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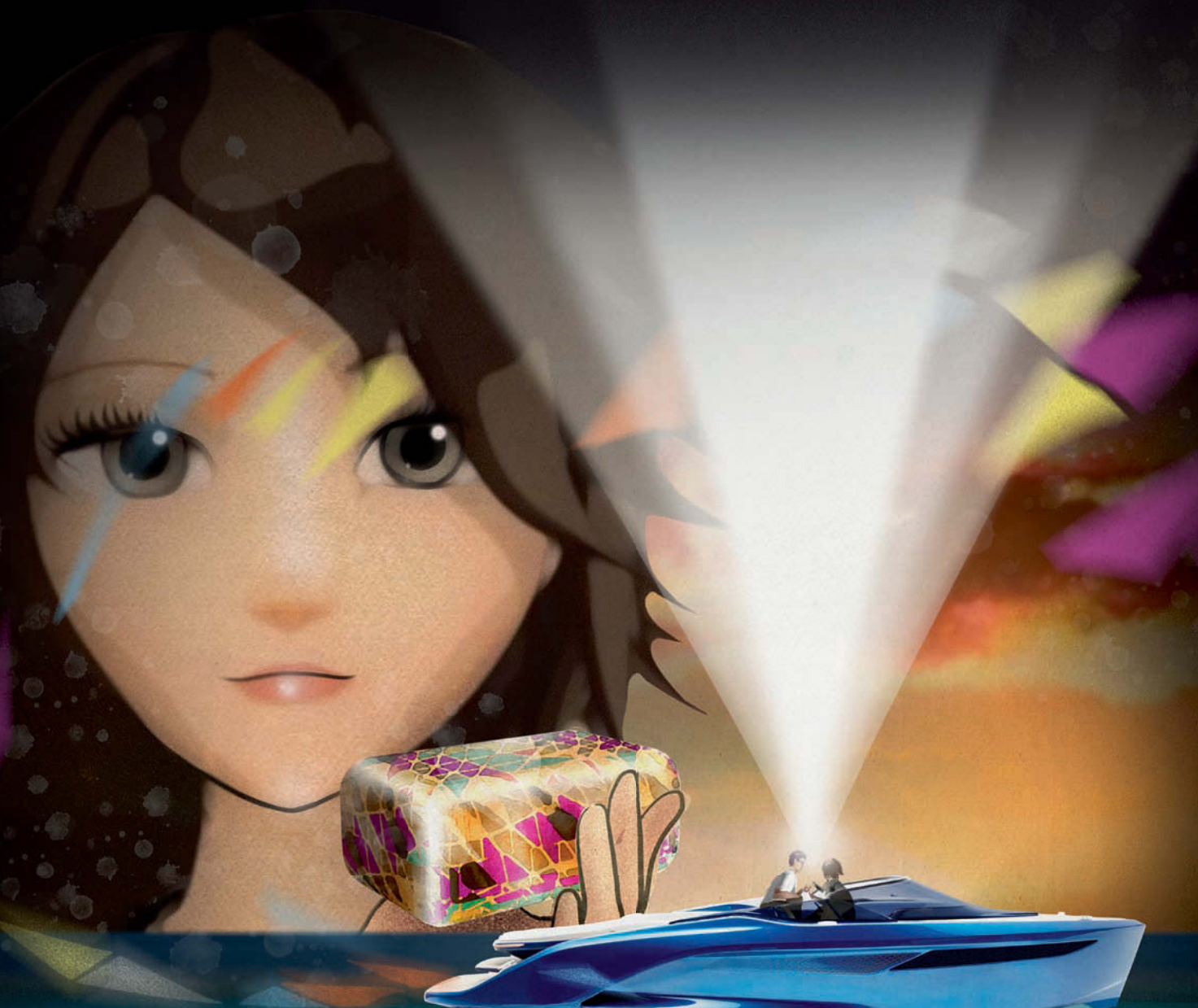
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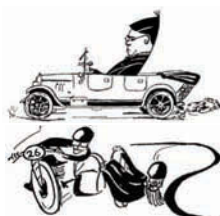


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Editor

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I

Is there such a thing as a born racer? It's a question that comes up from time to time at *Motor Sport Towers* and usually sparks an energetic discussion which goes on far longer than it should.

My personal view is aligned with that of Damon Hill. It would be easy to say that the son of a double F1 champion (dad) and international rower (mum) was born with competitive genes. But as he explains in his book *Watching the Wheels* which has been rightly lauded as a cut above the usual sporting autobiography, it's not that simple. In fact, he archly makes the point that since human beings have been around for about 200,000 years but racing cars for just over 100 it would be surprising to say the least if evolution had got around to creating such a thing as a natural-born racer.

Even so, the question cropped up again last month when I had the opportunity to meet two very different racing drivers, one who has relatively recently come to the end of his competitive career and the other still in the early phases of one.

The first was David Coulthard, who in a Formula 1 career driving for Williams, McLaren and Red Bull recorded 13 victories and scrapped with some of the greatest names in modern-day racing. He retired from F1 in 2008 but over the course of a wide-ranging interview (which is available as a podcast via our website) we touched on many areas of what it takes to be a successful driver. Through it all Coulthard stressed the importance of hard work over talent. It was, he argued, the work ethic that defined the greatest drivers - from Ayrton Senna (pictured below) who would famously obsess about every detail of the car to Nigel Mansell and Lewis Hamilton. Yes, they had and have talent to burn but it was the ability to knuckle down and work hard that set them apart from others.

Later, I found myself having dinner with Harry Tincknell, Ford's young endurance racer, at an event raising money for the charity Hope For Tomorrow, which provides mobile cancer care units. At 26 he has already won the European Le Mans Series and claimed victory at Le Mans two years ago in LMP2. He made the point that the best decision he ever made was switching from single-seaters to sports cars because it gave him more opportunity to race. I asked him what the best thing about being a racing driver was and he looked baffled: "Being a racing driver", he replied.

He went on to describe his schedule which includes stints in America where he drives for Mazda in IMSA, and which would make an F1 driver wince, and enthused about the challenges of working with the team to set the car up just right. It sounded like hard work and it also sounded like he was loving every minute of it.

Two drivers from different eras in

different disciplines but both clearly blessed with drive and determination and an abundance of work ethic. Is there such a thing as a born racer? Probably not, but there is such a thing as hard work.

Incidentally, bravery and a certain *sang froid* play a part too. A couple of weeks prior to our meeting Tincknell had been involved in a pretty hard crash at Spa. The first thing he remembers thinking after the huge impact was that he needed to get out of the car immediately.

Why? Because his parents were watching on TV and he didn't want to worry them.

TINCKNELL FEATURES IN OUR COVER STORY THIS MONTH WHICH previews what is perhaps the world's greatest race. There are always multiple strands to any great event and Le Mans is no different. This year there is a story to be told about how Toyota has refused to give up after the agony of 2017. Acres of text will no doubt be written about Fernando Alonso's attempt to win the race outright and almost as much on the appearance of Jenson Button on the start grid.

"When I asked Tincknell what the best thing about being a racing driver was, he looked baffled. 'Being a racing driver,' he replied"

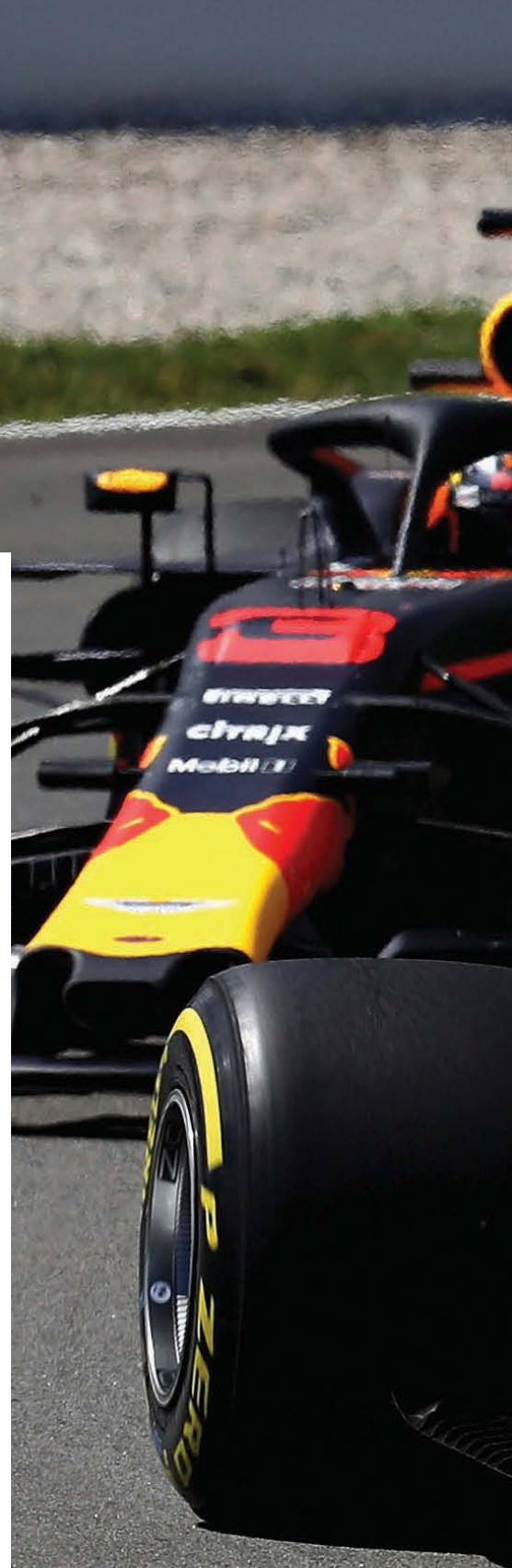
Our story, however, focuses on lesser-known stars - the dozen or so British drivers bidding for glory, mainly in the GTE-Pro class. As writer Jack Philips notes, this is the class where the real competition will take place this year, and the class which can lay claim to being the true keeper of the spirit of Le Mans.

I should say too, that while our story focuses on home-grown drivers, the race itself will - as ever - be a truly international affair. A non-exhaustive trawl through the entry list reveals drivers and teams hailing from China, Portugal, Denmark, Mexico, Germany, South Korea, Australia, Russia, Columbia, Netherlands, Venezuela, Austria, Turkey, UAE, Japan, Italy, Malaysia, France, USA, Norway, Singapore, Finland, Belgium, Sweden, Brazil, Switzerland, Ireland, Argentina and Canada...

We wish them all the best of luck.

Our August issue is on sale from June 29





RAGING RED BULLS

His engines are short of power and his drivers have been undone by their own freedom to race. Delicate times, these, for Christian Horner...

Mark Hughes

Christian Horner's urbane, affable persona had for once slipped as he made his way down from the pit wall on lap 40 of the Azerbaijan Grand Prix and headed for the Red Bull team office to await his drivers, grey with rage.

It had taken two seasons for it to happen, but finally Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen - arguably the fastest and most spectacular driver pairing in F1 - had collided in the heat of battle, a re-run of the team's Vettel/Webber nightmare of Istanbul 2010.

Actually, it wasn't quite the first time; in last year's Hungarian race Verstappen had got optimistic trying to outbrake his team-mate into Turn Two on the opening lap and crashed into Ricciardo's side, puncturing his radiators. But that was almost just one of those things that can happen in the mad scrabble of a first lap on a dusty track and a contrite Verstappen had apologised profusely; it was just a misjudgement, not a hard no-compromise foul like this time. At Baku, they'd already banged wheels twice as Verstappen refused to yield to Ricciardo's attacks - enough for Horner and Adrian Newey to eye each other with an unimpressed, knowing look on the pitwall - but now this, two wrecked cars up the Turn One escape road, 22 points turned to carbon dust after Verstappen made an illegal second move to block, leaving Ricciardo nowhere to go but



into the back of the other RB14.

"As a policy we want to let our guys race," said Horner, after the anger had subsided but long before the good humour would return, "but this is unacceptable. It couldn't be worse. F1 is a team sport, the drivers are one element of the team. When they wear the overalls and get in the car they represent more than 800 people that they're driving for. We've discussed it at length on many, many occasions - even this morning - that we wanted to avoid a repeat of Force India's scenario from last year... and that we would allow them to race but please allow each other space. Unfortunately, that hasn't happened."

To stop the outside world from intensifying the spotlight even further, both drivers were instructed to accept equal blame in public - and in the FIA stewards hearing. But there was little doubt that most, maybe even all, of the blame lay with Verstappen. The second move is a foul, one that he has been guilty of on several previous occasions (albeit not previously against a team-mate), but each time he has escaped official censure. He did so

again this time as Ricciardo did as instructed and shouldered some of the blame when being interviewed by the stewards. It was the behaviour of a smart, mature man with an eye to the long game as the team continues to try to secure his services beyond this year and he plays hard to get. If anything, the whole incident

Foes reunited: Verstappen and Ricciardo running as one in Spain, two weeks on from their controversial clash in Azerbaijan

REDBULL



ASTON MARTIN

ASTON MARTIN

ASTON MARTIN

RAUCH

RAUCH

ASTON MARTIN

33

PIRELLI

CITRIX

Mobil 1

RAUCH


RAUCH

strengthened his negotiating position as he seeks not just a suitable financial package but assurances that the locked-in Verstappen is not the favoured son.

In Horner's world, trying to get Ricciardo's signature on a contract while attempting to prevent a civil war inside the team were just two of several challenges facing him. Another one was the matter of the FIA's proposed changes to the aero regs for 2019. These are based around obliging teams - through the front wing specification - to configure 'inwash' aerodynamics rather than the 'outwash' principle favoured by everyone for the last nine years. The Red Bull has arguably the best aero performance of all within the current regulations - and now here was the FIA trying to change them.

But arguably Horner's biggest challenge was the matter of the team's power unit. Into the fifth year of the hybrid era for which it campaigned so hard, Renault Sport is as far behind Mercedes and Ferrari as ever. In particular its lack of a qualifying mode leaves the Red Bull something like 40bhp down in Q3 - and therefore invariably on the third row. Even if the RB14 has frequently shown itself to be the fastest car of all in race trim, trying to beat two Mercs and two Ferraris while starting behind them all is generally an exercise in futility and frustration.

This in turn has almost imposed a 'strategy of last resort': running at the back of that

three-team pack and with no undercut threat from the much slower midfield pack, all they can do is stay out late, using their generally superior tyre degradation so as to be in a position to take advantage of any late safety car. This is how Ricciardo had won in China. They were trying to do the same in Baku, as Horner confirmed: "Ideally we were hoping for a safety car in the last quarter of the race so we could go with the ultra-softs. Which we'd managed to go long enough to do. But we never dreamed we'd be causing the safety car." Instead of waiting to ambush the older-tired cars ahead, they'd instead ambushed themselves. Although the Red Bulls were running only fourth and fifth when they crashed, potentially this might've been for the win if there was a safety car, like in China. Both drivers knew this. Instead, the Red Bull-created safety car had gifted Mercedes and robbed Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel of victory. Ferrari's overly conservative early pitting of Vettel left him vulnerable to Bottas, who Mercedes left out. The ferocity of the Red Bull fight actually played a key part in informing Mercedes' chosen strategy. So as Bottas got his stop for free to leapfrog past Vettel, it looked like he was en route to his first victory of the season. Cruelly, he was robbed by a piece of debris with two laps to go. A shard of carbon fibre flicked up beneath the Merc and punctured a rear tyre - allowing team-mate Lewis Hamilton to inherit a lucky win. 



"Trying to get Ricciardo's name on a contract while attempting to prevent civil war were two challenges"



Verstappen took third in Barcelona, albeit the best part of half a minute behind Lewis Hamilton's winning Mercedes

WORD ON THE BEAT

Rumour and gossip from the F1 paddock

Liberty Media's F1 marketing boss **SEAN BRATCHES** has been working hard on trying to inaugurate a **MIAMI GRAND PRIX**, from as early as next year, around a street circuit within the city. Reportedly for no fee, so keen is he to have a race in a 'destination city'. Miami councillors approved the plan in mid-May for a 10-year deal, starting in October 2019. The council released the following statement: "A resolution of the Miami City Commission supporting the efforts to bring the Formula 1 racing circuit to the city of Miami for the Formula 1 Miami Grand Prix from



2019 to 2028, and to direct the city manager to formalise the necessary contractual agreement between the City of Miami and the Formula 1 World Championship Limited.”

McLaren’s engineering chief **TIM GOSS**, Sauber’s technical director **JORG ZANDER** and Williams’ chief designer **ED WOOD** have all parted company with their teams. In the case of Goss and Wood, it comes after very disappointing performances of their respective teams’ 2018 cars.

Pre-season changes to the wording of the regulations to restrict **ENGINE OIL BURN** are understood to have impacted also upon Mercedes’ ability to use pressure-injection to help with piston lubrication. This has required steel rather than the previous aluminium pistons in order to achieve the required reliability for the three-engine-per-season rule and this in turn is suspected to have compromised the qualifying engine

mode used this year. “I think at the moment, in qualifying, [Ferrari] has a small advantage,” said Mercedes’ engine chief **ANDY COWELL** in Barcelona, “but in racing conditions I suspect we still have a small advantage.”

Intrigue surrounds how the FIA managed to change the minds of key teams about supporting the proposed **2019 AERO REGULATIONS** in between the Azerbaijan and Spanish Grands Prix. The changes were approved by the F1 Commission, including votes in favour from Ferrari and Mercedes, both of which had been opposed only days before. A Ferrari spokesman confirmed that there had been a ‘trade-off’, leading to speculation that the 2021 engine regulations will now be much closer to what

Ferrari and Mercedes want and which therefore might include the ERS-H, which previously was set to be deleted.

The FIA announced pre-Baku that teams could mount their mirrors on the **HALO** if they wished, in order to improve visibility. Ferrari was quick to take advantage, turning up at Barcelona with a combined mirror/flow conditioner that enhanced aero performance. The FIA was not impressed and suggested the device be removed by the following race.

ROBERT KUBICA made his Williams Friday test driver debut in Barcelona and didn’t hold back about how bad the FW41 was. “The problems with the car are exactly the same as three months ago [in testing]! I’m not the right person to



go too much into the details. We know exactly what our car’s weakest part is. We’ve started a project which should help us to understand better, improve it and hopefully solve it completely. But it’s not a question of one day or one month – probably it’s even more. So we have to be patient. Miracles will not happen. Coming to Barcelona, I was expecting to be in a difficult situation and FP1 was even more difficult than expected. We will try to help our main drivers with the balance of the car, to make it easier for them to drive. Performance is a different story. We have to fix our many issues, in order to think about performance and try to attract the maximum from what we have. We have to somehow understand we’re in this situation, but apart from being slow, it was nearly impossible to keep the car on the track. You can make set-up changes to the car and they have an effect but they are not the dominant characteristics, because the basic issues are so serious.”

— A WISH CALLED HONDA? —

Coming to Barcelona two weeks later, the Red Bull drivers were all smiles and reassurances. No, they'd put it behind them. They'd stood on the 'naughty step' back at the factory as they apologised to the staff. There'd be no repeat... There wasn't - Hamilton's Merc won comfortably from pole and the Red Bulls, delayed by being constrained to a struggling Kimi Räikkönen's Ferrari pace early in the race, were a long way back. But there was one very familiar pattern being repeated: the RB14s had by far the best combination of pace and tyre durability during the race simulation runs of Friday, but qualified on the third row. As Verstappen and Ricciardo came home a respective third and fifth, the latter set the race's fastest lap.

"Track position is everything," said Horner post-race. "I don't see anything to suggest that had we been able to start from somewhere near the front, that we couldn't have fought Hamilton for the win. It's just when the others can turn up their engine in Q3 and we can't, that defines our track position for the rest of the weekend, especially on a circuit like this, where overtaking is so difficult." With an impending deadline approaching from Renault about whether Red Bull wants to continue the partnership into next year and beyond, such groundhog days seem to be pushing the team towards the open arms of Honda, where progress is more evident and attitudes seem more open. That at least is the impression from Red Bull's junior team Toro Rosso.

Just to complicate Horner's world further, the FIA proposed 2019 aero regs had been voted through between the Baku and Spanish races. Horner was reportedly furious and had fired off a letter to the F1 Commission members. Did he feel the changes threatened his team's aero strength? "No. I feel we have a pretty good aero department and any regulation change will be handled by them very well. I just feel that the changes have been pushed through without being fully researched."

But the fact that he was so angry after both Mercedes and Ferrari flipped their prior positions of being against the changes suggests a deal may have been made between those teams and the FIA - possibly regarding 2021 engine regulations - that may have scuppered Red Bull in some other way. The job of being an F1 team boss comes with certain stresses - and that Verstappen/Ricciardo Baku incident probably came at a bad time. ☑



— TURNS 1-2, CIRCUIT DE BARCELONA-CATALUNYA —

TRACKSIDE VIEW

A rare error, but the answer is blowin' in the wind

Bright sun, strong wind. A classic combination for Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, a place where everyone has recently completed multiple hundreds of miles. But there's something unfamiliar on this Friday morning with the body language of most of the cars, an over-eagerness to respond to the steering on the slower corners that's taking the drivers by surprise in their early, exploratory laps.

Watch as Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen attack Turns One-Two for the first time and there it is: the nose turns instantly, almost like there is a quicker steering rack, too quickly for the rear of the car, which shows its disapproval with a menacing little wiggle. Fernando Alonso's McLaren looks much the same and only the cars that are struggling with understeer at this stage - the Mercs, Toro Rossos, Renaults - don't display some variation on this theme.

It's all happening at low speeds and low grip levels and maybe some of it is

explainable by the gusty side winds, but it's more than just that; there's something within the cars, some ghost in the machine. Post-session discussion will reveal the answer: the debut of the thinner-gauge tyres, a new development this year to contain blistering of the outer shoulders on the long, fast-corner tracks. The drivers' muscle memory is of tyres with more rubber, more bend and delay, and it's a subconscious thing. So that automatic meshing of driver input and car response has suddenly been jarred.

It smooths out as the session progresses but never entirely goes away and then, 45 minutes in, Ricciardo approaches Turn Four, turns, the car points, loads up and the rear twitches out of line. He gets on the opposite lock almost instantly but it takes up more width of track than he has available and into the gravel he goes, coming to rest with soft contact against the tyre wall. A rarity, but for a very specific reason.



Ricciardo in Spain, where he would take fifth place after a patchy start during opening free practice

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BIRMINGHAM BACK ON THE RACING MAP?

*There is a strong will to bring
Formula E back to the UK...
but not necessarily in London*

Gary Watkins

For Superprix read E-Prix. Motor racing could make a return to the streets of Birmingham as early as 2019, with a round of the Formula E Championship almost 30 years after the demise of the city's Formula 3000 fixture.

The new Conservative mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority, Andy Street, has announced that he is in the "advanced stages" of negotiation to bring the FIA's electric vehicle series back to Britain three years on from the last Battersea Park E-Prix in London. The former boss of the John Lewis department store chain is following up on a manifesto pledge, made ahead of his election to the newly created post of a West Midlands mayor last year, to bring motor racing back to Britain's second city.

"Over the past year, we have been in negotiations with the organisers of the FIA Formula E Championship about bringing a road race to Birmingham, effectively reviving the Superprix," said Street. "We are now in the advanced stages of these negotiations."

Street explained that there were two reasons why he wanted to bring back Birmingham's street racing fixture, which ran for just five seasons from 1986 to 1990.

"First, it means we can showcase to the world the changing face of Birmingham city centre, which has seen unprecedented investment in recent years," he said. "Like many Brummies, I remember the original

Superprix fondly. Photos and footage from those events have become almost part of folklore and remind us of how those events thrust the city firmly into the spotlight.

"Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it showcases our region's position as a world leader in next-generation automotive technologies. So much of the engineering that goes into the cars already used in Formula E racing comes from the West Midlands. It makes perfect sense we should be hosting such events."

Street revealed that if the negotiations were successfully concluded and the necessary commercial sponsorship secured, the race would take place next summer "on a route similar to the one used in the original Superprix". The F3000 fixture, which was the result of a 20-year crusade by local entrepreneur Martin Hone, ran on a 2.47-mile anti-clockwise circuit, located just south of the city centre, incorporating both sides of the A4540 Belgrave Middleway dual carriageway.

The Superprix, whose winners included Roberto Moreno, Stefano Modena and Jean Alesi, required parliamentary legislation to suspend the Road Traffic Act. Its revival in the form of an E-Prix would be able to take place by invoking an amendment made to the act last year. This allows for the Motor Sports Association and the Auto-Cycle Union to issue permits for car and motorcycle racing respectively.

A FE race in Birmingham was first mooted earlier in the year as a replacement for the cancelled Montréal city race. It appears it wasn't seriously considered because the series promoter decided to cap the championship at 10 rounds.

MUTED RESPONSE

Street's announcement in May is understood to have caught the FE organisation by surprise after a period of stop-start negotiations. That explains a low-key response to his claims that a race could take place next year.

"The UK has a strong racing heritage and is an important market for FE, so it's a priority to bring a race back to British soil," read a statement from the series. "FE is based in the UK, as are a number of drivers, teams and manufacturers. ☑"

Marco Apicella leads Mark Blundell and Martin Donnelly in 1988, during the third of five F3000 races on Birmingham's streets



There have been two FE races in Britain, both around London's Battersea Park. The most recent was in 2016

“Regarding an E-Prix in the UK, we want to find the right long-term venue. We are currently evaluating a number of options and Birmingham is one of them.”

A date in FE's fifth season, when the practice of drivers swapping cars mid-race will disappear, might be too early for Birmingham. The calendar for the 2018/19 season, which is due to kick off this autumn, is due to be signed off after the next meeting of the FIA World Motor Sport Council on June 6 and was understood to be in the final throes of completion at press time.

Labour-controlled Birmingham City Council has, however, distanced itself from the Street's plan. The council's Labour leader Ian Ward described Street's statement as a “premature announcement”, pointing out that the local authority had not been involved in any discussions with FE and nor had there been a consultation with the people of Birmingham.

BRITAIN A PRIORITY

Bringing the series back to the UK is known to be among FE's top priorities, along with finding a venue in mainland China as distinct from its Hong Kong fixture. A number of its partners, including private banking group

Julius Baer, are believed to be pushing for the return of a British round.

FE boss Alejandro Agag has never made any secret of his desire for the series to return to London, a city in which he has made his home. He was the inspiration for the race around Battersea Park in Wandsworth, but after its two-year tenure on the calendar came to an end he stressed that he favoured a more central location for a future London race. A proposal from the ExCeL exhibition centre in Docklands, on a circuit which would have incorporated indoor and outdoor sections, didn't find favour with FE.

Hopes of a race in St James's Park, incorporating a section of track on Pall Mall, appear to have foundered. The Royal Parks authority is understood to have declined to give its approval in the wake of the chequered history of the event in Battersea Park, which also comes under its remit.

The Battersea fixture faced local opposition and was in the balance in the months leading up to its second edition in 2016, pending a legal challenge. FE eventually cut a deal with the lobby groups and Wandsworth Borough Council to allow the season finale to go ahead unchallenged while agreeing that the fixture would cease after that season. ☑



HOT TOPIC

ACCEPTANCE OF THE HALO

It might be ungainly, but fuss about its appearance is fading

For all the furore, it was inevitable that the world would accept the halo pretty quickly. That's because it's human nature to stop complaining about the norm and, perhaps more pertinently, because it would be seen to be doing the job for which it was designed.

Formula 2 racer Tadasuke Makino, a Honda development driver, has credited the halo with saving his life after another car landed on top of him during the sprint race at Barcelona in May. It was the first incidence of this ungainly device doing its job.

The accident, which involved fellow Japanese driver Nirei Fukuzumi, happened far away from the gaze of the casual F1 fan. But are the millions watching Grands Prix on TV really still bleating about the halo? Probably not.

The look of racing cars has always evolved. New developments are so often regarded with distaste, only to become part of the scenery while the complaints are quietly forgotten.

Wings ruined the simple lines of the cigar-tube F1 cars at the end of the '60s. The narrow-track machinery, running on treaded tyres from 1998, was ungainly. And what about the massive dorsal fins, again another safety development, on modern LMP prototypes introduced in 2011?

The objections died away pretty quickly. And all complaints about the halo will stop the moment it's seen to do its job in a major F1 shunt.





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Super Touring has attracted some strong grids since being adopted as a historic category, but only some...

The HSCC Super Touring Car Championship was one of the most eagerly anticipated historic racing developments when it expanded to formal championship status in 2014. It seemed to promise the return of one of the most popular and exciting categories, which has gone down in lore as the pinnacle of British touring car racing.

But just four years on from its relaunch, the reality is very different. Race organisers have struggled to attract entries and competitors have complained about the expense of keeping their complex machines running.

Now, even the championship organisers appear to be worried about its future. HSCC competition secretary Alan Jones admits that the championship is “going through a bit of a

SUPER TOURERS STALLING?

Eligible cars are plentiful, but very few compete in a potentially strong series

Samarth Kanal

dip at the moment,” after a grid of just 11 cars made it to the opening meeting of 2018 at Donington Park in May.

Jones puts the low numbers down to the complexity of the engines making it difficult for privateers to run the cars. “There was quite a bit of manufacturer involvement in period, and they were making, effectively one-off engines,” Jones says. “Cars like the Ford Mondeo were purpose-built by the manufacturers,” he adds.

Super Touring came into its own during the mid-1990s and featured family saloon cars that wouldn’t look out of place on a suburban driveway. The racing was intense and fans could relate to cars, making it one of the most popular championships in Britain. Manufacturers loved it, too, with Ford, BMW, Vauxhall, Honda, Audi and

Renault among those involved and teams such as Williams and Prodrive ran their cars. Partly because of this costs spiralled and the series imploded in the early 2000s - a victim of its own success.

Today, specialist manufacturers such as Judd have had to step in to help competitors rebuild engines for historic competition. Double BTCC champion John Cleland, who is running a 1997 Vauxhall Vectra in the championship, says that “The grids are very thin, and not all the cars are super tourers anyway. We just need more cars of this type to come out. There are a lot out there, and there will probably be two dozen within a 40-mile radius of Donington itself.

“The perception is that they’re expensive to run - and I think that’s what scares people off - but they’re not if you maintain them.”

Historic racer and current British GT front-runner Jason Minshaw concurs: “There’s a lot of rubbish about people saying that you need a team of 40 people to run one of these touring cars, and you can’t start one without a laptop.

“I’ve built a Volvo S40 and run it as a 26-year-old lad and it’s not rocket science. It’s just that everybody’s frightened of them. If you’ve got plenty of spares, running a Super Tourer isn’t a problem.”

But Minshaw, who is restoring a Volvo 850 estate as a demo car, to run at the Silverstone Classic in celebration of the BTCC’s 60th anniversary, won’t be racing it - there just aren’t enough spares around.

Some competitors have expressed disappointment over the spec-Hoosier tyres, which don’t reflect the cars’ performance, and have a narrow, inconsistent window of performance. The HSCC says it is aware of the tyre issue and is working on a solution.

Whether that will be enough to boost the championship remains to be seen, but the HSCC remains optimistic: “It’s probably one of the most challenging points that the championship has got to, and we’re hoping that it bounces back,” says Jones.

— WIRDHEIM WINS AT LAST —

Former Jaguar Formula 1 reserve Björn Wirdheim won in Monaco on his debut as a historic racer (left) - and avenged a quirky misfortune that had befallen him 15 years beforehand.

Wirdheim was FIA F3000 champion in 2003, finishing on the podium in nine of the 10 rounds. He scored three victories - although that would have been four but for a bizarre incident in



Monaco. Having dominated from the start, the Swede slowed on the final straight in the mistaken belief that he had already taken the flag. While he began celebrating, Dane Nicolas Kiesa - still at full racing speed - stole past to win by less than a second.

Now 38, Wirdheim has spent most of his recent career in Japan. He was also co-winner of the 2015 European Le Mans Series. At the GP de Monaco Historique he was invited to race the March 711 of his former manager Eje Elgh, who had Swedish TV commitments at the clashing Spanish GP. After qualifying on pole, Wirdheim didn't put a foot wrong in the race for 1966-1972 F1 cars and resisted fierce pressure from Stuart Hall (McLaren M19) to win by 0.389sec.

"When I was asked to do it, I said straight away that it would be a chance to lay a ghost to rest," he said. "I really enjoyed it - and it was such a tough race, too. I had wondered whether things might be a little bit more relaxed in historic racing, but that couldn't have been further from the truth. I've raced against Stuart in the WEC and know all about him. He didn't allow me a moment's rest.

"It was nice to drive something that relied so much on driver input, too. I've been racing GT3 cars for the past five years and, if I'm honest, they are probably becoming a little bit too easy. I'd love to do some more of this."

— 'LE MONSTRE' BACK —

Derek Drinkwater plans to enter his Cadillac 'Le Monstre' replica and his Cadillac Series 61 Coupé in the Le Mans Classic on July 6-8, aiming to emulate Briggs Cunningham's bold entry into the 1950 Le Mans 24 Hours.

'Le Monstre', also known as the Cadillac Series 61 Aerodynamic



Roadster, competed at the event with a striking body designed to reduce drag.

The 'Le Monstre' replica was built by Drinkwater in his garage, using a projector to trace the replica's bodywork and match it to the original 'Le Monstre', making sure that every individual rivet is in the right place.

It will be powered by the same 331ci engine as the original roadster, complete with a three-speed LaSalle gearbox. As a result, Drinkwater says that his 'Le Monstre' should hit a top speed 17mph faster than the original, thanks to a lighter flywheel, increased compression ratio and modern tyres.

"We wanted to do a 'Cunningham Team'," said Drinkwater. "We've got a 61 Series replica that we raced in 2016, but the engine failed. Now we've built the 'Le Monstre' so we've got the pair.

The only thing I would say that is different to the original is that the headboard is stronger, in compliance with modern-day standards."

He aims to test his roadster at Brands Hatch before the American Speedfest, at which he will display the two Cadillacs.

— 200MPH AT PENDINE —

Entrepreneur Zef Eisenberg became the first person to break the 200mph barrier at Pendine Sands when he set a motorcycle speed record of 201.572mph at the Straightliners Speed Event on May 13.

Pendine has long been associated with record-breaking in the UK, Malcolm Campbell having run there at 146.16mph with Blue Bird back in 1924.

"It can be a very difficult track," said Eisenberg, "You often encounter washed-up jellyfish!" The Guernsey-born rider was on a supercharged Suzuki Hayabusa. ☑



HOT TOPIC

AREN'T RECORDS MADE TO BE BROKEN?

Porsche potential reduced to a mere parade

With the excitement generated by the Le Mans-winning Porsche 919's current world tour - and Neel Jani's successful effort to beat Lewis Hamilton's Formula 1 lap record at Spa-Francorchamps in April - it was perhaps inevitable that the Nürburgring would beckon.

And Porsche seemed to pull out all the stops, bringing both the 956C - in which Stefan Beloff set his record time of 6min 11.13sec - and the modified 919 'Evo' to the Nürburgring ahead of May's 24 Hours.

The anticipation was swiftly muted, however, with both cars consigned to leading the pack in a ceremonial formation lap to begin the enduro.

Beloff's record has stood since 1983 - and many claim that it will never be beaten. But with a hybrid, uprated 919 at its disposal along with an expert team, well versed in smashing records, and a crack squad of works drivers, wasn't this a prime opportunity for Porsche to best Beloff's feat?

Perhaps it was treating the record with reverence, honouring the driver who died at the 1985 Spa 1000Kms, but records surely beg to be broken, especially three decades on.

Hybrid racing cars are expensive to run, however, and Porsche's restraint might have been borne from thrift.

Yet it's hard to believe that such a mighty manufacturer would overlook the chance to rewrite a little Nordschleife history, given that the 919 has already beaten a Mercedes F1 car, travelled to New York City and will star at the Goodwood Festival of Speed and Brands Hatch's Festival of Porsche later this year.

Most of all, it leaves us wanting.



Cunningham Cadillac duo at Le Mans in 1950 and, above, the new 'Le Monstre' taking shape



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"April is the cruellest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land, mixing memory and desire, stirring dull roots with spring rain." Such was TSEliot's view, but I'd take a contrary stance. I've always found April quite fruitful - and there's evidence to suggest it remains so...

BRANDS HATCH

Three races, nine different drivers on the podium (some of whom had never stood there before)... and if Jason Plato's name was mentioned over the PA at any point, I'm not sure I heard it. Fierce competition in the British Touring Car Championship is nothing new, but some of the most prominent names certainly are. The likes of Plato and Matt Neal were still there, fighting their corner (from rather a long way back, in the case of the former), but there is definitely an air of change in the BTCC's 60th anniversary year (aka its 61st season).

The series has sometimes been divisive in terms of its perceived acceptance of underhand driving tactics, but a yet more stringent penalty system is now in place - and there was little sign of wilful misbehaviour as the 2018 campaign dawned. There was some contact, of course, but how could it be otherwise with 32 cars hemmed into 1.2 miles of competitive asphalt... and 1.1sec covering all of them during qualifying?

The BTCC's availability on free-to-air TV seems to encourage, rather than diminish, raceday attendances. Within minutes of the gates opening the pathways were reassuringly populous - not to bygone F1 standards, of course, but healthy by the standard of the modern age. While families queued in the pits, in one or two instances awaiting signatures from drivers who are as yet little known beyond their immediate relatives, 2015 Le Mans winner Nick Tandy wandered unmolested through the paddock, wherein his JTR team is running four 911 GT3s in this year's Porsche Carrera Cup GB. Low-key has oft been his motif.

Held on an initially sodden track that dried rather dramatically, the second BTCC race was a glorious throwback in the finest traditions of mixed-weather chaos. While those on wet-shod Dunlops disappeared as a tightly knit unit at the front, rivals who gambled on slicks drove as delicately as they could. Starting 27th in his Vauxhall Astra, Senna Proctor posted a 1m 18sec on lap two, was down to the 55s by

lap 10 (but still only 26th), had found another four seconds by lap 16 (now 21st) and yet emerged in front on the 26th of 27 laps before going on to take his maiden BTCC win by half a second. It helped that Aiden Moffat had run wide at Druids in his Mercedes, and the outcome owed more to meteorology than any trick BTCC legislation, but the facts should not be allowed to get in the way of a compelling spectacle.

The FIA F4 race that followed immediately was won by Ayrton Simmons - a neat fusion of coincidence and heritage.

Other points of note included the Ginetta Junior teenagers' insistence on ignoring the traditional practice of avoiding wet kerbs, but getting away with it for 99 per cent of the time, an extraordinary piece of sandy artwork on the Clearways tyre wall - an almost perfect impression of a 911 GT3 wheel, left by Fraser



Brands Hatch was crowded on and off track. Left, Proctor wins. Below, Robertson leaves his mark; Neal vs Jackson



CHANGING OF THE OLD GUARD

Touring cars, bikes, a dearth of Cortinas... and a sprinkling of poetry

Simon Arron





Robertson left after he'd been launched into a double roll - and a first BTCC podium (in race two) for AmD Tuning Audi driver Ollie Jackson, who also ran strongly in the finale until a tap cost him several positions. During the morning I'd chatted to AmD boss Shaun Hollamby about the realistic targets for a team running with relatively modest resources. "Ollie was a bit disappointed to qualify 23rd," he said, "but he was only six tenths off pole and he's not a professional racing driver! The great thing about this championship is that it's so close - and if the circumstances are right we have as much chance as anybody of running at the front." Case proven.

SNETTERTON

An icon of the 1960s, the Lotus Cortina more or less disappeared from the national racing landscape during the '70s, began to reappear a decade later and went on to become more common than ever it was in period. So why were there only two at the Historic Sports Car Club's Snetterton meeting - among, indeed, a field of just nine touring cars?




JAKOB EBBEY & SIMON ARRON

"Bullen kept him honest with his bright yellow Anglia, hustling into the lead momentarily"

'Tis sadly symptomatic of historic saloon car racing's exploding popularity that the cake has become ever more thinly sliced. A few participants have moved on to other disciplines and some were awaiting fresh parts, but on this occasion owners of pre-66 tin-tops also had clashing possibilities at both Croft (13 entries, also only two Cortinas) and Imola (47 entries, a cornucopia of Cortinas).

As the old adage goes, though, it takes but a couple of cars to make a decent race. Mark Watts' Ford Mustang was always going to have an advantage, given the length of the Snetterton 200 circuit's straights, but Bob Bullen kept him honest with his bright yellow Anglia, closing up under braking and hustling into the lead during race two... but only momentarily before the reality of 4.7 litres/eight cylinders kicked in against 1.5/four.

At the opposite end of the subscription spectrum, the two road sports fields (historic and 1970s) were as diverse as they were busy. Ever a champion of the unusual, Ian Jacobs turned up in a Fiat 124 Spider - as beautifully presented as always in his customary British Racing Turquoise - while such as Mark 

CLUB RACING & BEYOND



Bennett (Alpine A310) and William Jenkins (Porsche 914-6) added distinctive silhouettes among the more familiar TVRs and assorted strains of Lotus.

In the latter department, students past and present from the Cambridge Regional College were tending Howard Payne's Europa twin-cam - youth cutting its teeth on antiquity and a sign of hope for the future.

Away from the racing, I might previously have mentioned (once, twice or more) that Snetterton has lost a little fried zest since its entrance was relocated and the Little Chef disappeared, but I'm reliably informed that the old building's shell is still there, complete with kitchen, if you know where to look.

It's a slightly less viable business proposition, mind, since they shifted the A11.

OULTON PARK

It wasn't the most promising of starts. You scramble from bed at 3.20am, quaff a couple of espressos, load cameras and notebook then walk out into rain so intense that the standing

water was almost axle deep towards London's western fringe. The M40 wasn't much better, ditto the southern slopes of the M6... but the clouds finally unzipped close to the Tropic of Stoke to reveal a glorious microclimate in the unlikeliest of regions.

The Wirral Hundred Motorcycle Club has been running grass-roots meetings at Oulton Park for more than 60 years - and its latest was a fine example of the breed. Negotiating the paddock required almost polar expedition levels of planning, such as the density of small vans within. There were clashing attractions in the area - a Liverpool MC sprint at Aintree, banger racing at Chesterton Stadium - but nothing that was likely to dilute the assembled numeric splendour: 49 riders practised for the Formula 600 race and 40 went through to the opening race.

There was also the dependably dynamic body language of the powerbikes, pawing the air as they crested Deer Leap, or bucking and weaving under acceleration from Druids.

Opposite lock while balanced on a rear tyre alone? Perfectly normal, it seems. ☑



Alan Brooks (Honda 350) leads through the Oulton countryside. Above, Bennett chases Jacobs at Snetterton



CLUB RACING SPOTLIGHT

Charles Barter has spent 25 seasons in the same Datsun

For many years the family name was almost as synonymous with hillclimbing as Shelsley Walsh. "My brother Robert and I started at the beginning of the 1970s," says Charles Barter. "We bought Win Percy's rallycross Ford Anglia and converted it. That sowed the seeds."

He subsequently forged his reputation at the wheel of a Hillman Imp - and other cars powered by Hartwell-tuned Rootes engines (including a Davrian and a Delta T80 Formula Ford 2000 chassis, fitted with a methanol-fuelled 1.1-litre Imp lump). He accumulated numerous wins and titles in the colours of Golden Springs, his family's watercress-farming business, before moving on during the 1980s to a Peugeot 205 that Hartwell was developing for customers. After a couple of years, though, with little more to prove on the hills, he decided to take a break. "Mistake," he says. "I soon realised how much I missed the sport."

