

CLASSIC DRIVER

Stranded in St. Moritz? Let's slide down the bob run and race up in our cars!

Lead

The ICE might have been canceled due to too much snow, but that did not stop the fast people of St. Moritz from getting their dose of adrenaline. Why not slide down the Olympic bob run and race back up again in your car? Welcome to the inaugural 'Down-Top' bobsleigh and classic car run!



"We simply cannot give up, because there's a little bit of snow. This is St. Moritz after all!" says [Fritz Burkard, custodian of the famed Pearl Collection](#), while the participants gear up at the top of the St. Moritz Olympia Bob Run, located just behind the iconic Dracula Club. He is the right person to talk about what exactly is happening, as not only is he the mastermind behind this spontaneously organized gathering, but also the current president of the St. Moritz Bobsleigh Club.





The previous evening, between around 7 and 8 pm, WhatsApp messages had started circulating: rumour was that some of the cars that were in town for The ICE concours – [that had just been cancelled due to heavy snowfalls](#) – might be leaving their parking position in the safety of the Serletta underground garage to take part in some sort of timed competition on Saturday.



“Of course this is only done for fun, we always try to think of new ways of having fun,” Fritz adds with a twinkle in his eyes. The president himself is not competing today, as he suffers from a small injury sustained on the equally famous Cresta Run – however he is sporting the famous V-neck sweater of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club, known to insiders simply as SMTC. Naturally, he is racing by proxy – both his friend, racing driver, collector, concours judge and bon vivant extraordinaire Katherina Kyvalova and his eldest daughter, Emma Sunshine, represent the honour of The Pearl Collection.



Other competitors include Classic Driver's dear friend, and St. Moritz Automobile Club (S.M.A.C.) founder [Richard Gauntlett](#), defending 'the House of Meyers Manx' – a company reactivated in recent years by US car collector Philip Sarofim, who this time is also cheering from the sidelines. He also helped Richard's attempt at victory by keeping the car nearby with the engine running. This could've been technically cheating if not for the informal and convivial nature of this competition.



The rules were simple: race down the hill in a vintage bob from the 1950s or 1960s, then run to your car and drive back to the starting line as quickly as reason allows.

Something our very own Rémi Dargegen excelled at in the Burkard-owned Ferrari 212 Inter Cabriolet Ghia. And while Richard Gauntlett vowed to never ever go down in a bob again, the 'eye of Classic Driver' raced both down and then uphill with an equally vigorous spirit, with the latter done to the accompaniment of the high-revving 'Colombo' V12 Ferrari engine. Eh, la musica!



Other cars present included the 1934 Le-Mans-winning Alfa Romeo 8C, a significant 1922 Bentley 3-litre short chassis tourer and... a Little Car Company Bentley Blower replica, dubbed "Blower Junior", which is an exact copy of the original car, just 85% of its size. And electric. The line-up closed with a 1932 Ford Model B Hot Rod, Alexander Boller's Ice Control VW Käfer known from previous editions of The ICE, and a Volvo P1800 Safety Car.



The winner? Everyone who participated. The prize? An aperó at the Kulm Hotel's famous Sunny Bar. The highlights? For this reporter: certainly the competitive atmosphere. The loud cheers from the teams' supporters as these daredevils hurled themselves down the icy track at more than 120 kph in 70 year old open bobs. And the sight of what on that same night turned out to be The ICE's 'Best Of Show' winning car - [the 1938 Delage Type D8-120 S Cabriolet by De Villars](#) - driving uphill at full speed. "You know, the Delage has never been in a race its entire life," Fritz had confided in me just minutes before, as I admired his bravery of leaving this priceless machine with its roof down while snowflakes fell on the soft leather front seats.

There is nothing left to say but conclude that the competitors' cars were therefore no garage queens and their owners no hotel room sulkers - instead writing themselves into the stories of these extraordinary vehicles. Ah, that eternal spirit of St. Moritz!

Photos: Błażej Żuławski

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