

AUTOWEEK®

MARCH 6, 2017

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**Do-It-Yourself
Special Issue**

CRAIN



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MARCH 6, 2017



ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES

Ever since the first tinkerer got the bright idea to combine an internal combustion engine to a carriage, the car world has been defined by do-it-yourselfers. Consider this issue a celebration of our proud DIY culture.

DO-IT-YOURSELF SPECIAL ISSUE

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Shown: yet another DIY adventure that played out differently in my mind

POSITIVE GROUND

BY GRAHAM KOZAK

Why We Do It To Ourselves

THERE ARE A NUMBER of reasons an otherwise rational person might roll up their sleeves and become a do-it-yourselfer. The promise of cost savings gets you started, especially when you're younger and don't have much of a budget to play with, but a lot of people who can afford to hire a professional insist on diving in anyway. It's a point of pride. It's educational; build (or rebuild) something, and you will truly understand it.

It's fun. Or at least it's commonly assumed to be. We take it for granted that working on a project car must be somewhat enjoyable. Otherwise, why would we do it?

But if DIY is fun, we're all part-time masochists. Think back to that last project. What percentage of your time was spent happily spinning a wrench? How does that compare to the time spent breaking things, breaking yourself, fixing whatever you did wrong the first time around and eventually retreating into a case of cheap beer?

With every do-it-yourself project I've undertaken to date, I've experienced far more moments of intense frustration than moments of Zen. I prevail, eventually, and when I take a step back from whatever I was

doing, the exasperation fades; the feeling of triumph sticks around.

I could be totally off-base here, but I'd bet my experience is fairly typical. Still, there are people for whom everything goes according to plan. They're done on schedule and under budget. Their beers are celebratory, not therapeutic. But here's the thing: They're missing out.

I've been getting in over my head on everything from cars to boats to an old house for years. My budget means I end up doing most things myself, but if I didn't want the stress, I could rent an apartment and take up stamp collecting.

No, I haven't learned to embrace the pain that comes with each project, and I haven't gotten much better at keeping my cool when things really go south. I doubt I ever will. But I've come to realize that the frustration is a big part of what makes a do-it-yourself project so satisfying. Some ancient part of my brain, I suspect, craves the strife.

There's a theory that humans are built not for speed nor strength but endurance—that our ancestors hunted prey by chasing it down to exhaustion. Even after pointy sticks entered the equation, it remained a drawn-out process.

The invention of the Land Rover and the .375 H&H Magnum round rendered persistence hunting obsolete, but there's still a desire—a primal need, even—to square off against a seemingly insurmountable task and run it down to the bitter end, no matter what actual or figurative brambles lie in the way.

"Maybe it won't be so bad this time," we tell ourselves, even when part of us knows it's going to be a bear of a project. We can't help it. We thrive on the challenge. It's not exactly slaying the mammoth and feeding the village, nor is it landing on the moon, but our time spent in the garage battling problems we create is how we keep our edge.

And yeah, between the tears and the busted knuckles, we sometimes manage to wrench ourselves out of the pit of despair and into the occasional moment of flow. When nothing is broken or about to be, when everything is going like we'd imagined it would. Even a non-masochist would call it fun. 🍷



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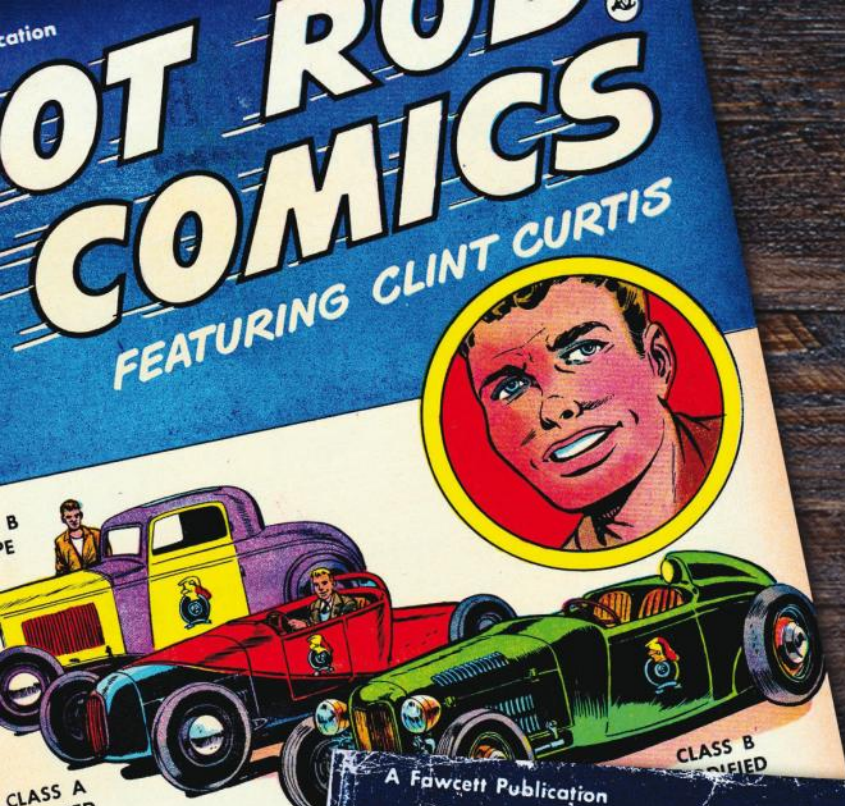
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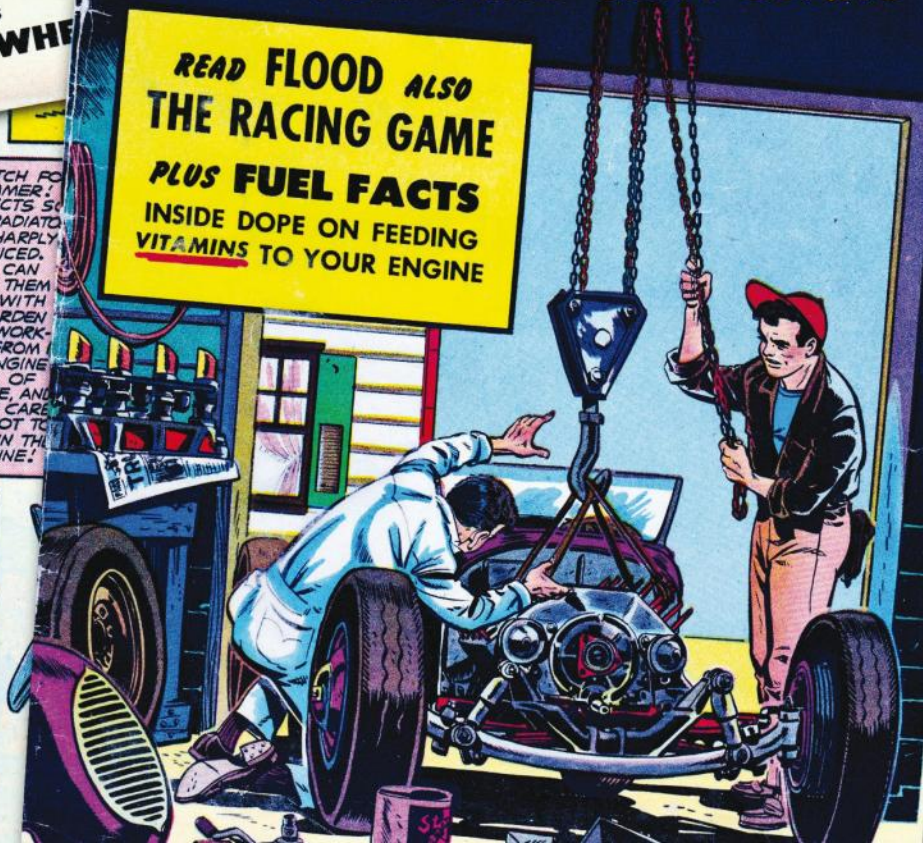
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INSECTS SO
THE RADIATOR
IS SHARPLY
REDUCED.
YOU CAN
WASH THEM
OUT WITH
A GARDEN
HOSE WORK-
ING FROM THE
ENGINE
SIDE OF
COURSE, AND
BEING CARE-
FUL NOT TO
DROWN THE
ENGINE!

AT ALL TIMES IN
TO ADD A SMALL
INHIBITOR
SHED IT OUT!

HOSE BY SQUEEZING
OR SOFT IT MIGHT COL-
LINE SPEEDS UP THERE-
FROM



HOT ROD COMICS

THIS WEEK, ALL OF THE ROAD WRIGHTS
WENT IN HELPING JIM BUILD HIS HOT ROD!

WHAT HUNDRED WON'T GET VERY FAR,
SET UP A DURAL FLYWHEEL FOR YOU. THIS
HALF AS MUCH AS THE STOCK FLYWHEEL
ENGINE AND HELPS TO SAVE POWER.

GEE,
THANKS,
CLINT!

ISSUE DEPARTMENT, THE IMPORTANT THINGS
STEERING GEAR AND SUSPENSION.
POINT IN PUTTING A STRONG
WEAK FRAME, SO YOU REINFORCE
ME BY WELDING QUARTER-INCH
TS TO THE REAR CROSS MEMBER.

TOP THE TOP, YOU FIRST REMOVE THE GLASS
DOORS FROM THE BODY. THEN YOU ACCURATELY
OFF THE SECTION YOU WANT TO REMOVE, CUTTING
AN ORDINARY HACKSAW. WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED,
TOP WON'T LINE UP WITH THE STUMPS OF THE
SHIELD POSTS, BUT A COUPLE OF V-SHAPED
IS CUT IN THE POSTS WILL ENABLE THEM TO
BE BENT BACK TO FIT.



