

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Oldtimer-Grand-Prix 2013: Under the bright Eifel sun](#)

Lead

The 41st Oldtimer GP - held on 9-11 August at the Nürburgring - combined all the ingredients for a world-class historic motorsport event, from a wildly diverse range of the top cars to a Who's Who of drivers, plus tens of thousands of eager enthusiasts. Including, of course, Classic Driver.

Automotive time travel requires the right stage: in England, it's Goodwood, in Germany it's the Nürburgring Nordschleife. While BMW, Jaguar and Porsche dominated the weekend's official events at the 2013 OGP, a vast range of rare and exotic cars captured the imagination of spectators. The journey begins in the historic paddock, where the roar of the engines drowns out all other sounds and the sporting legends of the 20s and 30s provide the right dose to kick-start this high-octane cocktail.

Non-stop racing from dawn to dusk

From pre-War cars to Historic Grand Prix Cars, GT and Touring Cars - it's all there, at speed, on the track. The air pulsates with sound, almost non-stop from early morning till sunset. Alfa Romeo 8C Monza, Aston Martin DB4 GT, BMW 328, Jaguar Lightweight E-type, Ferrari 250 SWB, Maserati 250F, Mercedes 300 SL Gullwing and Porsche 904 - and that's just the tip of the iceberg.



One highlight is a large paddock celebrating Grand Prix milestones from BMW's motorsport history, while another is a tribute to Stefan Bellof who (unofficially) set the fastest ever time on the Nordschleife in the configuration it is today, in qualifying for the 1983 Nürburgring 1000km. In the factory-supported Rothmans Porsche 956 he shared with Derek Bell, Bellof took pole by 5 seconds, recording a time of 6 minutes, 11.13 seconds, although the official record is his fastest race lap, at 6 minutes, 25.91 seconds. Bellof died at Spa in 1985 but his memory was kept alive at the OGP when Derek Bell took to the track in the rebuilt 956 in which Bellof set the record, exactly 30 years ago.

The legends of the 'Ring



Another hero always popular with the crowds is Jochen Mass, who raced a Cobra in the Gentlemen Drivers race (for pre-1966 GT cars) but, thanks to clutch failure, saw his beefy V8 blow on the last lap. Things went very much better for British driver Alex Buncombe, who won the race from pole in a 1961 E-type. "I won here with this car last year, and it was an honour to repeat that victory this year. The mechanics and team from JD Classics did a great job preparing the car. I gave it everything on every lap and it kept going until the end - a great feeling!"

Anniversary celebrations



Yet another 50th anniversary worth celebrating is that of the 6-hour race at the Nürburgring - held on 16th June 1963 - as the first round of the brand new European Touring Car

Championship. That race was won by Peter Lindner and Peter Nöcker in a Jaguar Mk II, hence it was good to see a MkII in the AvD Historic Marathon, on the Friday of the OGP, take third in class, driven by Alex Buncombe (again!), sharing with Le Mans-winning driver Andy Wallace and journalist/racer Roland Löwisch. Meanwhile, you could hardly expect Porsche to fail to celebrate the 911's 50th, so there was a large meeting of 911 enthusiasts with a parade on the F1 track. And to satisfy lovers of historic Italian metal, there was plenty from Alfa Romeo, Ferrari and Maserati.

So, was anything missing at this year's OGP? Well, yes, Mercedes seemed to have almost no role in the whole magnificent spectacle. It seems the marque has withdrawn from OGP, which is a shame. Still, at least it gives the other marques more of the limelight. Every dog has its day, as they say - a fact that was as true 50 years ago as it is today.

Photos: Nanette Schärf

Gallery

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