

Wall to wall nostalgia at the 2016 Monaco Historic Grand Prix

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The tenth edition of the biennial Grand Prix de Monaco Historique took place last weekend, briefly returning the glamorous principality to its former golden-era glory. We sent Monaco first-timer Rémi Dargegen to document the occasion...

It is said that there is no greater thrill (or challenge) in contemporary motorsport than tackling the Monaco Grand Prix circuit in a competition car, and we're sure the same applies to historic motorsport. Every other May, a number of lucky professional and amateur drivers get to realise the experience during the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique, one of the most prestigious events on the historic calendar.

No greater challenge





The roster of seven grids (including one demonstration for pre-War cars) spanned 50 years, and catered almost exclusively for single-seaters – though a race was held for front-engined sports cars of the mid-1950s, in tribute to the only Monaco Grand Prix run for two-seaters in 1952. The weekend culminated in a race for over 35 mid-1970s three-litre Formula 1 cars – a sight and sound that few could comprehend.



For our photographer Rémi Dargegen, it was an entirely new yet unforgettable experience. “This was my first time at the historic Grand Prix, and all I can say is wow,” he says. “At first I was a little worried about where I should be shooting from to get the best views of the action and the best depiction of Monaco, but I soon realised that the place is so recognisable and so special that it didn’t really matter.” He also found a new respect for those behind the wheel – “There are so few escape routes, and if a driver loses control, they’ll hit a wall and almost inevitably bring out the safety car. It happened in most of the races.”

Wheel to wheel, wall to wall



The racing was closely fought and crammed with action throughout. "Regardless of the value of these cars, there were close battles in every race," says Rémi. We're thrilled to report that Classic Driver dealer [JD Classics'](#) Chris Ward claimed a dominant victory in the sports car race, aboard the well-sorted ex-Fangio Jaguar C-type that we saw [undergoing final preparations](#) just last week.



Ex-Formula 1 star Alessandro Caffi in his Ensign narrowly held off Katsuaki Kubota's March by just 2.5sec to win Series G for the seventies Formula 1 cars, and Gregor Fisker finished a respectable fifth place in his Shadow. "Though it's not my favourite period of motorsport, the two later Formula 1 races were the most impressive," comments Rémi. "Those cars were really in their element, almost as though they'd never left the principality." In a particularly emotional moment, Anthony Beltoise was united with his father Jean-Pierre's Matra MS 120, its shrill V12 howl bouncing around Monaco and no doubt into neighbouring France.

The Goodwood of Formula 1?



If Rémi could find any fault with the event, it would have been the pre-War grid, which this year was limited to a demonstration for the first time. "I would have loved to have seen the Grand Prix Bugattis tussling with the Alfa Romeo 8Cs," he says. "The rest of the racing was truly magical, though." High praise, indeed, from a fiercely passionate snapper who's travelled to the finest historic events around the world. All that was missing, he concludes, was some period outfits and branding around the circuit, and the Monaco Historic GP could well become the Goodwood of Formula 1...

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