10 years before I started to see any return. I think I was getting a bit long in the tooth for that kind of commitment, so when [American businessman] Don Panoz made me a reasonable offer I decided to accept. I saw Don as a way to expand and use the good name of Van Diemen alongside his existing motor sport businesses [G Force and Élan Motorsport Technologies], but it didn't work out. I stayed on as CEO for three years and was paid very well, but…

"When Don wanted to build a GT2 racer I put a team together and costed everything out, but he insisted it should be front-engined. Stupidly, I suppose, as he was paying the bills, I dug in my heels. We made a quarter-scale model, put it in the wind tunnel and proved conclusively that the rear wing would be more efficient with a rear-engined car, but Don wasn't to be persuaded. He asked whether I'd ever seen a horse behind a cart, at which point I told him I wouldn't do it. Daft, really, but I suppose I was too much of a purist to do something I knew was wrong – and it would be my job to try to sell the thing. So that was that. I figured it was time to move on and thought Don would make good use of Van Diemen's name to expand the business, but he seemed to have reached the conclusion that it was just a funny little company that built funny little cars. He didn't really grasp what we'd been all about – and if I'd known that beforehand, I probably wouldn't have sold up."





**Ralph Firman is still involved in building racing cars, and is currently working with his son Ralph Jr (above, left) in the family photo.**

**CV** **BORN 12/3/1944, IPSWICH, ENGLAND**

- **1963** Starts work as mechanic with brother-in-law Jim Russell's racing school
- **1967** Joins F3 team Anglo-Spanish Racing
- **1969** Runs Emerson Fittipaldi's Jim Russell-entered Lotus 59 in British F3
- **1970** Sets up Ralph Firman Racing Preparations
- **1973** Van Diemen formed; Don MacLeod takes first car to a BRSCC championship/ Formula Ford Festival double
- **1975** Acquires assets of defunct GRD and markets short run of F3 cars
- **1977** Chico Serra's success in British FF1600 establishes Van Diemen as one of the market leaders
- **1981** Signs Ayrton Senna as factory driver
- **1986** Lands contract to build new Formula First cars
- **1992** Van Diemen returns briefly to F3
- **1999** Sells company to US entrepreneur Don Panoz, but remains on board as CEO
- **2002** Leaves Panoz to focus on property
- **2008** Builds bike-powered RFR Formula 1000 cars
- **2016** Returns to FF1600 with Firman brand
- **2017** Luke Williams wins National FF1600 title in Firman RFR16
- **2019** Working with son Ralph Jr on fledgling Firman R1 sports car project

That was 2002 and Firman spent a few years pursuing other interests, managing an industrial estate close to Snetterton before building a series of Formula 1000 single-seaters – known as RFRs – that were exported to North America, New Zealand and elsewhere from 2008. Eight years later, with Formula Ford 1600 never really having gone away (its prestige might have dipped, but its competitive zest remains), he returned to his roots and produced the Firman RFR16, an example of which Luke Williams used to win the UK FF1600 Championship in 2017.

However, perhaps the largest contract of his comeback came in the form of a partnership with Jonathan Palmer's MotorSport Vision organisation, for which Firman developed a car for the all-new BRDC Formula 4 Championship in 2013. Those machines helped launch the careers of drivers like George Russell, Jake Hughes, Harrison Newey and Charlie Eastwood over the three years of use before being replaced by the carbon-tubbed Tatuus offerings the rebadged BRDC British F3 Championship uses today.

Uprichard: "When Van Diemen was at its peak I think we had agents in about 20 countries, so there was a lot of travelling. When we decided to do it this time, we just wanted to focus on the UK. We thought it would be great to go racing without ever having to go near an airport."

Firman: "The trouble with that, of course, is that you're only going to sell four or five cars a year, so it's not worth the effort – especially when people are still winning FF1600 races in 20-year-old Van Diemens!"

THE WORLD HAS CHANGED SINCE the days when Formula Ford cars could occasionally be seen crossing the A11 under their own steam, to get from the Van Diemen factory across to Snetterton for a spot of testing – much quicker than loading them into a truck – but Firman's passion for the industry has never wavered. He is now working in partnership with his former grand prix racer son Ralph Jr, whose first Firman R1 sports-racer should be ready early in 2020. "It's basically a single-seater with prototype bodywork and lots of downforce," Firman says. "I'm happy to get involved on the mechanical side while Ralph Jr does all the running around."

Does he harbour any regrets about the hand he's been dealt? "None at all," he says. "Somebody once told me, 'Ralph, you don't make mistakes, you're just on a learning curve.' That's always been my attitude."

DK Engineering
Est. 1977

# The Kirk F. White, 1972 Sebring 12 Hours, Ferrari Daytona Competizione


1972 Sebring 12h
Photo Credit: Revs Automotive Library

This Daytona was developed for Kirk F. White to contest the GT class at one of the World's great endurance races, it was converted from a production car to full competition specs in period. The conversion work involved Holman and Moody (who built virtually all the competition factory Fords in their all-conquering NASCAR and Le Mans program) and Traco (who were, at the time one of the finest engine shops in the world). The car arrived at Sebring in 1972 with all the competition features as seen today - the features that are synonymous with these great GT cars. Large flared wheel arch extensions, covering 8" and 11" wide alloy race wheels secured by single locking nuts, an alloy chin spoiler, reconfigured light assemblies, a quick release fuel filler exiting through the boot lid, number marker lights, uprated suspension, and brakes from a Mk IV GT40. In all there are just 25 period Group 4 competition Daytonas recognised by the Ferrari factory, and this was certainly the fastest and most highly developed of them all with its unique specification. This car qualifies for some of the greatest events in the historic calendar - the Le Mans Classic and Tour Auto to name but two - and would be welcomed with open arms all around the world. Supplied with Classiche Certification.

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# Running on military time

Plenty of watches are inspired by instruments, but start-up brand Reservoir has created a range that really pulls it off

LAUNCHED IN 2017 BY FORMER HSBC banker François Moreau and staffed by a clutch of former Rolex and TAG Heuer employees, its initial collection of well made and imaginative retrograde hour watches was inspired by the distinctive speedometer used in the original Mini - but the brand has now expanded its offering to include designs based on aircraft cockpit instruments and a model that mimics the pressure/contents gauges found on SCUBA diving air tanks.

Its latest pays tribute to the significant role played by the legendary Jeep in the D-Day landings of June 6, 1944.

There can be few car enthusiasts who are not familiar with the Jeep, which emerged in 1940 as a classic example of form following function after the U.S. Department of War invited 135 motor manufacturers to tender their designs for a light, all-terrain, four-wheel-drive vehicle.

But the time frame was so short that just two firms pitched, Willys Overland and American Bantam, with Ford being kept close should its vast production capacity be needed. Initially, American Bantam landed the job and commissioned designer Karl Probst to conceive and present a suitable prototype, which he did within the Department's prescribed deadline of 49 days - the result being the Bantam Reconnaissance Car that became known simply as the Jeep.

More than 2,700 BRCs were made, with most sent to the British Army - but American Bantam's inability to build the large numbers required resulted in the blueprints being handed to Ford and Willys Overland so full-scale production could get underway. With both Willys and Ford both having input, more than 637,000 were built by 1945.

Reservoir's Battlefield D-Day watch




captures the look of a typical military Jeep with a 'sand-khaki' dial highlighted with a white, stencilled minute scale and a U.S. Army star. The retrograde time display features an hour window at the six o'clock position, beneath which is a petrol gauge-style power reserve indicator for monitoring the state of the ETA automatic movement. You can have a leather strap as well as a more authentic-looking nylon 'NATO' type.

Next year, Reservoir will expand the Battlefield collection with two further pieces named 'Midway' and Tobrouk, with a proportion of profits from the latter being donated to a war veterans' charity.

*Reservoir Battlefield D-Day. £3,800*
*reservoir-watch.com*



AUTOMOTIVE-INSPIRED WATCH brand Meccaniche Veloci was founded in Milan in 2006, its first product being the radical-looking QuattroValvole featuring a dial set with four individual subdials - inspired by the inlet and exhaust valves of an engine's combustion chamber. This Nardi Edition is a collaboration with steering wheel brand Nardi and features a titanium case set with a band of Nardi-style wood. Just 50 will be made.

*Meccaniche Veloci Nardi Edition, £8,200, meccanicheveloci.com*



ALTHOUGH ONLY IN ITS SECOND year of production, the high-end brand formed through a collaboration between rock musician Rob Dickinson's California-based Singer Porsche upgrade business and one-time Panerai designer Marco Borraccino has attracted a global following - and now it has a UK outlet in Mayfair's Berkeley Square. To mark it comes this 50-piece London Edition of the Track 1.

*Singer Reimagined Track 1 London Edition, £37,000*
*singerreimagined.com*

***Precision*** **is written by renowned luxury goods specialist Simon de Burton**





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MOTOR SPORT

# LETTERS

Doug Nye's musings on Mercedes' Hockenheim debacle [*The Archives, October*], raises the dubious concept of PR and marketing departments becoming too influential in the running of racing teams. The 1963/64/65 Ford GT40 programme was largely the 'baby' of Ford US marketing. History shows that the GT40 (a totally Ford US design with UK post-design corrective input) and their unrealistic race deadlines resulted in 100 per cent DNFs in 1964. These were on the back of a ridiculously short build period of about seven months, added to a restriction of testing that could have shown flaws much sooner. Then there was the enforced relinquishing of the sole completed car to the US for a Ford PR presentation, further restricting testing only days before the 1964 Le Mans test. The result was John Wyer being blamed by some ignorant Ford people and being removed from the racing effort with Carroll Shelby taking over.

However, in 1965 Ford US's success was limited to a win at the Daytona 2000Km - the rest of the season, especially their defeat at Le Mans, was a disaster. At least they had the 'cojones' to come back in 1966 and make good. I was at Le Mans then as a spectator and the impression I had was engineering was in control. A safe rule is to keep the 'chocolates and flowers' people away from the nitty gritty of running a race programme.

**JAMES FINLAY, BICESTER**

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I appreciate how difficult it is to keep a car original, especially an active race car, but I am losing the plot with the trend of where the originality line is.

There was a superb article on the Zerex Special [*The Original Unfair Advantage, September*], but in the article you say that a few panels around the back end were remade. Now they might have been remade by the man who made the original and using the original tools, nice touch, but it was a new piece of aluminium and more than likely not to the original spec. I fail to see how you can say 'You can't get much more original than that'. It is a new piece and not part of the original car.

I would be interested in Doug Nye's views on this originality trend. I can see our old friend DSJ up there muttering 'Rhubarb, Rhubarb' through his beard.

**DENZIL MONIS, BRISTOL**



**The Zerex Special, as featured in September, raises the question of true originality**

As an enthusiastic reader of *Motor Sport* for many years, I was taken aback by a picture in September [*Pick of the Paddock*] of a Ferrari 250 SWB, described as belonging to my friend Arnold Meier. As a matter of fact, the illustration does not match the article, as the car on the picture is actually my car I have been racing around Europe for more than 15 years.

I agree the confusion between these cars is easy since they have both the same livery. While you perfectly depicted the history of Arnold's car, my Ferrari SWB is totally original: body, chassis, 3-litre engine, gearbox, rear axle, etc. More than 18,000km in competition across Europe, it won four times the Ferrari Maserati Challenge, finished second, third and fourth at Le Mans Classic, and made very good results as well at Goodwood.

In a few words, a car which could also inspire a nice story in your excellent magazine. I would be most happy if you would give it back its real identity.

**VINCENT GAYE, BRAINE-L'ALLEUD, BELGIUM**

Loved the article on Brawn GP [*The Brawn Supremacy, October*]. I saw a car many years ago on display at Mercedes Benz World and I thought it so cool that there were no sponsors adverts on it. Shows that talent can sometimes win through, although rare nowadays.

**ADAM HERMITAGE, VIA EMAIL**

Ed Foster's piece on the Lotus Cortina [*Delivery for Mr Clark, October*] was very interesting and timely as we have just visited the museum, as well as Chirnside cemetery, and seen the car in all its glory. The museum is a perfect tribute to the man - modest and understated, as true class always should be, but seldom is.

**DAVID JONES, TRING**

As usual Mark Hughes writes with great insight on the new F1 rules - and I really am concerned! With the scale and ever-rising spending, Formula 1 has now become a bloated behemoth. Well rehearsed is the argument that the complex hybrid motive power/energy recovery technology has to be retained to keep the manufacturers involved. But in the last few months consumer acceptance of electric and hybrid cars has considerably accelerated. At the same time there is an 'end of an era' feeling amongst us enthusiasts, that IC-powered cars are to be savoured before they are lost to us, either with a classic car or an expensive performance vehicle. Those 'niche' makers may therefore well see a marketing justification to invest in F1. Meanwhile, the higher volume, lower price-point product manufacturers can look to the now growing-profile formats like Formula E and LMP1 for sales-promotional exposure of their 'new technology' cars.

Thus, if F1 reverted to non-hybrid multi-cylinder engined cars with an emphasis on mechanical grip, not only would the noise thrill us once again and the racing be closer, but costs could be reduced vastly, lessening the need for the teams to seek ever-escalating income, including from the big manufacturers.

As someone who has loved motor racing since the Fifties, I'm conscious of needing not just to long for the 'good old days,' but I feel the entertainment value derived from grands prix today is not superior to that of past decades. Do we really believe that the expense involved is sustainable?

**DAVID BUCKDEN, WALMER, KENT**

**CONTACT US**

**Write to *Motor Sport*, 18-20 Rosemont Road, London, NW3 6NE or e-mail, editorial@motorsportmagazine.co.uk**

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PORSCHE'S ULTIMATE WEAPON

# Best of the best

The Porsche 917 took many forms across its gloriously successful journey into the hearts of racing fans. But one version stands out above the others. **Andrew Frankel** got behind the wheel of its greatest evolution, the monstrous Can-Am 917/30

MARK RICCIONI

"This is the ultimate version of the car readers of this magazine voted to be the greatest of all time"

With a huge 5.4-litre flat-12 engine and weighing in at only 850kg, the 917/30 had brutal acceleration

# The Porsche 917 through the ages

What has become one of Porsche's most iconic models never stayed the same for long. Over its five-year lifespan, the 917 took many forms.




MARK RICCIONI

# PORSCHE'S ULTIMATE WEAPON

THEY WERE ALL JUST STORIES. They had to be. Of course a Porsche 917/30 would not actually spin its rear wheels at over 120mph.

I mean, have you seen those wheels? Or the acres of fresh Avon racing rubber that cover them? And it's not as if there is a lot of car in need of propelling: dry of all liquids, just 850kg all told. Lighter than the smallest, lightest Smart car.

And then there was the power. In period the actual horsepower of this 5.4-litre, twin-turbo flat 12, in standard racing output, was a little in excess of 1100bhp. But then again Porsche wouldn't let me out with that under my right foot, surely? Not for a demo at Goodwood, and not in this of all its cars.

The only person ever to win a Can-Am race in a Porsche 917/30 was Mark Donohue, and he only raced two of these cars. One is in captivity in the US and this is the other. This car has only ever been raced by Mark, and it has never been out of Porsche's hands. This car, 917/30-002, was the first 917/30 to win a Can-Am race. The idea that I would be released in it unfettered seemed rather fanciful at best.

But I was wrong. Here's a snapshot of a telephone call between the Franchitti brothers. Dario has been watching the live feed of my run at Goodwood, sees something on the screen and feels an urgent need to call Marino: "Tell me that was clutch slip," he says to his little brother. "No mate," says Marino, "that was wheel spin. Wheel spin."

It seems odd to be responsible for such a moment, but what the four-time IndyCar champion and triple Indy 500 winner is asking about is a moment I'll be remembering for a good while yet.

I've encountered wheel spin plenty of times on the Goodwood pit straight, because you enter it via a rather slow chicane and tend to bury the throttle on the way out. True, this wheel spin was on the pit straight too, but at the other end of it. At the fast end. The end where you should be thinking about losing speed, not gaining. But there it was, just at that moment I thought it finally safe to leave my foot on the floor. Before I had time to react, the tell-tale on the tachometer had flicked from 6000rpm to 7200rpm. This was the top end of third gear: it only has four gears and fourth is geared to do 220mph. So you tell me how fast it was travelling when it tried to incinerate its Avons…

When it was all over, I asked a question the answer to which I should probably have found out before we even started. Exactly how much power did the car have today, right here and right now?

The engineer shrugged apologetically. "I am sorry but we do not know for sure. More than 1100 horsepower for sure, but maybe not much."

What I had just driven was the best of the best. The fastest, most highly developed and just plain greatest version of the car that readers of this magazine voted the greatest racing car of all time. It can never, could never, get better than this.



**1969 917** The original from which all others would be spawned, even if it was the least successful of all. Developed off the back of the successful 908, the 4.5-litre 12-cylinder 917 was first run at Spa and the Nürburgring before heading to Le Mans. It suffered significant handling problems, mostly attributed to aerodynamic lift. The problem was so bad that all of the originals were modified, so none existed in their true configuration until Porsche restored chassis 001 for its 50th anniversary.



**1969 917PA SPYDER** With the PA standing for Porsche + Audi as part of a marketing exercise, the roof was chopped from the chassis to create an open sports-prototype developed solely for use within the North American Can-Am championship. It featured a signature upwards flick of the rear bodywork to aid aero stability over the coupé. Jo Siffert was the driver of note, scoring a podium finish after switching to the new car mid-season.

Mark Donohue won six of the eight Can-Am races in 1973 at the wheel of 917/30-002, making him one of only two drivers to win a race in the model. Here he chats with team boss Roger Penske, *left*



**1970 917KH** Upset by the original 917's wandering at high speeds, Porsche's technical department conducted several days of testing with British engineer and team owner John Wyer at the Osterreichring, where the original design and the open-topped PA ran back-to-back. The cure was the upwards sweeping rear bodywork, known as the Kurzheck, or short-tail. The improvement was obvious from the start and the Kurzheck became the design of choice for all races barring Le Mans, even though Richard Attwood and Hans Herrmann ironically delivered the 917's (and Porsche's) first win at La Sarthe in short-tail format.



**1970 917L** While the short-tail improved the 917's high-speed stability, the new rear added drag, therefore restricting its top speed. Not ideal at Le Mans in the 1970s, when the circuit was mostly straights. The solution was this Le Mans-specific Langheck, or long-tail, design. Even though it brought back some of the stability issues of the original, factory driver Vic Elford found it to be 25mph quicker down the straights than the short-tailed 917s and Ferrari 512s, and became the first man to lap with an average of above 240kph – at 242.685kph. Two were entered by the factory, with Elford's suffering engine failure and the sister car finishing second, behind the more stable 917KH.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

HERE'S A QUESTION. IN THE space between the first 917/30 firing up for the first time on November 10 1972 and the end of the 1973 season, whereafter Can-Am racing was made to run to a fuel-consumption formula which effectively killed the series and certainly the 917/30's competitiveness in it, how many people won any kind of race in a Porsche 917/30 - any Porsche 917/30?

The answer is two. Donohue is of course best known for driving the car. He raced chassis 002 and 003 to six wins in eight races in the 1973 Can-Am championship. Sadly, he died nearly 44 years ago during practice for the 1975 Austrian Grand Prix. The other is Victor Henry Elford.

# "I changed gear at 150mph and it left thick black lines behind it"

This is because the original test car, chassis 001, never left Europe and was instead campaigned in the Interserie championship, a somewhat less prestigious series, but one that nevertheless ran to the same Group 7 regulations as Can-Am.

Elford came out of semi-retirement to do one race at Hockenheim. And despite the fact he'd never driven it before and the small matter of it having close to double the power of any other car he'd raced, Vic put the 917/30 on pole, then won the race by three minutes, leading home a Porsche parade that filled the first nine places. "It was such a lovely car to drive," mused Vic over dinner the evening before I drove it. "Twice the power of the 917 I first drove in 1969 and none of its vices."

I asked him what it was really like to race. "I can't really tell you I'm afraid. It was never in the plan to actually race it. The plan was to start in front and stay in front. No racing required. And that's exactly what we did.

"What I remember most clearly was when it came out of the old Ostkurve and I changed from third to fourth at 150mph, it could still leave thick black lines behind it. I did find that quite impressive..."

Less than 24 hours later, I had some first-hand experience of what he said.

Of Mark Donohue's thoughts on the car, we have only the written word, though these are fairly unequivocal. After his dominant 1973 season he said: "At this time, there is nothing in the world any quicker, any better handling, any more advanced technically and any more fun to drive." And he's not just talking within the world of Can-Am cars. His fastest lap of the race that he won at Watkins Glen in this very car was over two seconds quicker than any F1 car would go on the same track later that year in the US Grand Prix.

In popular imagination the 917 Can-Am story starts at the end of 1971 when Porsche stormed out of the World Sports Car Championship (when the 917 was effectively banned) sailed across the Atlantic and steam-rollered Can-Am, first with the 917/10 in



**1971 917 16-CYLINDER** With the more powerful McLaren M8Fs and Lola T260s coming to the fore in Can-Am, Porsche was in danger of being left behind, so started coaxing more power from its engine. This chassis, 027, was used to evaluate a series of 16-pot units, scaling from 6 to 7.2 litres. On the dyno the 7.2 touched 850bhp, but was believed to be capable of 880bhp. The engine was fitted into a streamlined, lengthened and surgically ventilated chassis and driven by Mark Donohue for a few tests, including 56 laps of Weissach in September when Donohue believed up to 2000bhp would be achievable with turbos. Porsche then switched focus to turbocharging instead. The car never raced and only one example exists, fitted with the 6.6-litre flat-16 unit.



**1971 917K** While Porsche offered the option to use a bored-out 4.9-litre version of the flat 12 in 1970, the factory cars opted to stick with the proven 4.5-litre variant for Le Mans. For 1971 the larger unit was more proven and was even extended to 5 litres. The 917's chassis changed, too, with ultra-light gas-pressured tubular magnesium framing being used in the winning chassis, 053 – the only coupé Porsche would race with that high-risk, rather flammable, combination. Vertical rear fins added more stability without extra drag. The car won Le Mans on the first attempt with Helmut Marko and Gijs van Lennep.

1972, then with the 917/30 the next year. But while the Porsche factory team did indeed make its Can-Am debut with the 917, it was with a very different 917 to that seen here, and in a different decade. It was August 1969, just over three months after the 917 had raced for the very first time in Europe. The car was called the PA Spyder and surrounded by McLarens, Lolas, the odd Chaparral and Ferrari, Jo Siffert brought it home a very creditable fourth overall. But the car was basically a 908 Spyder chassis complete with the early 4.5-litre normally aspirated engine.

What is sad about Porsche's tentative early steps into the Can-Am field is that Siffert was the driving force behind it, yet did not live to see the project through. It is poignant to wonder what he would have made of the 917/30.

Although few noticed them, Siffert's efforts in Can-Am in 1971 had been extraordinary. Using a new car called the 917/10 and entered under his own name (albeit with a car designed and engineered by Porsche) he scored a string of impressive results: third on the debut at Watkins Glen, second at Mid-Ohio, second at Road America and so on, and all with a car hopelessly down on power relative to those of the full works McLaren team with its enormous 'big banger' Chevy V8s. If the missing horsepower could be located, the implications were clear.

