

Le Mans (not just) for Dummies



The Club Arnage Guide to the 24 hours of Le Mans 2011

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"I couldn't sleep very well last night. Some noisy buggers going around in automobiles kept me awake."

Ken Miles, 1918 - 1966

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Foreword

Welcome to the 6th edition of the Club Arnage Guide to the 24 hours of Le Mans – and the 79th edition of the big race. The significant changes in the regulations mean that we will see quite a few completely new cars and engines on the grid. A quick run-down of the 4 classes gives the following picture:

LM P1: “To finish first you have to first finish!” – This old adage in motor racing became a cruel reality for the French Peugeot team last year, when the unthinkable happened and all four of their faster cars broke down, finally losing the race to Audi. The 2011 round of the Audi – Peugeot battle will see completely new cars this year on both sides. In an effort to get lap times at Le Mans back into the range of 3:30 min – which is considered healthy for the current track safety standards – the A.C.O. has re-written the rulebook significantly. Especially the new engine regulations have led to a severe cut in cubic capacity, amount of cylinders, horsepower and torques. I’m sure the drivers hate it. But I’m also sure the 3:30 mark will be taken during the race with these cars too.

For the petrol engine powered cars there was also a significant change: basically last year’s P2 petrol engines are now the new P1 engine class. Teams like Quifel ASM and Strakka upgraded to P1 – a step which could be done with relatively little investment for those who owned a 2010 LMP2 car. New among the P1 petrol engine suppliers is Toyota. Does this mean they might come up with a complete factory car next year? Let’s hope so!

Last year David Richards made some headlines when he emphasized in several interviews that Aston Martin would only build a new car if the A.C.O. would re-write the rules giving petrol engine powered cars an equal chance compared to the oil burners. Well, they have built a brand new open top prototype and a new engine, a complete switch from their previous approach of using well proven standard components – the Lola Chassis and the winning GT engine. However, their performance at the Le Mans test day was a disaster and their withdrawal from the dress rehearsal at Spa-Francorchamps not much of a surprise – I don’t expect too much from them this year.

Do the current regulations still favour Diesel powered cars over petrol powered ones? Looking at the test day and the results of the 2011 ALMS and LMS races so far it clearly seems so – but I’m actually not 100% sure about that. What if a manufacturer like Porsche or Toyota stepped up and threw the same money and resources into the development of a petrol based LM P1 as Peugeot and Audi?

LM P2: This class is still designed for budget-minded privateers and to make sure it stays this way the A.C.O. has put a price cap on those cars for 2011: Max 375.000 € for a complete car with a few extras and another max of 75.000 € for engines – which are expected to last longer than before. From a drivers’ perspective the changes in the small prototype class are most dramatic: the switch to production-based engines resulted in a loss of almost 100 hp – and to make things even slower the organizers decided to add an extra 75 kg of weight on top of this. As a result most P2 can hardly outrun GTE cars on the straights. I’m sure the drivers hate that too.

GTE PRO and GTE AM: The old GT1 / GT2 class scheme has been replaced by the new GTE class which is technically based on the previous GT2-class: The difference between PRO(fessional) and AM(ateur) is basically that the former is reserved for factory efforts and professional drivers and the AM class is targeted at amateurs and cars of previous years’ models. There are some new cars in the GTE field and with Lotus even a new manufacturer is on the grid. Once again the duels in this class will be exciting to watch. With the Corvettes and the BMWs we will see 2 full-scale works teams fighting for class honors – and they can expect heavy competition from the semi-factory Ferrari and Porsche teams.

Liveries: Most race fans enjoy cars showing traditional colours and liveries, like the Ferrari–red , the Lotus–green and the Gulf livery, but was it really necessary for the Gulf people to put 6 cars in their colours on the grid in 2011? It’s not all about quantity...

New technologies: Last year we saw the addition of a 56th garage to the pit lane, and the A.C.O. proudly announced this would be used in the future for cars showing new technologies, e.g. electricity powered prototypes. Furthermore the rulebook now allows hybrid cars. Well, spectators still have to wait for new technology in large numbers, this year only the small Swiss Hope Racing Team (the name says it all, doesn’t it?) will run a hybrid using flywheel based technology. Which is a little bit disappointing, especially since one of the main competitors on the grid always claims to have “Vorsprung durch Technik” in their advertising.

Lost teams: When compiling this year’s entry list and using the one from 2010 as a template for this I realized that an amazing amount of teams which competed last year are actually completely gone: Drayson, Mansell, KSM, Kolles, Racing Box and a few others – what happened to all of them?

On behalf of Club Arnage, I wish all of you an exciting 24 hours of Le Mans.

Werner Kirchmann

Hall of fame

Welcome to this edition of the Club Arnage Guide to the 24 Hours of Le Mans, a guide from fans for fans and a project which was first started beginning of 2006. Beginning of 2010 saw a little change in the editing process, we did put all information into a Wiki (**special thanks to Tom Dawes-Gamble aka "Lawnmower man" who did all the tech stuff and much more!!!**), all text can be maintained directly on the internet. **More than 50 people have been involved** in the production of the 2011 edition, wow! The following list of contributors – using either their CA forum nicknames and/or their real names – is probably not complete, apologies in case someone is not mentioned:



Adrian Jackson-Woods aka "ajw" for his help with the Paris CCDG airport–train to Le Mans and others; **Allon Stokes** and **Graig Antill** for Arnage campsite info and pictures; **Anita Williams aka "Piglet"** for her information about the Spay campsite; **Bas de Graf aka "Bas"** for compiling the www-links; **Charis Whitcombe** from Motor Racing Legends; **Calum Cousins aka "ccr32"**; **Chris Clark aka "Chris24"** for the Sebring pictures; **Chris Howles** from www.finetext.co.uk for proof-reading; **Chris Norris aka "dukla2000"** for the campsite Arnage report and countless other contributions; pictures, proofreading and much more, another outstanding effort from him this year; **Christopher aka "Kpy"** for legal advice; **Deborah Dudley aka "termietermite"** and **Ian Dudley aka "Mr. Termite"**, our field officers at Le Mans for many contributions; **Derek Appleyard aka "Delboy"** for his regular updates of the race regulations and many other chapters, **Ewan Dalton aka "ewan"** for help with the ticket pictures and his campsite security warning; **"Fagey"** for his pictures and much more; **"Flapss"** from pistonhards.com; **"Fran"** for her update of the Bleu Nord campsite; **Geoff Morgan aka "smokie"** for his contribution to the pit walk story; **Graham Goodwin and Malcolm Cracknell** from Dailysportscar.com for their permission to reproduce the Vic Elford report; **Hansgerd Bramann aka "hgb"** for his many pictures for the entry list; **"h4muf"** from pistonheads.com; **Ian Swan** for the "Le Port" campsite information; **Jason Gore aka "Jason"** for the chapter about the race marshals; **John Curtis** for info about the Saint Saturnin Classic British; **John Dickinson aka "6Euros"** for the campsite Beausejour update; **John Hindhaugh** from Radio Le Mans for his contribution; **Julian aka "Jules G"** for his Maison Blanche zoning map; **Justin Moran** for proof-reading; **"Lorry"** for many pictures from 1986-2009 at Le Mans, **"Lofty"** for pictures from Paul Ricard, **Kristof Vermeulen aka "Dottore"** from www.raceshots.be for many excellent pictures for the entry list; **"landman"**; **"Lofty"** for entry list pictures; **Marcel ten Caat** from www.planetlemans.com for the Le Mans history story and many pictures; **Marius van Herpen aka "LangTall"** for pictures; **Mark Every aka "jpchenet"** for the mad Friday report; **Mark Williams aka "mgmark"** for the campsite security chapter; **"Martini"** for Sebring pictures; **"mwbennett"** for his info for vegetarians; **Neil Dobson aka "Dobbo"** for his permission to loot his website www.racetours.co.uk; especially the brilliant map and the track description; **Nick Livingstone aka "nickliv"** for the tv info and proof reading; **Paul Richards aka "Risky"** for his info about Interieur Musee; **Peter Catchpole** for route descriptions and getting the Mark Galvin reports; **"rdj-pics"; Rick Wilson aka "Mr. Rick"** for the Jacky Ickx story; **"Rhino"** his contribution to the pit walk story; **Rob Preston aka "RobP"** for the Tertre Rouge campsite description; **Robert Walsh aka "Pilgrim"** for his excellent Le Mans on foot story; **Rupert Lowes aka "Nordic"** for many chapters and excellent pictures; **Simon Lowes aka "SL"** for the Le Mans milestones; **"SmithA"** for information about the Le Mans bars; **Steve Barnes aka "SJ"** for his pictures, review of the Mulsanne and KN campsites and proof-reading; **Steve Brown aka "Steve Pyro"** for his chapter about the pretty route for sportscars and many pictures; **"stu_mchugh"** for information about the Mulsanne campsite; **Thierry Charge** for pictures from his site Les24hdumans.free.fr; **Tony Brown aka "lynxd67"**, for his contributions to the bars & restaurants chapter and for pictures; **Trevor aka "topcatz"** for info about the Beausejour campsite; **and of course thanks to all Club Arnage moderators and administrators for keeping the CA forum up and running!**

Last not least the usual request: We have tried to be as accurate and up-to-date as possible. However, if you find that some things have changed, places or services mentioned aren't there any more or if you saw or experienced something in Le Mans which should be in this guide but it isn't, please help us to improve the next edition by mailing your feedback and information to president@lemanszone.de – or put it into our wiki!

Call for Donations – Please help to support Club Arnage's chosen charities

Thank you for choosing to download this year's Club Arnage (CA) guide. As usual the guide is free. However we are once again asking you to spare a few Pounds / Euros / Dollars for charity as a way of thanks to those who gave their time and skills putting the guide together. Thanks to all those who donated in the past, but last year we raised a disappointing £350.30, and that included a donation of £100! Don't be a cheap Charlie; it's for a good cause!

This year we are supporting the following charities:

- **Association of International Cancer Research**, charity registration no. SC022918: The AICR funds cutting edge research into the causes of cancer. In the past 26 years, they have supported a large variety of projects in all corners of the world. Currently they have more than 220 projects underway. For further details please see www.aicr.org.uk
- **Motorsport Safety Fund**, charity registration no. 296802: After the death of Roger Williamson at Zandvoort in 1974, a fund was set up in his name with the primary aim of educating marshals on fire fighting and rescue techniques. In 1987, it was reconstituted as the Motor Racing Safety Fund and became a registered UK charity with the wider scope to generally aid improvements in safety standards at motorsport events. For further details please see www.motorsportsafetyfund.com

Payment can be made by bank transfer, Paypal, cheque or cash to the Club Arnage Charity Fund from where **the funds will be divided equally to each of the 2 charities listed above.**

- **Bank transfer:** Account name: Club Arnage, Bank: Natwest Bank, Account Number 78121469, Sort Code 60-03-27, IBAN: GB31 NWBK 6003 2778 1214 69, BIC NWBK GB 2L
- **Paypal:** Please go to www.paypal.co.uk and donate to cafund@hotmail.co.uk. Please note: You need a paypal-account to do so. Paypal takes no fees for a charitable donation.
- **Cheque or cash:** Derek Appleyard, 5 Park Crescent, Cossington, Somerset, TA7 8LD, United Kingdom – Please make cheques payable to "Club Arnage"

Thank you very much in advance from all of us

Club Arnage

Le Mans (not just) for Dummies – A brief history

Initial version courtesy of Marcel ten Caat, Gabriel Portos and www.planetlemans.com. All pictures are in the public domain except as noted otherwise.

Once upon a time...



It is 16.00 hours on May 26th, 1923 and 33 cars await the start signal under the pouring rain. A gruelling 24 hour race awaits them running in a road circuit of 17.262 kilometres. The drivers do not know it yet but this is the birth of the race of races, the first edition of the 24 Heures du Mans. The idea of a 24-hour race was not new and actually a few of them had taken place both in Europe and the United States already when 3 visionaries with initiative created what would become the most popular long distance race in the world. It was the combination of George Durand (secretary of the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, the A.C.O.) and Charles Faroux (editor of La Vie Automobile) that started turning an idea into reality after they met at the 1922 Paris Motor Show. The final ingredient was the involvement of Emile Coquille, Rudge-Whitworth wheels

representative in France who committed a donation of 100.000 French Francs and established the triennial Rudge-Whitworth Trophy for the races of 1923-24-25.

So, with some strict (and sometimes complicated) homologation rules and a winner which would be declared only after 3 years of running for the main trophy, the first race started in 1923 with 30 French entries, 2 Excelsiors from Belgium and a single private Bentley representing the UK. By 16.00 on Sunday and after 2209.5 km covered in 128 laps, it was the Chenard-Walcker of André Lagache-René Léonard that crossed the finish line first although it would not be recognized as winner, rather as top qualified in the Rudge-Whitworth Cup. A whole odyssey with rain, mud, no windscreen wipers and a lot of champagne consumed at the "Hartford Hotel" (a sort of proto-paddock of the time), the experience encouraged participants to engage the year after and 1924 saw 40 entries for the June scheduled race. Just one of them was non-French and it would win the race: the number 8 Bentley of John Duff and Frank Clement which had learned the 1923 lesson installing front brakes to improve their performance. The following two years saw the domination of André Rossignol and his Lorraine-Dietrich, despite the increased international presence and entries ranging in the 60 cars.

1925 saw the first appearance of the "Le Mans start" which would be a trademark of the race (until the famous Jacky Ickx walk to his Ford GT40 in 1969) as well as the first two fatal accidents on the track. The Bentleys were very competitive but eventually retired so it was the Chenard-Walckers to win the only ever triennial cup and the newly established biennial cup. 1926 saw new pits, a new prize (the Index of Performance) and another French victory, the last one until 1932. And the reason for the first 4 of that 5-year drought was no other than the Bentley Boys.

