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V8XSupercar

Welcome

FANTASTIC FORDS

There may be only two Ford teams on the Supercars grid, no factory backing from Ford Australia and no FG X Falcon sold in showrooms yet the Blue Oval is having another standout season thanks to DJR Team Penske, ably supported by Prodrive Racing Australia.

In fact, years ending with a seven have been kind to the Blue Oval: in 1967 the Mustang won the title and the Falcon its first Bathurst; in 1977 there was the famed one-two formation Bathurst finish for Moffat Ford Dealers; in 1987 the Sierra debuted; in 1997 a second championship win for Glenn Seton; in 2007 a second consecutive Bathurst win for then Ford team Triple Eight; and in 2017 the rise of DJR Team Penske.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of Ford's greatest moment, we look back at the Allan Moffat-led formation finish with an exclusive interview with the Blue Oval hero in addition to a look at the other decade-on Ford achievements.

On the Holden side of the ledger, we check in on the

progress of the new-generation Commodore and its turbo-charged engine with Triple Eight Race Engineering team boss Roland Dane. And over at Nissan Motorsport, we chat with Simona de Silvestro on her progress this season.

New Zealand drivers have led the way in Supercars in 2017. We investigate why the likes of Scott McLaughlin, Fabian Coulthard, Shane van Gisbergen and Richie Stanaway are hitting their strides all at once, while also looking back at the career of Kiwi great Greg Murphy.

Elsewhere, we profile the inaugural Coates Hire Newcastle 500, touch base with Team

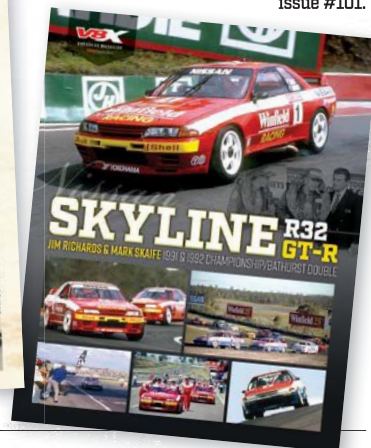
18, look back at Super Touring's manufacturer involvement and track the career of Alan Jones with extracts from his biography.

You'll also find the latest columns from Mark Winterbottom, Craig Lowndes and Garry Rogers, analysis of the key issues in Supercars and the top 10 driver-signature road cars.

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 Magtzer app store.

Enjoy!

– Adrian



BELOW: The two-sided poster in issue #101.

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SUPERCARS

THE FIVE PILLARS

Supercars' deal to run the Australian GT Championship and the launch of SuperUtes and Super5000 secures what it calls the "five pillars" of the sport moving forward. This is what the five categories bring to the table for the overarching business of Supercars.

While all eyes have been on how the Supercars category adapts to the end of Ford Falcon and Holden Commodore local production and the opening up of engine and body-shape regulations under Gen2, a quiet revolution has been happening within its support categories.

Supercars will now move forward with what's labelled as the "five pillars" of its future, namely the following five categories:

SUPERCARS

The Virgin Australia Supercars Championship remains at the core of the Supercars business as the premier motorsport category in Australia and with the Bathurst 1000 still the most revered race in the country.

However, concerns remain about how Supercars will move on from V8-powered Ford Falcons and Holden Commodores, which have been the foundation of the series for the last 25 years.

Other manufacturers haven't rushed in to help fill the void, even with the easier criteria

of being able to run non-V8 engines and coupes under Gen2. This leaves the category racing three cars that are no longer sold in Australian showrooms. The survival of the series without manufacturers is, therefore, crucial. But is a privateer formula sustainable with a lack of suitable cars in the marketplace?

There's also a question mark over how the fan base, so ingrained in supporting Falcon and Commodore V8s, will react to turbocharged imported cars.

If Supercars deems that

manufacturers are key to the growth, let alone survival, of the category, aligning it with GT racing seems inevitable because it's where the manufacturers are racing.

SUPER2

Supercars' second-tier Development Series, rebranded as Super2 in 2017, is not just a crucial feeder category for drivers, teams, engineers, etc. It's also the place where Supercars hardware is handed down, creating a valuable market for main-game teams and giving



the cars an added value.

As Supercars moves away from V8s and the traditional Falcon and Commodore bodyshells, this equipment will find a home in Super2 and keep a V8-powered presence on Supercars race weekends.

The wildcard initiative allowing Super2 entries to race in the main game has only strengthened the second-tier series. And it remains a valuable breeding ground for young drivers, the vital bridging series between junior formulae and Supercars.

SUPERGT

GT racing is booming around the world, as reflected by the growth of the Bathurst 12 Hour in recent years. However, that momentum hasn't necessarily translated into the Australian GT Championship.

Supercars' deal to run the Australian GT Championship follows in the footsteps of its acquisition of promotional rights for the Bathurst 12 Hour.

The Australian GT Championship suffered a drop in competitors in 2017, despite the abundance of GT machinery in the marketplace and increased manufacturer interest. Teams were unhappy at the leadership of the category, as

evidenced by plans to move the series away from the Supercars schedule in 2017. With teams struggling for sponsors as a result, the Australian GT Championship was forced into an embarrassing backflip to realign its schedule with Supercars.

Supercars will run the rebranded SuperGT category (not to be confused with Japan's Super GT series) and instil a SuperGT Commission,

giving GT competitors a say in the future direction of the category to avoid a repeat of the scheduling dilemma.

Where SuperGT aligns with Supercars shapes as the key question for the latter moving forward. The Gen2 rules bring Supercars closer to the GT platform, but maintaining a point of difference is vital to avoid confusion.

Yet it's clear manufacturers

are more interested in GT racing than Supercars. The global platform for GT racing allows the Australian arms of the manufacturers to be part of the parent company's international racing programs, rather than diverge into a separate category with its own unique rules such as Supercars.

Supercars could work within SuperGT to draw clearer points of difference between the two categories. For example, SuperGT could run GT3 cars exclusively and Supercars left with GT4 cars, more cost effective and less advanced cars such as the Chevrolet Camaro and Ford Mustang, which would be popular additions to the Supercars grid.

Bringing GT racing into the Supercars fold now allows for both parties to work towards a clear direction for the categories within Australia.

SUPERUTES

The changing automotive landscape has also forced Supercars to reset the core technical regulations that govern the SuperUtes category, moving from traditional utes to four-wheel-drives and SUVs.





The Toyota HiLux, Ford Ranger, Mitsubishi Triton, Nissan Navara, Holden Colorado and Mazda BT-50 have been homologated for the SuperUtes series, which launches in 2018. SuperUtes will see production models upgraded with race kits, using production turbodiesel engines and a control gearbox and ratios.

Supercars will be hoping to tap into the growing four-wheel-drive/SUV sector to entice manufacturers into the fold, with the likes of Holden already committing to race its Colorado in the category next season.

Like with SuperGT, having manufacturers working within the five pillars and having an Australian motorsport presence could make it easier for Supercars to persuade them to enter its premier touring-car category.

SUPER5000

Australia hasn't had a high-powered open-wheel category since the demise of Formula Holden. In fact, Australian open-wheelers have been in a state of flux since the Tasman Series glory days of the 1960s.

This makes Supercars' interest in open-wheelers an intriguing one.

Supercars announced plans for a modern-day Formula 5000 category at odds with a rival Formula Thunder 5000 project. The two have come together and are now working on securing investors to launch the category in 2018.

Super5000 serves two purposes for Supercars. Firstly, it's another marketplace and home for its current hardware because the Super5000 utilises Supercars' V8 engines and

transaxles. Secondly, it adds another V8-powered category and its own open-wheel series to its race weekends.

Critics of Super5000 remain unsure of the category's relevance.

Will it be a historic series similar to Touring Car Masters or will open-wheel aspirants really step up from the likes of Formula Ford and Formula 4 to race in Super5000 on their way to Europe and North America?

There's a lot of uncertainty around all five pillars. But there's strength in numbers,

which means that Supercars' future isn't solely reliant on the fate of the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship. **V8X**

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NISSAN AT THE CROSSROADS

Nissan has the biggest factory-backed presence in Supercars this season but it isn't translating into results as head office weighs up its future in the category.

Nissan hasn't had an easy time in its return to top-flight Australian touring cars under Supercars' Car of the Future regulations.

As the first non-Ford and Holden entrant into Supercars, Nissan paved the way for other manufacturers but also paid the price for being first on board.

Engine and aerodynamic parity issues set Nissan Motorsport back in terms of competitiveness with the Altima V8. And, in many ways, the team has never recovered from those handicaps.

The recent departure of Nissan Australia CEO Richard Emery has only intensified

speculation about the manufacturer's involvement in Australian motorsport.

Emery championed Nissan's involvement in Supercars and the Bathurst 12 Hour. Under his watch, Nissan extended its backing of the team formerly known as Kelly Racing for a further two years in 2017 and 2018.

Stephen Lester, the former managing director of Infiniti Canada, steps into the role of Nissan Australia CEO and will lead the manufacturer at a critical juncture.

Nissan Motorsport will continue with the Altima body and V8-powered VK56DE engine into 2018, though the Altima is no longer sold in

Australian showrooms, leaving no four-door sedan in the manufacturer's line-up.

The Gen2 rules allow Nissan to resort to its performance arm NISMO's racing line-up, namely the GT-R 3.8-litre twin-turbocharged V6 that's a regular in GT3 racing around the world, including the Bathurst 12 Hour.

Switching to the GT-R twin-turbo in Supercars will align Nissan with Holden's new engine platform, which comes into place in 2019. And aligning with NISMO's racing program saves Nissan the costs incurred by developing its own product such as with the Altima V8.

But a switch to the GT-R twin-turbo would see Nissan

Motorsport have to forgo all six years of development into its V8 engine.

Plus, running the GT-R in both Supercars and GTs raises the question of differentiation between the two, something Emery raised as a concern and is an ongoing issue for Supercars into Gen2.

If Nissan was starting from scratch, it would race the GT-R twin-turbo in Supercars by relying on NISMO's expertise and turn its domestic development into running the Navara in the new-look SuperUtes series.

However, the costly years of the Altima V8, which has produced just a handful of podiums, leaves Nissan at the crossroads. **V8X**



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CALENDAR CONUNDRUMS

As we prepare to farewell the 2017 season and look ahead to 2018, here's a look at the key questions around the make-up of the calendar moving forward.

Balancing domestic events with international-expansion aspirations remains the biggest dilemma for Supercars' evolving calendar of events.

Creating a footprint in Asia is now a realistic goal for Supercars off the back of a better working relationship with new Formula 1 owners Liberty Media and the Sepang Circuit in Malaysia declaring its interest in hosting Supercars.

But international expansion creates its own problems with its impacts on Australian events. Racing at Formula 1's Singapore Grand Prix in mid-September, for example, disrupts the Pirtek Endurance Cup scheduling and the Sandown 500's place as the lead-up event to the Bathurst 1000.

Sepang Circuit hosted its final Malaysian Grand Prix at the start of October. And any

future Supercars event will be paired with another Asian event, either at Singapore or at other potential circuits in China, Thailand and Indonesia, complicating the potential clash with the Pirtek Endurance Cup.

Closer to home, the Australian Grand Prix gets championship status for the first time in 2018, adding some weight to the start of the new season.

Sydney Motorsport Park's event is revamped with a new 'Big Bash'-style format run under lights. The circuit formerly known as Eastern Creek Raceway is now the sole Sydney event on the calendar following the demise of the Sydney Olympic Park street circuit, which is a concern for Supercars.

It remains to be seen what impact the format changes will have on the Sydney Motorsport Park event. But the changes are

a concession that the circuit will always struggle to attract a big crowd, therefore it's worthwhile to realign the event to better television demographics.

Supercars will also be hoping that changes at Queensland Raceway help crowd numbers. Queensland Raceway recently signed a new 10-year deal to host Supercars as part of facility upgrades and a track extension.

The boost to these tracks follows the near completion of The Bend Motorsport Park at Tailem Bend in South Australia, the first facility to be built in Australia since Queensland Raceway two decades ago and a potential long-term

replacement for Sandown as host of the 500-kilometre endurance race.

Beyond the addition of Tailem Bend, Supercars will be looking to other regional centres to expand its national footprint and replicate the Adelaide, Gold Coast, Newcastle and Townsville formula elsewhere.

For example, will a successful Newcastle event inspire the likes of Geelong, the Central Coast, etc?

And across the Tasman, does the success of New Zealanders in Supercars warrant a second round in addition to Pukekohe Park Raceway?

We wait to see. **V8X**

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PRODRIVE TO TICKFORD

Prodrive Racing Australia (PRA) could be rebranded Tickford Racing if plans for a unified identity go ahead.

It would be the third label for the former Blue Oval factory team, which switched from Ford Performance Racing (FPR) to Prodrive Racing Australia in 2015.

A change to Tickford Racing for the four-car Falcon squad in 2018 would be more relevant as Prodrive no longer has a local presence.

PRA is co-owned by Rod Nash, who is also behind the revival of the Tickford brand for a range of modified Fords, while team principal Tim Edwards doubles as chief executive officer of the road-car personalisation business.

PRA and Tickford operate from the same site at Campbellfield in Melbourne's north.

There is already Tickford signage on the PRA-run FG X Falcons of Chaz Mostert, Mark Winterbottom, Cameron Waters and Jason Bright.

A high-profile racing involvement would enhance

the image and appeal of Tickford-tickled road vehicles, especially its upgraded Mustangs in a crowded tuner market for the fully imported 'pony car'.

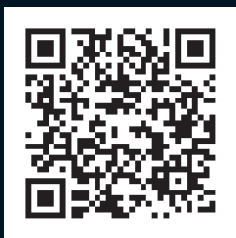
The lingering Prodrive link is the British motorsport and automotive engineering group's sale of FPR to Nash and Rusty French in early 2013.

Renaming the Supercars squad Tickford Racing would return the venerable English brand to V8 racing.

Glenn Seton Racing (GSR) ran as Ford Tickford Racing from 1999-2001, competing with semi-factory backing as the Supercars offshoot of Broadmeadows' then HSV rival, Tickford Vehicle Engineering.

Following Prodrive's takeover of Tickford, the fast Falcon joint venture became Ford Performance Vehicles in '02, followed by the purchase of GSR and transformation into the heavily funded Ford Performance Racing official factory team.

Scan to read the article.



SUPERCARS GOES ESPORTS

Supercars has officially launched its new national e-Sports competition.

To be known as the Harvey Norman Supercars Forza Challenge, gamers will be charged to set a lap time using a virtual Supercar around Mount Panorama on Xbox's Forza Motorsport 6 platform.

The All Stars Challenge will see the gamers paired up with Supercars drivers Shane van Gisbergen, Scott McLaughlin, Chaz Mostert, Nick Percat, David Reynolds, Lee Holdsworth, Simona de Silvestro and Alex Rullo for a virtual race.

"This e-sports initiative is an exciting opportunity to showcase Supercars and further our fan engagement, representing a significant growth market for our teams

and partners," said Supercars CEO James Warburton.

"The synergy and popularity of racing games and the sport of Supercars means that a e-Sports Championship in 2018 will become a natural extension of our product offering.

"We are delighted to be partnering with Harvey Norman and Microsoft as well as the stars of our show, the Supercars drivers and their teams."

This e-Sports program has already been successfully debuted by the FIA Formula E Championship, where drivers raced gamers in a virtual race in Las Vegas for a share of \$1 million in prize money.

Nissan has also enjoyed success in e-Sports by unearthing driving talent through its GT Academy program.



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BEYOND THE WHEEL

Column by Mark Winterbottom



TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

The Newcastle 500 street circuit looks set to be one of the best circuits we race on. Racing on the main streets of Newcastle in between buildings and then along the foreshore will be pretty special.

It's got everything: undulations, narrow sections, tight corners, fast corners, long straights and more, all the things that test us drivers and teams, which is what we want in order to produce a good spectacle. Tracks usually have at least one hero corner. Well, Newcastle has more than a few!

I went up there with a couple of other drivers and we had a look at what they proposed, which was awesome because

we could add our opinions and influence the track design. Although our primary role was to look at it from a safety perspective, we came up with a wishlist of improvements and they all came off.

It's a lot like the Adelaide circuit in the sense that it's smack bang in the middle of the city. And it's got a lot of those types of corners with a parklands section. But with the location along the foreshore it will be unique to Newcastle.

We went to Newcastle for a fan day when the tickets went on sale and it was packed with a real positive vibe and a buzz

around town. There's no doubt the Newcastle 500 is going to be huge and it already feels like it'll be one of the marquee events on the calendar.

It's important for us to have a marquee event as the season finale. The Sydney 500 was big when it first started but it served its time and now Newcastle could be even bigger, while still not being too far from Sydney.

Sydney was good and it served its purpose but it was at the end of its time. The track was hard on equipment and I won't particularly miss it. Newcastle has more appealing traits and more variety in its layout.

We still have a presence in Sydney at Sydney Motorsport Park. And I'm intrigued to see what becomes of that event under lights. I'm a bit unsure about the shorter format, so I have to see how it unfolds.

My preference is for longer races and the two 250km race format we will do in Newcastle is a proven winner elsewhere. It's a long day of racing and physically you're knackered. That's what you want; by Sunday feeling like you've really earned your result.

