

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Le Mans Classic 2010



**The fifth running of the definitive *homage* to long-distance motor racing provided 96,000 spectators with feats of entertainment ranging from Attwood/Schuppan in the Gulf Porsche 917 which finished second in 1971, to puttering Panhards, tiny Renaults and even a two-stroke Saab.**

In addition to the racing on the famous 'long' Le Mans course, which partly uses closed sections of public road, the event also encourages car clubs to meet on the **Bugatti Circuit**. So, you can dip in and out of the on-track excitement to browse the 100s of **Jaguars, Alpine-Renaults, Porsches *et al*** on display. There's also quality merchandising ranging from automobilia and vintage clothing to **Leica** cameras, **Chapal** leather goods and the sublime technological watches *de luxe* from main sponsor **Richard Mille**.

Significant manufacturer displays saw **Porsche** and **BMW** (in particular) bringing their priceless museum exhibits back to the track that made them famous. From **Porsche** came the **1971 winning Martini 917** and the '**Pink Pig**', while the Bavarian manufacturer showed several **Art Cars**.



For newcomers to the **Le Mans Classic**, here's a brief synopsis of the format. Only cars of a type that actually competed in the race from 1923 to 1979 are allowed to race. In actual fact, many entries are veterans of the famous 24-hour endurance event, including the winner in 1962 (**Ferrari 330 TRI**), the previously mentioned second-place **917 Porsche**, many **competition Ferrari 'Daytonas'**, **Aston Martin DP 212**, the sole **Jaguar E2A** in existence and the gloriously French **Inalteras** (built near **Le Mans** and named after a wallpaper manufacturer...).

The 460 entries were split by age into six individual grids (or *Plateaux*), each grid given three 40-minute races during the 24-hour period. It should be mentioned at this point that many veteran drivers of the main June race were competing once again. **Classic Driver** contributor and past **works Porsche** driver **Tony Dron** was behind the wheel of a **1923 Model T Ford** and **Jaguar E2A**, 1970 winner **Richard Attwood** was paired with 1983 winner **Vern Schuppan**, and **Henri Pescarolo** (a four-times winner) was back at **La Sarthe** once again. Other famous drivers included: **Jan Lammers, Alain Serpaggi, Jean-Pierre Jaussaud, David Piper, Rene Arnoux** and **Prince Leopold von Bayern**.



The **Le Mans Classic** organisers (**Peter Auto**, in conjunction with the ever-efficient ACO) are having none of the new-fangled 3 o'clock start; at 4pm racing was underway - as in period - and it was **Grid 3** (1957 - 1961) that led the way. Significant entries here included several **Lister-Jaguars**, **Porsche 550s**, the **Jaguar E2A** and GT cars from **Ferrari**, **Aston Martin** and **Austin-Healey**.

Pace-setters in practice had been the **Verdon-Roe/Leventis/Fisken 1960 Ferrari 246S** and **Peter Thornton's DB4GT**. After three rounds, however, it was the **ex-Camoradi**, 'Streamliner' **Maserati T61 'Birdcage'** of **Willi Balz** and **Audi DTM** driver **Frank Stippler** that emerged overall winner, just four seconds ahead of the **Roger Wills/Joe Twyman Lotus 15**.

Having started slightly out of sync with Grid 3, the rest of the weekend ran in number order so next up were the 1962 - 1965 cars, an entry which included early **Ford GTs**, **Bizzarrinis**, **Cobras** and **Porsche 904s**.



A highlight of this race was the 1962 race-winning **Ferrari 330 TRI** (sold by **RM** at Maranello in 2007 for 6,875,000 euros and entered by Argentine owner **Luis Perez Companc**). This, the 1963 **ex-works 275/330 P** and three other significant **Ferraris** were maintained during the event under the awning of a **Corse Clienti** transporter with **Ferrari Classiche** mechanics tending the **330 TRI**.



