

# LEGENDARY RACE CARS



by BASEM WASEF

Foreword by Sir Stirling Moss







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BASEM WASEF



*For Anna. My darling, my love, my life.*

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Basem Wasef's interest in racing was sparked when he first encountered a TYCO slot car track as a tyke. His experience as a writer, photographer, and journalist has since taken him inside the world of professional racing, and *Legendary Race Cars* continues the thread initiated by his first book, *Legendary Motorcycles*. Basem also contributes to About.com, *Popular Mechanics*, and *American Motorcyclist*. Though he enjoys chasing significant and unusual vehicles across the globe, Basem calls Los Angeles home. You can visit his website at <http://www.basemwasef.com>.

***Photo credits and captions:***

***On the cover:*** The Team Lotus-STP Type 56 Indy car.

Joe Leonard raced this turbine-powered, four-wheel-drive car in the 1968 Indianapolis 500.

See Chapter 23. © Rick Graves

***On the frontispiece:*** Detail view of the tail of the Rothmans Porsche 962C. See Chapter 24.

***On the title pages:*** The Aston Martin DBR1. See Chapter 10.

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# Contents

Foreword by Sir Stirling Moss.....	7
Acknowledgments.....	8
Introduction .....	10
1 Ford's GT40s	
<i>The Ford-Ferrari Wars</i> .....	12
2 The Mercedes-Benz Silver Arrows	
<i>A Legend Is Born</i> .....	20
3 Ayrton Senna's McLaren MP4/4	
<i>Ambition Unleashed</i> .....	26
4 The Lotus 49	
<i>Anglo-American Synergy</i> .....	32
5 The "Million-Franc" Delahaye	
<i>The French Retort</i> .....	40
6 The Greer-Black-Prudhomme Top Fuel Dragster	
<i>A Slingshot in the Sun</i> .....	46
7 Juan Manuel Fangio's Maserati 250F	
<i>The Maestro's Finest Drive</i> .....	52
8 The Thomas Flyer	
<i>The Great Race Round the World</i> .....	58
9 Parnelli Jones' <i>Big Oly</i>	
<i>The Beast That Conquered Baja</i> .....	64
10 The Aston Martin DBR1	
<i>A Singular Victory</i> .....	70
11 Walter Röhrl's Audi Sport Quattro S1	
<i>The Race to the Clouds</i> .....	78
12 The Ferrari 156	
<i>The Shark-nose Contender</i> .....	84



13	The Auto Union Grand Prix Cars <i>The Underfunded Overachievers</i> .....	90
14	Carroll Shelby's Cobra Daytona Coupe <i>A Lid Makes a Legend</i> .....	96
15	The 1911 Marmon Wasp <i>Igniting an Indy Tradition</i> .....	104
16	The Porsche 917 <i>From Undriveable to Unbeatable</i> .....	110
17	Richard Petty's Plymouth SuperBird <i>The Aero Car</i> .....	116
18	Ecurie Ecosse's Jaguars <i>The Goliath Slayers</i> .....	122
19	The Lotus 79 <i>The Ground Effects Car</i> .....	130
20	Michael Schumacher's Ferraris <i>Reinventing the Legend</i> .....	136
21	Maserati 8CM Number 3011 <i>The Relentless Racer</i> .....	142
22	Colin McRae's "555" Subaru Impreza <i>Full Tilt Fearlessness</i> .....	148
23	The STP Turbine Cars <i>The Future Was Then</i> .....	154
24	The Porsche 962C <i>Conquest at Le Mans</i> .....	162
25	Mercedes-Benz 300SLR No. 722 <i>The Unbreakable Mille Miglia Record</i> .....	168
	Index .....	176



# Foreword

*by Sir Stirling Moss*

This is a unique book and, no doubt, it will also be controversial in much the same way that books about the qualities of the drivers are. Who was the greatest? Who was the most naturally talented? Who was the most versatile? Who was best in the highest form of racing? Indeed, what is the ultimate form of the sport? In many ways, I hope all these questions will be raised about the cars chosen for this book. Because if they are, then the author will have achieved a major goal.

Motor racing may not be considered an art form in itself, but for those of us who were fortunate enough to have raced these vehicles, every car we were driving was, indeed, a work of art. Every one of them was an individual. Each had her own beauty, her own personality, her own idiosyncrasies, her own way of behaving, her own way of letting you understand her and form a relationship with her.

Just as it is with a very lovely woman—be she fun, sophisticated, or sporty, blessed with beautiful lines or just plain racy—to make it work, you have to know and respect her. For us drivers, it is the most fabulous and exciting challenge to get it right, because, with a racing car, the penalties of being arrogant and misunderstanding the signals she is sending you can, potentially, be disastrous.