Perhaps surprisingly to us reading this almost 50 years later, it was not immediately obvious where the source of that power might lie. Ferdinand Piëch favoured adding a cylinder to each corner of the extant flat-12 motor to create a 16-cylinder monster. It was evaluated at various capacities, built and even run in the back of the long-suffering PA Spyder: in 7.2-litre guise it had 880bhp, which was probably enough to put Porsche on a par with McLaren. But the engine was complex, heavy and, most importantly, required an extension in wheelbase that ruined the car's handling.



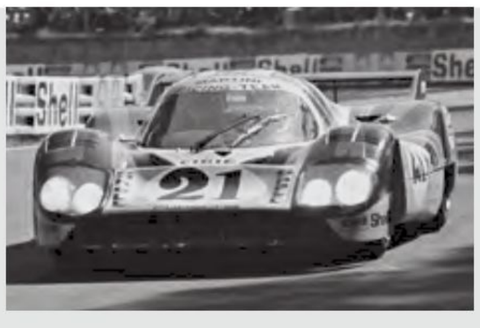

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

**Donohue and the 917/30 took pole and fastest lap in every race they entered as a combination**



LYNDON McNEIL

**Simple in design, yet brutally effective each time. The 917/30 was built on years of development of Porsche's other 917 variants. It enjoyed twice the power of the original, and yet none of its problems**



**1971 917LH** Based on the same principle of reducing drag, Porsche refined its long-tail design for 1971, with a redesigned frontal section, partial rear wheel enclosures and a single-piece rear spoiler assembly. Three cars were entered for pole and, despite Jackie Oliver securing pole in one, none finished the race and the long-tail project was finally scrapped.



**1971 917 INTERSERIE SPYDER**
When Germany launched its own Can-Am variant in the form of the high-powered Interserie championship, Porsche had a natural base with the 917. Three cars were built; two were adapted from 917 PAs, while the third was developed from the 917K that had been crashed at Le Mans by Mike Hailwood. It won the Interserie title twice on the trot in the hands of Jürgen Neuhaus and Leo Kinnunen respectively.




So it was decided to turbocharge the existing motor, a move that liberated even more power and did so at a fraction of the cost and with no need to redesign the chassis to accommodate it. Turbocharging was hardly in its infancy even in 1971: pole position for the 1952 Indy 500 had been won by a car using a Cummins turbo-diesel engine while GM had even sold turbocharged road cars in the early 1960s, but these were short-lived projects and the technology was far from perfected.

Porsche had charged Roger Penske with running its Can-Am programme in America as it had John Wyer for the World Sports Car Championship, and at first Mark Donohue found the engine all but undriveable. Despite all Porsche's development efforts through the latter part of 1971 with both Siffert and Willi Kauhsen driving, smoothing out the engine's wild power delivery remained at best a work in progress.

To begin with the car was so difficult to drive that it was no quicker than with the normally aspirated engine. But working with both the factory and Bosch over the winter, a fuel injection pump was created that provided a torque curve that was at least manageable. It became known as the 'happy pump'. And it was the happy pump as much as the additional power that turned the 917 into a competitive Can-Am car. The engine was reliable, driveable and had 900bhp with the boost turned down. Once they had it, all other competitors were toast.

By 1972 then, the 917/10 was the class of the field. It won six out of nine rounds despite Donohue having to sit out most of the season through injury incurred in a massive testing accident at Road Atlanta. George Follmer, who'd never so much as sat in a Can-Am car, proved a superb deputy and eventual champion.

But the real concern for everyone else was that, quite obviously, the 917/10 was Porsche's practice car. It had come to a new formula with new technology and blown the establishment to bits. What, then, might a perfected car do?

The 917/30 was that car. Most notably its engine had expanded from five litres to 5.4, resulting in both more power and better response across a wider rev range. On the bench blowing two atmospheres of boost pressure it really did develop 1500bhp, but there was nothing whatsoever to be gained from trying to race it like that, so 1.3bar and 1100bhp was usual for racing.

But power without control is nothing; the truth is the 917/10 had always been a rather unruly beast and nothing less than a total rethink in all areas was required. Most urgent and fundamental was an extension in the wheelbase which would serve not only to provide a more stable platform, but also to increase the size of the fuel tanks (they'd carry a barely believable 400 litres) and optimise their location, important when you consider a fully brimmed 917/30 was over a third heavier than when dry. The suspension, brakes and entire aero package were also revised and upgraded.

The result? Six victories in eight rounds. Donohue lost one of the two by running off the road and pitting for repairs and the other because a fuel valve burst, drenching him in high-octane petrol and he had to pit to have a bucket of water thrown over him. A fairer estimation of the car's performance is that it took both pole position and fastest lap in every single race it entered. On only two occasions was he less than a second clear of the next-quickest car in qualifying (always either Follmer or Jody Scheckter, both in 917/10s) and at the wondrous Road America he was fully three seconds quicker than anyone else out there. No wonder Donohue wrote such warm words about it.

THIS IS NOT ROAD AMERICA 1973, this is Goodwood 2019, and Porsche 917/30-002 is not behaving. In a demo of five 917s, four have fired up just fine and are sitting in the assembly area, but Donohue's car has so far resisted every external battery pack and exotic liquid squirted down its inlet trumpets. Time is running out. There is one last chance: an old Goodwood Land Rover is commandeered and the priceless old Can-Am Porsche is towed through the paddock, crowd parting like the Red Sea before it. The mechanic drops the clutch, which elicits a deafening bang as all the liquid enticements explode at once, followed by the sweetest sound I've heard outside a hospital delivery room: it's the rasping, roaring sound of a 5.4-litre, flat-12 twin-turbo engine finally prised from its slumbers and clearly in very rude health.

Despite my rather fraught introduction to the car, once installed behind the wheel in the thin but surprisingly comfortable ▶



**1971 917/10** Built for Can-Am, the original 917/10 was more of a development mule for things to come than an out-and-out quest for domination. Jo Siffert drove the boxy first design to fourth in the points, as McLarens dominated. With the rules being similar to Interserie, a few 917/10s also dipped into the German class.



**1971 917/20** Beautiful and playful, or just plain ugly... this is the 917 that divided opinion, with perhaps the most distinctive livery of all time. Created as a one-off to fuse the strengths of both the K and LH variants, the 917/20 emerged as a rather swollen, bulbous creation, with low-slung, wide bodywork. Designed by Anatole Lapine, it was decked in pink and marked up in butchery cuts; so the Pink Pig was born. Only lightly tested before Le Mans, it qualified seventh before being crashed by Reinhold Joest. ▶

seat, there is time to look around. In traditional Porsche fashion, it is right-hand drive (which assists weight distribution because there are fewer left-hand corners than right in motor racing). Everything has been pared back to the bare minimum: there's a large rev counter in Porsche's signature typeface, flanked by two smaller dials giving oil temperature and pressure. There are some boost gauges on the far left but how you're meant to read them is anyone's guess.

Like all 917s, it has a synchromesh gearbox, containing just four presumably fairly massive gears. The pedals are slightly offset towards the middle of the car but perfectly arranged for slick downshifting. And that really is about it.

Surprisingly, I'm not terrified. I have spoken to Derek Bell, Richard Attwood, Vic Elford, Mark Webber and Marino Franchitti about driving the 917/30 and to a man they all say that so long as I'm sensible with the power there's nothing to worry about. Quite what 'sensible' means in the context of a 1100bhp, 46-year-old racing car is not entirely clear to me. But I am as nervous as I've been in a racing car without racing it: it's not the career-ending implications of stacking it in front of tens of thousands of people, because if I bent Mark Donohue's immaculate and entirely original 917/30, I'd run away from this business all by myself.

It's the fact that no-one from Porsche has even said 'please bring it back', let alone suggested how I might drive it. I have encountered this approach before when Porsche let myself and Chris Harris drive the 1987 Le Mans-winning 962 at Weissach until its cut slicks had cuts no more. The trust is proven from the very fact that you are in Porsche's car, and compared to that words are meaningless. To betray that trust would be unthinkable. But still the responsibility is awesome.

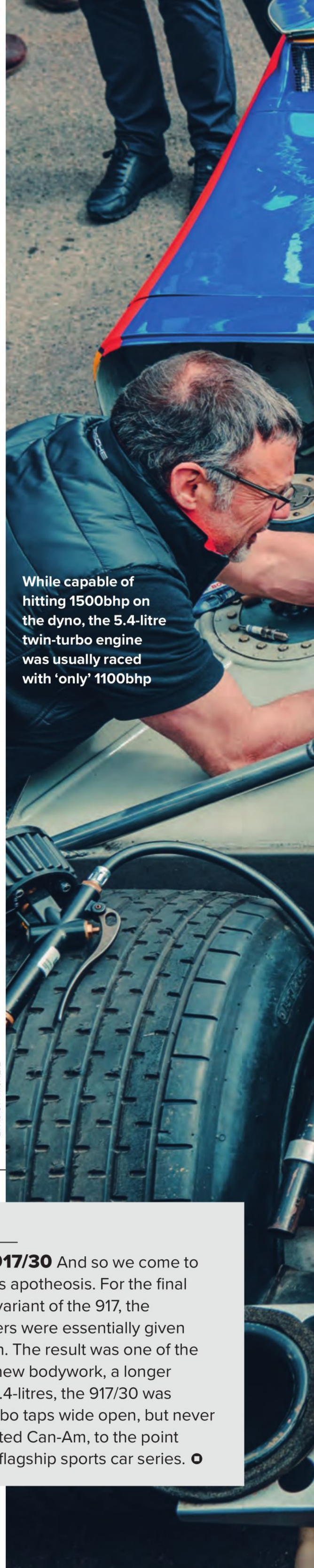


**Frankel gets acclimatised to the cockpit ahead of his run in front of the Goodwood crowds**

A WHISTLE BLOWS. I HIT THE little black starter button and the now warm motor blasts instantly into life. First gear slots home easily. Up comes the clutch as I wait for its savage bite. It doesn't come: the pedal is heavy but this one-time world's fastest racing car drives away as easily as a street machine.

You learn so much in the first 10 seconds. The action of both clutch and gearbox, the gearing of the steering, its feel and accuracy, the tractability and throttle response of the engine. In simply pulling out of the assembly area in first gear and turning onto the track you are bombarded by data which, because brains are clever things, coalesce into one single thought: this is going to be alright.

It sounds insane given that I'm not yet out of first gear and not even in danger of breaking even the urban speed limit, but those messages are unambiguous. This big old racer drives exactly as you'd hope and expect, and while loadings on the car will change, this fundamental behaviour should not, unless acted upon by external forces whose influence has yet to be felt, like high-speed aerodynamic instability. From all I've heard and read, that is not going to be a problem.



**While capable of hitting 1500bhp on the dyno, the 5.4-litre twin-turbo engine was usually raced with 'only' 1100bhp**

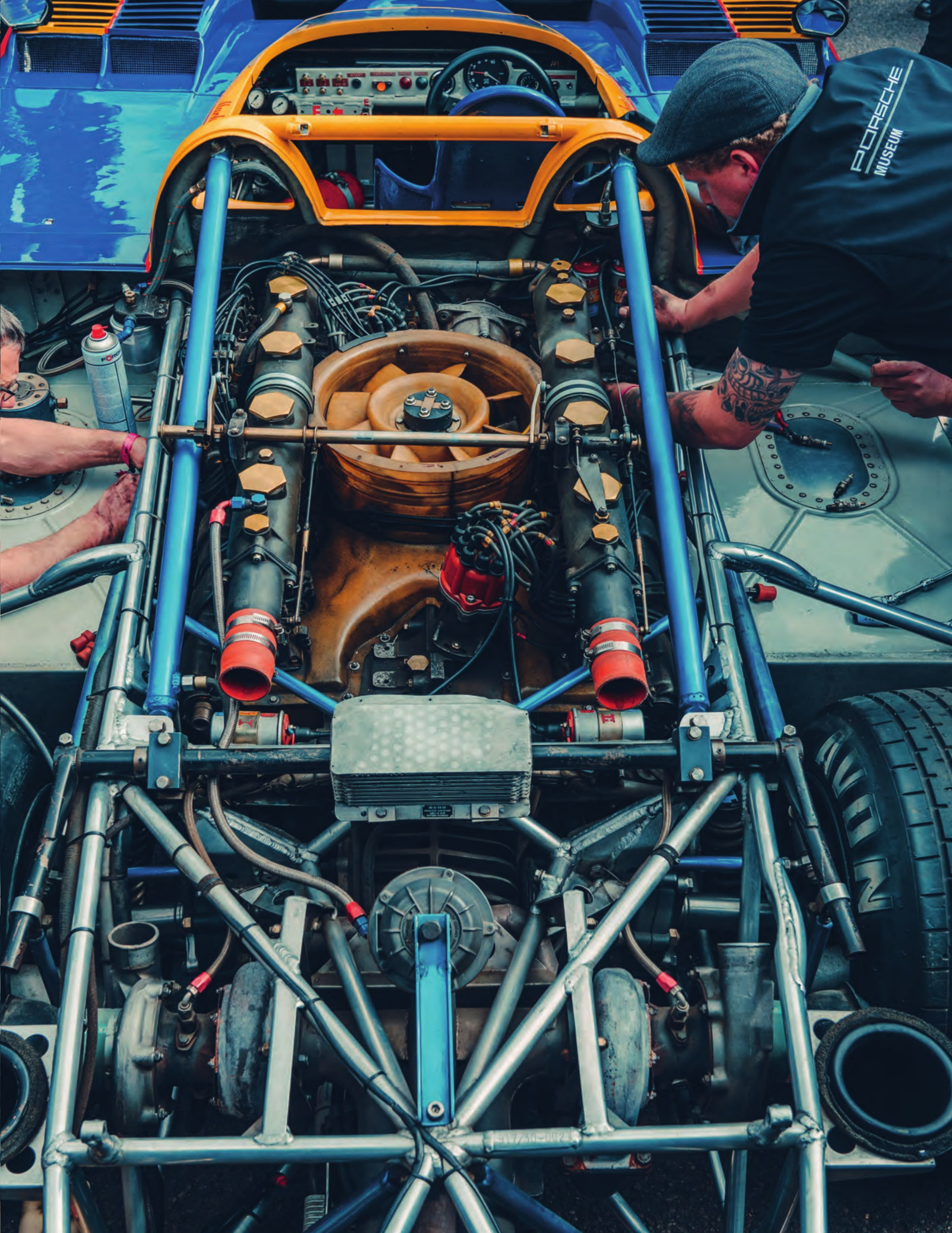
LYNDON McNEIL



**1972 917/10** Having been regulated out of the World Sports Car Championship – and as a result Le Mans, too – by the 3-litre limit, Porsche focused its efforts on Can-Am, and the search for power truly began. The second-generation 917/10 ran a 5-litre flat-12 engine with twin turbochargers giving up to 1000bhp. The bodywork was heavily sculpted at the front and a huge rear wing added to generate downforce. George Follmer won the Can-Am crown in its first year.



**1973 917/30** And so we come to the 917's apotheosis. For the final official variant of the 917, the engineers were essentially given free rein. The result was one of the most powerful sports cars ever. With all-new bodywork, a longer wheelbase and its engine bored out to 5.4-litres, the 917/30 was capable of nudging 1500bhp with the turbo taps wide open, but never raced with more than 1100bhp. It dominated Can-Am, to the point where America largely lost interest in its flagship sports car series.


PORSCHE
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So that's it: you've learned what you can learn, prepared what you can prepare. You have 10 minutes on one of the world's greatest tracks in one of the world's greatest racing cars. Don't waste them.

Only now, just as you're expecting confidence to build, does the fear hit. I know that when I put my foot down, this car is going to behave in a way for which all my time in all those other really fast racing cars has hardly prepared me at all. Truly this is a voyage into the unknown, yet I've set sail in front of the equivalent of the population of a small town. What will it be like? How, exactly does 1100bhp in an 850kg car feel?

I could of course find out now. One of the few skills I possess is being quite good at climbing aboard unfamiliar racing cars and driving them fast from lap one, because that's the very nature of the track testing business. But this, of all cars? Right Here? Right now? I only have a few laps anyway. Besides, the bloke in the 917/10 in front of me appears to think he's going shopping, and we've all been told very clearly that overtaking is a black-flag offence.

I hang back a little, find myself some space and let it build. As the speeds rise all those early indicators hold true. And I recognise the feeling I've experienced before but only in the greatest cars of their respective eras: that of being in control of a racing car that's been honed by the best in the business to be as good as it can be.

HERE COMES THE BOOST. IT'S actually surprisingly easy to modulate and worlds apart from the all-or-nothing approach I had expected. Yes, it takes a long time to arrive after your foot makes the request, but you can literally hear it coming as the turbos spool up, and when the resulting thrust goes from mad to maniacal, you can just ease off a touch and it all calms down instantly. Thank you, happy pump! In the meantime, I'm guiding it around Goodwood, savouring the car's typically Porsche slow and heavy gearshift and the car's delicious steering.

Even so, this is not quite enough. I have to be able to look you in the eye and say I've really driven the 917/30. Not oversteered it on the edge of oblivion through Fordwater, of course, but not simply steered it around the track either.

I put half a lap between myself and the next car, take a deep breath and go. And here's the thing: it wasn't scary at all. All my fear disappeared as I was swept along on a torrent of power the like of which I've never experienced before. Unlike putting your head in a tiger's mouth - thrilling no doubt, but probably best not done for very long - the faster I went in the 917/30 the faster I wanted to make it go. Just as long as you made some allowance for the fact that you arrive everywhere at a simply ridiculous speed and therefore need to adjust your braking points accordingly, the 917/30 is almost, whisper it... easy.

The only problem is that it wants to break traction absolutely everywhere, which is why I waited until near the end of the pit straight before not just putting my foot down, but leaving it there. Which is how you find yourself spinning the wheels of a Porsche 917/30 at over 120mph.

And that was that. I returned the car to a group of now grinning Porsche mechanics, gabbled my thanks and left.

How do you sum that up? To say it was an experience like no other seems so obvious as to be entirely redundant. So I'm going to wimp out and let someone else sign off.

Writing in his sublime autobiography *The Unfair Advantage* in 1974, Mark Donohue summed it up very simply: "It is to me the perfect racing car."

Forty-five years later and at least to me, it still is.

**"You can literally hear the power coming as the turbos spool up"**




**Only three 917/30s were ever built. One was a test car, one remains in America, and this, chassis 002, is the other**

JAYSON FONG

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# The car that killed

Mark Donohue and the Porsche 917/30 was a lethal combination for Can-Am, with Donohue on pole for every race in 1973, and sometimes by three clear seconds

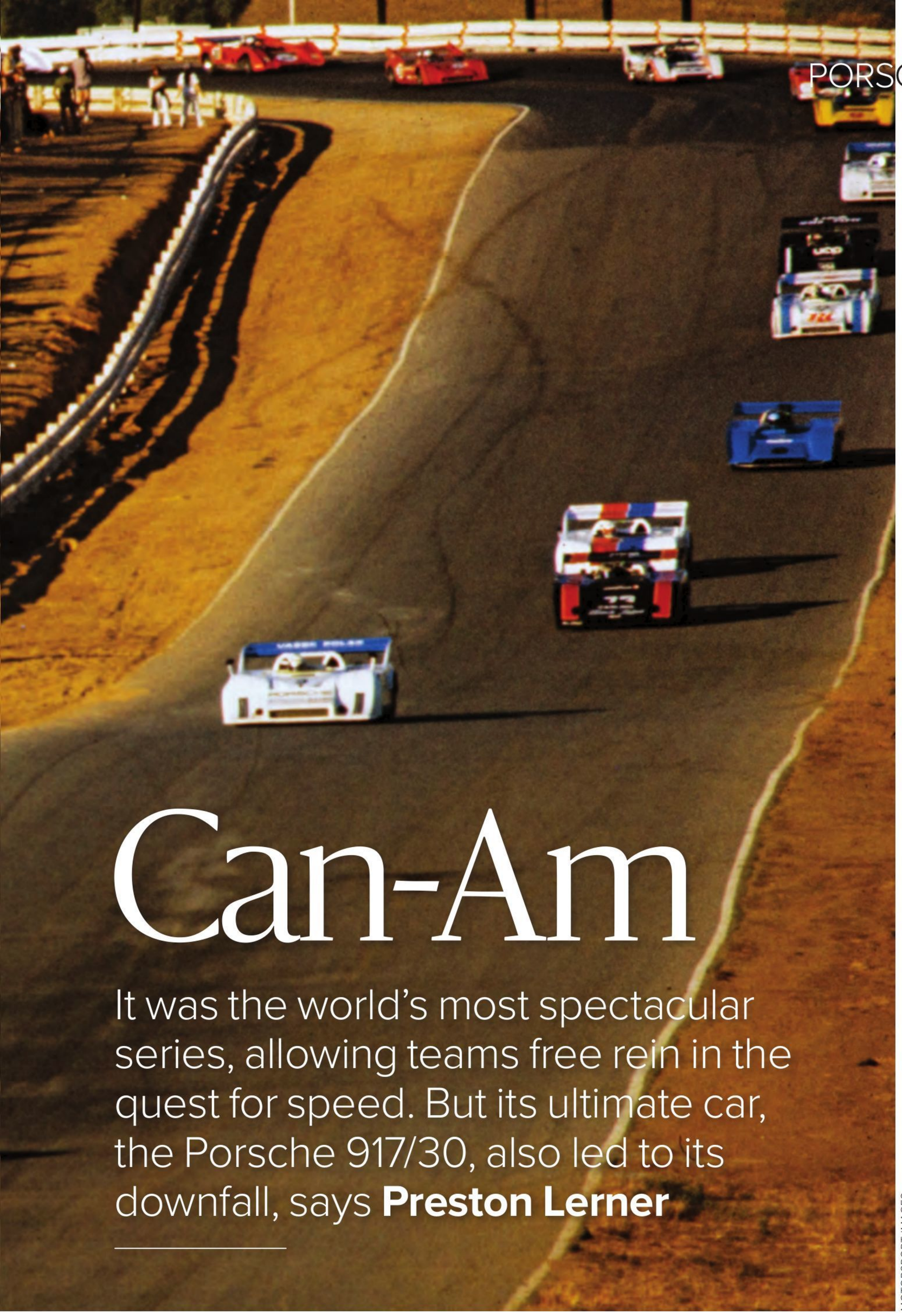
FANS OF THE PORSCHE 917/30 lionise the car because it was so fast and capable that it effectively killed the Can-Am series. Haters villainise it for the same reason.

The predecessor of the 'Turbo Panzer', the 917/10, had breezed to the championship in 1972 so convincingly that the once all-conquering McLaren Cars team quit Can-Am with its tail between its legs. The next year, the 917/30 was roughly two seconds per a lap faster than an upgraded, well-driven 917/10. Indeed, driver Mark Donohue claimed it to be "the perfect race car," after his dominant run in 1973. But it was perfectly deadly, too. At least to the Can-Am series as a whole.




