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Welcome

NEW BREED OF BLUE BLOODS

The Ford teams will race on with the FG X Falcon next season off the back of a 2017 when their young chargers really made a name for themselves.

Scott McLaughlin led the charge with a record-breaking season of stunning qualifying performances with DJR Team Penske.

Over at Prodrive Racing Australia, Chaz Mostert returned to the top step of the podium for the first time since his horrific 2015 Bathurst crash, Cameron Waters enjoyed a breakout season and Richie Stanaway announced himself as a future star in Supercars.

These four drivers represent the next generation of Supercars and in this issue we chat with them about their journeys so far and what's next in 2018 and beyond.

Erebus Motorsport also had a season to remember with victory in the Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000, an achievement we discuss with the team and commemorate with a pullout poster.

You'll also find our V8X wall calendar and a poster featuring all the dates for the 2018 Virgin Australia Supercars Championship season.

Elsewhere in this issue, we explore the birth of Walkinshaw Andretti United, chat with Prodrive boss and new Supercars board member Rod Nash, examine how engine parity will be achieved under Gen2 and meet the new Miss Supercars.

In our *Motorsport Legends*



section, we pay tribute to the Ford Sierra and explore the inside story on Peter Brock's split with Holden over the 'Energy Polarizer'.

You'll also find the latest columns from Mark Winterbottom, Craig Lowndes and Garry Rogers, as well as analysis of the key issues in Supercars such as the to-do list for the next CEO, the 2018 calendar and potential

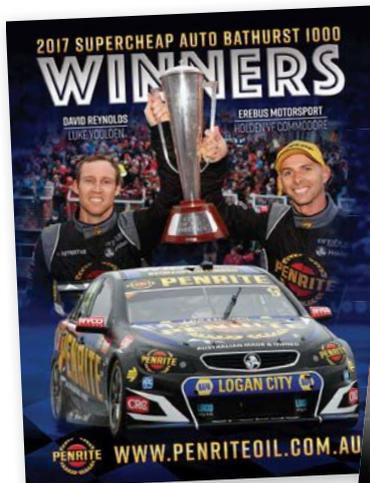
hybrid future of the cars. We also rank the top 10 legendary team owners.

Remember, *V8X Supercar Magazine* is also available in digital form in the official V8X app (in the App Store and Google Play), online at DigitalEdition, V8XMagazine.com.au and in the Magzter app store.

Enjoy!

— Adrian

BELOW: The two-sided poster in issue #102.



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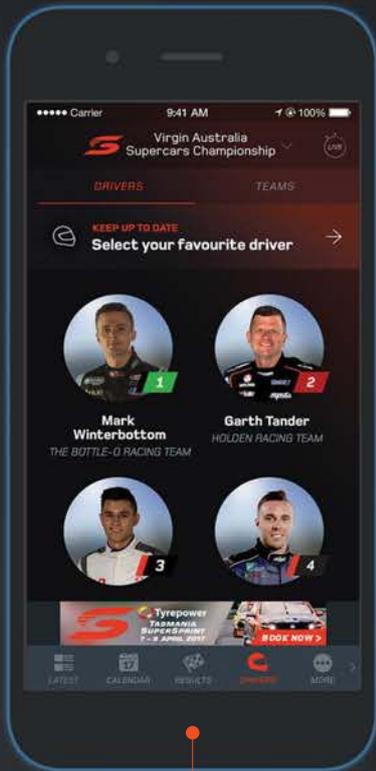
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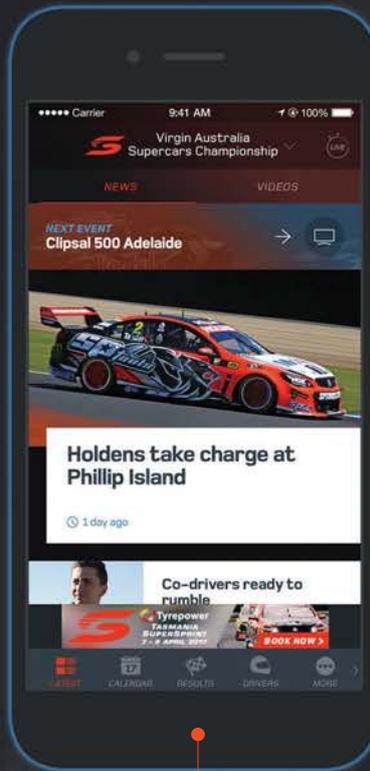
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NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

Supercars enters 2018 under new leadership and with a desperate need to steady the ship and settle on a future direction.

James Warburton's reign as CEO of Supercars was the second longest and most significant of the V8 era behind Wayne Cat-tach, who led the series at the start of the V8 era. Coincidentally, Warburton's era will go down as the beginning of the end of V8 era.

From 2013 to 2017, Warburton negotiated the Car of the Future and opening up the series to new manufacturers, which has now evolved into Gen2 and new engine configurations, the rebranding to Supercars, bringing other categories and events (such as the Bathurst 12 Hour) into the fold and the media-rights deal with Fox Sports. According to team owner Ryan Walkinshaw,

the sport "would have died" without the cash injection from that deal.

However, what comes next in 2018 and beyond is vital with the introduction of the imported Commodore and first non-V8 engine under Gen2 debuting in the first year post-car manufacturing in Australia.

Supercars must address the following in 2018:

- The identity of the series. Will it continue its desperate bid to attract new manufacturers or will it realign to suit privateers? If so, is the series sustainable without manufacturer involvement?
- Will provisions be made to keep V8 engines? If not, how will fans embrace Holden's new twin-turbo V6 engine in its wildcard appearances in 2018?

"WHAT COMES NEXT IN 2018 AND BEYOND IS VITAL WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE IMPORTED COMMODORE AND FIRST NON-V8 ENGINE UNDER GEN2 DEBUTING IN THE FIRST YEAR POST-CAR MANUFACTURING IN AUSTRALIA."

- In the wake of the end of Australian car manufacturing and the move away from V8s, will the supporter base diminish?

- Can Ford be enticed to get involved in Gen2 with the Mustang? With Holden committing with the new ZB Commodore, retaining a Ford presence is important to keep the Ford versus Holden rivalry going.

- Will Supercars continue Warburton's bid to get on the

Formula 1 support bill in Asian events or will the series decide to focus on events in Australia and New Zealand?

- How will the series position itself for a constantly evolving media landscape and the next television-rights deal?

- How will support categories such as Super2, SuperUtes, Super5000 and the Australian GT Championship evolve under the Supercars banner? **V8X**



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EXPANDING HORIZONS IN 2018

The Virgin Australia Supercars Championship expands to 16 events in 2018 with the addition of The Bend Motorsport Park and Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix, while Sydney Motorsport Park goes under lights for a 'SuperNight' spectacular.

The 2018 Virgin Australia Supercars Championship calendar breaks new ground for the category.

The Australian Grand Prix Formula 1 support races are included in the Supercars championship for the first time in the history of the event, the Bend Motorsport Park (pictured) is the first Australian permanent circuit to feature on the Supercars calendar since Queensland Raceway in 1999 and there's a night event in Australia for the first time since the Calder Park season opener in 1997 ran under lights.

The addition of two new events to the championship sees the schedule increase to 16 events across a 37-week season, starting with the traditional season opener in Adelaide in



March and concluding with the second running of the Newcastle 500 in November, for the biggest calendar of events in championship history.

The Bend Motorsport Park is a \$110 million development 90km south-east of Adelaide. The race will be held on the 18-turn 4.9km 'International' circuit configuration of the facility and will be the second Supercars event for South Australia after the season-opening Adelaide 500.

The inclusion of the

Australian Grand Prix races into the calendar is the result of a more productive working relationship with new Formula 1 owners Liberty Media and the axing of the 30-minute limit per session for Supercars at Albert Park.

Supercars will be on track all four days of the Australian Grand Prix event with extended practice, qualifying and races that will include pitstops as part of a six-year contract extension between the event and category.



2018 VIRGIN AUSTRALIA SUPERCARS CHAMPIONSHIP CALENDAR

MARCH 1-4	Adelaide 500*
MARCH 22-25	Formula 1 Rolex Australian Grand Prix
APRIL 6-8	Tyrepower Tasmania SuperSprint*
APRIL 20-22	WD-40 Phillip Island 500
MAY 4-6	Perth SuperSprint*
MAY 18-20	Winton SuperSprint
JUNE 15-17	CrownBet Darwin Triple Crown
JULY 6-8	Watpac Townsville 400*
JULY 20-22	Coates Hire Ipswich SuperSprint
AUGUST 4	Red Rooster Sydney SuperNight 300
AUGUST 24-26	The Bend SuperSprint
SEPTEMBER 14-16	Sandown 500*
OCTOBER 4-7	Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000*
OCTOBER 19-21	Vodafone Gold Coast 600
NOVEMBER 2-4	ITM Auckland SuperSprint
NOVEMBER 23-25	Coates Hire Newcastle 500*

*Denotes Dunlop Super2 Series

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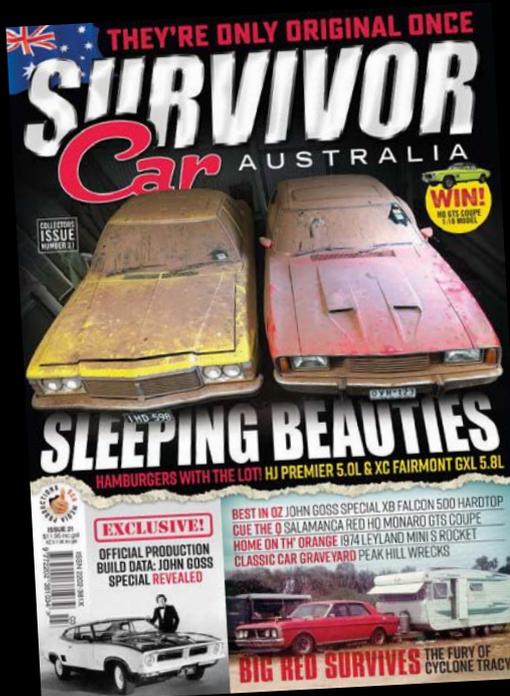
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BATHURST AS THE GRAND FINALE?

The Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000 is often referred to as Supercars' own 'grand final'. But what if it actually was and ended the Supercars championship season?

The Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000 is the one day of the year where Supercars is at the forefront of Australian sport. The television numbers confirm this.

An average audience of 1.897 million watched the 2017 Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000 across seven hours and 20 minutes, peaking at 2.746 million across Fox Sports, Network Ten and WIN TV.

It's little wonder the Bathurst 1000 is often referred to as Supercars' 'grand final', even though the season continues on after Bathurst with a few more events.

However, there's an inevitable lull after Bathurst and little evidence suggesting the momentum generated from Mount Panorama carries on into the Gold Coast, Pukekohe and Newcastle. The news cycle moves on quickly as the summer sports kick into gear.

So would it be such a bad idea for Supercars to revert back

"AN AVERAGE AUDIENCE OF 1.897 MILLION WATCHED THE 2017 SUPERCHEAP AUTO BATHURST 1000..."

to ending its season with the Bathurst 1000, pushing back the event to the end of the championship as it was in 1999 and 2000?

Supercars has long since lost the traditional Bathurst 1000 date on the Labour Day long weekend in New South Wales,



meaning the event isn't necessarily locked in to October.

The development of the calendar in September could also pave the way for a change to the Bathurst date.

Supercars remains in ongoing discussions with Formula 1

owners Liberty Media to race at the Singapore Grand Prix, which is typically held in mid-September on the Sandown 500 weekend.

Racing in Singapore is likely to be paired with another Asian event to justify the cost of freighting the series overseas.

And the Sepang Circuit in Kuala Lumpur is leading the way with negotiations at an advanced stage.

The Malaysian capital hosted Formula 1 a fortnight after Singapore, a double header in Asia that Supercars could replicate.

Any deal to race in Singapore would, therefore, force a change in the schedule for the Pirtek Endurance Cup events at Sandown, Bathurst and the Gold Coast.

With Sandown facing closure in the coming years and Supercars needing to find a new home for the 500km endurance event, there's another break from tradition that could see the Bathurst precursor event move away from its September date.

If indeed the Asian races

do take up the final weeks of September, Pukekohe and Newcastle could be moved into October before the Pirtek Endurance Cup.

The Gold Coast 600 could launch the Pirtek Endurance Cup in late October before the stakes and kilometres are increased at the 500km endurance event and then the Bathurst 1000 in November.

Rather than Bathurst coming one week after the AFL and NRL grand finals, Supercars has an opportunity to build up to it with a condensed schedule of marquee events leading into the real 'grand final'. And with both the Bathurst 1000 and championship on the line, there's additional weight to the importance of the event. **V8X**

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WILL SUPERCARS HAVE TO GO HYBRID?

Manufacturers are heavily investing in the all-electric Formula E category, which has added a production-car support category this season. But how will the rise of hybrid and electric cars impact Supercars in its own transformative stage?

Roland Dane thinks Supercars rule makers need to keep an open mind on the future when it comes to how to power future generations of Supercars.

He points to the series' lead in running ethanol-based E85 fuel as a significant step for the sport, but says the highest form of motorsport in Australia must change with the priorities of the motoring world.

Leading manufacturers have withdrawn from the likes of the World Endurance Championship, DTM and others to move into the Formula E category, which will soon feature factory-backed teams from Audi, Nissan (via Renault), Jaguar, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, Citroën and Mahindra. Formula E has also added the world's first production-based electric-car series as a support category with the creation of the Jaguar I-Pace eTrophy (pictured).

The Triple Eight boss' thoughts about the future, the discussion around the potential demise of E85 in the category and the possible introduction of some form of hybrid power, came up as part of an interview on engine parity for this edition of *V8X Supercar Magazine* (see page 52).

"I think we're absolutely daft to be moving away from E85 just as it's becoming more and more relevant to running a sustainable programme," explains Dane, whose Triple Eight team will be the first to move away



from the V8 engine with the new Holden twin-turbo V6, which is set to debut in selected wildcard events in 2018.

"To be moving away from that, which is on the cards for 2019, is madness in my opinion.

"Virgin is running a big program on biofuels around Brisbane and using sugar cane, so why the hell would we move away from something we took a lead in years ago? That just doesn't stack up.

"But then the next steps in terms of a hybrid powertrain, I think that's something that we need to have a very open mind on.

"It could be a sort of a push-to-pass hybrid type thing, or a

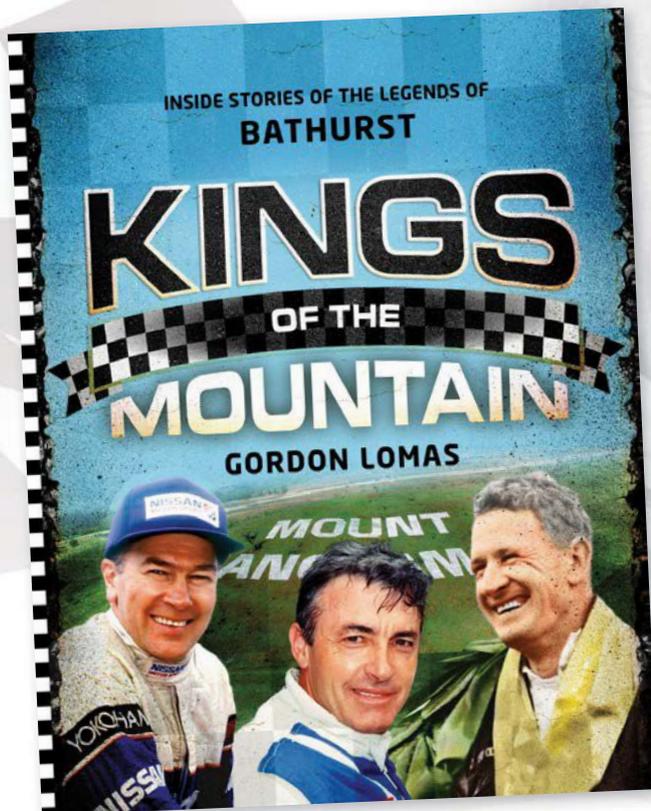
Le Mans approach like go down pitlane or go behind the safety car on electric power... whatever it is, we need to represent what's increasingly going to be the norm in everyday society."

Dane says he can't see a full electric future in cars – "we wouldn't have enough power to boil kettles or watch television" – but believes hybrid is an acceptable mix of technologies for the automotive industries

that will become more common and the sport needs to move with it.

"It isn't even the manufacturers," he says. "It's the broader fan base, it's the sponsors, it's the broadcasters, it's the governments that we deal with... they probably won't put up with us carrying on just using straight internal-combustion engines, much as I might like to, or you might like to." **V8X**

"THE NEXT STEPS IN TERMS OF A HYBRID POWERTRAIN, I THINK THAT'S SOMETHING THAT WE NEED TO HAVE A VERY OPEN MIND ON." – ROLAND DANE



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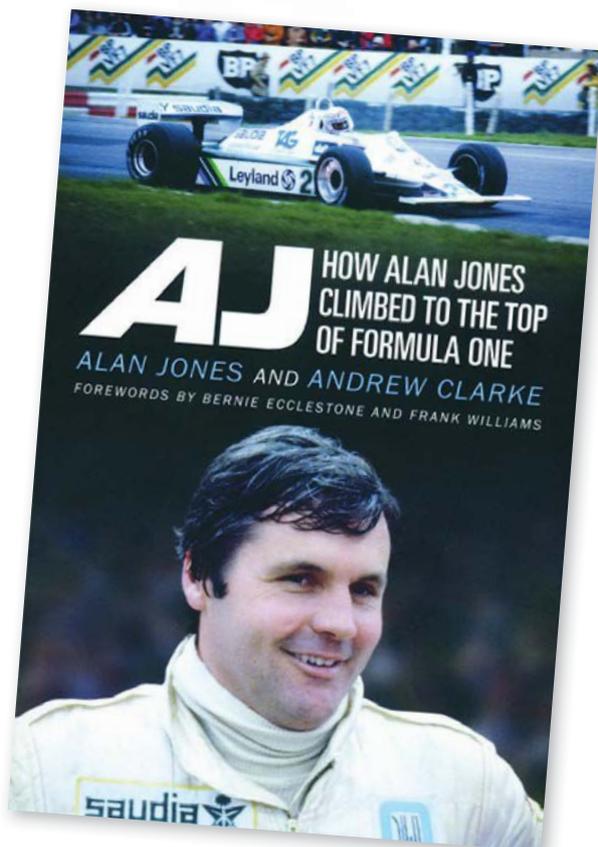
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MIXED REACTION TO TURBO

The V6 twin-turbo Holden has been met with mixed reactions from fans following its first public appearance.