That'll be really tough in Newcastle given the additional demands of a new circuit. It's sure to be an entertaining and intriguing weekend of racing.

- Frosty



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RIGHT ON TRACK

Column by
Craig Lowndes



REFLECTIONS ON RACING OVERSEAS

Twenty years ago, we ventured to Europe to race in Formula 3000. We had great success with the Holden Racing Team (HRT) in 1996, winning the championship, Sandown and Bathurst, but my plan all along was to try to get to Formula 1.

My whole upbringing was open-wheelers and it was something I wanted to get back into. The 1996 season was a stepping stone to where I wanted to get to, with the support of Tom Walkinshaw.

It was the first time I'd left Australia so it was a culture shock. Living and racing for an Austrian team, the language barrier meant we struggled to communicate. And, obviously, it was a completely different team structure and mentality to what I was used to back home.

In terms of my driving style, I needed to try to go back to my old open-wheeler style rather than a touring-car style. For the first half of the year we had one engineer covering both cars.



And my teammate Juan Pablo Montoya came from an open-wheeler background, so he definitely had a different mindset of what he wanted from the car, which didn't help me.

I was hoping for a second season, so although it was great coming back to Australia to race in the endurance events and seeing family and friends, it did make me realise how homesick I had been. The way HRT welcomed me back reinforced that in Europe the team and its structure was probably not the right fit for me.

I also saw firsthand how Greg

Murphy had evolved as a driver in the time I was away. There's no doubt that he'd had a tough year himself. There were a lot of mechanical failures, which obviously puts a bit of strain on not only the driver but for the team. The team were underperforming because we were lucky enough to win a championship the year before and then Greg was hoping to continue that on.

At the final round of Formula 3000 we were told we couldn't go on for a second season unless we could find the funds. Returning to Australia was an easy fit for everyone, but it meant the team had three drivers (Mark Skaife, Greg and myself) for two seats.

It was very disappointing that we couldn't continue in Europe, which is what I wanted, but then also to see Greg, unfortunately, miss out on the drive. We had been quite good friends for a long time and that was sad to see given his progress in 1997.

On reflection, it was a disappointing season overseas because we didn't get the results that we needed to continue into a second year. But we gave it a go, which is the most important thing.

– Craig

“THE WAY HRT WELCOMED ME BACK REINFORCED THAT IN EUROPE THE TEAM AND ITS STRUCTURE WAS PROBABLY NOT THE RIGHT FIT”



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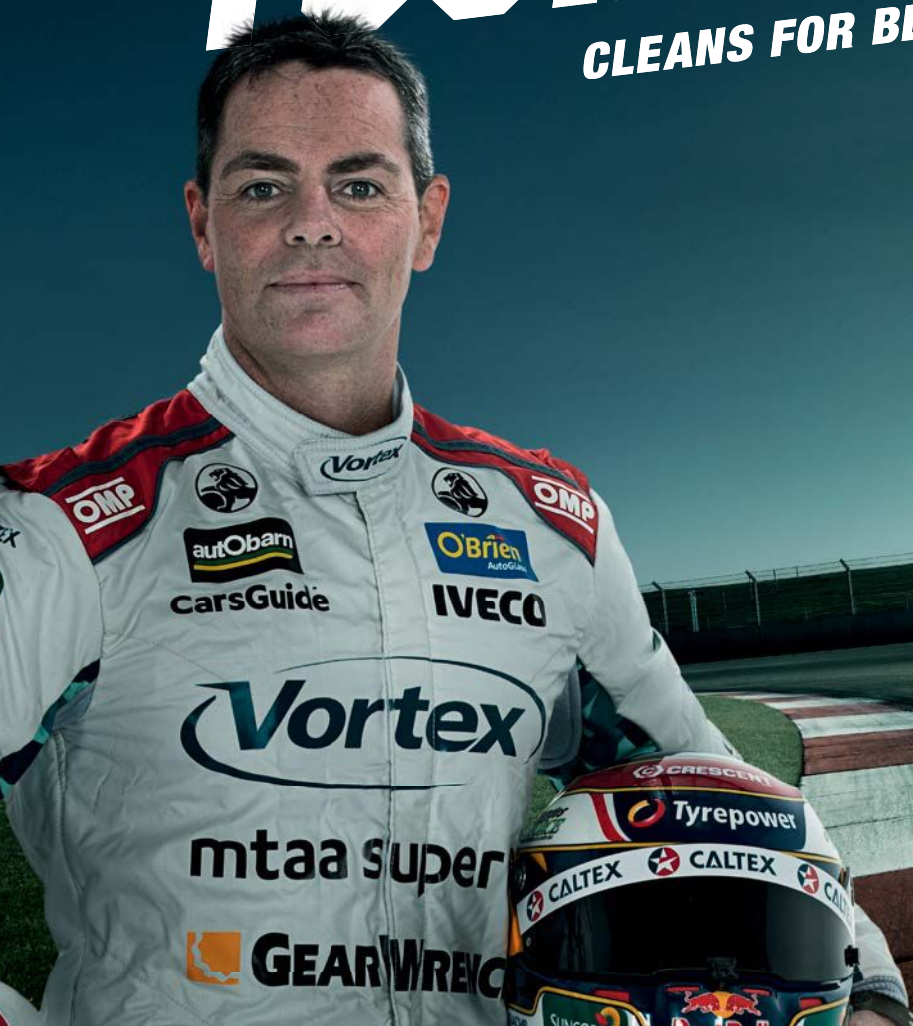


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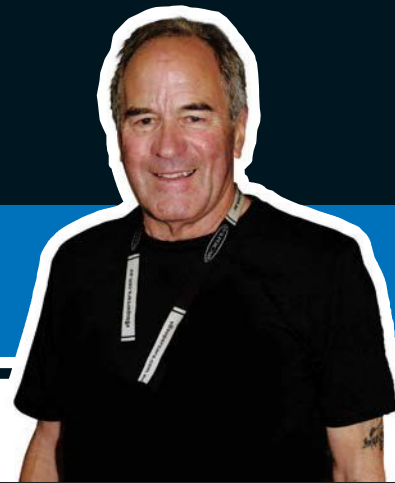
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GARRY THE GURU



MOVING ON WITH NEW ENGINES

Whilst we have all loved the V8 era of Supercars, it's time to move on. The new engine rules could just be what the sport needs.

One criticism I have had is that as a sport we haven't done enough to attract new fans. We have the stalwarts who love it but the fact is that we really need to push into a new market, a much younger market, and this may be just what we need to do that.

If Supercars has a good business plan and keeps the racing exciting and the television entertaining, does it matter what sort of engines we have got? I don't think it will matter two hoots.

The diehards, of which I am considered one, will say they don't like it. But it's a similar situation to alternative strips in the AFL; some fans complain that it's not the old traditional jumper. Well, I say get used to a new jumper and make the best of it, or, in our case, get used to new engines or new cars and make the best of it.

The new engine rules are broad enough that other manufacturers can get involved. And one thing Supercars has been good at with the introduction of the other makes is the equalisation of the engines, not just the horsepower but also the drivability.

I am confident that they will be able to get the rules with different engine configurations to work properly. It may take a bit of time and experimentation but it will work.



The entire rulebook needs to be stringent enough to make sure that we remain a touring-car category.

The cars must be able to seat four people comfortably, so that we don't end up with a whole gaggle of sportscars, but I am confident that Supercars can achieve that.

We also need rules that prevent the Porsches and Ferraris because if we allow those cars in then we have lost our category.

Whether it gets to a stage where it's so definitive that there is a list of eligible cars and if you want to run something different then you have to apply and it gets approved or not approved, I don't know as that is up to wiser people than myself to sort out.

My belief is that we should have as few rules as possible

because we don't need a million administrators at race meetings just to make adjudications on this rule and that rule.

Supercars taking over the running of GTs will be good for the business. This is about getting more people involved in our industry. There is an element of the crowd who love to see the McLarens and the Lamborghinis. If they start to draw a bigger crowd to the race meetings because some

fans want to watch them then everyone is a winner, especially the overall event.

Being an old car dealer I know only too well that the first thing you need to do is get them through the gate and then sell, sell, sell.

Will we run in GTs, SuperUtes or Super5000s? That's ultimately a decision for Barry, but if it stacks up commercially then anything is possible...

— Garry

“IF SUPERCARS HAS A GOOD BUSINESS PLAN AND KEEPS THE RACING EXCITING AND THE TELEVISION ENTERTAINING, DOES IT MATTER WHAT SORT OF ENGINES WE HAVE GOT?”

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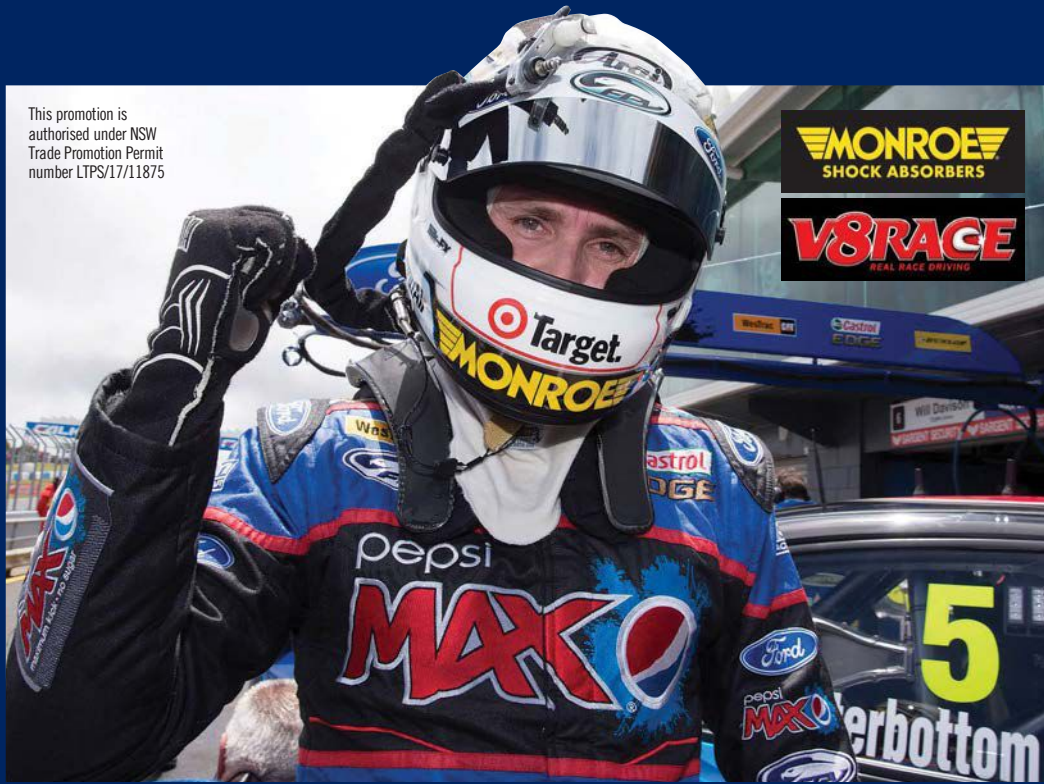
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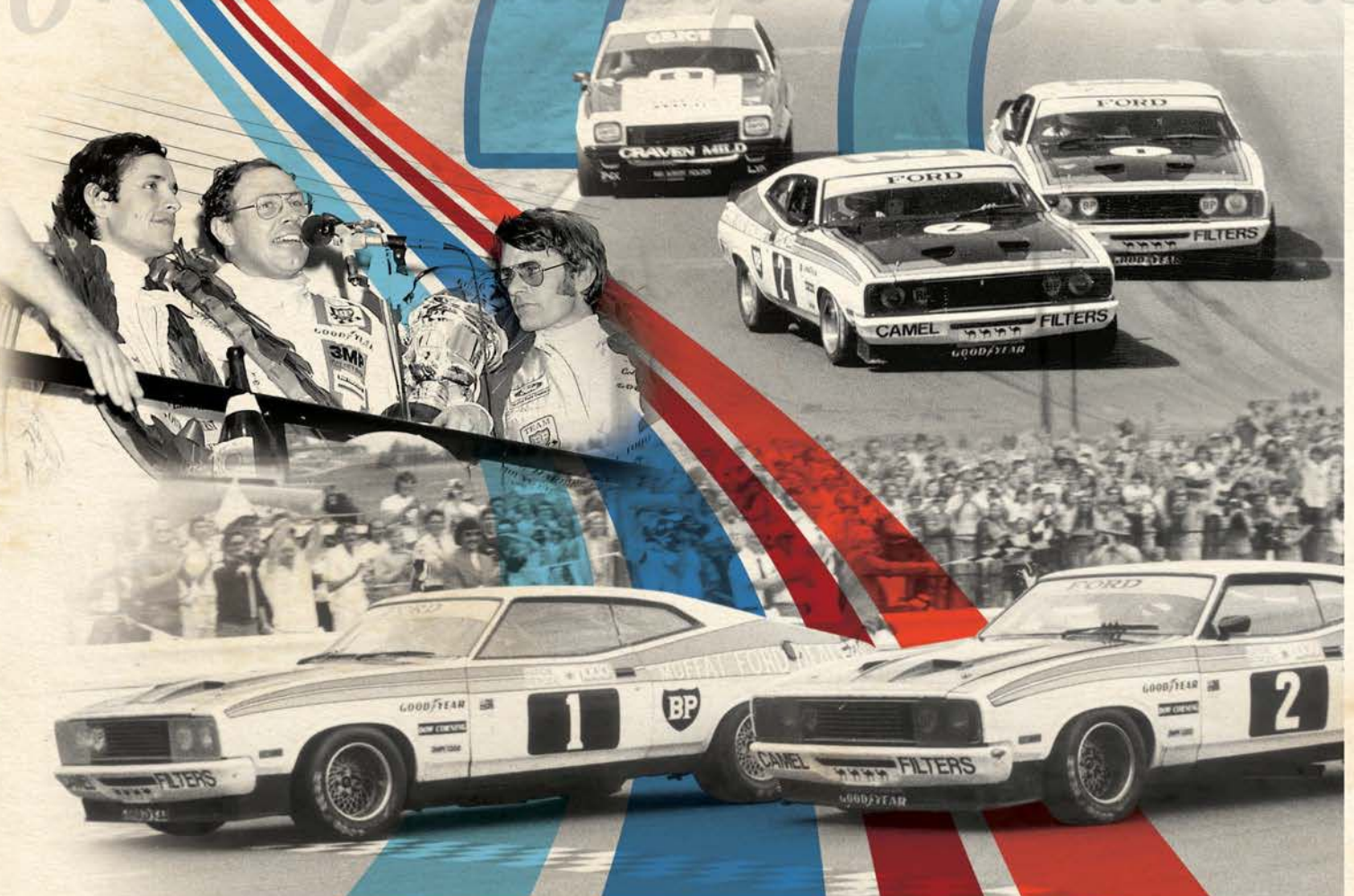
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MOFFAT'S MAGNIFICENT

77

Championship & Bathurst





LEFT: Allan Moffat and Colin Bond at the launch of the 2017 Bathurst 1000, which paid tribute to the 40th anniversary of their one-two formation finish in 1977.

What is it with Ford, Australian touring-car racing and the number seven?

Wind the clock back to 1967 and you've got the first Falcon V8 rocking up at Bathurst, winning and ushering in a new age. Fast forward to 1987 and it's the Sierra heralding a new era for the brand. Trip onwards to 1997 and the maiden V8 Supercars title with Glenn Seton, 2007 and another Bathurst win for Triple Eight with Craig Lowndes and Jamie Whincup and 2017 and DJR Team Penske's rise to the top.

Slap two sevens together, meanwhile, and you arrive at a year when Ford's biggest star of the day, Allan Moffat, absolutely steamrollered the opposition, first to his third championship, then to his fourth and final Bathurst win, the latter with a crushing team one-two formation finish that would haunt Holden fans until Peter Brock and his Holden Dealer Team finally equalled the feat in 1984.

For many Australian touring-car devotees who view the world through a blue tint, 1977 might just be the most sacred year of all in Australian motorsport. With the 40th-anniversary celebrations of Moffat's magnificent season underway, we took the opportunity to pin the racing legend down for a chat.

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FORD

BP

FILTERS

EAR

UNTOUCHABLE

Nothing could touch Moffat and his Moffat Ford Dealers team in 1977. There were 11 rounds that year's Australian Touring Car Championship (ATCC) – in a forerunner to today's all-in-one championship seasons, it included the Sandown, Adelaide, Surfers Paradise and Phillip Island enduros – and Moffat ran away with seven of them.

Teammate Colin Bond, who had controversially been tempted away from the factory Holden Dealer Team to drive for arch-rival Ford, won another race. Six of their combined eight wins were done with one-two finishes. Add the famous Bathurst one-two finish to that and you've got nine wins out of 12 for the team, seven of them one-tuos.

That's a lot of winning but ask Moffat about 1977 and, like most fans, his thoughts jump straight to the big one, Bathurst. Or, more specifically, the brake issue that slowed him late in the race.

"Would you believe me if I told you I only drove about 12 laps towards the end there with the brake pedal on the floor?" he says. "(It happened) when I went across the top of the hill, across McPhillamy. The moment I went down through the Dipper the pedal went down to the floor. I thought, 'Shit! I've got to turn left at the end of this corner!' I was ready to throw it into first gear, I can assure you of that!"

