

CLASSIC DRIVER

Race Retro 2008



There are few, if any, dates in the calendar which welcome such a huge congregation of historic motorsport big-hitters as the Friday of Race Retro, the International Historic Motorsport Show at Stoneleigh. It's a networker's paradise.

The main 'live action' attractions – autotests, historic karts and a Group B rally stage – are limited to the Saturday and Sunday, to attract the general public, but Friday is the day when the serious players gather and gossip. 2008 was no exception and, if the exhibitors themselves were generally similar to last year, the gossip is always fresh.

The hub of the racing gossip is the main aisle in Hall 2 – 'Speed Street', where sit the top historic race organisers, from the **Masters Racing Series** and **Motor Racing Legends**, to the **HSCC** and **Classic Sports Car Club**, **U2TC**, **HGPCA**, and the rest.





Here, the **HSCC** launched a new 80s Road Sports category, which will go live in 2009. "It will be for road-legal production sports cars produced and registered in the 1980s," said the Club's Grahame White. On the nearby **Masters** stand, there was much talk of the European expansion of the company's substantial portfolio of race series. In addition to its established UK Festivals, new events will be added: at **Anderstorp** in Sweden, and **Magny-Cours** in France. The large stand accommodated two display cars: a **1964 AC Cobra**, restored and 'ready to race', plus a **Broadspeed Ford Capri RS3100**, eligible for **Masters'** new **Touring 70s** class.



Just down the aisle, **Duncan Wiltshire** of **Motor Racing Legends** was busy talking to competitors about the changes he's introducing to revitalise the **BRDC Historic Sportscars**, which his company is running from 2008 onwards. Gracing the **Motor Racing Legends** stand was a fabulous **1957 ex-Works Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa**, on loan from **Fiskens**, the factory-entered car from the **1958 Buenos Aires 1000Km** and still remarkably faithful to the original. If this is indicative of the sort of cars which might be entered in this year's **BRDC Historic Sportscars**, we can indeed look forward to a revitalised series.

Elsewhere, throughout the four halls, was the usual colourful mix of rally cars and accessories, engineering companies, motorcycles and automobilia, an outstandingly diverse display at what is still the only show in the world dedicated to historic motorsport. To pick just a tiny sample of what was on offer...

Among the book launches was that of **Chris Lawrence's** autobiography – '*Morgan Maverick*', telling the story of his 'characteristically British' life from Royal Navy engineer to Le Mans class winner and Grand Prix driver. This is the first book he has written and he vows it will also be his last! We haven't yet had a chance to read it but, at first glance, it looks to be an engaging tale told with the informality of a good chat with an old friend. Very appealing indeed (if, perhaps, a little short on proofreading).



Meanwhile, **Lola** unveiled a 50th anniversary poster; the **Aston Martin Owners' Club** displayed a rubber-bespattered **N24 V8 Vantage**, fresh from testing at Paul Ricard; and **Bonhams** held its auction on the Saturday afternoon. Selling bang on estimate for £89,500 (including buyer's premium), the star of the sale was the **Björn Waldegård 2007 East African Safari Rally-winning, 1972 Ford Escort RS1600 Mk1**, which came with all the Safari Rally extras in place. As befits a sale taking place at Race Retro, an unusually high proportion of the entries were competition cars, but by no means all. For example, a well-presented **1966 DB6** saloon, in red with black leather interior, again sold for its mid-estimate price – £45,500.





Well done to the organisers of Race Retro, who again produced a spectacular show – although one disappointment came in the form of a major ‘theme’: how historic motorsport can ‘go green’. A potentially fascinating subject, yet it turned out to focus almost exclusively on biofuels which, while an important alternative to fossil fuels when the world’s oil supplies run out, have extremely dubious ‘green’ credentials. It’s the now familiar problem of ‘green’ being confused with ‘renewable’. Expert opinion seems to suggest that biofuels, all things considered, are very bad for the planet. The show rather glossed over this fact; but then many of the exhibitors were biofuel manufacturers and suppliers, so perhaps it’s not surprising.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to see the full Bonhams auction results.

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