The engine is based on that used by the factory Cadillac GT3 program and General Motors in America, producing a raspy sound common to smaller capacity turbocharged engines.

Speedcafe.com canvassed opinion among fans and met with differing opinions.

Graham, a 50-year follower of Supercars and its predecessors, enjoyed his first live experience of the sound.

"I saw the news of the V6 turbo Holden in the paper and wanted to come see it at Bathurst to hear what it sounds like," said the Victorian Ford and Nissan fan.

Mobil 1 HSV Racing supporter Anthony said he was similarly won over after seeing



the car out on track, comparing the engine to that of a GT car.

"I really like the new V6 Holden," said the Sydneysider.

"At first I had some reservations but on track it's probably better than what I expected. It has a good sound, very GT-esque and I think it's good."

Queensland resident Fiona, on the other hand, will miss the V8 sound when the V6 is implemented in the 2019 season.

"I'm not sure what to think of the new Holden," said the

Prodrive and Scott McLaughlin fanatic.

"It's alright, sounds pretty cool on track, but I am certainly going to miss the V8. A lot of people seem to be completely against it, but I kind of sit on the fence."

Steve from southern Sydney, a dedicated Supercars fan who first attended the Great Race in 1972, was less concerned.

"I'm really open minded about the new V6 twin-turbo Holden and I have been impressed by the development of the car," said the Craig Lowndes and Jason Bright follower.

"I was around in the 1970s when they had V6s and that worked well back then. It's no surprise that Triple Eight are pioneering the way with the new era of Supercars.

"I accept the sound; it's a V6 and that's what a V6 sounds like, so it's not an argument I can make."

The V6 twin-turbo will see its first competitive action as a wildcard entry at selected Supercars events in 2018 before full implementation the following season.

Scan to read the full article.



TEAMS REACT TO WARBURTON DEPARTURE

Supercars team owners have expressed their disappointment at the news James Warburton will leave his role as CEO.

Warburton is set to leave his position of four and half years in Supercars, moving on to the chief executive role at

APN Outdoor, an advertising company with offices across Australia and New Zealand.

The decision has been met with disappointment from teams contacted by Speedcafe.com.

Warburton took over the running of the sport in difficult circumstances during mid-2013 but has left the sport in a better shape, according to a selection of operation owners.

During his tenure he managed to strike a \$241 million dollar television deal between Fox Sports and Network Ten, which was divisive among fans but crucial for the viability of teams. He also helped introduce the Gen2 regulations and has continued to pursue new horizons for the championship in Asia.

Brad Jones, who holds a position on

the Supercars board, said Warburton played a huge role in turning the sport around.

"I think he has been a huge part of turning the business around," Jones told Speedcafe.com.

"We have gone back to the point where the business is viable for teams and he has been a real important part of that.

"I think that TV deal was the first big step, really. We ended up with a TV deal that got us back heading in the right direction and enabled the income and viability to be right for the teams."

Charlie Schwerkolt, boss of one-car operation Preston Hire Racing, told Speedcafe.com that he

was devastated by the announcement.

"I'm devastated by James' decision; he has done an incredible job," Schwerkolt told Speedcafe.com.

"I really feel the sport is just starting to get somewhere, so he is going to be deeply missed for sure.

"We have a current TV deal until 2020 and I don't think there could have been anyone better to negotiate that. His knowledge of the whole industry is incredible.

"I think we were in good, safe hands; he was good with the governments, all the team owners and he was our leader.

"I'm not happy at all by the sudden departure."



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BEYOND THE WHEEL

Column by Mark Winterbottom



LOOKING BACK ON 2017

It's been a tough season for us on the #5 Prodrive Racing Australia entry. In fact, I'd say it's been one of the toughest seasons of my career.

Even though I feel like I am driving well, there have been a number of factors stopping me from getting results as we've searched for pace in the races. While we've been in the hunt more often than not in qualifying, it's race pace that has let us down over the course of the season.

We've searched for a new direction with the car and at times it hasn't paid off, which is why our results have sometimes been mixed across the four entries in the team. When you are out of championship

contention it allows you to try different things in the latter stages of the season.

You never stop believing in yourself and your ability to race at the front of the pack. The day you start doing that is the same day you should give it all away, so we go into 2018 believing we can win again with a car that still has some development in it.

I know that when everything clicks the results will come and it's been encouraging to see the performances of teammates Chaz Mostert, Cameron Waters and Richie Stanaway over the last season.

We will continue to drive each other on in 2018, with the rise of these youngsters keeping me on my toes and forcing me

to work on my game to keep up with them. I push myself very hard, so when I don't meet my own expectations it is a frustrating period.

One of the highlights of the year was running the Moffat Ford Dealers special livery at Bathurst. Allan Moffat was one of my heroes growing up and still is, so I felt very honoured to be racing in the livery he made so famous with that iconic one-two formation finish for Ford 40 years ago.

We didn't get the result we wanted on race day but we had a real go to get a podium in the late stages of the races.

As part of the promotion around the livery we spent a bit of time with Allan and Colin Bond at the event. Being able to appreciate their influence on the sport and learn from them was special.

Such experiences really make you appreciate being part of the Supercars championship.

– Frosty

“ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR WAS RUNNING THE MOFFAT FORD DEALERS SPECIAL LIVERY AT BATHURST.”





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RIGHT ON TRACK

Column by Craig Lowndes



BATHURST PASSION BURNS ON

We didn't get the result we were after in the 2017

Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000. The rain on race day wasn't ideal for us and we struggled for pace.

As the conditions improved and the track dried we suspected an issue with the car that made it unresponsive to anti-roll bar changes. Also, changing brake pads over the course of the event made it difficult for us to adapt to the changing track conditions.

The beauty of Bathurst is it's one of the races where you are always in contention regardless of your championship position, so a tough season can be overcome with a good result at Mount Panorama.

It's the one that you want to win even more if you aren't in the championship race. You always want to win one of the big races and Bathurst has always been the big prize for me.

I've made no secret that I



"I'VE MADE NO SECRET THAT I WOULD PREFER TO WIN A BATHURST THAN A CHAMPIONSHIP."

would prefer to win a Bathurst than a championship, so it's disappointing to have a tough result at Mount Panorama given where we were in the points standings.

Despite the result the passion for Bathurst remains as strong as ever. It's a race I dreamt of winning for years and I have been fortunate enough to win it multiple times. The possibility of getting near Peter Brock's

record of wins is also in the back of my mind.

Our sport allows us to race on at Bathurst beyond our full-time driving careers. And there's no doubt in my mind that I would like to still be co-driving in the endurance events once I step down from full-time Supercars.

This means I could race on into my 50s, as Peter Brock, Jim Richards, Larry Perkins,

Dick Johnson and co did with some success.

It will all come down to being competitive in the car and making sure that whoever I am racing for and teaming up with will know I am in contention of a podium or a win.

Being competitive and up the front is an important factor in racing on in the championship and at Bathurst, while the excitement of racing cars and being part of a team is still there for me.

Next season we extend the team's very successful partnership with Autobarn, as well as my own personal relationship with them, which began more than 15 years ago.

I am grateful for Autobarn's support over these many years and that they've now chosen to take an even stronger position going forward. It has always been a relationship that I have valued highly.

I'm pretty excited to roll out a totally new look and I'm looking forward to sharing it with fans.

– Craig



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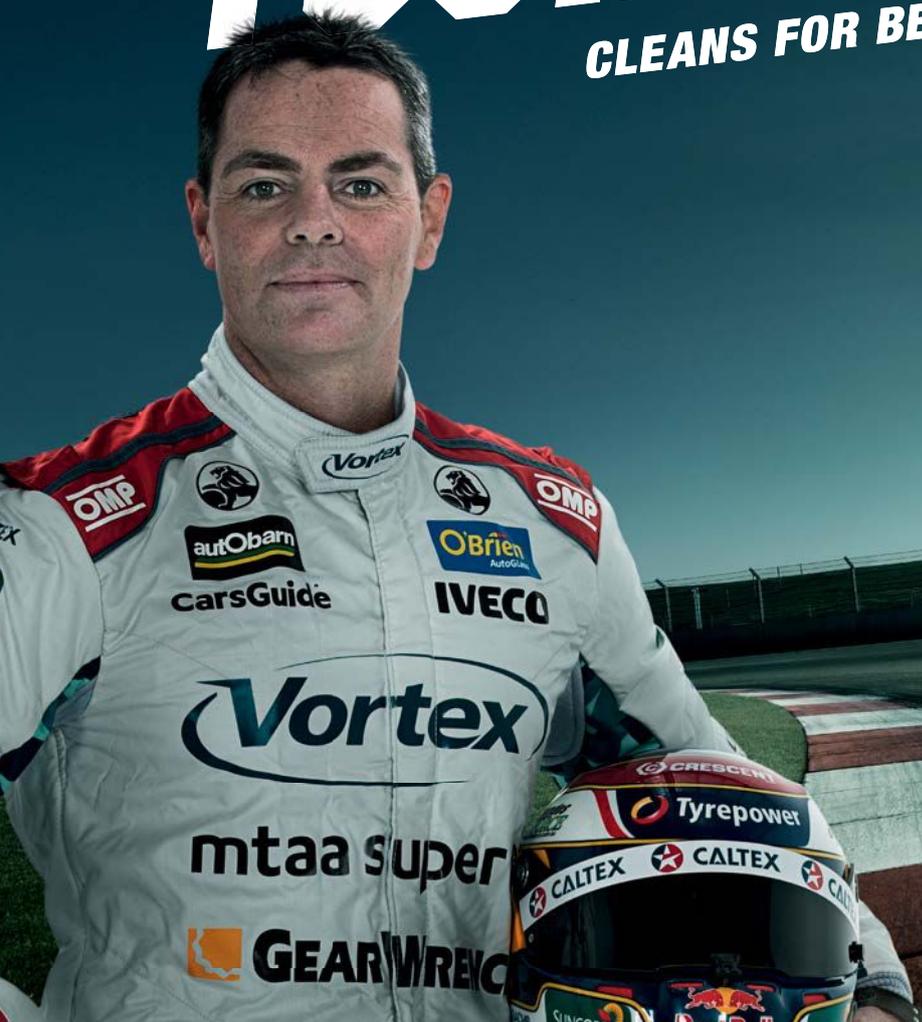


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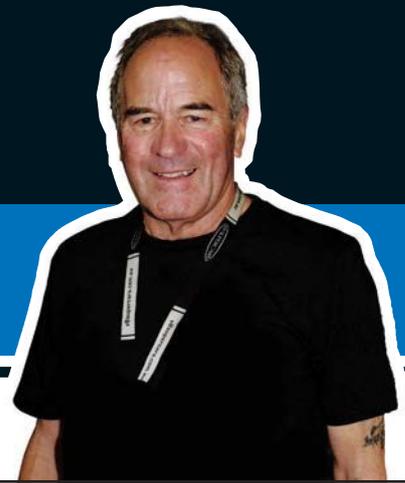
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GARRY THE GURU



THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE JOB

It was disappointing news when James Warburton announced that he would be stepping down from the driver's seat of Supercars.

James has done a very good job and he will be missed. Through a very difficult time he was able to continually present the brand in a very positive manner and he did very well for the teams.

A lot of people can do the television deal, but the fact of the matter is that if you are into sport, whether you like it or not, you will need to have pay television because that's where all sport will eventually be broadcast. The financial reward for the teams was necessary and beneficial at the time.

Since Tony Cochrane left Supercars there has been a number of people in leadership roles that, in my opinion, were completely unsuited to those roles.

The current group, including Shane Howard, did a great job keeping things going despite not having the right leader in place, but when James came along they once again had someone to provide that important leadership.

I wish James all the best in his future endeavours, but I think it's extremely important that we get the right person for the sport.

From a corporate perspective the sport has been well run, but we do need a strong front-man presenting to everyone: the sponsor group, the television channels and the public.

We have a great show and



that needs to be promoted and managed.

This is not a job for a bean counter. We already have great financial people working behind the scenes and they are doing a great job, but this role needs someone who can get out and be the leader.

So far there have only been two people who have really been able to do that job – one was Tony and the other was James.

We have had others that have been agency types that were just never going to cut it.

I don't think we need an agency person to fill this position; we need someone who can mix it with everyone from the fan standing on the other side of the fence to ministers of government and corporate heavy-hitters.

Most of all they need to have an understanding of, and empathy for, the sport and all of its stakeholders.

One of James' biggest desires has been a potential push into

Asia and I believe that is something that the management needs to continue to pursue under a new leader.

When you look at the population base in and around Asia, it's those areas that could be extremely beneficial to our sponsors.

The sport has never been better than what it is today, but it could be even better if we had a bigger market. People say that Asians would not be interested in our series, but so long as we provide good racing and entertainment then of course they are going to be interested.

I believe the new CEO is going to come in at a good time. The Supercars business is in good shape.

Financially it could be better, because – unlike cricket,

football or tennis – our sport is expensive to compete in, so anything that can be done to help the teams financially and provide them with some additional income would be good.

We need to find someone who can assess the opportunities and act on them.

The Supercars workforce at the moment is pretty stable with a good depth of talent, so there will be some good people to assist.

We just need to make sure it is the right person who can harness the good work that has already been done and continue the sport on a prosperous path.

Finding the right person will be a challenge and it's one that we must get right the first time.

– Garry

"THE SPORT HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER THAN WHAT IT IS TODAY, BUT IT COULD BE EVEN BETTER..."

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This place is the holy grail for me, I have been coming here the past 13 years for the best racing you can see. I have driven the track in my own car at 60 km an hour as it is a street for most of the year but this, this was something else. Feeling the power going up the mountain and the speed coming down mixed with the extreme undulation of the track gave me a new appreciation for this place and the drivers that come here to battle. Will definitely be going again next year! – *Brendan Algie*

Bathurst track at 200k was an experience to behold. From drivers to catering staff, the morning was perfect....Can't wait to hopefully receive this gift package again !! – *John Parker*



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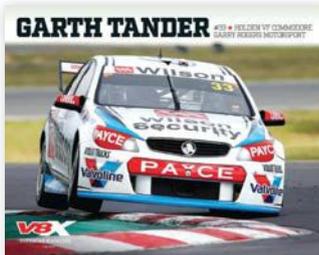
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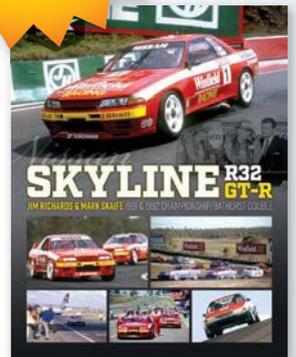
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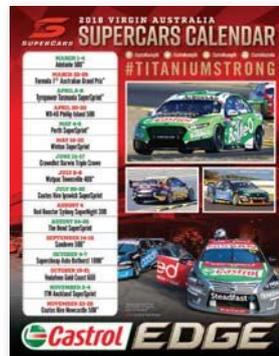
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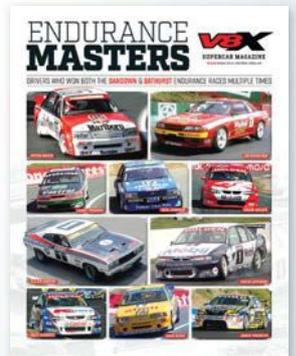
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BLUE BLOODS

Holdens outnumbered Fords 16 to six on the 2017 Virgin Australia Supercars Championship grid, but that hasn't stopped Blue Oval fans from having plenty to cheer about: Scott McLaughlin leading the way in his first season with DJR Team Penske, Chaz Mostert back to winning ways, Cameron Waters and Richie Stanaway rising to the fore and Ford winning the manufacturers' title for the first time since 2009.

WORDS John Bannon IMAGES Peter Norton, Prodrive Racing Australia, DJR Team Penske

“WE NEED TO KEEP THOSE FORDS UP THERE AS THERE AREN'T MANY OF US.”

- SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN

At the home of Australian motorsport, where fans are at their most die-hard and Ford and Holden battle lines are still firmly drawn, all six of the Falcon's in the Supercars field made Bathurst's top 10 Shootout.

Two of the top three teams in the sport prepare those six cars and the renewed success of Blue Oval stables DJR Team Penske and Prodrive Racing Australia (PRA) is propelling Ford to championship success. And all during a period in history when Ford has withdrawn its funding to both teams.

Complimenting this Falcon resurgence, led by the well-resourced DJR Team Penske, is a string of young stars led by Scott McLaughlin. The Kiwi has taken his considerable talent to a new level in 2017, transitioning quickly from team new-boy to championship benchmark.