Hot Rod magazine first appeared in January 1948. From the outset, it offered numerous in-depth how-to articles for budding do-it-yourselfers. West Coast rodders had been racing at the dry lakes to the north and east of Los Angeles since the 1930s, and a raft of performance-equipment merchants—some no more than filling stations with a machinist on staff—emerged to meet the growing demand for hot-rod gear and custom car accessories.

Speed Age magazine preceded Hot Rod by a year, and soon a pack of competitors like Rod & Custom, Honk! (which became Car Craft), Hop Up, Motor Trend, Auto Age and Motor Life arrived on newsstands. Their distribution raced from LA all across the country, spreading the hot-rod gospel as far as the East Coast.

And beginning in July 1951, there was Hot Rod Comics. These 10 cent, four-color, 32-page finely illustrated comic books starred Clint Curtis, a member of the Road Knights hot-rod club. Clint and his gang had their own clubhouse, spending their spare time working on cars in between bouncing from one adventure to the next. These fanciful stories portrayed hot-rodders as mechanically minded good kids who'd never race on the streets, instead helping motorists in trouble and performing good deeds for the community.

Hot Rod Comics lasted a mere eight issues. Clint reappeared in another, more broadly positioned comic book title, Hot Rods and Racing Cars, which ended with issue No. 120. Fawcett Publications, located in Greenwich, Connecticut, produced it, along with Captain Marvel Adventures, The Marvel Family, Tom Mix Western, Master Comics, Lash LaRue Western and many other titles.

Fawcett also published Best Hot Rods in 1952, but it ran just three issues. In 1953, they tried again with Sports Cars



and Hot Rods, which featured articles by Dean Batchelor, Griff Borgeson, and John Wheelock Freeman, but that was short-lived, too. Later on, Fawcett found more success with a series of 75 cent hot-rod, sports-car and antique-car anthologies.

Hot Rod Comics contained several adventures each issue. On one occasion, Clint and the Road Knights went to Bonneville to race a streamliner. In others, they helped rescue victims from a plane crash, entered a sprint-car race with a borrowed race car, competed in a hill climb, caught a ring of hot-rod thieves, hooked up snowplows to help their town avoid a winter disaster and even built a special three-wheeled hot rod to skirt the rules and beat a fast motorcycle in a road race. Along the way, there was plenty of information in articles like "Fuel Facts" by Oscar J. Gude, along with "Speed Secrets" and "Spark Plug Tips."

—continued on page 8

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DO-IT-YOURSELF

—continued from page 7

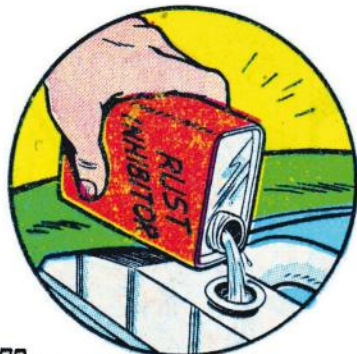
In one memorable issue, Clint helps a friend build his first car; included is a guide to “chopping and channeling.” While the information is limited, the basics are all there. Clint explains the use of wedge cuts to help align chopped windshield pillars, shows how to fabricate a dropped axle, and covers frame reinforcing and head milling—all on one neatly illustrated page.

Moral lessons abound as the club members frown on “squirrels” (showoff drivers), ally with local police to establish a sanctioned drag strip and conduct safety inspections to help other motorists. The illustrations are nicely detailed—these artists knew their cars, and the pictures are technically correct, for the most part. The sections on driving tips and the code of road conduct lessons have held up well. And Clint’s parents are supportive of his hobby; at one point, his dad even climbs into a race car when its driver is incapacitated (of course Dad was a hot-rodder in the ‘30s with a souped-up Model T) and wins the race.

On the technical side, pages of illustrations showed how to deal with squeaks and rattles and how to stretch tire mileage. Others detailed how spark plugs and carburetors worked. The basic text is simple, so a bright teenager could learn quite a bit from it. The language is quaint and slang-filled, but it was probably on point for the early ‘50s. Take this example on exotic fuels: “You should meet the alcohol sisters, Ethyl and Methyl...they differ from gasoline and benzine, both in chemical and physical properties, in that alcohols also contain oxygen. Like the hydro-carbons, they’re almost twins: methyl-alcohol or pure wood alcohol is about five percent hotter than ethyl-alcohol, so methanol is our baby.”

The text was often a little corny, as in this quote from a “Tire Tips” chapter: “Concerning recaps, for city driving on a stock wagon, it’s a great money saver. But when your neck can depend on the condition of a set of skins, invest in a good set and forget the retreads. They’re never guaranteed to hold together at the speeds you want to drive. Remember, a good boot on the car is better than one on the ear, which can be the result with bad rubber on a rod!”

Looking at these comic books today is like a trip back in time. Besides hot rods, there are ads for Fleer Dubble Bubble chewing gum for just 1 cent. Daisy Air



USE CLEAN WATER AT ALL TIMES IN YOUR RADIATOR AND ADD A SMALL QUANTITY OF RUST INHIBITOR AFTER YOU'VE FLUSHED IT OUT!

Rifles was a frequent advertiser. Every boy wanted a Red Ryder carbine. It was “only \$5.75,” the equivalent of \$51.32 in today’s dollars. The average annual wage in America then was \$2,973.70, so a six-buck BB gun was a pretty expensive toy, even though BBs were 5 cents for a pack of 128 slugs.

Faded issues of Hot Rod Comics, now collector’s items, sell for \$10 to \$20 at swap meets if you can find them. They clearly weren’t designed to last for 65 years. The kids who bought these magazines are now in their 70s, but many of them remain enthusiastic hot-rodders to this day. That 10 cent investment, made back in midcentury, has paid life-time dividends. 🍀

FROM THE COLLECTION OF KEN GROSS (7)

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DO-IT-YOURSELF

Why car projects stall
and how to get them

BACK IN GEAR

BY GRAHAM KOZAK



IT SEEMED LIKE IT WAS going to go so smoothly at first, your car project, and for a while it did.

You made steady progress, chewing through that to-do list with energy and genuine enthusiasm. A complete driver—at least one as complete as a needy old car can ever be—seemed like a reasonable, attainable goal.

Until something sidelined the whole operation. Maybe it was as big as a cooked transmission or as minuscule as an incurably faulty blinker circuit. No

matter. It killed your momentum. It threw off your game. It gave other obligations precisely the hook they needed to drag you out of your shop—your onetime sanctum—for ever-longer periods. Eventually, you stopped going back there more than you absolutely had to, avoiding eye contact with the ominous shape under the car cover whenever you did venture in.

So your project sits, stalled indefinitely, hogging prime real estate in your garage and an even more precious spot in the back of your mind.





This, friends, is how dreams die (and, for what it's worth, how future barn finds are created). And it's at this point any economist will tell you that it's just not worth it. All of the time, energy and money you poured into that project? Water under the bridge. Rather than throwing more good resources after bad, cut your losses and sell it for scrap.

We've yet to meet an economist with a halfway decent car collection, though. So you're going to stop feeling miserable about your car, and yourself, and you're going to get that sucker going. After all, you're hardly the first person to end up in this position.

Matt Lewis and Davin Reckow are co-hosts of Hagerty's ongoing "The Wrenchmen" web video series, in which the pair helps project-car owners across the country face off against dead-in-the-water projects.

"It's never a restoration for us. It's just making it a functional vehicle again," says Lewis. "The most frustrating car in the world is the one you can't drive. If you can get it back on the road, it's just so much nicer a thing to have than a broken machine you see every time you go in the garage."

"There are a lot of different reasons you get stuck, and some of them are beyond your control," says Reckow. A "Wrenchmen" subject with a 1967 Pontiac GTO, for example, "got the engine out, got it torn apart, got everything rebuilt and then over the years of doing that, his friends who had helped him out in doing that moved away, got

families. He was left with a task he just wasn't comfortable doing."

Based on all the tinkerers we surveyed, "life getting in the way" is the overwhelming reason for projects being placed on the interminable back burner. It's not just a matter of limited time and money; it's everything that comes to compete for your limited time and money. Work, travel, family, kids, buying a home—make no mistake, these can all be rewarding, fulfilling things, and it's easy to see how even the most ardent amateur restorer can lose focus in the face of them.

But our tendency to self-sabotage via procrastination makes it even harder to recover from a setback or overcome a gap in our knowledge. "Of course, nobody wants to have that car that's just sitting there doing nothing," says Reckow. "At the end of the day, whatever the project is, if it's stalled, it just eats at you as you walk by it. Mentally, you just dig yourself a bigger hole."

Some cars—the numbers are impossible to compile, but perhaps even the majority—will never be completed by their original owners. Alan Galbraith, founder of the celebration of misfit classics that is the Concours d'LeMons and for the past 11 years operator of the Billetproof traditional hot-rod and custom shows, purchased one such stagnant project: a rare 1952 Muntz Jet, one of about 400 built as part of consumer electronics titan Earl "Madman" Muntz's short-lived automotive venture.

"The original owner worked for Muntz. Being a good company man, he bought the car. He passed it on to his son; it became the family car, and then the weekend car, and then one day in



DO-IT-YOURSELF

1986 he went out to the garage to take it for a drive and it wouldn't start. And he wasn't a car guy, so there it sat," says Galbraith.