The intrusive roll bar on this car (an FIA requirement, easily removable) clearly offended the sensitivities of **Ferrari Classiche** and **Corse Clienti** head **Marco Arrighi**. But, with activity at **Ferrari Classiche** busier than ever, he was philosophical, delighted to be asked to look after the **Classiche-certified** car which (considering its totally original specification) had put in some competitive times.



In the race, nothing could stop **Christian Gläsel's GT40**, which finished (on aggregate) some eight minutes ahead of the **Peruch/Hitchins Cobra**. More heavy metal rolled out for **Grid 5** (1966 - 1971), where Lola T70s, ferociously quick little **Chevrons** and more-modified **GT40s** took on the technologically superior Porsches.

Two **Porsches** were in Gulf colours, the pair (plus a green 906) run by **Adrian Hamilton's Hampshire-based company**. The **Attwood/Schuppan** pairing was formidable, as was the immaculately prepared **917K**; however, nothing could stop **Bernard Thuner's red/black #21 Lola T70 Mk IIIB**. Main sponsor **Richard Mille** ran well in his **T70**, although a setback in the second round dropped him a couple of places in the overall result.







The **Grid 6** cars hit the track just before 20:00. With the sun dipping (although the temperature remained at 35deg C/94deg F...), it was time for the really fast stuff. The era of turbo cars saw much banging, popping and flame-outs with **Jean-Marc Luco's 1977 Porsche 936** emerging a dominant victor after every round. The performance of the **Ferrari 512 BBLMs** was impressive, trouncing the **Porsche 935s** every time - unlike in period.

As darkness fell, out came the **pre-War grid**. For two races it was a **Talbot** affair, although **Albert Otten's BMW 328** managed to win the second by the tiniest margin (0.228 seconds) and finish first overall on aggregate, despite the efforts of the many pale green cars. Disappointingly, the **pre-War** entry featured just one **Alfa Romeo 8C** and no **Mercedes SSKs**.



When Grid 2 crossed the line at 22:34, the circuit was completely dark. Two British **D-type Jaguars** had dominated practice but it was the **Peter Neumark/James Baxter** #14 'D' which took overall honours. Hats off to **Alex Buncombe** in [JD Classics'](#) ex-Fangio Jaguar C-type, though, for a storming drive from the back of the grid that garnered a win in the last race.

After 24 hours of pretty non-stop action, the flag dropped at 4pm on another **Le Mans Classic** - probably the best yet. As a spectacle, it, and the **Goodwood Revival**, are the world's best historic motor racing events. It's a shame we'll have to wait until 2012 for the next one.

**[PLEASE CLICK HERE TO SEE A PHOTO GALLERY OF THE 2010 LE MANS CLASSIC.](#)**





## 2010 Le Mans Classic - Final Results:

### Grid 1

1. BMW 328 - Albert Otten #26
2. Talbot 105 BGH 21 - Lee Maxted-Page/Julian Bronson/Gareth Burnett/Alex Ames #7
3. Talbot 105 - John Ruston/Alex Amex/Phil Stanton #2

### Grid 2

1. Jaguar D-type - Peter Neumark/JS Baxter #14
2. Maserati 300S - Nicolas Chambon/Henri Chambon #21
3. Jaguar C-type - Nigel Webb #2

### Grid 3

1. Maserati Tipo 61 'Birdcage' - Willi Balz/Frank Stippler #35
2. Lotus 15 - Roger Wills/Joe Twyman #4
3. Lotus 15 - Ewan McIntyre/Jamie McIntyre #74

### Grid 4

1. Ford GT40 - Christian Gläsel #34
2. AC Cobra - Steve Hitchins/Bernard Peruch #24



3. Ford GT40 - Manuel Ferrao/Diogo Ferrao #42

#### **Grid 5**

1. Lola T70 Mk IIIB - Bernard Thuner #21
2. Chevron B16 - John Sheldon #7
3. Porsche 917K - Richard Attwood/Vern Schuppan #42

#### **Grid 6**

1. Porsche 936 - Jean-Marc Luco/Jacques Nicolet #34
2. Lola T298 - Patrice Lafargue #44
3. Chevron B21 - Ludovic Caron #21













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