“It's been a whirlwind year,” he says. “It started off not as good as I wanted to but the team that I've had around me, I can't thank them all enough. It's really changed me as a person, as a driver. To have my family still beside me all the way and to everyone who has supported me, it's just great.”

The DJR Team Penske driver paid credit to his family and new engineer for 2017 Ludo Lacroix for his incredible run of form.

“I've had great people around me... my Mum and Dad



McLaughlin has put a smile back on Ford legend Dick Johnson's face.



have always pushed me 100 per cent to be polite, presentable for the media, for the fans and on track to work hard with my team,” he says.

“I’ve had a great opportunity with GRM [Garry Rogers Motorsport] and now DJR Team Penske. Now I’ve got Ludo [Lacroix] on my car. He has really turned me around as a driver. He’s very hard on me. He’s turned my work ethic off the track to work hard on things [data analysis, driver preparation] and make sure they are right. He’s made me focus more on that [what I do outside the car] to use my talent more.”

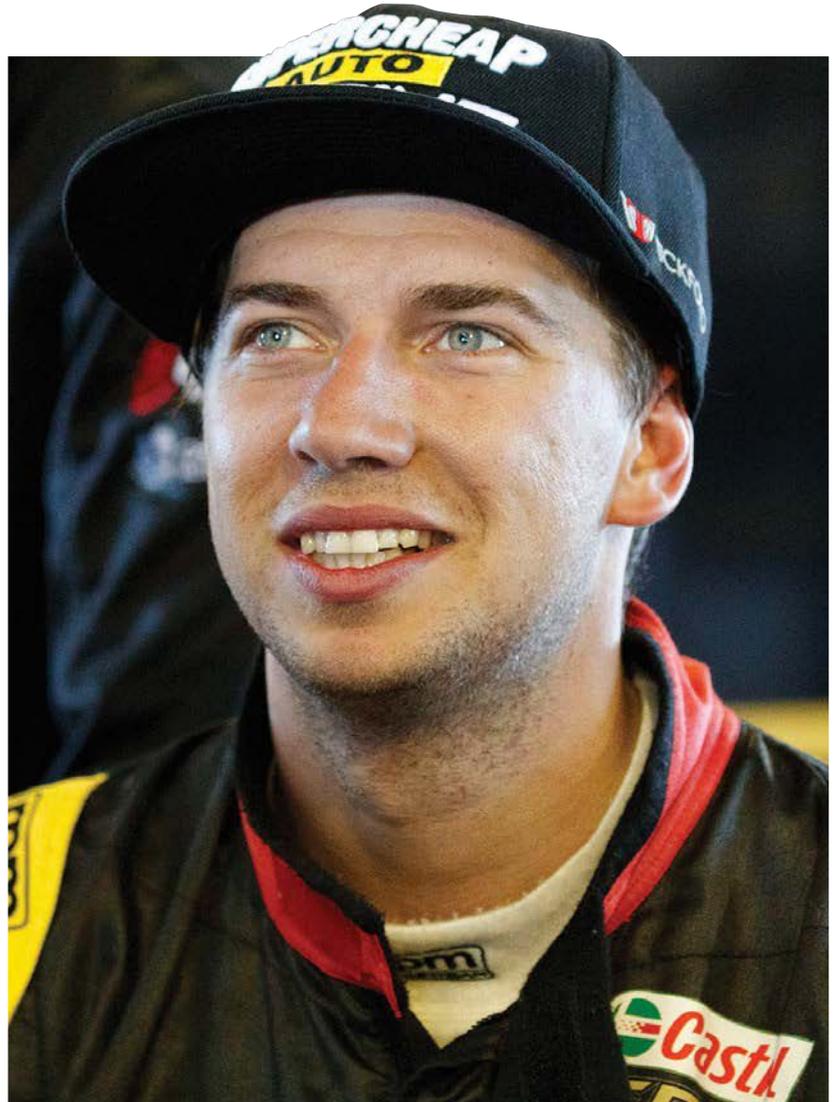
As the 24-year-old’s star continues to shine on track, so does his popularity off track. His 100,000-plus Facebook followers are testament to that.

“The fans have been unbelievable, especially at Bathurst,” he says. “It took me half an hour [at Bathurst] to get from the pits to the motorhome, which I don’t mind because I understand they are the backbone of our sport. They pay our wages and keep us racing.

“It’s amazing to see it. I actually took a moment during Bathurst [to take in the fans support]. I had to save some fuel on my out lap before my Shootout lap and as I went across the top of the Mountain it was unbelievable. The people were just going insane, I could hear them because I was saving fuel and idling in the car. You’ll never forget those moments and it will be one to look back and watch.”

The flying Kiwi has quickly become the hero in waiting for Ford fans, in just his first year with a Blue Oval squad having previously raced both a Holden Commodore and Volvo S60 at Garry Rogers Motorsport.

Forty years since Allan Moffat and Colin Bond’s famous one-two formation finish in the Ford XC Falcon at Bathurst, and as part of the next generation of Blue Oval drivers, McLaughlin admits fan appeal is important to him.



Ford wrapped up the 2017 manufacturers’ title on the Gold Coast.



"I just want to be that driver who if a Holden doesn't win then I'm their [a Holden fan's] next favourite driver," he admits.

"I'm big on rivalries, but I just want to be a people's person because that's who I feel I am as a person."

McLaughlin no doubt earned even more fans on both sides of the divide after being the first driver to dive into the 2.03-second bracket in a Supercar during an unforgettable Shootout performance, which has been dubbed 'Lap of the Gods II' in reference to fellow countryman Greg Murphy's groundbreaking 2003 lap.

"The boys were just pumped," he says. "It's really special you know, it's a special place [Bathurst], it's magical and it creates moments like that. Whether it is me or anyone, to do that lap was fantastic and I'll never forget it."

With all the extra attention, the former Development Series champion says it's good to keep the ego in check while at the same time channelling that ego positively to get results on track. But he says it's also important to remain grounded.

"That's who I am as a person," says McLaughlin. "I'm pretty sure that I let myself go when I need to. My Mum and Dad brought me up to be respectful and not only acknowledge my efforts but acknowledge other people's efforts as well. Sure, I've got a big ego, but I try and keep it under wraps. You've got to have some sort of ego as a driver and believe on any given day that you are better than anyone."

McLaughlin took the championship by the scruff of the neck during his debut season at DJR Team Penske after developing his craft and credentials with four seasons at talent-spotting outfit Garry Rogers Motorsport.

Behind McLaughlin is a chasing pack of fellow young blue bloods, namely Prodrive Racing Australia trio Chaz Mostert, Cameron Waters and Richie Stanaway, who are set to keep the DJR Team Penske star on his toes for years to come.

"They are all very fast on their day," admits McLaughlin. "We need to keep those Fords up there as there are not many of us. We were obviously all in the Shootout [during qualifying at Bathurst], which was great to see. Cam's coming up now, Richie is coming through, too, which is good for New Zealand. Absolutely, you look at the young guys and you want to be the best of all of them when they are around your age bracket."

Mostert is known just as much for being a Bathurst winner as for that massive qualifying crash two years

Mostert and co-driver Steve Owen won Ford's first Pirtek Endurance Cup in 2017.



ago, which sidelined him from the sport for the best part of six months. He's moved on from the broken bones and bruises with a renewed focus on his fitness and a new appreciation for the sport.

"Since the crash it's really opened my eyes up to how much I enjoy it," he says. "It is such a thrill to be driving one of these cars. So I have an absolute ball out there."

The Prodrive driver has been a Ford favourite since making his Supercars championship debut in 2013 with iconic Blue Oval squad Dick Johnson Racing and winning the team's home event in Ipswich before moving to his current squad for 2014.

"When you are walking around or going to a signing here or there the fans are great," he says.

"I couldn't believe how many people were at Bathurst. I remember being a 12-year-old and coming to Bathurst and looking up to drivers and having that sort of feeling, never expecting to be one of them. It's really mind blowing just to think about it, to be honest."

We asked Mostert whether he'd like to emulate other Ford heroes such as Allan Moffat both in terms of performance and popularity with the fans.

"These days it's really hard [to win]; you've got 26 cars covered by about a second or so, it's absolutely ridiculous out here... the way the social media followers have gone up over the last couple of years has been incredible as well," says Mostert.

"It really is such a fan-driven sport that we are in. I try and not get too deep into it, because I have a job to do and that's to drive as fast as I can for as many laps as I can and hopefully come away with some champagne and a trophy because that's what it is all about at the end of the day. Then if you get that you get to share that with the fans, which is the most important part."

After a challenging rookie season in the main game last year, Mildura native Waters hit the refresh button in the off season. An intense fitness regime and tips from renowned UK-based driver coach Rob Wilson has produced a season of consistent performances, highlighted by a stunning first Supercars win at the Sandown 500 in September.



"I guess through the year I've just built on all the work I've done in the off season," Waters says.

"My relationship with Brad [Wischusen], my engineer, is getting stronger and stronger. I'm slowly just working out what the car needs and what I need to put it all together, I guess.

"It's a pretty good confidence builder and it's a pretty big race to win," he beams. "So it feels cool to do that in front of my friends and family who were all there. It kind of takes the monkey off your back a little bit and just shows you can do it... it also keeps you motivated and wanting to do it a lot more, I guess."

The former Australian Formula Ford champ is pleased that his recent success has helped lift his fan base this season, especially for those loyal to the Blue Oval.

"I was a Ford fan growing up as a kid as well," he says. "I watched my Dad race Fords, so for me to drive a Ford at Bathurst at what is probably the biggest motor race in Australia is awesome. Obviously the fans are pretty dedicated and passionate, so I got a few new fans after Sandown, which was cool."

ABOVE & BELOW: Stanaway and Waters won the Wilson Security Sandown 500, their first victories in Supercars.



“I’M BIG ON RIVALRIES, BUT I JUST WANT TO BE A PEOPLE’S PERSON BECAUSE THAT’S WHO I FEEL I AM...”

– SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN

With Waters improving all the time, we asked if he feels it’s just a matter of time before he fights for the title.

“Obviously, I’m here to win the championship, that’s why I go racing,” he says.

“So I think I can do it in the years to come. Obviously, a lot of things have to go your way. It is probably one of the most competitive series in the world; it’s not easy.”

Former Formula 1 aspirant Stanaway has shifted the focus in his career to Australia and his impending main-game graduation comes after two eye-catching co-drive seasons under the Prodrive banner.

The GP2 race winner adds to the list of talented Kiwis in the field and, despite being just 26 years of age, has a wealth of experience in a variety of open-wheeler and tin-top machinery.

“It will be good to get into an elite category like this and have the opportunity to specialise with one car in one championship,” he says.

“For the first time in my career I’ll be somewhere where there is nowhere further up to go, you’re at the top and then it is just a matter of trying to be successful in that one category.”

Stanaway says he’s not thinking too much about red or blue-blood loyalties at this early stage, with his main consideration being where the team stacks up in terms of performance.

“It’s funny because I actually grew up as a crazy Holden supporter but now that I’m older I don’t really mind either way,” he says.

“Maybe some of the fans won’t like me saying that but it’s certainly something that I haven’t thought too much about.

“But I’d say if I can get in with one type of manufacturer and chip away at getting results then I’m sure the fans will appreciate that.”

But if Stanaway did find himself in a Ford over the long term, there is one modern-day Blue Oval hero he aspires to.

“You’ve only got to look at Frosty [Mark Winterbottom], he’s been a pretty good ambassador for the brand for a very long time now,” he says.

“Everyone sees him as one of the icons for the Ford brand. I’ve always looked up to Winterbottom.

“He’s always been a hero of mine and it’s quite surreal to be mates with him now and it’s easy to forget how much I looked up to him as a kid. So it’s definitely something I aspire to.”

With the uncertainty around Ford’s commitment to Supercars in recent seasons, the arrival of these talented drivers to the top is a credit to DJR Team Penske and Prodrive Racing Australia and a reward for long-suffering Blue Oval fans. **V8X**



LAP OF THE GODS II

Scott McLaughlin left pitlane gobsmacked with his 2:03.8312-second lap time in the Shootout for the 2017 Bathurst 1000.

McLaughlin had already claimed the qualifying award for 2017 and his Bathurst performance drew inevitable comparisons to countryman Greg Murphy’s ‘Lap of the Gods’ Shootout effort of 2003.

“All our fans, I could hear you guys that was crazy! That was the most incredible moment of my life,” said an elated McLaughlin, who was embraced by Murphy following the lap.

McLaughlin was set to get down to a 2:03 in the fifth practice session until a mistake at the Chase, but he made amends with a near-faultless performance in the Shootout, despite dropping a wheel and kicking up dirt on the exit of McPhillamy Park.

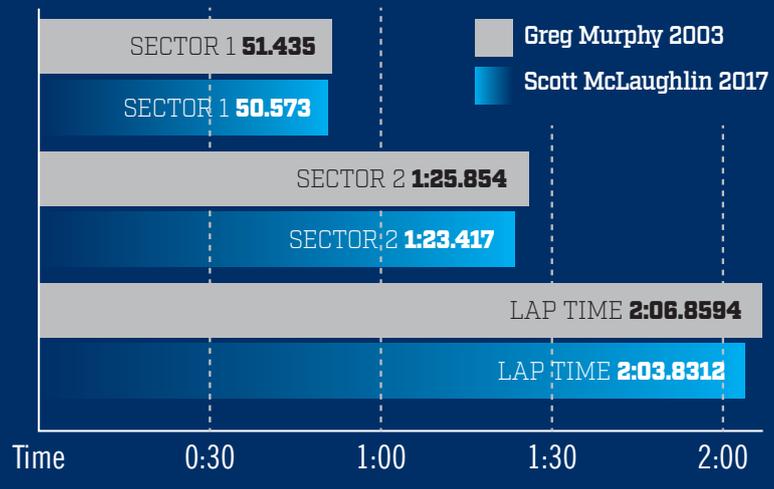
“We were trying to keep a lid on it but we knew was a three in the car if he put the lap

together. It had to be near perfect,” said the data analyst for the #17 car, Richard Harris.

“Because he felt the grip on his warm-up lap he had the confidence to push into Turn 1, he matched all his markers from the practice-five lap and we were surprised given it was the Shootout. He maybe carried a bit too much speed in, but he got out well. He was line ball at Griffins, but the Cutting was really good and we’d been struggling there.

“We rolled over Skyline and we were line ball. He rode the kerbs though the Esses just as he all weekend and hit the sector marker coming out of the Elbow a little more than three-tenths up on [David] Reynolds and on track for the 2:03.”

Highlighting the development of Supercars and gains from the resurfaced Mount Panorama, Murphy’s time would have put him in 26th place on the grid in 2017.





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MOUNTAIN CONQUERORS

Erebus Motorsport won the Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000 and was often the next-best Holden team behind Red Bull Holden Racing Team in 2017. It's an impressive feat for one of the smallest teams in Supercars.

WORDS Bruce Newton **IMAGES** Erebus, Ben Auld, Peter Norton, Matthew Norton, James Baker

Erebus Motorsport: winner of the 2017 Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000. It's amazing to read that, let alone picture Luke Youlden piggybacking David Reynolds on to the top step.

In a year where big operations have won virtually every race and claimed almost every pole position, a small team of self-described rejects pops up and qualifies on the front row at Mount Panorama and then wins the biggest Supercars race of them all.

And just for good measure the team's second entry, Dale Wood and Chris Pither, finishes fourth, making Erebus Motorsport the most successful entrant in the race, let alone the most successful Holden team.

"I think there's always some luck in winning Bathurst," concedes Erebus Motorsport general manager Barry Ryan. "But we were fast from the word go.

"We were fastest in one of the practices, Luke was in the top six in co-driver practice, Dave qualified second fastest and we started on the front row. We deserved to be there.

"Sunday morning, we genuinely thought the only car that could beat us on pace was #17 (Scott McLaughlin and Alex Premat in the pole qualifying DJR Team Penske Ford Falcon FG X), so we knew we had a shot."

Then he smiles: "We were really upset when they went out with their engine."

Today it's quiet at Erebus' South Dandenong shop. The team's two Holden



**“BETTY SAYS,
‘WE WANT TO WIN
THE CHAMPIONSHIP
IN THREE YEARS’, I
SAY TO HER, ‘WHY
ARE YOU BEING
SO PATIENT?’”
BARRY RYAN**





VF Commodores have already been refurbished after Bathurst and are headed to the Gold Coast.

The crew is having a day off, although lead driver Reynolds is here in cardboard cut-out form, a caption taped to his mouth proclaiming, 'We won Bathurst!'

Erebus has been in South Dandenong for more than 12 months, yet it still looks like they have only just arrived. There are unopened and opened boxes, some containing panels for next year's ZB Commodores.

Parked off to one side are the team's two Mercedes-AMG SLS GT3s, scattered around the shop are the now-retired Mercedes-AMG E63s team owner Betty Klimenko invested so much money in creating and racing. Stored away somewhere are a bunch of the troublesome M159 DOHC V8 engines that powered them. Erebus' past, present and future is here.

Ah yes, the past. From those amazing, crazy days of late 2012 and early 2013 when Klimenko took over Stone Brothers Racing, brought Mercedes-Benz unhappily into Supercars, pretty much only Betty and husband Daniel remain part of the Erebus structure.

There were so many controversies – remember Shane van Gisbergen's sabbatical and sudden return with Tekno Autosports and the court case that ensued; so little success – two wins in three years; and so much money spent – estimates as high as \$40 million.