The Bentley Boys

A fundamental step in the creation of the Le Mans legend, the 4 victories in a row of the green machines put the La Sarthe race into the definitive map of the greatest events in the world. Driven by the men that would become the everlasting symbol of the Gentleman Driver, the Bentleys were unbeatable until the appearance of another symbol of the big race, its first Italian winner. The names of Woolf Barnato, Sammy Davis, Dudley Benjafield, Bernard Rubin, Henry Birkin and Glen Kidston would forever bind the UK fans and teams to the dream of a 24-Hour win.



The 1931 victory would also be for a British team, however on an Italian car which would reign for another 4 years: the mythical Alfa Romeo 8C. The circuit, that had been shortened in 1929 to 16.430 km and would go to 13.492 km in 1932 was constantly evolving in terms of facilities, safety and road surface, therefore allowing higher speeds to be achieved and longer distances to be covered. 1933 saw 233 laps (3144km) being covered by the winning car, a works Alfa Romeo where Raymond Sommer (who had won the year before with Luigi Chinetti) shared the drive with the legendary Tazio Nuvolari, in his only (very successful!) appearance at Le Mans. Lagonda, Bugatti (twice) and Delahaye would be the last pre-war winners, the race not being run in 1936 due to a strike. The name of Jean-Pierre Wimille would be associated with both Bugatti successes (1937 with Robert Benoist, 1939 with Pierre Veyron), reaching a record 248 laps and 3354.7 km covered on the last summer before the start of World War II. By this time the Le Mans 24 hours was established as a top international event, one that manufacturers wanted to attend and win to show their cars' performance in the

most demanding of events; a race where anything could happen and unpredictability was a fundamental part of the plot, circumstances that changed constantly and unimaginable reversals of fortune, the very same components that attract so many people to this day to Le Mans in mid-June.

The war would put a stop to the race and 10 long years would go by before a swarm of racing cars would return to La Sarthe to take history from where the Bugattis had left it. The spirit of the race would be reborn with multiplied energy and the 1950s would witness more amazing victories (including the first of a small red car with a prancing horse) and the biggest tragedy ever in motor sport history.

After the war



By 1944 the location of the Le Mans circuit next to the local airfield had taken its toll. Practically nothing had been left standing of the infrastructure after the bombings and even today unexploded bombs can be found when any modifications are going on at or near the track. So it was only through a titanic effort from the A.C.O. that the "24 Heures" could return in 1949 with new pits, new grandstands and a road surface in race condition. It was the start of a new era, an era where road racing would become the source of tales to tell your grandchildren, where races like the Mille Miglia, Carrera Panamericana or Targa Florio would flourish and attract the cream of the crop in terms of drivers, privateers and manufacturers. But the status that Le Mans had earned before the war as the greatest race would not change, and its fame would soar

as communications became better and motor racing more popular.

The 1949 race saw a field with a big mixture of pre-war and modern cars. The British were now as numerous a force as the French and the presence of Bentley, Frazer-Nash and Aston Martin was much more noticeable. The victory however would go to a new marque, a car made by an Italian rebel that had been Alfa Romeo's racing manager many years before and was preceded by as many victories as conflicts: Enzo Ferrari. But it was not his entry, rather the British Lord Selsdon's one that saw the chequered flag in the hands of (now triple winner) Luigi Chinetti and Peter Mitchell-Thompson. 1950 would see a battle of epic proportions between Ferrari, Talbot, Jaguar and Allard. In the end victory would be for the father-son pairing of the Rosiers, the dad driving over 23 of the 24 hours in their beautiful Talbot-Lago. But by 1951 another new winner would start writing their history: with a wonderful streamlined body the Jaguar XK120C would win the race it had been designed for in the capable hands of Peter Walker and Peter Whitehead.

By this time Le Mans was also attracting attention from overseas and, after his first experience the year before with a regular Cadillac and the famous "Le Monstre", the American challenge of Briggs Cunningham would become a Le Mans feature as well as the pioneer in putting the race in the map for American motorsport. 1952 saw another new winner, this time a German one.

The unequivocal (and massive) presence of Alfred Neubauer in the pits, the collection of technical innovations and huge star signs to indicate where to stop were the clear sign of the presence of Mercedes-Benz at Le Mans. But their "gullwing" 300SL did not have an easy time and the main prize could only be clinched in the last hour by the all-German line-up of Hermann Lang and Fritz Riess who finished just ahead of their team mates Helfrich and Niedermayer. The leading Talbot where Pierre Levegh had driven almost 24 hours on his own gave up with practically minutes to go, possibly due to the driver over-revving the engine. A reversal of fortune so typical of this "gruelling monster" as someone qualified it.



The period 1953-1958 would see a ferocious rivalry between Jaguar and Ferrari which would become the first of many mythical head-to-heads at La Sarthe. The Jaguar C-Type from the works team would win in 53 with Tony Rolt-Duncan Hamilton after a Ferrari debacle that saw all but one of their cars retire or being disqualified. A new regulation was introduced as well allowing a maximum of 80 laps per stint and 18 hours total of driving per driver in order to avoid another "Levegh 1952" situation. But Ferrari would come back in strength in 1954 and the 375 Plus was able to beat both the Aston Martins as the new D-Type Jaguars. Skilled driving from Maurice Trintignant and the only South American winner ever, the Argentinian "Raging Bull of the Pampas" José Froilán González brought the first works victory for the Maranello team. "El Cabezón" González was able to resist the Jaguar pressure during a late rain period and give the Scuderia its maiden works victory at Le Mans as he had done at Silverstone in 1951 in the field of Grand Prix racing.

The catastrophe

The biggest tragedy in racing history would cast a black cloud over the Mike Hawthorn-Ivor Bueb victory for Jaguar in 1955. The infamous flight of Pierre Levegh's Mercedes 300 SLR engine and debris into the main grandstands taking the lives of 80 spectators as well as the driver's has marked Le Mans and motor sport forever and threatened then to stop car racing altogether in Europe (the ban is still valid today in Switzerland). Mercedes retired while Juan Manuel Fangio and Stirling Moss were in the lead in another 300 SLR but the race went on in order to avoid total chaos.



Renewed safety measures and the circuit shortened to 13.461 km incorporating a new section between the main straight and Tertre Rouge saw a big crowd show up for the 1956 race. In the first of two successive victories by the Jaguar D-Types of the Ecurie Ecosse, Ron Flockhart and Ninian Sanderson covered 300 laps of the new layout winning in a close battle from the Aston Martin of Moss and Peter Collins. Flockhart would repeat in 1957, this time with 1955 winner Bueb as partner beating 10 Ferraris and five Maseratis as well as the ever competitive Astons.

The Belgian Oliver Gendebien would score the first of his four victories in 1958 driving on a mighty Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa (nicknamed redhead, due to the color of the upper half of the engine block)

with American ace Phil Hill. They had a hard time battle the Aston Martins until about noon on Sunday but they won comfortably after a series of rival retirements. The 1950s would end with a DBR1 Aston Martin giving the British team its only overall victory to date, drivers were the American constructor-to-be Carroll Shelby and Roy Salvadori. After 30 years of trying it even was a 1-2 since 2nd place went to driver-journalist Paul Frere and Maurice Trintignant in another Aston. Ferrari succumbed to the "hare and tortoise" tactics from Aston Martin which had sent Moss to drive at a furious pace from the start and forced the Ferraris (and the Moss-Jack Fairman car as well) to retire. The great "uncrowned champion" would never win Le Mans but Sir Stirling Moss is undoubtedly one of the greatest drivers of all times. But 1959 was just a hiccup in the dominance of the Prancing Horse, the 60s would see the small factory from just outside the city of Modena dominate "la grande épreuve" and trigger the fury of a certain Mr. Ford.

The Italian era

If the fifties had been the start of the mythical marque duels at Le Mans, the sixties would propel these duels to an unknown level. The decade would start with a Ferrari victory in 1960. Oliver Gendebien (1958 winner) and Paul Frere (second in 1959) would bring home their beautiful Testarossa, just one of eleven Ferraris entered. Only Aston Martin could show some resistance to this Ferrari swarm with the car driven by Roy Salvadori and none other than Jim Clark arriving third in his best Le Mans finish ever.

It was the time of the Maserati Birdcage, the Austin Healey and so many fast cars but it was the period where Ferrari would prove unbeatable in Le Mans: 6 wins in a row (5 by the Scuderia itself and the last one by the NART) would bring first an offer and then the rage of Ford by the mid-sixties. 1961 saw another Gendebien victory, partnered again by Phil Hill like 3 years before. A clean sweep with a 1-2-3 followed by a Maserati and a Porsche which could have been even more humiliating if a Ferrari vs Ferrari battle between the cars of Ritchie Ginther/Wolfgang von Trips and Pedro/Ricardo Rodríguez would have not taken those two cars out of the race. The following year was almost a copy of 1961, same winners, same Ferrari domination and another 1-2-3 against mild resistance from Maserati and Aston. Fourth victory for Gendebien and third for the Gendebien-Hill pairing in a field with 15 Ferraris entered.

In 1963 an early Maserati lead soon gave way to another Ferrari all-Italian victory with Lorenzo Bandini and Ludovico Scarfiotti putting their 250P on the top of the podium. A curiosity in 1963 was the inclusion "hors-concours" of the turbine Rover-BRM which even managed to finish the race (it would have been a virtual eighth). The Jean Guichet-Nino Vaccarella victory of 1964 made it 5 in a row for Ferrari. However, this year saw the debut of Ford, anxious to grab the top spot from the small Italian constructor. This would be the last year for Jaguar and Aston Martin for decades and it also was a year for the victory in the GT class of Dan Gurney/Bob Bondurant in another legendary Le Mans car: Carroll Shelby's AC Cobra. Another 1-2-3 for Ferrari and on to 1964. And another 1-2-3 would materialize when the Ferrari of Jochen Rindt and Masten Gregory would lead another two Maranello cars after a disastrous performance by Ford which saw all their MkIIs abandon the race in just a few hours.

The Ford – Ferrari battle

The Ferrari domination would come to an end in 1966 when the 13 Fords vs 11 Ferraris race ended with a legendary victory by Bruce McLaren/Chris Amon leading a procession of 3 Fords to achieve a 1-2-3 in the closest finish ever in history. The rest of the decade would be a solo of the GT40: 1967 saw the beautiful MkIV take the win in the hands of Dan Gurney/A.J.Foyt in a first ever all American win which also broke the distance record with 5232km run. The

fantastic P4 Ferraris could only manage second and third in a tough battle with the American monster. But 1968, when the race had to be moved to the end of September due to the social unrest in France, witnessed two important facts: the first was the win of (yet another) Ford GT40 run this time by John Wyer Engineering with Pedro Rodríguez/Lucien Bianchi in Gulf colors, a team/sponsor that would become a symbol of Le Mans. The second fact was that a small German manufacturer that had always raced in small classes started now knocking on the door of the big win: Porsche. Since no works Ferrari was present due to regulations issues the Porsche offensive with their 908 car was even more visible and the Ford could take over only after the 908s showed their mechanical weaknesses, as did another future star: the Matra.



1967: Disaster for the Ford GT40 MK II 7 litre V8 driven by Jo Schlesser and Guy Ligier

© Derek Appleyard

1969 would see the fiercest fight ever with an almost photo-finish between Ford and Porsche. This was the occasion where the Porsche 917 did its first Le Mans appearance and it was both tragic (John Woolfe was killed in a first lap accident) and almost glorious: one 917 came close to winning the race, the Vic Elford/Dick Attwood car retiring with just three hours to go. Three 917s and three 908s had retired and the battle was left to the old 1968 winning Gulf-Ford GT40 (this time with Jacky Ickx/Jackie Oliver behind the wheel) and the sole survivor of the Porsches, the 908 driven by Hans Herrmann/Gerard Larrousse. The 908 and the GT40 exchanged positions constantly and the spectators were treated to an amazing duel that lasted until the very last lap. Ickx thought he had the race on the bag but crossed the line a few seconds before the

4PM clock so a thrilling and unexpected last lap brought Herrmann close to the Ford entering the Hunaudieres straight. A smart move by Ickx simulating he was out of fuel (a known issue in the Ford during the race) had Herrmann take the lead realizing too late that Ickx would use his slipstream to overtake him again at Mulsanne corner and hold the lead by 100 meters at the end of the race...la ronde infernale...

For 1970 a new, short lived age will start. Ford would be gone and the battle of the giants would take place between Porsche and Ferrari with a funny blue car watching right behind.

Battle of the Titans – Ferrari vs. Porsche

1969 was the last year of the Beatles together, the year of Woodstock and the end of the hippie era but it had also been the last year of the Le Mans start. The 1970 edition of the 24 Heures would see many unique happenings: A weird start with the cars in their traditional Le Mans layout but with drivers already in them, a certain Steve McQueen shooting for what would become a classic film among racing fans and the so-called Battle of the Titans between two very powerful cars ending on the first overall victory for Porsche. In fact the duel between the three John Wyer Porsche 917s and the four works Ferrari 512S was never as thrilling as in the film: a multiple crash in the rain would cripple the red team and leave one lonely car that never made it through the night and several issues would have the legendary Gulf-sponsored cars retire leaving the victory to the number 23 Porsche Salzburg 917 of Dick Attwood and Hans Herrmann.



1967: Downhill from Dunlop Bridge towards the Esses

© Derek Appleyard

For the first time one make got the win in all classes and all classified Porsches and Ferraris were private teams. The following year would see the fastest lap to date at Le Mans, the longest distance covered at 5335 km and the first rolling start which has been kept until now. The Porsches had again the edge but victory would again escape the Gulf-Wyer team and go rather to the Martini Porsche 917 of Helmut Marko-Gijs van Lennep, for the second time the short-tail 917 K (Kurzheck) would beat the "made for Le Mans" 917 LH (Langheck). Neither the privately entered Ferrari 512Ms nor the Alfa Romeos could beat the pace of the best racing car of the century in its last outing at La Sarthe.