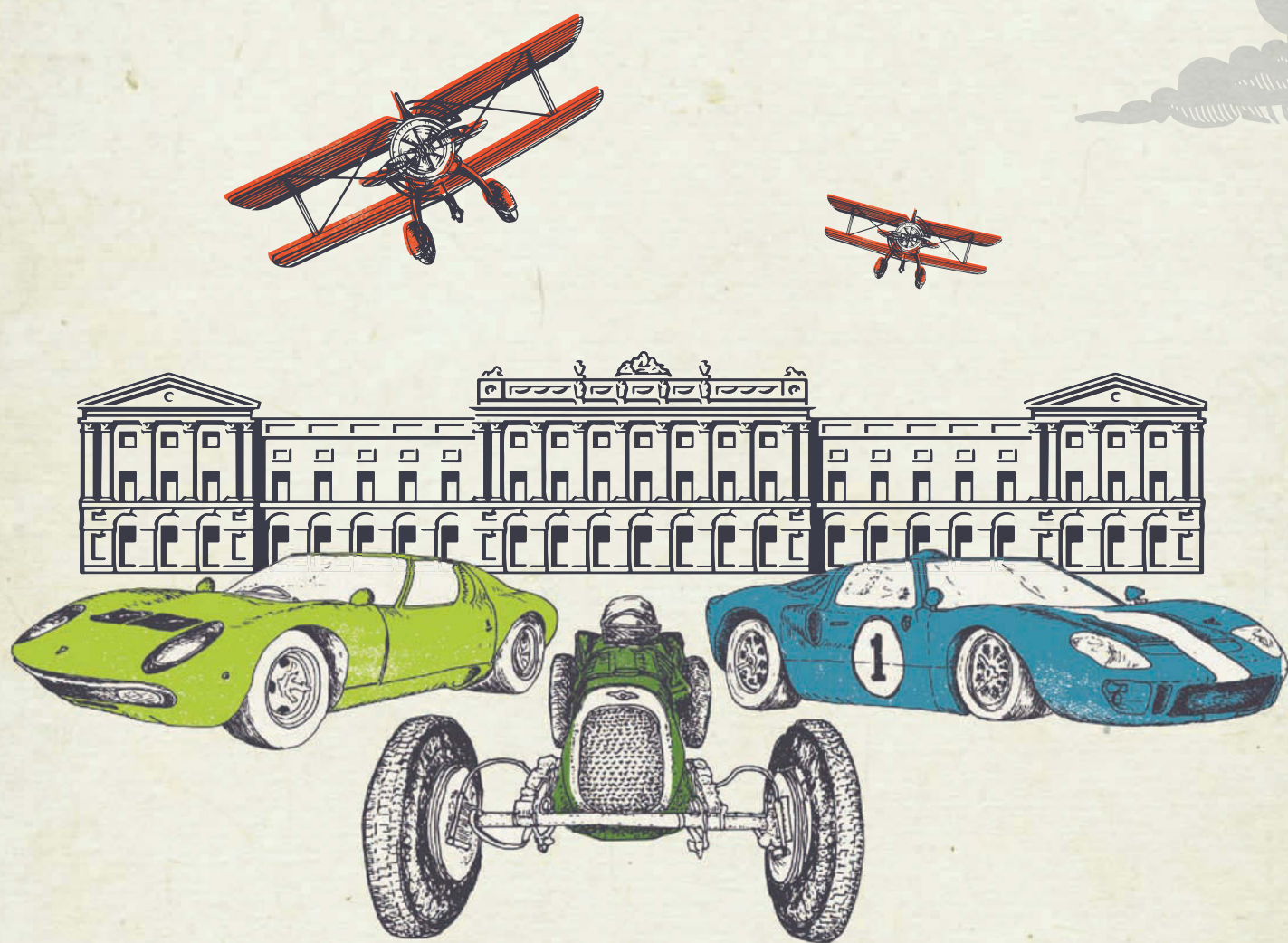
The answer? A Datsun 240Z. "I knew where that was," he says, nodding towards a familiar blue silhouette. "It's another ex-Win Percy car. He used it on the road, but also in a few events. It was languishing in an orchard so we restored it - and I have been racing it in road sports events for the past 25 years.

"I've been tempted by other things, but that would mean selling the 240Z - and I don't think I could. I enjoy it so much and still seem to be competitive as I approach my 75th birthday, so..."



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EVENTS



JUNE/JULY 2018

COMING ATTRACTIONS

IN THE UK *June 2-8, Isle of Man TT, UK*
The 99th Isle of Man TT promises another close rivalry between Ian Hutchinson and Michael Dunlop, the pair having switched teams for 2018. John McGuinness won't be competing for Norton, but there's a strong field hoping to lap the course at more than 130mph in front of 45,000 spectators.

IN THE UK *June 9/10 XK70 Jaguar Festival, Shelsley Walsh*
At the heart of this event, celebrating 70 years of the stunning Jaguar XK, will be a world record bid as the XK Club aims to assemble 700 XK-engined cars. Plus, the Le Mans XJ220 runs up the hill with various Group C racers.

INTERNATIONAL *June 10, Formula E, Zurich*
The Formula E Zurich ePrix will be the first circuit race to be held in Switzerland since a ban imposed in the wake of the 1955 Le Mans disaster. A legislative change in 2015 opened the door to the all-electric category.

INTERNATIONAL *June 13-16, Le Mans 24 Hours, France*
Toyota swept the privateers away at the Spa 6 Hours, but Le Mans has a habit of throwing spanners in the works. Will Toyota finally be able to secure its first outright success?

INTERNATIONAL *June 17-24, Pikes Peak Hillclimb, Colorado, USA*
Volkswagen's electric IDR has stolen the headlines for the 96th Pikes Peak International Hillclimb, but Bentley will be gunning for SUV supremacy with time attack and open-wheel class records also up for grabs. Turn to page 122 to find out more.

- June 3 **MOTOGP** Italy
- June 3 **INDYCAR** Detroit
- June 9 **INDYCAR** Texas
- June 10 **FORMULA 1** Canada
- June 10 **WRC** Italy
- June 17 **MOTOGP** Catalunya
- June 24 **FORMULA 1** France
- June 24 **INDYCAR** Road America
- July 1 **MOTOGP** Assen
- July 1 **FORMULA 1** Austria



Euro NASCAR has become a popular annual staple at Brands Hatch

SHORT BREAK

HEAVY METAL THUNDER

V8 muscle, FF 1600 and hotdog-eating contests – the SpeedFest isn't quite your typical race weekend

The sixth American SpeedFest, on June 9/10, continues in the same spectacular vein as its forebears. The event is a celebration of American muscle and motor sport at Brands Hatch, and the line-up mixes the two in familiar style.

Headlining will be the third round of the Euro NASCAR Series (NWES), which has been given a fresh lease of life in recent years.

Bobby Labonte, 1991 second-tier NASCAR champion and NASCAR Cup champion in 2000, is competing full-time in the series and the stock car racing legend lines up against sports car veteran Marc Goossens, Briton Alex Sedgwick, former Champ Car driver Bruno Junqueira and 2017 NWES champion Alon Day.

The series has gained further traction lately, with a number of drivers taking seats in the NASCAR Xfinity and Truck Series in the United States, while former Toro Rosso Formula 1 driver and current Ferrari test driver Daniil Kvyat also tried a NWES stock car in the pre-season test at Franciacorta.

The spec-series fields cars powered by 5.7-litre V8 engines, boasting 400bhp engines – and competition is close. The double-header is bolstered by the Legends Championship, Bernie's V8s, Formula 5000 and a Formula Ford 1600 race on the Saturday, which makes for a packed weekend of club racing along with the FIA-sanctioned double-header. Demo runs ensure that US-spec NASCAR stock cars will feature, as will 1950s and '60s stock cars.

Off-track, the second-generation Dodge Charger will be celebrated on its 50th birthday, with other displays paying homage to the best of Americana.

There is, of course, a healthy dose of the more gluttonous side of American sports: a barbecue competition and a hotdog-eating contest only add to the competitive but light-hearted spirit of the weekend.

Weekend tickets start from £32 for adults, while day tickets begin at £25 – grandstand entry costs extra.

www.msv.com/www.speedfest.co.uk

HOW TO GET THERE

Brands Hatch is on the A20, 20 miles away from Central London and just off the M20 and M25 motorways. Public transport can take visitors from London Victoria to Swanley station, about six miles away.

ALSO GOING ON

Brands Hatch also hosts 'Deutsche Fest', featuring – you guessed it – the best of German motor sport, on June 16-17. F1 demo laps, the Volkswagen Racing Cup, the M3 Cup and big helping of car culture fill the weekend.

DON'T MISS

The NASCAR Euro Series hits just one oval circuit this year and that's at Tours, France. The weekend of June 29-July 1 features another festival celebrating all that is Americana on a short-oval – often where the best stock car racing takes place.

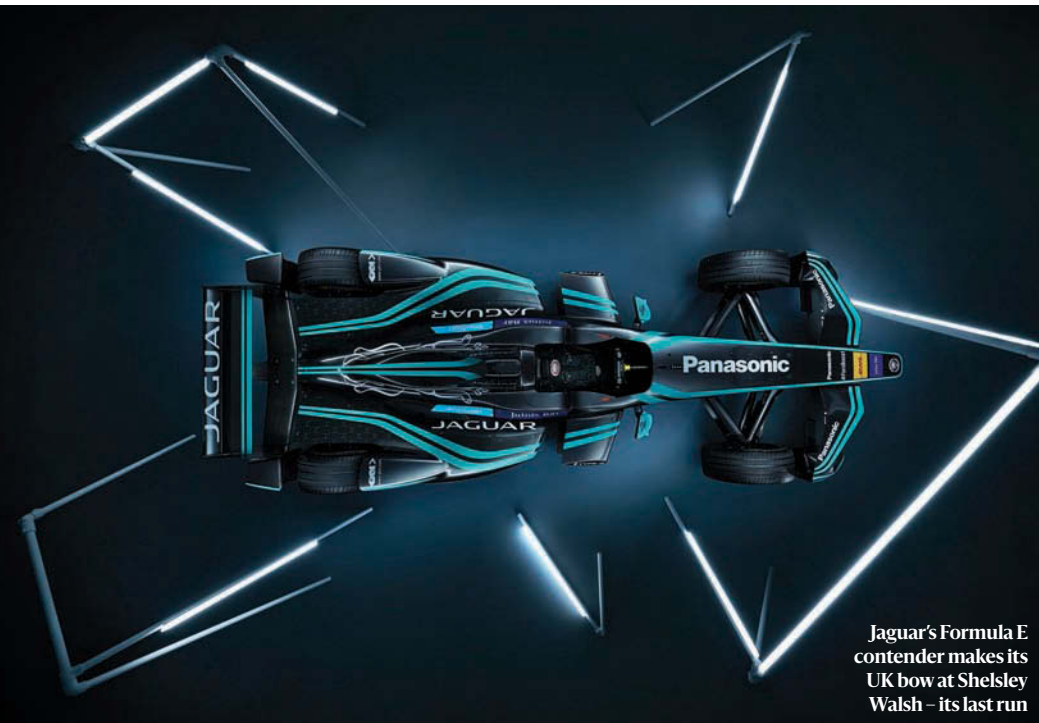


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Jaguar's Formula E contender makes its UK bow at Shelsley Walsh – its last run

UPHILL CHARGE

HELLO, GOODBYE

Jaguar's outgoing Formula E car is to bid farewell at Shelsley Walsh, on its UK debut

Jack Phillips

Past meets present this August as Jaguar will be giving its I-TYPE 2 Formula E car a run up Shelsley Walsh with New Zealander Mitch Evans at the wheel.

Remarkably the hillclimb will be the first public run for the British squad on home soil, having joined Formula E the year after London's race fell from the calendar. A UK race is yet to return, though talk is rife about a Formula E Superprix revival on the streets of Birmingham (see international news).

The I-TYPE 2 is a development of the initial spec Formula E car, and its competitive life will come to an end in July on the streets of Brooklyn when the city hosts the final rounds of the fourth season. It will be replaced by the



spectacular-looking I-TYPE 3 for season five. Evans should therefore be free to push the car to its limits through the famous hill's close confines. One would hope, anyway.

Jaguar has had a tricky time during its two years in Formula E, with just one podium to its name at the time of writing, courtesy of Evans's third place in Hong Kong.

As for what time Evans will clock, that is anyone's guess. The current hill record is 22.58sec, set in 2008 by Martin Groves in a Gould GR55 NME, while Neville Rollason and his Tesla holds the electric car benchmark, which currently stands at 37.30sec from 2011.

Evans, well aware of the world's oldest hillclimb, said: "We have a lot of hillclimbs back home in New Zealand but this is the most famous and historic. My all-electric race car should be well suited to the challenge and I'm intrigued to see what my time will be."

The appearance coincides with long-time Shelsley Walsh supporter GKN Driveline teaming up with Panasonic Jaguar Racing for this 2017/18 season. The two have a history that is almost as long as the hillclimb's own, in fact, dating back to 1935 and the Jaguar SS saloon. Even the 1951 Le Mans-winning

Jaguar C-Type's driveshaft was developed by GKN.

Evans' appearance at the hillclimb will be taking place 113 years to the day since the very first in 1905 on August 12. And to neatly show the contrast of old and new worlds, a Daimler team car from that first run will be on display during the event. ☑



HOT TOPIC

ROYAL APPROVAL

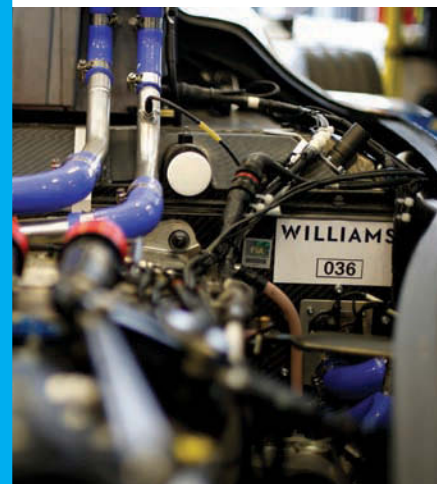
Formula E battery tech brings Williams Queen's Award

Williams Advanced Engineering has been recognised for its development of the Formula E batteries by receiving the Queen's Award for Enterprise in Innovation.

The batteries powering the Formula E cars since its inception have all been developed by Williams Advanced Engineering, with near-perfect reliability. Each battery is expected to be in use for two seasons, and its reliability record supposedly stands at 99.8 per cent.

It also highlighted the short timeframe in which the battery technology was required and developed, with a 12-month turnaround between design and the opening race.

Williams appears to be spearheading the UK's switch to electric cars, joining forces with Aston Martin not only for the upcoming RapidE but also for the Advanced Propulsion Centre with a number of other partners. Its aim is to create a high-performance and flexible battery supply capability in the UK.



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- 5. June 2018 Tuesday
- 26. June 2018 Tuesday
- 9. July 2018 Monday
- 6. August 2018 Monday
- 4. September 2018 Tuesday
- 18. September 2018 Tuesday
- 20. October 2018 Saturday
- 3. November 2018 Saturday

DIJON-PRENOIS FRANCE

- 16. October 2018 Tuesday
- 17. October 2018 Wednesday

LE MANS - BUGATTI FRANCE

- 30. October 2018 Tuesday



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To gasps of shock and awe, Rolls-Royce has finally shown the world the SUV it has been threatening to introduce for the last three years. The Cullinan will go on sale before the end of year priced at around £250,000 a pop, and that's not the only reason there's nothing else out there like it.

The car is simply vast in every respect. It not only costs nearly £90,000 more than the flagship version of the rival Bentley Bentayga, it is 200mm longer, 166mm wider and 93mm higher. As for its weight it is some 220kg heavier, tipping the scales at a barely believable 2660kg despite its all-aluminium construction. Those who believe that bigger is better almost by definition (and who can afford it) will feel that all their Christmases have come at once. The somewhat mixed reception to its styling is not believed likely to impede sales in the face of such grandeur.

Like other Rolls-Royces, the Cullinan's aluminium spaceframe chassis will be put together in Munich as will its 6.75-litre, twin-turbo V12 engine (18.8mpg on the combined cycle as you're asking), before being sent to Goodwood for final assembly, paint and trim. Rolls-Royce has not yet felt the need to muddy its hands with public declarations of acceleration times, but we know its weight and that the engine has 563bhp and 626lb ft of torque so we know it will be slower than the more powerful, torquey and lighter Bentley, but not by how much. My guess is a 0-62mph sprint of around 4.8sec compared to its rival's 4.0sec, not that this should trouble a Rolls-Royce customer in the least.

Of more importance will be the fact that the Cullinan will be just as opulent as any other Rolls-Royce and just as easy to personalise to the owner's individual taste so long as they are prepared to spend the money. And they are: I understand the average option spend on a Rolls-Royce tops £50,000.

But the Cullinan will not be for show alone. In perhaps the ultimate example of a car company providing talent most owners would never dream of tapping into, Rolls-Royce appears to have tried as hard with the Cullinan's off-road ability as its strengths in more usual surroundings. Said to be able to go wherever a Range Rover can go, the Rolls SUV comes with a completely configurable four-wheel drive system offering specific settings for sand, rocks and mud. It seems that even in a departure from the usual Rolls-Royce script as radical as the Cullinan, the need to appear authentic and able in all regards remains as much a part of the brief as in any of its more conventional products.

There is no news concerning other variants of the Cullinan but as Rolls-Royce has not in the modern era built one new car without spinning at least one other from it, it seems unlikely the Cullinan will be Rolls' sole off-roader. It has been estimated that the Cullinan all by itself could increase Rolls sales by as much as 50 per cent and become its best-selling model, and

with Bentley already working on a sleeker, more sporting Bentayga, it would be brave to bet that Rolls-Royce will not produce something similar in the years ahead.

— SHARPER ASTON DB11 —

Two years after its introduction, Aston Martin has already replaced the DB11 V12, the car on whose back the much vaunted 'second century plan' was launched. The new car, the DB11 AMR, represents a significantly enhanced reworking of the original, of which almost 4000 have been built since sales began in 2016.

At the AMR's heart lies a 630bhp version of



DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

Rolls-Royce has named its SUV after a famous gem – and claims top off-road ability

Andrew Frankel

Aston's home-grown 5.2-litre, twin-turbo V12, a rise of 30bhp but still a long way short of its potential: the engine is believed to develop 700bhp in the forthcoming DBS Superleggera, believed to have been achieved without major internal modification. Nevertheless the DB11 AMR enjoys a useful 0.2sec cut in its 0-62mph time, now 3.7sec despite the traction limitations inherent in its front-engine, rear-drive design. Less usefully but more impressively, its top speed has risen from 200 to 208mph.

Aston talks in less detail about its recalibrated chassis, though in truth this was likely to be one of the larger areas of activity; the team was known to want the DB11 to offer greater levels of driver interaction without

harming its ride and refinement. Aiding this is a new tune for the exhaust system and a reprogrammed eight-speed autobox offering quicker, sharper shifts. Visually you are most likely to notice the AMR by its monochrome detailing, including dark headlamp surrounds, smoked rear lamps, gloss back roof and darkened front grille and tail pipes.

Why has this car come so soon and why has it is being produced as a replacement for the original DB11 V12 rather than an addition to the range? The answer is likely to have its basis in the fact that while the DB11 is very much associated with the recent renaissance of Aston Martin, the car itself was started while the company was under its previous management and, crucially, before the arrival of its Chief Engineer, ex-Lotus chassis guru Matt Becker who was only able to make detail changes to the car before production. Many of the more substantive (and well received) changes he wanted to make only arrived in time for the subsequent DB11 V8 model so the AMR represents an opportunity for him and his team to really make their mark on the car. The DB11 V12 they would have built had they been around at the time? I expect that's near the mark. The car is on sale now for £174,995, up £17,095 over the car it replaces.

— LOTUS FUTURE PLANS —

We are getting slightly clearer indications of what the near future of Lotus might look like, now that money from new parent Geely is starting to flow. It seems that the new Lotus will be based on a three-model product line up, comprising a more upmarket replacement for the extant Elise and Exige models, a new crossover SUV and a new range topping supercar, likely to be considered a somewhat belated replacement for the Esprit.

Lotus is known to remain wedded to its long-held values of light weight, handling prowess and performance and it will be interesting to see how these can be applied to the traditionally heavy, cumbersome and relatively slow format of the SUV. But given the wonders that have visited the Volvo brand since it was bought by Geely, hopes must be high that a complete renaissance for the Norfolk brand remains on the cards.

No details of mechanical specifications of the forthcoming cars are yet known but it is likely that both the new Esprit and Elise replacement will be built up around aluminium extrusions, a technology that has served the Elise well for 23 years and has become popular among other brands like Aston Martin. By contrast the SUV is likely to be spun off an existing Volvo/Geely platform such as those used by the current XC40 and XC60. As for a power unit, Volvo already has a new and immensely versatile 2-litre, four cylinder offering outputs from 153bhp to 395bhp, and it would be a great surprise were Lotus not to take full advantage of this state of the art in-house technology. ☑



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Mark Hughes

As Formula 1 awaits its next big regulation change for 2021, interim tweaks are on the horizon. In theory, the sport is on the correct path

W

ith a little bit of political horse-trading, the FIA has succeeded in getting through aerodynamic changes that are conceived to improve the wheel-to-wheel raceability in Formula 1 from next season. The cars of 2019 will have narrower front wings, a wider rear wing and a more powerful DRS. These regulations are based upon research made by Liberty as part of wider-ranging technical changes for 2021, but are only for the 2019 and '20 seasons.

Since taking up his role with Liberty, Ross Brawn's whole approach to F1 technical changes has been to have them properly researched, so as to avoid the knee-jerk changes of which F1 has been so guilty in the past. These have either not worked at all or else created unintended consequences that, in some cases, have been worse than the original problem. As such, Brawn last year put Pat Symonds in charge of an engineering team to research fully the problems of racing winged, open-wheeled cars in close proximity and to come up with a solution that would allow more overtaking.

This research is very much ongoing, but with a year of it already having proven some key points the FIA was keen to incorporate some of this research into the cars that will be raced before 2021. "Why spend two years with cars we know don't work when we have enough knowledge at least to make them better?" was their position.

Nikolas Tombazis (formerly chief of aero at both Ferrari and McLaren) was previously part of that Liberty aero group, but has since been recruited by the FIA as its aerodynamics advisor. He was tasked with taking the research so far completed and incorporating it into the 2019/20 aero regs. The teams were largely against it - and Liberty was far from convinced that a part-completed research programme should be influencing the regulations ahead of a more fully considered change. But Liberty and the FIA will always tend to align in an agreed mutual position, such is the understanding reached between Brawn and FIA president Jean Todt. Only in that way can the chaos and anarchy of issue-based alliances be suppressed.

Ferrari, Mercedes and Red Bull - all of which sit on the F1 Commission that decided whether the FIA's proposal be implemented - were initially against changing the regulations in the remaining two years of this formula. That was the case in Baku just a couple of days before the vote.

But lo and behold, Ferrari and Mercedes (together with two Mercedes-supplied teams) changed their minds and helped vote the changes through. Quite what deal was struck that induced this change of position is unclear. But the change enraged Red Bull's Christian Horner, which suggests he feels it disadvantages Red Bull in some way (see Baku and Barcelona race analyses, p14).

The idea of the regulation change is that the

narrower front wing, with standardised endplates - so banishing the incredibly complex vortex generators of current set-ups - will force the aero teams to concentrate the flow off the wing inboard and towards the underfloor.

Since the introduction of the 2009 regulations, outwash has been the preferred aero choice, whereby as much flow from the outboard end of the wing as possible is directed around the front wheels and down the side, with vortices of air rising from the endplates and forming ahead of the sidepods, which then accelerate the flow in between them faster - as well as moving the airflow outwards, away from the separate flow feeding the radiators and underfloor.

In 2009 McLaren uniquely retained an inboard philosophy when everyone else had switched to outboard - and the car was a disaster, often leaving Lewis Hamilton and Heikki Kovalainen in the Q1 part of the grid. From Hockenheim, an outwash front wing was fitted and the car was transformed, Hamilton winning in Hungary next time out. Since then, every car has used only the outwash philosophy - as it is much the quickest way under the current regs. But compared to an inboard car, a greater proportion of the total downforce is being created by the outer bodywork rather than the underfloor and it is therefore more sensitive to disturbed airflow from the car ahead. The narrower-span front wing of 2019/20 will make it unfeasible to direct the airflow that way, especially without the sophisticated vortex generators. With an increased proportion of total downforce therefore derived from the underbody, a car should be less sensitive to the wake of the car ahead.

The new rear wing will direct the wake higher and farther back. This is designed to do two things - more of the wake's energy will dissipate before it descends to the level where it affects the following car and, in moving it farther back, there should be a relatively smooth area once the car behind has got past that turbulence, theoretically allowing it to follow closer through the corner.

The DRS is set to be 25-30 per cent more powerful. That does not mean that power will automatically be applied. Only those tracks with too short a straight for the current DRS to be effective will receive the benefit. At tracks where the current DRS is felt to work well enough, the zones will simply be shortened appropriately. While needing DRS at all is almost an admission of defeat, the good news is that it's generally agreed that for 2021 the idea is to get the aero working well enough not to need DRS.

"I share the underlying discomfort with DRS," says Tombazis. "But feel that it's the right thing for the present state of things. But for '21 we hope the cars will be much more able to follow each other closely and it will be a nice outcome if we can decrease DRS or even eliminate it. Until then it's a necessary evil."

Here's hoping. ☑

Since he began covering Grand Prix racing in 2000, Mark Hughes has forged a reputation as the finest Formula 1 analyst of his generation

Lo and behold. Ferrari and Mercedes changed their minds and helped vote the changes through

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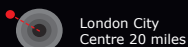
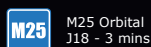
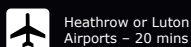
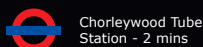
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Dickie Meaden

They say it's Britain's third-biggest spectator event – yet it takes place in another country. Why do enthusiasts cross the Channel in droves for it?

W

hat is it about Le Mans - that most French of races - that obsesses us Brits? You could pin it on a certain Walter Owen Bentley, who annexed La Sarthe with his Union Jacked British Racing Green machines and their five wins during the 1920s. Alfa Romeo was the dominant force in the 1930s, but after the hiatus for World War II the Brits returned with the combined might of Jaguar and Aston to take six wins during the 1950s. If possession really is nine-tenths of the law, then Le Mans was ours.

Since then apart from the odd moment of glory it's been comparatively slim pickings for the British marques, but our love for Le Mans endured. Jaguar's triumphant pair of Group C wins in 1988 and 1990 proved to be a source of national pride, while McLaren's historic win in 1995 remains one of the greatest fairy tales of them all.

Since then it's been *Deutschland über alles*, save for 2003 with the (Audi-flavoured) Bentley Speed 8 and 2009 when Peugeot derailed the Audi freight train with the mighty 908 HDI FAP, an example of which is tested elsewhere in this issue. Such periods of dominance are often said to be bad for motor sport. In F1 and rallying I would tend to agree, but there's something about Le Mans - its propensity for breathless drama and brutal heartbreak - that makes every victory an achievement so incredible it's impossible to begrudge the victor their spoils, however many years they manage to beat the odds.

It's apt that the French have enjoyed the most sustained success at Le Mans, with outright victories in all but one of *La Ronde Infernale's* 10 decades. From long defunct marques such as Chenard & Walcker (winner of the first 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1923), Lorraine-Dietrich, Delahaye and Talbot-Lago, to Bugatti, Matra, Renault-Alpine and Peugeot, the Le Mans roll of honour is peppered with uniquely characterful and hugely patriotic efforts.

The lasting significance of those home wins - in particular those scored in the modern era by Matra, Renault, Rondeau and Peugeot - and the aura that surrounds those cars to this day is one of Le Mans' uniquely beguiling qualities.

There must have been a time in my life when I wasn't aware of Le Mans, but it must have been a helluva long time ago because I genuinely can't remember it. Whether looking through books and reading race reports, making models or racing slot cars, Le Mans assumed an almost mythical status in my mind.

I remember the sense of wonder the first time I watched Steve McQueen's iconic movie. I also remember writing a letter to the Rothmans head office in London requesting promotional material relating to their sponsorship of Porsche's 956s in the World Sportscar Championship. Realising I was under-age, they sent a letter addressed to my parents thanking me for my interest and expressed pleasure in enclosing a selection of Porsche race posters, but

leaving it to my parents to decide whether I should receive promotional material from a tobacco company. Suffice to say I got the posters (wish I still had them now) and though I never did become a smoker, I vowed from that day that were I ever to do so my coffin nails of choice would be Rothmans King Size. But I digress.

My first trip to Le Mans remains a cherished and indelible memory. It was 1991. A historic year for a number of reasons - the new pit complex, wild 3.5-litre F1-engined prototypes and Mazda's heroic win being the most significant. The whole experience was epic. From the sense of being on a shared mission with my friends and the rag-tag caravan of UK-registered sports cars that disgorged from the bellies of countless cross-channel ferries to the ordeal of camping, the sensory trauma of the toilet blocks and the ever-growing beer bottle walls.

Above all it was the extraordinary scale of the race that blew my mind. Exhaustion and exhilaration are close bedfellows, but never more so than when you're completely lost in the kaleidoscopic whirl of noise and colour that is the Le Mans 24 Hours. The boom of the Saubers, the brittle wowl of the V12 Jags, the boosty hum of the Porsches and, of course, the tortured shriek of the Mazdas. The sense of relentlessness was almost overwhelming.

Having elected to crash out in my tent (positioned on the Bugatti Circuit near to the Dunlop Bridge) in the early hours of the morning, I can still remember the blissful feeling of almost drifting off to sleep. Then, as though plugged into the mains I'd jolt awake as the Mazda braked hard and woop-woop-wooped its way down the gears into the Dunlop Chicane, then wooop-woooooop-wooooooped its way up the gears as it crested the brow and tore down the hill. And so it went on, me never quite getting to sleep and the wailing Mazdas refusing to break, despite my increasingly dark incantations in the quest for some shut-eye.

I've been back many times since for the 24 Hours. In 1995 I drove out with a mate in a Caterham Seven, tent and belongings strapped to the roll hoop, and had my mind blown by JJ Lehto's legendary night stint in the Ueno Clinic McLaren F1 GTR. I was there the following year to see the place go wild as the breathtakingly beautiful Peugeot 905 finally won. Thinking back to 1999 I still go cold at the memory of watching on the big screen as Peter Dumbreck launched into the trees in his CLK-GTR and the whole place went deathly quiet. Such are the highs and lows at Le Mans.

While the nature of the racing has evolved and the place has lost some of its scruffy charm, the feeling I get from just being there never changes. Perhaps that's the answer to my original question. Wherever you're from, if you have a love for the drama and romance of endurance racing then being at Le Mans somehow feels like coming home. ☑

Dickie Meaden has been writing about cars for 25 years – and racing them for almost as long. He is a regular winner at historic meetings

“
So it went on, the wailing Mazdas refusing to break despite my increasingly dark incantations”

MAXTED - PAGE

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Mat Oxley

Intelligence has always been an important part of going fast, but never more so than in racing's electronics age

K

nowledge is lap times. We all know that. There are two ways to gain this knowledge: you either learn it or you buy it.

Time is a precious commodity in all kinds of ways in motor sport, which is why teams and manufacturers sometimes decide it makes more sense to write a fat cheque than attend a two-year training course.

This has happened throughout the history of motorcycle racing. In the 1950s, Gilera and MV Agusta hired British riders - Les Graham, Geoff Duke and John Surtees - to learn the chassis secrets of their fine-handling Nortons.

In the 1960s, Suzuki paid East German rider Ernst Degner to defect, so he could bring the hard-won secrets of two-stroke engine design from MZ (Motorenwerke Zschopau) through the Iron Curtain. Many of the early successes of the Japanese industry were built on that single Cold War deal.

Thirty years later Suzuki signed British engineer Stuart Shenton from Honda, to help transform its fast but fickle RGV500 into a bike good enough to beat Honda and Yamaha to the 1993 500cc world championship.

A little less than a decade ago, Honda poached vital know-how from Yamaha. The company hired three of Yamaha's European electronics boffins to rewrite its rider-controls software and regain the premier-class title, which had remained out of its reach for four seasons, Honda's longest drought since the 1970s.

Inevitably, most of MotoGP's current defections also centre around the electronics side of racing. Two years ago MotoGP rights-holder Dorna somehow convinced the factories to allow the introduction of unified software, with the intention of reducing costs, slowing the software arms-race and narrowing the performance gap between different machines. Although the factories can no longer undertake their treasured software R&D, MotoGP has benefited from this change: the riders are more in control of their own destinies and the racing is better as a result.

However, one thing hasn't changed. Tailor-made software or unified software, the electronics engineer who can find the best way through the labyrinth of computer codes can name his or her price.

In 2016, Dorna granted Magneti Marelli the MotoGP unified-software contract. The Milan-based company had written and developed Ducati's MotoGP rider-control systems for more than a decade, so Ducati had a head start in this new age of electronics warfare. Then the Bolognese hired a technician from Magneti, just to make sure.

Yamaha, Suzuki and Aprilia had also worked with Magneti Marelli over the years, so they too had some idea of what was going on. The only MotoGP constructor that was completely foreign

to Magneti code was Honda, which had always done its electronics development in-house.

During much of 2016 Honda struggled like hell to match the Italian electronics to its own RC213V MotoGP bike. "For the software, we need to learn how to think like Italians," said one Honda Racing Corporation engineer, with a hint of panic in his face.

Despite this, Honda went on to win the 2016 MotoGP title, thanks largely to the remarkable make-it-up-as-you-go-along riding talent of Marc Márquez. But at the end of 2016 Honda did the sensible thing: instead of spending the weeks, months or years necessary to learn how to think like Italians, it instead hired an Italian electronics engineer. It signed one of Magneti Marelli's best technicians to integrate the company's software better into the RC213V. As a result, both Honda and Ducati had a significant advantage over their rivals in last year's MotoGP series. Between them they won 14 of 18 races, while Yamaha had its worst season in years.

"Honda and Ducati discovered something in the power delivery, from the electronics, to help the rear of the bike," said Valentino Rossi's crew chief Silvano Galbusera at the end of last year. "When the rider picks up the bike, the system recognises this and then the rider can push. If you listen to their bikes you hear less cutting noise from the electronics, so they have better acceleration. Yamaha needs to work on the electronics to find something like this, because we need acceleration without destroying the tyre.

"The problem for Yamaha is that both Ducati and Honda have taken staff from Magneti who know everything about the system, so it's easier for them to find the right settings. I don't think there's anyone left at Magneti with that kind of experience."

Yamaha is making progress but still seems at a disadvantage. So much so that the situation has confused Magneti Marelli. "It's very difficult to understand if Yamaha are lost in themselves or not," says one Magneti MotoGP technician. "This situation is really hard for us to understand. We have asked Yamaha if they wanted help, but we received no answer."


Yamaha seem intent on working things out for themselves, having missed the chance to buy intelligence from outside.

"Unfortunately we missed the opportunity!" says Kouichi Tsuji, the general manager of Yamaha's motor sports division with a grin. "But although the software is made by Magneti, we are not sure they have the knowledge to make our bike faster, because bike development and software development must always be in parallel."

By the time you read this, perhaps Yamaha will have made those vital few clicks with the mouse.

But if Valentino Rossi and Maverick Viñales are still unable to challenge consistently at the front, you know why. ☒

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



In the 1960s Suzuki paid Ernst Degner to defect. Many successes were built on that single Cold War deal

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Doug Nye

Playboy or professional? Investigating the track record of Woolf Barnato, high priest of the Bentley Boys

In the run-up to this year's Le Mans 24-Hour race the thought occurs that it marks the 90th anniversary of Woolf 'Babe' Barnato winning the first of his three consecutive Grands Prix d'Endurance there, in 1928. 'Babe' Barnato was ostensibly the massively-built, Champagne-quaffing, playboy leader of the so-called 'Bentley Boys' - that glittering social set of car-crazy backers, customers and amateur or semi-professional drivers for the Bentley Motor Company of Cricklewood, north London.

But I am not alone in having always wondered just how good a driver Barnato really was. He cannot evidently have been any slouch behind the wheel of one of the great works team cars that he bankrolled. Winning the Le Mans 24-Hour race once might be the mark of a multi-zillionaire merely flexing financial muscle, and simultaneously striking lucky. That has happened before - and within living memory. But 'Babe' Barnato didn't just win Le Mans once - that first time in 1928 - he won it again in 1929 and then - glory be - returned to do it a third time - in 1930. You see the pattern emerging here? Such a record reflects not mere money. Neither does it reflect mere luck. Within the motor racing world, 'Babe' Barnato actually had a trump card up his sleeve - for I have it on first-hand authority that he really was a very fine racing driver, indeed... Bentley cars had first won Le Mans in 1924, with John Duff and Frank Clement co-driving the former's new 3-litre. The team was out of luck in 1925 - both cars retired - and in 1926 all three 3-litres failed - but in 1927 what had become 'the great race' was of course the stage on which 'The White House Crash' played out. 'Sammy' Davis, artist and sports editor of *The Autocar* was involved in that multiple accident in the 3-litre 'Old No 7' which he was co-driving with Dr JD Benjafield. He managed to extricate the badly damaged car from the multi-car melée, while team-mate Leslie Callingham had the macabre experience of seeing Davis and the third team member Duller searching the wreckage for his body...

Davis and Benjafield then set out upon an 18½-hour chase of the leading French Aries co-driven by Chassagne and Laly, battling against queasy-feeling steering caused - as a post-race strip-down revealed - by a cracked ball-joint. When the Aries blew its engine 'Old No 7' finally took the lead with less than an hour to run - and Bentley Motors had won its second Le Mans 24-Hour race. It was never again to fail at the Sarthe.

But if anything, the 1928 24-Hour race was even harder fought than the '27 edition. The Bentley works team then comprised a pair of new 4½-litre cars with 'Bobtail' bodywork, plus the year-old 4½ 'Old Mother Gun' in which Duff and Clement had won the 24-hour Grand Prix de Paris at Montlhéry in August 1927, only to retreat home with neither trophy nor prize money since the promoters went bankrupt during the event...

At Le Mans 1928 'Old Mother Gun' was shared by 'Babe' Barnato and his great Australian friend and like-minded all-round sportsman - and serial carouser - Bernard Rubin. Main opposition was the Brisson/Bloch 4.9-litre Stutz which led in the opening stages. 'Tim' Birkin in one of the new 4½s set a new lap record, but Barnato soon broke it, followed by Birkin in the Stutz, and then Frank Clement's Bentley 4½.

Birkin had a rear tyre puncture and wrap itself round the wheel, jamming it solid. He spent 1½ hours struggling to free it, only for the damaged rim to collapse at Arnage Corner as he struggled towards the pits. Bentley works team cars did not carry jacks as standard, the belief being that the cars could easily complete a Le Mans lap on a flat tyre, but the always impetuous Birkin admitted he was tearing back at 60mph when the wheel-collapse occurred. He then ran back to the pits to report the situation, whereupon co-driver Jean Chassagne hefted a jack under each arm, declared "*Maintenant, c'est a moi*" - "Now it's down to me" - and jogged three miles back to the stricken car to retrieve it. Total time lost - three hours.

The 4½-litres were all racking their chassis over a diagonal ridge which crossed the road near White House. This fatigued the Bentleys' chassis frames, and Clement's was the first to crack, the effect pulling off a water hose which emptied the radiator and cooked the engine. Both sister cars' frames would fail similarly. The leading Bentley was Barnato/Rubin's - No 4 - and with only minutes to run 'Babe' toured past the pits at 65-70mph, signalling thumb down - chassis broken, radiator leaking. The big Stutz was closing, though itself handicapped by lacking top gear. But Barnato nursed his car home, to that famous third win for Bentley Motors, first win upon his personal Le Mans debut. As a wry postscript to this punishing 24-Hours, the long-delayed Birkin/Chassagne team car left the lap record at 79.73mph last time round to hit their required minimum-distance to qualify as a finisher, then on the way home from Le Mans to Dieppe...its chassis finally cracked.

In 1929 five Bentleys contested Le Mans, and four finished first, second, third and fourth. Three of the Bentleys were works team entries, the Speed Six 6½-litre 'Old No 1' for Barnato/'Tim' Birkin, and two 4½s, including 'Old Mother Gun'. Entries for Birkin's two new supercharged 'Blower' cars were withdrawn at the last moment, and two additional 4½s had been substituted.

Facing three Stutzes, two Chryslers and a Du Pont, the Speed Six in Birkin's hands led from the start. Earl Howe would retire the 4½ he shared with Bernard Rubin due to magneto failure, but the surviving Bentley quartet simply rumbled round the Sarthe to their imperious, utterly dominant victory. WO Bentley always had a conservative approach to race strategy and he slowed his cars' pace so much that Jack Dunfee famously parked the 4½ in which he and Glen Kidston would eventually finish second, at the Hippodrome on the Mulsanne Straight to enjoy a refreshing drink. At 4pm that Sunday the Barnato/Birkin Speed Six No 1 boomed across the

“
He assured me that Barnato had been the greatest driver he had known - and the most like Jimmy Clark
”



Refuelling the winning Barnato/Rubin 'Old Mother Gun' in 1928. Below, Barnato (right) on the winning car with team-mate Birkin



finish line to win, its three sisters following in line astern. Score two for 'Babe'...

In 1930 - the hat-trick attempt for Barnato - he chose to co-drive the 1929-winning Speed Six 'Old No 1' - registered MT3464 - with Glen Kidston. The Bentley entry comprised three Speed Sixes backed by three of the new supercharged 4½-litre 'Blowers' which overheated on the poor-quality French fuel provided. It was decided to run them on pure Benzol which required raising the compression as a last-minute fix. Conversion time simply ran out for one of the cars - for Jack Dunfee/Beris Harcourt-Wood - which became a non-starter. So the 'Blowers' set out to lure the main rival Mercedes of Caracciola/Werner to destruction. Birkin lapped at 89.69mph in the process. But 'Babe' Barnato also did his share in the Speed Six, taking the lead on lap 36 and forcing Caracciola into engaging his car's supercharger excessively. Barnato pressed the German car relentlessly, and it broke. Caracciola told WO that the Mercedes race strategy had been based upon the 1929 Speed Six performance, so Bentley's conservative pace that year - contrasted by the real speed in this 1930 edition - really had laid the foundation for another triumph.

With the Mercedes removed, WO slowed his entire fleet to cruising pace. A rival Stutz caught fire, another broke its back axle. Birkin's hard-pressed 'Blower' broke a valve late-morning on Sunday, and Benjafield's 10-hour solo stint in the sister car ended when a piston collapsed. His co-driver Giulio Ramponi had fallen ill with a fever (including visions) and drove just one lap during the night - and that under protest. Clive Dunfee had crashed the Speed Six he was sharing with 'Sammy' Davis, which left Barnato and Kidston leading from Frank

Clement and Dick Watney in the only other Speed Six. And they toured home first and second for the fifth and - until 2003 - the last Bentley victory at Le Mans... and 'Babe' Barnato's third in just three drives in the world's most prestigious endurance motor race.

Back in the 1970s, I was talking to Walter Hassan, the former Bentley works team technician who had served as Barnato's riding mechanic, and who postwar became chief engineer of Coventry Climax. There he worked with Jim Clark and Team Lotus,

providing the Formula 1 V8 engines with which Jimmy won his two World Championship titles. And I was surprised when Wally assured me, level-eyed, that 'Babe' Barnato had in fact been the greatest driver talent he had known and - very significantly - the most like Jimmy Clark. "Despite being the company's financial backer he absolutely obeyed every pit signal he was given. He combined tremendous pace with terrific mechanical sympathy - and he could just make the car do whatever he wanted...". And for that capability, Wally Hassan plainly considered that 'Babe' Barnato - 'The Captain', the massive man who had inherited vast wealth from South African diamond-mining, who had shone at boxing and who kept wicket for Surrey County Cricket Club - had never received adequate credit. Well, 90 years ago - and in the 50th anniversary year of Jimmy Clark's tragic demise - 'Babe's' winning debut to launch his Le Mans hat-trick - and his true driving talent - is surely worth recalling. ☒

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

Gordon Cruickshank

*A concours Ford Zodiac, early Volkswagen Beetles and a £300 Rover 110.
It's amazing where the internet can lead...*

It was a spur of the moment choice. Being unexpectedly at a loose end on a sunny Sunday I googled classic car events. Well, you can't blame me if my scanning eye did a double-take at something called 'Crotchcooler Classic Car Sundays'. So I thought I'd investigate. Yes, I can hear the VW people among you saying 'Doesn't he know what it means?', and everyone else saying 'Do I want to know what this means?', so I'll get the name out of the way. 'Crotchcooler' is VW slang for front-wing vents on early Beetles that let fresh air into the cockpit. Okay?

