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EDITION

# FORD MOTORSPORT LEGENDS



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And now, the time has come, and we have reached... you know the rest and hopefully that ear-worm will stay with you for the rest of the day, but indeed, we have come to the end of Ford Memories. And what an issue we have for you. Instead of looking at the cars, our final instalment focuses on the talent behind the wheel, the legendary drivers.

With so many stellar names to choose from, we have tried to celebrate drivers from some of the pivotal decades in Ford's competition history. Key names, that when uttered, conjure up images of Cortinas on three wheels or Escort Cosworths brushing spectator's hands as their whale-tails flick out towards them.

From both Jim and Roger Clark in the 1960s, Bjorn Waldergard and Ari Vatanen in the 1970s, all the way through to Carlos Sainz and Colin McRae in the late 90s and 2000s there is a bit of speeding metal for everyone – going sideways obviously. That said, some of our chosen few preferred their tracks a little firmer and so

we profile the careers of Colin Chapman, Jackie Stewart and Andy Rouse as well.

I can not take all the credit for this fine publication though. The late Graham Robson penned most of the profiles, meeting many of the drivers over the years and keeping in contact with a lot of them until last year. In fairness, without Graham's infinite historical knowledge of all things Ford – some would say better than anyone involved in Ford editorial circles – Ford Memories as a running title and many of the features you have enjoyed over the last two years, would never have happened. I thank you Graham and dedicate this issue to you.

Moving on from sentiment and back to Fords being driven in anger, don your fastest pair of carpet slippers, buckle up and enjoy your co-driver-mug of Rosy, we're about to meet some legends!

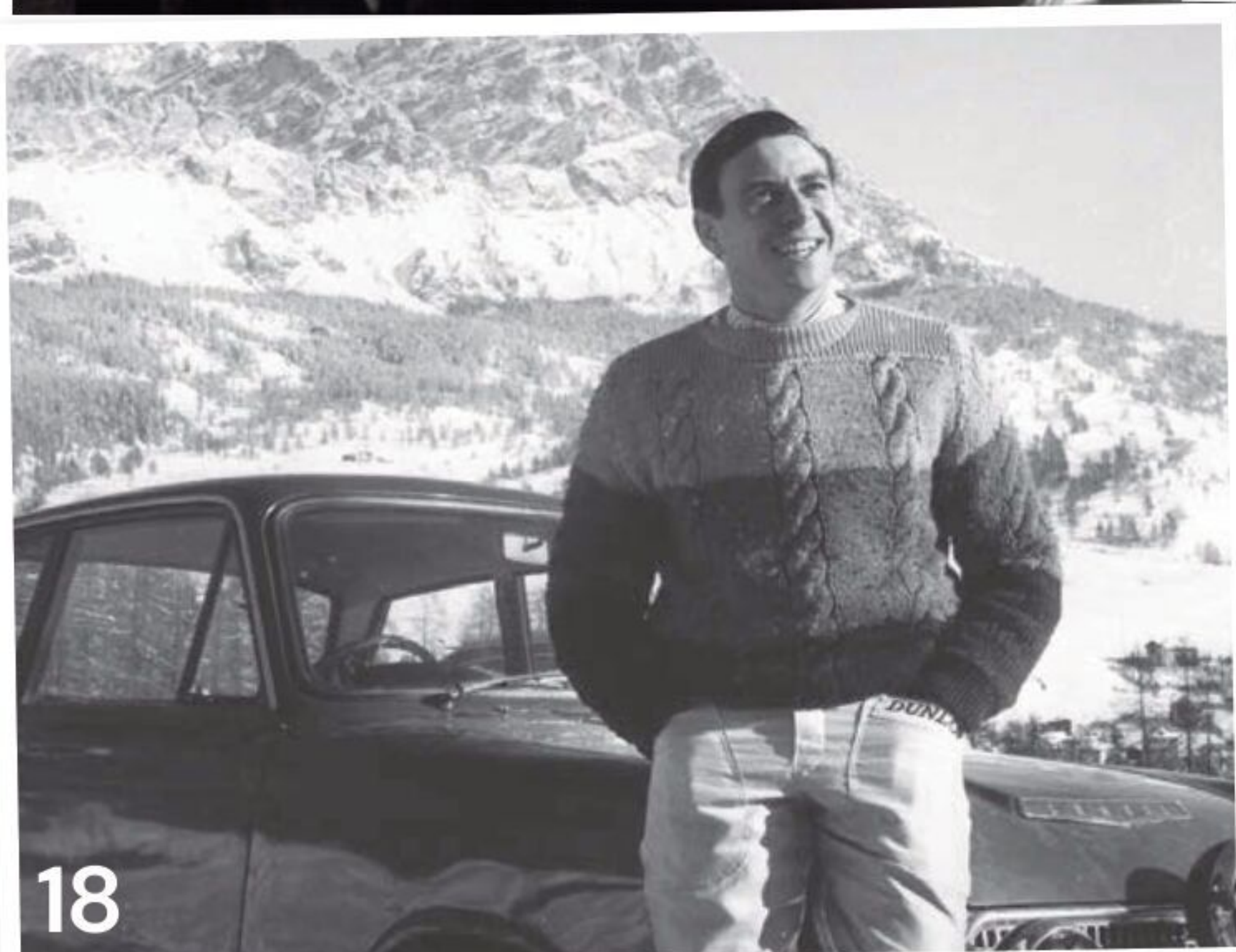
It's been a blast, goodnight!

**Paul Sander**  
Editor, Ford Memories



# FORD: MOTORSPORT LEGENDS

A focus on the legendary drivers that have made Ford a thing of force both on track and rallying.







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## FORD MEMORIES

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# Method to the madness

Having only just stretched its motorsporting wings, Ford needed a very special driver to take on the Monte Carlo Rally.

Rallying was still something of a gentlemanly sport in the early 1950s. Companies tended to spend available funds on motor racing, and in Britain it was only Jowett, Sunbeam-Talbot and Jaguar (by supporting Ian Appleyard) who took things seriously. However, the tide was turning. The Monte Carlo rally was revived in 1949, the first RAC International rally followed in 1951, and events like the Alpine (France), Tulip (Holland) and Lisbon (Portugal) began to attract attention.

Anxious to promote their cars in every possible way, Ford dealers started to lobby for Ford to get involved, and it was no coincidence that Cuth Harrison, who owned a Ford franchise in Sheffield, not only led this movement, but made sure that he would become team captain if it ever came to pass.

Accordingly for the 1953 season, Ford-UK's first-ever works Competitions Department was set up at the Lincoln Cars building. Edgy Fabris devoted some of his time to administration, while Jack Welch, Alf Belson and Norman Masters were the principal mechanics who maintained the cars, but it was the team of drivers themselves who carried out much of the pre-event organisation.

## DUTCH COURAGE

At this time every single personality — manager, mechanics and drivers — had other full-time jobs to do, so there was precious little time for development of the cars, while

strategy and forward planning was extremely sketchy. This is no criticism, for most other British companies operated in the same way. Even so, it's worth pointing out that before 1953 Fabris knew nothing about the sport of rallying, nor did Welch know much about the preparation of rally cars.

In January 1953, however, Ford could have been forgiven for thinking that building rally cars, and winning with them, was easy. For Fabris it seemed easy enough for him to persuade the Dutch rally ace, Maurice Gatsonides to drive one of the new Zephyrs, and he rewarded them by winning this, his ninth Monte Carlo rally, outright. Having finished second in the event in 1950, he had not figured strongly in Monte results since then, though his experience and well-publicised rally craft was never in doubt.

Fabris, therefore, matched him with a relatively unknown co-driver, Peter Worledge, whose job was with the brake lining company Cape Asbestos (one of Ford's important suppliers), and with a car to which most attention went into adding more comfort for long distance driving, than improving the performance.

Two other crews were also acquired for this event — one being Cuth Harrison, accompanied by Maurice Wilde and Reg Phillips, the other being journalist Tommy Wisdom, with J Simpson and A Jeffries. All could charitably be described as experienced, which is to say that they



Publicity machine: Following its famous win in Monte Carlo, VHK 194 sits proudly in a Ford dealer showroom in Central London. Within weeks, though, it would be off to compete in another event.







## FORD ENTERS RALLYING

were all well into middle age, for those were the days when young drivers had very little money, or influence, to help them into factory teams.

Before the new team could settle on the rally car's specification, a great deal of reading had to be done. Not only did the existing vehicle eligibility rules have to be studied, but also the individual regulations that the AC de Monaco always imposed on their event. Accordingly, for the 1953 Monte, the new Zephyrs were virtually standard, for no changes could be made to the mechanical spec of the cars.

Competitors were allowed to play around with tyres though, in hope of gaining more grip on the ice and snow-covered roads for which the Monte was famous. Instruments, seats, and of course lights could all be changed as well to make the car more comfortable, and more usable too, and this was where Gatsonides, with his cunning and previous experience,

came into his own. Not only did he arrange for separate front seats, but he also designed a comprehensively-equipped extra dashboard with extra instruments, a big aircraft-type clock, and a special average-speed measuring instrument.

### TRICKY BUSINESS

With the decision made to start the event from Monte Carlo itself and using a 2087 mile/3358 km road section which involved trekking all the way up to Amsterdam before returning south via Paris (with no overnight stops, and no official rest halt along the way), Gatsonides made sure that he could spend weeks in advance practising on the final regularity sections, which would settle the entire event.

The road section — long, often boring and tiring for the crews — was only ever made difficult by the weather, and on this occasion the only difficult section proved to be

in the Massif Central between St Fleur, Le Puy and Valence, where the tough Dutchman ended up with only 3 minutes in hand. In those days, of course, there were no studded tyres, so getting grip on old, packed snow and streaky ice patches could be a very tricky business.

Apart from a short acceleration and braking test, which all crews had to complete when they arrived in Monte Carlo, it was the 46.2 mile/73 km regularity circuit in the mountains, including the Col de Braus, which proved most difficult. This started and finished in the streets of Monte Carlo, and for timing purposes was split into six sections.

By separating that loop into sections of 13.7, 16.4, 10.0, 9.87, 11.9 and 12.5 km respectively and by not revealing the steady average — which would have to be maintained — until the very day of the rally, the organisers set a very tough target. On the day, in fact, they announced that



Gatsonides and Worledge in working kit ready for the start of the rally. The vast cowl at the front of the Zephyr is to stop stray light from the foglamps dazzling Gatso himself.



If you're going to spend three days and nights in a car, with no rest halts, why not be comfortable along the way? No sign of safety belts though!



Gatsonides and Worledge (in VHK 194) leave the start of the Monte Carlo rally, from Monte Carlo centre. Four days later they would all be famous... forever.



the speed would be 29.2 mph/47 kph — demanding by modern standards, but incredibly difficult in 1953.

#### HAIR-RAISING

All this took place on small and insignificant roads in the mountains north of Monte Carlo, some of which were twisty, some of which were steep, and some of which were both. The core of this test was the Col de Braus, which, though peaking at no more than 3287 ft/1002 m, was serpentine in the extreme, with hairpin after hairpin and very short straights in between — cars that were not fast uphill (notably the Zephyr, with a mere 68 bhp and three-speed gearbox) would have to be driven very hard downhill.

Although nothing went wrong for the Gatsonides/Worledge/Zephyr 6 partnership, they couldn't quite be second-accurate at every point. At Control 1, near La Trinite, the Zephyr was 1 second adrift, though many of its rivals made it exactly



Posing for the cameras Maurice Gatsonides (left), Peter Worledge (right), and their now-famous Zephyr (VHK 194) show off all the trophies they won in the 1953 Monte Carlo rally.



## FORD ENTERS RALLYING



The winning Zephyr on its way home from the 1953 rally, having crossed the Channel on one of Bristol's famous Type 170 freighters.

on time. Control 2 was at Touet de l'Escarene, where the Zephyr regained that second, which made the cumulative error 2 seconds — but those were the only errors made on that day, as Gatsonides made the 10 km sprint up and over the Col de Braus exactly on time.

Competition-wise, before the Col de Braus section, Ian Appleyard's big Jaguar Mk7 was still running exactly to time, but would lose two seconds in the next 10 km, while Stirling Moss' Sunbeam Talbot 90 was just one second away from the ideal before the Col, and would lose three more seconds in the next three sections. It was that tight, and that crucial to the results.

An ideal clean performance was possible, for each and every one of the short sectors in the regularity section was completed dead-on

time by at least someone. And the 10 km Col de Braus sector itself was cleaned by a handful of crews — including Gatso himself.

The fact of the matter is that the Ford crew was as close as was humanly possible to the ideal schedule. As Autocar reported, this phenomenal performance in VHK 194 was partly aided by technology: 'On Gatsonides' winning Zephyr no fewer than eight stopwatches reinforced the information provided by the Monastere average-speed indicator, which is made by Van Munster, and developed by Gatsonides. This a mechanically driven clock which, by comparison with an ordinary clock, indicates whether the car is ahead of, or behind, a given scheduled speed...'

Incidentally, rudimentary brake cooling was provided on the tightest hairpins by Ford mechanics throwing

buckets of water over the hard-pressed front wheels as Gatsonides arrived. Don't believe it? There are photographs to prove it!

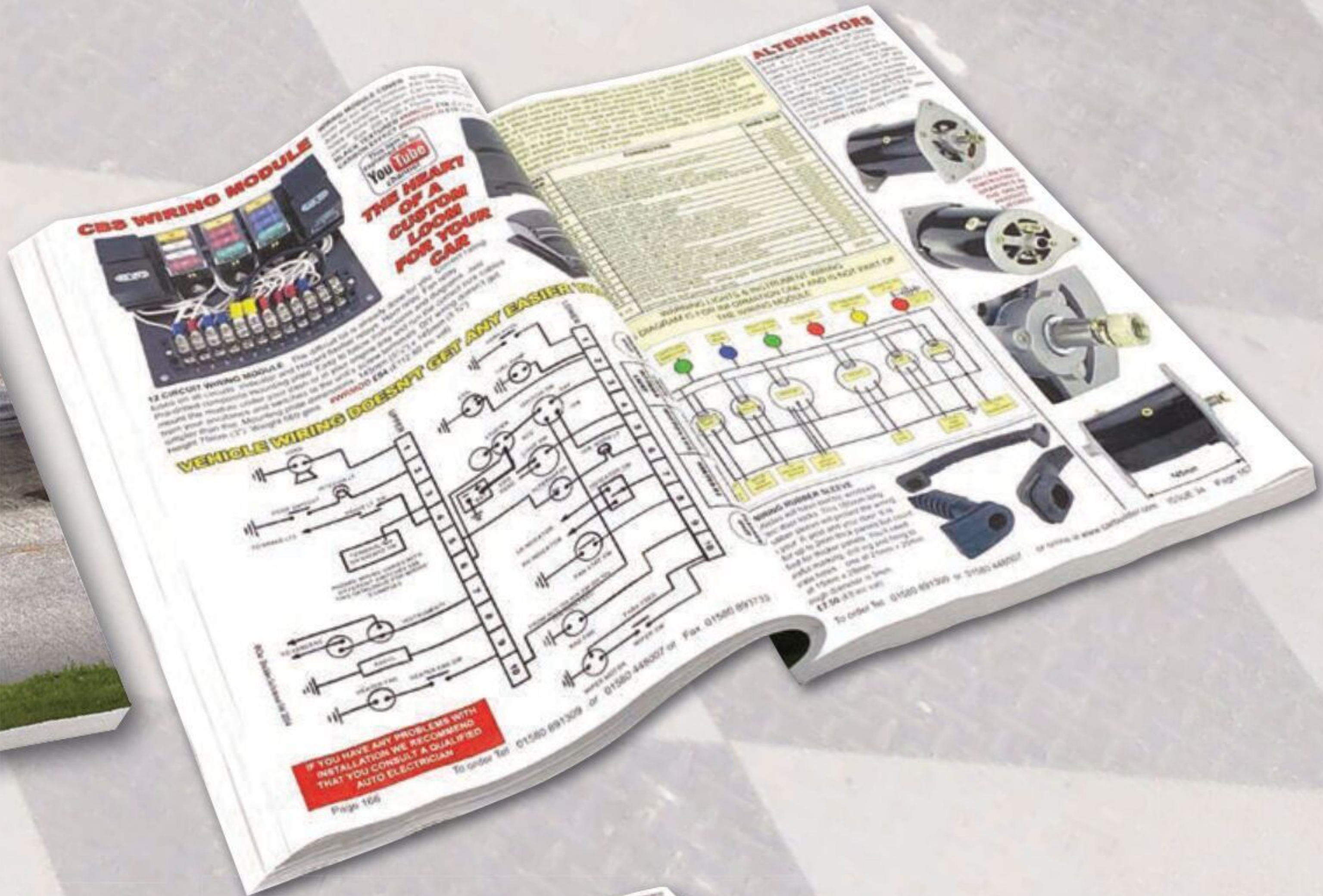
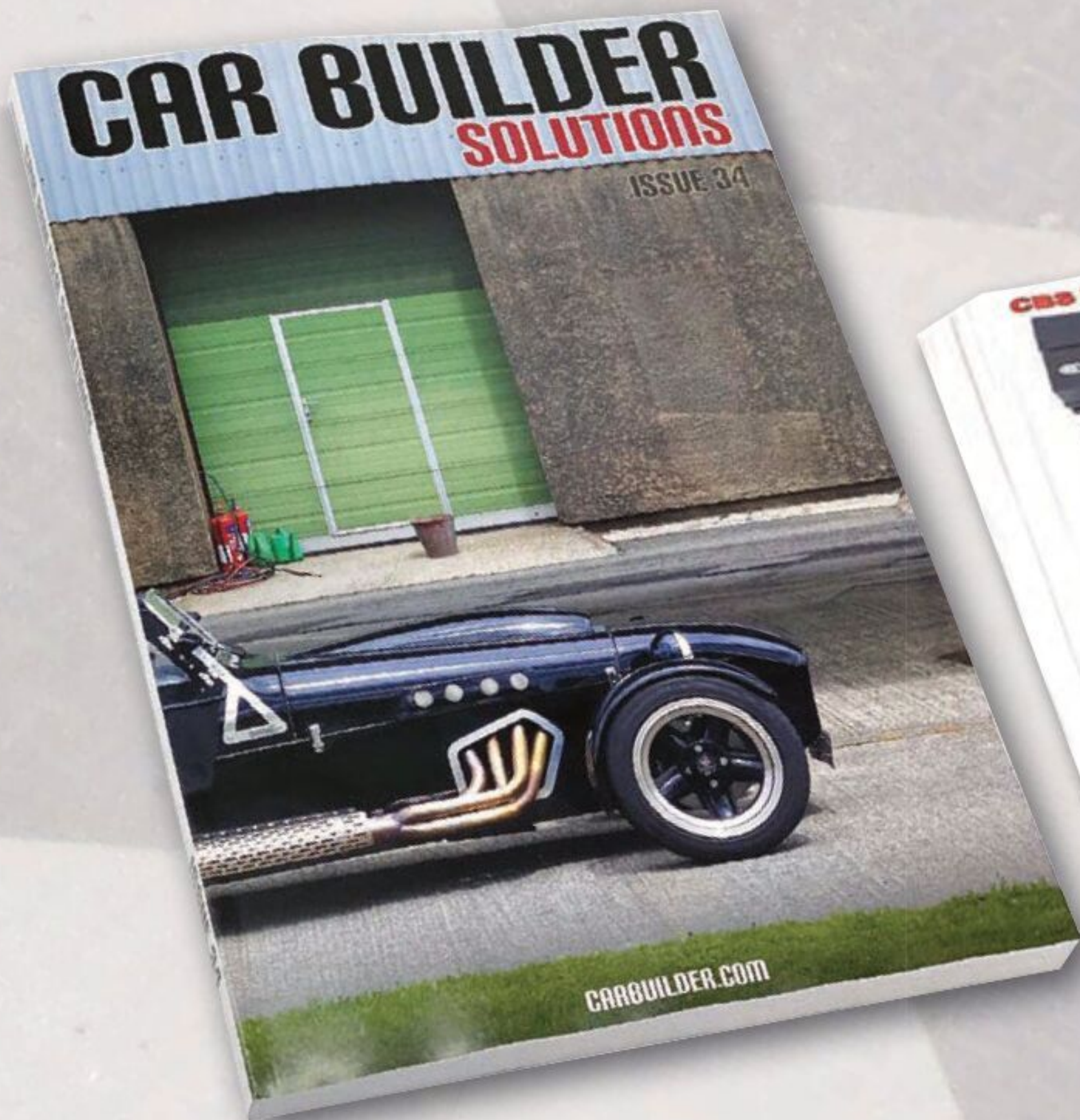
In the pandemonium that followed this stunning victory, most people missed another fine Jaguar performance by Ian Appleyard (second), and by Cuth Harrison whose works Zephyr took 12th place. Ford would not win the Monte Carlo rally again until 1994.

Once it had done the publicity rounds, VHK 194 was put back into works team use, and was then badly damaged in the 1954 Wiesbaden rally, where it was hit by a truck on a road section. Never used again as a competition car, it was reshelled and became part of Ford's heritage fleet. As such it is the oldest, and arguably the most famous, ex-works Ford rally car in existence.



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## HEROES: COLIN CHAPMAN



Even with rival cars like the Falcons threatening to overcome them, the Chapman's Team Lotus Cortinas, with 170 bhp, were still potential race winners.





# Trailblazer

The designer and businessman didn't get on with everyone, but Colin Chapman put Ford on the motorsport map from the '60s onwards.



## HEROES: COLIN CHAPMAN



Above and right: With Jim Clark, fresh from his win in the 1965 Indianapolis 500, in the Ford DFV-powered Lotus 38.

The rich and famous — especially the rich and famous — often have feet of clay, which usually makes their life stories doubly fascinating. The news that Lotus finally found peace in the hands of Proton of Malaysia makes the Colin Chapman story even more nostalgic than before.

Without Chapman, of course, Lotus would never have existed, and it was no wonder that so many of his workforce mourned him well beyond his grave, as the master for whom they would have done anything.

Almost everyone I ever talked to, who had ever done been involved with Chapman, felt the same about him. Anyone doing business with Lotus — whether on road cars or racing projects — always got their share of publicity, and sometimes a lot of glory from the success which followed. Whatever his faults, Chapman was a technical genius, his designs were usually innovative and successful, and the results usually worth the gamble of an association with him. But only just. Ask any Ford-USA oldtimer what they thought of his Indianapolis 500 adventures, or ask anyone at Ford-UK about the work he did on Lotus Cortinas (which

were built at Cheshunt at first, not at Dagenham), then stand back for the vitriolic response.

### FAST FUTURE

There was nothing in Colin Chapman's background to suggest a future as one of Britain's most famous automotive designers. His father kept a pub near London, he trained as a structural civil engineer, and his first motoring efforts were in sidevalve Austin Sevens converted into specials.

To finance his hobby he sold second-hand cars for a short time, he scrounged garage space from his father-in-law to build the first machines he ever sold. By the mid-1950s and until the 1960s almost all Lotus products were either schemed out by Chapman himself, or inspired through a handful of engineers (including Mike Costin, who later became famous at Cosworth) who thought they knew how his mind worked, and what he would want: if they were wrong, they soon found out, and a re-design was invariably successful.

His early Lotus sports cars were usually light, sophisticated but disarmingly simple, and effective



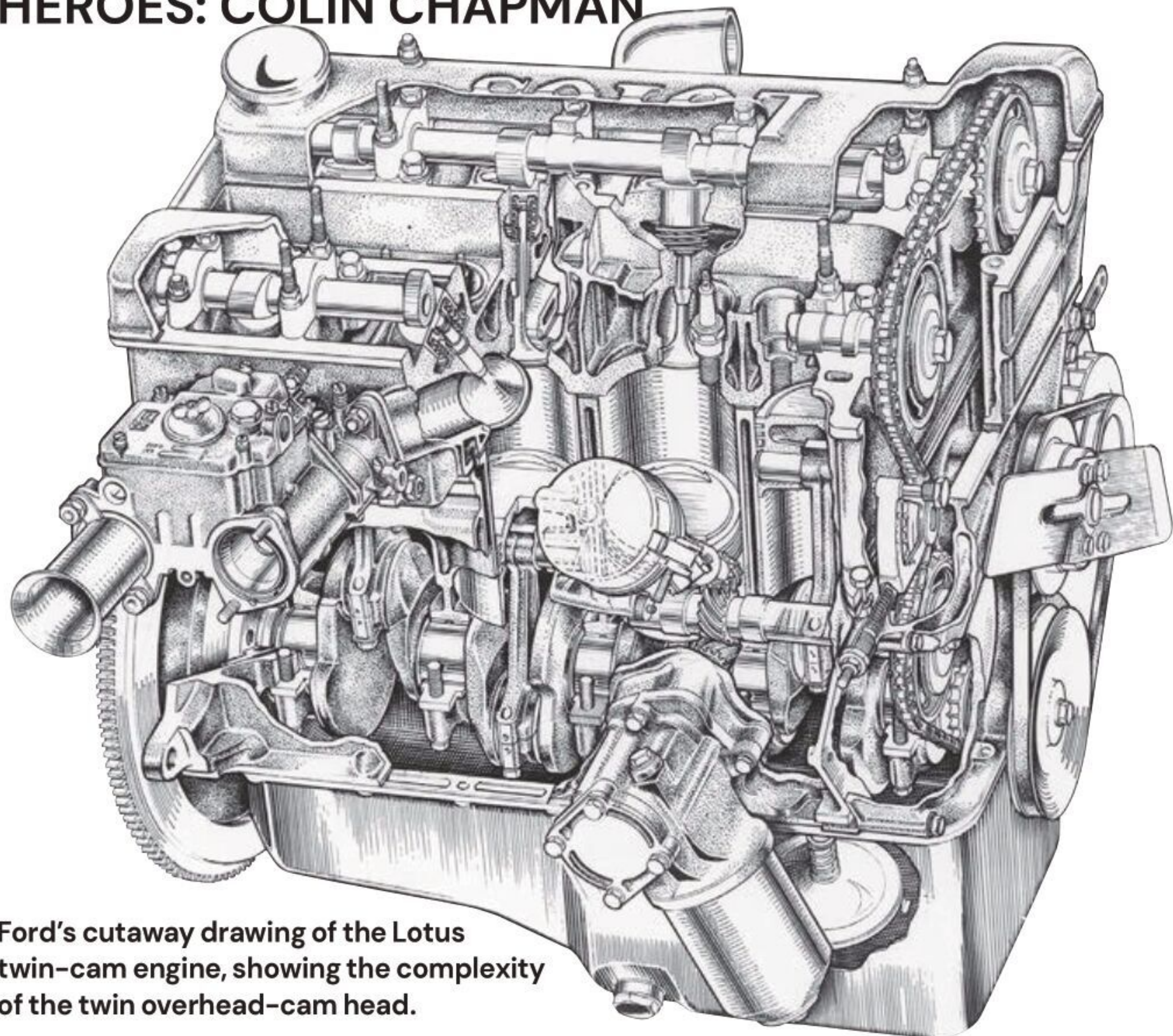




“From the mid 1950s until the 1960s almost all Lotus products were schemed out by Chapman himself”



## HEROES: COLIN CHAPMAN



Ford's cutaway drawing of the Lotus twin-cam engine, showing the complexity of the twin overhead-cam head.

on the race track. Then, as in later years, he soon learned to turn every set of restrictive regulations to his advantage, to sail as close to the wind as possible, and to positively relish arguing with officials who did not agree with his methods!