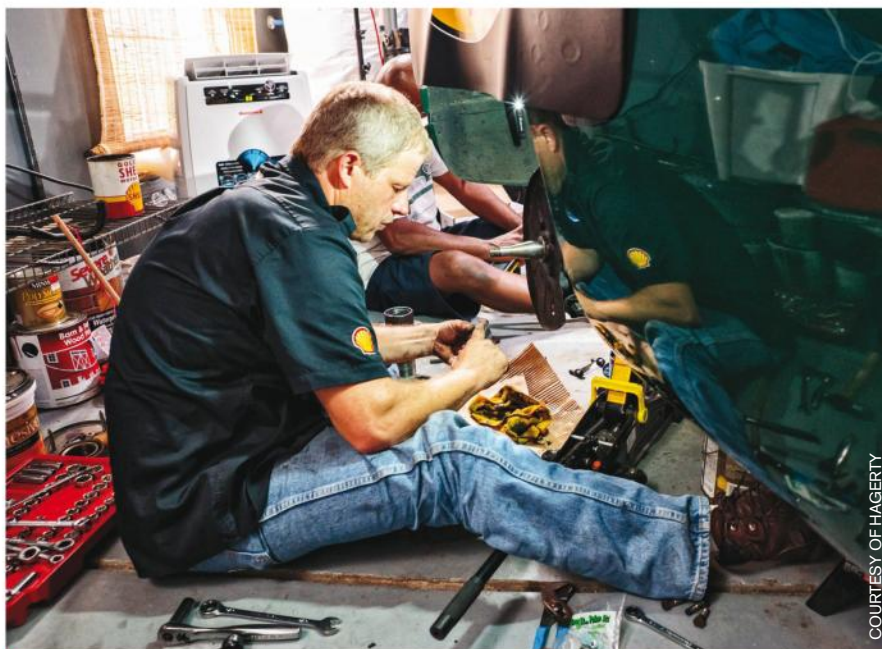
It sat until not quite two years ago, when Galbraith bought the car and got it back on the road. Mechanically sound, he's putting it through a full concours-quality restoration with a fast-approaching target: Monterey Car Week 2017. It's a colossal undertaking on an accelerated timetable, but Galbraith, no stranger to the occasional resto hang-up, has a method for maintaining that all-important momentum.

"What I've done with the Muntz is—and this is advice I got from very high-end restorers and shops—buy yourself a pad of paper or binder, spend a couple hours and touch every part that you're going to restore." Then, says Galbraith, "Write it down. Something as simple as 'take headlight rings off, have them rechromed, reinstall.' But write it down.

"Name all the parts you have to take off; name all the parts you need to go find. That way, if you do get to a point where there's something that's frustrating, there's always something more to do. You can break out that binder, you can look at that list and say, 'Oh, here's something I can do that will move the project forward' while you figure out or seek advice to get past other problems."

Forcing yourself to create an endless list of needs might seem intimidating, but, Galbraith says, "You eat the elephant one bite at a time." Even if that bite is as small as sourcing replacement weatherstripping online during your lunch break, "you've done something. You've accomplished something. And over time, it will add up ... to a finished project, hopefully," he says, laughing.

Another time-tested way to jump-start things? Call on the expertise of others, if only just to provide a fresh perspective. Remember, that's the entire premise of Hagerty's "The Wrenchmen" series. "Most every car guy has a project that's stalled, or put on the back burner or just flat-out stuck" at some point, says Reckow. "The idea is that Matt and I help out, if nothing else, as just an extra set of eyes. An extra set of eyes may see the issue ... fill that sort of 'forest from the trees' function."



COURTESY OF HAGERTY

"Nobody wants to have that car that's just sitting there doing nothing. Whatever the project is, if it's stalled, it just eats at you as you walk by it. Mentally, you just dig yourself a bigger hole."

—DAVIN RECKOW, CO-HOST OF HAGERTY'S "THE WRENCHMEN"

In addition to the wealth of information available online, surrounding yourself with like-minded enthusiasts can provide a sort of positive pressure; it's a proof of how local car shows and car clubs that meet up off the message boards still have real value today. Just seeing what others are doing might be all it takes to rekindle interest in your own project.

"Myself, I get pretty motivated if I just go to an event," Reckow says. "Kind of that 'well, heck, I can do that, too.' But there is a little bit of a competitive aspiration to it: I can do it better than you can. Or, I can at least do it same as you can."

And if all else fails, you can always find a reputable garage and pay them to fix whatever problem is holding up your project.

Yes, that's right: We're suggesting casting aside the core tenet of DIYism—that, you know, you have to do the work *yourself*—just long enough to get to a point where you can actually start making progress again on your own. After all,

between cutting a blank check for a total restoration and recruiting a specialist for one particular stumper of a task, there's something of a broad middle ground.

"I wouldn't consider it 'giving up' as long as you learned why it wasn't running and what they did to fix it," Lewis says. "Don't just hand it over and say, 'Make it run, I don't want to see it.' Actually get in there and learn. If you're at the point where you don't know it, get something out of the experience of having someone help you."

Above all, it's important to have humility. "I've found that, in any project, the hardest part is starting," Lewis says. "One of the pieces of advice that I would have is, swallow your pride and ask somebody to take a look at what you're doing. Nobody is going to make fun of you because they've done it, too." 🛠️

The author's 1961 Metropolitan 1500, shown on the preceding pages, is about as stalled as a stalled project can be. He'll get around to fixing it someday.

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DO-IT-YOURSELF

IN EXPERT HANDS

HOW TWO ARTISANS PRACTICE
THEIR NOT-SO-LOST CRAFTS

BY WESLEY WREN AND GRAHAM KOZAK

GIVEN ENOUGH DETERMINATION, there's no project (short of chrome plating) you can't tackle in your home garage. But with time and patience in perpetual short supply, you'll want to leave some tricky tasks to the pros.

Take pinstriping and upholstery, two delicate jobs that can make even the most dogged knuckle-buster flinch. Our look at how two ace artisans paint and stitch cars to show-ready luster proves there's no magic here, just skill—and because of that, pulling back the curtain will only deepen your appreciation for their work.

STEP-BY-STEP UPHOLSTERY

TO THE UNSCHOOLED, “tuck and roll” is something you do when trying to bail out of a speeding car. To those in the know, it's an art form that made its way into magazine cover cars from the '40s onward. The technique has managed to survive despite changing trends. And Mikey Brown, owner/operator of Mikey's Kustom Upholstery in Deputy, Indiana, is doing his part, one hidden stitch at a time.

Concealing stitches and seams is the essence of tuck and roll—and the major differentiator between it and a standard pleat.

1. First, measure what you're going to make. This particular project is a metal-flake vinyl seat base for a lightweight bomber seat. Not only will you have to measure out the piece's overall dimensions, you'll also have to measure out each individual pleat. Transfer these measurements to the vinyl after adhering it to some foam backing.

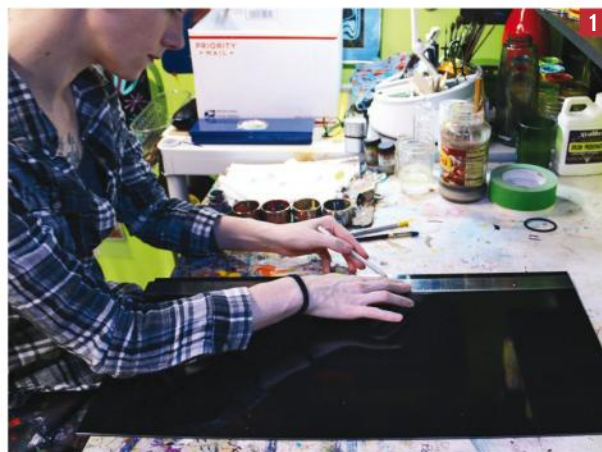
2. Move to a heavy-duty sewing machine and start sewing the pleats. Initially, the pleats are oversized, but this allows space to go back and hide the seams with a back stitch, a seam that is stitched through the foam backing to hide the initial stitch. It pulls

the pleats together, making them look full, and it will also make the seam impossible to see.

3. After finishing the rest of the top part of the seat base, cut out the vinyl for the front and sides of the seat and repeat.

4. Now that the entire seat cover is done, lay it over a foam base with a metal backing. The foam should give the driver and passenger some comfort, despite the padding sacrifices for weight reduction. Add more spray adhesive to the foam before the cover wraps it. Glue the vinyl cover to the metal base so the cover fully wraps the seat.





STEP-BY-STEP PINSTRIPING

LIKE A PANEL-BEATER

turning a flat piece of metal into an exotic, flowing form, there's something entrancing about watching a skilled pinstriper pull patterns out of the air and commit them, free-hand, to a workpiece.

Painter/photographer Jennifer "Hot Rod Jen" Skidmore of Pennsylvania has left her mark on cars and bikes, and practiced her panel art on a wide range of objects, from old sawblades to ornaments.

Here, she works on a stand-alone panel with nothing guiding her but the vision in her mind and a pair of extremely steady hands.

1. Start with a blank aluminum panel. Tape off the areas to leaf later, draw some guide lines, then start painting with the darkest color first. It's all freehand—no stencils.

2. Fill in some of the areas with a bright color. Then run a contrasting color around the outside of the design to make it all pop.

3. Lay down the gold sizing (a special type of glue for metal leaf) and wait for it to tack up, then lay imitation gold leaf down with some wax paper.

4. Using a drill, engine-turn the leaf. This metal finishing technique gives the surface the look of a finely machined vintage instrument cluster or engine-bay firewall.

5. Clean it and pinstripe an outline around the leaf. The panel is finished and ready to frame.



CLAY COOK (4); JEN SKIDMORE (3)

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FROM RICHES TO RUIN

THE FIVE STAGES OF KIT-CAR OWNERSHIP

STORY BY JAKE LINGEMAN
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARTY DAVIS



THE HUMBLE KIT CAR HAS TO BE THE TRUEST EXPRESSION OF do-it-yourself-ism. It's a car, but it's not a car. It's a box of jumbled parts or worse, someone's old stalled project with multitudes of "whats," "hows" and "whys." The hobby's popularity has shrunk some since the mid-aughts—the 2008 financial crisis didn't help—but thanks to the internet, where the following build threads were found, there is still a thriving culture here in the U.S., as well as in Europe and Australia. What most people don't know is, like grief, there are five stages of kit-car ownership.