By the time Ryan was drafted in late in 2015 from Erebus' GT operation to advise Klimenko just what to do next, the Supercars program was on its knees. Will Davison had negotiated an exit halfway through a four-year contract – to Tekno! – and Ash Walsh had been dropped from the second E63.

"The engine side of it was a real critical part of it and the expense of the way it operated up in Queensland was really hard to justify," recalls Ryan.

"We had to figure out how to make it sustainable, so it was not just a massive burden on Betty.

"With the way the sponsorship market is these days it's hard to justify \$8-9 million budgets. I had a vision of how we could do it for a certain budget, so I put it all on

REYNOLDS' REDEMPTION

Mount Panorama has been the scene of some of the most pivotal moments of David Reynolds' career.

It took him three attempts to make his first start in the Bathurst 1000. In 2007 his co-driver Cameron McConville retired with an engine failure on the warm-up lap. In 2008 he was replaced by Rick Kelly following the withdrawal of Kelly and Paul Radisich's car. Finally, in 2009, he made the start and finished in 12th place alongside Andy Priaulx.

Reynolds announced himself as a future star of Supercars by pushing Jamie Whincup in the closing stages of 2012. But the close-call second place threatened to leave Reynolds as a bridesmaid in the Great Race.

His career trajectory deviated in 2015 when controversial remarks in a press conference at Mount Panorama contributed (allegedly) to his departure from Prodrive Racing Australia, despite a

career-best third place in the championship.

A move to Erebus Motorsport appeared to be a backward step, but it took Reynolds just two years to get the team to the top at Mount Panorama.

"As a team we have worked extremely hard over the last year-and-a-half to get to this point," said Reynolds.

"We have always kept raising the bar. Like I have said all along, every race track we turn up to we are a better and different team to what we were at the last race. That is how quickly we are evolving as a team.

"It has just been a massive whirlwind experience to get to this point. I owe everything to them, it is not just us two

(drivers), there is a crew of 22 people behind us, which is probably one of the smallest teams in pitlane.

"In 2012 I was queen of the mountain and now we are king; it feels pretty good."



paper and said to Betty, "This is how we need to do it, are you in or out?"

She was in: "In November 2015 I put the option of walking away on the table and she was almost offended by it. That's how passionate she is about staying in Supercars."

"I think she doesn't want to walk away from anything until she succeeds."

The team exited its expensive Gold Coast quarters and relocated to Erebus' GT premises in the Melbourne suburb of Moorabbin; parked the Benzes, bought an old Walkinshaw Racing Commodore and secured an engine supply from the same place; outsourced much of its sub-assembly; hired Reynolds as its primary driver and retained its second REC via a buy-drive deal with the Russell family to run their Holden for Aaren Russell.

This was completely different to the all-singing all-dancing concept of the original Erebus Motorsport V8, which behaved like a factory team when it was very much a privateer.

"It was a big decision for Betty to change and not have something unique," admits Ryan. "But I think now she has seen she does still have something unique. Sure, it's a Holden but we have a unique team structure, we are unique technically and the way we go about it is different to everyone else. And I think that is important to her."

No-one working at Erebus on the Gold Coast in 2015 made the shift to Melbourne, apart from FIFO engineer Campbell Little. A lot of the group, thankfully, found employment up the road at DJR Team Penske. But Ryan still looks back on those days with angst.

"They were tough times and big calls, but they were decisions that had to be made," he says.

"Because I didn't live up there I was just the guy coming in delivering bad news most of the time. Sitting there face-to-face saying, 'You are going to be made redundant because of these reasons'. We offered them all positions but I don't blame any of them for not coming down."

Instead, recruitment for the 2016 season started from scratch... in early 2016.

"Getting experienced staff was going to be very hard when we moved to Melbourne," says Ryan.

"We were buying Walkinshaw cars that everyone said weren't going to be good enough, so who in their right mind wanted to come and work for that? It was going to be tough."

There have been wins and losses. Some hires lasted days, some like 2017 crew chief Dennis Huijser – who started as a mechanic on Russell's car – and Reynolds' number-one mechanic Brad Tremain saw an opportunity to step up into the big time and made the shift across the Tasman from New Zealand.

"They have been here from day one and they are now a massive part of the team because they have been through the tough times," says Ryan.

"Dennis lived here for six months without his family just to be part of it. Dennis is a brilliant crew chief and Brad is a brilliant mechanic. At 23 he is the number-one mechanic on a Bathurst-winning car!"

There are now 19 people in the team and it's a stable line-up. Obviously, the biggest hire of all in those dire early days was Reynolds, who had just finished third in the championship driving for Prodrive Racing Australia but had still not had his contract renewed.

"When he signed with us he was driving a Mercedes in Queensland and possibly living in Queensland," says Ryan.

"I think deep down he was thinking, 'What the f#%k have I got myself into? When we said we were buying old Walkinshaw cars his shoulders probably slumped again."

But the cheery philosopher/comedian with his eternally upbeat nature has been an integral part of the rebuild, bonding with the similarly eclectic Klimenko and relishing the responsibility and opportunity that comes with being the number-one driver.

Reynolds is now well established at Erebus.





Klimenko rides every bump with her drivers.

“A lot of drivers wouldn’t have got through that period and would have half-destroyed the team,” says Ryan.

“But his attitude was what kept me going and me and Betty believing we could do it. There was never any whinging and carrying on, which makes a big difference.”

That he is an exceptional driver obviously helps, too. “We say unless he is on pole we are not doing a good enough job,” says Ryan.

“He feels the grip so well in the car. If there is grip there he just uses it. He just always wants to be part of making the car faster. Anything technical or new he wants to understand it and help make it work. That passion helps the engineers work harder.”

Reynolds is the highest profile reject but Ryan sort of fits that bill, too, having chosen to exit the sport in 2011 rather than continue with Kelly Racing. He got involved with Erebus at the invitation of former chief executive Ryan Maddison, initially only to run their Bathurst 12 Hour campaign in 2012.

Ryan’s CV harks back to Perkins Engineering. He admits he is an impatient man, but he is also a highly experienced one. And he will never die wondering.

“I do get the shits sometimes and I just can’t hide it when I do,” he says sheepishly. “But I’m never scared to have a crack. I always saw a way we could do it better.”

Then there is head of engineering Alistair McVean, who joined Erebus at Bathurst in 2016 after being benched from James Courtney’s Holden Racing Team Commodore by Walkinshaw Racing. McVean walks and talks quietly but has a huge brain that is equally adept at developing a car or a winning strategy.

Little had started 2016 as Reynolds’ engineer and they even finished fifth in the deluge-shortened Clipsal Sunday race. They could have won if the team radios had been working. But Little soon departed and Ryan took over with assistance from Italian former rally engineer Mirko De Rosa.

There were some bright moments, but Ryan was also running the team and the business, literally turning his attention to engineering Reynolds’ Commodore the day before it rolled on to the track ... and doing it without historical data.



Crossing the line for a famous Bathurst win.

TIMELINE



2013: Erebus runs three Mercedes-Benz E63 AMGs in its first season.



2014: The team scales back to two entries with the loss of the James Rosenberg REC.



“Dave’s patience last year was amazing,” says Ryan. “He just had a smile on his face and basically no frustration. I never saw him upset. Deep down he was hurting but he just 100 per cent supported the team and what we were trying to achieve.”

McVean has turned out to be a literally brilliant solution. He improved the car and he connected with Reynolds.

“Alistair knew a few more things about the aero side of the car than I did and straightaway there was a couple of things he wanted to do different,” recalls Ryan.

“But he didn’t come in and say, ‘This is the way I do it’, he was more, ‘Yep I see where you are coming from, but if we did these little bits I think it will make it even better’. And he has gone on from there.”

McVean’s value became even more pronounced as the team built-up its own Commodore for Reynolds in 2017. It’s a unique combination of James White (Jimmy’s Fab Shop) chassis, the uprights from the E63, revised geometries and front-suspension components and Supashock dampers that are tuned in-house by McVean, De Rosa

and Ryan. The E-Cell seat that debuted in the E63 also carried over into the new car.

“It’s not a Walkinshaw car, it’s not a Triple Eight car,” he explains. “I said last year we were going to do our own thing. It sounded arrogant at the time to me let alone anyone else, but the fact is just buying stuff off Walkinshaw or Triple Eight wasn’t going to get us winning. It was going to get us to a little bit behind them.

“There is unique stuff in the car that no-one else has got as far as we know. It’s just a different way of looking at it in a couple of areas. There is some pretty smart stuff in there and some pretty basic stuff, too.”

Wood’s entry is Reynolds’ 2016 car so it has Erebus specs, too. That helps correlate testing results. But it is overweight, which means he doesn’t run the 15kg cool-suit system in qualifying. It goes back in for the race, which is a performance disadvantage.

Freed of the need to look after Reynolds’ racing plans, Ryan has instead been able to concentrate on the bigger Erebus picture.

There have been wildfires like the collapse of the deal

ABOVE One of the smallest teams in pitlane beat the big teams to win the most prestigious race on the calendar.



2015: Erebus retains its two entries in the final season running the AMG E63s.



2016: The team switches to a Walkinshaw Racing-built Holden VF Commodore.

with the Russells and the need to bring in Shae Davies for half of 2016.

But the commercial foundation has been bolstered by Penrite becoming a more important partner. Klimenko's contribution is far more controlled than it once was. The staff revolving door has settled down and the engineering department team is being bolstered for 2018.

There's also been time to nail down such fundamentals as pitstops and driver changes. Twelve months ago at Bathurst they were a self-admitted shambles. This year they were perfect.

"The team practices all the time now and the equipment is right," says Ryan. "The stops have been just about spot-on from Sandown onwards, which is good because they knew they were going to get yelled at if they weren't!"

The plans continue to evolve with Reynolds' deal extended. The team is now in a secure enough position to choose the second driver it wants.

"We have to find where the next Dave Reynolds comes from," says Ryan.

Then there's the decision to build two new ZBs for 2018. Not every team seems committed to making the switch from the VF so quickly, but for Ryan it's a no-brainer.

"I think commercially you have to do it to show you are ahead of the game," he explains.

"If I was a sponsor that was going to back a team that said it was going to run an older model car it suggests you're not trying, that you don't really want to be the best.

"It also looks like ZB is going to be a good aero-wise, a bit like the Volvo, so the move just makes sense."

The impression Ryan leaves is that while the Bathurst win was lucky it was no fluke. And more importantly, it's the start of something bigger, not the culmination. He is conscious the team has arrived at a sweet spot, but also understands that sweet spot can be quickly lost again. Look at the sour season the 2016 Bathurst champion Tekno is having.

"I think we will keep rolling on as long as we can keep consistent staff," says Ryan.

"We can't be the team that goes real good for a year and then goes shit. I am not going to let that happen.

"I need make sure that if an engineer leaves I know what he has been doing. I have to keep my finger on the pulse so if Alistair or Dennis miss a race, we keep going on in the right direction. If we lose a person we can't lose the race team."

The next step is to be a championship challenger and Ryan thinks that could happen soon.

"Why not? You have to be consistently in the top five. Right now we are in the top 10, call it fourth to seventh. We'll see how quickly we can progress from there.

"Betty says, 'We want to win the championship in three years', I say to her, 'Why are you being so patient?'" **V3X**





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WALKINSHAW ANDRETTI UNITED

The American influence in Supercars increases in 2018 with Andretti Autosport and United Autosports buying into Walkinshaw Racing to create Walkinshaw Andretti United, a team Ryan Walkinshaw and his new partners will be hoping can follow in the footsteps of DJR Team Penske.



Three years after Dick Johnson Racing and Team Penske joined forces to create DJR Team Penske, Walkinshaw Racing has followed suit by teaming up with Andretti Autosport and United Autosports to form Walkinshaw Andretti United from 2018. The goal is very much to replicate DJR Team Penske's success in three years' time.

It's been a tumultuous 12 months for

Walkinshaw Racing. The loss of factory Holden funding and the Holden Racing Team name was the culmination of a slide down the grid that couldn't be ignored relative to the new official Holden team, Triple Eight Race Engineering.

Ryan Walkinshaw took over his father Tom's business interests in 2011, including Holden Special Vehicles and the Holden Racing Team in addition to various interests in Europe. But the Holden Racing

Team was still reeling from the ownership changes between Tom Walkinshaw and Mark Skaife. Without a drivers' championship win since Skaife in 2002, the once mighty Holden team was struggling to keep pace with front-running rivals.

The 2017 season shaped as vital as the team rebranded without the Holden Racing Team moniker and launched as Mobil 1 HSV Racing, eager to prove the loss of factory status wouldn't condemn it to the



Walkinshaw has been in a battle to keep pace with other Holden teams.

midfield. Yet despite a season-opening podium in Adelaide for James Courtney, performances slipped and led to the team splitting with team principal Adrian Burgess mid-season.

Having seen what Team Penske's impact has had on Dick Johnson Racing, Walkinshaw set about finding new partners who could invest in his team and get it back to the front. Enter Zak Brown and Michael Andretti.

"We've looked at what both companies have to offer the team moving forward, which is why everyone should be so excited," says Walkinshaw.

"This combination of international expertise is a pivotal step in accelerating our development, getting us where we need to be.

"We've been looking for partners who can add value to the team both on and off the track, so to be able to find that so resoundingly is the most pleasing element.

"United Autosports and Andretti Autosport's experience, knowledge and record both on and off the race track, gives us, our current partners and any future partners access to global networks and talent pools."

Brown, who hails from Los Angeles, is a former racer who turned his interest in motorsport into a marketing company that's now heavily involved in a variety of categories. He set up sportscar team United Autosports with British racer Richard Dean and retains his interests in the team despite being appointed executive director of McLaren Technology Group in 2016.

Brown was introduced to Walkinshaw by Alan Gow, the manager of Courtney amongst many other motorsport interests in Britain. Brown even purchased the 2011 Bathurst 1000-winning Holden Racing

Team VE Commodore from Walkinshaw to add to his classic-car collection.

Brown was connected with Andretti Autosport, having allowed McLaren driver Fernando Alonso to race in the Indianapolis 500 with the IndyCar team. He put Walkinshaw in contact with Andretti and a deal soon followed.

Andretti will be familiar to Australian audiences, being a winner at the Gold Coast

Indy. The 1991 CART champion bought into Team Green in 2003 and became the sole team owner of the rebranded Andretti Autosport in 2009.

Andretti Autosport is best known as an Indianapolis 500 and IndyCar championship-winning team but its portfolio also includes Formula E and Global Rallycross Championship entries.

"When [Roger Penske] came down here, we started putting out some feelers to see if there would be any interest in doing something," explains Andretti.

"Ryan came to Indy and we sat down and in about half-hour we hit it off and had a deal. It makes sense for us with what we want to do with our brand, expanding it internationally."

Walkinshaw and Andretti own the same amount of shares in the team, with Brown as a minority owner.

In addition to the new-look ownership structure, Andretti Autosport will add its technical nous to the team. Walkinshaw admits this is where his team has been struggling in recent seasons.

"The most important factor is having access to resources and opportunity that we currently don't have," says Walkinshaw.



Andretti and Walkinshaw shake on the deal to team up from 2018.



Andretti was a keen observer at the Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000.

“That’s coming in in the form of expertise in development or manufacturing processes, technical expertise, and the ability to bring learnings from things like NASCAR and IndyCar to us.

“Andretti Autosport have a very diverse

portfolio of categories they compete in and they’ve been successful in most of them.

“If they’ve managed to do that in those other categories, there’s no reason they can’t do that in ours. Michael has a large team of engineers on the technical side and

he has plenty of resources to be able to support us in the development work that we’re looking at doing for the car as well.”

With Brown based in Europe and embedded in Formula 1 with his role in McLaren, there’s an added side to this deal in comparison to Team Penske’s majority ownership of DJR Team Penske.

“What we really want from Zak is for him to help us with commercial opportunities, introductions to his network and bringing his experience to what we do locally and how we can enhance what we do,” says Walkinshaw.

“We’re a pretty strong team with what we do off track, which is why we manage to command such a decent amount from most of our sponsors and partners. But we can always do a better job there and Zak’s experience in that field is second to none.

“With Andretti and United coming on board, we’ll have a European and US ladder for our personnel to climb.”

Andretti was in attendance at the Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000 to see how the team is run. He watched Scott Pye and Warren Luff claim second place and a Walkinshaw customer engine power the Erebus Motorsport entry of David Reynolds and Luke Youlden to victory.



A podium at the Clipsal 500 Adelaide was one of the few highlights for James Courtney this season.

The rebuild of the team is already underway with the recruitment of top British Touring Car Championship engineer Carl Faux, who designed the Team BMR Subaru Levorg and MG 6 cars.

Andretti Autosport technical director Eric Bretzman will also bring his expertise, having previously run Chip Ganassi Racing's NASCAR team.

Such experience is vital as Supercars teams gear up for Gen2 and Holden teams such as Walkinshaw Andretti United change to the new Commodore. But despite the team rebranding as HSV Racing in 2017, there's no guarantee it will continue to run Holdens beyond 2018.

Holden Special Vehicles and Walkinshaw Andretti United run as two separate entities. And given Holden's decision to funnel its Supercars backing into Triple Eight, Walkinshaw is free to shop around to other manufacturers.

"We've got relationships with other manufacturers through our road-car businesses and Holden is comfortable with that," explains Walkinshaw.

"We are open in our relationship that we continued on with them even though we aren't the Holden Racing Team, so I don't see there being an issue if we wanted



"WE'RE NOT COMING IN HERE WITH ANY ILLUSIONS THAT WE'RE JUST GOING TO COME IN AND KICK ARSE."

