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MOTOR SPORT

FORMULA 1 | SPORTS CAR RACING | MOTORCYCLES | ROAD CARS | HISTORICS

'Button is now a GP great'
By Nigel Roebuck

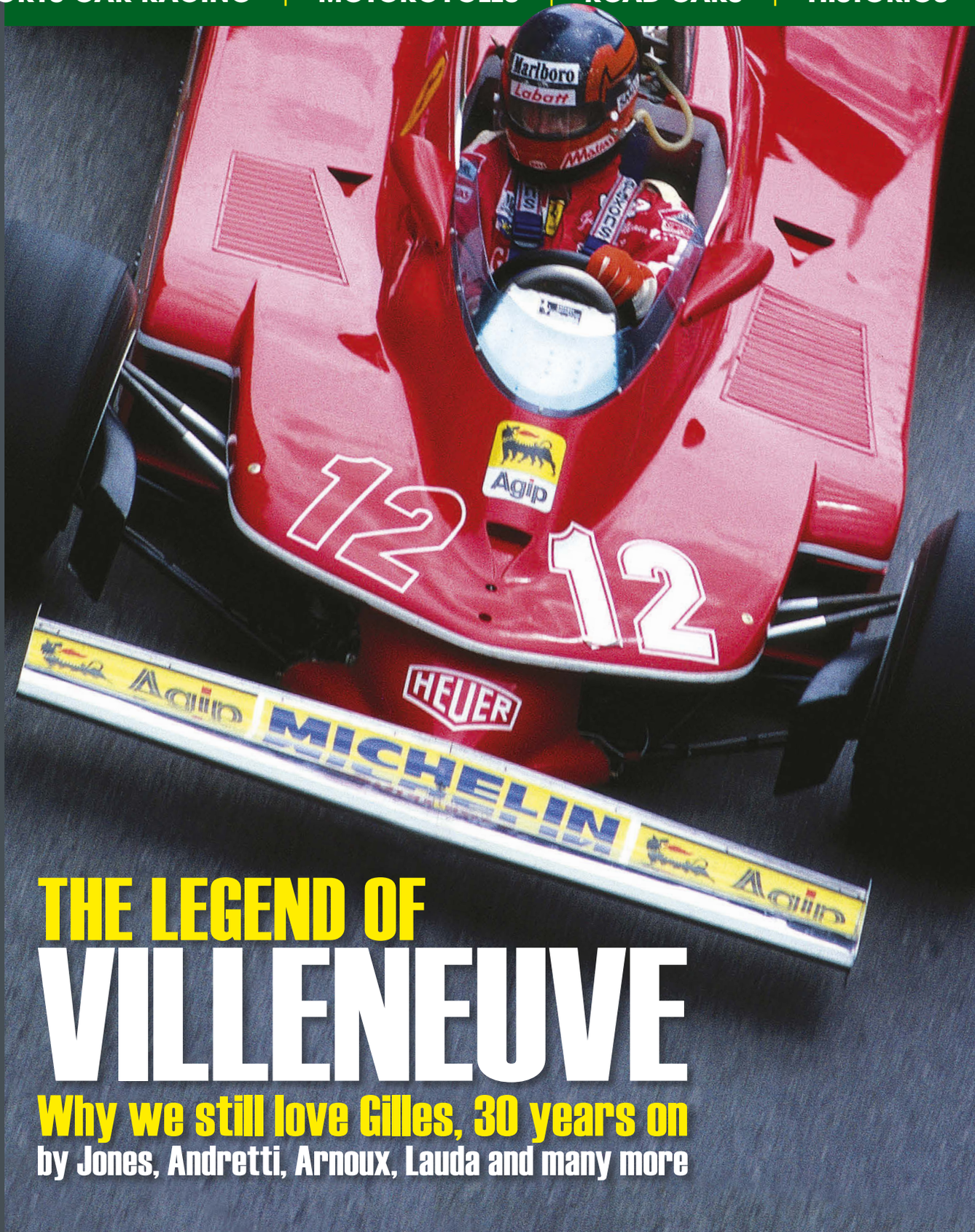
Agostini: A class act on two wheels
By Ed Foster

We track Britain's lost road race
by Simon Taylor

'At Le Mans I was always frightened'
Triple winner 'King' Klaus Ludwig opens up

On the road in Boxster, Alpina and 'new' MG

The paratrooper who took the battle to F1
Rob Widdows on his wild friend David Purley

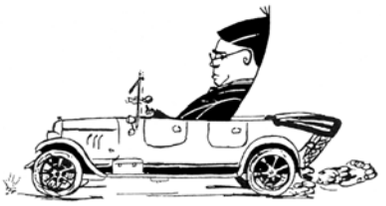


THE LEGEND OF VILLENEUVE

Why we still love Gilles, 30 years on
by Jones, Andretti, Arnoux, Lauda and many more

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In the spirit of Jenks

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Matters of Moment

As we mark 30 years since the death of Gilles Villeneuve, the driver who for some of us personifies more than any other what a true racing hero should be, I can't help wondering what the little man from Quebec would make of the picture on pages 72 and 73 of this issue.

Take a look. Did you read the caption? Three rows of McLaren engineers sitting in a grey room with no windows, monitoring all sorts of data on banks of computer screens during some far-flung Grand Prix. They're not even at the race itself. They're back in Woking, at McLaren's HQ, analysing performance and working out differing simulations of how the race might unfold, vital info that they will feed to their colleagues on the pitwall. Villeneuve would have been nonplussed by such cold science. What's happened to his sport?



Damien Smith
Editor

Still, as I watched the twists and turns of the Australian Grand Prix, I couldn't help but reflect that in spite of the immense intelligence and infrastructure that sits behind two racing cars circulating on a track, the sport of motor racing will often outfox even the most brilliant minds. Those analysts couldn't avoid Lewis Hamilton finding himself stuck behind Sergio Perez after his first pitstop at Albert Park, could they?

There was good reason, of course. McLaren had called Jenson Button in first because he had priority as the race leader. But having pushed their Pirelli 'option' tyres to their limit (and beyond), it left Hamilton scrabbling around that extra lap before his own stop on rubber way past its best. He lost about three seconds – so Perez, on his incredible one-stop strategy, came into play. Lewis took four laps to find his way around the Sauber, and Jenson was gone.

The solution, the risky "double-shuffle", as Martin Whitmarsh described it, was to bring in both drivers on the same lap for the second stops and trust in the mechanics not to botch a wheel change. It was an impressive team display, but then fate played a hand: Vitaly Petrov abandoned his Caterham on the pit straight and caused a safety car period. And that would lead directly to Sebastian Vettel jumping Lewis for second place.

There was nothing those engineers on the pitwall and back in Woking could do to stop it. Thus, we still have a sport and not merely a technical exercise. And on this evidence, a pretty exciting sport at that.

Gilles would still have shrugged and shaken his head, I suspect. It's hard to imagine the man of Dijon and Zandvoort '79 getting too excited about the vagaries of tyre and pitstop strategy. But looking further down the order he would surely have nodded in familiar recognition. For there, valiantly holding on against the odds in fifth place, was a supremely gifted racing driver grappling with a pig of a Ferrari and scoring points the team didn't deserve.

Yes, the spirit of Gilles Villeneuve lives on in 2012, in the pure racer form of Ferrari's little Spaniard: Fernando Alonso.



There's a word in the Malian language of Bambara that sums up the spirit of *Motor Sport* quite perfectly. The word is 'Abarka' and it means: 'thanks for yesterday, thanks for the present, thanks for tomorrow'. There. Never say we don't teach you anything in these pages… »»»

MOTOR SPORT
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Matters of Moment

The source for this unlikely tribute? A certain six-time Le Mans winner – who's from Belgium.

As you might recall if you read Simon Taylor's 'Lunch with' interview last year, Jacky Ickx's wife is Malian and these days he spends much of his time in a country he has grown to love. He also has a soft spot for this magazine, as he told me with such African eloquence when I found myself sitting beside the great man at dinner in Goodwood House recently. Talk about a 'pinch me' moment.

I'd previously met Jacky when he joined our Hall of Fame during the magazine's inaugural awards evening in 2010. Our exclusive club of motor racing legends has swelled to 20 following our latest big night, which took place for the third year running at the Roundhouse on February 16. Four new members were announced: the late Colin McRae, whose father Jimmy joined us to welcome him as the first rally driver in our Hall of Fame; legendary 15-time motorcycling World Champion Giacomo Agostini, who flew in from Italy specially to be with us; the king of both two wheels and four, John Surtees, a man whose inclusion was not before time; and also Adrian Newey, the greatest racing car designer of modern times – and perhaps, arguably, of all time.

It was quite a night, and you can read all about it in our special supplement that comes free with this issue (UK only). If you're a reader overseas, check out the Hall of Fame section of our website (www.motorsportmagazine.com) for a photo gallery and video of the event.

We have some exciting developments that we'll be introducing for the 2013 *Motor Sport* Hall of Fame, when more great names from the past and present will join the club. More on that next month.

The Goodwood media day featured 123 cars and motorcycles this year – on a par with the grand total that showed up for the first Festival of Speed itself, way back in 1993. Lord March has created another monster! He'll be tempted to open it to the public at this rate…

You can find out more about Goodwood's plans for both the 2012 Festival and Revival on page 18. Meanwhile, we're looking forward to the first big UK historic racing festival of the season, at Donington Park on May 5/6.

Now in only its second year, the Donington Historic Festival is already established as a spring highlight of the racing season. *Motor Sport* will be there, and if you pay a visit to our stand you can win a ride of the circuit in the course car on either day. Sir Stirling Moss will also be signing autographs at our base, so do come and say hello.

Motor Sport readers can claim a 25 per cent discount on admission, too. Visit www.doningtonhistoric.com, click on the 'advance tickets discount' button and enter code MSDHF12, or call the ticket hotline on 0844 873 7355 and quote the code, to make the most of this offer. Two days of terrific historic racing, all at a bargain price! Don't miss it.



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SIMON TAYLOR


NIGEL ROEBUCK


PAUL FEARNLEY


ANDREW FRANKEL

CONTRIBUTORS

Having lunch with racing's great personalities is hardly a chore for **SIMON TAYLOR**, but he particularly enjoyed catching up with two old friends for a rare dual interview this month. He's known Chris Craft and Keith Greene for over 40 years and promised us a wealth of entertaining stories. As usual, he didn't disappoint. We have a second dose of Simon this month, and it's something different. The story of how the Peak District almost became the home of British road racing is little known, but our man reveals all – with the help of his lovely Stovebolt Special.

For editor-in-chief **NIGEL ROEBUCK** tracking back 30 years to remember Gilles Villeneuve was always going to make for a special issue. His friendship with the Ferrari icon was like no other he had with a racing driver, before or since. In Reflections this month, he recalls that friendship and in our cover story he's spoken to a select group of Villeneuve's peers to gain their perspective of the great man.

Former editor **ANDREW FRANKEL** leads some life. This month, he's found time to drive the cream of the latest new road cars, drop in on the Geneva Motor Show to take a first look at Bentley's hideous SUV, and was last seen blasting up Goodwood's hill on press day in a Ferrari 750 Monza. Oh, and he's also written a great story on a recent 'Klaus' encounter (sorry) with a German legend.

Another former editor, **PAUL FEARNLEY**, has traced a man we think is probably the fastest GP driver to sport a comb-over… 1980s one-lap wonder Teo Fabi. With insight from Pat Symonds and Robin Herd, Paul sheds welcome light on an underrated ace of F1 and Indy.

FORMULA 1

Ecclestone eyes flotation

Plans for Bernie Ecclestone to float part of the F1 business on the Singapore Stock Exchange have emerged.

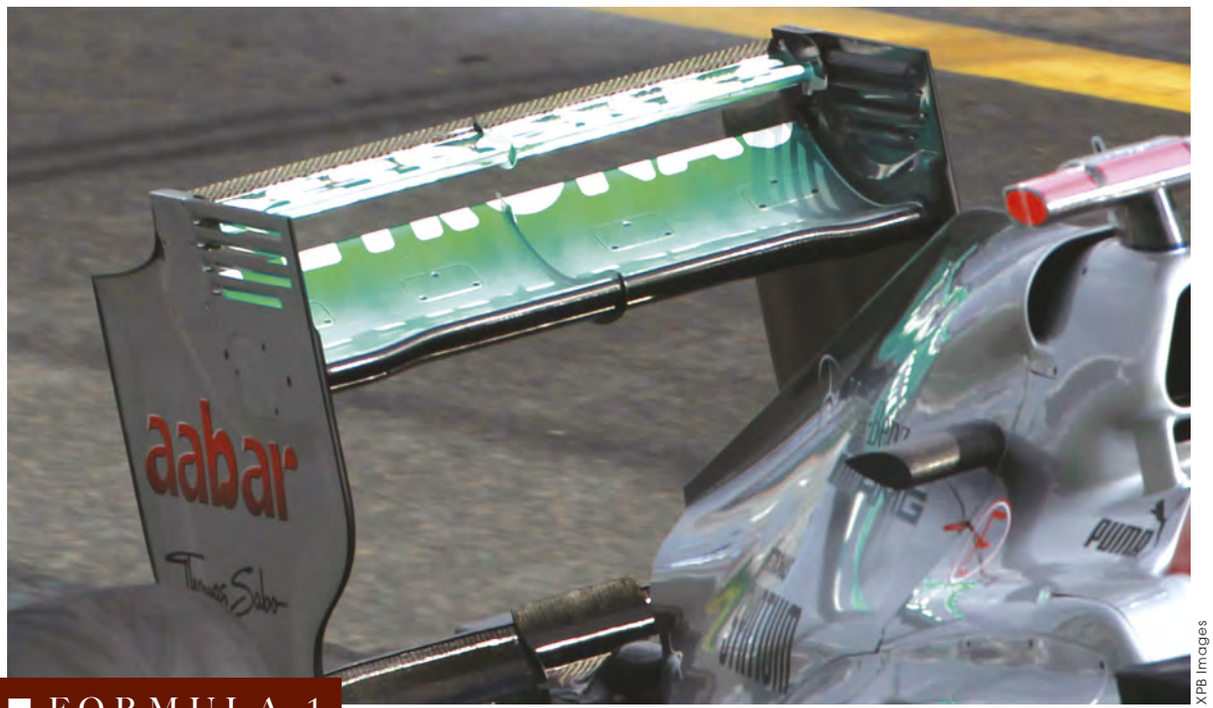
The offering is linked to suggestions that Ferrari and Red Bull are already committed to the new Concorde Agreement, which will cover the 2013-2020 seasons. The two teams left FOTA last year as the first step towards concluding their own arrangements with Ecclestone and CVC.

If the float goes ahead it could reduce the possibility of a future takeover of F1 by a single entity such as News Corporation, a potential outcome which has given the teams cause for concern. The F1 business is reputedly valued at $10bn.

Documents leaked to Sky News – and quickly removed from its website – underlined that Ferrari, in its traditional position as the 'Longest Standing Team,' is favoured by special arrangements.

It's suggested that Ferrari would get a share of the business and a place on its board for Luca di Montezemolo. It is not clear whether Red Bull or other future signatories – in essence the teams that have remained with FOTA, such as Lotus, McLaren and Mercedes – would also be offered a slice of the action.

In a move clearly calculated to anger the FOTA teams, there is mention of a payment of $35m for the first team to win consecutive constructors' titles after 2008 – already claimed by Red Bull – while there are extra funds for every title won since 2000 by teams that have not changed their names, for which only Ferrari and Red Bull appear to be eligible.



XPB Images

FORMULA 1

'Clever' Mercedes blows hole through aero rules

An F1 season rarely starts without controversy as the teams push the boundaries of the rules and in turn become agitated if they don't like a piece of technology that they see on another car.

They are often even more upset if it's something they have rejected as illegal, only to find that a rival has put it into practice. That's the case with Mercedes' so-called F-duct, a clever piece of lateral thinking by Ross Brawn's designers.

The F-duct was last seen in 2010 before the FIA banned driver-operated devices that stalled the rear wing, thereby boosting speed. They were in any case made obsolete by the Drag Reduction System (DRS), which performs a similar function.

The Mercedes W03 contains a system that stalls the front wing by linking grooved channels underneath it to a duct on the inside face of the rear endplate. The hole is only visible when the DRS wing flap that hides it is activated and pops up.

It thus provides a straightline speed advantage whenever the DRS is used – at any stage during practice and qualifying, but in races only when running behind another car. In effect it is a tool for aiding qualifying performance and overtaking.

Rivals believe that since the duct is opened by the driver's action it is clearly illegal, but after inspecting the system in Australia the FIA acknowledged that it complied with the law.

"Obviously we kept the FIA informed of what we were doing," said Brawn. "They physically checked the system, they were completely happy with it. Some other teams aren't quite so happy and are seeking clarification. If the FIA continue to be happy with it, we'll continue to use it."

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner was among those to challenge the Mercedes interpretation.

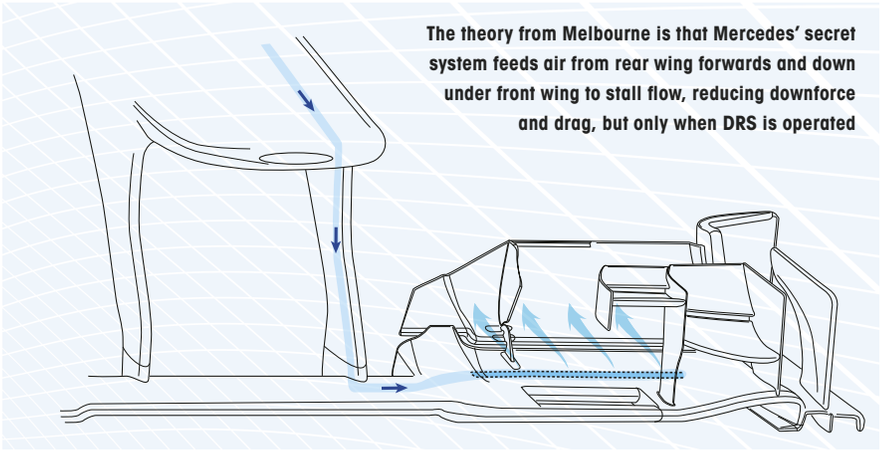
"I think it's something that we just want clarity on, because one could argue that it's a switch that's affected by the driver," he said. "The driver hits a button and it uncovers a hole, so therefore it's driver activated, which wouldn't be in compliance with the regulations.

"IT'S A SECONDARY EFFECT, BUT IT'S ABSOLUTELY OPERATED BY THE DRIVER"
ALAN PERMANE

"It's a clever system and hats off to them for doing it. The frustrating thing with all these systems is that they will undoubtedly be banned for next year, but in the meantime we are all going to go off and follow that rule."

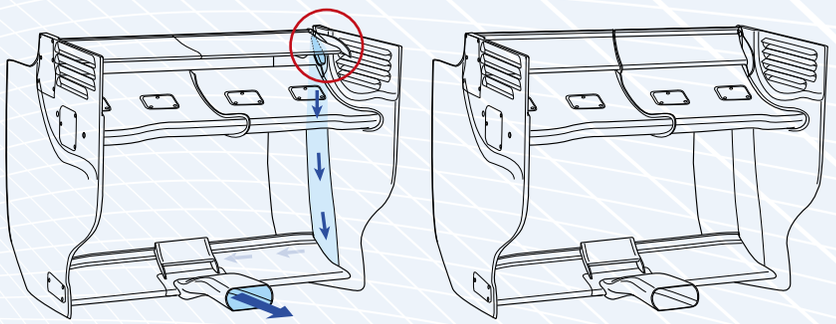
"It's a secondary effect, but it's absolutely operated by the driver," Alan Permane of Lotus told *Motor Sport*. "Mercedes hasn't invented something; it was there, and other people were under the impression that it wasn't legal. If this is allowed you'll see everyone doing it, and it won't stop there, there are many, many other things that can happen."

All the top teams are investigating their own versions, and the fact that



The theory from Melbourne is that Mercedes' secret system feeds air from rear wing forwards and down under front wing to stall flow, reducing downforce and drag, but only when DRS is operated

When open, DRS flap uncovers rear wing openings (circled) said to feed air forwards through car to front wing. This 'secondary' effect of DRS activation could improve both car balance in fast corners and straightline speed, but is arguably activated by the driver



DRS open – air fed to front wing

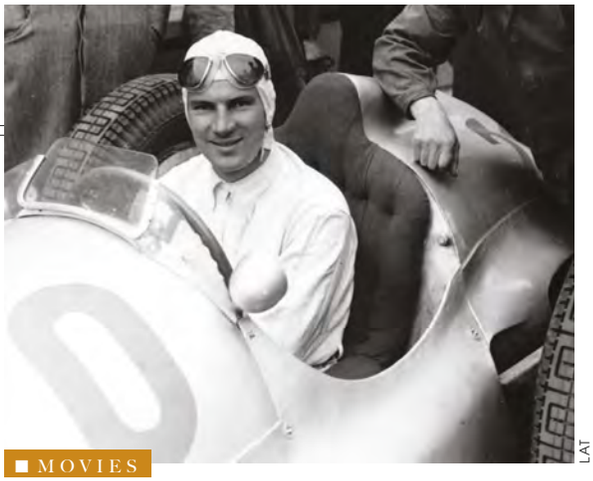
DRS closed – no air fed to front wing

Illustrations by Craig Scarborough

Martin Whitmarsh made it clear that he thought it was legal is a good indication that McLaren is closer than most to readying its own version.

"Probably what we've done is taken the spotlight off the exhaust systems that people are running," joked Brawn. "Because they are nowhere near what was intended by the FIA! You have to work to the regulations, and if someone can see a clever interpretation, then that's the nature of our business."

Clarification was expected from the FIA before the Malaysian Grand Prix, after *Motor Sport* went to press.



LAT

■ MOVIES

Seaman film nears production

Richard Seaman is the latest name to join a long list of legendary racing drivers whose stories are potentially being turned into movies.

Provisionally titled *Silver Arrows*, the Seaman project is being prepared by Brian Oliver, one of the producers behind the Hunt/Lauda film *Rush*, which is currently being shot.

Oliver – whose Cross Creek Pictures was also responsible for the 2010 Oscar-winning ballet film *Black Swan* – has no qualms about pursuing a racing theme for a second time.

"It was an interesting era because the German manufacturers were so superior that someone who was racing in Britain could not compete on the continent," Oliver told *Motor Sport*. "It was Seaman's opportunity to pursue racing, but he also went to a hostile environment in the sense that we were on the verge of WWII and the rise of Hitler.

"They forced him to try to do the salute, and he kind of did a haphazard one. From all I've read he was warned that if he didn't do that, there would be issues. I think he had a love of racing, and then once he got there and saw everything that was going on, he realised at what cost.

"To be a British guy in that environment reminded us a lot of *Lawrence of Arabia* – a fish out of water. He ultimately ends up in a tragic event. We thought it could be a great story if we capture it the right way on film."

Meanwhile pre-production work has begun on *Winning Is Not Enough*, a story that will focus on Jackie Stewart and his relationship with François Cevert.

The man behind the project is Bill Pohlad, the producer of *Brokeback Mountain* and a long-time friend of the triple World Champion. Stewart has indicated that he would like to see himself portrayed on screen by Ewan McGregor.

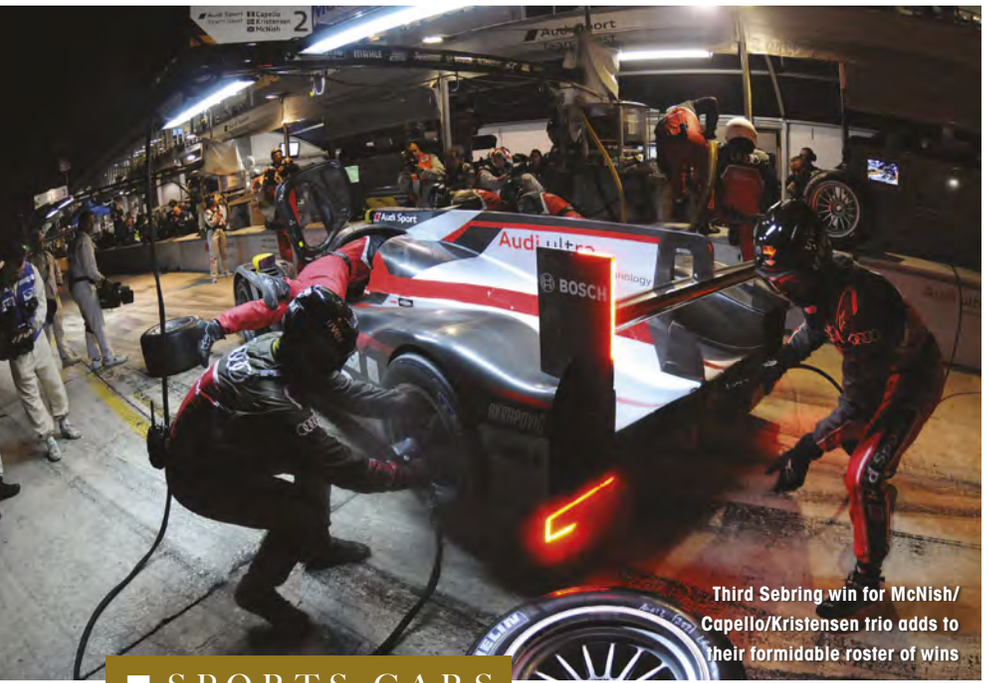
WIN A PACKAGE TRIP TO THE 2012 LE MANS 24 HOURS

WIN A TRIP OF A LIFETIME TO THE BIGGEST SPORTS CAR RACE of the year – the Le Mans 24 Hours. *Motor Sport* has teamed up with Speed Chills to offer one lucky reader a self-drive package for up to four people to this year's race, staying at the Speed Chills Beauséjour private campsite. The prize includes ferry crossing, camping at Speed Chills Beauséjour private campsite, Speed Chills Club Membership and up to four general admission race tickets. The Beauséjour Private Camping is conveniently located on the inside of the circuit close to the Porsche Curves, and the Club Membership will give the winners access to the Speed Chills private bar, restaurant and entertainment. With this prize our winner will be at the heart of the action for Le Mans 2012.

To be in with a chance of winning the package please go to the competitions area under 'The Magazine' tab at

www.motorsportmagazine.com

The deadline for entries is Thursday May 3, 2012. Full terms and conditions can be found on the website.



Third Sebring win for McNish/ Capello/Kristensen trio adds to their formidable roster of wins

SPORTS CARS

Audi dominates as world series returns

Audi drivers Allan McNish, Tom Kristensen and Rinaldo Capello claimed a third Sebring 12 Hours together on the return of long-distance world championship sports car racing.

The Audi trio followed up on their 2006 and 2009 victories, notched up in the R10 and R15 respectively, to win the opening round of the FIA World Endurance Championship aboard an updated 2011-spec R18 TDI LMP1 car. They became the first driver line-up to win Sebring three times on what was the 60th anniversary of the Florida event.

McNish and his team-mates led all but 66 of the event's 325 laps on the way to finishing four laps clear of team-mates Timo Bernhard, Romain Dumas and Loïc Duval. However, the race remained close into the penultimate hour until a handling problem forced Bernhard to back off.



THE 2012 SEBRING 12 HOURS IN NUMBERS

60 12-hour events that have now taken place at Sebring since 1952

10 Audi wins in the race in 13 starts since 1999

62 Cars started this year's race

15 Total Sebring wins shared between Kristensen, Capello and McNish

McNish said after the race: "We worked very hard for this victory. Together with the engineers and mechanics, Tom, Dindo and I invested a lot of time working out the optimal race set-up. That paid off because we had the best race car today."

The third Audi, shared by André Lotterer, Benoît Tréluyer and Marcel Fässler, was delayed by gear selection problems and finished 16th.

Third place went to the best of the LMP2 runners on a day that the majority of the P1 privateers hit trouble. The US Starworks team's Honda Performance Development ARX-03b took the position in the hands of Peugeot refugee Stéphane Sarrazin, Ryan Dalziel and Enzo Potolicchio.

SPORTS CARS

Nissan backs Delta Wing

Nissan has stepped up to provide the engine and backing for the experimental Delta Wing that will race at this year's Le Mans 24 Hours on June 16/17.

The Japanese manufacturer commissioned Ray Mallock's RML Group, which ran Nissan's British Touring Car Championship campaign in 1997-99, to produce a lightweight four-cylinder direct-injection turbo engine for the Delta Wing. It has subsequently become the major backer of the car, which will occupy 'Garage 56' reserved for technically-innovative cars at Le Mans.

Nissan's head of brand strategy in Europe, Darren Cox said: "Initially we were just going to do an engine deal, but we have become more and more involved."

Long-time Nissan driver Michael Krumm has been added to the driver line-up alongside Marino Franchitti.

Cox explained that the radical Delta Wing, which aims to achieve near-LMP1 levels of performance using half the fuel, had to meet a strict set of targets before the project was signed off by Nissan.

"We believed in the project, but we needed to make sure," he said. "We laid down what they needed to achieve. We had to do our due diligence, if you like."

This included running the first car at different angles of attack in the full-size Windshear wind tunnel to make sure it was stable. The car also had to meet certain g-levels under cornering, acceleration figures and fuel consumption.

Nissan also embedded its own representatives within the project including sports car engineer Ricardo Divila and ex-F1 driver and Nissan sports car driver Erik Comas.

"Straight after the first test all the data was taken to the Geneva motor show, where all our senior executives were present, to get signed off. If our criteria hadn't been met, that would have been it as far as we were concerned."

The Delta Wing, which was demonstrated in public for the first time at Sebring during the 12 Hours meeting, stayed on at the venue and was due to test over the two weeks following the race.



New series for Can-Am

Masters Historic Racing and the Canadian American Challenge Cup are combining two modest grids to promote a four-event series for Can-Am and Interserie sports-racing cars.

The Can-Am Interserie Challenge will be for sports-prototypes from 1971 to '78 and Can-Am cars raced between '66 and '74.

"We hope we'll make this joint venture a fantastic series for these great cars," said organiser Peter Schleifer.

Races will be run at Barcelona (April 21/22), Brands Hatch (May 26/27), Spa (September 21-23) and Donington (October 13/14).



Club to mark Elan's big 50

Although largely overlooked by the major historic festivals, the 50th anniversary of the Lotus Elan will be marked by the Classic Sports Car Club at two events this summer.

First introduced by Colin Chapman in 1962, around 17,000 examples of the original Elan and its subsequent 2+2 incarnation were built before production ceased in 1975. Up to 100 of the bespoke racing version, the 26R, were produced between 1964 and '66.

Now, to mark half a century of Elans, two 30-minute all-Elan races will be held at Brands Hatch (August 18/19) during the Lotus Festival and at Donington Park on September 15/16.



Goodwood's best bits. Oh, plus Lord March and some AC Cobras

All images LAT

HISTORICS

Vettel to make Goodwood debut

Double Formula 1 World Champion Sebastian Vettel will take his Goodwood bow this summer, spearheading the 20th Festival of Speed's main theme of 'Young Guns – Born to Win'.

Lotus, which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, will be the featured marque over the four days from June 28 to July 1. Other celebrations will include 50 years of both Brabham and Ferrari's immortal 250GTO, while Group C sports cars will mark the category's 30th birthday with timed 'qualification' runs on the Saturday ahead of the Top 20 shoot-out on the final day.

Lord March revealed his plans for both the Festival and September's Revival during a packed media day at the Sussex estate in March. The event, which has developed into a mini-festival without the crowds, featured a roster of drivers including



Jacky Ickx and Jochen Mass, while a large collection of famous competition cars made runs up the hillclimb.

Standing on the steps of Goodwood House, Lord March announced that seven of the 12 current F1 teams will take part in the Festival of Speed, which for the first time will feature an aviation show as part of the weekend's attractions.

Dan Gurney will be the honoured star of the Revival, which takes place on September 14-16 this year. Fellow US hero Carroll Shelby also plans to attend as part of the 50th anniversary feature race celebrations for the car he is most associated with, the AC Cobra.

The Silver Arrows 'controlled race' for pre-war Mercedes and Auto Union Grand Prix cars (see April issue) will be the main attraction of the weekend, while the Freddie March Memorial Trophy will be run on the Friday evening, to mark the 60th anniversary of the Goodwood Nine Hours.

Sytner all set for comeback

The return to racing of veteran historic competitor Frank Sytner after he suffered a major heart attack at the 2011 event will be the big story of this year's Donington Historic Festival (May 5/6).

Amid a very strong race line-up, Sytner will be re-united with the Lola T70 Mk3B he was driving last year when he suffered the heart attack and ran off the road into the wall.



Now, the Monaco-based racer has been given the all-clear to return and plans to complete the race, a year after he came close to death. Only the swift work of the marshals and rescue crews saved his life. "Frank is such an enthusiast," said Simon Hadfield, who has rebuilt the Lola ready for the race.

One notable competition debut will be a re-creation of the Cunningham C4R Le Mans car of the 1950s in the hands of owner Ben Shuckburgh. His faithful replica is based on the chassis of a 1953 Cunningham C3 road car.

A collection of special objects associated with Donington will be auctioned for charity at the meeting, such as the model of Bluebird from the top of Starkey's Bridge, the spark plug commentary box and sections of the Dunlop Bridge.



Historic F1 for British GP

Formula 1 cars of the 1970s and early '80s will race at the British Grand Prix at Silverstone this summer (July 6-8) following confirmation that the FIA Historic Formula One series will run a support race at the UK's round of the World Championship.

For the first time in five years, DFV-powered Grand Prix cars will be in action at the biggest event on the British racing calendar, marking the only event in Britain this season for the HFO cars. Series organisers are hoping to have a double-header event, but the format is yet to be confirmed.

"We're very lucky," said HFO's Dan Collins. "Bernie Ecclestone has always been a big supporter of ours and we've had Grand Prix support races at Bahrain, Hungary and Barcelona."

Collins is hoping to get as many as 35 cars to the grid. "It will be a great showcase for us and a chance to show our cars to a younger F1 audience."

E-types target capacity grid

Following the record-breaking grid of 52 Jaguar E-types at last year's Silverstone Classic, the organisers of the E-type Challenge are hoping to fill the grid to capacity with 58 cars in July.

The high-profile meeting (July 20-22) has been lined up as the key date in the calendar for the second season of the E-type-only series, which starts at Donington Park (May 5/6) and also takes in races at Dijon, the Nürburgring and Oulton Park.

The biggest-ever gathering of Ferrari F40s will be another of the big attractions at Silverstone, with more than 50 of the 1315 cars built due on show.

Crystal Palace sprint returns

The racing heritage of Crystal Palace will be celebrated again at the end of May with a sprint event in the grounds of the London parkland, taking in some of the original race track.

The event on May 26/27 will mark 40 years since the race circuit closed at the end of the 1972 season, and the organisers are hoping to have up to 200 cars competing against the clock this year. New for 2012, which will be the third running of the sprint, will be the Classic Racing Motorcycle Club with a demonstration of classic Grand Prix bikes.

Evening start for Britannia

The 2012 edition of Tour Britannia will start with a new prologue stage on the evening of Wednesday June 6 ahead of the three-day classic race and rally tour.

Competitors will tackle a three-quarter mile-long special stage in the grounds of the event HQ, the Rudding Park Hotel in Harrogate after scrutineering and sign-on.

"This was too good an opportunity to miss," said event director Alec Poole. "Our present thinking is that it will be a bit of fun and a useful shakedown ahead of the main event, so we have decided that it will not count towards the overall results."



Cobras head to Pageant

The 50th birthday of the AC Cobra will be celebrated at this year's Cholmondeley Pageant of Power (June 15-17) with a special 'Cobras at the Castle' display.

The organisers of the Cheshire event are also introducing a competition class for the car. The field is expected to include one of only three lightweight Cobras ever built.

Other attractions for Cholmondeley will include the return of the mighty 46-litre 'Brutus' special (above) from the Sinsheim museum in Germany. Driven recently by Jeremy Clarkson on the *Top Gear* TV programme, Brutus will be joined by several other aero-engined monsters.

Le Mans winner goes rallying

André Lotterer, winner at Le Mans last year with Audi, made his rallying debut in the Boucles de Spa when he drove a Porsche 911SC in the colours of the Belgian Zolder circuit.

Despite his lack of experience, Lotterer finished eighth overall, one place behind the Ferrari 308GTB of former World Rally Champion Bjorn Wåldegard. Lotterer's car ran in a red and white livery in tribute to his father Henry, an RAS Sport Porsche engineer in the 1970s.

With approval from Audi sports boss Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, the 30-year old was able to realise a childhood dream. "One day when I was about four or five, my father came back home with the Belga Porsche during some testing," he said. "And he took me to school in it! Rallying made me dream about being a driver."

Victory in Spa went to the Lancia Beta Monte Carlo of local hero Jean-Pierre van de Wauwer, who achieved his ambition to win the event after 30 years of trying.

■ OBITUARIES

Peter Agg

The Grand Prix entrant whose Trojan company manufactured McLaren sports cars and single-seaters under licence, has died aged 82.

Peter Agg moved from the family wine business into importing scooters during the 1950s, leading to reviving the moribund pre-war Trojan marque to build bubblecars. In 1962 he bought the Elva sports car company which two years later contracted to assemble M1s for McLaren. Over the next few years Elva and Trojan built some 200 cars for the Woking race team, including F5000 and Can-Am chassis, but as McLaren expanded its own facilities, Trojan briefly became a race manufacturer in its own right.



Ron Tauranac designed F5000 and F1 cars, helping Jody Scheckter to the 1973 US F5000 title, while in 1974 Tim Schenken contested eight Grands Prix in the Trojan T103 (above), an early DFV 'kit car'. Recognisable by his handlebar moustache, Agg also assembled a fine collection of vintage cars. His son Charlie Agg currently races in historics, notably in Trojan-built McLarens.

Robert Fearnall

This race promoter, who has died at the age of 59, was arguably the second most important name in the post-war history of Donington Park after Tom Wheatcroft.

A former journalist, who rose to become deputy editor of *Autosport*, he joined the staff at Donington in 1979 and had an on-off involvement at the track for the rest of his life. His Two Four Sports company effectively ran the track and promoted its race meetings from 1987.

After a short stint with Jonathan Palmer's MotorSport Vision, Fearnall was back working at Donington at the time of his death.

Motor Sport



Fittingly, pride of place went to a Red Bull F1 car designed by Hall of Fame inductee Adrian Newey


Giacomo Agostini


Jimmy McRae on behalf of Colin


John Surtees


Adrian Newey

Hall of Fame

Camden, London

ON FEBRUARY 16 AT LONDON'S Roundhouse, the 16 members of the *Motor Sport* Hall of Fame became 20.

Colin McRae, Giacomo Agostini, John Surtees and Adrian Newey were all honoured on the night and joined the likes of Enzo Ferrari, Ayrton Senna, Sir Jack Brabham and Mario Andretti in our exclusive club of racing heroes.

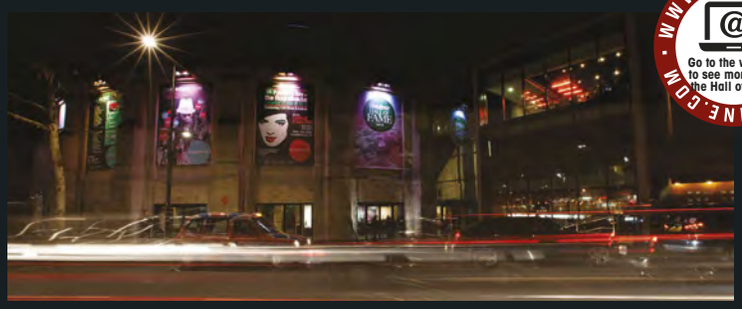
Once again Jake Humphrey was the host, and the consensus was that the event was even bigger and better than the first two in 2010 and '11.

The Roundhouse was filled with 500 motor sport fans including the likes of Sir Jackie Stewart, Sir Stirling Moss, Jimmy McRae – who was there to accept the award on behalf of his late son, Colin – Martin Brundle and even ex-England rugby captain Lewis Moody.

Fifteen-time motorcycle World Champion Giacomo Agostini had flown over from Italy specially for the evening and was given a huge round of applause when he took to the stage to accept his award from Humphrey, Brundle and BBC's MotoGP commentator Steve Parrish.

When the last new member of the evening, Adrian Newey, was on stage with Red Bull team principal Christian Horner, he was described by *Motor Sport* editor-in-chief Nigel Roebuck as "the greatest designer in the history of F1". Few would argue otherwise and this award brought a fitting end to another great *Motor Sport* Hall of Fame event in association with TAG Heuer.

For more on the 2012 Motor Sport Hall of Fame, please see the special supplement presented with this issue (UK only).



WWW.MOTORSPORTMAGAZINE.COM
Go to the website to see more from the Hall of Fame





Popular TV presenter Jake Humphrey hosted the evening (left). Guests included Red Bull team principal Christian Horner (below)



Our thanks to

TAG Heuer, Infiniti, Jardine International, Red Bull Racing, Meet & Potato, By Word of Mouth, The Roundhouse, Gallowglass Security, Amalgam Fine Model Cars, Goodwood, the Henry Surtees Foundation, Dawn Treader Performance, Greaves Motorsport, Lindsay Morle and David Weguelin

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Bjorn Waldegård (main and right) thrilled in Safari-spec 911 and orange 914/6. Bottom: what would rallying be without the Ford Escort?

Race Retro

Stoneleigh Park, Coventry

THE INTERNATIONAL HISTORIC MOTOR Sport Show, better known as Race Retro, is now firmly established as the kick-off point for the new historic season. The 2012 edition had much to admire, both static and on the move.

Porsche was honoured with featured marque status, and was prominent inside the exhibition halls. The spectacle of two 908/3s really caught the eye. One was a Martini car most recently used by Bobby Rahal, while from a private collection of Gulf-liveried cars came an ex-works example that had been driven by Derek Bell and Jo Siffert.

The 30th anniversary of the 956/962 Group C dynasty was another feature, ranging from the first 956 used by Bell and Jacky Ickx at Silverstone in May 1982 through to the long-tailed Shell-liveried 962 of Bell, Hans Stuck and Klaus Ludwig that finished second at Le Mans in 1988. Adding to the Stuttgart theme was the stunning 1961 RS61 of Stirling Moss, the car he was driving at the point he decided to retire from competition, at Le Mans last summer.

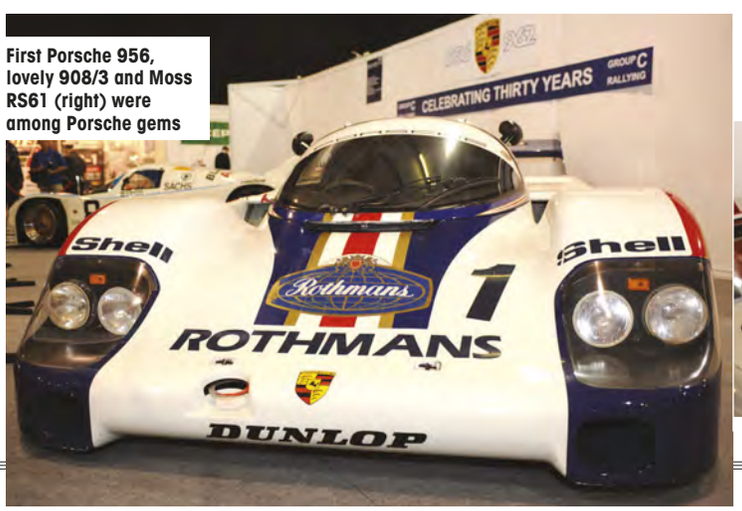
In the car park of the National Agricultural Centre was the usual rally stage, primarily for Group B rally cars. However, with everything from a Mini Cooper to a Subaru Impreza there was action from cars spanning nearly 40 years of rallying.

Maintaining the Porsche theme was **Bjorn Waldegård**, the first World Rally Champion back in 1979. The Swedish ace drove both a Team Tuthill 911 and the 914/6 of musician **Jay Kay**, a car Bjorn took to third place on the 1971 Monte Carlo Rally. The 911, which Waldegård hurled around in style, was only recently off a boat after winning the Safari Classic in December and sat high on Safari suspension. It showed the scars inflicted by a clash with a truck that, without a mighty effort from Richard Tuthill and his crew, would have put Waldegård out of the rally.