STAGE 1: UNBRIDLED ENTHUSIASM

■ It's all roses and butterflies in stage one. You have the time, you have the money and you have the space. You've found your perfect donor car, probably a VW Bug, Mazda MX-5 or Pontiac Fiero, and you have your Countach body. You also have a killer set of tools and you've done your fair share of building, repairing and fabricating. What could possibly go wrong?

"He contacted me and asked if I still wanted the car. Needless to say, I was in a little slice of heaven and of course said I did. I arranged transport for the car and went with the truck to pick it up. So much cooler in person, I was looking at a Lamborghini, my Lamborghini. Since this time, I've been collecting all the parts I need to make this replica as nice as I can. It's my dream car."

—WBNemo, "My 89-style Countach replica build"

STAGE 2: SHAKEN CONFIDENCE AND RECOVERY

■ In stage two, everything still feels fine. You have dealt with some roadblocks but found what you needed and are soldiering on. This project is going to take more effort, time and money than you originally planned, but that's OK. You're enjoying the challenge of finding parts, fabricating your own and buying new tools. You'll surely use that \$6,000, laser cutting/engraving, water-chilled CNC machine again, right? Right!

"I spent most of the today on the dash, aligning and fitting the individual panels, trying to even all the gaps. It's a puzzle because there are 16 panels in all. All will receive upholstery, but some are mounted to stay, and six will remain removable. Geez, I picked a hard car to build; the body has something like 12 panels, too. I spent the last two hours tonight making the black mask bezel for the gauges. The stock Fiero cluster is getting reused. And the new black bezel also covers the gap where the steering column cutout was on the old bezel." —TRcrazy, "512TR slow build"

—continued on page 20

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DO-IT-YOURSELF

—continued from page 18

STAGE 3: BARGAINING

■ In the bargaining stage, you are really looking for a reason to continue. Apparently, building a kit car isn't as easy as you thought. Still, the good outweighs the bad, and the finished product is in sight but a little far off. Sometimes this is when the project gets passed along to another brave soul.

"That's it, I'm thinking it's time to ditch the V12 in favor of a V8, and I'm serious. The engine is running on all cylinders, quite smoothly now, but there is still smoke in the exhaust. Some of the plugs are oiling up. I think it's time to cut my losses! Everything I have can be used in the V8 or whatever I choose to use in the car."

—NickTruman, "Zonda replica kit-car build"

STAGE 4: DEPRESSION

■ Once depression sets in, all hope is lost. It's too much work, building a car from scratch. Things aren't progressing; in fact, they may be going backward. Every time you go in your garage, the car is there, bare fiberglass and dust, taunting you. Things don't fit together properly, everything needs to be customized. It won't be long now.

"I'm just not in the mood to throw away anymore money. I swear I'm like \$30K in and really starting to question my morals on buying a replica over a real one."

—BentleyBoy, "MacGyver's Sebring widebody project"

STAGE 5: UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

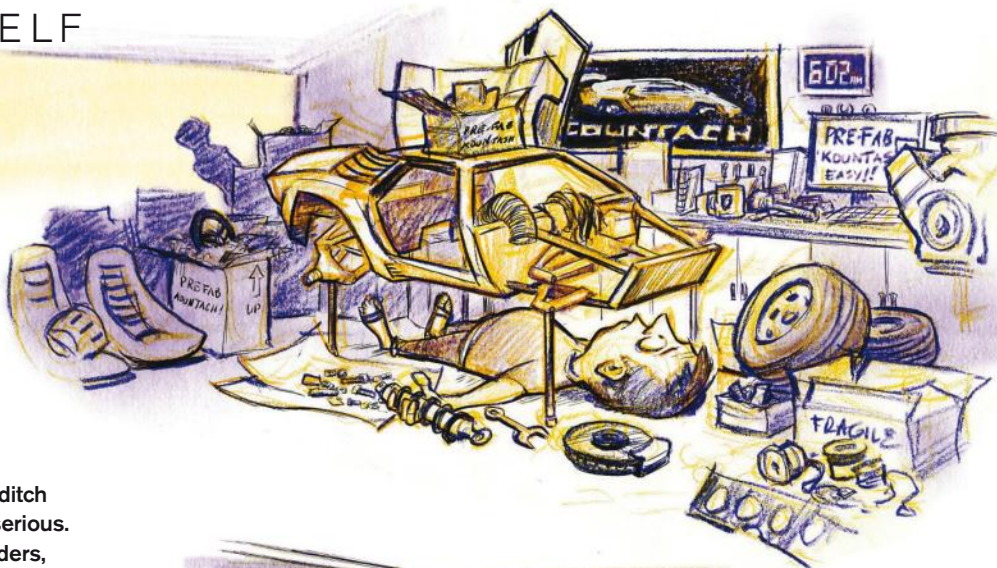
■ This is how many kit-car projects end, with a broken shell of a builder looking for buyers, sometimes on the cheap. There might be an inciting event—the blowing of an engine, perhaps—or the loss of a crucial auction part. You have

either spent too much time or too much money on the project, and now it's filling up space in the garage. The big problem is that a kit car doesn't just take up a singular area: Parts, body panels, boxes and tools end up all over the entire garage. And that doesn't leave any room for the couch you will be sleeping on if you don't finish the damn thing.

"Sadly, I have had a turn of events that is forcing me to sell the Countach. I'm looking for \$35K for all of it but am open to offers. I am not splitting it up. The chassis is a Porsche 914. Title says Countach."

—Zdaxxy, "Countach build"

Of course, not all kit-car projects go this way. Some fit together like finely chopped puzzle pieces. But if you're somewhere in the depths of stage three, with no end in sight, you might just want to find yourself a buyer now. On the other hand, if you've just picked up someone's half-built kit, check out our page 10 story on how to jump-start a stalled project. Back to stage one ... 🧠



GRASSROOTS MOTORSPORTS

ASK ANY CAR COMPANY why it's involved in motorsports and you'll hear things like "it helps us push our products to the limit," "it's a great training ground for our young engineers," and the old saying, "win on Sunday, sell on Monday." Meanwhile, ask a driver why they race and you'll hear words like "passion," "thrill" and "inspiration." And then there's Mazda, combining it all — a company where racing isn't just about a shelf full of trophies or some obscure engineering exercise. It's the company's very foundation.

Take grassroots racing, where drivers race for the simple joy of competition and camaraderie. With both the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) and the National Auto Sport Association (NASA) in road racing and autocross, grassroots racing is growing.

Mazda gets that. It understands that without entry-level racing, there would be no professional racing. So when the company says it boasts the most comprehensive motorsports ladder system of any automaker, it's not just talk. Mazda walks the walk as a company ahead of the pack, so to speak, where driving really does matter.

How so? Since it started racing 50 years ago, Mazda has won races from grassroots to Le Mans.

For Mazda, though, it's not just about winning. It's about passion

and racers voicing their Mazda love. According to the SCCA, the manufacturer holds a 55 percent market share in grassroots racing. In fact, the SCCA's biggest class is Spec Miata, with more than 3,000 cars built. Mazda also supplies engines for Formula Mazda, among the club's most-popular open-wheel classes, and racers drive Mazda in several other classes.

Mazda doesn't just support racers technologically — it also continues to pay more contingency prize money to SCCA and NASA racers than any other car company. In fact, Mazda and the SCCA just announced they'll work together to increase entries, contingency offerings and future opportunities for racers in all classes, and especially Mazda-powered Formula Enterprises (FE) cars.

Being so heavily involved in grassroots racing means Mazda has given many drivers their first racing experiences. They often speak of their passion and love for the company. "The first time I went more than 100 mph on a track was a eureka moment," said one. "I knew this is what I was going to do for the rest of my life."

Clearly racing is in Mazda's blood. It's a company continuously celebrating driving. Supporting thousands of racers who choose to race Mazdas is a no-brainer: They are the best representatives — the best brand advocates — an automaker could ever want.





JUST DONK IT

WHAT'S A 'DONK'
AND HOW TO
BUILD ONE

BY JAKE LINGEMAN

Q WE'RE GUESSING your first question is, "What the heck is a donk?" Let us explain.

Specifically, "donk" is the nickname for a customized 1971-76 Chevrolet Caprice or Impala. Many folks erroneously use it to describe any custom car with big wheels. To be clear, flashy wheels aren't required, but if you want a showstopper, they certainly help.

No one is certain where the term came from. Some cite the Impala logo, which

sort of looks like a donkey. Others swear that when the rear end of a Chevy is raised up and bouncing, it reminds them of the pack animal. Still others say it's from the slang term for, ahem, a woman's rear end. We'll let you decide.

The trend began in the 1990s in South Florida and has since fanned out across the country. Donks now have dedicated shops, clubs and car shows around the U.S., and the trend isn't slowing, according to Randy Cabrera, president of Riding Clean, a production company that's finishing up "DONKumentary," a film on the subject.

"The trend used to be about height, and the term was 'hi-risers,'" says Cabrera.

"Now it's all about clean. Everything is flush-mounted."

So then, let's build one.

First we need to find a car. A search of eBay Motors will net you a ton of results, with the cheaper donor cars starting at around \$7,000. Pre-built donks get up into the \$30,000 range, and some complete cars eclipse \$100K.

"You'll want something clean, (with) a good foundation," says Sage Thomas, aka Donkmaster, of In and Out Customs in Charleston, South Carolina. "You don't want something that's been sitting for years."

Thomas has a six-figure 1971 Chevrolet Caprice convertible known as the Z06 Donk because of its powertrain (an LS7), interior and brakes, all sourced from America's Sports Car. Thomas used to do these types of builds himself in the same way most learn: trial and error. Now he spends most of his time traveling around the country, spreading the good word and drag-racing when the mood strikes. His turbocharged Z06 donk can outrun its namesake in the quarter-mile with a 9.80 E.T.

