

CLASSIC DRIVER

The 'Ardenne Bleue Classique'



April 20/21 2002, Spa has been reunited with its history with the first running of the 'L'Ardenne Bleue Classique'. Fifty five prestige and sports cars crossed the famous roads and landscapes of the area; for many cars it was a return to their roots.

Everyone is aware of the significant role that the town of Spa has played in the birth of motor racing. But who remembers that in 1896, that is to say hardly 2 years after the first motor race of all time; Paris - Rouen, a first meeting of cars was already organized in this splendid area of the Belgian Ardennes.



Paradoxically, whereas Spa-Francorchamps has always played a significant role in the world of automobile sport, and that many drivers consider the circuit as being most beautiful of the world, the old cars have deserted these legendary roads. Apart from frequent races at the circuit for Historic vehicles only a few great European rallies occasionally pass through there now.



For the first running of the 'L'Ardenne Bleue Classique' twelve Jaguars, a Ferrari, three Aston Martins, four Austin Healeys' four Porsche 356s and two Bentleys were entered. Some inevitable TR2s and TR3s, MGAs and Bs, two Lotuses and a rare Alvis were also there to keep the onlookers happy.



After a breakfast and briefing, the crews left the Springs and thermal baths of Spa for the 280 kms that comprised the first day's action. The route took the participants towards the north of Spa; to the area of Herve.



In the afternoon, the navigators had two more regularity stages, which would be decisive for the classification of the first day.



The next day at 08.30 hours, the first cars passed under the starting gantry again for the second (shorter) course. The route led them this time to the south of Spa, towards wider roads. This did not mean the driver's attention could falter as fog soon descended on the route.

The finish of this first edition of 'Ardenne Bleue Traditional' was in front of the Town hall of Spa and the whole of the pilots and navigators were treated as honoured guests of by the organizers and the Mayor of the city



The date of the next 'L'Ardenne Bleue Classique' has been confirmed as April 12/13 2003.

Text and photographs: Trajectoire

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