King Henri and the Matras

For 1972 rules had changed and the 3-litre engine limit had completely altered the picture, much to the advantage of the small French Matra-Simcas who would become unbeatable emperors of Le Mans, this year with no real challenge as Ferrari was absent. This first victory was in the hands of Henri Pescarolo-Graham Hill making the British driver the only man to date to win Indianapolis, the Monaco GP and Le Mans with another Matra completing a neat 1-2 for the blue prototypes. Jo Bonnier was killed in an unfortunate accident leaving endurance racing without one of its main drivers and team owners. With the circuit now modified adding a complete new White House section, the next year would see a well earned Matra victory in an all-out fight with the all-but-Le-Mans conquering Ferrari 312. Henri Pescarolo was again part of the winning team partnered this time by Gérard Larrousse and they would repeat in 1974 even when gearbox failure kept them 47 minutes in the pits and put their lead at stake.



1979: GTC Mirage Ford of Vern Schuppan, David Hobbs and Jean-Pierre Jassaud

© Rupert Lowes

After their third victory in a row Matra would leave Le Mans and 1975 would see some familiar colors return to victory. And it was Gulf sponsored Mirage which would bring a British car back to the top of the podium driven by Jacky Ickx and Derek Bell and a first victory for the DFV Cosworth engine at Le Mans. John Wyer's team met again with victory in a year where the big works teams were absent and other names like Ligier or de Cadenet would continue growing as part of Le Mans history. 1976 would see again familiar faces on the podium when Gijs van Lennep and Jacky Ickx would help return Porsche to the first spot at la Sarthe. The Porsche-Martini team would start a long era of Porsche domination where having another manufacturer winning would certainly become a rare exception. Both the Porsches and their main rivals Alpine-Renault were using turbo engines in which would also be a change for the 24

Hour race. There was also a certain Jean Rondeau introducing a nice prototype called Inaltera...more about him later.

Alpine-Renault came back in 1977 with three cars but none of them would see the finish so victory was assured for the Jacky Ickx-Hurley Haywood-Juergen Barth Porsche when drama would come back to Le Mans in its typical fashion: a piston broke on the leading car with only minutes to go. Given their huge advantage Porsche decided to take a major risk and waited until 15:50 to send Barth back to the track with a crippled car to finish the 24 Hour race almost at walking pace in a very dramatic way. The race ended with a fourth victory for Ickx and a finish for both de Cadenet - now in his own car - and the Inaltera of Jean Rondeau.

But there is always a revenge and after their 1977 disaster Alpine-Renault managed to get their win in 1978 with Jean-Pierre Jaussaud and Didier Pironi beating the Porsches fair and square in a race that saw Porsche even change Ickx to a better placed car in a futile attempt to give him his fifth victory. Renault retired from endurance after this victory so 1979 would see Porsche be total favourites with practically no opposition. And while Porsche would effectively win again with Klaus Ludwig and Bill and Don Whittington, the big news was the second placed car since one of the drivers was Paul Newman getting to the podium on his first attempt on the race of races. The 70s would close then like they started: Porsche on top and a Hollywood actor on the spotlight. The 80s would start in a very different fashion, with the first ever constructor-driver to take the honors.



1984: The V12 6 litre Jaguar XJR 5 of Brian Redman, Doc Bundy and Bob Tullius

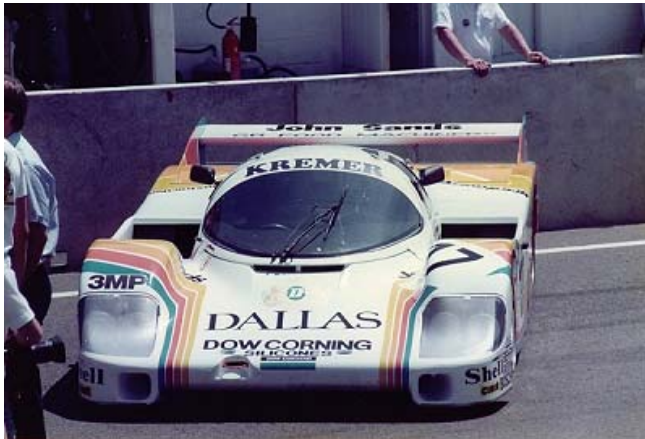
© Rupert Lowes

The 70's at the Le Mans 24 Hours ended with a clear Porsche victory. The German manufacturer had seven cars inside the top 10. Apart from a lonely BMW M1 only one manufacturer was able to get two of its cars in the top 10, namely Rondeau. And for Rondeau finishing fifth was not enough... The Le Mans-built Rondeau was the car to beat

in the 48th running of the 24 Hours. The number 15 Rondeau M379 of Henri Pescarolo and Jean Ragnotti had taken pole position, its sister car with Jean-Pierre Jaussaud and constructor/driver Jean Rondeau started from fifth place.

Early on in this very wet race it was the Liqui Moly-Martini Racing Porsche 908/80 of Jacky Ickx and Reinhold Joest that lead the race but lost it when the car suffered a problem. At midnight there was a Rondeau in the lead, but Ickx got the repaired Porsche back on the same lap an hour later. The Porsche increased its lead over the hours to come and had a decent lead at 7 am when it suffered a gearbox failure. Unfortunately for Ickx and Joest the Rondeau did not suffer any problems and while the Porsche was being repaired the Rondeau car of Rondeau/Jaussaud gained the lead. With just 30 minutes to go the rain came back and the Porsche went in for wet tyres in an attempt to finally close the gap and take the win. The Rondeau stayed out and won the race, despite a spin from Jaussaud (who did not hit anything), the first time ever a constructor won the race with his own car.

Porsche dominates



1984: The Kremer Porsche 956 driven by Tiff Needell, David Sutherland and Rusty French

© Rupert Lowes

Despite announcing his retirement after Le Mans 1980 Jacky Ickx was back in 1981 with the Porsche 936. The car he shared with Derek Bell was in a league of its own and won the race after completing 354 laps. The Rondeau M379s finished second and third, 14 and 19 laps behind the winner. The 1981 edition however was marred by the death of Jean-Louis Lafosse who crashed his Rondeau on the Hunaudières straight.

In 1982 the new FIA Group C rules were introduced and while privateer teams were unhappy with these new rules, the manufacturers did support them. Porsche built a new car to replace its successful 936 and the Porsche 956 was the result. The car was unbeatable and the number 1 Rothmans Porsche 956 in the hands of Jacky Ickx and Derek Bell won the 50th edition of the 24 Hours. Two other Porsche 956 cars completed a Porsche 1-2-

3. The success of the Porsche 956 in 1982 meant Porsche could sell several customer cars to privateer teams like Kremer Racing and Joest Racing. With all these teams competing at Le Mans the 1983 race turned into a Porsche parade. Eleven Porsche 956s took part in the race and nine of them finished in the top 10. Vern Schuppan, Hurley Haywood and Al Holbert won the race, just beating their team mates Jacky Ickx and Derek Bell.

Lancia responded to the 956 with its LC2 but despite running well in qualifying the cars did not finish. The 1984 race was won by the Joest Racing entered Porsche 956 of Henri Pescarolo and Klaus Ludwig. They won in the absence of the Porsche factory teams, which disagreed with the new 1984 rules and therefore boycotted the race. Despite the factory teams not being there, there were still eight 956s in the top 10 at the end of the 52nd Le Mans 24 Hours. Once again Lancia tried to win Le Mans, but even though they claimed the front row for the race it was once again a Porsche on top at the end of the race.

With a revised 956, being named the Porsche 962C, the Weisenbach-based manufacturer returned to Le Mans in 1985. This car, that was eligible under the new IMSA rules, was not able to beat the 'old' 956s however and Derek Bell/Hans-Joachim Stuck only finished third overall. The race was once again won by the Joest Racing team, the number 7 Porsche 956 driven by Klaus Ludwig, Paolo Barilla and "John Winter". Winter was in fact a pseudonym for Louis Krages, a German who used this name to prevent his family from finding out he was racing.

A year later, in 1986, no one was able to catch the works Porsche 962C of Stuck/Bell/Holbert. The number one car finished the race after 367 laps, beating several other Porsches. Unfortunately the 962C win was overshadowed by the death of Austrian Formula One and sports car driver Jo Gartner. During the night, just after 2 am, Gartner's Porsche suddenly made a hard left turn on the Mulsanne straight after suffering a (suspected) jammed gearbox. The car hit the barriers at nearly 290 km/h, became airborne and rolled down the track until it came to a rest on the right side barrier and caught fire. Jo Gartner was killed instantly.

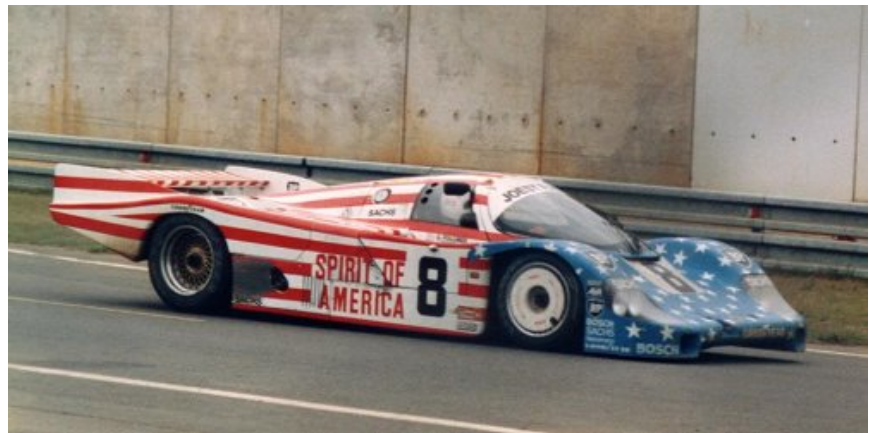


1983: The Lancia of Paolo Barilla, Jean-Claude Andruet and Alessandro Nannini

© Rupert Lowes

In between the 1986 and 1987 editions of the 24 Hours of Le Mans the track underwent some reconstruction at the Dunlop Bridge. A chicane was put in place at the Dunlop Curve as the ACO tried to slow down the cars around the track. Stuck/Bell/Holbert repeated their 1986 win by scoring yet another Porsche victory at Le Mans in 1987. The Porsche-powered Cougar C20 of Yves Courage/Pierre-Henri Raphanel and Hervé Regout finishes third making it the first time in years that there is a non-Porsche chassis on the podium.

The Porsche winning streak came to a halt during the 56th running of the 24 Hours in 1988. After four previous attempts with the XJR it was the latest evolution, the XJR-9, of Tom Walkinshaw Racing (TWR) that finally managed to dethrone Porsche. The number 2 Silk Cut Jaguar, driven by Jan Lammers, Johnny Dumfries and Andy Wallace, finished just over 2.5 minutes ahead of the Porsche 962C driven by Stuck/Ludwig/Bell. Apart from another Jaguar in fourth place the rest of the top 10 was taken by Porsche 962Cs however. The WM P87 reached a speed of 405 km/h early in the race, before breaking down, a sign that the attempts to slow the cars had failed.



1986: The Joest Porsche 956B driven by George Follmer, John Morton and Kemper Miller
© "Lorry"

In the final race of the eighties at Le Mans Jaguar was hoping for a repeat of their 1988 victory, but there was one other team that spoiled it for the British squad. Swiss constructor Peter Sauber, who had been running cars at Le Mans for more than a decade, and Mercedes-Benz became partners and Sauber's Team became the official Mercedes-Benz factory team. The Sauber C9 with its 5 litre Turbo V8 dominated the 1989 event. The number 62 Sauber C9 of Schlesser/Jabouille/Cudini took pole position and eventually finished fifth. Its sister cars went on to make it a one-two finish for Team Sauber Mercedes. Jochen Mass, Manuel Reuter and Stanley Dickens in the 63 car won after completing 389 laps. The number 61 of Baldi, Acheson and Brancatelli followed, albeit five laps down. All three cars were capable of reaching speeds up to 400 km/h. The winning Jaguar of 1988 was down in fourth place and seemed to have been tamed... The 90's would bring a lot more diversity in race winners and of course a new track layout.

The end of the Hunaudieres...



1988: The winning #2 TWR Jaguar XJR-9 LM driven by Jan Lammers, Johnny Dumfries and Andy Wallace

© "Lorry"

The domination by the Porsche 962C and its predecessor the 956 in the 80's meant other manufacturers had to improve their cars and get higher speeds out of those cars to be able to win again. In the 1988 and 1989 races at the Circuit de la Sarthe speeds in excess of 400 km/h were measured and the FISA decided it was time to stop the fun. As a result of the intervention by the autosport federation two chicanes were placed in the Mulsanne Straight and when the 1990 race took place the drivers had three shorter Mulsanne Straights to tackle, rather than one long.

After winning the 1989 race Sauber decided not to return to Le Mans in 1990. The TWR Jaguar team did return to France with an all new XJR-12. Their major opponents were the works Nissan R90CKs as well as numerous Porsche 962Cs. Nissan

took the pole position and fastest lap in the race, but the R90CKs did not last the full 24 hours. At the end of the day the Silk Cut Jaguars took a one-two finish again, with John Nielsen/Price Cobb/Martin Brundle beating everyone to take the victory. The renovation of Le Mans continued into 1991. A new pit complex, with modern boxes, pit stalls and suites was completed in the year between the races.

Out on the track a new World Sportscar Championship rule caused an upset. The new rules meant cars would be 750kg with 3.5L normally aspirated engines. TWR-Jaguar, Sauber-Mercedes and Peugeot built these cars, but nobody else did and there were not enough cars to fill the grid. The FIA reserved the top 10 of the grid for the new cars and invited older Group C cars to fill up the grid. The result was that the Group C cars were more reliable and quicker than the new cars and TWR and Sauber withdrew their new cars and raced with the old ones.



1991: First ever victory for a Japanese manufacturer: The #55 Mazda 787 B driven by Volker Weidler, Johnny Herbert and Bertrand Gachot

© "Lorry"

However this was not enough to beat the Oreca-Mazdaspeed Mazda 787B. The Japanese manufacturer had overcome the problems that troubled the Mazda 787 and with Volker Weidler, Johnny Herbert and Bertrand Gachot behind the wheel of the number 55 car they took the first ever Japanese victory at Le Mans, as well as the first ever non-piston engine car to win.