Next, we need some wheels. Lots of the popular manufacturers make them,

including Forgiato, Asanti and Lexani, in sizes up to 32 inches. Tire Rack will set you up, so will CARiD and AutoAnything. Prices range from \$1,000-\$3,000 for a set, but again, these things can go up into the stratosphere.

After the wheel choice, the sky's the limit. These cars sometimes get widened (aka tubbed) wheel wells for more clearance and can be channeled—where the floor is cut and the body is lowered around the frame—painted, reupholstered and/or powered up.

The Donkmaster has put \$60,000 into his car's powertrain alone.

And that's the most important thing about do-it-yourself. Just like Japanese tuners, giant pickup trucks and bombed-out rat rods, donks have their fans and their detractors. But when you're doing it yourself, you're also doing it *for* yourself. That means if you want a candy-apple-red paint job, do it. If you want 20-inch wheels, 24s, 32s or 13s, you can do that, too. Slow or fast, flashy or plain, racy or floaty, it's all good. Just don't call it a donk if it's not a Chevy made between '71 and '76.

Connoisseurs hate that. 🙄



CLINT DAVIS; RIDING CLEAN/RANDY CABRERA

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This watch doesn't do dainty. And neither do I. Call me old-fashioned, but I want my boots to be leather, my tires to be deep-tread monsters, and my steak thick and rare. Inspiration for a man's watch should come from things like fast cars, firefighters and power tools. And if you want to talk beauty, then let's discuss a 428 cubic inch V8.

Did I mention the \$59 price tag? This is a LOT of machine for not a lot of money. The **Stauer Centurion Hybrid** sports a heavy-duty alloy body, chromed and detailed with a rotating bezel that allows you to track direction. The luminous hour and minute hands mean you can keep working into the night. And the dual digital displays give this watch a hybrid ability. The LCD windows displays the time, day and date, includes a stopwatch function, and features a bright green electro-luminescent backlight. We previously offered the **Centurion** for \$199, but with the exclusive promotional code it's yours for **ONLY \$59**!

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— C.S. from Fort Worth, TX



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Derek "Kane" Long, right, still "gets giddy" when he hops behind the wheel of his race car.

GO SHORT!

NOT ALL RACING REQUIRES BIG BUCKS TO PARTICIPATE IN

BY MATT WEAVER

IF ANYONE WITH A PASSION for racing has bought a Saturday night short-track ticket and convinced themselves they could compete with the local weekend warriors. Some of us have even convinced ourselves that we could be as successful as the professionals if we simply had the funding and time needed to refine our craft.

But despite that cost-of-entry misconception, blue-collar short-track racing has never been more affordable.

Tyler Lamm races on dirt in Wisconsin. When he was 17 years old, he lucked out and found a 1988 Toyota Celica reclamation project for \$200. He spent a few hundred bucks more getting it race-ready.

"In my first race, I spun once and got lapped," Lamm said. "But by my third race, I was running with the pack with no help from the veterans, no guidance whatsoever. It was just me and a couple of other teenagers banding together with the common goal of getting faster."

Short-track racing is a direct descendent of a hobby born from moonshine running during Prohibition. It's a catchall category that includes asphalt, dirt, quarter-mile and full-mile tracks. The vehicles are equally wide-ranging, from four-cylinder sedans to custom-built, high-speed models resembling those seen on television.

There are as many types of divisions as there are tracks, too. The names are mostly familiar even if the rules aren't well-known: street stock, street sportsman, bomber, wasp and stinger. Typically, they have one common denominator: using strictly stock components.

Most beginners have two options when they finally take the leap. The most time-efficient option is finding a turnkey race car that is track-ready when you buy it.

The other option is a roller, usually lacking key components like a roll cage, weights, a drivetrain and a racing seat.

It's much cheaper to build a race car on your own, but it requires having the skill set or social circle needed to do it correctly.

"My advice is to look up a group on Facebook or go to racingjunk.com or Craigslist," Lamm said. "I've acquired many cars and parts for them through social media."

"Of course, the costs start to rise when you decide that you want to win or climb into a faster division. But with a great sponsor or finding some people to help you, there are ways to make it work."

Other racers, like Derek "Kane" Long, have followed this approach.

An Alabama Gulf Coast radio personality—and NASCAR reporter Dustin Long's brother—Long understood the financial aspects of his favorite hobby. A few years into his "career," he realized he could offset costs while increasing his chances of winning if he found sponsors. The No. 1 thing Long encourages new racers to do is

find a tire sponsor, like he did with a local Cooper Tire dealership.

"You just have to take some time and put together a nice presentation," Long said. "You take a picture of the car to a potential sponsor and propose what it would look like with their logo on it. You'll want to be able to use it as a show car on Wednesdays or Thursdays in their parking lot because kids love that."

A tire deal is important. Long estimates going through right sides every two races at \$110 a tire, not counting the \$20 to cut a tire for banked tracks like his home facility in Mobile, Alabama.

Saving on tires has allowed Long to invest in premium safety equipment like a \$1,000 firesuit, a \$700 certified helmet and a \$100 head-restraint system. There are cheaper and less safe options, but it's worth doing right.

While safety advancements have come a long way in NASCAR, the same can't be said for local racing. Safety means adding an extra expense the everyman can't afford. But Long knows just how tenuous a short-track career can be.

He didn't think he would compete again after a 2011 crash left him with a broken sternum, bruised lungs and nerve damage to both knees. But ever the racer, Long



MATT BISHOP (2); EDDIE RICHIE

would not be denied, and he returned for the 2013 season. The experience strengthened his resolve to find more sponsors and invest in equipment to protect him better.

More importantly, Long, like others who have been injured while racing, came back because he's addicted to the thrill.

"There's just no place like it," Long said. "The atmosphere is so cool. I still get giddy every time I get behind the wheel, like it's my first time driving. I can't contain my excitement." 🏆



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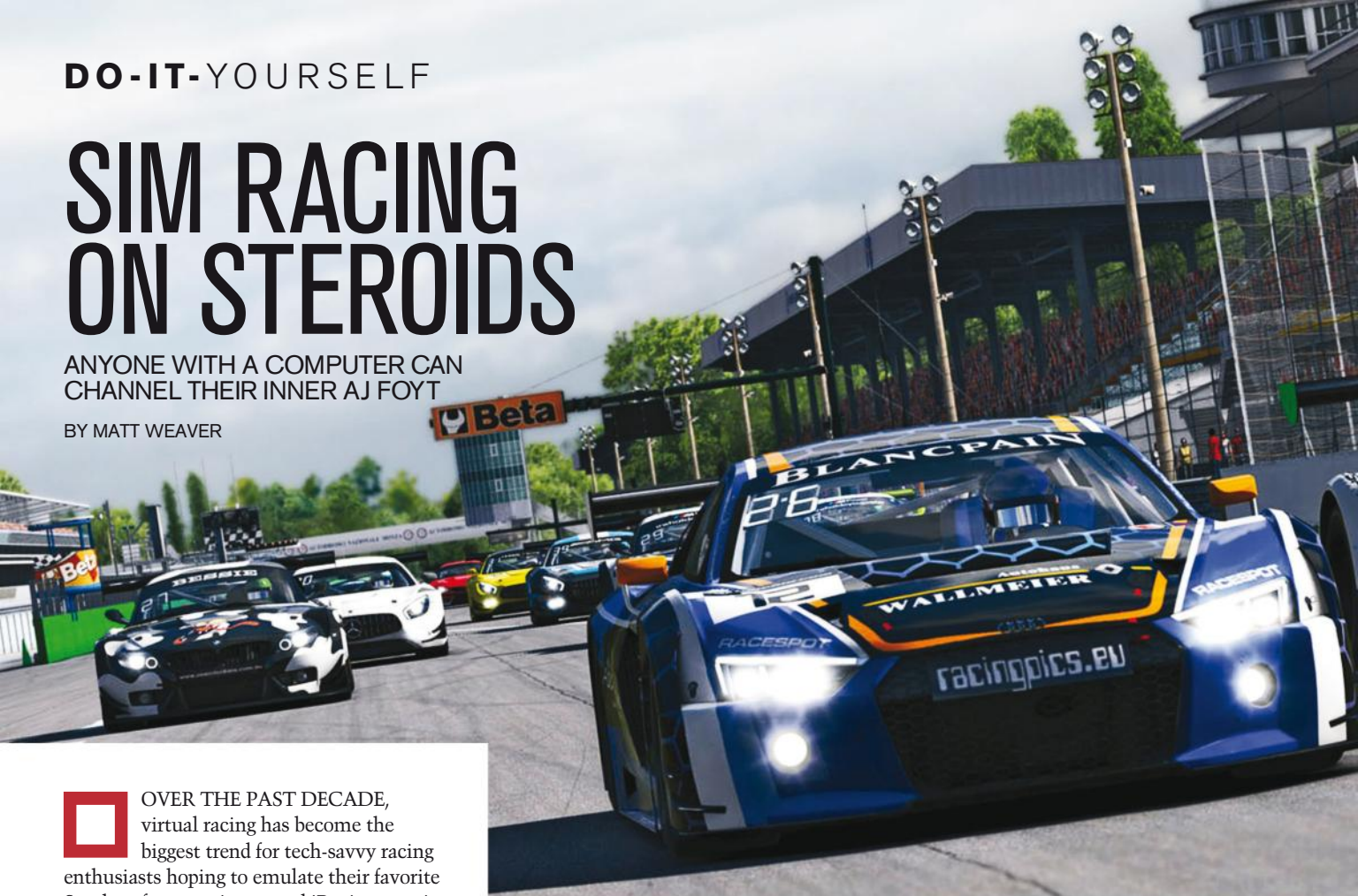
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DO-IT-YOURSELF

SIM RACING ON STEROIDS

ANYONE WITH A COMPUTER CAN CHANNEL THEIR INNER AJ FOYT

BY MATT WEAVER



OVER THE PAST DECADE, virtual racing has become the biggest trend for tech-savvy racing enthusiasts hoping to emulate their favorite Sunday afternoon icons, and iRacing.com is their platform of choice.

