

# CLASSIC DRIVER



## GP Historico do Porto 2005

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- **Motor racing hit the streets of Porto again last weekend after a gap of 45 years, with cars taking part in the GP Historico do Porto meeting.**

The Boavista circuit, which has been revived by Mayor Mr Rui Rio and the city council, now uses the western end of the old "Grand Prix" track and covers just over half of the original 7.4 km circuit, running around the city park. From the start, competitors race towards the sea before turning left at Salvador roundabout to head along Esplanada Rio de Janeiro with the Atlantic Ocean on their right. Then they are confronted by the famous Castle roundabout and turn left onto the Avenue Boavista, a 1.5km arrow straight dual carriage way that heads back towards the town. Half way along they negotiate a frighteningly fast chicane and at the end turn sharp left on to the Av.do Parque. Leaving the original circuit this runs through a series of right and left sweeps before turning left again on to Rua da Vilarinha. After 0.5km, and another chicane, a 90deg left in front of the Café Vinada takes the cars back on to the start straight.

Most of the circuit, through necessity of safety, is now lined with concrete barriers and high wire fences. Whilst this provides some wonderful racing and many car crunching incidents it does lack the wide open feel of the original sea-front area. It's when the cars turn left, in front of the church, on to Rua da Vilarinha that the transformation takes place, you are taken back 40, 50 years or even further to the great road races of the 1920s. No wire fences here, the crowd festoon trees, walls, windows, doorways, they fill the church courtyard cheering and clapping as the historic cars race past. A dog at the Café Vinada barks at every car screeching past only 2 metres from his door. Thank goodness that the local police, their white gun belts in evidence, are in charge of crowd control. It's like no other event I've been to in the last 35 years.

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The racing was also spectacular, most of it complementary to the old circuit: a wonderful entry of pre-war sports cars, Gentleman Drivers battling it out in 1960s sports racers, pre-1961 and pre-1966 F1 races and historic Formula Juniors. Plus two modern car events one being a Trofeu Datsun race, the other a round of the Spanish GT series. Both days saw the last races going on in to the evening with the circuit being bathed in a golden glow from the setting sun.

There's no doubt that the modern Boavista circuit is difficult, narrow and very unforgiving on both cars and drivers. Quiet a number of the drivers saying that they were worried by those concrete barriers, and sadly a lot of expensive and rare cars were damaged. 2007 sees the next GP Historico do Porto and I'm sure the organisers will do there best to carry out any modifications that are requested.

Also in 2007 the **CLUB INTERNATIONAL des ANCIENS PILOTES de GRAND PRIX F1** will be 45 years old and have agreed to celebrate their anniversary at Historico do Porto, so that event should be full of famous Grand Prix celebrities. The famous club was formed in 1962, in Switzerland by nine GP drivers including Louis Chiron, Gianfranco Comotti, Albert Divo, Juan Manuel Fangio and Nino Farina. The oldest current members number Yves Giraud-Cabantous, Toulo de Graffenried, Paul Frère and Robert Manzon. The President of the Club is Phil Hill, Vice-President Maria Teresa de Filippis.

For details and full results log on to [www.circuitodaboavista.com](http://www.circuitodaboavista.com)

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