1992: The Peugeot 905 driven by Philippe Alliot, Mauro Baldi and Jean-Pierre Jabouille

© Werner Kirchmann

Despite the problems with the new rules in 1991 the FIA did not change the regulations in 1992 and the 3.5L rules ushered in a new era of sportscar racing. Peugeot, the only manufacturer that ran the '91 event with a 3.5L car, returned to Le Mans with the Peugeot 905 Evo 1B and took on the Japanese opposition from Toyota and Mazda. The number 1 Peugeot Talbot Sport entry driven by Derek Warwick/Yannick Dalmás/Mark Blundell was the first '3.5L' car to win Le Mans, beating the Toyota TS010 and the number 2 Peugeot 905. For the 1993 race the ACO made the decision to allow GT cars back in the race for the first time since Group C was created. As a result many Porsche 911s and Venturi 500LMs were entered. The GT category in 1993 was won by Larbre Competition, putting their 2 Porsches in first and second.

The World Sportscar Championship collapsed before the 1993 season started and Peugeot and Mercedes focussed on F1 projects. Peugeot did return to Le Mans however, with the 905 Evo 1B. Eric Hélary/Christophe Bouchut/Geoff Brabham gave Peugeot a back-to-back victory, the two other Peugeots finishing second and third. Toyota Team Tom's was the best of the rest. Following this dominant performance, Peugeot pulled out of sports car racing. With new IMSA regulations coming into place to lower the costs the 3.5L cars were no longer eligible to race in 1994.

New cars had to be open-top, flat-bottomed sports-prototypes with production engines. The so-called LMP1 cars were not able to fight for victory though as Porsche exploited a loophole in the GT rules. Two street-legal versions of the Porsche 962 were built and modified to fit into the GT category. Jochen Dauer ran the so-called Dauer 962 cars, with Porsche support, and finished first and third. Toyota ran a couple of Group C Toyota 94C-Vs and finished second and fourth. The first real 'WSC' car (LMP1) to finish was the Kremer K8 Spyder, 18 laps behind the winning 962 in sixth.

The 63rd 24 Hours of Le Mans only saw proper GT and WSC cars on the track. Entries like the Dauer 962 and dusted-off Group C cars were not allowed. The Le Mans Prototype WM's of Welter Racing took pole position and set the fastest lap time in the race but suffered mechanical problems and retired. The McLaren F1 GTR, which was in its first racing season, turned out to be the most reliable car around the track, as it had already shown in the '95 BPR Global GT Series, and beat the Courage C34. Yannick Dalmás/Masanori Sekiya/JJ Lehto completed 298 laps, one more than the Courage. The McLaren F1 GTR took the remaining top 5 spots. Porsche responded to the McLaren F1 GTR in 1996 by entering two Porsche 911 GT1s and intended to win the race overall, defeating the McLarens and the LMPs. They succeeded in beating the McLarens, but missed out on the overall victory as Joest Racing entered a prototype for Davy Jones/Alexander Wurz/Manuel Reuter that won the race. This car was built around a TWR Jaguar

XJR-14, modified to fit into the LMP regulations and, ironically, fitted with a Porsche engine. At the end of the day Porsche won Le Mans, but not with the cars they wanted it to win with.

The 1997 race saw the same outcome as the 1996 race. The Joest Racing Porsche WSC-95 was not the fastest car out on the track, but mechanical problems for the Porsche 911 GT1s and McLaren F1 GTRs meant Joest Racing claimed his second ever back-to-back Le Mans victory with the same chassis. The drivers of this car were Michele Alboreto, Stefan Johansson and Le Mans rookie Tom Kristensen. In June 1998 the number of manufacturers officially involved in the 24 Hours of Le Mans saw a significant increase. Porsche upgraded its 911 GT1, BMW entered its new BMW V12 LM in cooperation with the Williams F1 team, Nissan sent 4 new R390 GT1s, Mercedes was involved with the CLK-GTR LM and the American Panoz team sent two Esperante GTR-1s. The race became a war of attrition that was won by Porsche. The cars from Mercedes, BMW and Toyota retired with mechanical problems or accident damage, while the Nissan R390 GT1s and McLaren F1 GTRs did not have the pace to keep up with the Porsche 911 GT1-98s. Laurent Aiello, Allan McNish and Stephane Ortelli in the number 26 Porsche gave the German manufacturer the Le Mans victory it wanted and the number 25 Porsche made it even better after taking second place. Porsche announced they would not return to Le Mans in 1999, taking a sabbatical instead...



1996: TWR Porsche WSC 95 from Joest Racing driven by Michele Alboreto, Pierluigi Martini and Didier Theys

© „Lorry“



1999: The BMW V12 LMR driven by Tom Kristensen, J.J. Lehto and Jörg Müller

© „Lorry“

For the 1999 season the rules changed again. GT1 had come to an end and was replaced by the LM GTP category for GT prototypes. Despite Porsche not being at the race, the number of manufacturers involved did not drop. Toyota entered three GT-One cars, Mercedes three new CLR LM GTPs, while Nissan and Panoz moved to the open cockpit LMP class. Newcomer for the 1999 race was Audi. They decided to race in both classes and ran two open cockpit R8R's in the LMP category and two closed cockpit R8Cs in the LM GTP. BMW entered their new V12 LMR. The 1999 event became famous for the Mercedes incidents during qualifying and race. A flaw in the CLR design caused the car to become airborne. During qualifying and warm-up Mark Webber was driving

the car when it lifted off. His car was withdrawn, the other two cars continued. Unfortunately for Mercedes a few hours into the race it was Peter Dumbreck who suffered the same problem. The Scot went into the air, over the barriers and landed in the trees. The whole accident was caught by the cameras and broadcast live on TV. Mercedes instantly withdrew the remaining car and withdrew from sportscar racing again. The race itself was won by Winkelhock, Martini and Dalmas in the Team BMW Motorsport BMW V12 LMR, ahead of the Toyota GT-One and the brand new Audi R8R. With another Audi Sport Team Joest R8R finishing in fourth place it looked like Audi had the right package to go for the win at Le Mans in the future.

The new millennium – Audi!

In 2000 three Audi R8's were entered and the R8 turned out to be an instant winner. During qualifying the number 9 R8 of Aiello, McNish and Ortelli took the pole position, the other Audi's were second and third on the grid. At the end of the 2000 Le Mans 24 Hours the same three cars were on top, albeit in a different order. Frank Biela, Tom Kristensen and Emanuele Pirro beat the sister cars to clinch the R8s first Le Mans victory.

In 2001 the Mulsanne straight was once again changed, the large hill on the last part of the straight was lowered in order to prevent accidents like the Mercedes-Benz CLRs becoming airborne in 1999. The race itself saw a famous name making its return to the French circuit. British manufacturer Bentley, like Audi owned by the Volkswagen Group, entered a Bentley EXP Speed 8 to challenge the German Audi R8. The race was hampered by heavy rain throughout the race but even the huge amounts of water could not stop Audi. The number 1 Audi of Biela/Pirro/Kristensen won again, 1 lap ahead of the number 2 Audi and 15 laps ahead of the Bentley. The 2002 race was driven on yet another

Le Mans circuit layout as the track was changed between the Dunlop bridge and the Esses. Once a straight it had now been turned into a set of fast turns leading to Tertre Rouge. Under much better weather conditions than in 2001 Bentley and Audi took on each other again and just like the previous years it was Audi that prevailed. With this result Audi Sport Team Joest and its drivers Biela, Pirro and Kristensen took their third consecutive victory as a team and manufacturer. It was the first time the same three drivers won the event three times in a row.



2002: The #3 Audi R8 driven by Marco Werner, Michael Krumm and Philipp Peter

© "Lorry"

With the success of winning three times in a row Audi did not field a works team in 2003, but privateers like Champion Racing, Team Goh and Audi Sport UK did enter the R8 though. However it was Bentley that won the race, its first victory at Le Mans since 1930. The Bentley team was supported by Audi factory squad Joest Racing and Audi had put its drivers Rinaldo Capello and Tom Kristensen in the winning car, joined by Briton Guy Smith. For Tom Kristensen it was his fourth consecutive victory, a new record. After taking the win Bentley withdrew from Le Mans again which meant there were no official works entries for the 2004 edition of the race. Nevertheless several privateer teams returned to the track with an R8 and the car showed its capabilities by scoring a 1-2-3 finish. The winning R8 of Audi Sport Japan Team Goh had a couple of familiar names in its line-up, next to Japanese Seiji Ara Audi works drivers Rinaldo Capello and Tom Kristensen were in the car. For Kristensen it was his fifth straight victory at Le Mans and his sixth overall, he was now on the same level as Jacky Ickx. The Le Mans-based Pescarolo



2006: The "Racing for Holland" Dome S101-HB – Judd driven by Jan Lammers, Alex Yoong and Stefan Johansson

© "Lorry"

squad entered its own Pescarolo C60 to compete against the Audi's and finished fourth, preventing an Audi top 4.

The 2005 edition was driven in exceptionally hot weather. The temperature was well over 30°C and caused a lot of mechanical problems for the teams. The Pescarolo Sport C60 of Collard/Boullion/Comas had taken pole position and with French rally ace Sébastien Loeb behind the wheel of the second Pescarolo the French fans all came to Le Mans hoping for a French victory for the first time since Peugeot in 1993. Unfortunately for them the Pescarolo cars had a lot of bad luck during the race and despite the lower speed of the car the reliability of the Audi R8 was the key factor. The Champion Racing R8 in the hands of Lehto, Werner and (again) Kristensen won the race, 2 laps ahead of the number 16 Pescarolo. Kristensen set a new record of seven overall Le Mans victories, six of them in succession. He was now one win ahead of Le Mans legend Jacky Ickx.

Diesel power

Before the 2006 event started the ACO changed the Dunlop Curve and Dunlop Chicane area again and extended the pit lane, as requested by the FIA. After receiving many complaints about the longer and slower pitlane during the Le Mans test day the ACO decided to use the old pit exit for the race. Audi Sport Team Joest returned to Le Mans as the official Audi works team with the diesel-powered R10 that had replaced the legendary R8. The car showed it was able to carry on where the R8 had left and it was the number 7 Audi R10 of Kristensen/McNish/Capello that took pole position for the 74th Le Mans 24 Hours. However the number 7 turned out to be less reliable as its sister car. While the number 8 of Biela/Werner/Pirro won the race, ending the winning streak of Tom Kristensen, it was the Pescarolo C60 Hybrid of Loeb/Hélary/Montangy that took second place ahead of the



2007: The #64 Corvette C6-R driven by Olivier Beretta, Oliver Gavin and Max Papis

© „Lorry“

second Audi R10. Kristensen did not improve his record, but Audi did rewrite motorsport history as the R10 became the first ever diesel-powered sports car to win Le Mans.



2009: The #8 Peugeot 908 driven by Sébastien Bourdais, Franck Montagny and Stéphane Sarrazin

© "Lorry"

The return of Peugeot to Le Mans in 2007 with a Diesel powered sports car prototype coupé was the beginning of a battle of a series of 24 hour battles. In 2007 and 2008 Audi won again with the R10, although Peugeot had the much quicker car in 2008 they were defeated by their own pit stop strategy. For 2009 Aston Martin joined the battle – hoping in vain that changes of the regulations would equalize their petrol-powered engine with the diesel powered entries. Audi presented with their new R15 that proved not to be sufficiently race ready and Peugeot 908s duly took top honours.

2010 saw the renewal of the 2009 battle. Peugeot dominated the 12 hour season opener in Sebring and laid down the gauntlet to Audi. During the races leading up to Le Mans it became clear that not only did the

Diesels still have the upper hand, but Peugeot were going to be the team to beat in P1.

P2 was more open with some welcome new teams arriving to take on the RML team, even though the Porsche Spyder had been retired in Europe and would not be seen again.

Come June Peugeot were odds on favourites to take a 2nd win. To hedge their bets Peugeot had loaned a car to ORECA so come race day four 908's lined up against 3 R15's. An assortment of petrol engined cars that included Lolas, Zyteks, Oreca's and the Prodrive Aston Martin were also entered but it was clear they still lagged behind the Diesels on pace despite attempts to level out the playing field.

Come race day the 3 works 908's that dominated practice made good starts and were able to build an advantage over the fastest of the Audi's driven by McNish.

The first of the starters to drop out was the AutoCon car, scant reward for this plucky team from the states. Another early casualty was the Beechdean Zytek driven by none other than Nigel Mansell. With the car immovable and rescue workers trying to free the motionless Mansell the race ran on under its first yellow. Happily Mansell was only stunned but this was not the way he would want to end his first and only trip to Le Mans.

Such was the pace of the leading Peugeots they have pulled out a lead of more than a minute after little more than an hour, McNish had clearly not given up as he was able to pass the ORECA 908 to take 4th. At about 7pm the first of the leaders to hit a problem did so in dramatic fashion. While avoiding the slow GT2 BMW the lead Audi now driven by TK ended up in the gravel. This excursion cost the car 3 laps over the leading Peugeot, Something the drivers had reason to rue in about 20 hours time.

With the lead Audi now 3 laps down the Peugeots could ease the pace something they looked very keen to do.

The first chink in the french armour happened when a 908 retired with suspension failure. The odds were evened up, 3 Audis vs 3 Peugeots going into Sunday. The odds then shifted further Audi's way when the lead Peugeot suffered a dramatic engine failure after a fuel stop. This allowed an Audi into lead for the first time, driven by the least experienced team put up by Joest. As the hours ticked down Peugeot threw caution to the wind and unleashed the full potential of the last works 908 now being driven by ex F1 driver Davidson. This came at a cost, not just to Peugeot.