The team orders that followed, sealing the Moffat-Bond one-two running order, have generated plenty of debate over the years, but to Moffat it's all pretty simple. If there had been a threat to the team victory, he would have let Bond go. With their nearest rivals more than a lap behind, the pressure was off and the ultimate form finish could be enacted.

"I was conscious of the one-two aspect even before I had no brakes, we were so far ahead of everyone else," he says.

"I was already slowing down and trying to close the gap. At one stage I had a full lap ahead of him (Bond). I wanted him up with me so we could get the one-two finish. So he was second in command. He was there and as long as I was in front and keeping going, I wasn't getting on the phone going, 'By the way, mate, I haven't got any brakes so, you know, you better come up and catch me'. It was really only with about four laps to go that he got up to the me."

In any case, says Moffat, the final call was made out on the track. There was nothing stopping Bond from nipping in front of his team boss, but he respected the deal.



"We get up to that last little bridge," says Moffat, using his hands to illustrate the two Falcons' relative positions.

"I'm already in first gear because I didn't need to bother fucking around with the brake pedal, I didn't have one! And Colin's come down here like this, and I'm here and he's there, and we're trying to go around the bend. I remember saying to myself, 'I'm sending you a telegraphic message, back off, we're going around the corner together!' and, well, he did back off and we came around the corner like that.

"By the time we got to the last straight we were already like that [places one hand slightly in front of the other] and Colin never went to pass and that's how we finished. And to this day the photographs show the number one of my car and the number two of his, the best bloody form finish of all time!"

While competitive angst between teammates is common today, Moffat says it wasn't a factor in 1977.

"Colin was never anything other than pleasant about it," says Moffat. "I was in charge of the team and he very gracious about it. He'd got more money that year than he'd ever seen in his life!"

THE BELGIAN ACE

Another potential Bathurst victory to go with his 1969 success wasn't the only thing Bond missed out on that October weekend in 1977. Thanks to Moffat's teammate, Belgian multiple grand prix and Le Mans winner

ABOVE: The #2 entry running ahead of the #1. There was no question about which would be leading by the end of the race, though.

"I WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE ONE-TWO ASPECT EVEN BEFORE I HAD NO BRAKES, WE WERE SO FAR AHEAD OF EVERYONE ELSE."

– ALLAN MOFFAT



Jacky Ickx, he also lost the number two car's driver seat.

"We picked Jacky up at Mascot, then got on another plane and got out early to the circuit. The other guys hadn't arrived yet," says Moffat.

"So Jacky's come over and looked at the car. I open my door and say, 'Jump in'. Then he gets out and I say, 'What's wrong Jacky?' and he says, 'Let me try the number two car'. I don't think he would have even known for sure at that stage we were a two-car team!

"So he's got into Colin's car, moved around in the seat and says, 'Can we take this and put it in the other car?' And I'm thinking, 'Oh no, not one of these drama queens!' But the real joke was I never said a word and Colin never ever felt the fact he wasn't in the right seat!"

The winning Falcon's brake failure has been commonly attributed to Ickx – who was more used to wielding top-grade European race machinery than big, boofy Aussie touring cars – pushing too hard. Moffat doesn't see it that way.

"The brake failure happened while I was driving, it wasn't his fault," he says. "He might have contributed by pushing harder trying to keep up with me, but the Falcon's brakes had only a small single piston."

The Falcon's brakes, however, did crop up on the Belgian's radar long before race day.

"We've done the seat and off he goes," says Moffat. "But then he's stopped and come straight back in. I say, 'Jacky, why have you stopped, what's wrong?' and he says, 'The car, Allan, it does not stop!' I'm thinking, 'Oh no, don't tell me something's wrong', because it only takes the littlest things to happen, so I say, 'I'll double-check it'. So I get in, do a lap, come back in and I say, 'The whole car is perfect'. When he heard that, he was like, 'Oh, okay!'"

And why choose the Belgian with no previous experience of Bathurst when there were plenty of locals who could have taken the drive? According to Moffat, Ickx was just too good not to take a punt on.

"The biggest thing with Jacky is he had won Le Mans many times and there was no-one else who'd matched that," says Moffat.

"He drove for Ferrari, not many people get that. When he was in his days at Le Mans, he never had a crash, he never got into trouble. In that respect, everybody thought, 'What are we waiting for?'"

Mount Panorama has put the frighteners on plenty of top-level drivers but for Ickx, who'd taken on certified driver killers such as the Nurburgring and Spa-Francorchamps and won, it was apparently just another day in the office. And a pleasant change from the high-stakes, high-pressure environments and number-one status he usually had to deal with.

"Jacky had been on enough places around the world to know what he was doing," says Moffat.

"He was always pleasant. I think he understood that a lot was going on just with the circuit itself and that we weren't a team with 500 people working for us. He didn't put on an act saying, 'Is this all you can do?' The only thing he asked to do was change the seat.

"I was the lead driver and he was there as the second driver and he was quite happy with that. We won the

DECADES THAT DELIVERED

1967 Ford scored a unique double in the Australian Touring Car Championship and Bathurst. Ian Geoghegan scored his third championship win and second in the Ford Mustang, the height of the pony car's domination of the single-race championship deciders. Bathurst, run under different technical regulations, saw the Ford XR Falcon GT of Harry Firth and Fred Gibson lead home a factory team one-two finish. It was the first win for a locally-produced V8 car in the event, setting the foundation for the link between Falcon road and race cars.

1977 Ford's most iconic Bathurst moment. The one-two formation finish, the first of its kind, completed a season of domination for the Moffat Ford Dealers Team. With Peter Brock having split with the Holden Dealer Team, Ford officially ruled Australian touring cars.

1987 The introduction of the Sierra to Australian touring cars proved a game changer. Dick Johnson only won one round in the championship that season, though the domination of the European teams at Mount Panorama (pre-disqualification) highlighted it was the car to have in Group A. Johnson ended the year with victory in his updated RS500 at the non-championship Australian Grand Prix, ushering in the domination that would follow.

1997 Glenn Seton won the title in the first year of the rebranded V8 Supercars series, the last owner-driver and single-car team to achieve the feat, ahead of Ford rival John Bowe of Dick Johnson Racing. Seton's sponsorship from Ford Credit paved the way for Ford Australia to step up its involvement with the team in the coming seasons.

2007 Triple Eight confirmed its status as Ford's leading team with a second consecutive Bathurst 1000 win with Craig Lowndes and Jamie Whincup. Ford entries filled the podium, with Stone Brothers Racing's James Courtney and David Besnard in second and Dick Johnson Racing's Steven Johnson and Will Davison in third.

2017 DJR Team Penske emerged from the pack to challenge reigning champions Triple Eight for the championship. The combination of Dick Johnson Racing and Team Penske, Shell Australia as title sponsor, plus the arrival of Scott McLaughlin and Ludo Lacroix, is paying dividends, while Prodrive Racing Australia has added to Ford's tally of wins.





ABOVE: Moffat nursed his Falcon home to what would be Ford's most celebrated win at Mount Panorama.

race, I put him in the plane to Sydney, he flew back to his European headquarters and that was that!"

THE AFTERMATH

Moffat's 1977 successes and those of the previous season had come with the help of backdoor factory assistance from Ford. But the post-race reaction from the Blue Oval, which had yanked its factory team out of the sport at the end of 1973 and would cut factory funding to Allan Moffat Racing at the end of 1978, didn't fill Moffat with confidence for the future of the relationship.

"The race finished on the Sunday and on the Wednesday I was having lunch with Ford's head man, Sir Brian Ingliss, and his top brass," says Moffat.

"We're all eating and all of sudden there's a glass being tapped, 'Gentleman, I just want to bring it to your attention the tremendous race we've just had, Allan's pulled it off, we've got something for him'.

"Then Brian hands me an envelope. As he's handed me the envelope, as I've seen it coming across, I've already decided, 'Whatever you do, don't open that envelope'. That's how fast it happened and I took it and put it in my pocket.

"Well, I got down into that carpark, ripped it open and – you've got to bear in mind that we were working in hundreds of thousands of dollars to achieve what did with the two cars – how much would you expect to be in it? Would you expect a bit of a pat on the back? It was \$1000. I just thought, 'If this is what we're up against.'"

Today, though, such feelings are all in the past and Moffat – after more than a little prodding, according to his manager Phil Grant – is having a grand old time getting out and about in the motorsport world, re-engaging with the people and cars that defined his career.

At last year's Rolex Monterey Motorsport Festival, Ickx was so surprised to see his former co-driver he hugged Moffat up on stage in front of a select group of motorsport luminaries gathered for a reunion of Ford's 1966 Le Mans-winning effort with its GT40.

"Jacky couldn't believe Allan was there," says Grant. "He kept saying, 'What are you doing here?'"

And just to illustrate how far and wide Moffat's star shone in its day, Ickx wasn't the only global motorsport icon who enjoyed a catch-up with his former teammate at Monterey. For Moffat, it was a chance to say thanks for some of the best advice he ever got.

"In 1967 Dan Gurney and I were getting ready for a Trans-Am event in Ford Cougars for Bud Moore Racing," he says.

"We were on the pitlane and the two cars are parked there, jacked up, they're changing the diff, checking something. And I'm me and he's, well, he's Dan Gurney. And I said something to Dan in the manner of, 'How do you think I should get going?' and he said, 'Whatever you do Allan, don't wait for the phone to ring, get out there, I don't care if it's a dune buggy, don't sit at home waiting for the phone to ring'.

"A lot of people do that – 'I'm waiting for the phone call' – and how many years do you want to do that? He was absolutely fantastic and it was such great advice.

"That night at the GT40 reunion, he whispered to me and said, 'Do you remember what I said to you? Just get on with it and do it?' I whispered back to him, 'Thanks for everything you did for me.'" **V3X**



FORMATION FINISH

Scan to relive Ford's one-two formation finish from 1977.



GET YOUR OWN '77

What would be the next best thing to driving Moffat's 1977-slaying Falcon Hardtop? Well, it would have to be Tickford's Bathurst '77 special.

This pack, designed for the current Mustang, has the 1977 Bathurst winner's fingerprints all over it. Upgrades over the standard car include a whopping big supercharger ("The biggest one that goes on," says manager Phil Grant), uprated suspension and rolling stock, all tied together with the Tickford's engineering nous.

A red, blue and white exterior theme that evokes Moffat's iconic winning two-door and unique cabin treatment seal the deal.

The Bathurst '77 won't be cheap – about \$120,000, or about double a bog-stock Mustang GT V8 – but owners are in for all kinds of exclusive treats and experiences, from Moffat presenting each car and handing over the keys to special drives and events.

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HOLDEN'S NEW

Commodore



WORDS Andrew Clarke **IMAGES** Holden Motorsport, Peter Norton, Autopics.com.au

The new-generation imported Commodore represents a seismic change in Supercars as the first Gen2-spec racer in the series complete with a non-V8 turbocharged engine. We take a look under the skin of Holden's new Supercar.

For Holden it was important to have a relationship between its race and road car, so the new Commodore will not have a V8. Instead, the performance model features a turbocharged V6 engine. And therein lies the reason for Holden's change.

Don't underestimate the size of the step.

This is as big a change for Holden since the six-cylinder Toranas switched to a V8 in the 1970s.

In effect, Holden is giving up 40 years of development

work and all that knowledge. They have been racing this new engine elsewhere for a while but running in Supercars is not always as easy as it sounds.

In marketing terms, however, it is important for Holden to have alignment between the performance car it sells and the car that it races.

It is also important that Holden remains in Supercars and owns the intellectual property to the car, so without the approval from head office the new car doesn't go racing.

The new racer is essentially an Opel Insignia and will

COMMODORE



be imported rather than built here. It is slightly smaller than the current car but not significantly so. Triple Eight Race Engineering has been tasked with getting the new racer right.

THE ENGINE

Right from the start it was clear the engine development program wasn't going to be about power. Power and torque targets from the early builds revealed it was more about pulling the engine back to the V8 and even the sound was pretty easy to get right.

Controversially, Holden announced it would run a lease program for the engines... and then backed away from further comment. Roland Dane says this is to make the transition more affordable and cede to Supercars' desire to simplify control of engines via a single supplier.

Holden, or more specifically General Motors, owns the IP over the engines and it can restrict access to the engines, which are expected to fully replace the V8 in 2019.

"I don't want to paint ourselves into a corner over something which, at the moment, we've got a very flexible approach to," says Dane.

"The idea is to come up with a program that reflects the durability of this engine, which hopefully will be considerably more durable than the current engine we're using.

"Our engines today in racing terms are fairly maintenance intensive. Anyone who looks at the engine logs, which are published regularly internally by Supercars, can see that.

"So the idea is that we want the engine to last longer



LION'S ROAR

Scan to watch Craig Lowndes drive the new V6 twin-turbo Commodore at full noise.



without losing performance. Maybe we can also reduce the capital investment for our teams. But certainly the intention of Supercars has always been that, and when people migrate away from the existing Holden and Ford V8s, that future engines come from one builder.

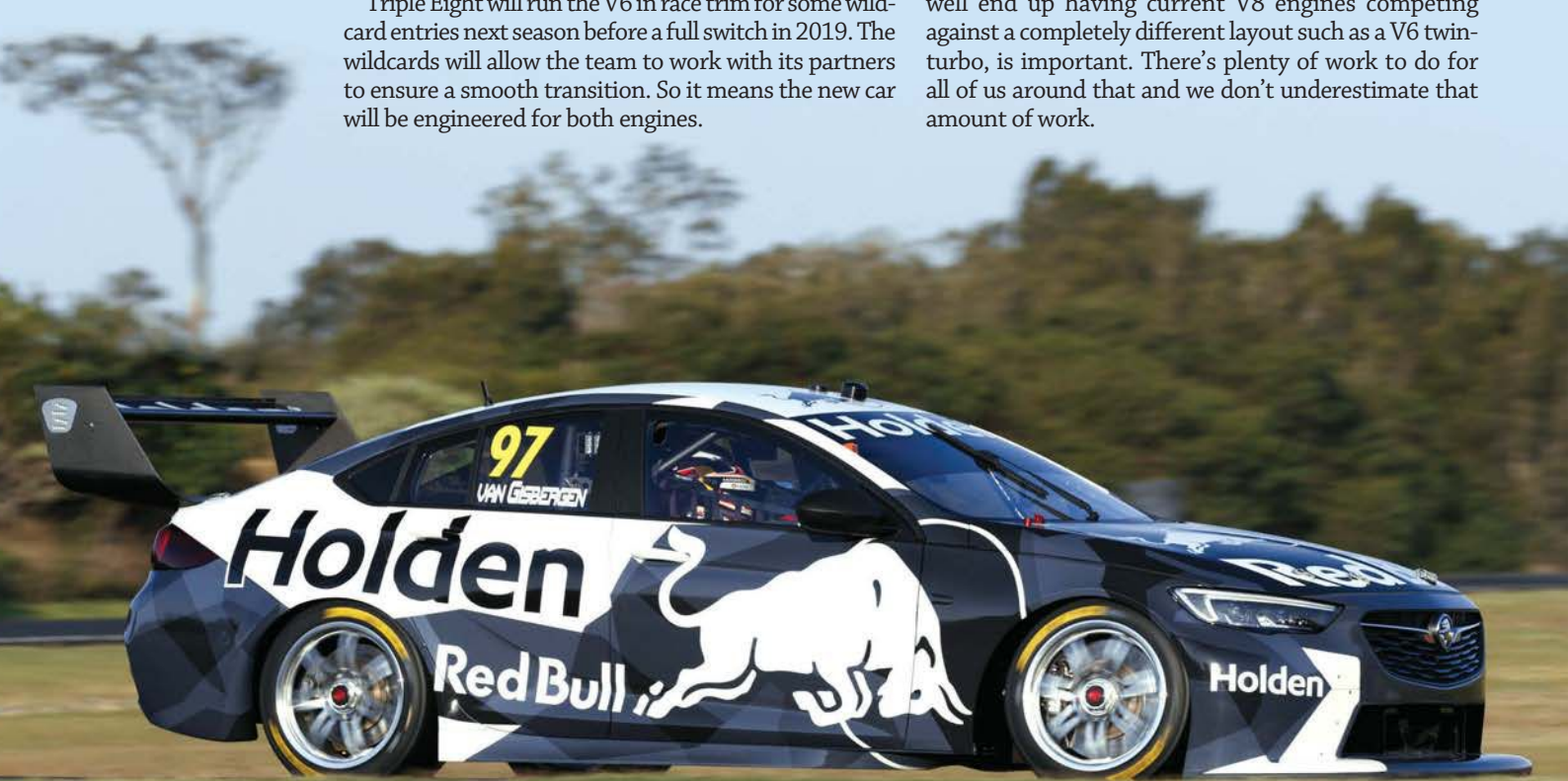
“So the Nissan engines come from one builder. Obviously, it’s only one team, so that’s easy. But if future engines for a different manufacturer come from a specific builder for that manufacturer, then it makes it much easier to police. It makes it much easier to ensure that everyone’s got the same equipment. So that’s very much the part of the thinking behind this as well.”