Not that this was a Volkswagen gathering. In fact this one (there's one a month in summer) was British day, so it was frustrating that the MkII Jaguar was still at the menders. (Over-eager horn led to finding worn steering column bushes plus a rotten jacking point... You know how it goes.) Instead I parked the modern transport shamefacedly away from the classics, among choppers and low-riders with doughnut rear tyres and doughnut-eating bearded riders in leather and tattoos. One trike had a chromed V8 between the rider's legs and handlebars as long as tree pruners. You just couldn't steer round corners.

This isn't a concours; there are no classes, no judging, no competition, and no charge either. Just one rule - a 1990 cut-off. Just roll up, park your classic and sit in the sun talking engine rebuilds and lucky eBay finds. The British theme was fairly widely stretched: I don't recall Buick Electras or Lancia Fulvia Zagatos being a notable output of UK industry, but hey - no-one was judging, in either sense.

Whether a concours-prepped Zodiac with all the period accessories - visor, swivel spotlight, picnic trays - or a VW rat hunkered down on its whitewalls sporting rust as proud as show rosettes, there was space for all on this grassy slope. Must have been 300-plus cars at peak - low-riding Buicks, Allegro panda car, a row of TR6s and MG BGTs, a '57 Chevy Bel Air Sport, a gleaming Rover 110 bought from a breaker for £300.

Top spot for me was a '51 Buick sedan with a mesmerising accidental paint job. When the owner began sanding down the panels, the various old colours began breaking through the blue top coat in mysterious swirls - silver, white, metalflake purple - like some psychedelic sea creature. Now he thinks he'll stop sanding and lacquer it. Good choice.

And sure enough, Crotchcooler leader Nigel Lewis turns out to be a VW man who felt his scene was getting a bit insular and decided to broaden the metallic gene pool. "We're not a traditional club with a committee," he says, "we're simply a bunch of car nuts who just get on with it. It began with roving runs, but it was hard to find destinations with enough parking. But this is perfect." He waves around at the hub of the event, the Departure Lounge café (it's in wooded country near Alton, Hants) which boasts retro décor, signs and furnishings. "Room for hundreds of cars, and we only gather from

2pm so it's good for a leisurely Sunday. Our name? I just thought it would be memorable." It is, Nigel.

THERE'S A LOT OF TALK ABOUT WHAT STARTLING PRICE 2 VEV, one of the pair of Aston Martin DB4GT Zagatos once raced by John Ogier's team, will garner when it comes up for auction at Goodwood Festival of Speed. It reminds of a moment at a small supper party at a neighbour's house. Sitting beside me was an older lady who asked what I did. "Oh, my husband was a car enthusiast too," she responded. "He had an Aston Martin." I asked what type, thinking it most likely to be a DB6 or DBS. "I can't remember what sort it was," she said, "but I do remember the number plate. It was 1 VEV."

SLOW PROGRESS ON MY NEWEST GARAGE FILLER, THE SHARKNOSE BMW 635CSi. The good news is that I've been cheerfully using it and finding to my pleasure it all seems to work - electric seats, windows, air-con, even the power aerial. It rides stably if firmly, snarls on kick-down and pounces with that straight-six urgency that turbos just don't have. Low mileage doesn't always mean an absence of problems (this 1989 example had 74,000 miles and only one owner when I bought it last year) and in fact Barney Halse at Classic Heroes, a Sharknose specialist, advised me to downplay the miles and look for a car that had had its "first birthday" - when an enthusiast owner has tackled the first round of the usual trouble spots. But I was seduced by this one, so now it's squeezed into my garage and raring to go.

But I can't drive it. Or at least only slowly. I've mainly enjoyed it from the passenger seat as I haven't got the hand controls fully sorted.

Problem one was finding someone who could supply the type of hand control I like - the ideal set I have on the XF is no longer made. Luckily one of the long-term experts in mobility conversions, Steering Developments, sourced an equivalent, so I went up there to be measured up. We got a hand control planned - it's a single lever for throttle and brake - but production manager Grant Harbour pointed out that we'd need to cut away a trim panel for the control rod. More luck: on eBay I found some 635 interior trim so we were able to cut and fit a stand-in while the original can go back if wanted.

But I was fooled by the steering. My injuries from a car crash mean I have reduced arm strength and need significantly lightened steering. You can't imagine what a complex and expensive job that can be, so I was surprised to find I could turn the wheel of the BMW while parked. "Leave the steering, I'll manage," I boldly declared. But that was pre-hand controls so I couldn't try in motion. (My minder did offer to sit in the back and prod the pedals with a walking stick. I declined.) This is the risk cycle if you're disabled: can't test the car without hand controls; can't fit those without buying it, so you're £2-3000 in plus the whole cost of the car before you know if you like it.

My minder offered to sit in the back and prod the pedals with a walking stick. I declined

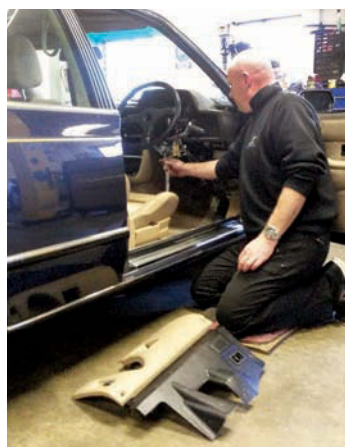


Crotchcooler gathering brought all sorts to Alton. Below, Sunday-best VW, psychedelic Buick. Bottom: trim out, levers in on BMW



Came the first short test. SD had installed just what I wanted on the control lever, so off I gingerly set. Boy, did that famous 3.5-litre motor feel quick under my right hand, even with an auto box. Around the industrial estate the steering felt heavy but manageable, so I had the car brought home. It was only on ranging farther afield that I found how much the assistance drops off with speed. Over 50mph I can hardly hold it straight. So it's back to Steering Developments who will have to tackle the unusual booster system that also pressurises the brakes. I hope there's an answer that doesn't give me Citroën-style on-off stoppers.

One other job I've done: when it takes you several minutes to get out of a car, the prospect of fire is that bit more alarming. And old cars have old wiring. So I've had both the MkII and the BMW fitted with a clever system called Firetrace. Instead of spray nozzles there's a long tube running wherever you want, around the engine bay and even behind the dash. It's pressurised from a hefty gas bottle, and the clever bit is that any flame quickly ruptures the tube, jetting extinguishant exactly where the fire is. It's automatic, self-policing, simple and neat. Makes me feel that bit safer.



LAST MONTH I MUSED ON A device that flashed cheery messages to other drivers. Now I've had a press release about another Kickstarter project, one which could inflame road rage to Mad Max levels. You say what you think into a tiny microphone and it spells out what you say on a rear display screen. The PR material illustrates messages saying 'Thanks!' and 'Have a nice day!'. Fat chance.

If I'd had one while negotiating the Bank Holiday A3 throttled by middle-lane dreamers... ☹

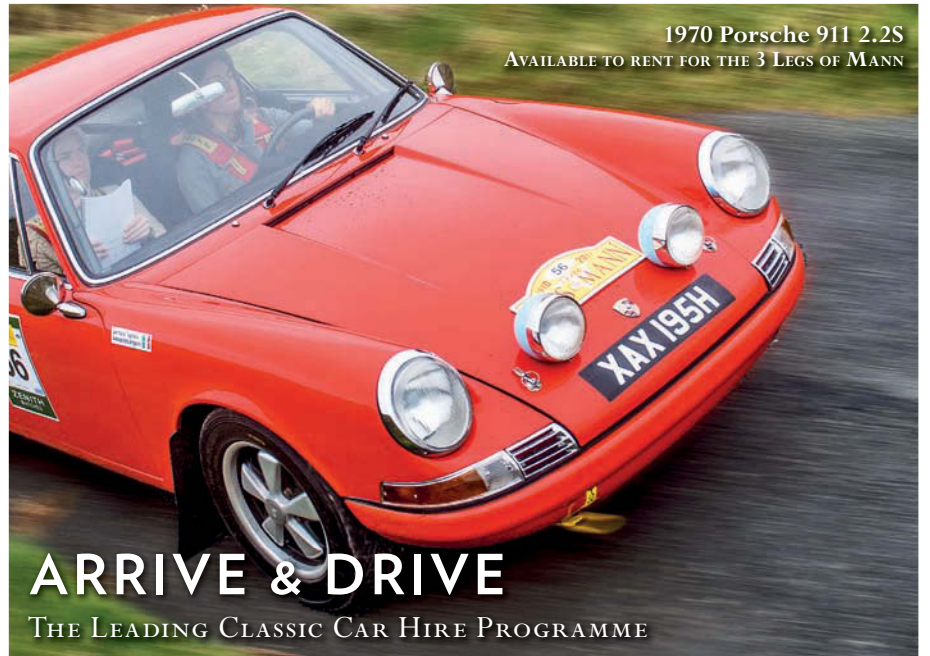
Long-time staffman Gordon Cruickshank learned his trade under Bill Boddy, and competes in historic events in his Jaguar Mk2 and BMW 635



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Setting history straight

As an owner and racer of Historic F3 and F2 Tecnos, at one time owning four, I devoured Doug Nye's piece on Ronnie Peterson's exploits in the famous SMOG F3 Tecno, which came up for auction at Monaco. What a car.

As I read further, however, I was dismayed by the inference from Doug that the Historic F3 racing group is a bunch of young hot-shoes sponsored by the Bank of Dad and that my very real Tecnos might have been "built last Tuesday". The HSCC HF3 Championship organising team, in which I play a modest 'marketing' role, is very rigorous in its demands for authenticity and period history, as are the organisers of the prestigious events that our series supports.

I agree that Peterson's Tecno should be out on track racing rather than being polished in some collection or museum. That is the sentiment of all those who compete in HF3, in period cars, where the bright yellow SMOG Tecno would be totally at home. Indeed, where else could or should it race again? What a shame Ronnie is not around to see it.

Peter Hamilton, Kelbrook, Lancs

Return to Curborough

Curborough Sprint Course celebrates 55 years of competition this year. To mark the occasion, on September 8 Shenstone & District CC is running a classic sprint meeting using the original course laid out in the traditional manner. The event will be a celebration of sprinting in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, with people being encouraged to dress in the period style of their car.

We would like to encourage anyone who competed at these times to either enter the sprint or else come along to support the event. If you used to compete, but have not done so for a while, to encourage you to take part we hope you will be able to purchase a sprint licence on the day for £5.

If you competed at Curborough in the past, please go to <https://curborough.co.uk/classic-sprint-2018/> and express your interest in competing or displaying your car.

Howard Cottrell, membership secretary, SDCC

Pleasure in the principality

I refer to the letter from Mr Richard Hennessy in the June edition. I remember the 1970 season very well. And yes, it was an exciting year with six very different cars and drivers winning Grands Prix, as Richard mentioned, but I would like to add one further car to his list - the Lotus 49C of Jochen Rindt in the most exciting finish to a Monaco Grand Prix I have ever witnessed.

Rindt had inherited second place and was 9sec behind Jack Brabham's BT33, but was catching him at a second per lap. It was very tense but I remember turning to a friend and saying that catching is one thing, overtaking

quite another. The words were hardly out of my mouth when Black Jack was forced off-line when arriving at Gasworks corner at the same time as Piers Courage. Taken by surprise, Jack slid gracefully into the barrier, gifting a surprised Jochen a hard-earned win.

I agree with Richard regarding the sports car scene; the new Porsche 917 and Ferrari 512 were brutish, but I feel that 1970 was the beginning of the end for top-class sports-prototype racing until the mid-1980s, which is where I believe the debate started.

Michael McNicholas, Bolton, Gr Manchester

Porsche spice

For someone who admits to consuming unhealthy quantities of classic car magazines, I was excited but not expecting to be surprised by your feature on the rebuilt Targa Florio-winning Porsche 911 RSR.

Over the years I had seen numerous pictures and magazine features about this magic race, but you managed to come up with wonderful, previously unseen pictures, together with a way of telling the story that could only be Andrew Frankel.

If you've ever been in, or watched, a classic 911 being driven with commitment, you know Herbie Müller is absolutely on it in the lovely picture where he is coming up the hill, front of the car bobbing as the fans look on.

As someone who is fortunate enough to own both a 1973 Carrera RS and an FIA-spec 911 S/T race car, I have more than a passing interest and passion for this era of the Porsche 911 and its development.

But still I had never heard how the improvised Group 5 running of the car at Monza came about, or seen pictures where the car was running magnesium centre-lock wheels. All in all a wonderful feature, and of course, a splendid rebuild by Maxted-Page!

The only thing left on the wish list would have been a test drive by Andrew - I love the way he describes how a car feels and reacts. Next time, perhaps...

Olle Victorin, via email

Brundle rumble

Much as I enjoy the musings of Doug Nye, I think it was a bit strong for him to refer to Martin Brundle as "a journeyman F1 driver", and by implication outstaying his welcome by cockpit-blocking.

Let's not forget that said 'journeyman' kept Ayrton Senna honest in Formula 3, stood on a Grand Prix podium nine times, won the world sports car title, ditto the Le Mans 24 Hours, and is arguably the most astute motor racing broadcaster of his generation.

Okay, Brundle didn't win a Grand Prix, but does that mean the likes of one-time F1 winners Pastor Maldonado or Olivier Panis were more worthy racing drivers?

I think not.

Peter Herbert, Moulton, Richmond, N Yorkshire

There's Johnny!

Just a small correction to the otherwise excellent article on Steve Nichols in the May 2018 issue. The 1980 Indianapolis 500-winning Chaparral 2K was driven by Johnny Rutherford, not Al Unser Sr.

Unser did indeed win the Indy 500 in a Chaparral, in 1978. He drove the 2K on its Indy debut in 1979, but dropped out with mechanical failure, and the car was then driven to victory at Indy by Rutherford in 1980. The photo on page 108 is clearly Johnny Rutherford (with his signature Texas star helmet).

Thanks for your outstanding journalism, and keep up the great work!

Norman Turnquist, Carlisle, NY, USA

A litany of shortcomings

As a regular reader of *Motor Sport* and an avid Formula 1 fan since the late 1960s, I must say that I'm concerned about the future. I'm not sure F1 can claim to be the pinnacle of motor sport any more. Here are a few reasons.

The depth of talent throughout the field has slipped with the continued nod to pay drivers. There are only three teams at best with a chance of winning. There is just not enough overtaking. There are too many questionable rule changes, for instance the grid penalties.

The halo ruins the beauty of the F1 car and looks to be a knee-jerk reaction that does not provide enough protection from debris. I felt Red Bull's screen looked to be a better solution. They should have done more homework before introducing the primitive-looking thing that's now being used.

Meanwhile, both Formula E and IndyCar are on the upswing, with more competitive racing and more drivers/teams having a chance to win. And please don't tell me that FE or Indy drivers couldn't compete in F1. That's rubbish. If anybody has watched Josef Newgarden, they'll know he's a true talent.

Steve Angell, Glenview, Illinois, USA

The life of Brian

Brian Henton might have needed Andrew Marriott's persuasion to get himself noticed (*Lunch*, May 2018), but he was modest about the role he played in getting F1 and other forms of motor racing on TV.

In 1977, his F1 team co-owner Don Shaw arranged for the BBC's documentary department to produce a 50-minute film, *Driving to Win*, which had some of the best racing footage seen on TV to that point. The BBC's sports mandarins noticed and - having been shown up by their own side, and also having seen ITV showing live F1 footage - finally crumbled in their resistance to showing motor racing (and its 'naughty' ads) on TV. It showed the first of its *Grand Prix* highlights programmes from Belgium 1978.

David Cole, Oakham, Rutland 📧

Clockwise from right: Phil Read nurses Norton home to win 1963 Thruxton 500 (with Brian Setchell); Tommy Bridewell celebrates, BSB 2015; Steve Hislop leads, BSB 2001



THRUXTON'S GREATEST HITS: PART 3

PERFORMANCE AND POISE

The British Superbike Championship is a byword for eye-catching average lap speeds – and never more so than at Thruxton

Motorcycle racing is not just part of the modern landscape at Thruxton - it played a pivotal role in the former World War II airfield's adoption for competition. The Southampton & District Motorcycle Club applied to the Auto Cycle Union for a racing permit in 1949 - and hosted the first ever race meeting at the track the following year, on Easter Monday.

This was not the Thruxton we know today, but a combination of perimeter roads and runways. Car meetings also took place in 1952 and 1953, after which the venue was left to the motorcycling community and remained in use until the mid 1960s. Notable race winners during that time included Mike Hailwood and Phil Read, while Triumph acknowledged its successes at the circuit by introducing the Thruxton Bonneville.

Since the British Automobile Club took over the venue in 1968, remoulding the layout into its current form around the old airfield perimeter, motorcycle racing has remained an annual staple. The Thruxton 500 was a popular two-rider endurance race, before and after the circuit update, and Norton set up a development base at the track, to help prepare its machines for the Isle of Man TT.

Thruxton has also been a regular haunt for one of modern motorcycle racing's greatest success stories - the British Superbike Championship.

Run in its current form since 1988, the BSB has produced a number of well-known champions - including Rob McElnea, John Reynolds, Jamie Whitham, Steve Hislop, Niall Mackenzie, Troy Bayliss, Shane Byrne and Josh Brookes - and generates the quickest two-wheeled racing on the UK mainland.

This is most spectacularly showcased at Thruxton, where at some points of the lap bikes reach maximum speeds of 180mph-plus. In 2017, pole-sitter Jake Dixon qualified his Kawasaki at an *average* speed of 114.53mph.

The BSB returns once again this summer, with Byrne seeking his first Thruxton victory since 2016 as he chases down a record-extending seventh title. Meanwhile, the circuit's 50th anniversary celebration in June will see demo runs from historic bikes including a 1972 John Player Norton as well as current BSB machines.



For more information about Thruxton's 50th Anniversary celebration visit www.thruxtonracing.co.uk

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MORE STARS SET FOR HALL OF FAME

Hill, Newey, Bell, Murray, McLaren and Porsche among the leading lights as Motor Sport prepares to pay tribute to bygone heroes

A galaxy of stars is confirmed to attend this year's Hall of Fame awards evening at Woodcote Park, Surrey, on June 4.

Joining us will be 1996 Formula 1 champion Damon Hill, a driver synonymous with the best of British motor racing. Hill is also a former president of the British Racing Drivers' Club and has also established an F1 media career.

Along with Hill, the popular, successful and charming Derek Bell - one of the greatest sports car drivers of all time - will be at the Hall of Fame, the double world champion and five-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner himself a 2016 Hall of Fame inductee.

And the familiar face of Karun Chandhok, who provides thoughtful analysis for Channel 4's Formula 1 coverage, and has contributed to

the pages of this magazine in the past, will also be attending. He raced in F1 in 2010 and has appeared at Le Mans along with a cameo in Formula E before his broadcasting career took off.

Legendary designers Gordon Murray and Adrian Newey will also be in attendance alongside Le Mans winner Richard Attwood and inaugural Formula E champion Nelson Piquet Jr.

You can witness history with the biggest names in motor racing as tickets and corporate packages are still available for the Hall of Fame, where you can enjoy a three-course meal and drinks in the picturesque surroundings of the Royal Automobile Club at Woodcote Park.

With the personalities will be a stunning

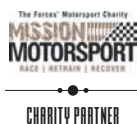
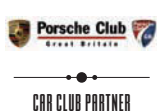
collection of road and race cars, some of which will run up the Woodcote Park hill.

A number of McLarens, such as the ferocious P1 GTR hypercar and the 570 GT4 will be displayed, while Porsche Club GB will bring a 356 Pre-A, a 911 SWB and a 924 Carrera GT - some of which will likewise be running up the course.

Charity partner Mission Motorsport will display its Jaguar F-type, dressed in a commemorative poppy vinyl wrap.

Celebrating the racing car category, nominees, the Porsche 917 and Jaguar XJR-9 headline the Hall of Fame display, complemented by a stunning Fantuzzi-bodied Ferrari and the Ford Cosworth RS500 - also nominated for the racing car category.

For more information about the Hall of Fame visit www.motorsportmagazine.com/hof2018



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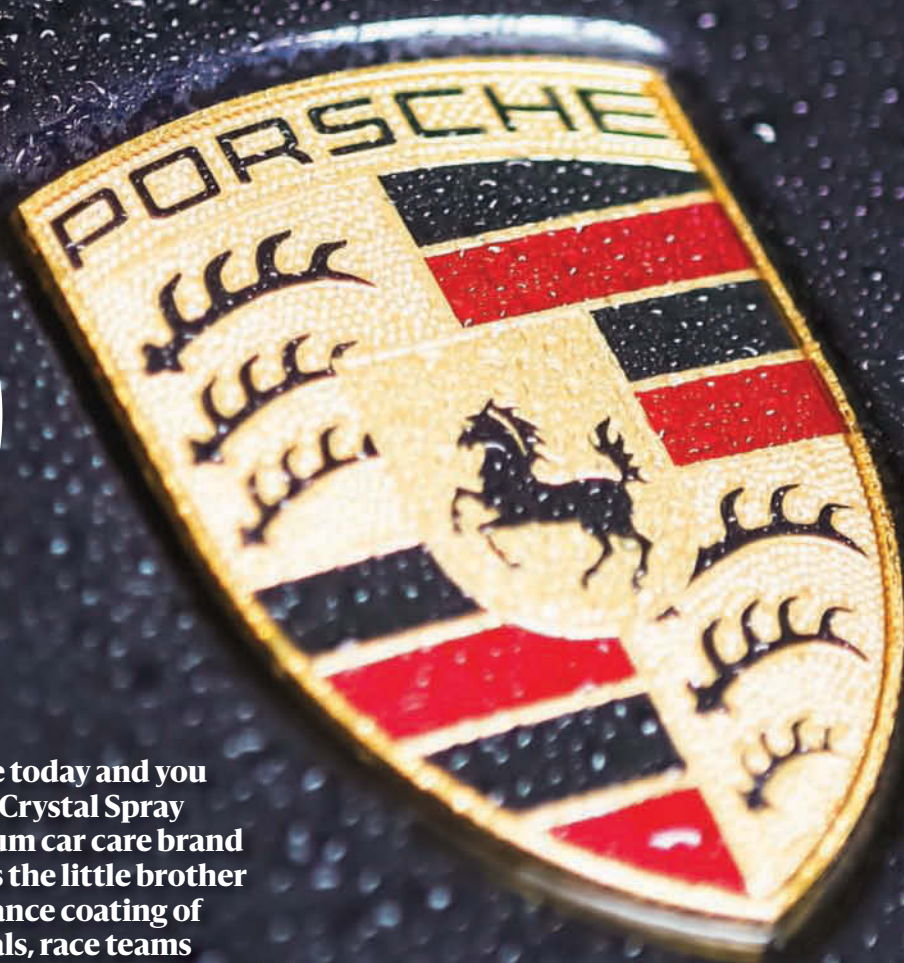
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Class of 2018, from left: Darren Turner; Sam Bird; Andy Priaulx; Alex Lynn; Harry Tincknell; James Calado; Mike Conway; Nick Tandy; Jonny Adam



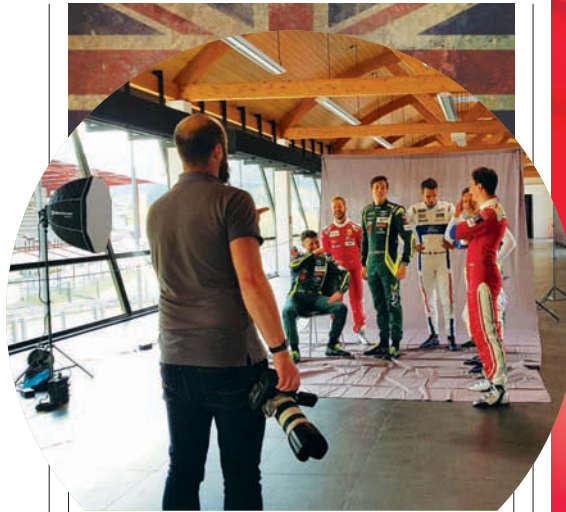
We band of

From the Bentley Boys to Bell and Brundle, British racers have always loved Le Mans.



brothers

And the class of 2018 looks like one of the strongest yet WRITER Jack Phillips



Picture perfect

Photographer Lyndon McNeil reveals how we managed to get the drivers together for a unique portrait

If you thought herding cats was difficult, trying getting seven racing drivers from several different teams all in the same room at the same time for a photograph.

When *Motor Sport* decided to shoot the British Le Mans contingent we anticipated problems. Teams generally don't like to have their drivers caught 'off message'. Pictures of them are usually closely choreographed by a tame photographer with the driver looking stiffly ahead and standing at an angle that best displays the team's sponsors.

Capturing them off duty, relaxed and interacting with one another was a big ask but crucial if we were to illustrate the sense of camaraderie that exists among our drivers. We decided that the first round at Spa would be the best chance of getting people together and begged a spare room from the WEC organisers in which to set up a makeshift studio. After initial scepticism the teams came on board and we managed to get groups of drivers in front of the camera. With a bit of coaxing they began interacting with one another, too. The final shot - pieced together from several group shots - gives a rare insight into the group and hopefully was worth the effort!

L

e Mans has changed in many ways over its 90-odd years, but the lure for Brits has endured on and off the track.

This year, should Manor's Chinese funds materialise, Britain will provide the grid with 28 drivers, more than any other country, bar host France. Shake out the amateurs, and there are more Brits being paid to be there than drivers from anywhere else.

There'll probably be more paying to be there, too, in the form of the tens of thousands-strong army of fans who cross the Channel every year to witness the world's most famous endurance race.

The last time a Briton stood on the top step of the overall podium was in 2015, when Nick Tandy helped Earl Bamber and the moonlighting Nico Hülkenberg take victory, with a thrilling night stint. This year could see another Brit win outright in the shape of Mike Conway, one of the drivers with Toyota's factory LMP1 team.

But, with the disappearance of works teams from the likes of Porsche, Peugeot and Audi in LMP1, for many fans it is the GTE-Pro class where the real thrills are to be had. Tandy agrees: "You can't beat an outright win," he says. "That's something I learned in 2015. [But] GTE-Pro will be the class of the race this year. I just hope it gets the attention it deserves."

The class will certainly be highlighting the cream of British racing talent - featuring no fewer than 11 drivers - and in many ways this year marks the coming of age for the contingent. From old hands to young hotshoes, British drivers form the backbone for each of the factories. And despite being

rivals on track it is clear that off it there is a camaraderie between them that harks back to the glory years of Le Mans, when the original Bentley Boys would band together to take on the best the continent could offer.

The class of 2018 features a full two decades-worth of British talent: the now 44-year-old Darren Turner made his Le Mans debut when his young team-mate, 24-year-old Alex Lynn, was still in primary school.

Lynn is the most recent sports car convert with GP2 race-winning pedigree. And he's unmistakably proud to have done so. "Aston Martin was always a brand I thought 'that's a bit of me' about. I'm honoured and loving every minute."

Last year a Sebring winner with Wayne Taylor Racing and Le Mans LMP2 polesitter with G-Drive, he's taken to sports cars with impressive speed and showed exactly why he was so close to the Formula 1 grid.

Then comes Ford's Harry Tincknell, 26 but something of an old hand now. He jumped off the single-seater ladder younger than most under the guidance of one of Britain's greatest Le Mans drivers in recent years. "Having Allan McNish behind me opened the idea to me to move over to endurance racing early," he says.

That was 2014, the year he and Jota won the LMP2 class at Le Mans on his debut.

Ferrari's James Calado, 28, and Sam Bird, 31, have also both been around the GT ranks since 2014 ever since they beat Jérôme D'Ambrosio in a Ferrari shootout. "It's quite unusual to have two Brits in an Italian team," points out Calado.

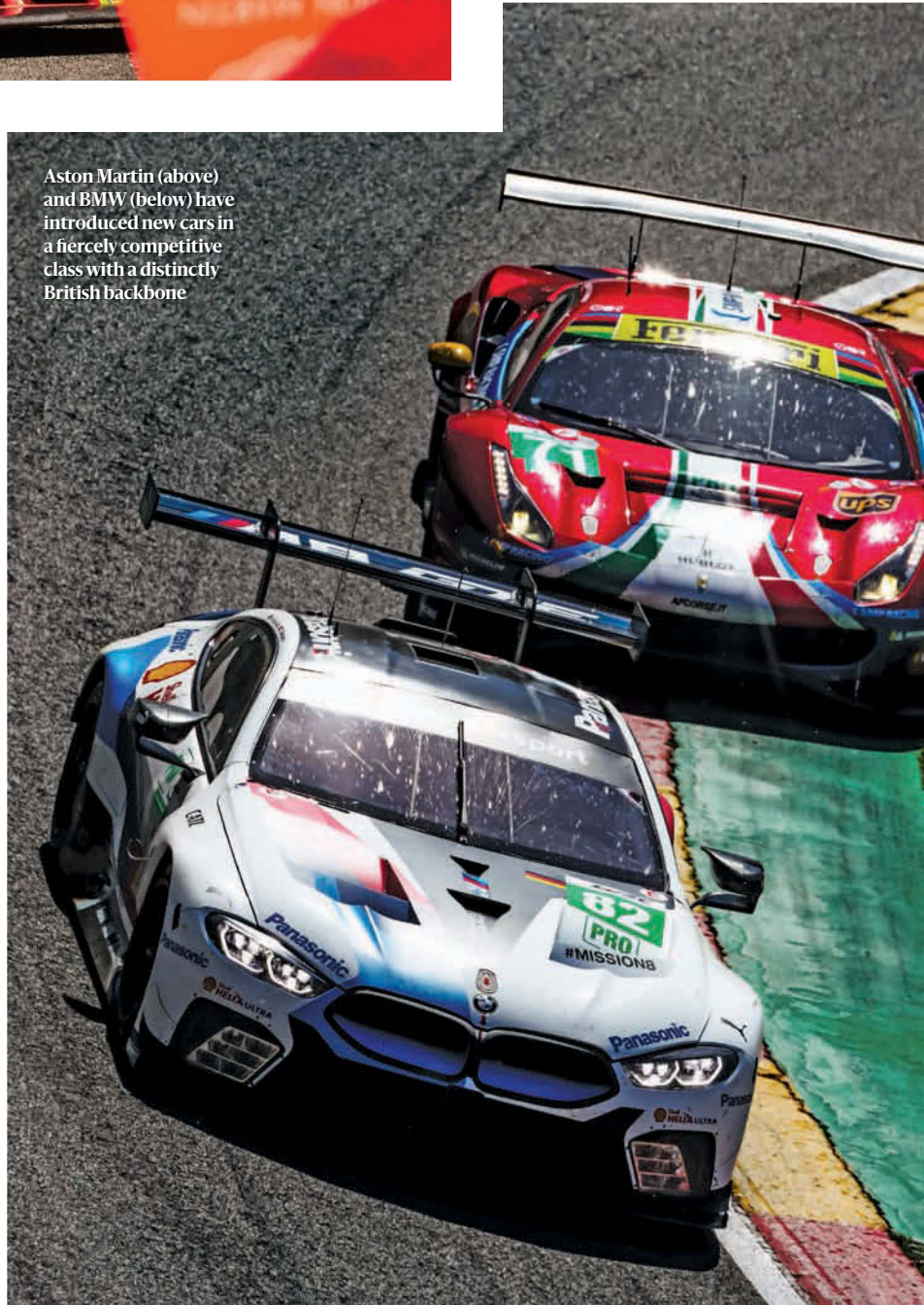
"James and I get on like a house on fire," says Bird. "He's a good mate." Two best-buddy Brits at Ferrari? Mon ami mate mkII.

Bird's old friend, his former Formula 3 team-mate to be exact, Alex Sims, 30, will ☐



Aston Martin (above) and BMW (below) have introduced new cars in a fiercely competitive class with a distinctly British backbone

“GTE-Pro will be the class of the race this year. I just hope it gets the attention it deserves”





Brits abroad: fans celebrate Jaguar's win at Le Mans in 1988

be in a new BMW M8 for Le Mans, too.

Sims, now in his fifth season with BMW, admits this all felt a long way off when they were all trying to make a name for themselves. "To be on the same grid with them all again, alongside the absolute greats of the GT racing world, is pretty cool. I definitely didn't think that would be the case. I was scrabbling around trying to work out where my career would take me, not quite expecting to achieve quite honestly what I have done to date. I'm very, very proud of it, and feel very lucky."

Among the greats Sims refers to are some decorated Brits. Tandy is an outright Le Mans winner and a man who's won every endurance race that matters. Turner has won Le Mans three times, Oliver Gavin five with Corvette. Andy Priaulx of Ford won three World Touring Car Championships on the trot, four if you include its ETCC forerunner. No driver has won more British GT races than double

champion Jonny Adam, who also shared that stunning Le Mans victory last year for Aston. Ford's Richard Westbrook, meanwhile, has two Le Mans podiums and a GT2 championship.

Combined, these drivers are the next Martin Brundle, Andy Wallaces, Derek Bells, Brian Redmans, Vic Elford, Richard Attwoods, Ivor Buebs and Woolf Barnatos. Revered Le Mans winners, all of whom are personalities, full of stories and engaging conversations.

THEMES SOON EMERGE WHEN YOU consider the stories of how the three 20-somethings, four 30-somethings and four 40-somethings got to taking over GTE-Pro, and it is cause for optimism about the future. For the younger crop of the batch, the move to sports cars came as a result of them deciding that F1 was not the only game in town.

For the more experienced likes of Tandy

and Turner the mindset was different. For them it was a case of making a career out of driving, not aiming for F1. That came quickly for both, Tandy coming straight out of F3: "I was very lucky in that I had a chance to go professional with Porsche and I was being paid to race in my second year out of F3.

"I wasn't aiming to be an F1 or NASCAR driver, just a professional. I'm sure there are guys that wish they hadn't spent so much time and other people's money trying to chase F1. But you can't look back with regrets; that kept me going when it looked like I might have stopped racing."

There is one outlier at Le Mans in the manufacturer seats, as Toyota's Conway is the only Brit chasing outright LMP1 victory for a factory now that Anthony Davidson has been moved aside for Fernando Alonso. Conway was late to the all-day and all-night party, instead chasing full-time IndyCar drives in the



Le Mans 24 Hours Class of 2018



Friends reunited

Former McLaren team-mates go head to head

Two of the most popular Grand Prix drivers in recent years will both be making their Le Mans debuts this year - Fernando Alonso and Jenson Button.

Alonso's Le Mans ambitions have long been grabbing headlines, a line that threads back to when the Spaniard waved the Tricolore back in 2014. Button's connection has been more one of answering questions of Le Mans only when asked ahead of his impending retirement - forced by Stoffel Vandoorne. It hadn't previously been on his radar.

"I was team-mates with him for a few years," Alonso said recently, "and I raced with him for 16 years. He was not willing to try different series outside of Formula 1 before."

Button also said last year that he would only consider the top P1 class at Le Mans, nothing else. But while Alonso will be a good bet for outright glory this year in the factory Toyota, all things being equal Button will be aiming for a podium with Russian squad SMP Racing alongside former F1 racer Vitaly Petrov and Mikhail Aleshin.

His chances of that look slim, probably needing two of the faster LMP1 cars - Toyota and top privateer Rebellion Racing - to hit trouble, such is their advantage. But it would need his own Dallara-built, AER-powered LMP1 to navigate the 24 hours without issue. And historically, that powerplant can prove temperamental.

Both Alonso and Button have been putting the yards in to prepare for the tricky traffic, Alonso racing and running well at Daytona as well as starting his full-time competitive endurance career at Spa last month with victory. Button meanwhile has opted for a season of Super GT in Japan and opened his account with a second-place finish.

Whatever the result, it'll be fascinating to see how two of F1's proper personalities manage what will feel like the longest week of their racing lives.

States, becoming a road-course ringer and eventually switching to sports cars full time.

"Once I had tried the sports car scene in 2013, because nothing was going on for me in Indy, it was the best decision I've made."

Now he is regularly one of the fastest drivers in LMP1, at ease with that position and relaxed. Yet the steel remains, possibly a result of that hard life of chasing and working for seats. Perhaps the combination of steely composure is the very reason he's so good in a prototype.

Like so many sports car drivers, and latterly F1 drivers, he is embracing the chance to drive fast and drive often.

"It opened my eyes up. There are sports cars all over the world and it's been great to be able to jump in and out of different cars. I wish I had done it earlier, to be honest. I always focused on one thing but doing the different disciplines has been great for my ☑



skills as a driver. It gives you extra sections in your library to call on, different experiences to use in other things.”

It's catching, too, this versatility, as F1 drivers crop up in races away from the usual places to build their own experiences. Alonso, the man whose name will be the first written by the headline-writer's pen regardless of result this year at Le Mans, is case in point. He is reveling in a new-found varied diet of racing, something that has long been the norm for pros outside of F1, explains Turner.

“You drive whatever you are given. Some drive one thing because that is the opportunity they have been given. It has been healthy seeing the big names try different things, it's mixed things up a bit and shown that you don't need to be pigeon-holed. If you can drive you can drive; the bit you do - push the pedals, turn the steering wheel - is all the same. It's not suddenly a different animal, it's just at a different speed or weighs a different amount.”

THERE IS ONE THING TO GET USED TO IN sports cars in that you're no longer alone. Often the biggest obstacle or single-seater racers to overcome is leaving the single-seater

team environment, rather than wanting to hold everything back from your team-mate to make your team-mate look rubbish. That was always a bit weird to me.”

“Alex doesn't do himself justice,” counters Lynn “He's an extremely talented guy and had the ability to go all the way. Sports car racing has a different mentality, something that I like. I like being involved with two other drivers and you'd sacrifice anything for the car and to help your team-mates.”

But it takes some getting used to and Calado admits he didn't get it at first. “I do now though and I love it. It's nice to come in, have a coffee and watch your team-mate.”

Strangely, those stints spent in the garage when team-mates are in the car probably provided some of the group's first live experiences of watching cars lapping Le Mans. Although that was not the case for Bird: “I watched it and went as a kid, I even did it as my French project one year!”

Conway's impressions came mainly via friends “going for the parties” and presumably the Heineken and ‘steaks américains’.

“My first time there was when I raced in 2013,” he admits. “I'd watched it a few times

I think from a fan point of view there seems more even the French. It's like a second home race for us.”

WHO WILL BE BRINGING THE TROPHY from home to home is almost impossible to call. Tandy can approach the race differently owing to his IMSA commitments taking priority. “We're just at Le Mans to win; we're on summer break. We don't care about fourth, let's put it that way. We'd rather break the car than bag points.”

That Porsche has proven itself to be fast, and the sweetest-sounding of all. But that counts for nothing at Le Mans.

Priaux and Tincknell are in a Ford GTE that is in its third (and possibly final) season of competition, so it is a known quantity. It proved in 2016 it can win, too. Tincknell is in no doubt about their chances: “For me and Andy, this is our best chance to win it and go one better than last year.”

The first round of the ‘superseason’ at Spa proved those two cars to be the better bets, with the newer cars of Aston and BMW, plus the updated 488, playing catch-up.

Whoever does come out on top will know



“Until you're involved in the Le Mans side of the sport you don't realise how much it means”

selfishness at the door to benefit the team. You'll have to make do with a potentially uncomfortable seat, talk to your team-mates and spend a lot of time together.

It's the very reason Alonso went to race in the midfield at Daytona in January, not necessarily to win but as a fact-finding mission to learn what that's like. It's something Jenson Button is learning about in Japan's Super GT ahead of his own Le Mans debut with privateer SMP Racing.

Yet Sims, for one, found the team mentality easy to switch into. “In single-seaters I felt a little out of place. I found my home in GTs, rather than having to adapt too much away from what I wanted to be like. I enjoy the fact that you've got people you genuinely want to help and they want to help you. It's a proper

but you never really know until you actually go and do it. That's when you know and you experience what it's all about. It's like a drug, it drags you back to win it. Every year you forget how long it is.

“It only really felt a big deal when I first got out on track. Then I was like: ‘Oh, hell. This is a pretty cool track’,” he adds still seemingly in disbelief.

Tandy: “Until you're involved in the Le Mans side of the sport you don't really realise just how much it means across the industry - from manufacturers to fans.

“You feel the presence of the Brits. You feel it on the way down there, you get on the train or ferry and the cars are all stickered up with Le Mans stuff and it's great. Then you get there and most of the people you speak to are Brits.

they've had to work for it, for rarely has it been so difficult or the standard so high to claim ‘just’ a class win. They'll be writing their names in the history books or bumping their names further up the leaderboard of Brits at Le Mans.

The lasting impression is that Le Mans means everything to them all, regardless of how they got there or the disappointments of missing out on F1. This will be the biggest win of their careers.

It's not a Brits benefit at Le Mans, of course, but the thousands in the tribunes could well be cheering a Brit onto the top step in the two biggest categories at Le Mans this year. And if not, there's always a second chance in this ‘superseason’. But, as Lynn points out, it will be a long 12 months to wait. ☑

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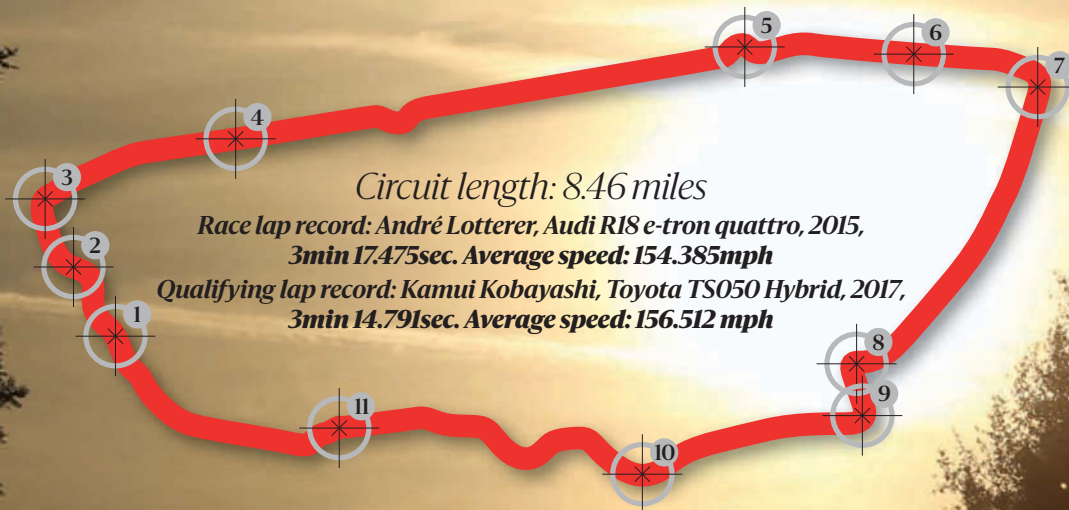
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Alex Brundle, LMP1 driver with CEFC TRSM Racing and podium finisher in 2017, explains the nuances of nailing a lap of Le Mans.

Unlocking the circuit's secrets



1. DUNLOP ENTRY

The kink into the first chicane is often underestimated. It's quite tricky in anything other than perfect conditions. It's flat, but as you go to apply the brakes for the first left hand of Dunlop you've got to make sure you're in a straight line. Almost every year there's a big accident as someone loses it on the brakes on the right-hand side. It's a little bit like at Monaco's Nouvelle Chicane in that a small moment turns into a big one.