Davidson was in full flight when he caught the No64 Corvette, sending the 'vette into the barriers. Worse was to come for the Peugeot, with Wurz now at the wheel the car suffered the same fate as the leader earlier, with a tell tale flame from the exhaust pipe, another was retired. All French hope now rested on ORECA's shoulders.

The ORECA car was in 4th at this point but was able to lap much faster than the Audis now cruising in 1st 2nd and 3rd. Loic Duval was able to get within 10sec of the 4th placed McNish car before the same flames spat from the exhaust, it's and the Peugeot challenge was over.

Against all the odds the canny Joest had been rewarded with a 1, 2, 3 finish. The Petrol engined race was won by Oreca, small reward for the brave efforts of the ORECA teams 908. The Lola Astons had been the faster, but like Peugeot suffered mechanical problems. LMP2 was won by the Strakka racing Honda. It was fitting that the last LMGT1 race was won by a stalwart of the GT1 series the Saleen SR7, GT2 went to the Felbermayr Porsche.

Overall winners since 1923

Year	Car	Drivers	Distance (km)
1923	Chenard & Walcker	André Lagaché (F), René Leonard (F)	2209
1924	Bentley 3-Litre	John Duff (GB), Francis Clement (GB)	2077
1925	La Lorraine	Gérard De Courcelles (F), André Rossignol (F)	2233
1926	La Lorraine	Robert Bloch (F), André Rossignol (F)	2552
1927	Bentley 3-Litre	Dudley Benjafield (GB), Sammy Davis (GB)	2369
1928	Bentley 4.5	Woolf Barnato (GB), Bernard Rubin (GB)	2669
1929	Bentley Speed Six	Woolf Barnato (GB), Sir Henry Birkin (GB)	2843
1930	Bentley Speed Six	Woolf Barnato (GB), Glen Kidston (GB)	2930
1931	Alfa Romeo 8C-2300sc	Earl Howe (GB), Sir Henry Birkin (GB)	3017
1932	Alfa Romeo 8C-2300sc	Raymond Sommer (F), Luigi Chinetti (I)	2954
1933	Alfa Romeo 8C-2300sc	Raymond Sommer (F), Tazio Nuvolari (I)	3144
1934	Alfa Romeo 8C-2300sc	Luigi Chinetti (I), Phillipe Etancelin (F)	2886
1935	Lagonda M45R	J.S. Hindmarsh (GB), Louis Fontes (RA)	3006
1936		Race was cancelled	
1937	Bugatti S7Gsc	Jean-Pierre Wimile (F), Robert Benoist (F)	3287
1938	Delhayé 135M	Eugène Chaboud (F), Jean Tremoulet (F)	3180
1939	Bugatti S7Gsc	Jean-Pierre Wimile (F), Pierre Veyron (F)	3354
1940-1948		Races were cancelled	
1949	Ferrari 166MM	Luigi Chinetti (USA), Lord Selsdon (GB)	3178
1950	Talbot-Lago	Louis Rosier (F), Jean-Louis Rosier (F)	3465
1951	Jaguar C-Type	Peter Walker (GB), Peter Whitehead (GB)	3611
1952	Mercedes-Benz 300SL	Hermann Lang (D), Fritz Reiss (D)	3733
1953	Jaguar C-Type	Tony Rolt (GB), Duncan Hamilton (GB)	4088
1954	Ferrari 375	Juan Froilan Gonzales (RA), Maurice Trintignant (F)	4061
1955	Jaguar D-Type	Mike Hawthorn (GB), Ivor Bueb (GB)	4135
1956	Jaguar D-Type	Ron Flockhart (GB), Ninian Sanderson (GB)	4034
1957	Jaguar D-Type	Ron Flockhart (GB), Ivor Bueb (GB)	4397
1958	Ferrari 250TR58	Olivier Gendebien (B), Phil Hill (USA)	4101
1959	Aston Martin DBR1	Carroll Shelby (USA), Roy Salvadori (GB)	4347
1960	Ferrari 250TR59/60	Olivier Gendebien (B), Paul Frère (B)	4217
1961	Ferrari 250TR61	Olivier Gendebien (B), Phil Hill (USA)	4476
1962	Ferrari 250P	Olivier Gendebien (B), Phil Hill (USA)	4451
1963	Ferrari 250P	Ludovico Scarfiotti (I), Lorenzo Bendini (I)	4561
1964	Ferrari 275P	Jean Guichet (F), Nino Vaccarella (I)	4695
1965	Ferrari 250LM	Jochen Rindt (A), Masten Gregory (USA)	4677
1966	Ford GT40 Mk II	Chris Amon (NZ), Bruce McLaren (NZ)	4843
1967	Ford GT40 Mk IV	Dan Gurney (USA), A.J. Foyt (USA)	5232
1968	Ford GT40	Pedro Rodriguez (MX), Lucien Bianchi (B)	4452
1969	Ford GT40	Jacky Ickx (B), Jackie Oliver (GB)	4997
1970	Porsche 917	Hans Hermann (D), Richard Attwood (GB)	4607
1971	Porsche 917	Helmut Marko (A), Gijs van Lennep (NL)	5335
1972	Matra-Simca MS670	Henri Pescarolo (F), Graham Hill (GB)	4691
1973	Matra-Simca MS670B	Henri Pescarolo (F), Gérard Larousse (F)	4853
Year	Car	Drivers	Distance (km)
1974	Matra-Simca MS670B	Henri Pescarolo (F), Gérard Larousse (F)	4606
1975	Mirage-Ford M8	Jacky Ickx (B), Derek Bell (GB)	4594
1976	Porsche 936	Jacky Ickx (B), Gijs van Lennep (NL)	4769
1977	Porsche 936	Jacky Ickx (B), Jurgen Barth (D), Hurley Haywood (USA)	4671
1978	Renault-Alpine A442	Jean-Pierre Jaussaud (F), Didier Pironi (F)	5044
1979	Porsche 935	Klaus Ludwig (D), Bill Whittington (USA), Don Whittington (USA)	4173
1980	Rondeau-Ford M379B	Jean-Pierre Jausaud (F), Jean Rondeau (F)	4608
1981	Porsche 936-81	Jacky Ickx (B), Derek Bell (GB)	4825
1982	Porsche 956-82	Jacky Ickx (B), Derek Bell (GB)	4899
1983	Porsche 956-83	Vern Schuppan (AUS), Hurley Haywood (USA), Al Holbert (USA)	5047
1984	Porsche 956B	Klaus Ludwig (D), Henri Pescarolo (F)	4900
1985	Porsche 956B	Klaus Ludwig (D), Paolo Barilla (I), "John Winter" (D)	5088
1986	Porsche 962C	Derek Bell (GB), Hans Stuck (D), Al Holbert (USA)	4972
1987	Porsche 962C	Derek Bell (GB), Hans Stuck (D), Al Holbert (USA)	4971
1988	Jaguar XJR-9LM	Johnny Dumfries (GB), Jan Lammers (NL), Andy Wallace (GB)	5332
1989	Sauber-Mercedes C9	Jochen Mass (D), Stanley Dickens (S), Manuel Reuter (D)	5265
1990	Jaguar XJR-12	Martin Brundle (GB), John Nielsen (DK), Price Cobb (USA)	4882
1991	Mazda 787B	Johnny Herbert (GB), Bertrand Gachot (B), Völkner Weidler (D)	4922

1992	Peugeot 905	Derek Warwick (GB), Yannick Dalmás (F), Mark Blundell (GB)	4787
1993	Peugeot 905B	Geoff Brabham (AUS), Eric Helary (F), Christophe Bouchut (F)	5100
1994	Dauer Porsche 962LM	Yannick Dalmás (F), Hurley Haywood (USA), Mauro Baldi (I)	4678
1995	McLaren F1 GTR	Yannick Dalmás (F), J.J. Lehto (SF), Masanori Sekiya (J)	4055
1996	Porsche WSC95	Manuel Reuter (D), Alex Wurz (A), Davy Jones (USA)	4814
1997	Porsche WSC95	Michele Alboreto (I), Stefan Johansson (S), Tom Kristensen (DK)	4909
1998	Porsche 911 GT1	Allan McNish (GB), Stéphane Ortelli (F), Laurent Aiello (F)	4773
1999	BMW V12 LMR	Yannick Dalmás (F), Jo Winkelhock (D), Pierluigi Martini (I)	4968
2000	Audi R8	F. Biela (D), Tom Kristensen (DK), E. Pirro (I)	5007
2001	Audi R8	F. Biela (D), Tom Kristensen (DK), E. Pirro (I)	4381
2002	Audi R8	F. Biela (D), Tom Kristensen (DK), E. Pirro (I)	5118
2003	Bentley EXP Speed 8	Rinaldo Capello (I), Tom Kristensen (DK), Guy Smith (GB)	5146
2004	Audi R8	Rinaldo Capello (I), Tom Kristensen (DK), Seiji Ara (J)	5169
2005	Audi R8	Tom Kristensen (DK), JJ Lehto (SF), Marco Werner (D)	5050
2006	Audi R10	F. Biela (D), E. Pirro (I), Marco Werner (D)	5187
2007	Audi R10	F. Biela (D), E. Pirro (I), Marco Werner (D)	5029
2008	Audi R10	Rinaldo Capello (I), Tom Kristensen (DK), Allan McNish (GB)	5192
2009	Peugeot 908	David Brabham (AU), Marc Gené (ES), Alexander Wurz (AT)	5206
2010	Audi R15+	Timo Bernhard (DE), Romain Dumas (FR), Mike Rockenfeller (DE)	5410



2011: The competitors: The Audi R18 and the Peugeot 908

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The “Circuit 24 Heures”

Since 1923 this small part of France has been a Mecca for motorsports fans from across the globe. From fairly humble beginnings, today's race is watched by close to 300,000 people trackside and a TV audience of millions, making it one of the largest single venue sporting events in the world.

The 24 hour event has evolved from a complex handicap race where the car that crossed the line having covering the most laps, was not always the winner, to the balls-out 24 hour sprint we have today.

Likewise, the track has had to change to accommodate shifting attitudes to safety and the expanding needs of this industrial city. The winners of the first race in 1923 were André Lagache & René Léonard, driving a Chenard & Walcker. While these two drivers have the honour of grandstands named in their honour along the pit straight, they would find the track very different today.

The original 17.2 km circuit which those pioneers raced on in 1923 started in the same area as now, but carried on much closer to Le Mans city until it reached an area known as Pontlieue, (roughly where the Carrefour now stands). There it turned sharp right onto the Les Hunaudières straight, sometimes also referred to as the Mulsanne. From there on it travelled for miles towards Mulsanne village before turning sharp right again towards Arnage and then the pit straight.

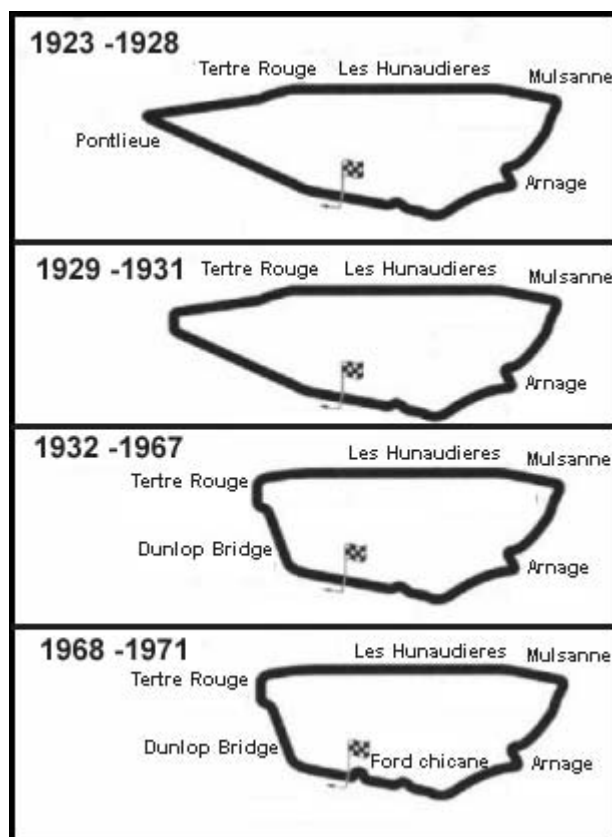
In 1929 much to the disgust of the drivers, the track was shortened slightly to 16.34km. This was achieved by cutting out the hairpin bend in the village of Pontlieue at the request of the local inhabitants. It was replaced with two right hand bends joined by a short straight just outside the village before rejoining Les Hunaudières and carrying on as before.

The track remained unaltered until 1932 when the A.C.O. purchased some land between the pit straight and the Hunaudières. The Club now was able to route the track to avoid the fast expanding city and these corners were to evolve into the Esses and Tertre Rouge (French for 'Red hillock'). This new section proved to be a massive success with drivers and spectators alike, getting the right line for the drivers was crucial for a fast ride down the straight and a good lap time and provided the public with an amazing view that was to become famous.

The circuit was to stay with this layout until after the horrific 1955 accident when changes were made to the pit straight to widen it. This was costly, as it involved the moving of tonnes of earth and the creation of signalling pits at the exit of the Mulsanne corner, to prevent the drivers being distracted by pit boards. These changes made little difference to the general layout. Until a few years ago it was still possible to see the remains of the signalling pits, last used in the mid 80s, just after the Mulsanne Corner.

However, the pace of competing cars grew, and the lap times fell by over 30 seconds. The speed differential between a 50's D-type Jaguar and a 60's Ford GT40 was becoming a worry and the A.C.O. realised that it needed to make a few changes. These started in 1968 when the Ford chicane was installed immediately before the pit entrance. This brought the distance down to 13.469 km. The organisers also added Armco along the entire circuit and created better runoffs. In 1971 the famous Le Mans 'ear of corn' running start was also forgone and replaced with a rolling start.