– MICHAEL ANDRETTI

to race with another manufacturer in Supercars."

The Gen2 rules and speculation over the arrival of the Chevrolet Camaro to challenge the Ford Mustang in the Australian marketplace led paddock insiders to link Holden Special Vehicles and Walkinshaw Racing to the development of a Supercar Camaro. But any such deal would need the blessing of General Motors, which would be circumspect in supporting a car racing against its own product, the Commodore being developed by its sole factory team in Triple Eight.

"Our ideal situation will be to continue

running Holdens next year, but there will be a renewed focus from myself and Michael to go and search for a new manufacturer going forward," says Walkinshaw.

"It's one of our key objectives, to start putting the search on and the feelers out for a new manufacturer.

"We've got some fantastic connections on the road-car side of things with a dozen or so manufacturers and we're very, very close with them. Michael's got the same thing from the racing side in the US as well with international brands so, ideally, together we can go and put a big search out there and try and find someone.



The Penske-Andretti battle will carry across from IndyCars to Supercars in 2018.

“If we don’t get anyone, it won’t be for lack of trying, that’s for sure.”

Andretti Autosport fields Honda engines in IndyCar, Volkswagens in Rallycross and will run the factory-backed BMW Formula E team from 2018. It’s these links that Walkinshaw will be hoping to tap into to help sell a Supercars program to a new manufacturer.

This all comes at a time when Supercars is increasingly being influenced by international motorsport.

Andretti is the first to admit Penske’s appearance in Supercars inspired his own investment, even in light of the fact he doesn’t have the trucking and other commercial interests that Penske has in Australia.

Andretti Autosport has been one of Team Penske’s biggest rivals in IndyCar over the last decade and will carry that rivalry across into Supercars.

“He’s the benchmark in the sport,” says Andretti.

“If you can beat him, you can beat anybody. So I am very excited to go head to head with him again.”

The influence of Team Penske in



Supercars is now evident. Teams such as Triple Eight and Prodrive Racing Australia, products of the European influence in Supercars in the mid 2000s, have sought to bring in new partners and expand their operations to keep pace with DJR Team Penske.

“Since Penske have come in and got their act together with DJR, I genuinely believe it’s going to be very, very hard – even for Triple Eight – to beat those guys in championships going forward,” says Walkinshaw.

“That’s because of the resource, infrastructure and personnel experience that

Despite its links to HSV, Walkinshaw Andretti United isn’t locked in to racing Holdens in Supercars.





DJR Team Penske can leverage off the Penske organisation over in the USA.

“You just can’t compete with that. So we decided to first and foremost to search for a partner that could add technical infrastructure, resources and personal expertise to our team.

“THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IS HAVING ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITY THAT WE CURRENTLY DON’T HAVE.”

– RYAN WALKINSHAW



“And someone who we could leverage off their team and add that to our team to give us more opportunity to have success than the traditional Supercars team.”

It took DJR Team Penske three years to rise to the top of Supercars. And it wasn’t simply as a result of Penske personnel being injected into Supercars but rather with an investment and recruitment in local expertise.

“We’re not coming in here with any illusions that we’re just going to come in and kick arse,” says Andretti.

“It’s going to be a project that’s going to take a while to get to where Roger is now.

“It’s taken him three years. I think we can have an immediate effect, but then to bring it to the level of Roger’s team out here is going to take a little while.”

Walkinshaw is well aware that there will be no more excuses for his team with this level of investment, especially given the team’s slide in recent seasons.

“With Andretti coming on board, we must be successful in the next couple of years,” says Walkinshaw.

The benchmark has indeed been set by DJR Team Penske. So how long before Walkinshaw Andretti Racing is at the front of the grid? **V8X**

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Fraternising with Foges

INTERVIEW BY MARK FOGARTY

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ROD NASH

THE QUIET

ACHIEVER

Newly-elected Supercars board member Rod Nash comes out of the shadows in a revealing discussion with Mark Fogarty about team ownership and the V8 debate.

He is neither an extrovert entrepreneur nor a swaggering Supercars team owner. Rod Nash is more comfortable in the background and while you may have heard of him, it's only in recent years that you've heard much from him.

Until Nash bought Ford Performance Racing (FPR) in partnership with fellow businessman racer Rusty French, he was something of a reclusive, avoiding media attention where possible. It was years before I actually spoke with Nash but once I made the reluctant connection he proved to be a voice of reason, calm and diplomatic.

He doesn't stand out in a crowd but talk to him and it is clear he knows what he wants and how to get it.

He made his fortune in vegetation-line maintenance – basically, cutting back trees from power lines – and that business continues to underpin his operations.

But Nash leaves its day-to-day operation to his management team while he runs the commercial operations of Prodrive Racing Australia (PRA) and oversees its aligned performance road-car enhancement enterprise, Tickford.

Nash co-owns PRA with French and a minority shareholder, lawyer Sven Burchartz, who is also his partner in Tickford. In addition, he owns the Rod Nash Racing (RNR) #55 entry that runs Chaz Mostert under the PRA umbrella.

His rise to prominence in the pitlane has brought Nash out of the shadows as PRA has consolidated as a top-three team, winning the Supercars drivers' championship with Mark Winterbottom in 2015 and emerging as a late challenger to fellow Ford team DJR Team Penske and Holden arch-rival Red Bull Holden Racing Team in 2017.

Nash has been further thrust into the spotlight by taking Triple Eight boss Roland Dane's position on the Supercars board, joining Brad Jones as one of the two team representatives.

It may seem like Nash is a late-comer to V8 racing but he has been involved for almost 20 years, first as a journeyman driver and then an itinerant team owner. Rod Nash Racing had alliances with all sorts, including Peter Brock, Larry Perkins and Paul Morris, until joining the FPR fold in a customer car deal in 2010.

The #55 in its previous The Bottle-O Racing guise (transferred to Winterbottom in 2016) established RNR as a



Mark Fogarty is Fairfax Media's award-winning motorsport writer. Foges also enlivens the *Inside Supercars* TV show every so often.



front-runner with Paul Dumbrell in 2011 and then David Reynolds, who finished close second at Bathurst in 2012 and third in the Supercars drivers' championship in 2015.

Since Ford Australia withdrew its factory backing at the end of that year, Nash has been working with DJR Team Penske to convince the Blue Oval to support a switch to the iconic Mustang.

What impact is the departure of James Warburton as chief executive officer of Supercars going to have on the teams?

Well, look, timing-wise, I'd like to think there's never the right time for someone of his calibre to depart, but at least he's seeing out the 2017 season.

For the teams, though, because the category's is generally in such good shape, you don't want that to drop back, so the challenge is to learn how we go to market and recruit his replacement, trying to maintain the stability he's achieved.

Warburton came in at a very critical time. Things were very tough for the teams and in the almost four-and-a-half years since you'd have to say he's done a good job, wouldn't you?

He's done an excellent job. He's made our sport attractive to partners, sponsors, TV, governments. We've had two new tracks – Newcastle and The Bend Motorsport Park – coming on under his tenure and then there are the south-east Asia relationships he's formed.

He's also been active on the Supercars commission as well, so he's been an all-rounder with his finger on the pulse. So he's done a lot for the category in tougher



ABOVE: Nash raced as a privateer from 1998 to 2001.

BELOW: Nash's #55 entry joined Ford Performance Racing in 2010.

times when there are more sports vying for less marketing funds. He's made us attractive to the marketplace.

When he came in there were teams on the edge of survival. He did the new TV deal, which brought in much-needed money, and then he cut a new revenue-sharing deal with the teams. So it's not an exaggeration to say that he saved some teams, is it?

Well, we don't know what we don't know, but we'd come off the back of the GFC and there were a few resets just because of the difficult economic times. Companies had tightened their belts and weren't allocating as much money to marketing activities such as sponsorships.

He got out there and made us more attractive in very competitive market and, equally, kept up the momentum to maintain the interest of the sponsors. So, in general, he's built the sport from where it was going through a major reset.





I remember when he first rocked up that he did make the comment to the teams in his first meeting with us at Darwin in 2013 that we had an outstanding show and that that wasn't the area that needed work. He identified that the weakness was on the administration side, which needed to be taken to another level to maximise the appeal of the racing.

His view all along was that we had a pretty good product and his efforts needed to be concentrated on ensuring that the teams received the right levels of assistance to ensure their sustainability.

He got the teams a significantly larger slice of the revenue pie, didn't he?

Yeah, he took a sustainability concept to Archer. Let's face it, they had a contract which gave them 65 per cent of the business compared with the teams' 35 per cent, so you don't have to be a mathematician to see how the profits should have been divided.

His concept was to invert that ratio to bring more funding to the teams and Archer agreed to it, so hats off to him for coming up with the concept but, equally, to the major shareholder for agreeing to that. It was a perfect example of two collectives working together really well in the interests of the sport.

You effectively control two teams because Rod Nash Racing is technically a separate entity. How does that all work under the PRA umbrella?

RNR is wholly owned by me and PRA is a partnership. The RNR REC is how I came to be involved in the first place. It was already being run out of the operation when we purchased PRA and it is still run on the same basis today.

Its major sponsorship is still the responsibility of RNR and the funds come through RNR and the PRA accountants invoice RNR for the services provided. But it's fair to say that it's an integral part of PRA and the grouping rules define it as such. The three cars run as a team, in essence, putting the ownership thing to the side.

Does the whole operation make money?

It is sustainable. PRA is run as a commercial business and that's the way I've run RNR over the years. I've made money out of it along the way because you try to run it as a business and it's no different now. And we've been diversifying in our business as well so that we're not 100 per cent reliant as a sporting entity on sponsorship funds.

So we're recreating associations from the past with Tickford, which is aligned with PRA just as Ford Performance Racing and Ford Performance Vehicles were under the previous Prodrive UK ownership. I set the business the goal that I'd like to see a quarter of their income come from commerciality outside of sponsorship and that's what we've been doing with opening up the Tickford automotive business.

But that's a separate operation again, isn't it?

Totally separate. But as we grow the business they will become closer. It's not every day that a car-performance enhancement company starts with a fully-fledged



Prodrive's line-up includes rising stars Cam Waters and Richie Stanaway.

successful motor racing team behind it, so it goes without saying that it's a great marketing tool that money can't buy.

We're also very much using the engineering expertise from the race team to create a standard under the Tickford model. So the two operations really go hand in hand. But they are separate because there are different shareholders involved. Again, like the RNR example, they're complimentary, but run as standalone businesses. It's my 20th year in Supercars and it's been a great journey, but like any commercial enterprise you can't rest on your laurels. You just have to keep adapting to change and that's what we do.

We keep looking for new challenges. It's a great industry to be involved in and it's how we leverage off that. We don't just rely on Supercars to come up with the answers. One of the good things about the business of Supercars is that the rules are that you can't control any more than four RECs and I think that's a good thing because it puts us all in hot competition with each other, both on the track and off the track. We have something that businesses use for their marketing, but we have to keep adapting to the changing business environment.

There's been speculation about rebranding the team as Tickford Racing.

It's certainly something that's been mentioned in the media and that's the direction in which we'd like to go. But when you're a sporting entity, you have to do your

research because changing your name is very disruptive. We were forced to change our trading name from Ford Performance Racing back to its company name, Prodrive Racing (Australia), because Ford owned the FPR name, and that was a lot of work, so we're not taking another change lightly.

There are benefits to aligning our road-car business with our racing, so it's certainly something that we're looking into. But we still have good relationships with Ford and they like us to keep them up to date with what we're doing. They still provide us with lower-level support, so we'll want to talk with them about our plans.

We also have to consider the ramifications of changing the team's name to our membership program and merchandise and also our general branding and our sponsors. From a commercial point of view, Tickford Racing certainly makes a lot of sense.

There's really no downside, is there?

No. It's a similar model to the one used by the previous owner. Prodrive was the majority owner of FPV in a joint venture with Ford and owned FPR outright, so it made sense to align them. However, I look at what they did and I feel there's a lot more you could do. I do head up both PRA and Tickford and then we have a common CEO in Tim Edwards, so it starts laying the foundations of why you would go down that road to integrate them and leverage the marketing.





Nash replaces Roland Dane on the Supercars board.

“FORD HAS WON THE MANUFACTURERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP, SO WE’D LIKE TO THINK THAT WE’RE DOING EVERYTHING RIGHT.”

– ROD NASH

With the Tickford business you have an incentive to remain with a Ford product in racing. So where are you at with getting Ford’s approval to run Mustangs in Supercars?

Still up in the air. We’re seeking to have a catch-up with Graeme Whickman – Ford Australia president and CEO – and that’s merely a catch-up, but having said that, it’s an important catch-up for us because we did present to them more than a year ago with what we were going to the market with Tickford. So that was the only conversation we’ve had.

But certainly this time around we want to explore with him the options that Tickford can offer through our dealer network and performance enhancement of vehicles. But we’re also very keen to talk about what their marketing focus is going forward with respect to motor racing and the Mustang.

You’ve done the groundwork, along with DJR Team Penske, on the design of a Mustang-shaped Supercar, so essentially you’re just waiting to get the nod from Ford Australia, aren’t you?

The design of a car like that is complex. It has to fit the new-generation chassis – there’s no adjusting the roll cage height or anything like that – and I agree with all that. So it’s still a lot of work and Ford has quite an amazing engineering team, both locally and overseas, that in the heyday had a lot of contribution to the design of the Falcon Supercars. We’d like to think that businesses like to showcase their technology and design, so that’s the angle we’d like them to take it up on.

So you’re looking for their help as well as their approval?

Absolutely. Between DJR Team Penske and ourselves, we’ve been aligned on this discussion because we are the Ford teams, collectively running six cars, and we’re doing a good job.

Ford has won the manufacturers’ championship, so we’d like to think that we’re doing everything right. Supercars is no longer seen by the public as a bogan sport, so we think the timing is good to race the Mustang.

Ford did make it clear when they departed from us as the factory team that they just wanted to have a rest on it and freshen up. That’s their business to decide what that means, but we’ll continue to put our best foot forward to try to convince them to support us with a move to the Mustang. Their endorsement is very critical to us.

The two teams have agreed that we don’t want to do this without their endorsement because, otherwise, you just end up doing it on a begrudging basis. I mean, it’s their brand and while, technically, we don’t have to get their approval to go and build a racecar, that isn’t the way we operate.

We still have a great relationship with their dealer network and we want to stay close to them, so their endorsement is important to us. But the days of big-money factory funding are gone and that isn’t what we’re talking to them about. It would cost a lot of money for us to engineer these cars. They have that expertise



The #55 entry is still run under the Rod Nash Racing banner.

within and if we could get assistance from them with that, well, that's indirectly worth money to you.

Even though the FG X is still very competitive, from a marketing perspective you really don't want to be running it for more than another year, do you?

It's a bigger picture than that. Supercars has been very interested in having the Mustang approved. If they had their way, Mustang would be on the track next year. But it's not a case of just changing a few panels; there's a very large aero task behind it.

And for the reasons we've just discussed, Supercars would be very keen to have the Ford endorsement behind it. Talking with my Supercars hat on, the rules were changed to allow two-door coupes like the Mustang and I think it would be good to see that happen so it's reflecting what's happening out on the road.

If and when you switch to the Mustang, would you be sticking with the tried and true five-litre V8 rather than a twin-turbo V6?

Look, first off, now you're asking me a question I feel very passionate about. This sport is about a brand and the brand is the V8 – and I don't mind going against the grain on this.

It's all very well for the entity to change its name to just Supercars, but everyone – the fans, the media, the teams – still refers to them as V8s. And while it's great for the other brands like Nissan to be involved, blue versus red is still the foundation of this sport. It's all about the branding.

Car of the Future was a big project that took a lot of years achieve and then the next steps have gone forward with Gen2, but I'm a strong advocate that we stay V8s. It's all very well to change body shapes but allowing other engine configurations as well is too much change all at once.

We run the danger of losing sight of what we do best. We've been down this road in touring cars once before and it didn't work here. Our current engine is an old-style pushrod V8, but in the future we'd more than likely be heading down the Coyote quad-cam engine route.

So you think it was a mistake get rid of the V8 branding?

I think it was right for Supercars to go to the market and speak to the manufacturers and as a result broaden eligibility with the Gen2 rules. The good thing is that manufacturers know that's an option going forward.

But it's fair to say we haven't seen all those alternate manufacturers jumping out of their skins to get in the game. So I think as much as we've opened it up, you can revisit anything at any time.

But because we haven't seen any new manufacturers attracted by Gen2, I would like to see it close back up again to just V8s. I'd like the commission to reverse those decisions and stick with V8s. Get rid of the turbo V6s. I don't profess to be an engine expert, but we've seen what happened in F1. Turbo engines haven't reduced costs – far from it – and we live in a country with

vast temperature differences and temperature has a big bearing on the performance of turbocharged engines.

The last thing we want to do is introduce disparities. Our parity rules are great and the cars are so reliable. You wouldn't want to see engines failing. There's just too much change, in my opinion.

Is it too late to change? You'll be in a position of influence now that you're on the Supercars board.

I think we've probably missed that timeframe because it'd been unfair to Holden. I'm on the board to represent what's good for the category, not my personal agenda. Given that we already have a team developing a twin-turbo V6 for a particular manufacturer, I think to turn that off now wouldn't be right.

Nonetheless, going forward, I think it's something we need to keep a very close eye on and if for some reason it became clear we were going down the wrong road, well then, we have to be prepared to change that. It's what you do as a business. You just have to grin and bear it, and not worry about saving a bit of face. If it means protecting the business, then that's the decision that should be made.