2. DUNLOP EXIT

You can save 0.5sec on the kerbs, but that's a negotiation with your engineer about how much you'll cut in qualifying/race trims. There's some space on the exit now, unfortunately - I'd like the challenge to return. The hybrids will take off like a scalded cat over the hill and you'll often find one up your inside, like the crash Allan McNish had in 2013. You try and cut back inside and beat them to the apex of the long right-hander. There's a bump where the Bugatti circuit goes off right, which the old cars would jump, now the cars Hoover over it.

3. TERTRE ROUGE

This is a great corner. The key is to be accurate on the right-hand kerb. The car will just hop a bit if you take a bit too much, and you will take more of the divots on the outside. If you miss the apex then you start getting into all of the rain gullies on the outside. The apex speed jumped massively through there between the new-spec and the old-spec P2 cars. In modern LMP1 cars it's almost a kink now. It's possible to lose it on the kerb and crash halfway down the Mulsanne because the straight subtly keeps turning, which can really catch you out in the wet. Where the track joins the open road there is a bump and it's easy to drop it there in the wet.



4. MULSANNE

If there's anything to talk about you can get on the radio, usually to the first chicane because the radios can be a bit rubbish. You're also looking down the road judging which car you're going to catch where and whether you can save any fuel. If I'm going to meet a GT in the first chicane and there's nothing I can do about it, instead of catching him in the braking zone I will lift and coast for 100 metres and let him go through the apex. Then I've saved fuel, I've caught him and passed him on the exit and I've lost no time.



5. CHICANE 2

Both chicanes are pretty similar. You used to have to be really patient because the grip wasn't there to turn through the mid-corner. Now you can carry a bit of aero through and actually push really hard through the middle. They're pretty fun, you have to be careful because both exit kerbs have a flat end so if you catch one of those you can take the splitter off or cause a puncture. If you get wide you're going off because they get so grubby on the outside.

6. MULSANNE KINKS

There's two kinks. The first is the old kink that used to be the scary one when you were flat out in a Group C car. I've had a couple of quite big moments in there in wet and drying conditions. You come out of the second chicane on line and if you have to pass a GT around the outside of the kink it's easy to drop it if you're not careful because the road crests away.

7. MULSANNE CORNER

There are a couple of bumps near the apex to miss. Get the braking and line right and there's time to be gained on the entry, which can make or break the lap. Hooking up the apex is really, really difficult because you've been going so quick and it feels like threading the eye of the needle because all of a sudden you've got no downforce. You have to get turn-in absolutely right or the front just slides past the apex. There's some pavement you can go up and down without rubbing the plank, which takes a couple of laps to get right in practice. You get a pace advantage at no reliability cost.

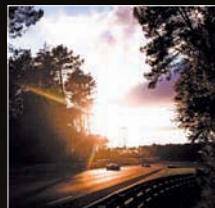


8. INDIANAPOLIS

Everybody boasts about how quick they've gone through the first part but it's irrelevant. What matters is where you lifted off. You need to hook up the left-hand apex because the kerb is really nasty. There's no space on the outside if you've turned in too early, either. Often the rears lock because you're going down several gears. The old P2s would take the first part flat and be a little bit flighty but you turn up a lot quicker now so there's a lot more braking to do.

9. ARNAGE

It's a longer distance than you think down to Arnage, especially if you've not got that much power. It doesn't look like a long distance in relation to Le Mans but if you put that straight at Silverstone, it might be the distance between Luffield and Copse. You have to make sure you get a good exit and then on the left-hand side for Arnage.



9. ARNAGE

They've opened up the exit so you can take a little bit more speed in and lean on the car through the middle. It's not quite as frustrating as it used to be but it's still frustrating. The braking is a real misery, it's ridiculous. You can yourself into thinking you're getting this amazing exit every time. It's another place where the hybrids just obliterate you. They get a chunk of hybrid boost out of Indy and then another chunk out of Arnage.

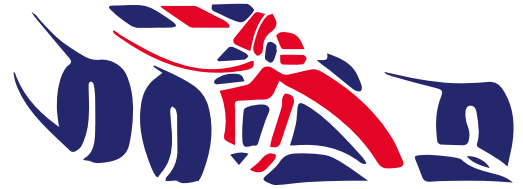
10. PORSCHE CURVES

Get stuck behind a GT and it's 3sec down the drain. Around the outside in the first right is sketchy, you can go around the outside of Karting. Or, you can beat them through the left and drill them before Maison Blanche. The first right's the best corner on the track - it progresses most and you'll end up flat. The next right is the most downforce you will feel anywhere in the world. The next left is very awkward and the next little chicane is dead tricky with traffic. Sometimes you can get a sleepy GT driver cutting you to the apex, or a P1 driver that wants all of the road. Everybody has to respect each other; it's a tricky area.

11. FORD CHICANE

The pitlane is the braking point. It's all about taking the kerbs nicely. You've got to make sure you get on the gas because it's a longer distance than you think between the two Ford chicanes. It's a place where the car really feels pretty awkward. If you drop it in the first chicane there's every chance that you're going to take the front off the car clattering one of those kerbs. Sometimes the GTs are faster than you. You're frightening them out of the way if you try go around the outside but that's a last-hour-of-the-race job. Then you head off for another lap...

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Sarthe circular road

Once a year, over a long weekend in June, a north-western French city is transformed into a British suburb. It's a tradition that stretches back several generations... and with good reason

WRITER Simon Arron


It was a tiny classified advertisement tucked away in a copy of *Motoring News*. The key points? Coach trip, Manchester, £17.50 and Le Mans 24 Hours. Hard to believe 40

years have passed since I booked my place. At the time it felt like the most exciting thing in the history of the world, probably because I still had a great deal to learn about the world: a trip abroad with school-mate Phil, parental involvement limited to the preparation of sandwiches and provision of a few francs... and one of the world's most famous races at the far end. In truth, we were simply signing up to a tradition that had spanned the ages - and has continued in that vein ever since.

We doubted anyone else in the Manchester

area could possibly have been as interested as we were in Le Mans, but our coach - organised by Seemore Travel, a long-defunct business based in Sale, Cheshire - was full.

Of the 250,000-plus spectators that attend the 24 Hours nowadays, how many are British? I've seen quoted claims of 50,000 to 80,000, but who counts? The number is well into five figures, as was very likely the case back then. Where else in the world is it possible to find a traffic jam comprising only Caterham Sevens?

IN 1978 WE WATCHED FROM THE AREA around The Esses, then very different from the way it is now: the track passed beneath the Dunlop Bridge, then continued straight before dipping into a flowing left-right preceding the short run to Tertre Rouge. At the turn's exit, it was more or less possible to lean on the earth bank that lined the circuit, the run-off area 



Having placed fifth one year earlier, de Cadenet and Craft were delayed by assorted problems in 1978 and finished a distant 15th

could be measured in millimetres and there was no debris fencing. Across the track there was a British enclave on an earth bank that faced oncoming cars - and a few hours into the race we made that our base. There were pockets of UK interest on the entry list, principally the de Cadenet-Lola T380S of Alain de Cadenet/Chris Craft, which had finished fifth overall the previous season. Every time the car appeared over the crest beneath the Dunlop Bridge, the Union Flags around us would go into overdrive. And every lap, almost without fail, a fire-resistant glove would rise from the steering wheel in acknowledgement.

Hampered by a succession of problems, the de Cadenet trailed home 15th. The highest-placed British entry was Charles Ivey Racing's Porsche 911 RSR, 14th overall and second in class in the hands of Gordon Spice, Larry Perkins and American John Rulon-Miller. Perkins commuted to the race on a large trail bike, something I know only because he was in the queue alongside our coach, waiting to board the return ferry. If memory serves, he was wearing the same crash helmet - distinctive in the green and gold of his native Australia, plus smattering of battle scars and deceased flies - that he'd used in the race. It was a pleasing footnote at the end of a marvellous adventure during which we'd remained trackside throughout.

Seamore had offered the use of its coach as a dormitory, but that would have been against the spirit of the whole enterprise. Neither of us had properly warm clothing - and it was extremely cold beyond sunset - but we drew comfort from the atmosphere, the constant, varied sound of internal combustion passing

but a few metres away, and occasional cups of coffee we could just about afford. And I also learned a valuable lesson: I'd been looking forward to some night-time photography with my dad's hand-me-down Pentax Spotmatic. It hadn't occurred, however, that light-trail shots would require long exposures that relied on something rather steadier than my hands...

That apart the weekend was everything for which we'd hoped - and then some. Little could I have imagined that I'd be back five years later, this time to report the race for the newspaper in which I'd originally seen the advert.

I have returned many more times since.

BRITAIN'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH LE MANS dates back to the race's dawn, as the Grand Prix d'Endurance de 24 Heures in 1923. The works Bentley 3-litre Sport of Frank Clement and Canadian John Duff finished fourth in a field of 33 - a hint of things to come. The pair won outright the following year - and Bentley then took four straight wins from 1927-1930. During this period, Woolf Barnato became the first driver to score three consecutive victories - a feat several drivers have since matched, though only Tom Kristensen has beaten it (they were Barnato's only Le Mans starts, so he had a 100 per cent strike rate).

As a petrol-headed schoolboy, I'd endeavoured to find out more about the Bentley story - but my own perceptions perhaps differed from the norm. Were we looking at history through British Racing Green-tinted spectacles? The company's bygone successes seemed equal parts endeavour and heroism, yet also seemed somewhat elitist. Its exploits might have

enhanced Britain's reputation as a racing nation, but could they have been more effective still if they had drawn from a broader talent pool? We'll never know.

UK drivers won again in 1931 following the withdrawal of the works Bentleys, Earl Howe and Henry Birkin giving the Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 the first of four straight victories, but the race wouldn't rediscover its full British flavour until the 1950s, courtesy of Jaguar and, the win that's most often overlooked due to its singularity, Aston Martin in 1959 (the last outright success for a British car in traditional racing green). JW Automotive's future victories would be achieved in Gulf's two-tone, while Jaguar's full-scale return in 1986 was cloaked behind a commercial smokescreen - a purple haze, if you like. The Cat's return intensified interest north of Calais, particularly when the marque won again in 1988 and 1990, but in truth the event's pilgrimage status was already established - not so much a motor race as a festival with a competitive core.

It's the periphery, the stuff you see en route to and from (or at) the circuit that gives Le Mans its distinctive flavour. An edgy cocktail of tension and exuberance, the pre-start parades are like nothing else to the east of the Atlantic - though the Indy 500 has parallel ambience. And while you can take spectators out of Britain, the reverse isn't necessarily true. One year, when a familiar face was strolling along the grid, most of the pit straight grandstand launched into a chorus of, "One Derek Bell, there's only one Derek Bell..." It didn't matter whether they'd have supported Liverpool or Everton, Arsenal or Spurs on other sporting weekends; here they were unified by respect.

THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS SO HARMONIOUS. 'Mad Friday', when fans gather alongside the Hunaudières Straight, is an acquired taste. For the most part it is good natured, but I'm also aware of drivers who have felt seriously intimidated because they didn't fancy playing wheelspin games to amuse the mob. If you want to tour most of the track peacefully on a Friday, your best bet is a pushbike. Even on one of those, the section from Mulsanne Corner to Arnage feels incredibly narrow: if that's the sensation at 20mph, imagine how it must be at the best part of 200.

A few years ago I was strolling during the early hours through the Race Village - home to many a bar and *frîterie* - when I spotted a silver-haired gent weaving his way past amiably drunken Danes on a clapped-out bike. He was pausing from time to time to take in the atmosphere and savouring every second - the kind of thing that comes naturally to all visitors. As I got closer, I realised it was former Grand Prix driver Philippe Alliot, pole-sitter for Peugeot at Le Mans in 1993, three times a podium finisher and now just an anonymous bystander.

You don't see that kind of thing anywhere else in our sport. There really isn't another race quite like this. ☐

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A blue Peugeot 908 HDI race car is shown driving on a wet track during a rainstorm. The car is in the foreground, moving towards the right. The background is blurred, showing a grandstand and other parts of the track. The car has 'PEUGEOT' on the front, 'TOTAL' on the side, and 'QUARTZ' on the front fender. The number '8' is visible on the side. The car's headlights are on, and there is a significant amount of water spray on the track.

*A Le Mans 24 Hours
winner as recently as
2009, the Peugeot 908
HDI is now eligible
for historic combat.
But how will it cope in
monsoon conditions?*

WRITER Dickie Meaden
PHOTOGRAPHER Lyndon McNeil

**TORRENTIAL.
BIBLICAL.
INCESSANT RAIN...**

O

f all the conditions in which to drive one of Peugeot Sport's precious and remarkable 908 HDi FAP LMP1 cars, this is the stuff of nightmares. The only thing worse than having your first taste of one of the fastest Le Mans prototypes in appalling conditions is not having that first taste at all. Distressingly, if the relentless rain doesn't abate that's exactly how today will play out...

We're present at the Silverstone Classic media test day - a gathering of cars that reflects the full breadth of the world's biggest historic race meeting. The leaden sky might be a foreboding shade of grey, but the impressive 'Wing' pit building is a riot of colour - a reflection of the vibrant historic racing scene.

But hang on a minute. A Peugeot 908? Surely that's still modern, right? Well, yes and no. Until last year it was an iconic but obsolete race car residing in a Peugeot Sport's collection - an heirloom to be dusted off occasionally and prepped for a run at Goodwood Festival of Speed, but very much retired from racing, as were all the cars from that epic Noughties era.

All that changed when Masters Historic Racing took the bold and visionary step of creating a championship for Le Mans-eligible GTs and prototypes from 1995-2012. Called Masters Endurance Legends, the series enjoyed a successful debut race late last year and MEL is now in the throes of its first full season. On Saturday July 21 it will enjoy top billing as Silverstone Classic's feature event, when a spectacular grid of machines will race into the dusk.

It seems remarkable that Peugeot would wish to sell off any of its family silver, but when Peugeot Sport had to relocate from its base at Vélizy, the decision was taken to sell a few cars to free up some storage space. Naturally the 2009 Le Mans winner wasn't among those offered for sale, but this car - 908 no09 - was one that Peugeot was willing to let go.

It might not have a Le Mans win to its name, but #09 has enjoyed plenty of success, winning the Petit Le Mans and Sebring 12 Hours in 2009. It also came agonisingly close to winning Le Mans in 2010, a con-rod failure forcing its retirement while chasing down the leading Audi with just three hours of the race remaining. It's a bona fide piece of French motor sport history and the undisputed star of this Silverstone test day.

Chassis 09 is one of a number of 908s run under the Peugeot Sport Classique banner by Chamberlain Synergy. A UK-based outfit with a strong reputation for its work with historic F1 cars and Group C racers, Chamberlain Synergy Motorsport is run by multiple historic F1 and Group C champion Bob Berridge.

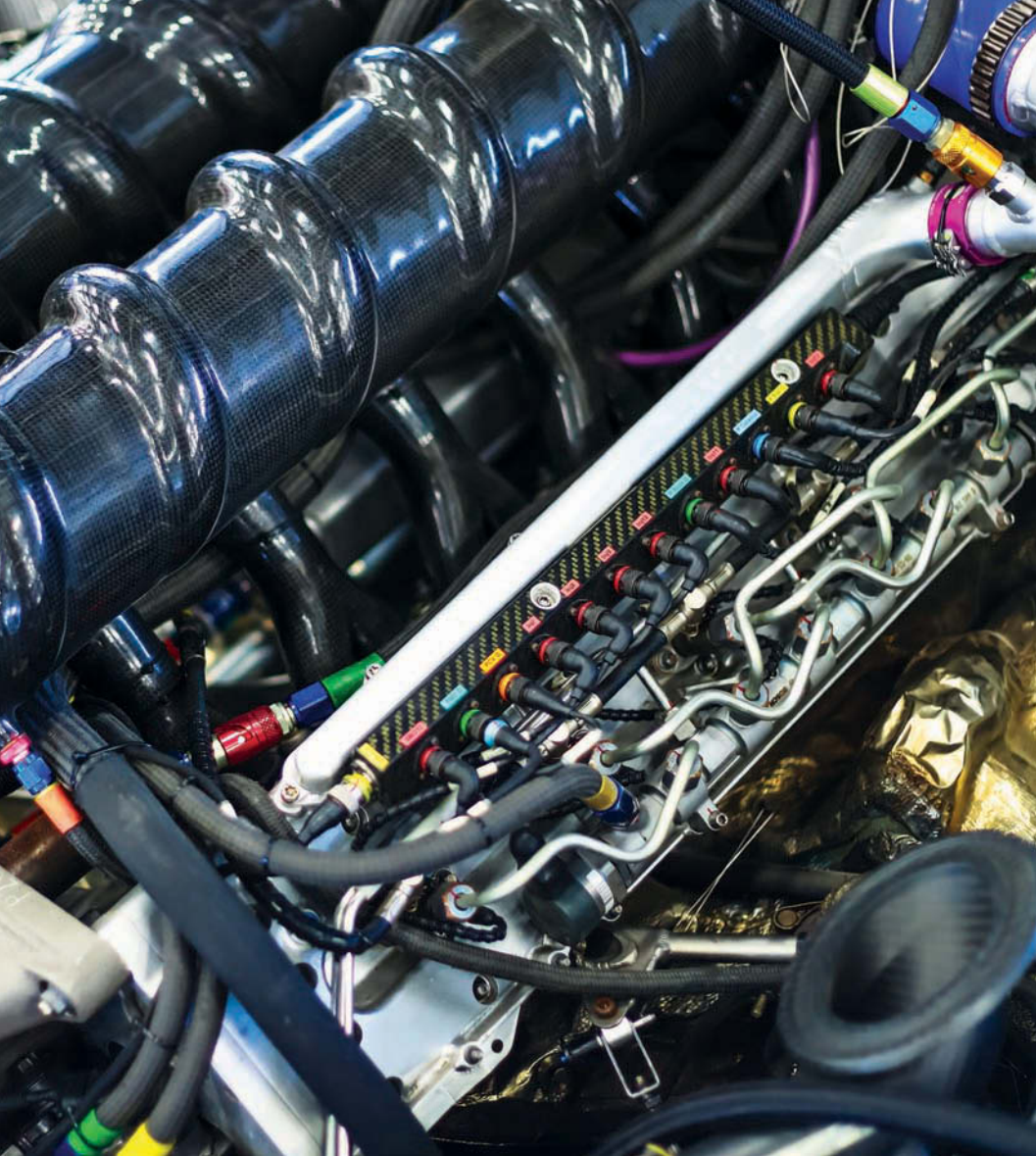
It's this knowledge of top-flight Le Mans machinery that forged the partnership between Chamberlain Synergy and Peugeot Sport. One in which the crack French outfit is happy to share technical information so that the cars can be raced and maintained to the highest standards.

Once 908 09 arrived in the UK, Chamberlain



Classic Peugeot vs Audi duel in 2011. Right, space-age cockpit more spacious than you might think. Top right, V12 diesel provides boundless urge





Synergy's Steve Briggs set about a full rebuild so that the car could be brought back to pristine, race-ready condition. Price? Well, that's on application. Besides, if you have to ask and all that... Given its historical significance, race-winning potential in MEL and the rapidly rising values of similarly significant endurance race cars (Porsche 956's regularly command over £1m and a Peugeot 905 recently sold for more than £3m) you can come to your own estimation.

IT MIGHT BE LESS THAN A DECADE AGO, but the titanic battle between Audi and Peugeot is worthy of recollection, simply because the German marque's crushing success at Le Mans paints a misleading picture. I for one didn't realise that of the 35 races contested by the 908, it won 25 - including all three of the big endurance classics for which it was eligible - Le Mans, Sebring and the Petit Le Mans. Of those 35 races, 25 were head-to-head confrontations with factory Audis. The Peugeots won 16.

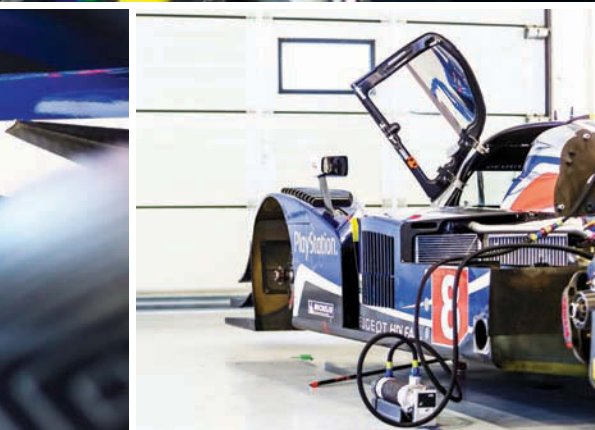
Unsurprisingly there were titles along the way. Peugeot collected championship silverware in the Le Mans Series and the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup, forerunner to the FIA World Endurance Championship.

The driver line-ups were stellar and included stars from the world of sports car racing and beyond. Formula 1 world champion Jacques Villeneuve was the marque's big-name signing at the start of the programme in 2007. He would be joined by fellow ex-F1 driver Marc Gené in a roster that included multiple Champ Car title winner Sébastien Bourdais and established sports car names Stéphane Sarrazin, Nicolas Minassian and Pedro Lamy. Ricardo Zonta, Alex Wurz, David Brabham and Anthony Davidson, all ex-F1 drivers, would subsequently race 908 turbodiesels. This was a no-holds-barred effort.

Given the scale of Peugeot's effort and ambition, the thought of a private individual buying and then attempting to run and race one of these extraordinary machines seems crazy. Yet here in the garage Chamberlain-Synergy's crew is quietly working away. There are a laptop or two plugged in, plus a few umbilical lines connected to the engine in order to pre-warm the 5.5-litre bi-turbo V12, but otherwise it's pretty standard stuff, handled by two mechanics and an engineer.

It's natural to get hung up and somewhat intimidated by the complexity and sophistication of cars like the 908, but according to Briggs so long as you do all the pre-warming and system checks the big Pug runs like a Swiss watch. Run the engine on a strong, but not qualifying map, and they will last 12,000kms or more. That's five or more seasons of racing in MEL. And, unlike many of the Group C cars, the level of on-board electronics means even if it does develop a fault the car will flag up most things for the crew, so they don't spend hours chasing mystery bugs.

While the rain continues to hammer down ☑



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outside, Berridge talks me through what I can expect, plus a few dos and don'ts. He'd already done me the courtesy of sending me the Peugeot Sport 'Driver Book' for the 908 - a 19-page operational manual of intense detail, covering not only the standard procedures, but every possible alarm, display page, recovery modes... My brain begins to ache shortly after absorbing the steering wheel buttons' basic functions.

Best news to me is that the traction control system is very, very good. I won't need to be playing around with any of the settings, and if I don't give them cause to drag me out of the car after my first run the team will give me a meatier engine map, so I can feel a bit more of the big V12 oil burner's legendary shove. It's also welcome news that the 908 is pretty much bullet-proof. Then, with classic timing, Berridge beckons me towards him for one final pearl of

wisdom: "There's one vitally important thing I need to add. Don't bloody crash it!" Gulp.

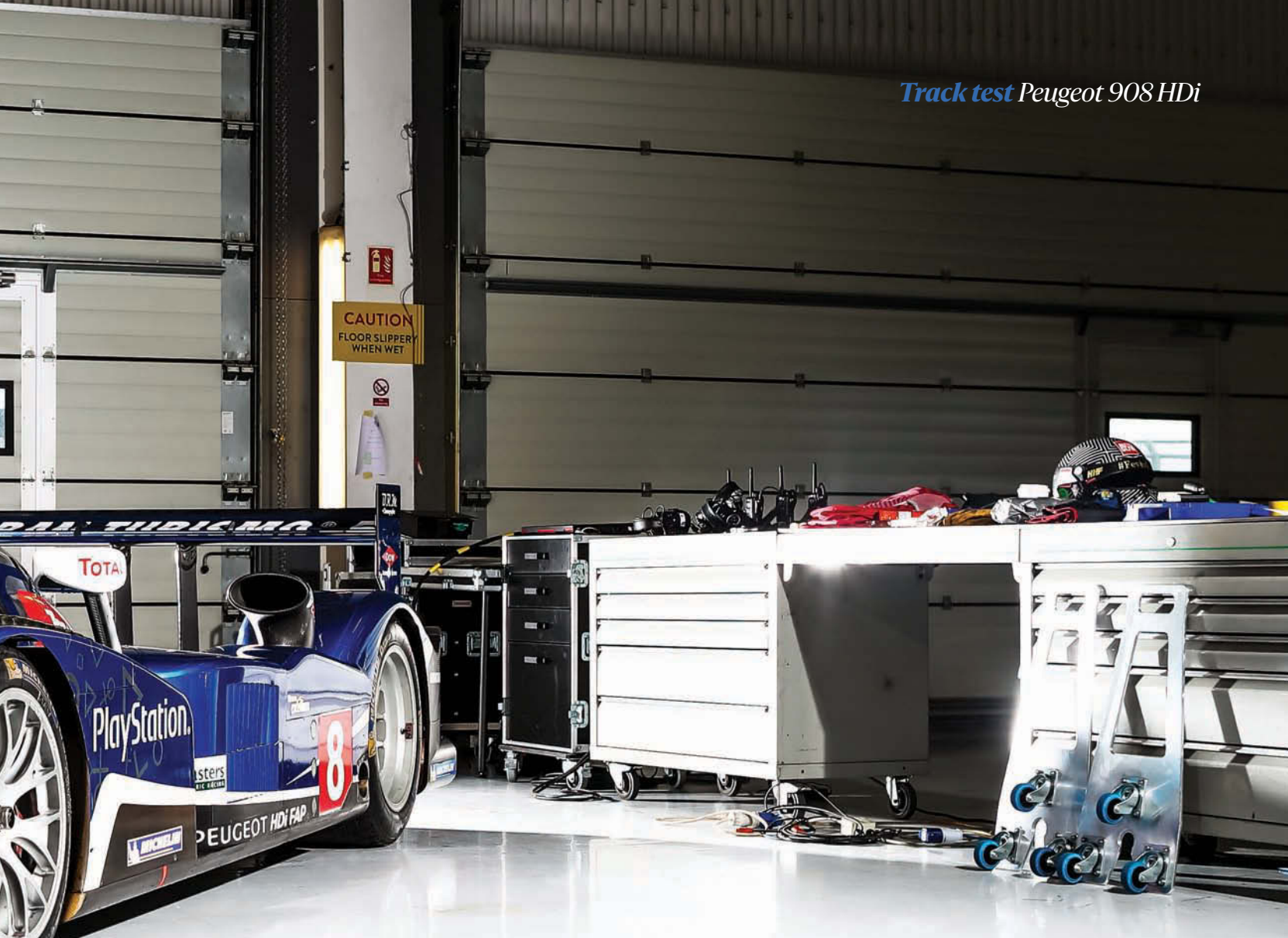
Finally, as our closing session of the day approaches, the rain eases then stops. The track's still wet - very wet in places - but there's less chance for the flat-bottomed prototype to aquaplane off. My nerves are sparking, but I can't not take up the opportunity to try this amazing car. Bob gives me the thumbs-up. We're good to go.

IT'S COMMON TO REFER TO MODERN ERA Le Mans prototypes as 'spaceships' due to their otherworldly looks and performance. Spend some time around one and the analogy only feels more and more appropriate. But it is not until you actually have the opportunity to drive one that the truth of the cliché hits home. This is a super-specialised craft, created to explore a different kind of space and time - that unique

pocket of chaos that exists between the start and finish of a 24-hour race.

There's a ritual to getting into the 908. For starters there's no door as such, merely a hinged window that flicks up and forwards like an insect's wing. From here you sit on the sidepod, then pull up your knees, swivel on your buttocks, tuck your legs through the aperture then slither your torso in after them. There's more room than I'm expecting, but the raised pedal box feels alien at first. However once you can brace yourself and attach the bent oblong steering wheel you soon forget your heels are higher than your hips.

There's a clutch pedal, but I'll only be using it when leaving the pits and pulling up outside the garage, so the fact it's straining my left calf muscle to depress it is of little concern. There are paddles for gearchanges and 15 assorted buttons and rotary switches to control the car's



"The 908 HDi is created to explore a different kind of space and time"

vital functions. A small display screen and a horizontal row of shift lights sit centrally.

It feels pretty intimidating, but the view out through the huge bubble windscreen is fabulous. With radio earplugs in, the faint hiss of dead air creates a feeling of distance and isolation from the mechanics who are wheeling me out into the pit lane on dollies. They abruptly spin the car through 90 degrees to point me towards pit exit. The hiss of an airline being removed heralds the 908 dropping onto its wheels - shod with fresh Michelin wets - before I get the signal to start. Flick the ignition toggle set in the switch panel to the left, then thumb the green and black starter button on the top right of the steering wheel. This is it.

The V12 diesel fires immediately and settles into a rapid clatter. It's a busy sound, more like a generator than a racing engine, with little or




no aural clue as to the number of cylinders. A Ferrari 333SP this is not. Nevertheless it fills the cockpit with a pulsating sense of purpose. It sounds powerful and, in a strange way, a bit malevolent.

To pull away you need to engage the pit limiter and select first gear. With the clutch pedal depressed you then floor the throttle and hold it there while smoothly feeding the clutch in. It feels counter-intuitive, but works a treat, the 908 surging away from its mark and grumbling along against its electronic leash.

Berridge has warned me about disengaging the pit limiter as I head on track as there's enough torque to trouble the tyres in the first four gears. Needless to say my out lap is not a flyer.

You go through a rapid and rather conflicting set of emotions during tests like these. To start with you're slightly numbed in disbelief at sitting in a car that has won or led the biggest endurance races of them all. You're also in fear of doing something wrong or, worse, stupid. Which would be easy given the learning curve you're climbing. But then you lose yourself in the process of trying to drive and make small steps towards the limit and not one giant leap into the gravel. It's a heady feeling.

VERY LITTLE I CAN WRITE WILL DO JUSTICE to how it feels when you pin the 908's throttle. The bald stats are startling enough: 730bhp 



and 890lb ft of torque in a car weighing 925kg, but even that fails to express the surreal, endless sense of propulsion it delivers. The intermediate gears are simply devoured as all the torque goes to work. It's all the more bewildering because the engine note bears no relation to the rate at which you're accelerating. There's no real crescendo of sound or delivery - unsurprising given the engine doesn't even rev to 5000rpm - just an intensifying, unrelenting push towards the next corner. It shrinks Silverstone's rangy expanses as surely as a hot wash shrinks cashmere.

The conditions are gradually improving, which is great as it gives me the confidence to work the car that little bit harder. Thankfully it's not as intolerant of timidity as some race cars, but it still comes to life when you begin to stretch it. The brakes - 380mm carbon discs at the front, 337mm at the rear - have immense stopping power and encouraging levels of feel. As I'm using my left foot, the track's slick and there's no ABS, this is a considerable relief. The traction control is on a conservative setting, so it picks me up early but again offers supreme reassurance. That is fine by me.

And the downforce? Yep, there's plenty of that, even though I feel like I'm struggling to carry enough speed into the corners to really lean on it.

As promised, the boys signal me to come back to the pits. I'm hoping it's for a feistier engine map rather than to evict me. It is, so with a quick once-over and a click or two on the rotary switch I'm waved back out. It's made a big difference, as there's now a real thump to way the 908 rips through each gear. It's a totally addictive feeling and one that makes you whoop with the sheer madness of being hurled down the straights by this immense and apparently limitless force.

With a drying line I finally feel happy enough

to try and drive with some purpose, rather than simply circulating. I'm glad I do because the 908 reveals much more of itself in the process. It's such a complete machine, massively sure-footed with just enough feel to connect you, but not so much to distract you. The engine is remarkable - ferociously powerful and yet almost deadpan in its delivery - and the entire drivetrain feels fabulously finessed yet utterly indestructible.

What I wasn't expecting was how approachable the car is in unfamiliar hands. I wouldn't presume to say it's easy to drive anywhere near its limits, but it feels like a car developed to be vice-free. The novelty of its acceleration and the lunacy of its braking and cornering abilities is something I was only just beginning to sample, but I tasted enough to know this car must have been a sensational thing to race. Especially at Le Mans, in front of a fired-up home crowd and against the very best of enemies in Audi Sport.

My last few laps are very special. With a dry line to attack through most of the corners and plenty of wet on the straights to cool the tyres, I alternate between feeling the car clamp itself to the track through the fast corners as those wings and underbody aerodynamics really begin to work, and peering into one of the high-mounted mirrors and watching in awe as those same aerodynamics lift a roiling plume of spray 20 feet into the air.

As the session is flagged to a close I have a few minutes to let the experience percolate and the adrenaline dissipate. Any Le Mans car is special, but one built by a factory team with the express intention of winning is one of the finest things imaginable. If your heart beats faster at the thought of cars like the 908 you need to be at the Silverstone Classic on Saturday evening, when for one blissful race the Hangar Straight will echo to the sounds of Les Hunaudières. ☑



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Good things come in threes...

The Motor Sport podcast has been busy recently: six-time Le Mans winner Jacky Ickx and 2017 Dakar winner and Segrave Trophy recipient Sam Sunderland both joined us at the Royal Automobile Club for podcasts, and Alastair Caldwell and Freddie Hunt visited *Motor Sport* towers for the latest podcast in association with Mercedes-Benz.

The ever-charming Ickx looked back on his early years, including meeting Ken Tyrrell, while the fascinating Sunderland talked eloquently about the challenge of the Dakar. Caldwell and Hunt, meanwhile, recalled Freddie's father James, 25 years on from the 1976 world champion's passing.

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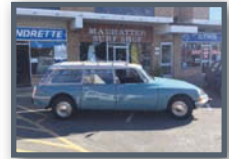
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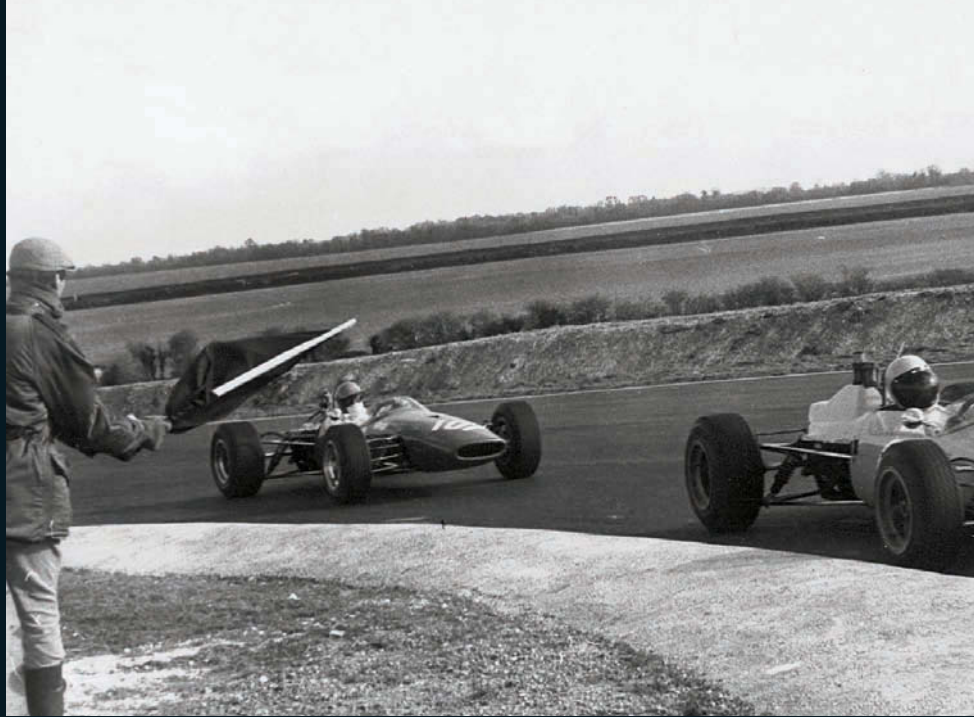
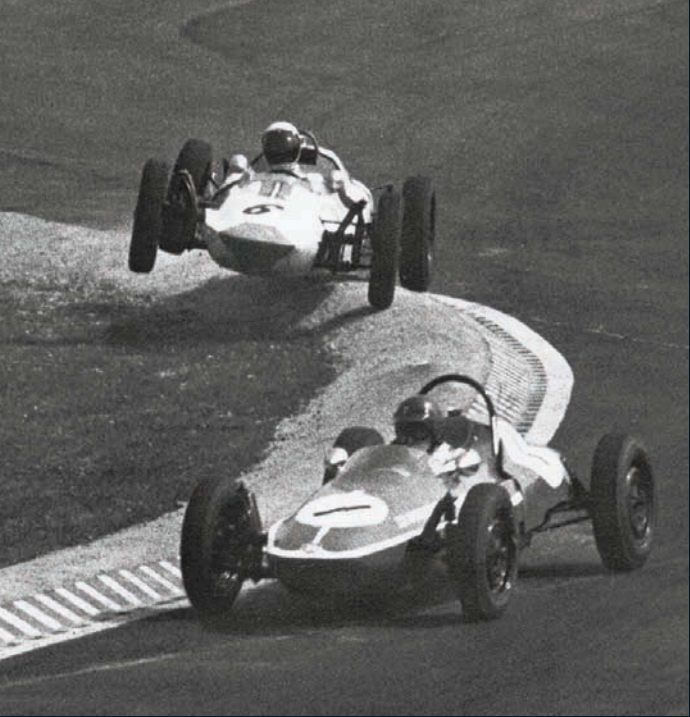
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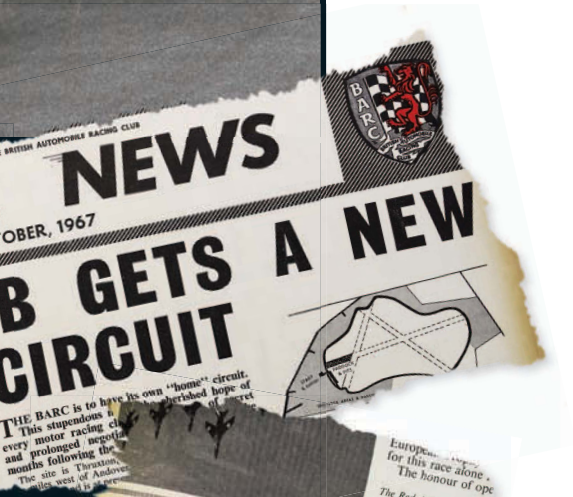


Home comforts

One well-known driver still covets his local circuit, where he remembers halcyon days of a boyhood spent trackside

WRITER Tiff Needell





My dad was a regular spectator at Brooklands before the war and a proud member of the JCC and BARC - for which I have a wonderful collection of his enamel members' badges. He even competed in a rally and an autotest there, but sadly never thundered round that daunting banking.

With aircraft factories built all over his beloved Brooklands, after the war he followed the BARC down to its new home at Goodwood and competed in a couple of Members' Meeting handicap races before a wife and the responsibilities of fatherhood rather curtailed his activities.

BUT THEN CAME THE GREAT NEWS THAT the BARC had found another new home, still in south-eastern England. They'd gone from Brooklands to Goodwood and now it would be Thruxton that would carry forward the club's history. The popular Easter Monday meeting was back home.

With my brother now old enough to drive, our parents decided they'd done enough carting us around the race tracks of Britain, so we were left to venture forth on our own. Unable to afford grandstand seats. the

"Rug over our knees, hot tomato soup, plenty of food and the best view in motor sport as the field streamed down Lavant"

From now on he would be restricted to sitting in the grandstands where his two young sons soon inherited his passion for motor sport. From the moment I crawled up the big bank on the exit of the Goodwood Chicane and saw these colourful, noisy, smelly machines being wrestled through the corner by the supermen behind the wheel, all I ever wanted to be was a racing driver...

I begged my parents to take me as often as possible and the Easter Monday Formula 2 meeting soon became one of my favourite events of the year. Rug over our knees, hot tomato soup, plenty of food in the hamper and one of the best views in motor sport as the field streamed down Lavant Straight, through Woodcote and then the chicane.

I saw wins for Stirling Moss, Mike Hawthorn, John Surtees, Graham Hill and Jack Brabham plus my greatest inspiration of all, Jim Clark. And it wasn't just Clark in the F2 race because he was in the saloon car race and the sports car race if there was one on the timetable. I'd fill in all the details in my programme, write the numbers on the grid as they were read out and try to do lap charts that my brother made look easy! But to my great dismay, the Goodwood doors closed and it was all over. Easter Monday in 1967 was a long haul to Silverstone...

Complex was picked out from the map as the place to go and we set off very early - down the A30 with the M3 yet to be built - to make sure we got a spot on the fence as close to the action as we could be.

I was a keen photographer and had a little Pal M4 35mm with a screw-on x1.5 enhancer - a sort of poor man's telephoto lens. I'd develop and print the photos myself at school, but even with the magnification I needed to have the enlarger on its maximum setting to make the cars fill the frame...

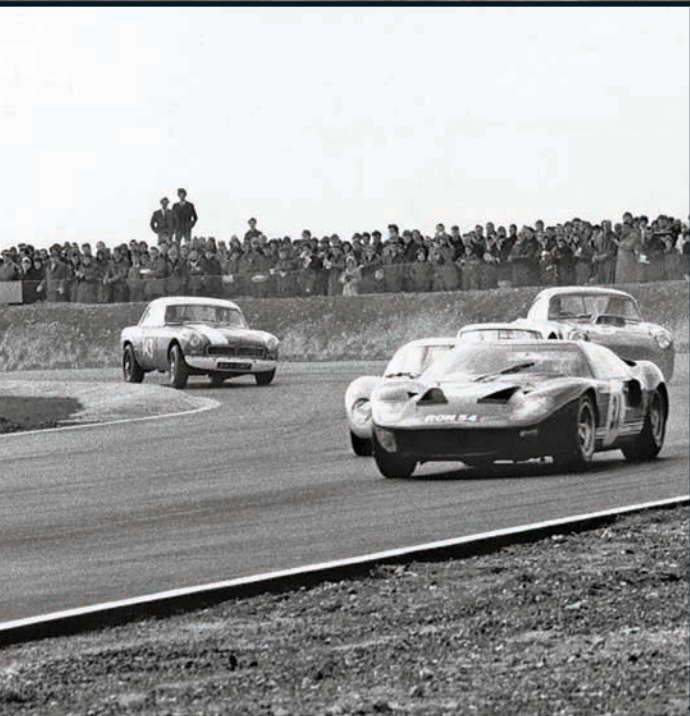
Still, I had plenty of action to catch with a programme that featured two heats and a final for the 35 F2s entered, but great sadness surrounded the event after Clark's death just one week earlier. Graham Hill withdrew his entry, but Jackie Oliver bravely arrived to drive his red and gold works Lotus.

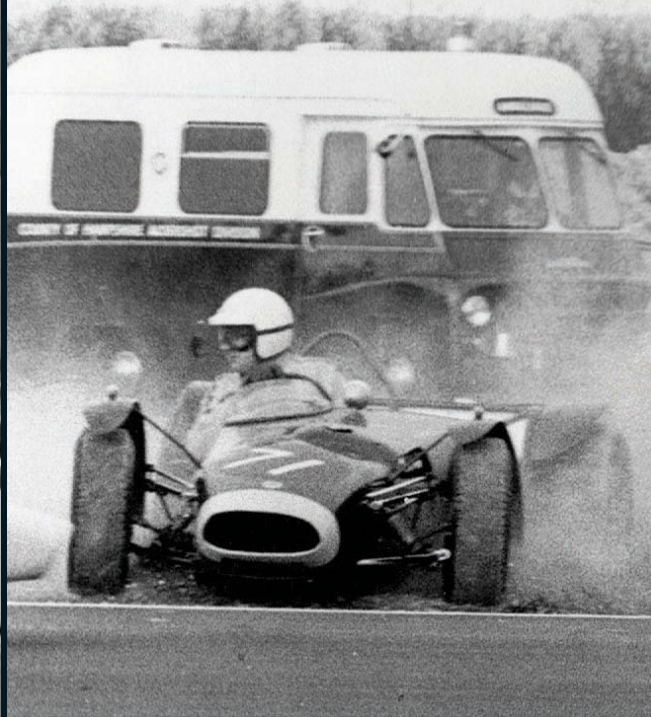
There was also a European championship round for Formula Vee, in which a young Helmut Marko took third place, and a round of the British Saloon Car Championship, so there was plenty for me to photograph and the arrival of the Red Arrows was simply a bonus!