When you combine this love affair and passion with danger, speed, adrenaline, and the will to win, something remarkable occurs. I have had the fortune to experience this sensation and to observe it firsthand.

The competition that is racing—be it with cars, boats, wings, two legs or four—has been with us for all our history. The desire to win is dominant and exciting. Winning may not be everything, but it is the defining factor in motor racing. In my career, I always said, “Show me a man who is second, and I will show you a loser.” A tough approach, yes, but I lived and raced by it. Many of those I raced with felt the same way.

This endless chase for victory has produced some spectacular cars and achievements. Michael Schumacher’s Ferrari domination; the Ford GT40’s 1–2–3 at Le Mans; the glorious Mercedes-Benz 300SLR with which I won the 1955 Mille Miglia with a record time that will stand forever. These victories were the result of a partnership. Car and driver.

There are heartbreaking exceptions as well, where the driver and car became legendary, despite defeat. To name but two: Parnelli Jones’ STP turbine car, which failed just three laps short of victory at the Indy 500. And Richard Petty’s Plymouth SuperBird, which fell short of a historic championship. Their greatness goes on, even if not everything went according to plan! That’s motor racing!

Selecting these 25 legendary cars cannot have been easy. Automobiles, like paintings and any other works of art, have different effects on different people. Which era do you love? Which look? Two- or single-seaters? Suited to which kind of activity?

I would hate to have been making the choice—but I am enormously proud and happy to have been invited to write the foreword for this book. And not just because my beloved 300SLR is one of the cars profiled here. My wife has suggested that this fabulous car is, perhaps, the most important lady in my life. She feels we belong together, and I am not sure she isn’t right!

Enjoy this super book. My involvement has been an honour and a pleasure.

—Sir Stirling Moss, 2009

# Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the enthusiastic support of Zack Miller, who had a vision for how *Legendary Race Cars* could conceptually evolve from my first book, *Legendary Motorcycles*. I'm also grateful that Zack paired me with Jeffrey Zuehlke, the ultimate motorsports enthusiast who just happens to be a great editor. Jeffrey's passion made it a pleasure to debate the nuances of *Legendary Race Cars*, and he deftly managed the production process and offered many insightful suggestions. My wife, Anna, is the perfect cohort for this crazy thing I call work. It took thousands of frequent flier miles between Pebble Beach, the Goodwood Revival, and the collections in Stuttgart and Ingolstadt, but her inventiveness, inspiration, and peerless taste was priceless, as were her ruthless edits. Baby, now you know way too much about racing!

Thanks to Dan Barile, Geoff Day, Rob Moran, and Nicole Patzer at Mercedes-Benz, I was able to photograph the Silver Arrows and 300SLR No. 722 in Germany. Florijan Hadzic was also a gracious steward of the brand. Christina Floss and Mario Guerreiro at Audi kindly facilitated access to the Auto Union and Audi Sport Quattro S1. And thanks to Christina, I was able to hear a firsthand account of the Pikes Peak-winning experience from the incomparable Walter Röhrl. Gary Axon and Janet Bradley helped navigate the wilds of the Goodwood Revival, and Doug Nye's scholarly diligence proved invaluable when it came to separating truth from legend. It took some doing, but tracking down Christopher Jaques and his Maserati 8CM proved a delightful addition to the book. At ProDrive headquarters in Banbury, Tom Tremayne thoughtfully arranged photography of Colin McRae's Subaru Impreza. Doug Hill at the National Motor Museum in Beaulieu graciously allowed access to Graham Hill's Lotus 49 and the McLaren MP4/4 driven by Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna. Bill Bicknell, Andrew Farr, Alan Manning, and Jon Richardson assisted with photography, while keeping me secure atop one very tall ladder—thanks guys! Chris Cowlam and Jay Walker at Tim Samways Sporting and Historic Car Engineers enabled photography of the Le Mans-winning Aston Martin DBR1. Dick Skipworth was also wonderfully warm when it came to shooting his Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar C-type at his home in Hemel Hempstead. Graham Gauld was a font of knowledge regarding David Murray and the exploits of Ecurie Ecosse, while also providing photos.

Gary Fong, Andy Schupack, and Heidi Weber assisted with the Porsche chapters, as did the late and much missed Bob Carlson. Francesca Smith at Aston Martin, Scott Brown and Brandt J. Rosenbusch at Chrysler, and Marguerite Moran and Linda Nye at Ford assisted with archived photographs, while Bruce Anderson and Tom Madigan gave sound technical notes.