The racing cars and the road cars were always effective, often fragile, and usually unreliable, but they were always likely to win.

### VISION THING

Chapman's personal influence on road car and racing car design stretched from the 1950s to the 1980s, and he designed revolutionary new race cars like the Lotus 25, which helped to make Jim Clark World F1 Champion, and the Lotus 38-Ford which won at Indianapolis in 1965, plus advanced little road-going sports cars like the twin-cam engined Elan, and the mid Renault-engined Europa, both of which used the chassis backbone frame which became a Lotus road-car trademark.

He it was who had the vision to invest in the design of a new Ford-based twin-cam engine for the 1962 Elan and the Lotus Cortina, then to repeat the gamble with the 16-valve Type 907 unit for the 1970s. There

was much to like about the sheer sensual and mechanical attraction of the technically-advanced Lotus products - the all-GRP Elite of the late 1950s, the monocoque-chassis'd Lotus 25 F1 car, the audacity of the Lotus Cortina homologation special, the wedge-style gas-turbine powered Lotus 56 Indianapolis race car and the amazing ground-effect Lotus 78 F1 car (complete with Ford-Cosworth DFV engine) which changed the shape of single-seater motorsport, and the twin-chassis'd Lotus 88 which held so much promise that the governing bodies banned it.

### BATTLE-SCARRED

Towards the end of his life, it was almost as if Chapman, frustrated so often in the past by officialdom, had decided to deal with them in his own personal way, for he had grown tired of a continual battle against the establishment. Regular financial crises, the search for motor racing funds and the struggle to stay ahead of his rivals, all mounted up. His massive heart attack in 1982 was sadly, perhaps inevitable. Significantly, Lotus's last victory using Ford power came only months later.



Colin Chapman with the 1975 Lotus 77 Ford.





“Whatever his faults, Colin Chapman was a technical genius and his designs were usually innovative and successful”



## HEROES: JIM CLARK







# Master class

When it comes to masterful success in F1, Jim Clark is right up there, but he was just at home behind the wheel of a race or rally Ford, too.

It's just 50-odd years since Jim Clark drove a Lotus Cortina in the 1966 RAC rally, crashed it, but endeared himself to the heart of every rally fan who watched him on that event. We will never forget the way that he learned to drive a rally car, the way that he almost immediately started swapping fastest times with the true experts, and did it all with a smile on his face.

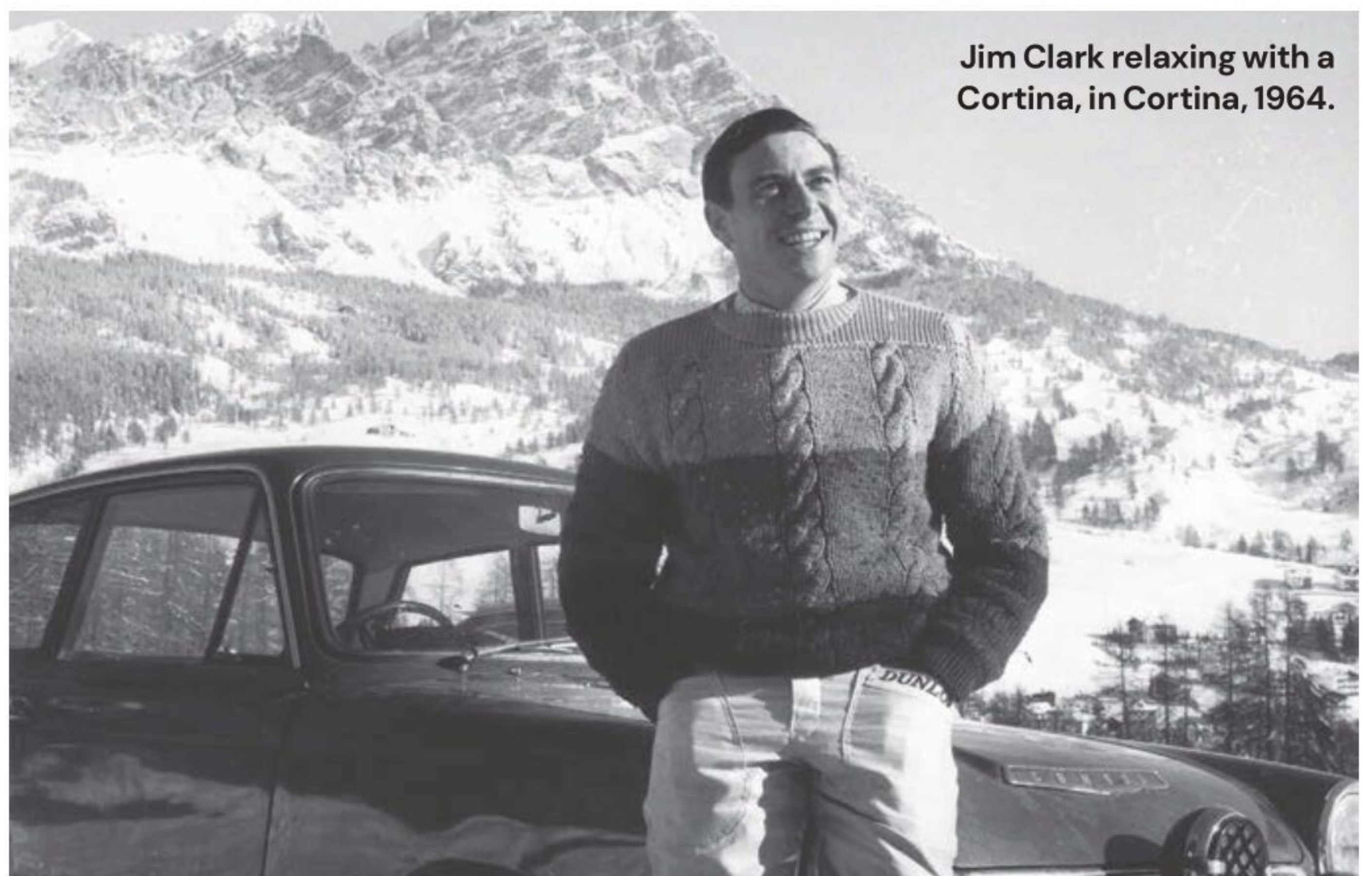
That was just one tiny part of his links with Ford, which started with a Lotus Formula Junior victory in 1960, and climaxed with early victories in Cosworth DFV-engined Lotus 49 F1 cars in 1967 and 1968. His tragic death at Hockenheim in April 1968 was a total shock to everyone, and one which came decades before he deserved to leave us.

In the meantime, there was the sensational record which he had built up, not only in Formula One (with Coventry Climax-

engined Lotus single seaters), but at Indianapolis with Ford-USA developed V8 engines, and in British Touring Car racing, where he was peerlessly successful in Team Lotus Cortinas, and could only really be matched by Sir John Whitmore.

There was a lot more — for Jim could, and did, race in anything which took his fancy, and for which he found the time. Before Colin Chapman snapped him up for the Lotus team, he had driven Porsches and Aston Martins, and during his eight years with Lotus he raced anything from tiny two-seater sports-racers to FVA-engined F2 machines, and massive single seaters in the North American Indianapolis 500 event.

Although as a race car driver Jim was a genius, and as a friend and acquaintance he was delightful company, he was really a modest country-loving farmer at heart. Born



Jim Clark relaxing with a Cortina, in Cortina, 1964.



## HEROES: JIM CLARK

and bred in the Scottish borders, at Chirnside, near Duns, his family were farmers, he grew up as a farmer, and always seemed to be happy to get back there, to a bit of peace and quiet, when his schedule would allow.

Unhappily, at the height of his fame he had little spare time for that, had to buy an apartment in London, to live out of a suitcase much of the year and finally (as a tax exile when his earnings soared into potentially punitive tax regimes) he was obliged to find homes both in Paris, and in Bermuda.

### WINNING FORMULA

His stellar F1 career, of course, is well known, and well-publicised — he won his first F1 race in Belgium in 1962, and in just six years he amassed 25 World Championship victories, 33 pole positions — both being more than any other race driver up to that point. In those years, too, he won the Drivers'

Championship twice — in 1963 and 1965 — was second in 1962, and third in 1964 and 1967. He also managed to dominate F2 at a time when it helped to have a Ford-Cosworth SCA or FVA-engined car, was robbed of the Indianapolis 500 in 1963, won it in 1965, and also won three of the four annual Tasman Series Championships which were held Down Under during the British winter.

Statistics of that type were enough to put him at the top of his sport, but it was also the way that he always seemed to perform — smoothly, peaceably, and with a good heart — which made him so popular.

Unlike some of those who followed, he was neither a whinger, a protester, or a thug, which may explain why he stuck with Lotus (and Ford) for all that time, with never an apparent sign of wanting to jump ship. Perhaps it was this which made winning look so effortless, for he rarely seemed to be under pressure: one of his most

famous questions, to those close to him, was to wonder why 'the others' seemed to be so slow... When he was killed, he was only 32 years old, and was widely expected to go on improving, and winning, for year to come. If only.

### SALOON CAPERS

Other historians have usually concentrated on Jim's single-seater racing successes, but ignored his record in saloon cars, but this is Classic Ford's opportunity to reset the balance, and show just how good he was with four seats around him, and a roof over his head. Jim first met the Lotus-Ford twin-cam engine in 1962, when he raced the tiny Lotus 23 sports car at the Nürburgring, first drove a prototype Lotus Cortina test car later in the same year, but did not race one until September 1963.

It was typical of Jim that he found that he had a spare weekend, was invited to drive one of the original



Jim Clark in his BTCC mount, and Champion in 1964.





Jim, Roger Clark, Bill Meade and Brian Melia compare times at Bagshot on a test day before the 1966 RAC rally.

Team Lotus BTCC examples at Snetterton (167 RUR), met it for the first time in the paddock, and finished the Touring car race in second place, beaten only by Jack Brabham who was driving an enormously powerful 7-litre Ford Galaxie.

For 1964, F1 stars Jim Clark and Peter Arundell drove the Lotus Cortinas in the BTCC, with three team cars waving their front wheels on most corners. The story of that



A snowball fight at a Ford-sponsored jamboree in Cortina, in the Italian Dolomites, in 1964. Left to right: Colin Chapman, Jack Sears, Vic Elford, Eric Jackson, David Seigle-Morris and Jim Clark.

season is easily told. Jim Clark started all eight rounds, won every class, every time — and even threw in three outright victories as well. Nothing could have been more emphatic that this. As Autosport writer, Paddy McNally commented:

‘The works Lotus Cortinas were well-prepared and exceedingly fast, proving capable of winning a race outright if the Ford Galaxies absented themselves for any reason.

‘They were, indeed, a whole lot more sophisticated than the cars of their more powerful rivals, much lighter than any of them, and with a great deal better balance and chuckability — but Jim Clark always making the most of this characteristic.’

For 1965 the Team Lotus cars were even faster than before, and by mid-season, when converted to leaf-spring rear suspension, they



At speed in the new Ford-Cosworth DFV-engined Lotus 49, on their way to winning the Dutch GP in 1967.



Jim Clark and his mentor, Colin Chapman of Lotus.



## HEROES: JIM CLARK



Jim on three Lotus-Cortina wheels in 1965 — a very familiar pose for all Ford race-car fans of the period.

were incredibly effective. Three new cars — JTW 496C, JTW 497C and JTW 498C — were usually driven by Jim Clark and Jack Sears, and always won their 2-litre capacity class (Jim and Jack Sears winning three times each). Jim also won two events outright — once at Goodwood and once at Oulton Park.

Once again, to quote Patrick McNally in *Autosport*: 'Once their cars were sorted out, Clark and Sears between them broke just about every class record lapping at fantastic speeds. They even won outright at International Goodwood on a wet track while the 4.7-litre Mustangs floundered. In the final race at Oulton Park they were hard on the Alan Brown Mustang's tail right to the finish.'

### BIG CHANGES

For 1966 the scene changed considerably, for Championship regulations were much modified, and new cars ran to FIA Group 5 regulations, which gave almost unlimited freedom for mechanical change and improvement. The British Team Lotus cars — the PHK...D team cars — ran with coil spring/wishbone front suspension, 160 bhp at first (with carburettors)

and later with 180 bhp fuel-injected BRM-tuned engines, along with cast magnesium road wheels.

In a 10-event season, one or other of these cars won outright three times, and always won the 2-litre capacity class. Not only Jim Clark (all three race victories, and five class wins) and Peter Arundell, but Sir John Whitmore and Jacky Ickx all drove the team cars. In 1966 the only cars which could beat them in a straight fight were other Fords, either the 7-litre Galaxies or the 4.7-litre Mustangs and Falcons.

Unhappily, though, for 1967 when the Mk2 Lotus Cortina arrived, and was equipped with a 16-valve FVA engine, Jim was in his tax exile period, and could not come back to the UK to race them: that was the year, of course, when Lotus produced the Ford-Cosworth Type 49 F1 car, Jim drove it magnificently and unstoppably, and was hot favourite to win the 1968 World Championship before the tragic crash in Germany which claimed his life.

In the meantime, using a works Lotus Cortina, Jim had taken part in a well-publicised entry in the 1966 RAC rally. Jim — already a double F1 World Champion in 1963 and 1965 — was determined to prove that he



could also shine on loose surfaces, without previously having seen any of the forestry stages which made up the vast majority of this event's competitive mileage.

This was no just-for-show-business appearance either, for before the event Jim Clark practiced assiduously, sometimes with his name-sake Roger as a tutor, sometimes with Brian Melia, who would be his rally co-driver, alongside him, and always with one or other of the sizeable fleet of





An all-Ford battle at the first corner of the Crystal Palace circuit in 1965, with Jim Clark (in JTW 497C) attempting to go round Jackie Oliver's Ford Mustang.

"The Cortina was lighter than its rivals and with a chuckability that Jim Clark always made the most of"

Boreham rally cars and practice/test cars to use at venues such as the Bagshot rough road tracks, near Camberley in Surrey.

Right from the start Jim was on the pace, setting third and fifth fastest stage times, his progress through the stages looking spectacular to say the least! He set fastest times in the Towy and Myherin stages (both of them Welsh classics), and in spite of having more than one minor excursion which (in his words) 'rounded off the corners of the car', four punctures, and a

very brief panic when the earth lead jumped off the battery, was in sixth place overall at the halfway halt at Aviemore, in Scotland.

It was in the second half of the event that the dramas kicked in. Soon after the restart, Clark put the car off the road in the Loch Achray stage, damaging the front suspension and steering against a bit of solid Scottish scenery, being delayed by up to 45 minutes before the car could struggle to a Ford service vehicle, and be patched up. Nothing daunted, he

carried on until (in John Davenport's words, published in Autosport): 'In the stage at Glengap, Jim Clark's rally came to an end when he got airborne over some humps and flipped twice into some trees.'

This was the sad end to a very spectacular outing, and the end for this car, which was later photographed back at Boreham before it was finally dismantled. In later years, rumours spread that the wreckage had been spirited away, and might resurface.



HEROES: ROGER CLARK







# Britain's best

Well over 35 years on from driving his last works Ford, Roger Clark is still fondly remembered by rally fans and the public alike as an outstanding talent, always at home behind the wheel of a (very) sideways Escort.

For at least 15 years, Roger was Britain's best rally driver. Victories proved it, his rivals admitted it, and his fans never had any doubts. Roger could hold his cars at impossible drift angles against all the laws of physics, and always be faster than anyone else.

Roger started rallying in BMC Minis, moved on to Rover 2000s, then prepared his own successful Cortina GT. Ford then hired him for their works team – where he stayed for the next 15 years. In Lotus Cortinas, Escorts, Capris, GT70s, or even in a Mk4 Zodiac, he always gave of his best.

In those days no other British driver attacked a stage like Clark – you never needed to identify the car to know he was driving it. Roger never worried about technicalities, but he knew what he liked – his cars to oversteer easily – and if ever he encountered a car which

understeered, he tried to make it do otherwise! His cars were often so far out of line, looking so close to having an accident, that I sometimes wondered if he ever considered that possibility.

On that subject, I actually got what qualifies as a great speech from him: 'Dunno,' he quipped, 'I never think about it. I make the car do what I want it do. I can always get it back. So long as I don't have to look out of the back window in a corner, it should be OK.'

By the time Roger won his second RAC rally in 1976, his works Escort RS1800s were sophisticated and fast. The 2-litre engines were Cosworth-designed 16-valve twin-cam specials, with at least 250 bhp. Backed by five-speed gearboxes, four-wheel disc brakes, rafts of preparation expertise, and with a great team of mechanics to back him up, they were rock-solid projectiles.



Roger never enjoyed posing, but made a team exception for this pre-Marathon shot in 1968.



## HEROES: ROGER CLARK

### GROUND RULES

It wasn't always like that for the Lotus Cortinas were simpler machines — fragile and temperamental — which didn't do him justice. In 1966 and 1967 Roger was a superstar waiting to shine: not until 1968, when the first Escort Twin Cam appeared, would that actually happen.

But when Ford signed up Roger at the end of 1965, it was Lotus performance that he needed. His Cortina GT only had 100 bhp, yet here was the same chassis with 140 bhp. Better than that, it pulled like a horse from 3000 rpm and had enough ground clearance to float over the rocks and shale of any British forest.

Three years of Lotus Cortina driving — 1966 to 1968 — brought more frustration than victory. Even so, he won the Shell 4000 in Canada and the Scottish in 1967, and also found time to coach race-driver Jim Clark before Jim starting the 1966 RAC rally.

In the 1966 Monte he was disqualified in the notorious lighting fiasco, in the 1967 Monte he was obliged to drive a Taunus 20M (and finished 67th), and in the 1967 Safari his Lotus Cortina fell apart after a structural battering. The biggest disappointment came on the London-Sydney Marathon of 1968, when he led the entire trans-continental event until the final hours in Australia, only for the twin-cam engine to fail, and for the back axle to break down.

So did his driving methods change in the next decade? Those who co-drove for him — Jim Porter, Tony Mason and Stuart Pegg among them — all told me that he never altered. The cars got faster and more complex — Escort Twin Cams succeeded Lotus Cortinas, then came RS1600s and finally the magnificent RS1800s which he used in the late 1970s — he trimmed his driving style, but didn't change his casual approach to driving or training. Later cars were less sideways than before, more powerful than before,



10,000 miles to go: Roger, Ove Andersson and the ill-fated Lotus Cortina in front of Big Ben on the 1968 London-Sydney Marathon.

and with more available adjustment for all occasions, but Roger changed less than anything else.

As a test driver, by the way, he was hopeless. Although he could drive any car quickly — even when it was about

to fall to pieces — he could change his driving style to suit the chassis involved, and would rarely sit down to work out what needed improvement. In Roger's case, though, that didn't matter — if you needed a hero you



Roger was often asked to rally different Fords, like the British Vita-prepared Mk4 Zodiac he and Jim Porter used to win their class in the 1969 Three Cities Rally.





Roger and his famous Escort, LVX 942J, on the ramp of the 1972 RAC rally. This became one of the most successful RS1600s of all time.

would back against the world in any conditions, he was peerless.

#### SENSATIONAL START

His first Escort performances were sensational. First of all he dominated

an ITV Rallycross event at Croft, then won four International rallies — Circuit of Ireland, Tulip, Acropolis and Scottish — in just eight weeks.

No-one — not Timo Makinen, nor even Hannu Mikkola, was quicker

in an Escort, and Roger just loved every minute of it. That, perhaps, was just as well, for he also suffered breakdowns, and development problems. If Ford wanted to try something out, Roger would usually get the donkey's job of testing it — and he was sometimes asked to drive other cars as well.

Roger was the first to drive a four-wheel-drive Capri in rallycross (February 1969, and a famous first-time-out victory), while he was also the first to try out an F2 FVA-engined Escort in testing, (too inflexible, too peaky). Ford sent him on the French Alpine of 1969 in a 2.3-litre V6-engined Escort, which overheated and put him out.

When Ford needed to see if the Mk4 Zodiac could be successful on the London-Mexico World Cup rally, it was Roger who drove it on a rally in Eastern Europe — and proved that it could not.

Although he then dabbled with GT70 developments, and spent another winter with the fuel-injected Capri 4x4, he then settled down to



Sideways to victory: keeping teammate, Gerry Marshall at bay on the way to winning the 1974 Avon Tour Of Britain in the RS2000.



## HEROES: ROGER CLARK

Roger on the 1975 Circuit of Ireland where, amazingly, it snowed at Easter time.



**“Roger rarely crashed his cars, and he was still competitive to the day he drove his last works Escort”**



A well-known picture, but this was Roger testing the water-proofing of his Safari Escort before the 1977 event.

drive Escorts — and did it superbly. From then on, he was Britain’s best rally driver for so many years that everyone else had to measure themselves against him, yet he never preened, or became a prima donna.

### **BACK IN THE GAME**

In 1970 and 1971 team-boss Stuart Turner decided that Roger was getting complacent about the Escort, and was maybe even a car breaker — although he won four internationals, he was forced to retire six times — and criticised him on TV. Roger was furious, demanded new cars for British Championship rounds, raised his game, and became dominant once again. From 1972 to 1976 Roger was then as near to dominant in British rallies as his Escorts would allow. Although he chalked up two famous RAC rally victories — in 1972 with LVX 942J,



While driving for Dealer Team Ford on the 1978 RAC rally, Roger used a Haynes of Maidstone Escort, OKK 380P.



(Esso Blue), and in 1976 with POO 505R, the Cossack machine — out in the wide world things did not go so well. He could have won the 1973 Safari if the car had not failed, brake problems foiled him in the 1973 RAC, and there was axle failure in the 1976 Southern Cross of Australia.

No matter. In 1972, 1973 and 1975 he won the British Rally Championship, and set every standard which young pretenders like Billy Coleman, Russell Brookes and Chris Sclater struggled to match.

He also became a media superstar — the tousle-haired genius who advertised Esso or Cossack when his sponsors asked him, and when he became one of the best chat show subjects Ford could have wanted.

When Ford Motorsport invented the Rally Forum, they cannot have known just how good Roger and John Taylor would be. Roger always made a point of arriving late, preferably with a pint of beer in his hand — which usually brought the house down.

Roger's problem though — which he cheerfully admitted — was that

he was bone idle. By the mid-1970s, he would often be losing a rally at half-distance, and have to put in a sensational effort later in the day to make up for this. Co-drivers found this infuriating, and were used to complaining loudly: that method usually worked. Co-driver Jim Porter once said that if the rally started at half-distance, then Roger could never be beaten.

#### OFF THE PACE

After that second, and quite unexpected, RAC rally victory, though, in 1976, there's no doubt that he lost his edge. Competent performances, all round the world, usually produced a podium finish, but no victories. In world events Waldegard or Mikkola were usually quicker, and in the UK it was Ari Vatanen and Hannu Mikkola who often beat him.

Roger knew this, but never showed any distress. Maybe this explains why Ford took him out of Escorts in 1979, asking him to concentrate on Fiesta development instead. But Roger never won anything in

the front-wheel-drive car, and was pleased to see the end of the year. Even as he aged, he rarely crashed his cars, and he was still competitive to the day he drove his last Escort. His last victory came in 1980, when he took a Rothmans Escort to win in Cyprus, defeating the opposition, the rocks and the searing heat.

#### MOVING ON

Roger and Ford parted company at the end of 1979 without bitterness. Boreham was closing down its works efforts to develop a new car, Roger knew that he was perhaps just past his best, and in any case he had a new British Leyland business to promote in Leicester.