Donohue counted the 1973 Can-Am and '74 International Race of Champions as his final titles

With no cars able to compete with the 917/30, fields eventually dwindled until it was essentially just Donohue - inevitably on pole by a light-year at most rounds - being trailed by five outclassed 917/10s and a rag-tag collection of outdated McLarens and near-obsolete Lolas. By the end of the 1973 season it was clear that heroic measures were necessary to keep the series alive, so the organisers instituted a controversial fuel-consumption formula that rendered



# Can-Am

It was the world's most spectacular series, allowing teams free rein in the quest for speed. But its ultimate car, the Porsche 917/30, also led to its downfall, says **Preston Lerner**

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thirsty turbocharged engines uncompetitive.

Porsche predictably bailed out. But no fresh blood materialised. The only new car of 1974, the Shadow DN4, dominated a truncated schedule featuring only five races. The season ended early when the final event at Riverside was cancelled because, as a press release at the time put it, "the costs involved simply aren't justified by the quality of the competition being offered."

It's often said that Can-Am – the uniquely muscular road-racing series whose success was built on the lack of rules – was destroyed when the new regulations were finally brought in, but this gets things rather backwards. That Can-Am survived as long as it did was nothing short of a miracle. Because, in truth, the series was the canary in the coal mine whose death signalled an inflection point that would change the sport.

The Canadian-American Challenge Cup began in 1966, when racing was on the cusp of a technological revolution underwritten by unprecedented sums of sponsorship money. The next decade would bring the development of wings, slick tyres, turbocharging and a host of incremental upgrades that caused speeds to skyrocket.

Up until then, racing had always been about making cars go faster. But after the breakthroughs of the 1960s, the rule makers were primarily concerned with slowing them down.

The impact of Can-Am's anything-goes formula was seen most clearly in lap times that plummeted while the series lasted. In 1967 Bruce McLaren put his bright-orange M6A on the pole at Road America with a lap at 2min12.6sec, or 108.597 mph. In 1973 Donohue pushed the 917/30 to a lap of 1m57.518sec, at 122.534 mph. That's a 14mph average lap speed improvement in six years. At Watkins Glen, while driving a backup car with the wrong gearing, Donohue qualified on the pole with a time nearly a second quicker than Ronnie Peterson would go in his pole-sitting Lotus 72 in the US Grand Prix two months later.

Can-Am was lucky, in a way, in that it was off the beaten path and didn't attract serious factory interest until late in the day. Early on it was dominated by race car constructors (McLaren and Lola) that built clever but straightforward chassis and American engine tuners such as Traco and Gary Knutson, who hogged out pushrod V8s to displace 8.0 litres and more. Then Porsche showed up and rewrote the rules of the game.

The same R&D team behind back-to-back wins at Le Mans in 1970 and 1971 now tackled Can-Am, with Donohue serving as the test driver and chassis engineer. The 917/10 they created was a world-beater, and the 917/30 was an order of magnitude better, featuring more grip, more grunt, more downforce, more velocity. With a 5.4-litre flat-12 engine making upwards of 1400 horsepower on the dyno and a slick aerodynamic body, the new car topped out at 242mph during a pre-season test at Circuit Paul Ricard. "If I drove this thing as hard as I could for the whole race," Donohue later confided, "I'd end up five laps ahead of everyone."

Donohue cruised to the championship in 1973. Roger Penske pulled the 917/30 out of mothballs the next year for the Can-Am round at Mid-Ohio, a twisty circuit with no long, fuel-sucking straights. Despite never having sat in the car before and using second gear in first-gear corners to conserve fuel, Brian Redman effortlessly stuck the Porsche on pole and won the first heat before finishing second in the final after the wrong tyre choice on a drying track.

Technically, the Shadow DN4 was the car that drove a stake into the heart of the series. But Can-Am was a dead man walking the moment the Porsche 917/30 showed up.




Moss as most know him best, at full flight in an Aston Martin DBR1 at Le Mans in 1958. But he was seldom far from full throttle away from the track, either

# The Secret life of Stirling

In his prime, Stirling Moss was a multi-faceted character: racing hero, celebrity and businessman. A new book by his former secretary, Valerie Pirie, sheds fascinating new light on the man behind the wheel

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NLOP
DUNLOP
2

# When 17-year-old Val Pirie answered an advert for a secretarial job in 1958, she little knew her employer would be the famous Stirling Moss, at the height of his career. Impatient and demanding as her new boss could be, Moss and Val grew close as over the years she became Girl Friday, chauffeur, confidante, house-building overseer and racing team manager, as well as helping him through the aftermath of his terrible accident. We present extracts from her memoir of her time with the Maestro, her friend of 60 years.



## FLYING INTO ACTION

**Thrown in at the deep end, Val is learning to handle her new boss's hectic life – and impatient character.**

My geography was beginning to improve by leaps and bounds. For example, I had never heard of places such as Catania, AVUS or Riverside, let alone tried to arrange flights and accommodation for any of these places. In early August 1960, I received a very irate telephone call from Stirling. He was steaming with rage and there weren't any niceties when I answered the phone.

'Get on to that bloody airline and tell them they have to get me to Karlskoga in time for me to race there,' he said bluntly down the line. 'I don't care how they get me there but tell them that if I do not arrive in time for me to race, I shall hold them responsible for paying my start money. Ring them now and tell them that I am stuck in the wilds of I can't remember where and tell them to get me a flight out of here.' The phone went dead. I looked at the receiver in my hand, wondering where to start.

Karlskoga was one of those places I didn't know either, and after checking all the details of his journey, I telephoned the airline concerned with a watered-down version of his plight. The person at the other end of the telephone chose to act dumb, so in the end I demanded to speak to a manager. Another rather bored voice came on the line and when he heard what the problem was said, 'And what do you expect me to do about it?' to which I agitatedly replied, 'Get him there. I don't even mind if you have to charter a plane for him, just get him there.'



MAXWELL BOYD/ANDREW BOYD

**Le Mans 1959: Moss plays liar dice with Valerie Pirie and French businessman and racer François Picard (right) while awaiting his stint**

Such was his celebrity status they must have pulled out quite a lot of stops because they did get him to the circuit in time and he arrived home one very happy bunny because he also won the race.

## AN INCENDIARY IDEA

**Stirling decides to build a new house on an old bombsite in Mayfair.**

Stirling was negotiating to acquire a 25-foot frontage on the old bombsite at the top end of the Shepherd Street cul-de-sac, two or three doors up from where we were, with a view to building a brand-new property for himself on the site. It was to be ultra-modern and, once again, it would incorporate his office so that he wouldn't have to waste time travelling to work. He had found it to be so convenient having his office within his house that this would be a mandatory requirement in the new one as well.

Again, an enormous amount of research took place as to the most up-to-date, modern designs and appliances available on the market to suit his taste for the new place. Now he became entirely focused on the new building site, and spent all his spare time working on the plans for his new house.

Whenever he wanted to buy a particular oven, faucet, basin or even a roll of wallpaper he would contact the manufacturer direct –



Stirling and Val (in the foreground) about to visit their Belgravia local. The bikes are to exercise Moss's legs after his 1960 Spa accident

and ask if they would provide the products free of charge in return for the use of his name in publicising them once the house had been completed, and he used to spend hours on the telephone negotiating with all the various companies. Occasionally, if he really did want an item and if the chosen firm wouldn't play ball with him, he would suggest paying a proportion of the cost or, if this failed, he would go and find an alternative supplier who would play ball. Again, I never felt comfortable with this, but Stirling didn't have any qualms about it whatsoever. Neither did he have any qualms about returning goods that he had bought, although most of the time muggins here was generally sent to do this chore. I loathed it and always felt most embarrassed.

Stirling managed to persuade the *Sunday Times* to agree to sponsor a couple of features on the house once it was finished and this was the bait he always used in his negotiations, but this was of little use when negotiating with companies in America, from where he brought in a huge amount of hardware.

Once the land had been acquired, he had to find an architect who would work with him, but the relationship soon deteriorated when the appointed person told Stirling he was not prepared to be at his beck and call morning, noon and night...

## TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

**A timely example of generosity with an ulterior motive, and a 'balls to you' riposte to Stirling's impatient behaviour.**

Another of Stirling's quirks was punctuality. If I was driving him about I had to pick him up at the specific time he gave me and if I did not turn up on the exact minute there would be merry hell to pay, and I would be put under interrogation as to the whys and wherefores! It didn't help either that I did not own a watch, so he decided to remedy this by buying me one when he was in Scandinavia and he gave it to me once he arrived home so that I would never have another excuse for being late again. Of course, this generosity was completely one-sided, because it would ensure that he could live his life according to his own standards and expectations.

Stirling had ensured the time clause was written into his contract with BP, in that when he went along to officially open garages for them he would only guarantee to stay and meet and greet and sign autographs until a specified time. Thereafter, he would only stay on longer at the rate agreed in the contract. He was, therefore, absolutely livid one day when he arrived at the Battersea Helipad from where he was to be flown to open a new BP garage in the south-west of England only to find that the helicopter had not arrived. He stormed back to the office and shot off a letter of complaint to the person at BP who had organised the tour and then, having partly relieved his frustration, tore off again back to the helipad. Not knowing any better at the time, I typed up what he had dictated, signed on his behalf and posted it.

He received his answer a couple of days later in the post in the shape of a confidential package of... ping pong balls! You should have seen the expression on his face when he opened it. It was a total mixture of frustration, irritation and, yes, actually a glimmer of admiration for such an 'amusing' and original reaction.

## THE CHINESE CONNECTION

**The night shift as Stirling's chauffeur often involved a visit to Lotus – just not the one you might think.**

Whenever I had to trundle out to the airport to pick Stirling up it was usually pretty late in the evening and nine times out of 10 on the drive back he would suggest going for a meal at the Lotus House Chinese restaurant on the Edgware Road, which stayed open until three in the morning, seven days a week - practically a unique phenomenon in London.

It was popular with other night owls, but generally we could sit there quietly and not be bugged by any autograph hunters. It was a peaceful place with subdued lighting where Stirling could relax, as much as he ever could, and unwind from the hustle and bustle of his life and come down from the satisfaction of winning his last race or brooding over why he hadn't won it (and ultimately thinking about what more he could have done if he hadn't retired for whatever reason).

Unusually, he would do most of the talking after I had updated him with

office affairs and it was always about the mechanical stuff on his car; or he would sit there, having cleared a space on the pristine white linen tablecloth to work out which gear and axle ratios he would need for his next race and the like. It was all absolute double Dutch to me, but he liked to use me as a sounding board, albeit an ignorant one. I didn't know anything at all about the mechanics of a car and never would. I wasn't the slightest bit interested. That's what mechanics were for!

He used to scribble away quite contentedly on scrappy little bits of paper and work out whatever was necessary, and he would be in his element, as happy as the proverbial pig in clover. We were in there eating shortly after I had applied for my provisional racing licence and he went to endless lengths to show me how to take the right line for some of the corners on the various circuits by drawing out the track and marking it up. He also wrote down the appropriate gears I should select for the bog-standard car I would first be driving on the various corners and straights.

## "I just caught his mumbled words: 'Bastar... Big bastaaar...d'"

### BLIND DATE

**Well before the days of internet dating, Moss plays matchmaker by introducing Val to a famous fellow Scot.**

Around this time, I was going out on a lot on dates but there was no one special in my life and I was continually bugging Stirling to introduce me to some gorgeous fellow who would sweep me off my feet. Stirling's thoughts were divided on the issue because he didn't want to lose me, but neither did he want to be seen as if he wasn't doing anything about it.

However, a new driving talent had emerged on the scene during the year and Stirling thought, as we were both Scottish, that we might just hit it off together and suggested to the young man in question, Jim Clark, that he take me along to the BRDC Annual Dinner in early December. Although we became lifelong friends until his death in 1968, he wasn't for me or me for him. He was even shyer than Stirling, in fact, painfully so. He was a quiet, unassuming man, extremely bashful, but with a prodigious talent. He had a totally split personality because he loved his farming just as much as he did his motor racing. He owned a 1200-acre farm in Chirnside, Berwickshire, and coincidentally my mother also owned a house in Chirnside. Consequently, we fraternised quite a bit with many of the other people from the Borders who were involved in the motor racing scene.

The local garagiste and a leading light in the Border Reivers Racing Team, Jock McBain, owned a Doughty speedboat and, whatever the weather, we would all go water skiing in Berwick Harbour. Certainly, Jimmy used to come out of himself much more in his own surroundings and amongst his Scottish friends.

Stirling felt very relieved when he saw that we were not attracted to each other, but he was equally content that he had been seen to be trying to get me hitched up. He never really tried again. During his racing career Jimmy tended to drift into long-term relationships, but he did tell me that he would never get married until he had stopped motor racing - and of course, he never did.

### A ROTATION OF DUTIES

**Moss is seriously hurt at Goodwood in a terrible accident in April, 1962. For a month he remains in a coma.**

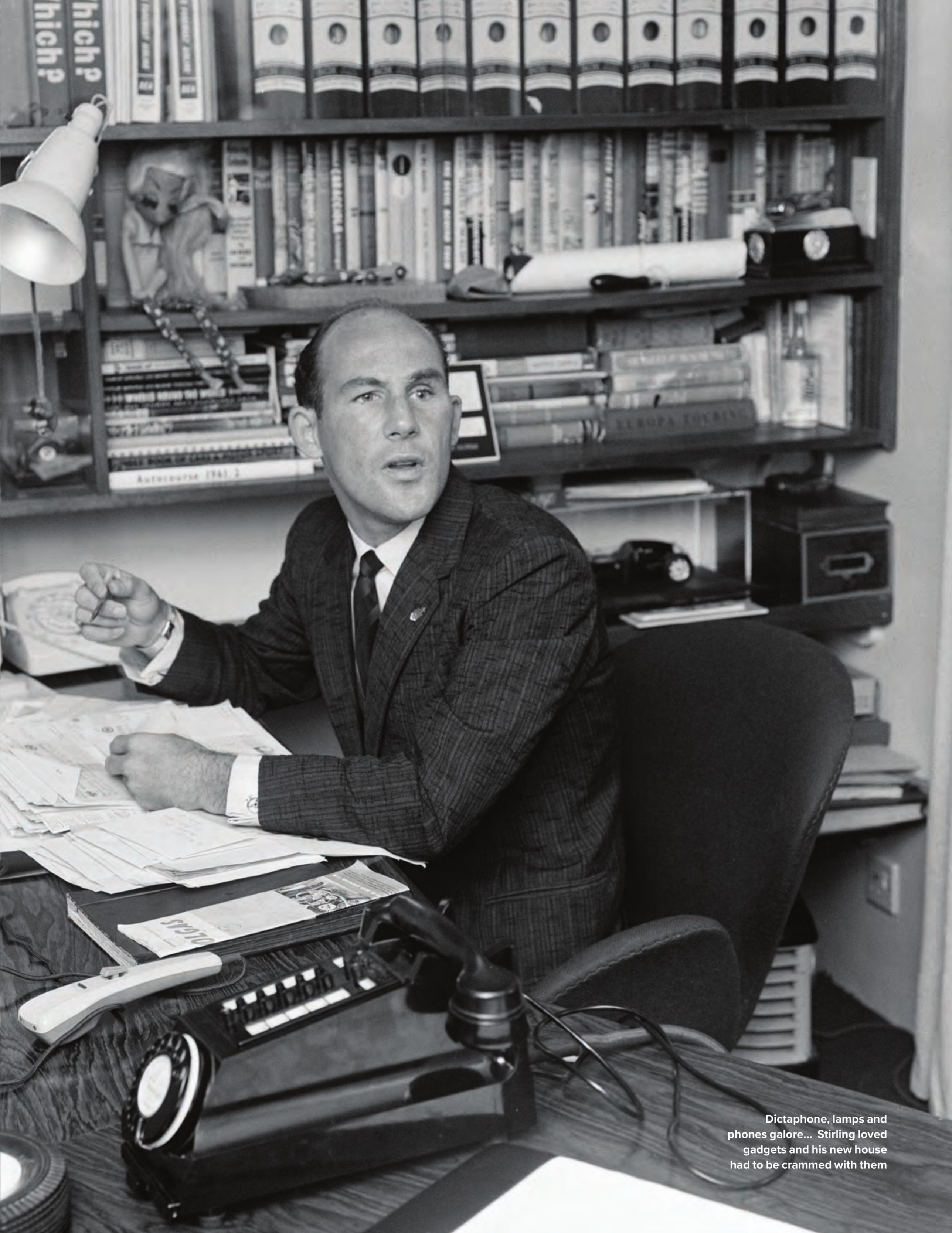
The doctors recommended that someone from his inner circle should stay with him round the clock, preferably talking to him, to try to bring him round from the coma.

We formed a roster whereby I would do the 6:30am until lunch-time stint, when someone such as Rob Walker [his patron] or Ken Gregory [his manager] would come in to take over until I could get back to the hospital in the afternoon and wait for Alfred [Stirling's father] to arrive around 10 in the evening. He would stay with Stirling overnight. I would then arrive back early in the morning to take over from Alfred, and so it went on, day after day.

Initially, the hospital found it hard to cope with the unrealistic fuss and commotion associated with dealing with such a well-known and well-liked personality. The avalanche of mail, flowers and even people



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Dictaphone, lamps and phones galore... Stirling loved gadgets and his new house had to be crammed with them

"The public reaction to Stirling's accident was absolutely overwhelming"

**Moss on his way to second place in the 1961 South African GP at Prince George Circuit, East London. Beaten that day by Lotus's Jim Clark, it undoubtedly prompted another late-night debrief over a Chinese...**



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This book is available from the Motor Sport shop
*shop.motorsportmagazine.com*

turning up unannounced to wish Stirling well was quite remarkable. We gave most of the flowers to the other patients in the hospital and I was, naturally, in charge of the mail. In addition, I also had the responsibility of seeing that the builders and suppliers kept up to scratch with the house.

The reaction of the public to Stirling's accident was absolutely overwhelming. He was headline news for some time. No one knew quite how badly Stirling had been injured and we wanted to keep it that way, just in case. He was to be protected by a wall of silence, especially as far as the national press was concerned.

In the first couple of weeks or so, we received well over 1500 letters and cards wishing him well every day.

The rigid office policy of replying to every single letter received was strictly adhered to so this was quite a job, and every letter was personally signed either by Ken or myself. I could sit and sign and stamp these later whilst I spent time with Stirling in the evening before Alfred arrived. It also gave me something to talk to him about, even though at that time there weren't any visible signs that he was listening to me. It was not exactly easy talking non-stop to a lifeless form, but it was an essential part of the recuperation process. Something had to trigger his brain out of its stupor.

## SIGN OF HOPE

**After weeks of bedside support, a familiar irritation finally stirs Stirling into his first words.**

I found it rather tedious having to talk constantly non-stop to a virtually dead body. Consequently, I used to tell Stirling in detail what was going on at the house because I reckoned that that was his main interest.

Just prior to the accident, he had agreed to put in an internal vacuum system, but things hadn't been going very well with it. A certain Mr Leon was the culprit; Stirling had been spitting fire and brimstone about him before the accident and I wasn't doing much better with him after it.

I knew that this would really irritate Stirling more than most so, after I arrived at the hospital and having been told about the prospect of complete malfunction of the vacuum system, I began to tell him the story, whilst he lay there totally inert.

'And, what's more,' I trilled, at the still, prostrate body, 'that Mr Leon, he is a right little toad. He's a s**t, a complete and utter bastard.'

By this time, I was pretty much yelling at the still, shrouded form when I suddenly heard a sound. I immediately stopped speaking, jumped up from the chair I was sitting on beside Stirling's bed and looked at him. He was lying on his right side and I just caught the words as he mumbled:

'Bastar... Big bastaaar...d.'

My heart jumped – this was typical of Stirling. That lifeless form had actually heard and said something. This was my first sign of hope for him.

Of course, his first words were officially attributed to his mother, Aileen, later that week when she visited him and claimed that he had said, 'Mum'. It probably made for better reading in the press than 'Bastard'!

## A WEAK POINT

**Val is now running the Stirling Moss Automobile Racing Team, which has prepared a Lotus Elan coupé for Sir John Whitmore in 1963**

John drove the car to considerable success (as did I in some events, often quite unbeknown to Stirling), apart from the fact that its rear wheels were frequently flying off fairly early on in the car's existence whilst John was racing it. This hub defect was, of course, a life-threatening predicament and Stirling became exceedingly angry and decided to do something about it. We had the hub metal tested by an expert and it was found to be not only made of very thin metal, but that the design was also flawed.

Without more ado Colin [Chapman] was summoned to Shepherd Street to discuss the matter with Stirling. He demanded that I should be present as well because by now I was virtually running the team by default because Stirling had very quickly become bored with it.

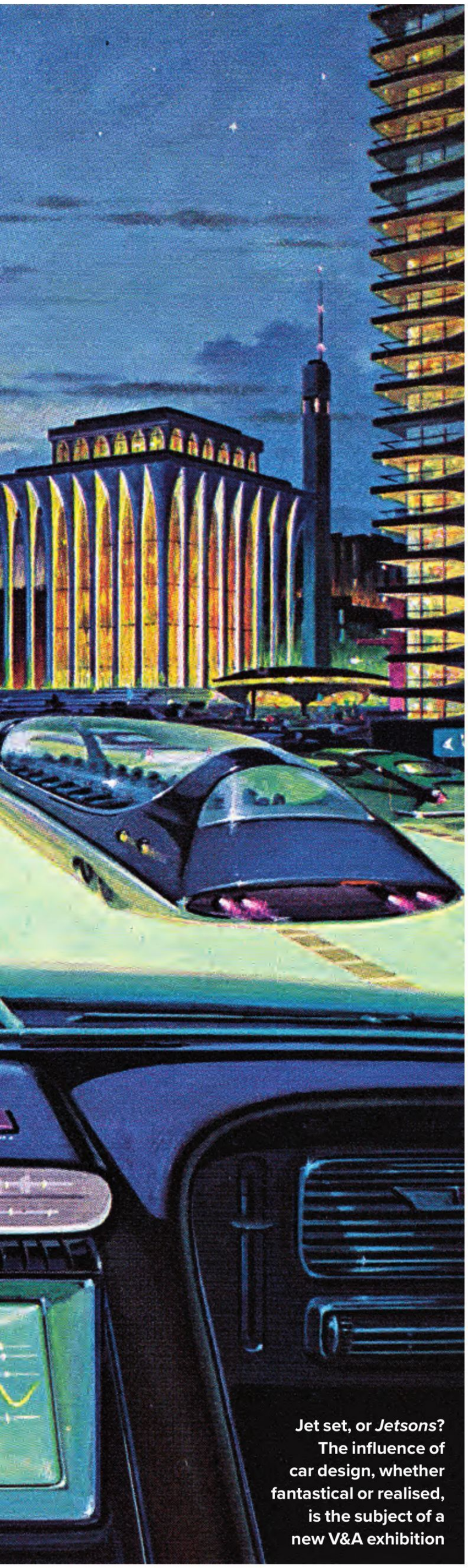
Colin sat in Stirling's upstairs living room opposite us and Stirling told him in no uncertain terms that the car was exceedingly dangerous and that he was thinking of suing him. Colin tried to wriggle this way and that out of this somewhat tight situation, but really there was no room for manoeuvre.

