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## 2002 Le Mans Classic: This weekend!

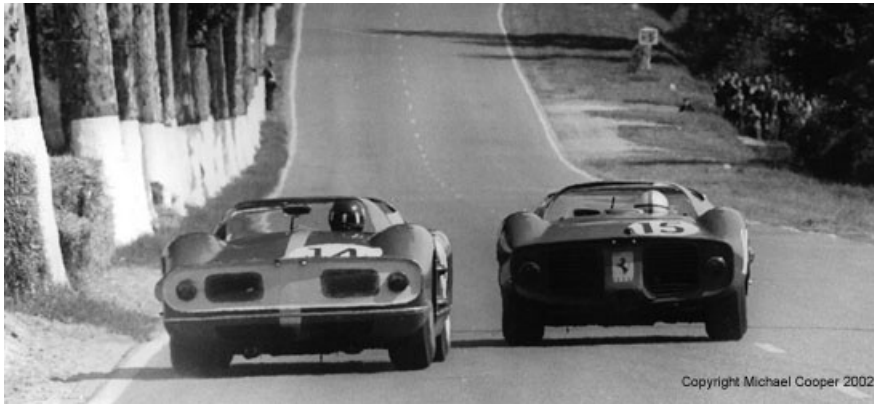
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**Yes, the first ever Le Mans Classic is happening this weekend, September 21-22. But what exactly is the Le Mans Classic? Up to 305 cars, of a type that competed in the 24hrs up to and including 1975, will race on the full 8.5-mile circuit.**



As some major public roads must be closed to permit this event to take place, the inconvenience will be kept to a minimum. All the circuit driving, including the qualifying practice sessions, will be restricted to the Saturday and Sunday.

Although the racing will begin at the traditional hour of 4pm on Saturday and finish at 4pm on Sunday, the Le Mans Classic is not, however, a 24 hrs race for historic cars. For the sake of safety the cars will be split into five separate grids of up to 61 cars each, according to age. For the sake of reliability and variety they will all race four times, by day and by night, with each race lasting 35 minutes.



Part of the idea is that different drivers will be able to drive each car, giving in theory the possibility of up to 1,220 different competing drivers. In reality, some cars will have only one or two drivers but there will still be many hundreds of competitors taking part.

This major event is a huge undertaking and promises an exceptional spectacle, from Vintage Bentleys in the races for the oldest cars through to the powerful Porsches and Ferraris of the 1966-75 era. Some pessimists have said that the possibility of incidents on the circuit is likely to cause delays in the programme. Without doubt, it's an ambitious time schedule.

The Le Mans Classic is the first of its kind. It does not affect the completely separate Le Mans Legend Historic races which began so successfully last year on the weekend of the actual 24hrs race for modern cars. The Le Mans Legend event will be back next June as planned.

Preview by: *Tony Dron*

**We are grateful to Michael Cooper, renowned 1960's motoraracing photographer, for the images used in this article. For further information visit [www.motorsportimage.co.uk](http://www.motorsportimage.co.uk) where you can order prints online.**

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