

CLASSIC DRIVER

Red lips and blown kisses - Racing legends tell of the Monaco GP

Lead
Featuring Alain de Cadenet, Emanuele Pirro, Jochen Mass and Ray Mallock, the seventh edition of Credit Suisse's Historic Racing Forum recalled the glory days of the Monaco Grand Prix, and honoured Sir Stirling Moss's first victory at the principality in 1956...

As the video depicting Sir Stirling Moss's historic maiden Monaco victory ended, so the guests at Credit Suisse's Historic Racing Forum burst into applause. Exactly sixty years ago, on 13 May 1956, the young Englishman claimed his first victory here driving a Maserati 250F, and time has not dimmed his passion and enthusiasm for motorsport one bit. He regaled us with his fascinating stories and unadulterated opinions alongside his racing peers for over an hour, in what was one of the highlights of the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique weekend.



The theme of the forum was 'Manufacturers versus Privateers: The Battle for Motorsport Supremacy', and posed the question whether you have a chance today as a privateer against a highly equipped factory team, and how this differs from the past. Five-times Le Mans winner Emanuele Pirro, who enjoyed immense success as an Audi factory driver, had a strong opinion on the matter, claiming that it is important for him that motorsport is accessible again for privateer teams. Alain de Cadenet, who financed his active motorsport career without the backing of a Works team, was even more pessimistic about the current situation - "Is racing still a sport, or just a pure technology fest?"





With this statement, the focus of the discussion shifted to the differences between motorsport then and now. Sir Stirling Moss agreed with De Cadenet, claiming that today motorsport is a pure arms race of technology, and hardly about the skill of the driver. Would Lewis Hamilton win, for example, if he weren't driving his Mercedes? Jochen Mass took a different stance. The former Formula 1 and Le Mans winner believes that today the driving quality is so much more diverse, and skill is still very much the most pivotal factor. The discussion also dealt with the belief that motorsport is no longer entertaining enough, for participants and spectators alike. Sir Stirling firmly believes that racing was far more charismatic in his day. "I remember the special atmosphere here in Monte-Carlo very well," he said. "Spectators were so close to the track - I remember blowing kisses to one particular lady with striking red lipstick every time I raced by her."



Towards the end of the forum, former sports car star Brian Redman even made a surprise visit. The whole affair made for an entertaining start to the historic Grand Prix weekend - we look forward to hearing more fascinating insight at Credit Suisse's next Historic Racing Forum at the Goodwood Revival in September.

Photos: Rémi Dargegen for Classic Driver © 2016

Gallery

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