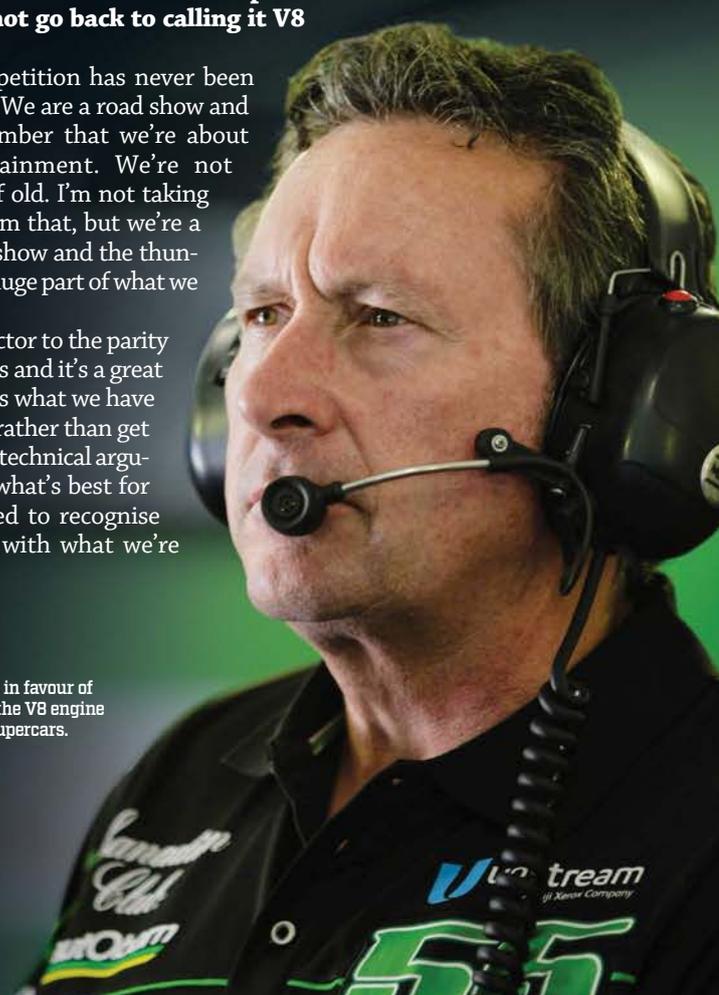
V8s are going to remain the most prevalent engine, so why not go back to calling it V8 Supercars?

Correct. The competition has never been closer or stronger. We are a road show and we have to remember that we're about providing entertainment. We're not the touring cars of old. I'm not taking anything away from that, but we're a modern-day road show and the thunder of the V8s is a huge part of what we deliver to the fans.

Add the noise factor to the parity between all the cars and it's a great show. That to me is what we have to concentrate on rather than get bogged down with technical arguments. It's about what's best for the sport. We need to recognise what is powerful with what we're doing.

“THIS SPORT IS ABOUT A BRAND AND THE BRAND IS THE V8 – AND I DON'T MIND GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN ON THIS.”
ROD NASH

Nash is in favour of keeping the V8 engine in Supercars.



STRENGTH UNDER PRESSURE

CAM WATERS AND
RICHIE STANAWAY

#6 MONSTER ENERGY RACING PRA FORD
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"IT IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE MOST PRESSURED BATTLES I
HAVE EVER BEEN IN, AND ONE OF OUR CAREER HIGHLIGHTS."
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WORDS Andrew Clarke

IMAGES Holden Motorsport, Nissan Motorsport, DJR Team Penske, Peter Norton, Danny Bourke

POWER ON PAR

How will Supercars manage engine parity when twin-turbo V6s go up against V8 engines from 2018? We quizzed key figures in pitlane to find out.

Without a doubt the biggest challenge to the next generation of Supercars is parity and competitiveness between different engine configurations. But, in saying that, we are not breaking new ground or telling you something you didn't already know. While you can get the same power with either cubic capacity or with boost (turbo), you can't get it in the same way.

Turbos have lag, the time taken for the exhaust gas to build up enough pressure to unleash hell and fury. They don't have as much engine braking either, but that is much of a muchness in racing cars. And they can be a bit more muffled – remember, we are taking gas from the exhaust.

The Holden Sandman, which is the mule for Holden's new twin-turbo V6 engine, was given a run at Bathurst with Greg Murphy at the wheel. And all the work the team put into the sound of the engine has worked just

fine. When Murph put his foot down, it came to life.

But good or bad sound it will count for nothing if the engine is either not competitive or if it is dominant. There is also, as it stands today, no guarantee that all Holden runners will make the switch since there is nothing other than Holden compelling them to do so. There remain plenty of unknowns as we move towards the 2019 full-time debut of the engine.

The sport's technical director, David Stuart, is confident he and his team have all the pieces in place to prevent either of the above outcomes.

"It may appear to be a complex process but the philosophy's pretty simple really," he says.

"The twin-turbo V6 will have to go through the same homologation process as the current V8 engines that are used in the category.

"We've been working on this now for 18 months to two years. We've had our own engine running for the

past eight or nine months, so we've been doing a lot of development work on the dyno and we've also been working closely with Red Bull Holden Racing Team on their program.

"So, essentially, the homologation process is as the engine is presented, it's run on the dyno. It is a reasonably simple operation to mimic the current Supercar power curve with a twin-turbo V6, and we've done that ourselves.

"We've also got various methods of engine control in place with the new engine-management system that Motec has developed for us. The turbochargers have an intercooler, or intercoolers depending on the packaging, that each individual team presents, and that also will be homologated with the engine."

Early thoughts of using control turbochargers and the like were put to the side given the plan is to encourage manufacturers into the sport. And it was felt that not having a critical component off the donor engine was going to make that harder. So Stuart set about some other ideas and it was really about documenting the turbo as part of the homologation process.

In that sense, it is no different to what is in place for the current engines. Now it just has specs for turbos and intercoolers. Then it just becomes about tuning.

"The beauty of the V6 engines is they all use variable cam timing to a degree, which we will be allowing and

"WITHOUT A DOUBT THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF SUPERCARS IS PARITY AND COMPETITIVENESS BETWEEN DIFFERENT ENGINE CONFIGURATIONS."

that in turn allows us to balance the engine out power-wise," says Stuart.

"We are also able to define the boost tables for each gear and rpm range.

"And that will be locked down, so the teams will know how much boost they can have for all applications and we give them all the tools to get to that maximum.

"Then we're monitoring that real time as the cars are on circuit. And we can also monitor their engine-management program post-session or post-event. The engine-management systems are very sophisticated now, so it will not be like GT3 where there is an indicator that goes off if you go over boost; we've developed a method of managing the boost so that you can't actually do that in any gear."

Stuart is full confidence that the new Holden V6 will not come out and blow away the V8s, but what if the





ABOVE & OPPOSITE: Ford and Nissan entries will retain their V8s throughout 2018.

other story happens and it takes years to get up to speed like Nissan and AMG Mercedes-Benz with the overhead cam engines? That outcome will be just as bad.

“When Car of the Future was introduced, I was working for Erebus and I was heavily involved in the design and build of the Mercedes,” says Stuart.

“Supercars did not have in place the robust mechanisms that we do now. We’re absolutely 100 per cent confident we will get this right. We’ve put an enormous amount of effort and time and research into this. We’ve done hours and hours and hours of development. We’ve done hours and hours and hours of research.”

There are two other stories to be told. One is from Roland Dane at Triple Eight, who is overseeing the new engine development for Holden. And the other is from Todd Kelly, who has been through it all with the Nissan V8 engine.

“In our case, it was probably the hardest thing we’ve ever had to try and do,” says Kelly of his team’s task of turning a Nissan Patrol engine into a Supercars racing engine.

“It was kind of against world’s best practice for purpose-built race engines and it’s still, right now as we speak, our biggest challenge.

“There’s all of the installation stuff in the car, like designing exhaust systems and airboxes and inlet manifolds and actually turning a road-car engine into a race

engine. While that is a big job, it’s not really that difficult. But developing the engine to produce the correct power and fuel economy is a massive challenge.

“We entered the series with a road-car engine in 2013 and given where everyone else was at, we were the pioneers to try and do that in this category. At that point in time the target was, in theory, actually quite easy to achieve: fuel use and power.

“But then as the category evolved over the following few years everybody really forged on with the new rules with their research and development to maximise the car within them. With the new chassis you could use the horsepower differently and that pushed another big development curve, so it was kind of doubly as hard to try and do that.

“It was a massive job but going to the next stage with the twin-turbo engine, it’s a lot of work to try and get the same responsiveness and initial power off that engine compared to a naturally aspirated, bigger cubic-inch engine. As far as maximising the power curve, instead of spending three years’ worth of research and development on camshafts and exhausts and inlet manifolds and port volumes and shapes, you could almost do it with a laptop or your boost control.

“And to a certain extent Supercars has done a lot of that testing and development already. What we spent five years on, and we’re still working on, could



potentially have 90 per cent of that time knocked out of it. It's just more of a learning curve on the packaging side of it with the turbos and the extra heat shields and the intercoolers and the bits and pieces like that."

It's certainly tempting the Kellys to follow Holden's example and switch to a twin-turbo V6 under the Gen2 rules.

"It's only a matter of time," he admits. "With their current engine, it is hard when you ask Nissan to do a very small run of cylinder heads for a race team in Australia out of a massive casting plant in Japan. Those things are a fairly big pain. With the twin-turbo engine, all of that stuff is not required so that part becomes a lot easier. In the short-term future it'll be a twin turbo and I'm kind of looking forward to doing it the easy way this time."

According to Dane, Holden's engine change is an inevitable step in the evolution of Supercars, especially with manufacturers' interest in V8 engines waning globally.

Dane sees his team's role, along with General Motors and KRE Engines, to be that of playing in the best interests of the sport. He doesn't want to come out and have Holden dominate because of its new engine; he knows that is counter-productive. But it also doesn't stop him trying to get the best out of the new configuration.

He is also a realist and thinks that, even with all the controls in place and all the best intentions, the turbo engine will perform better than the V8s at some tracks.

"We will benchmark the new engine against our current V8 engine in terms of where we want the economy and power to be," he says.

"We know what we are targeting, but I don't pretend that it's going to be easy. It also depends on more what everyone else does, if we're going to be racing against the eights or not, that's not clear.

"It's obviously much easier to establish parity against another V6 twin turbo than a V8, but it could be like the old days, where you got some specs where the V6 turbos are stronger at some tracks with the V8s better at others.

"The power curve is probably very easy to match





ABOVE & BELOW: Holden teams such as Brad Jones Racing face some dilemmas. Should they switch to the twin-turbo V6 or not and when should they do it?

because the turbo is so tuneable, but the drivability and fuel economy and the other things may not be so easy. There are going to be some differences and there'll be swings and roundabouts. But that's what used to make life interesting.

"Our goal remains to match what we've got. It would be very easy to turn up with something that blows

"WE'RE ABSOLUTELY 100 PER CENT CONFIDENT WE WILL GET THIS RIGHT. WE'VE PUT AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF EFFORT AND TIME AND RESEARCH INTO THIS."

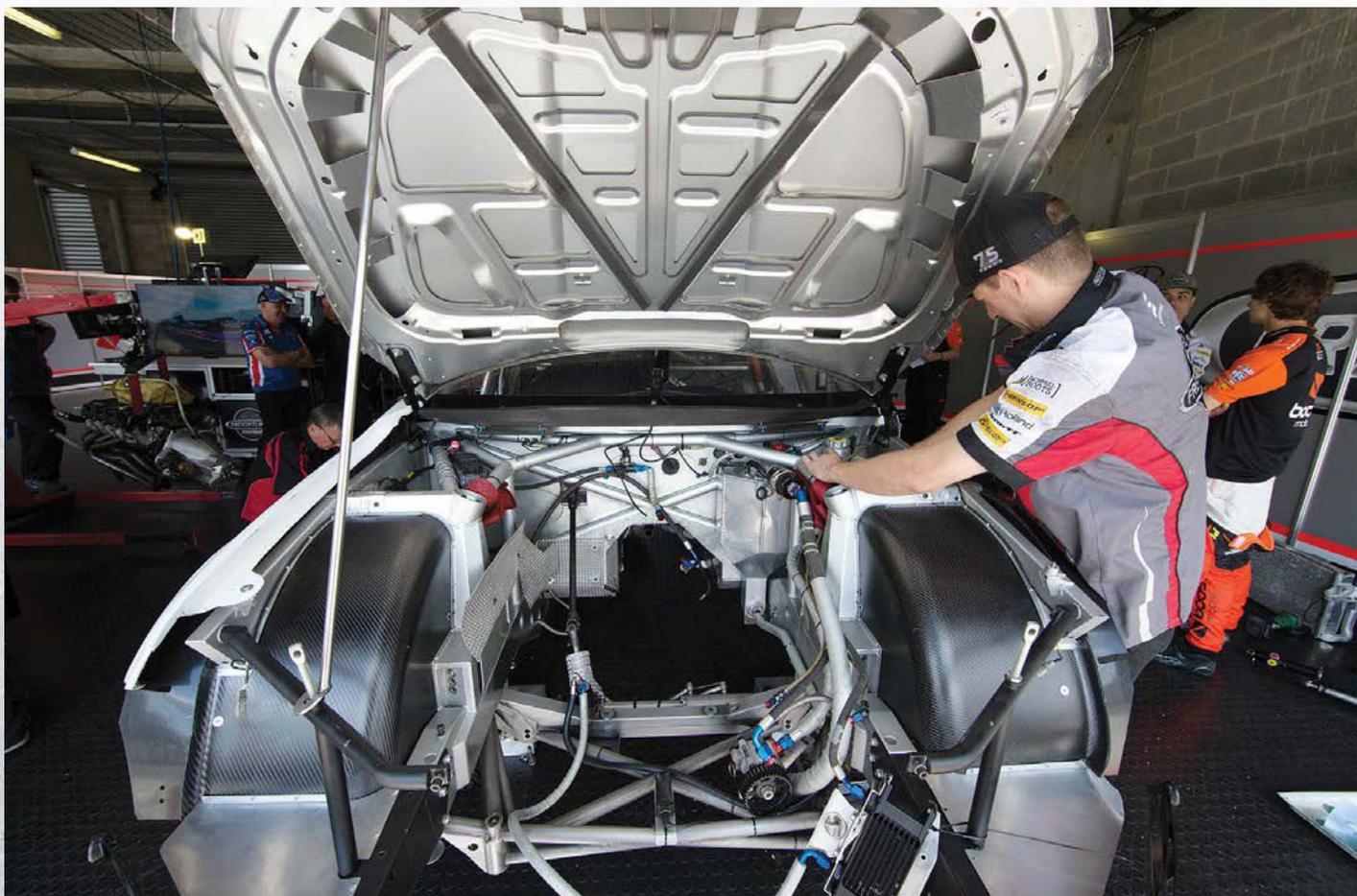
- DAVID STUART

everyone out of the water, but we know that it would be a waste of time because it wouldn't be allowed. So why do it? So we have remained focussed on matching what we've got."

In terms of getting it right, Dane says there is never enough time. But by not running the engine next season except for a few wildcard rounds, he has certainly given Holden as good a chance as any to get it right without being embarrassed.

Running the Sandman at Bathurst was also important, if not from the data side then certainly from the fan side.

There will always be doubters. And as Stuart says, people will like what they like, but there is every chance this next generational shift in the cars will arrive without the end of the world as we know it. **V8X**



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SENSATIONAL SIERRA

It's 30 years since the Ford Sierra took Australian touring cars by storm. Dick Johnson looks back on the turbocharged weapon that turned his Dick Johnson Racing team into a dominator.

As sweat-drenched Dick Johnson fiddles with an ear plug. He smiles, almost sinisterly, as his interviewer asks him about the race so far.

Johnson is happy; he'd led the opening stint of the race before handing his Ford Sierra to co-driver John Bowe at the first stop, and even a fuel-filler problem that dropped them to 11th wasn't enough to dislodge the grin.

"Were you surprised to be so competitive over here?," comes the question, asked with a syrupy British accent. Johnson's smile

grows wider, his eyes sparkle as he quietly chuckles to himself. "Ah, yeah, okay," is his response, dripping with sarcasm.

"I mean, you're obviously quite a match for the other Sierra Cosworths," the interviewer insists, desperate to pull some morsel of genius from the man who'd dominated the opening laps. Johnson duly delivers, the smile fixed across his face as he retorts, "Mate, we convicts can do anything!"

Now, three decades on from that interview at Silverstone in August 1988,

Johnson considers the weekend one of his proudest moments. His eyes sparkled that day not simply because he'd taken on the world with his Australian-developed Sierra and shown that he was as good as anyone. He'd also claimed revenge for Bathurst in 1987, where he'd been left a humiliated spectator from lap four as a bunch of foreigners went on to dominate Australia's biggest race.

"One of my favourite, bar none, photos was at Silverstone, down the Hanger straight there where on lap one we've got

LES HARDIE





"IT'S DEFINITELY ONE OF THE CARS THAT REALLY MADE OUR TEAM MAKE ITS MARK. IT'S SOMETHING THAT I THINK ALL OF OUR GUYS HAVE BEEN VERY, VERY PROUD OF OVER MANY YEARS BECAUSE WE LITERALLY BUILT A CAR THAT BEAT THE WORLD." - DICK JOHNSON

200 metres on two Eggenberger cars and a Rouse car is another 50 metres behind that," he says with the mischievous twinkle that was there all those years ago.

After switching from the Ford Mustang to Sierra at the start of the season, 1987 was a struggle. Over the course of the year the team blew 37 turbochargers, while its two-car Bathurst effort ended with both cars out before the start of the fifth lap.