He eventually agreed to pay a large amount of money to a charity specified by Stirling and, of course, to re-design all the Elan hubs and manufacture them using stronger metal.

We all shook hands on the deal. That was Stirling's preferred way. Calmly, sensibly, with no rancour – and secretly.

Extracts from **CIAO STIRLING – THE INSIDE STORY OF A MOTOR RACING LEGEND**
*By Valerie Pirie*
**Published by Biteback, £20**
**ISBN: 978-1-7859-0463-9**

GETTY



Jet set, or *Jetsons*? The influence of car design, whether fantastical or realised, is the subject of a new V&A exhibition

# Fashioning the future

## A major V&A exhibition explores the motor car from its birth – and shows how it has shaped our world, reports **Gordon Cruickshank**

NOTHING HAS CHANGED THE world like the car. Railways affected whole countries, but not your street; the internet altered world views, but you can't see the web as you walk around. On that walk, though, you're certain to see cars - the embodiment of technological consumerism. Now, after 130 years, the automobile is facing a major turning point; our roads are not going to be the same from here on.

That's the theme of a major exhibition at London's Victoria & Albert Museum, opening on November 23. "After years of progress the automobile industry is facing big questions," says chief curator Brendan Cormier, "and no-one seems to know what the future will look like. Is it about electric power? Autonomous vehicles? Or alternative mobilities summoned by an app? We felt it was time to look in the rear-view mirror and try to understand what 130 years of the car has created."

# "Nucleon's occupants would have needed 50 tons of lead to shield them from the radiation"





GETTY

Titled *Cars - Accelerating the Modern World*, the exhibition is much wider than a history of the machine, Cormier says. "It's about how a designed object sent out ripples of unintended consequence into the wider world."

By looking at objects as diverse as radios and even clothing, Cormier wants the exhibition's 15 cars and 250 objects to illustrate how the concept of styling borrowed from science but turned into a marketing tool - "how a technical pursuit like streamlining became an aesthetic pursuit, an aesthetic of the future, suggesting progress and speed. It became applied to many things that belie its purpose. We have a streamlined 1930s meat-slicer in our collection - there's no need for that to be streamlined, unless you're going to throw it out of a window! But it shows the power of the automobile as a symbol of progress."

Progress and the future form the show's opening section, *Going Fast* - a gallery of illustrations, science fiction dreams, comics, cinema, and concept cars of the then-future, featuring the 1953 GM Firebird 1 - a grounded missile of wings and fins. "So often a car has been used to indicate the future," says Cormier. "It's a perfectly encapsulated object of progress." Think of the Batmobile, *Thunderbirds* or *Bladerunner* for a perfect example of how a fantasy vehicle can be shorthand for a future world.

FROM THERE THE EXHIBITION switches to reality: *Making More* features the first practical car - and this really is the first. On display is the Science museum's 1888 Benz Type 3 Motorwagen, the first model to be mass-produced (25 of them were built) and it is the world's oldest motor car in broadly original form. (Even Car No1 in the Mercedes Museum was dismantled by Benz and reassembled later.) With the idea of speed implanted, the V&A team has selected the rear-engined Tatra T77 to explore streamlining on four wheels, and how it spilled over into a wider world of domestic appliances such as fridges and radios. There's even a close-fitting 1920s lady's cloche hat on display which borrows from the style of leather racing helmets - a streamlined fashion feature derived from sheer practicality: it's less likely to blow off in an open car.

Naturally there's a Model T on display, but chiefly to indicate another unexpected consequence: unable to undercut the ubiquitous Ford, rivals strove to make their products more desirable than the ageing T, and they did it by trying to transfer to their everyday offerings some of the elegance of the hand-crafted bodies found on luxury machines - there's a Hispano-Suiza H6B to exemplify this. It was the beginning of 'styling' - a word designers loathe but which conveys that sense of making the external shape glamorous and appealing, even if what's within is perfectly ordinary. It also sparked the idea of planned obsolescence, as GM began to upgrade its cars every year, with new colour palettes so that your existing car was suddenly out of date, even though it functioned perfectly well.

"The car industry pioneered that idea of styling," says Cormier, "and it began in the 1920s with GM's Art and Colour




Ford's radical 1957 Nucleon promised uranium-powered motoring, but thankfully it was never built. Left: the Hispano-Suiza H6B



Autonomous, electric, compact, and it can fly: is Audi's Pop.Up Next the future of commuting?

department. Once [automotive paint supplier] Duco introduced a wide range of quick-drying colours it spread to other domestic objects such as Corona typewriters. Or take the Kodak Brownie camera. It had been around for a while, but once they restyled it as the Beau Brownie, with fancy colours and patterns, it sold more."

This is the core of the V&A show, that the car and its styling trends have affected a far wider sphere. "The narrative of modern design has been form over function - styling has always been important," adds Cormier.

And the car has also sparked its own subcultures, as a video in this section illustrates, profiling South African spinners, California low-riders, Emirati dune racers, and Japanese truck drivers.

In the final section, *Shaping Space*, the exhibition looks at the other effects of automobilism - the huge impact that cars and roads have had worldwide, and how petroleum has gradually turned from a miracle resource to a pernicious substance damaging our world. Attempts to reduce consumption feature here with a 1950s Messerschmitt Kabinenroller three-wheeler as well as ideas for moving on from petrol via that other fuel of the future-past, nuclear power. Ford's 1957 Nucleon envisaged a 5000-mile range before its compact nuclear powerpack had to be 'refuelled' by swapping for a new one. Luckily such a compact fusion plant did not exist so Ford's concept was non-functional. Which is just as well as it has been calculated that the occupants would have needed 50 tons of lead to shield them from the resulting radiation...

APPROACHING THE END OF THE show we too go back to the future - or at least our best guess as to what any future for cars might look like. Co-designed by Italdesign, Airbus and Audi, the Pop.Up Next returns us to the vision of a flying vehicle, which has occupied the thoughts of dreamers since before the car itself arrived. But now we have the technology to turn science fiction into fact: this aerial carriage involves a passenger pod which either rides on a wheeled chassis or hangs from a quad-copter unit. "We knew we needed a future car," says Cormier, "and this conveniently combines four important strands - electric power, it's self-driving, you call it up with an app instead of owning it, and it flies. So we end the show as we open it, with an imagined future".

At a time when orders for electric cars have soared, it would be easy for the show to take a green stance and demonise petrol power; there's little mention of biofuels or hydrogen, for instance, which might extend the life of the internal combustion engine further into our century. That's not the approach, though; instead the museum aims to demonstrate the invisible as well as the visible effect that mass motoring has had on all of us over those 130 years. We can't know if the Pop.Up Next is the future, of course; in 50 years there may another exhibition where viewers smile fondly at it, just as we do at Firebird 1 and Nucleon.

*The exhibition* Cars: Accelerating the Modern World *runs from 23 November 2019 - 19 April 2020. Tickets are £18. Members go free.*


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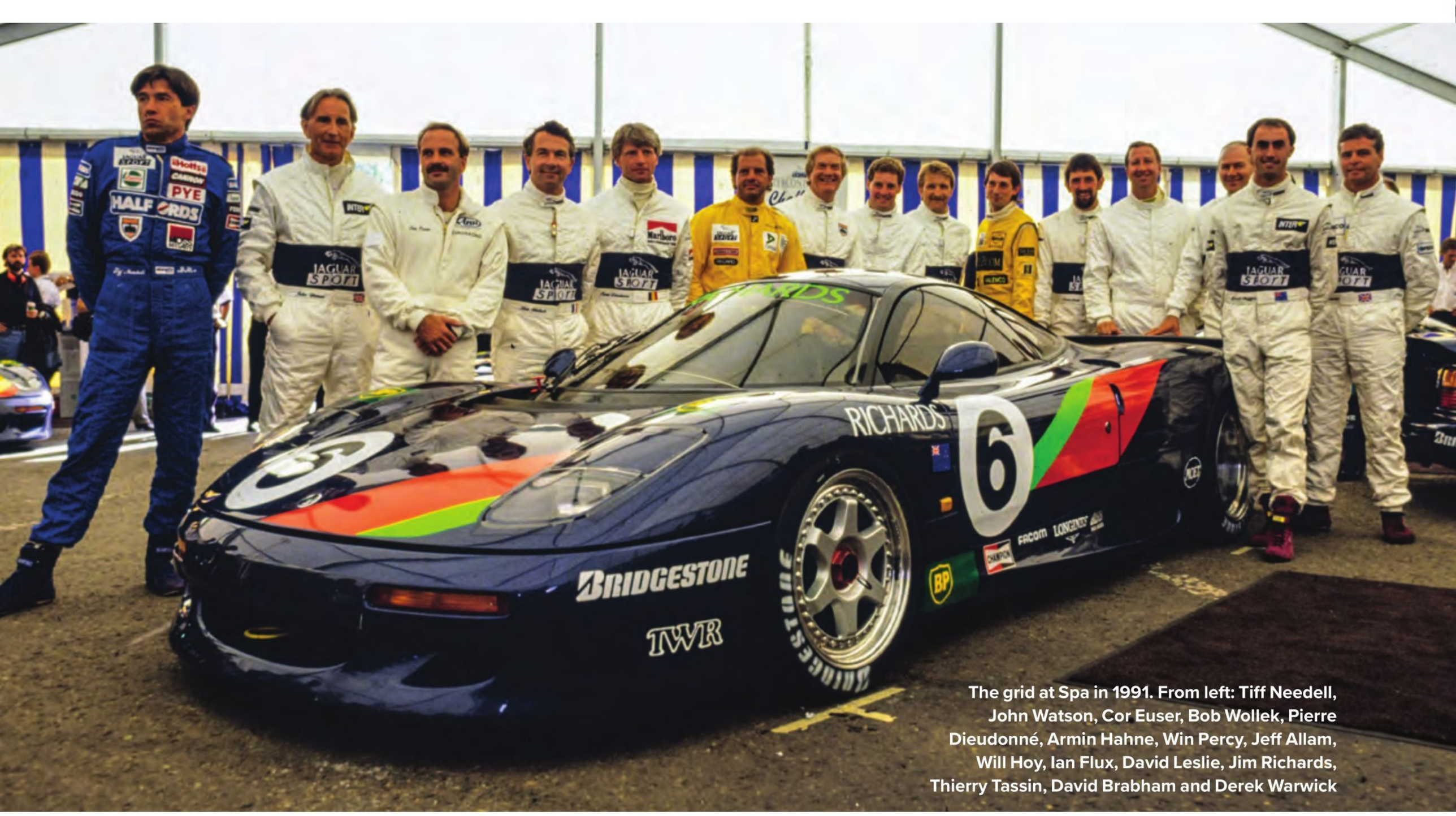

Back in 1991, the TWR-developed XJR-15 was raced on the grand prix support bill. Here, Armin Hahne leads at Monaco

# Jaguar's forgotten gem

Despite its Le Mans-winning pedigree, the Jaguar XJR-15 never really got the headlines it deserved, and even formed the basis of a short-lived one-make racing series. **Simon Arron** recounts the story with those who were part of it

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

# JAGUAR'S XJR-15




The grid at Spa in 1991. From left: Tiff Needell, John Watson, Cor Euser, Bob Wollek, Pierre Dieudonné, Armin Hahne, Win Percy, Jeff Allam, Will Hoy, Ian Flux, David Leslie, Jim Richards, Thierry Tassin, David Brabham and Derek Warwick

On the surface it's a typical Goodwood track day, freshly minted E-types and suchlike gently being fettled in readiness for more robust track activity at the forthcoming Revival Meeting. But away from the preparatory activity, there's a flurry of interest around the dummy pits at the main paddock's northern fringe. The trigger? Jaguar's XJR-15.

It was a rare sight in period, but this morning two have their snouts poking out into the sunshine. Over the next couple of hours that brace becomes three, five, eight and finally 11. Such improbability is also fairly typical at Goodwood.

There is no immediate commemorative cause for such a gathering. It is 28 years since the XJR-15 became the backbone of the Jaguar Intercontinental Challenge, a one-off series that embraced three grand prix support races - Monaco, Silverstone and Spa - in 1991, but long-time motor sport enthusiast (and XJR-15 owner) Valentine Lindsay is trying to drum up interest in the model ahead of that initiative's 30th anniversary in 2021.

"Since buying my car I've got to know other owners," he says, "and we've started finding XJR-15s all over the place, so we decided it would be good to organise a get-together. We want to increase awareness and in 2021 we hope to put on demonstration events at Monaco, the British GP, which is already arranged, and Spa, as well as running the cars during events like the Goodwood Members' Meeting."

The XJR-15 was conceived by the late Tom Walkinshaw, head of Jaguar's racing partner TWR, following the firm's Le Mans 24 Hours win in 1988. "I think Tom fancied trying to cash in on that victory," says Tony Southgate, who designed the XJR-9 that achieved it and also played a part in the XJR-15's genesis.

"Of course, Jaguar had its own XJ220 supercar project at the same time, though with a V12 engine and four-wheel drive that didn't seem terribly realistic. It would have weighed about two tons and nobody could manufacture tyres capable of dealing with that kind of bulk and performance. The XJ220 ended up being a much nicer, lighter

Getting the old gang back together in 2019. From left: Jim Router, body engineer; Tiff Needell, did all three XJR-15 races; Tony Southgate, TWR designer who did early XJR-15 chassis work; Kenneth Acheson, raced at Silverstone; Jeff Allam, raced at Spa; Ian Flux, did all three races with a best finish of third at Silverstone (but would probably have won barring a missed shift); Peter Stevens, body stylist; John Grant, BRDC chairman who is a former Jaguar board member; and ex-F1 driver John Watson, who crashed one at Spa

car, with a V6 turbo, but Tom didn't want to tread on the toes of that project so a lot of the XJR-15 planning was done in secrecy.

"Most of the Jaguar Le Mans cars from that period had the same monocoque structure and suspension. After that we carried out aero and engine adjustments, but that was it. It would have been very expensive to change the tooling for the main carbon-fibre structure, so we didn't really want to do that.

"The original idea was to produce a road-going equivalent of the Le Mans car, which was a good-looking machine. But naively, as a racer, I always designed cars around my own average height and fairly slight build, because you wouldn't want a driver who was much bigger than I was. I'd base everything around me, then allow another two inches or so just in case. But of course, many people buying this type of car were fairly big blokes – so I soon realised that they weren't going to fit. We had to build in a little hip room..."

Southgate didn't stay for the project's duration – he went off to design a stillborn Le Mans car for Aston Martin – but one of his key early collaborators was designer Peter Stevens, later responsible for the shape of the McLaren F1. "It was such good fun," Stevens says, "a project with no egos, no personalities and no politics, which was a real treat. It didn't have to be like a racing car in the wind tunnel, because the idea of the race series came later. They were going to be road cars, but the fact that Tom also got the job of building Jaguar's XJ220 meant we had to adjust the project to have a racing element..."

If the XJR-15's rear lights look slightly familiar, incidentally, there's good reason. "Tom had a series of Mazda dealerships," Stevens says, "and they came from the 626 Coupé because we could just get the bits from the store..." The interior door handles, meanwhile, came from a Renault 5, the suggestion of body engineer Jim Router who happened to own one at the time and felt them to be suitably functional.



Router also later worked with Stevens on the McLaren F1, but regards the XJR-15 as the best-looking car with which he's been involved. "I thought so at the time and still do," he says. "It's very subtly cool."

POWERED BY A 6.0-LITRE, 450BHP V12 and retailing for £500,000, the XJR-15 was announced in November 1990 and the car was formally launched at Silverstone. Fifty were built (including five 7.0-litre LM models, all of which are thought to be in the hands of one Japanese custodian), plus two R-9R prototypes, and the three-race series involved a significant carrot: the main prize at the first two events was a JaguarSport XJR-S coupé, while a $1 million winner-takes-all purse was on offer at the Spa finale.

At the time, in the January 1991 issue, *Motor Sport* described the idea as being "reminiscent of the BMW Procar series of 1979-80" and Walkinshaw said "There will be no favouritism. We will prepare the cars and take them to the races. They will be as near identical as we can make them. Ideally, the owners will take delivery after Spa, in August, and I'd expect them to be seen in museums and private collections."

Buyers were permitted to compete so long as they had a suitable licence, but for the most part the cars were entrusted to seasoned professionals - many of them with strong TWR affiliations.

Derek Warwick won the rough-and-tumble opener, Juan Manuel Fangio II triumphed at Silverstone (where 11 of the 16 cars sustained some form of damage) and the 'money race' was a curious affair that began without drivers knowing how many laps they had to complete - a bid to avoid any of them striking mutually convenient pre-race deals and sharing the pot. They knew only that they had to race for at least six laps - and the flag was eventually shown after 11, by which stage Armin Hahne had a fairly comfortable lead... at the wheel of a car owned by Walkinshaw.

"As far as we can ascertain," Lindsay says, "Tom owned six or seven of the 16 racers, those he'd been unable to sell. Some went back to the factory and were later converted into road cars, which involved changing the gearbox, adding air-conditioning, indicators, headlights and so on, then selling them on. So a few people have road cars that they might not realise are actually ex-racers. We've already found a couple like that."

The XJR-15s were raced by 23 different drivers, most with serious top-line pedigree - for instance Warwick, John Watson, Bob Wollek and David Leslie - though record producer Matt Aitken, also a keen amateur racer, was one of the nine drivers who took part in all three outings.

"My professional career effectively concluded at the end of 1990," Watson says, "after a few seasons in Jaguar's Group C cars. I did only one XJR-15 race, at Spa, and having come out of XJR-7s, 8s and 9s, which were high-downforce, high-grip cars, the 15 was a bit of a wake-up call, with ostensibly 10 per cent as much downforce and a very high centre of gravity. I didn't adapt particularly well to it either.

"In the race, going up to Les Combes, I was running just behind Tiff Needell - but when he braked I backed off and simply lost control, spinning up the grass and then hitting him. I think it was probably easier to adjust for those who were more accustomed to touring cars, so my memories are short and not particularly sweet."

Touring car star Jeff Allam also made his series debut at Spa. "I'd had a long relationship with Tom Walkinshaw," he says, "racing his Rover SD1s and so on, but I'd never driven anything like this. Tom just phoned me and told me I was doing it, as team-mate to [winner] Armin Hahne.




MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## "Some have road cars that they may not know are ex-racers"




The Jaguar Intercontinental Challenge was capped by a $1m race on the undercard of the Belgian GP at Spa. Euser led early on, but Hahne won

"We had one set of fresh tyres for the weekend and could use them whenever we wanted. It was best to qualify on whatever they gave you and use the new rubber for the race - though I have a feeling that Armin got more than one set! The cars were quite difficult to drive, with so much weight at the back - quite oversteery and under-tyred for the power they had. It was alien to me, so I'm not sure I'd have wanted to do Monaco..."

Having spoken to many former drivers and owners, Lindsay understands that the car evokes mixed memories. "For some they were a step up, for others a step down," he says. "They didn't have much downforce, the engines were very heavy and they did only three races, so they never got to be developed. If you look at the Porsche 917, it was hated for the first 18 months of its life but then evolved to become one of history's greatest racing cars. The XJR-15 never had that opportunity." O




# We were there

Nine drivers contested all three Jaguar XJR-15 races – and two of their number were Tiff Needell and Ian Flux. Here are their first-hand recollections

**TIFF NEEDELL** "I suppose my first thought is that it must have been extremely dangerous, because Flux was driving one! But, in truth, it was absolutely great fun – though they were wild, wild machines."

**IAN FLUX** "They were, but I managed to finish all three races – more importantly, I never damaged the car once, despite spinning through the swimming pool section at Monaco."



**TN** "That Monaco lap was certainly busy – the tunnel certainly wasn't taken flat and we had to apply opposite lock in the middle."

**IF** "When I went off, I somehow managed not to hit anything, then had to do about a 12-point turn to rejoin. That was during the race, must have cost me about half an hour..."

**TN** "What!? You never put a scratch on your car? Neither did I, I was just savaged by other people... Actually, that's not quite true, there was an incident at Spa. In qualifying your best lap was usually your first, because after that the tyres went away – we all knew that, so I did one warm-up lap, stormed down to Eau Rouge and slightly overestimated the speed at which it was capable of going up the hill. I'd run out of talent – and grip – by the time I got to Raidillon. I felt very guilty at costing the owner what must have been a fortune."

**IF** "I wasn't far behind and the dust was still settling when I drove past. I thought, 'Blimey Tiff, that one looks a bit expensive'."

**MOTOR SPORT** "Did you chuckle all the way up to Les Combes?"

**IF** "Yes, and all the way back to the finishing line..."

**TN** "As cars they were great to drive on their own, but that changed a little when you had to race them and start worrying about other stuff. When your tyres went you were completely screwed, so you had to manage that aspect quite carefully, especially as we had only one new set per weekend."

**IF** "Unless you happened to be a TWR driver... allegedly!"

**TN** "The cars were also incredibly hot inside – particularly for those of us who were perhaps a little less fit by that stage."

**MS** "When you see the XJR-15 today, does it inspire fond memories?"

**TN** "Mostly, though mine are probably slightly mixed because of the occasional trauma."

**IF** "Absolutely – in more than 40 years at the wheel, it was the most I've ever been paid to race, so I loved it."

JACQUES VILLENEUVE

# Going back to basics

More than 20 years after becoming Formula 1 world champion, Jacques Villeneuve is competing in a somewhat lower-level racing series that's as simple as it is spectacular. **Simon Arron** spoke to him

THE CROWD IS PRETTY MUCH what one would expect at Brands Hatch for a Friday test session – negligible, but for a knot of spectators gathered behind one particular pit garage, all of them hoping for a selfie, an autograph, or possibly both. When their target emerges he proves to be a paragon of patience, fulfilling every request with a smile. It is two decades since Jacques Villeneuve survived a sideswipe from Michael Schumacher at Jerez to become Canada's first world champion, but his competitive instincts endure.

Since making his final F1 start in the 2006 German Grand Prix, with BMW Sauber, Villeneuve has competed in the Le Mans 24 Hours, NASCAR, Australian V8 Supercars, rallycross and Formula E, but this year he has settled on the NASCAR Whelen Euro Series, a wonderful anachronism in which spectacle is everything and simplicity outranks sophistication.

"The lust for competition never goes away," he says. "I've always wanted to drive more than I have been doing, but the opportunities haven't been there – that's all there is to it. I've been competitive by nature since I was a little kid, whether it was skiing or any other form of sport. It's still something that really drives me."

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Razzmatazz and public interaction are key elements of the NASCAR Euro Series








Despite differences between US and Euro NASCAR, there are spiritual similarities

"I've always enjoyed racing NASCAR in the States," he says. "I'd been looking at this championship for some time, but again you need the opportunity. I've known team owner Alain Lord Mounir for many years and, happily, we were able to strike a deal. I wanted to get back to contesting a full season, not just doing a few races here and there, because you can't build on that. When you do a full season you work with the same guys, develop the car around you and that's part of the excitement. It's not just a race, it's all the peripheral work."