In 1971, a Porsche 917K driven by Helmut Marko and Gijs van Lennep, set distance and speed records that remain to this day. 5335.31 km (3334 miles) were covered at an average speed of 222.3 kph (138.9 mph). By comparison Audi's R10 completed 5187.0 km (3223 miles) in 2006 with an average of 215.40 kph (133.843 mph). The lap record in 1971 went to Jackie Oliver's 917 LH at a stunning 3:18.4 sec, an incredible average of 244.387 km (152.7 mph).



1923: The Pontlieue hairpin corner

In 1972, the ACO continued its revisions and decided it needed to have greater control over the track. More land was purchased and a completely new section was created between Arnage & the Ford Chicane, by-passing Maison Blanche completely, before rejoining the existing track just before the start straight at the Ford Chicane, which was also modified. This lengthened the track to 13.64km, pretty much the distance today.



1995: The Esses

© Rupert Lowes

The circuit stayed in this format between 1972 and 1986 with only some modifications to the Tertre Rouge corner to allow for the widening of the N138. The Mulsanne corner was also re-profiled for the construction of a roundabout.

In 1987 the Dunlop chicane was added. This slowed the cars dramatically on their approach to the Esses and destroyed a classic section of track.

The circuit, along with most other European ones, was also falling victim to enlarged runoff areas that have evolved into acres of gravel with the public having to face increasing amounts of mesh fencing between them and the cars, to the point where now, almost the entire track is fenced

off.

However, worse was to come in 1990. The "Les Hunaudières" straight - along with the character of the entire track - was changed when two chicanes were added. Gone were the Langheck specials, corner speeds went up and top speeds fell. The track had fallen victim to a bitter dispute between the A.C.O. and the FIA, who had brought in a new rule limiting the length of a single straight. The lap times increased by about 15 sec's. Whether the track is any safer with the chicanes is open to debate; true the cars were slowed by about 30 mph on the straight, but the higher down force set-ups used now have pushed up the corner speeds on the rest of the track.

The one good thing to come out of this is that the small WM Peugeot team will forever hold onto the fastest speed down the shute. Set during the 1988 race Roger Dorchy hit 405 km/h (251.1mph) strapped into his WM88 Peugeot. The fastest in 1990 was a Jaguar XJR-12 at 353km/h (218mph) some 50km/h (31mph) slower.

Despite some meddling with the Dunlop chicane and the construction in 1991 of a new pit complex, the track was to remain largely unchanged throughout the growth and death of the GT1 cars of the 90's.

In 2002 the Esses were extensively reworked at the request of the bikers to slow the bikes entry onto the short Bugatti track. This led to the loss of another seminal section of track. The Esses between the Dunlop bridge and Tertre Rouge, once an exciting, tight yet flowing section of track, now became a wide open section of sweepers set in masses of gravel that could just about be on any circuit in the world.



1982: Dunlop Curve

© Rupert Lowes



1996: Dunlop Bridge

© Rupert Lowes

For 2006 the bikers once again demanded changes. The Dunlop chicane was tightened up still further. The sight of the cars sweeping up the slight hill at the end of the pit straight, then under the Dunlop bridge before dropping down into the Esses and onto Tertre Rouge is now a distant memory.

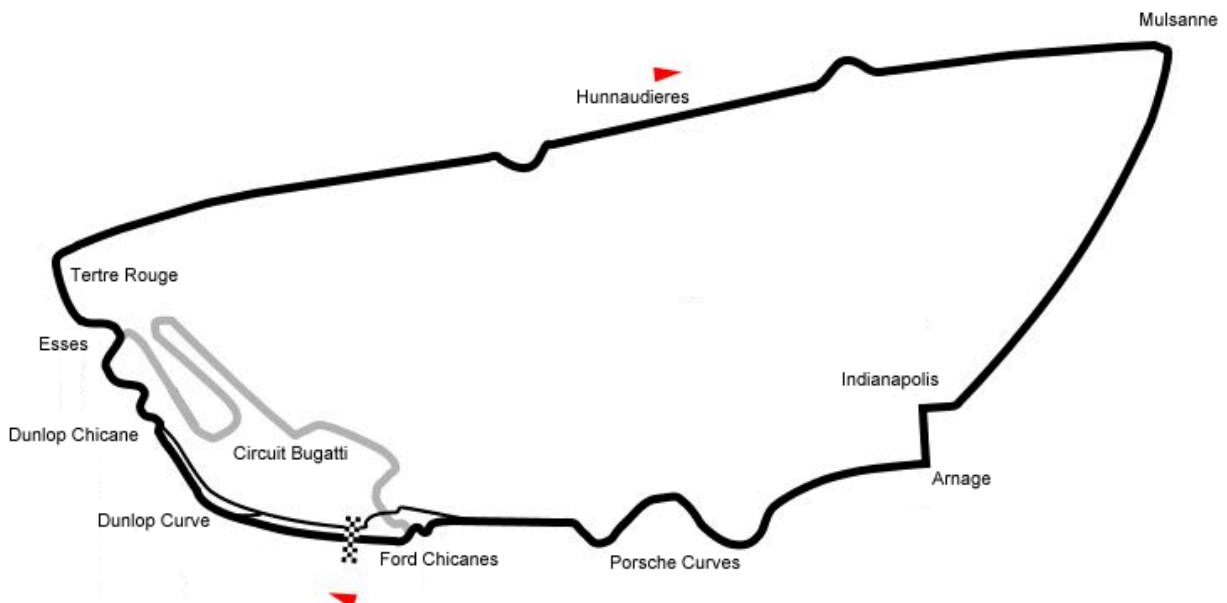
Work on the new Paddock and Village areas was completed in the early part of the decade, removing another part of the history of the Le Mans track. Gone was the country market feel of the old village, that had over time become rundown replaced by a large modern plaza.

Extra garages were also added at this time to allow for an increase in the number of starters in the race.

The track re-profiling of Tertre Rouge to allow for the new Tram link was completed in time for the 2007 race. This has opened up the corner so the entry speed onto the straight have increased and provides an excellent vantage point. The cars now pass the another sign of progress, the new Le Mans FC stadium, modelled on the Bolton FC Reebok stadium in the united Kingdom, Le Mans twin town. More changes are planned for the coming years as the A.C.O. continues to evolve the circuit to match the demands on both available space as the city expands and the speeds of cars.

Circuit changes - overview

1923 – 1928	10.726 miles, initial track
1929 - 1931	10.153 miles, hairpin bend at Pontlieu cut out
1932 - 1955	8.475 miles, new section from the pits to the Esses and Tertre Rouge
1956 - 1967	8.364 miles, wider pit straight, Dunlop curve changed
1968 - 1971	8.369 miles, Ford chicane installed
1972 - 1978	8.475 miles, new Porsche curves between Arnage and the Ford chicane
1979 - 1985	8.467 miles, modified Tertre Rouge corner
1986	8.51 miles, modified Mulsanne corner
1987 - 1989	8.41 miles, Dunlop chicane installed
1990 - 2001	8.45 miles, Mulsanne chicanes installed
2002 - 2006	8.483 miles, new section between Dunlop Bridge and Tertre Rouge
2007	8.480 miles, Tertre Rouge was modified



War of the classes

Le Mans isn't just about winning the race overall - it comprises four main separate classes, each entrant fighting for the honours in their respective class, and the competition within each often as fierce as that for the overall victory.

Following the spirit of the rules

In September 2008, the A.C.O. announced the general direction that the rules will take in the next few years. In essence, the objectives are:

- to slow all cars down for safety reasons, the aim being to limit the fastest cars to a lap time of 3mins 30secs
- to create a level playing field between diesel and petrol driven cars
- to maintain the speed differential between the classes
- to reduce overall costs

The rules for 2011 reflect the spirit of these objectives in that the rules for the LM Prototypes chassis' have been kept stable, and the use of homologated (production) engines is increased. The last few years has seen a decline in the entries for the old GT1 class; this class has now been discontinued, and all classes have been redefined. The classes are now (2011):

Le Mans Prototypes

“LM”P1 - The most 'open' class and the fastest, petrol or diesel, from which the overall winner will likely come. Fuel capacity is limited to 75 litres petrol and 65 litres diesel. Engine size limits are:

- 3.4 ltr atmo petrol engines, 8 cyl. max.
- 2.0 ltr turbo petrol engines, 6 cyl. max.
- 3.7 ltr turbo diesel engines, 8 cyl. max.

“LM”P2 - Chassis the same as P1, but with homologated petrol only engines (ie no diesels). Fuel capacity is limited to 75 litres. Engine size limits are:

- 5.0 ltr maximum 8 cylinders for normally aspirated engines
- 3.2 ltr maximum 6 cylinders for (single only) turbo engines

Grand Touring Endurance

These are cars built by manufacturers for sale on the open market: Engine sizes are limited to 5.5 litres for normally aspirated engines, and 4.0 litres for turbos. Fuel capacity is limited to 90 litres. These cars are based almost totally on the old GT2 specification, with a few minor changes (ie paddle shift systems allowed and display, push buttons and switches allowed on the steering wheel). Cars not homologated by a manufacturer will also be accepted if entered by tuners - subject to separate homologation criteria. All cars are limited to one evolution per year, to be made before the first race of the season. LMGTE is sub-divided into two separate classes:

LMGTE-PRO - destined more especially for professionals where up-to-date models are used as the basis for the race car.

LMGTE-AM - destined more for the 'amateur', where cars must be at least one year old and without further modification. This is designed to create a second-user market for GT cars. The crew is limited to only one professional driver.

Hybrid cars are allowed to compete in LMP1 only and be classified provided they meet the specified, very detailed criteria. The fuel capacity for hybrids is 73 litres (petrol) and 63 litres (diesel). Four-wheel drive cars are now allowed but for hybrids only.

The A.C.O. also closely watches the performance of all competitors, with the intention of differentiating classes from each other as far as lap times are concerned, for example, a 1.5% difference in lap times between LMP1 and LMP2. The A.C.O. constantly alter various specifications in order to maintain this differential, for example the size of the air restrictors, the minimum weight of the car and the maximum size of fuel tanks. A good example of this was in 2006 when the Chevrolet Corvettes and the Aston Martins were getting a little bit too close to the prototypes in terms of speed, so both were given 25 kg extra weight. They also specifically state that if any car shows a significant performance increase in the 3 races prior to Le Mans (ie Sebring, Paul-Ricard and Spa), then those specific cars will be 'penalised'.

Equal rules for Diesels and Petrols

This has been promised several times in the past, but despite all efforts to reduce the power and the advantages of the diesels by reducing their fuel flow and fuel tank size further almost each year, at present the petrol powered LMP1 cars have no chance to compete against the latest spec Audi or Peugeot diesel prototypes. Whether this is caused by an unbalanced technical regulation or just by the fact, that the diesel engines have been developed by large manufacturers while the petrol LMP1 engines are either being built by small companies like Judd or AER (with significantly lower technical and financial resources) is difficult to judge. In 2010 David Richards, whose Prodrive company runs Aston Martin Racing, said they will not return to the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 2011 when new rules come into force if they are “hindered in any way” against the diesels. *“If there is a level playing field, we will be there.”*



Will Aston Martin be competitive in 2011?

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2011 Rule Changes

Apart from the overall re-classification, there are many other changes to the rules, significant ones being:

- A vertical rigid fin must be added to the LMP cars built as from 1st July 2010 (new chassis), and is recommended for the other cars. This fin will be mandatory for all cars as from 01/01/2013
- All vehicles must have a Data Logger as specified by the A.C.O. This is seen as very important to the A.C.O. as if there is a failure of this device, the times posted by the vehicle during practice will be cancelled, and if during the race, the car will be stopped. The data collected must be extracted at re-fuelling sessions, and the data transmitted to the A.C.O. An extra person will be allowed in the pit area purely to collect/change the memory card from this device.
- The rear wing has for many years had to be fixed. Obviously some rule-bending has been uncovered, and there is now a maximum distance that the rear edge of the wing can flex under a given loading.

Leader Lights

In 2007 the A.C.O. introduced the “leader lights” system. Each car must have 3 LED lights mounted on both sides; these lights have different colors for each class:

- LMP1: red lights
- LMP2: blue lights
- LMGT1: green lights
- LMGT2: yellow lights

The leading car of each class will show one light switched on, the second place car two lights, the third place car 3 lights; if no lights are burning then the car is fourth or further down the order. These “Leader Lights” will help trackside spectators to follow the progress of the race, especially at night or in poor visibility. This system was developed and first introduced by the organizers of the American Le Mans Series in 2002 with the original idea coming from an American race fan. It reloads at the timing line so it is basically the previous lap position that one is viewing.



The 4 classes – overview

The following overview page gives just the most basic facts, the exact regulations are very extensive with lots of technical stuff, e.g. numbers about the minimum of road cars produced for the GT classes, size of the wings and others. All figures mentioned are maximum values, except the car's weight of course...



P1

- Open or closed roof sports cars with room for 2 seats
- 3.4 ltr. aspirated engine (8 cyl) or 2 ltr. Turbo (6 cyl) or 3.7 ltr. Diesel (8 cyl)
- 4.65 m length, 2.00 m width, 1.03 m height
- 900 kg minimum weight
- 75 litres fuel tank, 65 litres for diesel
- Headlights with white beam
- 16" wheel width, 28.5" diameter
- Race numbers in white digits on red background



P2

- Open or closed roof sports cars with room for 2 seats
- Production based engines: 5.0 ltr. atmo engine (max 8 cyl) or 3.2 ltr. Turbo (max. 6 cyl)
- 900 kg minimum weight
- 4.65 m length, 2.00 m width, 1.03 m height
- 75 litres fuel tank
- Headlights with white beam
- 14" wheel width, 28" diameter
- Race numbers in white digits on blue background



GTE-PRO

- "Professional" GTE sports cars
- Minimum weight 1145 kg
- 4.8m length, 2.00 m width
- 5.5 ltr. atmo engine or 4 ltr. Turbo
- Race numbers in white digits on green background
- 90 litres fuel tank
- Headlights with yellow beam
- 14" wheel width, 28" diameter
- Carbon brake discs



GTE-AM

- "Amateur" GTE sports cars
- Specification same as GTE-PRO
- Only one professional driver from Platinum or Gold class
- The car must be at least one year old
- Race numbers in white digits on orange background

Stop press: Performance Changes after the LMS round at Spa Franchorchamps 2011

After the 1000km at Spa in early May, the A.C.O. announced certain changes to some types of car, and to some particular cars. These changes are made based mainly on engine-performance data taken at Spa, and are designed to further 'level the playing field' within each class.