"On lap two Neville Crichton and Larry Perkins came together coming out of the Cutting and it put both of them out, so I was the lone ranger. I got to the top of the Mountain and broke a diff on lap four," says Johnson.

"I walked back to the bloody pits and spent the whole day in a corporate box, which is very uncomfortable when both their cars are out and all their customers are there wanting to see their vehicles perform. It's very uncomfortable, for six or seven hours, trying to explain why these things happen."

Johnson had moved to the Sierra in 1987 in an effort to move up the order. The previous two years had been a struggle with the Mustang, a heavy, normally-aspirated

car that handled well but lacked the top speed needed to be competitive. The Sierra XR4Ti had debuted in Britain in the hands of Andy Rouse, despite the fact it was never sold outside of North America, where it was known as the Ford Merkur.

"The body was very similar or the same as the Sierra except for the fact that it had a 2.3-litre single overhead cam four-cylinder engine with a turbocharger on it," Johnson recalls.

"I knew nothing about electronics or management systems or anything like that, so the only other Ford that was homologated as a race car back then, or a Group A car, was the Mustang. So I chose to run the Mustang for a couple of years until the Sierra came out, which was the RS Cosworth and then in 1988 they bought out the RS500 Cosworth.

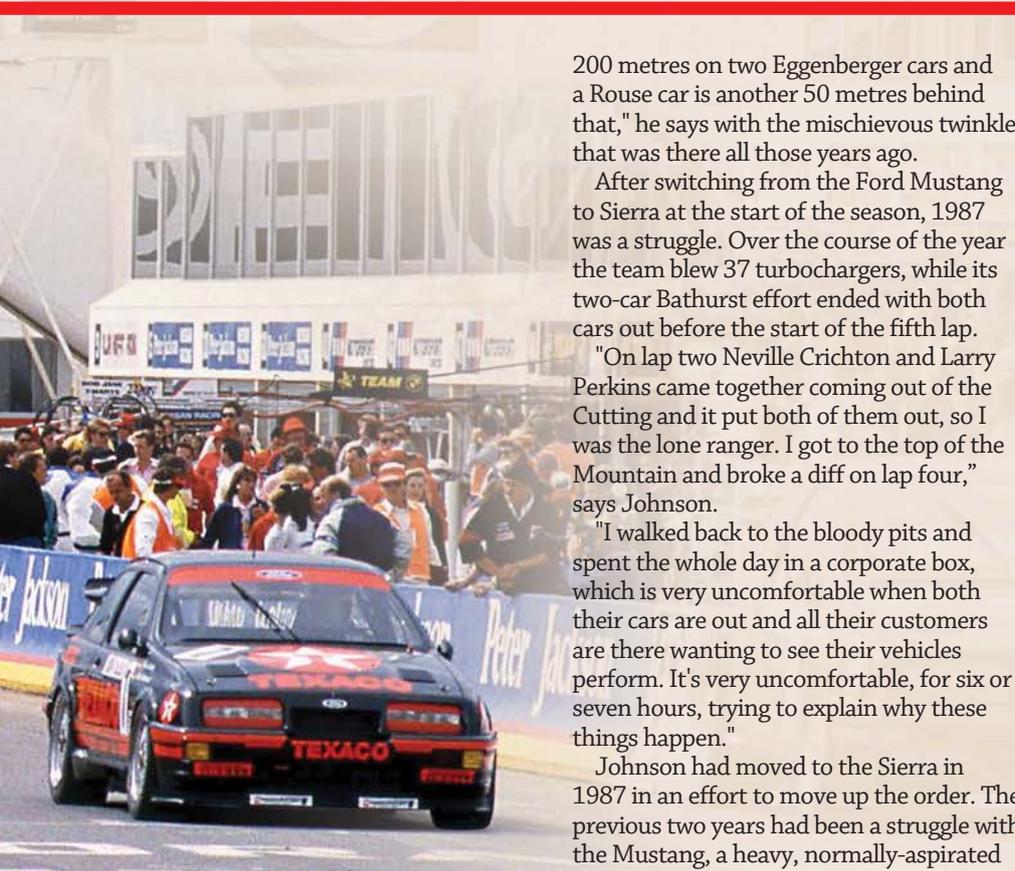
"The Mustang handled extremely well, it was just far too heavy for the amount of horsepower it had. It was only a normally-aspirated 382 Windsor engine, which I might add is the same bloody engine we're running now if I'm quite honest. It was just far too heavy. It handled well, it stopped well, but the way the rules were structured the car was, as I said, far too heavy. It didn't have an awful lot of straight-line speed. But the Sierra itself, when it first came out, it was only 980kg or something, the homologated weight. It was a bloody rocketship because we could make a fair bit of horsepower but they were popping turbos."

Throughout the course of 1987 Dick Johnson Racing struggled to come to terms with the car, though he did give the Sierra its first win with victory at Adelaide International Raceway.

The car was fast but fragile, with the differential a key concern, one that wasn't addressed until the release of the Sierra RS5000 Cosworth in 1988, which solved the turbocharger problem and gave the car more power.

"When the RS500 came, shit, we made a fair bit of bloody horsepower," says Johnson. "But then we started splitting blocks in half, right across where the welch plugs go in the side of the block. Because we'd run so much boost, it'd try and split the thing in half, which it used to do.

"We ended up overcoming that by some good Australian engineering. In fact, we made some special head studs that went from the cylinder head, like it used to hold the head on, but went all the way through and bolted into the main bearing studs at the same time, so it holds the whole thing together, so it never blew in half. It was bloody ripper!





Johnson debuted the Sierra at Mount Panorama in 1987, though it was out in the early stages.

"When we used to run them in on the dyno, we ran them in without a turbo hooked up and they had all of, flat out, they had 90hp. After it was running, we hooked the turbo up, give it about 2.4 bar of boost and it had 680hp."

Aside from the difficult power delivery, the Sierra handled well, though Johnson admits it did suffer initially from understeer. His solution to the problem landed him in court.

"Yeah, it was pretty good in that respect," he recalls of the handling.

"It was well balanced; it was just the fact that it needed more front grip. I ended up going to bloody court over that. Kevin Waldock took us to bloody court saying we stole his bloody design on a steering arm. What a joke. It was a piece of aluminium with holes drilled in and he reckoned he

owned the design. I mean, give me a break. Obviously the judge threw it out."

With the car's handling sorted, the differential remained a weakness and source of frustration stemming back to Bathurst 1987 – not to mention a degree of embarrassment.

"The diffs that they had in them were very unreliable and very fragile," explains Johnson. "So we thought, well, why don't we try and homologate, make something here."

The task fell to Ron Harrop, who worked to have Ford homologate a tried and tested nine-inch differential. It was a battle, but eventually the manufacturer gave in and the new diff received the rubber stamp it needed for competition. It also proved a revenue stream for Dick Johnson Racing, with it quickly becoming popular among fellow Ford Sierra runners despite a lighter though more expensive 'factory' alternative being developed soon after.

Johnson didn't stop there and homologated a six-speed Hollinger gearbox in place of the five-speed Getrag in an effort to overcome the turbo lag that made the cars such a handful. It also increased the car's reliability, making it more suitable to the

demands of Mount Panorama.

The refined suspension, upgraded turbo, new differential and gearbox were all well and good but fundamentally there was no escaping the fact that Johnson was wholly reliant on Andy Rouse in the UK, who drove the engine development. The engine was governed by an ECU and a machine designed to burn the programming onto the chip was needed to make any changes, and Rouse wasn't prepared to share.

"He wouldn't sell us the equipment that we could sort of programme our own chips or our own computers," says Johnson.

"So I told him he could shove it fair up the clacker and walked out of his bloody office. I ended up going to see a mate of mine who I used to get some parts off. He put us onto this guy named Graham Dale Jones and he was a guy who, on contract, did all the rally cars for Ford. They ran a Bosch system, so he said, 'I'll help, I'll put you onto a Bosch system'. So that's how we sort of got things honking."

Jones visited Johnson on his way back to the UK from Pikes Peak, stopping at the Queenslander's workshop to teach the crew how to use the Bosch system to program the car's ECU. It was a critical moment in



DICK'S POLE LAP

Scan to watch Dick Johnson claim a sensational pole position in the Ford Sierra RS500 at Mount Panorama in 1992.



**"IT WAS A BLOODY
ROCKETSHIP BECAUSE
WE COULD MAKE A FAIR
BIT OF HORSEPOWER
BUT THEY WERE
POPPING TURBOS."
DICK JOHNSON**

Johnson's relationship with the Sierra and one that transformed him from a customer to a world beater.

"That was it, that was the one thing, the key to the whole thing," Johnson admits.

"We could actually control the development of the engine and sort of not have to rely on anyone from the UK to tell us you can have this and we'll charge you a bloody fortune for it and give you five horsepower."

Transformed, Johnson and teammate John Bowe, who joined the squad in 1988, dominated the season. Johnson went on to win the championship that year, backing it up in 1989. He and Bowe won Bathurst in 1989, leading every lap of the race after qualifying on pole in a dominant display. But while Johnson is proud of that achievement, it was his last Bathurst in a Sierra that he considers on par with his Silverstone performance in 1988.

"Thinking back to 1992, where the Nissan won by default when the race was stopped and they went back not one lap but two, that was probably one of the most perfect races that JB and I ever did," says Johnson.

"We really took the fight up to them all day



The Sierra's turbo proved unreliable at first but a rocketship when working.

Johnson and John Bowe pushed the Sierra to the max at the Bathurst 1000 in 1992.



from start to finish. If ever we say you do a perfect race, that would have been it because our pitstops were spot on, our strategies were spot on, we put the right tyres on at the right time, both JB and myself probably drove better than we ever have, so it was one of those situations where it was disappointing not to win."

By 1992 the Sierra had been outclassed by its Japanese challenger, though the writing had been on the wall much earlier than that. In 1990 the tide began to turn when Jim Richards won the title from Peter Brock in a Sierra while Johnson could only manage third. Johnson's wins that year would be his last in a Sierra. Bowe went on to win two rounds in 1992, the last at

the car's penultimate event at Barbagallo, before it was retired and replaced with the Ford EB Falcon for 1993 as the sport waved goodbye to Group A.

"We knew damn well that things weren't going to last forever and, unfortunately, the Nissans really started to get their act together; twin-turbo V6, four-wheel-drive and everything else that went with it," says Johnson.

"It was a bit of a David and Goliath battle, or a tortoise and the hare, and we were the bloody tortoise. To try and keep up with the likes of the Nissan and that we would have had to gone to what they had over in the UK, which was called a Ford Sapphire, which was a four-wheel-drive Sierra

basically. We never went down that road because we never had the funds to do it."

Though well past its prime by the time it was retired, the Ford Sierra holds a special place in Johnson's memory. It was a championship winner, both in Australia and in Britain.

"It's definitely one of the cars in my eyes that really made our team make its mark," he says.

"It's something that I think all of our guys have been very, very proud of over many years because we literally built a car that beat the world."

Johnson may not have won the race that day at Silverstone, but he proved his point. We convicts really can do anything. **V3X**



The Sierra was the car to have in the late 1980s into the 1990s and dominated in terms of numbers.

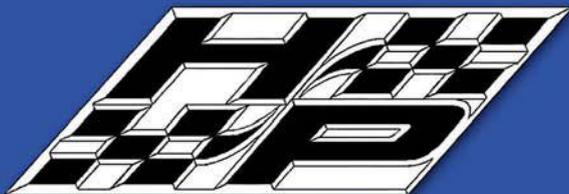


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BROCK ENERGY

Thirty years ago Peter Brock and Holden split in controversial circumstances following Brock's claims about the 'Energy Polarizer'. *Kings of the Mountain: Inside Stories of the Legends of Bathurst* by Gordon Lomas sheds new light on the saga with insight from Phil Brock.

The 1987 Bathurst 1000 was a groundbreaker. It was the first Great Race where the winning car was disqualified. It was also the first and last marathon at the Mountain that was incorporated as a round of the then freshly formed WTCC.

The race was held on October 4, 1987, but the results were declared unofficial, with the winner not being announced until March 1988 – Peter Brock had won his ninth 1000km race at the Mountain. He would not win the Great Race again.

Brock's relationship with Holden had fractured due to the wacky Energy Polarizer affair of 1986–87, which led to HDT being starved of funds from the factory and ultimately to Brock's sacking from Holden. Brock had begun fitting the HDT VL Director with the Polarizer, claiming – with no scientific evidence – that the device would help with fuel efficiency and handling.

It was discredited after being found to be essentially a box containing crystals and magnets with not a skerrick of beneficial properties, and hence it tarnished Brock's image.

HDT was predominantly fuelled by money from oil giant Mobil, but that money had to stretch across two cars, as per the contract. HDT had to field a second car beside the #05 Commodore for Bathurst. Brock would combine with David Parsons, while the team's second VL Commodore, #10, was in the hands of Peter McLeod. McLeod was a last-minute stand-in for Neil Crompton, whose competition-licence upgrade had not been completed in time for the event.

If sports betting had been legal in Australia in 1987, HDT's odds would have been deep into the triple figures – rank outsiders in a field where the big-spending European teams were expected to dominate on a tide of technology and commercial backing.

There was a fleet of European-entered BMW E30 M3s and a three-car effort from Rudi Eggenberger, but only two of the Texaco Ford Sierras would make the start. In stark contrast to the HDT cars, the Eggenberger Sierras were polished, sleek and fast. It seemed the team also had a penchant for stretching the rules.

The HDT #10 Commodore was essentially a Frankenstein effort built from bits here, parts there, and anything the cash-strapped factory team could cobble together. According to Wayne Webster, author of *Peter Brock: How Good Is This! The Real Story*, slabs of beer had been used as currency to obtain parts from rivals. The #10 Holden was expected to start the race, but with a use-by date sooner than a bottle of milk inside a locked car at the height of summer.

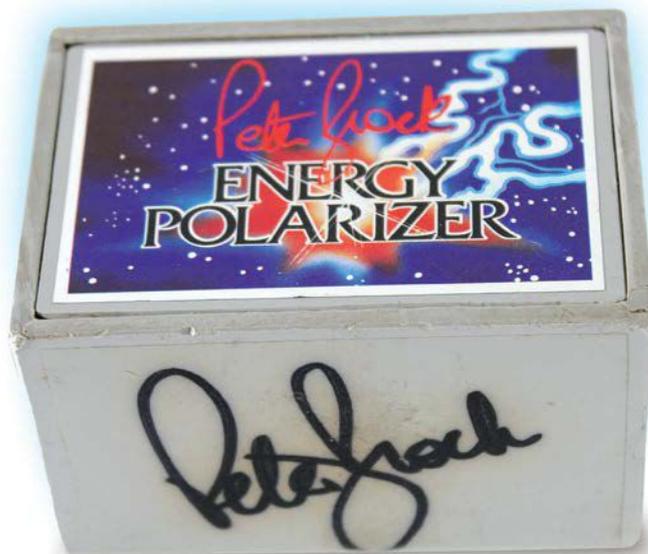
Three-times Le Mans winner Klaus Ludwig took pole position in the #7 Texaco Sierra – the first time a Ford had occupied the prime starting spot in the race since Allan Moffat in an XB Falcon in 1976.

Brock's run in the #05 Commodore would last just 34 laps before the engine expired. As was permitted at the time, drivers could be cross-entered, and Brock and Parsons promptly moved to the second car. The rearranging of the HDT deckchairs meant that Jon Crooke, the co-driver of the #10 Commodore, would spectate for the day.

In a mighty effort Brock hustled the 'bitzer' Commodore around with tremendous determination. Rivals, including some of the international raiders, were dropping like ninepins – so much so that at the end of the race, 21 cars had failed to go the distance. Brock managed to lift the #10 Commodore to third position as the 'winning' Texaco Sierra of Steve Soper and Pierre Dieudonné crossed the line in first, ahead of the second Sierra of Ludwig and Klaus Niedzwiedz. Soper and Dieudonné blitzed the field to complete 161 laps, two tours ahead of Ludwig and Niedzwiedz, while the Brock/McLeod/Parsons machine was three laps down.

Talk quickly swirled around the paddock that the Sierras were illegal. After a frightfully slow appeals process, a decision was finally handed down six months later that both the first and second-placed Sierras were deemed to have been running illegal wheel arches in a bid to run taller tyres. They were duly disqualified. Brock had literally beaten the best the WTCC could serve up at Bathurst, and with almost two hands tied behind his back because of the bitter split with Holden.

There were myriad backstories to the '87



1000. With regard to the Energy Polarizer, Phil Brock claims that all the talk about it was a diversionary tactic by Holden.

PHIL BROCK

I believe the Polarizer was a smokescreen to enable Holden to gain control of Peter's HDT Special Vehicles operation. Holden had decided in 1986 and maybe a touch before that they wanted that part of the business. As a racer, Peter was Holden's golden-haired boy. He was doing strong business with the performance side of the road-car business and Holden suddenly realised they wanted it as their own. Peter said he would never sell and stood firm, so

after that Holden decided on payback.

I had moved to Queensland in the mid-1980s and initially worked for the Motorama Dealership in Brisbane, which was a multi-franchise affair but I was specifically selling Holdens. Then I went and started the Brock Shop, again in Brisbane. I still had a good association with the Holden dealer and I remember some of the employees saying one day, 'What's this Energy Polarizer all about?' I told them I didn't know what they were talking about. I went to the Holden dealership and saw a brochure on HDT cars and it had Peter Brock with an Energy Polarizer.