For somebody who represented Williams-Renault at the peak of its powers, current circumstances are somewhat altered. The Go FAS racing team has a single truck, with a modest awning tacked to the side to accommodate a table and folding chairs. "Our set-up is pretty straightforward," he says. "We have two mechanics and one crew chief on the car - and that's it. I never liked the way F1 evolved from when I started in 1996 to my final race 10 years later. That's when the big change happened, from working with your engineer and maybe one data guy to sitting in a room with 30 people and doing a debrief. It felt like a boardroom meeting, which is completely wrong.

"This is much more human and even a bit gladiatorial, which is how racing started - a few crazy guys doing something they loved... That's one aspect I really enjoy about this - they're basically muscle cars, and the more society heads towards the opposite extreme, the more people appreciate stuff like this. It's rough and tough, which is what people want to see, and fun.

"There's a good atmosphere here, too. The driver range is broad - something like 18 to 50 years old. There are youngsters who aspire one day to go to the States to compete in NASCAR and see this as a stepping stone, then there are lots of experienced drivers who are happy to return to racing's roots. We didn't have any data when I began racing, you sat down with your engineer and a piece of paper and went through the stuff you'd probably need to do to go faster. That's the way we operate now. Some teams have telemetry, but there isn't even a computer in our garage - we're doing it the old-fashioned way and it seems to work."

Well enough that he was able to guide his Chevrolet Camaro to a brace of podium finishes in the second meeting of the year, at Franciacorta, Italy, though eighth (of 29) would be his best in the UK. (His father Gilles won the Race of Champions at Brands Hatch for Ferrari 40 years beforehand, but this was Jacques' maiden appearance at the venue.). He'd take another podium at Venray in the Netherlands, having been on pole and set fastest lap for the oval round, only for contact to knock him down the order.

Devised in France in 2008 and originally known somewhat non-specifically as the Racecar Euro-Series, the championship has been sanctioned by NASCAR since 2012 and the cars - 1150kg rear-drive chassis powered by 450bhp V8s - are spiritually similar to their American counterparts, though tailored for European-style circuits (Venray is the only oval on the schedule).

"There are a few differences between here and what they have in the States," Villeneuve says, "some things had to be altered to comply with FIA crash-test rules. There aren't many changes we're allowed to make - there's a fairly fixed set-up in an attempt to keep costs down, so either the car suits you and you're fast, or it doesn't and you're screwed because you can't work around the problem mechanically. You can make a real difference, though, by adapting your driving style.

"One thing I prefer about America is that no one blocks you, which is not the case here. In the States there's no blocking - and if somebody tried it they'd probably find themselves in the wall two corners later. Nobody weaves, it's just hard, fair racing. A lot of weaving goes on here and, if the perpetrator doesn't get caught, there's nothing you can do. But that's the one small aspect I don't like."

Villeneuve is now in the twilight of his career and relishing the sport for its own sake. If he were to be starting out all over ▶

> "We have two mechanics and one crew chief. There isn't even a computer in our garage"



Villeneuve scored two thirds at Franciacorta earlier in the year, but his best at Brands Hatch was an eighth

again in the modern era, does he think he'd still have been able to make it to the top?

"Not a chance," he says, "because my mother didn't have the millions to put me through the ranks. There's no way I could have made it. I was lucky to grow up in an era when you could still figure a way to do it. At 16 I worked as a mechanic in a racing school - I'd be there throughout my summer holidays, which was fun, and we were allowed to drive a little bit, so there were ways to build experience.

"I was also lucky that Camel stepped in to sponsor the sons of famous racing fathers, just when I turned 17. The timing was perfect and then you just had to dive in. It was also an era when you could still be yourself and evolve. It wasn't all controlled and politically correct."

EVEN WHEN HIS CAREER WAS AT its zenith and rivals tended to steer clear of controversy, for fear of upsetting team principals or their sponsors, Villeneuve was happy to speak his mind - a principle to which he adheres in his role as an F1 analyst for French and Italian TV. So what does he make of contemporary F1? He frowns slightly before responding. "There's good and bad," he says. "It's huge, perhaps the biggest sport in the world, which is great, but the problem is that even though we now have the fastest cars ever, they look so simple to drive. I watch and think, 'I could be quick tomorrow' and that's wrong. Even when I was in IndyCar, I remember looking at F1 and thinking, 'Wow, if ever I get there it's going to be a handful.' I don't get that feeling now.

"It's economy racing. Three engines per season? That's also wrong. F1 is meant to be extreme - you're supposed to throw the engine in the garbage after a race weekend. That's what made it so special. There should be testing, too. Everyone says, 'We need to create a better show to get fans.' No. You need to allow testing. How d'you create a fan? It happens when you're 12 years old and go to watch testing with your dad. It's not the show in itself that creates the fans, but those shared moments. That's what's missing. You don't take your kid to watch a simulator run, do you?

"Everyone complains about pay drivers, but if you go back to the 1970s Niki Lauda started out as a pay driver. He came from a wealthy family that didn't want to support his racing, so he had to borrow the money. He had the focus, though, and was willing to put his balls on the line. Now it seems to be, 'Son, you will go racing.' 'But Daddy, I don't really want to...' 'Yes, son, you will.' It's gone the other way, because it's so safe. Fathers never used to want their sons to become F1 drivers - they still don't tell them to go and race motorbikes, do they?"

But back to his own present. Is he in this for the long haul?

"There's no fixed target," he says, "but we've only just started the programme and I really don't want it to stop because I'm having such a blast. This year the series finale is at Zolder. It's where my dad passed away, of course, but I've never even been there, so that will be quite special, I think. It's hard to find quite the right words, but I'm excited that I'll be racing here - it will be a very powerful moment." ○



# The art of plain speech

Since his racing pomp, Villeneuve hasn't been afraid to launch the occasional verbal grenade...

"The results speak for themselves. It [Lance Stroll's debut season] is one of the worst rookie performances in the history of Formula 1."
***On Williams's new boy, 2017***

"He [Jenson Button] brings to the sport what boy bands bring to music. He is young and cute, which is not bad – I guess – for the girls. The team prefers to use him for that kind of stuff [marketing] but prefers me for the in-car activity, which is racing hard."
***Welcoming his new team-mate at BAR-Honda, 2003***

"I think that the problem is you don't ever see Michael Schumacher's true personality. He's a racer – but a pure racer, nothing but a racer. Because of that, I think that the day he hangs up his helmet people will just forget about him. Michael simply isn't a great champion because he's played too many dirty tricks and because he isn't a great human being."
***Contemplating the seven-time champion's first retirement, 2006***

"These corporations don't want drivers to ruin their image, so you can't say what you think. You're basically not allowed to have a personality. How can you have any heroes if you don't allow personalities?"
***Talking to* The Guardian, *2005***

"He needs to figure something out. Maybe a new team-mate will be helpful. Have a slower team-mate. He needs to find a way to go faster."
***Back on Lance Stroll's case, Brazil 2017***

"F1 is giving penalties for people making mistakes instead of for people driving dirty. And that is wrong. Mistakes happen. You run into each other: that's life, that's racing, too bad."
***Analysing race stewarding, 2011***

"What do you expect? Most of them are still babies. If we want to excite the fans of tomorrow, we need heroes – idols they want to copy. But what they see today are drivers who earn millions but are cowards, hiding behind a safety car. What makes a grand prix driver so special is no longer coming through."
***Thoughts on a soggy British GP starting behind the safety car, 2016***

"I don't really listen to Jacques Villeneuve any more."
***Lance Stroll, 2018***

# F1 SEASON REVIEW

## WITH DAMON HILL AND KARUN CHANDHOK







## Join *Motor Sport* for an exclusive evening of behind-the-scenes insight into the 2019 Formula 1 season

The 2019 Formula 1 season has featured multiple twists and turns, with drama each step of the way. The *Motor Sport* season review with Damon Hill, Karun Chandhok and members of the magazine's editorial team will lift the lid on the season, and take you behind the scenes of the paddock. With a chance to ask your own questions, this is an opportunity not to be missed!

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Sixty years ago this season, Honda entered motorcycle grand prix racing with technology that stunned the world. It sparked a power struggle that changed the sport forever. **Mat Oxley** explains

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MORTONS

# HONDA'S ENGINE REVOLUTION

Jim Redman bumps Honda's brand-new 250 six into life at Monza, September 1964. The bike "sounded like the end of the world" – it was so loud that Dunlop technicians refused to check its rear tyre when the engine was running

MUSTCHLER WOOLLETT

In September 1964, famed Honda engineer Michihiko Aika and rider Jim Redman climbed aboard a BOAC VC10 at Tokyo's Haneda airport, bound for Monza, via Hong Kong, Calcutta, Karachi and Rome. Sitting next to them was their new motorcycle, laid across three passenger seats and hidden beneath a blanket. The decision to race the bike at the season-ending Italian Grand Prix had been last minute, too late to freight it to Italy.

The machine was Honda's RC165, a six-cylinder 250cc four-stroke created to defeat Yamaha's twin-cylinder RD56 two-stroke, which had proved too much for Honda's four-cylinder RC164.

The RC165 was Honda's most famous weapon during its 1960s war with the burgeoning two-stroke force, led by Yamaha and Suzuki. The 250 six and its lesser-known stablemates the RC148 125cc five and RC115 50cc twin were also important symbols of Japan's new industrial might and perfect examples of the nation's fascinating technology of miniaturisation. The 250 six had a bore and stroke of 39 x 34.8mm, while the 125 five and the 50 twin measured 34 x 27.8mm. Pistons like espresso cups.

The engineering concept behind these shrieking engines was straightforward: a two-stroke fires twice as often as a four-stroke does, therefore the four-stroke must rev twice as high. The 250 six revved to 18,000rpm, the 125 and 50 went to 21,000, compared to Yamaha's 11,000rpm RD56.

Remarkably, these engines, and Honda's first Formula 1 engine, the RA270, were mostly designed by one man, the brilliant Shoichiro Irimajiri, who was only 24 in 1964.

Irimajiri had wanted to design jets, but Japan was banned from engaging in such activities after the Second World War, so he joined Honda instead.

Honda itself was emblematic of Japan's new role in the world. Metallurgist Soichiro Honda had established his company in 1948, by buying a job lot of Second World War army radio generators and installing them in bicycles to create low-cost powered transport. By 1965 Honda was the world's biggest motorcycle manufacturer, producing 1.25 million units annually.

Honda's stunning growth was part of a greater Japanese economic boom that had been largely precipitated by the Korean and Vietnam wars, for which the US needed a supply and repair base close to these new theatres of war. During the first 18 months of the Korean conflict billions of dollars flowed into the Japanese economy, the Tokyo stock market leapt 80 per cent and numerous US-Japan licensing agreements were signed. Irimajiri was one of many Japanese engineers who took advantage of this new relationship between his country and the USA.

"When we had trouble with materials, we went to General Electric or Pratt and Whitney in the USA," he recalls. "They asked us, 'what problems do you have?' We explained, and they introduced us to a very special steel, a new material they were using for turbine shafts. In those days American companies were kind to us; they showed us everything so we could overcome these problems. We took samples home, went to Daido Steel or Nippon Special Steel, who analysed it and then made the same for us."

With his innate genius and imported knowhow, Irimajiri revolutionised






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four-stroke technology. His engines made up to 280 horsepower per litre, about the same specific power output of a 2019 MotoGP bike; although modern grand prix engines are restricted in bore size, specifically to rule out any Irimajiri-style flights of fancy.

No doubt many other four-stroke race departments learned from Honda's engines. BMW certainly did. The details of Honda's 1960s marvels were required reading for engineering students of that era, according to ex-BMW Motorsport head Mario Theissen.

When Aika and Redman arrived in Italy for the last race of the 1964 season their hand luggage caused a sensation in the Monza pit lane. "My heart sank when I saw its fantastic speed past the pits," remembers Yamaha's Phil Read, Redman's rival for the 250cc world title. And the bike was so loud, with a shrieking exhaust note that sounded like the end of the world, that Dunlop tyre technicians refused to check its rear tyre while the engine was running.

When the race started Redman charged into the lead, but not for long. The six was far from fully developed, so its carburettors suffered a vapour lock, the mighty six slowed and the championship went to Read and Yamaha. It was another year or so before the bike was fully sorted, just in time for Mike Hailwood to arrive at Honda from MV Agusta. 'Mike the Bike' became synonymous with the six, taking the 1966 and 1967 250cc titles and the 1967 350cc championship, using a bored-out 297cc six.

Hailwood enjoyed these successes and many more despite his famous lack of technical nouse.

"Mike's mechanical knowledge was practically zero - he didn't have the remotest idea," said fellow Honda rider Ralph Bryans, speaking before his death in 2014. "I was there when he jumped aboard the 250 six for the first time at Suzuka. He came back in and they asked him what it was like and he said, 'bloody awful'. But as for what it was doing and what could they do to fix it - absolutely no feedback whatsoever. It was lucky there wasn't much set-up to do in those days - there was only one tyre choice and we'd set the suspension at the start of the year and never touch it again."

At the Spa-Francorchamps track in 1966 Hailwood's team-mate Redman suffered career-ending injuries. His place was taken by up-and-coming Brit Stuart Graham, who had sparked Honda's interest with some brave rides aboard a single-cylinder Matchless G50 in 500cc grands prix. Honda approached the youngster at the East German GP, asking him to ride the 250 six in the quarter-litre class.

"Talk about jumping in at the deep end - going from a single-cylinder four-speed Matchless that revved to 7000rpm to a six-cylinder seven-speed Honda that they warmed up at 13,000rpm!" recalls Graham, who later raced saloon cars, enjoying great success in a Chevrolet Camaro. "It was pretty traumatic. Just riding the six out of the pits was a problem - it really had no flywheel, so it was very easy to stall. The power delivery wasn't user-friendly - it was all way up at the top end and it came in with a big wallop at 15 or 16 thousand. And the handling was interesting, to put it mildly, because in those days all the emphasis was on the engine; the chassis was just somewhere to put the engine. All in all, it was pretty hairy."

Irimajiri's leitmotifs were high revs, low friction, lightweight materials, compact design and very clever combustion, using very shallow valve angles with almost vertical intake ports. The six was a stunning design - no wider than its four-cylinder predecessor - with tapered double-overhead camshafts that drove 24 valves, with sparks provided by special miniature NGK spark plugs. The crankshaft ran with one-piece conrods and tiny flywheels, with most of the mass concentrated towards the centre and drive taken between cylinders two and three, effectively halving the crank's vibrating length.



Jim Redman was instrumental in the test and development of Honda's 250cc six. He retired after being injured in a crash at Belgium in 1966

HONDA



Bryans at full flight on Honda's 50cc twin, leading Suzuki's Mitsuo Itoh during the Isle of Man TT

HONDA

# "They revved so hard that if they blew up you'd just have shrapnel"

Although Graham found the six intimidating he is still in awe of the engine: "The engineering world should acknowledge the pioneering work that Honda did with its high-revving, multi-cylinder engines that set things up for the next few decades. When George Beale [a British collector] built a few replicas of the six a while back he took an original to Mecachrome, who pulled it apart and couldn't believe what they found, like all the tiny oilways they could only find with x-rays. And this was 50 years later."

IN 1965 IRIMAJIRI UNLEASHED HIS NEXT creation, the RC148 five-cylinder 125. He based this new engine on the twin-cylinder 50 that he had designed alongside the 250 six.

"My idea wasn't to make a normal five-cylinder," he says. "Instead I made a six-cylinder 150cc and took off one cylinder. I was also working on the 250 six, so that was very simple. If you look at the 125 five engine you can see that it started out as a six cylinder. I took out one cylinder and put in the gear train. Then we used parts from the 50cc twin, so that design was very smooth."

Swiss rider Luigi Taveri rode the 125 five to world championship success in 1966, when Honda achieved a unique full-house of constructors' titles in the 50cc, 125cc, 250cc, 350cc and 500cc classes. However, these were heady times, with Honda and its two-stroke rivals involved in a mad technology race. The following year Yamaha got revenge, reclaiming the 125 crown with its wild RA31 V4 two-stroke - which boasted 17,000rpm and a nine-speed gearbox

Honda's 125 five was even more of a handful than the 250 six. "Even when you got it right the carburation was absolute s**t at low revs," said Bryans, Taveri's 125cc team-mate. "If it wasn't above 18,000 it wasn't going anywhere. At slow tracks like Montjuïc Park it was practically unrideable."

The diminutive Ulsterman won four grands prix on the RC148 during 1966, after winning the 1965 50cc world title aboard the 13-horsepower RC115, which used bicycle-style stirrup-brakes to reduce brake drag. Bryans, a technical illustrator at shipbuilder Harland and Wolff, got to learn more about the 125 five and 250 six than most Westerners. When Honda quit GPs at the end of 1967 the company loaned him one of each to ride in non-world championship events. And it was up to him to service the bikes.

"With Honda it was always the same - the engine parts just kept getting smaller," he added. "Looking after the 250 six was a piece of cake compared to the 125 five. The small size of the parts and the tiny clearances made things so difficult. I had to use tweezers on the valve collets.

"Before Honda signed me, I raced Manx Nortons. You could have a single-cylinder Manx in bits in a few minutes, you could probably rebuild two in a day. With the 125 five it took two days just to do a cylinder head and a week to do the whole engine.

"Setting up the cylinder head was an absolutely mammoth job. Valve clearance was only six to eight thou, but the tappets had no screw adjusters. You had to measure them with a micrometer to work out where you were going to put each one, then you'd grind them down on an abrasive stone according to how each valve was opening and closing. The margin for error was very, very small.

"Each piston had to be handcrafted to suit. I did that by placing four blobs of plasticine on the piston, turning over the motor, then measuring the plasticine with a micrometer to check the valve clearance. If there wasn't enough clearance I'd scrape aluminium from the top of the piston until it was right. I didn't have to bother with that on the 250 six but on the 125 five the clearances were extremely small and it was very critical that they were correct because a valve clouting a piston was catastrophic. The things revved so hard that if they blew up all you'd be left with was a load of shrapnel."

Getting the carburation right was a similarly labyrinthine job: five carburettors with five jets each - main petrol and air jets, intermediate petrol and air jets and a slow-running air jet - plus three different lengths of inlet rubbers.

By the late 1960s the four-stroke versus two-stroke conflict was getting out of control. In 1967 Suzuki engineers designed the RP66 for the following season. The RP66 was a three-cylinder 50cc two-stroke, created to defeat Honda's rival four-stroke twin. The RP66 made 18 horsepower at 19,000rpm - 380bhp per litre - delivered through a 14-speed gearbox.

But the RP66 was banned before it reached the racetrack. The governing body of bike racing, the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme, decided to call time on this weapons race. From 1968, the 50cc class was limited to single-cylinder machines, the 125 and 250 categories to twins and the 350 and 500 classes to fours, all with six-speed gearboxes. What many people still believe to be motorcycle racing's golden age was over.

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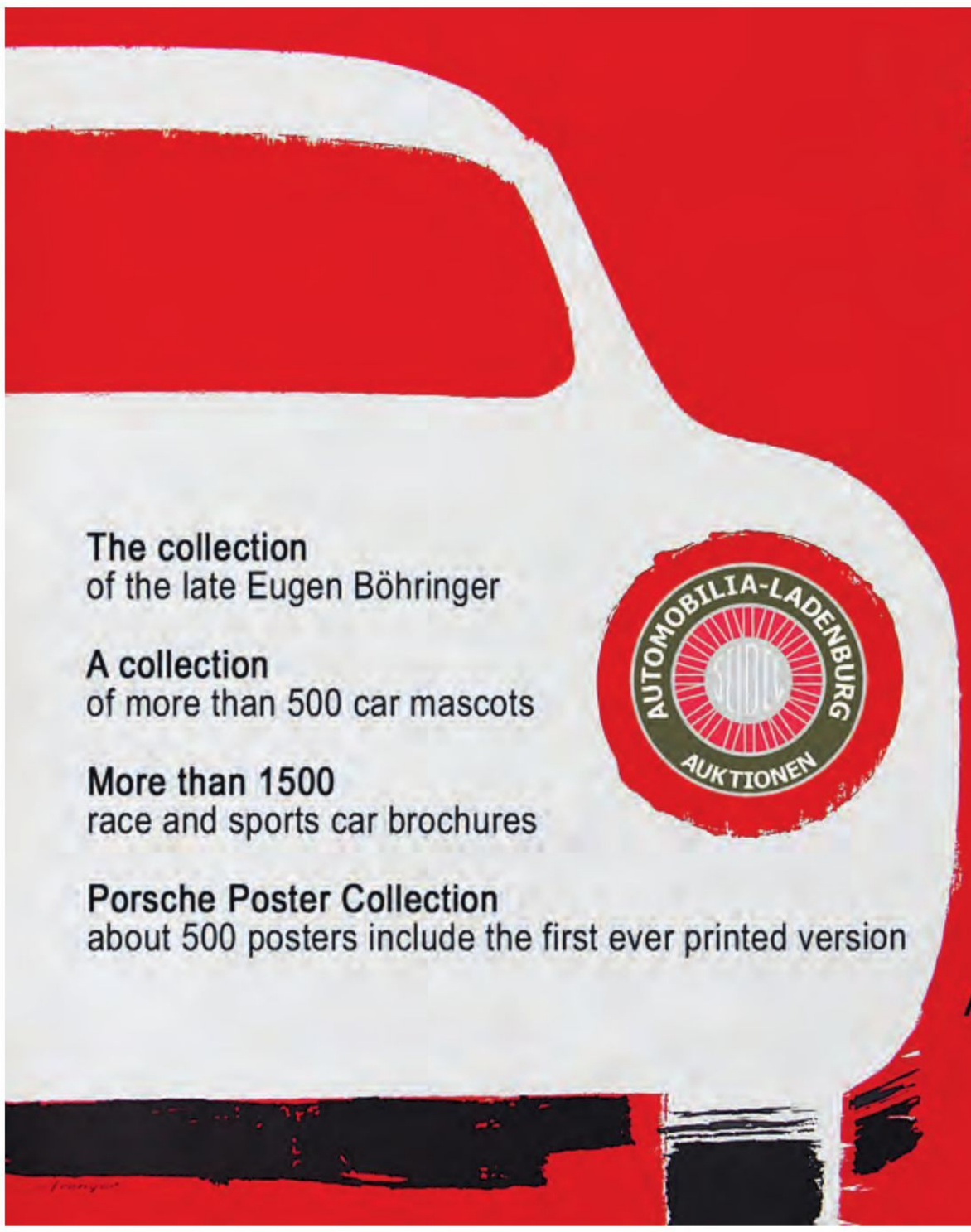
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# Red Bull's Rough Diamond

Set for Formula E at the start of the year, then thrust into the F1 spotlight, and now at Red Bull's top table, **Mark Hughes** charts the rise of Alexander Albon

NOT EVEN ON THE F1 RADAR A few months ago, Alex Albon started the year as an apparently left-field selection for a Toro Rosso seat by the ever-mercurial Helmut Marko. Now he's a Red Bull driver in a potentially grand prix-winning car. That's the most recent instalment of Albon's helter-skelter career.