In P1:

- Fuelling nozzle increased by 10mm for petrol cars, and reduced by 3mm for diesels
- For petrol cars, air restrictor increased by .3mm and 10kg less minimum weight OR .5mm increase in air restrictor where the car's weight cannot be decreased.
- The Oreca Peugeot 908 (a 2010 car) has 15kgs taken off its ballast

In P2:

- The 2011 cars which meet the new regs (Oreca Nissan, HPD, Oak Pescarolo) are allowed an increase of 3.5mm in the refueling nozzle
- In particular, the Judd engines are allowed an increase of 1.1 (2.6%) increase in the air restrictor.

In GTE:

- Various performance adjustments (weight, size of air restrictors, gurney or fuel tank capacity) have been made to various cars - particularly the Lotus Evora and Doran Ford GT.



Administrative Checking & Scrutineering at the "Place Centrale des Jacobins," below the cathedral in the centre of Le Mans 2010: Team Oreca presents cars and drivers to the public. From left to right: Didier André, Soheil Ayari, Andy Meyrick, Teamboss Hugh de Chaunac, Olivier Panis, Nicolas Lapierre, Loïc Duval

© Deborah Dudley

Sporting regulations

The full regulations (see www.lemans.org) cover everything from what can be done where, the penalties for infringement, to a list of the 19 trademarks filed by the ACO. Although the regulations look rather comprehensive and strict, the organizers often leave themselves the option to decide differently because of "force majeure", a term which can be found many times in the sporting regulations. The following list is just a summary of the rules.

Side Numbers

- As well as leader lights (see War of the Classes chapter), all side numbers must now be in the same 'class colours' with the exception of GTE-AM (where the leader light colour is yellow) ie LMP1 – red, LMP2 – blue, GTE-PRO – green and GTE-AM – orange. The actual numbers are in white on a background of these colours. They must also be lit so that they are visible in the dark.

In-car Cameras

- All competitors have to accept and facilitate the setting up in their cars of a system of technical means enabling the production, the storing, the selection, the compression and the transmission of a video signal or any other signal via satellite.

The start

- The starting grid will be in a staggered 2 x 2 formation, after one lap behind the pace car there will be a "flying" or "rolling" start.
- The fastest driver in the team shall start the race.
- If a car can't make it to the starting grid, it is allowed to start from the pits. There is a maximum of 1 hour after the actual start to do so, after which the car will be excluded from the race.

Pit stops

- The engine must be switched off at the start of the pit stop; once the pit stop is finished it must be re-started without any additional device or outside assistance.
- During refuelling no one is allowed to work on the car (except for driver changes and windscreen/rear-view mirrors cleaning), the car cannot be jacked up.
- Cars must be electrically earthed before the refuelling equipment is connected
- Fuel tanks must always be filled to the top ie no more 'splash & dash' scenarios
- For tyre changes, a maximum of any 2 mechanics (from a maximum of 4 designated) and one only air gun is allowed, and all equipment and wheels must be taken from/returned to the garage whilst the car is stopped in the pit lane. This is a change from 2008 and before when 4 mechanics and 2 air guns were allowed.
- A third person is allowed only to retrieve data from the ACO Data Logger.
- For other repairs in the pit lane a maximum of 4 mechanics are allowed to work on the car. The car must be pushed back into its garage where more people can work on it.
- Speed limit within the pit lane is 60 km/h.
- Reverse gear cannot be used in the pit lane - if necessary, the car must be pushed by no more than 4 people.
- It is strictly forbidden to spin the wheels when leaving the pits!!
- New for 2011: All people permitted in the pit lane work area must wear *long underwear* and *shoes*. Could be fun to see this policed!

Repairs

- Chassis, engine block, gearbox casing and the differential casing cannot be changed.
- Reserve cars are not permitted, so if a car is totalled during practice or warm up, it is out!
- New for 2010 - any broken louvres (typically above the wheel arches) must be properly repaired. Sticking them back together with duct tape is not allowed.

Time penalties

- If you have been a naughty boy (or girl) the race marshals will show you the black flag and give you a time "Stop/Go" or drive-through penalty. When this happens, you can do a maximum of 4 more laps before coming into the pit lane for your penalty. These penalties cannot be combined with a pit stop.

Drivers

- For 2011, there is a new system of placing drivers into one of 4 categories - Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze. See separate section in this guide
- A maximum of 3 drivers is allowed for each car. Drivers are not allowed to change to another car during the race, not even within the same team.
- During qualifying sessions, drivers must achieve a lap time at least equal to 125 % of the average of the 3 best laps set by 3 cars of different makes, and at least equal to 115 % of the best time achieved by the fastest car in each of the four classes. Furthermore, they have to do a minimum of 3 laps during night time qualifying sessions.
- A driver is only allowed to drive a maximum of 4 hours within a 6 hours time frame (minus pit stop time)
- Maximum total drive time for a driver is 14 hours.

Sound Levels

- The sound emitted from each car must not exceed 110 dbA during the qualifying practices and the race. The measurement will be made at 15 meters from the edge of the track.

Cockpit Temperature (closed cars)

- The temperature inside the cockpit must not exceed certain limits, and each closed car must be fitted with either an efficient air conditioning system or an efficient ventilating system. A sensor may be fitted by the ACO at driver's head height, out of any air-stream, to measure the temperature. If this goes above limits, or if the sensor is disconnected, the car will be stopped until such time as the problem is fixed.

En route

- If a car stops on the race track and the driver leaves it and walks further than 10 metres away from his car then the car will be excluded from the race. No outside assistance is allowed; only the driver can carry out repairs using tools and spares carried aboard. Supplying with fuel, water, oil, etc., is prohibited on and along the track.
- Drivers are not allowed to push their cars.
- Headlights must be on at all times, on the track and in the pit lane.
- One of the silliest rules and difficult to enforce at night time: Drivers are not allowed to cross the white lines marking the race track or use the kerbs.

Fuel

- All teams have to use the fuel provided by the race organizer.

End of race / classification

- Le Mans is an endurance race! You'll only be classified if you have covered at least 70 % of the race distance of the winner in your class **and** if you pass the chequered flag at the end of race. Leading the race for 23 hours and 55 minutes and retiring e.g. with a blown engine 5 minutes prior to race end won't get you on the podium or even classified, even if you have done already more laps than the subsequent winner.
- It is forbidden to stop on the circuit to wait for the chequered flag.
- At the end of the race, cars must go to the Parc Fermé, and they may be weighed.

Entry fees

- Entry fees for each car are €42.000, with a non-refundable deposit of €5,500 to be paid in January. This deposit is payable (and non-refundable!) for all cars on the Reserve list, whether they race or not.

Le Mans Moments: Life can be boring - Franck Montagny after retiring from the 2010 race



© Gordon Whitworth

Driver Categories

Not only the cars are categorized in classes, for a while now the A.C.O. has also put the race drivers into different categories – since 2010 in the Le Mans Series, for 2011 this system will also apply for the 24h of Le Mans. Professional race drivers are rated as either “platinum” or “gold”, the so called “Gentlemen drivers” have “silver” or “bronze” status.

For the teams, certain restrictions for their driver squad apply:

- LMP1: Only drivers rated as “platinum”, “gold” or “silver” are allowed.
- LMP2: There must be at least one Gentlemen Driver (“bronze” or “silver”) in the driver squad.
- GTE Am: For the amateur GT class entries, only one “platinum” or “gold” driver is allowed per car.

The drivers have to take care themselves about their rating. They have to send a request for categorization together with their race driver cv and credentials at least 15 days prior to each race to the A.C.O. – together with a juicy administrative fee of 450,- Euro! In case of a last minute driver change, e.g. at the beginning of a race weekend, the race stewards will categorize a driver.

Platinum

These are all internationally well known professional race drivers below 55 years of age who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Holder of a Formula 1 super license
- Have previously driven for a manufacturer team and have been paid for this
- Have finished a Formula 3000, CART/Champcar, IRL or GP2 championship within the top 10 positions
- Have finished an international top Formula 3 series or other top Formula series (e.g. Renault World Series) within the top 6 positions
- Do not meet the above criteria but are seen as a professional race driver by the sporting committee

Gold

These drivers have been active in national or international series on a semi-professional bases and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Fulfill a criteria of the „Platinum“ category, but are between 55 and 59 years old
- Top 3 position in second class international formula series, e.g. A1GP, Formula Renault)
- Top 3 position in a national formula series season
- Winner in an entry formula series, e.g. Formula Ford, Formula BMW
- Top 3 position in the Porsche Supercup
- Winner of an international manufacturer championship (Porsche, SEAT, Renault, Peugeot)
- Do not meet the above criteria but are seen as “gold” race driver by the sporting committee

Silver

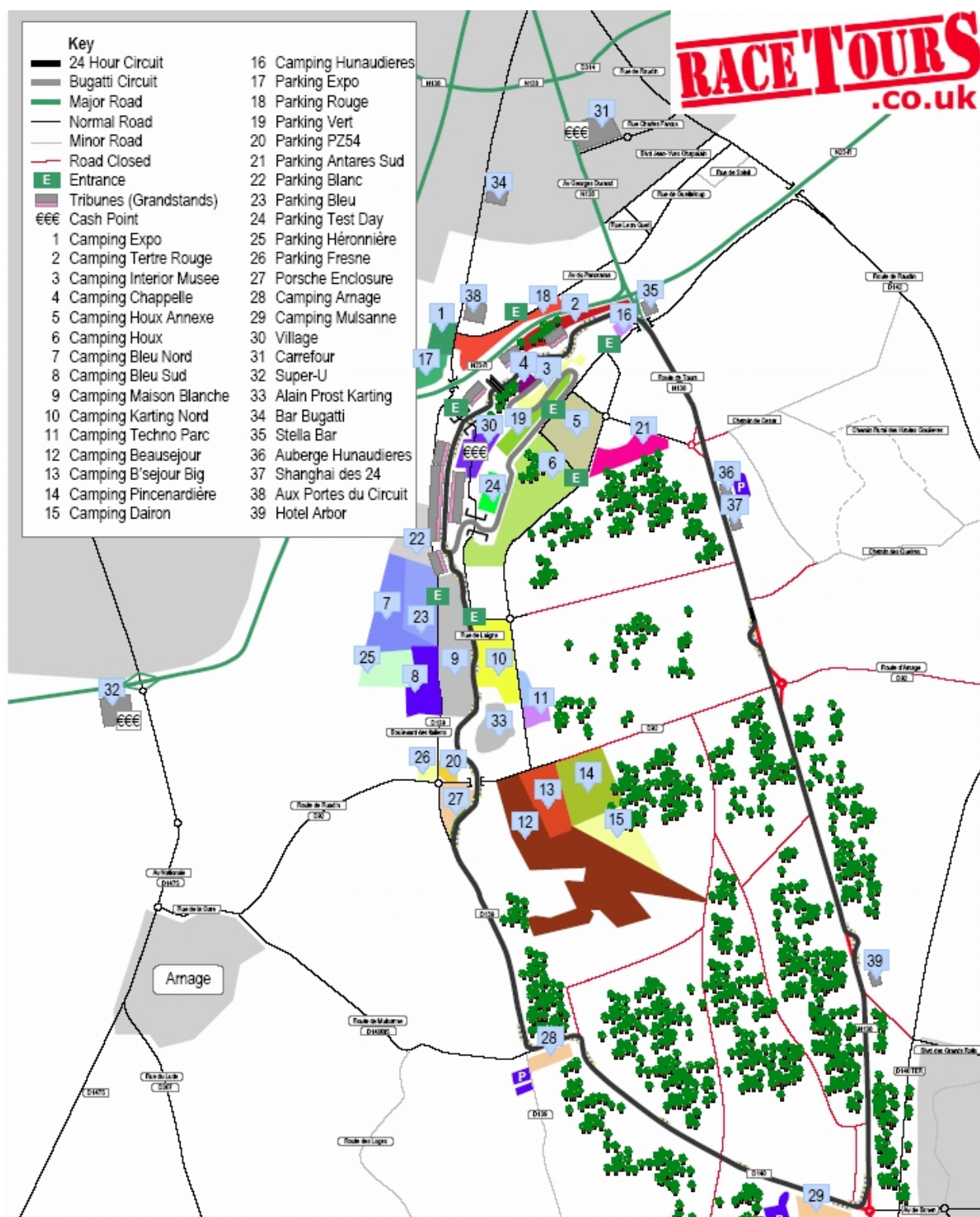
All race drivers who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Below 30 years of age and not rated as „platinum“ or „gold“
- 60 years of age or above and fulfill one of the criteria for “platinum” drivers
- The driver has scored a race win in an international series or national championship together with a professional driver
- Has won a non-professional race series, e.g. Ferrari Challenge, Maserati Trofeo
- Has done a full season in a formula series
- Do not meet the above criteria but are seen as “silver” race driver by the sporting committee

Bronze

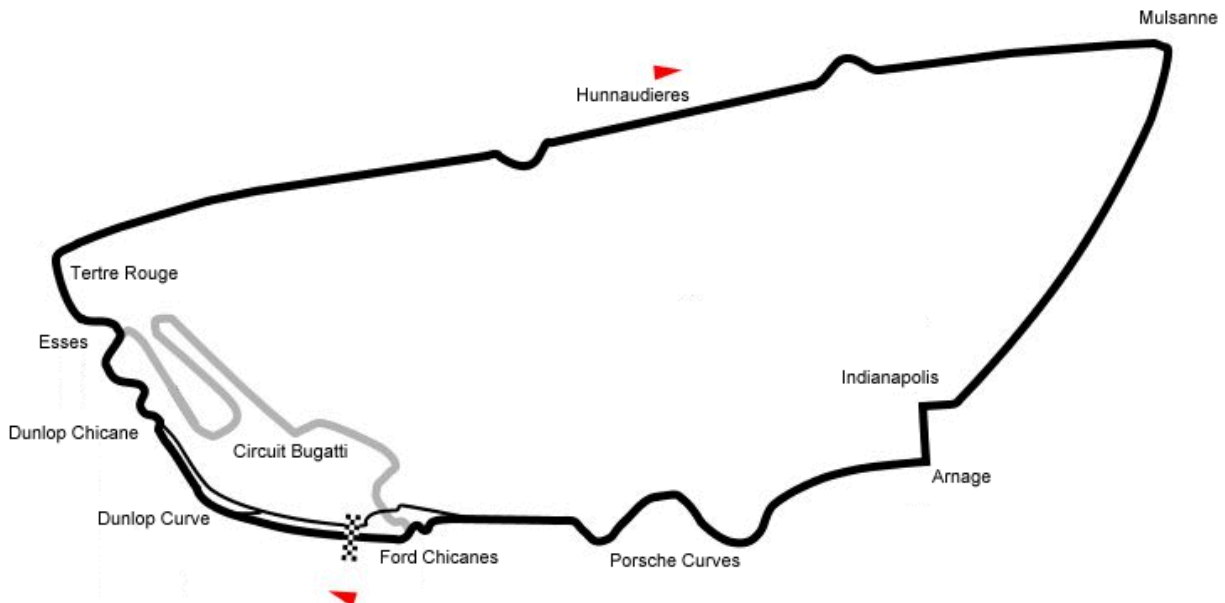
- All amateur drivers, every driver who has been above the age of 30 when his first license was issued and who has little or no experience in any formula series.