Triple Eight will run the V6 in race trim for some wildcard entries next season before a full switch in 2019. The wildcards will allow the team to work with its partners to ensure a smooth transition. So it means the new car will be engineered for both engines.

“The V8 engine is straightforward; the amount of space we’ve got under the bonnet is almost identical to the current car and since there are so many other regulations around the engines and Car of the Future, it is no real issue there,” says Dane.

“The V6 turbo is obviously a completely different kettle of fish. We have run that engine in the Sandman vehicle that we built several years ago with this job in mind. And we are happy with that initial run. What we’ve got is a very good base unit at the moment and it is good enough to be truly competitive in a Supercar field.

“The parity modelling of Supercars, where you could well end up having current V8 engines competing against a completely different layout such as a V6 twin-turbo, is important. There’s plenty of work to do for all of us around that and we don’t underestimate that amount of work.



“We’ll carry on doing it with Supercars’ input behind closed doors to make sure it rolls out properly around the middle of next year.

“We need to make sure that it’s competitive whilst sticking to the Supercar guidelines. If we were allowed to roll it out and give it its head it would be more than competitive. The power is not an issue.”

THE BODY

Again, the strict controls from Supercars on what is allowed forms the base constraints of this project. For the first time, however, Triple Eight is handling the full development of the bodyshell with Holden.

The Car of the Future specs control the running gear and the chassis, so this job is just about a bit of stretching and bending to get the shell to fit the chassis.

The new Commodore has almost the same wheelbase as a current Supercar and is almost the right width and length, too, so there really isn’t that much to it, except moving it from a front-wheel-drive platform to rear-wheel-drive, or more specifically, going from a transverse engine to a longitudinal one. That means it is all down to aero and the parity process.

Previously Dane would have leant heavily on Ludo Lacroix for this sort of work but his departure to DJR Team Penske has meant some shuffling of staff. A few engineers have some new challenges to face and an extra one or two have come into the place, such as ex-Formula 1 technical director Sam Michael.

The challenge, as ever, is to make the most efficient car possible within the specs outlined by Supercars. This means drag and front and rear downforce will be matched to the current batch of cars.

In terms of downforce and drag, the only real issue is the sleeker back of the hatchback car versus the booted rear end of the current car. But it was no biggie, says Dane, who adds that the sleeker option is not necessarily any more efficient than the boot. In fact, he says when he ran Vectras in Europe many years ago they tested both boot and hatch and went with the boot, which they found was the better option.

Dane’s operation has been involved in the development of both Falcon and Commodore Supercars in the past. He says the team relishes the chance to get involved at the start of a project.

“This is a bit more extensive in that we’re doing the complete development of the car, whereas with the VE, we took over an existing and homologated car, as it were, which was already being run by other teams when we started with Holden in 2010,” he adds.

“It was a collaborative exercise with what was then Holden Racing Team and ourselves. And this is a bigger undertaking, to be honest; it’s more like when we did the original FG back in 2008. There’s no question, if Ludo was still here, he’d be involved. But Ludo leaving us gave us the opportunity to allow other people to step up and also to bring in new blood. That’s something I’m very happy with.

“I think it’s very easy to get sort of stuck in your ways, if you like. And, yes, those ways served us well over the years.



ABOVE: Holden’s last six-cylinder was the Torana GTR-XU1. BELOW: Triple Eight is leading the way for the development of the new Commodore Supercar.



“I certainly have said it quite a few times that it was time to change. And I can see that on a day-to-day basis.”

Dane and his team will juggle the challenge of trying to beat the Falcons out of DJR Team Penske while developing something great for next year. The Ford teams will continue with the Falcon, so they have a known program. The only real change in 2018 will be the Commodore.

“I prefer to let our actions do the talking while other people talk everything up for themselves,” says Dane.

“We’re working really hard and everyone’s been trying to make sure that we don’t lose sight of the program this year as well. But we’ve also got to keep working really hard on next year’s program, which is a pretty big undertaking.

“It’s more complicated with the slow logistics because of where the base car is built; it is no longer just Adelaide for us and that does make it more complicated than previous projects. But, yeah, it’s more interesting and exciting.” **VE8**

UNLOCKING SPEED

INTERVIEW John Bannon IMAGES Nissan Motorsport

This time last year Swiss superstar Simona de Silvestro completed her second wildcard appearance at the Bathurst 1000 and was preparing for her full-time stint in Supercars. One year on, we touch base with the 29-year-old to discuss her progress.

Supercars isn't easy for rookies, let alone one new to touring-car racing and Australia. Nissan Motorsport rookie Simona de Silvestro has had a lot to learn in her first full-time season in Supercars, as she tells *V8X Supercar Magazine's* John Bannon.

How do you feel you're fitting in at Nissan Motorsport?

Yeah, I feel like I fit in pretty good. There has definitely been a lot of progress and now I think we are pretty close, but we're still missing a little bit. It's always the last few tenths that are the hardest to find, but that's why we are working really hard on the car to find that.

You had your family here for the endurance events. How has that been?

It's actually the first time this year that they have come, so it's nice. When you move from Switzerland to Australia it is a bit lonely sometimes, but the team has been really good to me. And, yeah, for sure having your parents around is always nice.

Some commentators have said that you're one of the best full-time internationals to come out to race in Australia, not only in terms of your reputation but what you've produced on the track. What do you think of that suggestion?

It's pretty good but at the same time I'm not really happy with my performance. Okay, it is good to see the series is tough because other people have tried before and struggled as much as I did or even more. That gives you a little bit of confidence.

As a driver you just want to get quicker, so it doesn't really matter what people have done before you as you just want to focus on yourself and move forward.

What are you doing well and what do you need to work on?

I think the biggest thing is just really getting it all together. Every time we go to the track next year, except Bathurst, we're not going to start behind the eight ball, so that's going to be really good.

We can start working on the car straight away instead of spending the first session figuring out where everything is going. So that's quite important but, results-wise, it could have been a little bit better for sure.

Results have slipped away a little bit when compared with the first half of the season. Do you know why?

I think as a team we're all struggling a little bit if we look at the other cars as well. Some races we've been really strong and other races not really. I think as a team we've just struggled a little bit more this year to have a consistent car and if Rick Kelly and Michael Caruso are not in the top 10 then you know there is a lot of work to do because they are people that usually run up front.

So, for me, that makes it a little more challenging because if I don't get the lap really perfect you are starting like 21st or 22nd. It just adds a little bit more pressure too because you have to get it all together to get an okay result.

Where does the biggest improvement need to come from, qualifying or the races?

BELOW: Simona de Silvestro has spent 2017 finding her feet in Supercars.







De Silvestro has worked closely with her engineers to adapt her driving style to Supercars.



Yeah, I've really struggled a bit in the races. I think the biggest thing is everything is so close. So it just makes your life so much harder when you're starting towards the back in any series. And, for sure, if we end up qualifying a little bit more in the pack I think that is going to help quite a bit.

It must be hard mentally when there's very little between being inside the top 10 and outside the top 20. How frustrating is that?

Yeah, if you look at it and you're like two-tenths away from your teammate and you're 22nd, it is pretty frustrating. But that just shows that the series is at such a high level and you just have to nail everything perfectly to be up front.

During your last two trips to Bathurst there was so much hype and media around your wildcard entry. Were you relieved just to be able to get on with the job this year as a full-time driver in Supercars?

I didn't really feel any additional pressure before. I think I feel more pressure now because I am a main-game driver and you've been running the whole year in the car, so you're hoping for a good result finally at a place that you know. I think there was a bit more pressure this time around actually.

You've been an inspiration for some of the young female drivers coming through the sport. But, at the same time, it's been disappointing for some fans that Renee Gracie and Chelsea Angelo are no longer part of the Super2 Series.

“NEXT YEAR WE DEFINITELY HAVE TO BE MORE CONSISTENT - AND THAT'S WHAT'S IMPORTANT!” - SIMONA DE SILVESTRO




It just shows that racing is really tough. I've experienced that before in the past when I was in IndyCar. You can be a pretty good driver but if you don't have the funding behind you it makes it that much more complicated.

Hopefully more companies get behind young girls and I think there's quite a few in go-karting right now that are doing a really good job. And that's the important thing, getting a shot. I've been really lucky with Harvey Norman giving me this shot here in Supercars.

Do you think you've got the car to deliver the results you want in Supercars?

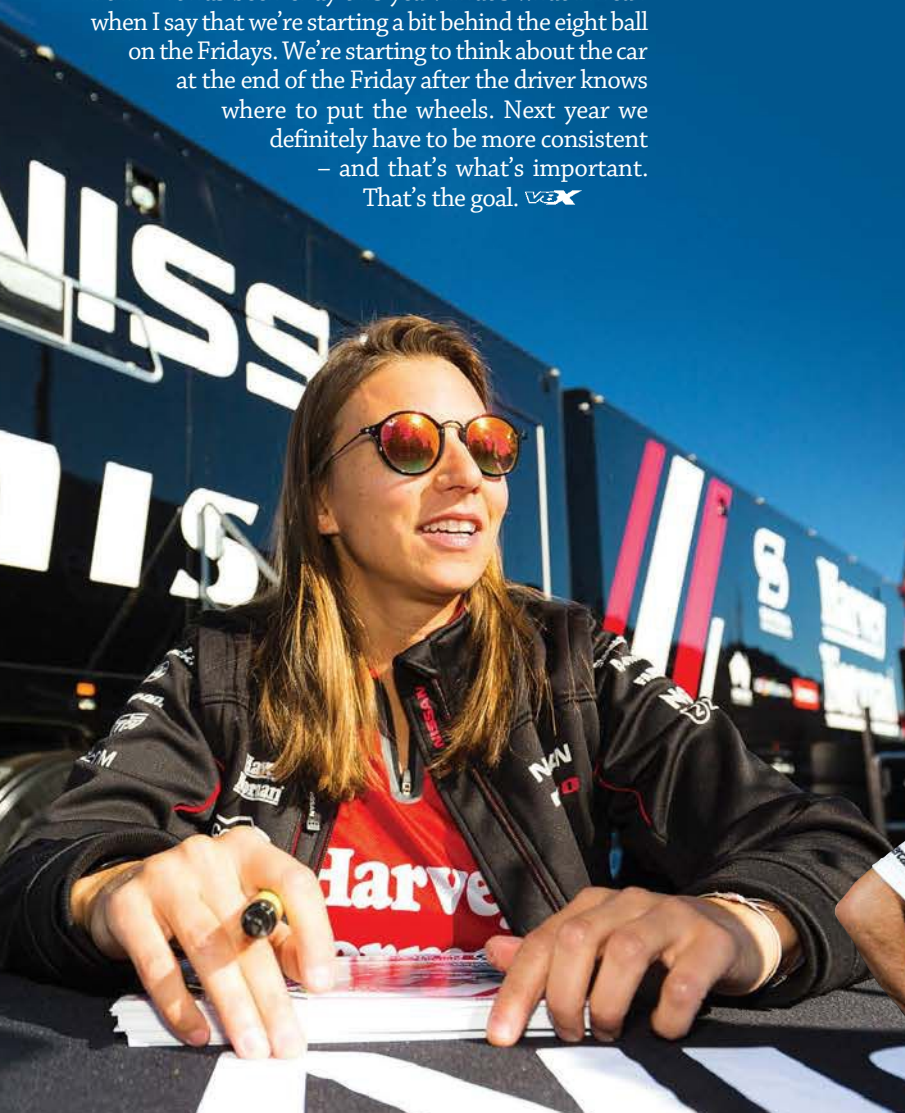
It's hard to say. I think the team are not where we want to be, to be honest. We want to be up the front, we want to be in the top 10, all of us, all the time. And we're not quite there yet. The team is working hard on it and that's what counts. We see improvement every time we go out there; that's what's important.

Are you happy with your progress at this stage of your deal? Have you achieved your goals and how much further do you want to go?

I think it has been okay this year. That's what I mean when I say that we're starting a bit behind the eight ball on the Fridays. We're starting to think about the car at the end of the Friday after the driver knows where to put the wheels. Next year we definitely have to be more consistent – and that's what's important. That's the goal. 

“AS A DRIVER YOU JUST WANT TO GET QUICKER, SO IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER WHAT PEOPLE HAVE DONE BEFORE YOU AS YOU JUST WANT TO FOCUS ON YOURSELF AND MOVE FORWARD.”

– SIMONA DE SILVESTRO



THE CO-DRIVER VIEWPOINT

The 2009 Bathurst 1000 was the last time a female and male pairing raced in Supercars. On that occasion, David Wall drove alongside Leanne Tander for Paul Cruickshank Racing. Eight years on, David Russell partnered with Simona de Silvestro at Nissan Motorsport in what is his seventh season with the team.

“I've had a good relationship with the team; there's a good culture,” says Russell.

“We've been up and down at times and it would be great to have some success with this team because I know how hard everyone is working.”

The 35-year-old used his experience to assist de Silvestro as she continues to develop in Supercars.

“We obviously don't want to go off in the wrong track with set-up,” he says.

“I guess my experience is useful. It's been good; she's a professional, she's learning the ropes very, very quickly.

“You see guys come out of the Development Series when they've had a few seasons and they come in and they need 12 months or more. So I think it has been pretty impressive for her to come in and have some good performances.”



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KIWIS TAKE FLIGHT

Is there something in the water in New Zealand? For a country with a population well south of five million there's no shortage of motorsport talent, as the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship is witnessing in 2017. We spoke to Kiwi Supercars legend Greg Murphy and MotorSport New Zealand CEO Brian Budd to find out the key to this success.

WORDS John Bannon IMAGES Peter Norton



N

ew Zealand is well and truly on top of Australia in the latter's premier motorsport category. The rise of DJR Team Penske to take up the fight to Red Bull Holden Racing Team has thrown the spotlight on New Zealanders Scott McLaughlin, Fabian Coulthard and reigning champion Shane van Gisbergen, all race winners this season.

While the emergence of three fast Kiwis at the pointy end of the Supercars standings might appear inconsequential, other than as a vehicle for some light-hearted trans-Tasman banter, McLaughlin, Coulthard and van Gisbergen are not the only New Zealanders impressing on the world stage.

When you take a look the success of multiple IndyCar champ Scott Dixon, World Endurance Championship winner Brendon Hartley, Formula E racer and GP2 race winner Mitch Evans, Le Mans 24 Hour winner Earl Bamber, World Rally Championship ace Hayden Paddon and the versatile and Supercars-bound Richie Stanaway, you quickly realise how much New Zealand talent is out there. And those names just scratch the surface.

In a rugby-obsessed nation, motorsport success mostly flies under the radar but the understated achievements of Kiwi racing drivers is steeped in history.

"I think it sort of comes back to the fact that we are a small nation and there is a strong desire to succeed here," says MotorSport New Zealand CEO Brian Budd.



"I guess we like to beat Aussies but that's beside the point. We definitely punch above our weight internationally in a whole range of sports and activities and motorsport is one of those. We've got a proud motorsport history going back to the days of Denny Hulme, Bruce McLaren and Chris Amon just to mention a few."

Budd believes many young Kiwis have a go behind the wheel from a young age, which helps aspiring racers develop their skills early on.

"A lot of young guys, particularly ones that are on farms, are driving vehicles at a young age," he says.

"We've got a very strong karting scene and most major towns and cities have a kart club and a kart track. If you look at most of those drivers that are succeeding internationally they have all come through karting."

Budd says the progression from karts to Formula Ford is still seen an important development step in New Zealand.

"With Formula Ford, even though numbers fluctuate from year to year, we still push that heavily as a championship class and as a stepping stone from karting through to other categories," says Budd.

"We have a junior-licence regime where young competitors from the age of 12 can get a competition licence that allows them to compete at quite a wide range of events – hillclimb and some clubman racing events. And the only restriction on that at the moment is they can't drive anything that's more than 2500cc."

But Budd claims the jewel in the New Zealand motorsport crown is its Elite Motorsport Academy, which has been running for 13 years now.

**"WE'VE GOT THREE
BRILLIANT KIWI
DRIVERS WHO'VE
ALL ENDED UP
IN THREE OF THE
BEST CARS IN THE
CHAMPIONSHIP."**

– GREG MURPHY



"All those drivers that we are currently talking about who are competing with distinction overseas except for Scott McLaughlin and Scott Dixon have been through that academy," says Budd.

"It's an event that is run over a one-week intensive in Dunedin, which is a collaboration between the New Zealand Sports Academy and the Otago University physical education department. It's a sports science-focused academy rather than a driving academy and there is a 12-month mentor follow-up program with those participants."

The academy came about after a perceived lull in Kiwi international motorsport following the success of Hulme, McLaren, Amon and others.

"We had about a 20-year period where nobody from this country excelled at an international level and it was established that part of the reason was that other young



drivers, particularly in Europe, had access to sports science training and tuition,” explains Budd.

“So we’re talking about mental skills, diet, managing hydration and core body temperature, especially in heat conditions. And it was felt that drivers in that part of the world (Europe) were given these skills and drivers from New Zealand trying to break in over there were disadvantaged because they didn’t have it. We certainly think the program has had a huge bearing on the way our competitors are performing, not only at home but also internationally.”