I asked, 'Have you got one here?' but they didn't.

The key thing is that this was six to 12 months prior to the release of that Director Commodore. The Director was a brilliant machine – it had an independent rear end that Holden had been trying to do for years.

When you look back, you see how Peter was strong in some ways. I can see him saying, 'Who are Holden, telling me what to do?' But in reality this was General Motors, the biggest car manufacturer in the world at the time, and it just didn't work that way. I get a bit annoyed at the selective reporting on how the whole Polarizer episode



Despite the controversy with Holden, Brock raced on to win his ninth Bathurst in 1987.





rolled out. Holden were quite happy to have this Energy Polarizer in the cars and sell them with warranty and all that stuff for six to 12 months prior to saying, 'We know nothing about this. We can't do it. This is discrediting us.' Big companies don't work that way – if you don't have it signed, sealed and delivered beforehand, it never gets on the car. So it is bullshit if anyone believes Holden knew nothing about it beforehand. In all the advertising brochures, there is the Polarizer in full living colour. Whether the Polarizer is right or wrong, or works or doesn't work, doesn't matter. Someone said to me once, 'That is just like the St Christopher pendant. There is no scientific proof it works, but a lot of people believe in it.'

Holden paid for all of that advertising on the Polarizer. One of the greatest reasons why HDT Special Vehicles was so successful was that we didn't ask Holden to design anything for us. HDT designed and built what it wanted and then gave the car to Holden and it would be approved under the Australian Design Rules. That was it, even for the first HDT engine on the VC Commodore – the only thing we did was put big valve heads in it, and then Holden went,

'Oh, that won't work.' Pig's arse. It did.

I was at HDT Special Vehicles from 1980 virtually through until 1984, and it's the best workplace I've ever been involved with, before or since. It was a group of dynamic people doing great things. But when I went back there in 1987, it was the worst place to be at. There was mistrust, lies and bullshit. Also the bullshit from reporters and the Holden people.

If you look at Special Vehicles sales from 1980, they probably had a lot to do with saving Holden, because they couldn't sell bloody cars. And one of the most important things, which tends to get missed, is that Peter's major sponsor was Mobil and the deal with them was that he had to run two cars in 1987 for the endurance races. Mobil could walk away at any moment if he brought the company into disrepute,





Brock's team ran Fords and BMWs after the split.

which was and is standard practice in any contract.

Here is a situation where Holden are actively trying to get Mobil's business as their oil supplier. Castrol were supplying Holden road cars at that stage. Mobil did their own analysis on what would be best for their business and the result was that they wanted to stay with Peter Brock. You think about that – this huge multinational oil giant who doesn't give a hoot about personalities, because it's all about big business and shareholders. They said they were sticking with Brock. To my mind it was one of the most massive things of all time, but that side of the situation hadn't really played out in public before – the fact that Mobil basically said, 'Stuff you, Holden. We're sticking with Brock.'

The situation with HDT was pretty bloody dire. There was no money and it was a thin-ice job right from the start of 1987. Until then Peter had been making money hand over fist. In some ways HDT Special Vehicles was a licence to print money. It was the only company of its type in Australia, a specialised tuning house for road cars.

In 1985 Peter had a lot of money and the following year they planned this European campaign in their touring car championship. Holden said they would be involved and agreed to fund the European campaign in 1986.

At the end of that year Peter had also tipped in a fair bit of his own money and it had drained him of a lot of cash reserves. Holden were in the motions of going about the Polarizer business. If Mobil hadn't tipped in for 1987, it was all over – we would have been bankrupt.

With the race team, a new car had already been started that would be the #05

car, but the #10 car was just an old shitter. That is being a bit harsh, but basically it was built by the team apprentice. The car was okay but it was all second-hand bits.

At Bathurst the situation would turn fairly bizarre. We hired a couple of security people to watch the team garage 24/7 because it seemed to me that if the cars were any good they were going to be nobbled.

There were awful things happening during the year that Holden were doing to discredit Peter, and he was too bloody pig-headed to do anything about it.

I don't think Holden believed that Peter would be as stubborn as he was. I remember ringing up a few jourmos I had known earlier in the 1980s and they said, 'Oh, I can't talk to you about that subject [the Polarizer].'

Earlier in 1987 Peter's car was stolen with his briefcase inside. I don't know what the contents was. After I got a call from an anonymous person who said, 'I know where Peter's briefcase is,' I asked Peter what was in it. He said, 'Oh, just information on stuff we were testing, and the Polarizer stuff.' He never ended up getting it back.

Through all of this he refused to say anything in the press bagging Holden. He just wouldn't do it. I couldn't have done that – not many people could – and I totally respect how he handled it.

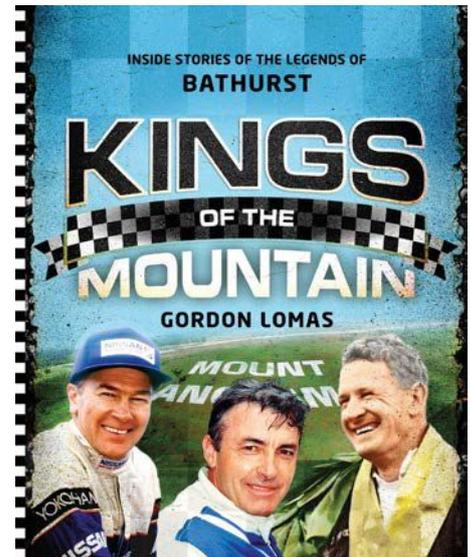
Moving along to the Bathurst weekend in 1987, I found it a difficult time. It was just

plain weird. As it turns out, the #10 HDT Commodore finished third. I was unaware at the time of all the controversy over the Eggenberger cars. All of my attention was on day-to-day survival because there was no money to kick around.

It's funny how things twist and turn in life and how the unexpected pops up every now and then. So along came the Ladas [more than 6000 Lada Samaras were imported and given the Brock Special Vehicles treatment in 1988] and Peter was on his feet and employing people.

But when I think about going from the mid-1980s, when Peter was swimming in money, to 1987 and the depths of despair, and then to win Bathurst when no-one gave us a hope in hell – it was pretty special.

Chapter extract from *Kings of the Mountain*. Inside Stories of the Legends of Bathurst by Gordon Lomas, published by Penguin Random House Australia. Available in stores now. **V3X**



BROCK IN THE RAIN

Scan to watch Peter Brock slipping and sliding around a wet Mount Panorama circuit in 1987.

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The 2017 Miss Supercars Sports Model Search is an official support event of the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship at the Vodafone Gold Coast 600, which crowned Darwin's Sophie Budack as the newest Miss Supercars.



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Judging categories were based on photographic judging; interview judging; festival wear; and swimwear judging. The winner was Sophie Budack from Darwin.

“I went in with no expectation and to hear my name called out is everything I’ve dreamt for,” says Ms. Budack. “At first it’s very daunting. You’ve got 23 other girls who are competing but we’ve all helped each other grow.”

The Miss Supercars finalists raised over \$9000 for Variety Queensland the Children’s Charity.

“This year’s program has been a huge success with a mature depth of contestants and ambassadors representing the Supercars and sponsors’ corporate image,” says Selina Macdonald of Procon Leisure.

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“Sophie is an extremely deserving winner, well spoken, intelligent, driven and intelligent. She is the perfect brand ambassador to represent sponsors and the Miss Supercars driven by Unibet brand with integrity and professionalism.” **V3X**



2017 MISS SUPERCARS PLACINGS

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1st Runner Up	Michaela Arnott	Gold Coast Qld
2nd Runner Up	Nicole Hall	Brisbane Qld
3rd Runner Up	Valeria Sizova	Sydney NSW
Miss Charity*	Ashley Izod	Brisbane Qld
Miss Personality	Jodie Pozzan	Gladstone Qld
Voters' Choice	Mercury Mowen	Rockhampton Qld

*Raising over \$1900 for Variety Qld



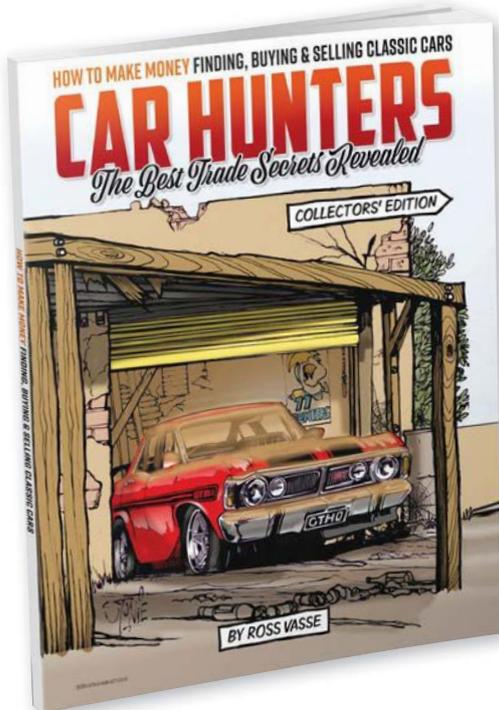
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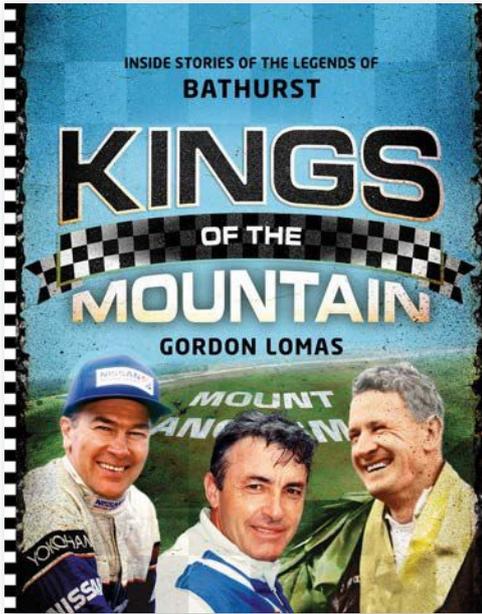
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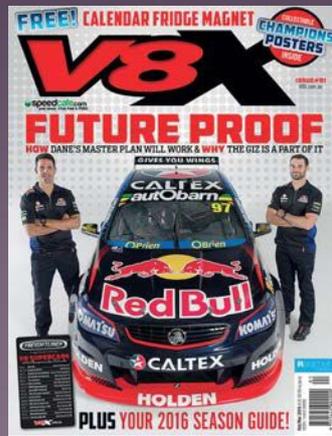
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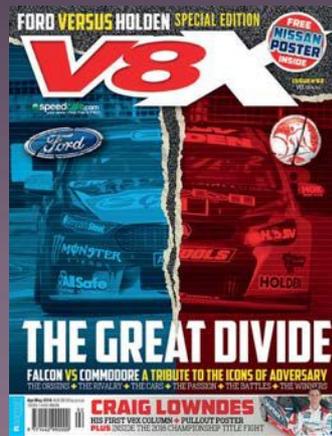
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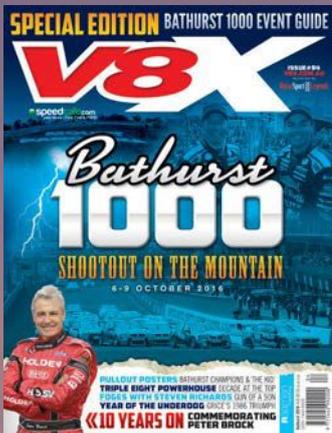
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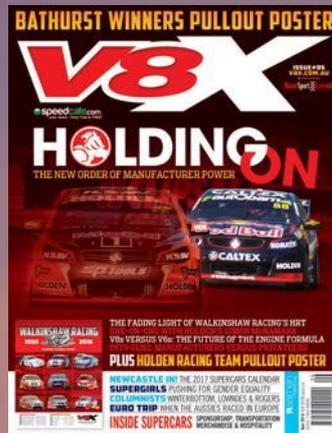
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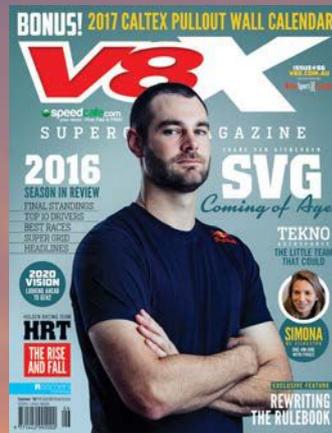
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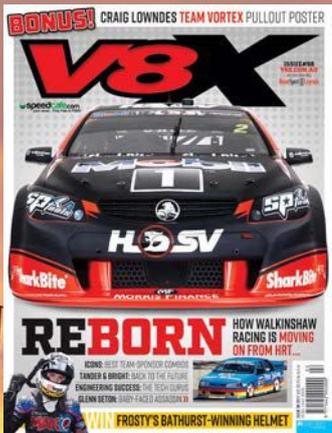
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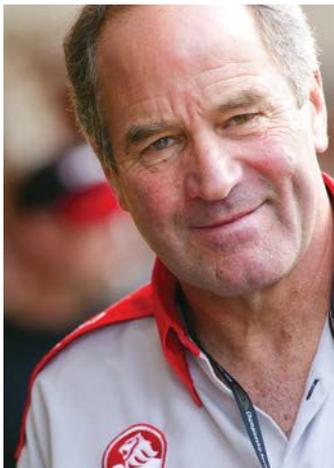
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TOP 10 LEGENDARY TEAM OWNERS



10 GARRY ROGERS ▲

Rogers has amassed more than 50 years in motorsport, winning the Bathurst 1000 and Bathurst 24 Hour and giving the likes of Garth Tander, Steven Richards, Jason Bright, Jamie Whincup and others their big breaks in Supercars.

9 GLENN SETON

Seton is the last owner/driver to win an Australian Touring Car Championship/Supercars title back in 1997. He achieved the feat twice and came agonisingly close to adding a Bathurst 1000 win.

8 ROSS & JIM STONE

The Stone brothers of New Zealand took over Pack Leader Racing from Alan Jones in 1997 and built up a powerhouse team that won three consecutive drivers' and teams' championship wins from 2003 to 2005.

7 FRED GIBSON

Gibson replaced Howard Marsden as the head of Nissan's factory team under the Gibson Motorsport branding. The team



completed the championship/Bathurst sweep with the Nissan R32 GT-R in 1991 and 1992, adding further championship and Bathurst wins in Holdens.

6 LARRY PERKINS ▲

Perkins turned the engineering nous he demonstrated at the Holden Dealer Team into his own Perkins Engineering operation from 1986, going on to win three Bathurst 1000s between 1993 and 1997.

5 DICK JOHNSON

Johnson's team, founded in 1980, has gone through a number of peaks and troughs over the years, winning multiple championships and Bathursts as Dick Johnson Racing and now adding to its trophy cabinet as DJR Team Penske.

4 ALLAN MOFFAT

Moffat's team enjoyed success across different categories, with various manufacturer arrangements and as an independent entry, winning four Australian Touring Car Championships, four Bathurst 500/1000s and a round of the World Touring Car Championship.



3 ROLAND DANE ▲

Dane's Triple Eight Race Engineering team arrived in Australia in 2003 and soon set a new standard in Supercars, becoming the benchmark team through stints with Ford and now as the sole Holden factory-backed team.

2 TOM WALKINSHAW

Walkinshaw's team won Bathurst with Jaguar in 1985 before the Scotsman played a key role in the formation of the

Holden Racing Team and HSV Dealer Teams, winning multiple drivers' championships and Bathurst 1000s.

1 HARRY FIRTH ▼

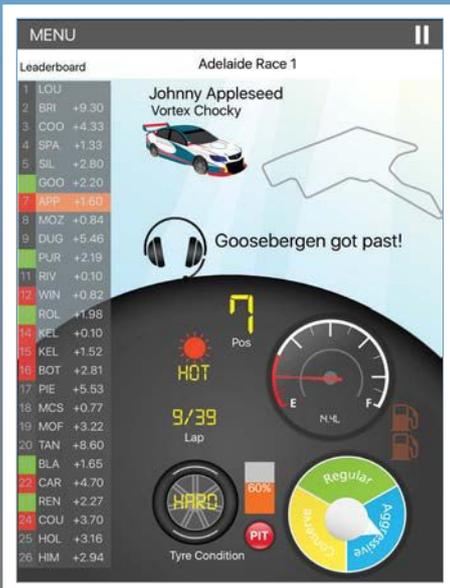
'The Fox' founded the Ford and Holden factory teams, playing a vital role in the growth of Australian motorsport through the Bathurst 500/1000 in the 1960s. Ford won four of the first five Bathurst 500s under his leadership before he switched to lead the Holden Dealer Team to the top. **V8X**





V8 RACE MANAGER

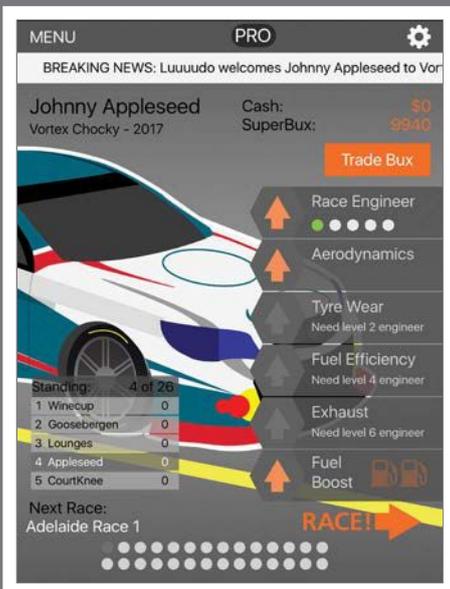
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