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Le Mans Legend 2011: Historic Highlights



The Le Mans Legend, the historic support race at the Le Mans 24 Hours, has become a popular fixture at the world's greatest endurance race, both for entrants and spectators. This year it offers a diverse and spectacular grid of Le Mans-type cars - many with actual Le Mans history - from 1949-65, and the 61 places on the grid were snapped up soon after entries opened, not to mention an oversubscribed Reserves list.

From the Ferraris (including 250LM, 246S, 365 PS) and Listers (Knobbly and Costin), right back to the earlier, smaller-engined cars such as Frazer Nash and even a 1500cc HRG, there is much for spectators to see - and it's not just the fastest cars at the front of the field that are likely to attraction the world's attention.

This year, much focus will be given to the class for sports-racing cars from 1959-65, with engines of no more than 2 litres. For a start, this class will see Sir Stirling Moss in his first ever race in the Porsche RS 61 he bought back in March 2010 - and which he entered at Laguna Seca last August, only to spin off on the warm-up lap. As a result, Sir Stirling was hit by a Lotus that came off at the same corner, causing substantial damage to the Porsche's front end but thankfully not to Stirling. The car was shipped to UK Porsche specialist Maxted-Page & Prill for repair, where Andy Prill soon discovered the reason for Stirling's spin. And it was not driver error.



When the gearbox was stripped, it was found that a ball bearing had momentarily lodged in the gearbox teeth, causing the back wheels to lock. No wonder the car had spun off...

By June, Prill and his team will have the RS 61 fully fettled and ready for Sir Stirling, and co-driver Ian Nuthall, to take to the track for the 45-minute Le Mans Legend race. But the Porsche RS 61 is not the only car in that class likely to excite the interest of enthusiasts, as the Moss/Nuthall pairing is up against a Porsche RS 60, Ferrari 206P, Lotus 15 - and American racer Cameron Healy's 2-litre, 6-cylinder Porsche 904-6 prototype, one of just six built, of which only four survive.

Says Duncan Wiltshire of Motor Racing Legends, which runs the annual Le Mans Legend race, "Despite the incredible provenance and value of the cars entered, the Le Mans Legend is a fiercely fought race and none of Stirling's opponents will be hanging back. There's no doubt that he'll have quite a fight on his hands; but

then, Stirling is used to that. In fact, he positively thrives on it.”

The 61 cars in the 2011 Le Mans Legend will take to the track at 10am on Saturday 11 June, shortly before the start of the Le Mans 24 Hours. For more details of the race, see www.motorracinglegends.com.

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