The famous Lotus Sunbeam that Henri Toivonen used to win the 1980 RAC Rally was a welcome sight as **Ian Gwynne** slid this landmark car around in style on its first public run for the better part of a decade.

Indoors, star attractions included a display of the fabulous work of Hall and Hall, the team behind so many projects at the Donington Grand Prix Collection, promoting October's BRM Day at Bourne. The ex-Graham Hill/Tony Brooks BRM P57 was displayed emerging from the rear of a period BRM transporter, while the ex-Innes Ireland and Masten Gregory Lotus 24 was also on show.

Seldom seen outside the Coventry Transport Museum, where it has spent the past 40 years, was the Techcraft BRM used by Peter Lawton to win the British Hillclimb title in 1967 and '68.



First Porsche 956, lovely 908/3 and Moss RS61 (right) were among Porsche gems





Hawthorn's Riley Ulster Imp pulled the crowds to our stand. Bottom: Senna's Toleman



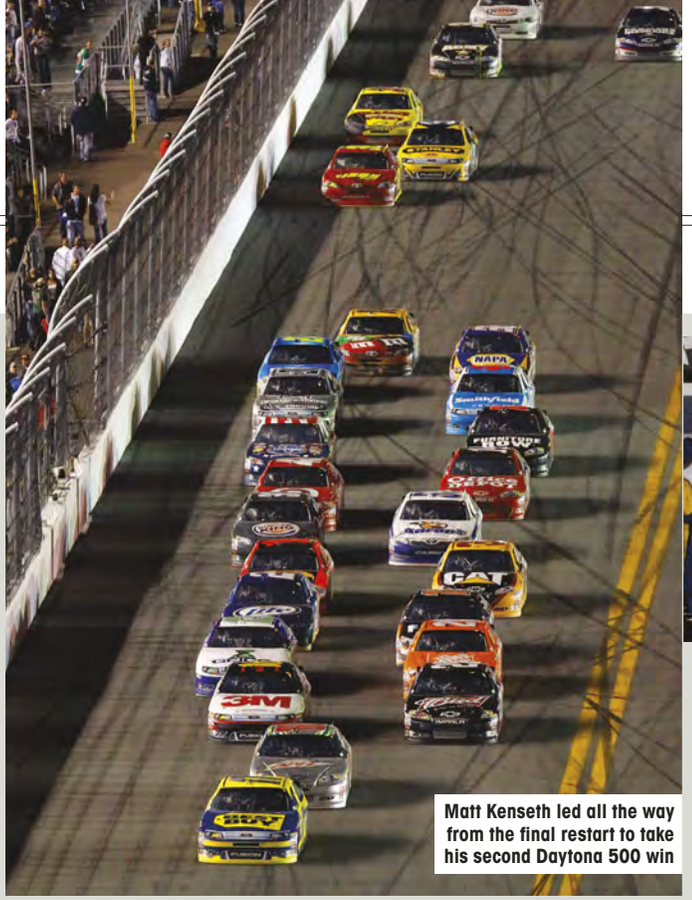
Rallying had its own hall and the centrepiece was a display from the 'Rallying with Group B' organisation as it unveiled plans for Michelin Rallye Groupe B this August to re-live the old Sunday spectator stages of the Lombard RAC Rally. Alongside was a glorious Lancia display, with a period 037 sitting next to an impressive re-creation of a monstrous Delta S4 from the time in the mid-1980s when rallying technology went crazy.

Motor Sport was also in attendance, our stand featuring Tim Ely's ex-Mike Hawthorn Riley Ulster Imp – complete with a bow tie-wearing dummy that carried a certain resemblance to Britain's first World Champion (even if it was a little on the skinny side…). The pretty car, with its special history, proved a popular draw. *Paul Lawrence*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

MAR 29-APR 1	WRC Rally de Portugal
APR 8	GT1 Nogaro, France
APR 13-15	F1 Shanghai, China
APR 13-15	HISTORICS Jim Clark Revival, Hockenheim
APR 13/14	ALMS Long Beach
APR 15	INDYCAR Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach
APR 16-21	HISTORICS Tour Auto, France
APR 20-22	F1 Sakhir, Bahrain
APR 21	VSCC Spring Start, Silverstone
APR 22	GT1 Zolder, Belgium*
APR 27-29	WRC Rally Argentina
APR 29	INDYCAR Sao Paulo Indy 300

**Subject to circuit approval*



Matt Kenseth led all the way from the final restart to take his second Daytona 500 win

Daytona 500

Daytona, Florida

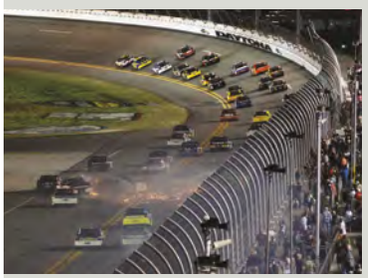
THIS YEAR'S DAYTONA 500 WAS AN epic, delayed by rain for a day and a half and finally run on a Monday evening. Just before the 400-mile mark a bizarre accident occurred under a yellow flag when **Juan Pablo Montoya's** car suffered a transmission failure resulting in Montoya slewing into a jet fuel-powered track-drying truck. The collision destroyed Montoya's car and caused the dryer, containing almost 200 gallons of jet fuel, to explode and burn feverishly for a few minutes. Montoya was unhurt, as was the truck driver, but the track surface and safety barrier were charred and the race was stopped for more than two hours, eventually finishing a little after 1am.

In the end the 2003 NASCAR champion **Matt Kenseth** came through to win after leading the race's final 37 laps. Kenseth and Roush Fenway Ford team-mate **Greg Biffle** enjoyed the fastest cars at Daytona this year and they ran one-two through the closing laps with Kenseth scoring his second Daytona 500 win. **Dale Earnhardt Jr** chased them and drafted by Biffle to take second at the chequered flag, but couldn't challenge Kenseth.

"We had a really fast car all day," Kenseth said. "But we had a lot of adversity to overcome, a lot of problems wth the car, and we had a great pitstop at the end that put us in position. It feels great. I wasn't expecting to win.

"Our car for some reason was a lot faster out front than it was in traffic. It took a long time to get to the front, but once we were there it was hard for any of the others to get locked onto us and to push me. We had enough speed that once we took the white flag I felt okay about it, but I still thought they were going to run past me. But when we got to turn three I knew I had enough speed to win it.

"The car had a lot of speed. Doug Yates and the guys in the engine shop deserve a lot of credit. It really would go through the gears and it was great on all the restarts."





Kenseth also won his 150-mile qualifying race and team-mates **Carl Edwards** and Biffle qualified on the front row for the 500. "The testing results over the winter were very encouraging," said team boss Jack Roush. "We brought better Ford Fusions here than we've ever had and we had more power relatively speaking than we've ever had. Tonight, Matt had the best car and Greg was unselfish and worked with him and they pulled it off together."

Roush complimented NASCAR on getting the race restarted following Montoya's spectacular accident. "It was amazing that NASCAR was able to have enough oil-dry, had enough people trained and were able to save the race track," he said. "I thought surely the track would be damaged and wouldn't be suitable to continue the race. But NASCAR and the track's crew did a great job of saving the race track and having a race for the fans." *Gordon Kirby*



Jet fuel caused inferno after Montoya crash. More than two hours were lost (below)



All images LAT

Nigel Roebuck



REFLECTIONS
– Prost-like Button leaves Hamilton shaken
– Villeneuve's fear of falling out of a window...

The opening round of the 2012 World Championship, in Australia, rather put me in mind of the 1988 Mexican Grand Prix in one respect. At both races the McLarens had the front row to themselves, with the team's acknowledged charger of the moment – then Ayrton Senna, now Lewis Hamilton – on pole position.

Come the start at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, though, it was Alain Prost who took the lead, and he calmly held it for the rest of the afternoon. Senna, beaten by a team-mate in an equal car for the first time in his life, looked frankly bewildered afterwards, as if normality had been suspended.

In the same way, when the lights went out in Melbourne, Jenson Button it was who got away best, and, like his hero Prost, simply drove away. Although Hamilton had more than once been beaten by his team-mate, everything about his body language after the race suggested that this was a shock, that this time he really hadn't anticipated it. Like his hero Senna, he seemed... bemused.

It was a straight fight, after all, with varying conditions – in which Button traditionally excels – playing no part. On a bone-dry road Jenson simply drove faster than anyone else, and that was the end of it. In his behaviour afterwards Lewis was not graceless exactly, but neither was he effusive in congratulating his team-mate. Uncannily reminiscent of Senna in Mexico a quarter of a century earlier, in fact. How *could* this have come to be?

I'll admit that I, too, was at least surprised. Hamilton's pole-position lap – set on his first run – had been scintillating, and all through practice the talk was of how he was at last 'in a good place' again,

Button had the upper hand at Melbourne, leaving Hamilton clearly nonplussed (right)



with his girlfriend back on board and a further support team, comprising his mother, musicians, advisers *et al*, also to hand. If he were indeed settled at last, many believed, Lewis could be untouchable this weekend.

As it was, the matter was resolved in the first few seconds, when Button got away better. No one is infallible at the start, but the greater surprise was that Hamilton was unable to stay in touch, and if his demeanour afterwards were any guide no one was more shaken than he. Had Red Bull found a magic potion for the race, such as was frequently apparent in the past, that would have been one thing; to be outpaced by another McLaren quite another.

It used to be said of Pedro Rodriguez that he got better and better and better with every passing year, and this is very obviously true also of Button, whose natural ability was remarkable from the start, but who seemed for a long time to lack some of the essentials required to capitalise on it. Even when he won the World Championship in 2009, with Brawn, doubts remained about his ultimate quality, but it seems to me that now, at 32, he has matured into a great Grand Prix driver. Jenson's move to McLaren, the wisdom of which many – myself included – doubted at the time, has been the making of him, while the team, in turn, has a driver who 'fits' better than any since Mika Häkkinen.

All that said, if Hamilton truly is 'in a good place' (God, I hate that phrase), and remains there, there will be days – as Prost always acknowledged with Senna – when he will simply be unbeatable. This is being written a couple of hours after the Australian Grand Prix, and in a few days' time, who knows, Lewis could well find himself on the top step of the podium at Sepang. Should that be the case – or whenever it happens – I would ask only that he looks at Jenson's response to a team-mate's success, and learns from it.

Melbourne provided a fine beginning to the F1 season, but a curious one, too, »»

LAT

Nigel Roebuck

in the sense that it didn't – to my mind – swing much of a lamp over the months to come. Yes, it was obvious that McLaren is mighty strong, and that Red Bull, if not bursting from the starting-gate as we have come to expect, is well in touch, but more remarkable was that so many teams – at this very early stage – appear to be in considerably better shape than before.

Consider, for example, that Romain Grosjean qualified third – ahead of the Red Bulls – in the Lotus, and that his returning team-mate, Kimi Räikkönen, drove a strong race to seventh after qualifying nowhere. Look at the startling lap times in the race achieved by the Sauber of Sergio Perez, which had started from the very back after needing a gearbox change. Think of the fastest Williams for many a long year, which Pastor Maldonado drove beautifully, I thought – until overdoing it on the very last lap. And what of the performances of Daniel Ricciardo and Jean-Eric Vergne at Toro Rosso? Try telling Dietrich Mateschitz he was wrong to 'let go' Sebastien Buemi and Jaime Alguersuari.

No one needs to be reminded, of course, that this was merely the first round in a 20-race campaign, that before the kaleidoscope of a season begins to take shape teams very often show a competitiveness which dissipates as time goes by, as those of greater financial and technical resource develop their cars, and almost inevitably restore a natural pecking order. Nor, for that matter, does anyone have to point out to me that Melbourne is far from a typical Grand Prix circuit, that not too much store should be set by a single Sunday.

That said, it was a start to the season which most of the teams will have found encouraging. I perhaps expected more from Force India, and the race pace of Mercedes (compromised by high tyre wear) was disappointing after a strong showing in qualifying, notably by an apparently rejuvenated Michael Schumacher, but about the only serious team falling way short of its ambitions was Ferrari.

> "Opposite lock was more in evidence than for a long time"





Alonso started from the sixth row after spinning into the gravel in qualifying (above)

LAT

It was no more than confirmation of what testing had suggested, but for all that it was a shock to see Fernando Alonso back on the sixth row of the grid, with Felipe Massa a whole second slower than that. In the race Fernando did his usual number, making a tremendous start, and then driving out of his skin for 200 miles, greatly flattering his car, but – while I'm sure he would deny it – there must be times when he wonders at the wisdom of signing *such* a long-term contract with Ferrari. There is no doubt of his love for the team, nor of his wish to finish his career there, but even he must eventually tire of working with loaves and fishes.

Damned if you don't, damned if you do. After losing the World Championship to a bad strategy call at Abu Dhabi in 2010, Ferrari built a conservative car for '11, which couldn't hack it with Red Bull and McLaren, scored only one victory, and led to Aldo Costa's being shown the door. For 2012 the team has gone to the other extreme, but so far its new car is baffling one and all with its wayward behaviour.

The ban on 'blown diffusers', which has taken away a significant amount of downforce into a corner, has caused this year's cars to be not only considerably more pleasing to the ear, but also – no bad thing – significantly harder to drive. In Melbourne, particularly before the track 'rubbered in', opposite lock was more in evidence than for a long time, but even in this context the Ferraris looked a handful and a half. You don't often see Alonso drop it, but he did in qualifying, and as for poor Massa… he just seemed lost.

Who would be Stefano Domenicali at a time like this? There is no more decent and engaging a man in the paddock, nor one who works harder in a daunting job, but the Ferrari team principal will know better than anyone that the Italian press is merciless – and Luca di Montezemolo is not renowned for his patience. If, like me,

you think that something is fundamentally awry with F1 if Ferrari is not at the sharp end, you will hope that the F2012 can swiftly be brought to heel, not least because Alonso is as good as there is, and should be fighting with McLaren and Red Bull.

Before the latest Ferrari was launched – and we had yet to have sight of any car with a 'stepped nose' – Domenicali warned that it was 'quite ugly', as indeed it proved to be, along with virtually all the others. Alonso said not to worry: any car was beautiful that was quick. When the wraps were pulled from the McLaren MP4-27, though, there was audible delight at the revelation of this smooth, svelte, nose – like a boxer who had never been in a fight. On the strength of Melbourne, maybe there is indeed some truth to the old homily that 'if it looks right, it is right…'

The end of May in 1981 was a busy time for me. On Sunday the 24th I was in Indianapolis for my first 500, and the following evening flew home, arriving on Tuesday morning. Twenty-four hours later I was back at Heathrow for a flight to Nice for the following weekend's Monaco Grand Prix – but if it seemed a little hectic to me, imagine how it felt to Mario Andretti, who was *competing* in both events.

People nowadays struggle to believe that, for countless years, that was how Andretti ran his professional life. In the late 1960s and early '70s he drove in as many Grands Prix and sports car races as his Indycar schedule allowed, and by the late '70s, when his priorities had changed, he competed in the entire F1 season and also in those Indycar races that did not clash. Indeed, after clinching the World Championship at Monza in September 1978, Andretti's next race was for Penske at Trenton – and he won it.

Around the time of the Indianapolis 500 – or, more particularly, its qualifying weekends – there were always potential problems for Mario, in that he was at the mercy of the weather. In 1981 he was at the Speedway for the first of these weekends, but rain wiped out most of it, and he had no opportunity to make a run. For any other driver that wouldn't have greatly mattered, for there remained the second weekend, which was cloudy but dry.

Problem was, Andretti was then at Zolder, driving for Alfa Romeo. In his absence, Wally Dallenbach qualified his Patrick Racing Wildcat-Cosworth for him, albeit in 32nd place, on the very back row of the grid.

Mario drove a fantastic race at Indy, coming through to finish a close second to Bobby Unser's Penske Eagle. Furthermore, as I left the track rumours abounded of a protest against Unser who, it was alleged, had illegally overtaken several cars 'under yellow' while rejoining the track after a pit stop. In truth, there was nothing 'alleged' about it: the whole thing happened right in front of me.

Next morning I was on a flight from Indianapolis back to Washington, and the pilot came on the blower to give us the news, just announced, that Unser had been docked a lap for his transgression – and that Mario Andretti had been declared the winner of the 65th Indianapolis 500. Everyone on the aeroplane, it seemed, whooped with delight.

Roger Penske, though, appealed against the decision, and eventually – 138 days later, no less – USAC (United States Auto Club) upheld the appeal, rescinding Unser's one-lap penalty, and replacing it with a $40,000 fine. Seemed like a reasonable tariff for an Indy 500 win; Andretti remains sore about it to this day.

When he got to Monaco in '81, though, Mario was all smiles, still high on having – apparently – won his second 500. On the Thursday morning of practice I walked with him from the paddock, and as we passed the Ferrari pit, I remember, this little figure came running after us. It was Gilles Villeneuve, positively bouncing with delight at Andretti's success.

Recently, when I asked Mario for his memories of Gilles, he remembered that moment: "When I think of him now, the first thing that comes into my mind is that smile…"

I'd go along with that. As Jody Scheckter has said, "More than anyone else I've known, Gilles was in love with motor racing", and that was invariably reflected in his face. Put him in a paddock, and no matter how badly his Ferrari was behaving on a given weekend, he was in the place he was born to be.

Villeneuve was the racer pure, a category into which one would also put Andretti and – emphatically – Stirling Moss. Britain's greatest driver somehow never won the World Championship, and he once told me when that ceased to matter very much. In 1955, '56 and '57 Stirling was runner-up to Fangio, and that he could live with – Juan Manuel he will always hold as the best there has ever been – but in 1958 he was second once more, and this time it was to Mike Hawthorn, whom he did not consider his equal, far less his superior. More to the point, he won four Grands Prix, to Hawthorn's one: if *that* didn't win him the World Championship, then maybe it didn't count for as much as he had believed. For Moss, after all, the thing had always been primarily about winning *races*.

As time went by, that view became ever more unfashionable – indeed the World Championship became of surpassing importance, and quite often the driver who finished up with the title was far from the best in a given year. No matter: it was he who got into the record books, and they are many who go by nothing else. It is not a view to which I subscribe – indeed I still quake at the thought that if anything had happened to Mika Häkkinen's McLaren at Suzuka in 1999 Eddie Irvine would have been World Champion.

When I think of my years of working in Formula 1, it is individual races, not championships, that come first to mind, and it is races – *days* – on which legend surely feeds. Take the romance out of motor racing, and I'll collect stamps.

When Vanwall withdrew at the end of 1958, following the death of Stuart Lewis-Evans at Casablanca, Moss could obviously have had his pick of the teams, but he chose to commit his F1 future to Rob Walker.

Those who thought him nuts had no understanding of the man: if the World Championship came along, fine, but of greater consequence to Stirling was pleasure and satisfaction from his job. Rob was his long-standing friend – as with Jackie Stewart and Ken Tyrrell a contract was a handshake – and there was also within him a wish, as the best driver »»

Nigel Roebuck

on earth, to 'take on the factories', to beat them with a privately-run car bound to be slightly obsolete. It was Moss and the Walker team, let's remember, who scored the first Grand Prix victory for both Cooper and Lotus.

If there were those who didn't comprehend Moss's motivation, so later there would be many who simply didn't 'get' Villeneuve. No surprise that Stirling loved the 'racer' in Gilles's character, but look elsewhere in the magazine, where sundry racing folk offer their memories of him, and you will read suggestions that he can't be compared with those who 'won World Championships'. Ditto, presumably, for S Moss.

Villeneuve, it's true, left little for the statistician. Sixty-seven Grands Prix, six wins. It adds a little perspective, though, to point out that in only one of his four seasons of F1 – 1979 – did he have what would now be considered 'a competitive car', this borne out by the fact that, indisputably the fastest of his time, he took pole position only twice. Ferrari may have been strong on horsepower, but in those years fell lamentably short on chassis and aerodynamics. Thus we had the Villeneuve style, and it was a style to make you catch your breath.

"People say I'm crazy because I get sideways sometimes," Gilles said. "Jesus Christ, a Ferrari driver who *didn't* get sideways these last few years would not have been a racing driver! I can honestly say I've never *ever* stroked in my racing career, and I'm proud of that. Even running 10th in a bad car, you can have fun – but not if you're stroking. Some of the guys I see out there… I don't know how they can accept their pay cheques!"

It was a matter of pride, and it defined the man. One wet day at Silverstone, with testing temporarily on hold, we sat in Ferrari's small motorhome and talked about why Villeneuve was a racing driver. "Well, first of all, I don't *need* the World Championship – not in the way that someone like [Didier] Pironi does. For guys like him, the championship is the only reason to race – it's like a mountain he has to climb, and he has to stick in that flag with his name on it…

"If I win it one day, OK, I'm not going to turn it away! But plenty of drivers have won it who were not so good – and yet a guy like Ronnie Peterson never did, so… how much does it mean?

"What I really care about is being the best, and you don't have to get a trophy in Paris at the end of the season – you have to *know* you can drive a racing car faster than anyone else. Maybe I'm wrong, but that's the feeling I have, and that's why I'm a happy man…"

> "There would be many who simply didn't 'get' Villeneuve"

People who thought Villeneuve too brave, maybe even a little mad, took no account of why he went racing, perhaps because they were incapable of understanding it. If there were many accidents, it was surely inevitable for one who ran *constantly* at the edge, invariably forcing mediocre cars along faster than they were meant to go.

There were those who would murmur that Villeneuve had a death wish, but while I can think of a driver of whom I believed that perhaps to be true, I never thought it of Gilles – if ever there was a man who loved life, it was he. "Everything he did," Patrick Tambay said, "he did at 200mph – and he enjoyed every second of it…"

As Harvey Postlethwaite pointed out, though, undeniably Gilles had an absolute faith in his ability to get out of any perilous situation. What was that he said to me on the afternoon of our first proper interview, at Zolder in 1978? "I don't have any fear of a crash – absolutely no fear of that. OK, at a top-gear corner, with a fence outside, I don't want to crash – I'm not crazy – and if I feel I'm going to put a wheel off, I'm going to lift a bit, like anyone else. But if it's, say, the end of qualifying, and you're going for pole, I guess you can squeeze the fear – I guess anyone can do that…"

A fortnight earlier, at Monaco, Villeneuve had had a big accident in the tunnel when his left front tyre punctured, and I had been amazed by his demeanour half an hour later. Had he not been frightened *at all*? "Me, no – the car, yes. When I knew I'd lost steering, I thought, 'Bloody hell, I'm going to have a nice one here!' You screw up your face, you know, before the impact, but honestly in that split-second what was going through my mind was that another race was going away – that I wasn't going to finish. I never think I can hurt myself –



Formula 1 was a more informal business once; Villeneuve even gave Roebuck (left) his address

that seems impossible to me – but I know I can hurt the car, and that's what I don't want to do…"

Even in that era, 30-odd years ago, I was aware that this was an interview outside my experience. By 1978 I had talked to many racing drivers, and some of them – notably David Purley – had a swashbuckling attitude to safety literally unfathomable today. Villeneuve, though, was something else again, and the impression he made on me was the more powerful because there was nothing gung-ho in the way he spoke. His voice was light, his tone matter-of-fact, and he firmly rejected suggestions that he was 'too brave'.

"If I have a different attitude from some of the others," Gilles said, "I think maybe it's because they have never done snowmobiling, which I did – I was quite good, in fact…" Indeed he was, one year taking the title of World Champion. "They were quick, those things, and every winter you would have three or four big spills, and get thrown down the ice at 100mph or so. Maybe the bike racers develop the same attitude, I don't know…"

On the one occasion when Villeneuve admitted to fear, a very specific fear it was. In the 1980 Italian Grand Prix (run, unusually, at Imola) a tyre failure sent his Ferrari T5 into the bank at the end of the straight before Tosa. When I saw him after the race he admitted to a severe headache, and said he had been told not to fly his helicopter for a couple of days, but was otherwise fine.

"I knew what had happened even before the car started to spin, because I heard the thumping of the flat tyre. I knew where I was, how close was the bank, and I thought, 'This one is going to hurt…' Everything went black when I hit the bank, then came back into the middle of the track – I could hear the other cars going by me, but for maybe 30 seconds I couldn't see, and that made me very frightened…

"I'm reassured by how well the car stood up. It's like I was always a bit nervous of hitting a guardrail – until I did. It was in an Atlantic car at home, a very big shunt, and I broke my leg. But afterwards I knew what it was to hit a guardrail, and it's never bothered me since. On the other hand, I'm afraid to fall out of a window because I've never done that. Today I was scared that I'd lost my sight – I guess we're all afraid of the unknown…"

When you work in F1, you come quite swiftly to learn that to admire the driver is not necessarily to like the man, but Gilles was one of those I would have wanted as a friend even had he been unconnected with motor racing. As Harvey Postlethwaite said, "He was the most unpolitical and disarmingly honest person I ever met – absolutely no hang-ups…"

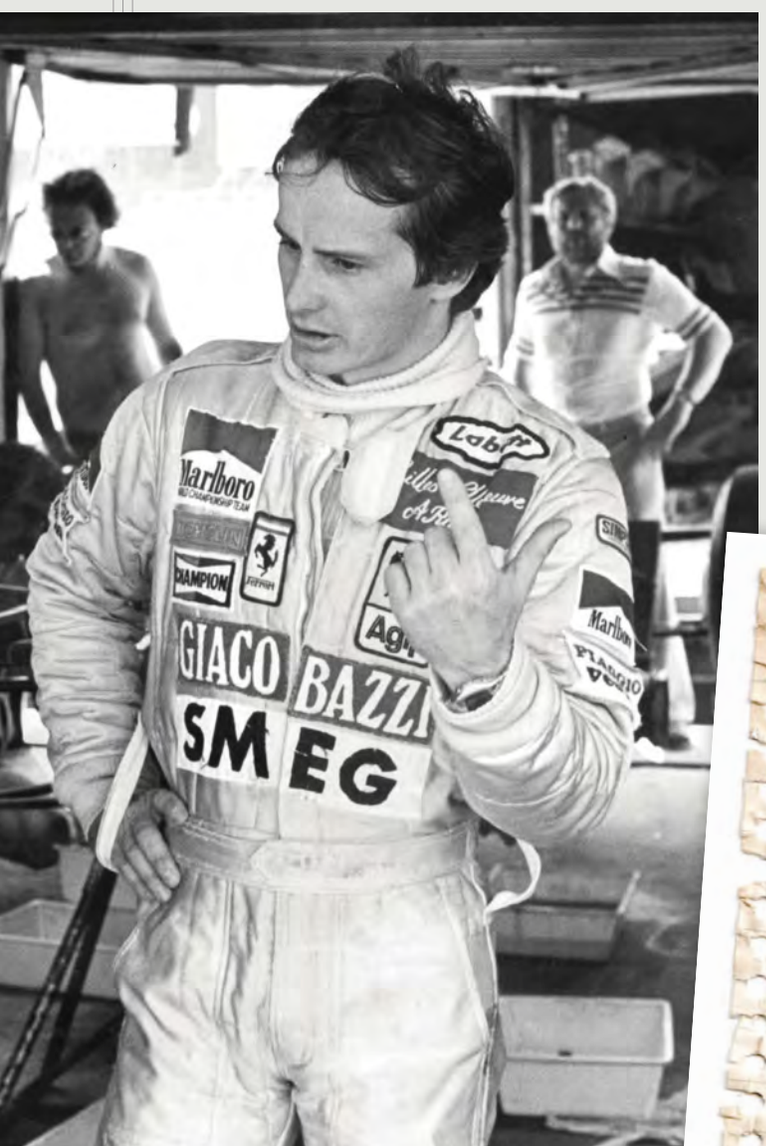
I remember asking him what he thought of Ferrari's then new 208GTB turbo, which reputedly had the same performance as a 308, but qualified, by virtue of its smaller engine, for a lower tax bracket. Rather to my surprise, Gilles said he didn't want to talk about it. I asked why.

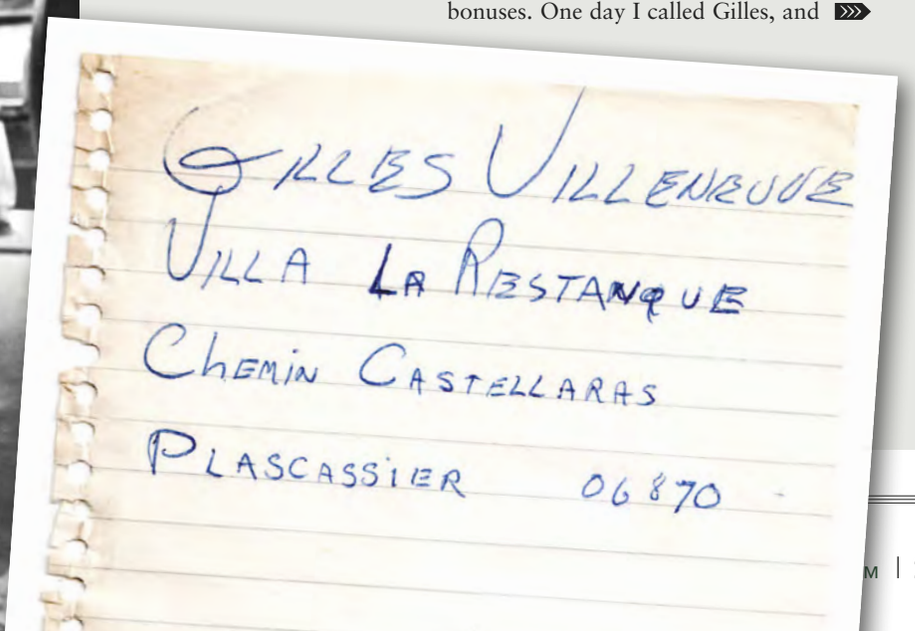
"Well… because I don't like it!" came the reply. Then, "I mean, what's the point of downsizing to a 2-litre engine – and then turbocharging it? If they'd turbocharged the 3-litre, that I could understand…"

Quite often I have pictured contemporary PR people striving to cope with Gilles, and smiled. Saying the right thing… he just wouldn't get it. If he developed a healthy cynicism about the whys and wherefores of F1 – and some of the people within it – he was utterly without guile: for Gilles, saying the right thing was saying what he thought, and Niki Lauda – another who always struggled with the concept of PR – was one of many who loved him for it.

Time was when F1 was an infinitely more informal business than now. There were no press conferences, nor press releases, and thus there was necessarily much more direct contact between drivers and journalists, from which friendships sometimes grew. At Zolder that day I asked Villeneuve if we could record an interview, and we did it right away. When it was finished, he wrote his address in my notebook, and also gave me all his numbers.

He was different in other ways, too. Over the years you come to realise that, while there are certainly exceptions, as a rule Grand Prix drivers volunteer to pay for things like bankers offer to turn down bonuses. One day I called Gilles, and »»




GILLES VILLENEUVE
VILLA LA RESTANQUE
CHEMIN CASTELLARAS
PLASCASSIER 06870

Nigel Roebuck

after a few minutes he asked where I was. At home, I said. "Well, put the 'phone down, and I'll call you back. You're a writer, and I'm a driver – you're paid too little, and I'm paid too much!"

During Villeneuve's brief time in F1 the sport was going through one of its politically catatonic periods, and there was dissension in the ranks such as I never knew before or since. This was the time of what became known as 'the FISA-FOCA War', with teams locked in combat both with each other and the governing body.

Gilles had his own strong opinions on these matters, and would express them saltily and without fear of the consequences: "F****** Ecclestone does this, and then f****** Balestre does that – and between them they are killing our sport…"

He always referred to F1 as 'a sport', for that was truly how he saw it, and it offended him that others regarded it as nothing more than a business, a power game to be won at whatever cost.

More than anything, though, Gilles hated the way the Grand Prix car was evolving. It was the time of 'ground effect', when the cars had shaped underbodies, and 'skirts' effectively achieved a seal with the ground. The word 'grip' was taking on a whole new meaning.

"You know," he said, "you have to drive these cars on rails, and I don't like that – I like it when you slide a car, and make that work for you. The days of driving with your fingertips are gone – nearly all the art has gone out of it. The ratio between horsepower and grip is all wrong – we have *far* too much grip for the power we have. I'd like the balance always to be in favour of the power because that allows a driver's ability to influence speed through the corners.

"People don't come to a race to see how good aerodynamicists are, do they? No, they come to see a battle, a *spectacle*, to be stirred – and they're being cheated. I mean, is there anyone who doesn't love to see a car being steered on the throttle?"

> "There was dissension such as I never knew before or since"

Only once did Villeneuve ever use the words 'off record' to me, and it was in the best of causes. It also goes without saying that, Gilles being Gilles, he mentioned it *after* he had said what he had said…

This was at Rio in 1982, and Villeneuve had qualified second to Prost, while the other Ferrari, driven by Pironi, was back in eighth place, a second and a half slower. After the session Gilles asked me if he could have a quiet word.

In testing at Paul Ricard, shortly before the Brazilian Grand Prix, Pironi had had an enormous accident when his throttle jammed open, the Ferrari vaulting a guardrail and coming to rest upside down in a spectator area mercifully unoccupied at the time.

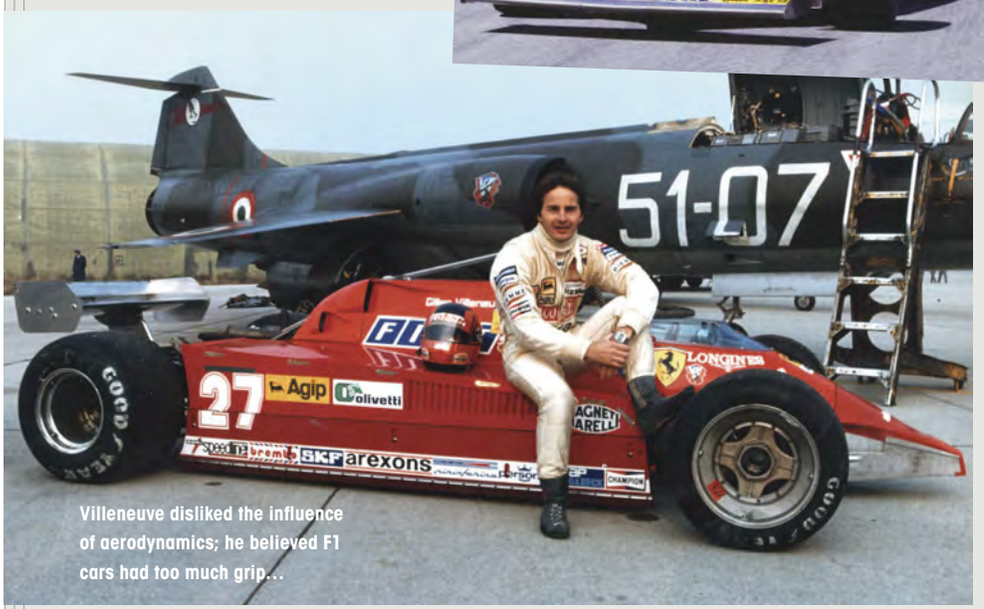
"Listen," said Gilles, "that was a *huge* shunt Didier had, and he's still shaken up. He's a bit off this weekend, but he'll be fine. Please go easy on him when you write your report, and maybe you could ask your colleagues to do the same…"

To this day I have never known another Grand Prix driver seek sympathy for his team-mate, and of course it became the more poignant a month on when Pironi cheated Villeneuve out of victory on the last lap at Imola, and set in motion the events which would lead to Gilles's death at Zolder 13 days later.

Personally I never had any doubts about that. Immediately after the race at Imola many people seemed to believe that the Ferraris had been involved in a genuine battle, that Pironi had simply got the better of Villeneuve, but they were swiftly disabused of that when Gilles drove into the paddock, giving the Ferrari a great burst of power as it slewed sideways to a stop. I looked on as he took off his helmet, and when I caught his eye he uttered one word – of four letters – and marched off to the Ferrari pit. Later he briefly appeared on the sham of a podium, declining to ➤➤➤



LAT



Villeneuve disliked the influence of aerodynamics; he believed F1 cars had too much grip…

Nigel Roebuck

look at Pironi, and then left the circuit in his helicopter.

Jackie Stewart, who flew back with him, was disturbed by his state of mind. "I'd never seen Gilles angry like that," he said. "He was *stunned*. You know, for him the World Championship was incidental. He told me that evening his one goal was to beat my record, win more Grands Prix than I had – and this one had been stolen from him. There had always been this innocence about Gilles – he didn't have a trace of maliciousness in him – and he couldn't quite believe what had happened. It was awful that the last days of his life were so tormented and disillusioned…"

That was beyond doubt. After leaving it a couple of days, I called the number in Monaco, and our conversation – an hour and more – formed the basis of my next column in *Autosport*, which I called 'Bad Blood In Maranello'. What Gilles couldn't stomach was that he had been the Ferrari driver to take the battle to the Renaults, the one in front when they became first and second, the one mindful of Ferrari's marginal fuel consumption – and the one who never thought to defend against Pironi at the last passing place on the last lap.

"I think I've proved, in the 60-odd Grands Prix I've done so far, that in equal cars – or sometimes even in a lesser car – when I want someone to stay behind… I think he stays behind. No *way* would he have passed me, and nor would anyone else! Not on the last lap…

"Because of the fuel situation I was cruising, but him, he was just racing, and I was too stupid to realise it – I thought he was an honest guy." Had he spoken to Pironi? "No, and I'm not going to – ever. I have declared war on him. When we get to Belgium next week, I'll race with him as if he was in a Williams or a Brabham…"

Another who spoke to Villeneuve that week was Alain Prost. "I could understand why he was so upset," Alain said, "but I never forgot it. When things got really bad between Senna and me, I would always remember that conversation with Gilles – and what happened to him…"

A month after Zolder we were in Montréal, where the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve was way quieter than usual, for the hero was gone. Irony of ironies, Pironi was on pole position in the revamped Ferrari C2, and afterwards declared that, "If Gilles had been here, we all know he would have been on pole…" I was with Keke Rosberg as that came over the PA, and he voiced what many were thinking. "If it wasn't for him," he retorted, "Gilles *would* be here…"



Friday practice, Watkins Glen, 1979: Villeneuve was quickest by 11 seconds

"There will always be those who question Villeneuve's greatness as a driver"

There will always, I suppose, be those who question Villeneuve's ultimate greatness as a Grand Prix driver. They will admit to his blinding pace and other-worldly car control, but they will suggest that he was a one-dimensional driver, capable only of driving flat-out, regardless of conditions or circumstance.

To them I would say only this: do you not remember Watkins Glen in 1979? In the monsoon conditions of Friday practice, Gilles was *eleven* seconds faster than the next man, Ferrari team-mate Scheckter, and that was one side of the man – his genius. Another side was the driver who fought long with Alan Jones's Williams in the race, then babied the car to the chequered flag, its oil pressure virtually gone.

Or what of Jarama in 1981? In the turbocharged Ferrari 126CK – a bullet in a straight line, a lumbering sofa in the corners – Villeneuve had already won in the most unlikely place, Monaco, and now, at the tight little track in Madrid, he did it again, holding off four rivals for 65 laps. Gordon Murray, who walked the circuit during the race, told me afterwards that Gilles's drive was the greatest he had ever seen: "That car was so *terrible*, but he controlled the race, and never made a mistake…"

Over the years I had many a lengthy debate about racing drivers with Denis Jenkinson, and if he reckoned I overrated Jochen Rindt, and I thought the same of him with Nelson Piquet, generally our opinions were similar.

In a paddock somewhere in 1979 Jenks showed me random thoughts from his notebook, concerning the drivers of the moment. Against some names he had put, 'Wasting his time', against others, 'Tries hard', against others again 'Good lad', and so on. Towards the top of the list he had written of Alan Jones, 'On the hill', then of Gilles Villeneuve, 'He is the hill'. As I said, we didn't disagree about much.

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Rob Widdows

DISPATCHES



LAT

DAVID AND GOLIATH

TAKE ONE LOOK AT THE GRID IN MELBOURNE AND YOU are reminded that Formula 1 is now exclusively underpinned by the financial elite. Just a dozen teams kept afloat by corporations, or emerging nations, who choose to use the sport as part of their global marketing strategies. Despite attempts at cutting costs, 21st century Grand Prix racing is prohibitively expensive. But this was not always so.

In 1977 no fewer than 14 cars took part in a pre-qualifying session on the Wednesday before the British Grand Prix. The fastest five would then join the fight for a place among the 24 cars eligible to race. Among these was Australian Brian McGuire in a McGuire BM1, a modified Williams FW04, and David Purley in a LEC CRP1, so named after his father Charlie Purley's refrigeration company.

Designed by Mike Pilbeam, the LEC was built in a shed behind a fridge factory in Bognor Regis. Yes, if you had the money and the sense of adventure, you could do that. The Purleys had plenty of both. The old man started by selling fish from his bicycle. Feeling the need to keep it fresh, he and a friend started building fridges and by 1977 could afford to build an F1 car. David, an ex-paratrooper, or parrot-shooter as the mechanics called him, never built a fridge in his life. But he had a sense of adventure and was already a British F5000 champion. Pilbeam sent in the drawings while team manager Mike Earle and chief mechanic Greg Field made the bits, installed one of John Nicholson's Cosworth DFVs, and went racing. No computers, no wind tunnel, no simulator.

That summer of '77 was to be the LEC's last outing. Striving to pre-qualify, Purley crashed into the railway sleepers at Becketts, severely injuring his legs. The throttle had stuck wide open. Thanks to his fitness and tenacity the man recovered, but never raced again. After the shunt, Purley asked if the car would be ready in time for the final session. Emphatically, it would not, and the wreckage lies in the museum at Donington.

The great thing about privateers in sport at its highest level is the joy of supporting the underdog, a creature that can sometimes make an amusing nuisance of itself. At Zolder, earlier in that summer of '77, the race started in the wet, the track gradually dried out, and all the frontrunners pitted for dry tyres. But not David Purley. Mike Earle realised that a pitstop could take all day as there were only three of them in the pit to change four wheels. So Purley stayed out, took the lead and soon had a hard-charging Niki Lauda, on new rubber, snapping at his heels. Not afraid of anyone, Purley held up the Ferrari for several laps (above), later asking Earle 'who was the idiot in the red car?' He soon found out and, after a heated exchange in the paddock, referred to Lauda as 'the rat', a moniker that stuck to the Austrian thereafter.

Privateers, long departed from F1, are necessarily not like us. They are mavericks, gatecrashers, and elite groups beware. Purley was a regular guest on my 'Track Torque' radio show, often accompanied by girlfriend Gail or neighbour Derek Bell, or both. Arriving late one night, Bell explained that Purley had insisted upon shooting rabbits from the tailgate of his Range Rover, thereby hindering progress. On another occasion he amused himself by raising Gail's jersey above her head to reveal her upper body, this doing nothing for the concentration of a 'live' radio presenter.

It would be fun, would it not, if Grand Prix racing still allowed for the unusual, the independently wealthy and the truly adventurous. Sadly, few have both the attitude and the $100 million to make their entrance.

Dismally, neither David nor Brian McGuire are still with us. McGuire was killed in practice for a Shellsport race at Brands Hatch in August 1977, while David Purley died when his Pitts Special plunged into the sea off Bognor Regis in the summer of 1985. They, and others like them, added texture and colour to a sport that is so often out of reach for those other than the elite.

ON TWO WHEELS



Ducati

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1000 REASONS TO WATCH

CAN AN EXTRA 200cc OF SWEPT VOLUME AND SOFTER tyre casings transform a race series? That's what MotoGP is about to find out.

In its original four-stroke 990cc format MotoGP was a glorious spectacle of riders wrestling with their machines and slugging it out with their rivals. That all changed in 2007 when engines were reduced to 800cc in a badly misjudged effort to reduce speeds following the death of Honda's favourite son Daijiro Kato at Suzuka. The 800s turned out to be revvy little things that knew only one way round a corner – a big, sweeping arc for huge corner speed to compensate for puny engine torque. All of a sudden, everyone was using the same lines. The racing became rather less exciting.

It got worse in 2009 when MotoGP became a control-tyre series, with Bridgestone the designated supplier. The Bridgestones were fast but they were also rather like the 800s – they demanded a specific technique. The tyres had to be loaded all the way through the corners, which maintained those big, sweeping arcs as the only way to go round. Otherwise the tyres wouldn't get up to temperature and riders would either find themselves off the pace or off the bike and cart-wheeling through a gravel trap.