While I clung to the fence dreaming of being a racing driver, I never thought it would actually happen. With no family money, even karting was out of the question, so little did I believe that just over three years later it would be my name in a Thruxton programme entered in the Formula Ford Lotus 69F that I had won in an *Autosport* magazine competition. ☑

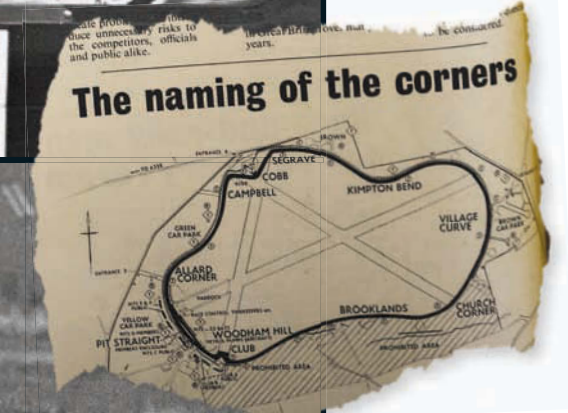
My Thruxton Tiff Needell

Clockwise from right (1968 unless stated): Barry Pearson's Cortina at Easter; Clubmans chaos; Piers Courage; Beltoise heads F2 pack; GT40 leads at March 17 BARC clubbie; FF1600 pack pursues Davids McClelland and Leslie, 1977





“Tucked into the slipstream, waiting for the man in front to choose inside or outside, then diving for the other...”



WITH THE BRAND-NEW CAR SITTING ON ITS brand-new trailer and towed by a very rusty, very second-hand Morris 1000 Traveller, my first Thruxton race was on May 30 1971. It was to be only my fourth race in the prize Lotus and I had little idea of what I was doing! Unable to afford any testing my plan was to learn as many circuits as possible in my first year and, with the huge success of Formula Ford, you could find a non-championship race somewhere every weekend - it was a magical era.

To make life a little harder my practice session was in the wet. With the formula back then running on road tyres, the challenge this high-speed track offered was hard enough in the dry but learning it in the wet was a daunting prospect. Yet the difficulty it created made it all the more rewarding and that challenge remains the same today as it was all those years ago.

Well, almost the same because it was made a little easier when they reduced the big bump on the apex of Church and also when they took away the Armco barrier lining the inside of the Chicane, but we'll come to that later. Whereas modern technology has created single-seater formulae that can run full throttle from the Complex to the Chicane, that very much wasn't the case back in the 1970s.

For me, in the wet, nothing was flat. That starts with the awkwardness of Allard, where the exit suddenly comes up to greet you, making your turn-in point critical. Then there's the complication of the Complex where you don't want to use all the road out of Campbell and you don't want to use all the road out of Cobb because you want to create the optimum line through Segrave with its tricky adverse camber exit.

The Complex is laid out as I feel all complexes or esses should be, with the first element the slowest to encourage overtaking on the way in, a decent distance to the next corner and progressively becoming faster and faster with a good exit crucial to launch you into the countryside and the fabled high-speed section, with three very quick corners, that makes Thruxton so special.

First up was Kimpton (now called Noble as Thruxton celebrated another British Land Speed Record holder) and it's perhaps the easiest of the three to take flat out, but it's crucial not to exit too far to the right or you'll compromise your entry into Goodwood - the hardest to take flat!

Surviving Goodwood, the gentle curve of Village is no problem but all of a sudden you're heading down hill, gathering momentum and trying to tell yourself not to lift for Church. It's impossible not to in the wet and was extremely hard to even in the dry at a time when our road rubber gave far less grip - and the big bump at the apex invariably pitched you sideways at high speed.

Of course, every extra mile an hour you can exit Church with is crucial to your speed all the way up Woodham Hill and into the braking area for the Club Chicane - your best chance of overtaking. Tucked into the slipstream, watching the driver in front look this side and that in his mirrors, waiting for him to choose the inside or the outside and then diving for the other...

With its wide, high-speed, curved entry funnelling you into the bottleneck of the tight left in the middle, this is much more exciting than overtaking in a straight line, and back in the early days there was no kerb to bale out over - just a solid Armco barrier to clatter into. You did have the option to go straight on but then you had to do a U-turn to get back out again!

It was a barrier that gave photographers a superb vantage point and drivers a much greater challenge. It also taught us to respect our rivals. There was no point just barging up the inside like you can do now because you knew if the other car hit the barrier it would bounce back and take you with it. Apart from the race-stopping incident in the 1975 F2 event I don't remember any horrendous accidents, but - as safety issues were given ever more importance - sadly the barrier had to go... ☐



"I don't think there's been a happier day in my career. Your first win is always the one you cherish most"

ON THAT FIRST MOMENTOUS VISIT I WAS PRETTY CHUFFED TO discover I'd been 13th fastest of the 28-car entry and went on to finish a very happy eighth in the dry race, thoroughly enjoying the fast, flowing circuit. I returned almost a year later when no fewer than 49 cars turned up for a national championship round split into two heats.

Unfortunately, I wasn't only learning how to be a racing driver but was also a reluctant mechanic, as so many of us were in those early Formula Ford days, and I made the classic error of putting fourth gear the wrong way around so had to scream my little engine way over its safe limit in third for a couple of laps to qualify 18th for my heat in which I finished 10th. That earned me 16th on the grid for the final, in which I finished ninth!

Lesson learned, I returned for another non-championship race a month later, qualified sixth and fought through for my first ever race win - with fastest lap as a bonus! I don't think there's ever been a happier day in my entire racing career. Your first win will always be the one you cherish the most.

THERE'D BE 16 MORE FORMULA FORD RACES SLIPSTREAMING around Thruxton, before I took the next step up the ladder to Formula Ford 2000, with 10 top-three finishes including two more wins. But the story doesn't quite end there as, having sold that Lotus 69F in 1973, I bought it back in 2012 and have since done five more races at Thruxton in the Historic Formula Ford Championship with three more podiums and, best of all, one more win!

Two wins with the same car and the same driver at the same circuit 42 years apart. Now that must be some sort of record - and where better to do it than at Thruxton, the family home of the BARC... and the Needell family. 🏁



Join Tiff Needell on an exclusive trip of Britain's fastest racing circuit via our YouTube channel at [YOUTUBE.COM/MOTORSPORT1924](https://www.youtube.com/motorsport1924)



Is it a record? Two wins in the same car at the same circuit 42 years apart... Tiff and his prize Lotus 69F



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BRUNCH WITH

Steve Parrish

Serial champion on two wheels and four, media analyst... and the only racer to have outqualified himself while pretending to be Barry Sheene

WRITER Simon Arron PHOTOGRAPHER Lyndon McNeil

I

t's a bright, breezy morning in London's West End. Pedestrians zig-zag through Soho without looking up from their mobile phones, while cyclists with pipe-cleaner physiques maintain a casual attitude towards red lights and zebra crossings. Amid this sea of human folly, a distinctive figure strolls down Old Compton Street: slight frame, leather jacket, right arm cradling a crash helmet whose design hints that this is no ordinary commuter. Which, indeed, he isn't.

Steve Parrish became a professional motorcycle racer at the age of 22 - and within a year was installed as Barry Sheene's team-mate, riding a factory Suzuki in the FIM's 500cc world championship. That first season, though, would be his best - precursor to a career that reaped rich rewards in terms of domestic honours and, later, enormous success at home and abroad in the somewhat contrasting realm of truck racing. "People never believe me," he says, "but there are many, many similarities between bikes and trucks."

To find out more, we adjourn to Balans Soho Society, where Steve orders black coffee, poached eggs on toast and a slice or two of bacon.

"There was absolutely no racing history in the family before I got involved," he says, "but I seem to have been submerged in speed from a young age. I grew up on a small farm next to Steeple Warden - a disused wartime airfield. When my grandfather died he left my dad to sort out massive amounts of debt, but he managed to make enough money to repurchase the farm by breaking up the adjacent runways and selling them as hardcore that underpinned the new M1. He didn't touch the perimeter tracks, though - and they eventually became my own little race track. It didn't have to be a motorbike, either: it could be anything I could buy for five or 10 quid. This started when I was quite young.

"Dad sadly died from leukaemia when I was only 12 and I was left to muck around with anything I could lay my hands on. I raised money to buy stuff by washing cars, doing a bit of sugar beet-hoeing, sprout-picking or whatever. At one stage I had a 500cc Matchless that you could just get to 85mph and I'd be riding that around - jeans, no helmet, mate on the back - it was all a bit mad, really." □

Brunch with Steve Parrish

His free spirit was already apparent away from his personal fiefdom. In what he believes to have been “a first for the village”, he missed his 11-plus after being expelled from primary school. “I wrote that the head teacher was fat old cow. I spelt it correctly and everything, but she didn’t like it. I was also expelled from secondary school, for more mechanical reasons: I didn’t get on with my geography teacher, Mr Carruthers, so one day removed the wheel nuts from his Triumph Herald and put the hub caps back on, which seemed quite funny when he tried to drive away. He didn’t agree, so at 15 I began an apprenticeship as an agricultural mechanic, which taught me lots of things that would later prove useful.

“INSTEAD OF PLAYING DARTS OR FOOTBALL, OUR VILLAGE PUB decided to start a racing team because two of us were thinking about having a go. My first racer took shape as a result of buying bits from *Exchange & Mart*: Triumph engine, Norton frame... I have a feeling the whole thing cost about £150. It was absolutely hopeless. I made my debut at Brands Hatch and the cylinder nuts all worked loose as the race went on – some of my oil is probably still there. I learned pretty quickly that I needed a better bike.

“One of the lads at the pub used to wheel and deal lawnmowers. He had more money than the rest of us and agreed to help me buy a quicker engine, I found a better frame and put together another Triton that turned out to be quite good. I started getting podium finishes in club racing in about 1973 and that set me thinking about doing it more seriously. Yamahas had arrived by then – the two-stroke era – and everyone was buying a TZ250 or 350. So that’s what I did. I saved up, borrowed £250 from my mum, acquired a TZ250, started winning a few races and never really looked back.” Quite a commitment from Mrs Parrish, that, given the period casualty rate...

“I don’t think she fully approved,” he says, “but you have to remember that she knew I’d been a tearaway on the roads. I think she regarded the racetrack as a more controlled environment – you had to wear a helmet, which we didn’t on the road when I passed my test, and we were all theoretically travelling in the same direction.

“With hindsight, I could have opted for car racing just as easily as I did bikes. I think a lot of it was down to being able to ride a motorbike aged 16, a year before I could drive a car. Plus, of course, bikes were a bit cheaper and fitted in with my pub group.”

Success on that TZ250 earned him backing from chicken farmer Harold Coppock, a well-known motorcycle racing benefactor. “I started winning national-level races and getting a bit of prize money, which all went back into tyres and fuel. I was starting to realise that I must be half okay, because I was competing against established riders. For 1975 I had another sponsor, a Guildford builder called Dave Moore, and he persuaded me that it was no use



Steve Parrish
A career in pictures

1975

Backed by chicken farmer Harold Coppock, Parrish scored good results in the UK and realised that he would need to turn professional



1977

After winning the ACU Solo title, Parrish joined the factory Suzuki team alongside Sheene – and lost the British GP with just one lap to go



1977

Rivals on the track, Parrish and Sheene were close mates off it. Sheene wrote the foreword to Parrish’s ‘new’ book... in 2003



winning races on smaller bikes - I needed to be on bigger machinery. He was absolutely right and generously bought me a 500cc Suzuki and a Yamaha 750. Castrol then gave me enough backing to do some proper racing in 1976. I'd long since finished my apprenticeship and had started my own little business, servicing cars and tractors, but racing now took up too much of my time and I had to pack in the day job to turn professional. My life had been consumed by the sport."

He won that season's ACU Solo title - and then Suzuki called.

"I'D MET BARRY SHEENE A COUPLE OF YEARS EARLIER," HE SAYS. "We lived quite close to each other and started knocking around: he was hell-bent on getting me a Suzuki seat alongside him for 1977, but to do so I had to prove I could beat his current team-mates - John Newbold and John Williams - and in all the British 500cc races I did. I loved my Suzuki RG500. I was racing against Phil Read, Barry, all the stars, and usually finished second to Barry. I probably peaked too early.

"Moving up at that stage opened my eyes to a ridiculous degree. I quite literally hadn't sat on a plane until I flew to Venezuela for the opening Grand Prix of 1977. It was ludicrous, really. I still had pictures of Barry on my workshop wall at home, stuff I'd cut out of *Motorcycle News* or wherever, and now I'd been thrust into a role as his team-mate. I'd always dreamed that I might one day meet him, never mind race against him. I was as green as they come.

"My favourite moment that season was racing against Giacomo Agostini at Spa, the old, original circuit. It was one of those places where you could slipstream endlessly on the straights, passing and repassing three or four times. I remember looking across and thinking, 'Wow! I'm passing Agostini!' He was looking back and probably thinking, 'Who the f**k is that?' He'd never heard of me!

"It was an extraordinary year for me. I had a good bike - Barry's 1976 machine, his title winner - but all the tracks were new and it wasn't like learning circuits nowadays because most of them were so long. It was quite a steep curve. I didn't qualify terribly well, but I raced okay and wound up fifth in the championship."

He was also on course to end the campaign on a high, qualifying third on home soil at Silverstone and leading the race into its closing stages. "I was ahead by about three seconds when I crashed with a lap to go. I had it in the bag, but it started raining and I was first to hit the shower. John Williams had been second, but he crashed at the following corner and my team-mate Pat Hennen came through to win. Suzuki cut back in 1978 - and because of what happened at Silverstone I slipped behind Pat in the championship, so I was fired.

"Barry had broken down in that race, so returned to the pits and, just before I crashed, hung out my pit board. He'd chalked, 'Last lap, P1, gas it - w**ker.' Quite prescient, really, given what happened next..."

His next line is delivered in the same matter-of-fact manner he had ☑



1978

Dropped after one season as a works Suzuki rider, Parrish won the ACU Gold Star title in Britain... and promptly got his old job back



1984

Parrish wangled a deal to race a Mercedes at the UK's first truck meeting, something that led to bigger, better things



1987

Parrish as team manager, with Keith Huewen (left), Trevor Nation (right) and sponsor Loctite's managing director Geoff Bennett



2002

Once he'd called time on truck racing, Parrish committed to race commentaries with, among others, Charlie Cox and Suzi Perry

Brunch with Steve Parrish

previously used to describe earlier sponsors Coppock and Moore. “Fortunately, George Harrison stepped in with support...”

Hang on. George Harrison? Parrish laughs. “Yes, I know... Barry was very friendly with him and, as a result I got to know him in 1977. We’d be at a race and George would turn up with Eric Idle and other famous faces and I’d be thinking, ‘Jesus, how the hell did I come to be mixing with this lot?’ George was angry that Suzuki had fired me, because he didn’t think I deserved it. He helped keep me on track in 1978.”

PARRISH CONTINUED TO COMPETE IN THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP, finishing fourth in Venezuela and fifth in Finland, but enjoyed greater success at home, picking up the ACU 500cc Gold Star title. “It might sound odd,” he says, “but many of us competed in multiple series back then. For one thing there were fewer Grands Prix - and for another you

bike only on row three. I’m not sure that kind of thing happens nowadays, does it?”

His success in ’78 persuaded Suzuki to recruit him once again to its factory team. Hennen, the first American to win a 500cc GP, had been sidelined by a serious accident in the Isle of Man TT and would never race again. Parrish thus started 1979 alongside Sheene and Tom Herron. “It turned out to be a terrible year,” he says. “Tom was killed in the North West 200, I broke my wrist in Venezuela, the opening race, and Barry contracted a debilitating virus that slowed him down.” With a best result of fifth to his name, in Sweden, he was promptly fired once more. “Given my track record at school,” he says, “I was fairly used to such things by then...”

He would carry on competing at world level as a privateer, without ever scaling the heights he reached at home. He won the 1979 Shellsport 500c title - “My proudest achievement on two wheels, because I was competing against Barry and beat him” - and continued to chalk up wins at home. In the 1982 French GP at Nogaro, he finally recorded his first podium finish at world championship level - albeit in a race that many factory



Parrish and Sheene at Mallory in '77, when works GP stars also raced in the UK



could earn much more in the UK. The start money in the world championship was pathetic - the equivalent of about £400 in Swiss francs. If you did international races in the UK you could earn a decent wage, but you also had to be racing in the world championship to be regarded as a worthwhile name and qualify for good appearance money. It was chicken and egg. I was getting about £2000 per meeting in Britain back then and Barry was probably on £8000 or similar. We’d also be paid to race at places like Imola and Chimay, but at Grands Prix it was hard to earn enough to cover your costs. With the exception of guys like Kenny Roberts, who was probably being paid loads by Yamaha, most riders were travelling backwards and forwards to the UK races.”

In one instance, at Mallory Park in 1977, Parrish found himself doubling up in other ways. Is it true that he impersonated team-mate Sheene after the latter arrived with a hangover? “Yes and no,” he says. “The hangover bit simply didn’t happen. I think that rumour was started by [former racers] Carl Fogarty and Jamie Whitham, who did a theatre tour chatting about the sport, nicked some of my stories and got them wrong! The truth is that Barry turned up for free practice and a medical screw, from his 1975 Daytona accident, came loose in one of his knees and caused it to lock solid. He couldn’t ride and was smuggled out of the circuit under blankets, on the back seat of his Rolls-Royce, to get medical attention. While he was absent, I donned his leathers and helmet and went out on his bike, which I qualified on the front row. I then came in, changed back into myself and managed to put my own

riders boycotted because of concerns about track conditions. Not untypical, perhaps, for a rider who graduated to Grands Prix just after the world championship had turned its back on the Isle of Man, but continued to race there all the same. He made his debut on the island in 1974 - finishing seventh in the Lightweight TT - and continued to enter long after other leading riders had chosen to stay away, taking a best result of fourth in the 1984 Production TT. He also raced at Macau, Chimay and other venues of a particularly perilous persuasion. How did he balance the equation of reward versus potential risk?

“Quite simple,” he says. “I really didn’t want to die. I was seriously within my limits when I raced. I know I fell off like the rest of them, and I was maybe lucky on occasions to hit a straw bale rather than a lamppost or a tree, but I was never a brave racer. I think I had natural ability and the intelligence to make sure I had a good mechanic, a good bike, the right tyres and so on, but I was never gung-ho. I didn’t see red mist when I raced. I kind of worked out that, ‘Yeah, third place will probably do.’ I really had no interest in waking up in strange hospitals with broken legs and arms. I was quite pragmatic. Perhaps that’s why car racing might have suited me better - I didn’t like pain and was allergic to it from an early stage.

“Also, I never had the attitude that I was going to win. Talk to someone like Carl Fogarty and he always absolutely believed that, but I preferred the pessimistic approach - an optimist with experience, if you like. Even when I was racing trucks and dominating, I’d go in thinking,

'A podium will do today.' Had I gone in expecting to win and come away third, I'd have been distraught. It was a sort of reverse psychology. Nowadays MotoGP riders have dieticians, psychiatrists, fitness trainers and all sorts. All we had to do was sober up in time for Saturday morning and get on with it. If I lacked anything it was probably a little self-confidence. If you have ability, determination, fire in your belly, character and complete self-confidence, then wrap it all up, you get a Rossi, a Márquez or a Sheene."

It's not unknown for top-line riders to dabble with four wheels - and by 1985 Sheene was racing for Toyota in the British Saloon Car Championship - but Parrish's next step took him into altogether more substantial territory.

"When I started racing in Grands Prix," he says, "all I saw was that ribbon of asphalt and the chequered flag. In about 1983 I started to notice the barriers that came with that ribbon and a couple of seasons later I started to notice the ambulances that were parked beyond. That's when the throttle no longer stays open, even when you think it does. It was probably more the case then than it is now because the penalty was often greater than the crime. You were far more likely to die, whereas MotoGP riders now they have airbag suits, back protectors, foam barriers and so on. In my day there were generally three or four fatalities a year and it was just accepted. That was my inbuilt fuse: too many people were being killed, and that's what slowed me down.

"So I was aware that I wasn't getting any faster on a bike, I was sick of hurting myself, had a family on the way and a really good sponsorship deal with Loctite. They wanted to continue, so I retired from riding at

where you point it. A motorcycle isn't like that. You can't swerve on a bike, you have to coax it - and a truck is the same, with all that kinetic energy. You had to coax it because it didn't want to go where you wanted it to go, so you needed to be gentle - and that helped early on. I felt absolutely at home.

"At first I'd just do occasional races in the UK, supported a little by Mercedes, but I won the British title in 1987 and at the end of 1989 Mercedes invited me to test with the factory's European championship team at Hockenheim. I was about a second quicker than the regular drivers, so they offered me a contract there and then - a good deal, similar to the kind of thing their DTM drivers were on.

"During my last couple of years as a team owner I was having to duck and dive between management duties and racing trucks. It came to a head late in 1991, when Yamaha and Mercedes both decided that something had to give. It was a fairly easy choice, because I knew I could go back to running a team when I was 60 but wouldn't be able to drive professionally at that age, so racing got the nod."

A fruitful choice, as it transpired. He won a European title at his first attempt in 1990, adding a second British crown for good measure, and by 1996 he had accumulated five of each. He would continue as a Mercedes driver until the end of 2001, his career on four wheels lasting slightly longer than that on two, and remained a front-runner to the end.

"I did it for more than 10 years and went to hospital once, as opposed to 40 or 50 times when I was racing bikes," he says. "A lot of car guys came in and did okay. Towards the end I was probably getting a bit slower and some of the younger guys started getting the hang of it. All



"I did trucks for more than 10 years and went to hospital once, as opposed to 40 or 50 times on bikes"

the end of 1986 and set up my own team, with backing from them and riders such as Terry Rymer and Rob McElnea. We had a lot of success, winning four titles and a couple of World Superbike Championship rounds between 1987 and 1991, and that might have continued had truck racing not turned up.

"MY FIRST SUCH EVENT HAD BEEN IN 1984, THE VERY FIRST UK truck race at Donington Park. Barry was signed to drive for DAF, through one of his bike racing connections, Martin Brundle was in a Renault, Barry Lee and Willie Green were there along with drivers from many different spheres of car racing. It turned out to be a crazy event - they claimed there were about 130,000 people present and I can believe it. The roads all around were at a standstill and I think East Midlands Airport had to be closed for a while because emergency vehicles would not have been able to get in or out.

"I was disappointed not to be invited initially, but managed to do a deal to get hold of a Mercedes. They brought it along for me to try and suggested I try it first on the road - they were all road trucks. I'd never driven anything bigger than a Ford Transit, but pretended I had the correct licence and then drove off, crunching gears and telling them it was because I was more used to a Scania. But by the time the race came around I was as quick as anybody and it built from there.

"Racing a five-ton truck is honestly quite similar to racing a bike. A single-seater car is very responsive - you can jink it, turn and it will go

of a sudden, drivers who were struggling to make any money from car racing worked out that they could do okay in trucks.

"It was a good place for companies like Pi to develop electronic systems that could be adapted for cars, because there was space for these huge great boxes - and once they'd made it work they could start shrinking it down. At one point my data-logging system took up about half the cab. We had independent braking systems, electronic diffs... and an immensely powerful 12-litre V6. We'd test alongside the DTM cars at Hockenheim and be able to outdrag them to 100mph, when the speed limiter kicked in. We did some tests for a TV show and my truck was quicker from 0-100-0 than a Porsche 911 Turbo.

"My decision to stop at the end of 2001 was quite straightforward. Mercedes-Benz withdrew from the sport - and that sparked a decline in the whole business, because MAN didn't see the point in continuing without Mercedes, and then DAF did the same. It would be like Ferrari pulling out of F1. Also, by that stage I'd taken up commentary roles with the BBC and others and the Beeb gave me a bit of an ultimatum: they wanted me to commit more fully to broadcasting... and that coincided with Mercedes' withdrawal. Talk about lucky..."

HE WOULD SPEND MORE THAN A DECADE WITH THE BBC, UNTIL IT lost its MotoGP contract, but still does bits and pieces of media work for the Beeb, Eurosport and others. "I still watch MotoGP when I can and it continues to fascinate me. Everyone seems to hate Marc Márquez, but ☑



Today Parrish combines media duties with assorted ambassadorial roles and accident investigation work



he's the best of this generation. The biggest sadness I have as a pundit - and a fan - is that I never got to see Casey Stoner and Márquez race together. In the time I've watched and commentated I think they are the two quickest guys I've seen." For a while he held a world record for achieving the fastest speed ever recorded in reverse - "I believe it was 89mph, in a Caterham at Bruntingthorpe. Nobody else fancied doing it, but if anything went wrong I reckoned the worst that could happen was that I'd end up going forwards."

Steve Parrish career in brief

Born: 24/02/53, Cambridge, UK
1972-1975 Club and national racing in the UK **1974** IoM TT debut; **7th** in Lightweight race, Yamaha **1976** ACU British solo champion, Suzuki 500 & Yamaha 750 **1977** 500cc world championship, Suzuki; **5th** **1978** ACU Gold Star champion, Suzuki **1979** Shellsport British champion, Suzuki **1982** 3rd in French GP, Yamaha **1984** 4th in Production TT, Yamaha; truck racing debut, Mercedes **1986** retires from bike racing **1987-1991** runs Team Loctite in British Superbike Championship **1987-2001** Truck racing, Mercedes; **5** British titles (1987-1993) and **5** European titles (1990-1996)
2002-date Assorted media and ambassadorial activities to stave off the need for "a proper job"

brakes and tyres and, in all probability, it won't seize, unlike some of my old stuff."

On top of all that he has also just written a book, *Parrish Times*. "It's not so much why I've chosen to do it now," he says, "as why I didn't do it earlier. I always made notes when I was racing and it has been in the

planning for quite some time: Barry wrote the foreword for me... and he sadly passed away in 2003, which rather underlines how long it has taken.

"Racing brought me so much fun and the book is about that - an age when you could have an enjoyable life and still race professionally. I don't think anybody else will be able to tell a story quite like it, unless they are even older than I am. My racing punctuates it, but if I'm honest I wasn't good enough to write a book about my own career. I was, though, very good at getting into trouble and then getting out of it again, so it is more about that."

On which note, is he still banned from attending the Macau GP? "No," he says. "That happened after 1985 and remained in force while the colony was under Portuguese control, but ended when China reclaimed sovereignty at the end of 1999. I have been back since.

"It was a result of four of us letting off a firework inside a brothel - and it was probably bigger and better than we'd anticipated. A senior police official was actually in there at the time and one of his colleagues was in the bar at the front: we flung this thing in and didn't get away because we were laughing so much, not least because it turned out that we knew many of the people who came running out through the haze... The police came to our hotel that night and confiscated the passports of those they held responsible, though I actually had two with me.

"When everyone was due to return home the following morning, the police arrived and we assumed they were returning our passports... but they had actually come to arrest us. We were all in the foyer and I realised what was happening, so took a lift to the first floor, exited via a fire escape, took a cab to the hydrofoil and got on one just before it left. I reached Hong Kong and was sitting having a gin and tonic when the rest of the party caught up. I was feeling very pleased with myself until I was told that the police had impounded all the F3 teams' cars and all the motorbikes and wouldn't release any of them until I returned. I had no choice, really. I wish I'd had a camera phone back then, because the police had blown up the picture from my passport and there was by now a poster at the hydrofoil terminal in Macau: 'Wanted. Do not let this bloke out,' even though I'd already gone and was now coming back in. We spent four days in prison and I had to phone my new wife to explain that I'd been arrested for blowing up a brothel, which wasn't too well received.

"I like to think I've had an interesting life - and I'm certainly not going to die young because I'm already too old for that." ☑

BATTI

McLaren

ER & ED

BROKEN

McLaren is floundering. But who is to blame and is there any way back to its past glories?

WRITER Mark Hughes

It all began to unravel a long time ago for McLaren - in terms of it being a top-rank, title-contending F1 team, at any rate. Today it operates on about half the budget of the best-funded team and laps more than 1.5sec per lap off the pace. The implications that can be drawn from the early races of the 2018 season suggest that it's going to be a long, hard climb back to the top.

McLaren's loss of works Mercedes engine status happened eight years ago (partly hastened by the Spygate affair a couple of years previous to that) and it last won races six years ago. Loss of form spilt down into reduction of revenue and further loss of form, but the Honda partnership was going to put all that right - except, of course, it didn't. The Japanese manufacturer was ill-equipped to

conquer the hybrid F1 formula and for three seasons supplied McLaren with uncompetitive and unreliable engines. But within that sorry convoluted mess, there remained a stubborn belief that this was still the McLaren of old, merely stymied by lack of horsepower - and that as soon as that was corrected we'd see once again the colossus of a team that had lit up the tracks during a decade-long race-winning spree, book-ended by the world titles of Mika Häkkinen and Lewis Hamilton.

The switch from Honda to Renault - putting McLaren on power parity with Red Bull - has revealed that belief to be wildly optimistic. The MCL33 is usually something in excess of 1sec per lap slower than the RB14 and didn't make the Q3 part of qualifying until round five, Spain. The drivers say it's quite nicely balanced - but just slow. It's on a similar level of performance to Renault, Haas and Force India, but never at the front even of that group, let alone challenging the big three. □



“He’d convinced the board to invest an extra, unbudgeted \$100m per year to exit the Honda deal early”

The stopwatch had revealed the reality and, shortly after a particularly embarrassing performance in front of the team’s majority shareholders in Bahrain for race two, heads began to roll as a perhaps long-overdue process of self-examination began.

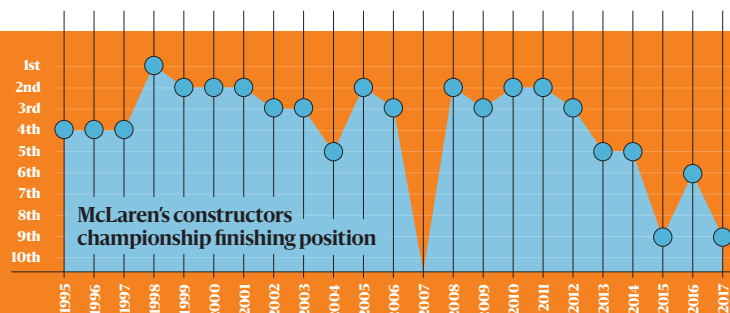
The following Tuesday, the first part of a restructuring plan was announced. The commercial and racing responsibility between Zak Brown (who became CEO of the newly created McLaren Racing) and Eric Boullier was more clearly defined. Brown was acutely aware that he had just convinced the ‘Bahraini’ board (it also includes the Saudi Mansour Ojeh) to invest an extra, unbudgeted

\$100m per year to exit the Honda deal early and replace the income it was bringing - only for that change to be arguably revealed as performance-neutral.

At the board’s home race the McLaren was the slowest car through the speed trap - by an embarrassingly big margin. Making it all the more acute was that the Honda-powered Toro Rosso was a full 7kph quicker - and significantly faster over the Bahrain lap, too. In the race the inexperienced Pierre Gasly finished a fine fourth for Honda, three places ahead of the great Fernando Alonso in the McLaren-Renault. The little Toro Rosso team was achieving what could reasonably have

been expected of McLaren - best of the rest after the big three. This came hot on the heels of a very troubled, unreliable McLaren pre-winter test programme, where the car had to run with holes cut into its bodywork to prevent overheating, as Gasly with the Honda motor had completed the third-highest number of laps, behind only the Mercedes pair.

THE STOPWATCH DOESN’T LIE AND THOSE numbers revealed that, relative to the competition, McLaren’s technical prowess was not at the level it had believed. For three years an uncompetitive engine had allowed it to hide behind the assumption that its aero and



1995-97 McLaren partners with Mercedes-Benz and brings in David Coulthard ('96) alongside Mika Häkkinen. They struggle, but Adrian Newey joins in '97 to ignite a hot streak for the Woking-based team. **1998** Newey's impact is immediately felt and McLaren wins the '98 constructors championship while Häkkinen takes the first of two titles. **2000-2004** The purple patch fades and Häkkinen retires from F1 after '01. Ferrari spoils the party; in '04, the MP4-19B leaves McLaren fifth - its worst standing since '83. **2005-2006** Coulthard



MCL33 has underlined that recent problems weren't all down to Honda. Right, Zak Brown and Mansour Ojeh face a major rebuilding job



design remained cutting edge. But even some of the Honda's problems can be seen to have been rooted in McLaren's dominant status in the partnership. The 'size zero' concept of engine - with the turbo in the vee - was to maximise the aerodynamics but played its part in limiting the power of the engine. With size zero eventually abandoned in year three of the partnership, a vibration problem that limited the turbo's speed could have been significantly eased had Honda been allowed just a little more space. It was as if McLaren was demanding ultimate standards of performance from an organisation that needed time to grow into the challenge of the hybrid formula -

while failing to provide anything like ultimate standards itself.

So after three years of unreliable McLaren-Hondas that were slow on the straights but competitively quick through slow- to medium-speed corners, the 2018 McLaren-Renault was revealed as slow on the straights but competitively quick through slow- to medium-speed corners... The car's aero efficiencies were clearly ill judged, with way too high a cost in drag for the given range of downforce, something that might well have been true of the Honda years, too. The extra straight-line

speed achieved by use of DRS was less than any other car and at Baku there was another little tell-tale of how wrong that trade-off in the car's conception had been. Alonso was involved in a first-lap skirmish that punctured two of his tyres, ripped off a great section of the front of the floor and punched a hole in the rear, costing significant downforce. Yet with a set of new tyres he rejoined the race - and found that the car was now vastly quicker down the straights, no longer so constrained by drag that wasn't giving enough corresponding downforce. "It was a good upgrade," he said later, only partly joking.

How had the technical team so misjudged things? For Brown, watching one of the early races from the operations room at the factory, one thing became apparent as he asked various questions of the team in the garage. There were far too many answers of, 'I don't know, that's their department.' It was clear that a 'silo' mentality (inward-looking, resistant to sharing of information) had built up around each of the three-pronged technical leadership of the team - Tim Goss, Matt Morris and Peter Prodromou. As Brown investigated further, he found that in some cases

physical barriers had even been erected between the aero, engineering and design groups. Goss was the first casualty, moved aside between the Shanghai and Baku races and subsequently leaving the company.

This technical trio had been put in place after Paddy Lowe departed as technical director in 2013 and the shared responsibility between three ambitious engineers had clearly not gelled in the way originally hoped. Five years of intra-departmental competition was the background to the creation of the ☐

and Newey move to Red Bull. **2005** Juan Pablo Montoya and Kimi Räikkönen come close to the 2005 title (constructors) in a resurgent MP4-20, but the team misses out. The drivers leave after a mixed '06. **2007** 'Spygate' scandal breaks and poleaxes McLaren after Ferrari accuses it of theft and espionage. A fine of \$100m and exclusion from the constructors championship is imposed while Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso engage in a fierce rivalry, losing out to Räikkönen in the title race. **2008** Hamilton clinches

his first drivers championship in dramatic style. **2009** Ron Dennis retires as team principal and the team is given a three-race suspended ban for misleading stewards. **2013** Hamilton leaves for Mercedes. **2014** Dennis returns as CEO but the following year the team ends its engine deal with Mercedes and struggles with Honda hybrids. **2017** McLaren remains off the pace while Dennis is forced out by shareholders. **2018** McLaren battles for fourth in the championship for constructors with its new Renault engines.



Left, racing director Eric Boullier has faced fierce pressure. Below, Alonso finally qualified in the top 10 in Spain

MCL33, a car without the necessary overarching technical vision behind it, resulting in an inappropriate set of performance trade-offs. As well as the departmental competition, there was also the culture that the Honda years had bred of decoupling McLaren's responsibility from Honda's in the performance deficit - as opposed to actually living by the 'win as a team, lose as a team' mantra that Ron Dennis used to espouse.

Ultimately, it was a failure of management. But whose management? At the micro level, arguably Boullier's - since joining early in 2014 he has been the level of management immediately above the destructive rivalry between those technical departments and either hadn't recognised it or had failed to do anything to intervene. That's certainly the feeling within the team at the moment and his role there as racing director is under big pressure. But even that is indicative of a deeper-rooted cultural problem. Boullier seems powerless to prevent himself falling into the same trap as his engineers of protecting his territory against an organisation looking for blame rather than contributing towards moving everything forwards. In reality this is a bigger problem than just one man. It's about management and leadership from the very top - and this is where the damage of McLaren's turbulent boardroom history of the last few years has become evident.

MCLAREN OF THE GOLDEN YEARS WAS RUN as the embodiment of Ron Dennis's vision. With the financial muscle of his partner Mansour Ojjeq quietly but powerfully behind him, the two formed a great partnership. That vision was a team that aspired to be the best at everything, to be dominant. Whatever was

needed would be provided and the big money backers came flocking. The team grew quickly as Dennis became the first team principal to understand the scale of F1's expansion in the late 1980s/early '90s. It became a corporation, requiring a much more formal structure to operate. It combined that corporate horsepower with the competitive zeal of a top racing team and became the standard by which all others were judged. Superior resource fuelled McLaren and it was all directed with a unifying purpose and vision. It created a certain arrogance, a 'we are McLaren, therefore we are right' attitude, but one that could be largely backed up.

But that hubris played a part not only in the loss of such valuable mavericks as Adrian Newey and the rupturing damage of Spygate, but also in the aftermath of the falling out between Dennis and Ojjeq. As the former partners became bitter enemies locked in a fight for control of the team, so over time McLaren was left to run itself without that unifying vision, without the aggressive pursuit of cutting-edge technology, and so personal and departmental rivalries took hold. That damaging battle lasted more than five years and in the meantime McLaren steadily drifted back from the front, the income gradually dwindled. But still that arrogant belief remained - albeit now without the goods to back it up. Honda's three-year struggle allowed that reality to be denied, but the direct comparison to the identically powered Red Bull has exposed it.

Into that tricky narrative walked first Boullier and, in November 2016, Zak Brown as the ultimate boss (albeit reporting to the majority shareholding Bahraini group). They've each inherited a cultural problem.

Boullier arrived from a much more straightforward racing team background and has perhaps been poorly equipped to deal with root causes of the peculiarly McLaren problems, while Brown has arrived as an experienced commercial and racing operator but without a technical background. It would be unusual if they'd each been able to change a culture instantly.

ALL OF THAT SAID, WITH AN OPERATING budget of about \$180 million compared to \$300 million-plus for Mercedes and Ferrari, McLaren is approximately where it might be expected to be on the grid. It has approximately 700 staff, about 200 less than the top teams. Mercedes deploys three times as many people on, for example, suspension design. Does McLaren have shareholders that could provide a top team budget? Yes, of course it does. But why would that group loosen the purse strings further to a management team that has just failed to deliver what was expected after the buying out of the Honda deal?

Brown, in getting a handle on the internal competitions that have resulted in the sub-par MCL33, has made the first step to McLaren's recovery by recognising the problem. But it's fallen so far that even if he has the required depth and long-term vision, it will take years to rebuild.

On the positive side, with Liberty and the FIA going all-out to impose a \$150 million cost cap on teams from 2021 onwards, in theory that would bring the front of the field back down to McLaren levels of spend. In the meantime, McLaren is very much a work in progress and a testimony to the destructive power of hubris. ☒



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Timing is everything

EDITOR Richard Holt

PRECISION

S U M M E R 2 0 1 8



In this season's issue: **p104** Bremont Endurance fuses functionality with style
p107 Richard Mille launches first joint watch venture with McLaren Automotive **p108** Fabergé DTZ –
a fresh twist on telling the time in different parts of the world **p110** Round-up of the latest launches,
including new arrivals from Christopher Ward, Rolex, Tudor, Porsche Design, Audemars Piguet & more





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P R E C I S I O N

S U M M E R 2 0 1 8

B R E M O N T

Anyone over the age of 40 will remember when quartz watches were cutting-edge tech. If you were a child of the 1970s, your first watch may have been a wind-up Timex, before you were delighted to move on to a fancy Swatch. That was where the future was going, and it wasn't going to be long before clockwork disappeared altogether.

Many watchmakers began abandoning their traditional craft as the companies prepared for the inevitable takeover of battery power. And yet against the odds the mechanical watch industry not only clung on but kicked back with force. Here we are, decades after the expected demise, and a proper watch is still one with cogs and springs.

But why did the mechanical watch refuse to die? For most people the answer is an emotional one. They love the idea of a fiendishly clever little machine that has been refined over centuries. People who are deeply into watches think of them as almost alive, that the relentless ticking is more heartbeat than mere interaction of man-made components.

But remove the emotional side and what is left? Are these just handsome toys to pimp up a person's wrist? Not according to the adventurer Ben Saunders, the first man to have skied solo, unsupported and unassisted to both the North and South Poles. Saunders, who has been on 12 expeditions to the polar regions since 2001, covering over 4000 miles in the process, reckons that mechanical is still the practical choice if you are in some of the world's toughest environments.

"On the last big trip in Antarctica, we had ambient air temperatures of nearly minus 48, minus 49 degrees centigrade," he said. "When something like a GPS with an LCD screen gets that cold, the screen becomes almost impossible to read; it becomes very sluggish and slow to respond. Even specialist lithium batteries go flat very quickly, so having an accurate timepiece is crucial when it comes to navigating. The best thing still, the most reliable way of doing that, is having a mechanical watch that doesn't have batteries in it."

In his role as ambassador for the British watch company Bremont, Saunders has taken what most people regard as a luxury product and treated it about as harshly as you could imagine. Every time he makes a trip to one of the freezing ends of the earth he straps a Bremont to the outside of his jacket - as hitching up a sleeve to look at your watch in such conditions is not to be recommended.

His latest piece is the Endurance, a watch he helped create in collaboration with Bremont. Although to him it may be a functional no-nonsense timepiece, he did insist on one little bit of modern fancy, an exhibition caseback. Saunders decided that, even though his watch was a work tool, the chronometer-certified automatic movement was too good to hide away. This meant that Bremont had to design a new crystal and titanium caseback that would be able to cope with polar conditions and also be water resistant to 500 metres.

The watch is named after the ship that Ernest Shackleton used on his heroic attempt to reach the South Pole little more than a century ago. Back then watches were mechanical or nothing, and this new Bremont is carrying on that traditional craft. But with a century of technological development, this piece of old technology is also, surprisingly, still at the cutting edge.

www.bremont.com



The Bremont Endurance has a COSC chronometer-certified automatic movement with GMT function and 42-hour power reserve. It is water-resistant to 500 metres and has an automatic helium escape valve. Case diameter 43mm, orange Nato strap. Limited to 300 pieces. £4795

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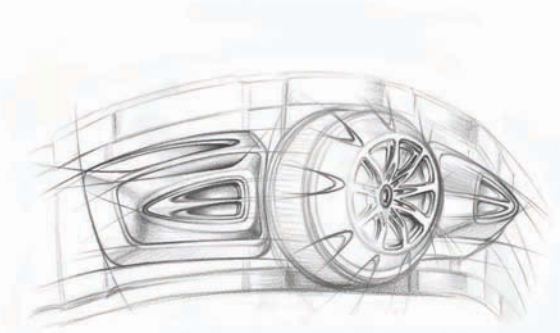
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RICHARD MILLE



The name Richard Mille is very well known, but not always terribly well understood. It gets in all the right places, thanks to partnerships with glamorous names in sports like F1, golf, athletics and polo. But for all the people who recognise the name, those who are not that deeply into watches can find it puzzling.