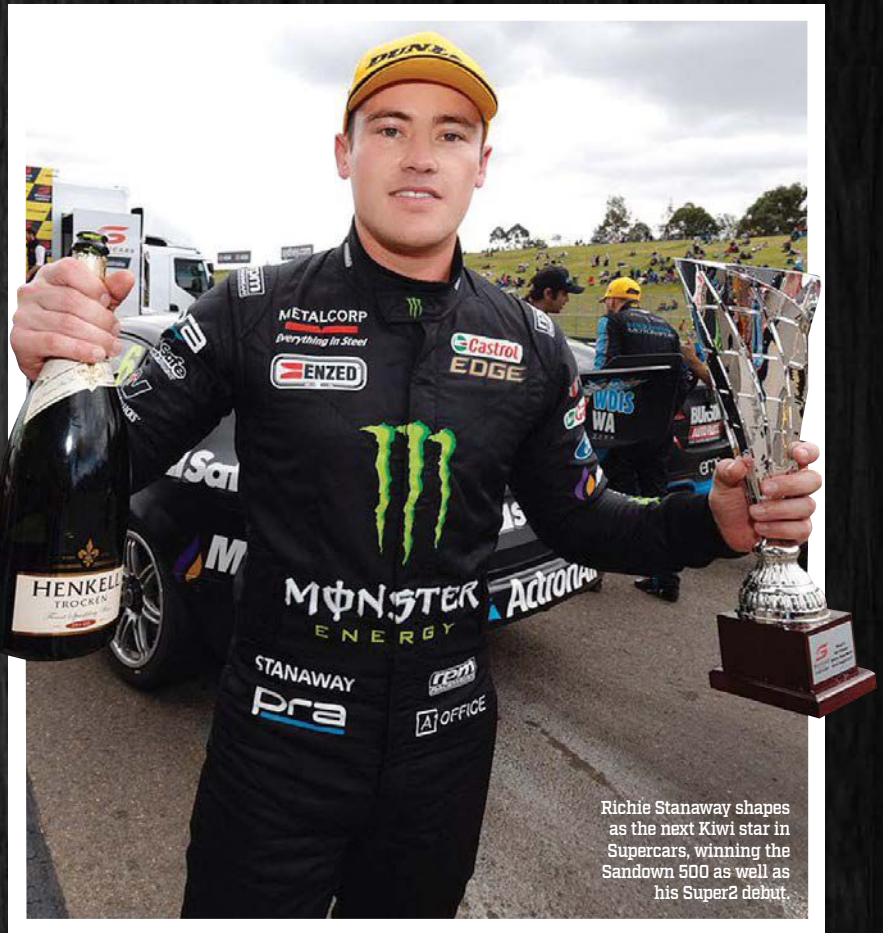
When asked what role New Zealand race tracks played, Budd adds: “We’ve got a lot of circuits for the size of the population, eight permanent licence circuits for four and a half million people. If you look at Sydney, you’ve got one or two. In this country travelling distances are so much less, too. There’s a chance that a lot of young guys will do a heck of a lot more racing because it’s not a big thing to travel the length and breadth of the country to do events.”

However, despite all the success at a junior development level, top-flight motorsport in New Zealand has taken some hits in recent years.

“If you go back 10 years we had a V8 category here that was particularly vibrant and competitive,” Budd recalls.

“Those three guys, maybe not Scott McLaughlin, but Shane and certainly Greg Murphy also came through that. We had a V8 category at one stage that had 38 cars running. It’s just a shadow of its former self now and that’s partly as a result of that split between NZV8 and NZ SuperTourers.

“Certainly, V8s were the premier category and the



Richie Stanaway shapes as the next Kiwi star in Supercars, winning the Sandown 500 as well as his Super2 debut.



go-to class here for a number of years and there was quite a good pathway to get there.”

Four-times Bathurst champion and proud Kiwi Murphy says there's some good work being done in New Zealand, but there's still room for improvement.

“The Toyota Racing Series is an amazing category that runs over the summer,” he says.

“It hasn't been around forever and it certainly doesn't provide every up-and-coming young Kiwi a chance to go racing because it's still expensive. There's the Toyota 86 Championship, which has started up in the last couple of seasons and it's going okay, but hasn't managed to have the depth or the numbers in it that Toyota and the rest of us would hope for. And touring cars has been up and down and all over the place.”

Murphy says an area of strength has been the willingness of generous benefactors to help propel talented Kiwis overseas.

“There's always been a lot of people in New Zealand willing to help financially, with contacts, information and support,” he says.

“The Ken Smiths of this world were a key behind Scott Dixon and his group of contributors. Kenny played such a huge part in Brendon Hartley's career, giving guidance and just his ability to pick up the phone and talk to people. I think it's a stepping stone that many have been able to follow and the rewards that have been given by the drivers that have had that support has been huge.”

Returning to Australia, Murphy says McLaughlin, Coulthard and van Gisbergen have all managed to find the right ingredients to success at about the same time.

“Now we've got three brilliant Kiwi drivers who've all ended up in three of the best cars,” he says.

“So now they are able to absolutely show their skills supported by the best teams and, therefore, they are all at the front of the field. And that's what it takes.

“It's not all about being a brilliant driver as we all know. You've got to have the right people and the right support around you to make sure all your skills are tuned and that you're able to extract them to the absolute maximum. And that's what we've got at the moment, which for all the Kiwis fans back in New Zealand watching and for the likes of me is fantastic for our motorsport culture.”

In previous interviews about drivers' Bathurst childhood memories, McLaughlin, Coulthard and van Gisbergen all listed Murphy and his 2003 'Lap of the Gods' Bathurst qualifying effort as an inspiration when they took steps in their own racing careers.

“It's very humbling and I'm proud to have played a part in their build-up, their growth, their desire and the history and memories of what it is all about,” he says.

“The thing is they are going to experience exactly the same thing because there are kids that are sitting in the grandstands watching saying, 'I want to be like him' and the kids will remember all these amazing key moments that these three guys are creating now.”

Murphy still frequents the Supercars paddock as part of his media duties and has had varying degrees of contact and input with McLaughlin, Coulthard and van Gisbergen over the years.



“I've probably had more to do with Scott and Fabian and very little to do with Shane, I guess,” he says.

“Fabian's story is the one that started the longest ago. He fell under the Greg Murphy Racing umbrella with Carrera Cup and my Dad and I gave him his first start in a Supercar in New Zealand at Pukekohe.

“He also showed incredible speed and form back in Carrera Cup and it was cool that I played a part as team manager, so he has been a close friend of mine for a long time.

“Then with Scott, I knew him when he was just a little junior karter and I've had a little bit to do with him over the years... I also speak to Shane whenever we are at race meetings. But not so much away from the track.

“They are now in their zone, relishing the opportunity, loving being in those cars and pushing them to the absolute limit... not everyone in the championship is capable of doing what they are doing.”

As for the significance of three Kiwis leading a field of Aussies, Murphy concludes: “I think everyone is probably just enjoying the fact that there is a bit of a laugh about it. Maybe it will get more serious if the Kiwis continue to dominate and there could be a little more backlash, who knows?”

“But maybe that's going to be part of an increased rivalry moving forward between the Kiwi and Aussie guys and that is something the sport can always play on.” **VEX**

ABOVE: Two Kiwis are leading the charge for DJR Team Penske in Supercars.

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GREG MURPHY

ONCE A WARRIOR

Twenty years ago, Greg Murphy got his full-time break in the Australian Touring Car Championship following Craig Lowndes' departure to Europe. It was the start of a glittering, sometimes controversial but always interesting career that intensified the generational change and the connection between talented Kiwis and our sport.

The 2017 Virgin Australia Supercars Championship is the year of the Kiwi. Australia's Supercars contingent, more often than not used to maintaining a constant winning presence in its own racing series, has been enduring the kind of trans-Tasman whipping more often seen on the rugby field.

It wasn't always this way. Sure, talented Kiwis have long prospered in Australian touring cars, but typically just one has stamped their boot on the statistics at a time, such as Jim Richards or Greg Murphy. With a posse of New Zealand talent currently tearing the Supercars field apart, and Murphy's own championship endeavours kicking off 20 years ago this year, what better time to revisit the career of one of the all-time Kiwi greats.

RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

Twenty-eight race wins. Four Bathurst 1000s. Two Sandown 500s. Nine race wins at his Pukekohe home track. Author of probably the most celebrated lap of Bathurst ever.

Such statistics make Murphy's arrival onto the Australian touring-car scene seem inevitable. But for the young Murph of the early 1990s, making a living out of his passion didn't seem possible.

"Being a racing-car driver wasn't part of the equation," says Murphy. "It was so far off, so foreign and unobtainable. So I was trying to get myself into the NZ Air Force and go and fly Skyhawks, then I contemplated going into engineering."

Winning NZ's Formula Ford Scholarship, however, set him on the path to his destiny.

BELOW: Greg Murphy reunited with Craig Lowndes in the 1997 endurance races, though this time he was the lead driver.





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ABOVE: The star-studded Holden Racing Team line-up.

BELOW: "Here I was with a HRT car and Peter Brock as my teammate, and it was my car, with just my name on the door."

That led to a year working alongside movers and shakers in NZ's Formula Ford scene in 1993. Then followed what he says was the big gamble of his career, crossing the ditch to take a punt at the first round of the 1994 Australian Driver's Championship at Eastern Creek.

"It was a pretty scary decision," says Murphy. "My Dad and I had \$12,000 between us – that was everything we had! – and we put it on black, rented a Ralt RT21 and turned up at Eastern Creek.

"As it happened it was the first round of the new Super Touring championship. We were a support category and some decisions just turn out to have bigger results than you think. I won the two races and a guy named Peter Addison walked into our garage."

Addison was part of the team running the new Australian Super Touring series. He'd seen Murphy's exploits and was impressed. Would he be keen to have a steer of a Toyota Carina in the next round of Super Touring?

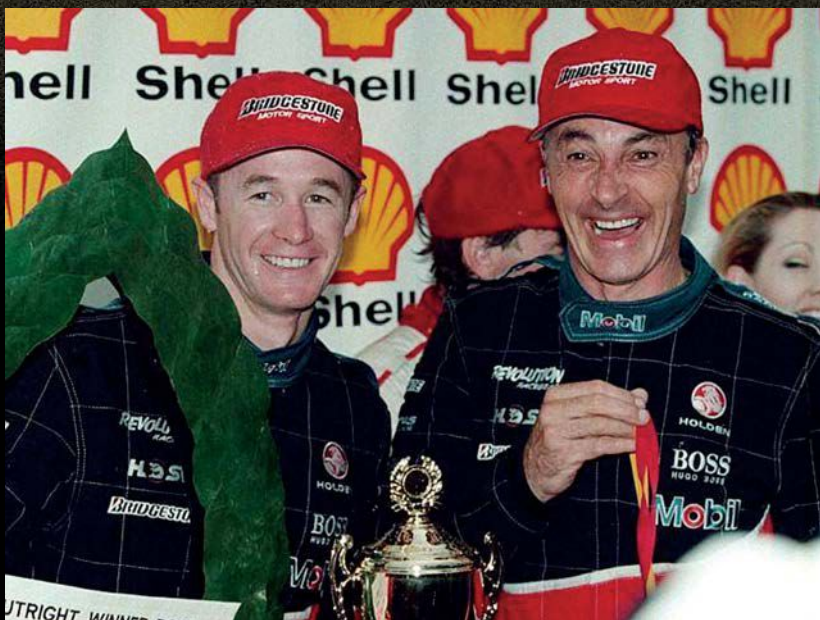
And, just like that, Murphy's Australian touring-car career was out of the gates. After a promising run in the Campbell Little-run Carina in 1994 he bagged a seat in the factory Audi outfit, Brad Jones Racing, for 1995. The gamble he'd made just 12 months earlier had paid off spectacularly.

"Here I was, 22 years old, turning up to be a factory driver with Audi and getting paid for the first time," says Murphy.

"I'm driving around Sydney in an Audi company car and racing on the weekends. Just living the dream.

"If we hadn't have done our homework and spent a day and half at the track testing and making sure everything was right... if I hadn't been able to put it on pole, or if we'd had problems with the car or a DNF, and if we hadn't won those two races... if all those things hadn't played out positively, I don't know what would have happened.

"If it wasn't for Peter Addison walking into our garage and saying, 'Do you want to drive this car in a few weeks time?' my whole career might have gone a completely different way."



INTO THE BIG LEAGUE

Murphy was a new face on Australian motorsport scene in 1995 but soon the premier category, Group 3A touring cars as it was then known, was knocking at his door.

He was by now firmly part of the Super Touring 'family', living with the Addison clan, at a time when there were tensions between V8 and Super Touring worlds, but it wasn't an opportunity he was about to pass up.

"There was a lot of politics, people saying this and believing that, but at the end of the day Bathurst was the race and the heroes were still Peter Brock, Dick Johnson, John Bowe, Larry Perkins, Glenn Seton, Mark Skaife and all those guys," says Murphy.

"That was still where it was at in Australia, so when I got the call from the Holden Racing Team (HRT) to do the enduros in 1995 it was a pretty amazing and surreal moment."

Murphy's maiden V8 enduro campaign was forgettable – retirements at both Sandown and Bathurst – but the experience of turning up to Mount Panorama for the first time in a front-running car is still clear in his mind, what with the mania that year over teammate Craig Lowndes, who was returning for the first time since his surprise runner-up result in 1994.

"The first time I ever saw the place was when I drove the Carina in 1994. That was like, 'Holy crap, what I have I got myself into?'" he says.

"But turning up a year later in a Group 3A touring car, that was massive pressure. Lowndes was a big focus, he was this kid who'd just taken the world by storm. I was just trying to keep up and it was not easy."

The pair's 1996 enduro campaign has gone down in legend – victory at Sandown and Bathurst for the pair, ushering in the age of the young gun – but Murphy says there was also the odd bit anxiety on his part.

"When I arrived at Bathurst in 1996 Craig was in such good form, he was the new champion, we had the number 1 on the door, it was just massive and I felt the pressure, I felt it big time," he says.

"He was clearly faster than I was and I felt that because I didn't want to let the team down, I didn't want to let him down. To get in the car during the race and drive out there onto a damp track that was still wet at the top on slicks in the number 1 HRT car that was leading the race, well, I can still recall just being terrified about the whole situation!

"I relinquished the lead; I think Tony Longhurst passed me while I was still getting up to speed. Then I hit the wall, down where Chaz Mostert crashed, it wasn't caught on camera but the car climbed the wall. There was a lot going on, it was incredible. But then it all started to come together, we made amends for what we'd lost and it all just fell into place."

1996 put Murphy on the Australian touring-car map and made him a star in New Zealand, a status he really got to bask in when the V8 circus rolled across the Tasman late that year for the Wellington and Pukekohe non-championship races that ran at the time.

"Here I was with a HRT car and Peter Brock as my teammate, and it was my car, with just my name on the door," he says.



DOWN & UPS

Murphy still smarts about 1997, the year he took over the number-one HRT seat from an overseas-bound Lowndes for his maiden Australian touring-car championship tilt. He won six races and three rounds, more than any other driver that year, but only finished fourth in the title race.

"We had a very fast car but also a lot of mechanical failures, which everyone in the team was hugely disappointed about," he says.

"I qualified on the front row at eight of the 10 rounds but at two of those I didn't even make the warm-up lap, which makes it pretty hard. And I had a crash at Phillip Island when a tyre went, that wasn't very nice.

"Things just conspired against us. And I don't think I handled it all that well, to be honest; I was feeling a bit hard done by. I didn't understand why it was happening, that sometimes that's just the way it goes."

A championship, as it turned out, would be about the only thing to elude Murphy in his V8 career. In 1998 he was back to part-time status owing to the return of Lowndes, an incoming Mark Skaife and an (unsuccessful) attempt to forge out an overseas racing career of his own. In 1999 he was a full-timer again with the reborn Gibson Motorsport, a team good enough to deliver him his second Bathurst crown (1999) but not

ABOVE & TOP: Murphy had big shoes to fill following in the footsteps of Lowndes' dominant 1996 season.



“YOU WANT TO BE WINNING A CHAMPIONSHIP, THAT’S THE WHOLE POINT OF IT, AND NOT BEING IN THE POSITION WHERE YOU FEEL YOU CAN DO THAT IS DIFFICULT.” – GREG MURPHY

the consistency to fight for the title.

“We had some good results but, like so many teams, we were making up the numbers,” he says.

“You want to be winning a championship, that’s the whole point of it, and not being in the position where you feel you can do that is difficult.”

A move to the newly-formed Kmart Racing in 2001 brought an upswing in form but also plenty of close-but-no-cigar championship results (fourth in 2001, second in 2002 and 2003, fourth in 2004). And, at Bathurst in 2002, the famous five-minute penalty for a fuel spill and his subsequent Portaaloo sulk. It’s something he can laugh at now.

“It’s added to the story, hasn’t it?” he says. “I’d have preferred it to be Todd (Kelly) and I winning adding to the story but that’s not the way it worked out. But anyway, that’s the way it was.

“I was very passionate about the whole thing and I

suppose that’s something I’ve been known for – losing my shit and not handling things very well – but I’m not the only one!”

THE GOLDEN YEARS

Of course, Murphy would more than make up for his 2002 Bathurst disappointment with his ‘Lap of the Gods’ qualifying lap of 2003 and victory the next day in one of the most dominant performances ever seen at the Mountain. The following year he and teammate Rick Kelly would go on to score a rare double, taking his Bathurst-win tally to four.