The combination of new engines and tyres made overtaking a tricky business. And increased development of traction-control systems – to calm the peaky 800s – made things even worse by further homogenising riding technique. MotoGP became a tame game of follow my leader, or "parade racing" as Valentino Rossi's crew chief Jeremy Burgess called it.

This year, and not before time, MotoGP goes to 1000cc. The riders already love the engines which make another 30 horsepower or so – 260 instead of 230 – and have the torque the 800s desperately lacked.

"We've got a lot more control with the 1000 because the engine isn't so peaky," says reigning World Champion Casey Stoner.

Thus riders no longer have to swoop through the corners in uniform style. When they want they can use the old point-and-squirt technique that was the fast way to ride the evil old 500 two-strokes, translating the cornering line from a 'U' to a 'V': braking deep, flicking the bike on its side to make the turn, heaving it upright and giving it full throttle, profiting from all that torque.

"We call that making the straight as long as possible," says MotoGP veteran Colin Edwards. So the riders now have options. Suddenly there's two ways round the same corner.

"On the 1000s you're going to be able to pass people," says Tech 3 Yamaha rider Cal Crutchlow, last season's MotoGP rookie of the year. "With the 800s you'd see people make a pass, then run out of the powerband and get passed back. With the 1000s you can stuff people and use the torque to get out of the corner, which will be great for the racing."

By happy coincidence, Bridgestone's 2012 tyres – with more pliable casings – should also have a beneficial effect on the action. Bridgestone redesigned its casings because too many riders were crashing and getting hurt when their tyres weren't getting up to temperature. The Japanese company's latest slicks are safer because they warm up quicker. They also go off sooner, a downside that riders are happy to live with because hanging onto a hot, greasy tyre at the end of a race is a much easier proposition than surviving a cold, rigid tyre in the first laps.

"We'd rather have safe tyres that slide around at the end than tyres that break your collarbone after the start," affirms Crutchlow, just one of MotoGP's many cold-tyre victims of recent seasons.

Formula 1 has recently learned from Pirelli's designed-to-degrade rubber that deteriorating tyres can enliven things by creating more overtaking opportunities as some racers run out of grip and others don't. How long it takes the electronics in MotoGP to catch up remains to be seen. Meanwhile, enjoy the show.

THE US SCENE



LAT

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NASCAR GETS WIRED

CHANGE IS COMING TO NASCAR. ELECTRONIC FUEL injection has arrived this season, replacing the traditional four-barrel carburettor, while the introduction of ECUs has brought the thin edge of the electronic wedge to the top level of US stock car racing. And next year a new Sprint Cup car will make its debut featuring more brand identity for each of NASCAR's four manufacturers – Chevrolet, Ford, Dodge and Toyota.

When the current, safer 'spec'-car – the so-called 'Car of Tomorrow' – was introduced in 2007 it erased any individual identities between the competing brands, and was not received happily by either fans or the manufacturers. In recent years there's been a clamour from all quarters for NASCAR to allow more individual identities. So it will come to pass next year.

Toyota Racing Development's president, Lee White, is unrestrained in his enthusiasm for the close working relationship NASCAR has developed with its manufacturers in making the move to fuel injection and developing the 2013 Sprint Cup car.

"The 2013 car has probably been the most amazing collaboration we've ever seen," White declared. "There's been a truly remarkable degree of cooperation with everyone pulling on the same end of the rope to get that to happen, so the manufacturers are finally going to get some real brand identity in the cars that we haven't had for five years with the CoT. If there was an issue we needed to get out on the table, we did it. Everyone has worked together really well."

The new car will be sleeker than the CoT with shallower windshield angles and different nose and tail proportions (above). "The current car is disproportionate because the tail is so long and the nose overhang is so short," said Ford Racing's chief aerodynamicist Bernie Marcus. "So we moved things around and made the nose a little longer and the tail a little shorter."

"You can put your own character into the side of the car and into the wheel openings and the front bumper," added Lee White. "Those will be unique to each manufacturer."

NASCAR's Sprint Cup fuel injection system comprises well-proven Bosch pumps, injectors and sensors plus a McLaren ECU, which is similar to the unit used in F1 and IndyCar. McLaren's ECUs are produced in a partnership with Freescale, a large-scale supplier of ECUs and electronic bits to the automotive industry and a wide range of consumer products. Freescale has been a McLaren partner for 10 years.

The biggest problem in adapting EFI systems to NASCAR is coping with the large quantity of heat generated by a stock car. "The heat is a tremendous issue," said White. "The exhaust runs right through the car and you have to do everything you can to keep the components cool. When you look at the heat and the inertial loads and vibration generated by these cars it's a very unfriendly environment for hundreds of wires and connectors."

NASCAR's vice-president of competition, Robin Pemberton, stressed that despite the arrival of electronics in NASCAR, data systems and telemetry will never be allowed during race weekends. "We won't be there anytime soon by design," he said. "We'll save that for testing and run our races without any of that. We want the man and the machine. We want the teams and the human to do it. In our world, that's what makes us healthy, and that's what keeps our owners healthy. The arms race doesn't help make racing better, it just helps you spend more money."

Pemberton added that the penalty for messing with the electronics will be very serious. "Minor isn't even on the gauge," he commented. "It'll be a top of the line penalty."

So as much as NASCAR has opened the door to the modern world it remains committed to the first principles that have always driven it: keeping the nature of the competition as simple as possible and ruling with an iron fist.

Desirables









Essential events 2012

Clockwise from top left:

BRITISH GRAND PRIX Silverstone, July 6-8
Tel: 0844 3750 740 www.silverstone.co.uk

SILVERSTONE CLASSIC Silverstone, July 20-22
Tel: 0844 3750 740 www.silverstoneclassic.com

BRITISH SUPERBIKE Cadwell Park, August 25-27
Tel: 0843 453 9000 www.cadwellpark.co.uk

MILLE MIGLIA May 17-20, from Brescia to Rome and back, Italy
Tel: +39 0100897005 www.1000miglia.eu

GRAND PRIX MONACO DE HISTORIQUE May 11-13
www.monaco-historic-grand-prix.com

CHOLMONDELEY PAGEANT OF POWER June 15-17
Tel: 01829 772 432 www.cpop.co.uk

BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP Snetterton, August 11-12
Tel: 0843 453 9000 www.snetterton.co.uk

GOODWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED Jun 28-Jul 2
Tel: 01243 755055 www.goodwood.com









Eric Sawyer









Essential events 2012

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GOODWOOD REVIVAL September 14-16
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UNIQUES SPECIAL ONES Florence, Italy, Sep 28–30
Tel: +39 0100897006 www.uniquespecialones.com

GOLD CUP Oulton Park, August 26-27
Tel: 0843 453 9000 www.oultonpark.co.uk

DTM Brands Hatch, May 18-20
Tel: 0843 453 9000 www.brandshatch.co.uk

LE MANS 24 HOURS June 16-17
Tel: +33 2 43 40 24 24 www.lemans.org/en/

MOTO GP Silverstone, June 15-17
Tel: 0844 3750 740 www.silverstone-tickets.co.uk

FORMULA TWO/INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN
Brands Hatch, July 13-15
Tel: 0843 453 9000 www.brandshatch.co.uk

ECO TARGA FLORIO Sicily, Italy October 11–14
Tel: +39 010 0897009 www.ecotargaflorio.com









Letters

Don't blame the bean counters

Sir,

As both a motor sport enthusiast and a chartered accountant I must object to the comments made by editor Damien Smith regarding Peugeot's withdrawal from the WEC and the cutting back of the MINI rally programme.

In the case of Peugeot this is an organisation that currently has the twin problems of falling sales and a desperate need to invest in new product, both of which are a drain on financial resources. Clearly something has to give, and a motor sport programme must seem an expensive luxury at a time when the organisation is fighting for its survival. Rather than being "shortsighted" and "selfish" as Mr Smith suggests, the decision is just plain common sense.

Our editor goes on to ask if BMW's decision regarding the MINI rally programme makes sense. How many of us have felt cheated when a builder or mechanic identifies a problem that means the job is going to cost a lot more than the agreed expenditure? This is effectively what Prodrive has done with the MINI project in going back to BMW to ask for more money because they have failed to raise sufficient sponsorship. Furthermore, given the choice between the stable DTM series or the shambles that is currently the WRC I think most people would know which choice makes most sense.

As motor sports enthusiasts we all appreciate that large manufacturers bring a lot of credibility to our sport. We must, however, acknowledge that they will only invest in motor sport programmes that make sense; to believe otherwise is romantic naivety. In taking cheap shots at the "corporate bean counters" Mr Smith is descending into hackneyed journalistic stereotyping. The readers of *Motor Sport* deserve better.

Gareth Tarr, Chertsey, Surrey

Sold on Ireland

Sir,

Nigel Roebuck's 'Reflections' on Innes Ireland in the February issue motivates this letter to share my fondness for Innes.

In the early Sixties I was working in Stuttgart and trying to race a TR3. In 1961 I went to Solitude with the Stuttgart Sports Car Club to watch the masters of the day, Innes, Moss, Gurney, McLaren and others, dicing in Lotuses, Porsches, Coopers, etc. After a hard fight Innes won with a Lotus to the delight of Chapman, and in the evening our little club threw a party for him. This is where I met him first [see pictures below]. A ferocious party animal but he also impressed us with his down to earth attitude, his gentlemanly behaviour and his simplicity. I became sold on this character.

In the Eighties, being involved with the French Ferrari Club, I concocted a series of Ferrari 20th anniversaries, including that of the 250GTO. Innes had shown quite a bit of gusto with the UDT Laystall GTO, and, remembering our encounter back in 1961, I thought that he would be a perfect guest for our one-week drive across Burgundy. He was indeed: a gentleman during the day drive and the heart of the party at night, to put it mildly… But also great fun, a great raconteur, elegant with the ladies, impeccably behaved. On top of this the Harrison brothers had come from the UK with Innes's old winning GTO, and the reunion delighted Innes.



For the GTO's 25th anniversary in 1987, along with Pierre Noblet, I thought that Innes would again be appropriate for our week's road trip to the Bordeaux area as he wouldn't mind comparing his own national refreshment with the local Grands Crus… He came back for another hilarious week, so genuinely friendly and happy to be there. As a token of thanks he wrote a very nice and lengthy piece in *Road & Track* on the subject. Having been 'married' to 3607GT for 20 happy years I was always in awe of these GTO pilots' exploits on the track, and admire a person like Innes Ireland not only for his career but also for his persona.

You made my day with your Ireland recollection. Thank you, and let's have a drink to Innes.

Jess Pourret, Chiang Mai, Thailand

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Write to: Motor Sport, 38 Chelsea Wharf,
15 Lots Road, London SW10 0QJ
or e-mail: editorial@motorsportmagazine.co.uk

(Please include your full name and postal area)

Technical focus

Sir,

I enjoyed reading about active suspension on the Williams cars in the March issue and had to re-read the passage and do some serious mental exercise to understand how it works. This is refreshing, because for me too many magazines focus on aesthetics and history, and not enough about what makes cars tick. Technical without mathematical formulae would be perfect. Yours is the magazine I'd keep if I had to rationalise my many subscriptions down to one. Andrew Frankel's articles are worth the cover price alone.

Nick Ashby, London W1

Seven Lords leaping

Sir,

What has an F1 grand prix in Bahrain to do with seven Lords and a Green Party MP showing their "concern" over the running of the race? Surely the only acceptable reason for not going ahead with the race would be if it was clearly unsafe for the drivers and teams. If Bernie Ecclestone and the team managers are satisfied with the security arrangements provided by the Bahrain government, then the race should go ahead. Motor sport should not be allowed to become a political football for interfering Westminster politicians. Teams taking part in the race in no way should be construed to imply either their support for or opposition to the Bahrain government. Modern F1, whether we like it or not, has become a huge commercial enterprise providing mass entertainment, and the F1 circus travels to wherever it offers a worthwhile commercial return.

Jeremy Willings, Liphook, Hants

Antipodean antidote

Sir,

I invariably turn to the Parting Shot page immediately on receiving the magazine each month and enjoy trying to identify as much as I can about the picture featured before looking at the caption. This month, having identified the location as Pukekohe and the race as the 1969 New Zealand GP, I was somewhat surprised to see the picture captioned as being taken at the 1969 Australian GP at ➤➤➤

Letters

Lakeside. While the modern Tilkedrome looks the same regardless of location and is thus easily mis-identifiable, I don't think the same could be said of these two circuits!

That quibble aside, congratulations on April's interview with Mike Thackwell, a man who should've graced an F1 grid for many years but who chose to walk away, seemingly without regret, well before the age of 30 and who seems to have a very well-balanced view on life and how he wants to live it. In my view Rob Widdows' piece ought to be compulsory reading for all young (and not so young) drivers. You never know, it might cause them to question their self-importance knowing that a man with more talent in his little finger than most of them put together was prepared to give it up because he recognised that there are other things in life than driving round in circles generating as much cash as possible in the belief that they are the centre of the universe!

Chris Hall, Hemel Hempstead, Herts



Vans for the memory

Sir,

A message for your Art Editor Mr Damon Cogman and Associate Editor Mr Ed Foster about the Fiat 900 ex-Ferrari service van which they coveted in the Bonhams auction.

Sorry guys, the van has gone to Austria, to join my Alfa Romeo Maserati service van…

Heinz Swoboda, Vienna, Austria

Thackwell takes his queue

Sir,

I just had to send you this story because they don't come much stranger than this. I recently had to pop into a local post office. Waiting in the mile-long queue my thoughts lingered over your excellent article on Mike Thackwell, which was for me the highlight of this month's read. As the queue shuffled forward I spotted a man chatting with an older lady. Then I recognised the symbol on his dark woolly hat and looked again; you couldn't mistake those piercing blue eyes, the stubble and the Jaguar jacket. Yes, it must be Mike Thackwell! Smilingly he shook my hand and confirmed it was him, to my great delight. I muttered something about seeing him at Silverstone in the early Eighties. "Ah, those were the days," he said with another smile.

Then as I walked outside, to my delighted surprise there he was again with pipe in hand. We had a very relaxed chat for 15 minutes or so on life and racing. I told him about Rob Widdows' article and how much I and other motor sport fans appreciated him meeting you to talk about his life. He said he owed it to Rob as he was one of the first to give him a radio interview when he came over to the UK, and that all he wanted was a bottle of whisky. How refreshing in these days of agents looking out for every deal! He had kind words for Rob, James Weaver and his mechanics. A real true gentleman and a great racer, much missed.

We got on to the subject of Goodwood; he was spectating there and rather to his embarrassment Jochen Mass recognised him!

Thanks for bringing Mike out to talk. Had I not seen those fantastic photos in *Motor Sport* I would never have recognised him.

Martyn Hulland, Maidenhead, Berks

Dealing with tragedy

Sir,

I am writing to congratulate Nigel Roebuck and other *Motor Sport* writers for their sensitive and informative articles on the deaths of Dan Wheldon and Marco Simoncelli in the January 2012 issue. It's never easy to be a spectator and commentator reporting these tragedies, and it's difficult to report in a way that respects the deceased, their loved ones and friends.

The IndyCar accident at Las Vegas certainly was made worse by the flight of impacted cars once downforce ceased to keep these cars on the bitumen. I certainly think that cars with less downforce would be safer in an accident, but would this open another can of worms? We see incidents as recent as 2011 where 2000kg NASCAR stock cars take flight at 190mph and the catch fences did their job of keeping the wreckage on the track and not amongst spectators. Racing light open-wheelers on banked ovals is a recipe for further disaster under current IndyCar design rules.

Stephen Asprey, Lane Cove, NSW, Australia

KEEP IN TOUCH

The new-look *Motor Sport* website is *the* place to discuss motor racing past, present and future. Don't miss the opportunity to comment on blogs, video and audio podcasts, and read Nigel Roebuck's newsletter and the editor's monthly letter. To get involved in the discussion simply log on to **www.motorsportmagazine.com** and tell our writers exactly what you think!
Also, don't forget that if you have any images which would be suitable for our You Were There feature in the magazine, please send them to the office (address on p44).

Rendezvous with Rondeau

Sir,

I was fascinated to see Nigel Roebuck's remarks about losing interest in a race that could be won by a Rondeau. 1980 was my first trip to Le Mans and the start of a love affair – the tickets are already bought for number 31 this June. Perhaps the 1980 entry was not the best ever, but this was an epic – we had no idea who would win and the guy did it in a fantastic-looking car he made himself just down the road. Surely that puts it up there on the list of most romantic racing happenings?

Apparently, going to Daytona is now a highlight of Nigel's year – so he wasn't put off a race that could be won by a Porsche 911? Maybe he should give Le Mans another try…

Ian Mann, Divonne les Bains, France

Fitch's record

Sir,

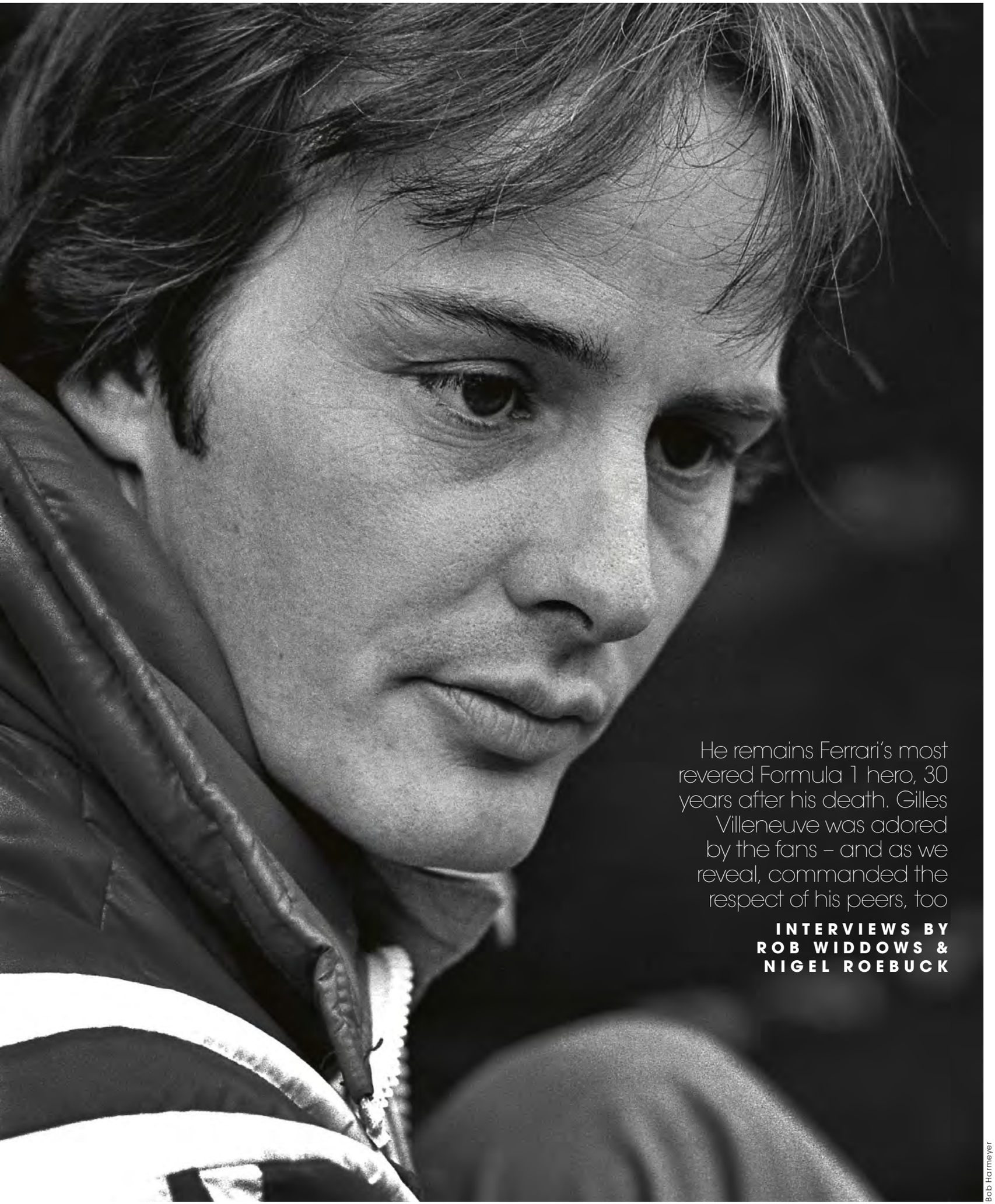
I'm prompted to write regarding your article on John Fitch in the April edition. I have had the privilege of meeting John on a few occasions at Lime Rock Park in Connecticut, USA. To add to your list of his accomplishments, this track was heavily influenced in design and engineering by John Fitch. It dates to the early 1950s and is very 'old school' – no stands, just beautiful sloping tree-lined hills to sit on and enjoy the race action.

John Fitch also designed and engineered his own road car, the Phoenix, and a fuel line catalyst that in my experience actually works. In addition he is involved with Mercedes in speed record attempts involving restored 300SL Gullwings. John is frequently seen at vintage race events, particularly Lime Rock, and is always very approachable. To top all this off he is a decorated WWII combat pilot. I look forward to seeing him during the 2012 racing season.

Michael O'Connor, Bronx, New York, USA

With the death of Gilles Villeneuve Grand Prix racing will not be the same. It will still go on and one day another star will appear and shine brightly, but until that day something has gone out of racing that will be hard to replace. 'He shall not grow old...'

Denis Jenkinson, Motor Sport, June 1982



He remains Ferrari's most revered Formula 1 hero, 30 years after his death. Gilles Villeneuve was adored by the fans – and as we reveal, commanded the respect of his peers, too

INTERVIEWS BY ROB WIDDOWS & NIGEL ROEBUCK

Bob Harmeyer



The bare statistics give nothing away. Just four complete seasons in Formula 1, 67 races, a couple of pole positions, eight fastest laps – and six Grand Prix victories. In cold black and white, Gilles Villeneuve appears to have been an accomplished racing driver, and little more. The reality, of course, is somewhat different.

The little man from Quebec shares his place in the record books (joint 38th in World Championship GP wins) with Jacques Laffite, Riccardo Patrese… and Ralf Schumacher. He also happens to sit alongside Tony Brooks, John Surtees and Jochen Rindt. So much for the record books.

Thirty years after the violence of final qualifying at Zolder, Villeneuve continues to split opinion. To some, his fate was sealed long before that terrible Saturday in Belgium, by his foot-to-the-floor attitude to both life and racing – one and the same for this man who was born to go fast. But to many, he remains the purest, most thrilling, most explosive talent ever to sit in a racing car. Senna? Ruthless, calculating, complex. A very different animal. There was no cynicism about Villeneuve, who was an old breed of hero even in his own lifetime.

It's likely you've read the stories before, probably recounted by our own Nigel Roebuck whose friendship with Gilles will always be the defining racing driver relationship of his life. But what of Villeneuve's peers, the drivers and engineers who went up against him? What did they think of him? Madman, genius… or perhaps a bit of both? Here, we present a compilation of 'voices', from interviews both old and new, telling us what it was like to know, and sit on a grid with, the man who might just be the fastest racing driver we've ever seen.



Hard but fair: Villeneuve wrestles 'that old tank' ahead of Alan Jones at Monte Carlo in 1981

Schegelmilch



Chris Amon

FELLOW FERRARI LEGEND

Early in 1977 I decided I really wanted out. I was trying to run a team and I had pretty much lost my enthusiasm to be a racing driver. My wife-to-be was pregnant and I had decided to stop at the end of that season. But after the first Can-Am race I decided it was time to pull the plug.

Gilles replaced me at Walter Wolf's Can-Am team. He struck me at the time as a great talent. You could see he was going to be exceptional. He was the obvious choice. Being Canadian, Walter Wolf was interested in him. It didn't take too much persuading to convince Walter to put Gilles in the car. He was obviously a huge talent and had been having some big races with Keke Rosberg in Formula Atlantic. They were the two obvious, emerging talents in North America.

Unfortunately, we never really gave him a decent car to drive. We had all sorts of issues, but Gilles made the best of it. It had some real weaknesses. The brakes, for example, were always a big problem. I think the car was potentially quick enough, but it was totally undeveloped.

I drove from the circuit to the hotel with Gilles at St Jovite. He had a Honda Civic and it was only a couple of miles, but I decided I would think twice about ever getting in a road car with him again. Then I made the mistake at Watkins Glen of going from the Motor Inn up to the circuit with him and after that trip I definitely decided, 'Never again!' We were a bit late leaving the motel and there was a hell of a lot of traffic and Gilles said, 'Don't worry!' We managed to thread our way through everything, annoying the police as he zipped wherever he wanted to go. He really was something else.

I don't think there was ever any margin in reserve with Gilles. Later, in 1980, when Ferrari had a real dog of a car, he absolutely put Scheckter in the shade. I think more than anybody he's remembered for some exceptional races, often with cars that were less than competitive. People talk about Senna, and obviously Senna had some brilliant races too. But I think Senna had the advantage of being in top-rate equipment. Gilles was a hard racer, but very fair and he drove some fantastic races in uncompetitive cars.



Enzo Ferrari

IL COMMENDATORE

Gilles Villeneuve achieved great fame with Ferrari through his magnanimity and daring. He taught us to appreciate the forces that mechanical parts have to withstand when a driver finds himself facing the unforeseen. Some people called him crazy. There was a chorus of criticism when I engaged him because he was an unknown entity. Well, Niki Lauda was also unknown when I took him on. You have to admit I have a pretty good nose. In my eyes Villeneuve was one of my family. I loved him.



Jody Scheckter

FERRARI TEAM-MATE AND 1979 WORLD CHAMPION

For Gilles, racing was a romantic thing. My preoccupation was in keeping myself alive, but for him the thing was to be fastest, every race, every lap. I believe he was the fastest racing driver the world has ever seen. If he could come back tomorrow, and live his life over again, I'm sure he would do it the same way, and with the same love. That was the right word. More than anyone I've known, Gilles was in love with motor racing. »»



Keke Rosberg

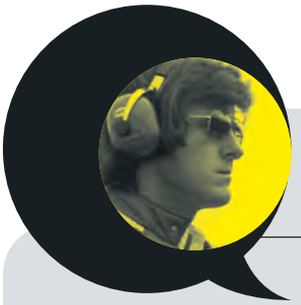
FORMULA ATLANTIC RIVAL AND 1982 WORLD CHAMPION

My battles with Gilles in Formula Atlantic in Canada were the hardest racing of my entire career, believe me. In the Atlantic days we were *such* fierce rivals that we never really talked very much – I spoke more with his kids than with him. And it wasn't until 1982 that I got a competitive car in Formula 1 at last – and before half-season Gilles was gone…

I liked the way he drove. Very hard, but always correct – he wasn't *ever* dirty. Later on people used to compare Senna with Villeneuve, but Ayrton was a different story – he would use every trick in the book, in a way we'd never seen in F1 before. That started a new era, and unfortunately it's spread to the junior categories. Gilles would never do anything like that.

He was incredibly tough, though, the toughest I ever raced against. I remember that once in an Atlantic race we flew over the hump at Mosport – and touched wheels while we were airborne! Remember the fight he had with Arnoux in Dijon – Gilles's tyres were completely *finished*, but he still wouldn't give up, and he won the battle…

He was just a born fighter, wasn't he? I thought Gilles was a phenomenal driver – a *giant* of a driver. Pure speed, pure talent. The sad thing is that when I think about him now, the first thing that comes into my head is the Monday after the race at Zolder. I had to go to the track for some reason, and it was deserted – nothing there except rubbish from the weekend, and Gilles's helicopter…



Alastair Caldwell

McLAREN CHIEF MECHANIC AND TEAM MANAGER

The first we at McLaren knew of Gilles Villeneuve was when James Hunt went to Canada to do a Formula Atlantic race at Trois Rivières – in those days Grand Prix drivers were allowed to do silly things – and when he came back he said: 'This kid's a genius, he can really drive.' It was *very* rare for a racing driver to extol the virtues of another, so Teddy Mayer called him and asked him to come and see us.

The following day our receptionist called up to say there was this young man downstairs called Gilles Villeneuve who'd like to see you. Now this was the kind of guy we liked, he'd found a flight to London, made his way to Colnbrook, and here he was. We showed him the cars and he was just mad about them, full of enthusiasm, and this was the perfect kind of driver for us, needed no babying, and he couldn't wait to drive the car.



LAT

So we took him to Silverstone for the British Grand Prix in 1977, gave him a third car alongside Hunt and Mass. With hardly any running, he was immediately quick, the times coming down and down. Journalists who'd watched around the track came and said, 'Wow, you should have seen your boy spin at Copse, at Becketts, at Club', wherever, but there'd been nothing to show on the lap times. So I said to Gilles, 'They're telling me you've spun the car at just about every corner,' and he says, 'Yeah, how else can I tell how fast I'm going?' That's all he said. I pointed out that the lap times didn't falter and he says 'No, it's not a problem for me'. He had so much car control, he'd spin, select a gear, get it pointed the right way, and go. It was seamless, and this is how he found the limit of each corner.

He qualified ninth and made up places before coming in with the temperature gauge off the clock. It was a faulty gauge so we sent him back out and he came 11th two laps down. He would have been in the points easily. I was ecstatic about him. We offered him a test contract for '78, and three races at the end of the year, but Ferrari had also noticed him and offered him a test contract. So he came back to us and I told him he should stay with McLaren, he'd be a first-string driver in no time. Then it all went haywire – Teddy Mayer told him to call Ferrari's bluff and demand a full race contract or nothing. Well, Teddy screwed up, because Ferrari *did* make him the offer, thought he was too good to lose, and effectively Teddy had negotiated the bloody contract for him. I was *furious*, the kid would have been a perfect McLaren driver. For sure he would have won a championship with us.

He got involved in all the politics at Ferrari, all the razzmatazz, and it was a disaster. I really liked Gilles, he was actually a very sensible young man, he had an inner calmness. He hated all the bullshit, all the smart hotels, and he lived virtually in the pitlane, had his motorhome with his wife and young son. He pined for us when he was at Ferrari, came to see us all the time, and it was tragic what happened with Pironi. In a team like McLaren, that would never have been allowed to escalate like it did. In the end it was a disaster – all the hysteria, the Italian media. A huge talent was wasted.



Mario Andretti

1978 WORLD CHAMPION

Gilles was such a likeable guy, first of all. As a driver he would battle, and do whatever it took, but he was never one to moan about other drivers chopping him or whatever, and I really liked that about him. He took his job very seriously, but after the race you'd always find him smiling. He was a guy you knew was going to fight you to the end – and that at the end you'd still be friends.

I remember so clearly the race we had at Monza in '78. I was on pole, and Gilles was next to me on the front row. He jumped the start – and I reacted to it, so I jumped it, too! We both knew early on we'd been penalised a minute, but still we fought the whole race like we were going for the win. I followed him until about six laps from the end. I could see he was working really hard in that Ferrari, and I was waiting for the mistake – but the mistake never came. I had my usual problem with the brakes – all season long I was having to pump the pedal at least three times because the rears always boiled the fluid – but I made my move at Ascari, just went in there at the limit, and he gave me the room that I needed. That showed he was thinking, and you really respect someone like that.

Villeneuve had a huge amount of natural ability – for me he had car control like no other. There were times when I followed him, and, trust me, I know how hard he was capable of driving! The fans adored him, of course, because he was unbelievable to watch.

What I remember most about Gilles – apart from his driving – was that there was always a smile. He had such a relaxed aura, amazing for someone as intense as he was in the car. That was inspiring to me – and what it said was, 'Here's a confident man…' He was totally confident in himself, because he knew how good he was. He knew how to maintain the limit of the car, to run right at the edge, lap after lap – ok, sometimes he'd push it over, but you have to remember that invariably he was racing against better cars. One thing's for sure – there was never an ounce left in the car when he got through with it…

Dijon 1979, and all eyes are on the battle for second between Villeneuve and René Arnoux



René Arnoux

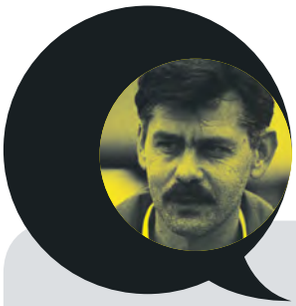
RENAULT RIVAL AND FRIEND

I am so happy to talk about Gilles because he was my friend and you know, I understood him better than a lot of other drivers. As a driver, he was an acrobat, always on the limit of his car. He asked everything from his car, and sometimes he would finish with the car in a bad condition, brakes and tyres completely used up.

At Dijon in 1979, his brakes and tyres were destroyed, my car had a problem with fuel pressure, but we pushed so hard. The way we raced was only possible between Gilles and me. Some people said it was dangerous but no, I do not agree.

In Monte Carlo in 1981 he was fantastic, only Gilles had the talent to win there with a turbo-charged engine at that time. But I think his best race was at Jarama in '81 when he led almost the whole race chased by four other cars and he never had a gap of more than a second or so. For me this was a high point because the car was finished by the end – but he beat (Jacques) Laffite by less than half a second and all five cars were within one second.

I must tell you, he was not dangerous for other drivers. For himself maybe yes, but he was never happy in a straight line – he liked oversteer, the sliding. He had to race at the maximum, not 100 per cent, but 105 per cent. At Watkins Glen one time, I asked him – the corner before the pits, I take a small lift in there, do you? He said he took a small lift also, but in final qualifying he would try it flat. So, just before the end of the session, I came to this corner and there was his car, completely destroyed in the wall. But he was ok and when I get back to the pits I asked him if this bend could be flat out? 'No René', he said, 'I tried, but it is not possible.' He'd decided it could be done, so he tried it. And that was Gilles Villeneuve, my good friend, and such a fast driver.



Gordon Murray

BRABHAM DESIGN GENIUS

Gilles never drove for me but, watching him race, I think he personified that era of the sport. I'm not sure how well he'd go down with the teams these days but in that era he was a superstar in the true sense of the word.

He just lived for racing, getting into a car and going as fast as he could. These days I think a lot of drivers, when they go past a certain earning point, they forget why they were there in the first place. I had a lot of contact with Gilles over the years and he struck me as being a really genuine, nice bloke – there were two different driver camps, those that were up their own backsides, and those like Gilles.

He was incredibly passionate about his racing. I think he was the kind of guy who would drive around a problem, as opposed to people like Senna, Prost or Lauda who would analyse a problem to the 'nth' degree and work with you to get it fixed. Remember, before some idiot invented pit stops (it was, of course, Gordon himself) the cars started with heavy fuel and some of them must have been real pigs to set up. And you didn't have a whole village of engineers behind computer screens, so drivers had to drive around problems. The cars were limited on traction, so a driver needed a lot of natural car control, and Gilles certainly had that.

He had a reputation amongst the other drivers, and other teams, for being a bit wild, bouncing off other cars. Gilles just got in and got on with it, which – if you had a driver who was constantly whingeing about a bit of understeer – seemed like a good thing. Guys like Gilles always set the car up for oversteer, always, because they just couldn't handle understeer. His engineers would have sussed that and given him a car that oversteered, whatever feedback he was giving them.

In the end, the relationship between Gilles and Pironi was not good for them, or the team. Even when we ran Senna and Prost at McLaren, I operated on the basis of an information pool. They didn't like it very much but I made them do it because the idea is to finish first and second – but if you've got a war going on between drivers you've split the team in half, and your chances of results in half, too.



Jo Ramirez

McLAREN TEAM COORDINATOR

Gilles drove me from Rio de Janeiro to Jacarepaguá one morning and I will never, ever forget that trip. It was in a hire car, nothing special, but it was unreal, the scariest trip I ever had in my life. He seemed to sense what the people in front were going to do before they did it and he always passed them at the right moment. And his car control was just amazing. I tell you, when we got to the track, I had to send my underpants to the laundry.

But I realised that maybe he was never going to be an old man, he took far too many chances, and honestly I think that's what happened at Zolder. I think he under-estimated the move of Jochen Mass and they collided. Such a shame because he was such a good guy, he loved his job, and he did it well.

I never thought he was one of the greatest drivers of all time, no, but he drove with his heart and with so much passion. If he had gone to McLaren he might have expressed himself differently, without all the media and razzmatazz that builds up around a driver in a Latin team like Ferrari used to be. What he did at Zandvoort (in 1979), after that puncture, was incredible but – as a mechanic – I was thinking to myself 'there will be nothing left of that car when it gets back to the pits'. He didn't care, he just wanted to get a new wheel on.

It was so sad at Zolder, you know, it was terrible because there was no recognition that he had gone. Ferrari withdrew and went home, yes, but on raceday there was no acknowledgement. No space on the grid where he should have been, no minute of silence, no respect for the fact that we had lost one of the biggest stars of the moment. It was very sad and I thought how cold the



LAT

sport can be sometimes. Maybe if the race had been in Italy, or England, there would have been more respect.

You have to remember, Gilles was a superstar, a world champion without a crown, if you like, and everybody liked him. He was not a playboy but he loved life, and he showed it, and Grand Prix racing needs drivers like that, even more so today when we seem to have lost all the big characters. Motor racing is not just about cars and engines, it is about people and personalities too, and the fans love a driver like Gilles. He had real charisma, you warmed to him, and so did the sport. Nowadays we have a driver like Lewis Hamilton, exciting to watch, but he has to be controlled in what he says all the time. We miss drivers like Gilles.



Alan Jones

1980 WORLD CHAMPION

Know what I remember most about Gilles? I was behind him in the early laps at Monaco in '81, me in the Williams FW07 and him in that shitbox Ferrari turbo. He was holding me up a bit, and we both knew it. Now, most guys in that situation will just sit there, and be bloody-minded about it, but Gilles was smarter than that. That old tank of his was heavy as hell, and he knew that if he stayed ahead of me he soon wasn't going to have any brakes. So he let me by into Mirabeau – by which I mean that he left me a gap about an inch wider than my car! He didn't make it easy, but it was there if I wanted it – and I absolutely knew that the gap wouldn't close once I was into it. Which wasn't true of someone like Piquet. I had trouble later in the race, and Gilles repassed me and won – and the greatest compliment I can pay him is to say that, while I wasn't exactly delirious with joy, if it had to happen, I was glad that he was the one to benefit from it. The guy just *never* gave up. A lovely bloke, and a fantastic racing driver – the best I ever raced against…



Harvey Postlethwaite

FERRARI CHIEF DESIGNER

Gilles was the most unpolitical and disarmingly honest person I ever met. He had no hang-ups about anything whatsoever. In front of the Old Man, in front of anyone, he'd say that the car was shit, that it had no downforce and he was wasting his time. 'I'll drive it,' he'd say, 'all day long. I'll spin it, I'll put it in the fence, I'll do whatever you like. I'll drive it, because that's my job, and I love doing it. I'm just telling you we're not going to be competitive…'

Just disarmingly honest, you see, and the Old Man loved him for it. He and Gilles were very close, even though they could barely converse because they hadn't a language in common apart from a bit of French – and the sort of 'Québécois' French Gilles spoke was difficult to understand, anyway!



LAT

I've never known a racing driver quite like him. Given a choice between going for the lead and destroying his tyres, or going carefully and only finishing third, Gilles would always choose the former. Jody Scheckter would go for the latter, and therefore it was Jody who won the World Championship. It was as simple as that.

Now it wasn't that Gilles *couldn't* have done it – he could have done it as well as any man – there was something within him that wouldn't *let* him do it. That's just the way he was.

I remember going out to eat with him one evening, and we were coming back to Maranello in his 308. Cold engine, eight thousand revs, typical Gilles. He would drive down the outside of a line of traffic, with no gap in it and a truck coming the other way, just to get himself warmed up! He just *knew* that he would find a gap. He had complete blind faith in his own ability and it was that, I think, that made him drive round the outside of Mass without lifting off. In terms of sheer God-given ability, I think he was on a different plane from the other drivers.



Mauro Forghieri

FERRARI DESIGN LEGEND

When Gilles was alive, maybe we underestimated Didier, because he was always getting beaten by someone in the same car – because we were judging him against Gilles, we didn't realise what a great driver he was. In all my time at Ferrari the years with Gilles and Jody were the happiest. Villeneuve had a competitiveness that I've never seen in any other driver – a *rage* to win – but the amazing thing was that he was only that way in a car; as soon as he was out of it, he was relaxed and laughing. Gilles *loved* his life. When he drove, it was with such joy, such pleasure… »»



Jacques Villeneuve

SON AND 1997 WORLD CHAMPION

I inherited two passions from my father – speed and music. There was this speed, and excitement, in my childhood and my dad played both trumpet and piano. We were always travelling, from track to track, and when I was five years old he sat me on his lap behind the wheel and we went flat out everywhere, tyres screeching, or sliding around the roads on the snow. We went snowmobiling, he took me in his helicopter. There was always speed and excitement.

He was always pushing the envelope, stepping out to the edge, and I inherited some of that. He took risks. Like my dad, I needed to feel the speed, and now I relate to the way he was because he pushed himself in everything he did.

When I went to F1 I didn't want to talk about my dad, I wanted to do my own thing, on my own terms. Now I can talk about him, I can say how much I admired and respected him for the person he was, and for the times we had when I was a child.



Professor Sid Watkins

F1'S CHIEF DOCTOR

I was very fond of Villeneuve – a good, honest, bloke, as well as a genius of a driver. On one occasion, at Monaco in 1980, we were out on the circuit in the medical car, and the pack caught up with us at the hairpin. All the drivers gave us a wide berth – except Gilles, who seemed to use us as his apex! I started to give him a bollocking afterwards, about how he'd missed us by an inch or so, and he simply couldn't understand what I was talking about. 'That's the whole point,' he said. 'I missed you!' And then I realised that, to him, an inch was like a yard to anyone else. He was that precise.

When I first met him, I remember he said, 'I hope I'll never need you'. I was really very upset at Zolder – it was obvious immediately that there was nothing that I could do for him.



Jochen Mass

MARCH F1 DRIVER, 1982

The first we knew of Gilles was when he came to drive a third car for McLaren at Silverstone in '77 and he surprised everyone with his speed in the M23. For me especially, and for James (Hunt), we could see that this was the next generation of drivers.

He fitted in very well at Ferrari but it was a pity they overdid it by putting Pironi up against him. This brought things to the boil, because Pironi was very quick and equally reckless, more so than Gilles in some ways.

What happened at Imola in '82 (when Pironi took the lead from Villeneuve on the final lap) was bad, both morally and psychologically for Gilles. There was anger and frustration after that and you don't need that at the racetrack where you need a certain tranquility in your mind. This put a lot of strain on Gilles and in my view, when he came to Zolder, he was totally frustrated, still angry, and in the wrong frame of mind for a driver. It was all terribly, terribly unnecessary.

In the practice I was driving slowly back to the pits with a blistered tyre and, going over the crest, I saw him coming behind me, a reasonable distance away, and normally I would have expected him to back off. I never thought he would pass me where he did, it was dirty off the line on the right where he passed, and maybe he thought I would move left. You can think, 'maybe I should have waved him to the left', but you cannot go over and over this for ever.

It was a cataclysmic event, of course, but, you know, a whole lot of circumstances came together at that moment. Of course people talk about it, and I don't complain about that, but sometimes, in moments like this, there is a lot of bad luck.

I spent a lot of time with Jody Scheckter and Gilles, and he was always so relaxed, so open, and you could talk to him about anything. He had this sort of Canadian aura about him, he was fun, and intelligent.