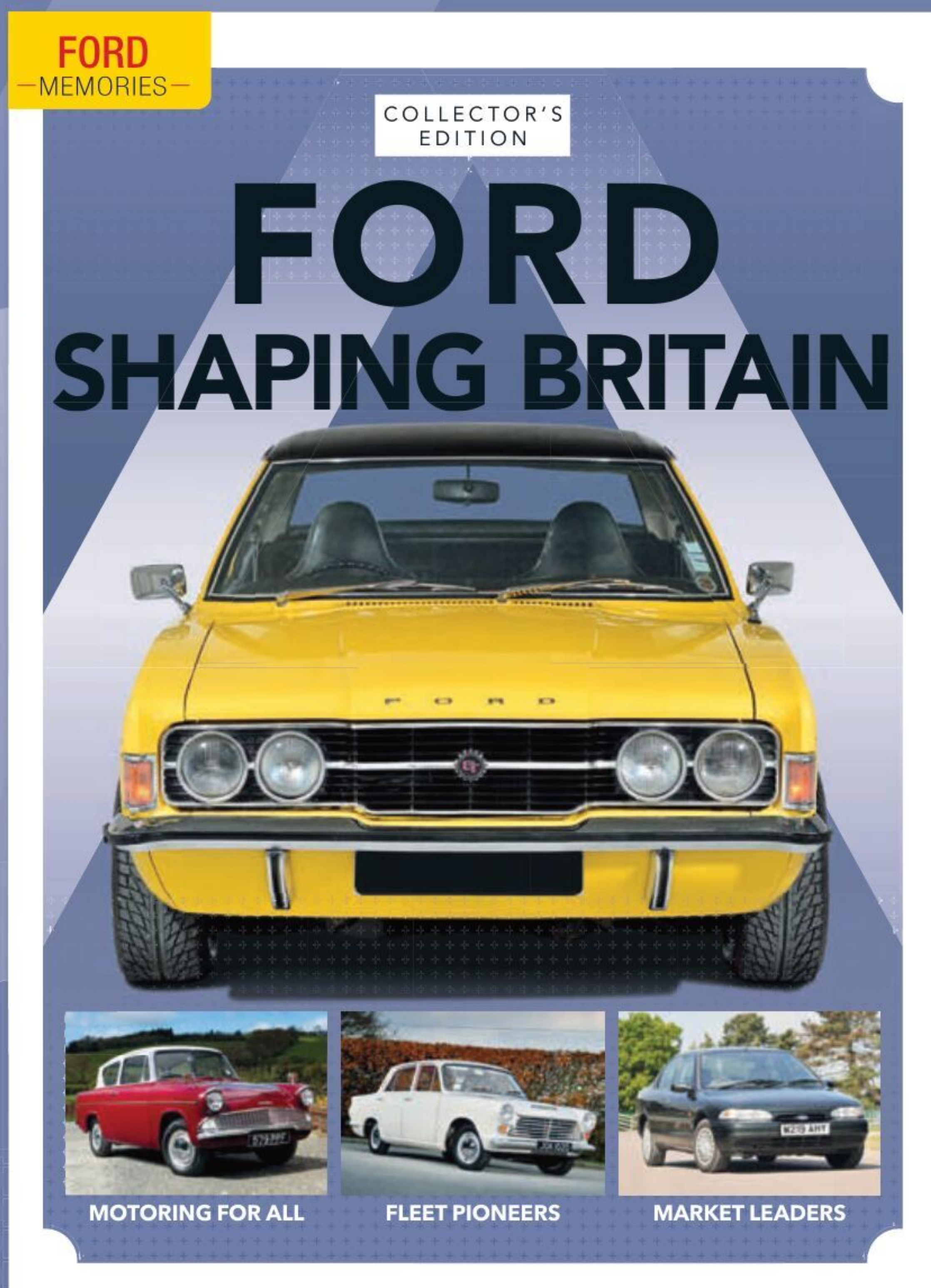
In a way, it's a pity that Roger did not retire when he stepped down from Ford. Fans wanted to remember him for his glory days, than for what followed in the 1980s. To see Roger driving a Triumph TR7 V8, a Porsche 911 or a Metro 6R4 was to see someone enjoying himself, but no longer competitive. It was a waste of his talents, but he would never admit that.



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## HEROES: JACKIE STEWART

Jackie at the wheel of Tyrrell 003, the most successful of all his Ford-engined F1 mounts.



**H**ow much do we Ford enthusiasts know about Sir Jackie Stewart. Everything, too much or are we missing something? We know that he was World F1 Champion three times in Ford-engined cars, for sure — but who remembers that he started his single-seater career in BMC-engined Formula 3 cars, and hasn't raced a car in anger for the past 40-odd years?

There's no doubt that he was incredibly successful as a racing driver, and even more so as a businessman. Made himself rich? Tick. Sold his services to Ford, Goodyear and other companies over the years? Tick. Founded his own Formula 1 team, but made sure that other concerns (not least Ford) would pay for it? Tick. And there is more.

The mass media still look on him as the ultimate thinker. If Sir Stirling

was not available to make some wise comment on a new development, then Sir Jackie would be approached — always being fluent, persuasive, and on the side of the establishment on anything that he analysed. He has now been doing that for well over 40 years, and shows no signs of slowing down.

In most respects, of course, the motor racing enthusiasts will always remember John Young (always known as Jackie) Stewart as a





# Formula Won

Triple World Champion, F1 team owner, media pundit — Jackie Stewart's reinvented himself over and over — and always with Ford in the background.

beady-eyed Scot from Dumbarton, just west of Glasgow, born in 1939, with an elder brother (Jimmy) who was also a successful racing driver, but whose mother did not approve of his chosen hobby. The Stewarts were garage owners, but by no means a wealthy family, which explains why Jackie (who was later diagnosed with dyslexia) started working as an apprentice mechanic at 16 years of age.

## LATE STARTER

Motor racing came later in his young life, for originally he took up clay pigeon shooting, and later became a prize-winning member of the Scottish shooting team, competing with honour at international level. It was not until the early 1960s that he tried his hand at motor racing, by driving a customer's cars, but from 1962 it was obvious that he had a rare, and well-directed, flair for this craft.

Even so, it was only after he had started winning events all around Britain in cars usually supplied by the Edinburgh-based Ecurie Ecosse team that Ken Tyrrell approached him. Those were the days in which Ken was running works teams of Mini Coopers and single-seater Formula Junior Coopers, Thus it was that, for one breathtakingly busy season in 1964, Jackie drove Mini Cooper-based engines in the 1-litre Formula



## HEROES: JACKIE STEWART

3 Cooper single-seater, and seemed to win wherever he appeared.

Notice, even now, that there was no link with Ford, although we now know that Ford's Walter Hayes, who controlled the company's motor racing activities, had already spotted the young Scot when he was driving the Cooper-BMC single-seater. In his autobiography *Winning Is Not Enough*, Sir Jackie recalls meeting Hayes at the London Motor Show:

'My attention was drawn to the Ford stand, and a creamy white Ford Zodiac with red upholstery and chrome wheels.

"Do you like it".

A complete stranger was standing next to me.

"Yes", I replied.

"It's lovely," he said, "Would you like one?"

Of course, but that's unlikely to occur.

"Well, if you drive for me, I'll give you this car, and a bit of money as well. You don't know me, but I know you. My name is Walter Hayes."

The deal was done that day, but originally it was only for driving Lotus

**Using this Matra-Ford MS80 for most of the 1969 season, Jackie won the first of his first World Drivers' Championships.**



Jackie and his wife Helen, before the French GP of 1968.

Cortinas — and was worth £500 plus the gift of the car after which he had been lusting.

There would be three more years to go before Jackie finally got his hands on a Ford-engined Grand Prix car. Those were the years in which he was originally number two to Graham Hill in the BRM Formula 1 team, driving

1.5-litre V8s in 1965, then valiantly battling with the lumpen 3-litre H16 machines in the next few years. Even though he only won two races (along with six other podium positions), it was clear that he was likely to be the world's best soon.

Along the way, he won the 1966 Tasman series (four outright wins)







Jackie and World Champion Emerson Fittipaldi, with a newly-launched Capri 3000GXL in 1972.

and finished second in 1967 (two more victories), while he and Hill also drove the Rover-BRM gas turbine car at Le Mans. and also found time to race in North America, and to enjoy himself in Lotus Cortinas from time to time. That was also the year in which his BRM aquaplaned off standing water

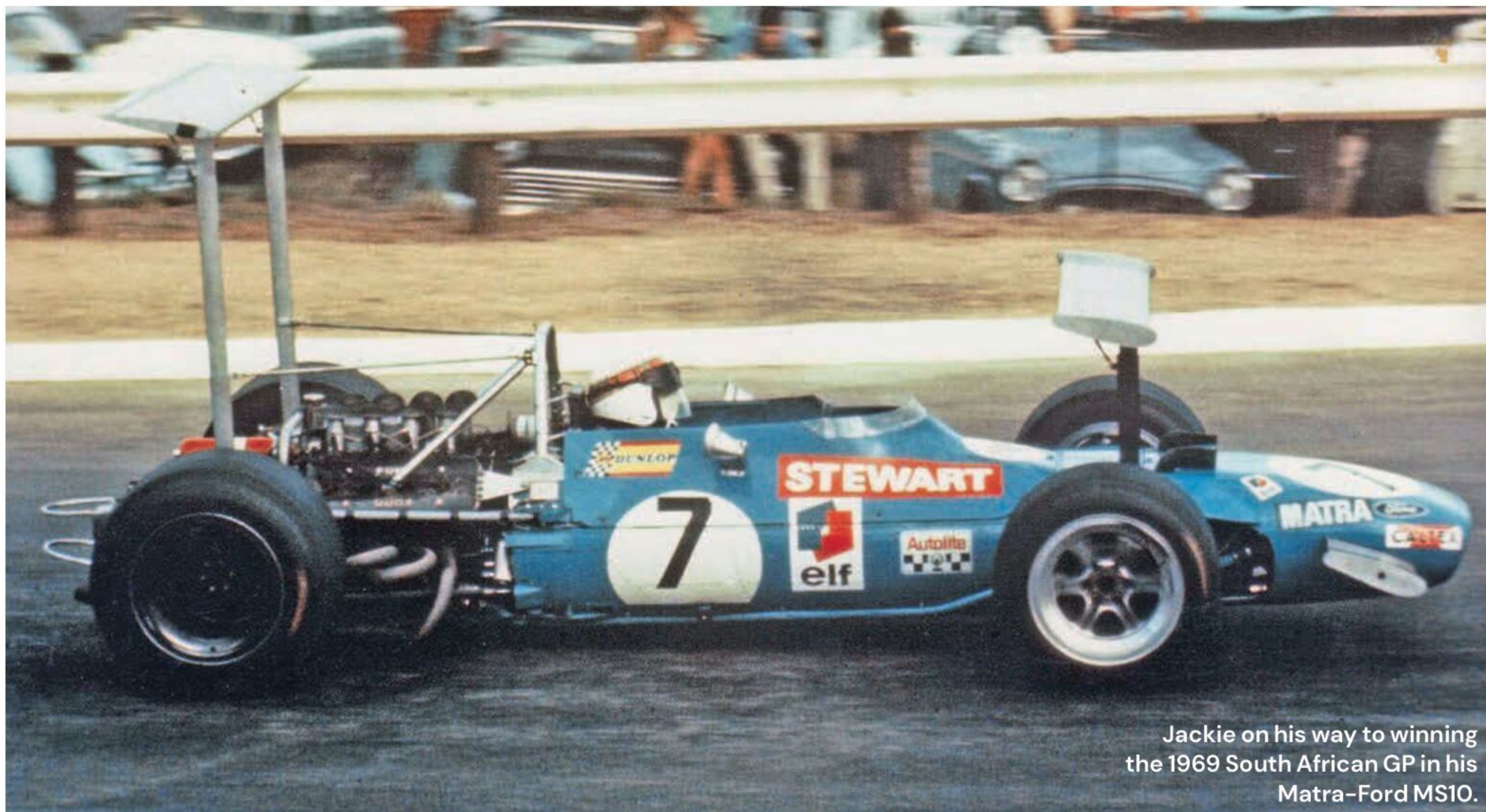
in the Belgian GP, an accident which let him trapped in a rain and petrol-soaked car for some time, faced with dirty and rudimentary medical facilities — and the burning desire to do something about motor racing safety, for which he would become the prime mover in the next few years.

### COSWORTH POWER

The breakthrough, to driving Cosworth-Ford DFV engined F1 cars, came in 1968, but only after he had turned down an offer from Ferrari. Ken Tyrrell, for whom he had been driving Cosworth FVA-powered French Matra F2 cars in 1967, knew that he was anxious to walk away from BRM, suggested that if he could arrange to combine a DFV engine in a modified Matra F2 chassis, the two could start their own F1 team.

By today's multi-million, heavily-sponsored standards, this sounds bizarre — but it worked. No soon had the team got established — with generous financial support from Matra, Ford, and the Elf petrochemical giant — then they were competitive. The definitive Matra MS10 F1, chassis, which arrived in mid-season, made all the difference, and Jackie won three World Championship F1 races before the end of the year. Only Graham Hill, in DFV-engined Lotuses, beat him to the Drivers' crown that year.

The following season, when equipped with the new Matra MS80, there was no mistake, for



Jackie on his way to winning the 1969 South African GP in his Matra-Ford MS10.



## HEROES: JACKIE STEWART



Racing the March 701 at Jarama in 1970. The crashed cars of Jackie Oliver and Jacky Ickx lie behind.

he won six races and the Drivers' Championship, but 1970 was a great disappointment because the March 701 with which he started the year was not of the best, while the original Tyrrell 001 which followed it was not really race ready. That was also the year in which his dear friend Jochen Rindt was killed in a practice crash at Monza, and when his efforts to improve track and vehicle safety were redoubled.

Jackie was among the first to use safety belts in a car, early to use a full-face helmet, and always made sure he had the best of fire-resistant clothing available.

1971 was a repeat of 1969, now with the Tyrrell 003 to harness Ford's DFV power (six outright victories, and the Drivers' crown), but there was partial disappointment in 1972 when his hard-working body rebelled, a duodenal ulcer was diagnosed in mid-season, and he was not always at his best. Even so, four outright wins, and second in the Drivers' Championship was not what

any other racing driver would have described as 'disappointing'.

### TRIPLE CROWN

1973 was the season when everything went right — and wrong. On the 'right' side were five more World

Championship F1 victories, and a third Drivers' Championship crown, but on the — sadly — 'wrong' there was the tragic death of his Tyrrell team-mate in practice for the USA Grand Prix. From that moment, as Stewart tells it so vividly in his memoir, he became



Jackie and engineer John Wheeler, discussing the handling of the prototype RS200, at a MIRA test day in 1984.



an ex-racing driver, who would never again drive in anger, having chalked up 27 F1 successes in 99 starts, which was a remarkable record. It was then, and only then, that he could reinvent himself as 'Jackie Stewart – Personality', not only by being a face and voice on radio and TV, and became a fully-fledged advisor and representative for Ford. Although he kept away from participation on the race tracks themselves, he could usually be found watching and commentating on events varying from F1 races to NASCAR, from Le Mans to the Indianapolis while behind the scenes, he worked tirelessly for Ford, whether in Europe or the United States, as a top-of-the-tree vehicle tester/assessor

By this time he had moved his home and family to Switzerland (Britain's high-tax regime was to blame for this), Ford made sure he always had the latest and best road cars at his disposal (these were always identified by the registration number 1 JYS), and in later years he

personally made sure that he always used the same imperturbable chauffeur – and that there were two in-car mobile phones, one of which was used purely for outgoing calls! In the 1990s, of course, as Britain's high taxes had been steadily reduced, the family moved back to the UK, originally living near the Sunningdale golf course, and later moving to a more rural home north of London.

Along the way he could (and did) act as a world-famous and persuasive spokesman for his sponsors, could (and) did drive modern race cars so that he could assess them, and usually comment on them afterwards, and could (and did) be trusted to drive secret prototypes within the Ford empire, and often provide scathing comments about their failings, whether functional, or in terms of quality and fittings standards.

#### TEAM CAPTAIN

By the mid-1990s, Jackie was so close to Ford's Top Brass that he travelled to and from major races,

and it was one of those flights that he criticised the way the company was mis-handling its F1 programme, where Benetton (and Michael Schumacher) had just defected, and would use Renault instead of Ford-Cosworth engines.

Challenged to help rescue them, he turned everything on its head, set up Stewart Grand Prix, which effectively became the works F1 team in 1997.

From then until the end of 1999 the new team struggled for success, until it sold out to Ford, and was promptly re-named Jaguar Racing. Two years later Jackie then became Sir Jackie, and spent some years as the Chairman of the British Racing Drivers Club before finally moving into a more peaceful retirement.

But not to be invisible. Today when already into his late 70s, and deserving of a bit of peace, he is still asked for his opinion on so many aspects of F1 that it is as if he was always there... Which, in a way, he always will be.



Jackie and his family were proud of their development of Stewart F1 cars in the late 1990s. This was the 1999 model, as being launched.



## HEROES: BJORN WALDEGARD







# Top of the world

The first ever World Rally Champion, Sweden's Bjorn Waldegard was always the most at-home behind the wheel of a works Ford.

**B**jorn Waldegard may not have been the most glamorous, and not even the people's favourite (Ari Vatanen took that title), but he was one of the most successful. You only have to look at what he achieved at Boreham to see that.

Just look at the stats. He won six out of the 17 World Championship rounds which he started for Ford, took eight more podium finishes — and retired only once. Two of those second places were behind other works Escorts. And that's not all — he was robbed of Monte Carlo victory in 1979, by just 6 seconds, when French saboteurs placed rocks in his way on a special stage. With crashes in World rallies, no wonder he won the World Championship in 1979.

Already a superstar after twice winning the Monte Carlo in Porsches, Bjorn must have wondered why he had to suffer two such traumatic years at Lancia in 1975 and 1976. At Lancia, he won several World Championship rallies, but suffered from team politics: the Italians wanted Sandro Munari to win every time. When Bjorn defeated Munari at San Remo in 1976, team boss Cesare Fiorio was so angry that he sacked the Swede on the spot.

Bjorn, therefore, was on the market again: 'I talked to several teams at that time, but as soon as I talked to Peter Ashcroft I knew that the Ford offer and programme was the best...'

## **BOREHAM-BOUND**

Not only was Boreham noted for its relaxed environment, but it was time to rebuild the team. Timo Makinen was being released, Roger Clark was just past his best, and Ari Vatanen

was still at the bash-and-crash stage. The whole team needed Bjorn — old in the head, but still fit and young — to start again. Bjorn clearly loved working with the works team at Ford. Nothing, it seemed, was too much to ask — and he gave everything in return. If Boreham needed to know anything about their rivals — Bjorn could tell them. Having started in VW Beetles, he had been rallying Porsche 911s since 1968. After winning the Monte in 1969 and 1970, he then went freelancing, to drive for Fiat, Toyota, BMW, Citroen and Opel — before settling at Lancia in 1975. He could drive anything, and win in anything: 'Learning to drive the RS1800 wasn't difficult,' Bjorn commented, 'because it is a very easy car. I'd driven all types of car recently anyway— front-engined, rear-engined, mid-engined. In a way the Escort is like the BMW 2002, and very much like the Toyota, but a lot quicker.'

He settled in at Boreham at once. Hired a month before the end of 1976, he found that his Lancia Stratos drive in the RAC rally had been cancelled, and bagged an Escort to compete in the British event. Boreham — typical Boreham, who pulled many a rabbit out of the hat in those days — scratched around, found that Timo Makinen's ex-Total Rally car had just got back from South Africa, and rebuilt it for Bjorn.

After just one testing session at Bagshot in another car, he met MTW 200P at scrutineering in Bath, then spent the next four days looking as if he had been driving Escorts throughout his career. He never put a foot wrong, and finished third: only Roger Clark (RS1800) and Stig Blomqvist (16-valve Saab 99) beat him.



## HEROES: BJORN WALDEGARD

### RIGHT CONSISTENCY

Success then followed success in 1977, the season in which Ford so nearly beat Fiat to the World Rally Championship. Bjorn started six events, winning three of them, not finishing below fifth, and never crashing: he became Mr Consistency. Everyone at Ford loved him, for Bjorn was soft-spoken, placid, always ready to do his best — and was amazingly successful.

It was this character, rather than his sheer pace, which made Ford so happy. Ari Vatanen might generate all the emotion (and, at this time, most of the expensive accidents), but it was the quiet, effective Swedish farmer who provided most of the results. Even in late-1970s guise the Escorts still liked to kick their tails out, and go sideways, at every opportunity: Bjorn loved that, and was very comfortable with the habit, but never let it get out of hand, for he was always totally composed.

Was he not hard on his cars?: “No way,” Mick Jones told me, “and

you can tell, by looking at them afterwards, he’s as smooth as silk.” Calm, fast, but never getting bogged down, in 1977 his performance on the wettest-ever Safari was awesome. Rivers became deep torrents which had to be waded (have you seen the videos?), and only 12 cars made it to the finish. Only one of them was an Escort, but that was Bjorn’s car, which won by 35 minutes. That’s minutes, incidentally, not seconds.

If that wasn’t enough, he went to Greece six weeks later, and repeated the trick. Ford had always shone in the Acropolis, but Bjorn positively glittered. Beating team-mate Roger Clark by 6 minutes, he was 16 minutes ahead of the next non-Ford. So, what if he didn’t shine in the 1000 Lakes (he never liked the Finnish jumps) — the RAC was still to come.

Here, in the brand-new British Airways-liveried car, WTW 567S, he drove serenely to victory. Five of the first six finishers were in Escorts, and Bjorn who led them all. The only non-Ford driver to challenge him was

Hannu Mikkola — and he had already been signed up to rejoin Ford in 1978.

Amazingly, in 1978 Bjorn only tackled three World rallies for Ford. One reason was that Ford never planned a full programme — no Safari, and no Acropolis entries, for instance — but the other was that a lengthy pay strike crippled Boreham in the autumn. Even so, Bjorn managed one victory (in Sweden), and second in the RAC, behind team-mate Hannu Mikkola’s sister car. Because of the strike, Mick Jones actually part-completed Bjorn’s car at home, in his own garage:

“When I needed parts for the car,” Mick once told us, “I would go back to Boreham at night, when there were no pickets. When I knew the security people would be looking the other way, I would let myself into the workshops — I always had a key.”

### FULL ASSUALT

In 1979 Ford committed themselves to a full Championship assault, for the Escort was near its peak, and the



Bjorn gave VHK 74S its debut in the 1977 San Remo rally, finishing fifth overall.



Not even Bjorn could win every time out — this being the result of him leaving the track in the 1979 Scottish rally.



Bjorn’s Monte-special Escort (VHK 74S) was the moral victor of the 1979 Monte, thwarted at the last minute by rocks put in the road by anti-British spectators.





To new-old POOs competed in Portugal in 1979 — Bjorn being in POO 505R, and Hannu Mikkola in POO 504R.



Bjorn Waldegard and his co-driver Hans Thorszelius celebrating their Safari victory in 1977.

loss of the 1977 championship still rankled. Bjorn and Hannu Mikkola both tackled seven events, while Ford also released them to drive for Mercedes-Benz in their 450SLC 5.0 coupes in the rough and tough Safari and Bandama (Ivory Coast) events. Bjorn's major competition came from Hannu Mikkola, and there were no team orders.

This was the way the season developed:

- Monte Carlo : Bjorn and Hannu swapped the lead throughout, but at the start of the last night, Bjorn led the rally by 6 minutes, 27 seconds. Although he lost time to Darniche's Stratos during the night, he would still have won if spectators had not placed rocks in his path on the next-last stage. He lost — cheated out of victory — by just 6 seconds.
- Sweden: After Bjorn had crashed on the first ice-bound stage, no-



## HEROES: BJORN WALDEGARD



In the year in which entered Dealer Team Ford in the RAC rally (Boreham being strike-hit at the time), Bjorn's car was partly built by Mick Jones in his garage at home! He finished second to team-mate Hannu Mikkola.

one could catch Stig Blomqvist's front-wheel-drive Saab 99 Turbo on the snow. Even so, by being fastest on 19 of the 38 stages, Bjorn's second place, 80 seconds behind, was a fine effort.

- Portugal: Hannu and Bjorn used reborn POO 504R and POO 505R RS1800s, finishing first and second. The fastest non-Ford was 22 minutes behind. No contest!
- Safari: Driving a Mercedes-Benz 450SLC 5.0, Bjorn took sixth place.
- Acropolis: Bjorn drove his opponents into the ground (Hannu's engine broke) and dominated this hot, dusty, gruelling event. He set 30 fastest stage times, and won by 32 minutes! It was the first World victory for a Rothmans-liveried car.
- 1000 Lakes: Bjorn had never liked this event, but drove smoothly to finish third, 6 minutes off the pace. He set only two fastest stage times – but team-mate Ari Vatanen set 20 fastest.
- Quebec: Driving POO 505R (ex-Portugal, and once Roger Clark's 1976 RAC-winning identity), Bjorn won his second rally of the year. This time it was close – his car stalled for 7 minutes in deep water at one time, and smashed a gearbox casing in another stage. In the end he was only 38 seconds ahead of Timo Salonen's Datsun 160J.
- RAC: It should have been a cakewalk, but it all went wrong. Works Escorts finished first, second, fourth and sixth – but Bjorn's car (GJN 126T, brand-new before the event) finished ninth, way off the pace. Punctures, jacks that did not work, and a broken rear axle were all part of the problem. But was Bjorn off the boil? He only set two fastest times, compared with 35 by other Escort drivers. One event remained, and since Bjorn and Hannu could both still win the Drivers' Championship, both accepted fistfuls of Deutschmarks for the Bandama. Driving Mercedes-Benz 450SLC 5.0s, Hannu Mikkola won the event, with Bjorn in second place. It was a steamroller win,

Bjorn's outright victory in the 1977 RAC rally was one of the most cultured of all his successes with Ford's works team.



which confirmed Bjorn's World Championship success – by one point from Hannu, 112 to 111 points.

Incidentally, if we discount the Mercedes-Benz scores, Bjorn's victory margin was crushing – 99 against 76 for Hannu. Third man, Markku Alen (Fiat Abarth) was way behind, on 68.

### MOVING ON

Amazingly, Bjorn never drove for Ford again. After spending a troubled year with Mercedes-Benz in 1980, he moved over to Toyota in 1981,





Sometimes it just wasn't his day! Bjorn and Graham Robson inspect the damage Bjorn had just inflicted on his Escort in the 1978 RAC Rally. Even so, he finished second overall.

winning five more World Championship rallies (mainly in Africa) — his last coming in 1986.