Launched in 2008, iRacing emerged from the ashes of the popular “NASCAR Racing 2003 Season” video game developed by Papyrus Design Group. Using laser technology to scan cars and tracks to fractions of an inch, iRacing has created a legitimately immersive experience. Combine this with consulting OEM partners and real-life drivers, and the company has replicated the feeling of turning a 200-mph lap around Daytona International Speedway or barreling through Eau Rouge at Spa-Francorchamps.

But just like the real world, members of the 60,000-plus subscriber base can’t simply jump into a Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series car or a formula single-seater with no prior experience. Instead, they begin their careers as rookies, slowly working up to faster machines.

Licenses must be acquired to move up the ladder, and they can only be earned based on results and avoiding contact at all costs. Incidents have consequences and can set back weeks, even months, of progress.

And that’s the point, according to executive vice president and executive producer Steve Myers.

“We recognize that our users want a more realistic experience,” Myers said.



“TV kept bringing up iRacing and how many drivers were using it to get better at road racing. So I gave it a shot later that week.”

—WILLIAM BYRON, NASCAR XFINITY SERIES DRIVER



"Console gamers just want to pick up a controller and race against their friends for a couple of minutes before moving on to something else. But our users are those who will spend all afternoon trying to crack 29 seconds at Charlotte."

iRacing can be enjoyed on a modest budget. Myers says the software is compatible with any modern Windows operating system and can run with minimal hardware updates. In addition to a standard PC and monitor, an entry-level steering wheel and pedal set costs roughly \$150.

The service is subscription-based. Tracks and cars are purchased as add-on content. The best-value model is two years at \$100, but the company routinely offers discounts and one-month/three-month tiers targeted at beginners.

"We see that as a low-risk investment," Myers said. "We encourage first-time users to just try it for a month to make sure their system can support it. From there, they can decide if this is something they want to invest in."

And Christopher DeHarde has invested. A Best Buy employee and motorsports blogger, the Louisiana native has pumped several thousand dollars into his setup.

He spends at least an hour a day—and usually more—turning laps.

"I recently competed in a Rolex 24 sim with three buddies," DeHarde said. "We lasted about nine and a half hours. I drove 92 laps around Daytona and handed it off to my friend, thanks to iRacing's driver-swap feature. One of my co-drivers got loose and was hit by a GT car and the overall race leader—three cars out in one incident. That's how our race ended. We finished 17th overall, out of 42 cars."

The software's devotion to realism has drawn praise from Dale Earnhardt Jr., Brad Keselowski and Rubens Barrichello. It's that synergy between iRacing and the real world that has allowed some of the best sim racers to move into real racing.

The most notable example is current NASCAR Xfinity Series contender William Byron, who famously used iRacing to persuade his parents to allow him to get behind the wheel of a Legends Car at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

"I grew up a fan and always wanted to race, but I didn't know how to go about it," Byron said. "I was 13 and watching the Cup race at Sonoma, and TV kept bringing up iRacing and how many drivers were

using it to get better at road racing. So I gave it a shot later that week, and I just kept getting better."

He started 683 sim races in his first two iRacing seasons, winning 104 of them. This helped prove to his dad that it would be worth the investment to secure him a real-life Legends Car. Plus, it assured his mother that he wouldn't be a safety risk to himself or others.

Byron is far from the only success story. Josh Berry earned a ride with Earnhardt's Late Model program due to his success in Earnhardt's private invitational league, while Roush Fenway Racing development driver Ty Majeski is the highest-rated oval driver on iRacing, according to Myers.

This isn't a passing fad, either. The FIA Formula E Series promoted a virtual race in January at CES in Las Vegas. Offering a purse of \$1 million, the race paired real-world Formula E drivers with the best sim racers in an event contested on a digital Vegas street course.

In a world in which Major League Gaming is a thing, virtual racing will only continue to grow in stature. Expect the lines between digital and reality to continue to blur. 🏁



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WIPIER

FAST-STARTING LEAH PRITCHETT OUT TO CHALLENGE FOR TOP FUEL TITLE

BY SUSAN WADE

TWENTY YEARS AGO—which doesn't sound quite right for a 28-year-old, but it's true—

Top Fuel ace Leah Pritchett was winning races at Pomona, California's storied drag strip.

But when she dominated the season-opening NHRA Circle K Winternationals, winning from the No. 1 position and setting the low elapsed time of the meet at 3.672 seconds on the 1,000-foot course, it went differently from her Jr. Dragster victories there at age 8.

On the eve of eliminations, Pritchett said, "We wouldn't get trophies. We would get plaques. We'd line our dragsters up in front of this tower, and we'd host our own little ceremonies. And there would be two people watching."

Pritchett remembered the days when she, always the rebel, "was standing in the restricted-pass area when I didn't have a restricted-area pass, and watching these guys, freezing in the corner, hoping and praying that I would get to be here."

In one of her first outings on this grand stage, at the 2009 NHRA Finals, on a Friday the 13th, driving a ragged, outdated Monte Carlo Funny Car for a shoestring-budget team, she ignited fireworks with an oil-spewing, rod-kicking, parachute-popping disaster of a launch. It rocked her at the hit of the throttle—and it upended her branding efforts. "My reputation that I have been building all this time is not worth mistaking quantity for quality," she said. Lesson learned, she continued to dream.



In preseason testing, Pritchett recorded the quickest unofficial pass ever in drag racing (3.654 seconds), signaling to three-time and reigning champion Antron Brown, the 2017 favorite, that he has his work cut out for him.

After qualifying first at this year's Winternationals with an E.T. that was third quickest in NHRA history and just one-thousandth of a second off the national record, Pritchett said, "To be able to get up on a stage someday here would be incredible."

And the incredible happened. In the Papa John's Pizza Dragster, she earned her second victory and served notice to the class.

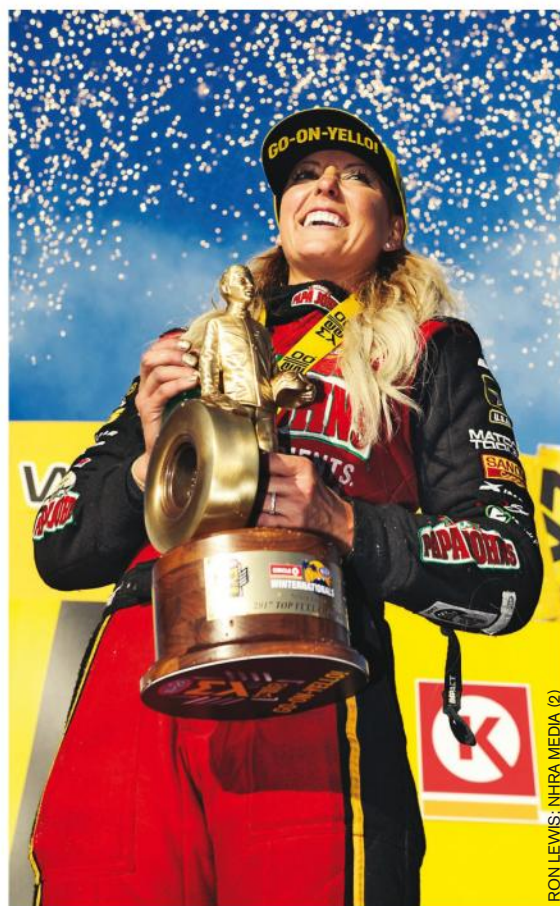
"I'm giving this everything I've got," she said of her run at Pomona. "If this starts to sashay, so what? If it goes 2 feet past the finish line, so what? We got brakes. We got parachutes. We're going to get every ounce out of this run."

She spat out each word with the passion of a street brawler.

Her rivals, she said, "are on our heels. If you're off two-hundredths on the tree (at the launch), you're going to get waxed. The meticulous work my guys have done in the off-season, plus this extra power we've been able to create, we put it on the track. I wasn't super excited about the 3.65 from Phoenix. That's testing. Let's do it when it counts. We did it when it counts."

Pritchett has an alarming, almost savage, intensity. Her dad, Ron Pruetts, a former land-speed record holder, warned everyone.

"We Pruetts, we're not afraid of nothin'," he said. "We're like vipers,



RON LEWIS: NHRA MEDIA (2)

"If this starts to sashay,
so what? If it goes 2 feet
past the finish line, so
what? We got brakes.
We got parachutes.
*We're going to get every
ounce out of this run.*"

us Pruetts. We want the other guy to blow up and catch fire while we set the world record."

His daughter was more diplomatic, but not by much.

"I thrive on pressure. I thrive on performance. I refuse to have failure," she said. At Pomona, she thanked her crew and said, "I'm just the lucky one that gets to have the balls to hang on and (drive the car)." She mashed the gas pedal like there's no tomorrow, proving her mission "takes every ounce of focus and tenacity I have."

In victory, Pritchett said she will "relish this moment—you never know how long it's going to last."

She knows that all too well.

Pritchett's first full-season deal in Top Fuel lasted two races last year. The team's major benefactor died unexpectedly, the team folded, and, she said, "We literally were in the unemployment line. (Current boss) Don Schumacher and Papa John's got together and picked us up by the bootstraps and we kept rolling."

She said of the ordeal, which turned out shockingly well with a Countdown field berth and a seventh-place finish in the standings, "Every step of 2016 has been a blessing times 100."

John Schnatter, founder and CEO of Papa John's Pizza, had considered corporate involvement in motorsports, and he found a fit with the NHRA and Pritchett.