This is not surprising, as nobody foresaw the success of a company like Richard Mille, other than perhaps the man that gave the company its name, the car-loving Frenchman who in the late 1990s came up with the formula for a whole different kind of watch.

Mille used his obsession with F1 engineering as an inspiration to make watches with techniques and materials that had never been used before. They also did not look like watches were supposed to look, and

to top it all they carried price tags more readily associated with real estate.

They could also be treated differently to other watches. Normally something intricate like a tourbillon means a watch must be carried with care, worn as an object of admiration, but not bashed around too much. But a Richard Mille, no matter what clever machinery is inside, is designed to take one hell of a beating.

Since launching at the turn of the century, the company has produced watches that are the object of obsessive affection for a select club of people. They share the vision of a man who looked at the mechanical watch and decided it needed to be driven into another dimension. Not everybody understands. For those that do, this is not a problem.



RM 11-03 McLaren Automatic Flyback Chronograph is the first watch jointly commissioned by Richard Mille and McLaren Automotive. The case, designed to be light yet extremely strong, is made with the proprietary material Carbon TPT interlaced with orange Quartz TPT. The was created in collaboration between McLaren design boss Rob Melville and Richard Mille engineer Fabrice Namura. It has little touches like titanium chronograph pushers designed to look like the headlights of the McLaren 720S, and the crown is shaped like a McLaren lightweight wheel. Limited to 500 pieces worldwide. £173,000
www.richardmille.com





P R E C I S I O N

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F A B E R G É

When you want to buy a high-quality watch, there are many companies - both from the old and the new school, that are more than happy to take your card details. There are many established firms that have golden reputations based on decades, sometimes centuries, of being at the top of their game. The newer players, like Richard Mille (opposite page) must go very big indeed to get themselves into the conversation.

Fabergé does not have to worry about name recognition, as its reputation as a jeweller extends far beyond its own immediate sphere. You do not need to know anything about jewellery to remember that the priceless objet d'art artfully stolen by Roger Moore's Bond in *Octopussy* was a movie-built interpretation of one of the legendary Fabergé eggs.

Founded in St Petersburg in the mid-19th century, the firm, under the founder's son Carl Fabergé, became the

official jeweller to the Russia tsars, creating many brilliant bejewelled masterpieces including the Imperial eggs, figurines, ornaments and automata.

Five years ago the reborn Fabergé decided to get serious about making watches. When jewellery companies work to get a piece of the high-end watch market they are always aware of the suspicion that the watches will be more about glamour rather than sophisticated timekeeping. Fabergé headed this accusation off from the start by hiring only the very best people. Watch director Aurélie Picard, formerly of Audemars Piguet and Omega, engaged the services of the movement makers Agenhor and Renaud et Papi to create cutting-edge, innovative mechanical movements.

The result is watches that are beautifully put together pieces, as you would expect from a company with Fabergé's background. With engines that are more than a match for the intricate bodywork.



RESERVOIR

SWISS MADE



SUPERCHARGED

1930-1960: On the horizon of the glorious English landscape appears an elegant gentleman at the wheel of a legendary convertible.

The cavernous, throaty sound of the iconic engine is muffled by the foggy air, and the only thing that can be seen is the reflection of a ray of light on the chromium. The minutes tick by, and then appears the vision of exquisitely crafted leather and aluminium. With its retrograde minute, jumping hour and power reserve, the SUPERCHARGED watch invites you to get behind the steering wheel, tinker with the old-fashioned dials and give the old girl a good run, with all the passion of the true enthusiast.

Available To Order Now At

RESERVOIR-WATCH.COM

For further details in the UK contact www.veritime.london — 0207 603 5688

CHRISTOPHER WARD

The luxury watch industry has been slow to embrace online shopping. The thinking for many of the big-name firms was that spending a large amount of money on a watch is something that needs to happen in person, that the buyer needs to see and feel the watch before committing to a purchase. That view is finally changing, and brands are starting to realise that buying pretty much everything online is where we are heading, whether we like it or not. One company paving the way is the brand Christopher Ward. It was the brainchild of three British businessmen who spotted an opportunity to produce high-quality, Swiss-made watches that would sell at a lower price than the competition by being available online only. Launched in 2005, Christopher Ward has developed a great range, from motor sport-inspired pieces, through to dive and even dress watches. The Christopher Ward C7 Rapide Automatic has a Swiss-made self-winding movement with a 38-hour power reserve. 42mm steel and aluminium case. Water resistant to 100 metres. £695, www.christopherward.co.uk



MÜHLE-GLASHÜTTE

This family-owned company has a history going back almost 150 years, when Robert Mühle started making watches in Glashütte, the Saxony town that remains the heart of German watchmaking. The founder made the firm's name by producing high-quality nautical instruments. Now on the fifth generation of family ownership, Mühle-Glashütte still makes marine chronometers, as well as a very handsome range of well-made wristwatches. The Mühle-Glashütte 29er Tag/ Datum has an automatic movement with day/date indications in a 42mm stainless-steel case. Water resistant to 100 metres. From £1440, www.muehle-glashuette.de

CERTINA

The Swiss brand Certina was founded in the Swiss town of Grenchen in 1888 and has claims to fame that include ground-breaking watches that were tough enough to take on the Himalayas in the 1950s, and then in the 1970s a Certina adorned the wrist of one Muhammad Ali. The company motto is Reliability, Precision and Innovation and one of the innovations it is known for is the DS (Double Security) system of shock and water-resistance. The Certina DS Action Big Date Automatic has a 41mm stainless steel case with screw-down caseback, housing a Swiss self-winding movement. Water resistant to 200 metres. From £610, www.certina.com



PORSCHE DESIGN

Sometimes it can sometimes be difficult to make your mark when you are born into a successful family business. Ferdinand Alexander Porsche, nicknamed Butzi, had big shoes to fill: his grandfather, also called Ferdinand, founded the Porsche company and designed the VW Beetle; his father, yet another Ferdinand (better known as Ferry) designed the Porsche 356. So how do you follow that? Well, Butzi only went and designed the 911, which should have been plenty for anyone, but in the 1970s he got itchy creative muscles and founded Porsche Design, making objects of fine design like sunglasses and watches. It was a separate company that is now back under Porsche control, and in the last couple of years has been making some beautiful, uniquely styled watches. The Porsche Design 1919 Chronotimer Flyback Brown & Leather has a 42mm titanium case. Chronometer-certified automatic movement. Water resistant to 100 metres. £4450, www.porsche-design.com

AUDEMARS PIGUET

Back in the 1970s, if you spent a lot of money on a watch it would probably be gold, and it would almost certainly not be sporty. But at that time, anyone sportingly inclined was beginning to see the alternative in the waves of cheap, durable quartz watches that could take a beating, or at least be easily replaced. The Royal Oak was Audemars Piguet's act of defiance. It made a radical watch that had a steel case, yet was so expensively produced that it cost more than the non-sporty, gold-cased watches from AP's rivals. Initially the Gérald Genta-designed watch did not sell well, but then its time came, and the Royal Oak became a mainstay of the Audemars Piguet range, and a reminder that the whole point of rules is that you should break them. The Audemars Piguet Royal Oak "Jumbo" Extra Thin has a self-winding movement in a 39mm titanium case. Waterproof to 50 metres with a minimum power reserve of 40 hours. £29,400, www.audemarspiguet.com

PANERAI

If you ever wonder why watches got so big, a lot of it is down to Panerai. The Florence-based brand made its name making watches for Italian frogmen in the early part of the 20th century. When it was revived in the 1990s it took the chunky, no-nonsense aesthetic of those early watches and transformed it into a brand for people who like their watches cool, functional, and - for the most part - big. But then everybody got in on the game and suddenly any Premiership footballer worth his salt would want a watch with a dial roughly the diameter of the match ball. Thankfully the race to be biggest has abated in recent years. Even Panerai makes some sub-40mm watches now, but you can, of course, still have a big one if you want. This one measures a nicely sized 42mm. Big enough, but not showing off. The Panerai Luminor Due 3 Days Automatic Acciaio has a 42mm stainless-steel case and a self-winding movement with three days of power reserve. Water resistant to 30 metres. £5500. www.panerai.com





RESERVOIR

Watch companies love a bit of fanfare. Before you actually get to see a new watch, they like to indulge in a bit of pre-launch fluffing. You are encouraged to believe that the watch you are going to see is so ground-breaking that you will always remember the day when you were lucky enough to see it and touch it for the first time. Then when the curtain is pulled back, what often strikes you is a feeling of familiarity. This is not anybody's fault, because if you are riffing on various design themes based around the classic clockface, you are going to end up covering some of the same ground. In some cases, exactly the same ground. If you are the French company Reservoir, the way to avoid this design clash is to look not to other watches for inspiration, but to dashboards. It has a range of watches based around the theme of instruments from cars, planes and submarines. The Supercharged watches have a minute hand that moves from zero to sixty in an hour then snaps back to zero, as the central hour-indication jumps forward. The Reservoir Supercharged Sport is powered by a Swiss automatic movement with retrograde minute hand, jumping hours, and fuel-gauge style power reserve indicator. It has a 43mm stainless-steel case and is water resistant to 50 metres. The Reservoir Supercharged Sport Red Zone has the same features, but the minute track has a red "danger" zone and five-minute markings.

£3500, www.reservoir-watch.com

TAG HEUER BAMFORD

The watch business does take itself terribly seriously. You could put this down to the overwhelming Swissness of the industry, but interestingly nobody does a dry, technical, reference number-heavy watch presentation quite like the super-cool Italian firm Panerai. But whatever the reason, everyone always seems to be on their best behaviour. Somebody who has refused to play by the rules from the beginning is the British entrepreneur George Bamford, who made his name doing top-quality customisations of luxury watches from the likes of Rolex and Audemars Piguet. His signature style is blacked-out cases, which look great, but some people do not think that anybody should be messing around with these watches. The customers disagreed, and Bamford operated for years as an industry bad boy, making watches people wanted as the industry as a whole looked away. But Jean-Claude Biver, the LVMH watch supremo, saw that the industry was making a mistake, and Bamford now does official collaborations with TAG Heuer, Zenith and Bulgari. The TAG Heuer Monaco Bamford is a modern take on the Heuer Monaco worn by Steve McQueen in the 1971 film *Le Mans*. The Bamford Monaco has an automatic chronograph movement in a 39mm carbon case, black opalin dial, with black alligator leather or rubber strap.

£6600, www.tagheuer.com/bamfordwatchdepartment.com



TUDOR

Tudor was created by Hans Wilsdorf as a brand that would give Rolex-level quality but at a more accessible price. The name reflected his anglophile leanings, having spent a few years living in London as a young man, where he met an English woman named Florence who would become his wife. Despite the modest-sounding origins, Tudor has always refused to live in its big sister's shadow, making a reputation of its own for innovation, and more recently for making some of the most stylish watches around. The Tudors released over the last few years, leveraging the brand's past and bringing it right up to date, have been some of the best-loved watches among press and public alike. The Tudor Black Bay Fifty-Eight has a 39mm steel case and a chronometer-certified automatic movement with a 70-hour power reserve. Water-resistant to 200 metres. *£2560 on bracelet and £2430 on leather or fabric strap.* www.tudorwatch.com



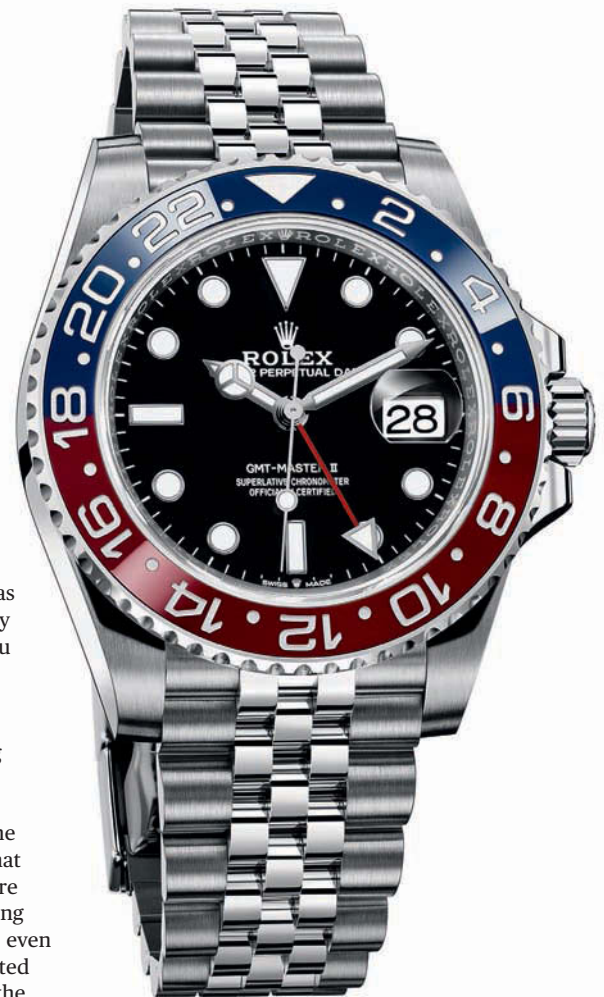
ROLEX

When there is any discussion of fancy watches, no name comes up as much as Rolex. The brand has been so endlessly talked, sung and rapped about that you would have to go pretty deep into the rainforest to find someone who hasn't heard of Rolex.

How well the name travels was a big consideration for the founder, Hans Wilsdorf. When the young Swiss watchmaker started the company in the early 20th century, he chose a word that was easy to pronounce no matter where you came from. And soon it was tripping easily of tongues all around the world, even if Mr Wilsdorf perhaps hadn't anticipated the Japanese difficulty in coping with the letters R and L.

You might think that the dominance of one company would cause people in the industry to gnash with jealousy at the behemoth that is Rolex. But in fact there is none of that. Not to say that other companies do not want some of the magic, but the way senior people from other watch companies talk about Rolex is always in tones of quiet awe for the way it has consistently been at the top of the watchmaking game for so long, continuing to make watches that people lust after and consider selling vital organs to acquire.

Two of this year's most talked about new watches are two versions of the GMT-Master II, one in steel, the other in Rolex's proprietary Everose gold. The GMT dates back to the 1950s when Pan-Am - another glamorous name, but one that is sadly no longer with us - requested a watch to help



their pilots keep track of two timezones simultaneously.

The result was a major new addition to the Rolex line-up, with another hour hand for the second timezone. Over the years the GMT-Master has been developed into various different versions, along the way finding its way onto the wrist of stars such as Sophia Loren and Clint Eastwood, to name but two.

Some of the most popular GMTs have featured the so-called 'Pepsi' blue and red bezel, like the new steel version (pictured). The variations in types of dial and bezels are some of the things that Rolex lovers enjoy talking about. And those discussions are never ending. Everyone may have heard of Rolex, but they can't have heard everything about Rolex, because that stuff runs really deep.

The Rolex GMT-Master II has a 40mm case in Oyster steel (£6800) or Everose gold (£10,350). It has an in-house automatic movement with 70-hour power reserve and is water-resistant to 100 metres. www.rolex.com



Race to

This month marks the latest running of the world's most challenging hillclimb. But what does it take to conquer Pikes Peak? We asked former winners to explain how they did it

WRITER Clyde Brolin

the clouds

T

he American writer Ernest Hemingway famously rated motor racing as one of only three “real” sports alongside mountaineering and bullfighting; the rest

are merely “games”. If so, the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb offers a unique blend of the first two - as drivers speed up a 14,000ft mountain via a 12.4-mile course snaking around sheer Colorado cliffs, where mistakes can lead to an all-too-real end of the road.

This legendary “Race to the Clouds” first took off more than a century ago, and has been attracting some of the greatest drivers ever since. But in recent years it has also attracted some serious teams. Keen to make their mark on the hill and bathe in the subsequent publicity that victory brings, these big budget attempts have changed the character of the event. Even so, the basics remain the same: drive upwards as fast as you can until you can’t go any further.

So what does it take to be the fastest? The current record is held by former rally world champion Sébastien Loeb. Five years ago he piloted a 875bhp, 875kg Peugeot 208 T16 up the course in 8min 13sec. According to Loeb, the key to his success was the planning which ensured all cylinders were firing - inside both the car’s 3.2-litre, twin-turbo V6 engine and the mind of the man behind the wheel (not easy in the thin air of the mountain top).

“At Pikes Peak you have to be 100 per cent sure that you don’t confuse two corners,” Loeb deadpans. “So you need to work very hard on it. I started by watching videos, like I used to do in rallying. Then we went there and began our recces.

“I used my co-driver Daniel Elena to start: on the first pass he’d write my notes, then on the second pass he’d tell me the notes and I’d either confirm or modify them. From that point I would tell him the notes while I was driving and he would correct me. I’d say ‘this is 120’ and he’d reply ‘no, 120 minus’. Once I knew my notes were good, I started memorising all the corners.

“For me notes are the best way to know how hard to push. If a corner near the bottom is ‘140’ I know to use sixth gear. Then if there is another ‘140’ five kilometres later I know it will be the same, because my notes are precise. We did the road nine times like that until I could relay all the notes by heart...”

To complete this Peak practice the Frenchman then studied videos of all his recces, plus onboard footage from the previous year’s competition, which he analysed with Elena.

But Pikes Peak doesn’t simply give away its riches; next came the last-minute hitches and the threat of rain.

“When I was on the start line waiting to go I

could see the clouds closing in at the top of the mountain,” says Loeb. “I remember thinking that if we didn’t get going soon, it would be really difficult. There was pressure because I knew there had been so much work and investment from all the partners.

“Finally, after all the practice, it was just down to me and I had to perform. I didn’t know if I should push absolutely to the maximum or to a comfortable pace to make sure of victory. In the end, I decided to push to the limit...”

Not half. Loeb’s 8min 13.878sec not only broke the previous best by a staggering minute and a half, it was a couple of seconds faster



“He was faster than the theoretical ideal Peugeot’s computer had calculated”

than the theoretical ideal time Peugeot’s computer had calculated was possible.

“It was a very good run,” smiles Loeb. “It was certainly not over the limit; I wanted to go fast but without big risks - because I knew I wasn’t allowed to go over the limit... So I was right on my limit but the feeling in the car was good.

“In rallying I needed this sensation to be able to push hard, too. When it goes like that, it’s just perfect. You feel well yet safe because you don’t feel you’re taking risks, you just push hard and do exactly what you want. That’s the best feeling you can have on a rally stage.

“At Pikes Peak it was a car you didn’t have to slide because with all the grip and the downforce it was important to drive smoothly. So the feeling wasn’t quite as easy or at one with the car as I had been in rallying, but it wasn’t bad.”

LOEB MIGHT BE THE FASTEST BUT American motor racing legend Bobby Unser, a triple Indianapolis 500 winner, is also the most successful driver to have competed at Pikes Peak with 13 overall wins. And this was back when it was gravel, rather than the comparative luxury of the tarmac enjoyed by Loeb and his fellow real-sports lovers since it was fully paved in 2011.

Unser now attributes his success to a peculiar dedication to the cause as a kid - not out on the mountain but in the comfort of his bed.

“When I was eight years old I’d go to sleep every night thinking about Pikes Peak,” says Unser. “This is how I learned all 156 turns. Later I read that scientific tests had shown the subconscious mind works all the time when you’re sleeping. I was already doing that so I thought: ‘I was right.’

“If you think about anything before you go to sleep, your subconscious mind carries it on. It’s a free thing with its own energy. Your body gets its proper rest but your brain doesn’t have to sleep. The subconscious mind is one of the most powerful things there is for a driver. I did that throughout my career and I still do it today.”

The Unser family had long dominated Pikes Peak - Bobby’s ‘Uncle Louie’ first won it in 1934 - and Bobby’s own personal era of glory lasted from the Fifties right up to the Eighties, during which time he also inspired countless kids to dream big.

A 15-year-old Paul Dallenbach went to watch at Devil’s Playground in 1983 and recalls being “blown away by just how crazy it all was”. He was hooked.

Six years later Dallenbach raced at Pikes Peak for the first time. In those days before YouTube his chosen method of learning the course was simply to keep driving up and down, even if he quickly discovered how the view can vary...

“The best way to learn Pikes Peak is in thirds,” says Dallenbach. “You do the bottom third, middle third and top third. Then you piece it all together. Pikes Peak has a lot of things that happen in twos as well. It goes somewhere, then it will do almost the same pattern. It does that a lot, all the way up. But the mistake I made in my first year was picking landmarks on the road. Then on race day there were people standing in front of them! I was like, whoaaa...”

“The hardest part is when you get above the tree line [about 12,000ft]. There are some guardrails up there now, so if you see a guardrail you know a sharp turn is coming up. But back then there were no guardrails. All you saw as you went up was sky and you didn’t know if it was a hairpin, a kink or what. That’s where experience helps.”

Dallenbach insists it took him a few years to fully figure it out - but in 1993 he took the overall title and broke the all-time record 🏆



Bobby Unser has a record 13 Pikes Peak wins. Paul Dallenbach (below) has been the only US victor during the past 25 years



Psychology Pikes Peak

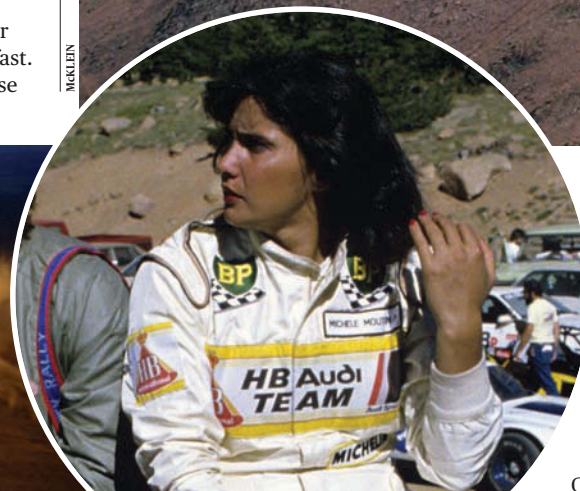
with a 10min 43.630sec. He repeated the feat 10 years later and he's been competing ever since, racking up class wins and usually finishing near the top of the tree.

Except, that is, for 2012 when his dreams of victory turned into every Pikes Peak driver's worst nightmare...

"It happened so fast but I recall every second of it," he says. "I remember realising the throttle was sticking, then the trees were like *Star Wars* when they go into hyperspace. I closed my eyes - and as I was hitting the trees and knocking them down it felt like a machine gun: *duhduhduhduh...* I was just waiting for one to completely impale me or hit me in the head.

"Everything goes through your mind: 'Oh God my throttle's stuck, oh my God I thought I was going to win, oh my God I'm going to die...' The whole thing. All that work was disappearing right there. And all this time I was still holding on and trying to turn. Both my hands were completely swollen when I was done."

The video is terrifying but mercifully Dallenbach went off barely 10 seconds after the start of the race, so help reached him fast. He had flipped upside down so the response



\$10m Peugeot spent does rather dwarf his annual \$35,000 budget. Next up comes Volkswagen's bid for a record with an electric car in the hands of reigning champion Romain Dumas. So it seems Pikes Peak still has enough of an aura to tempt everyone from the grass roots to the biggest manufacturers across the pond.

CURIOUS, THEN, THAT THIS EVENT WAS off the beaten track for the rest of the world until as late as the Eighties; the first European competitor was Michèle Mouton, who competed alongside co-driver Fabrizia Pons in 1984 before running solo in 1985.

That year the Frenchwoman drove a modified Group B Audi Quattro S1 with 600bhp (70bhp more than her WRC-spec car), but fell foul of the authorities after she was caught speeding by 5mph during a practice start. She was hit hard by penalties and given the firm impression no one over there wanted a foreign winner, let alone a female one. As she headed cloudwards, the red mist duly descended...

"Because the organisers gave me such a hard time, I really decided to go for it," she smiles. "There's a section near the top with four left-handers, all flat except the second one. But I was so mad I decided to go flat out in the second corner as well, instead of lifting."

"From up there it's a drop of hundreds of metres. The car was sliding and it felt like I'd end up all the way down. I didn't want to go straight off so I pushed more to turn - because

team righted his car, pulled him out and threw down dirt to limit the chances of his 22 gallons of methanol bursting into flames.

Miraculously, Dallenbach escaped intact apart from a bloody nose, some wounds to his hands and a six-week-long headache. "When I woke up my best friend was standing there and my wife was close by saying 'Wake up, wake up!' I was like: 'Where am I? Did we start yet?' I was confused with what was going on. I had tunnel vision and everything around me was grey.

"They airlifted me out and it wasn't until I was in the hospital that I realised: 'Oh, my throttle stuck.' They went back the next day to get the car and the throttle was still stuck right open. So there was no escape...

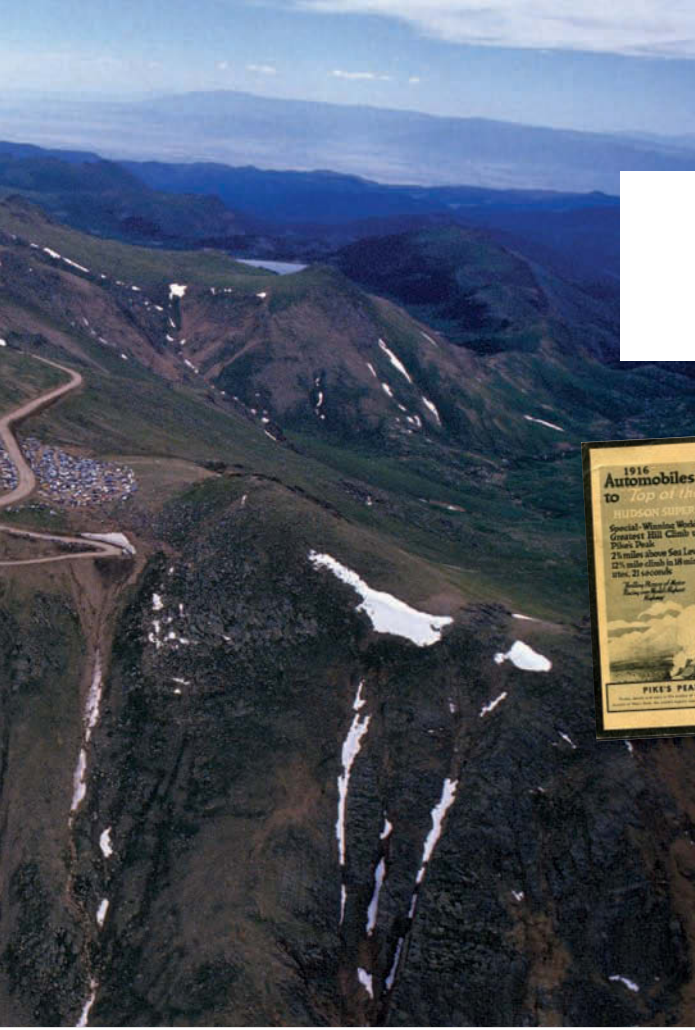
"There's an eerie picture of when I'd just woken up and it's quite haunting. My eyes are crossed and I'm completely out of it. I look back and realise if the car had been angled even slightly differently I would have been dead. It just wasn't my time to die."

"Mouton was given the firm impression that no one wanted a foreign winner"

Apparently it also takes a hell of a lot for the love of this place to die: Dallenbach was back in action the following year.

Like many veterans he bemoans the fact that Pikes Peak is no longer a dirt track - even though Colorado does still have a few such hillclimbs. But the decision to start paving the track in 2002 came about when the Sierra Club environmental organisation sued the city of Colorado Springs for problems caused by decades of stray dust.

Dallenbach is a fan of Loeb's glory run, too, and the publicity it regenerated, even if the



PIKES
PEAK

in numbers



1916

The event was founded by Spencer Penrose (who also built the original Pikes Peak Highway itself) and first held in August 1916 - making it the second-oldest American motor sport event after the Indianapolis 500, which dates back to May 1911.

518m

The mountain's biggest drop is 1700ft (518m) at the aptly named Bottomless Pit.

12.42 miles

The hillclimb is held on a public toll road on a mountain (named after Zebulon Pike) near Colorado Springs; the course is 12.42 miles long and features 156 corners.

14,110ft

The start line is at an altitude of 9390ft (2862m) with the finish at 14,110ft (4301m), an overall vertical rise of 4720ft (1439m) at an average gradient of 7 per cent.

8min 13.878sec

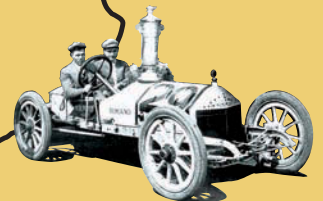
Sébastien Loeb's 2013 benchmark (8min 13.878sec) remains the fastest Pikes Peak climb, at an average speed of 87mph. Next comes fellow Frenchman Romain Dumas, with 8min 51.445sec in 2016.

6

Despite its clear dangers, only six competitors have lost their lives at the event - most recently motorcyclist Carl Sorensen in 2015.

130

The event features up to 130 entrants including categories for motorcycles, sidecars, semi-trucks, electric vehicles and huge-winged open-wheelers.



\$1000

The inaugural Pikes Peak hill climb in 1916 was won in a time of 20min 55.60sec by Rea Lentz, an unknown driving a home-made car who took home a prize of \$1,000...

at least I wanted to go off with the back of the car first. So I pushed, I pushed, I pushed, I pushed... and the car stayed on the road. From then on instead of being afraid I was decided, and I knew I would take the next corner even faster than I'd done in practice.

"It shows the mental side makes a huge difference. It's all in your head: motivation, determination, when you want something so much... You don't even think about the corners and you start believing you can go faster than the notes are telling you. I think that's what happened to me when I won Pikes Peak. It's like dancing."

When Mouton waltzed to the overall prize and the new course record, it was the first time it had gone outside America. This was all too much for Bobby Unser, who came out of retirement at the age of 52 and used all his years of experience - and all those dreamy nights - to take the same Audi Quattro that little bit faster a year later.

But the tide had turned: in the following years Group B greats Walter Röhrl and Ari Vatanen took to the hill and returned with silverware - and more records. Since then those pesky foreigners have proved hard to beat. New Zealand's Rod Millen dominated the Nineties, then the Noughties were largely the preserve of Japan's Nobuhiro Tajima. Then came Loeb and now Dumas.

In fact, Paul Dallenbach's two wins are the only home-grown outright victories of the last 25 years.

Whether that changes on June 24 remains to be seen.

From monster SUVs to all-electric supercars, big name manufacturers are scrambling to compete at this year's Pikes Peak

WRITER Samarth Kanal



KINGS OF THE

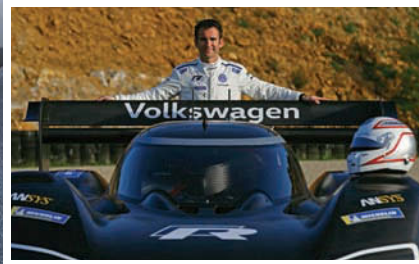
Although Pikes Peak is no longer topped with gravel, the challenge for 2018 is set to be as intense as ever. Double Pikes Peak winner Rhys Millen will use a tank of medical-grade oxygen when he attempts to break the SUV record in Bentley's Bentayga later this month. "Quite a lot of competitors have gone there with high blood pressure issues or altitude sickness, fainted and crashed because of the lack of oxygen," he said earlier this year. Bentley knows what's at stake, and the

manufacturer has gone all-out to beat the existing record held by the Range Rover Sport, which completed the course in 12min 35.61sec. That was five years ago, however, and Bentley, with its lime-green W12 contender, should be confident of breaking the record - unless the competing Acura RDX pulls off a major upset. Both feature in the 'exhibition class', which the organiser says exists to 'demonstrate advancements in the practical application of motor sport technology.'

There will be a little bit less breathing room for Romain Dumas, who will be looking to break the electric record of 8min 57.118sec in Volkswagen's new IDR.

In 2016 Millen set the existing record in a Drive eOPP100, which boasts 1190kW of power (nearly 1600bhp) in a package weighing 1200kg. Contrast that to Volkswagen's claimed output of 680bhp/507kW and Dumas's job seems even harder. Then again, VW claims the car, which weighs 1100kg including Dumas, will hit 60mph in just 2.25sec.

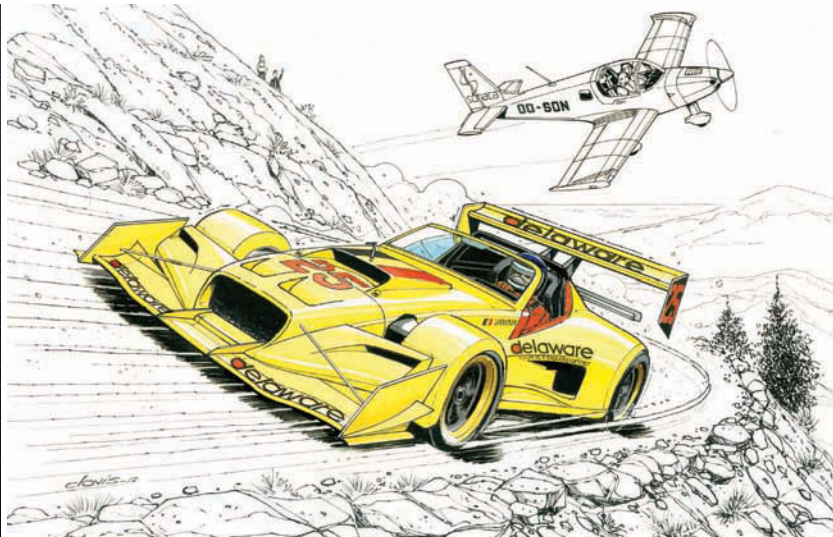
The manufacturer will launch its range of ID electric road cars next year and is using the hillclimb to prove its battery tech. "Customers have always benefited from the findings made in motor sport," said VW's development head Frank Welsch, adding that the assault on Pikes Peak was the real "acid test" of the technology.



Rhys Millen represents Bentley (above), while Romain Dumas (left) moves to electric VW and Vanina Ickx (right) is nominated to drive the distinctive Gillet Vertigo (below)



HILL



The only other electric car present will be a 2018 Nissan Leaf with Japanese rally veteran Fumio Nutahara at the helm. Expect the Leaf to be modified in some way, as it's competing in the 'time attack' class for production-based vehicles. He's going up against Vanina Ickx's Belgian supercar, the Gillet Vertigo, a 1986 Lancia Delta S4, numerous Subaru Imprezas and the McLaren 12C of former NASCAR driver Clint Vahsholtz, who has been competing at Pikes Peak since 1992. Paul Dallenbach's class record of 9min 46.001sec has stood since 2013 and, in the right conditions, could be topped.

Dallenbach is a veteran of the mountain having won on the dirt, mixed-surface and

paved iterations of Pikes Peak, and this year will be his 25th entry. The Dallenbach Special, which you may have seen challenge for the Goodwood Festival of Speed hillclimb record, is something of a family heirloom as his brother Wally Dallenbach Jr and Wally's son, Wyatt, have both scored podiums in it (to go with Paul's two outright wins). With dominant open-wheel driver and 2017 winner Vahsholtz having moved to 'time attack' competition, Dallenbach P stands a chance of beating last year's record of 9min 35.747sec, held by Vahsholtz. Greg Tracy, six-time motorcycle champion and 2014 electric record holder, might have something to say about that.

He'll compete in the open class in a 2018 Sierra Summit.

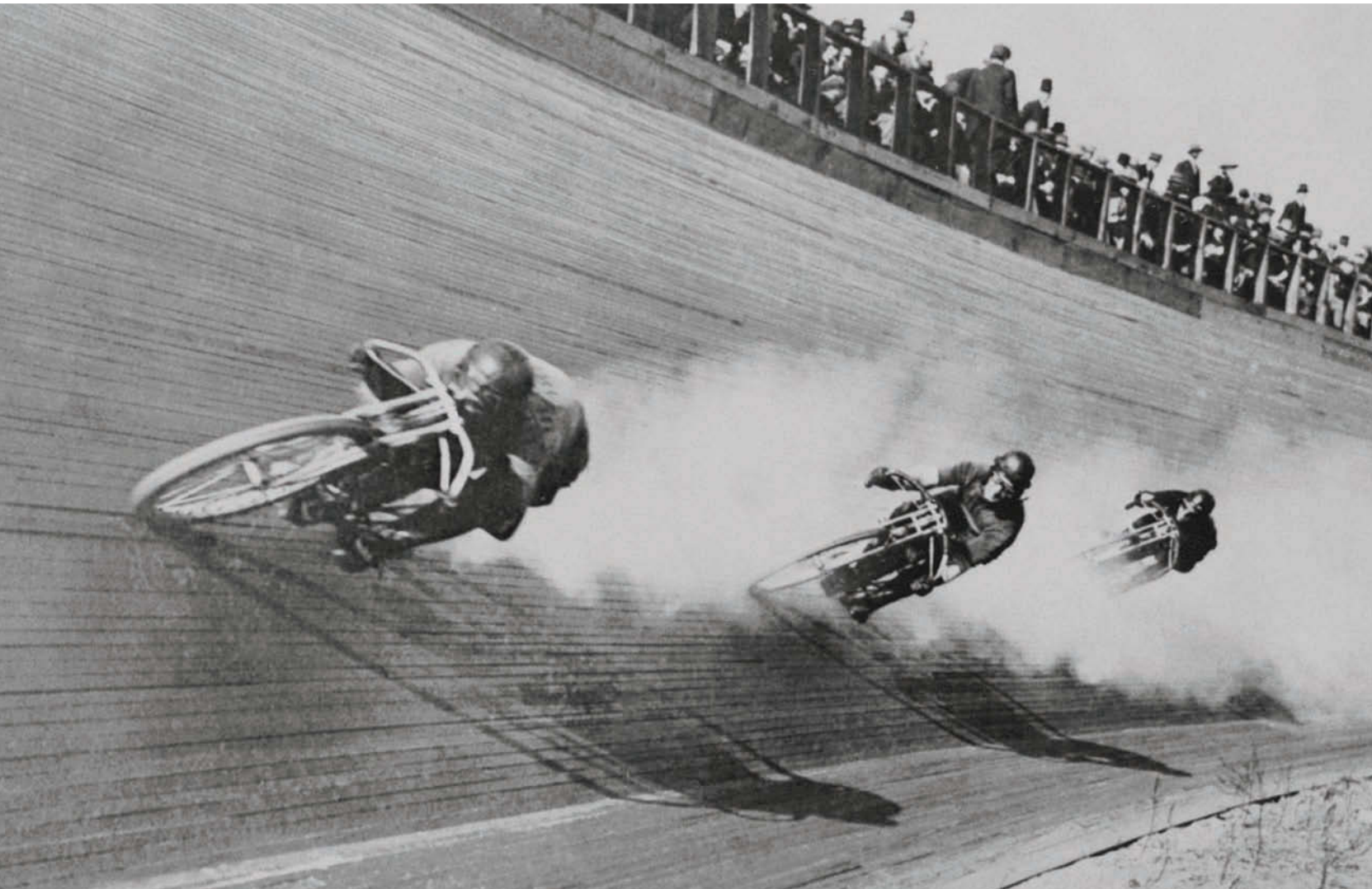
The 'open class' follows the same regulation as the 'time attack' class, but major engine modifications can be made to the production vehicles entered. Peter Cunningham, who set the 2017 'open class' record in his Acura TLX GT (Honda Accord) with a blistering time of 9min 33.797sec, is back again. Also in an Acura TLX will be Nick Robinson, a senior automotive engineer at Honda, who won the class in 2016. Pitted against them will be sports car veteran and journalist Randy Pobst, driving a 2018 Ford Mustang GT. The race to the clouds is very much on. 📺

'SPEED FANS
FELT THE BLOOD
CREEPING UP TO
THE ROOTS OF
THEIR HAIR'

Motorcycle board-track racing took America by storm in the early years of the 20th century. But it wasn't long before the motordromes became known as murderdromes

WRITER Mat Oxley







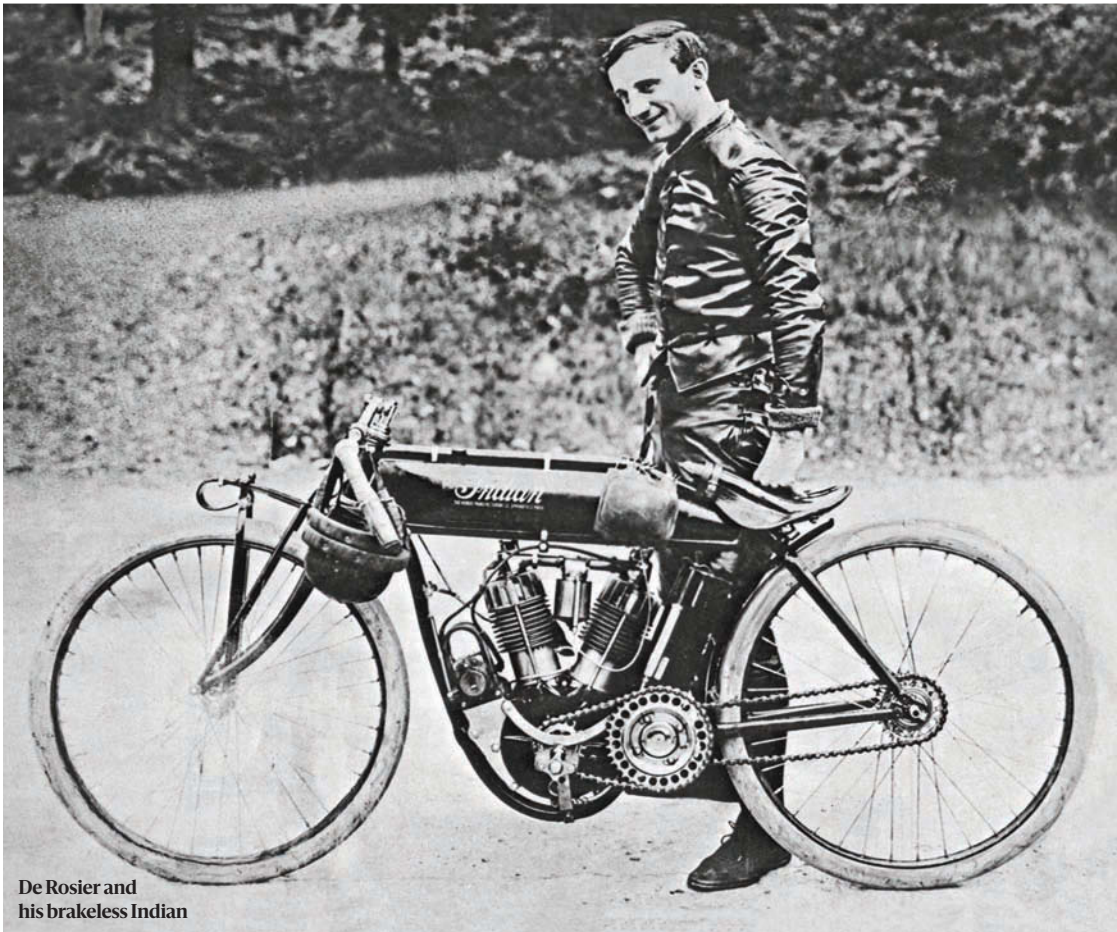
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De Rosier and his brakeless Indian

ALL PHOTOS: IVAR DE GIER & DON EMDE

Jake De Rosier's 998cc Indian is fully on its side, just about parallel to the ground and 30 feet above it, as he sweeps around the speedbowl's west banking, closing in on the race leader.

Wood splinters thrown up from the pinewood boards by Paul 'Daredevil' Derkum's Reading-Standard motorcycle stab De Rosier's knuckles. Hot oil from its engine smears his goggles and stings his cheeks. Now he lets his machine run loose, allowing centrifugal force to take him high up the wooden banking at around 90 miles an hour, then he lets gravity take over, plunging down the boards to swoop past Derkum, into the lead.

Leaving the angry noise of Derkum's steed behind, he aims at the east banking for the final time: last lap, pay day. The g-force sucks him deep into the planking, the Goodyear Blue Streak tyres squirming ominously as his right hand works the oil pump to feed fresh lubricant into the straining engine. He can almost smell the fat wad of dirty dollar bills that will be his, for cheating death and beating the rest once again.