Legends Derek Bell, Tony Brooks, Parnelli Jones, Richard Petty, Don Prudhomme, Brian Redman, and Carroll Shelby offered invaluable and evocative glimpses of life behind the wheel. It was a thrill to meet Sir Stirling Moss at Goodwood and hear him recount one of racing's greatest victories. But I was tickled when I invited him to write the foreword, and he agreed

to participate “Only if it will be as good as *Legendary Motorcycles*.” I hope *Legendary Race Cars* exceeds your expectations, Sir Moss.

Back in the United States, Duncan Dayton permitted photography of his Lotus 79 at the Monterey Historics, and Julio and Christian Palmaz thoughtfully made their Le Mans-winning Porsche 917 available one rainy day in Napa Valley. Sandra Kasky Button with the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance helped with the brainstorming process, and Barbara Clark at Harrah’s National Automobile Museum provided historical photos of the Thomas Flyer. Thanks to Peter Mullins’ generosity and Webb Farrer’s assistance, the Million-Franc Delahaye was made available for a shoot in Los Angeles, while Richard Adatto clarified the finer points of the car’s history. Equally generous in the City of Angels were Parnelli Jones and Jim Dilamarter, who gave access to the Lotus STP Turbine car and Big Oly at their headquarters in Torrance; we could have listened to their racing stories all day, and I have to thank Dean Case for the introduction. In Santa Cruz, California, Bruce Canepa and Llew Kinst made photographing the Porsche 962C and Don Prudhomme’s top fuel dragster a pleasure, and across the country in Philadelphia, Dr. Fred Simeone and Kevin Kelly couldn’t have been more accommodating while we shot the Shelby Cobra Daytona coupe and Ford GT40 at the Simeone Foundation Museum. At the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum, Donald Davidson orchestrated access to the *Marmon Wasp* and verified the historical accuracy of the chapter.

Thanks to Paul-Henri Cahier, John Lamm, Pete Lyons, Peter Sachs at the Klementaski Collection, and Zoë Shafer at LAT Photographic Archive for granting access to their libraries of photography. Ernesto Cuevas once again graced the book with his painstaking Photoshop expertise. I appreciate my family’s endless support and patience throughout the process, despite their bafflement regarding the curious nature of my work. Love you, Mom and Dad!

Finally, I would like to thank God for making all things possible, even fulfilling a childhood dream as frivolous as traveling the world in search of legendary race cars.

—Basem Wasef, April 2009



# Introduction



With much the same spirit that sparked my first book, *Legendary Motorcycles*, this book initiated from a “What if?” conversation with Zack Miller. This time we were having lunch at the Ritz Carlton, Half Moon Bay, during the Legend of the Motorcycle Concours, and the idea of *Legendary Race Cars* made my wife Anna squeal—which I considered a good sign.

Lists were debated, and the agonizing process of whittling down the world’s most historically significant race cars began. But how does one distill the history of automotive motorsports into only 25 cars? As with *Legendary Motorcycles*, I knew it would be impossible to please everyone. But I also felt fortunate to be tasked with the topic, deciding early on that the book would present a selection of the most illustrious race cars, and not necessarily an A to Z compendium of every great car that raced.



Next, I began compiling a calendar of events, narrowing selections, getting second and third opinions, and of course soliciting the input of my fearless editor Jeffrey Zuehlke. Tracking down actual race cars was more difficult than choosing them. Hearsay, word of mouth, and rumor were but a few of the threads I had to sift through. Endless phone calls revealed that some cars like Phil Hill’s Ferrari 156 and Richard Petty’s Plymouth SuperBird are gone forever. But others have been preserved and simply needed to be hunted down—but hunting them down wasn’t simple.

As much as my drive across the United States for *Legendary Motorcycles* was a relatively clear path, the trajectory for *Legendary Race Cars* proved to be the opposite. The first and most obvious stop for my wife and I was the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance and the Monterey Historics, where I photographed the Thomas Flyer and the Lotus 79.



Shortly after Monterey, we embarked on the Teutonic leg of our quest. Packed into a tiny Mercedes-Benz A-Class rental, we traversed the German autobahn seeking legendary cars. We started with the Mercedes-Benz museum in Stuttgart, a time capsule of amazing automotive accomplishments. I also photographed cars at the company’s secret garage, a non-descript building where a breathtaking array of vehicles is discreetly cloaked under matching car covers. Audi’s S1 Sport Quattro and an Auto Union were tracked down in Ingolstadt, but Porsche’s Stuttgart museum was in the final phase of construction, so I decided to pursue private owners later. As a visual alternative to the steady diet of race cars, I assuaged my wife with the architectural delights of King Ludwig’s Castle, a drive alongside the meandering Rhine, and the idyllic town of Heidelberg.