"When I met Leah, she had some burns on her arm," Schnatter said. "She said, 'I'm working on my car, I'm working on the clutch.' This is a different kind of person ... a self-made person. She doesn't have a silver spoon, she wasn't born into wealth, has had to work her tail off. I remembered back when I didn't have nothin' and people picked me up by my bootstraps."

Pritchett is back in the hunt with the dragster she calls "the best hot rod," alongside veteran crew chiefs Todd Okuhara and Joe Barlam.

"You can't just have a goal and chase after something like a world championship someday without envisioning," she said. "Is it a far dream? For sure it was back then. Am I closer to it now? Absolutely. You can hear it in my voice." 🏆

Class of 2017

DANIEL SUÁREZ IS NOW
A FAVORITE FOR CUP'S
TOP ROOKIE AWARD

BY AL PEARCE



□ CARL EDWARDS' unexpected decision to walk away has—of all things—blurred the Rookie of the Year picture in NASCAR's premier Monster Energy Cup Series.

Before Edwards' announcement in January, Erik Jones was generally favored for ROTY. Jones' only serious challenger was JTG Daugherty newbie Ty Dillon, who has more starts in NASCAR's top three series (182-103) than Jones actually does.

Jones has six Xfinity Series wins and 28 top-five finishes in 59 career races, while Dillon has just one Xfinity win and 29 top-fives in 111 career starts.

More significantly, Jones' contract with Joe Gibbs Racing pairs him with Martin Truex Jr. at Toyota-based Furniture Row Racing. With FRR's recent successes, Jones seems more capable than Dillon of winning the rookie award.



Daniel Suárez, top, takes his championship experience in Xfinity to Cup, where he'll join Erik Jones, above, as one of the top rookies for 2017.

Enter Daniel Suárez. Edwards' decision left team owner Joe Gibbs little choice but to elevate 25-year-old Suárez to pilot Edwards' former No. 19 Toyota team. Suárez's numbers—three wins, 27 top-fives and the series championship in 68 career Xfinity starts—immediately put him in the discussion for

Cup ROTY favorite in 2017. The young Mexican anticipated spending this year defending his Xfinity Series title—the first by a foreigner in a major NASCAR series. Instead, Suárez finds himself suddenly immersed in Cup. (Gray Gaulding, 19, of BK Racing is also a rookie contender but might not run every race).

Gibbs chose well. Suárez won the Xfinity title in his second full season and has 17 combined Xfinity, Camping World, K&N East and NASCAR Mexico Series victories. His longtime racing backer is Carlos Slim, the Mexican businessman/philanthropist worth a reported \$51 billion.

As with any last-minute blockbuster change, Edwards' motives have spawned endless speculation. One unfounded but nonetheless fascinating theory is that Slim so desperately wants Suárez in a Cup car *right now* that he made Edwards and Gibbs offers they couldn't refuse.

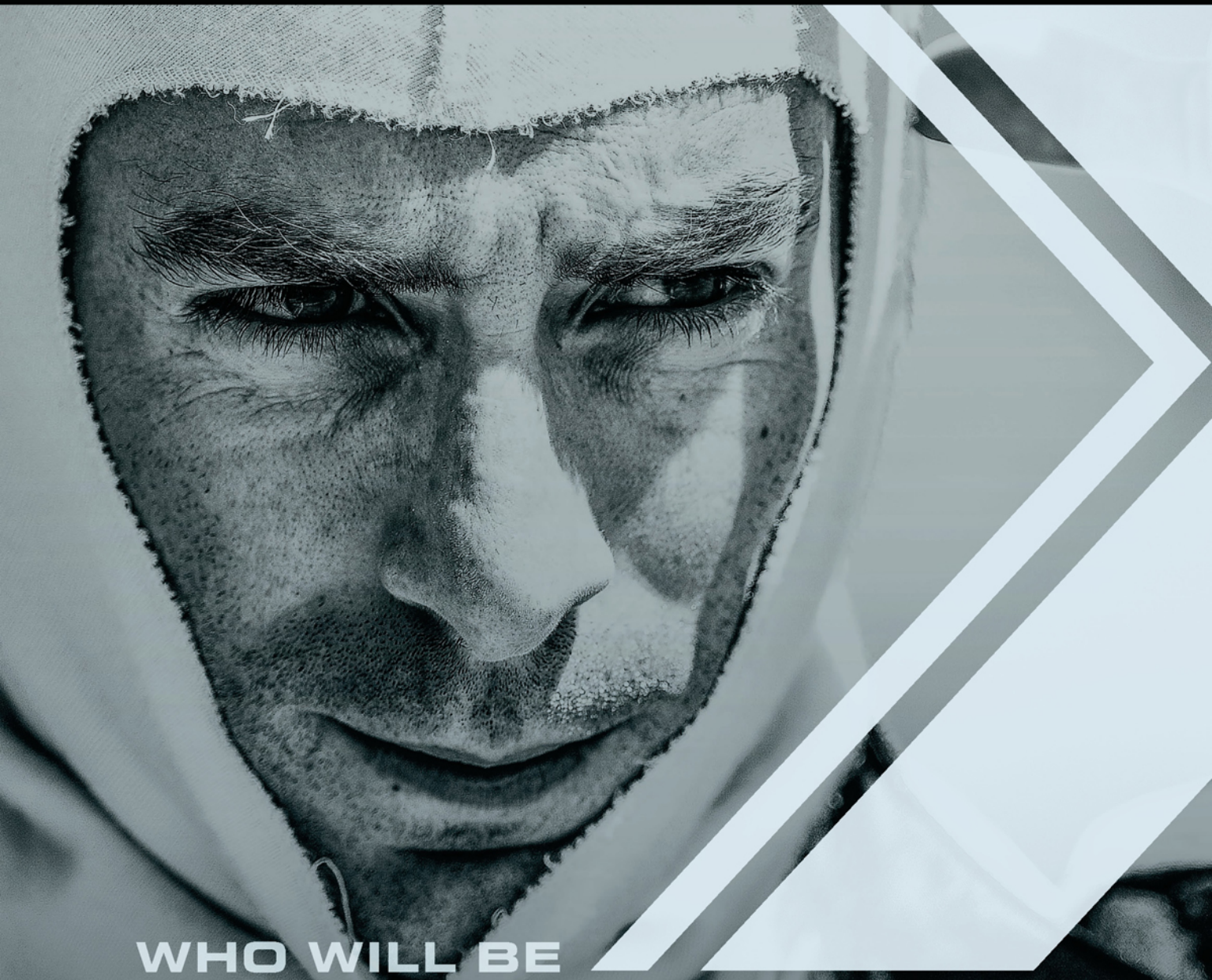
Regardless of how it happened, Suárez adds another star to the Class of 2017. It's likely that NASCAR's best string of rookies was 1999-2009, when Tony Stewart, Matt Kenseth, Kevin Harvick, Ryan Newman, Jamie McMurray, Kasey Kahne, Kyle Busch, Denny Hamlin, Juan Pablo Montoya, Regan Smith and Joey Logano won the award.

The past seven years have produced a mixed bag: emerging stars Chase Elliott and Kyle Larson, total washouts Brett Moffitt, Kevin Conway, Andy Lally and Stephen Leicht, and current midpack plodder Ricky Stenhouse Jr.

FYI: The rookie award generally means almost nothing in a driver's career. Note that none of these 15 champions, with 28 Cups among them, was named Rookie of the Year: Jimmie Johnson, Brad Keselowski, Kurt Busch, Bobby Labonte, Dale Jarrett, Terry Labonte, Bill Elliott, Bobby Allison, Darrell Waltrip, Cale Yarborough, Ned Jarrett and Rex White, plus the late Benny Parsons, Bobby Isaac and Joe Weatherly.

So, Suárez, Jones and Dillon in all 36 races, huh? That should be fun. 🏆

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Big Shoes to Fill

MERCEDES F1'S VALTTERI BOTTAS REALIZES THE TASK THAT'S BEFORE HIM

BY JOE SAWARD

VALTTERI BOTTAS WAS riding a training bike under trainer Antti Vierula's watchful eye when he heard the news— Mercedes F1 driver and new champion Nico Rosberg was retiring. This was following the season-ending Formula 1 Grand Prix in Abu Dhabi in November.

"I was on a bike, pedaling away, and I thought about the news and said, 'That's strange,' and then I started to think, 'Who is going to fill the seat?'"

Bottas admits it didn't take him long to call Mercedes boss Toto Wolff.

"It wasn't many minutes, well, seconds, after I got back to my room that I called Toto," Bottas said. "He was just finishing the press conference about Nico. Luckily, he picked up and, obviously, me being a racing driver and wanting to be in the best car possible ... I told him that I wanted to win races and championships and that more than anything I wanted to be in that seat. He didn't say much. I think he said, 'It's way too early, we need to sit down and speak about it and work out who are the potential candidates, etc.'"

"After that, it felt like a very, very long time," Bottas said, chuckling. "Obviously, I still had a contract with Williams and it is never easy to discuss these things, but we managed to get there with everything in the end. Of course, Mercedes had a few potential drivers and they were analyzing if it was possible to have them and what the deal was with each one. But I am very pleased that they ended up choosing me."

Williams lost Bottas but gained on the financial side when Mercedes came calling for its driver. The team already had additional financing coming in thanks

—continued on page 36

LAT PHOTOGRAPHIC



Valtteri Bottas, right, shakes hands with Toto Wolff after signing his contract to become a Mercedes F1 driver.

LAT PHOTOGRAPHIC (2)

—continued from page 34

to hiring pay driver Lance Stroll. Add Mercedes buying out Bottas' contract and the team suddenly had some new options.

"I hope that they feel it is a win-win," said Bottas.