Swinging off the banking, De Rosier's Indian is charging hard on full throttle, its engine chattering like a Gatling gun, gobs of blue and yellow flame bolting from its stubby exhausts. Out of nowhere, he is jolted from his reverie by an almighty thump. It's that mad young idiot from Texas, sneaking underneath him. How the hell did he get there? Charles "Fearless" Balke and his Thor v-twin have the momentum. As Balke swings past into the lead he kicks Rosier's left leg, throwing the Indian off course, right up towards the high line, so close to the barrier that De Rosier can smell the perfume of the bonneted ladies sitting in the grandstand, shrieking in delight at the sight of a man risking life and limb for their entertainment. He has to back off for a moment and the young upstart has beaten him. Curse it, the stinking dollars won't be his; not today anyway.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING AT BROOKLANDS during the early years of the twentieth century was merely a game of jolly hockey sticks compared to what was going on in the United States. Board-track racing around motordromes was the mad thrill of riders whirling around steeply banked tracks built from acres of pinewood, "like flies clinging to

a ceiling". Board-track racing was less like Brooklands and more like a horrific collision between *Ben Hur*, *Rollerball* and a bar-room brawl. It was like a fairground wall of death, only much deadlier.

Riders raced around the boards at speeds exceeding one hundred miles an hour, indulging in all kinds of dirty, rotten tricks to get the glory, the gold and the girls. Fistfights - before, during and after the racing - were all part of the show.

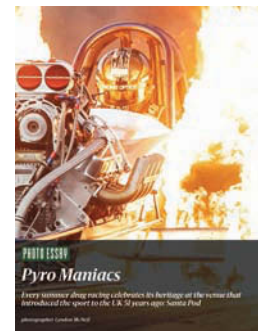
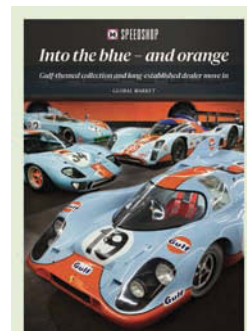
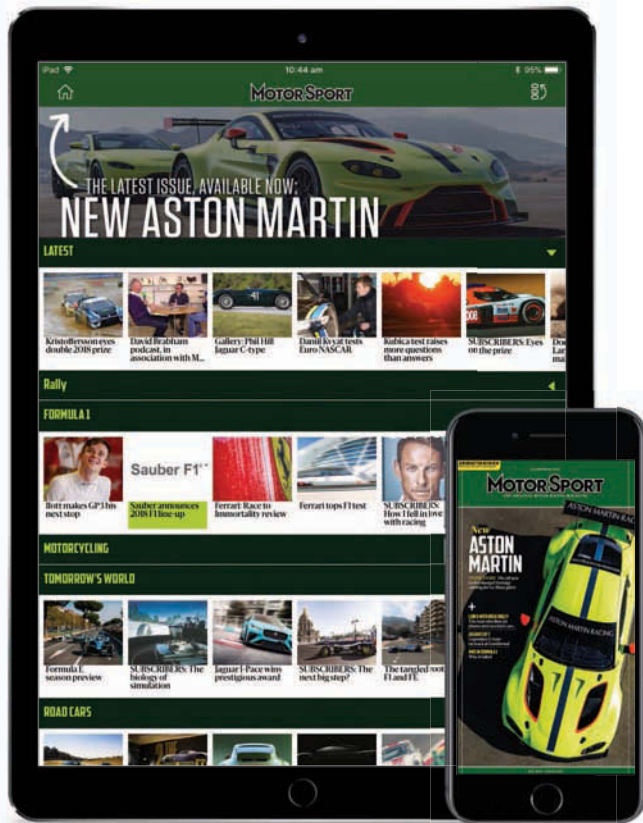
The USA's board-tracks were velodromes on steroids: quarter-miles at first, then half-miles and miles, constructed by armies of carpenters with thousands of feet of two-by-four timber and tons of nails. The timber was rough-cut, to help tyres get traction, although they didn't have much chance against oil sprayed onto the boards by total-loss lubrication systems and open valves. Some promoters coated their tracks with crushed seashells to improve grip. Others sprayed the boards with lye, a corrosive that causes nasty chemical burns to the skin and can be fatal if swallowed.

As speeds increased, the banking got steeper and higher, rising from the 20 degrees used in velodromes to more than 60 degrees, and 50 feet high. Maintenance workers needed ladders to maintain the upper ☐

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reaches of these wooden speedbowls and riders had to reach 50 miles an hour before they could even climb the banking, so all races were started with rolling starts, triggered by a pistol shot.

The hideous dangers of this new form of racing weren't a problem; in fact the danger was loudly celebrated and promoted, because this was what the punters wanted: the scary thrill of watching fellow human beings racing past, just inches away, within a whisker of heaven or hell. "Neck and neck with death!" shouted one sign nailed to the outside of Detroit's Michigan Motordrome.

The press was in on the deal, whipping up the crowd's lust for blood between the riders. "There's no valid reason why every race on the programme should not be a hair-raising fight for blood and supremacy between riders," wrote a *Los Angeles Herald* reporter, previewing an early LA board track meet.

The American public, many of whom had never seen anything faster than a horse, were knocked sideways by the speed, noise and thrill of board-track racing. Dozens of so-called saucer tracks were erected across the USA, from LA to New York and from Washington State to Daytona. The biggest crammed in forty thousand fans on bleachers and grandstands built above the banking; 25



"There's no reason why every race should not be a hair-raising fight for blood and supremacy between riders"

cents general admission, an extra 75 cents for a grandstand seat.

The races were staged amidst a carnival atmosphere; "the pistol cracked, the band played," with "something happening every second the spiteful hiss of gas explosions are heard". The invariably vicious racing provided the "nerve pulsations that the public looks for", so much so that the "speed fans felt the blood creeping up to the roots of their hair."

But you don't get something for nothing. Unlike Brooklands and its wide-open spaces, board-track events frequently ended in bloody tragedy. Dozens of racers and spectators died, so the motordromes were rechristened 'murderdromes'.

BOARD RACING HAD MANY STARS BUT THE sport's first superstar was Jake De Rosier, a Canadian whom the Americans always assumed was French. Born in Quebec, De Rosier was four years old when his family moved to the USA, where he became one of New England's top racing cyclists. At the turn of the century De Rosier became obsessed with motor bicycles and met Oscar Hedstrom, the founder of America's first major motorcycle brand: Indian.

De Rosier and Indian became motorcycle ☐



On the wall at Newark, 1912. Above, Indian team after a typically damaging race.





Far left, Harley's gladiators. Left, spectators stood inches from any crash. Below, Excelsior and Indian rivals dwarfed by Omaha's towering boards



racing's first great rider/factory partnership. They became 'Lords of the Boards', dominating board-track racing for half a decade, an eon in a sport that had a habit of snuffing out its greatest exponents.

In Los Angeles newspapers, De Rosier was variously referred to as the doughty Frenchman mounted on his redoubtable Indian, the hard-headed Frenchman, the terrible Frenchman, even Napoleon. And he didn't like it. "There are a lot of people in this town who have made fun of me and called me a foreigner," he told the *Los Angeles Herald*.

De Rosier was a slight, slender figure who earned a lot of money and knew how to spend it. His riches came from generous factory salaries, cash purses from promoters and all kinds of dodgy dollars earned from the gambling industry that flourished around the speedbowls.

De Rosier never had a problem spending what he earned. "It may be fine business to wear big diamonds, get out of bed when you are tired of sleeping, and eat nothing but half-fries and terrapin, whether you are hungry or not," wrote *The Indianapolis Star*. "But if you have to break your legs, arms, head and ribs and pass all your spare time in some hospital in order to get such luxuries, the

"Cheers from 10 thousand throats hailed Derkum as the new leader. And again the desperate battle renewed. This time De Rosier strived for the lead, calling on his machine as it had never been called on before. Slowly, but surely, he repeated the thrilling, hair-raising trick turned by Derkum and De Rosier resumed his place at the front.

"And still once again did Derkum creep steadily towards De Rosier, inch by inch, but still creeping, turning corners with a swish and a rush of speed so terrific as to be demoniacal and tearing onto the straights with not a perceptible change in their mad work. And as grimly and desperately as Derkum laid down to his work, as equally grim and desperate was the fight made by De Rosier in maintaining his lead.

"It was a battle royal and there was not a man, woman or child present who didn't feel a thrill of admiration for two men with such steady heads and such nerveless bodies, who held their machines true to the lines of the track as they followed its changing contour from high banks into the more level

"There was not a person present who did not feel a thrill of admiration for two men with such cool heads and nerveless bodies"

ordinary man would probably rather take a chance at the corn beef and cabbage of life than at the joy stuff that makes one's stomach think it's a ballet dancer.

"There are those who do not think that way, however, and one of these is Jake De Rosier. He has had all kinds of accidents, from cracking his head to having his feet burned, and he has probably gouged enough splinters out of board-racing tracks to build a small-sized cottage, with a chicken house and a backyard fence stringing out behind."

The fact that death was a real risk for De Rosier and his rivals was no surprise considering the protective gear they wore, or rather, the protective gear they didn't wear. De Rosier's preferred racing attire was wind-cheating theatrical tights, canvas running shoes and a woolly jumper. Only later did riders protect themselves with cowhide suits, gauntlets and flying hats.

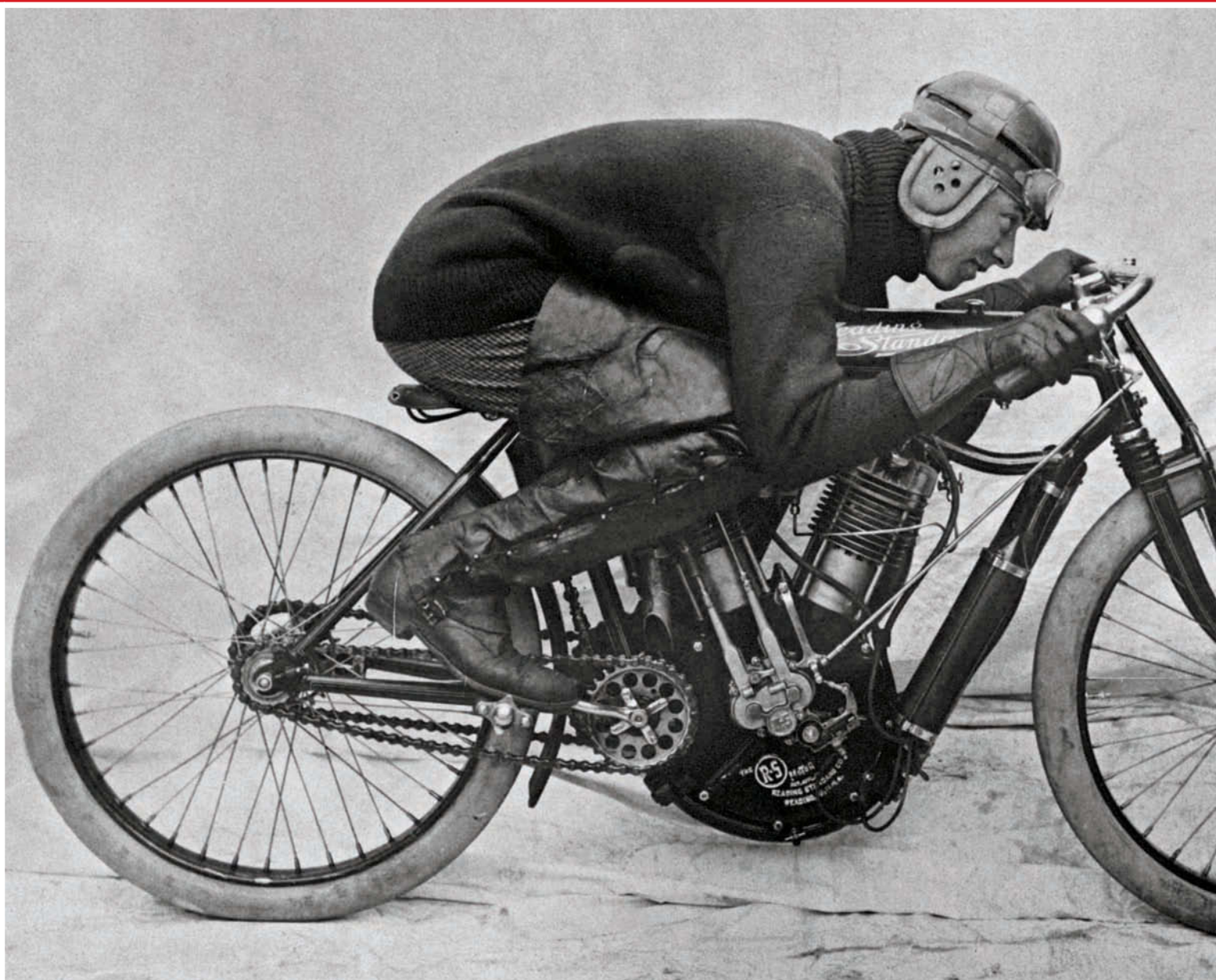
De Rosier made his best money at the Los Angeles Coliseum, America's first motordrome, constructed in 1909 at Hooper Avenue and 35th Street. The venue was wildly popular. Especially when it came to the evening's main event: the long-awaited showdown between Indian team-mates De Rosier and Derkum.

straightaway and into the high banks again. Try as he would, Derkum could not again gain an equal footing with De Rosier and at the finishing pistol he was but two short wheel lengths behind."

Indian was one of the first manufacturers to run what would now be called a factory team, with great care lavished upon its racing stable.

"The machine De Rosier rides is of the most sensitive construction, delicate in every part; and the care it receives, if devoted to many a child of the poor, would be a mercy."

De Rosier's Indian 998cc v-twin, with pushrod-operated overhead valves, was good for 130 miles an hour, which must have felt more like 250 miles an hour. De Rosier sat on a leather bicycle saddle, his backside an inch or two above the two-inch rear tyre. There were no brakes, no suspension, no gearbox and no clutch. No throttle, either, just a magneto cut-out button, which the rider used like a trigger: press and go. The engine either ran at full throttle, or not at all. ☐



DE ROSIER BECAME AN LA SUPERSTAR, the Barry Sheene or Valentino Rossi of his age, even though this so-called immigrant was never popular with the LA papers.

“The solemn Jake has little or nothing to say about what he expects to do this afternoon, it being a characteristic of this son of France to keep largely to himself,” wrote the *Los Angeles Herald*. “He wanders about, Napoleon-like, wrapped in thoughts wholly his own, but there is the same old determined look on the face of this daring French motorcycle rider which has carried him through many events and brought him home the winner.”

Just like the real Napoleon, there was another side to De Rosier. In April 1909 he was caught up in a great LA scandal, which had the local press in a fever. Even back then, in fact especially back then, the “City of Angels” was anything but.

“Pretty girl elopes with motorcycle rider,” exclaimed the *LA Herald* headline. “Miss Clark under arrest; De Rosier escapes... Mother

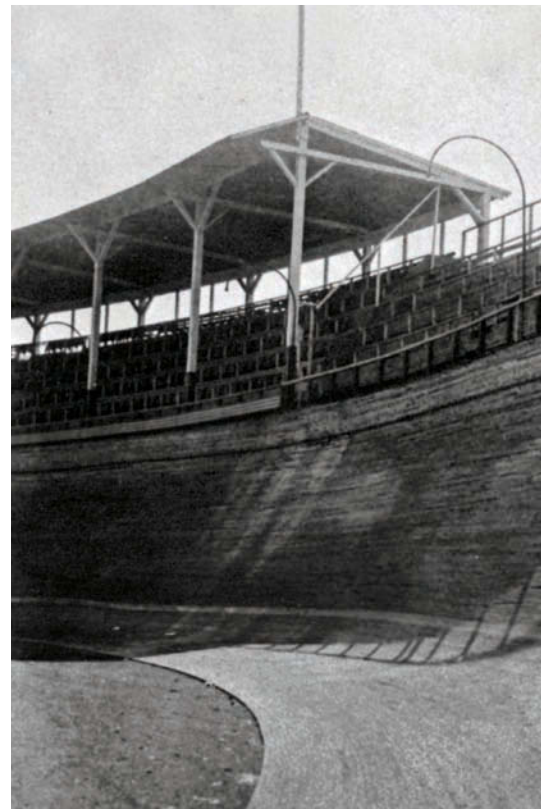
faints when she is told the truth.”

Twenty-eight-year-old De Rosier had started an affair with 16-year-old Pearl Clark, the daughter of a wealthy local family. The pair’s assignations went along just fine until the pair took the relationship to the next level.

Journalists took the story and ran with it, enjoying every twist and turn. “Pining for the excitement of the outer world, the glare of the electrics, the charm of the café orchestras and the taste of rare wines and rich viands, Pearl Clark escaped the quiet surrounding of her home, Wednesday night, and plunged into the life she thought she wanted.”

The pair eloped to Venice, LA’s fancy new beachside resort. After several days on the run Clark turned herself into the police and made a full confession, while De Rosier was later arrested.

De Rosier’s manager then arrived at the Clark family home, offering them five thousand dollars if they would convince the police to drop charges. Pearl’s father refused



Paul 'Daredevil' Derkum
– De Rosier's Indian
team-mate. Below:
as bankings rose, the
motordrome became
a true wall of death



and for good measure, “administered a severe beating while escorting the manager from his premises”.

There is no record of what became of Pearl Clark. Meanwhile De Rosier evaded jail and got on with his career. Two years after his entanglement with Clark he fell out with Indian and moved to the Chicago-based Excelsior brand.

At first, it seemed like fortune was on De Rosier's side: Excelsior had a new v-twin that had the beating of Indian's best. There was only one problem: De Rosier and his new team-mate Charles 'Fearless' Balke hated each other.

The pair's needle was gold for the motordrome promoters, who arranged big-money grudge matches between them. In February 1912 they took their rivalry to the brand-new LA motordrome. They hadn't even started the race before they got into a fist fight.

The race itself was just as brutal, the pair trading blows throughout, neither of them able to make the break because their identical motorcycles were equally fast. They rode neck and neck until 22-year-old Balke caught

the engine back on song, but the bike picked up speed so quickly that it launched him into the fence at the top of the track. Hasha and his bike slid along the railings for 30 yards, killing four young boys who had been peering through the fence. Hasha died instantly when he hit a grandstand upright and was thrown into the crowd. Meanwhile his cartwheeling bike tumbled down the banking, killing another racer and two more spectators.

The following year 10 people died at the Lagoon Raceway in Kentucky where a gas lamp ignited fuel from the split fuel tank of a crashed bike. The conflagration triggered a deadly mass stampede.

In the intervening 10 months between these two smashes, at least nine other board racers were killed, making a total of about 30 fatalities. Board-track was barely half a decade old and already it seemed like its time was over. Not surprisingly, the press turned against the sport, some papers likening it to barbaric Roman gladiatorial combat.

Promoters thought they had an answer to this plague of death and injury: build longer,

“In the 10 months between these smashes, at least nine other roard racers were killed, making a total of about 30 fatalities”



a pedal on the banking and went down in a heap, taking De Rosier with him. Balke suffered burns and multiple splinter wounds; De Rosier was knocked unconscious and sustained a compound fracture of his left femur. He died several months later as a result of complications following a number of operations.

IT WASN'T DE ROSIER'S DEATH THAT sounded the death knell of board-track racing. He was still recuperating from his LA crash when the first of several major incidents occurred.

In September 1912 Eddie 'The Texas Cyclone' Hasha was duelling for the lead with Ray Seymour at Newark's newly built New Jersey Motordrome, outside New York, when his Indian developed a misfire. A quick fiddle under the fuel tank brought

faster tracks. And they were right. The new one-mile and two-mile circuits gave riders a lot more room to play with and kept spectators out of harm's way on the straightaways between the turns. And extra railings were added at the top of the banking, to stop machines careering into the bleachers.

However, people had already seen enough. By the mid-1920s most of the board-tracks had fallen into disuse as racers moved into the safer sport of dirt track. At the end of the board-track era the one-mile lap record stood at 110.67mph, not bad for a 40-horsepower motorcycle riding on jumped-up parquet flooring. ☑

Taken from Mat Oxley's new book **Speed: The One Genuinely Modern Pleasure**. Only available from www.matoxley.bigcartel.com

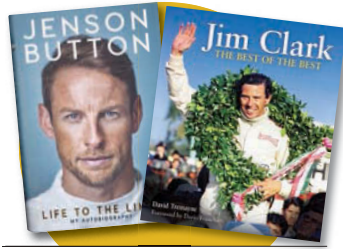


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ANDREW FRANKEL GETS BEHIND THE WHEEL OF THIS MONTH'S BEST NEW CARS

ROAD TESTS

THIS MONTH BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT • PORSCHE 911 GT3 RS • MORGAN PLUS EIGHT 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Grandest tourer

Bentley's cross-country express reaches greater heights

Here's confidence for you: assemble a bunch of journalists at the bottom of the 8200ft Grössglockner Pass, distribute among them a small fleet of your new and rather weighty Grand Touring cars and tell them to see you at the top. The new Bentley Continental GT is not just vast in stature, it is not short of heft either: although lighter than the car it replaces, this is still 2244kg of prime British Bentley I'm about to fire up one the highest road in Austria. ☑

So you settle down in one of its enormous chairs, fire up its 626bhp, 6-litre W12 motor, pull the shifter back into manual mode, pull the pin and let it go.

You notice the thrust first - it'll do 0-62mph in 3.7sec despite all the inertia it must first overcome - and then the howl of the engine and how much easier on the ear it is than the identically configured but barely related motor in the previous Continental GT.

Next you feel the gearchanges and this is new: while the old car had its shifts slurred and slushed by a conventional automatic box, its successor sports a beefed-up Porsche eight-speed double-clutch transmission. If Sport mode is selected, not only do you get the usual thundering exhausts, stiffened suspension and sharpened throttle, you can also feel each shift being banged through, a new and tactile approach I rather appreciated. Bentley delayed the launch of this car by several months to perfect the gearbox calibration, and while awkward and embarrassing in the short term, a terrific powertrain is the result and over time that will count for rather more.

So it's good in a straight line. What Bentley was not? For too many in the recent and not so recent past, it's the corners where Bentleys have struggled, especially slow turns, with treacherous cambers and tricky gradients to negotiate, just like those that punctuate the Grössglockner from base to summit. I remember well the frustration felt driving the very last of the old Conti GTs, the 700bhp Supersports, because its strengths when the road ran true served only to throw into stark relief its manifest weaknesses when it did not. Clearly this new Continental GT would be better, sharing as it does many of its sub-structures with the new Porsche Panamera. But would it be actually good? Could this enormous Bentley possibly rise to immense challenge ahead and prove itself to be genuinely fun to drive?

It seemed unlikely. That mass, a 2.85 metre wheelbase and air springs are all ingredients you'd leave firmly in their packaging were you attempting to configure a truly rewarding driver's machine, and to expect such a device to fulfil its touring brief as well as tackle this preposterously long and difficult climb appeared to be asking too much.

Yet despite it all, the Bentley was indeed good. Not brilliant, mind, but impressive given what it as being asked to do. It never felt light, nor in the least bit chuckable and despite Bentley's assurances it never felt inclined even to shake its hips let alone drift, but it was poised, precise and pleasurable to drive, in a way the old one never was. In that moment it proved that, at least to drive, it was the best new

Bentley since VW took the reins 20 years ago.

Although I have long admired the quality of every Bentley I've driven in the interim, there has always been a certain youthfulness missing from their characters, and the new Conti goes a certain distance to addressing that deficit. No one is going to find it as entertaining as an Aston Martin DB11 on this sort of road or any other, but it has more than halved the span of what was until recently a yawning dynamic chasm between them.

And then there is all the other stuff that the old Continental GT always did well, at least in its latter years. But the new one is exceptional. It is a delight to guide down a fast open road of the kind Grand Tourers are made for: that there is effectively unlimited torque underfoot will surprise no one, the fact that its steering is better weighted and has more feel than that of the closely related Panamera simply amazed me.

But its greatest assets are its ride and refinement. The suspension is so good that even in Sport mode the car is always

comfortable. In Comfort it is sublime. As for the noise levels in the cabin, all I can tell you is that at speeds I have no intention of owning up to here, me and my massively experienced driving partner were laughing at how uncannily quiet it remained.

A shame, then, that it is let down by, of all things, its cabin. The job of creating a harmonious marriage between traditional upholstery and state of the art telematics is rarely an easy one and in the Continental GT it doesn't quite work. TFT instruments look great in a Panamera (and, indeed, an Audi A4 or even VW Golf) but they don't in a Bentley. I don't want to look at a thin film transistor screen in a Bentley however clever it might be: I want to look at big, chunky, beautiful analogue clocks. Also the centre console is far too cluttered and I bet that even after months of acclimatisation owners will still be struggling to find the option they want at the first stab of the finger. The car I drove also had some awful 'diamond knurling' around the air vents, representing almost £1500 I would most





“It is a delight to guide down a fast open road of the kind Grand Tourers are made for”



Diamond-knurled vents apart, the new GT wafts to a new level of capability backed by endless torque



definitely leave in the bank.

And a word about the car's party piece, its famous rotating dash which can flip the central navigation display to reveal three dials giving outside temperature, your compass heading and a chronometer. And for the novelty value you might think £470 a reasonable price to pay for the option. Unfortunately it doesn't cost £470 but £4700 or, put another way, a perfectly serviceable second-hand family hatchback. Given you get the navigation screen anyway which already

FACTFILE

Bentley Continental GT

Price £156,700 **Engine** 6.0 litres, 12 cylinders, turbocharged **Power** 626bhp@5000rpm **Torque** 663lb ft@1350rpm **Weight** 2244kg **Power to weight** 279bhp per tonne **Transmission** eight-speed double-clutch, four-wheel drive **0-60mph** 3.7sec **Top speed** 207mph **Economy** 23.2mpg **CO₂** 278g/km



tells you the direction in which you're heading, and that the temperature is displayed elsewhere, what you're actually doing is paying almost five grand for a stopwatch.

But we won't let this cloud the essential fact that the new Continental GT is not just a fine new car, but an outstanding new Bentley. Existing owners will scarcely believe the progress that has been made, but I expect it will create some converts to the cause as well. It feels as beautifully built as ever but within an envelope of overall ability that has been ballooned compared to what went before. It doesn't break any new ground, but following quite easily the most successful car in Bentley's near 100 years, it was never going to. What it does is take the essentially sound concept of the original Continental GT and reimagine it on a level where it may still be neither the best-looking nor the most exciting Grand Tourer on sale, but for all-round, every day ability, it almost certainly the best. ☑



Numbers game

Porsche has released a horde of GT models lately – but this is special



Do you get confused by the sheer number of Porsche GT models that are produced? In the last three years alone there's been the previous GT3 RS, the 911R, a new GT3, a GT3 Touring, a GT2 RS and now this new GT3 RS. And the temptation therefore is to think of this GT3 RS as being like the last one, only more so.

Tempting, understandable even, given how similar they look and appear to be specified, but - wrong. The truth is that every time Porsche makes a new RS, it feels the need to vary the formula, sometimes seemingly just to keep us on our toes.

The original 996-based GT3 RS was a very uncompromising machine, while those of the 997 era were far more accommodating and tolerant of what you might call 'normal' use. The last GT3 RS didn't like that approach, so went for something far more track-orientated, which seemed a very hard-core solution, right up to the moment I met this latest GT3 RS on the Isle of Man and was made to think all over again.

This GT3 RS makes that one feel like a snoozing spaniel. It may have only another

20bhp from its 4-litre flat-six motor but some indication of the direction in which the wizards of Weissach have gone with this car is provided by the fact the front springs are now literally twice as stiff as those of its predecessor, those at the back raised by a comparatively trifling 40 per cent.

In fact, the best way to think of this car is not as a new GT3 RS per se, but what it really is, which is a normally aspirated GT2 RS; for it has far more in common with that utterly lunatic machine than the car that ostensibly sired it. The very fact this GT3 is quicker around the Nürburgring than the purpose-built mid-engined 918 Spyder despite a, wait for it, 374bhp power deficit tells you all you need to know.

FACTFILE

Porsche 911 GT3 RS

Price £141,346	Engine 4.0 litres, 6 cylinders
Power 513bhp@8250rpm	Torque 346lb
ft@6000rpm	Weight 1505kg
Power to weight 341bhp per tonne	Transmission seven-speed
double-clutch, rear-wheel drive	0-62mph 3.2sec
Top speed 194mph	Economy 22.1mpg
CO₂ 291g/km	

No surprises, then, that I enjoyed driving it on the Isle of Man. But I'd have enjoyed it far more on a race track. Even out here where people are rare, cars rarer still and speed limits literally non-existent outside the towns and villages, it felt hemmed in. There was no question of really putting it through its paces - in the dry there was just too much grip, in the wet not nearly enough on the semi-slick Dunlop Sport Maxx Race 2 rubber the test car was running on.

The engine is rivalled only by the Lamborghini Huracan Performante's V10 for the title of greatest normally aspirated motor in production, and at its 9000rpm red line is so loud in the car you might genuinely want to consider wearing ear plugs.

It was, in short, a mesmerising few hours in the car, but ones that left me begging for an environment that not even the greatest limit-free roads in the world could provide.

On the road, a standard GT3 is a better bet, and not just because, unlike the RS, you can buy one with a manual box. On the track? I don't know, but I'll consider it a personal failure if I've not answered that question before the year is out. **Q**

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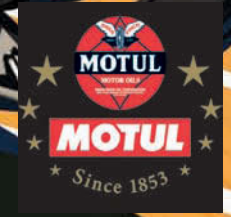


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www.motorsportmagazine.com



A new life begins at 50

Morgan is phasing out the Plus 8 – but watch that space



It seems a funny way to celebrate but as soon as this run of half-century Plus Eights have been built, Morgan is going to kill perhaps the most famous car in its history. Just 50 will be made, painted green if you choose the standard soft top or blue if you opt for the racier Speedster, both priced at £129,000 though this does include a Christopher Ward wristwatch. And that will be that.

Maybe. Morgan does have something else up its sleeve which it will announce later this year as a replacement for the Plus Eight and Aero models, but it will emphatically not be based on the original 1968 design.

But then again, nor is the current Plus Eight. The original Plus Eight, with ash frame and sliding pillar front suspension, breathed its last 14 years ago when the supply of Rover V8s dried up, only for the name to be applied to a visually similar but mechanically entirely different car in 2012. With a bonded aluminium structure and 4.8-litre BMW V8 engine, it was and remains an Aero 8 in all but appearance.

Just don't imagine for a second that anything approaching a modern-feeling car lurks beneath those familiar lines. Indeed, and

this will be news as good to some as it is bad to others, the Plus Eight still has a very vintage feel. Modern tub or not, the Morgan still appears to have all the structural rigidity of a jelly in an earthquake. Its ride is no longer so bad you spend your time scouring the road for pot-holes to avoid, but there is no nuance in this chassis, nor its lifeless steering or overly assisted brakes. The car is commendably light at just 1100kg, which is the only reason it feels reasonably quick, because the design of the BMW engine is even older than the car to which it is fitted, which is why despite its impressive capacity, it only delivers 367bhp.

So by any objective assessment this is not a good car, and I've not even started on the Land Rover Defender door handles, ludicrous BMW

FACTFILE
Morgan Plus Eight 50th Anniversary

Price £129,000	Engine 4.8 litres, 8 cylinders
Power 367bhp@6200rpm	Torque 370lb
ft@3600rpm	Weight 1100kg
Power to weight 334bhp per tonne	Transmission six-speed
manual, rear-wheel drive	0-62mph 4.5sec
Top speed 155mph	Economy 23mpg
CO₂ 282g/km	

column stalks and the fact there is no room to stow anything at all on board. But who ever bought a Morgan for its talents? People buy Morgans for their charm and the Plus Eight is neither the first nor last car to derive much of that charm not from what it does well, but what it does badly. Which is plenty.

But there is something else going on here too, something you'll only find if you accept there's not much point driving it fast, and sit back, relax and do things its way. If you just amble along, the wind in your hair, V8 woofling contentedly to itself, there is one very particular form of real driving enjoyment to be had here. It's a car for long, lazy drives on quiet roads in the summer sunshine, a place to chill out, forget your troubles and enjoy the very simple pleasures it provides.

It is not remotely a car for me because I'm far too intolerant of its flaws and far too aware of what else the same money can buy (a brand new Aston Vantage to name but one), but I am aware also that this is entirely the wrong way to look at it. The Plus Eight is unique and you'll either get it or you won't. I don't, but I'm not quite so blinkered as to be unable to see why others do. ☑



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2007 ASTON MARTIN RACING DBRS9 £195,000

Built by Prodrive to GT3 specification in 2007, DBRS9/19 was delivered new to Cadena Motorsport and run, with success, in a number of high profile GT series, such as British GT, Belcar and the Spanish GT Championship. Run, from 2009 onwards, in partnership with AMR specialists, Barwell Motorsport, DBRS9/19's most recent outing was in 2012 at the Le Mans festival where the car finished 4th in class and 10th overall.

Used sparingly since, with just 2,000 km's engine mileage and 5,000km's gearbox mileage and is currently finished in the attractive and iconic Petronas livery. The two substantial files which accompany the car contain run sheets, testing notes, information on set-ups, parts orders and a wealth of other technical details.

Full details online

2000 ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE LE MANS £475,000

This superb example, number 7 of the 40 planned and produced, was built for and shown at the 1999 Earls Court Motor Show and was completed with the 600bhp and 5 speed transmission option.

Finished Aston Racing Green with Saddle Tan hides and Alcantara inserts, numbered 007, the car offered is complete with all its original hand books and equipment, including the glove box mounted torch and Michelin road map, highlighted with the traditional route to Le Mans from Newport Pagnell.

Full details online



0208 741 8822 info@nicholasmee.co.uk nicholasmee.co.uk

Please note that we have now completed our relocation to our new 'destination' premises in Hertfordshire.

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SPEEDSHOP

THIS MONTH A diverse range of historic Formula 1 cars • Auctions latest • BMW E30 M3 – the original and possibly still the best • The man who swapped banking for classic car dealing • Brabham BT35



TOP STORY

Fulfilling the ultimate fantasy

They're not cheap, but ex-Grand Prix cars are very definitely available


Returning from this year's Monaco Grand Prix Historique with absurd fantasies about buying an old-school Formula 1 car, I began trawling the web to see what was available. I quickly alighted on the site of the super-successful French dealership GTC, which is based outside Marseilles, not far from Paul Ricard. Founded by enthusiast and talented historic racer Jean Guikas almost 30 years ago, it usually offers an inventory of at least 60 cars, all of which are owned by the business

rather than being offered on behalf of clients.

That means Guikas has used the knowledge and experience he has built up over decades to decide that the cars are worth buying in the first place, and that he's confident his good reputation will be upheld when he sells them. It didn't take long to open up the details accompanying a photograph of a Footwork Arrows that was depicted sitting provocatively on a race track at a three-quarter angle.

It turned out to have been the car driven by Michele Alboreto in 1990, when he first joined

Jackie Oliver's Arrows team before it was sponsored by Japanese logistics firm Footwork Express. But, despite being offered with spare body panels, wings and floors, the car currently has a major drawback - because GTC is selling it as a rolling chassis, minus the Cosworth-Ford DFR V8 engine that propelled it in period. Which might explain the tempting €80,000 price tag...

A better buy, however, is probably the superb March 771 that's also on the GTC stocklist. Not only is it eye-catching in 



1

vibrant yellow and blue Rothmans livery, but it has a bit of history (if not an especially remarkable one) in that it was one of the two cars built by March for the 1977 season - and, as chassis 771-01, it was the one driven by Ian Scheckter, elder brother of 1979 F1 champion Jody.

Long-standing F1 fans will know that the 1977 season proved to be something of a non-event for March, not to mention the end of Ian Scheckter's F1 career - but the 771 chassis and its 761 predecessor proved to be a popular choice among privateer teams and drivers, because they were simple, cheap and available. (Frank Williams, for example, used one as a stop-gap when the Williams Grand Prix Engineering team made its



2

(1) Restored works 771 as it looks today, ready to run with fully functional Cosworth-DFV (2) Ian Scheckter leading Hans Heyer's ATS Penske PC4 in 1977

debut in the 1977 Spanish Grand Prix).

By 1979, the car on offer at GTC was back in England and being used for hillclimbing, after which it was prepared for historic circuit racing by the renowned Martin Stretton, after which it went to Italy and has, says GTC, since been raced only 'occasionally'.

Offered in fully operational condition with a fresh Cosworth engine, FIA passport - and, in my opinion, looking superb in its now non-PC Rothmans livery - it's a perfect opportunity to scratch that historic F1 itch. Although it's worth remembering that the €300,000 price tag will just be the first of many large bills you'll have to meet in exchange for all those heroic feelings.....

www.gtc-collection-cars.com

In the market for bygone F1 cars

A selection of options for the historically ambitious



1983 RAM DFV
EPOA

Potential race winner in Masters GP. As driven in period by Acheson, Schlessler, Salazar and J Villeneuve Sr. Fresh DFV
www.hallandhall.net



1997 Stewart SF01 show car
£18,000

Non-running replica of SF01 as raced by Barrichello and Magnussen. An original, full-size model
www.mementoexclusives.com



1990 Leyton House-Judd CG901
EPOA

Early Adrian Newey F1 design. Raced by Gugelmin and Capelli, who took second place in the French Grand Prix
www.dhrogo.com



1985 Toleman TG185
EPOA

Driven by Teo Fabi; with Hart four-cylinder turbo motor. All mechanically restored
www.mementoexclusives.com

It has become a truism that classic automobiles and mechanical chronographs go together like a horse and carriage, so it's little wonder that auction houses around the world frequently stage sales that combine the two - and now the Monaco Legend Group is set to exploit the fortuitous coincidence that 2018 marks the anniversaries of both one of the most collectable of all sports cars and one of the most highly coveted watches.

The car is the Porsche 911 and the watch is the Rolex Cosmograph Daytona, an example of which currently holds the record for being the most expensive wristwatch ever sold after a much-publicised example that once belonged to Paul Newman fetched \$17.8m at Phillips last year.



A cocktail of 911s and watches

MLG brings together the best of Porsche and Rolex

It's unlikely that MLG will be able to match that, but there should still be some strong prices at the 55-lot themed sale in which Porsche 911s and Cosmographs dating from 1963 to 2017 will cross the block.

Among the car highlights will be a 1970 2.5ST that was delivered new to Porsche Sonauto in Poitiers, France before being raced by Claude Ballot-Lena in major events such as the 1971 and 1972 Tour de France. The car won the 1972 French GT Championship, placed sixth in that year's European GT Championship and was then sold back to Sonauto, after which it became the '74 season practice car of champion endurance racer and rally driver Guy Chasseuil.

It's tipped to realise €1.1-1.6m, while one of the star watch lots is set to be the Cosmograph awarded to Christophe Bouchut for winning the 'Rolex 24 At Daytona' in 1995. Offered in what appears to be mint condition, it will be sold complete with its box, certificate and instruction manual. Expect it to fetch more than €50,000.

www.monacolegendauctions.com

DEALING



POP IN FOR COFFEE AND A CLASSIC

Martin Chisholm from Cotswold Collectors Cars

Two years ago, long-established Cotswolds-based dealer Martin Chisholm bought RAF Bibury, a former Battle of Britain fighter base he has now transformed into an extensive showroom that integrates Cotswold Collectors Cars with an open-to-all Sunday morning 'coffee and classics' meet, drive-in cinema screenings and dining events for invited guests.

Chisholm calls it The Classic Motor Hub, and he believes it reflects a changing attitude among buyers who are less fixated with investment and more interested in owning cars for the enjoyment of driving.

"People are definitely coming to us in search of cars that they can actually use," says Chisholm.

"We're finding the market to be surprisingly strong, with particular demand for Austin-Healeys, which are rising in value, and Porsche 911s, the values of which have come down. We've

also had quite good success with affordable pre-war cars - by which I mean those costing less than £100,000 - but have noticed that the Jaguar market is not as buoyant as it was.

"Opening the Classic Motor Hub has shown us that people are looking for reasons to drive their cars and they are looking for suitable events. Together with our increased use of social media, it's helped us reach out to a new audience and we are definitely seeing a younger generation of enthusiasts coming through, which can only be good news.

"What is perhaps most encouraging, however, is the number of people who simply drop in to see us and to see what we have in stock. Last year, that might have been as few as four people in a week. Now we're seeing 10-15 a day - including some who arrive by helicopter or turboprop." www.classicmotorhub.com



**1932 Aston Martin LMS
EPOA**

Works car that competed in the Le Mans 24 Hours 86 years ago. Has been in the same family since 1955; recently subject to full restoration



**1964 Ferrari 250 TR
EPOA**

Former keepers include Innes Ireland, among others. Sale includes Ireland's picnic hamper, which often travelled with him



**1982 Ferrari 512 BBi
E250,000**

Provenance certified by Ferrari Classiche. Originally sold in Geneva. Finished in two-tone Bianco Polo over Pella Crema

Millions in Monaco

Racing royalty and His Holiness command princely sums in Monaco May auctions

The Bonhams Monaco sale coincides with the Monaco Historic Grand Prix, and this year's consignment lived up to the storied history of Formula 1's revered street circuit.

From 66 lots (of which 13 were unsold), the take amounted to €13,600,000, with Ayrton Senna's first and last Monaco Grand Prix cars taking more than 40 per cent of that.

His first, the 1984 Toleman-Hart TG184 (centre right), which ignited a rivalry with Alain Prost, outdid its estimate of €750,000-€1,000,000; the car that announced Senna's arrival in Formula 1 sold for €1,610,000 after a bidding war at the Villa La Vigie.

The Brazilian ace's final Monaco GP car, the 1993 McLaren MP4/8A (centre left) in which Senna took his sixth win at the street circuit, fighting through an injury he sustained on the Friday at St Devote, headlined the auction. It finally fetched €4,197,500, with the buyer reported to be Bernie Ecclestone.

Motor Sport contacted a spokesperson for Ecclestone, but they were unable to confirm that he was indeed the winning bidder. Bonhams also declined to comment.

Fetching six figures was the 1987 Ferrari F1/87 that sold for €666,666, sporting Gerhard Berger's no28 but, curiously, billed as an ex-Michele Alboreto challenger. A Garrett turbocharger belonging to the F1/87 sold for €1265 - less than some aftermarket Garrett road-going turbochargers cost now. And Gerhard Berger's Ferrari F1 bag (matching the car) sold for €6325.

The Formula 3 Tecno driven by Ronnie Peterson and offered by his daughter Nina sold for €92,000 while TAG Heuer's re-edition of the watch presented to Peterson by Jack Heuer for his 1972 German GP podium fetched €97,750. Proceeds went to the Ronnie Peterson Memorial Foundation, supporting young, emerging racing drivers in Sweden.

Raising money for another worthy cause was the 1955 Jaguar XK140 SE Michelotti Coupé (above right) which raised a staggering €365,500 for an animal welfare charity in Ghent, Belgium. That price tag was far, far more than its pre-sale estimate of €20,000-€50,000, for a car found in a barn in Belgium in April.



Illustrious and notable as an ex-works, ex-Mike Hawthorn and Umberto Maglioli racer, the 1953 Ferrari 625 Spider is a breathtaking example of a relatively untouched sports car that was campaigned at Monza, the Targa Florio, the Dolomites Gold Cup and then in South America by Luis Milan. But it was condemned to a barn, and had a Ford Lincoln V12 engine fitted to it before an extensive restoration. Estimates were in the region of €4,500,000-€6,500,000 but the Ferrari didn't sell.

Among the road cars that did sell were a 1951

Delahaye 135M Convertible that fetched €310,500, a 1931 Bentley 8-Litre Tourer taking €741,666 and a 1993 Bugatti EB110 GT coupé, selling for just over €600,000.