Looking back, Murphy reckons those 2002 demons – and a very public expunging of them ahead of the race – played a crucial part in what is now seen by many as his career-defining performance.

“I think, subliminally, my performance had a lot to do with wanting to get revenge but we took the piss out of the whole thing,” he says.

“That weekend was the pinnacle; I’ve never experienced emotion and feelings quite like it. And the other thing is, how many sportspeople get the opportunity to experience something like that? You only understand the significance after more and more time. To be a part of something that people have respect for, talk about and have memories about, it’s incredibly humbling and very special.”

Then there was Murphy’s incredible record on home soil at Pukekohe: nine race wins from 2001 to 2005.

“It’s a bit funny, isn’t it? It’s always been a highlight of my results and trying to understand why is interesting,” he reflects.

“Why did it come together on those weekends more than most? I don’t really know but I had incredible support and it’s an amazing feeling when you feel the people’s energy directed towards you, it’s something else.” **V8X**

ABOVE: Lowndes’ return from Europe left the Holden Racing Team with a dilemma in terms of its driver line-up for 1998.

BELOW: Murphy took victory at the Mallala round in South Australia, one of three round wins in 1997.



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WORDS Adrian Musolino IMAGES Supercars

THE NEW CASTLE TO CONQUER

The Virgin Australia Supercars Championship has found a new home for its season finale in New South Wales' second biggest town, Newcastle. And the new street circuit along the coastline promises to be one of the most spectacular events on the Supercars schedule.

Supercars takes in new horizons when Newcastle joins the schedule to host the season finale this November.

The move from Sydney to Newcastle has the backing of Destination NSW, the lead government agency for the New South Wales tourism and major events sectors, switching from the ambivalent capital to the second biggest town in the state with the aim of driving significant visitation and economic benefit to Newcastle.

The new circuit takes in Nobbys Beach, Fort Scratchley and the Harbour Foreshore, racing into the city centre and a parklands section.

Supercars worked closely with the Newcastle City Council on the layout and to minimise disruptions, with Mark Skaife leading the track design and Supercars drivers providing their input in the initial design stages.

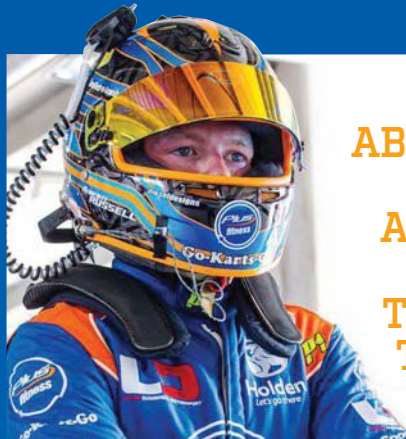
“We’ve put a huge amount of work into delivering up a really good racetrack with great character and great elevation change, showing off the vista and the beautiful aspects of Newcastle’s coastline,” says Skaife. “I think that’s going to be one of the real signature events.”

Supercars’ experiences in Adelaide, Gold Coast and Townsville highlight how the series has a better chance of engaging with smaller centres where the competition from other events is reduced. The Supercars season finale will be the biggest event on the Newcastle calendar. More than 10,000 people attended a fan day in Newcastle in April, snapping up the first tickets for the event and meeting the Supercars field to highlight the enthusiasm around the Newcastle 500.

“This is a pretty unique town and they love their sports,” says Novocastrian Aaren Russell, who will race in the Newcastle 500 for Lucas Dumbrell Motorsport. “It’s going to be absolutely amazing when it comes around. I think it’s going to be one of the biggest events that they’ve had.”

Newcastle takes some of the traits of the other street circuits: it races into the city centre and a purpose-built parklands section like in Adelaide; it sits right on the waterfront for a spectacular backdrop like Surfers Paradise; and the final sector and hairpin mirror the one in Townsville. But, unlike those circuits, there is a significant amount of undulation around the circuit.

“It has its own unique twist with the undulations,” says Russell. “So it brings its own element of challenge to get that right. There’s going to be a bit of havoc for some of the drivers that can’t get around it.”



“IT’S GOING TO BE ABSOLUTELY AMAZING WHEN IT COMES AROUND. I THINK IT’S GOING TO BE ONE OF THE BIGGEST EVENTS THAT THEY’VE HAD.”

– AAREN RUSSELL

Russell will be the hometown fan favourite at the Newcastle 500. His father Wayne Russell was the last Novocastrian to drive in the series on a full-time basis. Wayne now owns the Go Karts Go go-karting track, the biggest facility in the Hunter region.

“As soon as they announced it, it was the number-one focus,” says Russell on locking in his place on the grid.

“It’s amazing to be able to go out and do the first Newcastle 500 in front of my family and my friends.”

While the Russells will be out in force to celebrate Supercars’ arrival to their beloved Newcastle, they are also excited to introduce Supercars to the Hunter region.

“Everyone should be staying for an extra week and going on a holiday as there’s plenty of stuff to do,” says Russell. “There’s plenty of places along the foreshore to eat and drink and our awesome beaches. And the great thing is they are right there next to the track.” **V8X**

NEWCASTLE DRIVERS

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NEWCASTLE



Location: East Newcastle
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Direction: Anti-clockwise
Corners: 11

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THE CIRCUIT

PIT STRAIGHT

The Supercars are expected to reach around 200km/h at the end of pit straight along Wharf Road. The pit complex faces the Hunter River and will provide a picturesque backdrop to the front straight.

TURN 1

A slight right-hand kink leads into the first left-hander into Watt Street. Exit speed will be key given the long uphill run to turn two. The run into turn one could be tight and troublesome at the start of the races.

WATT STREET STRAIGHT

Another long run will see the Supercars exceed the 200km/h mark. The uphill run takes the track into the centre of Newcastle with tall buildings on either side.

TURN 2

The second corner shapes as the first overtaking opportunity following the longest straight on the track. The tight uphill left-hander is a 90-degree entry but gets tighter on exit, leading into a series of sweepers, similar to the first hairpin at the Surfers Paradise street track.

TURNS 3-4-5

These series of corners could be the most impressive section of the track. The right-left-right sweepers will have Newcastle beach as its background and begins the run downhill, drawing comparisons to the series of fast kinks on the back section of Surfers Paradise.

TURNS 6-7-8

The trio of 90-degree corners take the track back towards Nobbys Beach and will be the slowest section on the circuit. The corners will be similar to the city section of the Adelaide street track.

NOBBYS ROAD STRAIGHT

The run back towards Nobby Beach isn't exactly straight, so the Supercars are likely to run single file from the exit of turn eight into the turn-nine sweeper with an entry speed of 200km/h-plus in the purpose-built section of the track.

TURN 9

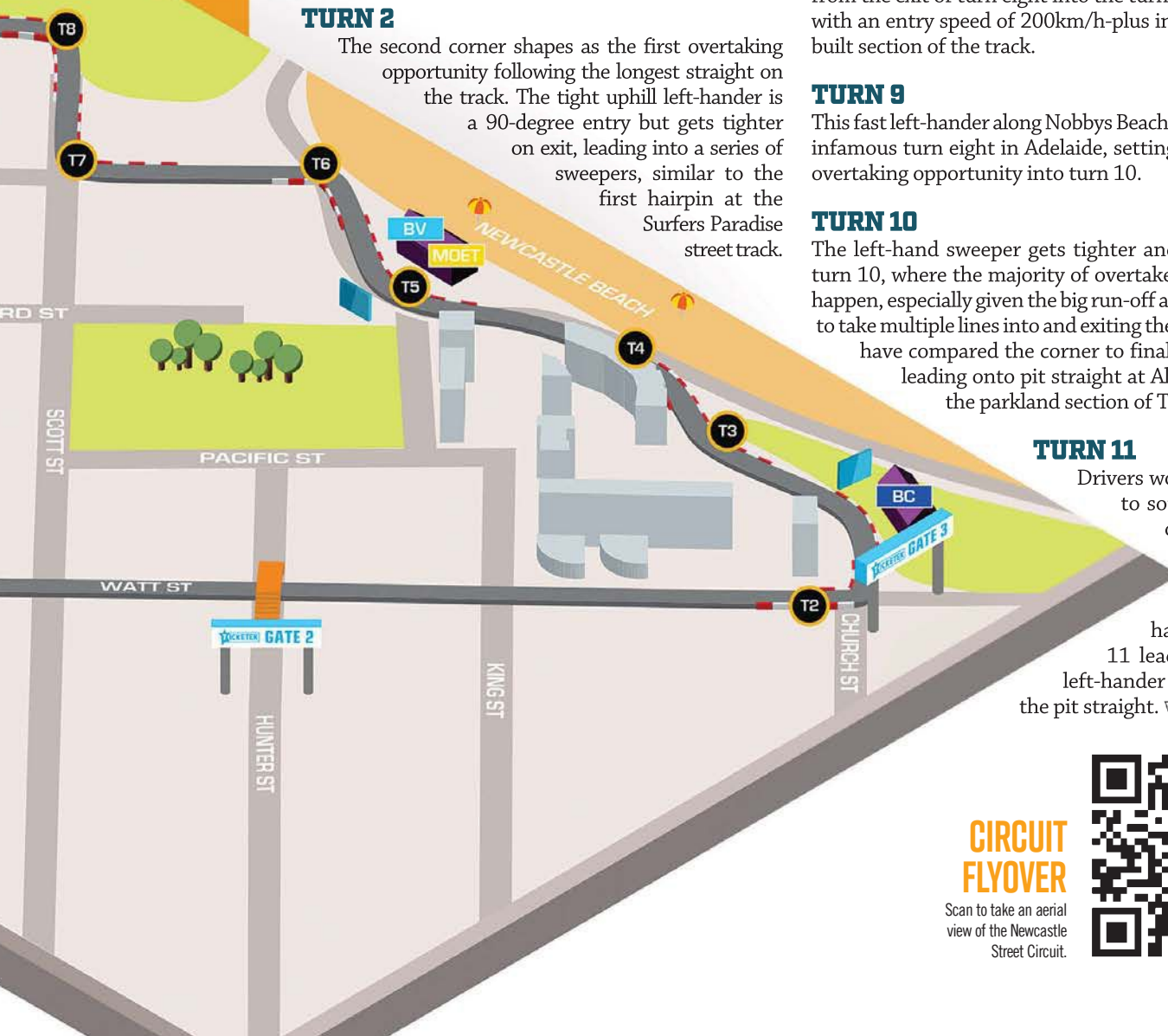
This fast left-hander along Nobbys Beach resembles the infamous turn eight in Adelaide, setting up the main overtaking opportunity into turn 10.

TURN 10

The left-hand sweeper gets tighter and tighter into turn 10, where the majority of overtakes are likely to happen, especially given the big run-off area and ability to take multiple lines into and exiting the corner. Some have compared the corner to final right-hander leading onto pit straight at Albert Park and the parkland section of Townsville.

TURN 11

Drivers won't have long to sort themselves out at the exit of turn 10, with the tight right-hander of turn 11 leading into the left-hander sweeper onto the pit straight. **V8X**



CIRCUIT FLYOVER

Scan to take an aerial view of the Newcastle Street Circuit.



GET TO KNOW NEWCASTLE

LOCATION

Newcastle is the second most populated area in New South Wales, located 162 kilometres north-northeast of Sydney in the heart of the Hunter Region and located by the Hunter River.

GETTING THERE

Newcastle Airport is a 30-minute drive from the centre of Newcastle and is serviced by several airlines. If driving from Sydney, take the M1 Highway in a northerly direction for what's usually a two-hour drive.


ACCOMMODATION

Hotel/motel options are expected to be exhausted at the time of the Coates Hire Newcastle 500. Tent City Hire will provide the same camping options available at both the Bathurst 1000 and Bathurst 12 Hour to Newcastle. Nearby major areas where accommodation may be available include Lake Macquarie, the Hunter Valley, Port Stephens and Maitland.

HISTORY

Newcastle is a harbour city with plentiful beaches linked by the Bathers Way, a coastal walk stretching between Nobbys Beach and Merewether Beach. From its convict settlements emerged a number of industrial developments, namely coal, steel and copper. Newcastle remains the world's largest coal-export port.

TO DO

Newcastle is a vibrant cosmopolitan city with a vibrant nightlife and picturesque beaches. The coastal walk between Nobbys Beach and Merewether Beach provides access to Bogey Hole, a convict-built ocean bath from the colonial period. Also on the path is the 1880s Fort Scratchley, a historic site and a viewpoint for spotting migrating whales. There's also plenty to see and do in the surrounding areas: water sports at Lake Macquarie, wineries and the wilderness of the Hunter Valley, the sheltered bays of Port Stephens and the historic town of Maitland. 





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PUNCHING THEIR WEIGHT

In an era of super teams in Supercars, there is still room for privateer customer outfits that punch above their weight. Charlie Schwerkolt's Team 18 and driver Lee Holdsworth are certainly doing that.

WORDS Bruce Newton IMAGES Peter Norton, James Baker

When you boil it all down, the key question for Charlie Schwerkolt is... why? Why put yourself through all this effort, expense and pain to be a Supercars team owner? It's a question he's clearly been asked before because his answer comes back quickly and definitively. "Owning my own team is a good thing," he says simply. "It's the best thing I have done by far because we have had control of our destiny. I am really enjoying my racing and going out there and having a crack."

Swerkolt is the owner of Team 18 (Preston Hire Racing). It's been around for less than two seasons yet has managed to cram a Netflix TV series worth of drama and incident into that time. And the viewers would probably dismiss it as fiction.

Just creating a Supercars team from scratch was challenge enough, but then throw in the Darwin accident, driver Lee Holdsworth's injuries, a wrecked car and the budget damage inflicted buying a replacement, a gut-wrenching Bathurst start-line failure, this year's Australian Grand Prix torpedoed by a brakeless Nick Percat and much more and you can begin to understand the immensity of the hurdles Schwerkolt and his small band have overcome to be on the grid.

"Sometimes through 2016 I was thinking, 'What have I done, what am I doing,



Team 18 is one of the smallest in Supercars.



ABOVE GHT



GEN2 & BEYOND

Don't expect Team 18 to roll out a new-generation Commodore at the Adelaide 500 next year... or any time soon after. For budgetary reasons Schwerkolt reckons he will stick with the current VF II Commodore for at least next year.

"At this stage I won't be going to the new car, I have too many parts and panels for the VF II," Schwerkolt reveals.

"That's unless Holden comes along to the Holden teams and says, 'Here's a couple of hundred grand to upgrade'. Then, sure, I'll upgrade – no dramas – and promote the car. But as long as there is no disadvantage staying with the current car and no support from Holden I see no reason to change."

The other aspect of the evolution into the new Commodore is the eventual arrival of a twin-turbo V6 engine to go with it.

Swerkolt is a V8 man through and through and it's not hard to tell he isn't enamoured by this change.

"I think the fans love the noise of the V8," he says. "I think the noise and excitement of a V8 engine powering down a straight is something pretty special and unique."

"The fans I do pit tours with and so on, they really want the V8. I would prefer the category to stay with the V8 engine, for sure."

this is just madness, this is just crazy'. Most of it was out of our control," says Schwerkolt.

But Charlie's been involved in Supercars for some years before that, too. And pretty much all along there's been drama, controversy and challenges.

It didn't start that way. The Gold Coast businessman became professionally involved with the sport when he invested in Dick Johnson Racing in mid-2008.

He was a long-time friend of the icon and although he never raced anything other than go-karts himself, he was a huge motorsport fan and a petrol-head with a passion for V8 road cars.

Swerkolt played his supporting role as Adrian Burgess led a rebuild of the team and James Courtney secured the 2010 drivers' championship. But by then Schwerkolt and Johnson's relationship had soured and the partnership was dissolved.

Swerkolt left the team with a Racing Entitlements Contract leased to them for two years. Required to use it or sell it for 2013, Schwerkolt became a customer of Prodrive Racing Australia, running a Falcon for Alex Davison. It was a difficult year and one that ended unhappily between driver and owner

Jack Perkins drove the car in 2014 and endured a frustratingly unsuccessful season, the combination only really gelling at Bathurst, where they showed great speed and only missed a top-five result because of a late-race penalty.

For 2015 it was all change, with Schwerkolt moving to Walkinshaw Racing to reunite with Burgess and complete a four-car set-up with Erebus Motorsport refugee Holdsworth as his driver. It was another inconsistent year, again highlighted by a good effort at Bathurst.

Two events later at Pukekohe, Schwerkolt realised a change had to be made.

"We were in the first year of a two-year deal with Walkinshaw Racing and they came up to me and said, 'We are going down to a two-car team next year and we are going to need more money to run you'.

"I thought to myself, 'My God what am I going to do?' The performance wasn't happening down there. We weren't going to go anywhere. So I went and spoke to Lee and said, 'You know what, I think it's time we go and do this on our own. This is just crazy'."

That began a whirlwind of activity that has been widely reported: the recruitment of former Holden Racing Team boss Jeff Grech as team manager, signing up staff, locating and fitting out a workshop, purchasing the 'Xbox' Triple Eight Holden Commodore and the spares to go with it, finding a transporter, the securing of sponsorship... the list was almost endless.