Like many other stars, though, he did not walk away from rallying completely. Still one of the most effective drivers in classic rallying, he astonished fans several times in more recent years — including winning the East African Safari Classic Rally in 2007 in a Historic Motorsport-prepared RS1600. Except that the hair went white he was still recognisably the same Bjorn who charmed everyone at Ford in those three seasons, and he died, too young, in 2014.



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# The Vatanen touch

Famous as much for his early crashes behind the wheel of works Escorts as much as his wins, Ari Vatanen was, and still is, a firm favourite with rally fans. Here's why.

**W**hat is the Ari Vatanen mystique? How is that Ford fans still worship this man — the star who crashed more Escorts than any other works driver of this period? Did you ever see him drive an Escort — close your eyes, and visualise the sight, the sound, the sheer drama. That is why everyone adored him.

Do you remember the way that Ari Vatanen burst on to the 1975 British rally scene in a battered old Opel Ascona? It was enough for Ford to hire him — first to do the 1000 Lakes (in a Boreham-built RS1600) then in a brand-new RS1800 for the RAC. For six stages he led the 1000 Lakes, then crashed out — a trick he repeated on the RAC, though that was on the second morning...

Even so, his pace electrified Ford's Peter Ashcroft, who immediately signed him up as Boreham's apprentice rally driver. The young man from Finland was suddenly on his way to becoming a Ford Superstar. And for why? Not only because he was super-fast, and seemingly quite fearless, but for the way that he always made himself available for interviews, appearances, chats with the fans — he was, in every possible way, the people's hero.

## WINNING ANTICS

From novice to star he made the transition, right away, in 1976. Rallying just one hard-worked RS1800 — LAR 801P — he dominated the RAC Championship, with his victories, and his exciting antics. During the year the Allied Polymer-sponsored

car had many off-road excursions that inflicted body damage. As ace-mechanic Mick Jones once told me:

'We were so busy that we never had the chance to re-shell the damned thing — we just kept patching it up. In the end Ari wrote it off for us on the Castrol 76 rally.'

Yet with five wins, the Championship was his, spectacularly and memorably. This was a year, too, in which he also won the Tour of Britain, which ran to Group 1 regulations, in an RS2000. At the end of the season, no question, he was exhausted, and looked it.

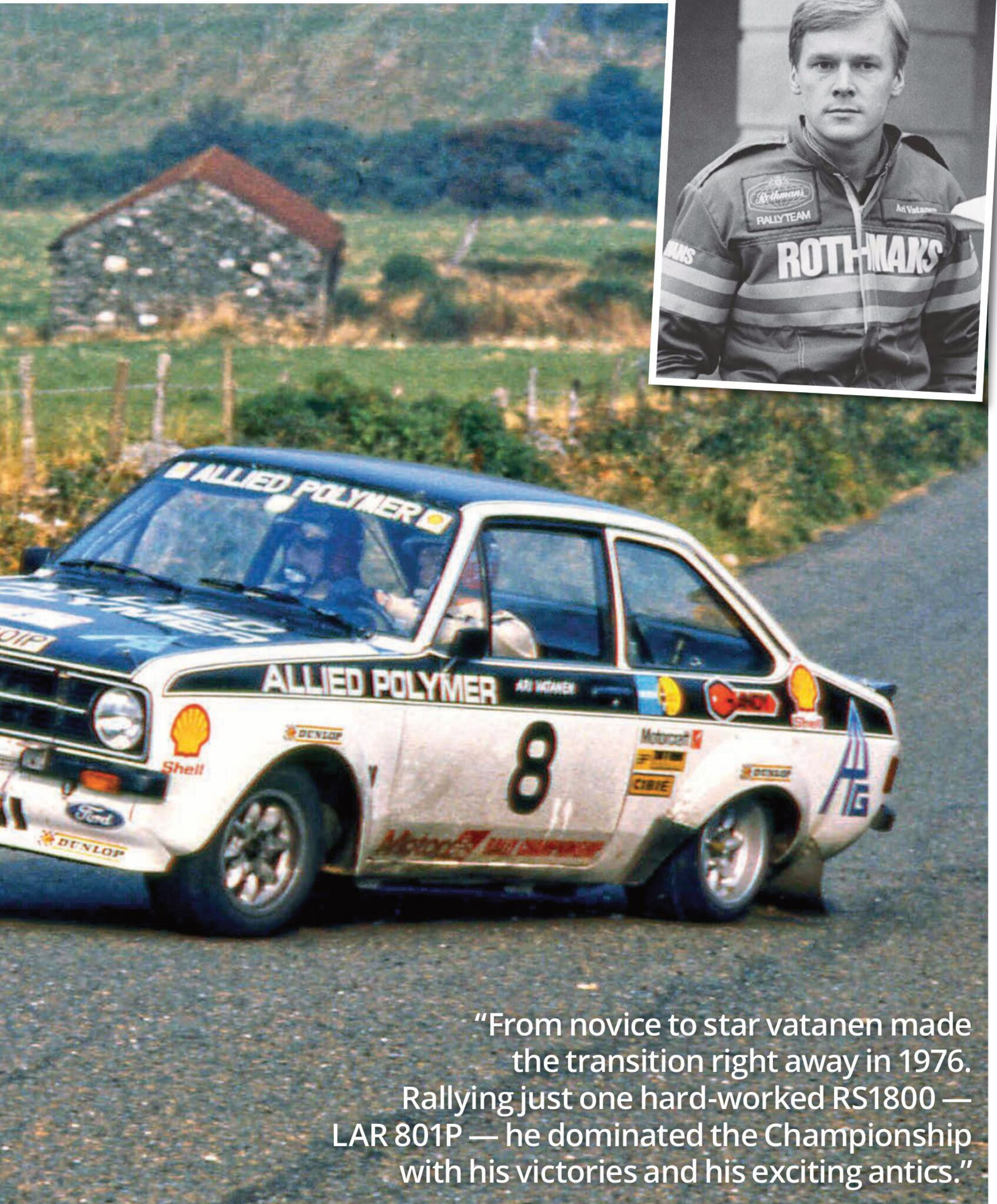
As far as Boreham was concerned, the apprenticeship had been worth it, and signed up to run a Boreham RS1800 in Scandinavia, works RS1800s in World Championship events, and — where there was time — to drive David Sutton's Gandy-backed cars in other rallies.

Even so, by comparison with 1976, the 1977 season was almost a washout. Having won the Arctic rally in POO 489R, Ari didn't finish another works International event all season! It was a sad story, for Ari usually drove two Boreham cars — POO 504R and STW 202R — both of which seemed to be jinxed.

It was a season to regret: Ari crashed POO in Portugal, hit a non-competing car with STW in Africa, planted POO head-on into a tree in Greece, a reshelled POO's clutch exploded in Finland, STW's ignition system let go in Canada, and he also crashed MTW 200P in San Remo, and rolled STW on the RAC. On the other hand, he won the Mintex and the Scottish in a Sutton Escort, was







“From novice to star vatanen made the transition right away in 1976. Rallying just one hard-worked RS1800 — LAR 801P — he dominated the Championship with his victories and his exciting antics.”



## HEROES: ARI VATANEN

POO 504R was in Ari's hands in the 1977 1000 Lakes rally in 1977, where he carried sponsorship from Marlboro.



second on the Welsh, crashed a Ford of New Zealand RS1800 in New Zealand but still managed to finish second, and won two other Finnish-Championship rounds.

Because Boreham had plenty of drivers — Roger Clark and Bjorn Waldegard were heading the team — many suggested that Ari would be cut adrift, as too crash-prone, and too immature. Yet it didn't happen. Peter Ashcroft still believed totally, in his protégé, and was sure that one day, it would all pay off.

On the stages Ari was spine-chillingly spectacular, always seeming to be hovering on the cusp of a disaster, but mostly keeping his increasingly-battered Escorts on the road. Even so, it was not until years later, when a young Colin McRae joined the team, that Ford's bodyshell repair bills went even higher.

For 1978, Ford reduced his programme, cutting his World

Championship programme to just four events (he retired three times), letting him concentrate on events in Scandinavia and Europe. For his adoring fans, however, he was married to David Sutton's magnificent wide-arched Tarmac-spec Escort UYY 256S, soon known as Black Beauty. In Donegal, he not only set fastest times on nearly every stage, but won the three-day event by more than 12 minutes. But still it wasn't his year, for his engine let go in the 1000 Lakes, yet again he went off the road in the Castrol 78, and he was excluded for missing a passage control in the RAC.

### SMOKE SIGNALS

Then came 1979, the forging of his in-car partnership with David Richards, and the start of his love affair with the cigarette company, Rothmans. It would not be long before their ambitions spread, they

picked the blond, non-smoking Finn as their next hero, and started to build him up for the future.

Ari, whose sense of irony was well-developed, loved every minute of it, and soon became the face of Rothmans — for he would be linked with them until he finally moved to Peugeot in 1984. Suddenly, in the second half of the season, the results began to roll in. Third in New Zealand, second in the 1000 Lakes, third in Canada (Quebec), a great win in Cyprus, and a solid fourth on the RAC — all in Rothmans-coloured cars — was encouraging.

Then came the Rothmans years of 1980 and 1981. Although Boreham had closed its doors, they kept Ari and Hannu Mikkola under contract, and loaned them to David Sutton's team, where Rothmans invested in a series of newly-built Escorts.

In 1980, Ari's spectacularly-liveried Rothmans Escorts were fast, reliable



In 1976, this Escort, LAR 801P, was the hardest-working car of all, for Ari drove it throughout the year in the UK, crashing it several times, but winning the British Championship in it.



The event which started it all: Ari, Escort LVW 690P, and the 1975 RAC rally, in which he was amazingly fast, but then crashed the car.

— and always exciting to watch. Ari, now approaching rallying maturity, captivated everyone by the sheer commitment of his driving — and the results poured in. Between February and November he started eleven events — five of them being World Championship rounds, and five of them British Championship rounds. In spite of the occasional high-speed crash, Ari won the Acropolis and Welsh rallies, and recorded seven second places.

It was remarkable, and would get even better in 1981. For this season Ari was backed up by Pentti Airikkala and Malcolm Wilson, a fleet of new Escorts was developed, and the Rothmans insignia seemed to be everywhere. The records show that there were 35 car starts in 21 events. Sutton maintained a fleet of 10 cars — and Ari started 12 times. Somehow he took part in 10 World Championship events without



## HEROES: ARI VATANEN

becoming totally exhausted, winning three of them — Acropolis, Brazil and Argentina — and taking second place on the Swedish and RAC.

Not only did Ari win the World Rally Championship for Drivers, but he became the first (and only) one to do it in a non-factory team. Then came the anti-climax. With the Escort RS1800 now obsolete (the front-wheel-drive Escort generation had already been on sale for a full year), and with the four-wheel-drive Audi Quattro dominating the world scene, Rothmans took their money away and invested in Opel instead.

Ari, still linked to Ford, stayed on for a further season, spending time test driving the RS1700T, and occasionally appearing in privately-prepared Escorts. Early in 1982 he took second place in Sweden (David Sutton had repainted one of the old Rothmans cars), while in Finland he drove Geoff Fielding's MCD Escort, but the engine blew. MCD also provided Escorts for Ari to drive in the British series, though by this time it was clear that time had caught up with the Ford, which could now be beaten by the Quattros, the Opel Ascona 400s, and matched by the Vauxhall Chevette HSR.

### MOVING ON

Then, in October, the news that all Ford fans had been dreading, broke — Rothmans, its links with Opel tighter than ever, had attracted him to drive for the German team in 1983, and except for one-off appearances in Sierra RS Cosworth in Finland (1987 and 1991), he would not be seen again in a works Ford until 1994, when in the autumn of his years.

When leaving in 1982, Ari was quoted as saying, very graciously, that: 'It will be strange not driving a Ford, because since I joined them seven years ago, I have driven nothing else...'

In those years, of course, not only did he compete, and win, for Opel, Peugeot, Mitsubishi and Subaru (he won five World rallies in



This famous combination — Ari, David Richards, and a Sutton-built Escort RS — won the World Drivers' Championship in 1981. Here they are celebrating second place in the Lombard-RAC rally.

**“In 1994, Ari returned to boreham to drive escort rs cosworths, taking third place in the acropolis rally”**



OVX 43IP was a Group 1 RS2000, which Ari used to win the Tour of Britain in 1976.





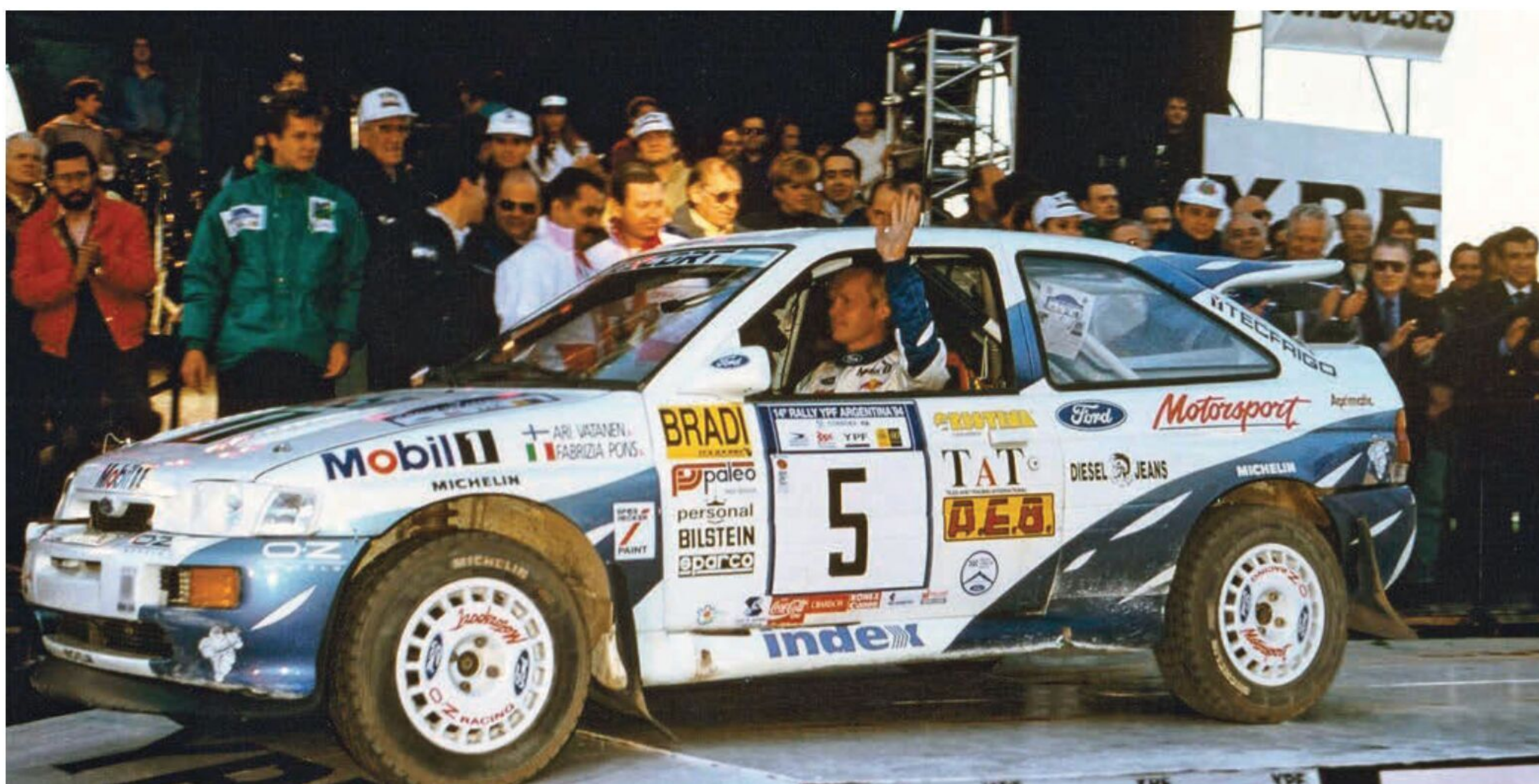
In the year following his crowning as World Drivers' Champion, Ari spent much of his time testing the Escort RS1700T.

succession in 1984/1985 with the Group B Peugeot 205 T16), but he was so nearly killed in a high-speed accident in Argentina, fought his way back to health, turned to Paris-Dakar Raid rallies with huge success (he won no fewer than four times), and also took up a European Parliament politician's career,

Even so, in 1994, when Ford works driver Francois Delecour was injured in a non-rallying accident, Ari returned to Boreham to drive Escort RS Cosworths, taking third place in the Acropolis, and in 1998 he drove an Escort WRC into to third in the Safari, his last podium finish in rallying.

Even after he retired from active driving, he never lost touch with the sport, or his legion of fans, colleagues and friends. There were — and still are — many public appearances, when queues for his autographs, or selfies, are usually swamped by the crowds.

Call him a hero, a phenomenon, the most popular rally driver of all time, and you would be right, every time. We're already looking forward to the next time we see him.



In the mid-1990s Ari made several fleeting appearances for Boreham driving Escort RS Cosworths. This was the 1994 Rally of Argentina, where he took third place, accompanied by Fabrizia Pons.



# Battle of Britain

Despite stiff opposition, Jimmy McRae dominated British rallying in the '80s behind the wheel of Sierra Cosworths.

Yes, of course — Jimmy McRae, not Colin McRae! Just as rapid, but not as flamboyant, as his legendary son, McRae senior was one of the most successful British rally drivers of the 1980s. His legendary, season-long, battles with Russell Brookes mesmerised rally fans for more than 10 years and, let's never forget, he was British Rally Champion no fewer than five times.

And his Ford connection? Let's just say that once the Sierra RS Cosworth came along, Jimmy settled into it with great joy, winning two consecutive Championship seasons in three-door whaletail types, and only losing out in later years because David Llewellyn rose to fame in his four-wheel-drive Toyota Celica GT4s (and it was the 'four' which was so important). After that, it seemed, Jimmy gradually withdrew into the management background, and managed Colin's affairs for several seasons.

Even so, all Sierra-followers should give thanks for the fact that Jimmy had one brief try at making a privately-owned Lancia Delta HF4 work, but failed, and his supporters, RED, turned rapidly to the Sierra instead. Whereas Jimmy's progress in the Delta had been embarrassing, in the Sierras he was immediately a winner. In three particular years — 1987, 1988 and 1989 — British rallying saw battle-after-battle running between McRae, Russell Brookes and Mark Lovell, all of whom had so-called privately-prepared three-door Sierras, but all of their teams seemed to have unlimited access to Boreham for expertise and the latest parts which John Wheeler's team developed.

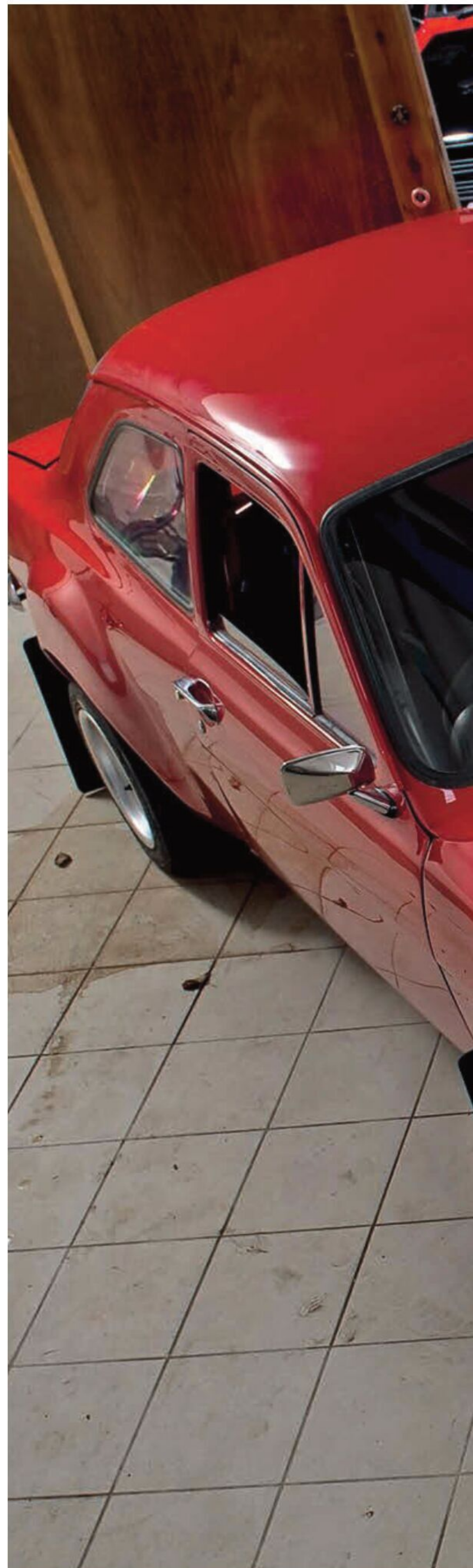
## THIRTYSOMETHING

Lanark-born Jimmy was already in his mid-30s when he became a regular winner in British rallying, for at first he had to make sure his plumbing business grew and grew, so that he could neglect it occasionally! Like almost everyone in the 1970s, Jimmy started rallying in Fords — his first rally car being a Mk1 Cortina with a Lotus twin-cam engine, this being speedily followed by an Escort Twin Cam.

Then (and I had better keep this section quite brief to save Classic Ford fans from building up too-high a blood pressure), Jimmy settled in with General Motors, first in the Castrol-Autosport National Championship (where he fought a running-battle with Malcolm Wilson), then from 1978 alongside Pentti Airikkala in Chevette HSs and HSRs.

Next he became a regular Opel Ascona/Manta 400, became involved with Rothmans and even drove a Metro 6R4 Group B car in 1986.

It was only after Group B rallying was banned that Jimmy had to turn to Group A cars in 1987, found that Vauxhall were no longer interested in him, and so he speedily joined forces with RED of Merseyside, originally to use their newly-bought Lancia Delta HF 4x4, with Ian Grindrod as his co-driver. Straight away, on the National Breakdown rally, which was held in the snow-ridden Yorkshire forests, he found that the car was not only uncompetitive, but that the hope of gaining better homologated parts was slim. He finished — 11th — but was no less than 21 minutes off the pace. Significantly, there was not a single Sierra in the top 10.









## HEROES: JIMMY MCRAE

At extremely short notice, therefore, RED (which already had strong links with Boreham) acquired two early-spec, Group A Sierra RS Cosworths (D418 SVW and D541 UVW) and settle down to do better. By chance, the author had links with Pirelli at the time, so it was a privilege to see how the driver/car/team/supplier combination immediately came together so rapidly.

With little time to do other than prepare the first car, RED made D541 UVW ready, and unleashed Jimmy on the Circuit of Ireland, where has astonished everyone by taking an outright win. Two weeks later, Jimmy then started the Welsh, discovered that 300 bhp and rear-wheel-drive was never going to be easy, but overcame that, and blown turbocharger problems, to finish fifth.

Then came the Scottish, where Jimmy took second place overall, a mere 11 seconds behind Llewelin's four-wheel-drive Audi, though he had led for some of the distance, then finished a storming third in the all-tarmac Ulster rally, where he had to give best to Mark Lovell,

The first Sierra victory —  
Circuit of Ireland 1987.



in another Sierra, and to local-hero Bertie Fisher in an ultimate-spec Opel Manta 400.

### FOURTH TIME LUCKY

That was better, a lot better, but there was more to come. In the Isle

of Man, in September, where all the stages were on Tarmac, and where Jimmy had practiced carefully, he quite excelled himself. Even though he hit a rock at one point and slipped briefly to 16th place, he



Sliding to overall victory win the 1988 Scottish rally, with Rob Arthur alongside.





The Manx 1989 finish. Left to right: Lovell's Sierra, Brookès' car, and McRae's third-placed car.

fought back rapidly, found himself massaged into first place because Mark Lovell's sister car/team was instructed to obey team orders in the Radiopages Sierra, and suddenly became British Rally Champion for the fourth time in six years

That was not all, for RED then gained enough support from Boreham (and even more support than expected from his fuel sponsor, Shell) to be able to run D418 SVW in the Lombard RAC Rally (Chester to Chester and 47 special stages)

where he took a sparkling third place overall (behind Kankunnen's Lancia and Stig Blomqvist's works Sierra RS Cosworth. This was an event where there were three Sierras in the top 10 (the other was driven by Carlos Sainz), with George Donaldson taking the Group N crown in D74 EYU.

The McRae/Sierra/RED magic was even more obvious in 1988, when Jimmy had a new and exuberant co-driver, Rob Arthur, for in the British Rally Championship they won three of the six events, and took second place on two others. Not even the fact that the Sierra visually struggled to get its massive power down to the ground through Pirelli's latest rubber seemed to handicap the crew, who had a marvellously serene year.

#### TAKING IT CALMLY

The bad news was rare, for there was only one retirement, when Jimmy rolled the Sierra down a firebreak in the Dalby complex of North Yorkshire on the Cartel (which had succeeded the National Breakdown as sponsors of the season's opening round). Soon afterwards, however,



Midland Ulster rally 1988 and outright.



## HEROES: JIMMY MCRAE

the McRae magic surfaced again in the Circuit of Ireland, when he won outright (making this his sixth success in the Irish classic), taking a serene course over 26 special stages. For McRae followers, this was a perfect example of the calm way in which he approached his rallying, for the car always looked fast but never difficult to drive, and even after a particularly hard session behind the wheel he could, and did, give a lucid response to questioning. Looking back, his approach to rallying seemed to be very different from his exuberant young son, Colin, who was just making his way (in a Vauxhall Nova) in the same sport.