Sometimes, like at Zandvoort (in 1979), he was stupid and ridiculous but the fans loved the way he raced, and that's just the way he was. Motor racing needs drivers like this, especially today. You have Lewis, he's a real charger who sometimes makes mistakes, but it doesn't matter, it brings excitement. Like Gilles, these guys are racers. »»





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LAT, Sutton & Harmeyer



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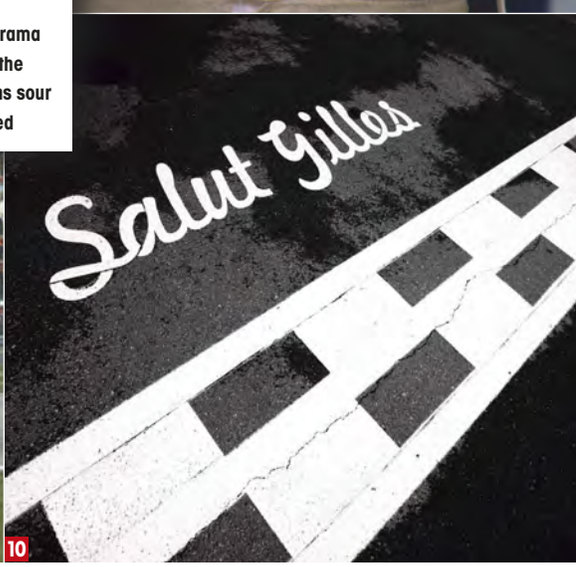
[1] Sensational McLaren debut at Silverstone in 1977 turned heads [2] Gilles's brio in the '77 British GP earned him 'Driver of the Day' honours [3] Ferrari swooped to offer Villeneuve a drive for 1978 [4] Chemistry was better with Scheckter as Ferrari team-mate [5] Miraculous escape from head-on shunt in 1980 Italian GP after a tyre failure [6] Three-wheeled antics at Zandvoort in '79 polarised opinion [7] Relaxed and happy out of the car, utterly focused in it [8] Tenacious, masterful drive to win at Jarama in 1981 [9] Imola '82, and the relationship with Pironi turns sour [10] Still fondly remembered



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LAT



Sutton



Eddie Cheever

LIGIER F1 DRIVER, 1982

Think of the circumstances that day. Gilles was a fraction off Pironi at the time – and this was right after their falling out at Imola. Last qualifying run… good lap, probably, a hundred revs more in the straight… through the chicane and up the hill… Mass is in the way… is he going to go left or right?… Gilles commits himself to the right… Mass also goes right to try and give him room… You know how long that takes? It's a snap of your fingers…



John Watson

McLAREN F1 DRIVER, 1982

Gilles was a huge natural talent. But the talent was misdirected. In some ways Ferrari was the ideal team for him, but it was also the worst possible place to be because Ferrari didn't understand how to get the best out of Gilles. Had he gone to a British team, his talent could have been channelled in a more efficient and effective way. Winning championships is *not* all about being a 'hot rod', it's as much about using your intelligence.

At Dijon in 1979 his driving was irresponsible. He was going beyond what was acceptable and maybe the GPDA should have been more critical of him banging wheels with René Arnoux. And again at Zandvoort, with three wheels on the car after a puncture, he received adulation for the spirit of what he did with bits falling off the car. But he had no regard for his fellow drivers, for what might have happened on that lap with the



Derek Warwick

TOLEMAN F1 DRIVER, 1982

I've always been a little bit confused by the mystique surrounding Gilles. Sure he was very fast, he was a nice guy, very passionate, but he could also be reckless and that stirs the loins of journalists and photographers, even some fellow drivers.

The journalists have put him up there among the world's greats and I'm not sure he was at that level, never a multiple World Champion like the true greats. If he'd been driving in today's world he'd have been disqualified from many races. At Zandvoort, when he brought the car back on three wheels, everyone said it was wonderful whereas I thought it was just bloody dangerous. I raced with him, never *against* him, because he was in a Ferrari, and I was in the 'Flying Pig' (the Toleman TG181), but I was fortunate to be in F1 with him because he was someone special.

At Zolder I was the first car on the scene, the first to pull him out of the catch fencing, and when I ran to his car I was shocked and bewildered that he wasn't there, he was 150 yards up the track and his helmet had come off. I've read that he always wanted to die in a racing car, and – if you analyse Gilles – that was the way he drove, even the way he flew his helicopter. He created that aura, that image, which in a way was a pleasure because he didn't seem to have a care in the world.



LAT



Patrick Tambay

REPLACED VILLENEUVE AT FERRARI

I love to talk about Gilles, he was a great guy. Gilles drove a racing car like he behaved in the rest of his life – he was a really outgoing guy, open to life, to people, to the world, and it showed in his driving style. He was never calculating in his approach.

I can recall the emotion of going to Ferrari after the accident, to drive his number 27, more than any other part of my life. It was such an emotional situation, personally and professionally, for me and for the team. Ferrari was in a very deep trough, you cannot imagine how bad it was, but the team got on with the job with a lot of respect for Gilles and also respect for me although I was not of his calibre.

It is emotional even now for me. I was close to him, and after he died, even though he was not there physically any more, he was there intellectually, psychologically and even today his presence is nearby, you know. He is still around. It's strange because I turned down my first chance with Ferrari, went to McLaren in 1978 instead, and Gilles went to Ferrari when he was supposed to have got the McLaren drive. That's how close the connections were in our careers, somehow they were intertwined in a strange way. I cherish my happy times with Gilles – he was a great man, and it has been nice for me to talk about him, to remember him in this way.



Niki Lauda

THREE-TIME WORLD CHAMPION

Recorded on Sunday morning at Zolder, 1982

Gilles was a perfect racing driver, I think. He had the best talent of all of us. In any car he was quick. He didn't drive for points, but to win races. I liked him even more than I admired him. He was the best – and the fastest – racing driver in the world.

And speaking today…

Ah, Gilles… I was at Zolder, of course, the weekend he had the accident. On the Thursday evening I was in my hotel room – it was completely dark, and I heard a helicopter. I looked out of my window – and there was a helicopter landing in the grounds! There were lights on, but still it was difficult to find the hotel – difficult to see! Next day I said to him, 'What the hell were you doing?' He said, 'Oh, I left Nice too late – and it got dark…' I told him you're not allowed to fly during the night, and he said, 'Yes, I know…'

Then we started practice, and Gilles went out in front of me – and spun like crazy on the second lap! After the session I said, 'Why are you so crazy – going so quick when the circuit is dirty?' He said, 'Niki, I can't do any different…'

I really liked Gilles – he was a real racer, and took chances like you can't believe. I was a big fan. He had *huge* talent – I liked him for his driving, his helicopter flying, but also I really loved him as a person. He was friendly and open and very funny. We were the same type – when we spoke to each other we knew exactly what we were saying, and there was never any bullshit.

People say Gilles was too brave, but I don't agree. He was certainly the most aggressive driver of the time, but he was never unfair on the track – you could absolutely trust him never to put you in danger. I don't think he was too brave: he just raced the way he raced, and I admired him for that. At the time of his death, Gilles was absolutely *the* guy in F1 – he had the best talent of all of us, no question. Unbelievable. A lovely, lovely guy.

car falling apart around him. I think he needed a better sense of balance on that occasion.

To me, Gilles was a hyperactive child, and Ferrari allowed him to drive in a manner which was probably a throwback to the 1950s. They could have done more to help him harness the raw talent. Gilles allowed himself to be used by Ferrari, they played driver against driver, and old man Ferrari didn't give a damn for drivers.

Would he have been better off at McLaren? Well, you can mull over that into your old age, but in 1979 the Ferrari was arguably a better car than, say, the McLaren M28. But the fact is that Gilles drove with a flair and a passion that was not channelled constructively and when he came up against a clever team-mate like Pironi, who was sometimes faster, he found it hard to cope with. And then, after the row with Pironi at Imola, I have never seen a driver *so* bitter, *so* angry, and that led to him taking risks over which he had no control at Zolder. Gilles made a commitment, took a risk, which was influenced by the feud with Pironi and which he could not control. And that's a dangerous position for a racing driver to put himself in. But that's what he did all his life in a racing car, he believed he could get away with anything.

Gilles loved to throw the dice, that was the buzz. His road driving was dangerous and selfish, and he took unacceptable risks flying his helicopter. A great many people are attracted to rebels or mavericks, and that explains some of the hero worship that still exists today. Gilles was a loose cannon at a time when F1 was starting to show signs of political correctness. He was outside the box, and I believe a team like Williams, or McLaren, would have contained his wild side, disciplined the raw talent more effectively, and enabled him to win a World Championship.



Denis Jenkinson

MOTOR SPORT'S CONTINENTAL CORRESPONDENT

The whole racing world must have been sad at the death of Gilles Villeneuve, especially those who admired him as an individual as well as a racing driver. He brought a breath of fresh air into F1, not only by his driving but by his simple philosophy. No long-winded psychological explanations of what he did and why. He just loved racing and had 'the will to win' that was in the same class as Fangio, Moss and Jim Clark. They used to do the impossible with a racing car and so did Villeneuve.

Those of us who watched him race from the track-side will remember him more for the races he didn't win than those he did, when he battled



Paul-Henri Cahier

against impossible odds. To my mind Alan Jones paid him the greatest compliment of anyone, when he said to a group of us chatting after dinner, "Jeez, that guy just won't give up".

To us, who had seen him walk away, unmoved, from some monumental prangs caused by tyre failures or mechanical breakages he seemed to be indestructible. But Jim Clark always seemed indestructible, and so did Mike Hailwood. We live in a wonderful world but at times it can be very cruel. Perhaps it is so to ensure that those of us who are left do not get too complacent. Ⓜ



Marc Sproule

TRANS-ATLANTIC ROOTS

Raw, youthful Gilles Villeneuve set sail in North America's single-seater shallows. It was a tough voyage that would lead him directly to the shores of F1

BY GORDON KIRBY

Back in 1973, Gilles Villeneuve was a young snowmobile champion in his native Quebec unknown to most motor racing people even in la Belle Province, let alone the rest of the world. Gilles used some of his snowmobiling prize money to go to the Jim Russell Racing School at Mt Tremblant, site of the 1968 and '70 Canadian Grands Prix, and bought a Magnum Formula Ford that he ran in a handful of races. That winter he appeared on the doorstep of Kris Harrison's little Ecurie Canada shop in Montréal and asked Harrison to run him in the next year's Canadian Formula Atlantic championship.

Harrison himself had dreamed of becoming a racing driver and competed in eight Can-Am races in 1969 with a McLaren-Chevy. The next year he ran a handful of Trans-Am races but discovered he had neither the talent, money nor organisation to race successfully, and decided to concentrate purely on setting up his own team.

Harrison's small shop and team were struggling to survive and he was considering quitting the sport when Villeneuve walked into the shop. "Gilles came in and introduced himself," Harrison recalls. "I had no idea who he was. He said, 'I want to drive your race cars.' His English wasn't very good, but he was very clear in what he said and I was captured by the fact that he was so cocky and self-assured.

"I asked him if he had any references or anybody I could talk to about him. He said, 'Call Jacques Couture. He'll tell you what I can do.' Jacques ran the Jim Russell Driving School at St Jovite and I knew him, so I said I would call him and Gilles left. We agreed that he would come back in a couple of days and we would talk it over. Just thinking back on it, I remember saying to myself that was kind of an amusing conversation. Again, his confidence and self-belief stood out like a beacon.

"So I called Jacques Couture and asked him if he knew this guy Gilles Villeneuve. He said, 'Oh yeah!' I said, 'Should I give him a ▶▶▶



LAT

After a rocky start Villeneuve made Atlantic his own, winning the 1976 and 1977 titles


Player's
69



chance?' And Jacques said, 'He's extraordinary.' Those were his words. I liked and trusted Jacques and I believed he wouldn't deceive me. As you know, there are all manner of people out there with the same kind of mindset that Gilles was projecting but without the skills.

"When Gilles came back a few days later I said that I had talked with Jacques and we should do this thing. I think I told him it was going to cost him $50,000. I said I don't have the money to do it without you paying me. He never said a word. He just said, 'I'll pay you the money.' And we shook hands. For me, we had just hired our first driver and it was just as casual as the way I'm telling you."

Villeneuve drove home to Berthierville and told his wife JoAnn that they were selling their home to pay for his first season in Formula Atlantic. "In his mind it probably wasn't casual at all," Harrison adds. "He didn't tell me, but he went home and sold his home and moved his family into a motorhome. A little bit later he showed up with a cheque. We never had a contract or signed any letters. He just handed me a cheque for $50,000."

Harrison was able to convince Schweppes to provide Ecurie Canada with a small amount of sponsorship for the 1974 season but the relationship started disastrously when Villeneuve destroyed both of the team's shiny new March 74Bs in his first test session. "We went to Mt Tremblant; it was the first time he had sat in that kind of a race car and within a couple of hours he wrote both cars off. He just totalled them. There was nothing left. The first race as I recall was a month away out in Vancouver and we had no cars. But Robin Herd and Max Mosley at March were really good. They trusted me. I had insured the cars with Lloyd's of London which was very fortunate. They took a long time but they eventually paid March Engineering. So we pulled it together and went racing."

But at Mosport in the middle of the season Gilles crashed and broke his leg. He missed three races and finished a distant 16th in the championship. "Gilles and I fought constantly," Harrison says. "I couldn't understand how he could be so one-sided. He wouldn't consider any of the financial problems or anything else. He would just say, 'Give me the car and let's go. I'll do my job.'

"In those days I was pretty young so I didn't understand his mindset. I had put everything I had on the line and I only saw how much pressure he put on me and the team. We weren't very good at being able to provide the equipment



In an era when riding the kerbs isn't the norm, Gilles has modified his splitter so he can do just that…

LAT



Marc Sproule



L to R: sideways to '77 title; Quebecois *fleur de lys* tell-tale of sponsor woes in '76...; 69 was his number long before 27

for that much talent. In car racing the last tenths of a second are the difference and the most difficult. If it took you $10,000 to get to third on the grid it took another $100,000 to get you to first place and none of the people we had assembled or our financial partners were in that league. They were not prepared for that kind of pressure.

"At the end of the year Gilles said, 'To heck with you guys. I'm going to run my own race car.' He bought a car from March and ran it on his own with sponsorship from Skiroule, a snowmobile manufacturer."

Driving his own car Gilles scored his first Atlantic win in the middle of the '75 season in pouring rain at a remote airfield circuit near Gimli, Manitoba. He also finished second to Elliott Forbes-Robinson at Mt Tremblant and was fifth in the championship behind Bill Brack, Bertil Roos, Tom Klausler and Forbes-Robinson. "He found running his own team just as tough as I did and the following year he wanted to come back with us," Harrison says. "I liked the guy but there was so much tension on every issue. I was fighting for financial survival and he was fighting to win races and not really understanding what issues I was facing. But he asked me if we could do it again and he brought Skiroule as a sponsor."

Harrison decided he needed an experienced pro to help run Villeneuve and hired former March F1 and F2 team manager Ray Wardell for the job. Wardell and Bill Stone were March's first two employees. They built the March 693 F3 car that Ronnie Peterson drove, Wardell worked on the first two March 701 F1 cars, then became March's F1 and F2 team manager. He also managed Chris Amon's Can-Am effort in the March 707 and won the European F2 championship in 1973 running Jean-Pierre Jarier. In 1975 Wardell came to Trois-Rivières to run Patrick Depailler in a second Ecurie Canada March entry, and after the race Ray spent a few days with Harrison at the latter's family home in the Laurentian Mountains.

"It had become very apparent that there was huge potential with Gilles, but it was very, very raw at the time," Wardell remarks. "Gilles had tremendous potential. I wouldn't say I thought that he was going to be another Peterson or whatever. Having worked with a lot of young drivers I didn't try to compare him at that stage with any of the others. But there was just something about him, a real determination and a very natural ability that was exciting." »»



"It was apparent that there was huge potential with Gilles, but it was very raw"

Harrison took a big step forward for 1976 by making a deal with Goodyear to become the company's Canadian racing tyre distributor. With Wardell on board and the Goodyear deal in place Harrison decided to move Ecurie Canada to Toronto.

"We rented a really nice shop," Harrison says. "The Goodyear distributorship gave us a boost because it was exclusive for all of Canada so we supplied and serviced everything from stock cars to the Formula 1 cars when they came to Canada for the Canadian GP. So we had some income from car racing."

Harrison stayed away from the races in 1976 and 1977. "Ray used the same people I was using but he knew how to do it," Harrison recalls. "I really liked Ray. He was much easier to get along with than Villeneuve was. Ray took the team off to the first race and Gilles won and just kept on winning. He did just fantastically well. Ray Wardell and Villeneuve were just perfect together. It was a match made in heaven."



Not always easy to get on with, Gilles needed the right people around him

Marc Sproule

Gilles proved to be completely irresistible in 1976, winning nine out of 10 races he started and taking both the Canadian and IMSA Atlantic championships. "We went off to Atlanta for the first race and in the first day's qualifying he was getting quicker and quicker and doing very nicely," Wardell recalls. "I was watching from the pitroad waiting for the car to appear from under the bridge at the top of the hill. And a cloud of dust went up and then there was a bit of green. He had tried to take the turn under the bridge flat and gone off big-time and absolutely destroyed the car. Fortunately we had two cars but we were a bit short on money and I didn't want to phone Kris and tell him we've just totalled one of the cars already.

"But Gilles was unscratched and unfazed about the whole thing. He just said, 'I was sure it was going to be flat, but it wasn't.' But he still managed to win the race in the back-up car. When we left there I thought, if he's going to do this at every race we're not going to finish the season. But he certainly knew how to pull it out of the bag. What a talent! He had this incredible ability to find the limit by spinning or doing something to take the car over the limit and 99 per cent of the time he got away with it.

"When it came to qualifying Gilles was so impressive. At St Jovite, right at the end of qualifying Gilles just knocked a second and a half off his time and none of us could believe it. He had an incredible ability to do that, and it just made us in the team feel very special. It was just a pleasure."

At the Trois-Rivières street circuit in September of '76 Gilles not only added another win but also defeated a brace of F1 drivers led by Alan Jones and soon-to-be world champion James Hunt. Both were mightily impressed with Villeneuve's driving, and when Hunt got home he raved about Gilles to McLaren bosses Teddy Mayer and Tyler Alexander, and also to sponsor Marlboro.

> "When Hunt got home he raved about Gilles to Teddy Mayer and Tyler Alexander"

"The organisers at Three Rivers always paid me to bring someone over from Europe," Harrison relates. "I brought Patrick Depailler over one year and then I brought Hunt over in '76. We had four cars for Villeneuve and Hunt. I had never met anybody quite like James. He was quite a character and it was really interesting and exciting to have a world champion-calibre guy driving one of our cars. But Hunt couldn't outqualify Villeneuve and he really tried. We had three-lap qualifying tyres and we just gave him everything that we could like a professional team because Ray was running it. But he couldn't outrun Villeneuve."

Gilles charged away to win the race comfortably while Alan Jones drove one of Fred Opert's Chevrons and beat Hunt to second with Vittorio Brambilla finishing fourth in a Shierson March, Bobby Rahal taking fifth place and Patrick Tambay sixth in another Opert Chevron. "Hunt never said anything to me until the end of the weekend," Harrison recalls. "Then he said, 'this guy is really good. I've never seen anything quite like this guy and I'm going to tell Teddy Mayer about him.' The next thing that happened was Teddy Mayer called our shop and asked if Villeneuve would like to drive in the British Grand Prix. Winning a bunch of Atlantic races wasn't important. What was important was that race against James Hunt. He could have said I'm not going to even talk about this guy, but that wasn't Hunt's makeup and that's significant. That shows the character of a person."

Hunt's enthusiasm convinced Mayer and Alexander to give Villeneuve a try, and after a fast, spin-filled test he made his F1 debut in the 1977 British GP at Silverstone (see p52). After winning the Atlantic championship a second time Gilles signed in September '77 with Ferrari. Thus began a legend.

"The nice thing about Gilles was he didn't pretend that he knew anything," Wardell adds. "He let you do it. He gave me feedback on what he thought was going on. He didn't tell me why he thought it was going on. He just told me what the car was actually doing and would accept my opinion about what we were going to do. It just worked so well.

"From that point of view he was probably one of the easiest guys I ever worked with. He didn't pretend he knew what changes we should do next. I would draw a map of the circuit and he would mark off around the map what was happening with the car. It was a really nice routine we got into after every session, and it worked very, very well."

Wardell later formed Pi Research with Nigel Bennett and Tony Purnell. They subsequently sold the company and Wardell retired in 1996. Harrison went through a variety of businesses and today owns a small stable of horses he trains for endurance racing.

"Anywhere around Gilles there was always contention and fire going off all over the place," Harrison observes. "He pushed everybody and I had to get used to that because I was pretty young and it was a new thing for me. It was a great learning experience and I enjoy looking back at it and thinking, 'That was something.' Gilles was absolutely on fire and it was a privilege to experience that. It was just a unique moment in time and I'm so glad to have been a part of it."

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Known as WB, Bill Boddy was the editor of *Motor Sport* for 55 years from 1936 to 1991 and continued to write for the magazine until the latter half of 2011 when he sadly passed away. Denis Jenkinson, or 'Jenks' as he was affectionately known in these pages and beyond, was our Continental Correspondent for over 40 years.

Motor Sport magazine is pleased to offer for the first time the new DVD from Motorfilms, 'Jenks & The Bod – The odd couple of motor sport'. Documenting a collection of rare interviews with Jenks and the Bod, this DVD offers a unique glimpse into the personalities and lives of two motor sport legends.

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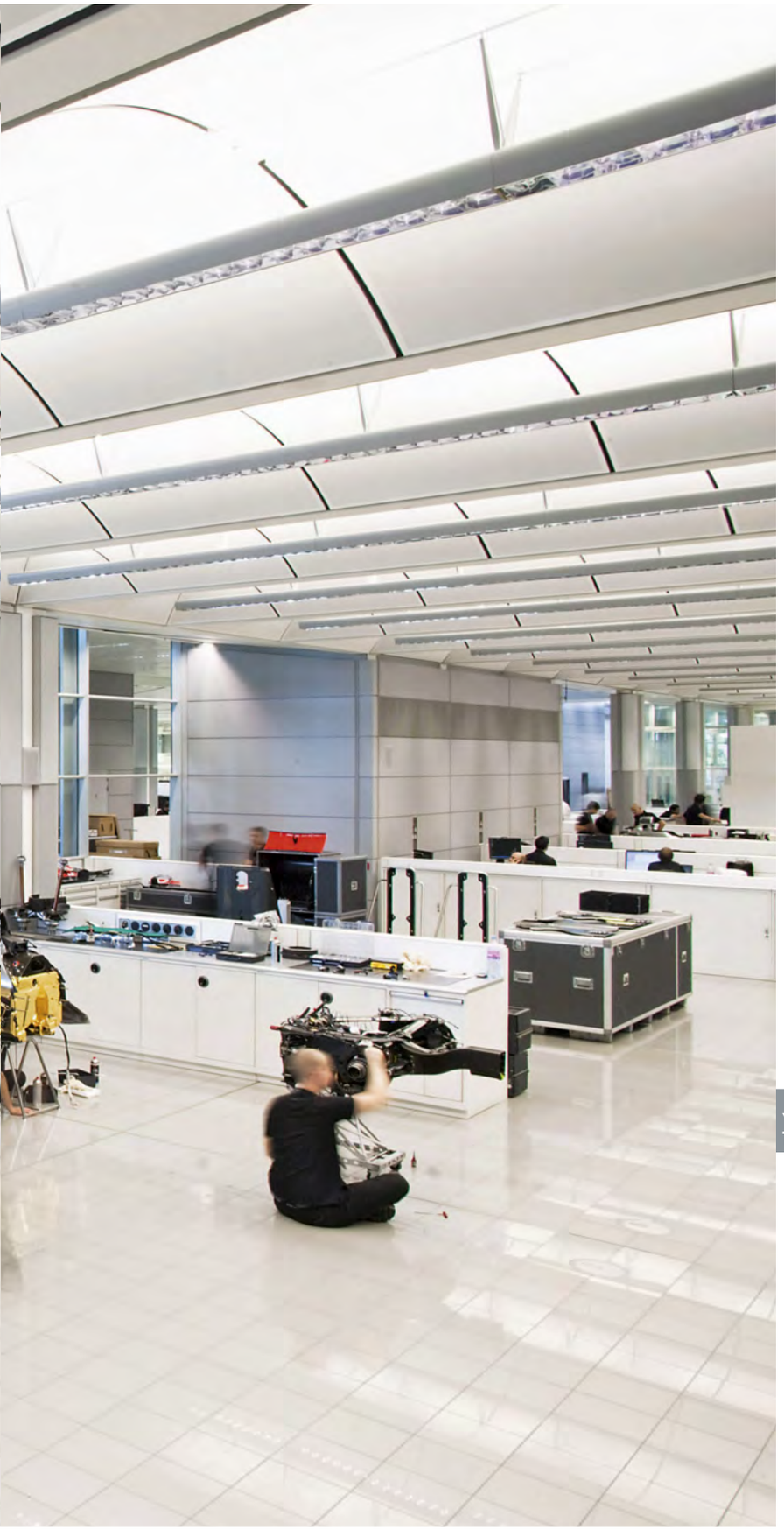
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BEHIND THE SHUTTERS

A new book of stunning photography, *McLaren: The Art of Racing*, takes us deeper behind the scenes of a Grand Prix team than we ever usually see. Here, we present a selection of those images, courtesy of Prestel Publishing

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DARREN HEATH
CAPTIONS BY MAURICE HAMILTON

YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

With a backdrop of previously successful F1 cars on the boulevard on the other side of the glazed screen, the team prepares two cars for the next race. The hydraulic frame across the front of the chassis on the left is ensuring that more than 20 sensors on the suspension are working as they should under load; the Mobil 1 rig to the right of the car indicates a fuel system test is being carried out. The second chassis in the adjoining bay is at an earlier stage of preparation, the gearbox being completed separately on the extreme right.



INFORMATION IS POWER

Each time a driver stops in his garage during practice, he is fed information, either through the timing screen (part of the unit placed in front of a smiley Jenson Button) or with the help of a trace showing the driver's laps translated into throttle, brake and steering graphs.



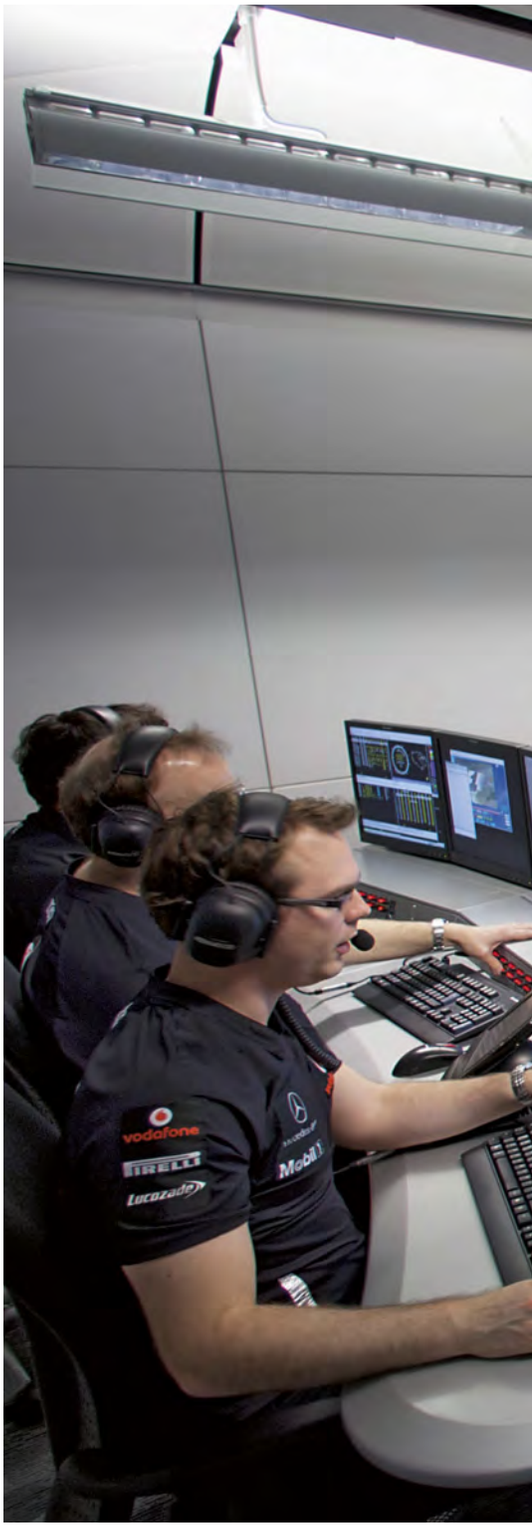
PULLING THEIR WEIGHT

Drivers are such an integral part of the car that their personal weight is included in the overall permitted 640kg; if it falls below it will be excluded. Continual checking of a driver's weight throughout the weekend is vital for this reason, and also for the monitoring of his hydration levels. In a hot race, a driver can lose up to 3kg in fluid, causing a potential drop in performance.



TRACING THE TRUTH

Jenson Button studies traces during the first practice for the 2011 Chinese Grand Prix. The overlay of both drivers' throttle, brake and steering inputs from laps completed allows useful comparisons between where one driver is finding a performance improvement over the other when running the same type of tyre.





LONG-DISTANCE SUPPORT

Thousands of miles from the action, a team of race strategists, systems engineers and engine analysts sit quietly in Mission Control, a room in MTC dedicated to giving measured and informed support during a Grand Prix. Supplied with every conceivable piece of information generated during frenzied activity at the racetrack, the technicians use the calm of Mission Control to deal with various scenarios as the race evolves and offer immediate solutions or changes to strategy. They will be ready to deal with a car having to start from the pit lane or the new circumstances created by a first-lap accident or the deployment of the Safety Car. Not only will the team in Woking be working out the best strategy for Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button, they will also be advising the pit wall crew of the predicted pit stops for McLaren's closest rivals. While the race team celebrates visibly and loudly in the event of victory, their colleagues in Mission Control quietly share the success after playing a vital if unseen part.



In the pits garage the 'hands on' crew watch race monitors until a car heads into the pit lane, when (below) they sprint into action.




Mobil 1
vodafone

ME AND MY MATES

Everyone at Vodafone McLaren Mercedes, from drivers to mechanics, goes out of their way to say this is all about the team. They win together and they lose together. Since there can be only one winner from the 24 starters each race weekend, it is a poignant moment if a McLaren crosses the line first. Here is the raison d'etre for the hundreds of hours of effort and thought. Victory brings a sudden rush from the garage and a clamber onto the pit wall to savour the chequered flag moment. It is a feeling shared by everyone on the team, from Jenson's girlfriend, Jessica Michibata, and his father John to the mechanics reaching out to be part of this intensely personal moment with their driver.





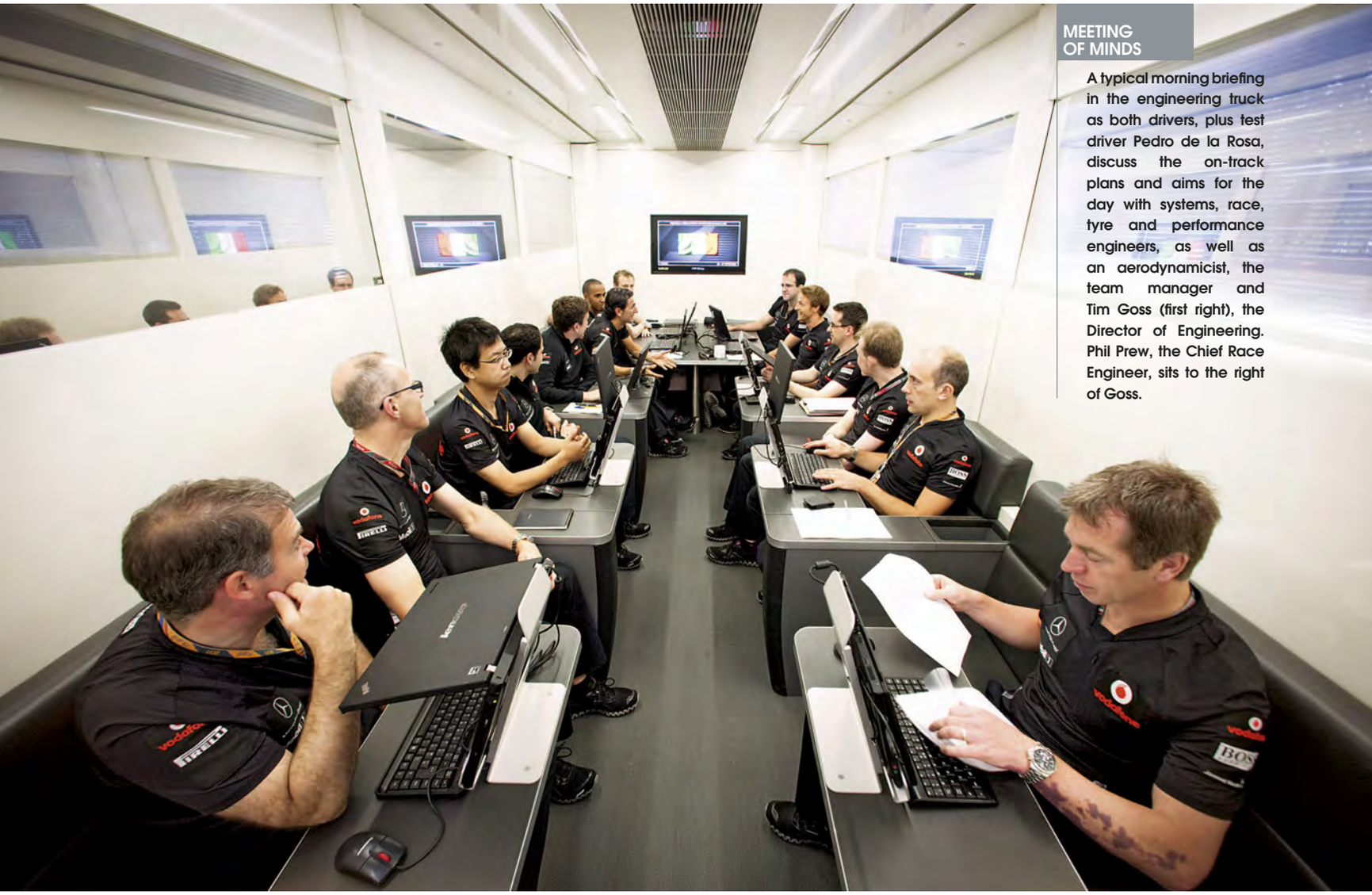
Lewis Hamilton between runs



McLaren Brand Centre at Monaco



Surgical conditions in paint booth



MEETING OF MINDS

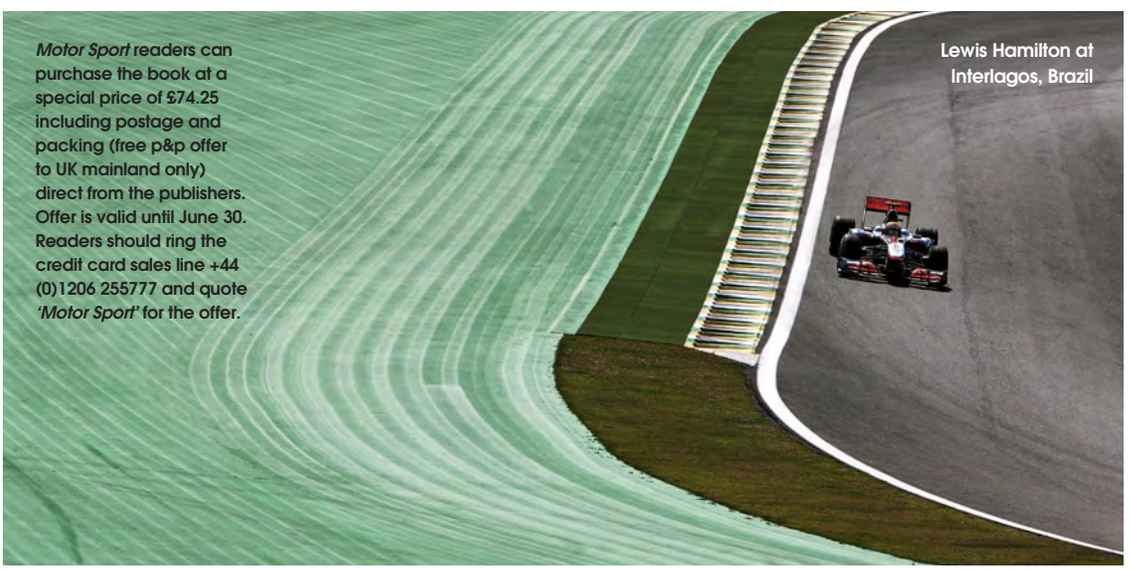
A typical morning briefing in the engineering truck as both drivers, plus test driver Pedro de la Rosa, discuss the on-track plans and aims for the day with systems, race, tyre and performance engineers, as well as an aerodynamicist, the team manager and Tim Goss (first right), the Director of Engineering. Phil Prew, the Chief Race Engineer, sits to the right of Goss.



McLAREN
THE ART OF RACING

by Darren Heath and Maurice Hamilton
is published by Prestel on Monday May 7, price £99 in hardcover. Large format, 26 x 37.5cm, 304 pages.
ISBN 978-3-7913-5195-7

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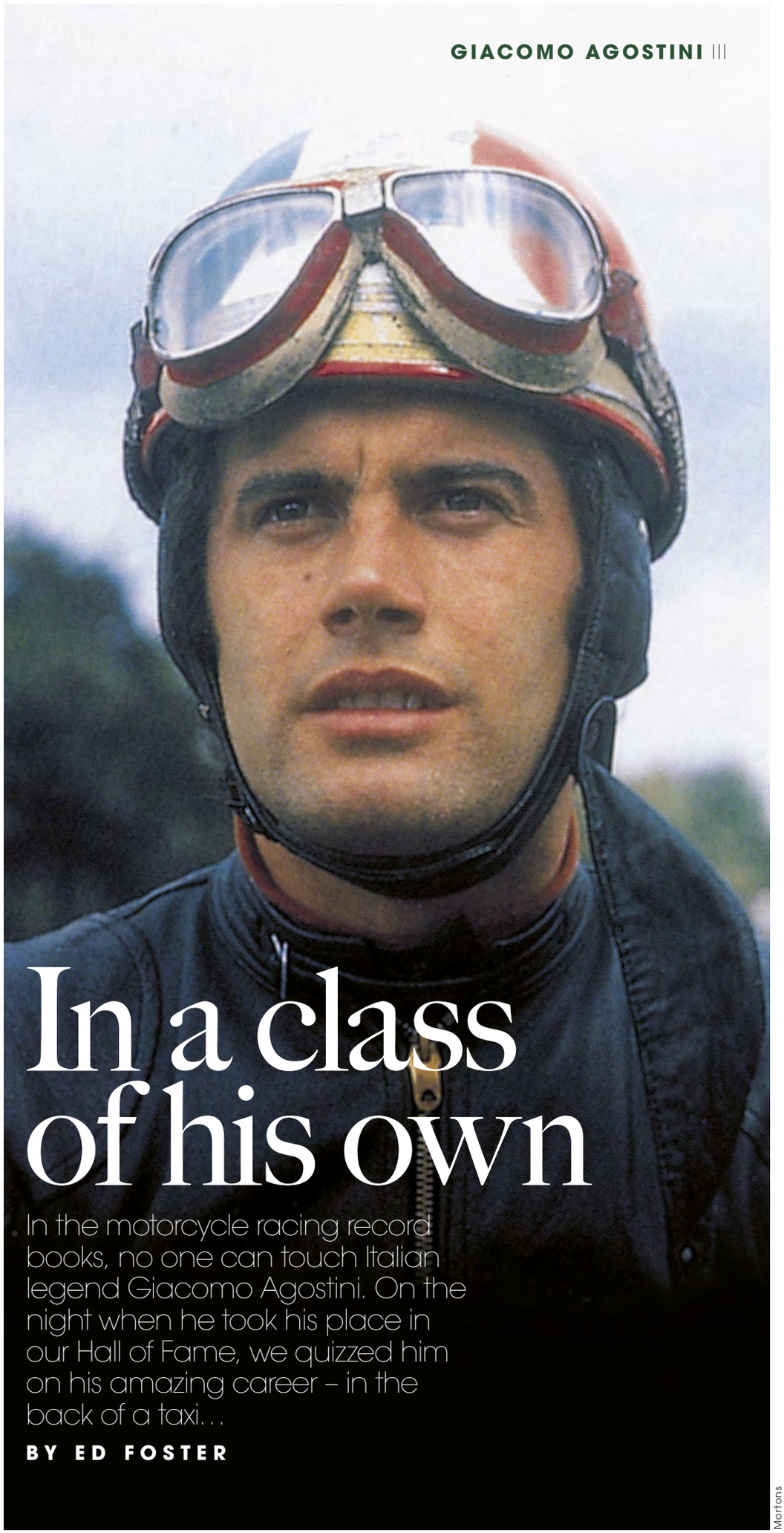


Lewis Hamilton at Interlagos, Brazil



'Ago' at his supreme best, on an MV on the Isle of Man. He won 10 TTs, and reckons each one was like winning a world championship

Mortons



In a class of his own

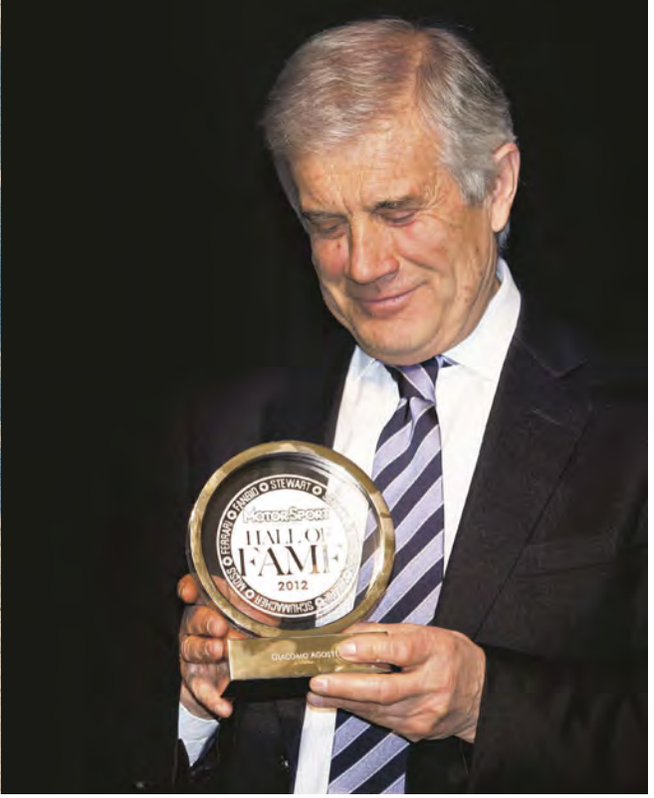
In the motorcycle racing record books, no one can touch Italian legend Giacomo Agostini. On the night when he took his place in our Hall of Fame, we quizzed him on his amazing career – in the back of a taxi…

BY ED FOSTER

There are hundreds of people filing out of luggage reclaim at Heathrow Terminal 5. They're coming from two different doors, 20 metres apart, and I wonder whether I'll spot Giacomo Agostini among the crowd.

I needn't have worried. The Italian good looks, the tan, the grey hair swept to the side and that smile – he's unmissable. The 15-time motorcycle World Champion is here for a mere 16 hours to become a member of the *Motor Sport* Hall of Fame and I am under strict instructions to get him to the Roundhouse in time for the awards. To grab some time with him, we're sharing a taxi back into London. "We are running late?" he asks in his accented English as we head off to find our transport. Too modest to pull the fame card, Ago was 'bumped' from his overbooked original flight – the one that would have allowed us time to talk, and not in a taxi – and we're now pushed for time.

He needs to jet off in the morning to head back to his home in the pretty town of Bergamo in Italy – where he still regularly rides his MV Agusta – in order to get to Jerez. He may have retired, but the most successful rider in motorcycle racing history is a busy man.

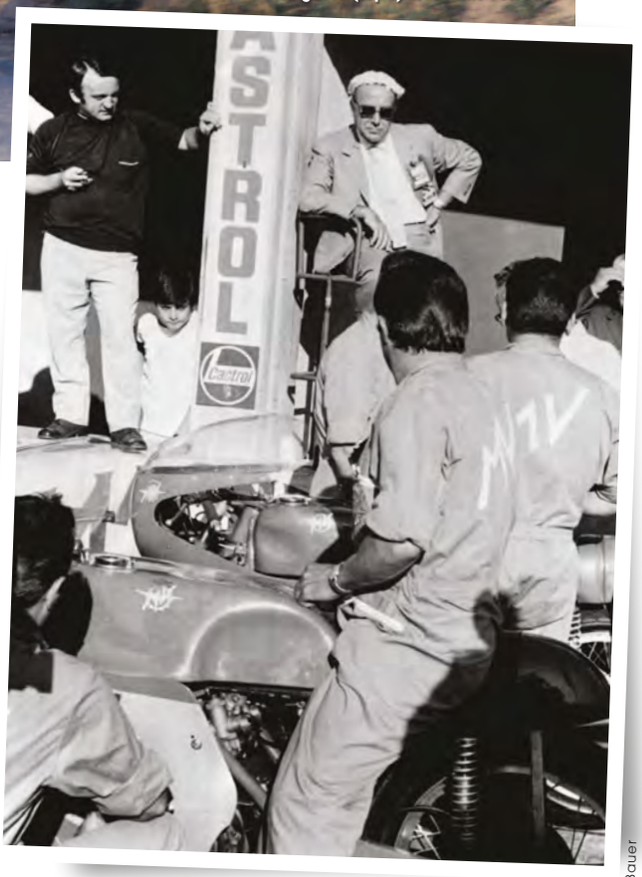


Mortons



Agostini called the IoM TT course "the best in the world" – but finally refused to race there. Below, Count Agusta (top r) was "like Ferrari"

Mortons



Bauer

Count Agusta

(Terminal 5 to the M4)

The taxi driver is oblivious to who he has sitting behind him, which is probably for the best. I'm too panicked about the time to let the enormity of sharing a taxi with Ago dawn on me, and we launch straight into his thoughts on MV founder Count Domenico Agusta, for whom he won an astonishing 110 World Championship races in the 1960s and '70s.