With the taste of travel still in the air, weeks later we found ourselves dressed in 1940s suits and hats, slicing through the British countryside on our way to the Goodwood Revival in a borrowed Aston Martin DB9—automotive journalism does have its privileges. Surrounded by fellow enthusiasts also clad in period garb, Spitfires roared overhead as we discovered a mother lode of legendary race cars—including the 1959 Le Mans-winning Aston Martin DBR1 and the ex-Whitney Straight Maserati. The event wasn’t just go-fast eye candy either; it

was a convergence of exceptional driving talent which included Sir Stirling Moss. After meeting him, I was convinced he would be the perfect person to write the foreword. Once the dream of Goodwood was over, we darted across the bucolic British countryside to the National Motor Museum in Beaulieu, ProDrive headquarters in Banbury, and several private collections for additional photography. Once again, I tempered the automotive overload with strategic visits to Stratford-Upon-Avon, Bath, Oxford, and London.

By now I had amassed an impressive list of European cars, but American cars were woefully underrepresented. So I flew to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum where I photographed the *Marmon Wasp*. In Los Angeles, the American contingency became further bolstered when I shot Parnelli Jones' *Big Oly* (an ear-splitting behemoth which Anna quickly fell in love with) and his 1968 Lotus STP Turbine car. Parnelli regaled us with riveting tales of everything from Indy to Baja.

However, there were still a few missing links, and since he had been gracious enough to write the foreword to my first book, I gave Jay Leno a call. "You've got to speak to Dr. Fred Simeone," he instructed, and a few weeks later we were braving a blustery, 10-degree day in Philadelphia, documenting his Ford GT40 and Shelby Cobra Daytona Coupe. Curator Kevin Kelly lifted our spirits with hot laps in the Daytona.

Photography wound to a close when we flew to a vineyard in Napa, California, to shoot the Le Mans-winning Porsche 917, and even farther north to Santa Cruz, California, for the Porsche 962C and Don Prudhomme's top fuel dragster.

Copious photography was matched with hours of research, and interviews were one of the most memorable parts of the process. To hear Richard Petty recount the glory days of his SuperBird, Carroll Shelby riff on what it felt like for his Daytona to beat the Ferraris, or Derek Bell recall the terror of driving down the Mulsanne straight in a Porsche 962C, was thrilling. Distilling these separate sources into their most elemental form was the final challenge, and it took months to write and refine the stories that comprise this book.

After spending a year on this project, I'm awed by those bold enough to commit their lives to racing. But the drivers would be incomplete without their cars, as their relationship with these exceptional and unforgettable vehicles propelled them into history. It is my hope that this book stirs a fraction of the emotions that accompanied the competitions it documents.





# Ford's GT40s

## *The Ford-Ferrari Wars*

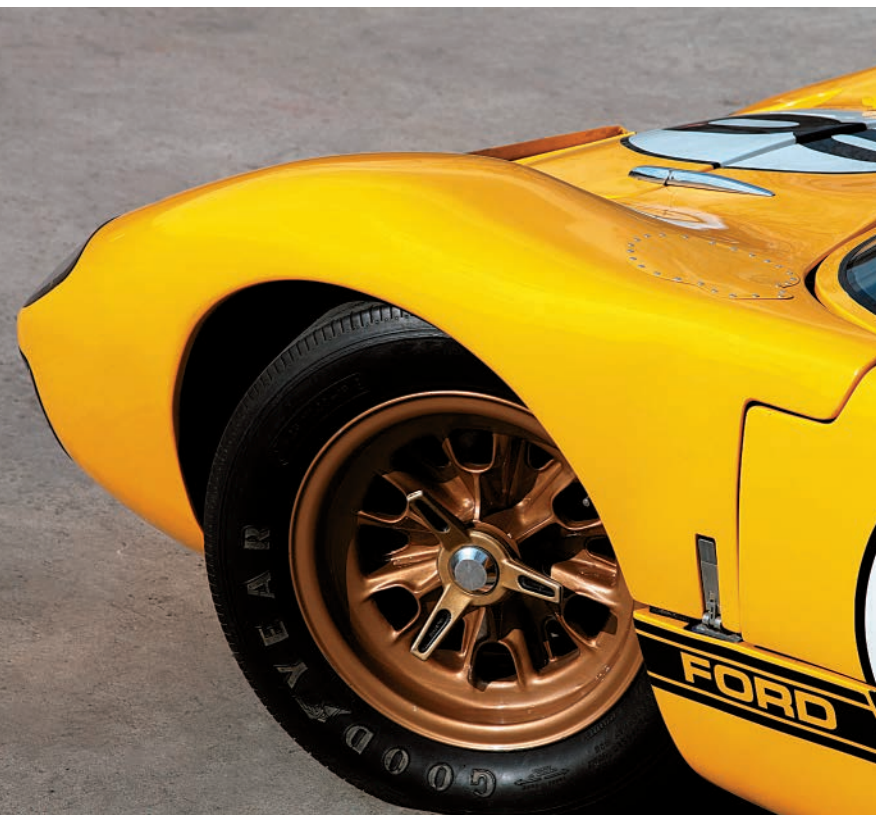
July 4, 1963, was supposed to be a historic day. The American behemoth Ford Motor Company had a deal in place to buy the boutique Italian sports car manufacturer Ferrari. It promised to be a marriage of opposites: While the Ford Motor Company perfected the mass production of automobiles, building 3,400,000 cars the previous year, Enzo Ferrari's company had hand-assembled only 500 vehicles over the same time period.