Two events done and four more to go but on the next outing, the Welsh, quite amazingly he was beaten narrowly by Pentti Airikkala's rear-drive Mitsubishi Starion. No matter for just five weeks later, in his native Scotland, he finally won the home event which he had been chasing for so long, this in fact being his 14th start in the event. In 1988 the Scottish forests were in fine, dry, condition, which was the least possible handicap for the powerful Sierra so, driving D541 UVW (in which he had won his first Sierra event well over a year earlier), he led the event from start to finish, never looking like being headed.

But that was not all, for at the end of July he returned to Ireland, once again enjoyed competing in the bumpy, twisty, but Tarmac-surfaced stages of Ulster, and won his third Home international in succession, this time beating Mark Lovell's Sierra by 5 minutes, and flattening the opposition. Come September, and the Manx International, he could only ever have been beaten to the Championship crown by Airikkala's Mitsubishi, but on the Isle of Man this proved to be no contest. Instead, Jimmy had to cede the victory to the spectacular Patrick Snyers of Belgium, who used one of Prodrive's BMW M3s — but even



Jimmy took up Historic rallying in recent years. He won the 2006 Roger Albert Clark in this RS1800.

then the gap was only a mere 21 seconds. Jimmy, therefore, won the British Championship, and was a very popular victor indeed.

### STRONG COMPETITION

By this time, however, the writing was very much on the wall, for in 1989 David Llewelin abandoned the overweight and underpowered Audi saloons with which he had grappled in 1988 (not for nothing was the 200 Quattro nicknamed 'The Tirpitz' by its rivals), in favour of a four-wheel-drive Toyota Celica GT4. Inevitably, it seemed, the combination of Toyota, Llewelin, and Pirelli rubber made all the running — so much so that although Jimmy's newly built Sierras (F948 RTW being a new numberplate to cherish) were competitive, and he finished on six of the seven rounds, he could only win once — the Circuit of Ireland.

It was a season of 'nearly but not quite', where Jimmy finished fourth, first, third, fifth, third and third again — while the Toyota won four times.

Apart from the Celica, the Andrews-sponsored cars of Russell Brookes and Mark Lovell were also competitive with him (their season

including the caught-on-TV moment where Lovell was obliged to pull over on the final stage of the Manx, by team orders, to allow Russell Brookes to win). For Jimmy, the season's low point came in Scotland, of all places, where his turbocharger caught fire on only the second stage, causing the crew to stop and abandon ship very rapidly indeed.

For Jimmy, who did not have a contract lined up for 1990, it then seemed the right time to withdraw, gracefully, from the rally scene, especially as his flamboyant son, Colin had begun to make the headlines. Driving rear-drive Sierra Sapphire Cosworths in the British Rally Championship, Colin had already won the Cartel rally in February 1989, and taken two seconds and two third places later in the year, so Jimmy thought it better to fade out of the competitive frontline scene and, later, to manage his son's affairs when he broke into the big time with Subaru.

Not that this was the end of his rallying, for in more recent years he has competed in classic events in cars as various as a Mk2 Escort (he won the Roger Albert Clark in 2006), a Porsche 911, and a Vauxhall Firenza Can Am.





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# Tour de force

There was no stopping Andy Rouse at the wheel of an RS500. Here's why.

The last time I visited Andy Rouse at home I found him happily tinkering with a pedal cycles in his garage, and with his office desk strewn with estate agents' brochures, and other legal-looking documents. The fact is that Andy's racing days may be over, but as a businessman he seems to be as active as ever.





## “It was in the BTCC Sierra RS500s that Andy Rouse really left a lasting legacy”

In fact, it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe Andy's Ford-based career without filling up an entire magazine, for he started racing in a self-prepared Formula Ford single seater, his first racing saloon was an Escort Mexico, and his last serious mount — 22 successful years later — was in a Mondeo Super Touring Car, in the great days of the British

Touring Car Championship. Along the way, however, there were touring car victories in Triumph Dolomite Sprints, 3-litre Capris, Rover Vitesses and BTCC Toyota Carinas, but it was in Sierras — XR4Tis, RS Cosworths and the mighty RS500 Cosworths — and with the original Mondeo race cars, that he really left his lasting legacy. I'm sure that most of us remember,

with great joy, the great days of the late 1980s when the Sierra RS500s regularly raced with more than 500 bhp, when they totally dominated World, European and British Championships, and when Andy Rouse was always around to drive, win, or prepare the successful machines. He personally won many races in self-prepared cars, but sold replicas to



## HEROES: ANDY ROUSE



In the 1980s Pete Hall of ICS was Andy's patron and sponsor, who was also a very competent race driver. This was an original ARE Sierra Rs Cosworth in 1987.

a number of high-profile customers, both at home and overseas.

Before then, of course, and as a Broadspeed employee and preparation guru, he had won the British Touring Car Championship in Triumph Dolomite Sprints, and raced the massive Jaguar XJ 5.3C without success, but then turned to racing Capris, winning races in 1980 and 1981 until the homologation race began to favour Rover's 3500s instead.

### STARTER SIERRA

It was in 1984, when the Capris were finally beaten by the Rover Vitesse on a regular basis, that Ford decided to promote the new Sierra but how to do it? Back at Boreham, team boss Stuart Turner called the man who had already become 'Mr Touring Car Racer' in Britain, by winning BTCC races in a variety of cars, and challenged him to repeat the dose:

'I called Andy Rouse', Stuart once commented, 'and asked what it would need for us to get him back into a Ford car? "Simple", he replied. "I need 350 bhp in a rear-drive car to beat all the Rovers and BMWs."'

And he was right. For Andy, therefore, Ford Motorsport reacted in a very positive way, though Boreham was only peripherally involved. First, as an interim, there

would be the Sierra-based Merkur XR4Ti (Rouse went on to dominate the British Touring Car series for two seasons — 1985 and 1986 — in those cars), and the Sierra RS Cosworth race car programme would soon follow. Years later Andy agreed that this had been a very busy and happy time for him, and for his business, Andy Rouse Engineering. By the time the long-running Sierra programme was finally completed in 1990, Andy's business had built 30 complete RS500 Cosworth race cars, and more than 100 500/550 bhp full-race engines to power them. The business, based in Coventry, was usually heaving with activity.

### KICK-STARTED

It is worth exploring the Sierra programme in some detail, as this was not a car whose engine choices, and technical layout, looked promising at first. Fortunately, Turner's phone call to Andy followed Ford's decision to have Cosworth develop the new turbocharged YB power unit, and it also helped that Boreham's design team had done some work on the chassis of the Sierra.

Ford promised Andy that the new Sierra RS Cosworth would be ready for him to race in 1986 (in fact that schedule slipped by a year) — but as

Andy in disguise — almost — in his familiar Sierra, but in a one-off colour scheme, at Silverstone in the Tourist Trophy in 1988.



a stop gap they were able to have him race the German-built Merkur XR4Ti (think three-door Sierra with an American-made turbocharged engine) in 1985, and at least to get the chassis right.

Merkur XR4Tis, using some Boreham-designed chassis components, started to race in 1985, and were certainly among the fastest Touring Cars of all by 1986 — but these cars used race-tuned versions of the turbocharged





2.3-litre four-cylinder Lima power unit from Ford-America. The Sierra RS Cosworth programme was running late, and it could not become a fully-fledged Group A car until 1987.

In 1985, however, Andy started 11 BTCC rounds, won nine of them outright, and comfortably lifted the title. A year later, with homologation of the RS Cosworth still not achieved, he started just nine races — but won five times. Although nothing else could

beat him unless the running gear let him down, the regulations and points-scoring system did, which meant that he could not lift the Championship trophy again — ever.

#### **COSWORTH CALLING**

Then came the Cosworth years — 1987 to 1990 — when the Sierra became the best Touring Car racer in the world. Andy started by winning at Silverstone in the spring of 1987, picking up one of

the first British wins achieved by an RS500 Cosworth before the end of the same year, scrapped throughout 1988 with Steve Soper's Eggenberger's car, and in 1989 and 1990 battled with Robb Gravett's Trakstar machine. Four years on, in fact, he was still winning at the end of a 1990 season where he was in tip-top form, but when the authorities decided to muzzle the RS500 Cosworth by changing the rules to ban turbochargers!



## HEROES: ANDY ROUSE

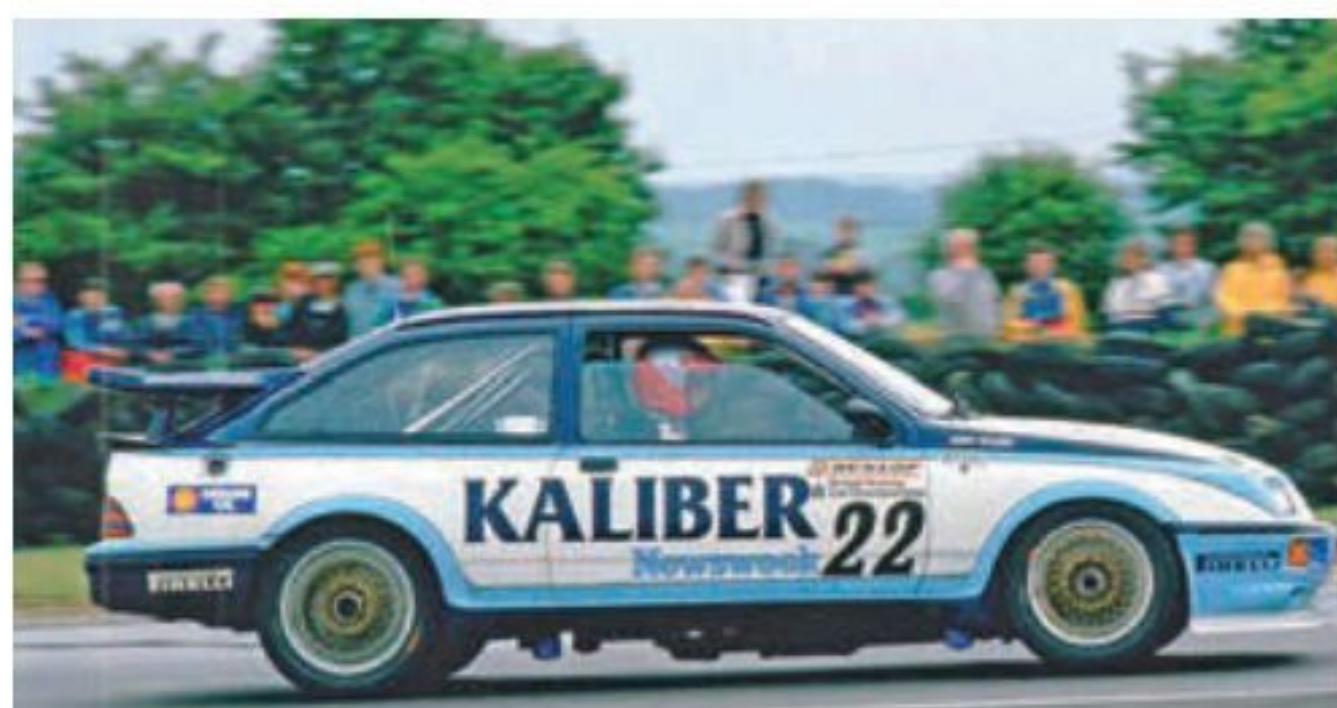
In 1988, when sponsored by a non-alcoholic lager, Kaliber, he fought a series of thrilling battles with Steve Soper in the Eggenberger RS500. Event after event was seen on TV, the battle was always very close, with Andy winning nine races outright (from 13 events altogether), and once again winning his capacity class.

This was the time in which anything up to 15 RS500s would start a BTCC race, in which almost every other car in the field was left way behind, and in which there was an ever-lengthening queue at Andy's workshops in Coventry, for him to prepare race cars for them. It was a measure of his honesty that he built cars for the Labatts-sponsored team, which were always fast enough to contest the lead positions with Soper and himself.

It wasn't just that Andy was fast, but that he did everything so neatly, and with the very minimum of fuss. In those pioneering days of TV in-car camera work, it was a real pleasure to see the master at work. When the soundtrack volume was turned up, we could all hear the magnificent YB engine revving hard, but Andy's hand and arm movements were always calm and deliberate. To get the best



The very first Andy Rouse Engineering Sierra RS Cosworth, at Andy's workshops in Coventry in 1985.



The combination of Rouse and the Sierra RS500 was almost unbeatable in British racing in the 1980s.



Andy Rouse built and raced the Merkur XR4Ti with great success in the 1985 and 1986 BTCC.

out of a Sierra, it seems, you had to be insistent, and know exactly when those overworked rear tyres were about to let go, but Andy never seemed to be over those limits.

It was in 1989 and 1990 that the Rouse and RS500 combo reached its zenith. The Swiss-based Eggenberger had abandoned their quest to beat him on his home ground after several bruising encounters in 1988, so now the scene was set for a never-ending battle with Robb Gravett and the newly-developed Trakstar Sierra. Gravett's car was backed by TV disc jockey/presenter Mike Smith,

had started life in Australia in Dick Johnson's hands, and was equally fast, its driver equally determined.

Officially at least, Ford-UK wasn't backing either team, so their top men watched the Rouse-Gravett battle with amusement. The results, and the spectacle, were electrifying to the spectators. In 1989 Trakstar, and Gravett were still learning their trade, though the battle mainly depended on the particular merits of tyres (Dunlop with Rouse, and Yokohama with Gravett) for each event. That was the year in which Rouse, not wishing to give away his title of Mr Touring Car racer to



A great one-two finish at Brands Hatch, for the Rouse Merkur X4Tis in 1986.

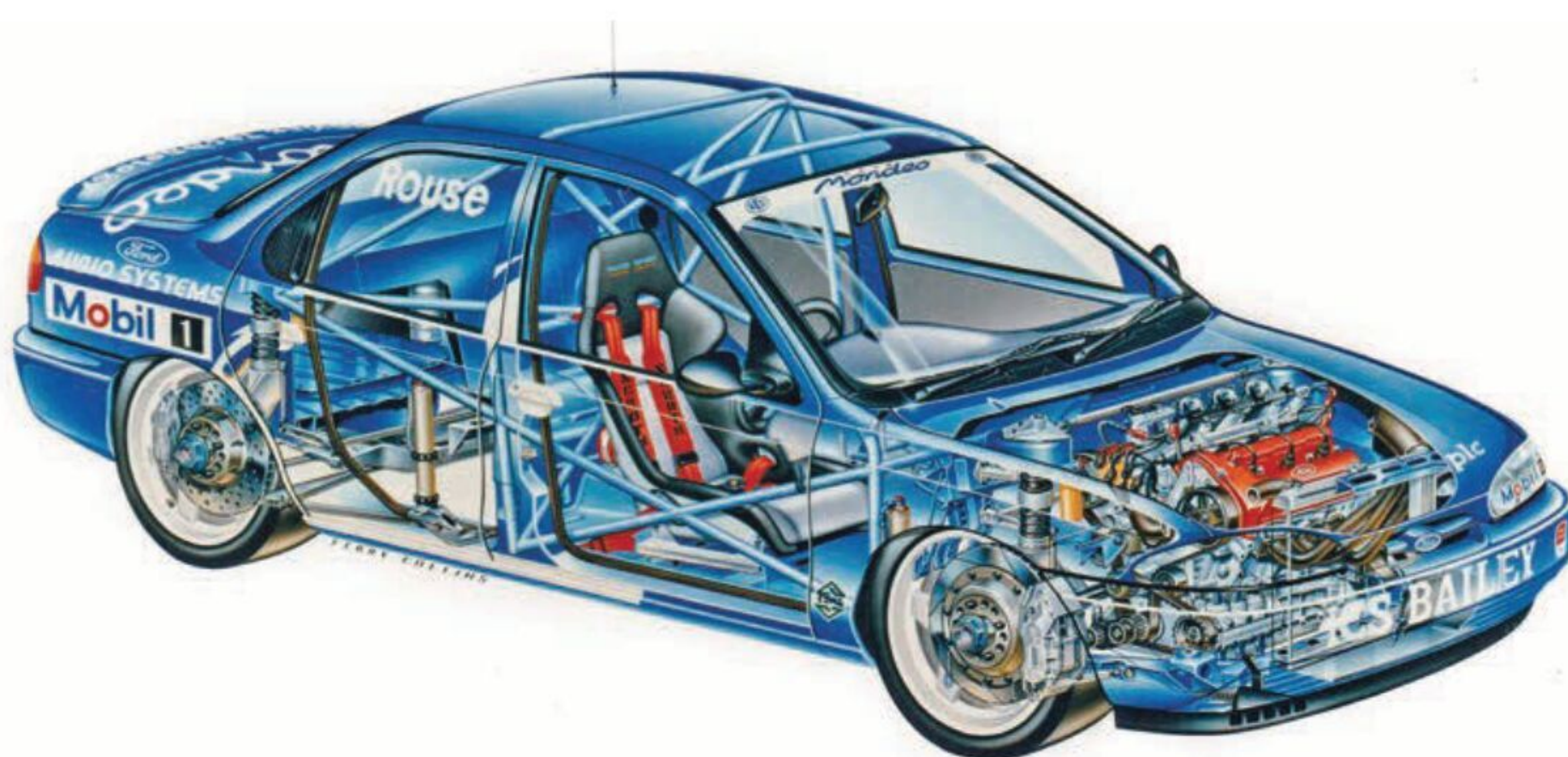




At Silverstone in the Merkur Sierra XR4Ti.



Getting ready in the BTCC Mondeo, 1993.



**“Andy not only drove the BTCC Mondeos,  
but engineered them, too”**

Gravett, won six BTCC races, and took podium placings on four other occasions. Naturally his RS500 won the class category yet again.

The Sierra/Rouse racing climax came in 1990 – the year in which the motor sporting authorities decided to change the rules to ban the Sierras in 1991. Trakstar ended up winning nine races, while Rouse won four times and finished second on five other occasions.

This was a straightforward season’s battle, with cars almost identical in performance (Rouse’s engines were self-built, those at Trakstar coming from Mountune), and in the end it was Gravett’s Yokohama tyres which made the tiny bit of difference. It was a wonderful way for the multi-UK Champion then to leave Ford for a time, for in 1991 and 1992 he went off to run the works Toyota Carinas, but returned in 1993 to prepare the works Ford Mondeos.

That though, with inputs from New Zealand, Cosworth, Mazda, and Ford-USA all in the mix, is all part of a different story.

Andy testing the first of the front-wheel-drive Mondeos, which ran the Ford-USA/Mazda 2-litre V6 engine.





HEROES: FRANCOIS DELECOUR

# Floored genius

Utterly committed to rallying, Francois Delecour shone brightly but briefly in the works Cosworths, giving Ford its first Monte Carlo win for 40 years, too.



Never has a Ford driver — not even Colin McRae — made such an immediate impact on the World Rally Championship scene. With just one special stage to go on the 1991 Monte Carlo rally — his first event for Ford — 28-year-old Francois Delecour looked set to win the event. Ten minutes later, when his Sierra Cosworth 4x4 broke its

rear suspension on the legendary Col du Turini, that dream lay in ruins. With only a third place to celebrate, it was no wonder that he was close to tears when interviewed by the press. It would be three long years before he got his revenge.

Like his contemporary teammate, Miki Biasion, Francois never quite managed to urge the Sierra

Cosworth 4x4 to victory at World Championship level, though he led several events.

Unless you actually saw his spectacular driving, his sheer commitment, and his massive enthusiasm for rallying, you might have thought he was never going to be a winner. But this was a perfect case of Murphy's Law at work.





Francois could so easily have won three or four World Championship events in Sierras — but the car invariably let him down.

There was more heartache (some said skulduggery) to let him down in the future. When victory in the 1993 Monte Carlo rally, in the Escort RS Cosworth, was snatched from his grasp in the final hours, a few

know-alls wondered if he lacked the killer instinct. Perhaps they now acknowledge that something very mysterious happened to make Didier Auriol's victorious Toyota so fast on that January night?

#### **TALENT SHOW**

At this time, Francois Delecour was probably the most exciting talent

to arrive in World Championship rallying for a decade. Just as Michael Schumacher had done in F1, Francois arrived on the scene with an enormous flourish, and within three events it was clear that he was a World Champion in the making. Except for previous Peugeot-sponsored drives in front-wheel-drive cars in French events, the



## HEROES: FRANCOIS DELECOUR

Dust and stones in the 1992 San Remo rally of 1992, where Francois finished third.



“Wanting to run an ultra-light Sierra, he persuaded Ford to delete all the instruments, because he never had time to look at them anyway”





Old dog, new tricks? Francois pulling Colin McRae's leg at a drivers' meeting in 1995.

legendary Monte of 1991 was his very first works drive for anyone.

For Ford's Peter Ashcroft, who was starting his final year at Boreham, the signing of Delecour was a real capture, even though it was initially only meant to be for only four events. For 1991, Peter had already lined up Malcolm Wilson and Alex Fiorio to drive the Sierra Cosworth 4x4s, but was looking for a Tarmac specialist to help him in Europe. Friends like Ari Vatanen told him all about this brave young Frenchman who could get 309GTis into impossible angles at seemingly impossible speeds, yet keep them on the road, so that at the end of 1990 Peter hastened to contract him for just four events.

At that point, incidentally, Francois had never actually won any rally outright, but after that fabulous Monte drive, the four-event programme immediately and prudently became eight — and within months Francois had become Boreham's de facto team leader.

As far as the mechanics at Boreham were concerned, he could do no wrong. Though by no means a fanatic, Francois seemed to be totally committed to motorsport, and never seemed to be happier than when driving. Ford's Director Of Motorsport, Colin Dobinson,

once asked him where he was going for a holiday in 1992?: 'Holiday! No, no holidays, I'm going rallying!' He was willing to do almost anything to improve his cars. For Catalunya in 1992, where he wanted to use an ultra-light Sierra, he persuaded John Wheeler to delete all the instruments because: 'I never have time to look at them anyway'.

#### GRAVEL BASH

In 1991, with Ford horsepower and four-wheel-drive to play with, he proved to be blisteringly fast on Tarmac, but when I interviewed him at the RSOC National Day in 1992 he insisted that he actually still preferred driving on gravel. One day, he said, he would prove how good he was in the loose — and in 1993 in Portugal, he did just that.

His first season with Ford was badly hampered by the works Sapphire Cosworth 4x4's unreliability. He would certainly have won in Corsica (first a fuel pump, then a diff broke), he so nearly won in Spain — and he had a lengthy interview with the traffic police on the Lombard-RAC. It was such a tempestuous year that for a time he flirted publicly with a move to Lancia, and ditched Anne-Chantal in favour of a new co-driver, Daniel Grataloup.



## HEROES: FRANCOIS DELECOUR

In 1992, by this time using stronger but not-quite-quick-enough Sierras, he led in Portugal until the front diff split, Auriol's Lancia beat him by just 86 seconds in Corsica, he crashed in the 1000 Lakes and in Spain, while he was 102 seconds from victory in the San Remo.

In 1993, though, the tide turned decisively, and Francois' antics in Escort RS Cosworths were always exciting to watch, for the crowds found his talents awesome. He led every one of the four early events, winning two of them, and being cruelly robbed of a third victory (Monte Carlo), by a Toyota which was accused of running with illegal rocket fuel on the stages of the final night. Neither as smooth nor as outwardly composed as team-mate Miki Biasion, he clearly adored the nimble new Escort RS Cosworth, and it was obvious from his attitude in the cars themselves. When driving, he liked to sit erect, and close to the wheel, and he always seemed to be fighting an aggressive battle.

### FULL MONTE

For Francois, the rest of 1993, though successful, was not as startling as those early months, though he took a second place in New Zealand, third in Australia, then won again in fine style in Spain. In January 1994, though, he then did what he, and Ford, had always wanted — to win the Monte Carlo rally. For Delecour it was (and would remain) his only Monte victory — while for Ford it was their first since Maurice Gatsonides and his Zephyr had triumphed in 1953!

After triumph, though, came disaster. In April Delecour was injured in a non-rallying car crash, while driving a friend's Ferrari F40, which was hit by another car through no fault of his. Confined to bed for weeks with broken legs, he eventually struggled back into rallying in the 1000 Lakes event in August, but could only finish fourth, and clearly had lost his edge.

Tragically, this seemed to be the end of 'Francois Delecour —

Superstar', for although he took two more second places in 1995 — Monte Carlo and in the Tour de Corse, he and the team's sponsors (RAS of Belgium) seemed to fall out of love with each other, and he was no longer a regular team member by the end of the season.

Thereafter he drifted off to drive occasionally for Peugeot, had a full Peugeot 206WRC season in 2000 (including two second places in Corsica and Italy), before coming back to the Ford-backed M-Sport operation in 2001, where he was demonstrably not as rapid in the Focus as either of his team-mates, Colin McRae or Carlos Sainz.

Looking back, as far as his Ford connections were concerned, he flared strongly between 1991 and 1995, but then rapidly slipped down rallying's pecking order. Even so, all of us who recall his famous drives in Sierra Cosworth 4x4s and Escort RS Cosworths will continue to regard him with great affection.



Francois Delecour could always get the most out of any Sierra Cosworth 4x4 — this being the man himself, in the Monte Carlo rally in 1992, when he took fourth place.





“For the crowds, Delecour’s antics in the Escort RS Cosworth were always exciting to watch”



Top: This was the first of several outright victories for Delecour in 1993 — Portugal in K748 GOO.

Above: L421 NHK was brand new for the Rally of Spain in 1993, so Francois was delighted to steer it to outright victory.



# The fixer

As a senior design engineer for Ford Motorsport, John Wheeler was behind the legendary RS1700T and RS200 projects. Here's his exclusive story.

**W**hen John Wheeler was still an active Ford staffer, he was usually too busy, or too involved in confidential projects, to talk to me about his stellar career at Ford Motorsport. Now that he has recently retired, it is typical of the man that he queried the worth of me writing a full length profile of his work.