"You know," he says, looking out the window at the heavy traffic on the M25, "it was very, very difficult to work with him on a daily basis. You couldn't just talk to him; you had to ask Mr [Arturo] Magni, the team manager, for a meeting. Before I first met Count Agusta Mr Magni called me and said 'meeting Count Agusta is a huge honour, but I have an appointment for you at 4.30pm'. I waited one hour, two hours… eight o'clock soon passed, nine o'clock, and he eventually received me after 10 o'clock!

"I was with Mr Magni and we went inside this big, big room. It was very dark and Count Agusta is at the far end, surrounded by trophies from the Isle of Man and other important races. He looked at me and asked 'who are you?' After five hours of waiting he asked that!

'I am Agostini', I replied.

'What do you want?'

I couldn't believe it. I didn't really understand what he was on about!

'I want to race your bike.'

'Are you any good?'

'Yes, try me!'

"He organised a test at Monza, but it was not really a test. Along the Tribune straight they had put chicanes in with cones. I am an Italian Champion [Ago won the 1963 Italian Championship aboard a 175cc Morini] and I am doing Monza like this? Incredible. After that we were OK, but he was like Enzo Ferrari in many ways."

Mike Hailwood

(M4 to A40)

Count Agusta gave Agostini a ride for the 1965 season and immediately he started challenging the likes of Briton Mike Hailwood, who was already a four-time World Champion. "Mike was very, very fast," Giacomo says after we dive off the M4 towards the A40, trying to avoid the traffic at Hammersmith. "He was one of the best that I ever competed against because he was always so strong. He had the ability to win on 125, 250, 350 and 500cc bikes on the same day. He had quite an aggressive style, but was always very correct. It's difficult to ride all the sizes of bike well because of the different speeds – the 125cc had maybe 50 horsepower and the 500cc maybe 120 horsepower.

"When I met Mike he already had many more years experience than me so it was very difficult to compete." Indeed, in the 1965 500cc Championship Ago couldn't better Hailwood all year and finished second on six occasions. He did win the Finnish Motorcycle Grand Prix, though – which Hailwood didn't compete in – and he had done more than enough to persuade the Count that he was worth holding on to. The following season Agostini won the 500cc Championship for the first time – a feat he would manage on another seven occasions.

Then and now

(A40 to Regents Park)

"Racing in the 1960s and 1970s was very different to now," he says. "The safety was not like it is today, especially at circuits like Spa Francorchamps, the Nürburgring, the Isle of Man or Opatija in Yugoslavia." Opatija was a super-fast seaside track that claimed the lives of many riders before being wiped from the championship calendar in 1978. "They were all so dangerous because we had fences, trees, walls… we had everything.

"Out of all the tracks the Isle of Man was the best in the world. For a rider it gives you more emotion, more… how do you say *sensazioni diverse*? Yes, different feelings. Winning an Isle of Man TT is like winning a World Championship because so much goes into it." Ago was supreme on the island, winning a total of 10 TTs. However, his memories of the road race are not all good. Many of his friends died racing on the Isle of Man, and it was Ago who eventually put up his hands in 1972 and said that the circuit was too dangerous. Plenty of his contemporaries joined him, and in 1977 the race was removed from the World Championship calendar for good.

"During the many years that I raced in the Isle of Man I won 10 times, but every year I saw another friend gone. The last one was in 1972 – Gilberto Parlotti, an Italian guy. The night before the race [on June 9] he asked me 'please Ago, can we do a lap so that you can show me how to be faster?' I knew the circuit better than him so I took him out in my car that evening. In the morning he was in the 125cc race, which started at 9.30am and at the time I was in the paddock preparing for the Senior TT. He crashed and died that morning. After that I say 'it is too many now'.



"Nowadays the bikes are so fast. People say the TT is safer, but the circuit's about the same. They still don't have any space to crash. You know, when you start a race today you're nervous, you're thinking about the win, but it's not like it was when I raced. When we were about to start we had to think about everything that they think about today, but also you had to think about the possibility of dying. Every two or three weeks you lost a friend and sometimes you did think 'well, next time it is going to be me'.

"Of course, most of the time when you see friends dying you *have* to think 'he's unlucky, and I'm sure it won't happen to me'. It's normal – it's like when you fly. If a plane crashes the day before you fly, killing 200 people, do you not fly the next day? Of course you do, because you have to think like that in order to go out and continue with life. If you didn't you would just shut the doors and stay at home."

Inevitably talk turns to the dreadful accident that took Marco Simoncelli's life in the 2011 Malaysian Grand Prix. Ago is quiet, and the only thing that breaks the silence is the driver's mobile beeping, no doubt telling him his next pick-up is waiting.

"The accident that killed Simoncelli," Ago says, "maybe in 30 years it might happen again. *Maybe* in 30 years… he was just so unlucky. The problem is that everyone is always trying to make the bikes faster and faster. But if you get onto the straight and do 200mph instead of 170mph it doesn't improve the show. It changes nothing. The show is in the corner and under braking – not on a long straight."

Rossi at Ducati

(traffic jam after leaving the A40)

By the end of Agostini's career he had notched up an incredible 122 Grand Prix wins, making him the most successful rider of all time. For a moment, though, it looked as though the record might actually be broken by a fellow Italian. Valentino Rossi has so far won 105 World Championship races, but his recent move to Ducati seems to have temporarily stemmed the flow.

"He is clearly trying to have another *vittoria*, another conquest," Ago tells me as we edge ever closer to the Roundhouse. "Of course, if it works then Valentino will become a legend. But it's not what he thinks. It's been very difficult and he didn't win a single race last year, which for him is very tough. He is used to winning every week, he's a big champion.

"A few weeks ago a journalist said that the object for Ducati and Rossi now was to finish on the podium. No. Valentino is Valentino. For someone else maybe it is OK because he has never won before, never been on the top step of the podium. I don't think he's happy finishing second or third…"

I suggest that if anyone can get Ducati back to the front it's Rossi. "Yes, the rider is important," Ago says. "I'm sure I helped MV and Yamaha to set up the bike, to understand it, and I transferred as much information as possible to the engineer. But if the factory doesn't give you a good project then you can't transform the bike. Look at Mercedes in F1, look at Ferrari and then at Red Bull. Red Bull doesn't manufacture cars, it makes drinks – and it beats Ferrari and the other big car companies! Why? Because it has one of the best engineers."

The switch to cars

(still in traffic jam after the A40)

Time is running short, the start of the Hall of Fame is fast approaching and Ago's attention will soon be on more important people than me.

John Surtees, another 2012 Hall of Fame inductee, cemented his name in history when he moved from bikes to cars and went on to win the 1964 Formula 1 World Championship. Ago made the same move, but with less success.

"John Surtees made it work, as did Mike Hailwood," Ago says about the move to four wheels. "I also tried to make the switch, but I tried very late. Too late, I think.

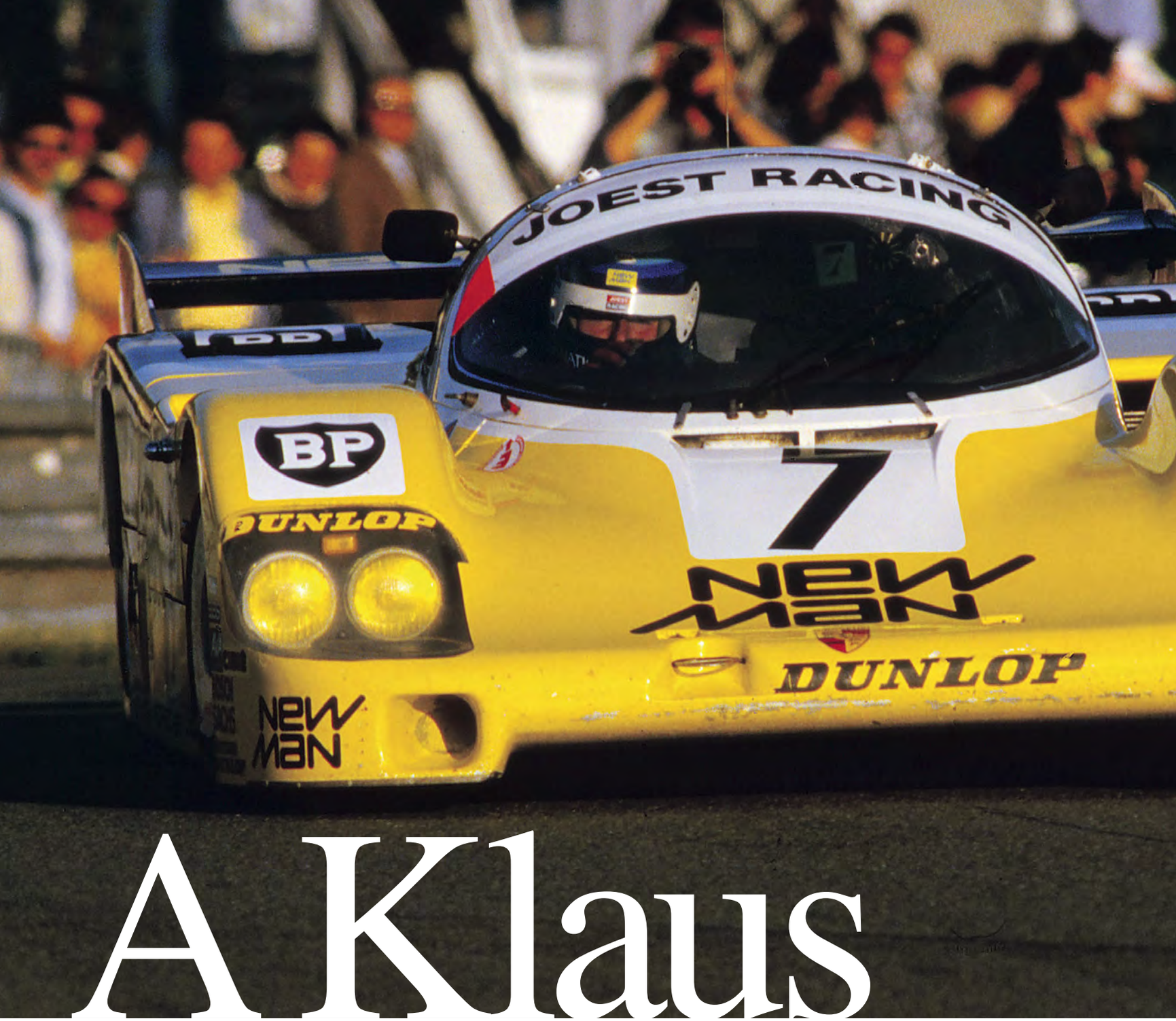
"I did some races in British Aurora Formula 1 and European Formula 2, and one day Niki Lauda said 'I don't understand why everyone expects you to win after your first season. I waited over three years before I won in Formula 1'. I think [the switch to cars] is possible, because other riders have done it. But it is important to start early, it is important to have a good car.

"Some things are the same – you need to control the engine, you need the courage, but you must also forget about some of the things you did when you were riding a bike. Then you have to learn new skills.

"One of the things is that if you really slide with a car, it's OK, you correct the wheel and go again. With a bike you crash. It makes going from cars to bikes very difficult. Schumacher tried, but he did a lot of crashing. Afterwards he understood that doing crash after crash is not so good…"

For the first time ever I'm wishing that the traffic in Camden won't clear too quickly. Of course, it does. All too soon we draw up outside the Roundhouse and it is time for Ago to make his way inside to be briefed on the plans for the evening. Apparently I was supposed to do that in the taxi, but strangely enough it slipped my mind.

It's hard to believe that Agostini is the most successful motorcycle racer of all time when you talk to him – he's that genuine and unassuming. If you ever meet Ago, or see him riding through Bergamo on a MV Brutale or F4, make sure you say hello. You won't be disappointed.



A Klaus encounter

He keeps retiring, but Klaus Ludwig just can't stop racing. *Motor Sport* has an appointment in a van with the tin-top legend – and then teams up to go racing

BY ANDREW FRANKEL

It's October at the Nürburgring and, as ever here at this time of year, everyone's talking about the weather. What's unusual is that it's not the rain, fog or snow that so often plagues the Eifel mountains in autumn that's started tongues wagging but precisely the reverse: there's not a cloud in the sky.

We're here for the ADAC Westfalen Trophy meeting, the last historic event of the year on the 'Ring's calendar. I'm in the endurance race, a two-hour, Sunday afternoon event combining 'Oldtimers' and 'Youngtimers' into one 150-car grid using both the modern Grand Prix track and the fabled Nordschleife. Youngtimers are not new cars but slick-shod racers of all sorts from the '70s, with RSR Porsche 911s at one end of the grid and steroidal Golf GTis at the other. My car is most definitely an oldtimer: a 1963 'Fintail' Mercedes-Benz 220SE saloon, prepared by none other than Mercedes-Benz itself, the first of its classic cars Mercedes has ever permitted to race.





Ludwig scored back-to-back Le Mans wins in Joest Porsche (left), before the DTM and Mercedes beckoned

Improbably at this large but determinedly grass-roots meeting, Klaus Ludwig bounces into view. That's three-time Le Mans winner, triple DTM champion, double DRM champion and FIA GT Champion Klaus Ludwig. Even more implausibly and for one race only, we are to be team-mates. You can find out how that worked out overleaf, but for now the chance to download the man known in his homeland as 'König Ludwig' and here simply 'King Klaus' is not to be missed.

Rather charmingly for its debut into the world of historic motor racing, Mercedes-Benz has brought along no trucks, transporters, motorhomes or any of the paraphernalia you might expect from such an organisation. Like almost every car in the race, the Fintail has been towed here behind a van, while the back of another van, a converted post van with a table and chairs in the back to be precise, will provide a more than adequate environment for our interview.

Indeed these back to basic surroundings rather suit our subject. Not for him the wealth to wheel route to motor sport success preferred by his mainly monied contemporaries. "When I was young I couldn't even think about racing," he now recalls. Agonisingly he grew up almost next door to the Nürburgring and lost no opportunity to visit the track as a child. His one bit of luck was that his father's best friend married the daughter of the 'Ring's racing director – which is how, after the 1957 German Grand Prix, a seven-year-old Klaus found himself sitting on the very next table to Juan Manuel Fangio, who had just won the race of his life. "I remember looking up at him and seeing this old man sitting there and he just looked tired. So tired. He wasn't giving any autographs at all. But he did one for me and I still have it."

But that was it. While the men who would become his rivals worked their way up through the usual formulae of racing, Klaus earned a living selling toasters in the family shop. "There were five of us, my mother, father, me and two others. I did no karting, no nothing while I was a kid. I sold radios and food mixers." Indeed he was 18 before he could afford any kind of car at all. It turned out to be an NSU TT. "I did a few slaloms, won them all easily and thought, 'I can do this.'"

The NSU merely lit the fire. It was too complicated and unreliable to use as a proper racing car, so he got a BMW 2002 and started proper racing on his beloved Nürburgring. "I did 12-, 24-, and 36-hour races with the BMW club of Bonn, made a bit of a name for



1



3



2

[1] Victory at 1978 German GP meet brought praise from Chapman [2] 1979 Le Mans win crowned amazing season [3] With Bobby Rahal while racing Mustang Probe in US [4] Zakspeed Capri was showcase for Klaus [5] Mustang quick but fragile



4



5

All images LAT

myself and then people started asking me to drive for them." Then a friend who worked for Ford in Cologne suggested he buy a Weslake Capri and let Klaus race it. "It was an old car, but a good one and I got noticed some more." Paying most attention was Ford itself, who duly snapped him up and sent him to race new Cologne Capris and Escorts with Zakspeed. He came third in the DRM in 1974, and second only to Hans Heyer in '75 and '76. But even now that he was fully on the radar of what was then the second-largest car company in the world, his payment comprised no more than a company car and expenses. When not racing, Klaus served in the shop.

But at least racing no longer cost Klaus any money and by 1978 he'd started his love affair with Porsches, courtesy of Georg Loos's 935. It led to one of Klaus's greatest moments. "We were at Hockenheim in the support race for the German Grand Prix. The 935 was fantastic and I won the race 45 seconds clear of the field. That evening Colin Chapman came up to me by the hotel pool and asked, 'are you the man who won in that red Porsche? Well done. Congratulations.' I can't tell you what that meant. To me, Colin was The Man."

Even so, Ludwig's career path now looked well defined and while he had briefly raced a March in F2, he was never to seriously set foot on the single-seater road to Formula 1. Instead it was the Kremer Brothers who turned Klaus into a superstar. The weapon with which he was equipped has become a motor sport legend. The Kremers' take on the Porsche 935 was so much better than the factory original that Porsche all but stopped making them thereafter. Featuring over 30 metres of tubular steel to improve rigidity, more efficient air-to-air intercoolers to replace the factory water-to-air units, better weight distribution, lighter bodywork and improved aero, Klaus and the 935 K3 were almost literally unbeatable. In the 12 rounds of the 1979 DRM championship, Klaus won 11 and came second in the 12th. He also chalked up his first Le Mans win in filthy weather conditions after the legendary reliability of the works Porsche team temporarily deserted its pair of 936 prototypes. Klaus would never be short of a drive again.

Which is not to say he would not be short of money. At the end of 1979 his old friends at Ford came knocking, this time with proper remuneration in their hands. Ludwig told the Kremers that he didn't want to go but they needed to pay him more than the 70,000DM he was then earning with them. They didn't want to pay, Ludwig left, Kremer sued and Ludwig lost, putting him financially, in his words, "back to zero".

But he was at least happy. For the next nine seasons he raced in America, a period he describes wistfully as "the best in my racing life" even if, on that side of the water he was not as successful as he'd like to have been. His chief weapon of choice, the Ford Mustang Probe was a fabulous car, "a sports car with a carbon-fibre chassis long before Jaguar" but its little 2.1-litre engine, when boosted to provide the requisite 750bhp, was fragile. "Shit, it was so quick," he muses. "We were fastest everywhere, but after half an hour or an hour, everything exploded…"

In Europe in general and France in particular the usually Porsche-powered Klaus fared somewhat better. He returned to Le Mans in 1983 and came sixth in a 956, but the following year was back on the top step driving for Joest, though the victory came thanks in no small part to the absence of a works team. But the factory turned out in force in 1985 yet Klaus, still in a private Joest 956, beat even the works 962 to take his third win in the French classic.

And then Klaus says, "We would have won again in 1986 but for Jo's crash," and the

mood in the back of the van changes completely. Jo Gartner was killed at 3am when mechanical failure pitched his 962 into the trees on the Mulsanne Straight. In the process it demolished over 100 metres of barrier which took over 2½ hours to replace. Stuck behind the safety car with no thermostat in the radiator, the water temperature in Ludwig's 956 dropped, its oil thickened, and the pump that circulated it blew, wrecking the engine. Joest's secret lay in its Goodyear tyres which had less rolling resistance than the factory Dunlops, meaning the car was able to run less boost and use less fuel. But that was not what was occupying Ludwig's mind. "Jo was a friend. I saw the accident and thought 'f**k this, I'm going home'."

Fact is, and Ludwig is not afraid to admit it, he was scared. Indeed the true scale of his achievement in winning Le Mans three times can only be seen when you learn how he hated the place. "I was frightened there. All the time. Every lap I ever did I was scared. You sat in these cars made out of folded aluminium and went down the Mulsanne at whatever they would do and you knew, you just knew that if anything went wrong, you didn't stand a chance. One year the 962 did 399km/h (248mph) down the straight, with low-drag bodywork, so no downforce. It was wandering around in the road with me sitting inside shitting my pants."



Mercedes brought 1998 GT title plus two in DTM, below



"I was frightened at Le Mans. Every lap I ever did I was scared"

But though Ludwig went, he would be neither the first nor the last driver to find it easy to stay gone. In 1988 he was back, but as a works driver in the number one 962 partnering Derek Bell and Hans Stuck as the factory made one final effort with its ageing and outdated sports car to deny Jaguar victory in France.

And what everyone remembers is that Klaus was at the wheel when it ran out of fuel, returning to the pits on the starter motor, losing more time than would separate the car from the winning Jaguar at the end. Ludwig mounts a robust defence to the oft-peddled claim that it was his fault – his case is that the 10-litre reserve simply didn't work – but regardless of who was to blame, the undeniable fact is the car recovered all the time it had lost and regained the lead from the Jaguar, when it lost six minutes – getting on for two laps – repairing an intercooler. It was that which really ended Porsche's seven-year run of winning Le Mans.

Still spooked, Ludwig turned down a works Mercedes drive at Le Mans in 1989 ("a big mistake, in that car I could have won the race with one hand on the wheel") and, as he entered his 40s, turned his attention to tin-top racing. He had already won the DTM championship the year before driving a Ford Sierra and would do it twice more in 1992 and '94 driving for Mercedes. He then spent two seasons driving for Opel before retiring from racing altogether, aged 46. But once more he was tempted back, this time by Mercedes to contest the 1998 FIA GT Championship in its CLK, even venturing back to Le Mans. The car was good enough for pole in France but retired before nightfall. Elsewhere however, it was the class of the field, providing Klaus with his last major championship at the age of 49.

But he was not quite finished. When he returned to the revived DTM in 2000 he was in his fifties yet still good enough to win twice and come third in the championship.

Since then he has raced "for fun" and often here, at the Nürburgring. He first won its 24-hour race back in 1987 driving a Sierra Cosworth with Steve Soper, did it again in a Viper in 1999 and came second as recently as 2006 in a 911. He loves this place as much as he loathes Le Mans, describing it as his home and citing only Silverstone as a circuit to rival it.

And then there's a knock on the door of the van. Our 10-minute chat has turned into a two-hour meander down memory lane and now we must prepare for our race. Klaus is 62 and wears his years well. He springs out of the van and walks towards the pits, the locals at this club meeting visibly stunned to see their hero in their midst. He is as relaxed as I am nervous. Then again, he isn't about to share a car with 'King' Klaus Ludwig. Ⓜ



ON TRACK

STATELY AS A GALLEON

To highlight its Classic department, Mercedes decided to go racing – slowly. In a vast Fintail...

THE IDEA WAS SIMPLE AND came from the mind of Michael Bock, head of Mercedes-Benz's Classic department and as such the man in charge of the most important single-marque collection of cars there is. He wants more people with old Mercedes racing cars to use them and believing actions to speak louder than words, he determined to practice what he preached. The plan was to enter a racing Mercedes saloon into the FHR series of European endurance races in 2012, each time pairing a stellar Mercedes professional racing driver with a journalist. But the car was ready before the end of the 2011 season so it was decided its first outing would be at the last race of the year, at the Nürburgring. Step forward K Ludwig and, very much to his surprise, A Frankel.

The weapon *du choix* is a 'Fintail' 1963 220SE. I'd presumed that, being a factory car, it would contain every legal trick in the book, but nothing could be further from the truth. The last thing Mercedes wants is to turn up with a skunk works car and blow everyone into the weeds. Its approach, from the van in the car park to the car on the track, is delightfully modest and low-key. The Fintail is stripped out, has stiffer springs, race pads and a control Dunlop race tyre but otherwise is near enough completely standard. And that includes the 2.2-litre fuel injected engine which was rebuilt and carefully balanced, but still only produces 138bhp, just 20 more



Frankel braves the understeer in the stripped but very standard car



than when it was new. All Mercedes did not hold back on was safety, as a roll cage that would keep King Kong under control bears witness. At 1300kg, the car is just 75kg lighter than standard.

The first problem is that as practice starts, the Nordschleife is reported to be covered in ice. Klaus heads out, does a lap just to make sure the car is qualified, hands the car over to me and laconically confirms that there is indeed ice everywhere the sun has yet to reach. Having not raced at the 'Ring in eight years, driving a car belonging to Mercedes with Klaus as your team-mate, it was pressure I could do without. My first lap takes almost a quarter of an hour – the fastest Klaus has ever been around the Nordschleife is 6min 19sec.

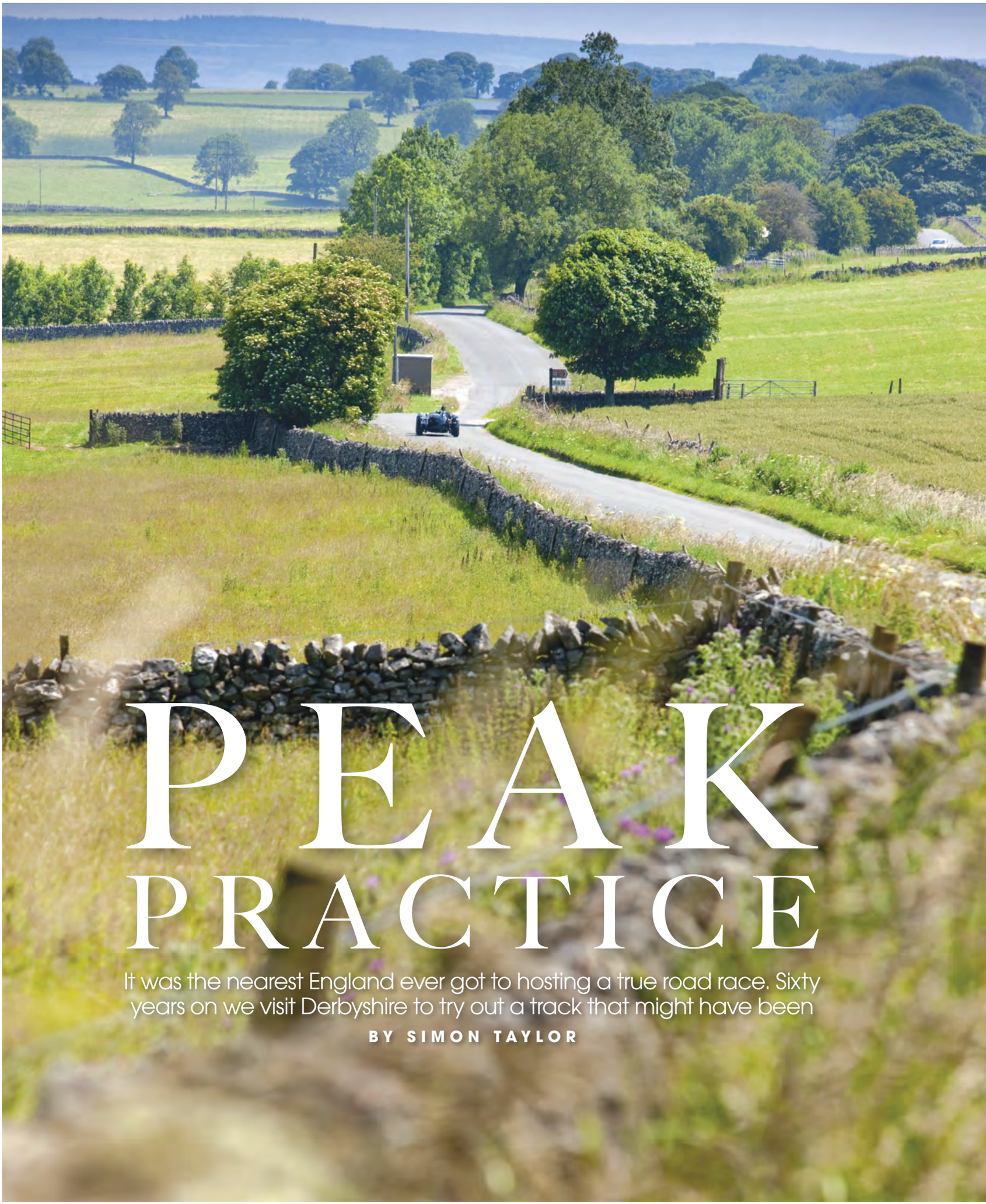
But by the time the race starts the sun has been shining for hours and the track is dry. My only problem is I'm still not sure exactly which way it goes. The race forms up in three groups of 50 cars each, with the Fintail towards the back of the last. We spent 20 minutes on a parade lap waving to the surprisingly large crowds before the race starts. And, as often happens on long tracks when you're at the thin end of the grid, soon the cars that could get ahead had and those I could drop had been dropped. For all practical purposes, I had the track to myself.

Keeping a car like the Fintail on the boil around the 'Ring is an art in itself. Drive it conventionally and it feels painfully, almost pointlessly slow. You drive up to a corner, brake, understeer through and spend what seems like the next half hour getting your speed back. So you don't brake unless you absolutely have to which, in this car at this track, is hardly ever. Instead you turn into each corner impossibly early on a trailing throttle and as soon as your trajectory is established, get back on what little power there is, often long before the apex. There's not enough steam to drift it, but you can all but eliminate the understeer and carry more speed than you'd ever have imagined. And then driving the soft and slow old car becomes positively fun. My lap times were still falling 20 seconds per lap when I pitted and handed over to Klaus, who then made me look ridiculous by going half a minute faster than my best. Only when I looked at the in car video and saw him using bits of track I didn't know existed did I feel less than disgraced.



And what did Klaus think of our noble steed? By the end of the race he was going so fast even the Mercedes mechanics were starting to giggle, he won us the class and emerged wreathed in smiles. "Honestly, I thought she was going be a bitch. But in fact if you turn early, she is wonderful. Very forgiving and nicely balanced. You have to hook the kerb to get it to turn in and power on early, then it's real fun. I never expected that."

Nor I. We both agreed the car would be transformed by more power and Mercedes would be within its rights to use a 3-litre direct injection motor; but I don't think that's how they're thinking. Everyone knows that if it put its mind to it, Mercedes could build a car no one could catch. But by using a car as unusual and beautiful as the Fintail and asking drivers of the calibre of Ludwig to drive it, Mercedes gets all the positive attention it needs, with none of the attendant downsides. So the Fintail may not be the fastest thing out there, but as far as classy ways for a car manufacturer to go racing is concerned, it takes a hell of lot of beating.



PEAK PRACTICE

It was the nearest England ever got to hosting a true road race. Sixty years on we visit Derbyshire to try out a track that might have been

BY SIMON TAYLOR

Matthew Howell



HWM Stovebolt Special would have been eligible for Peak District event, so made perfect recce machine

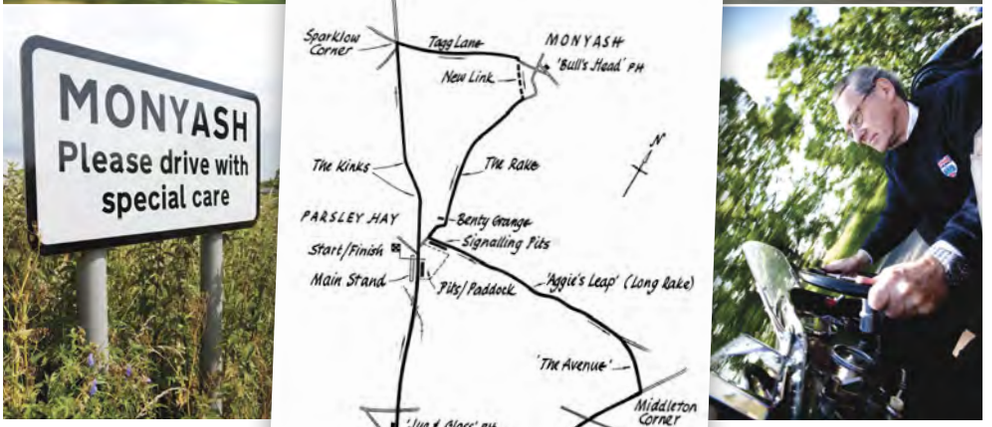
Imagine Jaguar D-types, Ferrari Monzas, Aston Martin DBR1s and 300S Maseratis fighting it out over a fast, narrow road circuit looping over high hills. A circuit almost as long as the old Nürburgring, with every sort of corner and hazard from stone walls and off-camber curves to a narrow bridge under a railway. A circuit in England, on the Queen's Highway.

Since the sport began, races have been run on closed public roads in Europe, and in Ireland and the Isle of Man. But it has never been legally possible in mainland Britain. Until World War II donated a slew of decommissioned RAF airfields up and down the country, we Brits were only able to enjoy proper circuit racing at Brooklands and, from the mid-1930s, at Donington and Crystal Palace. Post-war, some of those airfields turned into places like Silverstone, Goodwood and Snetterton, as well as many other now forgotten venues from Ibsley to Brough, Davidstow to Charterhall. In time further tracks were created on private ground, like the parks of Oulton, Mallory and Cadwell (though the latter had been used by motorcycles since the 1930s).

Then in November 1984 Birmingham City Council decided to sanction its own version of Monaco, and forwarded a Road Race Bill to Parliament. Remarkably, it was approved five months later, and duly received the Royal Assent. The Formula 3000 Birmingham Superprix, run each year around the city centre between 1986 and 1989, is a whole story on its own: a signal achievement by a small band of determined enthusiasts working doggedly to surmount every obstacle and ensure the event took place. In the 'elf 'n safety-ridden 21st century, it is unlikely to take place again.

However, few people know that there was a serious effort in the 1950s to get approval for a real road circuit running through the Peak District National Park in Derbyshire. Exactly who initiated this scheme seems lost in the mists of time, but Derby's most famous motor-racing resident Reg Parnell, a member of the works Aston Martin team and soon to be its manager, was certainly a prime mover. So was works MV and Moto-Guzzi rider and TT winner Bill Lomas, who also lived locally.

The proposed layout, shaped like a rough figure of eight, was extremely ambitious, totalling around 12 miles. The startline, pits and main grandstand were to be centred around the hamlet of Parsley Hay. Nearby was a tiny country railway station: today the Cromford and High Peak Railway is long dismantled, but in those pre-Beeching days special trains could have been laid on, bringing spectators to within a five-minute walk of the paddock.



In early 1955 the Derbyshire County Council decided to back the scheme, and drafted a Bill which, if approved by Parliament, would allow them to close the roads and hold motor-races on a fixed number of days each year. They submitted their plans to officials in the Ministry of Transport, and also proposed detailed arrangements for diverting normal traffic on race weekends. Parnell himself completed several high-speed laps in his Aston Martin DB2/4 road car, some with Lomas as passenger, and they pronounced the track ideal for both a serious long-distance sports car event and for motorcycle road racing.

Meanwhile, a new Road Traffic Bill was on its way through the House of Lords. Although the bill dealt primarily with mundane matters of safety and vehicle regulation, Lord Brabazon – himself a former racing driver, winner of the 1907 Circuit des Ardennes on a Minerva – stood up to propose an Amendment to the Bill which would give the Minister of Transport powers to sanction the closure of public roads, where and when appropriate, for the purposes of motor racing. "Here in Great Britain," quoth his lordship, "we have the second-largest motor industry in the world. In motor racing, Jaguar have developed disc brakes and Mercedes-Benz have developed fuel injection. We may even, in the future, see such innovations on everyday road cars. The Government should be prepared to do something to help this great industry, which has pulled us out of so many difficulties through the lean times. There might be clamour against closing the roads, but it would only be for two or three days in a year. Recently, on a main road travelling north, I was held up for 45 minutes by the Quorn Hunt, and nobody said anything at all in expostulation."

Lord Howe, 1931 Le Mans winner and president of the BRDC, spoke in eloquent support of the value of motor sport and the huge draw of road races on the continent of Europe. The Amendment was also backed by Lord Teynham, the chairman of the AA, and by Lord Strathcarron, himself a keen amateur racer. Only one backbench peer, Lord Moyne, spoke against it, grumbling that when racing took place near his house in Ireland "the quiet of the countryside was spoiled by a fearful and appalling noise that can be heard for many miles." Ironically Lord Moyne's first wife, Diana Mitford, later married Oswald Mosley, and their son Max went on to play a not inconsiderable role in the organisation of international motor sport.

But the Paymaster-General, Lord Selkirk, told the debate that the correct procedure for closure of public roads for a motor-racing event would be by way of a Private Bill. "If due provisions are made for the public to be properly safeguarded and local traffic is reasonably undisturbed, it might well find Parliamentary approval. I will readily give an assurance that the Ministry would not automatically oppose such a Private Bill." Given this assurance, Brabazon withdrew his Amendment.

This all sounded most encouraging. But by the time the Lords again debated the matter three months later, the world had changed. Six weeks before, during the Le Mans 24 Hours, Lance Macklin's Austin-Healey 100S swerved to avoid Mike Hawthorn's pitting Jaguar D-type, and Pierre Levegh's Mercedes 300SLR ran up the back of the Healey and was catapulted into a crowded spectator enclosure. In all 84 people died, and over 120 were injured. Lurid newspaper headlines around the world called for all motor racing to be banned forthwith. In Switzerland that was actually done, while it was suspended in France and elsewhere. In the second debate Lord Howe did his best to support the Parsley Hay proposal, but it was almost universally opposed, most speakers now agreeing that the proper place for a motor-race was on a private track. Several of their lordships displayed little understanding of motor sport: in the patronising view of one, "all cars that race are prototypes, and all the technical experience gained makes not one jot of difference to the modest little motorcar that is bought by a Bill Jones or a Peter Robinson."

In theory there was still nothing to stop the Derbyshire County Council presenting a Private Bill, but two months later came another tragedy, this time on a track very close in character to the Peak District proposal. The Dundrod circuit in Northern Ireland, on 7.4 miles of fast, narrow country roads outside Belfast, was once again the scene of the Tourist Trophy, a World Sports Car Championship round that attracted all the top teams. Unwisely, the organisers had accepted an entry from an inexperienced French amateur, Vicomte Henri de Barry, in an apparently standard pale blue Mercedes 300SL coupé. He was quick on the straights but slow through the corners, and right from the start a queue of smaller-capacity cars with more expert drivers built up behind him.

On the downhill switchback from Deer Leap to Cochranstown on the second lap Ken Wharton, in a works Le Mans Replica Frazer Nash incongruously wearing a Mistral fibreglass body, tried to squeeze past the Gullwing but failed. Then Jim Mayers got alongside de Barry, but at over 130mph on the narrow road his bob-tail Cooper struck the concrete gatepost of a house at the side of the roadway, and the car disintegrated. Mayers was flung out into the road along with the nearly full fuel tank, which burst into flames. Wheel to wheel behind him were Peter Jopp's Lotus-MG and the works Connaught of 20-year-old rising star Bill Smith. As Jopp told me years later: "Bill and I found ourselves driving side by side into an opaque curtain of smoke. I was lucky: I came out the other side, my arms singed by the fire as my car ricocheted along the bank. Bill wasn't so lucky: he went straight into Jim Mayers' wreckage." Both Mayers and Smith were killed instantly. Wharton went off the road, his car also on fire, and was dragged injured from the remains of the Frazer Nash which was completely burnt out. Jim Russell's Cooper, Freidrich Kretschmann's Porsche and Lance Macklin's Healey 100S also crashed avoiding the pile-up.



LAT

"On that brow are two wicked flicks, left then right – Derbyshire's answer to the Masta Kink"

Jopp helped marshals manhandle his Lotus away from the fire and into a field, and then walked into a nearby farmyard. "Do you want a priest?" asked the shocked farmer. "No," replied Peter wearily, "just a lift back to the pits." The stewards had du Barry black-flagged and pulled out of the race for baulking. A few laps later Richard Mainwaring died when his works Elva turned over in the fast left at Tornagrough and burned out while he was trapped underneath. Macklin, having been innocently involved in the tragedies at both Le Mans and Dundrod, never raced again; of de Barry nothing more was ever heard.

Not surprisingly, the events in France and Ireland effectively spelt the end of the Derbyshire road circuit. Local enthusiasts switched their attention to trying to get Donington revived – which, as it turned out, would not begin to happen until Tom Wheatcroft's eventual purchase in 1971.

But, 55 years on, the roads are all still there. I dug up the few contemporary references that are available – the project received surprisingly little coverage at the time – and was greatly helped in my researches by arch-enthusiast and former Rolls-Royce car designer Martin Bourne, who surveyed the course in detail and produced the fine map on page 93. My own period sports-racer, the 1950 ex-Stirling Moss HWM offset F2 car which metamorphosed in 1956 into the V8 Chevy-powered Stovebolt Special, would have been eligible had the race ever taken place, and was obviously just the thing to sample it. So, soon after dawn on a clear morning last summer, the Stovebolt and I left London for the 160-mile blast to the Peak District National Park.

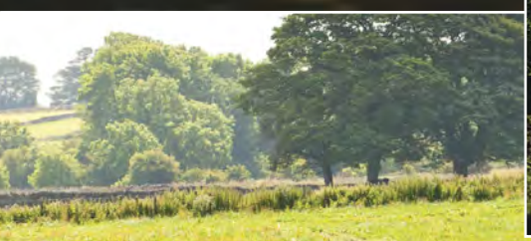
Coming along the A515 from Ashbourne, I joined the proposed circuit at the village of Newhaven. This would have been the start of the main straight, which totalled a Mulsanne-beating four miles. The road rises quite steeply, with undulating blind humps, and by modern standards is not very wide. It's the busy main route from Derby to Macclesfield and is now controlled by a 50mph limit, which the Stovebolt and I did our best to observe. But during a race it would be a magnificent flat-out climb, blasting past the circuit's start-line, pits and main grandstands halfway along. About a mile before the end of the straight, by which time the fastest cars would have been doing over 180mph, the road reaches its highest point, and on that brow there's the first of two wicked flicks, left then right – Derbyshire's answer to the Masta Kink. On a dry road a D-type on the limit might have needed a slight lift here: in the wet, or moving off-line to lap a slower car, it would have been a real test of skill and courage.





Planned road circuit mixed plunges and crests of Mulsanne-beating straight with tight bends and alarming 'breathe in' railway bridge











Circuit's rural nature would mean organisational problems, but limit nuisance to locals

Then, with the hamlet of Sparklow coming up on the left, it's maximum braking and second gear for the sharp right off the A515 and onto the B5055. This is Tagg Lane, which curves downhill towards Lathkill Dale. Back up the gears into top before more hard braking for a sharp downhill right into the planned new section of road, which would have been laid across a couple of fields to skirt around the village of Monyash. Now we are climbing again through sweeping fast curves between dry stone walls, briefly taking top to breast the brow along The Rake, and down the other side with the A515 coming into view again. But just before reaching it, after a testing S-bend, a tight junction left brings the track along the back of where the paddock would have been: here there could be signalling pits, where boards would be easier to read than at high speed on the straight.



"It could have given the UK a wonderful road race, to rank with the European classics"

Next comes a fast, treacherous back section, never straight, never level, much of it under overhanging trees, mainly full-throttle third-gear stuff with the bellow of the HWM's V8 echoing off high grassy banks. A blind cross-roads near Youlgreave village is a dead stop for us, but the racers would have scrabbled through it in second, then back up to third and maybe top again before diving down to a tight left. After an uphill right, there's a unique hazard. It's where the CHPR railway line ran over the road and, although the line is long gone, the bridge remains. If the lush verges each side were cut back it would be wide enough for two cars of the period – barely. With a fast right-hander the circuit briefly joins the A5012 from Matlock, before a sharper right brings us back onto the A515 again, and the start of that long, long uphill straight.

I did six laps of this awe-inspiring layout, around 72 miles, before stopping at the Bull's Head pub in Monyash for refreshment and a quiet think about it all. Outside the pub the locals admired the HWM; but none of them had ever heard of the proposal, more than half a century before, for the Parsley Hay Peak District road race circuit.

