

CLASSIC DRIVER

Oldtimer Grand Prix 2016 - fresh ideas and rare racing treasures

Lead

Featuring a track day on the Nordschleife, races for historic Formula 3 cars, dicing DTM heroes, a twilight race and demonstrations of Group B monsters, the Oldtimer Grand Prix 2016 at the Nürburgring proved a success for yet another year...



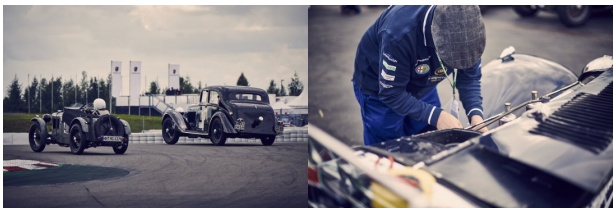
The 44th edition of the Automobile Club of Germany's Oldtimer Grand Prix saw some 500 cars – spanning seven decades and divided into 20 grids – descend on the legendary Eifel Mountains circuit. Kicking proceedings off on Friday was an organised track day for around 120 classic and modern sports cars on the Nordschleife.



“We tried to appeal to those people who do not wish to race their classics, but would like to do more than just look at them,” explains event organiser Jorge Bratke. Given the ear-to-ear smiles of those peeling off the circuit at the end of the session, we imagine the track day will become a permanent fixture at future events.



By contrast, Saturday and Sunday's action-packed roster of races was held on the Grand Prix circuit. Some 51,000 expectant spectators watched, among other races, the Jaguar Classic Challenge (in which local hero Marcus von Oeynhausen claimed victory after Julian Thomas retired), two rounds of the Masters Historic Formula 1 championship, and a twilight race for early-1960s Grand Touring cars. There was also a race held for mid-1980s Formula 3 cars, which featured one of Ayrton Senna's first racing cars – the Ralt RT3/82.



Another highlight was the field of more than 40 pre-War racing cars, including eight supercharged Mercedes-Benz SSKs and the 680 S in which Rudolf Caracciola won at the Nürburgring in 1927. Other cars of notable significance in action at the 'Ring included Ford engineer John Wheeler's RS200 Group S and the Jaguar XJ13 that our [UK editor Joe Breeze managed to experience on its maiden lap of Le Mans](#) just a few weeks ago.





Opel showed its legendary 1996 International Touring Car Championship-winning Calibra, affectionately known as ‘Cliff’ after its memorable livery. Driven by Manuel Reuter in period, ‘Smoking Joe’ Winkelhock got to take the wheel last weekend. “It was the first time I’ve driven a ITTC car,” he commented. “I was driving for BMW in the BTTC at the time, and I’m glad I finally got the opportunity to have a go in the Opel.”



Among the many famous guests at the Oldtimer Grand Prix was Derek Bell, who’d travelled directly from the [Classic Days at Schloss Dyck last weekend](#). He led a parade of Porsche 924s, 944s and 968s assembled to celebrate 40 years of the marque’s transaxle models, driving the ex-Le Mans 924 GTP. Also in attendance was current World Endurance Championship driver Stefan Mücke, who drove a Ford Capri RS in the revival round of the German Racing Championship, and ex-Formula 1 driver Christian Danner, who was promoting Jaguar’s Formula E activities.

Photos: Frederik Dulay © 2016 for Classic Driver

Gallery

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