Is it all too early, though? What's to stop him being demoted and dropped again, just like Daniil Kvyat and Pierre Gasly before him? They were, after all, two quick young drivers promoted to the senior team with minimal F1 experience. As of course was Max Verstappen...

That's the thing with the Red Bull Junior programme: it's brutal but the opportunities come around fast because of that. But the initial signs, on his first race for the team at Spa, were extremely positive. "I think he's the real deal," said Christian Horner afterwards. His feedback, his attitude, his racecraft... I'm suitably impressed."

This was in the immediate wake of him starting from the back with an engine change penalty and racing up to fifth place, including a dramatic last-lap pass on the Racing Point of Sergio Pérez - one of the hardest, least compromising racers out there - at around 200mph with two wheels on the grass that lines the Kemmel Straight.

Watch the in-car footage and appreciate the surety of his many passing moves; he's a guy who's relaxed in the car. As he passes Nico Hülkenberg flat-out in eighth gear, he's simultaneously pulling off a visor strip. His move on the old-tyred Daniel Ricciardo was beautiful in its subtlety and originality - making for the outside of Rivage but rather than trying to sit it out as Daniel was doubtless expecting, backing off early to allow the late-braking Renault back in, knowing that would pull it out wide, allowing Alex, from his reduced speed and wider approach angle to simply steer right and pass down the hill and cleanly around the outside at Liege.

These were big moves, the sort of things that get a driver noticed, that just might see him make the transition to the big time. Yet they could hardly be in greater contrast with his out-of-the car persona, which is humble verging on unconfident, self-mocking, smiley, shy but talkative when engaged, giggly. He is not at all your typical young professional coached in presentation skills. He's just... normal. This 23-year-old Red Bull driver who had just passed Sergio Pérez on the grass on the last lap of Spa went back to his home with his mum and three younger siblings in Milton Keynes, where he will still happily do the school run. "I am the family Über," he told Ben Hunt of *The Sun*. "Every morning I drop off my little sister Chloe, 17, and brother Luca, 15, at two different schools and then pick them up again. It's not cool, being an F1 taxi driver, but it does mean they are on time in the mornings."

"Yes, it's true," agrees Pierre Hamelin, his Toro Rosso engineer for the first part of the season, overseeing his graduation to F1. "His personality in the car and out is very different. For example, he crashed the car in Saturday morning practice in China, just pushing a bit too hard. When he got back out there in the race he was immediately straight back on it, really pushing and up for it and not looking back at all [he went from a pitlane start to a top-10 finish]. But out of the car, if you talked to him he was maybe a bit more skeptical about what was going to happen. It's only when he puts the visor down and goes out the garage that all that disappears."

THAT SOFT SURFACE IS misleading, but has probably played its part in Albon's sometimes rocky career path, in not transmitting that underlying confidence that is actually very much there. He's as natural out of the car as in it, but they are two very different beasts, each as real as the other. Those in F1 from the karting generation in which he competed harbour no doubts about his stature and aren't surprised to see him excel in F1. Lando Norris, for example, being a couple of years younger, used to idolise him as the racer he wanted to be. Max Verstappen was the karting new boy, Albon the established ace as they took each other on. "Oh, he's fast," said Verstappen in Spa, "No question about that." They went head-to-head in 2010 in the KF3 class, winning three titles between them, two of them Albon's. "Yeah, Max has the experience now and I'm the new boy," he smiles. "It used to be the other way around."

He first found himself on the Red Bull programme as a Thai-based kid in 2009 (Red Bull is partly Thai-owned). But the transition from European karting ace into cars in 2012 did not go well. As a 15-year-old he had, by his own admission, nothing like the maturity needed to retain racing focus amid great turmoil in his home life at the time. He was dropped by Red Bull at the end of the year. He'd found it initially difficult transferring the karting ability into cars but, with the help of father (former BTCC racer) Nigel, he rebuilt, with more promising seasons in European Formula Renault in 2013 and '14. By 2016 he was fighting it out in GP3 with team-mate Charles Leclerc (he won four races to Leclerc's three) - and leading the final round until crashing out.

Throughout, he'd kept up contact with Marko and after staying in contention for last year's F2 title until the final round, he enquired whether there might be any possibility of getting back on the Red Bull Junior scheme. The response was negative, at which point he surrendered the F1 dream and signed for the Nissan Formula E team. Marko had a change of mind and arranged for that contract to be annulled and, with no preparation, Albon became a Toro Rosso F1 driver in winter testing. It was a stark contrast to the many miles of F1 testing under the belts of fellow rookies - and F2 title rivals - George Russell and Lando Norris, both of whom had grand prix Friday practice sessions under their belts.

"We were not expecting much from him at the start," says Hamelin, "because they are complex cars. You have to get used to the procedures on the car and understand the balance and he had zero experience. We thought he'd be a long way off Daniil [Kvyat] who has a lot of experience, but he wasn't. He was up to speed very quickly. For us, he was race-ready by Australia. That was really impressive. I didn't expect the winter test to be as straightforward as it was."

Albon reckons he was nowhere near ready in terms of properly understanding and exploiting the car, and that it took most of the first half of the season for him to ▶



Flung into the fold at Toro Rosso at the start of the year, Albon now finds himself installed in one of grand prix racing's most coveted seats




"Albon surrendered the F1 dream and signed for Formula E, but Marko had a change of heart"

get there. Yet his speed was quite evident regardless. He out-qualified Kvyat on his debut and was irritated at himself for missing out on Q3 for the sake of half a tenth. But it was the manner of his progress that caught the eye: flamboyant full attack, total confidence in his car control – and then reining it back from his excesses. Watching him attacking the Albert Park kerbs, seeing how he used the bumps to place the car, brought to mind Fernando Alonso in a Minardi back in 2001.

"Yes, he's not over-thinking the car too much," observes Hamelin. "He just drives on his feeling so he will go fast into the first corner and try to understand how the car reacts, what its balance is and by the next corner he will be acting on that. This makes him very flexible according to what is happening with the wind or the track temperature or the tyres. That's why he can get up to speed so quickly because he's not over-thinking, just reacting. Even tracks that are new to him, after one run he will be there. That's good to work with because we can then understand the limitations of the car early in the weekend. We wouldn't have to wait until qually to be fully up to speed with the car."

The difference between that and absolutely maximising the potential of the car every time is about understanding how the car needs to be run in setup terms, where its sweet spot is and how it likes to be driven within that. The Toro Rosso couldn't always give him what he ideally needed and this was where he sometimes achieved less than he might, with those empty rookie data banks. "As with a lot of younger drivers, if something doesn't work they can start to lose the confidence that [the setup direction] is the right way and that it will come good. He's still coming up to speed with that, keeping the faith that he's going in the right direction.

"The other thing which is very difficult for young drivers in the midfield is everything is so tight that we have to push a bit earlier in qualifying. The top three teams can afford to build up more progressively and start with laps at 95 per cent in Q1, then 98 per cent in Q2. For us we cannot afford it, so it's easier to have a worse qualifying. You have to deliver but you have less knowledge, so you have to risk. There's more risk of a small mistake that can be costly."




Runner-up in GP3, then third in Formula 2 last year, Albon is now in at the deep end with the Red Bull team

## "He's verging on sensational, but not quite hitting it just yet"

Kvyat, in his second incarnation at Toro Rosso after a spell as a Ferrari reserve driver, is a seasoned pro these days, getting the best from himself much more consistently, while also retaining his underlying speed. Albon slipped up more frequently on the sort of final details Hamelin is talking about and therefore often ended up behind even when he was intrinsically faster. But even so, in qualifying they scored evenly at 6-6 in their part-season together. With a fuller understanding of the technicalities of tyre prep laps – and not getting delayed by Norris in Hockenheim – that qualifying score could conceivably have stood at 10-2 in Albon's favour. Which is sort of where he's at right now: verging on sensational but not quite hitting it as those data banks fill up.

Highlights included his Q3-qualifying speed at Silverstone where his huge confidence through the fast corners put him way ahead of his team-mate. Then there was his first drive of an F1 car in the wet – during the rain of Hockenheim race day. From 17th he was soon running in fourth, absolutely on merit. On a day when many of the big stars hit the wall, he was faultless. He was even attacking Hamilton's Mercedes at one point and only lost a likely podium due to the gamble on strategies late in the race to change to slicks made by Kvyat and Stroll from nowhere. It was easy to forget this was




Albon caught the eye with his charge to fifth from the back at Spa-Francorchamps




Red Bull Junior Team, class of 2012: From left: Daniil Kvyat , Lewis Williamson, Stefan Wackerbauer, Alex Albon, Carlos Sainz Jr and Callan O'Keeffe. Only Kvyat and Albon are still with the brand

a rookie in a Toro Rosso. It's the peaks of a rookie's performances that should be taken as an indication of their potential, not the averages - and Albon's peaks have been giddy. Passing, then re-passing, the Red Bull of Pierre Gasly at Hockenheim just underlined the situation of the under-performer in the senior team and the over-achiever in the Toro Rosso.

But the decision had already been taken by then: Marko was going to swap them around after the summer break.

AT THE TIME OF WRITING there had been no direct comparison with new Red Bull team-mate Verstappen possible on account of their alternate engine penalties at Spa and Monza. This has perhaps taken the pressure off Albon as he's settled in, and the eye-catching race in Spa helped with that, too. "It was a relief," he said, "because it just got the media off my back." Typically, as one who sets the bar very high for himself, he was not particularly elated with the drive. While the paddock was abuzz with his grass-taking, outside-line passes and cut backs, he was reflecting on whether he could have done better in the first stint on the harder tyres before the car came alive. Certainly, Kvyat - who was superb at both Spa and Monza - made the point that in a Red Bull Albon spent a lot of laps behind a Toro Rosso at Spa. It was, of course, a comment loaded with understandable bitterness as one who's been on and off the Red Bull conveyor belt many times. But it's also one that Albon wouldn't necessarily disagree with. For someone for whom the driving comes so easy, the results are sometimes less than he would expect of himself.

Is he ready for the Red Bull drive? Ready to be compared directly with Verstappen? Ready to go wheel-to-wheel with Hamilton and his erstwhile GP3 rival Leclerc? "I believe he is," says Hamelin. "He still has a few things to get up to speed on. But the basic performance, yes, I think so. He's very good at working on his own, getting the performance from himself." Perhaps in contrast to his predecessor in the seat... "Also, the things he was asking for in our car, when you look at the onboards of the Red Bull, you can see it has that. I think it will suit his style very well."

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Abarth made its name building small but fast racers, with the propped-up bootlid being a signature

# Small mercies

## Period taxes may have taken their toll, but there was some good to come from Italy's downscaling, says **Simon de Burton**

NOT MANY PEOPLE HAVE GOOD things to say about taxes, but we do have Italy's punitive post-war levies on larger capacity engines to thank for the many pocket rocket racing machines that were created by the country's tuning houses.

The most famous of these was undoubtedly Abarth, which was especially renowned for working its magic on such improbable cars as Fiat's 500 and 600 in order to turn them from low-performance shopping cars into high-performance fire-breathers.

The firm was founded in 1949 by Carlo Abarth following the demise of Cisitalia, of which he had been the sporting director. The first Abarth-badged cars were based on a clutch of Cisitalia 204s which were acquired as part of the company's assets, after which the firm built and raced its own creations before establishing close ties with Fiat in 1952.

Drivers including Tazio Nuvolari, Franco Cortese and Piero Taruffi were all associated with the Squadra Abarth team, and the giant-killing ability of the firm's cars soon came to be known worldwide – as part of Alfred Cosentino's team FAZA, for example, Abarths won 51 Sports Car Club of America races out of the 53 entered.

That history and reputation, combined with the general fun factor associated with




**Aside from the 1000TCR wide-arch bodywork, this 850 TC is perfectly original and ready to race again**



the Fiat-based models, has inevitably led to Abarths being much imitated by professionals and amateurs looking to build recreations and evocations - but this excellent example of a 1963 Fiat-Abarth 850 TC on offer at the Classic Motor Hub is the genuine article.

Based on the standard Fiat 600, the 850 TC was heavily upgraded by the Abarth wizards to feature a 51bhp 848cc motor (the standard car having a 633cc 28bhp unit), a modified front end with integrated oil cooler, larger wheels and the distinctive, propped-open engine cover.

The car, which remained in Italy up until last year, is almost entirely original save for the flared, 1000TCR-style bodywork (believed to have been added around 40 years ago) and aftermarket Campagnolo wheels.

Aside from that, the car is absolutely correct, retaining its original Veglia instrument cluster with 10,000rpm rev counter, correct Fiat and Abarth number stamps, the proper magnesium sump and carburettor and Carello external oil filter.

The four-speed gearbox is also an original Abarth item, as are the special fuel tank and the Stinger exhaust system - which is described simply as 'loud'.

Inside, the car has been stripped for race use and fitted with an OMP seat and harness combination and full roll cage, while the austere painted metal dashboard carries an original '850 TC' badge.

Offered with a packed file containing expired FIA and FIVA papers, it has clearly seen some track action within the past 15 years and is described to be 'on the button' and ready to go. It simply needs a new owner with around £45,000 to spare on a pocket rocket - and, of course, plenty of *sprezzatura*, as the Italians would say.

**1963 FIAT-ABARTH 850 TC**
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The curvaceous body was the work of Giuseppe Figoni, who would later form the creative half of the Figoni et Falaschi design partnership from the mid-1930s

AUCTION HERO

# Fuelled for success

Despite an embarrassing Le Mans failure, this rare Bugatti enjoys a second life as a design classic, says **Simon de Burton**

FEBRUARY'S PARIS RETROMOBILE show may be a way off, but Bonhams has already given pre-war car enthusiasts considerable food for thought by consigning a Bugatti Type 55 that began life as a works Le Mans entry driven by two of the greatest French *pilotes* of the era.

There were high hopes for Louis Chiron and Guy Bouriat's chances when they took to the grid at the Circuit de la Sarthe during the 1932 event, for which the car was fitted with makeshift, regulation-compliant four-seat bodywork. But, as it turned out, the pair were forced to retire after just three hours and 22 laps - when the car ran out of petrol.

Following its ignominious Le Mans failure, Bouriat sold the Type 55 to magazine publisher Jacques Dupuy, who commissioned Parisian coachbuilder Giuseppe Figoni to clothe it in an elegant, one-off, two-seater body featuring high-level doors and came complete with wind-up windows.

This made the car both more practical and more elegant than examples fitted with the 'cutaway' design favoured by Jean Bugatti, and Dupuy soon entered it into the Paris-Nice trial, a gruelling event that began with a high-speed lap of Montlhéry before competitors were required to make the 500-mile journey to the south of France at an average of 40 mph - with just 15 minutes of leeway for lateness.

Dupuy's performance in the trial is not recorded, but the Bugatti is known to have enjoyed success in less arduous *concours d'elegance* events, after which its wartime history becomes hazy.

It was rediscovered in the early 1960s - then in a parlous state and minus its engine - by the Bugatti Trust founder and noted historian Hugh Conway, who helped to effect its export to England, where it was bought by marque expert Geoffrey St John.

St John restored the car, using it regularly for trips to France - during one of which it was involved in an accident that required the services of Wales-based Bugatti frame guru Gino Hoskins to repair the chassis in order to maintain originality.

Powered by a 2.3-litre, supercharged straight-eight that is an only mildly detuned version of the twin-cam engine fitted to the Type 51 GP cars, the Type 55 is said to be capable of touching 115mph - performance that was regularly exploited by St John, in whose family the car has remained for the past 56 years.

One of just 38 Type 55 Super Sports models built, the well-known car is still fitted with that same decidedly stylish Figoni body that it has worn since the early 1930s and undoubtedly represents a rare opportunity, both in terms of its rarity, period history and long-term ownership.

Bonhams is pitching it as 'estimate on request' - although we are reliably informed that bids of around €4m are hoped for.

**1932 Bugatti Type 55 Super Sports. On sale at Bonhams, Retromobile, Le Grand Palais, Paris. February 6, 2020. *bonhams.com***



**1994 McLAREN F1 LM SPEC. SOLD FOR $19.8M, R.M SOTHEBY'S.** This year's Monterey Car Week sales might have reinforced the belief that the classic car market is undergoing a downward correction – but the sale of this McLaren F1 shows there is still big money available for truly blue-chip offerings. One of just two to have been factory modified to 'LM' spec, it has a 680bhp GTR-type engine and high-downforce bodywork. Originally in blue pearl with a black interior, it was re-finished in platinum silver with cream leather.



**1959 KELLISON J-4R COUPE. SOLD FOR $17,985, BONHAMS.** This fabulous Kellison sold for half its low estimate. Developed by former Korean War fighter pilot Jim Kellison, the 'J' cars were sold as kits designed to take Chevrolet engines, and this one had a 497bhp 406ci V8. With a NASCAR roll cage, and still street legal.



**1931 STUDEBAKER SPECIAL. SOLD FOR $1.1M, GOODING AND CO.** This survivor made its debut at the 1931 Indy 500 with Tony Gulotta at the wheel, qualifying 19th at 117 mph – although it crashed out of the race. It did, however, go on to win that year's Pikes Peak hillclimb in the hands of Chuck Myers. Restored to 1932 spec.



**1957 ASTON MARTIN DB2/4 MK II. SOLD FOR $302,000, R.M. SOTHEBY'S.** Discovered 11 years ago in the California desert where it had been abandoned, it was bought by marque enthusiast Don Rose who gave it a full mechanical rebuild, but left the bodywork in its paint-stripped state, creating a superb 'derelict'.

# Lost in translation

## R.M Sotheby's language barrier is just one example of why it's now a buyer's market

ANY FOLLOWERS OF UK politics across the last few years will be very familiar with the word 'debacle' - but it can also be used to appropriately describe the attempt by R.M Sotheby's to sell the 1939 'Porsche' Type 64 in Monterey. The car appeared to have soared in price, and in $10m increments, to a high bid of $70m. Until it was revealed that the auctioneer's European English had been 'misinterpreted' and that he actually meant '17' and not '70'.

In the event, the unique vehicle (which Porsche itself says is not technically a Porsche as it was built by Ferdinand P before he founded the firm) failed to sell, leaving the crowd to express its displeasure with boos and hisses at the unfolding events.

But the Type 64 was only one of many big-number entries that were left on the shelf during Monterey Car Week, with this year's auctions generating a total of $245m in sales between them. That's against the $370m realised in 2018 for around 25 per cent fewer lots.

And many of the multi-million dollar cars that did sell (such as the McLaren F1 mentioned above) changed hands for below estimate prices, a scenario that seems to be playing out at all levels and at auctions in both America and Europe.

Yes, it is now a buyer's market - so get out there and make the most of it.





**1975 FERRARI 312T. SOLD FOR $6M, GOODING AND CO.** **A poignant lot, this 312T was driven by the late Niki Lauda and team-mate Clay Regazzoni to the F1 constructors' title in 1975. Chassis number 022, it began Lauda's famous rivalry with James Hunt, after Lauda beat Hunt in the BRDC International Trophy.**



**1954 JAGUAR XK120. SOLD FOR £133,333, BONHAMS.** **Originally owned by celebrated racer Jack Sears, who competed in it at Goodwood, Snetterton and in the RAC rally throughout 1954. It was sold with FIA papers and a file of period photographs – some signed.**



# MAX GIRARDO

## "We can't look at sales today through the rose-tinted glasses of the past"

Every year, for five days in August, the classic car industry descends upon the small city of Monterey (a population of under 30,000 people) – for the Monterey Car Week. Of course, I was in attendance, along with my Girardo & Co. team, and this year we had a very special addition to the group: the ex-works 1956 Maserati 200 SI we sold last year.

As the official 'babysitter' of the car, I started off my week on Thursday driving it on the Pebble Beach Tour d'Elegance, with my colleague and friend Daniele Turrisi sharing. If you ever have the opportunity to participate in this tour, I highly recommend it.

The next day we tucked the Maserati in a safe little spot to get her beauty rest before her big debut at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance on Sunday, and the team and I headed out to the many auctions. To be honest, there were so many going on at the same time we had to divide up to hit them all.

With all of the big three auction houses combined, the total number of cars unsold was 134, which was up significantly from last year's number of 76. To be fair, there were more cars on offer (543 compared to 432 last year), but 25 per cent of the cars didn't find new homes this year.

Don't let these numbers scare you. Cars are selling, but only if they have realistic reserves. The main reason that those 134 didn't sell was predominantly down to auction houses giving in to sellers' unrealistic reserves to fill their catalogues. This tactic should probably be revised and maybe 'no reserve' is the way forward. For this year, in an effort to alleviate the negative effect these no sales can have on the room, almost half of the cars were sold at no reserve.

This amount of no-sale cars is further evidence to those sellers of certain cars that they can no longer offer their cars privately six months prior to the sale and then take it to auction and expect it to sell with a reserve. The pool of buyers for high-value cars is small, and the air is pretty thin at the top!

Speaking of these high-value cars, last year 56 cars sold for more than $1m. This year, that number was 42. But again, that's not necessarily something to worry over. That's still a lot of cars and a lot of money being transacted. Plus, the top 10 sales totalled $78m US dollars.

Although the bull market of a few years ago is no more, I wouldn't go as far as to say that these results are damaging. It just goes to show that if auction houses and sellers are realistic with both their reserves and their willingness to sell, there are still buyers out there.

With all the auctions over, we ended our week by surrounding ourselves with some beautiful cars in a beautiful setting. Marcus Willis and Daniele Turrisi woke up early on the Sunday morning and headed to one of the most famous fairways in the world to show the Maserati 200Si in the Postwar Sports Class of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. And although it didn't win Best of Show, I believe that the judges got it right by crowning Sir Michael Kadoorie and his 1931 Bentley 8-Litre Gurney Nutting Sports Tourer with the honour, especially with this being Bentley's centenary year. Congratulations to not only Sir Michael but also to P&A Wood, the company that restored the car, as the Bentley was the first car restored in Europe to win the world's most famous concours.

Monterey Car Week may have been the last hurrah of the summer car season, but there are still a few events this autumn, one of the biggest on the classic car calendar being the recent Goodwood Revival. I'll do a full review of the Bonhams Revival auction, next month.

**Max Girardo is the founder of classic car specialist Girardo & Co. Before that he spent 20 years in the classic car auction world, where he was the managing director and head auctioneer at RM Sotheby's**




**Buying guide**

# Lotus Eleven

## The diminutive sports racer that soon became a benchmark

THE LOTUS ELEVEN WAS A runaway success for the Norfolk marque, both on the race track and in the marketplace. The car quickly became a staple of the up to 1100cc sports car classes, both nationally and internationally, and a total of 271 were built over the three-year production life of the car from 1956.