There's no doubt that the track would have been very fast, potentially very dangerous, and fraught with all sorts of organisational problems: not least how to control and protect spectators over so long a lap – although that's been managed pretty well down the years around the 37 miles of the Isle of Man's wonderful motorcycle TT course. And, while there was only sparse local population to be inconvenienced, my researches show there was already strident opposition to the proposal from local farmers, ramblers and countryside groups making use of this area of natural beauty.

But used just one weekend a year, with the standards of organisation and marshalling for which our major clubs were famous, this could have given the UK a wonderful road race, to rank with the best of the European classics. Without the Le Mans and Dundrod accidents it might, just might, have happened in the mid-1950s. It certainly wouldn't happen now.

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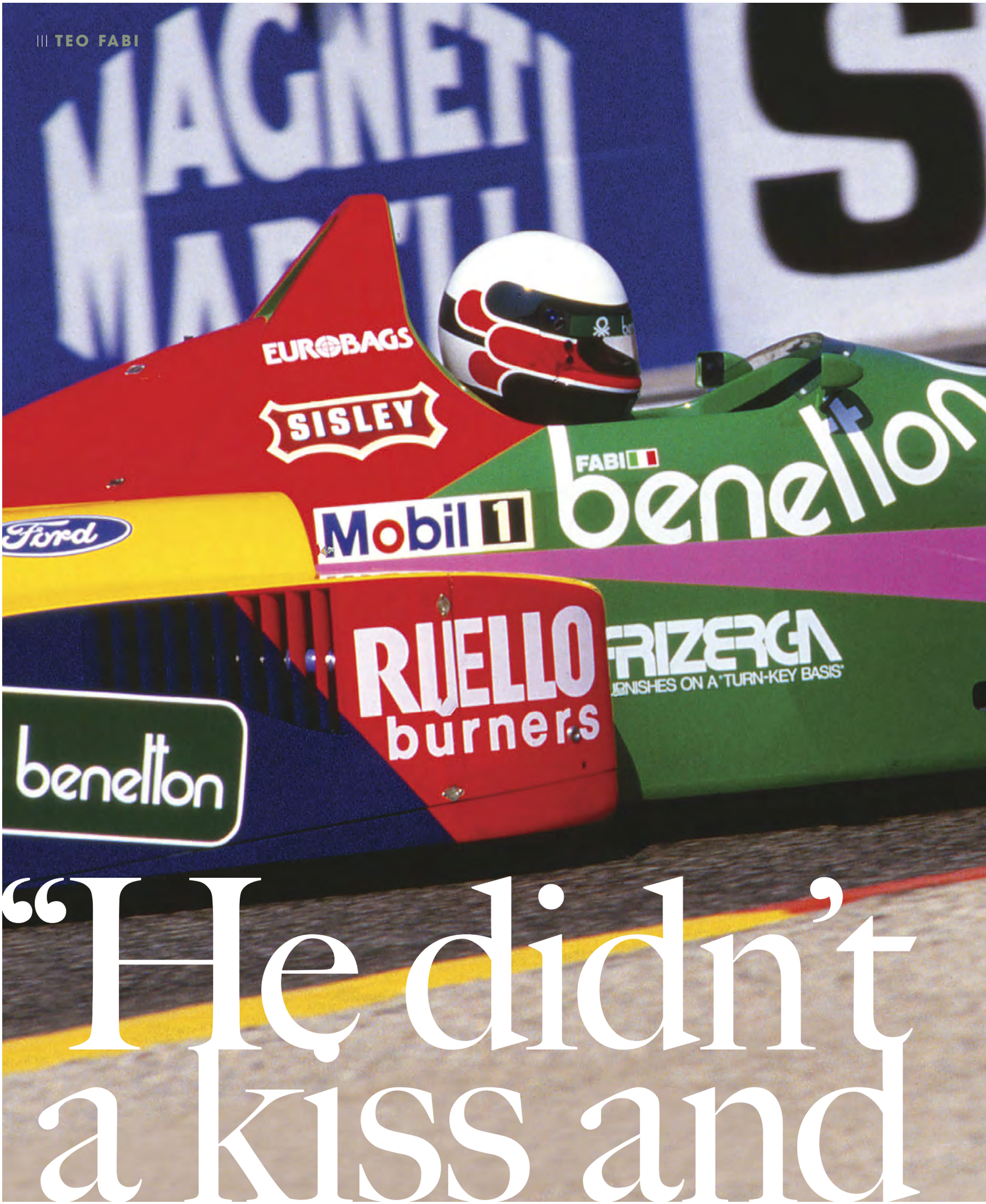
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“He didn’t a kiss and



need a cuddle”

Little Teo Fabi had an inner steel that made him tougher than he looked. Which was just as well for an Indycar and F1 ace who was dogged by bad luck

BY PAUL FEARNLEY

All images LAT











From top: F3 in 1978 began strong link with March and Herd; for 1980 Teo was March's no1; 1983 brought second place but moral victory in CART; reliability spoiled '84 F1 Brabham season. Opposite: pole at '83 Indy 500 for March – but DNF

Only four Indianapolis 500 rookies in 100 years have started from pole: Teo Fabi in 1983 is one. Prematurely balding and softly spoken, his puppy-ish face often apparently bemused, occasionally morose, he was a beautifully smooth operator at 200mph-plus.

"Everyone was afraid that I would make a mistake at the start," he says. "So I decided that it wouldn't matter if I got on the throttle before the green flag. I had such a big lead at the end of the first lap that I was thinking that maybe there had been an accident."

The little man from Milan pulled away at four-tenths per lap until his first fuel stop. His inexperienced crew cost him some time and positions, but he had planned to back off in any case to conserve his equipment. Fourth at his second stop, he was still blissfully confident so easy did it feel. At which point a gasket in the refuelling system blew: "My thinking then was, 'Okay, I'll win it next year.' I was quite wrong of course. My disappointment is stronger now."

Only one F1 driver has secured three poles yet failed to lead a lap of a Grand Prix: Fabi.

In 1986, in the most powerful GP car, Benetton's B186-BMW, he recorded laps of 159 and 154.3mph for back-to-back races at the old, flowing Österreichring and Monza. In Austria, his engine let go yards after taking the lead from team-mate Gerhard Berger. In Italy, his engine stalled on the formation lap and he had to start from the back. He set fastest lap before leaving the road because of a blow-out.

He had the speed, particularly at the ballsy tracks, but not always the luck.

"Austria was my biggest mistake," he admits. "That was the race to win. But I missed a gear and over-revved the engine a couple of laps before passing Gerhard. I hit a bump as I was changing gear exiting the first chicane. Even now I think, 'How is this possible?' I still feel that I owe Pat an apology."

Symonds that is, his engineer for four seasons at Toleman/Benetton: "Teo liked to drive with a lot of precision, which pays off in the quicker corners. He could find more time than anyone else by scrubbing off less speed. But he needed unbroken concentration to do it. That was his downfall. If there was traffic, he lost speed. He wasn't the all-rounder that Gerhard was."

Fabi contested 64 GPs from 1982-87. He qualified inside the top 10 for half of those, yet scored just 23 points and two podiums: thirds, in Detroit '84 and Austria '87. His machinery was not kind to him: no finishes in '82, just four in '84, one in '85, and five in '86 and '87. Of those myriad retirements only six were due to spins, incidents and accidents.

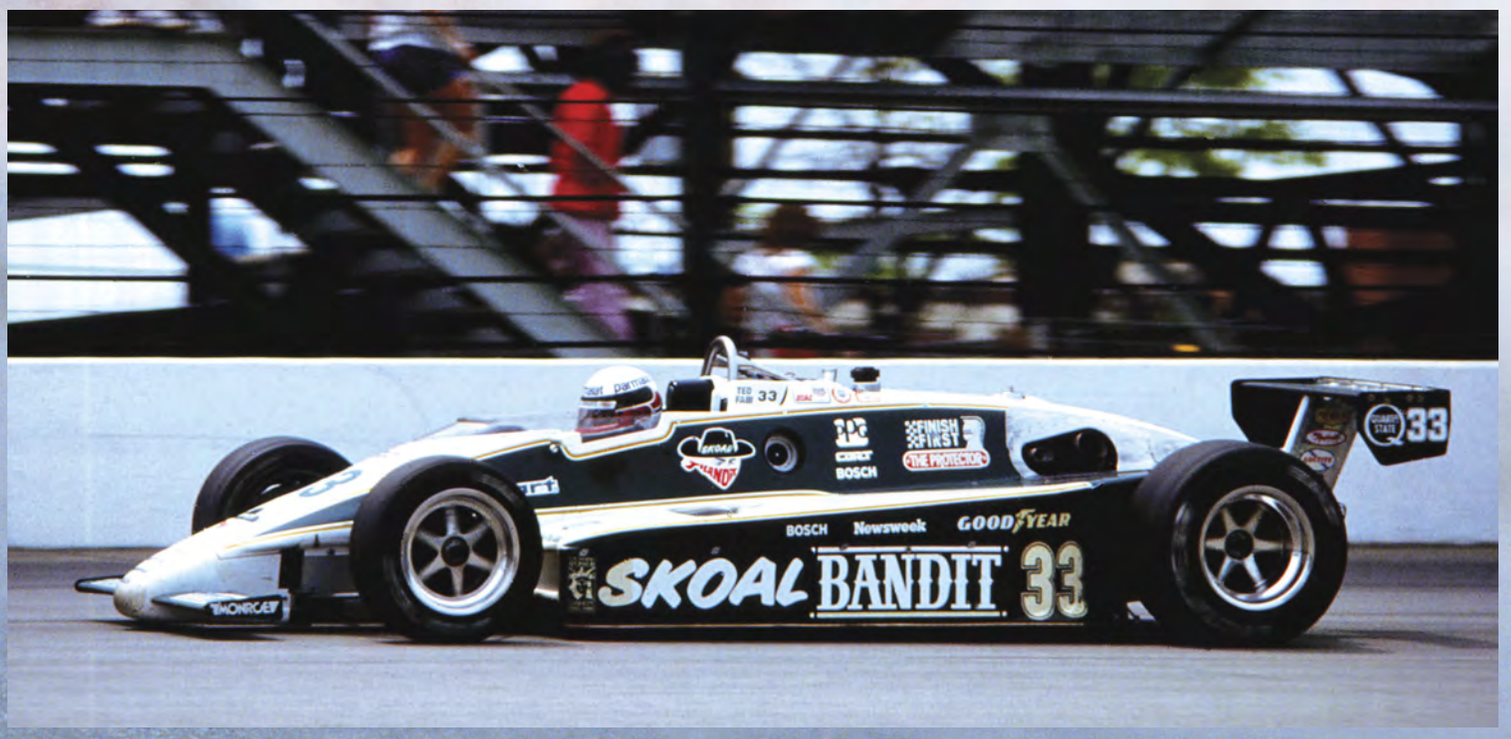
Symonds: "Teo deserved better. He should have had a win or two. He was at that level. His results in America are a more accurate reflection of his talent. And he should have won more races there too."

March boss Robin Herd guided Fabi through the Can-Am and Indycar campaigns that twice resurrected his career in the early 1980s: "Teo was as quick as anybody on a qualifying lap: Stewart, Peterson, Andretti, the lot. A fantastic competitive skier, he brought that balance and co-ordination to his racing. The one thing that he had difficulty with was driving a bad car. Luckily he tended to land in our good ones. He's very significant in March's history."

This most important relationship of Fabi's career began in F3 in 1978 when he won three European races at a time when Ralt's RT1 was tops. He graduated to F2 but struggled as March's "number 10 driver". Promoted to number one for 1980, he won twice at Hockenheim and at the 14-mile Nürburgring, but was out-scored by the Tolemans of Brian Henton and Derek Warwick. Three engine failures when second didn't help. Still, F1 with John Macdonald's March team beckoned.

"I visited the factory in Bicester, and there was my car – with Derek Daly's name on it," he says. "I realised that my GP career might be over before it had started. Robin was not in England, so I waited. My girlfriend – who is now my wife – stayed too, supporting me through the two worst days of my racing life."

Fabi, an aeronautical engineering graduate, was then 25. Twice he had skied World



Championship slaloms for Brazil – thanks to his mother's nationality. He was a European karting champion in 1975 – alongside younger brother Corrado – the Italian Formula Ford 2000 champion of '77 and the '78 and '79 Formula Pacific champion. Thus America had never heard of him when a contrite Herd persuaded Paul Newman's nascent Can-Am outfit to hire him for 1981.

"And we just loved him," says Barry Green, the Australian ex-Chevron driver managing the team. "He couldn't talk much English when he arrived, but he did what he was told, never got out of the car unless he had to, and helped us to develop it. He had a fantastic year."

Seven poles, five fastest laps, four wins, Fabi was quickest – but unlucky. A mechanical failure flipped him into the trees at Elkhart Lake, and although he put team-mate Al Unser Sr's car on pole – despite being battered, bruised, black-eyed and temporarily blinded – politics dictated that the all-American hero take the start. At Riverside, a wheel fell off after an unnecessary stop. Hence more consistent Geoff Brabham won the title in a Lola.

Fabi: "I don't think that being faster than Al was important. He just had a few weekends to fill and never had a good feeling with the car. He wasn't as hungry as I was."

Five-foot-five Fabi was ski-racer tough. Days before the second Mosport round he was diagnosed with appendicitis: op Wednesday, pole Saturday, win Sunday.

Herd: "He shrugged it all off. Typical Teo. Inner steel. He didn't need a kiss and a cuddle like some. Very determined, totally straight to deal with, he drove as well that season as any driver I've ever worked with. F1 with Toleman in '82 must have come as a shock."

That team was built around Warwick. Its 'General Belgrano' TG181C was hopeless, with no development forthcoming because its replacement for 1983 was the priority. Fabi's confidence was shot, his stock rock-bottom… Let's just call it the Herd Instinct.

Johnny Rutherford had been slated to drive for the Forsythe brothers' start-up Indycar team until he made a late swerve to Pat Patrick's Wildcats. March's 'works team' thus consisted of Green's defunct Can-Am set-up, Herd, engineering when he wasn't at F1 – and Fabi.

"Everyone was very motivated," says Fabi. "I'd just had a terrible season in F1. And Barry had had a bad year in Can-Am." And March, almost bankrupt at the start of 1981, wanted to push on from its American beachhead. Yet nobody gave this rookie team, with its rookie driver, a hope – until they ran third at the Atlanta opener. Indy was next.

"There is all this history and procedure to go through," says Fabi. "An old driver takes you round and makes you watch. Sitting in the grandstand, the speed, the closeness of the walls, looked crazy to me. So my impression was distorted when I finally got in the car."

Herd: "He's not the first driver to have this happen. He found day one difficult and was all for jacking it in. I told him to sleep on it. The next day he just flew." And would break every qualifying record.

The 'inevitable' win – the first for a European since Graham Hill's 1966 Indy success – didn't arrive until Pocono in August, by which time Penske's Unser Sr held a commanding points lead. Second at Riverside, first at Mid-Ohio, third at Michigan, Fabi needed to win the final two rounds – Laguna and Phoenix – from pole to stand a chance.

Herd: "He achieved it all. His pole at Phoenix was by half a second – on a 25-second lap. Phenomenal. Mario Andretti got slightly the better start but Teo overtook him on the outside of Turn 1. Wow! As stunning a pass as I have ever seen."

'Big Al' clung on, but Fabi, with four wins to his rival's one, ended as the moral champion. He had already re-signed with Forsythe when Bernie Ecclestone called. Such was Teo's reinvigorated clout, however, and so compelling is F1 to an Italian, that all sides agreed to a compromise: Teo would take the wheel for Brabham when his Indycar commitments allowed, and Corrado would take over when they didn't.



"We just loved him. He never got out of the car unless he had to"

Green: "Teo was a young man who thought that he could win everything. That's why we signed him, so I can't complain. It was a shame, though, because we were on a roll. We'd had a brilliant year, and yet so many more things could have gone better. We had the right people; we just needed more time to gel.

"Teo was a brilliant development driver. I'd choose Jacques Villeneuve as my number one in that respect, but after that it would be a toss-up between Teo and Dario Franchitti. He could have been a little more aggressive as a racer. Having said that, his plan was always to make his car faster than everyone else's."

Fabi soon realised that he had bitten off more than he could chew in 1984 and by July had decided to concentrate on F1: "When you have such an opportunity, it's impossible to say no. But flying every week, driving a different car every week, is difficult physically and mentally.

"Brabham was like a family team. Nelson Piquet was world champion and its number one, no doubt, but I felt part of it. Maybe I didn't have the best qualifying engines, but in the races I had the same treatment. The car [BT53], though, was difficult to set up and to drive. Its chassis wasn't stiff enough because its BMW engine was tall and difficult to package, so I was never able to drive at the limit. The '86 Benetton was the same: flexing at the rear, impossible to find a consistent set-up."

A third, fourth and fifth were insufficient to keep the drive, and he re-signed with Toleman, soon to become Benetton. It missed the first three races of 1985 while it rebuilt its bridges with Pirelli, but at least Rory Byrne's step-floor TG185 was right up Fabi's alley, even if its Hart turbo engine was not. A wet Saturday at the Nürburgring saw him retain a surprise provisional pole from Friday. Not that he knew.

Symonds: "It was raining and he lost it exiting the last corner. He hit the barrier and head-butted the steering wheel. Then we had a surreal conversation inside the motorhome: 'You do know that you are on pole?' He thought I was winding him up; I thought he was winding me up. For five minutes he genuinely lost his memory.

"Teo was more confident by this time. When he rejoined us he knew he could do it. We didn't have a lot of data acquisition in those days and drivers tended to tell you more than they knew. Teo didn't. He told you what he felt, not why something was happening and what you should do about it. Much better. But although our 1985 car was very good, its reliability was appalling." At the 'Ring, its clutch failed on lap 28. Fabi was sixth at the time.

"It was the same in 1987," he says. "Rory's chassis was the best, for sure able to win many races, but its [Cosworth GBA V6] engine was unreliable and down on power."

That final season of F1 was ultimately disappointing – 12 points in the slender B187 – and concluded with an out-of-character spat at Adelaide: "At Estoril I was fighting Piquet for third when [team-mate Thierry] Boutsen blocked me as I tried to lap him. Peter Collins, our team manager, chose not to give an order. The situation in Adelaide was the same

except that I was about to be lapped. This time he gave an order. But because I was already out of the team, I decided to get even.

"I had outqualified Boutsen at the start of the season. But in the middle of the year we had bad flooding in Italy and my family's company was nearly destroyed. I had a few nights without sleep and my performances suffered."

Indycar, in the form of three seasons with Porsche's programme, provided him with solace rather than salvation on this occasion. Stuttgart's chassis had been dumped in favour of a March, but its engine still lacked torque. By the second half of 1989, however, the tailor-made 89P wrapped tightly around him, Fabi was CART's form man after Indy, winning from pole at Mid-Ohio and finishing fourth in the points.

"We were on an upward curve and I was feeling good," he says. "Everyone was expecting us to win in 1990. March designed the first carbon-fibre Indycar for us. It passed the safety tests, but the other team owners got the rule changed – in December, no carbon monocoques. March added a skin of aluminium, and when a car is 70kg over the limit it can't be competitive."

A disgruntled Porsche called time after a very disappointing campaign – third at Meadowlands, pole at Denver – in which Fabi was outscored by team-mate John Andretti. He'd be back, but not before an unexpected upswing elsewhere.

A surprise selection by a TWR Jaguar team centred on Warwick, Fabi qualified well – three poles – impressed with his feedback and ended by winning the 1991 World Sportscar Championship. Warwick was victorious on three occasions to Teo's once but was denied the points for the victory that they shared at Silverstone because he had swapped from his original XJR-14 after a broken throttle cable delayed co-driver Martin Brundle.

"That Jaguar was fantastic: 750bhp, 750kg, lots of downforce. And the team was very well organised," says Fabi. "I think that [boss] Tom Walkinshaw wanted Derek to win, but Derek had the tragedy of his brother's death that season and for a few races, understandably, he was not 100 per cent."

Fabi also finished third at Le Mans alongside Kenny Acheson and Bob Wollek in an XJR-12. He disliked the event, however, even though – or perhaps because – it provided his only ride of 1992: eighth with TOM'S Toyota. The following year he finished runner-up, one lap behind his Peugeot team-mates.

Approaching 40, he knew that there could be no more slingshot returns to Europe, but Indycar's pull remained strong. Two seasons with Jim Hall's team from 1993, in Chevy/Ilmor-powered Lolas and Reynards, brought a clutch of fourths and ninth overall in '94. He joined the Forsythe stump of its split with Green in '95 and, again engineered by Herd, set pole at Milwaukee and was unlucky not to win at Cleveland; his Reynard-Cosworth emerged from the last round of scheduled stops with a four-second lead, only for a header to break almost immediately.

Replaced by the emerging Greg Moore, bar three races in 1996 as a substitute at PacWest for the injured Mark Blundell, that was that.

"It was time to stop because it was no longer possible to race with the top teams," says Fabi. "One day you have to start a new life. But I miss racing even now."

He's wistful, not bitter, his assessment of his talent disarmingly honest: "I was a natural skier; I had to work a lot harder to get results in cars. I needed the perfect set-up to be fast. My approach stemmed maybe too much from skiing: looking too much to the lap time and not so much on preparation for the race."

Herd is more effusive: "He could have been a regular winner in F1. More than 20 GP winners drove Marches, so I have a feel for those who could do it. But Teo didn't have the will to impose himself on a team like a Stewart or a Lauda. When everything was right, though, he was sensational."



Porsche Indycar project promised much but proved disappointing: Fabi scored only one win in three seasons

Lunch with...
KEITH GREENE & CHRIS CRAFT





James Mitchell





LAT

Driven by Craft, managed by Greene: Broadspeed Escort, Brands Hatch 1970 and (inset) Alain de Cadanet's Duckhams sports car, Le Mans '72

One was a popular saloon and sports car racer, the other a highly respected team manager. And as friends from their teens, their careers often wove together

BY SIMON TAYLOR

I'm in a village pub, listening to two old friends reminisce about spending their entire working lives in and around motor sport. One raced his own marque of Formula 1 car, then spent 35 years as a top team manager in endurance racing. The other, after a quarter-century as a highly versatile campaigner in sports and saloon cars, marketed the nearest thing in its day to a pure racing car for the road.

Keith Greene and Chris Craft have known each other since their teens, when Keith was already racing for his father's Gilby Engineering concern and Chris, two years younger, was terrorising the burghers of Woodford in his Austin 7 Special. Both are Essex boys, although Keith retired a few years ago to the Isle of Wight. So we meet at one of Chris' favourite watering-holes, the Queen's Head at Fyfield. Smoked haddock with poached egg, followed by sea bream, are washed down with a glass of no-nonsense white for Chris, a glass of honest rosé for Keith.

Keith's story has to start with his father, the remarkable Syd Greene. In the 1920s Syd, aged 16, was a delivery boy, riding one of those precarious bicycles with a small front wheel under a big carrier. He skidded on wet cobbles, put out his left arm to save himself – and a London bus, with the solid tyres they had in those days, ran over it. What little remained of the arm had to be amputated. "He got one of the dreadful prosthetics of that period, all straps and leather harness, but that went in the cellar after a week. He managed perfectly well with one arm, holding a box of matches under his stump so he could strike a match to light his fag. He became a technical draughtsman, bought into a small company called Gilby

Engineering, and built it up until he had a 53,000 sq ft factory in Barking with 220 employees and double-shift working 364 days a year. He raced, too, holding his supercharged MG TA's wheel with his knees while he stretched his only arm across to change gear. Then some snooty bastard at Brooklands complained that he couldn't control his car, complete crap of course, and he lost his racing licence. But he still did sprints and hillclimbs."

After the war Syd ran a Frazer-Nash Le Mans Replica, and Stirling Moss scored a great victory for him in the 1951 British Empire Trophy on the Isle of Man. Next came a Maserati A6GCS which, with Roy Salvadori at the wheel, fought great battles in 2-litre sports car racing with Archie Scott Brown's Lister-Bristol. "Dad used to drive it to races on the road and I, as wheel-polisher and pit signaller, went with him. Leave Essex for Oulton Park at dawn, stop halfway for eggs and bacon, and no speed limits." In 1954 Syd wangled Board of Trade permission to import a Maserati 250F Grand Prix car, before even Alfred Moss and Ken Gregory had swung the permit to get one for Stirling. Factory price was £4000, and as much again for import duty and purchase tax. The British Racing Green Gilby 250F was raced with success by Salvadori, mainly in Britain but with the odd European foray.





Keith was now old enough for a licence, and Syd bought him a bob-tail Cooper-Climax. He even, at 18, got to race the 250F at Snetterton. "I'd never driven it before, and queuing up for practice oil started pouring out of the gearbox. The lads took it to bits, rushed into Norwich, knocked up an engineering shop to mend it, and got back just before the race. I lined up at the back of a big motley formule libre grid. I had no idea what revs to use off the line, so I asked Archie what he thought. Max revs was about seven-two, so he said, 'Try six'. When the flag fell I swallowed about eight cars before I even realised I'd started. What a fantastic car. You could go through the old Coram Curve without any effort in a perfect four-wheel drift, thinking you were Fangio. You weren't, of course. But the brakes weren't up to much. At the end of the Norwich Straight I was standing up in the seat on the brake pedal, with the bank and the spectators rushing up, going down the box to slow it for the hairpin." He finished fourth. "In the end Dad sold the 250F to Cliff Davis, who flogged old American cars from a yard in Shepherds Bush. Complete with spare engine, spare wheels and coach transporter, Cliff gave him £1200, and then dealt it on to Australia."

Keith raced his own Lotus 11, and did Le Mans in a works 750cc 17 with Alan Stacey, their sights set on the Index of Performance. "Winning that was worth big money. The French Panhards regarded it as their personal property, but we were leading by miles on Sunday morning when the water temperature started to go up. You weren't allowed to add oil and water within a set number of laps, which was controlled in the pits by a *plombeur* who sealed the fillers. I went slower, trying to make it last, but eventually it seized.

"Stacey was a lovely bloke, and quick. We were good friends until the Spa tragedy: a bird hit him in the face, stunning him, and he went into the trees and was killed. He had a tin leg, from an old motorbike accident, so he always had a twist-grip throttle fitted to the gear-lever to blip the engine on down-changes, because he couldn't heel-and-toe. Chris Bristow was killed that same day at Spa. A complete nutter. I remember battling for the lead with Mike Taylor in a sports car race at Goodwood, and well after we'd both got on the brakes for Woodcote Chris came howling past both of us, still hard on it, and went straight into the bank. But if he'd grown up and matured he'd have really gone somewhere. Another tragedy."

> "I was standing up in the seat on the brake pedal, with the bank rushing up"

Next Keith got a Lotus 17 "which was a piece of garbage. So Dad asked Len Terry to design me an 1100cc sports car. Jack Knight did the chassis, Williams and Pritchard did the body, and that was the first Gilby-Climax. It was a sweet little car, went really well." Keith also raced a succession of Coopers in British national events. "I had Bruce McLaren's 1959 F1 car, then Roy Salvadori's Tommy Atkins 2.5-litre Cooper-Maserati. The engine was heavier than the Climax, and it was a dog – which is why Tommy sold it to Dad. Then the 1500cc F1 came in, and we built the Gilby single-seater." Len Terry was again the designer, but the shark-nosed Climax-powered machine never got the development it needed. "We did the British GP at Aintree, then for 1962 Dad lined up a V8 BRM engine for it. The anorak websites say we built a second Gilby single-seater, but we didn't: we modified the first one, made it two inches narrower and an inch lower. In the German GP I was running ahead of Siffert and Vaccarella until the front suspension broke, and I went through a hedge. But it was gutless: the customer BRM engines had nothing like the power of the works ones. We should have stuck with the four-pot Climax. We sold it on to Ian Raby, and it ended up sand-racing in Jersey with an American V8."

Other cars in the Greene stable included a 2-litre four-cam Porsche 356 Carrera. "I did a four-hour race at Rouen in that, two two-hour heats with a break in between for a cup of tea. And the Goodwood Tourist Trophy. I ended up with a Lotus 23B, had a couple of wins with that. By now I was working for Armstrongs as Competitions Manager. I was going to all the Grands Prix, carrying in the back of my Cortina the shock absorbers for every team except Ferrari and Honda, who used Konis. I did all the settings for the different cars and circuits."

Meanwhile Chris, the tearaway in the Austin 7 Special, had become an employee of Ford. "Unlike Keith I had no family connections with racing. My father worked in the City office of Barclays Bank. But I was always mad about cars: my bedroom walls were covered with racing pictures. At public school I failed every exam, and they only let me stay on because I was captain of boxing. My first job was as a packer in a ladies' underwear warehouse. I thought it was the best job in the world, but my father didn't agree. He got me a Commercial Apprenticeship at Ford. Basically I was just a postboy, but I wangled a job in the competitions department, helping on rally recces and running errands to Cosworth's in Barnet. In 1961 I bought an Anglia out of the press fleet and started racing it, until I wrote it off. Then we made some Group 5 Anglias for Ford France with lighter shells, so I stuck another one down the line. I built it up as a 1340cc club racer, and had some great David and Goliath battles with the big Jaguars.

"Walter Hayes, who'd joined Ford from Fleet Street as the big boss, strode into the office one day and said, 'This chap Craft who's beating up the Jaguars in an orange Anglia, he's not our Craft, is he?' 'Yes he is, sir, and he's sitting right behind you.' He lent me a Cortina GT which I gave to Willment to build up, and



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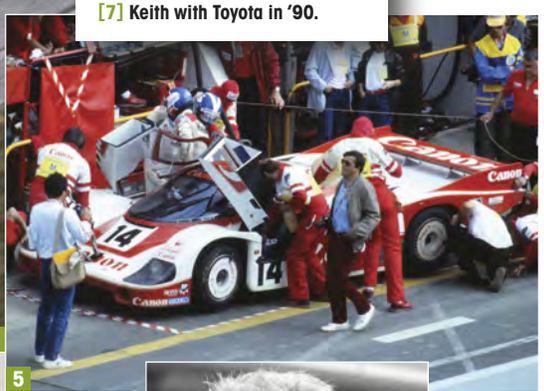


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[1] Keith Greene raced his father Syd's Gilby Maserati 250F at just 18. This is Silverstone formule libre, 1957. [2] Sharing a Lotus with Alan Stacey at Le Mans in '59. [3] Keith, the racing driver. He says he wasn't quick enough. [4] Len Terry designed the unique Gilby F1. Greene qualified on the sixth row at the Nürburgring in '62, only for suspension failure to pitch him into the scenery. [5] Keith oversaw second place finish for Richard Lloyd's Canon Porsche at Le Mans '85, [6] and second and third places for the five-car Rondeau team in 1981. [7] Keith with Toyota in '90.



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All images LAT

the first time I got into it, at Brands, the rear A-bracket broke and I rolled it five times. A clip of the shunt went into the title sequence for *Play of the Week* on the telly, so every seven days everyone was reminded of it. Then I had a good season with a Lotus-Cortina which Walter also fixed for me, and we even raced in America at Elkhart Lake. In 1964 Alan Mann got me doing ice notes for the Falcons he was running in the Monte Carlo Rally. That was a great trip: Roy Pierpoint and me in one Falcon, John Whitmore and Tony Hegbourne in another, even Pete Arundell was driving the tyre truck.

"By 1966 I was doing the British Saloon Championship in one of the Superspeed 1300 Anglias. Now I have to own up to something I'll always regret. I caused Peter Proctor's accident at the Easter Monday Goodwood. I'd made a bad start, and was coming up the field. Peter was in a 1-litre Broadspeed Anglia. At St Mary's I dived up the inside, and in my usual way of passing people I was trying to get to the apex first. I just touched his rear wing, which was enough, and he went off. In those days there were no rules covering fuel tanks. The car rolled and exploded, and he was horribly burned. I had no idea: my car was undamaged, I raced on and won the class. When they told me after the race I was shocked. Peter went through hell, but he's never held it against me. He's wonderful, and so is his wife Shirley.

"It was time to try single-seaters, so I bought an F3 Merlyn, borrowed a V4 Corsair from Ford and towed it to Monza. I forget how I did, but the next race was in Portugal at Vila Real. Driving overnight, I stopped off at Juan les Pins to see a girl I knew there. I unhitched the trailer and went to pick her up, but outside the Eden Roc Hotel I fell asleep, and went head-on into a lady who'd been given a brand new Mercedes as her birthday present. I never got to Vila Real.

"My friend Boley Pittard, who'd been hot stuff in an Anglia and then gone on to race in Italian F3 for BWA, told me he was moving to Tecno, and his drive was going begging. So in 1967 I did an incredibly hard season in Italy, racing the works BWA virtually every weekend and living in Milan.

"They were good days, but In Italian F3 the problem was just to survive. Every weekend, it seemed, someone got killed. Poor Boley died in June: by then he'd fallen out with Tecno and was in a private Lola which wasn't very well prepared. At Monza, as the cars moved off the dummy grid, the Lola went on fire. Boley drove it off the grid out of everyone's way, but was very badly burned in the process. I was on the front row with Manfred Mohr and Giancarlo Baghetti, and never saw it. At Monza – no chicanes then – you came past the pits on

the huge wide straight, your little F3 car screaming its heart out at 145mph, and then funnelled down between the Armco that ran up to the banking and the little section leading onto the *pista junior*. We're all diving flat-out into this narrow bit, letting each other filter in, but 'Geki' Russo shuts me out. I go nose first into the Armco, pole-vault, fly for 200 yards and land in a shower of bits, still holding the steering wheel.

"Apart from a few loose teeth I was OK, but as I walked back to the pits I learned about Boley's accident. I stayed with him in hospital, but he died the following Saturday. The race the weekend after that was at Caserta, a fast street circuit in the south. Three more drivers were killed there: my Monza rival 'Geki' Russo, the Swiss Beat Fehr, and 'Tiger', whose real name was Romano Perdomi. After that BWA gave up racing, but Luciano and Giancarlo, the Pederzani brothers who ran Tecno, lent me a chassis so I could carry on. Then I went back to England, more saloons with Superspeed, and for 1968 I moved to Broadspeed."

Meanwhile Keith Greene had left Armstrongs to join Alan Mann Racing as team manager. "In 1967 we were running Frank Gardner in the Falcon, a pretty stunning car by the time we'd sorted it. Frank was fantastic, always the clean white socks, always the dead-pan Aussie humour. And brilliant at sorting the car. During practice he'd come in: 'It's like a sack of shit around Paddock, KG. What've you done to the castor angles?' So we'd play with things a bit, adjust this, adjust that, he'd go out again, and we'd be on pole by a second and a half. We walked the British Saloon Championship.

"Mind you, I saw a different side of Frank at Le Mans in 1969. When John Woolfe was killed on Lap 1 Frank, driving the GT40 we'd built up for Malcolm Guthrie, was right behind Woolfe's Porsche 917 and Chris Amon's Ferrari. It was an immense accident. Frank came into the pits, got out and was wandering around in shock saying, 'I can't do this.' You wouldn't think it of Frank, would you? Alan Mann got him by the shoulders and said, 'You're contracted to drive this car. Get in and drive it.' Frank got back in, drove out of the pits, and at once his lap times were back on the programme."

In 1969 Keith joined Broadspeed, and found himself managing Chris for the first time. Chris' Escort was second overall in the British Championship, winning the 1300cc category. And now Chris met someone else with whom he was destined to spend a lot of time.

"I was driving the Techspeed Chevron B8 in the Nürburgring 1000Kms with Chris Meek – although Chris put it on its roof, so I never drove it in the race. Sharing our pit was a long-haired bloke with a great-coat down to his ankles and a purple Ferrari Dino 206. He was permanently lying underneath it trying to get it to run, and when we left on Monday morning he was still underneath it. He was evidently a Brit, although he had a French name. The next time I saw him I was racing Sid Taylor's Lola T70 at Innsbruck. His Dino only managed two laps of the race, and the organisers didn't want to pay him his start money. Huge row. Finally they gave him the Austrian currency he was due, and he tore it up and threw the pieces in their faces: 'That's what I think of your start money.' As another long-haired Brit, I was starting to become aware of Alain de Cadenet.

"He told me he was buying a Porsche 908, which I didn't take too seriously until he phoned me and said, 'My 908's arrived. Do you and Pipes want to do Vila Real?' It was a six-hour race, and David Piper and I won, beating Frank Gardner's Lola T70 by two laps. Alain called the team Ecurie Evergreen. His next wheeze was to put a Cosworth DFV F1 engine in the back of a Can-Am McLaren M8C. Keith supervised the installation at Broadspeed, and it worked fantastically well. It didn't have the straight-line speed of the big Chevy McLarens, but the handling and the brakes were just great. The 1970 Swedish GP at Karlskoga was for sports cars: Ronnie Peterson and Niki Lauda in 908s, Reine Wisell in a Lola T70, Gijs van Lennep in the Porsche 917 that had come second at Le Mans. We beat them all and won. It was a gloomy day, though, because in the saloon race a car went into the crowd. Five spectators were killed and 27 injured. After that they didn't use Karlskoga for many years."

In 1971 David Weir, a wealthy American friend of de Cadenet's, thought he might like to do Le Mans, and ordered a brand new Ferrari 512M. Chris was drafted in as co-driver, ➤➤➤




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[1] Chris caught Walter Hayes' attention with giant-killing Anglia. [2] Still in Ford touring cars a decade later, at Thruxton in Spice Capri. [3] McLaren-DFV in wet BOAC Brands, 1970. [4] David Weir-owned Ferrari 512 was fourth at Le Mans in '71. [5] Chris in Brabham BT33 for brief F1 foray. [6] Hair was worn long in the '70s. [7] Chris did seven Le Mans with Alain de Cadenet: this is '76 stop en route to third

and Keith was the obvious choice as team manager, but at first he was unconvinced: "David was heir to a Pittsburgh steel fortune, a big bloke, seriously into partying and drinking and other stuff. Always still in bed at lunchtime, and the only exercise he got was walking from one pub to another. In February I said to him, 'Are you just the entrant, or do you want to drive it? If you're driving, the only way I'll manage the car is if you come with me to the gym every day from now until June.'

"Well, he was good as gold, gym every day, and we did a strict regime for the race. Chris did a bit more of the driving, but not a lot more. David did exactly what I told him to do. To start with he was 6sec a lap slower than Chris; by the end he was 3sec a lap slower. That 512 had a strong engine, and as it wore in during the race it made 700rpm more. During the night we were pulling 230mph on the Mulsanne. The screen cracked early on and as the cracks spread they filled up with oil, until it looked like a road map of France. We finished behind two 917s and a NART Ferrari. Fourth overall. And once the race was over, David went straight back on the booze and the parties."

Also in 1971, Ecurie Evergreen bought a full-house 7.6-litre Can-Am McLaren M8E which Chris drove: "We went to the Norisring Interserie race, and Pedro Rodriguez was entered in one of Herbie Muller's Ferrari 512s. What a fantastic driver: if I had a hero it'd probably be Pedro. I led him to start with, then he came by, and Leo Kinnunen's Porsche 917 Spyder got past me too. The three of us came rushing up to a back-marker, Pedro went one way, and the back-marker jumped the same way." Rodriguez hit the Armco and the car instantly became a fireball, with him trapped inside. The race was stopped and the fire extinguished, but it took several minutes to extricate Rodriguez, and he died in hospital a few hours later. The race was restarted, and Chris scored a joyless win from the McLarens of Peter Gethin and Jo Bonnier.

"When we got home Alain read in *The Times* that Rodriguez had died 'in a minor race in Germany' – which was true, but there were 100,000 spectators there, and Alain really took umbrage. 'To hell with it,' he said, 'I'm going to sell the McLaren and buy you an F1 car. What do you reckon?' I said, 'Fine, let's give it a go.' I didn't realise the budget would be so tight that we'd only have one set of brake pads…

"So Alain bought Jack Brabham's 1970 BT33 from Ron Tauranac. It still had a dented front wishbone from when Jack had gone off on the last lap at Monaco. Five weeks after Norisring we ran it in the Oulton Park Gold Cup. I finished fifth there, and then we took it to the Canadian Grand Prix. When we turned up we were rubbished by the entire pitlane – another wanker comes to F1 – until Jackie Stewart, who'd already clinched his third world title, strolled up. I'd shared some Ford touring car drives with Jackie, so we knew each other. 'Anything I can do to help, Chris?' I loved that, it was really nice of him. But we never made the start, broke a cam on the warm-up lap. Two weeks later we were at Watkins Glen for the US GP. Soon after the start the electrics cut out. I pushed it back to the pits, they changed the battery, I went out again, and kept going for 30 laps until the rear suspension broke. It had been vibrating at the back for a while, and in the pits Tauranac said, 'Why didn't you bring it straight in when you felt that?' I said, 'In sports cars you don't stop just because you've got a vibration. You keep going until it hits the ground.'"



Keith (left) and Chris: 75 years of racing experience between them – and still smiling!

Bernie Ecclestone was now moving onto the F1 scene. Keith takes up the story: "Bernie rang me and said, 'I've just bought Brabham', like he was talking about buying a packet of fags. 'You fancy running it? Come and see me at 10 o'clock tomorrow.' I tell you, Bernie was tough in those days. Today he's a pussycat by comparison. He slept a maximum of four hours a night, ate like a sparrow – but always three-star Michelin sparrow food, of course. In his office he had a desk you could have played football on, but there was never anything on it. He'd be on four phones at once around the world, checking up on everybody. His brain was incredible, and he never, ever, forgot anything anybody said or did. You had to remember everything you'd talked to him about, and a lot more you hadn't, because he'd phone you up at 4am and quiz you about it.

"Our drivers were Graham Hill, Carlos Reutemann and Wilson Fittipaldi. We had 15 DFVs, five per driver, and Graham complained that he wasn't getting the best engines. The first GP we went to was Buenos Aires. We were just getting everything unpacked when there's a yell from the back of the pit: 'Greene, here!' Bernie's with Graham, Carlos and Wilson. 'Got a coin?' I produce a peso. 'Right, I'll tell you who's having which engines for the year. Hill, heads or tails? Heads. Right, Hill, engine number 932. Write it down, Greene.' I tossed the coin 15 times, wrote down 15 numbers, and Bernie said: 'That's the engines everybody has for the season. And I don't want another f***ing word about good and bad engines.' Strides off, gone.

"That year Graham did nearly 6000 miles of testing, Carlos 4500, Wilson 4300. We had eight mechanics in total, and they were doing 100 hours a week. So was I. I stayed for the season, then I moved on. But you can never quite escape Bernie. A few years later at Spa, running Gordy Spice's Capris for the Martin brothers in the Belgian GP support race, I'm summoned to the Brabham motorhome. They were sponsored by Parmalat then. 'I've got to leave quick after the race. Watch the boys take the cars through post-race scrutineering, will you? You like Parma ham?' He calls to that little Italian guy who ran errands for him. 'Give Greeney a pile of that Parma stuff.'" ➤➤➤

De Cadenet soon realised that Ecurie Evergreen wasn't going to take F1 by storm. But British glory at Le Mans was his other ambition, and he had the ingenious idea of using the BT33's running gear to build an endurance racer. He persuaded Brabham's Gordon Murray to draw the monocoque, Grand Prix Metalcraft built it, and Alain talked Duckhams into sponsoring it. Chris describes that first Le Mans foray in 1972: "Two hours to go, and we were battling for fourth place with the de Adamich/Vaccarella Alfa T33. Then suddenly it rained. De Adamich lost it, spun without hitting anything, carried on. I lost it, caught a wooden post, damaged the steering. It was repaired, but the stewards wouldn't let us out again until the last lap, so we only got 12th place. I felt dreadful about that."

Chris also raced David Piper's Porsche 917: "Not a frightening car, despite its reputation. I loved it. Unfortunately I crashed it, twice. At the Norisring I was working to stay ahead of a couple of 917/10s. I had about 670 horsepower, they had over 1000 each. Trying to get it stopped for the hairpin, I stuffed it into first and it turned sharp right into the barriers. The two lengths of Armco opened up, and my feet went though the gap. My fault, so I paid Pipes for the damage. The other time was at the Nürburgring, going down the Foxhole, and the left-hand front wheel suddenly appeared through the bodywork. The wishbone joint had pulled out of the upright. You're doing 170mph there."

In F5000 Chris raced several chassis, starting with the unsuccessful Leda. "Not one of Len Terry's best efforts. It was awful. Later I drove a Team VDS Chevron alongside Teddy Pilette, who won the championship in 1973. But I never felt comfortable in F5000. The cars seemed unbalanced to me." Also in '73 Chris campaigned a Lola T292 for Martin Birrane's Crowne Racing team, winning the European Sports Car title – managed, as ever, by Keith.