But the two automakers did have one thing in common: both were run by headstrong men with formidable egos. After protracted negotiations, Ferrari backed out of the \$18 million deal for a number of reasons, among them Henry Ford II's decree that Ferrari couldn't race his cars at Indianapolis. Ford was incensed at the withdrawal, and famously responded, "Okay then, we'll kick [their] ass."

The ass-kicking, Ford decided, would be administered at the heart of Europe's racing scene, the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Acknowledging that Ford had neither the experience nor the expertise to build a world-class roadracing car, it investigated partnering with an established race team. Ford eventually reached a deal with Lola, the Huntington, England-based company founded a few years earlier by engineer Eric Broadley. Lola had just raced a Ford V-8-powered coupe at Le Mans and seemed like a natural partner for the venture.

A development team was assembled, headed by Broadley and fabled team manager John Wyer. Ford quickly began building its new Ford Advanced Vehicles facility

**Opposite:** Although its true name is the Ford GT, the car's 40-inch height led the British press to dub it the GT40.



Ford Advanced Vehicles developed the GT40 Mark II's nose through months of wind-tunnel and on-track testing.



Copious vents were required in order to cool the GT40's huge 427-cubic-inch big-block V-8.

in England. After months of toil and testing, the team unveiled a prototype of the new car in London on April 1, 1964. This first car was officially referred to as GT/101, and all subsequent iterations would be called GTs. However, the British press would later dub the car “GT40”—GT for Grand Touring and 40 for its 40-inch height—and the GT40 nickname stuck.

The new car was thrust into an intensive testing program at Goodwood, Brands Hatch, and Monza, leading up to its first competition at the Nürburgring 1,000-kilometer race in May. The car was fast, if unsteady, and was able to hold its own until suspension failure knocked it out of the race. The following month, Ford entered three GTs in the 24 Hours of Le Mans, with driver pairings of Phil Hill/Bruce McLaren, Richie Ginther/Masten Gregory, and Dickie Attwood/Jo Schlesser. From the start, the phalanx of Fords demonstrated that they were fast enough to lead, but none of the cars would finish the race. Worse still for Ford, the V-12-powered Ferraris were the ones doing the ass-kicking: They swept first, second, and third. The rest of the season would play out in similarly—nine race starts, no finishes for the GT.

Aware that teething problems are a normal part of racing, Ford redoubled its efforts for 1965. This time, Ford enlisted the genius of Carroll Shelby, hiring his Shelby American outfit to run the cars. After a win at Daytona and an encouraging second place at the 12 Hours of Sebring, the team returned to Le Mans with six GT40s.

Five of the six cars were prepped by Shelby American; among them, two were equipped with massive 427-cubic-inch (7.0-liter) V-8s. But as history has shown repeatedly, Le Mans is about far more than horsepower and top speed. Although Phil Hill set the fastest lap time at 138.443 miles per hour, none of the six GT40s managed to finish the race. Adding more insult to Ford's injury, Ferraris once again prevailed in the top three spots.

Still undaunted, Ford returned to Le Mans in 1966. The company had already sunk millions of dollars into its pursuit of victory abroad, and after two years of packing up its garages before the race had



Chassis number XGT-1 in action at the 1966 24 Hours of Le Mans. The car started third on the grid but retired in the sixth hour with a broken clutch. *Ford Archives*



Sir John Whitmore and Frank Gardner drove this Ford GT40, chassis number XGT-1, at the 1966 24 Hours of Le Mans under the Alan Mann Racing banner. The car is now part of the Simeone Foundation Museum.