The summer of 2015-16 was a blur of activity for Schwerkolt, Grech and the small team they had built around them, which included respected engineer Jason Bush, crew chief Andy Atkins and number-one mechanic Janelle Novarro.

"We put it all together in a very hurried way," Schwerkolt recalls. "I had to beg, borrow and steal to get it all together to get racing.

"It's been a great learning curve and I am still learning every day because it's so different to my previous team.

"What have I learned?" he ponders. "The biggest things are financial; it costs more to set up a team and to run it. That's one thing that's really caught me out.

"You need a lot behind you to get it all happening and I am getting there now. In the first year we had to buy more gear.

"As a customer of a team the gear is all there, but being independent means financially having to spend more money than I ever thought I would. But it was the only way to do it; I had to take control."

The other big deal Schwerkolt nominates is people. Charlie is undoubtedly a people person and there isn't a sentence he speaks about the achievements of setting up and running his team where he doesn't deflect to his crew as the real heroes.

And no wonder. After the team's first car was wrecked



TIMELINE



2008-2012: Schwerkolt owns the #18 at Dick Johnson Racing.



2013: Schwerkolt moves his entry to Prodrive Racing Australia.

at Darwin in 2016 a lot of the team effectively lived at Triple Eight's HQ in Queensland to build the all-new car in double-quick time.

At the same time, the team also raced on at Townsville and Ipswich with Kurt KostECKi in the driver's seat of his own Development Series Commodore. It wasn't until Sydney Motorsport Park that the new car debuted in Karl Reindler's hands and Holdsworth didn't race again until the Sandown 500.

"I have an incredible team of people," Charlie said at the time. "We have no team without the people we have got and all the people we have through my businesses – which are all built on fantastic teams – have all dug in. It's an incredibly tough time for the race crew, some are up in Brisbane working away (on the new car), some are in Melbourne (at the workshop). It's bonded them strong for sure, it's incredible."

Schwerkolt's primary business role is as group managing director of the family business, Waverley Fork Lifts, where he started work in 1976 and his diesel apprenticeship in 1977.

The Waverley group of businesses has its headquarters in Melbourne and offices in Sydney and Brisbane, while Charlie lives on the Gold Coast with his wife and kids. He's on the road constantly with business.

Moving the race team from rented space in Dandernong to Waverley Group's HQ in Mount Waverley has at least taken one destination out of his busy life.

You get an inkling of the way Charlie lives watching him at a race meeting. He is a perpetual motion machine. One moment he is conferring with Grech, the next with Holdsworth, after that he's conducting a pit tour or up in the corporate box making sure the sponsors are happy. Then there's the ever-present television and other media to deal with. Usually with a smile on his face. Sometimes over the years, he admits, it's been a little forced.

"Inside there I've been hurt a lot in this game," he admits. "It's a tough gig. But we move on, we have a lot of fans and supporters and there's no point getting sad. You have to be positive and create a positive message for everyone who is watching."

He is the complete antithesis of an authoritarian and distant team owner. Charlie is in the trenches, completely hands-on.

"IT'S THE BEST THING I HAVE DONE BY FAR BECAUSE WE HAVE HAD CONTROL OF OUR DESTINY."
– CHARLIE SCHWERKOLT



"It's all on me, decision are made pretty quick about what we are doing and where we are going. I am hands-on with all my businesses," he says.

"The environment is very good, the set-up and facilities are good ... and I think it's a great plus to work in motorsport. We all have the same passion and dream, we all want to win and get up there."

But as Schwerkolt ruefully concedes, the dream of winning is pretty much just that. The reality for a small one-car team in Supercars is that the odds are stacked against you.

The most obvious issue is data sharing. The more cars in a group, the more different set-ups can be tried and cumulative knowledge built, the quicker the blind alleys are discarded and the more promising avenues pursued.

In 2017, a year when Dunlop has introduced a new-construction tyre and that ability to share data has become even more important, Holdsworth and new engineer Chris Stuckey have gone out on their own.

For financial reasons the new Team 18 Commodore runs 2013-specification T8 Mk 4 front uprights. But the factory cars of Whincup, Shane van Gisbergen and Craig Lowndes are on Mk 6.5 and the set-up correlation simply isn't there. Paying for data would be a waste of money Schwerkolt reveals.

"The front end of the car is the least controlled part at the minute, which means you can try things like a new upright. But I can't really do much with all that at the moment because of budget.

"It's big money to upgrade; it's one hundred grand-plus to get a couple of sets of uprights.



2014: The entry remains at Prodrive for a second season.



2015: Switches to Holden with a move to Walkinshaw Racing.



2016: Goes his own way with a customer Triple Eight Holden.



Jeff Grech returned to Supercars as team manager at Team 18.

“We are completely solo at the moment, we are not getting any data off anyone. Lee and Chris have gone down their own path and I think they are headed the right way.

“We are probably the only single-car team without data sharing on pitlane right now, so I think we are punching above our weight that way.

“Our goal at the start of the year was to finish 10th in the championship and if we achieve that we will be really punching above our weight.”

In a championship where pitlane time is as crucial as qualifying speed, it has been a sore point.

The team shares a boom with the third Brad Jones Racing entry, the Cooldrive car of Tim Blanchard.

Because one half of the crew is in Albury and the other half in Melbourne, practice time is limited and that means time gained on the track can sometimes be lost in pitlane.

“Some of the pitstops have been fantastic and some haven’t been so good,” Schwerkolt admits.

“Brad and I have talked about it. We just have to work together to get the right results.

“I’d love to have my own boom but that’s against the rules. We just have to work together to improve and improve, that’s all there is to it.”

Holdsworth is the other piece of Schwerkolt’s puzzle.

The horror 96g Darwin crash means their relationship transcends the normal driver-owner connection.

Schwerkolt is conscious how tough a run Holdsworth has had in recent years. Not only Darwin, but two major accidents while with Erebus Motorsport and a roll (albeit soft) into the Barbagallo sand in 2015 in the first year of their relationship.

“This is probably his best year in about five years since Stone Brothers Racing I would think. Lee’s grown and grown this year, his confidence is coming back, he’s getting quicker,” Schwerkolt enthuses.

“I have all the faith in him... you’d have to ask him, but I think he is very happy with the team.”

The factory is big enough to have more racing cars based there. Schwerkolt concedes that might make sense even next year if the finances add up, but he has no interest in bringing on a pay driver for the sake of it. It would have to be the right driver and the right deal to make it happen.

“I have some incredible people on my car, some incredible people behind me, and incredible people within the team as well,” he concludes.

“I am very fortunate to have such good people in my life. I thoroughly enjoy what I do and hopefully continue to go up the ladder and get success with Lee. Bring it on. Can’t wait.” **V8X**



Lee Holdsworth has found a happy home in Supercars at Team 18.

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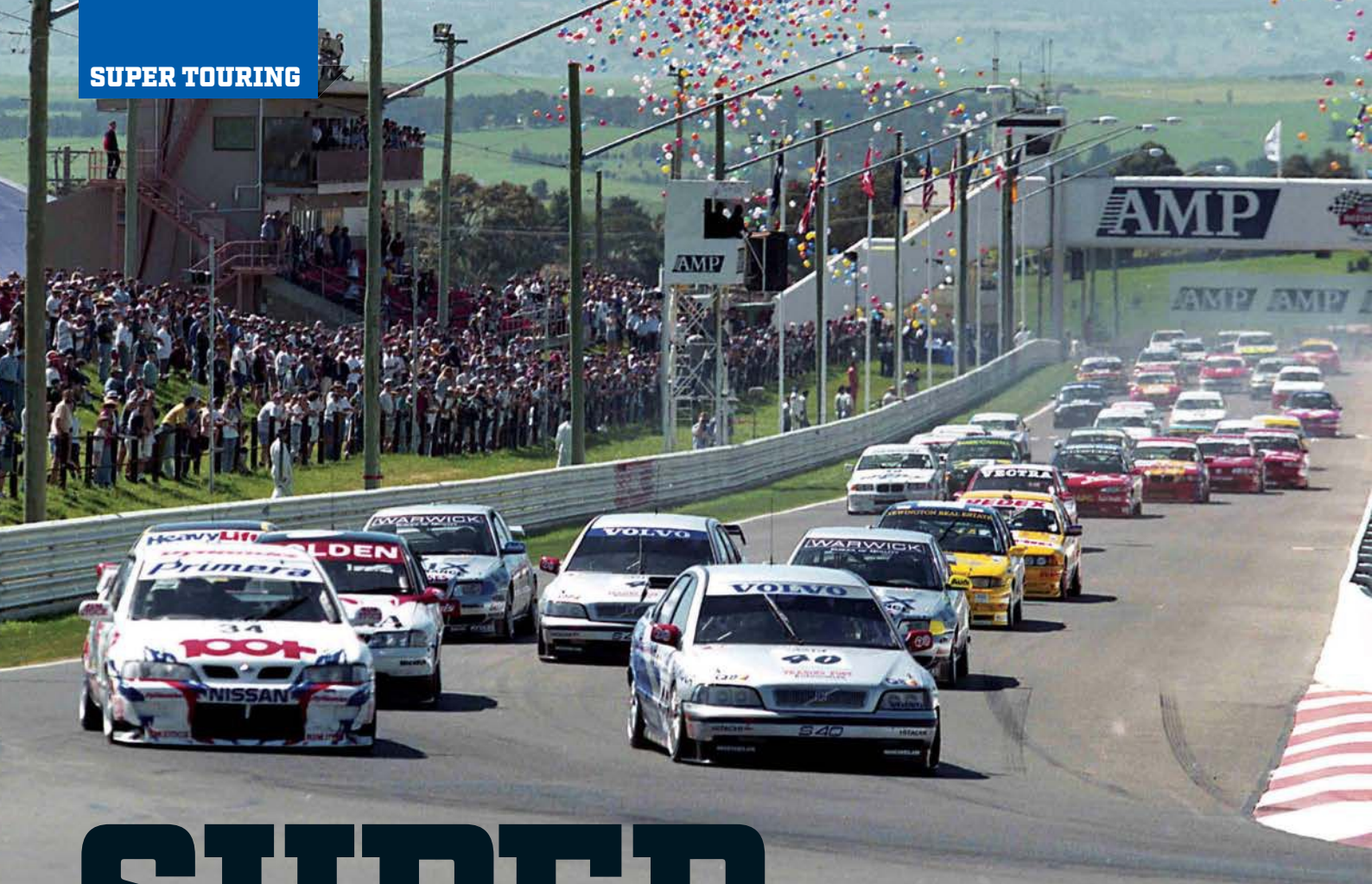
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SUPER MANUFACTURERS

WORDS Matt Coch IMAGES Autopics.com.au

Supercars is desperately seeking manufacturers to enter its series under the Gen2 regulations. The irony is that 20 years ago multiple manufacturers raced at Mount Panorama in the Super Touring Bathurst 1000s, having been shut out of V8 Supercars.

Welcome to the future. Supercars has ushered in the Gen2 regulations, the next step in the sport's evolution. It's meant to build on the foundations laid by the Car of the Future and set the sport up as the automotive industry in Australia goes through one of the most radical changes in its history. There's only one problem, an elephant of sorts in the room. It's the fact Supercars 2017-style looks much like it did last year and the year before.

The problem has been a lack of appetite from manufacturers to engage in the new rules and a similar reluctance from teams to take on the cost of developing a new car for the new regulations. After all, for the thick end of a generation, the top end of motorsport in Australia has been dominated by V8 racing. Brand it however you like, the fundamental formula has been a large chunk of iron wrapped up in a shell that shares

more than a passing resemblance to the car you or I have parked in the driveway.

A lot of criticism has been levelled at Supercars in recent years because it's no longer 'relevant' or that the cars are simply silhouettes of the family sedan they're meant to represent. There's truth in that but, if you're honest about it, hasn't that always been the case? Ever since Ford, Holden and Chrysler invested in homologation specials and fuelled the 'Supercar Scare' of the early 1970s, the sport has been moving ever so slowly away from what was originally a production-car style of racing.

We went through an era where the cars were largely sports sedans and then into Group A, which saw costs grow to the point where it became unaffordable even for the manufacturers to stomach, all the while the cars edging further and further away from that which sits on the showroom at your local dealership. We were simply



ABOVE: General Motors' Super Touring line-up included Peter Brock in his farewell tour in 1997.

convinced otherwise by marketing types trying to pry us from our hard-earned dollar.

Group A broke from that brand-based, almost football-like rivalry. The Holden versus Ford battle gave way to more universal regulations throughout the 1980s and the early part of the 1990s, but that wasn't without its problems. Having been dominated by Ford Sierras, it was the mighty Nissan GT-R which took over as the class of the field, but that came with a hefty price tag that ultimately sunk the regulations.

"To run one of our cars, that was a half-million-dollar motor car back in those days," admits Fred Gibson, the man behind the successful GT-R project in Australia.

"That's why we had to get Winfield on as a sponsor, because Nissan couldn't afford it. Nissan couldn't afford for us to go racing with the GT-R without a major sponsor, no way. That's why Group A eventually folded in Australia."

And so, in 1992, Group A died. In its place two factions looked to establish prominence. One was a niche, local product which attempted to hark back a generation and the other imported from Europe, boasting some of the biggest names in the automotive world.

Super Touring benefitted from the fact that a host of the world's automotive brands were onboard with the concept, building and selling cars to customer outfits. It was that very point which attracted Brad Jones, who went on to win Super Touring titles in Australia with Audi.

"Because V8 racing was pretty much a lock out between Holden and Ford, there wasn't that much opportunity for any other manufacturer to compete at a really high level, so Super Touring became somewhat of a phenomenon around the world," Jones recalls.

"At the time that my brother and I looked at it, I was racing for HRT in the enduros and just trying to find the money to break in was difficult – impossible for us. And then with Super Touring you could get a deal going with a manufacturer and end up with really good equipment

straight from the factory and be competitive straight away. So, for us, it was really I'd say a no-brainer. We found a manufacturer and we ended up with the right equipment from the factory."

On paper, Super Touring was a great idea. There were fixed costs and a diversity which made for some iconic race cars. Think of the Volvo 850 Estate, or the BMW 3 Series, two of the most unlikely bedfellows racing door to door on track. And the parity system made them all, more or less, equal.

Contrast that with the V8 Supercars model, which allowed teams to build their own cars and fettle their own engines, all within stringent regulations of course. The initial dollar investment to be competitive was far higher, while the regulations locked out manufacturers beyond Ford and Holden. It was unashamedly Australian; designed here, made here and raced here.

It was a formula more reminiscent of the 1970s and the marketing reflected that. It linked in names like Peter Brock and Dick Johnson with familiar brands like

BELOW: Greg Murphy and Russell Ingall ran a Holden-branded Vectra in 1998.





ABOVE: Renault's British Touring Car Championship team added to the prestige of the Super Touring Bathurst 1000 in 1997.

the Holden Commodore – the successor to the iconic Torana – and the Ford Falcon.

There was less diversity and greater field spread; a gulf between 'factory' teams which enjoyed the backing of the brand they raced and the privateers who tried to compete on that same uneven playing field. In time that changed. The privateers were slowly pushed out as the sport became more professional only for the whole thing to come full circle with now next to no factory investment.

In the early 1990s we were still pumping out the Commodore and Falcon at factories in Broadmeadows, Geelong and Elizabeth. The automotive industry was strong and it was willing to invest its marketing dollars in motorsport. But as the world changed so did the industry's attitude.

BELOW: Nissan and Volvo eventually returned to Mount Panorama in Supercars.



Purse strings were pulled tighter and, while V8 Supercars opened its regulations to allow new manufacturers, only Nissan was especially interested. Volvo has come and gone and Betty Klimenko's private Mercedes-AMG project has been mothballed. Ford pulled its investment and Holden has ended a long relationship with the Walkinshaw family in favour of Triple Eight.

In the face of the shrinking local automotive sector, the likes of James Warburton and the Supercars board have been charged with growing the sport. They've rebranded and moved the goal posts in an attempt to attract manufacturer investment, but with so little money in the industry it's proved difficult. The trouble they face is that Australia is a tiny market. Supercars is a unique product. There is little incentive for manufacturers to throw their dollars behind a programme here which has no economy of scale.

That was the strength of Super Touring, a universal product which was raced in multiple markets. Its weakness, of course, was that in Australia the cars were alien. Few of us drove or aspired to drive a Mondeo or Primera, making any connection to fans more difficult.

There was also no hiding away from the fact that there were two touring-car championships fighting for a market of just 20-million people. One, it seems, was always doomed to fail.

"If you look at what happened with IndyCar racing in the United States when they tried to have two categories, CART and IndyCar, it didn't work," argues Jones, who now not only heads one of the largest Supercars teams but also sits on the Supercars board.

"It's no different here. We've got two lots of touring cars, one's pretty much based on four-cylinder European-type cars and the other one's a heart-pounding V8.

"While (Super Touring) ended up with a reasonable following, Supercars was being pushed pretty hard.



“Bathurst was a Super Touring car race for a couple of years, so it started to get a bit popular but it really just became a battle between BMW, Audi and Volvo.

“Not that that’s a bad thing, but there was just never going to be enough room for Super Touring and for Supercars.