At Le Mans that year the de Cadenet was out soon after half-distance with broken suspension. "We couldn't get the straight-line speed out of the car," says Chris, "and I said to Alain, 'We're wasting our time. I'm not going back if we can't get more than 205mph.' So various mods were made, which we needed to try. We decided to run it down the M4 at night, but the headlights weren't fitted at this point, so we had to wait until dawn was breaking. We unloaded the car on the roundabout over Junction 16, and sent the van 13 miles down to Junction 17. Then off I went. I pulled 7200rpm, which I knew was 213mph, so that was all right. I peeled off at Junction 17, the van was waiting on the roundabout, and we stuffed the car in quick and went back to London. Unfortunately at full chat I'd had to go between two lorries, one was pulling out to pass the other and I couldn't lift off. So it got reported to the police. But we never heard anything more. Of course, in 1964 when Jack Sears did 185mph on the M1 in the Le Mans Cobra, it was all perfectly legal…"

> "I pulled 7200rpm on the M4, which I knew was 213mph, so that was all right"

For 1974 the de Cadenet was now painted patriotic dark green, but Alain was a spectator with a broken collar bone after falling off his scooter. Chris shared the car with John Nicholson, and they were lying third at midnight before a succession of suspension breakages put them out. In '75, with a Lola T385-based car, Chris and Alain finished a lowly 14th after various dramas; but Chris was credited with fastest lap, quicker than the winning Ickx/Bell Mirage. The best Le Mans year was '76. They took a superb third place, Keith directing operations as always: "With Alain we were always on a marginal budget, but what was good about him was he never pretended to be better than he was. It was his kit, but he always did as he was told. To finish at Le Mans you have to be mechanically sympathetic, disciplined with rev limits. We had one of the oldest DFVs in existence, and that same old engine did the race year after year. And always gentle with the gearbox: get the changes right, neat and deliberate so you don't wear out the transmission."

De Cadenet/Craft were fifth in the 1977 race, and 15th in '78 after two mid-race transmission rebuilds. Then Alain told Chris he wasn't going to do Le Mans in '79. "After seven years that seemed to be that, so I signed with the Japanese Dome team, who were entering for the first time with a big two-car operation. Ten days later Alain told me he was going after all: by then I was committed. I did the race three times for Dome, but we always had problems. A strange car: very narrow, so it would do 226mph, but heavy, no downforce, no mechanical grip. And terrible brakes. Plus the tyres kept coming off the rims at high speed…"

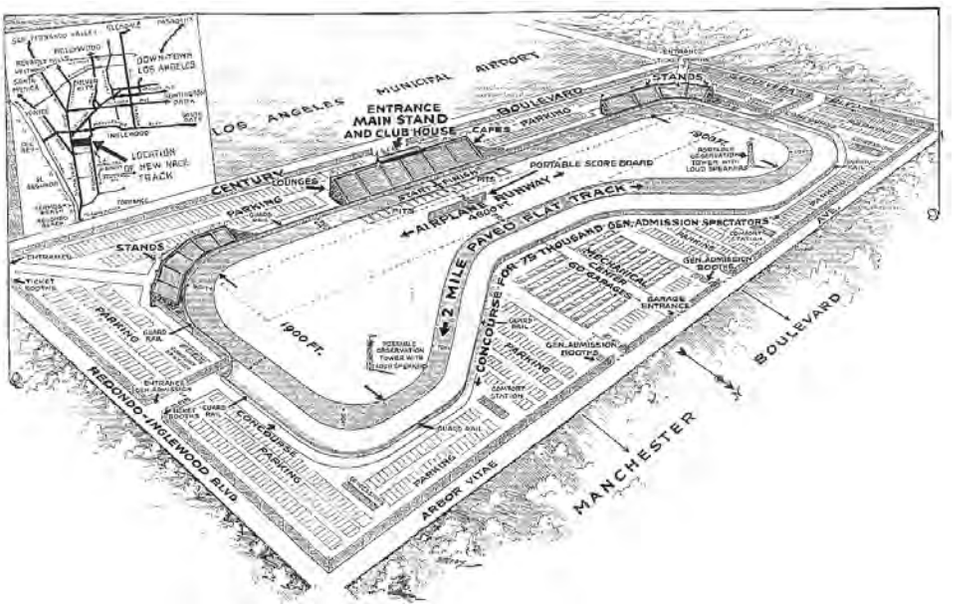
Keith has managed so many cars, teams and drivers in his long career that we can't talk about them all. An F1 Brabham for Hexagon of Highgate and John Watson. John Fitzpatrick Porsches, with victory in the Brands Hatch 1000Kms for Fitz and Derek Warwick. Richard Lloyd's GTi Engineering, with second place at Le Mans in 1985 for Palmer, Weaver and Lloyd. The works March-Nissans, and then the Toyota World Sports Car programme for three seasons in Japan and at Le Mans. The BTCC BMWs of Vic Lee Motorsport: Tim Harvey won the 1992 title despite, as Keith drily points out, the team's boss being jailed for smuggling drugs in the transporter. The BTCC Renault Dealer team for two seasons, with Alain Menu finishing runner-up in 1994. Callaway Corvettes in sports cars for Rocky Agusta and Almo Capelli. Then he ran Jonathan Palmer's Bruntingthorpe operation.

I've watched the discipline of a Greene-run team at work in the Le Mans pitlane, Keith controlling everything and still timing every lap himself. But he says, "Being a good team manager isn't about being tough on people. I always had infinite patience with mechanics and drivers. You need to understand what they're saying and thinking, and translate that into a better performance. Having been a driver yourself helps a lot." After Keith ran the private Spice/Martin/Martin Rondeau to third place at Le Mans in 1980, Jean Rondeau brought him in to manage his mammoth works operation for the '81 24 Hours. "A logistical nightmare. We had five cars and 125 French mechanics, and my French isn't great. I did it by keeping a separate book for each car, and we brought two of them home second and third behind the Ickx/Bell works Porsche. I had another French spell in '96, running Courage-Porsches. Both cars ran in the top six, but on Sunday morning Philippe Alliot crashed at Tertre Rouge, and Mario Andretti went off at Indianapolis. So he, Warwick and Lammers only finished 13th."

Chris, as his racing career wound down, farmed sheep and planted trees, and launched the Light Car Company to build the Rocket, Gordon Murray's design for a racing car for road use. Looking like an open-wheel single-seater – although it had tyre-hugging mudguards and a tandem passenger seat – it boasted 145bhp of Yamaha motorcycle power to propel less than 400kgs. "Every component was purpose-made. We sold them for £28,400, and lost money on every one. I'm still in touch with most of the owners, they're like family."

Chris' latest project is to restore the only remaining World War I airfield. Keith now enjoys riding his Honda CB1000R and sailing, both full-size craft and radio-controlled models with eight-foot-tall masts. "I stopped competing as a driver because, racing against Moss and Clark and Gurney, I knew I wasn't good enough. Getting a group of guys to pull together, coaxing a victory out of all of them, that gave me a true feeling of achievement."

Final word from Chris: "Racing in our day was a wonderful life. It was dangerous, but nobody made us do it. I reckon we're very, very lucky to have done it when we did."



Before the gold rush

US stock car racing boomed thanks to NASCAR. But its roots were planted in unlikely territory: California dirt

BY JONATHAN INGRAM

Many claims have been made about the location of the first race in America for production cars, which came to be known as stock cars. The majority of these accounts concern bootleggers racing in cornfields in the South, stories often told for the benefit of Southern pride and pre-race publicity by whiskey trippers-turned-race car drivers. But there's little dispute about which race was the first to establish that stock cars could generate speed, excitement and a large crowd of ticket-buying enthusiasts.

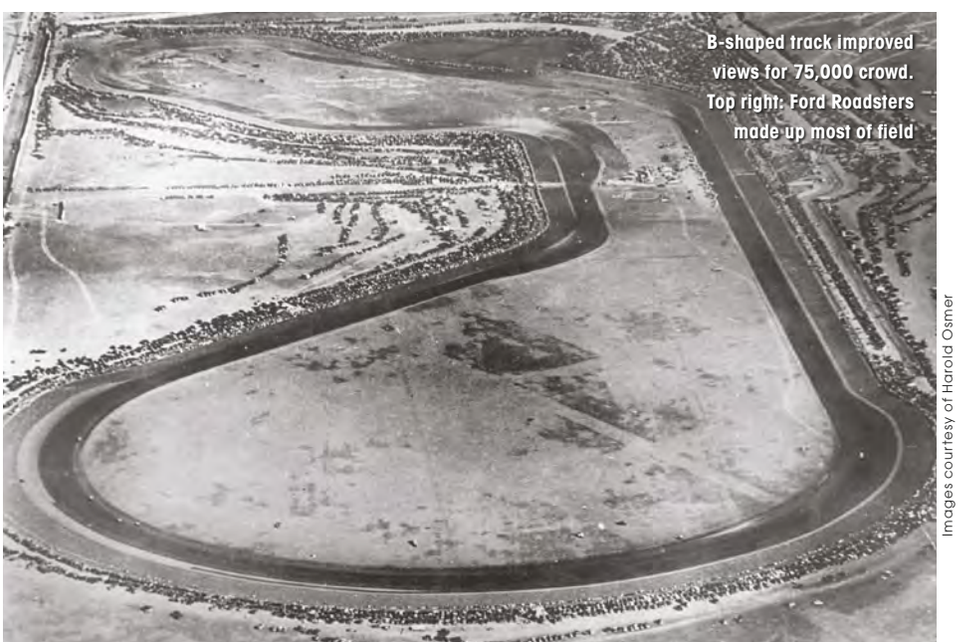
This landmark race was held near the coastline in rutted, sandy soil and featured cars powered by the engine that convinced bootleggers they could outrun Revenuers despite cars laden with whiskey – the Ford flathead V8. But it wasn't at Daytona Beach: it was held on the California coast, far from the birthplace of NASCAR.

Run in February 1934 in an already car-crazy Los Angeles, the Gilmore Gold Cup was a spellbinding event that lived up to the standards of its promoter William Pickens, a publicist known for finding new ways to sell tickets to an admiring public, such as pitting a biplane against cigar-smoking barnstormer Barney Oldfield's Fiat around oval speedways. When it came to the idea of racing stock production cars three decades on, Pickens was the middleman in a trio driven by a desire to sell gasoline and Ford cars.

Keen to promote his Gilmore Gasoline, oilman Earl B Gilmore liked sponsoring the 'Big Cars', as Indy-style machines were known, in national championship events sanctioned by the AAA, including the Indy 500. But in the early 1930s, the demise of board tracks and the economic downturn had reduced the AAA's national championship schedule. Looking for new avenues, Gilmore teamed with Pickens and Ford dealers to create the Gilmore Gold Cup. A four-race series, this started on a public roads circuit in Elgin, Illinois before moving to LA for the second race. To tout the performance of the new flathead V8, LA Ford dealers provided Roadsters, while Pickens recruited well-known driving stars.

They were to race on a new, purpose-built oiled dirt track near what is now Los Angeles International Airport. The Mines Field track had a long front straight and an ample viewing area for spectators, but to give fans a closer view of all the action the back straight bowed in toward the front. Slewing out of the east turn, drivers could hit 90 miles an hour on the front straight before downshifting into second gear for the west turn.

Given that the field was made up of racing blue-bloods, including Indy 500 winners Louis Meyer and Pete De Paulo, future Indy victors Wilbur Shaw and Kelly Petillo plus local heroes



B-shaped track improved views for 75,000 crowd. Top right: Ford Roadsters made up most of field

Images courtesy of Harold Osmer





like Rex Mays, who would win the pole at just over 70mph, the Mines Field race had a high profile. Dignitaries included flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker and famed French racer Leon Duray, while a parade of cars and drivers was held on LA's Broadway to promote Ford's Roadsters and ticket sales.

The AAA was to verify that the drivetrain was entirely stock on the cars, although bumpers, fenders, headlights and windscreens could be removed. The majority of the entries, 23, were Ford Roadsters, but one Chrysler, a Chevrolet, one Plymouth and a Rochne also ran. Due to the expected rutting of the soil and the necessary pit stops for fuel and tyre changes, the average speed of the race was anticipated as around 60mph.

On the morning of the race the *LA Times* described the event as "A new era in the enthralling history of automobile history on the Coast. After four hours of chilling speed, breath-taking daring and courageous endurance," ran the story, "the 50,000 fans who are expected to line the well-oiled surface will have been shown just how well their own little runabouts compare with the other various makes of light cars on the road."

The inaugural race at Mines Field drew a crowd estimated at 75,000 by the *Times*, many in their own vehicles as well as some temporary grandstands after paying $2 a ticket, then a large sum. They saw an outstanding event where local heroes 'Stubby' Stubblefield and Al Gordon fought for victory in the closing stages. Coverage could also be heard on a local radio station.

"And so it went," reported the paper, "Gordon taking unbelievable chances and making up time in the dangerous east curve and Stubblefield gaining it back on the straight-aways. ...Gordon kept the entire assemblage in a state of breathless suspense with his wild antics, to no avail."

In a result eerily familiar to the first race at the Daytona Speedway in February 1959, the first Mines Field event took three days to determine a winner. It was not until Thursday that fans were informed 'Stubby' Stubblefield, who was passed during his pit stop by Gordon in the late going, was the winner after a re-check of the scoring.

Adding controversy, Gordon waived his right to check Stubblefield's entry for non-stock equipment when the official results were changed, and the two were shown shaking hands in a publicity photo announcing the new winner.

At a time when Detroit was flooding the American market with relatively low-cost automobiles, the Mines Field race established a precedent when it came to the crowd appeal of stock cars. In this light, the Mines Field race had as much to do with the origins of NASCAR as the bootlegging in the Appalachian mountains.

Among those taking note were the city fathers of the Daytona Beach and Ormond Beach areas, the scene of land speed record attempts since 1906. Following the death of record chaser Frank Lockhart at Daytona in 1928 and the shift of Sir Malcolm Campbell and his ilk to the relatively safer hazy heat of the Bonneville Salt Flats to pursue land speed records, the entrepreneurs of Daytona Beach were forced to look for a new way to draw tourists to the unpredictable, often chilly climate of north Florida in the winter months. The success of the "spine-tingling" Mines Field event one year earlier in Los Angeles offered a solution. If a stock car race could replace the glory of the established 'Big Cars' in California, why not give the stock cars a try on the beach in Daytona?

> "Al Gordon kept the entire assemblage in suspense with his wild antics"

Starting in 1936, the race on the sands of Daytona and Highway A1A lost money for the city in its first two years, largely because fans had become accustomed to watching the land speed record vehicles for no charge and often occupied the course without buying a ticket. Then in 1938 driver turned promoter Bill France took over the race promotion and the rest is better known history than events at Mines Field.

Whatever happened to the track in Los Angeles? It was the reverse of the situation in Daytona Beach, because the successful event in California soon folded in the absence of its charismatic pitch man. Promoter Pickens contracted blood poisoning when he stepped on a rusty nail at what was officially known as the Municipal Airport Speedway shortly after the first event. He later had his leg amputated and subsequently died in July '34. Without his expertise the race lost momentum. The facility remained active for two more years, but the open-wheel sprint cars, midgets and 'Big Cars' soon took the upper hand.

Affectionately known as an "accelerator of public sentiment", Pickens was lauded for his many promotions in the *LA Times* obituary, which concluded with a note on his ambitions. "He planned and talked of larger and better races for the stock cars," read the obit, "but [Mines Field] was his last big effort."

Two more Gilmore Gold Cup events were held in 1934, one at Ascot Speedway promoted as the 'American Targa Florio'. This failed because fans could watch without buying a ticket as the course left the oval to run on public roads and then returned to the track. Next, the Ford dealers took their cars back and sold them refurbished after the two LA races. In fact, they literally raced on Sunday and sold on Monday!

The last Gold Cup race ran in Oakland on its one-mile dirt oval that same year. Despite the end of the Cup, Oakland's dirt mile hosted stock car races until WWII.

This new thing of racing production vehicles took hold at places like Ft Wayne's mile oval in Indiana and elsewhere in the Midwest, too. Thanks to the success of the races run by 'Big Bill' France in Daytona, the mile dirt tracks at Lakewood in Atlanta and Langhorne near Philadelphia also began promoting stock car events in the late 1930s where previously they had focused on barnstormers and Indy cars.

The race to promote stock cars was on. Ⓜ

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Road cars



by Andrew Frankel

So it's happened. Bentley's much-threatened SUV finally broke cover at the Geneva Motorshow and if its first job was to grab as many headlines as possible, it succeeded beyond every imaginable expectation. At a show where Lamborghini and Ferrari showed perhaps their most exciting-looking cars of the last generation, all anyone wanted to do was talk about the Bentley.

Whether Bentley staff will be pleased with what was being said is another matter. Reaction varied from indifferent to aghast with a solid middle ground of really rather shocked in between. Of course Bentley's biggest mistake was to show their vast, inelegant and inappropriate SUV in the salubrious surroundings of Geneva. If it had waited a month for the Beijing show, it might have passed off as comparatively tasteful amid the monstrosities that tend to pop up in that part of the world come show time.

The EXP9 F can, however, be defended on two counts: first it will undoubtedly sell in large quantities and for big money in China, Russia, the Middle East and the US. Second, it remains a 'concept' for now. The production car is undoubtedly no more than three years away, but that does give Bentley some room in which to reconsider the car's appearance: if it were gorgeous or anything other than damnably ugly it would sell in even greater numbers without dragging the marque's image through the mud. And a mere two days after the show, at least one Bentley executive was admitting in private that they needed to look at it again.

Other companies seemed to have a clearer understanding of what is expected of their brand, none more so than Ferrari. While Bentley, Aston Martin, Maserati and even Lamborghini are either actively designing or at least seriously flirting with the idea of making an SUV, Ferrari has ruled out such a move.





Instead Maranello brought to Geneva a new flagship called the F12 Berlinetta to replace the 599GTB. Unlike Ferrari's last offering, the capable but compromised FF, I found the F12's proposition utterly compelling. I must reserve final judgement until I drive one, but on paper and show stand alike, it appears everything you could hope a front-engined, V12 Ferrari to be. This is the configuration Enzo Ferrari chose for every road car to bear his name from the birth of the company to the mid-engined Boxer in 1973 (although most do, Dinos should never carry Ferrari badges or prancing horses) and it remains the type that best defines the marque.

But what I like most about the F12 is that it shows Ferrari's understanding of what is required of a 21st-century supercar. Namely not just more, but less. So while power has somewhat predictably risen, all the way to a scarcely believable 730bhp at 8700rpm from its normally aspirated 6.3-litre motor (can you imagine how that's going to sound?) the car is actually smaller in every area and lighter too. Compared with the 599GTB at launch, it also uses 30 per cent less fuel.

However Ferrari insists the real step forward it has made with the F12 is in its aerodynamics. During the guided tour I was shown how air slipping into those deep bonnet channels was used to smooth out turbulence emanating from the wheel arches and how the cooling ducts for the front brakes only opened when sensors detected brake temperature reaching a critical point. I asked whether the car has an F1-style blown diffuser and was told the company did not want to talk about that at present. So, yes, it does.

Meanwhile Jaguar finds itself in a predicament. Thanks to its cars being beautiful, well received and increasingly perceived as reliable, more people want to own a Jaguar now than in recent history: if a product's sales were measurable only by the public's desire for it, all Jaguar's problems would be over. As it is, last year it sold just over 50,000 cars, which makes it not a minnow among its German rivals, but something closer to plankton.

Why? Simply put, a product needs to be more than merely desirable before it will sell. Until last year it was not possible to buy a

Jaguar with an engine displacing less than three litres or powered by fewer than six cylinders. Which means Jaguar was cut off from the vast majority of its potential customers: those who might like the idea of big multi-cylinder engines but not half as much as the reduced price, taxation and running costs of cars with small four-cylinder engines. When Jaguar finally got around to putting one in the XF, it immediately accounted for 65 per cent of all XF sales.

A quarter of the cars in the XF's class are estates, of which, until Geneva, Jaguar had none. Now and thanks again to the expert hand of Ian Callum and his team, the XF Sportbrake is the best-looking estate on the market.

I almost missed the last of what turned out to be my three favourite cars at Geneva. So busy was I gawping at the gorgeously styled but stupidly named Emerg-E supercar concept on the Infiniti stand that I walked straight past its Nissan parent, and therefore its equally daftly entitled 'Invitation' hatchback.

Over the years Nissan has come up with some of the very silliest names for its products, including, Cedric, Leopard J Ferie and, my personal favourite, the Big Thumb Harmonised Truck, but they're usually attached to machines you'd not take very seriously. Not this time: the Invitation is a very real car that will go into production in apparently similar form at Nissan's massively successful Sunderland plant next year, creating 2000 new jobs in the process.

Its aim is to compete in the Fiesta-sized class with a car boasting the interior space of a small MPV and the style and kudos usually reserved for a low-slung coupé. The production version will differ very little from the car shown at Geneva though, thankfully, the name seems unlikely to make it off the stand. If Nissan has any sense at all, and it has lots, it will be called 'Note' after the car it is indirectly replacing. There was much else that was noteworthy at Geneva: Audi launched an all-new A3, though it looked so similar to the current car it would be easy to mistake for a minor facelift. By contrast the new Mercedes A-class could hardly be more different: for good or bad, Mercedes has abandoned the clever sandwich floor platform which has provided the A-class with such astonishing space efficiency since 1998, in favour of an entirely conventional configuration.

As for the Lamborghini mentioned earlier, I'd have dwelt sooner on the Aventador J were it not for the fact that total production will amount to a single unit, already sold for an undisclosed number of millions.

Such one-off commissions are more common than you'd think. Ferrari has been doing them for many years and the reason we know so little about them is that most get spirited away into private collections. However irrelevant, it was nice to see one on public view for once.

MY MOTORING MONTH



TEMPTED BY AN EXQUISITELY RESTORED E-TYPE

THIS MONTH SAW A COUPLE OF wonderful steps into Jaguar history. First was a trip to see Henry Pearman at Eagle, the man who'll take a rusty old E-type and turn it into something far better than even Sir William would have ever imagined.

I've always had a hankering for an E, failing to be put off even by a rather tired 4.2-litre 2+2 coupé that made a brief appearance in my childhood. This is the least desirable specification it's possible to have, and I still loved it.

Once grown up my appetite was whetted further by Philip Porter suggesting I tried to reach 150mph in 9600HP, the oldest of the surviving E-type prototypes and the car that, with the aid of an engine more closely related to a D than an E, reached precisely that speed in 1961. First time out I blew it up at 140mph on Millbrook's banking, but, undeterred, Philip rebuilt the engine, we tried again and it reached a slightly oversteery 147mph. I then drove the other E-type prototype, the convertible 77RW, from Browns Lane to Geneva in 2001 and thought I'd blown that too when I looked in the mirror and saw I was towing what appeared to be a ball of white smoke at 130mph down the autoroute. It was merely steam, and after pausing to replace a core plug we continued to Switzerland.

Sadly I think my E-type-owning aspirations will remain just that, at least any coming from the Eagle stable. Though cars can be had for far less, now I have seen the fastidious attention to detail foisted on cars that come its way, I understand why the cheapest E Henry has for sale costs £85,000, and the most expensive 'normal' car an eye-watering £225,000. If you want one of Eagle's bespoke Speedsters you can double that cost.

Pearman says that if you deliver to him a sound but shabby E-type, it will typically be two years before you drive it again. In that time every nut and bolt will have been restored – so that at least 80 per cent of the original car will be returned to you. What comprises the remaining 20 per cent depends on your tastes and budget. Large modern brakes and five-speed boxes are common upgrades, as are modern suspension components. My eye, however, was caught by a 4.7-litre engine block. Pearman says something over 400bhp would be easily possible, but it's been tuned for effortless torque instead.



IS IT TIME TO REAPPRAISE THE JAGUAR XJ220?

MY SECOND VISIT WAS TO OLD chum Don Law near Stafford to reacquaint myself with a Jaguar XJ220, almost 20 years after I first drove one. Don's premises are akin to a shrine to Jaguar's troubled supercar. When I was there he had a mere dozen or so on hand, including a yellow 680bhp XJ220S and David Coulthard's class-winning (but later disqualified) Le Mans car. I was casually tossed the keys to what appeared to be a standard car but was actually one of the most important pre-production prototypes, the very car in which Andy Wallace reached 213mph during tyre testing. It was then turned into a race car for Don's formidably quick son Justin before reverting to standard road-going form.

The XJ220 is not without its critics, but it's worth remembering it struggled to sell not because it was a bad car but because the economic climate had turned against it. Its downfall was ensured by Jaguar's decision to persuade depositors by force of law either to purchase their cars or buy their way out of their commitment. The decision may have made commercial sense but it was a PR disaster from which the XJ220 never recovered. But before the era of the McLaren F1, here was a beautiful, rare (just 283 were built) and British supercar that was not just the fastest in the world, but was fastest by a mile. Indeed it was the first production road car to turn 200mph from a near mythical objective to just another number on the dial. Perhaps the time has come for it to step out of the shadows.

CHASSIS CLEANER TURNS OUT TO BE A BLAST

I DON'T USUALLY DO PRODUCT plugs on this page, but out of the blue Kärcher sent me a chassis-cleaning attachment for their pressure washer and I thought I'd give it a go. So I went for a blast in the old Porker and when I came back, rigged up the device and set to work. It sits on a small plastic trolley which can be slid under your car.

Judging by the fountain of detergent it shot into the air when I pulled it out again while forgetting to release the trigger, it will clearly blast all the salt from the underside of your car. How much underseal will come away with it too is unclear. Even so, for around £80 (without the washer) I thought it a worthwhile addition to the garage.



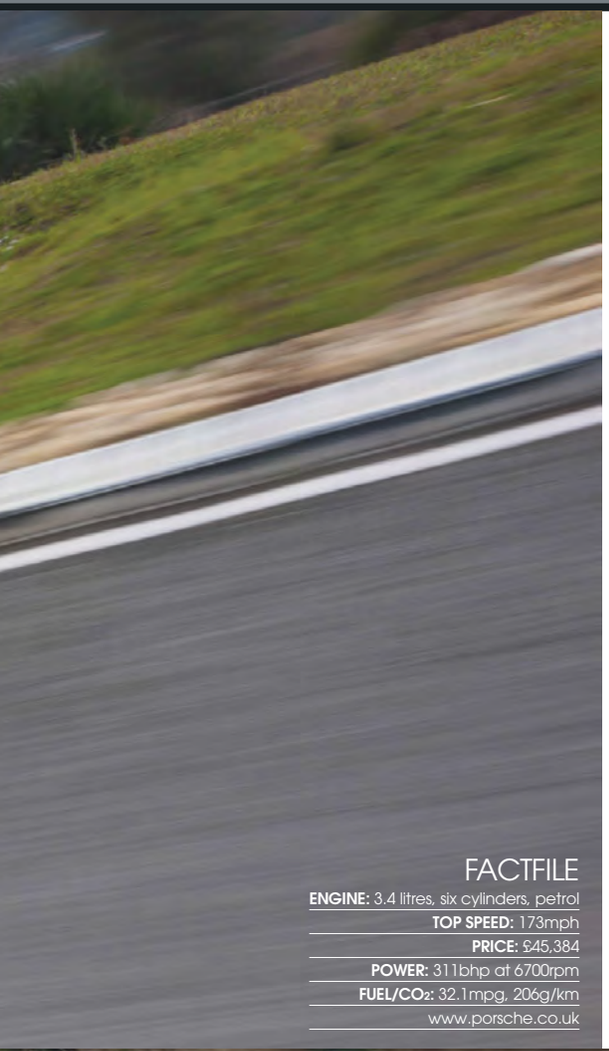
PORSCHE BOXSTER S

Here's progress for you. When the Porsche Boxster was launched in 1996, the quickest normally aspirated Porsche you could buy was the RS version of the last of the air-cooled 911s – the famed 993RS, no less. It was a fabulous car – I know, I owned one for a couple of years and still kick myself for selling it to finance some inconsequential racing. Compared with the 300bhp 993, the 201bhp Boxster was a pedal car. Spool forward to the present day and here's a very different Boxster, one that in 'S' trim now has 311bhp. Moreover, now it weighs just 40kg more than the 993RS did then and, with advances in brakes, tyres and suspension technology, it's quite clear that this Boxster would now trounce that old 911 in a straight fight.

We know this not merely thanks to basic maths, but to another strange statistic: in 1999 Porsche produced the first of its mad 911GT3s, a very specialist piece of equipment designed primarily to homologate the racing version of the all-new water-cooled 996 series of 911. It became the first Porsche ever to lap the Nürburgring Nordschleife in less than eight minutes. Today this common-or-garden Boxster, aimed as much at *fashionistas* as hard-driving road warriors, will also duck under the eight-minute mark. Put another way, Porsche's tamest car of today is as quick as its wildest of just a dozen years ago. At this rate, by 2024 the standard Boxster will have around 450bhp and lap the 'Ring at a rate you'd once have required a Group C car to match.

We shall see. For now, however, Porsche has other things on its mind with the new Boxster.

The brief was an interesting one. Now that Porsche has been wholly absorbed into the Volkswagen colossus, you might have thought the Boxster likely to become pigeon-holed. It happens all the time: when Haymarket bought this very magazine back in 1996, its new proprietors very sensibly looked around its stable and saw others dealing with road cars old and new and with modern racing. So *Motor Sport* became dedicated to old racing cars, this being the only space left in the portfolio. It was only when it was sold on and into the hands of



FACTFILE

ENGINE: 3.4 litres, six cylinders, petrol
TOP SPEED: 173mph
PRICE: £45,384
POWER: 311bhp at 6700rpm
FUEL/CO2: 32.1mpg, 206g/km
www.porsche.co.uk



its current proprietor that it was able to broaden its appeal to re-embrace modern racing and extensive road car coverage such as you are reading now.

But the Volkswagen Group has always taken a contrary view of what appears to be simple common sense, and it has never shied away from a spot of in-house competition. Indeed, if you look at the ways various VWs, Skodas and SEATs are marketed, inter-marque rivalry seems to be actively sought.

The same is true of the Boxster. However much faster and more fun it may or may



MG6 is roomy, but dynamically it lags behind the competition

MG6 MAGNETTE TSE

HOW MANY REALLY good MGs have there been? There were many before the war, from the pretty little PB to the giant-slaying K3, and a few after, like the TC. Unquestionably the MGB was in touch with its times, but it broke no new ground even in 1963, something you could say about every car to sport the octagon since. Fact is, the overwhelming majority of MGs I've driven in nearly quarter of a century doing this job have been disappointing.

And yet there seems to be nothing that can be done to kill the public's affection for the brand.

Time alone will tell what the world thinks of this MG6, but for now I can tell you it feels like a car from a time gone by. Not inherently bad, just entirely out of date.

This should be no surprise as it is something of a mongrel, with parts of its design dating back to the Rover 75 and the rest of it derived from something called the Roewe 550, a car produced by MG's Chinese parent SAIC.

There is little that is actively unpleasant about the MG6 save for its rather dated and ugly dashboard, but too little to provide grounds to recommend it to anyone save those intent on going about their daily business in a MG. Reasonable performance is extracted from its lightly turbocharged 1.8-litre engine but the gearing of the five-speed manual 'box is absurdly long, fuel consumption poor and engine refinement little better than adequate. I didn't much appreciate it constantly flashing red 'change up' warnings at me, particularly when I was in top gear.

Its chassis fares better, thanks to its well-judged suspension which features a properly independent multi-link rear end. The car has pleasant steering and a balance that's unusual to find in such cars. Even so, grip levels are modest and traction surprisingly poor at times.

Actual strengths are too few and far between: the car is well packaged and offers good room in the back, but if you're looking for a USP beyond that badge and the fact that its final assembly takes place in Longbridge, you're going to struggle to find it. Nor will I be alone in fearing for its residual value.

It is to be hoped therefore that the MG6 is just the start, a means of getting the name back out there before introducing cars perhaps more worthy of the brand. The truth is, 10 years ago the MG6 would have been more than adequate. Today it seems barely mediocre at best.

FACTFILE

ENGINE: 1.8 litres, four cylinders, petrol
TOP SPEED: 120mph
PRICE: £19,995
POWER: 156bhp at 5500rpm
FUEL/CO2: 35.9mpg, 184g/km
www.mg.co.uk



not be relative to its predecessor, these differences are little compared to the changes wrought in the car's essential character. This is a calmer, quieter and more comfortable Boxster, a more overtly styled car designed to appeal to those as keen on being seen in a Boxster as actually driving one. Indeed, if there is a better reason not to buy an Audi TT roadster than this, I have not driven it.

It would be understandable if you were disappointed by this revelation. In this corner of the market there has always been a straight choice for the customer: he or she either took the line of least resistance and bought a TT or a Mercedes SLK because it was good-looking, absurdly easy to drive and covered the ground with the ease of a saloon, or chose a Boxster, gladly accepting some compromise to comfort for the knowledge that they'd enjoy themselves every time they climbed aboard. Any attempt to combine the best of these two worlds tended to result in rather unsatisfactory compromise, as the BMW Z4 bears witness.

But Porsche appears to have found a way around this, a means of planting a foot firmly in each camp without doing the splits.

Like the new 911, with which it shares a large (but undisclosed) number of parts, there is something slightly conflicted about the Boxster. Many owners will spend their entire time with the car delighted that it's so much better suited to their everyday lives without ever realising (or, probably, caring) that when the traffic dies back and the road opens up, there is a scintillating driving experience lurking beneath that breezy all-purpose ability.

Faced with a choice of weapons at its launch in southern France, I selected a manual Boxster S with a 311bhp, 3.4-litre motor and six-speed 'box and headed for the hills. Interestingly and significantly this is the old gearbox and not a version of the new and disappointing seven-speed manual created for the 911. Paired to a chassis of exceptional rigidity and damping perfectly tuned into the most difficult of surfaces the result was a level of point-to-point fluency that, at times, had you gasping at its brilliance.

The point is not that it feels like a racing car, for that would be entirely inappropriate, but that it summons such grip, poise and precision in a package that's now at least as sensible as an Audi TT.











Mean equipment levels detract little from the new Boxster's desirability

Porsche has figured out a fact that still continues to elude most other manufacturers of sporting cars. True driving pleasure lies not in how hard it kicks when you accelerate, nor how quickly it reacts to each movement of the wheel, but in providing the driver with the equipment to make the most of his or her abilities. So you need an engine with deliciously precise throttle response and power delivered evenly across a wide rev range. You need a gearbox that allows you to drive smoothly without thinking about it. You need steering that is linear in response from lock to lock so your every input is met with an entirely predictable response. This is what the Boxster does to a standard no rival can even approach, let alone match.

So what is wrong with this new roadster? Well, it's expensive and meanly equipped for the money, while the steering is not quite so lucid in the feel it feeds back to the driver. But that's about it.

I shall watch further Boxster developments with interest. In time it will be made available with a 2-litre flat-four turbocharged engine because of the fuel consumption, CO2 and, therefore, tax benefits that would result. Lighter, and probably still with around 240bhp, it should evoke the spirit of the 356, though whether even Porsche can make a turbo four a worthy motor for such a car remains to be seen. A normally aspirated screamer would be far more evocative, but at the price of the fuel efficiency that is the reason for its creation in the first place.

For now, however, this Boxster is another fine accomplishment from a car company as on top of its game as I can remember it ever being. Though I will always prefer a Cayman or a 911 because of my fundamental belief that fast cars gain more from being closed than they lose, if you believe the merit of a machine can be measured by how it performs relative to its rivals, it is the Boxster and not the new 911 that is now the best car Porsche makes.



Since the M550d won't be sold in the UK, the Alpina D5 has the market to itself

ALPINA D5

A WHILE AGO I inadvertently started a small war of words when a story broke saying that BMW's titanic new diesel-powered M550d was going to be sold over here. All I did was tweet my enthusiasm for the idea. But then other journos waded in to say it wasn't going on sale, while a few more said it was. BMW in Germany then said it could be sold here, while BMW in Bracknell said it wouldn't. It now seems it won't because it can only be made with four-wheel drive, which is incompatible with right-hand drive on a 5-series.

Which is the news Alpina has been waiting for, since it leaves its new D5 with the field to itself and a wide-open goal at the end of it. Simply put, if you want a large saloon of specifically rather than incidentally sporting intent, but need diesel range, economy and emissions, there's nowhere else to look.

Not that you'd want to. The D5 is one of those cars you'd choose to drive for hours, but which will actually show you its soul in five minutes if you've got the right piece of road in front of you. The 345bhp engine is quiet enough to make your passengers think it is petrol flowing through its combustion chambers, at least until you flex your right toe and release more torque than even BMW's biggest hitter, the M5, can muster. Then you'll feel grunt that no 3-litre petrol engine could manage.





FACTFILE

ENGINE: 3.0 litres, six cylinders, diesel
TOP SPEED: 171mph
PRICE: £55,950
POWER: 345bhp at 4000rpm
FUEL/CO_2: 47.9mpg, 155g/km
www.bmwalpina.co.uk

Speed accrues without apparent effort and is matched by a chassis set up to be far less aggressive than that of the M5. On British B-roads, which are often wet and always require cars to be able to breathe over the bumps without also compromising primary ride control, the Alpina actually finds a far happier compromise than the M5, offering fine comfort yet fluent, fluid handling. I have no doubt that on a race track the tables would turn, but who cares about that with cars such as these?

Potential owners will be likely to care more about claimed fuel consumption almost 20mpg better than the M5's, a spec-adjusted price tag around £10,000 lower, and the fact you can have it as an estate and choose almost whatever colour interior you like.

Over the years I've driven some Alpinas I liked and a few I did not, but none I can recall that appealed beyond the niche in which the company has sat so comfortably for so long. But the D5 is different: not just by some margin the best Alpina of any kind I've driven, but a car that should be of interest to anyone who likes to go fast but needs a common-sense car too. To me it is a far better judged and more satisfying driving machine than an M5: the fact it will go over 200 miles further on every tank of fuel is icing on an extremely well baked cake.



Classic good looks, but the demeanour of the Plus 8 is also a retro experience

MORGAN PLUS 8

IT'S NOT CLEAR WHY IT HAS taken Morgan more than a decade to marry the classic looks of the original Plus 8 to the bonded aluminium structure of the startlingly ugly Aero 8, but I am glad they've finally got around to it. For the first time in too long, here is a Morgan that's both gorgeous in appearance and astonishingly quick point to point.

Not that I'd yet call it a good car, at least by any conventional measure. Its faults are too numerous to mention in detail, but fundamentally the 390bhp 4.8-litre BMW engine asks questions that the car to which it's fitted can't answer. The performance is savage and electronic regulation nonexistent, meaning that on damp roads it will happily spin its rear wheels at dizzying speeds. Worse, the steering is so ludicrously aggressive off-centre that the car requires concentration to guide even at sensible speeds, let alone when the back's got loose on a wet road. There's also nowhere to put your left foot, a gale in the cabin even with the roof up and guaranteed loss of dignity every time you get in and out. And there is no storage space at all.



Yet used on the right road (dry) at the right time of year (summer) for the right purpose (going to the pub and scaring your friends), its charm is real and rare. Whether that makes the Plus Eight an £85,000 investment worth making is another matter. It won't depreciate much and you'll look very dashing in it. But the Plus 8 is simply not good enough to be treated as a serious road weapon, so it's scope is limited to that of recreation. And in that case you can buy a Morgan Three Wheeler, have even more fun, and look even more dashing – and all for a third of the cash.



FACTFILE

ENGINE: 4.8 litres, eight cylinders
TOP SPEED: 155mph
PRICE: £85,200
POWER: 390bhp at 6000rpm
FUEL/CO2: 25.7mpg, 256g/km
www.morgan-motor.co.uk

AND THAT REMINDS ME...

Why looking fondly on past racing glories doesn't ring Jacky Ickx's bell

One of the most wonderful aspects of this job is that just occasionally the most prosaic circumstances can suddenly turn into events you'll remember for the rest of your life.

Not long ago I was attending the launch of a new type of Volkswagen Passat in France when, during some interminable press conference, I happened to look around the room and saw a short, dapper man looking for all the world like Jacky Ickx.

The reason for this was that it was Jacky Ickx. I elected to give up my place next to the man in charge of electronic architecture to have dinner with a man who's fascinated me since I could walk.

Infuriatingly, and as Simon Taylor found when he lunched with the great man, he is excellent at talking about anything other than himself, particularly when it comes to racing. He has kept no memorabilia, gives the impression of not much liking the young Jacky Ickx and says that today it's almost as if it all happened to someone else.

Just once he seemed to dial back into the old times and appeared, very briefly, almost wistful. At the time he was describing lapping the old Spa at an average of over 163mph in a Ferrari 312PB. He also named the five drivers with whom he felt most proud to have shared cars. Three of them, Messrs Bell, Redman and Oliver, were Brits. The other two were Mass and Andretti.

But the only time he became truly animated was discussing his National Service. This he spent instructing people how to drive tanks. But being a very young Jacky Ickx he couldn't just do the job. "They caught me doing doughnuts," he ruefully recalled. And instead of recognising a sublime talent, they locked him up for a couple of nights. I'm sure I'm wrong, but he gave the impression of being more pleased with that than any one of his six Le Mans wins.



Sidetracked
WITH ED FOSTER





Sky's substantial F1 spend includes a bespoke UK studio and a portable on-event one

So what does everyone think of Sky's Formula 1 coverage so far? The best there has ever been? Overkill? Or maybe you were quite happy with the BBC's highlights package for the Australian Grand Prix?

Whatever your thoughts, you can't deny that Sky is throwing all its resources at F1. On a recent trip to its offices in Osterley, London to talk to the production team behind the F1 channel and Sky Sports News it became clear just how much effort is going into the coverage.

There are 80 staff and 18 tonnes of equipment sent to each Grand Prix, a new studio at HQ has been created just for F1 and there is a portable studio that will be shipped to 16 of the 20 races. And that's just the start.

A week after going to Osterley I was at the launch of the BBC's F1 coverage and it seems the BBC is fully aware of the might of Sky. "We get all the press releases [about Sky's plans] as well," BBC F1 presenter Jake Humphrey told me. "All the stuff about portable studios and things, and we just can't compete with that. The trick for us is to take the model that we've got and make it as good as possible."

In 2010 Sky surpassed the 10 million subscribers mark and if you take a (very low) estimate of 12 million subscribers now that means it has a *monthly* income of £360 million. That's taking an average monthly subscription of £30, which again is probably conservative. It also doesn't count any commercial revenue, or the fee that Sky takes for other channels to be on it. So it's hardly surprising that Sky can afford to plan such comprehensive coverage.

A NEW TYPE OF **F1 COVERAGE**

Sky's investment in Formula 1 has opened up plenty of viewing options to subscribers, but it comes at a cost to the broadcaster – and to us



"It's been really frustrating that we haven't been able to do more F1 in the past because of the rights problem," admitted Andy Cairns, the head of Sky Sports News HD. "And the more we did of the pre-season build-up, the more I wondered why more people don't cover it. It makes very good TV.

"Yes, we'll have a week's build-up to each Grand Prix, but we do that for boxing and in F1 there are a lot more than two people involved. We'll be looking at what each race means to the local town, catching the atmosphere as the trucks arrive and covering the driver events on the Wednesday and Thursday. A lot of people haven't seen all that, and we're also going to try and get away from the formulaic replies that F1 drivers give."

Trying to get exciting answers from modern F1 drivers will not be easy. In fact, it will be nigh on impossible thanks to the sponsorship and PR focus of the sport nowadays. But when a driver is at the circuit he'll be a lot more closed than he will be away from it. When he doesn't have a race weekend to think about Sky may well get more interesting answers and interviews. Time will tell…

Is there really enough action to justify such long build-up to races, though? As many of you

will have watched Sky's first F1 race in Melbourne you will have your own opinion. "The fact that your readers want to buy your magazine or read your website means that they clearly want to know more than they can get from just watching the race," counters Cairns. "Extra coverage will surely be of interest. There is a genuine passion for the sport here and we really want to make great coverage. We're really excited because we've got the backing to do this properly."