Now, the winning for Bottas must come on the track. Fair or unfair, the 27-year-old will be quickly judged by how he fares against new teammate and three-time champion Lewis Hamilton.

"I understand the challenge completely," Bottas said. "People are going to watch very closely and see how I will do against Lewis. I am excited about that. For me, there is going to be a lot to learn."

Plus, Bottas does not exactly have a can't-miss track record. He's winless and has just nine podium finishes in 77 career races. The man he's replacing—Rosberg—had nine wins and 16 podiums last year alone, while Hamilton has 31 wins and 50 podiums in three seasons with Mercedes.

"Lewis has been a long time with the team, so he knows it and how it works,"

Bottas said. "I am learning every day. Sure, I have a big learning curve ahead of me, but I am confident that my pure speed will be good. It is just a matter of time.

"It's going to be a great challenge, and I am very happy to be his teammate. He's a great driver—really fast—and a three-time world champion. So, for me, it's great to have a teammate like that."

Bottas is stepping from Williams' shadow, where he's worked since first taking on the test-driver role in 2010. He's been in an F1 race seat for four seasons.

"It is a fact that I haven't achieved anything yet in Formula 1," he said.

"I haven't won a race. A few podiums, but for me that's nothing compared to what Lewis has achieved. Of course, the team is going to expect me to perform well, but so do I. I feel that being in a very good car, I can definitely perform well and definitely battle with Lewis at the front. By the end of the season, we will see, but I am confident that I can match the level of the car and the team." 🏎️

"People are going to watch very closely and see how I will do against Lewis. I am excited about that."

FRESH START

INDYCAR'S WILL POWER IS REFRESHED, READY

■ THERE PERHAPS IS NO

Verizon IndyCar Series driver more anxious to roar into the 2017 season than Will Power.

Power's 2016 season was splendid—with one spectacular exception. He missed the season opener on the St. Petersburg, Florida, street course because of health issues (originally thought to be a concussion), then spent much of the rest of the year churning from behind.

Power scored victories for Team Penske at Detroit, Road America, Toronto and Pocono—a surge that

pushed him to second in series points by season's end.

"I was tested for a lot of stuff, actually," said Power, who turned 36 on March 1, of



Power

the ailment that dogged him early last season. "Dairy was one of the issues, food was a part of it, and then pushing your body too hard in the offseason last year before Christmas."

This offseason included a different playbook—and a new role as a father.

"I had to definitely work on the diet stuff and then just have a month rest this year when I finished the season—doing nothing but relaxing," he said. "And then it was about getting myself energized and then back into it and being very smart about my exercising, not pushing too hard, too far, where you fatigue yourself."

Moving into IndyCar's lame-duck season—teams are running the current body style for the final year before dramatic changes roll in for 2018—Power is eyeing a second series title and a first Indianapolis 500 win.

"I guess you could say time is running out," Power said. "You get less and less chances at it every year you go. And it's tough to win now. It really is."

—MIKE HEMBREE

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THE WIRE \\\

■ **Mercedes F1** lost its reigning champion when Nico Rosberg retired in December, but the group solidified its executive staff in February when team principal Toto Wolff and non-executive chairman Niki Lauda signed new contracts that will keep them with the Silver Arrows through the 2020 season. The two have been atop the Mercedes F1 ladder since the 2013 season. The team finished runner-up in the constructors' championship in 2013 before winning the title the next three seasons.

■ The news wasn't as good for **KV Racing Technology** in the Verizon IndyCar Series—the team folded on Feb. 16. KV Racing Technology was owned by former CART champion Jimmy Vasser and 72-year-old Australian businessman Kevin Kalkhoven. The group had been operating for 14 years and won the 2013 Indianapolis 500 with Tony Kanaan. "As I approach



■ **Joey Logano** kicked off the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series season with a win in the Advance Auto Parts Clash at Daytona International Speedway on Feb. 19.

Logano grabbed the lead in his Team Penske Ford Fusion when leaders Brad Keselowski and Denny Hamlin collided in turn two on the final lap. Logano's win was Ford's first in the Clash since Dale Jarrett's victory in 2004.

Kyle Busch was runner-up, and Alex Bowman finished third. Danica Patrick dodged the turn-two fracas to finish fourth.

73, I feel I can no longer give the team the effort and support it and the team members deserve," Kalkhoven said in a press statement. Sebastien Bourdais, who moved to Dale Coyne Racing for 2017, drove for the team last season. The

team had not announced its drivers for this season.

■ **Sébastien Buemi** is on some kind of roll in the Formula E series. The defending series champion made it three wins in three races to start the 2016-17

season with a victory for the Renault e.dams team in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Feb. 18. Jean-Eric Vergne and Lucas di Grassi completed the podium.

■ **Austin Theriault**, 23, won the ARCA Racing Series opener for the single-car Ken Schrader Racing team Chevrolet at Daytona International Speedway on Feb. 18. Terry Jones and Shane Lee finished second and third. Meanwhile, driver Justin Fontaine suffered a mild compression fracture of his L1 vertebra following a rollover crash in the closing laps of the race and is expected to be sidelined for several weeks.

■ **Ronnie Bassett Jr.** earned his first career NASCAR K&N Pro Series East win at Florida's half-mile New Smyrna Speedway on Feb. 19. The 22-year-old Bassett's win came in his 40th career start in the series. Bassett led the final 42 laps. Zane Smith finished second, followed by Derek Kraus.

RACING ON TV

FRIDAY, MARCH 10

- Monster Energy NASCAR Cup practice, Las Vegas; 2 p.m., FS1 (L)
- NASCAR Xfinity practice, Las Vegas; 4 p.m., FS1 (L)
- NASCAR Xfinity practice, Las Vegas; 6 p.m., FS2 (L)
- Monster Energy NASCAR Cup qualifying, Las Vegas; 7:30 p.m., FS2 (L)

SATURDAY, MARCH 11

- Monster Energy NASCAR Cup practice, Las Vegas; noon, FS1 (L)
- NASCAR Xfinity qualifying, Las Vegas; 1 p.m., FS1 (L)
- Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series final practice, Las Vegas; 2:30 p.m., FS1 (L)
- NASCAR Xfinity Series Boyd Gaming 300, Las Vegas; 4 p.m., FS1 (L)
- Monster Energy Supercross, Daytona Beach, FL; 7 p.m., FS2 (L)

SUNDAY, MARCH 12

- Verizon IndyCar Series Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL; noon, ABC (L)
- Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Kobalt 400, Las Vegas; 3:30 p.m., Fox (L)
- Monster Jam, Detroit; 6 p.m., FS1 (T)

FRIDAY, MARCH 17

- NASCAR Xfinity practice, Phoenix; 1 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., FS1 (L)
- Monster Energy NASCAR Cup practice, Phoenix; 2 p.m., FS1 (L)
- Monster Energy NASCAR Cup qualifying, Phoenix; 7:30 p.m., FS1 (L)
- NHRA qualifying, Gainesville, FL; midnight, FS1 (S)

SATURDAY, MARCH 18

- Indy Lights, St. Petersburg, FL; 2 a.m., NBCSN (T)
- Pirelli World Challenge GT, St. Petersburg, FL; 2 p.m., CBSSN (T)
- Monster Energy NASCAR Cup practice, Phoenix; noon and 2:30 p.m., FS2 (L)

- IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship 12 Hours of Sebring, Sebring, FL; 10:30 a.m., imsa.tv (L)
- IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship 12 Hours of Sebring, Sebring, FL; 12:30 p.m., FS1 (L)
- NASCAR Xfinity qualifying, Phoenix; 1 p.m., FS2 (L)
- NASCAR Xfinity Series DC Solar 200, Phoenix; 4 p.m., Fox (L)
- Monster Energy Supercross, Indianapolis; 7 p.m., Fox (L)
- NHRA qualifying, Gainesville, FL; 11 p.m., FS1 (S)

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

- Monster Energy Supercross, Indianapolis; 3:30 a.m., FS1 (T)
- NHRA Amalie Motor Oil NHRA Nationals; Gainesville, FL; 1 p.m., FS1 (L)
- Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Camping World 500, Phoenix; 3:30 p.m., Fox (L)

L = live, S = same day, T = tape delay
*All times Eastern

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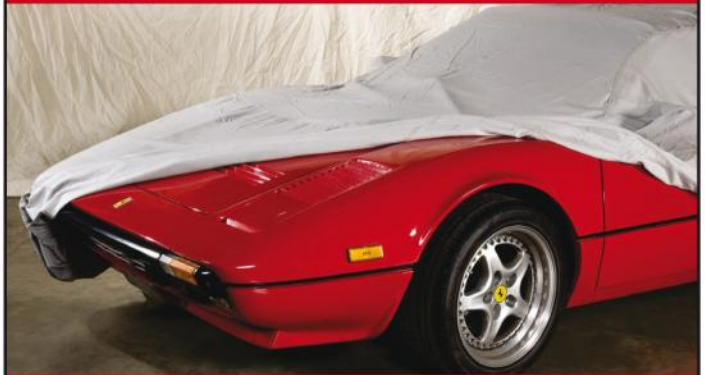
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1999 355 Spider F1 13k Fiorano	Blk/Tan
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2001 360 Spider F1 19k Sil/Blk	\$79k
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In the spirit of our special Do-It-Yourself issue, the BWTM editors are ~~shirking the responsibility~~ passing the joy of creating the back page on to you, the reader.

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SPOILER ALERT

■ Imagine if someone put a spoiler on a car that wouldn't usually have one. Better yet, draw a spoiler on the Toyota Camry below!



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■ Misspellings? Double entendre? Archaic slur? Create your own Sign of the Times below.



MOVING MISCUE

■ Is there anything funnier than when people try to move things with cars that weren't designed for it? No. Cut out the mattresses below and glue 'em to this car's roof! Should have rented a truck, doofus!



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