The Eleven – and it is correctly written out, even though the very earliest sales literature listed the car as a MkXI – took class wins at the Le Mans and Sebring enduros in ’57 and ’58 respectively, and was driven by the likes of Graham Hill, Mike Hawthorn, Ivor Bueb and Harry Schell. Just as significantly, the cars were raced weekend in, weekend out at club events around Britain, Europe and North America by amateur owners, and continued to do so deep into the 1960s.

It had all the hallmarks that have come to be associated with a Colin Chapman design: it was lightweight and aerodynamic. The dry weight of the Eleven was listed as seven-and-five-eighths hundredweight, or a shade under 390kg in new money. The low-drag aluminium body was the work of De Havilland aerodynamicist Frank Costin, who was also responsible for the shape of the Chapman-designed Vanwall VW2 grand prix car of 1956.

Chapman raided the British automotive industry’s parts bin to source much of the running gear that was hung off the Eleven’s panelled space-frame chassis. The front swing-arm suspension was culled from a Ford Prefect, the steering rack borrowed from a Morris Minor and the gearbox was sourced from either an Austin A30 or an MG Magnette.

Available from launch in three distinct specifications, the majority of cars were sold in kit form simply to avoid the crippling

### LOTUS ELEVEN LE MANS

- **Price new** £2155 (assembled)/£1437 (kit)
- **Price now** £150,000-£250,000
- **Engine** Coventry Climax FWA 1.1-litre normally aspirated straight four
- **Rivals** Cooper T39, Elva Mk1
- **Verdict** A successful machine that was an important marker in the history of the Lotus marque







The Eleven's nimble chassis was a hit in endurance racing. But for Le Mans it needed modification, such as this Cliff Allison/Keith Hall entry from the 1957 24 Hours

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purchase taxes of post-war austerity Britain. The top-of-the-range Eleven Le Mans – powered by an 85bhp Coventry Climax FWA engine – sold for £2155 as a turn-key racer, or £1437 as a ready to assemble kit.

There was also a 75bhp version of the same car (£1387 as a kit) and the Club spec, with drum rather than disc brakes (at £1083). The entry-level Sport specification was powered by the 1172cc Ford side-valve engine and had a live rear axle – sourced from the Austin Metropolitan – in place of the other cars' semi-independent De Dion set-up. That version sold for £872.

**"Most cars were sold as kits, to avoid crippling post-war austerity tax"**

The Le Mans name for the top-of-the-range car was something of a misnomer: it referred to the De Dion axle and disc brakes rather than where it could compete. The regulations for the 24 Hours decreed that the car must race with a full-width screen and a two-seater cockpit rather than the classic Eleven's off-set single-seater bodywork.

Full independent front suspension was incorporated on the Series 2 car that came on stream from 1957. This version was also three inches longer in wheelbase thanks to the need to incorporate the Climax FPF Formula 2 engine in a small run of cars.

The Lotus Eleven now has a home in multiple historic sports racing championships from the Motor Racing Legends Stirling Moss Trophy to the Peter Auto Sixties Endurance series. Most active cars boast the De Dion rear end – even if they didn't start life with one – while the 1500cc FWB engine is more common today than in period. Most of the bigger engines have been created out of blocks from the fire pumps that were the core business of Coventry Climax.

Provenance is key to values, although it is not unusual for cars to be racing *sans* chassis plate. The vehicle identification tag was mounted out on the front-right corner of the car and therefore easily went astray in an accident or the repairs that followed. Traceable history is just as important for this little car which helped set Chapman and Lotus on their way.




ONE CURRENTLY FOR SALE

## 1957 Lotus Eleven Le Mans Series 2

# On the forecourt

With a bulging history file showing success from Australia to Europe, this Eleven ticks a lot of boxes for collectors

A 1957 Le Mans Series 2 on its original chassis and with continuous racing history stretching back to 1958 is offered by William I'Anson Ltd. Owned by the same family for the past 45 years, Lotus Eleven chassis no313 retains the road registration it was given in 1958 and comes with a bulging history file containing scrutineering tags dating from 1959.

An early example from the run of 120 Series 2s, the car was ordered in Le Mans specification with an FWA, magnesium 'wobbly web' wheels and a close-ratio gearbox by its first owner, a Jack Slater from Scotland. The car briefly passed into the ownership of notable club racer Phil Barak in 1960, the first of a number of drivers to campaign the car in the north of England. Chassis no313 then headed south and was used exclusively on the road by one of its subsequent custodians.

A bare-chassis rebuild was undertaken by renowned Lotus racer Bill Friend for the current owner in 1975. A common sight at British historic meetings in the 2000s, the car was upgraded to a 1500cc Climax FWB in 2007.

This Eleven won its class in the BRDC Historic Sports Car Championship that year and the Spencer Flack Trophy at Phillip Island in Australia in 2004. It has competed in the Pau Historic GP and should, as a 1957 car, be eligible for the Mille Miglia. It is ready to go with the FWB and also comes with an FWA. "It has been part of the family for the current owner," says Ben Mitchell from William I'Anson Ltd. "It has a lovely feel."

**William I'Anson Ltd Collectors Car Sales, Birdlip, Gloucestershire**
**Tel: 01285 831488, *williamianson.com***




ONE PREVIOUSLY RESTORED

## 1957 Lotus Eleven Le Mans Series 2

# In the workshop

What began as a normal restoration soon turned into a photo archive trawl in search of period originality details

Mike Brotherwood estimates that he's undertaken between 25 and 30 Eleven restorations in his time, but none has given him more satisfaction that the Series 2 Le Mans he returned to two-seater V-screen long-distance spec for Lotus collector and racer Barry Davison at the start of the present decade.

"The car required a lot of work when Barry brought it to me, but as we went through it, we kept discovering 'anoraky' details that gave an insight into its history," says Brotherwood. "There was what looked like a baked bean tin riveted to the floor behind the De Dion tube, which was a catch tank for the differential. It was definitely a long-distance car, which we know had a toolbox that fitted just behind the radiator. This one had the brackets for the box."

The car doesn't have a chassis plate, but Davison put in the hours researching the car. That included finding a picture of the chassis being assembled in Lotus Engineering's Tottenham Lane premises in London.

"The photo shows twin Lucas coils with silver banding around them," says Brotherwood. "I managed to procure a set of them. It's those little details that make the car special.

"It's one of the nicest Elevens I've ever done and I'm very proud of it. A lot of that is down to Barry and the research he did, as well as to his patience. He never pushed me to get the car back ahead of time, because it was so important for him that we got it right."

**Mike Brotherwood, Calne, Wiltshire**
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**Buying guide**

# Austin-Healey 3000

The biggest of the Big Healeys is still a real head-turner

A SIMPLE BUT STYLISH DESIGN that looks good from every angle, the Austin-Healey 3000 may just be the epitome of the 1960s British sports car with its low-slung stance, long bonnet and wire wheels, not to mention a strong motor sport pedigree. Many regard it as such today, although America seems to have reached that conclusion more than half a century ago – the majority of sales were made 'across the Pond', a British invasion that predated even The Beatles.

The 3000, launched in 1959, stands in a line of so-called 'Big Healeys' dating back to the 100 that hit the market in 1953. When Donald Healey, an engineer at Triumph and a Monte Carlo Rally winner before World War II, launched his Austin-powered roadster at the previous year's London Motor Show at Earls Court, he attracted the attention of the British Motor Corporation. A deal for BMC to build the new design at its Longbridge plant followed suit and the Austin-Healey was born as we know it.

**AUSTIN-HEALEY 3000 MK I**

- **Price new** £1300
- **Price now** £35,000 to £125,000
- **Engine** 2.9-litre normally aspirated straight-six
- **Power** 117bhp
- **0-60mph** 11.7sec
- **Top speed** 115mph
- **Rivals** Triumph TR2 & TR3, Sunbeam Alpine, Jaguar XK150
- **Verdict** A great British sports car with enduring appeal

The car grew into the 100/6 in 1956 with a major redesign around a bigger body, a lengthened wheelbase and a 2.6-litre six-cylinder engine. Another increase in capacity of the BMC C-series powerplant three years later created the most famous 'Big Healey' of them all, a retrospective moniker that distinguishes the car from the Austin-Healey Sprites.

The 3000 had disc brakes up front, but the body and chassis were unchanged on a car that was available, like its predecessor, as a two-seater and a 2+2, codenamed the BN7 and the BT7 respectively.

A Mark 2 version of the car arrived in 1961 with triple SU carburettors and that distinctive Healey grille with vertical bars. Early in the life of this second-generation



With striking low-slung looks and a mighty engine, the 3000 was a hit in the UK and America



MAGIC CAR PICS/SHUTTERSTOCK

car, what Healey called the 'sports convertible' was introduced with a fold-down roof. The BJ7 was a significant development for Austin-Healey owners who previously had had to retrieve the soft top from the boot on signs of inclement weather.

This led into the third iteration of the 3000, designated the BJ8. A 2+2 only, now with two carbs again, this latest variant was aimed squarely at the eager North American market. That's where the majority of cars ended up before production of what was now an ageing design ended in 1968.

The Austin-Healey 3000 hadn't been conceived with racing or rallying in mind, but the BMC Competitions department spotted its potential. The car competed at the Sebring and Le Mans endurance classics, but it was on the open-road time trials across Europe that the 3000 enjoyed greatest success, Pat Moss famously winning the Liège-Rome-Liège Rally in 1960. There was a near-miss on the forest stages of the RAC Rally, too, Timo Mäkinen finishing a close second to his BMC team-mate Rauno Aaltonen in a Mini in 1965.

**"The 3000 wasn't built with racing or rallying in mind, but it had potential"**

The third-generation cars are the most desirable today. There are rarities from the production life of the car that can command similar or even higher values, but the later 3000s are certainly the easiest to live with on the open road.

The folding hood, wind-up windows, an increased ride height, a longer final-ratio gearing and a tad more power courtesy of a high-lift cam and bigger carbs make the Mark 3 a better drive than its predecessors. A plusher interior incorporating a wooden dash and more exterior chrome arguably make it even more beautiful on the eye, too.

The threat of rust, as you might expect of a British-made vehicle of the 1960s, can be a problem. The Big Healeys tend to capture water in the inner and outer sills, the bottom of the wings and the boot. But repairs are relatively straightforward and complete body shells are available from British Motor Heritage.




ONE CURRENTLY FOR SALE

1961 Austin Healey 3000

# On the forecourt

Rarity, originality and immaculate condition combine into this top-of-the-market offering

This 1961 tri-carb Mark 2 imported from the USA for restoration and sale by Warwickshire Healey specialist JME Healeys is a rare car. Built in November 1961, it is one of only 150 two-seaters built with the improved centre-change gearshift before production shifted to 2+2s the following March.

"It was a car we had to have when it was offered to us," says JME's Dan Everard, who, together with brother Chris, runs the company started by his father Jonathan. "We jumped at the chance to have such a rare car in amazing condition."

The BN7 underwent a ground-up restoration at JME, though much of the original metalwork was in excellent order.

"The restoration process doesn't change even if a car, like this one, requires less work," explains Everard. "We had to replace the floor, the B-posts and the sills, but the all the outer panels required only minor repairs because it had spent its life in a dry climate."

The car has matching numbers throughout, from the chassis and body down to the distributor and instruments. Original parts were used in the restoration wherever possible.

"It is the originality and the rarity that makes it one of the nicest Healeys we've seen," says Everard. "I'd describe it as the best Healey 3000 on the market anywhere in the world."

Offered at £125,000 in its original left-hand-drive specification, it can be converted to RHD at the buyer's request at no additional cost.

**JME Healeys, Warwick, Warwickshire**
**Tel: 01926 499000, *jmehealeys.co.uk***



ONE PREVIOUSLY RESTORED

1961 Austin Healey 3000

# In the workshop

Having arrived needing rear-end repairs, this Healey got the full works from Murray Scott-Nelson

Restoration of a Colorado red Mark I BT7 has just been completed by Murray Scott-Nelson. The car originally came into its Scarborough workshops for a rear-end repair but has emerged from them, says Jonny Scott-Nelson, "as a car people are drooling over".

"It came in needing a new rear shroud and a boot lid, but when you take those parts off, you are opening a can of worms," says Scott-Nelson. "Part of the chassis had previously been plated and the doors that had been put on weren't quite right. It had obviously had a lot of what I would call 'MOT repairs' to keep it on the road. The job grew. This is a rare UK right-hand-drive car, so it needed to be done correctly. It would have been a shame to skimp on the car.

"It ended up as a full restoration, including a new loom and electronics. When you take it down to the metal, you have what I call a free fit when you are putting it back together."

A set of original doors were sourced. Scott-Nelson's rebuild also included powder-coating the suspension and fitting touring-style poly bushes, which are harder wearing than the original rubber. The gearbox was rebuilt and the engine just honed after a head-off inspection.

"It was a bigger job than our client originally envisaged, but he's chuffed with what he's ended up with," says Scott-Nelson. "We had a tight deadline on this car to get it ready for his son's wedding, where it stole the show."

**Murray Scott-Nelson, Scarborough, North Yorkshire**
**Tel: 01723 361227, *murrayscott-nelson.com***

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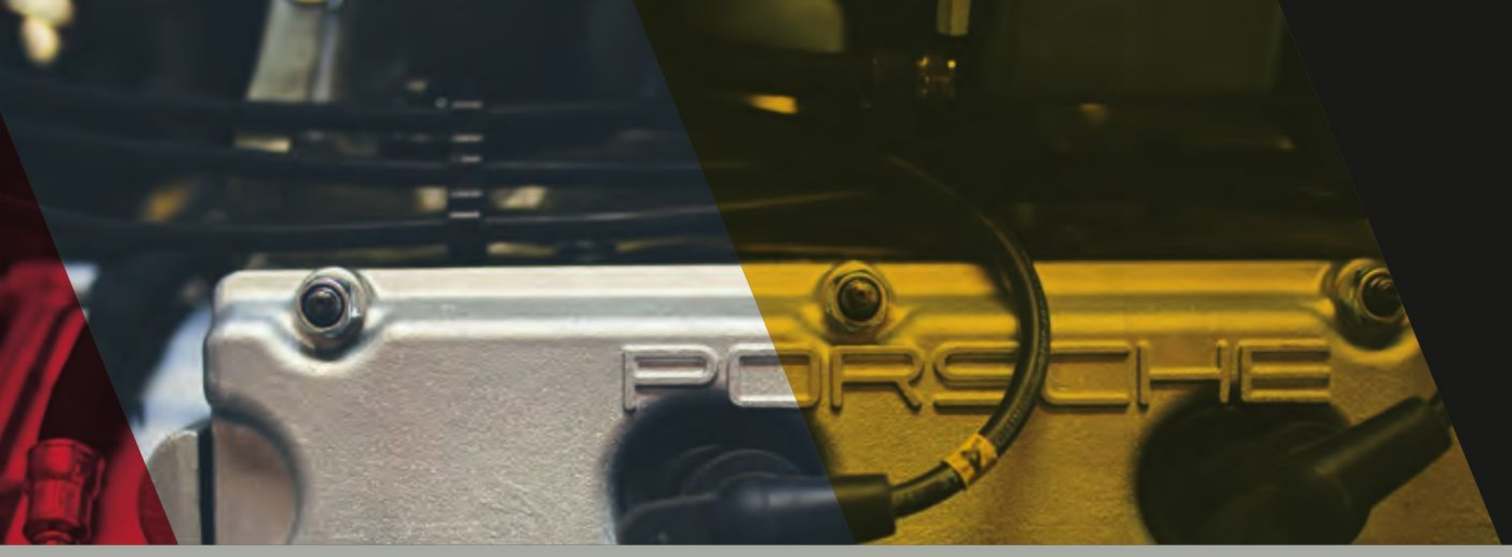
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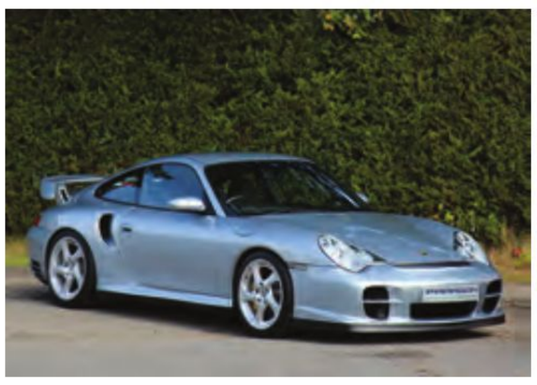
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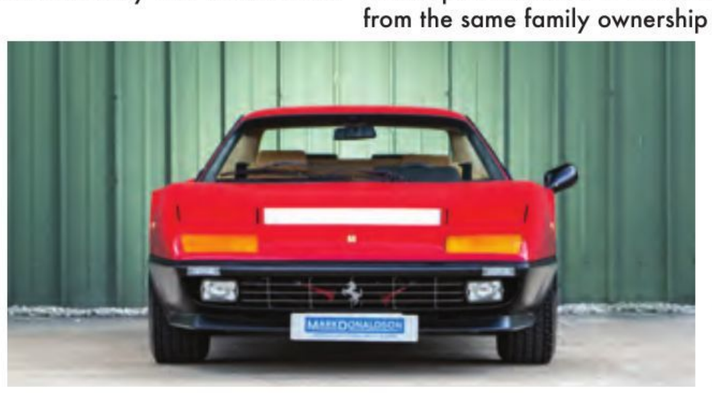
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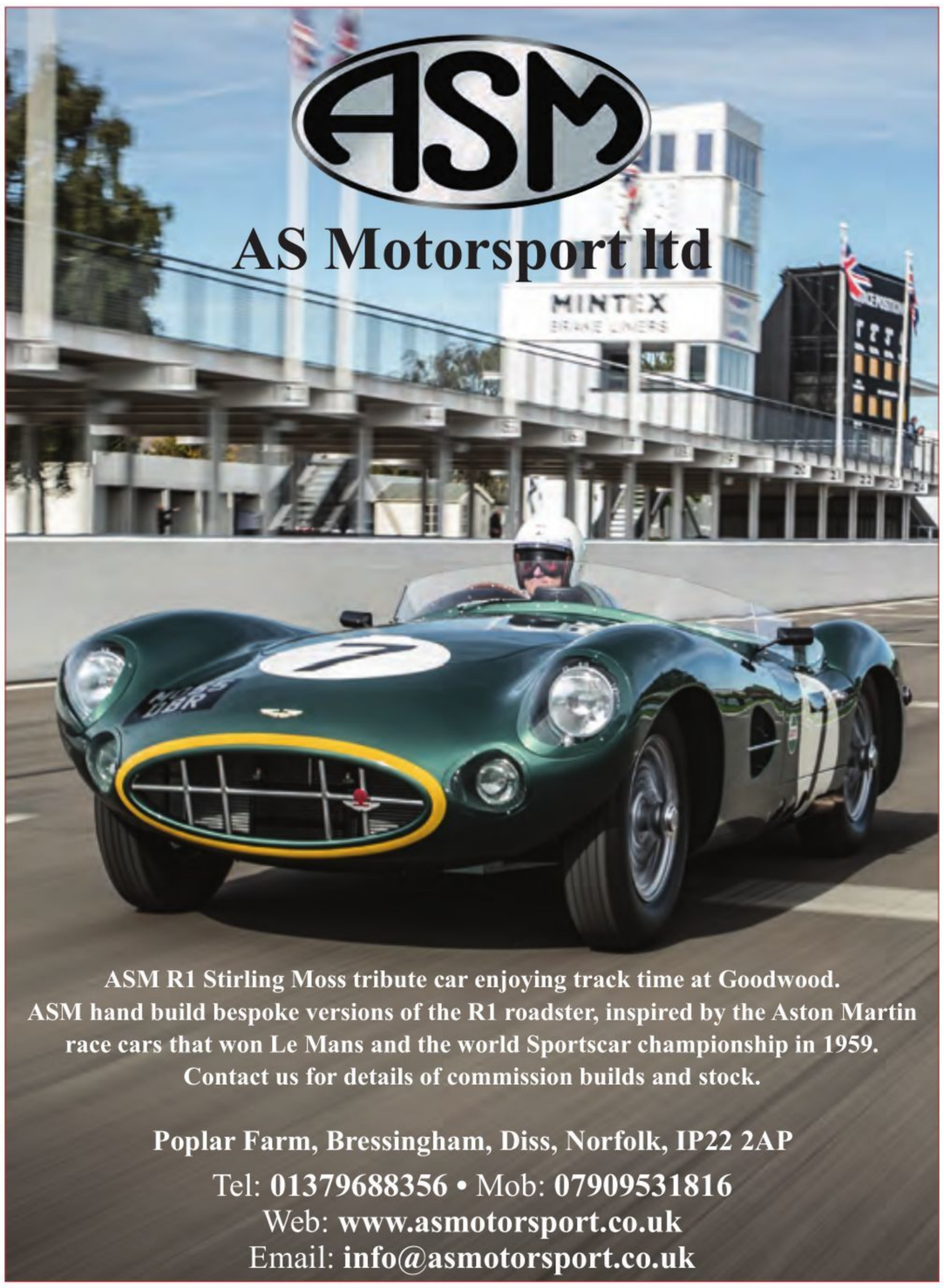
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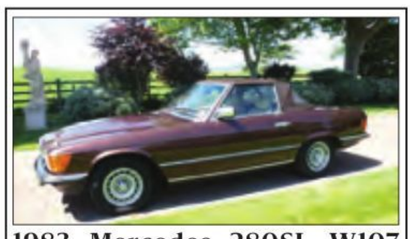
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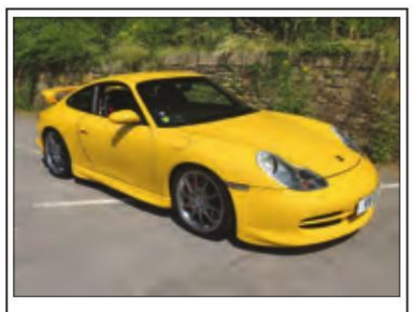
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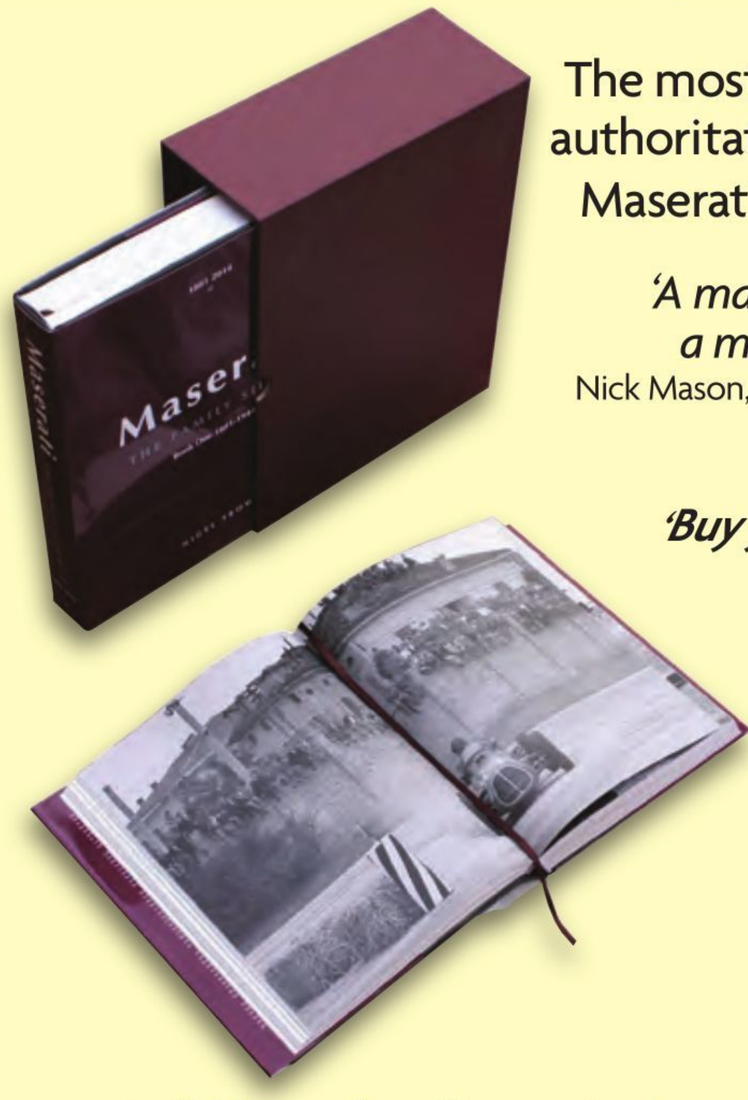