That backing has also meant that Sky can take advantage of the 5.1 Dolby surround sound that Formula One Management supplies. Only one Spanish broadcaster has trialled this to date, even though FOM has been offering it for three years. But the problem is that you need to stream the sound live, which is a large – and expensive – undertaking. The sound is impressive, if you have a surround sound speaker system of course, and prompted Martin Brundle, after he finished his first commentating run through with David Croft, to ask what the banging in the background was in some of the recording. It was a band in one of the grandstands – it's that sensitive.

"The audio is really important to people at home," said Darren Long, the director of operations for Sky Sports. "The noise [of an F1 car] puts a tingle down your spine. We've built a 5.1 pod [for all the equipment needed] so that we can take it to every race and do our mixing in there. I'm passionate about the sport and I think the noise is such an important part of it."

The list of 'extras' for Sky F1 viewers seems endless, and as many of you will have already seen from the coverage in Melbourne you can choose from nine different streams on the red button. This means you can direct the coverage of the race yourself. The main FOM feed, of course, is in HD. You can also go on board with a selection of drivers – which is also provided by FOM – and although these aren't in HD I wouldn't expect to wait too long for that to be sorted. Indeed as my morning at Sky progressed it became clear that a regular limiting factor seemed to be FOM. If FOM agreed to it Sky would probably film all the F1 drivers having breakfast on race morning.

The British F1 fan has never been so well catered for with the choice between the BBC's coverage and that of Sky. However, the fact remains that many can't afford Sky, and for that there is no quick fix.

We really shouldn't have been surprised that F1 coverage in the UK has gone to Sky, even if it is shared with the BBC (for now). In the past 10 years it's happened with golf, rugby, football, cricket and many more sports.

Over the season viewers will form their own views on Sky's treatment of F1, but one question stands out: will anyone have enough time to sit down and actually watch it all?



Aston is focusing on GTE after failure of LMP1 campaign



BACK TO WHERE IT **BELONGS**

Aston Martin is looking to put the LMP1 programme of 2011 behind it with an assault on the GTE title

BEFORE ASTON MARTIN departed for the start of its new GT World Endurance Championship campaign, commencing with the Sebring 12 Hours on March 17, it launched its new V8 Vantage GTE car in London.

Many believe that GT racing is where Aston Martin belongs, especially after its disastrous attempt at building its own LMP1 car – the AMR-One – for the 2011 season. Hopefully its LMP campaign will be better remembered for the Lola-Aston Martin B09/60 that won the 2009 Le Mans Series.

"The foray into LMP racing was exciting for the period that we were there," the chairman of Aston Martin, David Richards (above), told me. "But we always felt that we were there with one hand tied behind our back against the diesels. We seemed to constantly be fighting a political battle.

"Obviously we made our own mistakes as well, but that's by the by. To go back to GT racing in a straight fight against cars that are our competitors in the market place – with racers based on the cars that we sell – is a very exciting prospect."

Darren Turner, who has been an Aston Martin works driver since 2005, is equally excited about returning to the GT category, where he won the GT1 class in both the 2007 and 2008 Le Mans 24 Hours. "I really liked the challenge of LMP racing, but it's more about finesse when it comes to the driving style. With GTs you have to grab hold of them and make them work for you. I've always enjoyed that type of driving!

"We had some really good years with the Lola-Aston Martin and we were always one of the top petrol teams. Last year the result at the Le Mans 24 Hours (when both cars completed a combined total of six laps) was not the result that any of us could have imagined."

Here's hoping that Aston Martin puts 2011 behind it with a proper challenge for the GTE Pro title in the 2012 WEC. »»





Festival is focused on Donington heritage, says Wiltshire (below)

A FESTIVAL OF **PROPER RACING**

As the second Donington Historic Festival approaches the organisers are keen to build on the success of last year

AFTER THE DEBACLE OF THE BRITISH Grand Prix project, the 2011 Donington Historic Festival was a great way for one of the country's best-loved tracks to move ahead. As we wrote in the July 2011 issue, the event "proved the venue is back in business".

The second Festival is fast approaching – on May 5/6 – and plans are afoot to ensure that this year's edition goes as well as the first.

"There's no question that we're still building," Duncan Wiltshire, who runs the event, tells me. "Our intention when we set out was to put on an event that had a focus very much on the cars, the drivers and the racing.

"On the spectator side, we recognise that it isn't Goodwood, but if you like racing come along and enjoy it. I think we had about 12,000 spectators over the two days last year and we'd certainly like to increase that. There are plenty of signs that we will, and the ticket price is very fair.

"With these events it's potentially quite difficult to stand out. You've got to work at it and you've got to be quite clear what the event stands for. When I set the whole thing up it was very deliberate that it was called the Donington Historic Festival because it is all about Donington and its heritage.

"I could very easily have called it the Motor Racing Legends Festival (Wiltshire is chairman of Motor Racing Legends – the organisation behind four historic racing series), but if we'd done that I felt very strongly that we would have just been pitching it in with all the other organisers that are running events at Donington.

"In the first year we just wanted to concentrate on doing the key elements of the event as well as we could. I have to say we were extremely pleased with how year one turned out. You never know until you've done it, however much work you put in!

"Our plan for this year is to build on that and keep the ethos of proper racing. We aren't planning anything wildly bigger or bolder, but we do want to fix the things that we weren't happy with."



With Historic F2, the E-type Challenge, pre-72 sports-racing cars and Group C races the second Festival should be a great success. Yes, there are so many historic race meetings out there nowadays that the market seems almost saturated, but with another successful Donington Historic Festival in May, the event will be on the way to being considered one of the essential meetings of the year.

MADNESS ON WHEELS

A new TV documentary captures the ferocity and danger of one of rallying's most extreme eras



IF YOU PICKED UP THIS ISSUE early enough you might be able to catch the screening of *Madness on Wheels* on BBC4 on April 1 at 9pm.

It's a film about Group B rallying, and a great little one at that. It focuses largely on the extreme power and the inherent danger of the 600bhp machines, but with one-on-one interviews with the likes of Walter Röhrl, Ari Vatanen and Jean Todt, and great period footage, it makes for compelling viewing.

If you missed it then there's always the DVD here: www.madnessonwheels.com



Historic Scene
WITH GORDON CRUICKSHANK



Power not needed for good racing, says Julius Thurgood (r, with Jason Plato)



WHEN DRIVERS **COME FIRST**

A club with a difference aims to put the fun back into historics – and tempt out some 'new' machinery

How many race series could you list? Don't start, I only have two pages. But I still hear owners of some prized car, whether exotic or mundane, lamenting that they can't find anywhere to race – at least, not without being blown off by highly modified and costly opposition.

Of course we all want to see a Ford Falcon at full stretch ahead of a pack of wheel-waving Lotus Cortinas, but the ever-rising pace of the grid-toppers has caused many competitors to retreat from the field. Who wants to finish two laps down all the time? That's the view of long-time racer and organiser Julius Thurgood, who reckons drivers are an unsung community.

"There are more high-profile events than ever, but they're leaving behind the car owners who aren't famous or wealthy," he says, pointing out that historic touring car grids have fallen of late. "Drivers with Cortina GTs or MkVII Jaguars have put them away because they haven't got a chance against modified cars. That's reducing the pool of cars." This from the man who created the Top Hat group of races to give Fifties saloons and pre-1966 sports cars somewhere to exercise (that's now overseen by the Masters group).

Thurgood's response was to start a whole new club – the Historic Racing Drivers Club. "It's fuelled by the needs of the competitors," he says. "To keep down costs I've got sponsors involved so drivers aren't paying for everything." He reckons that running races is the easy bit, that it's owners who are often preparing their own cars and towing them to meetings who are doing the hard work. And while he can't make that any easier, he can at least make the whole thing more fun, with a relaxed paddock atmosphere where a Sprite can race without being terrorised by a 300bhp Healey. And look out for a Nash Metropolitan and a Daimler Conquest Century. You're unlikely to see those racing anywhere else.

Thurgood aims to draw out machinery now languishing in garages. "We've sprung so many new cars," he grins. As HRDC classes cater for small engines it's a chance for forgotten gems such as Rochdale Olympic and Mini Marcos to see action. Touring Greats is for pre-60 saloons in original spec, while Grand Touring Greats stretches to 1966 – but under 1500cc, flushing out Speedwell, Ashley and Talisman entries. This year Thurgood adds GTS65 for over-1500cc sports cars, featuring 45-minute races with pitstops, while TC63 provides for larger-engined tin-tops of the sort which ran in the first year of ETCC, specifically excluding the homologation specials like Cooper S, Lotus Cortina or Alfa GTA. Last year produced some terrific racing among Jaguar MkIs, a Mercedes 300SE, and even a Warwick GT – and grids were packed.

"TC63 is accessible," says Thurgood. "There hasn't been an arena lately where you could play among well-matched cars. It's great that some people spend big money on spectacular cars, but the average historic racer has been frightened off by costs – some series allow lightweight hubs, big brakes and sticky rubber. We don't, though the watchword is inclusion, not exclusion."

In this MGB 50th anniversary year, HRDC is also running the MGB50 category, where interesting Bs which don't rate FIA status can also run. That makes five series at six meetings, including Lydden, where I don't think I've been since it was a stage on the Classic Marathon I did in Henry Pearman's E-type. Thurgood also wants to start a historics register, and run a 24-hour event too. And just to give himself more work he starts the season at max revs on April 9 for the HRDC Historica Festival at Castle Combe, with a grid 50 per cent bigger than the track is used to.

Thurgood is not exactly a po-faced character, and *The Racer*, the club's monthly, showcases its cheery image – 'Elvis to race with HRDC' yells one – while paddock prize-givings can be as much about silliness as silverware. And each race stands alone – no full-season commitment here. Jenks thought F1 should be that way too…

One season is early to judge, but the HRDC's expansion promises much, and it may tip the odd newcomer into buying his first race overalls.

"It's not a step down," says Thurgood, "it's a destination for people who aren't looking to be the new Vettel. Somewhere they can bring their families. And it's bloody good racing!"

www.hrdc.eu



Hawthorn Riley on MS stand. Right: VSCC stalwart Dougal Cawley receives Trophy



MOTOR SPORT BROOKLANDS TROPHY AWARD

Premier VSCC contest winner enjoys the fruits of a successful season of bare-bones racing

ONE OF MY APPOINTMENTS AT THE Race Retro exhibition (see also p22) was to watch the VSCC *Motor Sport* Brooklands Memorial Trophy being presented on the show stage. This award goes back to 1950 and Bill Boddy's desire to perpetuate the memory of his beloved Brooklands which never re-opened after the war. Bill was a great supporter of the new Goodwood circuit which he saw as inheriting the mantle of the defunct Track, so with the money from the Brooklands Memorial Fund he had set up he commissioned a trophy to be contested by "drivers in Brooklands-style races" at Goodwood.

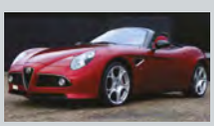
After the Sussex circuit closed in 1966 the VSCC took over running the trophy – highly appropriate as the club boasted many of the very cars which had in their time tackled the Byfleet Banking.

Today the trophy is awarded for cars of the right sort to have run at Brooklands, according to points garnered at the VSCC's race meetings, and there are few cars 'righter' than a GN. That's what Dougal Cawley drove to lift the 2011 trophy, which, after a few words by the VSCC's Mike Stripe, Nigel Roebuck presented to him at the show. Very fitting, as Nigel recalled seeing the same elaborate silver cup going to Innes Ireland, later to become a friend of his. Dougal, who runs vintage tyre supplier Longstone Tyres, won seven races in his skimpy Ford-powered GN special, driving it to several events. Runner-up Riley man David Pryke also stepped up to collect his tankard, though third-placed Stephen Shoosmith couldn't make it to Stoneleigh.

Very neatly, *Motor Sport*'s show stand featured a car which had lifted the trophy in earlier days – Tim Ely's Riley Ulster Imp which brought Mike Hawthorn the award in 1951. Perhaps WB was looking down and recalling that day too.

DREAM GARAGE

WHAT WE'D BLOW THE BUDGET ON THIS MONTH



DK ENGINEERING

ALFA ROMEO 8C SPIDER

Even as a static sculpture it would be inspiring, but it shifts too! And that noise – possibly the nearest sound to a straight-eight Bugatti on the road today. One of only 500 built.

£159,950
www.dkeng.co.uk

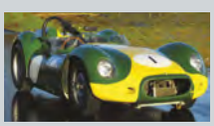


NADDER VALLEY CLASSICS

PORSCHE 356SC

Prepped for racing but flexible enough for the road – an ideal all-rounder which would make a good classic rally choice. In late spec with discs, 12v electrics and Fuchs alloys.

£49,950
www.naddervalleyclassics.co.uk



CKL DEVELOPMENTS

LISTER-JAGUAR 'KNOBBLY'

Built up in the '80s using many proper parts, this 'Knobbly', which has FIA papers, spent 20 years in a Japanese collection before returning to start a race career over here.

£275,000
www.ckldevelopments.co.uk



HALL & HALL

LOTUS 48 F2 FVA

A significant precursor of the 49, this chassis, R1, was the first to use the FVA engine. Driven by Hill, Clark and Oliver, with a win for Clark and a GP fifth for Jackie.

£350,000
www.hallandhall.net



IN THE WORKSHOP

I S Polson

WHAT'S YOUR HISTORY?

I'm an engineering graduate from the 1960s, my first job being in product engineering with Chrysler and then Ford Australia where I experienced at first hand the awesome GTHO Falcons. I represented Ford Australia in Ford of Europe in the early 1970s and decided to stay on in the UK and turn my hobby, Roesch Talbots, into a business. I brought three historic cars from Australia with me, the Delahaye 135CS which finished second in the 1936 French GP, the mechanical remains of BGH 22, a 1934 Alpine Trial team Talbot, and components of the only surviving unmodified 1931 Talbot 105 (above).

WHAT'S YOUR RANGE OF SKILLS?

We have a comprehensively equipped workshop employing six full-time and four part-time craftsmen with a wide range of skills. We undertake total restorations, particularly of Roesch Talbots. We rebuilt the marvellous 1916 Indianapolis Sunbeam from parts dismantled 40 years before, and my GP Delahaye which had been seriously damaged by fire in 1951. That car is now in the Peter Mullin collection.

DO YOU HAVE A SPECIALISATION?

Roesch Talbots, particularly the ultra-rare 1931 AV105 using the original specification racing engine with aluminium cylinder block.

WHAT'S IN THE WORKSHOP NOW?

A Talbot Lago, two Vanden Plas 105 Talbots, two Brooklands Speed Model 105 Talbots, a replica Alpine Trial-bodied 105 Talbot, two partially completed Talbot 90s, a 1917 Hudson racing car and several Edwardian Talbots. We are also building a replica of the Percy Lambert 25hp hour record car using original Talbot parts.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE YOU PROUD OF?

Establishing the facts concerning the use of aluminium cylinder blocks in all the Talbot 105s produced in 1931, five of which were used in the racing team and six sold to the public. It took several years of research to convince the late Anthony Blight, universally accepted as the top Talbot guru. After that we proceeded with producing new aluminium blocks identical to the original which had been in my hands since 1965.

GC was talking to Ian Polson
www.ispolson.com



1953 Ferrari-powered hydroplane is confirmed for Monaco on May 11/12



Around the houses

NEWS FROM THE MAIN AUCTION HOUSES AROUND THE WORLD

– GOODING AND COMPANY –

Very often 'star lots' fail to sell. There's sometimes too much hype surrounding the car in question and potential buyers are scared off with high estimates. Gooding didn't suffer any such problems in Amelia Island on March 9. The 1973 Porsche 917 Can-Am Spyder, which we featured in last month's magazine, set a new world record for a 917, and in fact for a Porsche, when it sold for £2.8 million.

The Drendel Family Collection of Porsches amassed more than £11.3m and 11 of the cars set new world records. The two-time Daytona 24 Hours winner – the 1984 Porsche 962 – sold for £1.2m, the development 1974 Porsche 911 Carrera RSR Turbo went for £2.1m, the first 1976 Porsche 935/76 to be built sold for £1.6m and the 1997 Porsche 911 GT1 Evolution found a new home for £805,000. All of these were new world records for the respective models. The 1987 McLaren-Porsche MP4/3 Formula 1 car also sold well, reaching £546,000, but the Le Mans 24 Hours class-winning 1975 Porsche 935 didn't sell.

Other notable lots included a 1930 Bentley 4½-litre Tourer (£423,000), an ex-works 1967 Porsche 906E (£636,840) and the 1951 Ferrari 212 Inter coupé that Mike Hawthorn used for practicing the '53 Mille Miglia route (£874,783).

– RM AUCTIONS –

More than £14.6m worth of lots were sold at RM's Amelia Island sale on March 10. The top seller of the day was the 1929 Cord L-29 Hayes Coupé that went for £1.5m.

The Canadian auction house also had a successful Milhous Collection sale on February 24/25, which raised a total of £24.4m. The most staggering statistic, though, was that 100 per cent of the 500 lots sold, which included cars, bikes, firearms, musical instruments and fairground carousels. There were also a couple of single-seaters in the sale: a 1984 March Cosworth 84C (£70,140) and a 1949 Snowberger-Offy roadster (£122,750).

More lots have been confirmed for RM's Monaco sale on May 11/12 including the record-breaking Ferrari-powered hydroplane ARNO XI. The 1953 racing boat was built with help from the Italian manufacturer and set a water speed record of 241.70kph (150.19mph) on Lake Iseo in northern Italy in 1953. The record – for an 800kg boat – still stands today. Estimate is available on request.

There is also a very special Ferrari in the sale, which raced in two Mille Miglias and two Targa Florios in the hands of celebrated drivers such as Froilán Gonzalez, the Marzotto brothers and Umberto Maglioli. The 1948 Ferrari 166 Spyder Corsa 'Fontana' (£900,000-1.5m) was campaigned by Scuderia Ferrari and later by Scuderia Marzotto, who rebodied it in Barchetta style by Carrozzeria Fontana in 1950. It's the sixth Spyder Corsa built and will no doubt reach, and possibly exceed, its estimate.

– BONHAMS –

RM Auctions wasn't the only company to see all its lots sold. Bonhams managed the same feat at its Oxford sale of March 3, raising £1.29m. A 1961 Ferrari 250GTE 2+2 coupé barn find sold for £101,180, while a 1965 Jaguar E-type Series 1 4.2-litre roadster once owned by Sir Elton John went for £82,140.

The big news from Bonhams, though, is that it will sell the George Daniels collection of cars at the Festival of Speed sale on June 29. This includes one of the most famous British racing cars of all, the 'Tim' Birkin supercharged single-seater 4½ Bentley which set the Brooklands Outer Circuit Lap Record at over 137mph in 1931. Also included is the 1932 Alfa Romeo 8C-2300 that Birkin drove with Earl Howe at that year's Le Mans, and the 1908 Itala Grand Prix car which has so often figured in these pages. Expect high bids…

– SILVERSTONE AUCTIONS –

At its Race Retro sale on February 25 Silverstone Auctions sold a number of interesting racers including a 1963 Ford Anglia (£22,550), a 1987 MG Metro 6R4 (£46,200), a 1958 Tojeiro Jaguar (£286,000) and a recreation of the 1976 Porsche 934 Jägermeister car that includes "many original period parts" (£78,320).

FORTHCOMING AUCTIONS

MAR 29-31 MECUM *Muscle Cars & More,* Kansas City Convention, Kansas City, Missouri Tel: 001 262 275 5050

APR 5-7 BARRETT-JACKSON *Palm Beach Auction,* Palm Beach, Florida Tel: 001 480 663 6255

APR 13-14 MECUM *Muscle Cars & More,* Houston, Texas Tel: 001 (262) 275 5050

APR 17 BARONS *Classic, Collectors and Sports Car Auction,* Esher Hall, Sandown Park Exhibition Centre, Surrey Tel: 023 8066 8413

APR 19 H&H SALES LTD. *Classic Cars and Motorcycles,* The Imperial War Museum, London Tel: 08458 334 455

APR 21 COYS *The Spirit of Motoring,* Ascot Racecourse, Berkshire Tel: 020 8614 7888

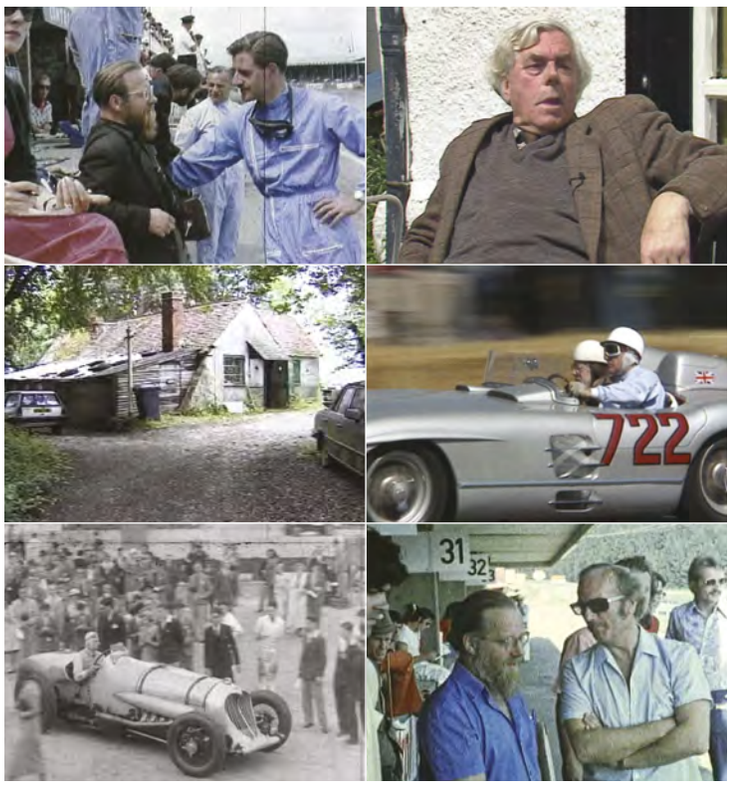
APR 26-28 AUCTIONS AMERICA *Spring Carlisle Auction,* Carlisle Expo Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania Tel: 001 954 566 2209

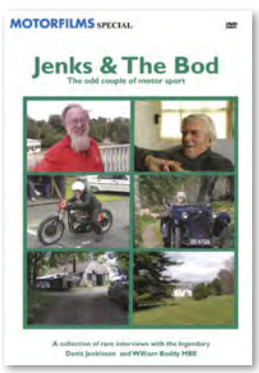
APR 28 OLDTIMER GALERIE *100 Classic Cars & Motorcycles,* Toffen, Switzerland Tel: 0041 31 819 6161

APR 30 BONHAMS *Collectors' Cars and Automobilia,* RAF Museum, Grahame Park Way, Hendon, London Tel: 020 7447 7440

FOR FULL AUCTION LISTINGS AND RESULTS VISIT
www.motorsportmagazine.com

Reviews





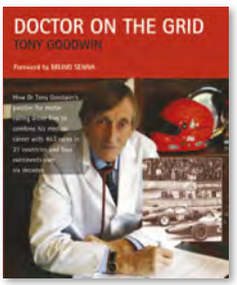
JENKS & THE BOD

THE ODD COUPLE OF MOTOR SPORT

The odd couple of motor sport, this DVD is headed, and it couldn't be more true. The interlinked lives of The Bod and Jenks – Bill Boddy and Denis Jenkinson – were central to this magazine and to the sport for years and years, and these nostalgic films bring their different characters to life. A relaxed face-to-face with WB from 2005 (seen on a previous MFQ release) is full of reminiscences about his career and exploits, filmed in his early 90s when he was still as sharp as ever. It took me back, hearing the tales tumbling over one another – his delight over Vernon Balls' surname, recalling the Teesdale offices and WJT's appalling driving… Then comes a rare 'to camera' piece with DSJ at Brooklands recalling his times and how he got involved with WB and the magazine, followed by an assemblage of footage featuring our diminutive Continental Correspondent: sprinting his Triumph 'bike up Prescott, crossing the Arctic Circle in a Mercedes 300SL with 'Taffy' von Trips, explaining how a 'Nash's chains work. Finally, Doug Nye takes us for a wander around the shambolic cabin in the woods where Jenks lurked off-duty, surrounded by rotting vehicles including a 1924 Sunbeam Grand Prix car. I'd forgotten how tiny the cabin was, and how many packing cases he used to shore it up.

If you've been reading the words of this peculiar pair for years and never heard them talk, this is your chance to meet them. **GC**

Produced by Motorfilms, www.motorfilms.com, £12.99

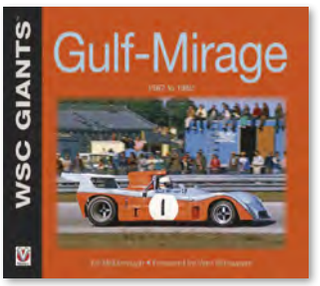


DOCTOR ON THE GRID

by Tony Goodwin

With a race career of over 60 years, Tony Goodwin has a varied history. This work talks us right through from as a child watching Seaman and Bira race, to F3 and sports cars and on into historics. It's been a career of, in his words, "flimsy resources of time, money and mechanical aptitude", and hardly packed with glamour, but on the way Goodwin has been able to mix with great drivers and tackle famous tracks alongside mighty factory teams. It's a rich picture of privateer life around Europe and the Far East, with amusing tales of earning a bonus for crossing the finish line backwards, or driving his F3 car into town when the van broke down. At times he was reporting and photographing events he was also racing in, and helping with research into stress, but it's clear here that fun outweighed stress by a big margin. **GC**

Published by Motor Racing Publications Ltd, ISBN 978 1 899870 84 4, £35



GULF-MIRAGE

1967-1982

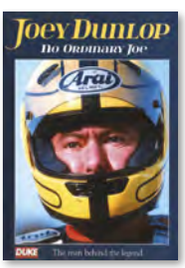
by Ed McDonough

This is the latest in the WSC Giants series from Veloce, and lists all the races, chassis, drivers and developments of every Mirage sports car.

It also documents the origins of the Mirage name and how John Wyer, with Gulf Oil backing, created a successful outfit from the humble beginnings of a re-engineered GT40. The 1967-1975 period was its most successful, when Wyer secured an array of top-line drivers such as Derek Bell, Jacky Ickx, Howden Ganley, and even James Hunt for a one-off race!

Sadly McDonough only dedicates a couple of pages to his experience of actually driving a Mirage in anger. Much like the rest of the book, he documents rather than offering much opinion – which is a shame since the Mirage name deserves a bit more applause than it gets here. **DC**

Published by Veloce Publishing, ISBN 978 1 845842 51 2, £15.99



JOEY DUNLOP

NO ORDINARY JOE

Quietly spoken Joey Dunlop made winning the Isle of Man TT races look easy. Even in 2000, at the age of 48, he won three out of five races in TT week. A month later he died in Estonia in a 125cc race. His memory lives on, though, with fans around the world celebrating Dunlop's life, especially in Joey's bar in Ballymoney, which is filled with bikers every time the road-racing circus visits for the Northwest 200.

Much of this DVD is based in Joey's bar, but don't expect too much from it. The film jumps all over Joey's career and it becomes increasingly hard to follow. This isn't a run through of his illustrious career, it's more a collection of memories about the man. Worth a watch, but only if you've seen the other DVDs on Joey. **EF**

Production by Waldovision, www.dukevideo.com, £16.99



KYALAMI: A REFLECTION ON THE HISTORY OF THE ORIGINAL CIRCUIT 1961-1987 *André Loubser* This comprehensive 410-page work on the South African circuit is exhaustive in its detail, but is let down by some poor images.

Aquarius Publishing CC, ISBN 978 0 620 48826 6, £67



LE MANS: PANORAMIC *Gavin Ireland* This photo book includes some stunning images of the Le Mans 24 Hours. It doesn't just cover the action, but also the weeks leading up to it and the unique atmosphere around the circuit. **Veloce Publishing, ISBN 978 1 845842 43 7, £35**



AUTOMOBILE YEAR: INDUSTRY – SPORT – CULTURE 2011/12 Another great edition of *Automobile Year*. It doesn't cover anything in huge detail, but it does look at everything from the design of road cars to the IndyCar Series.

E-T-A-I, ISBN 978 2 7268 9581 8, £47

YOU WERE THERE

Workshops and forests figure in this assemblage, as we see behind the scenes of an almost mythical car being built, and take a trip to the 1966 RAC Rally



1



2

SVERRIR THORODDSSON

A bit of history that took 16 years to complete. In 1965, to follow the 289 Daytona Coupé, Peter Brock began on a 427 Super Coupé. Radford built the body in the UK, but the project was cancelled, the car only completed in 1981. While awaiting delivery of his new Brabham BT15, Sverrir met Brock, with director John Frankenheimer – and ended by driving in the film *Grand Prix*! {1} Brock (in blue shirt) makes a point about air vents. {2} With the shape fully formed, Brock and a craftsman discuss the job. Note body buck behind



GEOFF MORTON

Geoff Morton's shot of the grid for the 1960 BRDC *Daily Express* International Trophy at Silverstone, sent to us by his friend Charles Aveling, captures the year that front engines finally gave way to rear, and when a non-championship F1 race could also include F2 cars. Works Dino Ferraris are high up the grid, but it is Innes Ireland's Lotus 18 (10) which will pull off the victory after a battle with the Cooper of Stirling Moss, clinched when the Cooper breaks a wishbone



1

GREG THOMPSON

Greg was one of that army of enthusiasts who hiked deep into the forests to watch their heroes, back when spectating itself was an endurance test. This is the 1966 RAC Rally. {1} Graham Hill is clearly not happy after an off on the first day – note dented wing and headlamp. He and co-driver Maxwell Boyd would later retire. {2} Co-driver Tony Ambrose ducks down following Simo Lampinen's roll-over excursion in a works Mini. {3} Also on a break from the Grand Prix grid, Jim Clark in a Lotus Cortina. Although he crashed out, co-driver Brian Melia reckoned the Scot "a potential rally champion". {4} Long before the wail of the Stratos heralded Lancia hopes came the rasp of the Fulvia V4 {5} Morning greets Volvo 122 in Gwdyr Forest



2



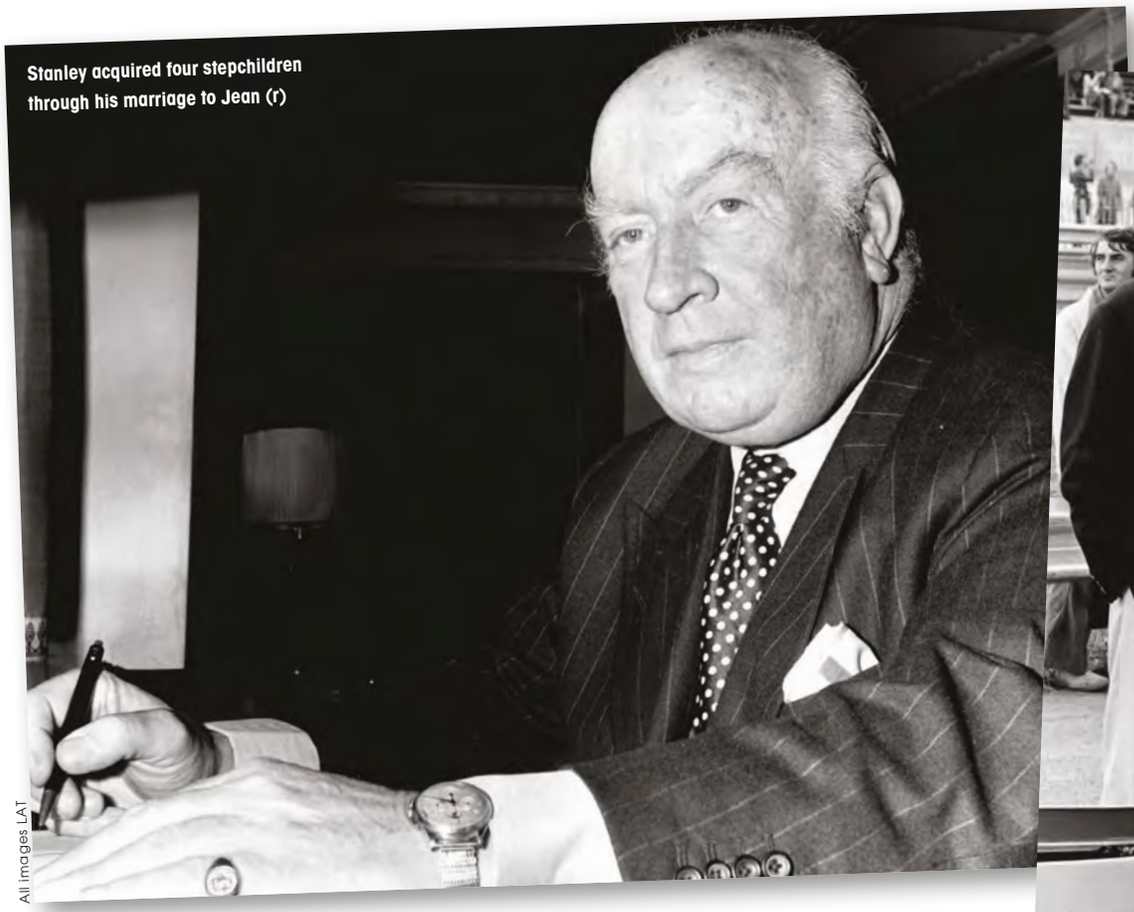
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5

3





Stanley acquired four stepchildren through his marriage to Jean (r)



All images LAT

LOUIS STANLEY: ANOTHER FINE MESS?

A compelling new book by Louis Stanley's stepdaughter unveils hitherto secret evidence of the BRM man's origins… and makes other, damning accusations

I must be honest. I used to detest Louis Stanley, husband of Jean Stanley who was the sister of Sir Alfred Owen, the owner of the BRM racing team. Big, blazered and blimpish, pompous to a fault, seemingly possessed of a king-sized superiority complex, publicly dismissive of those he plainly regarded as 'common workers', he seemed from a distant viewpoint like a definitive cartoon villain… not least for signing himself and his wife into the Watkins Glen Motor Lodge for the US GP as 'Lord Stanley'.

The Stanleys' habit of swanning into race paddocks in a chauffeur-driven Grösser Mercedes 600 didn't help settle one's class-warrior tendency, and then when the Owen Organisation withdrew its backing from the team at the end of 1974, 'Big Lou' – as Dan Gurney had nicknamed him in 1960 – founded 'Stanley-BRM' to continue racing.

The result, predictably, was abject failure, but with continuing financial support from his plainly loving but dominated heiress wife, Stanley went on to attract backing from Rotary Watches for a 1977 Formula 1 programme. If I didn't rate the man before his Rotary-BRM team launch, any doubts I had were dispelled by his typically whispered, lisping speech there. "Bee-aah-Wem", he declared "has won every World Championship Gwand Pwee at least once…" A number of us in the audience, I suspect, thought "Hang on a minute, is that quite right?", but we either couldn't think quickly enough to challenge his claim, or perhaps those more polite than I just sat on their hands and kept schtum.

While the Dreyfuss family members who ran Rotary Watches looked on admiringly, evidently impressed, 'Big Lou' went on to extol the virtues of what the team would achieve that season with their new BRM P207 V12-engined car. But this was all baseless flannel, and in fact the programme collapsed almost as abruptly as it had begun. And for me the really frustrating bit was that it wasn't until I was in the car on my way home that evening that the switch finally clicked in my brain, and I bawled aloud "British Grand Prix!" – and then "French Grand Prix!" BRM had never won the most obvious prize they could ever have aspired to. But I'd missed the moment. And I've regretted it ever since. I would love to have challenged him publicly.



Stanley kept BRM going (briefly) after the Owen Organisation withdrew its patronage in 1974



In later life, 'Big Lou' – I am told – mellowed somewhat. Certainly several of his old staff at Stanley-BRM recall him quite kindly. His work for motor racing safety does him credit, and he and Jean were always there when it came to providing top-level medical care for any employee or dependent of one who required it. But I am also assured that such considerate behaviour would have been second-nature to Jean, not to him.

Bobbie Neate is one of Jean Stanley's four children from her first marriage to a Reverend Leslie Civil Baber. When Jean and Leslie Baber were divorced, and she then married 'Big Lou', who had himself been previously married to another heiress, Stanley became stepfather to Bobbie and her siblings. The childrens' relationship with 'Poppy', as Jean required him to be known, seems to have been always tense, and according to Bobbie even abusive, in the unforgivable modern sense…

But the children, just like those of us in the motor racing world, were always mystified about just who this man really was, and where he had come from.

Bobbie determined to discover her stepfather's roots, and in *Conspiracy of Secrets* – her quite remarkable book just published by John Blake – she draws back the curtain on that man's lifetime of amazing deception. It's not comfortable reading, and it is sometimes confusing, but her remarkable detective work is simply riveting.

'Big Lou' had lied about who he really was, and had been assisted in doing so by the political establishment from whom he had sprung – and whose airs and graces, privilege and influence he so evidently craved. Bobbie presents compelling evidence that 'Big Lou' Stanley was in fact the illegitimate son of no less than the Liberal Party's last Prime Minister, H H Asquith, and the dazzling young mistress with whom he was utterly besotted, Venetia Stanley.

She was the youngest daughter of Edward Stanley, 4th Baron Sheffield and Stanley of Alderley. Asquith began writing to her in 1910, since she was a friend of his daughter Violet. If Bobbie Neate is right, Venetia gave birth to their illegitimate son late in 1911 or early in 1912. She cites copious evidence that the boy was raised by a foster mother funded by joint Asquith/Stanley family patronage. Asquith's increasingly obsessive correspondence with Venetia continued until 1915, pausing when she married Edwin Montagu MP. She proved unrelentingly promiscuous, later lovers including Lord Beaverbrook, and after Montagu's early death she renewed correspondence with the fading Asquith.

'Big Lou' Stanley grew to lead an often bullying life of deception, fraud, bombast and poison. To him, during my extensive BRM researches over many years, I became "the odious Mr Nye", something of which I am quite proud, though to be truthful I might have accepted 'odorous' more readily than 'odious'.

But now thanks to his stepdaughter's extraordinary, driven, and undeniably vengeful book we know more about the man who at one stage seemed poised to become a pre-Ecclestone Formula 1 supremo. For those who fancy a fiendishly tortuous – and, if proven, shatteringly significant – detective story with both a political and a motor racing twist, *Conspiracy of Secrets* is not always an easy read, but it is a truly compelling one… »»



New book uncovers evidence of Stanley's secret past, before his involvement in racing



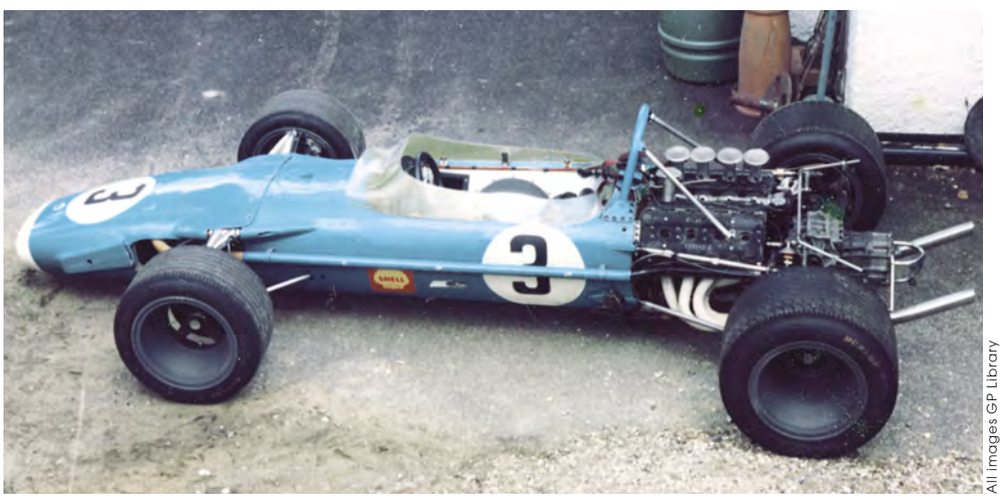
Doug handled diverse machinery including two rare Ferraris, and an ex-Graham Hill Lotus 49 (below)

The passage of rarities

Back in the 1980s I was occasionally asked to buy classic and competition cars on behalf of the wealthy Japanese collector Yoshiyuki Hayashi. His pink Italya Trading sponsorship livery became quite familiar on assorted Group C cars, racing not only in Japan but also internationally. Those occasional commissions proved a useful avenue to my actually handling some great cars, and learning so much more about them than I would ever have managed as just another paddock bystander armed with press pass, notebook and pen.

On Hayashi's behalf I bought, and kept at home or ran for a while, cars as diverse as a look-alike 'Knobbly' Lister-Jaguar, a make-believe 1937ish Alfa Romeo 6C, a genuine – and stirringly gorgeous - Alfa Romeo T33 Stradale, a T33TT3, and then a 'Lightweight' E-type Jaguar, Ferrari 275LM, Maserati 300S and a pair of Formula 1 Ferraris – the unique Spazzaneve prototype 312B2-and-a-bit, and an ex-Reutemann 312T2.

But the absolute apple of my eye from that period was Lotus 49 'R3', the last surviving green-and-yellow 1967 team car – ex-Graham Hill and John Love in South Africa. It had been raced there in Team Gunston colours before passing through less celebrated hands and eventually ending up with me in pale blue, and derelict. I think it cost £22,500.



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Jenks and I drove up in his battered ochre-coloured Ford Transit to collect 'R3' from dealer Mike Lavers' place in Fulham. It was boat race day, and we threaded our way back through dense traffic with 'R3' roped to Jenks's home-built trailer, which was a caravan chassis from which he had cut the rotted body. We did nothing in style.

But Michael Cane did. He worked his magic on restoring the car to its green-and-yellow glory with a John Judd Cosworth DFV engine we bought for £4000 cash from the Fittipaldis, on the day their F1 team folded. The gleaming car was eventually air-freighted out to Hayashi in Japan, but we later managed to buy it back thanks to the National Heritage Trust Fund and 'R3' is preserved in the NMM at Beaulieu today (despite sporadic best efforts there to destroy it – the first and worst of which reduced me to tears).

My go-between with Hayashi was a Japanese journalist and wheeler-dealer who spoke his own brand of Jenglish. I collected him at Heathrow once, fresh off a flight from Paris. As we headed back to my place he observed, "Doug, all the car in Engrand so much creaner than all the car in Paris. They all durrr-ty like hell, and all cover in burr-d shrit!" For a while I found it difficult to see the road ahead…

I subsequently went to Gotemba near the Fuji race circuit to see the collection, finding it disappointingly unloved, crammed into an industrial warehouse. It's 20 years ago now, when the 1992 Japanese GP was held not at Fuji but at Suzuka, and Nigel Mansell had just won his title with Williams, promptly falling out with them and announcing his retirement from Formula 1. His team-mate Riccardo Patrese won that Japanese GP, but there was more action off track than on it.

Not only had the new World Champion announced his departure but Alain Prost had signed for Williams on the proviso that Ayrton Senna would not. Patrese was moving to join Schumacher at Benetton so a stunned Martin Brundle was out on his ear. McLaren were engaging an unknown quantity in Michael Andretti and were talking with Mika Häkkinen in case Senna opted out, while Honda confirmed it was withdrawing from Formula 1, leaving McLaren without an engine. Oh, and Ferrari had dropped the hapless Ivan Capelli for the last two races of that year and replaced him with Nicola Larini. Strapped for cash, March gave what had been Karl Wendlinger's drive to Jan Lammers, back in F1 after 10 years away…

Some Japanese girl interpreters working at that race have an unusual abiding memory of Suzuka '92. On duty in the Team Lotus pit, they looked on completely aghast at how these supermen drivers behaved. Husky Mika Häkkinen had just qualified seventh but team-mate Johnny Herbert out-did him, by qualifying sixth. And then in the back of the pits a grinning Häkkinen grabbed the giggling little Herbert in simulated homosexual rape.

I think that wasn't what excited young Japanese girl interpreters had quite expected of Formula 1 – but it raised a laugh.



Parting Shot

Belgian Grand Prix, Spa-Francorchamps, June 13, 1965

Graham Hill's BRM P261 obscures Jim Clark's Lotus 33 as they sweep through a wet Eau Rouge ahead of BRM 'new boy' Jackie Stewart and Richie Ginther's Honda – but Hill will fall to fifth as Clark takes the flag ahead of his fellow Scot

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