Yet here was a man with previous at Porsche, someone who individually made sure that his concept of what an RS200 Group B car should be like was accepted, and a man who inspired the birth of the Escort RS Cosworth programme. After that he ran the Aston Martin DB7 engineering programme for years, rescued the original Focus RS project from oblivion, and was the project manager of the ultra-successful Focus RS Mk2 programme too. Not worthy of a complete profile? You must be joking.

Although John arrived at Boreham in October 1980, his innovative chassis/vehicle layout work, had begun years earlier — at Porsche. Having joined the German company in 1971, and rapidly built up a working knowledge of German, he became a member of the advanced design staff, and became thoroughly familiar with the way that Porsche was perfecting front engine/rear transmission layouts.

## PROJECT COLUMBIA

The job at Boreham followed his response to adverts in Autosport, his immediate task being to begin



work on the new Columbia project, which eventually became the Escort RS1700T. That car, as we all know, showed every sign of being a stupendously fast two-wheel-drive car (by 1983, according to authentic test times on representative stages, it had the beating of cars like the Lancia Rally 037, and made the Mk2 Escort look quite obsolete), but when Stuart Turner returned to Motorsport, the project was immediately cancelled.


The problem, of course, that in the meantime the Audi Quattro, though

with a crude four-wheel-drive layout, had arrived, and was changing the face of rallying. When Columbia was being designed:

“At the time the first Quattros were in existence, and known, but not yet rallying. We still thought there was considerable doubt as to whether four-wheel-drive was the way to go...”

But it was and, early in 1983: “We were already working on ways to make a four-wheel-drive version of the RS1700T, and we had done some tests with FF Developments, and we





Three RS1700T test cars being built at Boreham in 1981/1982.

**“The Escort RS1700T showed every sign of being a stupendously fast, two-wheel-drive rally car, and it had the beating of rivals like the Lancia 037”**

were in the process of working out how to convert the RS1700T. There was huge disappointment when the cancellation came through. The RS1700T was a tremendous car of its type, and could have had great success as a semi-professional owner's machine...”

All at once John, and his tiny team at Boreham had to cast around for other things to do and, for months, began work on producing Group A versions of the newly-launched Sierras. (At that time, though, there was no such thing as a Sierra

RS Cosworth or an XR4x4 car in existence): “At that time we built a Group A Sierra test rally car, with a turbocharged Pinto engine, and different suspension, and we already had built a BDA-engined Fiesta. We went testing in Welsh forests but soon decided that the Fiesta was not going to work.”

In the meantime, Stuart Turner, and his committee of advisers — Brian Hart and Gordon Murray were among them, and Walter Hayes was always on hand — had not consulted either Peter Ashcroft, or Wheeler,

and had invited three independent engineers — Tony Southgate, Mike Loasby and Nigel Stroud — to propose their idea of what a Group B car for World Rallying should be like.

“At the time, I was not at all happy that I had not been invited, so I started working feverishly on my own concept, which was to use a lot of RS1700T components such as the turbocharged engines. Product Planner, Mike Moreton was aware of what I was doing, and supported it: he ensured that my proposal, my schemes, got put in with the others.



## HEROES: JOHN WHEELER

I did it totally on my own, and the design was christened Z200.

"Then it came to the time to present all the schemes, which took place at Warley [Ford's European HQ in Essex]. The upshot of this was that my scheme was the one that was chosen. When they asked me how it could be delivered, I admitted that we couldn't do it all at Boreham, and I chose Tony Southgate as the other engineer I wanted to work with.

"My Z200 scheme was very specifically based on many of the Sierra pressings. I wanted a steel monocoque centre section for safety and weight-efficiency reasons. Stuart, though, wanted to move further away from the Sierra, and that was when, and why, we got into the realms of working with Tony to use his sports-racing car experience, and with an aluminium honeycomb tub."

### PLAN B

That was when the definitive RS200 programme (known only as B200 at

that stage) got under way. Approval to build just one car came in the autumn of 1983, which meant that for the next few months there was immense pressure on John, Tony and their associates. Tony's assistant Dave Amey did much drafting, while John himself did most of the long-travel suspension geometry. Most importantly, Tony had close ties with John Thompson's TC Prototypes business, a company which set about assembling the car during the winter.

John, to be frank, was under all manner of non-engineering pressures at this time, for he had to present, and re-present, his (and Tony's) thoughts to management, all the way up to the Chairman, Ford-of-Europe level. It was all good training for the same process which he had to follow with the Escort RS Cosworth project which followed.

Here, though, was a rugged solution to a complex problem, not only with a four-wheel-drive system, but a layout

which was to deliver remarkable handling and stability. John's solution, of mounting the gearbox/four-wheel-drive system up front, between the passengers' leg spaces, had much to do with this. His explanation of the RS200's planned, and delivered, cornering behaviour is enthralling.

John is full of praise for the work later put in on the RS200 by FF Developments (on the transmission) and by Aston Martin Tickford (who tackled much of the road-car detail and proving), but we must not forget that the very essence of the car, the reasoning behind its layout, and its potential, were all his:

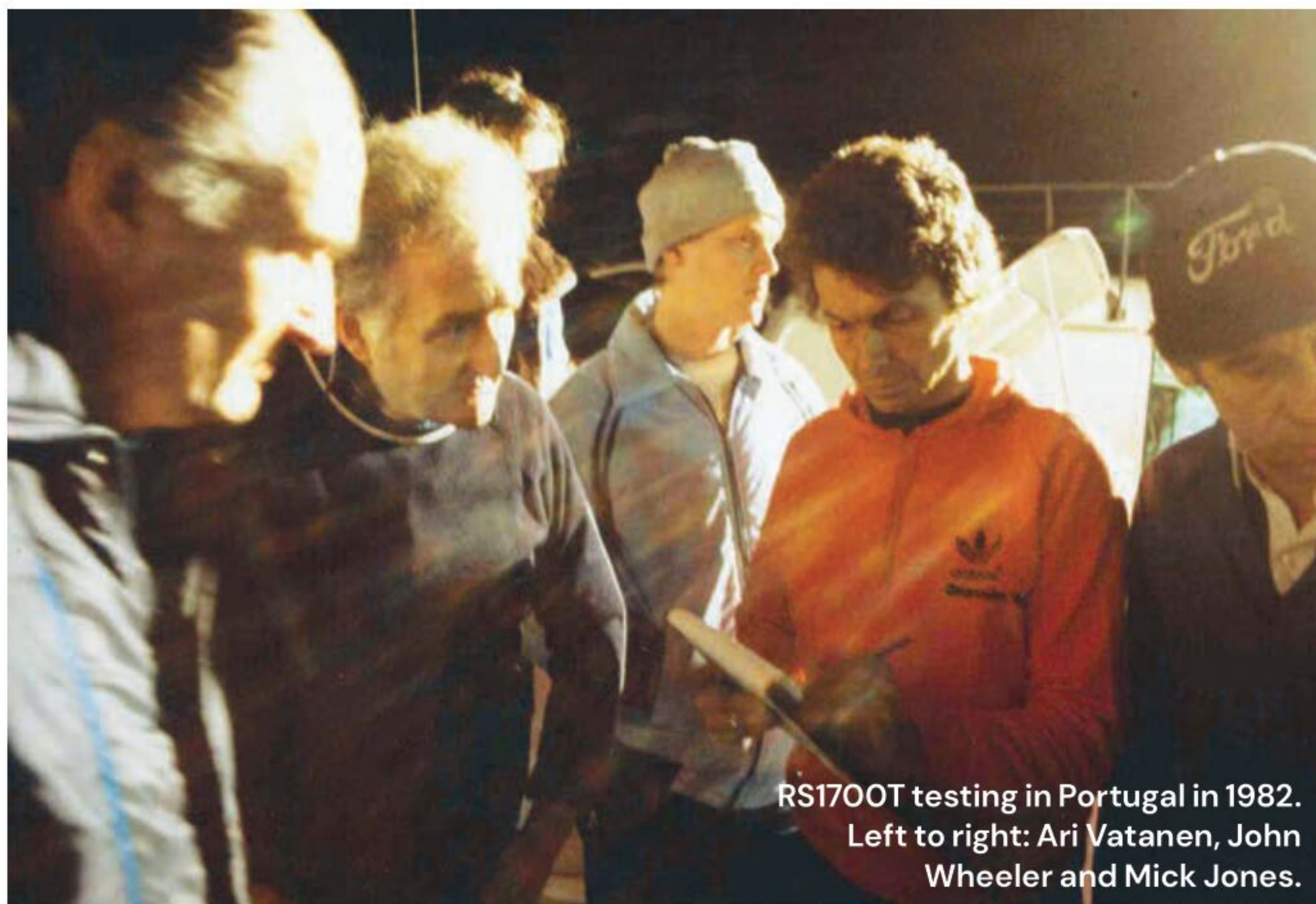
"I spent a great deal of time with FF, in particular, on the detail design of that transmission, and during 1984 and 1985 my six to seven-day week was divided between Boreham in Essex, FFD in Coventry and Tickford in Milton Keynes."

Once approval to build 200 cars came through, and once Tickford could start productionising the



Two RS200 test cars at Boreham in mid-1984.





RS1700T testing in Portugal in 1982. Left to right: Ari Vatanen, John Wheeler and Mick Jones.

prototype layouts, John and his tiny team could turn their attention to rallying in 1985/1986, to making the cars even faster and better — and to look ahead to an Evolution type, with more power and less weight.

This was where the legendary 100-100 concept was born, where the object was to gain 100 bhp (from 450 bhp to 550 bhp, which was achieved), and to slim the cars down by 100 kg:

“I was already looking ahead by one or two years, because the proposed Group S was being discussed, and I had thoughts of every way that I could match up to it.”

**“We were already working on ways to make a four-wheel-drive version of the Escort RS1700T”**

#### BANNED

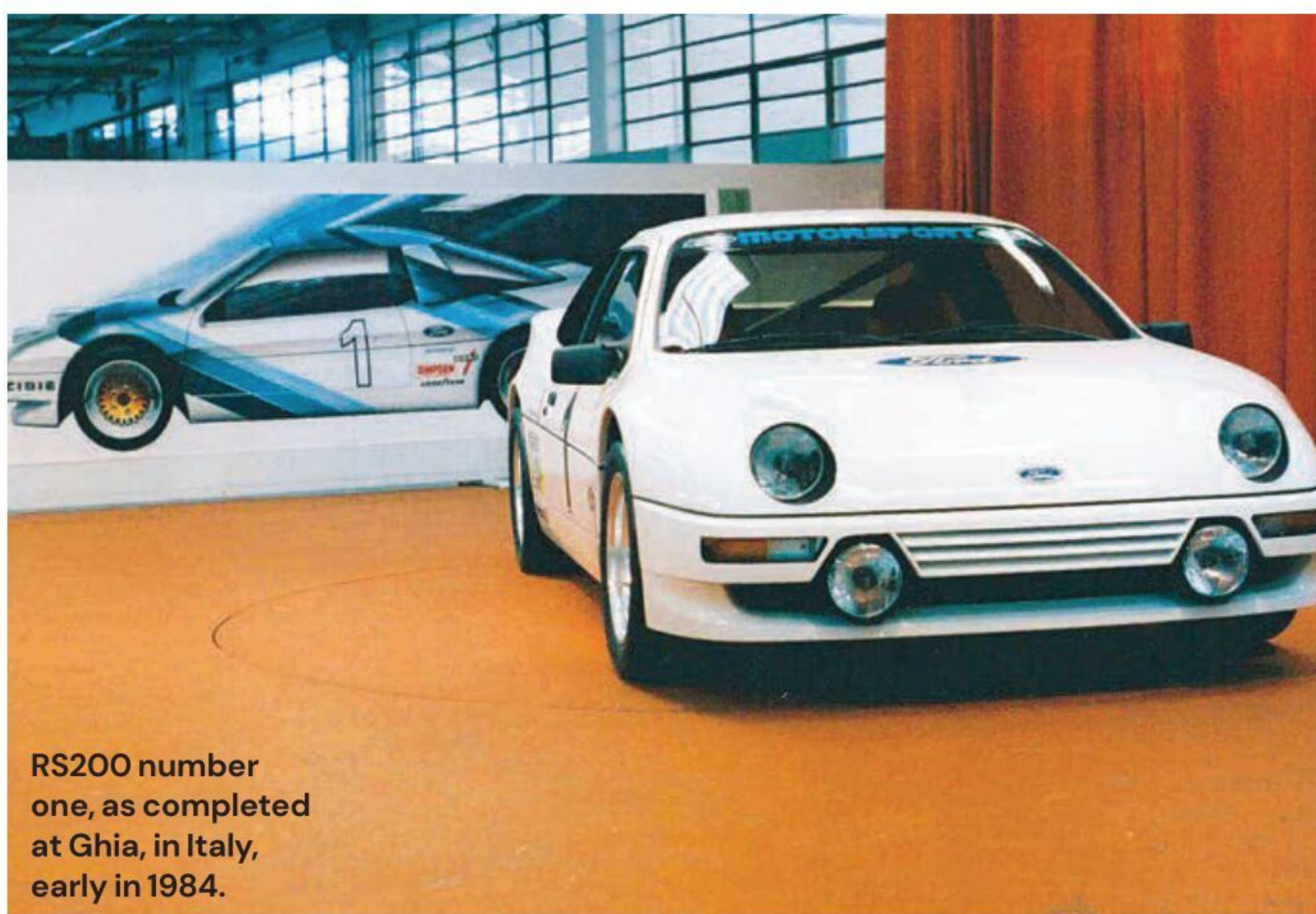
Then, during 1986, came the horrible spate of accidents which abruptly led to the FIA/FISA decision to make Group B cars ineligible for World Championship rallying in future years. All the work, and all the planning, that John and his colleagues had already put in to the RS200 was rendered pointless.

John, however, was not about to abandon his RS200 work and experience completely, which explains why a recent visit to his garage in suburban Cologne reveals a beautifully re-engineered RS200 rally car, which not only includes the use of a 400 bhp Sierra RS500 Cosworth YBD engine, but a six-speed sequential change main gearbox, surrounded by repositioned inlet and exhaust manifolding, and modified tubular front and rear subframes.

In mid-1986, however, there appeared to be no significant future for the RS200. John had to sit down at Boreham, to talk to Stuart Turner and Peter Ashcroft, and to wonder what might now be done at World level in 1987. A new chapter in his career was about to be started.



Two of the six RS200 prototypes, rally-prepared for testing, at Boreham in 1984. John Wheeler is in the centre, and workshop foreman Robin Vokins is in the check shirt.



RS200 number one, as completed at Ghia, in Italy, early in 1984.



## HEROES: CARLOS SAINZ



Escort Cosworth took Sainz to victory in Indonesia in 1996





# Spanish legend

We look back at the outstanding motorsport career of Carlos Sainz, and his time behind the wheel of Blue Oval rally weapons.

Carlos Sainz was born to be a winner. Long before he'd caught the eye of Ford Motorsport bosses, and long before his handsome visage and bronzed facial glow turned everyone's heads as we queued for cottage pie in the Boreham canteen, Sainz was already a sensation.

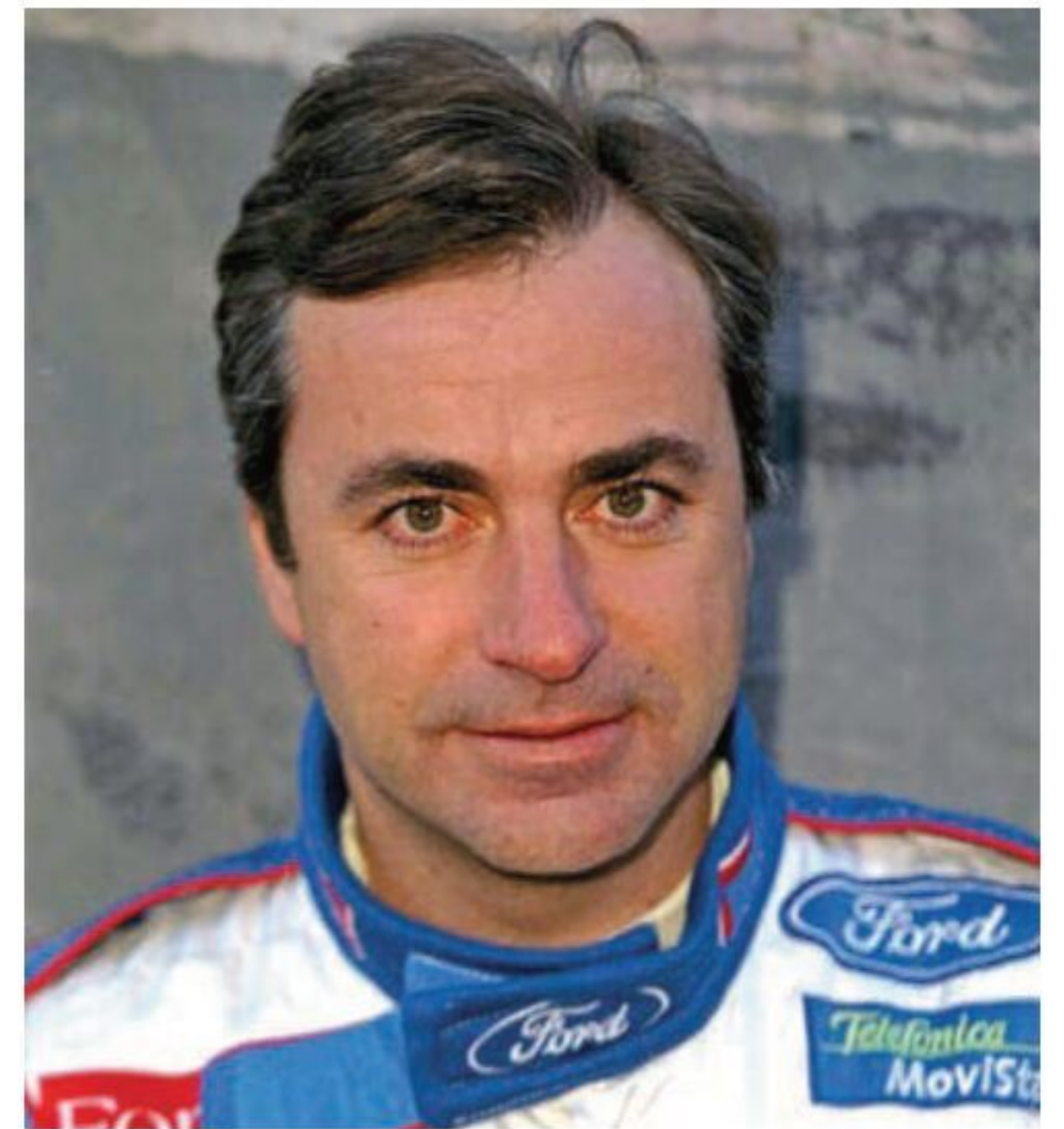
Even before he took up rallying in 1980, he had excelled in other sports, was rumoured to have had trials with top-level Spanish football clubs, and was known to have social connections with the Spanish royal family.

Later in his stellar career, it is said, the Spanish king's staff turned up for work one morning in Madrid, and wondered what the rubber markings outside the main entrance were all about: Sainz had been demonstrating what 'doing doughnuts' was all about.

Starting with a humble front-wheel-drive Renault 5 TS, he soon climbed the ladder, and really made his name in Spain in mid-engined Renault 5 GT Turbos, where he won the Spanish championship in 1986.

It was then that Ford first pounced, for in Spain in 1987 Carlos switched to driving locally-maintained Sierra RS Cosworths and RS200s. On his very first world championship rally (Portugal in that year) he set fastest time on the first special stage, which signalled his explosive arrival at the top of the sport, and he went on to win the Spanish championship (which he would once again win in 1988).

Ford immediately signed him for the world championship team, and although he only started five events in Sierras, in a series already dominated by four-wheel-drive cars,



he was always competitive – he led the San Remo event on its early tarmac stages, was usually among the top six, and endeared himself to the entire corporation.

It was typical, therefore, that when he went off a Lake District stage in the 1988 RAC Rally, wiping off the complete rear spoiler of his Sierra RS Cosworth, a lackey was sent to the nearest RS dealer (County Garage in Carlisle) to beg another one. The dealership did not have one in the stores, but there was a suitable used car for sale in the showroom, which they were cheerfully about to strip to keep the charismatic Spaniard in the event when the message came through that yet another dealer had turned up trumps in the same way.

For 1989 it was inevitable that Sainz would have to leave and go elsewhere, for Boreham did not have a four-wheel-drive car, and Carlos wanted to become world champion. It was typically thoughtful of this man that he took the trouble to call Ford Motorsport boss Stuart Turner to spell out unhappily why he thought he had to follow his



## HEROES: CARLOS SAINZ

ambitions, to beg for forgiveness, and to ask if he might be allowed back to Ford one day.

Reluctantly, therefore, Carlos drifted off to Toyota, where he won the championship in 1990 and 1992, then spent a year with Jolly Club Lancias, and two more frustrating seasons with Prodrive's Subaru.

To most people's surprise, Sainz then fulfilled his promise, by returning to Ford as team leader in 1996 and 1997, bringing generous Repsol (a Spanish-owned oil company) sponsorship with him.

According to John Taylor, who was running the world championship team at that time, he remembers that he was able to sign Sainz in Spain at the end of 1995, and that within two days Carlos had arrived in Sweden, where Boreham's pre-season testing was already taking place. That is how professional he was, and remains to this day.

Originally, in 1996, his cars were Ford's ultimate Escort RS Cosworths,

Carlos in his own car in Spain in 1987.



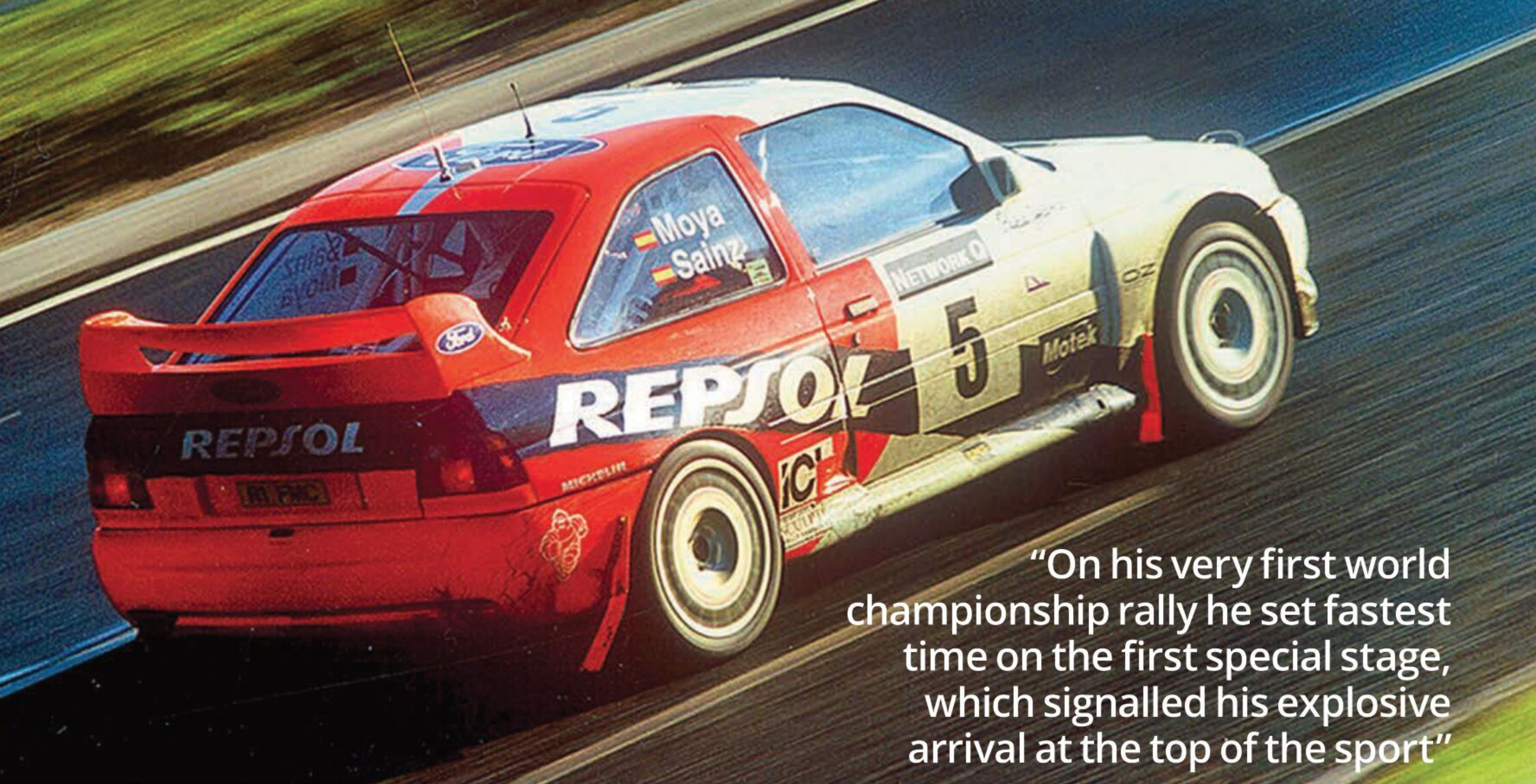
and for 1997 they were replaced by their hastily developed world rally successor – the Escort WRC, a substantial improvement on the obsolete model. Throughout those seasons, Sainz was always among the leaders, as the results table confirms. Three outright victories

and ten other podium placings meant he was still seen as the best – but it was typical of Carlos that he wanted to be even more dominant, and he was always pressing for improvements.

Those who got to know Carlos and his long-time co-driving partner







“On his very first world championship rally he set fastest time on the first special stage, which signalled his explosive arrival at the top of the sport”

Luis Moya were often surprised by the difference in their characters. Carlos – urbane, elegant and letting his driving tell the story – differed significantly from Luis, who seemed to talk all the time (go back and watch snatches of in-car video to get confirmation ....) and did enough

arm-waving and joking about for both of them. Yet the two were amazingly compatible in a rally car – they stayed together for well over a decade, and shared all of the famous victories that made Carlos Sainz one of the most famous rally drivers the world has ever known.