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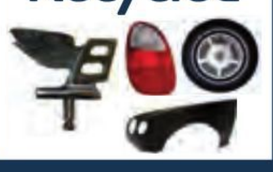
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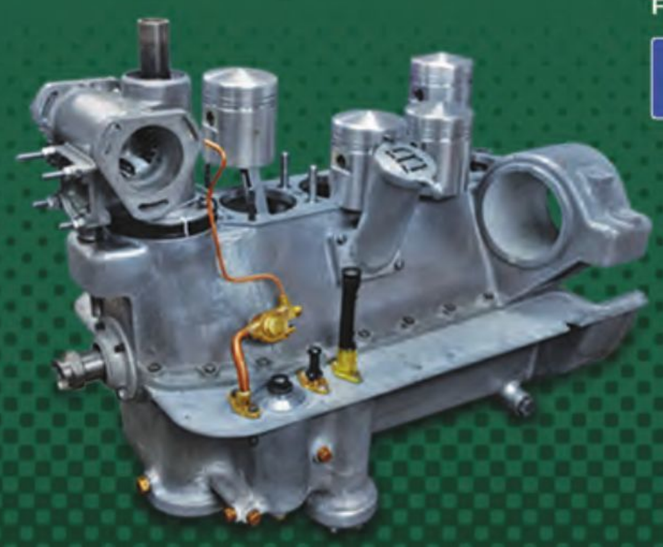
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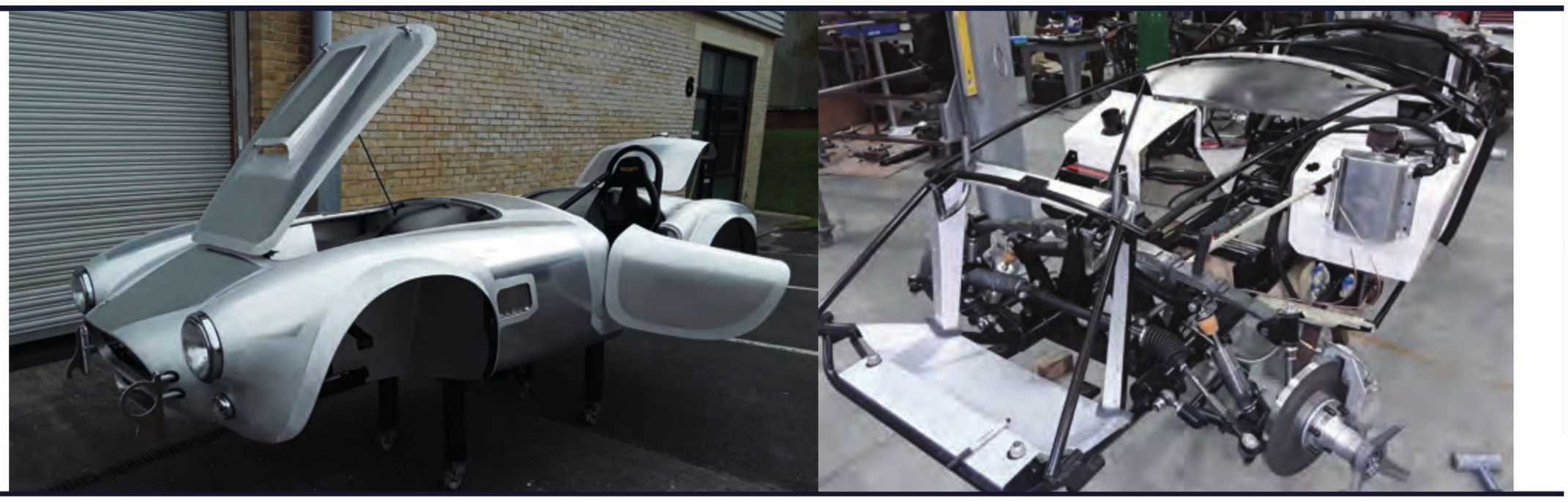
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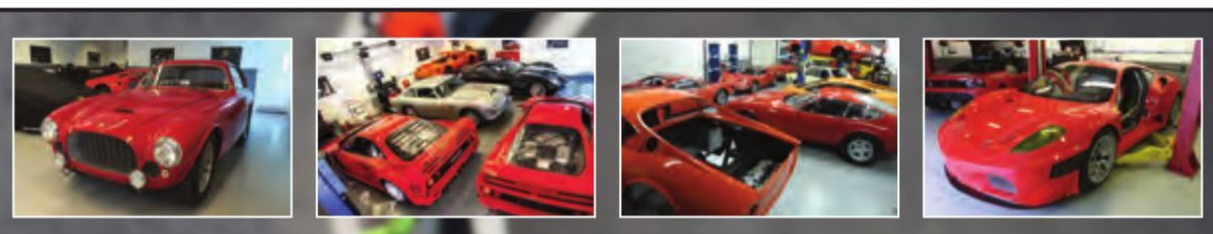
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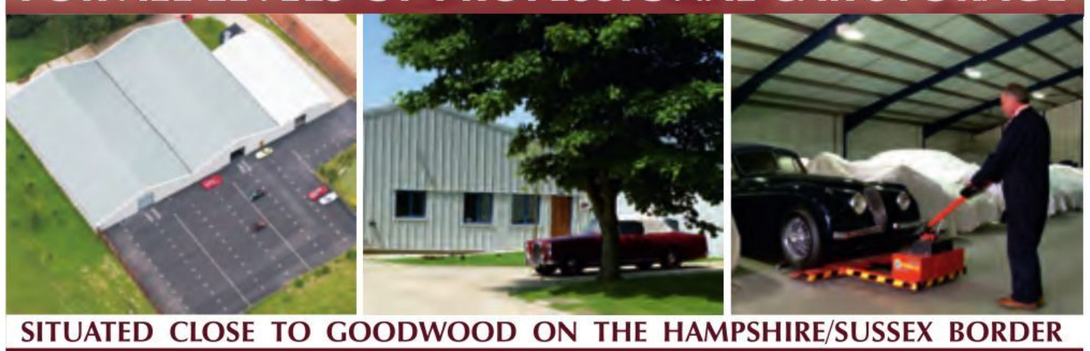
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Growing up 40 miles from Silverstone, Tim Rhodes often went there with his father, Jack, and four brothers. At the 1967 BRDC International, Rhodes Snr took these informal shots

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**If you have any photographs that might be suitable for *You Were There*, please send them to: Motor Sport, 18-20 Rosemont Road, London, NW3 6NE or e-mail them to: editorial@motorsportmagazine.co.uk**




**Bruce McLaren heads for the grid in his McLaren M4B; he was fifth while Mike Parkes' Ferrari won**



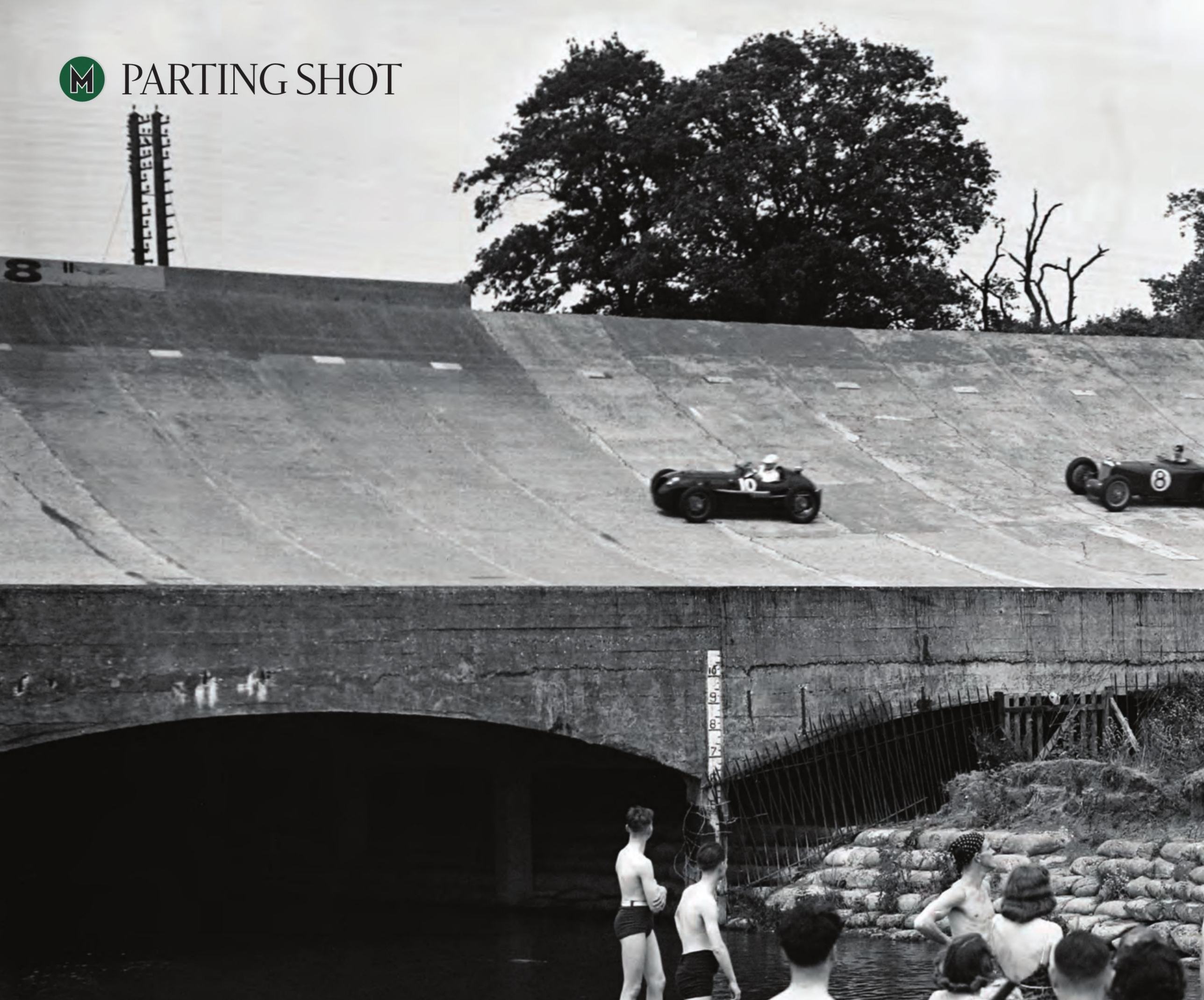

**The Bruce McLaren Motor Racing team heads to the collecting area, with Bruce giving a push**

Left: privateer Bob Anderson's crew tweak his Brabham BT11 beside the VW flat-bed he used as his transporter.
Below: Mike Spence (BRM P261) and Piers Courage (Parnell Lotus 25) burble through the paddock



With racing luminaries like McLaren, Brabham, Siffert, Hill, Hulme and Ligier on the entry, there was no shortage of interest in the paddock

# PARTING SHOT



## AUGUST 1, 1938
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**The best (and cheapest) seats in the house. With rivers being a public right of way, those in the know could skip an entry fee and spectate some motor racing for free from the water. Here a group of boaters take in the action of the August Bank Holiday meeting at Brooklands as a policeman calmly ensures there's no trespassing onto land. Incidentally, this is rumoured to be where the term 'punters' originated.**

MOTORSPORT IMAGES


9

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**2000 Aston Martin DB7 Vantage Manual,** finished in special order Porsche Cobalt blue with Pacific blue and Parchment hide interior, complimented with Walnut dash and door cappings and dark blue Wilton carpet. This exceptional example has covered just under 38,000 and comes with a fully stamped Aston Martin service history. It has had just 3 owners from new, the last of whom has owned it since 2004 and has kept the car in exemplary condition and during his ownership has covered just 10,000 miles. The specification includes 6 speed manual transmission, power assisted steering, fully adjustable electric heated seats, fully adjustable steering column, heated front and rear screens and 18" alloy wheels. Manual versions of the DB7 Vantage were produced in very low numbers and to find one in this condition is becoming rare. Not expensive at **£42,750**





**1998 Aston Martin DB7i6** phase II finished in metallic Cleveland red with contrasting Parchment and Burgundy hide interior and fitted with best quality Wilton carpet throughout. Fitted with high gloss walnut veneers to both dash and door cappings. Believed to have originally been registered to Aston Martin Works Service for the first 6 months and has since had just 2 owners, the last of whom has owned it since 2001. This low mileage, low ownership motor car has covered a mere 33,000 miles and comes with a fully stamped service book and drives in an exemplary manner. The specification includes Automatic transmission, Climate control, twin airbags, electrically operated power hood in unmarked sand beige mohair, adjustable steering column, electrically adjustable heated seats, Alpine Hifi system with 6 stack CD, electric mirrors and 18" alloy wheels. This whole car is in superb condition throughout and only needs to be seen. Unrepeatable value for one in such outstanding condition at **£32,950**





**2001 Aston Martin DB7 Vantage Volante, LEFT HAND DRIVE,** finished in Aston Martin Racing green with Forest green and Parchment hide interior with dark green Wilton carpet throughout. This one owner car was purchased by the now deceased English owner whilst living in France and has covered a total of 47,000 miles from new. Everything about this car suggests that it has been maintained to the highest level as it remains in superb condition to this day. It comes with a fully stamped up service book, initially by the French dealers and more recently by Grange Aston Martin in Exeter. Both paintwork and interior are completely unmarked and the soft top is showing no signs of wear. The car has touchtronic transmission and most other available options, is fabulous to drive and realistically priced at **£37,950**





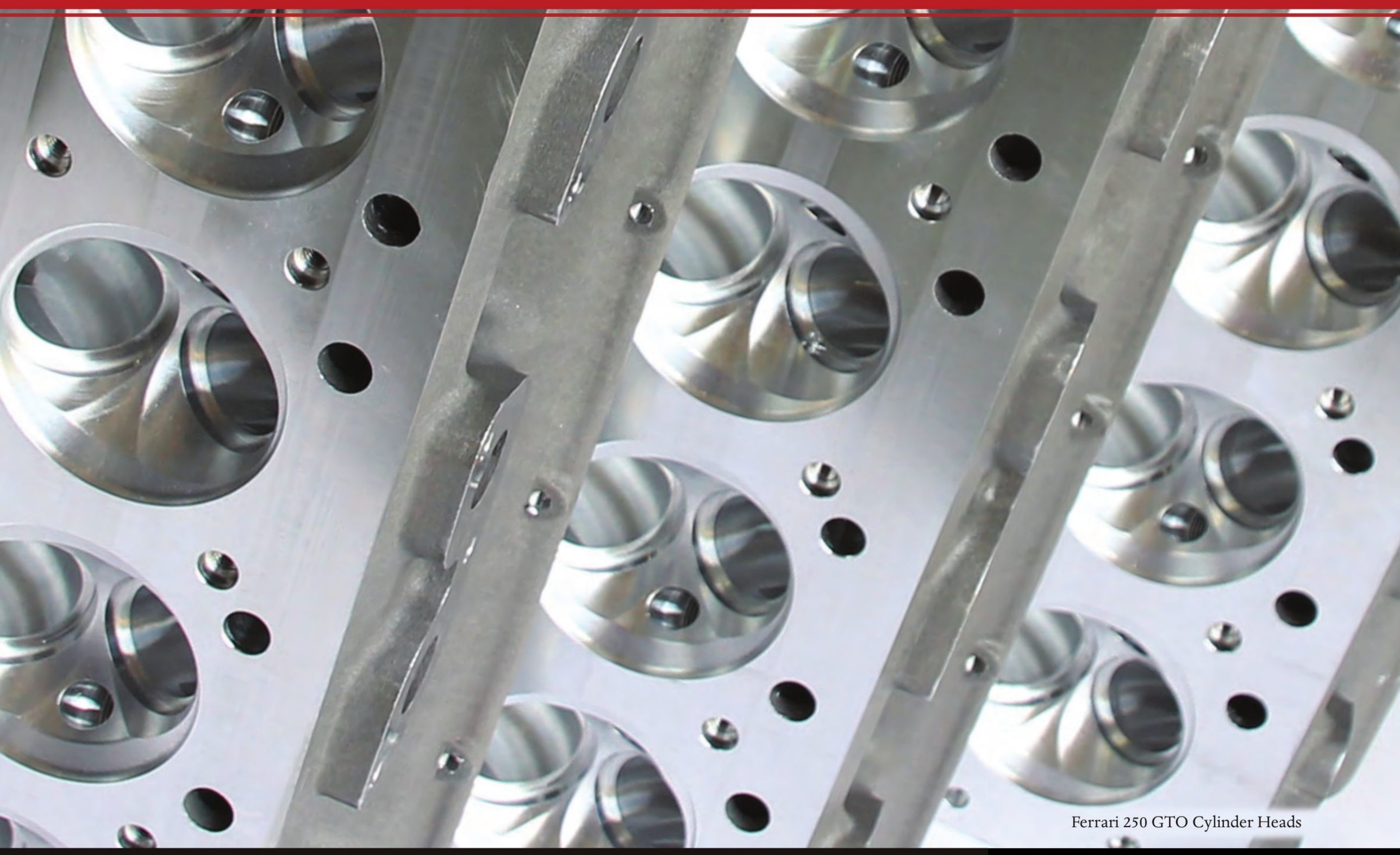
**1999 Aston Martin DB7 i6 Volante f**inished in Champagne with Cream hide interior piped black with black dash top and best quality black Wilton carpet throughout. The interior is complimented by walnut veneers to the dashboard and door cappings and the hood and hood cover are both in black mohair. This is a superb example, especially when taking into consideration that this car is now 20 years old. Early Aston Martin DB7 i6 Volante's in this condition are now becoming increasingly difficult to find and this one is in really nice condition. The specification includes automatic transmission, electric heated seats, a fully adjustable steering column, a Kenwood Hifi upgrade with 6 stack CD player and cruise control. This beautiful example has covered just under 60,000 miles and comes with a comprehensive service history and is competitively priced for one in this condition at **£29,950**

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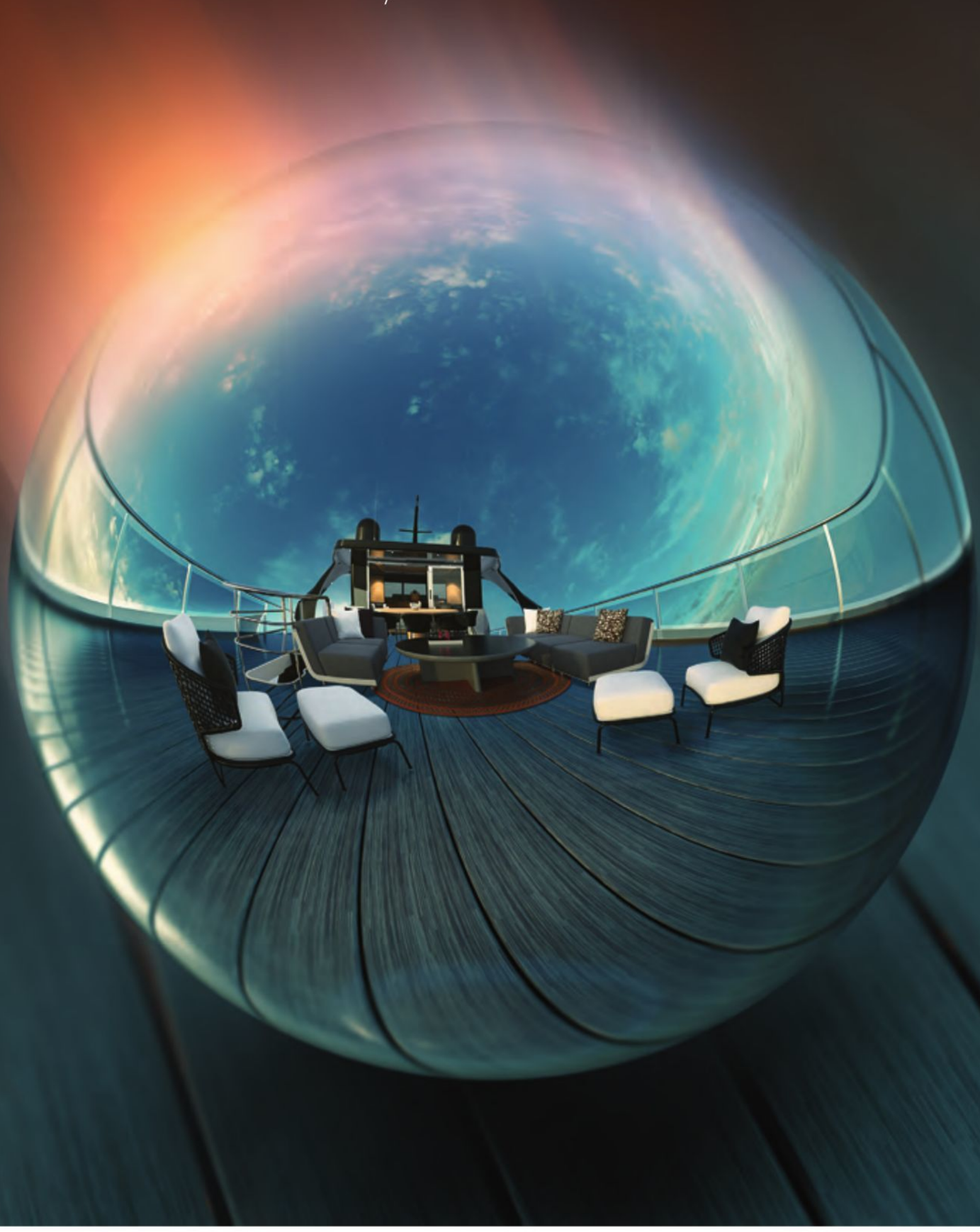
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