However, more contemporary European supercars failed to sell, with a 2013 Aston Martin V12 Zagato, 2011 Porsche 997 GT3 RS and a 2002 Ferrari 575M Maranello all leaving without a new owner.

Bonhams' European Head of Motoring Philip Kantor was more than content with the takings, calling the sale an "absolute triumph".

"We achieved astonishing prices across the board and found new owners for some of the most historically important cars to come to public auction in Monaco in recent memory," he commented.

At the Grimaldi Forum the following day - just a 20-minute walk, or more likely, a six-minute drive away - RM Sotheby's Monaco auction took €23,317,290 from 58 vehicles, while 28 were left unsold.

A 2018 Lamborghini Huracán, gifted by the marque to Pope Francis, sold for €809,375. Tripling its estimate the car (pictured right) was signed by His Holiness, perhaps proving the power of the Papal pen. Proceeds were donated to charity.

Road cars dominated the auction, such as the €1.7million Bugatti Veyron Grand Sport Vitesse, but the racing suits of Steve McQueen (of *Le Mans* infamy) and Ayrton Senna (1987), which fetched €40,000 each, showed that racing royalty reigns in the principality. ☐

Tripling its estimate and signed by His Holiness, the Lamborghini was a tribute to the Pope's penmanship



Preview & Calendar

JUNE

5 **H&H**

Motor Sport Hall of Fame, Epsom, UK

5 **Barons**

Sandown Park, UK

20 **Barrett-Jackson**

Northeast,

Connecticut, USA

JULY

7 **Artcurial**

Le Mans Classic, France

13 **Bonhams**

Goodwood

Festival of Speed,

Chichester, UK

17 **Barons**

Summer Classic,

Sandown Park, UK

19 **Silverstone**

Auctions

Silverstone Classic,

UK

26 **H&H**

National Motorcycle

Museum Auction,

Solihull, UK

AUGUST

24 **Bonhams**

Quail Lodge,

California, USA

24 **RM Sotheby's**

Monterey Sale,

California, USA

30 **RM Sotheby's**

Auburn Fall,

Indiana, USA



RM SOTHEBY'S

1968 Porsche 908 'Short-Tail' Estimate: \$2,300,000-\$2,800,000

Raced by Vic Elford and Jochen Neerpasch, who crashed it at the 1968 Spa 1000kms. Made its way to America later and the damage was repaired with factory parts. Signed by Elford and other works drivers



GRAHAM BUDD

1955 DSJ 1955 Mille Miglia tie pin Estimate: £300-£500

Commemorative pin presented to Denis Jenkinson by Mercedes after legendary 1955 Mille Miglia win with Stirling Moss



H&H CLASSICS

1973/2018 BMW CSL 'Batmobile' Evocation

Estimate £100,000-£120,000

CSA coupé modified to CSL form; 3.5-litre Alpina motor, alloy panels



BONHAMS

1948 Talbot-Lago T26 Record Sport Coupe De Ville EPOA

One-off Saoutchik-body; won 1950 Grand Prix du Salon at Paris Show, extensively restored back to Concours



BARRETT-JACKSON

1970 Plymouth Road Runner Superbird EPOA

High point of the US muscle-craze: powered by a period-correct 440ci engine, all original sheet metal



THE EXPERT ALAN JONES

Spokesman (and F1 champion), Lloyds Classic Car Auctions, Australia

Australia is an untapped market for overseas buyers. Enthusiasts world-wide are noticing this market, with prices for European road and race cars raising the game to a new level. In 2017 Lloyds sold a Brabham BT21B-Cosworth S for a record-breaking £130,000 and continue to offer European race and road cars to customers who see the value in cars from Australia's dry rust-free climate. Collectors looking to Australia also enjoy good value due to the exchange rate. Being so far from Europe and the US, we've had this market to ourselves for years, but now people overseas are realising you can pay the same amount in dollars you would in pounds for the same car and get a rust-free vehicle - plus free shipping.

From high finance to high performance

Why a leading French banker opted for a radical career change



The late actor Steve McQueen’s oft-quoted remark that ‘racing is life - everything else is just waiting’ could well be applied to Xavier Micheron who, until five years ago, was at the peak of his career as a high-flying investment banker.

In 2013, however, he gave it all up to followed his dream of spending more time collecting and driving post-1950 racing cars - a decision that led to the formation of the Ascott Collection that has now developed into a highly respected brokerage service operating on the outskirts of Paris, just a few

kilometres from the palace of Versailles.

“I currently have about 13 cars in the collection but, like many historic racing enthusiasts, I tend to sell one in order to buy another, so the collection is always evolving. When I made this dramatic change in my life, various people who heard what I was doing asked me to sell and source cars on their behalf, and now I offer that service as a business, always on an exclusive mandate basis.”

Micheron loves to research the history of his cars and meet the people who originally designed them, and has a tenacious attitude towards getting it right. During his ownership

of one of the two Howmet TX gas turbine cars built during the 1960s, for example, he spent two years working with specialist engineers to develop a replacement for its missing wastegate system, without which the car was virtually undriveable on track.

He employs no in-house engineers or technicians, preferring instead to track down the best specialists in their field on the basis that “Someone who is an expert on a certain type of Ferrari might not have any experience with a certain model of Porsche.”

Although he has a particular passion for cars from the 1950s - he has raced a Lister Jaguar and Lotus 15, for example - Micheron is now heavily involved in Group C machines and currently has six on his books, including a 1987 Porsche 962C, a 1988 Spice SE88P and a 1990 Nissan NPT90.

“We have made a great deal of progress in five years, and the Ascott Collection has become truly international,” says Micheron, who recently sold the unique 1967 Nomad MK1 to Japan and has since worked on behalf of clients from around the world - despite suggestions when he started the business that there might not be sufficient call for such a specialist service.

“People said the market was already being served by the bigger specialists in the UK and that it was too much of a niche area for a small broker to be successful. But I think the fact that it is a very, very small world means that when you are active in it you meet everyone, you share a passion and the business comes from there.

“Put it this way - I’m definitely not going back to banking!” ☑



SPEAKING TO XAVIER MICHERON

Racing cars are much more a passion than they are an investment

The market for classic road cars is going down in several areas - but there’s a big difference with racing cars, because the people who want them are not buying them speculatively, they are buying because they want to race them - be that at Goodwood, Monaco or anywhere else. Paradoxically, many road cars have become so valuable that their owners don’t actually want to drive them on public roads. I think people who are interested in buying competition cars are more passionate than those who buy classic road cars. There is more to be passionate about too since each car has its own history, the races it has run and the victories it has achieved. As a result, every racing car is truly unique.

ALAN MANN ESCORT AMR#8



A 1969 "Program Car," VIN BB48JJ07183, sent to the U.S. for the Trans-Am (rejected, as being too far from stock). Known since 1979 by Tivvy Shenton, who with Brian Lewis and Jim Rose, is one of the AMR fabricators and team members still alive who originally built these cars. Tivvy bought the car in the 1990s, and has now restored it to perfection. Lewis, Rose, Alan Mann, and his son Henry, have given advice on details. Rose: "like an artist who paints, a welder acquires a style and look. . . I can confirm without any doubt that this is an Alan Mann Racing original body shell and parts." Unique features (offset engine, torsion-bar rear suspension, horizontal watts linkage, fabricated front crossmember with steering rack, many others) photo-documented "before" and "after." The definitive, and unrepeatably, example of period-correct authenticity for an Alan Mann Escort. No modern alterations or modifications—except one: Alan Mann himself, in a phone conversation with Shenton not long before he died, agreed that it should be his signature red and gold, not its original white.

Never before advertised.

**Offered for sale by owner and restorer Tivvy Shenton: 434-799-5629 (7-5 EST).
Tivvy's Autocraft, 560 Memorial Drive, Danville, VA 24541 U.S.A.**

BMW M3 (E30)

Built to win races – and the hearts of enthusiasts

Price new: £22,750 **Price now:** £40-100,000
Rivals: Mercedes 190E 2.3-16, Ford Sierra RS Cosworth, Alfa Romeo 75 **Heritage:** Racing special that became a marque hero on track and sired a line of road offspring



It was the same but different. When BMW revealed the first M3 in 1985 it was clearly derived from the compact 3-series saloon - it had to be to go racing, which was the whole purpose. It was just a little 3-series; only, were the arches always that chunky, the boot so high, the rear glass so sloped? And under the bonnet did the motor always have BMW M-POWER emblazoned on it?

The fact was that the German firm dived headlong into the E30 project, intending to grab touring car success with both hands. Everything you could see was different bar bonnet and doors: those flares could swallow race tyres, the new boot lid and shallower rear window cut drag, the rear spoiler reduced lift.

Underneath, everything was reworked. Brawnier suspension glued it to the road, the stubby lever sprang from a Getrag dog-leg five-speed box, and a high-revving four-cylinder with a 16-valve head design borrowed from the M1 supercar meant 200bhp in road form and loads of room for race team tuning.

But to qualify for Group A BMW had to make 5000 examples, so this was no special, hand-built in handfuls at the M-Division base. It came out of the main factory, but assembled by specialist teams faced with getting those 5000 out of the doors within 12 months. Such was the M3's success, as a dominating racer and a sensational road car, that BMW ended E30 production at almost 18,000 examples. In series after race series - DTM, WTC, BTCC, not

to mention rallying - the snarling M3 hoovered up success, topping championships across Europe. But unlike many homologation specials it also made a fantastic road car, and successive Evolution models only turned up the thrill, to 215, 220 and finally 238bhp in 2.5-litre form, but all versions shared the responsive steering, obedient turn-in and sheer solid punch of a race-bred engine made to thrive on high revs. M-series cars have proliferated since, and they may be faster, but none has caught the spark of the first M3.

The E30 M3 rides hard and comes only in left-hand drive, but the drive is a thrill you won't forget - balanced but wildy, grippy but forgiving. And prices are surging...

www.classicheroes.co.uk



SPEAKING TO BARNEY HALSE

Owner, Classic Heroes, BMW specialists

You're not buying a mega-fast car in an M3, you're buying an amazing chassis with beautiful balance - it's incredibly flattering. You feel like a touring car hero. And you're getting incredible usability. I say buy at the high end of a lower spec rather than chase, say, a doubtful Evo. A quality 200bhp car is £40,000-65,000; the Evo 1 has small changes, but the Evo 2 was a major upgrade with 220bhp. That's worth a premium - £70-100,000 - as are Cecotto and Ravaglia versions. The 2.5 SportEvo had 238hp and you'll pay over £100,000. They have been popular for 20 years, and I love the way they dominated motor sport worldwide. They had over 1500 international wins!



Our passion is classic competition cars



1959 Maserati Tipo 61 Birdcage

Crostwhaite & Gardiner exacting recreation incl. engine and gearbox. As new and stunning. Eligible for Stirling Moss Trophy, etc.
EUR 495,000



1978 March 782 (#22)

Ex-Lista Racing and well documented. Fully rebuild with fresh Hart 2 litre engine. Race-ready w/ good spares and new FIA HTP.
GBP 135,000



1970 Chevron B19 (70-S-10)

The prototype B19 with extensive documented history! Freshly restored with Richardson FVC. Spares and current FIA HTP.
GBP 195,000



1982 Porsche 911 SC / RS 3.0

Build to RS Group 3 spec in Belga livery to FIA rally/race spec. Used sparingly since. Road registered and with FIA HTP papers.
EUR 145,000



1969 Lola T70 Mk3B (HU76/160)

2nd of 6 continuation cars built by Lola Ltd. Two owners from new, completely overhauled and race-ready with good spares and 2016 FIA HTP.
P.O.A.



1973 Lola T292 (HU-54)

Archembeaud team car with excellent race history. Race-ready with BMW M12/7 engine, 2016 FIA HTP and good spares.
EUR 225,000



1971 FORD CAPRI 2600 RS

Well known and iconic Capri. 2017 Peter Auto HTC championship winner. Sold in race-ready condition with current FIA HTP and spares.
P.O.A.



1968 Chevron B8 (CHDBE-51)

Genuine, ex-John Lepp FVA-engined B8 with excellent Int'l race history. Fully sorted and race-ready with extensive spares.
P.O.A.

We have a wider variety of great cars for sale. Please call or visit our web-site for more information.

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Brabham BT35-8

Hero of a dramatic victory against the greats

*Price new: £3500 approx Price now: £95,000
Rivals: March 722, McLaren M21, Surtees TS10,
Chevron B20 Heritage: From an era when the
Brabham name meant success in multiple
series - even against future champions*



the 1972 season Morgan used the 35, re-engined with an 1830cc Cosworth BDE. His impressive victory ahead of Niki Lauda, Carlos Reutemann and Jody Scheckter marked him out as a coming man.

Meanwhile the car went to Australia and raced in Australian F2 with a 1600 Ford twin-cam. Rescued from a spell of inactivity, it got a new life in historic racing down under with correct BDE power before returning to the UK where Simon Hadfield fully restored it to the form in which it scored that memorable victory in 1972. It's now for sale at specialist dealer William I'Anson.



Historic F2 is buzzing right now, and as a prime example of a marque at its peak, a BT35 would make a very competitive entry in historic F2, whether the HSCC International or Peter Auto Euro series. But only one has headed Niki Lauda...

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Straightforward, forgiving and successful - three words that sum up Ron Tauranac's chassis designs in his Brabham era. That's why the team, when not winning Grands Prix, sold so many customer cars in lower formulae; by 1970 the total constructed was 500 and rising. It was the Dallara of its time. Tauranac's cars may not have been innovative, but they were robust, relatively light and forgiving at the limit and throughout the 1960s they garnered excellent results in F2 and F3.

That's why when Ed Reeves wanted to contest Formula Atlantic in 1971, he ordered this BT35 from Brabham.

Following on from the successful BT30, the 35 retained a tube frame (which along with the

sister BT36 F2 design was the last before Brabham switched to stressed-skin principles), conventional suspension and a front radiator. Available in three strains for Atlantic, Formula B or F3, it appeared at a time of great change, when growing wings and widening tyres were pushing up lap speeds, and its high-mounted nose wings and single-plane rear wing made good use of the new science.

Reeve's car was fitted with a 1600 Cosworth BDA and he had a decent season before choosing to put promising pedaller Dave Morgan in it for a couple of late-season events. The newcomer impressed with a fourth and a third and landed himself a seat for 1972.

Reeve ordered a new Brabham BT38 for the new 2-litre F2 series, but in the first round of



SPEAKING TO BEN MITCHELL

Partner, William I'Anson Ltd

There's always a demand for a car with an interesting background like this - Dave Morgan with a relatively small team went out and beat the world at Mallory Park that day. A massive achievement when you look at the names he beat. This is a great way to get on the F2 grid - very enjoyable and maybe not so high maintenance as later cars. Also it's lighter than later chassis, so it's more agile. Simon Hadfield restored it with particular attention to the way it was that day at Mallory - it even has a dummy side fire extinguisher though obviously it also has all the up to date equipment too. It's beautiful up close.



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For more photos etc. search 'AC SHELBY COBRA' on www.pistonheads.com



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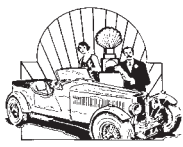
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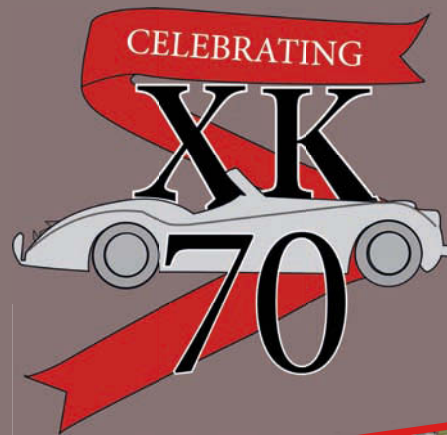
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THIS MONTH Several months after its first appearance on these pages, the Alfasud Sprint Veloce hits the track • Ed Foster on his ex-works MGB • Jordan 195 rebuild latest



RACER REBUILD

Alfasud Sprint Veloce

So much hope, so much expectation, so much promise... but motor racing has a habit of being cruel to its aficionados, as Geoff Gordon explains

This was supposed to be a glorious send-off. Note use of the word 'supposed'. Over the past few months I've related the tale of how my Group 2 'Sud Sprint Veloce was located in Portugal and then brought to the UK to be restored at Speedworks Motorsport.

Following a successful shakedown at Blyton, reported last month, the story was due to end with reflections on the car's first race - something to which I'd been looking

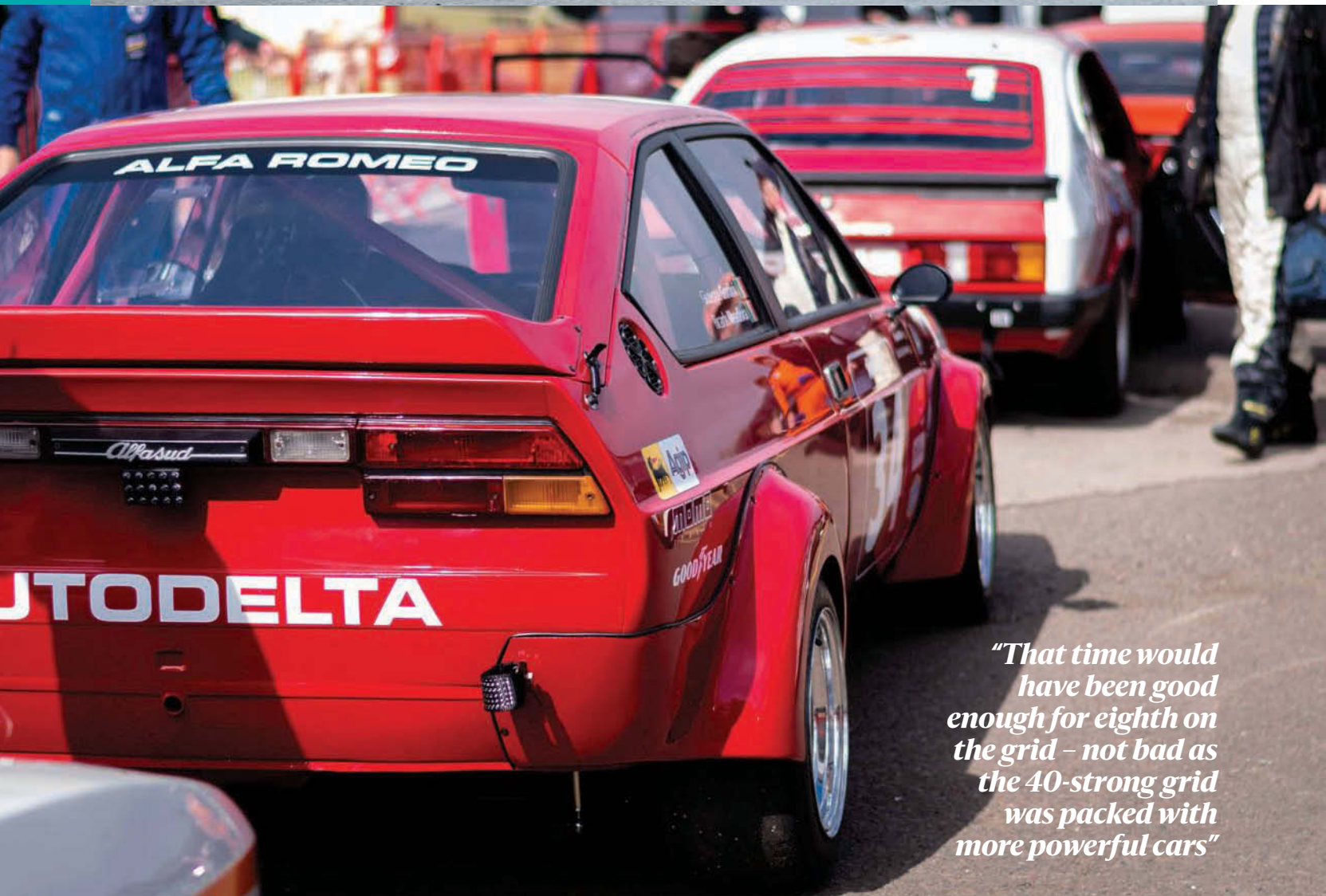
forward immensely.

At the time of writing, I still am.

I was due to contest the Historic Touring Car Challenge event at the Donington Historic Festival - and things looked promising during the pre-event test, initially at least. With so many cars present, we were restricted to four half-hour sessions during the day - and the car ran well in the first two, Dickie Meaden and I sharing driving duties and Dickie working his way down to a 1min 20.1sec. The car felt good

and we thought that was a reasonable start, little imagining that the time would have been good enough for eighth on the grid had it been set during qualifying - not bad as the almost 40-strong field was packed with many more powerful cars, including BMW M3s and 635s, Ford Sierra Cosworths, Rover SD1s, Capris etc.

Would he have been able to go quicker still during qualifying at Donington on Friday? Might track conditions have improved? We didn't get chance to find out. **☒**



"That time would have been good enough for eighth on the grid – not bad as the 40-strong grid was packed with more powerful cars"



Eight-valve boxer produces impressive power – but at Donington debut decided not to play



Dickie thought he'd felt the engine miss a couple of times in our second test session and mentioned as much. I then started the third half-hour and the engine definitely tightened during my out lap, so I turned off and coasted in. We thought it best that we stop immediately so that Brunswick Racing boss Dave Ashford could check the engine. He took it apart and discovered an oil-feed anomaly, so made a few modifications and put everything back together ready for Donington. The car was fired up in the workshop and sounded good, so we headed north in a positive frame of mind.

The qualifying plan was for Dickie to complete a handful of laps and post a time, while I would do the bulk of the session as I had greater need of seat time. Under load on the out lap, though, he wasn't happy with the engine note and, not wanting to inflict any damage, brought the car back in. As nothing obvious was amiss, we took the decision to withdraw so that the problem could be investigated more thoroughly - and the engine has gone back to Brunswick, where I know they'll get to the heart of the problem.

With Spa coming up quite soon after Donington, there wasn't time to put the car back together and complete adequate rolling road and circuit testing, so we've also scratched from that race and refocused our targets on Dijon, in mid-June, by which time we should also have a spare engine. When running well, the car produces astonishing power for an eight-valve boxer and I feel very optimistic about how it will eventually perform.

I have very much enjoyed relating the story of the car's rebuild and hope it will in time feature again in *Motor Sport*. In the meantime, I would like to thank the many readers who sought us out for a chat at Donington - including a chap from New Zealand, although he happened to be on a European tour and hadn't flown over specifically to see the Alfa!

I'm sorry they didn't have the opportunity to see the car running in anger, but that's motor racing.

We will be back... 📺



Thanks to: Speedworks Motorsport; Brunswick Racing; Motor Sport's readers



F1 RESTORATION

Jordan 195

The finish line is in sight as the car gains made-to-measure dampers, while work continues on the period monochrome dash



My Jordan-Peugeot is finally nearing completion, and we are now focused on the relatively minor parts of the build and restoration. That includes the dampers and the dash.

The car came to me minus its dampers, so we have had to commission a brand-new set from Quantum Racing in West Sussex. They have been designed to mimic the originals as closely as possible, but we have added some options for adjustability to allow for greater fine-tuning. We don't have any set up-sheets from period, so knowing the exact damper rate employed in the day and at each circuit is impossible. Having a set of dampers built for every circuit is impractical, so this solution will allow us to tune the car as required. The dampers are a direct fit to the original suspension components and as such require no fettling or modification of original rockers or mounts.

Spring rates have been determined via a very complex computer simulation. We have several spring choices to test, which should give us some further set-up options for each circuit. If we were just building the car for static display or demo runs we wouldn't have gone to these lengths, but from the outset I have determined that the 195 should be built to race.

Tour-de-Force Power Engineering have also been working on the cockpit and specifically the dash display and associated knobs and switchgear. The intention is to use the original dash which came with the car, but it is taking some time to comprehend the exact communication protocol used to relay information to a 23-year-old bit of kit. It's a work in progress at the moment and taking longer to

complete than we originally thought.

Maintaining the original look and feel is important, though. The dash rev display starts at 6 and progresses to 0, and then on from 1 to 7 again, a shorthand way of getting from 6000rpm to the near-17,000rpm rev limit. Very cool. If the dash work doesn't get completed in time for the first few runs of the car, then we have a plan B. This involves using a MoTeC CDL display, which is the last monochrome LCD display option manufactured today and it has the look and feel that suits a '90s Formula 1 car perfectly.

While the dash is being figured out the original pots and switches are all being refurbished and we have had Momo supply a replica steering wheel to match the original. We only had the few onboard camera videos available on YouTube to use as a reference, but the copy we have is identical in every way as far as we can tell.

It's final assembly and shakedown test next, and then on to Prescott Hill at the end of June and the Silverstone Classic in July. We'll also hopefully be running the car up the hill at the Goodwood Festival of Speed. 🏁



Next month: At last – shakedown test, ready for debut at Prescott hillclimb
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HISTORIC RACER

MGB Roadster

A new season should always bring hope, but for Ed Foster it yielded mostly frustration



The view from the outside of Graham Hill Bend at Brands Hatch is a great place to watch racing. I only know this as I found myself there after needing some solitude during an MGB race weekend.

Regular readers will remember that BRX 855B underwent some quite serious work over the winter and the Equipe GTS races at Brands Hatch on April 28/29 were its first proper tests. To recap, the engine was totally rebuilt, the gearbox was rebuilt, the suspension was renewed and the braking system was overhauled. I would write down the full cost, but it is still too painful.

Roy Gillingham of Chequered Flag Classics did a fantastic job on the rebuild, but what followed at Brands Hatch was a wonderful example of luck so rotten, it stank. In Friday testing the old clutch was slipping in third and fourth. The last three (of four) sessions were a write off and Roy took the engine and 'box out to discover the clutch plate was breaking up. It was absolutely fine on the rolling road, but had finally had enough. Roy, in typically calm fashion, fixed it and the car was ready and waiting come Saturday morning. A dodgy alternator halted us in the first qualifying session and then, in the first of four races, the

freshly rebuilt gearbox decided to eat itself into one large, noisy, expensive mess. It was after this I wandered off to Graham Hill to watch the race I was supposed to be in.

The gearbox was sent off to a separate company for rebuild and it seems that the gears (particularly third) were tired. Third went, which then bent the layshaft, which means a new gear set is needed. Not an easy, or cheap, fix with the estimate at £2600.

It was after discovering this that co-driver Nick Trott messaged to ask whether I'd like him to do a costings sheet on what I've spent. I asked him not to. I hope readers have enjoyed the trials and triumphs of our racing career. It has certainly been an experience and the MGB will ride again, of course. Now, excuse me while I call my bank manager. ☹



Thanks to: Thanks to Roy Gillingham and Chequered Flag Classics for working around the clock to get the car on track at Brands Hatch

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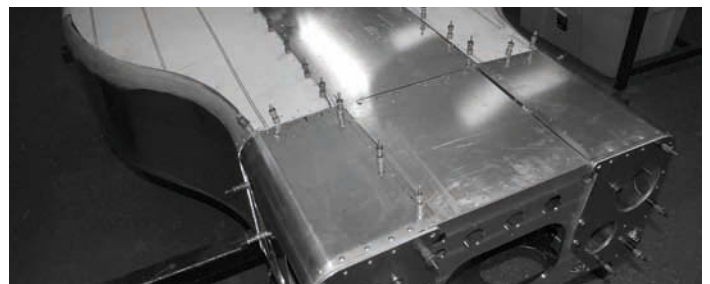
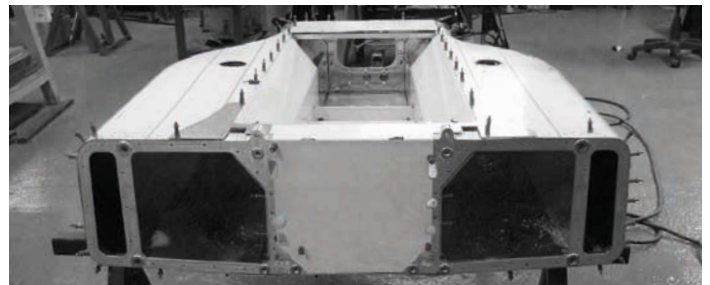
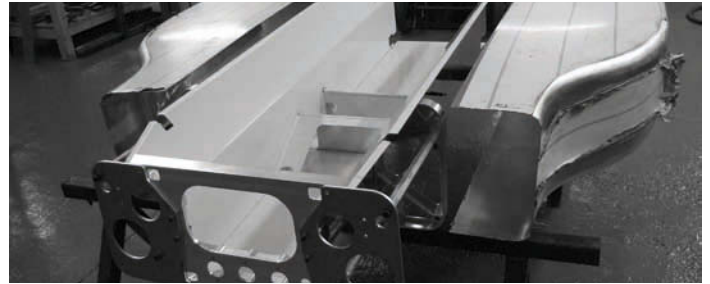
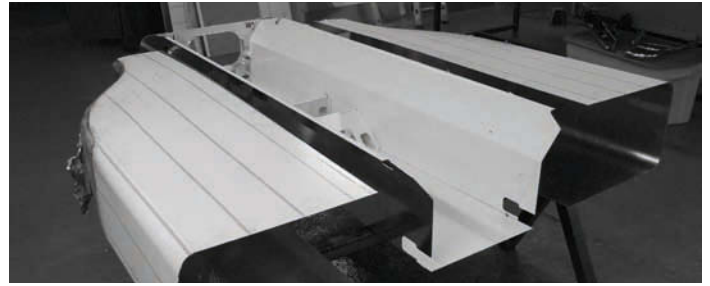


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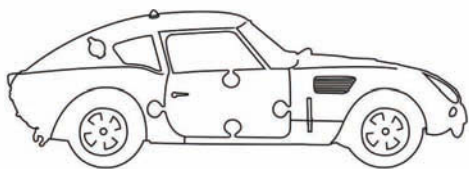
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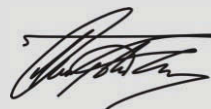


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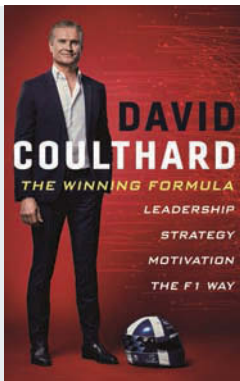
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The Winning Formula
 Leadership, Strategy, Motivation, the F1 Way
 David Coulthard

Formula 1 is unique among mainstream sports in that it is both an individual and team endeavour; it requires immense physical strength, bravery and skill but also incredible intellectual ability, mainly (but not exclusively) in the field of engineering. The skills it fosters have obvious applications in everyday life and business and this book aims to distil them into a handy guide. It could go very wrong, ending up as little more than a dry-as-dust management manual hiding behind the glamour of Formula 1. But Coulthard and his co-authors (Martin Roach is credited and so is the excellent

Mark Gallagher) manage to make the book zip along at a fair old lick while avoiding too much self-help jargon, barring the odd “be the best version of yourself” lapse. Coulthard’s obsession with work ethic comes out clearly, but so too do his feet-on-the-ground manner and occasional flashes of self-aware humour: signing for Red Bull from McLaren resulted in a pay cut that meant he wasn’t earning enough to cover his “burn rate ... because my life had expanded to include such things as planes and boats.” There are also surprising nuggets of detail: interviewed by Frank Williams for a drive, the team boss demanded to see his abs as proof that he was taking his training seriously. Overall, this is a diverting and at times enlightening book that ultimately delivers on its aim of showing how skills honed in F1 can be used away from the track. **JD**
 Published by Blink Publishing, ISBN: 978-1-788700-11-5, £20

Circuit Paul Ricard

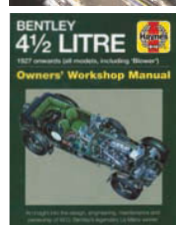
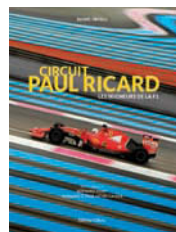
Les Seigneurs de la F1
 Daniel Ortelli

There are several sides to Paul Ricard. When it opened in 1970, little more than a year before hosting the first of its 14 French Grands Prix, it represented motor racing’s shiny new face, with cutting-edge safety facilities and - a sign of the sport’s changing ways - its own private airstrip.

Time’s passage added a certain patina and, following the permanent loss of the GP to Magny-Cours at the dawn of the 1990s, it became a rather soulless place, a popular test venue but only an occasional racing host. F1 seemed a million years distant... particularly after the French GP was axed altogether beyond 2008.

And that’s how things stayed until race and Ricard made a surprise return to the calendar 10 years later, much of the venue’s bygone polish finally having been restored.

In honour of the circuit’s illustrious past (and, hopefully, future), respected writer Daniel Ortelli - cousin of 1998 Le Mans winner Stéphane - has compiled a weighty circuit history featuring a barrage of detail and, perhaps more importantly, the photographic input of three of France’s finest lensmiths (Bernard Asset and the Cahiers père et fils, Bernard and Pierre-Henri).



It’s a sumptuous undertaking at something of a bargain price, covering everything from the earliest days to the post-F1 decline and pre-2018 redevelopment, and the images - a blend of cars, people and context - are uniformly splendid. The downside, for some, will be the all-French text, but a) that’s what you get for paying insufficient attention at school and b) the pictures alone should justify the modest outlay. **SA**

Published by Éditions Gilletta
 ISBN: 978-2-35956-102-9, €29.90

Fascinating F1 Facts

Volumes 1&2
 Joe Saward

Playful, punchy and often poignant, Joe Saward’s two-volume set of *Fascinating Formula 1 Facts* covers an enormous amount of ground, from the origin of the term ‘Grand Prix’ in the late 18th century, to F1’s connection with the banana business.

Each fact is divided into page-long articles, each often beginning with something completely unrelated such as a rant about America’s foreign policy and the role of immigrants in a strong economy; if you’re a fan of his blog, rest assured that Saward’s voice is not lost in this compendium of short stories on F1.

Sometimes, Saward enters into a pattern of listing names and dates, Wikipedia-style, delving into deep-rooted family trees connecting drivers such as Didier Pironi and José Dolhem. What begins as an interesting family connection sprawls into a convoluted family history, and ends on a tragic note. The tone of Saward’s fact-filled volumes veers from light-hearted to downright depressing - but it underlines the fact that motor sport has long been a heartbreaking pursuit.

There are 200 stories here and they originally appeared as part of a free-to-view series on Saward’s blog, so at £19.99 each - or £35.99 for the pair via flatoutpublishing.com - the price seems a bit lofty. But if you’ve got a pub quiz coming up with a prize fund, Saward’s sprawling collection of yarns could earn you a small profit. If you’re looking to impress your colleagues through a wealth of carefully compiled certitudes, with some tenuous F1 connections included in the mix, then Saward’s set of facts makes a priceless acquisition. **SK**

Published by Morienvall
 ISBN: 978-0-9554868-3-8, 978-0-9554868-4-5, £19.99 each or £35.99 for both

Bentley 4½ Litre
Owners' Workshop Manual
 Andy Brown & Ian Wagstaff

There is a certain charm about the continued existence of Haynes manuals. In an age when car manufacturers make it ever harder to access bits beneath the bonnet - there is a series of YouTube videos that explain how to change light bulbs on certain models, which really shouldn’t be necessary - Haynes continues to outline the finer points of everything from recent Ford Fiestas to Ferguson tractors, Volvo 240s and, here, the Le Mans-winning talisman once described (by Ettore Bugatti) as the world’s fastest lorry.

The recipe is the same as ever: a bit of history, a few nice period photos and plenty of drawings outlining how best to dismantle the rear suspension, the whole contained within a familiar (aka pedestrian) design template. **SA**
 Published by Haynes
 ISBN: 978-1-78521-070-9, £22.99

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— FEATURED ARTIST —

Olivia Davis

*Who doesn't want to deconstruct F1?
This artist does it, in two dimensions*

If there's one symbol of motor racing it's the chequered flag, and it overlays much of Olivia Davis's work. The Paris-born French-Canadian, who has lived in the UK for 32 years, says "It's a question of making the observer think and extract the image for themselves rather than being given a straightforward representation."

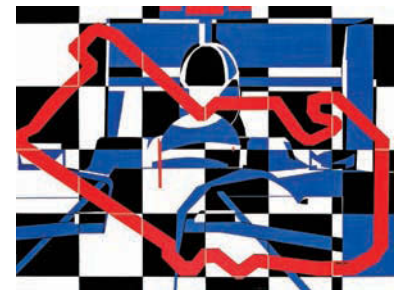
And while she also paints cricket, cycling and deep sea fishing, that image is likely to be Formula 1. "The Formula 1 car is a fascinating object" she says. "I've watched a lot of F1 and enjoy attending races. Nothing beats those smells and sounds."

Olivia works directly on to the canvas without preparatory sketches, using acrylics and other elements such as paper or metal leaf. "At the beginning it looks like any drawing of a car but as the other elements are added - company name, logo, circuit markings, etc - there develops an overlay of several drawings which I then break down as I paint. I work with an enormous amount of masking tape which helps me to paint several layers of colour."

Abstract art is a rarity in automotive art. Her style, she says, developed from her love of industrial shapes such as bridges, factories and constructions like the Eiffel Tower - "basically geometry. I like to deconstruct what I see and just represent what I feel are the essential parts."

The driving force, she says, is to explore "the balance between mechanical shapes and the designers and drivers who set them in motion. The result is a dynamic cocktail of colours and industrial shapes which draws the viewer in."

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FEATURED MODELMAKER

BBurago

Marcus Nicholls takes a look at a famous Italian die-cast maker

BBurago is, or perhaps was, an enormously famous producer of die-cast metal model cars, turning them out by the thousands from their Burago di Molgora factory in Italy from 1976 to 2005. Originally entitled 'Martoyo's' from 1974 to 1976, the company was founded by Mario, Ugo and Martino Besana (who had previously started Mebetoys, later sold to Mattel). In 1976 the company's name was changed to 'BBurago', specifically with a double B to reflect the town and the Besana family name. This unusual twist helped to make the company memorable, as did product lines that included everything from lorries to Lamborghinis.

From a personal viewpoint, the car that most stuck in my mind was the 1:18 1934 Bugatti Type 59, a model that my father cherished and even embellished with some hand-painted details to make accurate some small flaws. The model made use of die-cast metal - usually zinc - main chassis and body parts, with injection moulding for the wheels, seats, engine and other items. The details were of a 'good' level rather than cutting-edge, but it looked stunning in its racing blue livery and was certainly a contributing factor in my subsequent addiction to all things scale-model related.

Not all of BBurago's output was in the now hugely popular scale of 1:18; in the earlier years the firm released cars in 1:48, 1:21, 1:22, 1:16 and even in 1:12. Several model ranges were created in 1:24, the universal scale for model car kits alongside 1:43. These included grandly titled lines such 'Grand Prix', 'Super', 'Bijoux' and 'VIP'. The Super series included many sports cars plus vehicles in police liveries, with no fewer than 45 different models in that line-up. The Grand Prix range comprised 10 Formula 1 and Indycars.

Models in the larger scales often featured opening doors, bonnets and boots and had detailed engines, working steering, spare tyres, windscreen wipers and instrument



panels. Some cars even had workable suspension and removable wheels. In earlier designs, BBurago made use of plastics for doors and bonnets and these parts sometimes didn't fit particularly well with the metal structures; after a few openings and closings, they could distort and not sit correctly in place. They were best opened/closed just once then placed in the display cabinet for observation only. In 2005 BBurago declared bankruptcy and was purchased by rival manufacturer Maisto in 2006, but the famous name lives on and has been part of the Maisto brand since 2007. ☑

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Parting Shot

June 30, 1956

Reims, France

Relaxed-looking pit drill during the Reims 12 Hours, as the Auguste Veuillet-entered Porsche 550 RS of Richard von Frankenberg/Claude Storez receives attention. The car won the 1.5-litre class, taking fifth overall behind the Jaguar D-types of Duncan Hamilton/Ivor Bueb, Mike Hawthorn/Paul Frère, Desmond Titterington/Jack Fairman and Ron Flockhart/Ninian Sanderson.





1. George Eaton's McLaren MI2 at the 1969 Michigan Can-Am 2. The winning Chaparral 2A of Jim Hall/Hap Sharp, 1965 Sebring 12 Hours 3/4. Al Unser Jr (Galle GR-3) and Al Holbert (VDS-001), 1982 Laguna Seca Can-Am 5. Shelby Cobra of George Reed/Dan Gerber, Sebring 1965 6. Ford MkII of Walt Hansgen/Mark Donohue, Sebring 1966 7. Tom Pryce (Shadow DN5), 1975 Spanish GP



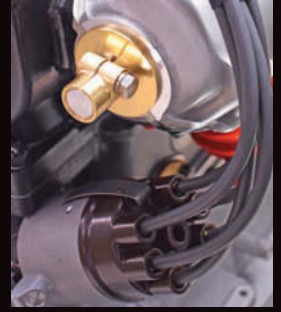
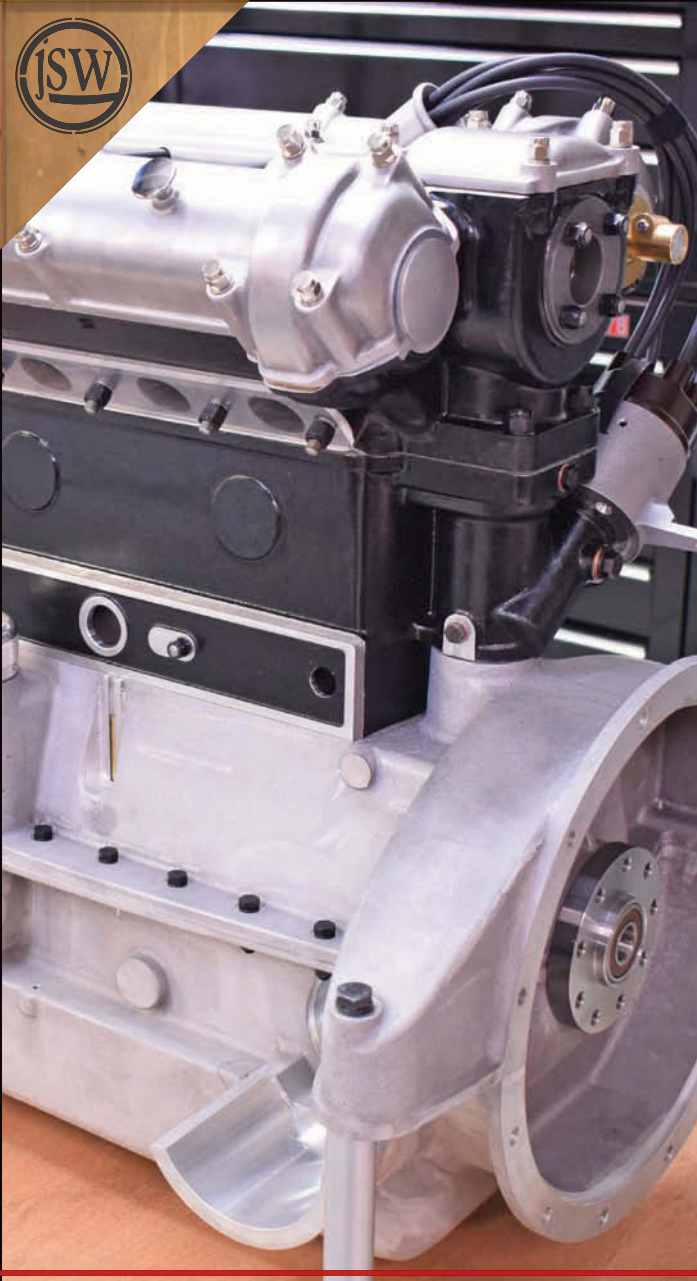
You were there

A lifelong racing enthusiast, Seattle-based Wiley Norwich was active on both sides of the Atlantic during the 1960s and 1970s

Send us your images

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

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