Now we come to one of the most gratifying occurrences of Ford’s rally career, for when Carlos Sainz returned to Ford – this would make it his third sojourn with the Blue Oval – it was to join Malcolm Wilson’s M-Sport operation for a three-year contract starting in 2000. He would



Sainz scooped third in Argentina in 2001.



## HEROES: CARLOS SAINZ

drive the new-technology Focus WRC, which was already being talked about when he left Boreham at the end of 1997, and was already proving to be an even better machine than he had ever thought Ford could develop.

There was, of course, an underlying worry about all this, for Carlos would be joining a team where he would definitely be joint leader alongside Colin McRae, but with whom he had a tempestuous relationship at Subaru in the 1990s.

Malcolm Wilson had already seen it coming, was a strong leader who knew how to handle prima donnas, and made it clear to both parties that there would be no favouritism at M-Sport. For the next three seasons, with ever-improving cars emblazoned not only with Martini sponsorship, but with major mentions of Movistar (a Spanish TV company that was Carlos's main supporter) the Sainz/McRae duo were always trend-setters – on tarmac or in the loose, in heat or in



Malcolm Wilson and Carlos – always good friends.

snow, and in countries as far apart as Finland, Australia, and Kenya.

The difference between the two – and there were tiny, but noticeable differences – was that the volatile McRae might have been explosively fast whereas Sainz always appeared

to be in total control of everything he did. On the other hand, McRae had more than his fair share of accidents (once or twice bringing him close to personal injury) whereas Sainz rarely crashed, and only occasionally even left the track.



Carlos was always fast on tarmac – or in the dust.





Carlos finished in third place on the 2002 Swedish Rally.



Taking part in the 2002 Telstra Rally Australia, Perth.



## HEROES: CARLOS SAINZ



Sixth place for Carlos in Corsica, 2002

**“The new-technology Focus WRC was already being talked about when he left Boreham, and was already proving to be an even better machine than he had ever thought Ford could develop”**

M-Sport, like Subaru, and Boreham before them, discovered the hard economic factual differences between the two – but came to terms with this situation for the simple reason was that both the stellar drivers were always likely to win an event for the team, and sometimes ended up scrapping among themselves. Look at the stats printed below, and see that in the three seasons they were together at M-Sport, Carlos won three times and Colin seven times, while Carlos took 15 podium placings to Colin’s eight. No team manager could have been anything other than totally happy with that.

For the media, certainly, they could expect to get more dramatic on-stage action from McRae, and perhaps more pungent quotes at

service points, but from Carlos they would expect him to behave in a gentlemanly way.

When Carlos left M-Sport, and Ford, at the end of 2002, it was not because the company was faced with severe financial constraints. McRae’s financial demands were so high that he was allowed to leave without too much heart-searching, but when Carlos followed shortly afterwards (he moved to Citroën) it was a sad occasion for the Blue Oval.

Although Carlos never drove for Ford again, it was not the end of his career, so although he retired from world rallying at the end of an unsuccessful two years with Citroën, he then turned to arduous long-distance ‘raid’ rallies (of the Paris-Dakar variety), and remaining so competitive that at the time of

writing he had already won the prestigious event three times outright – and shows no signs of giving in.

Not only that – and to many people this is an equally important part of his life – he has encouraged his super-talented son Carlos Jr to rise to the dizzy heights of Formula One racing, where he is now one of the young guns of the sport.

During his amazing rally career, Carlos Sainz was twice world champion, four times runner-up to other stars, won no fewer than 26 world events, and recorded an astonishing 97 other podium positions. In most peoples’ opinions, no other driver – not even the great Ari Vatanen, nor either of the ubiquitous flying Frenchmen – can match that.

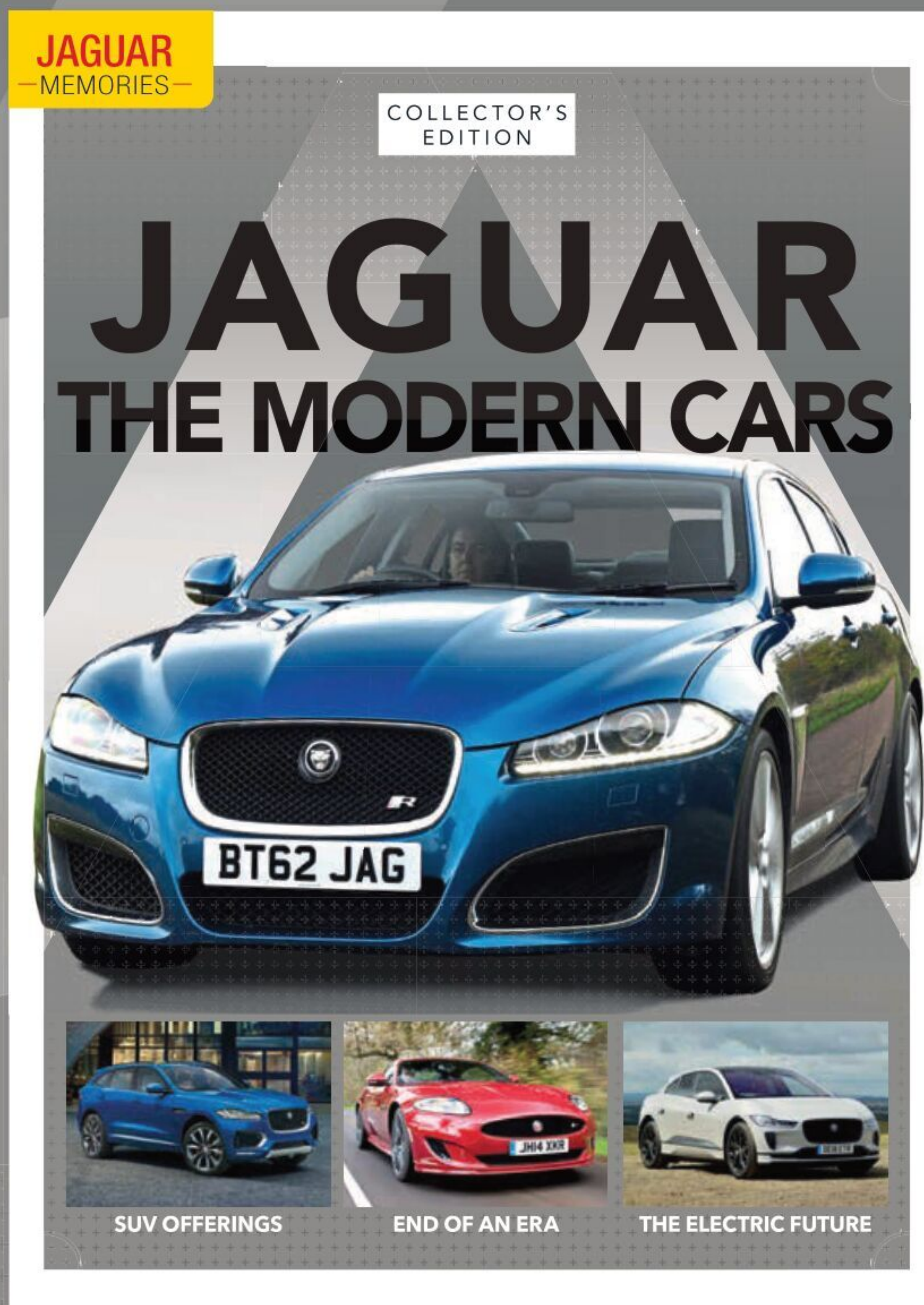


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## HEROES: COLIN MCRAE



“With McRae’s *‘if in doubt, flat out’* attitude, there’s no wonder he’s regarded as one of the most-loved Ford motorsport icons of all time”





# Flying Scotsman

One of the most iconic characters in motorsport, Colin McRae will forever be remembered as a true Ford hero. Here's why...

It's been 21 years since Colin McRae won his first rally event in a Focus WRC, the Safari of 1999. It may have been of shattering importance to Ford, and to M-Sport, which had built the car, but for Colin it was just another step along the way – he had, after all, won his first world championship round six years earlier, and had been world rally champion in 1995.

As a personality, an icon, and, above all as a fiercely competitive driver, we'll never forget him. Colin, who tragically died in a helicopter crash near his home in Scotland in 2007 (along with his son Johnny and two family friends) had no time to do anything slowly. Everything in his life seemed to be enjoyed at top speed, and his career certainly reflected that. Maybe his top-line rally career was already over by the year in which he was taken from us, but as far as he was concerned there was still much more motorsport to be enjoyed.

Before he took up rallying, Colin had indulged in motorcycle trials and scrambles, but it was after watching his famous father, Jimmy McRae, win so well, so often and so stylishly in a rally car that he took up the sport. He never let his rallying life be dull, and his sport was never tackled cautiously.

Along the way, he notched up an impressive total of bills to repair crashed cars and seemed not to care how much this was sometimes costing his employers. It was a perhaps slightly arrogant attitude, which eventually weighed against him.

The first time I saw Colin McRae on a British rally in the 1980s, he was picking tree branches out of the



bodywork of his battered Vauxhall Nova. The second time, he was doing the same to a Sierra RS Cosworth, and the third... Well, why do you think that his long-standing nickname was McCrash? His one-time team boss David Sutton described Ari Vatanen's progress as 'crash, win, break the car, crash, win...' and Colin was like that in every way. And just like the flying Finn, Colin matured and became a hero to millions of rally fans all over the world.

Colin was the eldest son of five-times British Rally Championship winner Jimmy McRae, who along with Russell Brookes, had dominated British rallying events during the 1980s. It was when Jimmy was at his peak, driving works-blessed Ford Sierra RS Cosworths, that in 1986 Colin (then only aged 18) started out in the Scottish Rally Championship in a Talbot Sunbeam, soon turning to a Vauxhall Nova (with financial help from Dealer Team Vauxhall).

Ford, which had Jimmy McRae on a long-term contract, then decided to encourage Colin too. The Blue Oval provided him with a Group N



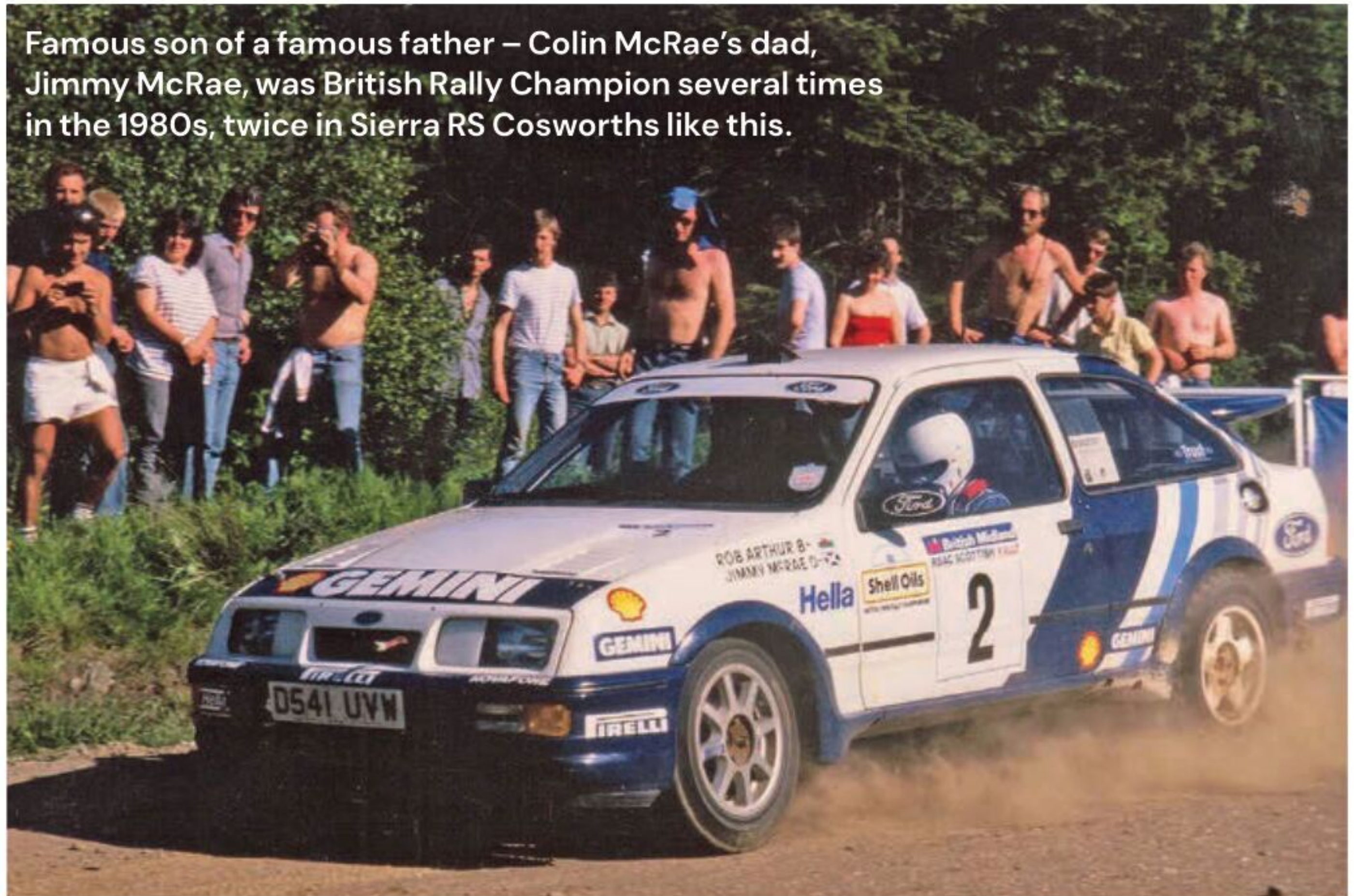
## HEROES: COLIN MCRAE

Sierra RS Cosworth for the British Rally Championship (where he often crashed) but at this early stage his most astonishing performance was to take fifth overall in New Zealand in D933 UOO, an elderly ex-works Group A Sierra RS Cosworth RWD (on an event where four-wheel-drive cars were already considered essential).

Ford, still indulging him in spite of his frequent costly crashes, then gave Colin full backing in 1990, where he started the year in a rear-drive Group A Sapphire Cosworth, and ended it in one of the first Cosworth 4x4s. Although he took second place overall in the British Rally Championship of that year (a seven-event series in which he had one victory, two seconds and two third places), his first Ford works contract came to an end immediately after he had badly damaged yet another works Sapphire Cosworth 4x4 in the RAC rally.

Despite taking sixth place at the end of that event, his car was really a rolling write-off following a typical McCrash excursion and Boreham seemed relaxed when hearing that he had decided to join to Subaru (and Prodrive), where he would stay until 1998.

Famous son of a famous father – Colin McRae's dad, Jimmy McRae, was British Rally Champion several times in the 1980s, twice in Sierra RS Cosworths like this.



To be honest, it was at Subaru that Colin firmly cemented his relationship with the British rallying public. Not only did he win the British Championship twice in the four-wheel-drive Legacy, he began winning at world level, using steadily-improving Imprezas.

Not that his demeanour, nor his treatment of his cars, improved in that period, for although he became world rally champion in 1995 and finished second in the championship

in 1996 and 1997, he was often at odds with his team management, with his teammates, and even in the car itself; he also dumped co-driver Derek Ringer in favour of Nicky Grist in 1997.

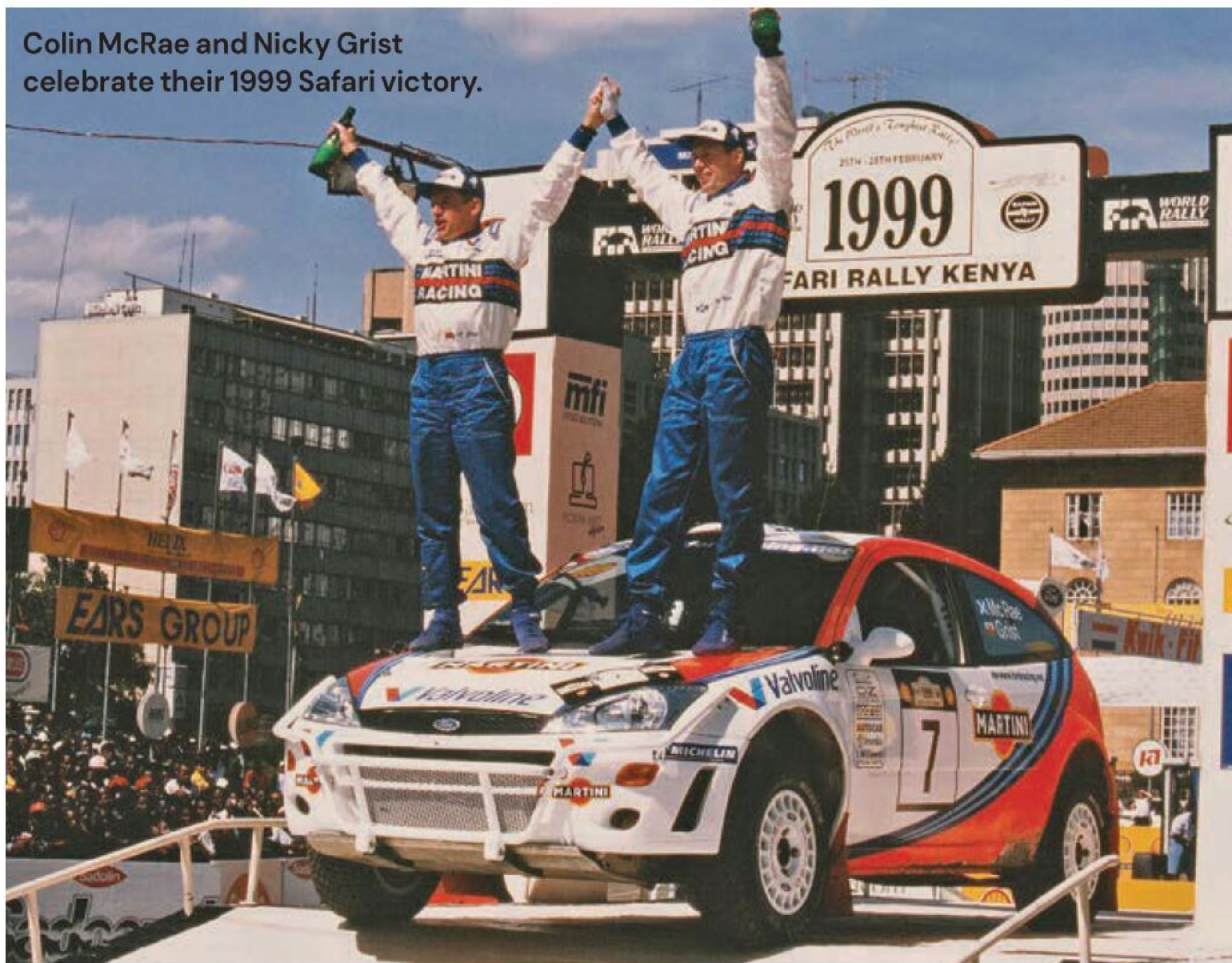
By that time he had become something of a media hero, as his Colin McRae computer game sold in its millions, making him richer than any previous British driver. His demands on the team and, coincidentally, his financial demands on Prodrive, eventually led to them releasing him at the end of 1998.

By then, though, he had already concluded a mega-contract with M-Sport and Ford for 1999; he was made team leader at a then-colossal fee of reputedly £3 million-a-year. You may be sure that Martini, which was the headline sponsor of the newly-developed Focus WRC cars, had to spend much of the budget on McRae.

No matter, the financial outlay was soon seen to be worth it; grappling with the all-new Focus WRC, he startled everyone by winning the 1999 Safari and Portugal events in his first few months. They were only the third and fourth rallies ever tackled by that complex four-wheel-drive car.

Nevertheless, Colin always seemed to be very hard on his cars: he expected them to put up with

Colin McRae and Nicky Grist celebrate their 1999 Safari victory.





This was Ford's glossy publicity shot of a new team for 1999 – Colin McRae and Nicky Grist, behind one of the Focus WRCs that was to make them mutually famous.



Colin McRae was supremely fast – and brave – on any rallying surfaces.





## HEROES: COLIN MCRAE

his methods, and expected the team to put up with his sometimes sullen temperament. When things were going well, he could reputedly be the best of hosts and the soul of any party. But when the gloom descended (which it sometimes did) he was said to be better avoided.

Malcolm Wilson's M-Sport organisation, which loved him because of his unstoppable ambition to win and ability to keep a battered car going, rose above McRae's attitude, as the car kept on improving. Colin was always on the pace unless the Focus WRC let him down. Sadly it did that more often than he or M-Sport would have liked in 1999, with 11 retirements in that first year; three were due to crashes, but whenever and wherever he appeared in the Focus, Colin McRae set standards and, usually, fastest times.

His second season with the M-Sport Focus (in 2000) was so typical of his flamboyant career at Ford. Having started all 14 world championship rounds, Colin won



Richard Burns and Colin McRae – rivals but still friends.

twice (Spain and Greece), and took second on three occasions. But his cars suffered four engine failures and had two big accidents. He was apparently so unhappy about this that he threatened to leave at the end of the year.

Things got much better in 2001 when McRae won three world events,

all three on the run: Argentina, Cyprus and Greece. And amazingly, there was only one accident – in front of his adoring fans in the Network Q Rally at the end of the season.

Even so, Colin always seemed to give everything to his sport and his employers. In fact, he came close to death after a high-speed crash



Colin McRae was famous the world over, and the fans loved him – as this shot confirms.

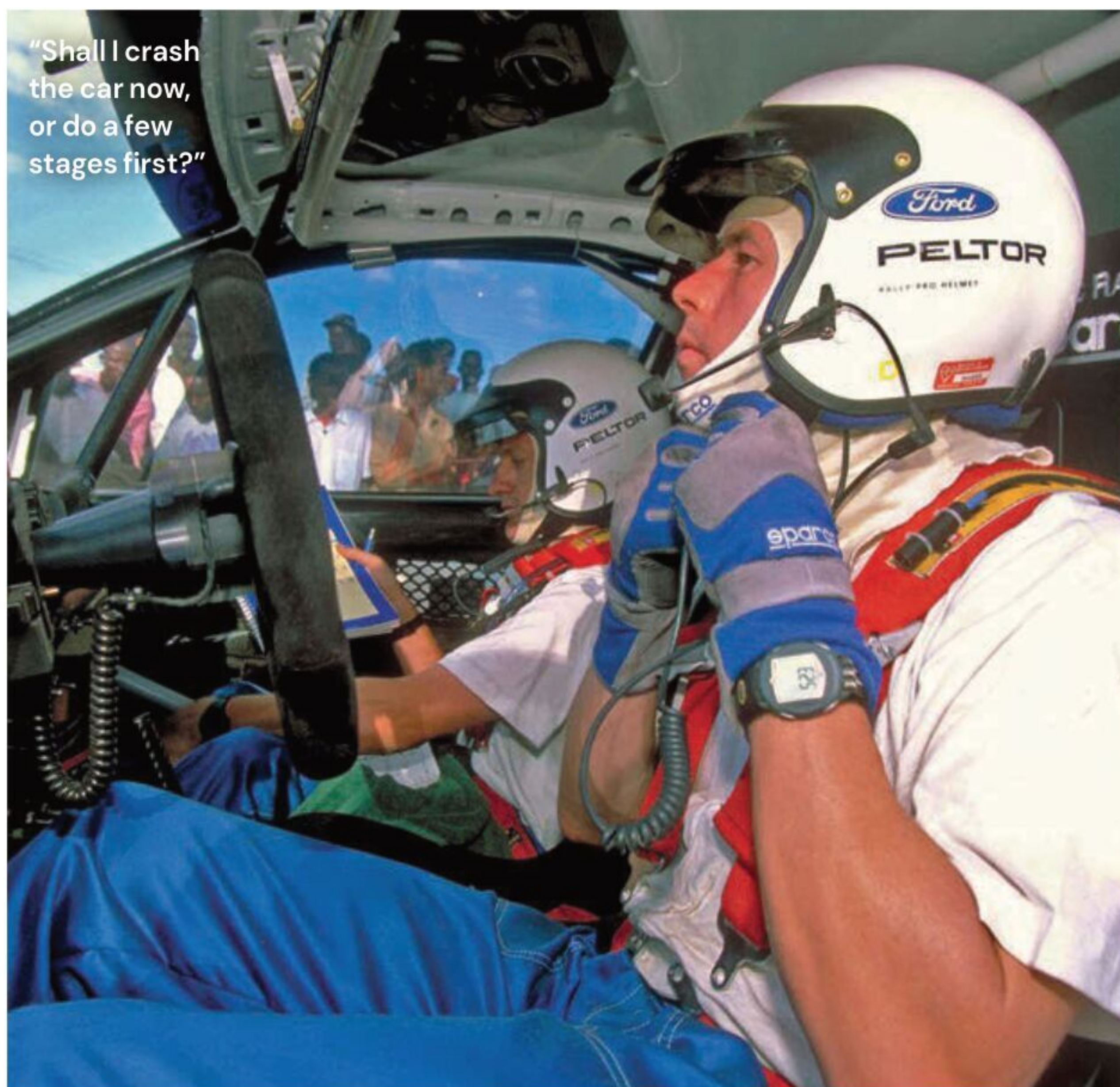




A famous victory – Colin McRae won the 1999 East African Safari in only the Focus WRC's third event



"Shall I crash the car now, or do a few stages first?"





## HEROES: COLIN MCRAE



**“He had become a media hero, as his computer game sold in its millions, making him richer than any previous British driver”**

in Corsica in 2002, which left the car upside down in the trees and below the level of the road, with him trapped inside and fuel dripping onto his overalls. It was a miracle that co-driver Nicky Grist was able to get out of the wreck and summon help.