“I’m not sure how many people are in America, but they didn’t have the population to support IndyCar racing and CART. It didn’t have much of a chance here.”

Of course, the landscape is now very different. Super Touring has long since been buried and Supercars is now without rival at the top of the motorsport tree.

It’s ironic then that its regulations are moving closer to those of Super Touring from some two decades ago, albeit dressed up as Gen2, a model which has been used successfully to grow GT3 racing globally.

The strength of GT3 racing is its manufacturer involvement, a state of affairs which has come as a result of a strong global market that allows for the sorts of economies of scale Supercars can only dream of.

There’s a tangible link to manufacturers’ road cars, too, while the balance of performance – a different style of parity which keeps all cars within an accepted envelope of performance – allows for the strengths and weaknesses of each respective design.

“GT is, I guess in some ways, somewhat similar to Super Touring, but it’s found a different niche in the marketplace where it caters for very wealthy guys that want to see their cars go round and have a bit of a pedal themselves,” Jones reasons.

“The difference with Super Touring was there was actually proper factory teams with drivers, it wasn’t so much a gentleman sport.”

“THERE WAS JUST NEVER GOING TO BE ENOUGH ROOM FOR SUPER TOURING AND FOR SUPERCARS.”

– BRAD JONES

Beyond that, there are potential commercial issues with Stéphane Ratel and the SRO, which runs GT3 racing globally and owns the intellectual property for the feeder GT4 class, not to mention the FIA which has an over-arching interest in the category.

There is simply no alternative to Supercars currently on the table, giving it an unchallenged opportunity to lay out its plans for the future.

Its decision to move to Gen2 has a degree of logic and more than a hint of irony when one realises that we’ve been here before in Australian motorsport.

The cards Supercars played as it set out a stall all those years ago, linking it to a history it was perhaps not really entitled to claim and establishing a style of motorsport the country came to accept, is now its own worst enemy.

The challenge now is changing that mindset, creating the belief that the sport’s future is linked to its past and energising fans to buy into the new style of motorsport.

It’s why we now hear terms like ‘road relevance’ in a sport which has had only tenuous links to the cars you and I have chauffeured the family around in for the last four decades.

The marketing arm of Supercars is doing what it can to link its future with its past, to excite us and lure back an industry devoid of the riches it once had. **V3X**

SUPER TOURING CARS

Cars that entered the Super Touring Bathurst 1000s in 1997 and 1998.

- Alfa Romeo 155
- Audi A4 Quattro
- BMW 318i
- BMW 320i
- Ford Mondeo
- Ford Telstar
- Honda Accord
- Honda Civic
- Honda Integra
- Hyundai Lantra
- Mazda 626
- Nissan Primera
- Nissan Sentra
- Peugeot 405 Mi16
- Peugeot 406
- Renault Laguna
- Suzuki Baleno
- Toyota Camry
- Toyota Carina
- Toyota Corolla
- Vauxhall Cavalier
- Vauxhall Vectra
- Volvo S40
- Volvo 850



ALAN JONES

TOURING-CAR JOURNEY

Alan Jones is one of only two Australians to win the Formula 1 world drivers' championship. He finished his racing career in touring cars in Australia, where he scored a podium at the Bathurst 1000 in 1988 and a runners-up finish in the championship with Glenn Seton Racing in 1993. He recounts his journey in his new book *AJ: How Alan Jones Climbed to the Top of Formula One*. The following are extracts from his biography.

CALTEX SIERRA

"When we talk about compromised race cars being modified for a task, the Sierra was a perfect example. It was under-tyred and over-powered, which is fine in itself, because everyone else in a Sierra was in the same boat and that was the car to have."

BENSON & HEDGES RACING

"I joined the Benson & Hedges Racing team for the endurance races and then turned that into a full-time drive for 1990.

"The team was really Tony Longhurt's even though Frank Gardner was there and running it. It was a well-structured team and it had, I believe, pretty good sponsorship from Benson & Hedges. He had a great relationship with Ron Meatchem at BMW, which saw Ron in our pits on a regular basis even though we were running Fords, but Frank had a plan there.

"The BMW M3 promised a very different experience; while we were not going to have the power of the Sierras, we were going to have a car that handled really well, had great brakes and wasn't going to melt rubber every time you powered out of a corner.

"I was very much looking forward to 1991. But things were changing in Group A: the Sierra was no longer the car to have, the weapon of choice was now the Nissan GT-R – or Godzilla as it was dubbed by local journalist Mike Jacobson.

"This car was built to the very edge of the rules: turbo, four-wheel-drive ... everything you wanted or needed to dominate ... and they did. I didn't have a clue how it even worked, but I appreciated the fact that the Nissan had a major advantage over everybody else. That's the car you wanted to be in, particularly in the wet,



Alan Jones joined Colin Bond's Caltex team in 1988.



Jones partnered another F1 world champion, Denny Hulme, in 1990.



The 1993 championship-winning Glenn Seton Racing team.

but I think we had the next best thing.

“As the season went on, it was clear they were going to win and for the rest it was a different battle. We won the non-Nissan battle.”

GLENN SETON RACING

“I switched camps after the championship and drove for Glenn Seton Racing in the endurance races, which was more about looking into the 1993 season given Group A was getting the boot and a new formula for V8 Holdens and Fords was coming in.

“Aside from the fact that Paul Morris was now nosing into the BMW team with pocket loads of cash, I felt Seton was better prepared for the new era and that all made sense.

“The 1992 championship itself was not that much fun. CAMS had lumped both our

cars and the Nissans with extra weight to slow us down, and it killed us. The Nissans dominated the series again, but the Sierras and Commodores were closer.

“Joining Glenn’s team was such a good move for me. Both his dad Bo and he were terrific to work with. The whole team was really nice and even Ken Potter and Kerrie Godfrey from Philip Morris, who was sponsoring the team with the Peter Jackson brand, were great. They all put on a really professional show.

“For my first race with the new team we ran the 1993-spec Falcon rather than the Sierra, which we could also have run, but Glenn was keen to get as many laps in the car as possible before the next season began.

“So we raced the Falcon at Sandown and Bathurst. Looking to the future was what attracted me there in the first place, so I

thought this was good.

“We had retirements in both races, but the potential was clear.

“The 1993 season was structured in an interesting way. Amaroo Park was the season-opener, and Tony was still allowed to run his M3s during the season so I thought they had the box seat. I was wrong. The new cars dominated, and by that I mean both Falcons and Commodores.

“At Symmons Plains my car was really good and I won both my heat and the final and had enough points to be the overall winner for the weekend.

“I won’t say it was like winning my first grand prix, because it wasn’t, but it was very satisfying to finally win in a touring car in Australia.

“Now comes the politics. I had not really paid much attention, but there were little





lobby groups and whingers all over the place.

"The Holden teams had started complaining about our Falcons, saying we had some sort of advantage. They were better at this game than Glenn and Dick Johnson, who was leading the other competitive Falcon team.

"So what happened was if you spent enough time complaining instead of working on your car, you could get the rule-makers to help you out. They killed our car mid-season. We lost some of the front undertray and the Holdens were given some other little tricks to boost them.

"The effect for us was immediate, we lost speed and we lost front downforce, which meant we started to work the front tyres too hard. The Holden teams eventually got on top of their changes and the pendulum swung the other way. Glenn put on just enough points to win the title and I was second, but no-one was listening to us about what they'd done to our cars.

"For the next season, 1994, both brands of car had new aero packages, and we were still a little off the pace but it was nowhere near as bad.

"It was enough for me to finish fifth in the championship, which I thought was a pretty amazing result. Glenn and I were the only two Fords in there.

"There were issues starting to grow inside the team. Glenn and his father Bo were arguing and it was affecting the team, and particularly my car. As things were bubbling away, the guys at Philip Morris were getting pissed off. At Sandown I ran to a retirement with Parsons, and then for Bathurst I was paired with Allan Grice.

"My relationship with the Philip Morris people was really good, and the guys there offered me a bonus if I finished on the podium. Glenn had that race in his control

and then the engine died with nine laps to go, and that gave us the famous footage of him and the talk he gave to the TV while sitting in the car, I really felt for him that day. We saw a lot about the character of Glenn Seton that day – the failure was ripping his heart but he still sat there in the car doing a TV interview. Bo was in tears in the pits.

"I was a little bit pissed off at the team because I was actually leading at one stage and my brakes were starting to go. I was changing down early and probably, if anything, slightly over-revving it, going into the corners, using the engine as a brake.

"I didn't realise that, of all people, Larry Perkins was catching me at a great rate of knots. They weren't giving me that information. Before I knew what was going on in that final stint, he was right up my arse, out-braked me and went on to win.

"If they had told me what was going on I would have pushed a bit harder. I was a bit disappointed in that. I think they'd just forgotten they had a second car out there while Glenn was leading.

"So I was in the car at the end and I was a

second or two behind Larry when Glenn's car stopped."

PACK LEADER RACING

"The relationship issues between Glenn and Bo were having a big impact on the team and Philip Morris was looking at exiting the team.

"They approached me to see if I would be interested in running a team. I made it very clear that, yes, I would be, but I didn't want to be seen to be pulling the rug from under Glenn. I would only do it if they were definitely not going to sponsor Glenn. They guaranteed me that was the case and we formed Pack Leader Racing.

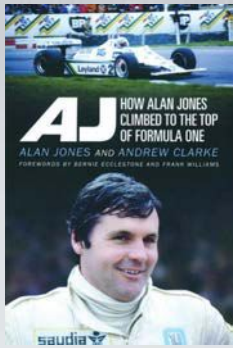
"I think Glenn knew what the deal was, so we didn't really have any issues. Since I was in charge of getting as much money as possible for the team, I went to talk with the CEO of Ford Australia, who offered me sweet FA, probably because of the way the media were portraying the set-up of the new team as shafting Glenn.

"Everyone in Australia thinks I'm a Ford man – I'm not. It's just purely coincidental that every single team, with the exception of the BMWs, was either a Ford Sierra



Jones went his own way with Pack Leader Racing.

A fiery end to Jones' 1996 Bathurst 1000.



or a Ford Falcon. I always wanted to race a Holden, because I thought they were a better race car.

“They had a smaller frontal area and they always seemed to handle a bit better than the Falcon. So I was pretty pissed off with Ford for what I saw as a token amount. I was so pissed off that I went onto the grid at Bathurst wearing a Holden cap just to show them what I thought.

“Regardless of Ford’s effort, Philip Morris supplied enough money to set up a workshop and get all the equipment, transporter, engines, dyno... the whole deal.

“I then contacted Ross Stone, who always prepared a good car, and got him and his brother Jimmy on board to look after it all.

“I knew I wasn’t mechanically minded enough to run the cars and I didn’t want to worry about the small things, I just wanted to race. The Stone brothers looked to be the perfect solution.

“We ended up with sponsorship issues when the government blocked cigarette sponsorship on cars – bloody Jones’ Law, here was a good sponsor and the relationship was already terminal. That is when we switched to Pack Leader with a colour scheme that evoked the Peter Jackson brand. The government cracked it with us – but they did say we could take the sponsorship money but not market products.

“Eventually we weren’t

allowed to take their money, even if we were driving a plain white car with no stickers, which I just find extraordinary.

“Anyway, the relationship lasted a couple of years until they closed that door on us. At that point I was in a bit of trouble. We had the team and all the equipment. I had a factory up and running and I had my office at the front and the Stone brothers were operating the workshop at the back. Because I was having trouble getting sponsorship for 1998, I sold them the team.”

ANTHONY TRATT RACING

“I did three sets of endurance races with Anthony Tratt and that included a couple of extra races in the championship to get ready. We had no speed in 1999 and finished the Queensland 500 but then retired at Bathurst in the closing laps of the race. We finished neither race in 2000 and then finished both in 2001 – but we weren’t racing, we were making up the numbers.”

DICK JOHNSON RACING

“My final opportunity in V8 Supercars came up with Dick Johnson Racing and the chance to drive a Falcon with Greg Ritter while Paul Radisich and Steve Johnson ran the lead car. It was good to be back in a serious team. This was 2002, at the end of the era where the team was a powerhouse of the sport.”

RETIREMENT

“I never announced or even declared a retirement proper from racing. I would never close the door to a good opportunity if it came up, but I was now in my late 50s and knew I was stretching it. I just walked away from it, no fanfare, no farewell tour, just me being me and doing it my way. So in a very quiet and private way, that was it for my motor-racing career as a driver.”

Edited extract from *AJ: How Alan Jones Climbed to the Top of Formula One*. By Alan Jones and Andrew Clarke. Published by Penguin Random House Australia. Available now. RRP \$34.99. **V3X**



CHAPTER EXTRACT

Scan to read the full chapter.

BELOW: Jones' final Bathurst 1000 start in 2002.





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Stay tuned for more monthly winners next issue!

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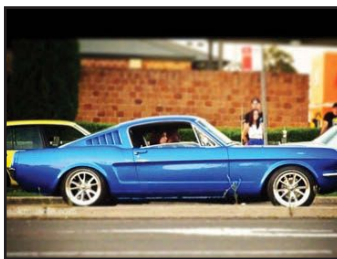


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10 SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN

VOLVO POLESTAR S60/V60

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9 ALLAN MOFFAT

MAZDA RX-7 AMS

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8 WAYNE GARDNER

HOLDEN VS COMMODORE WGR

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7 JACK BRABHAM

HOLDEN HB TORANA

Holden's first sporty Torana carried the name of three-times

Formula 1 world champion Jack Brabham, with a more powerful 79hp engine, stronger brakes and wider wheel arches.

6 AMBROSE/INGALL

FORD BA FALCON XR8 DEVIL R/ENFORCER

Ford celebrated Stone Brothers Racing's championship wins with limited-edition XR8 BA Falcons featuring Marcos Ambrose's Devil R in shock-wave blue and Russell Ingall's Enforcer in envi green.



5 CRAIG LOWNDES

HOLDEN VF COMMODORE SS-V

The Craig Lowndes SS-V special edition included sporty performance additions from the standard range, with a distinctive black bonnet, side decals and Lowndes' signature.

4 ALLAN MOFFAT

FORD XC FALCON 500 AMS

Ford produced 500 versions of

the Allan Moffat Special Falcon 500 sedan in 1977 featuring a 4.9-litre V8 amongst other performance upgrades. The Moffat-led formation finish at Bathurst that year made the car a hit.

3 JOHN GOSS

FORD XB FALCON JGS

To commemorate victory in the 1974 Bathurst 1000, Ford produced the Ford XB Falcon John Goss Special in 1975. The special edition was based on the XB Falcon 500 two-door hardtop and also featured a 4.9-litre V8.

2 DICK JOHNSON

FORD XE FALCON GRAND PRIX TURBO

After Ford stopped production of the V8-powered Falcon, Dick

Johnson gave his name to a turbocharged performance version of the 4.1-litre six-cylinder Falcon XE in the Tru Blu paintwork of his race car in 1982.

1 PETER BROCK

HOLDEN VK COMMODORE SS GROUP A

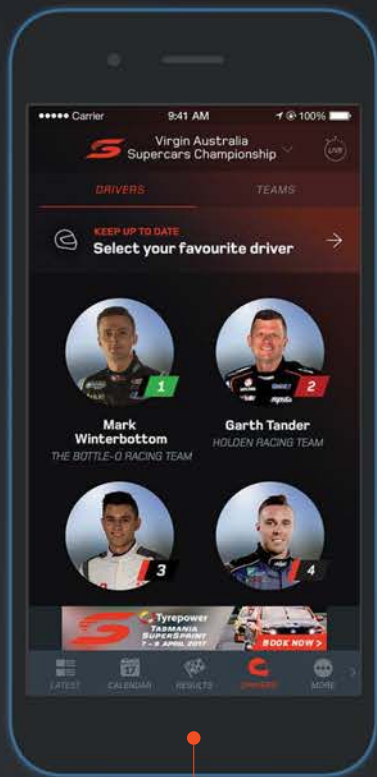
Peter Brock's name appeared on many Holdens and other cars but none stand the test of time like the Holden VK Commodore SS Group A. The car was designed by his Holden Dealer Team to homologate the Commodore for Group A and nicknamed it the 'Blue Meanie' for its powerful five-litre V8, sporty bodywork and unique colour. **V8X**



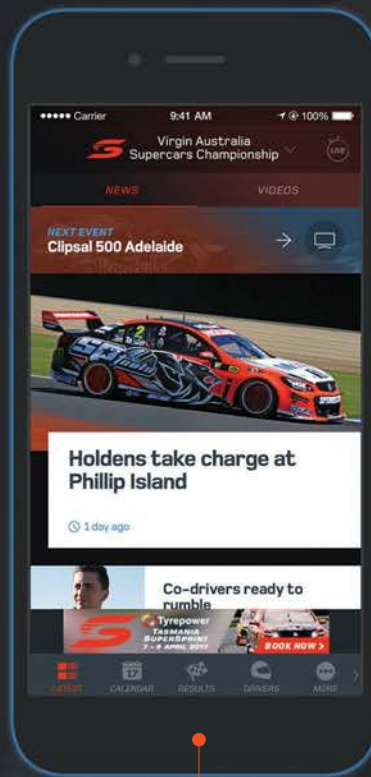
Peter Brock's 'Blue Meanie'.

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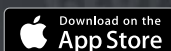


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