McRae was always the darling of the national and motorsport press (like Nigel Mansell, they didn't necessarily like him as a man, but he certainly provided them with many good headlines). It was especially a great thing for his personal publicity, especially as the media encouraged the myth of his rivalry with Richard Burns (in fact, the two were friends and thought the idea of a feud was laughable). With a total of 25 world victories and many other podium placings, it's easy to see why.

Bargaining on his worth to the sport, Colin soon became rallying's richest driver, and because more than ten million copies of the PlayStation Colin McRae Rally video games were sold, he wisely became a tax exile in Monaco for some years.

Nevertheless, it was his financial demands (he reputedly demanded £5 million for the following year) that eventually forced McRae out of Ford at the end of 2002, and he was never happy, nor successful, with Citroen the following year.

When he lost his Citroen contract after only one season, there were no other substantial rally offers, and because of his known character he found it impossible to gain any further works drives.

Apart from dabbling with the design

of a new clubman's rally car – the McRae R4 – which he personally demonstrated at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in 2006, a one-off drive in the Le Mans 24-hour race, and the commissioning of an ultimate Mk2 Escort 'just for fun', his motorsport career was effectively over.

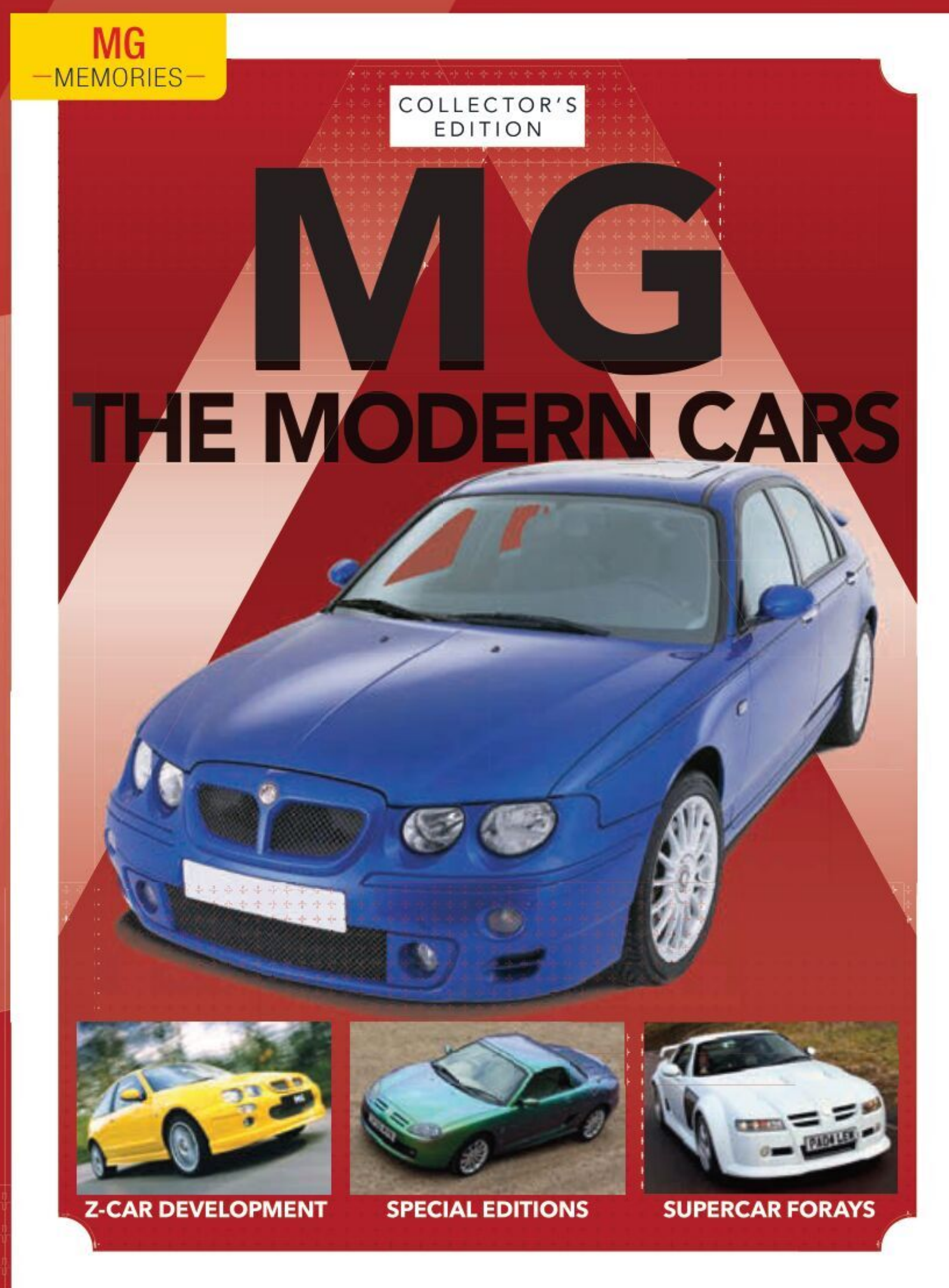
But his legacy will live on forever. Rally fans aren't as pragmatic as team bosses; they don't care about coming second in a pristine car ready to do battle again next week. No, they want to see a do-or-die attitude, going all-out for glory and to heck with the consequences. And with Colin McRae's 'if in doubt, flat out' attitude, that's exactly what they got. No wonder he's regarded as one of the most-loved Ford motorsport icons of all time.



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# Malcolm Wilson

Jamie Arkle recalls an exclusive interview he had with M-Sport's head honcho and all-round rally hero, Malcolm Wilson, to ask about his experience both as a team boss and as a driver of rally-spec fast Fords...

**M**alcolm Wilson should need no introduction to those of you with a long standing interest in fast Fords of all shapes and sizes; the head honcho of M-Sport has been associated with the mighty Blue Oval's finest performance offerings for decades now. Admired and respected both within the motorsport community and further afield, Wilson and M-Sport have established an enviable reputation for punching above their weight, and Dovenby Hall's trophy room is very much proof of this! We caught up with him to talk rallying history, Group B legends and the birth of M-Sport's latest and most extreme creation, the 2017 Fiesta WRC....

**Ford Memories: Fords have been a fixture of your life for so long now, was this a conscious decision at the start of your career, or was it simply a by-product of the Escort being such a great rally car?**

**Malcolm Wilson** It was more the fact that Escorts were readily available and easy to come by. My parent's background was in salvage and there was never a shortage of Fords to run around their breakers yard, they were the only cars that could take the abuse! There was also a constant stream of local guys coming into buy Cortina crossflows for their Anglia rally cars, so Fords were always a fixture...I was driving before I was 12 and building a crossflow Mk1 Escort before I was eligible for a competition license!

**FM You were Ford's official test driver during a very interesting**



Malcolm was instrumental in the development of the RS1700T

**time for Ford and world rallying in general, the early 1980s. Can you tell us a little more about the test process that led to the RS1700T?**

**MW** The RS1700T was a great car and I'm sure it could've beaten the four-wheel drive guys on tarmac given half a chance, as it was certainly a big step up in terms of performance. I remember us testing back-to-back over the same stage with Hannu Mikkola's 1979 RAC Escort, and the RS1700T was easily several seconds a mile quicker over a stage. Then the Quattro broke cover and everything changed. I recall Stuart Turner coming in to tell us that the project was cancelled and that we had to shift focus to a four-wheel drive car, but not before I got a chance to drive the Escort in South Africa.

**FM The RS200 is one of those 'hero cars' to the vast majority of our readers, and this probably has as much to do with its unfulfilled**

**potential as much as its spec. Do you have similarly warm feelings towards the RS200, or do you view it as just another old rally project?**

**MW** A bit of both, though I can certainly appreciate a certain amount of sadness around the project – it really could've been a world beater, especially on gravel. Kalle (Grundel) and Stig (Blomqvist) were leading the Acropolis in 1986 before they went off the road, so the potential was certainly there. It would've been even better had we had a chance to shed some more weight. I did a large portion of the testing that led to the RS200 so I got to know the car very well, I even competed on the Lindisfarne Rally using it.

**FM How hard was it to manage the growth of M-Sport in the mid '90s while still competing at the highest levels of the sport?**

**MW** At the time I didn't really view it as tough in the slightest – I was







## HEROES: MALCOLM WILSON

Malcolm completed a lot of the testing that led to the birth of the RS200, and even won the Lindisfarne Rally in an RS200 in 1985!







young, had an appetite for it and was convinced I could drive anything quickly, run my own business and expand it, all at the same time. It's only when I look back now that I appreciate just how much we had going on within the space of a few short years.

**FM Tell us more about the early days of M-Sport, the point when it evolved from being a rally car preparation outfit that enabled you personally to compete, to something for more sophisticated and involved?**

**MW** It was in the early to mid '90s really. The company was called Malcolm Wilson Motorsport for most of that time and we were successful, winning 11 national championships with cars like the Sierra and Escort Cosworth, including my own British title in 1994.

**FM M-Sport took over the reins of the works Ford operation in time for the 1997 season, was the move as tough as you might expect? It must have coincided with the need to homologate the Escort Cosworth into the WRC?**

**MW** The various championships we'd managed to win certainly acted as a springboard and gave Ford confidence that we could do a good job of running the works rally cars, but the step up was a big one, no doubt about it. We took over the running of the works rally team in the winter of 1996/1997, so we went from being a team of 18 in November to a team of over 100 come the Monte Carlo in January.

Most of the homologation work on the Escort WRC was handled by Ford themselves, certainly when it came to actually dealing with the FIA and getting the Cosworth into the new WRC rules. We had a great debut rally with the new car though, 2nd overall with Carlos (Sainz) and Luis (Moya), just over a second down on Piero (Liatti) in

the Impreza. We then went on to win another two events that season which was a good way to start our works association with Ford.

**FM A question for my own personal benefit; I remember you saying that you felt that McRae could have been WRC champion in the Escort in 1998, did you try to lure him from Subaru a year earlier?**

**MW** I did say that, and still believe he could have. And yes, I did make a move to sign him in 1998 as it would have been great to have him on board to help develop the Focus, but his Subaru contract was water-tight.

**FM Was the launch of the Mk1 Focus WRC as tough an undertaking as the motorsport press reported at the time?**

**MW** Yes, we were a much smaller team back then and it was the most technologically complex project we'd undertaken to date. This was before we'd completed the renovation of Dovenby Hall and space was at a premium, so much so that I ended up renting a number of units and workshops down at Millbrook Proving Ground to complete the project. In real terms, bearing in mind our size at the time, it was probably the most challenging undertaking of them all.

**FM What prompted the move to Dovenby Hall in 2000?**

**MW** The need for more space! We'd already outgrown the old Malcolm Wilson Motorsport premises in Cockermouth before the Focus deal was signed, but the launch of the new car meant we needed to expand to continue to be competitive. We moved in and had the workshop up and running by April 2000.

**FM What was it like campaigning the Focus WRC in its debut season in 1999? There seemed to be a cruel mix of wins and mechanical-related retirements.**



## HEROES: MALCOLM WILSON

**MW** It was certainly a tough season, a bit of a mixed bag. I couldn't believe it when we won in Kenya on only the car's third rally, as it was the toughest and most gruelling event on the calendar, a real car breaker. Colin (McRae) followed that up with another win on the equally punishing Rally Portugal. It really was remarkable, and I remember Carlos Sainz turning to Ove Andersson (Toyota Team Europe's Manager at the time) and asking him 'when is this bloody Focus going to break?'

Of course things did get tougher later in the year and we had a lot of retirements due to mechanical issues, but Colin was exceptional throughout. People expected him to be tough on the car but he really wasn't, he had a lot of mechanical sympathy and it showed on rough events like the Safari.

**FM** It seems that M-Sport has had massive success building and selling the R5 Fiesta, has this played a significant role in the company's evolution since Ford departed the WRC 5 years ago?

**MW** Certainly, there would have been no way we could've continued to compete at the very top of the sport for so long, not without the R5 project, the most successful single car we've yet built. We've sold just over 220 individual Fiesta R5s now so business is booming, plus we've got a more powerful evolution engine slated for launch in May.

**FM** Was building the new 2017 Fiesta as technologically demanding a task as it appeared? More so than previous cars under the old regulations?

**MW** Not as tough as you might imagine, as the FIA did a great job with the new regulations and gave us enough freedom to work within them. The new rules have encouraged everyone to up the ante from last year's Fiesta, a model which was in its final evolution and

one originally based on an S2000 car, a formula that required it to be built to a price. The 2017 car is a clean sheet design in all respects and that's why we've invested so many of our resources into it.

**FM** Which aspect of the 2017 rules have had the biggest impact on the manner in which the new cars drive: aero, the extra power, the active centre diFM or the weight reduction?

**MW** Probably the aero. Getting to grips with it has been a challenge and it's obviously had a big impact on performance, but it's also put the WRC back in front in terms of appearance. The cars look aggressive, they look sexy and sound great. That's important from a fan perspective. They're also brilliant fun to drive. I carried out some test mileage in the Fiesta, and beforehand I will admit to having been a tad skeptical about the hike in power due to the increase in turbo restrictor size, but the car can more than handle it.

**FM** How did you feel upon learning that you'd managed to sign Sebastien Ogier for this season, and what were his first impressions having driven the new Fiesta?

**MW** Delighted! I actually received confirmation he'd be driving for us at 4:09pm on Friday and then told the staFM at 5pm! He was certainly impressed with the car after the first test but you have to remember that we'd not finished negotiating his contract at that point, so he couldn't exactly push it to the very limit.

**FM** How do you feel about the new regulations and the impact that they'll have on the future of the WRC moving forward?

**MW** I think the results speak for themselves in this respect. All four manufacturers are closer together than they have been in years which is great news for fans and the







“We can definitely go into each and every rally knowing that we’re in with a chance of victory”



## HEROES: MALCOLM WILSON



With the best driver line-up in years, it's no surprise M-Sport are winning rallies since 2017!

**“The most gifted driver I’ve worked with was Colin (McRae), hands down, without a doubt”**

WRC in general. The championship is more open and anyone has a realistic chance of winning, which is exciting for all concerned.

**FM How satisfied have you been with the Fiesta’s performance so far, and are there any WRC rounds that you’re particularly looking forward to seeing it tackle?**

**MW** There was a lot to consider and a fair bit of pressure because our last five cars have won on their debut, right out of the box. The fact that Sebastien (Ogier) and Julian (Ingrassia) were able to maintain that record at the Monte is hugely rewarding and sets the whole team up for the challenge ahead.

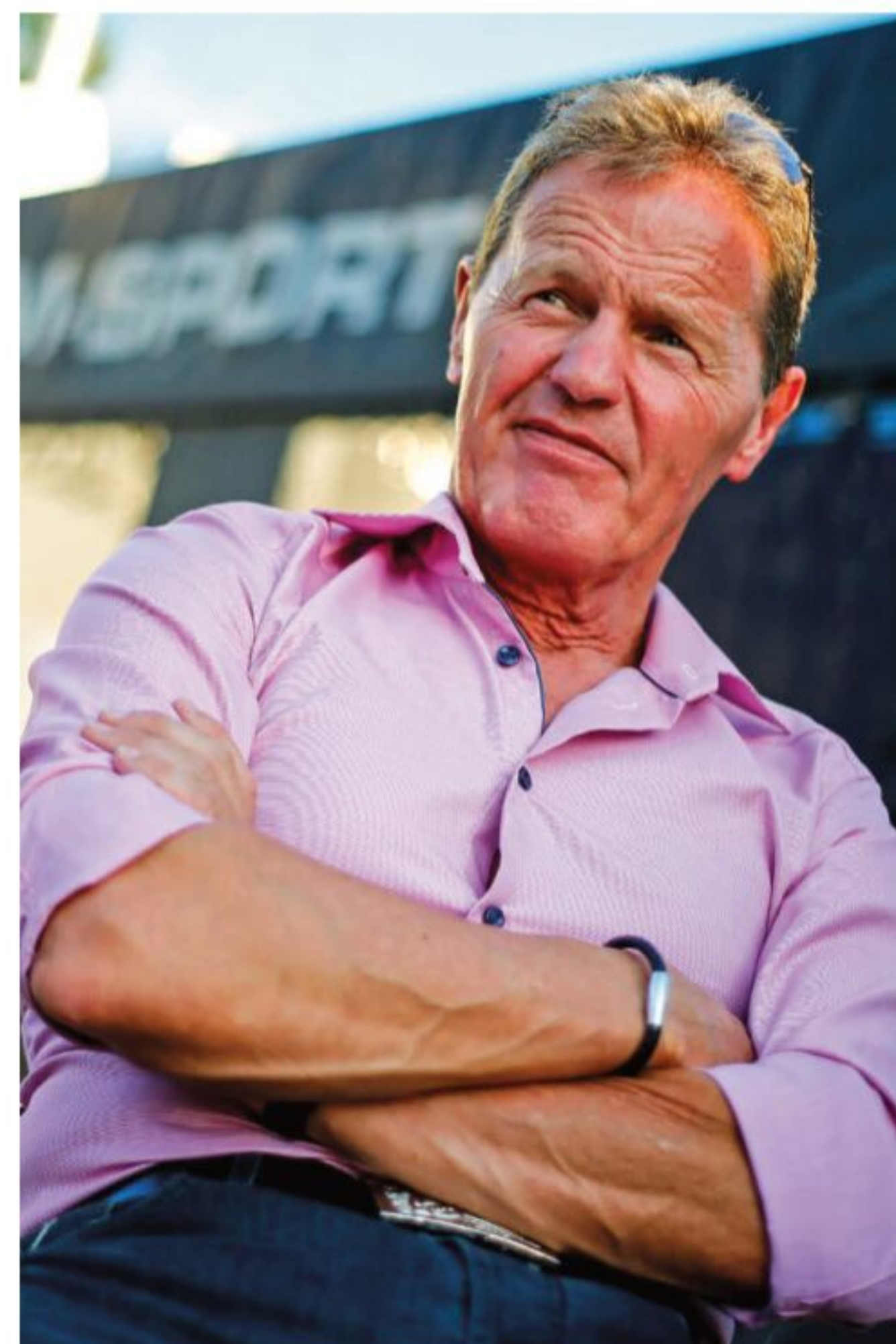
In terms of individual rounds, I’m keen to see it tackle a dry tarmac event like Corsica where I think the

aero will really come into its own. The fast rallies like Finland and Poland, the fastest on the calendar, will also be great, but then that’s the beauty of the WRC – each event is different and offers up a unique challenge to the teams and drivers.

**FM You’ve worked with most of the finest WRC drivers of the last 25 years, in your opinion who was the most technically minded, the one able to give your engineers the most valuable feedback post-test? How about the most naturally gifted?**

**MW** The most gifted was Colin (McRae), hands down, without a doubt. In terms of the most technically minded...I’d probably have to say Colin again, he gave excellent feedback. The most

professional and demanding? That would be Carlos (Sainz).





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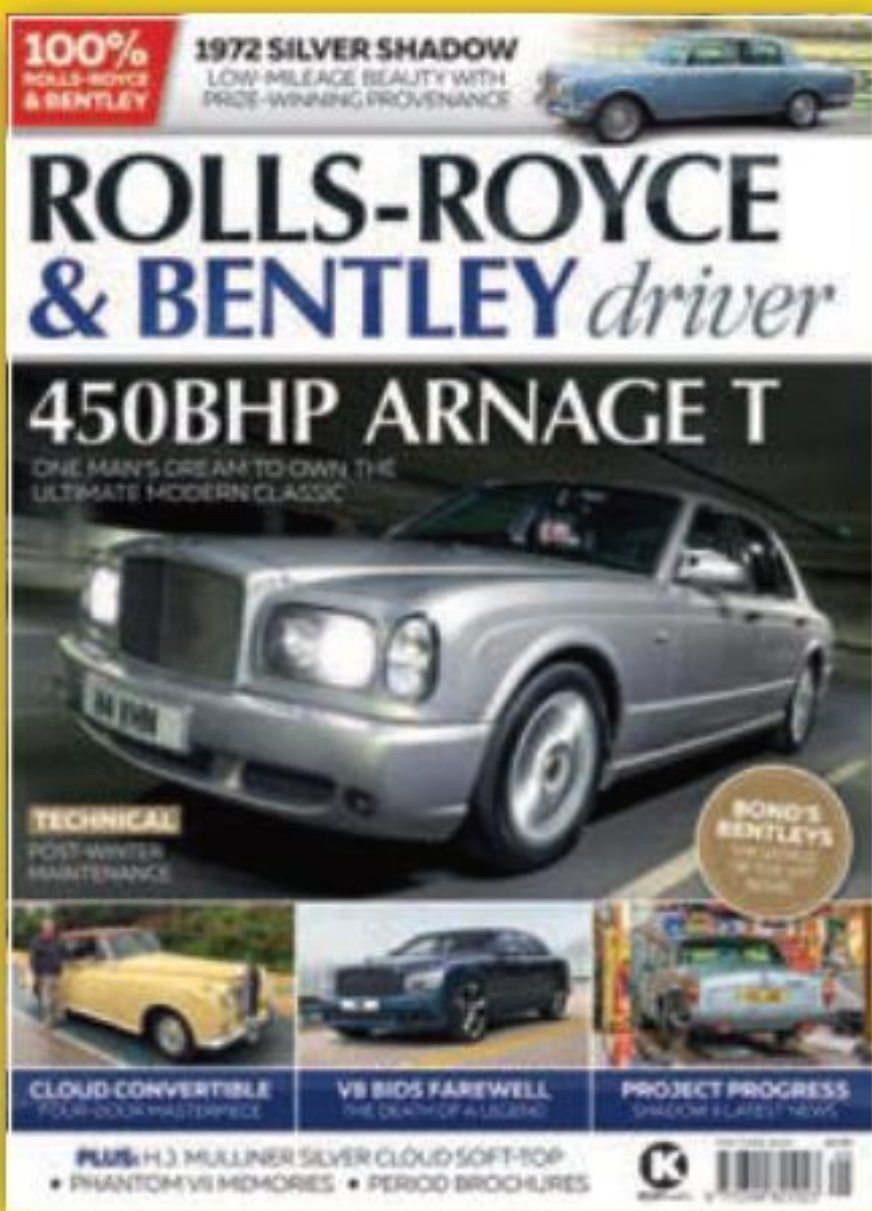
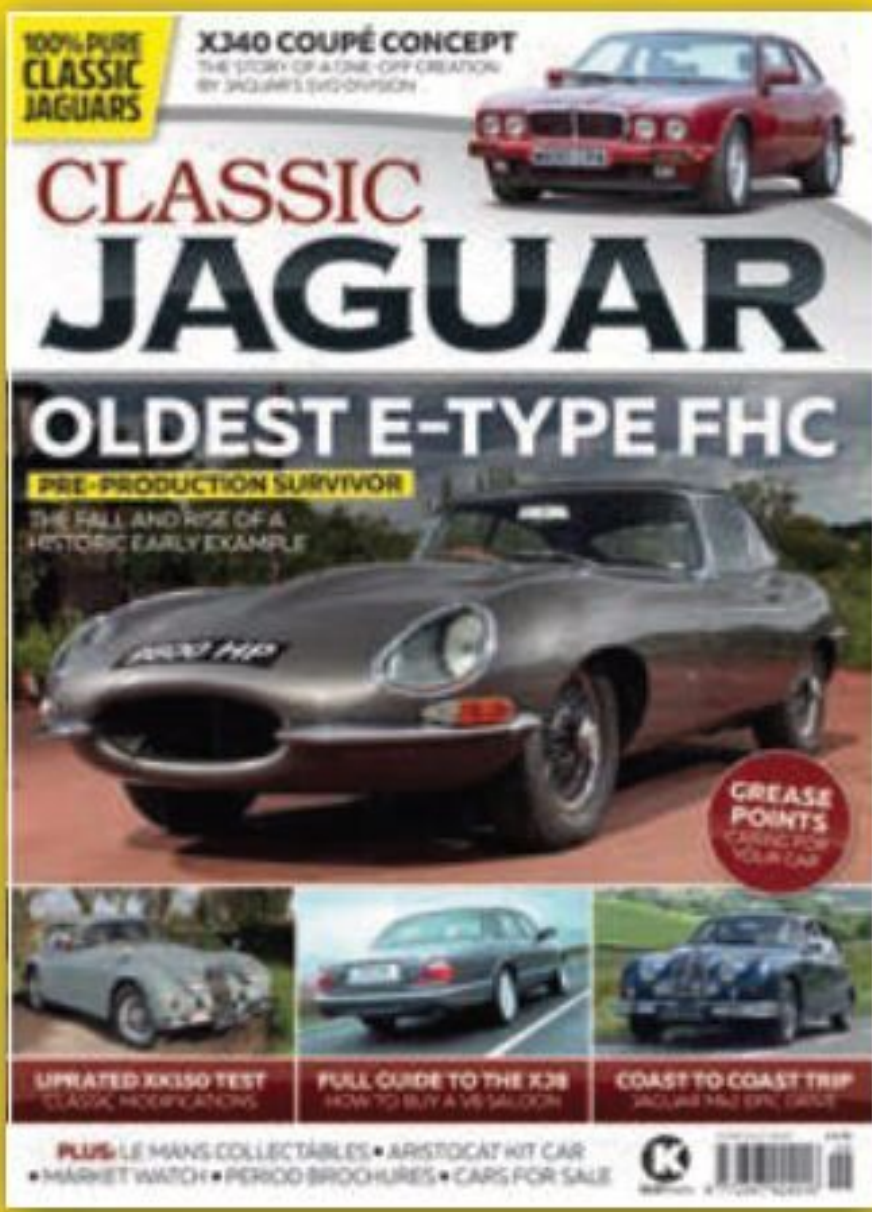
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