Map of the circuit



Where to watch

Over the last couple of years there have been some noticeable changes to the spectator areas at Le Mans. These include better provision for disabled access, installation of more big screens and the raising of embankments to provide panoramic views of the track. For the most part these changes should be applauded as they have increased the accessibility of the event for the majority. On the down side the character and charm of the circuit has been sacrificed to some extent. However, out on the public road sections of the course there are still some fantastic opportunities for the plucky race fan to see the action in its purist form. Read on to discover the intricacies of this famous circuit and be prepared to do some walking!



Navigation: The General Enclosure is easily accessible on foot. It stretches from the exit of the Porsche Curves to the exit of Tertre Rouge, approx 2.5 km. There are pedestrian crossing points at the start of the pit straight (outside the media centre), the end of the pit straight (adjacent to the main entrance), after the Dunlop chicane and in between the Esses and Tertre Rouge. Access to the further reaches of the circuit requires a bit more planning. The enclosures at Arnage and Mulsanne are accessible by car and there is limited parking at both (see the relevant sections below for directions). Alternatively, a free shuttle bus (Navette) runs during the race - see **Transport in Le Mans** chapter for more details.

11 giant screens will be installed for the 2011 edition of the race, giving the spectator the opportunity to watch live action, whilst keeping up to date with what's going on on other parts of the track:

- On the straight line of the pits, opposite the grandstands,
- On the straight line of the pits, next to the Welcome,
- Opposite the Dunlop Grandstand,
- Outside the Tertre Rouge bend,
- Inside the Mulsanne bend,
- Inside the Arnage bend,
- At the braking point of the Raccordement
- At the level of the starting line
- In the village by the Audi clock



FanVision (Kangaroo TV): This service will **not** be available in 2011.

Grandstands: These are referred to as tribunes at Le Mans. They are situated at the exit of the Ford Chicane, opposite and above the pitlane, at the exit of the Dunlop Chicane and The Esses outfield. It is worth noting that access to the tribunes is not restricted during Wednesday and Thursday's qualifying sessions; the separate tribune tickets become valid from Saturday morning. A grandstand seat will provide a guaranteed good view of the start and finish of the race and a place in the shade to regroup on Sunday morning, especially useful considering the

temperature regularly gets into the 30s through June. However, if you prefer to sample the circuit in its entirety a seat in a tribune may not represent good value for money for you.



Pit Straight: There are concrete steps running the length of the pit straight in front of the tribunes. These serve as a free seating area enabling those without grandstand seats to view the action from this spot. Its extremely crowded at the beginning and end of the race but try to squeeze yourself in for the closing stages and you will be rewarded; once the last of the competitors rolls into park ferme the marshals open up the gates in the 8ft wall that borders the track, signalling a mass track invasion. Follow the crowd down to the finish line to see the winners presented with their trophies on the podium.

Dunlop Chicane: The Dunlop Chicane, within very easy reach of the ACO village, was modified for the 2006 season to bring the track speeds down. However, the new tighter left-right chicane still provides many thrills and spills, arguably more than before the modification. Position yourself on the infield 50 yards down the hill from the entry to the chicane for a clear insight into the undulations and racing line of this section of track. Watch the drivers attempting to keep their braking tidy during the fast right-handed approach, all under the backdrop of the famous Dunlop Bridge. Another prime spot is on the outfield at the chicane exit (in front of the Dunlop tribune) where many a driver will be caught out getting on the power too early.





The Esses: The famous Esses cut their way through a natural amphitheatre that provides spectacular views of this challenging sweeping section of track. Take up position on the infield banking beyond the point where the Bugatti circuit peels off to the right. Here you will be able to follow the cars all the way down the hill from the Dunlop Bridge and up through the left handed section of the Esses. Then watch as they blast away from you, sweeping right and disappearing into the trees. Tertre Rouge Tribune, situated on the outfield, provides an elevated view of the Esses and must be sampled during Wednesday or Thursday night qualifying when this flood lit section of the circuit will look particularly impressive. Walk a hundred yards further down the track and you will find yourself amongst the trees at

the exit of the Esses. A bit of careful positioning and you will notice that this is one of the few locations at Le Mans that offers a photo opportunity genuinely unimpeded by catch fencing. Thanks to the ACO having kindly removed a number of trees around here over the winter, there is a much better view now than in the last few years. Catch a shot of the cars as they accelerate up the hill and on down to Tertre Rouge.

Tertre Rouge Approach: The area between the Esses and Tertre Rouge was completely redeveloped in 2007 at the same time as the Tertre Rouge corner itself was revised. Viewing here is excellent thanks to a huge embankment to the infield that runs the full length of the straight. Wide walkways slope gradually to the top of the spectator area where there can be found a number of ample viewing platforms suitable for disabled spectators. The ageing and cramped pedestrian underpass that has always served this part of the circuit was also replaced for 2007. In its place is a well-lit and wide underpass, again served by gradual concrete slopes on both sides of the circuit. The cars are full throttle for this short burst and ear splittingly loud. Worth busting your way down to the front of the busy enclosure if that's your thing!



Tertre Rouge: The Tertre Rouge corner marks the point where the purpose built racetrack joins the public road and the surrounding viewing areas signal the extremities of the 'General Enclosure'. The layout of the corner was heavily modified for the start of the 2007 season to increase the size of the run off area. The right hander is shallower than its former self and the cars now carry a great amount of speed through the heart of the corner, the drivers letting the cars drift out from the apex as they make the transition onto the public road section of the course. The embankment mentioned in the previous section runs all the way round the inside of Tertre Rouge and offers views all the way up to the Esses, down through Tertre Rouge and on to the Mulsanne. Refreshment and merriment lie only yards away when at Tertre Rouge; exit the General Enclosure, turn left under the circuit and you will find a lively trackside bar dubbed the 'Stella Bar' by many a seasoned campaigner!

Mulsanne Straight (Hunnaudieres): Access to the Mulsanne is prohibited, the track being kept secure by race officials (stationed at the various posts) and the local police, both of whom will take a dim view to any attempts to break through the trees to the circuit. Nevertheless, there are still viewing opportunities waiting to be exploited, it will just require a little endeavour and organisation.

It is possible to get within a few feet of the action at the Auberge des Hunaudieres or Shanghai des 24 Heures restaurants situated a couple of hundred yards before the braking zone of the first chicane. The legendary Auberge des Hunaudieres used to offer dramatic trackside seats from where you could enjoy good food and drink. Unfortunately green covers attached to the catch fencing obscure the view (although if you are lucky they will have been eased down!) and getting a table can be problematic during track time as the restaurant tends to be taken over by corporate hospitality. However, there is still an open air public bar at the rear of the property; clamber up onto the benches for a glimpse of the cars going flat out down the Mulsanne. To get to Hunaudieres (and the Shanghai des 24 Heures) during track time refer to the circuit map and stick to the following instructions. Head South East on the N142 (Route du Mans) running parallel to the Mulsanne Straight. Turn right on to Chemin de Ceasar and you will enter the network of minor roads. The restaurant will be temporarily signposted and there will be French police or race officials willing to direct you. They may be blocking the final turning so you need to be ready to tell them you are eating at Hunaudieres and they will gladly let you through. Eventually you will end up in a field at the back of the restaurant where you can park for free.

The less well known Hotel Arbor presents a better spectating opportunity. It sits alongside the Mulsanne straight on the circuit outfield only a couple of hundred yards after the second chicane. Parking is permitted in the hotel car park for a fee of 10 Euros per person. From there, the chicane can be found only a short stroll away through the trees. This is an excellent spot to watch from, particularly as there never seems to be anybody else there! Parking is at the discretion of the hotel and information listed here is purely based on their setup in previous years.

Mulsanne Corner: Your General Admission ticket will give you access to the Mulsanne Enclosure although getting there is another issue. The 90-degree right-hander marks the end of the Mulsanne straight and the spectator area follows the track for about 200-300 meters as the cars accelerate down the narrow section towards Indianapolis. The view over the corner itself is helped by a small embankment that just gives you enough elevation to take some photos over the catch fencing. The entry to Mulsanne corner is a very heavy braking zone so you can expect to see plenty of overtaking and maybe the odd driver overdoing things and utilising the run off area. To get to Mulsanne follow the directions to Arnage (see below) then continue down the D139 (this will be one way during the race). In approximately 1.5 Km you will reach a crossroads. Look out for a 'P Mulsanne' sign directing you to turn left. Take the left turn and follow the narrow lane for into the outskirts of Mulsanne village. The final left turn that leads to the parking area is easy to miss so once again look out for the 'P Mulsanne' sign. The left turn is just after an area of open ground and approximately 400m before the junction with the N138. It takes you up a dusty track to the large parking area under the trees, some 300 meters after the corner.

Indianapolis/Arnage: As with the Mulsanne corner the complex at Arnage is accessed by a separate enclosure, admission being covered by your General Admission ticket. Although a fair distance from the ACO village, this zone is reasonably accessible and well worth the effort. The enclosure runs from the apex of the cambered Indianapolis left-hander to the entrance to the extremely tight 90-degree right-hander of Arnage. There is grass banking alongside the track that allows you to get close to the action, especially at Arnage, where you are right on top of it. You won't know what Le Mans is all about until you've seen some night racing from here. Watch the cars burst out of the trees towards Indianapolis, the fastest part of the circuit. They swoop through the fast right curve towards the tighter left of Indianapolis proper where several drivers land in the gravel after overestimating their ability. This is followed by the short straight before jumping on the brakes for Arnage, desperately trying to shed some speed for the uncompromising corner, brake discs glowing in the dark. You can hear the cars accelerate up through the gears long after they disappear back into the surrounding forest. This is what endurance racing is all about. Just try to get to Arnage for Wednesday or Thursday night qualifying or ideally after 2am on Sunday morning because the crowds at peak times can be a real drag. To get to Arnage corner follow Rue de Laigne in a southerly direction, passing the Maison Blanche campsite on your left and the Bleu campsite on your right. At the roundabout turn right onto Rue de Ruadin and follow the road for approximately 1.5 Km. Before entering the built up area of Arnage village take a left turn signposted 'P Arnage'. Follow this road for approximately 2 Km until you arrive at Arnage corner. Follow the one-way system as it bends to the right. Parking can be found on the right hand side in two fields. For those who are coming to Le Mans with tour companies - beware of the overpriced "excursions" to Arnage and Mulsanne which they will try to sell you. There is a shuttle bus from the front of the circuit which will take you there for free - see Transport in Le Mans chapter, Navettes.



Porsche Curves: The Porsche Curves are a series of sweeping corners starting where the racetrack curves to the right to leave the public road. An enclosure here called Porsche Exterior offers a view of the outside of this up hill corner and can be accessed from the road leading to the Beausejour campsite. Looking back up the road section of the circuit its possible to see almost as far as Arnage in the distance.

New in 2010 there was also a viewing area on the inside of the circuit at the Porsche curves, accessed via the Beausejour campsite. Further round the track you will find the Circuit de Alain Prost Karting that lies adjacent to the Karting Nord campsite. Conveniently, the kart track's pit lane roof can be accessed via steps at the back of the building. This gives a fantastic

elevated view of the Le Mans circuit. Turn around and you can also watch the public karting where the skill levels are drastically lower but the crashes come immeasurably more frequently! This spot lies outside of the General Admission enclosure so you don't need to show your ticket, although on race day there is sometimes a steward demanding 5 Euros for admittance. It seems to be a little known spot so enjoy some crowd free spectating at all but the busiest times.

Ford Chicane: The final challenge on the circuit is the double left right complex known as the Ford Chicane. Stick to the outfield where you will find shallow banking (just high enough to see over the armco) that stretches right into the Maison Blanche campsite as far as the exit to the Porsche Curves. The Maison Blanche grandstand nestles conveniently over the Ford Chicane offering excellent raised views of this action packed area of the circuit. If you can't get into the grandstand try getting down to the catch fencing in front of it to get some close up views of the cars powering onto the pit straight.

Waving the flags and so much more – The marshals

Little is known to many visitors about the marshals at Le Mans and their work, although there wouldn't be any race at all without them. Marshalling is a hobby done by volunteers with a passion for motor sport. These men and women spend their free time and their own money to train in the many aspects of marshalling. They act as flag marshals, chief track marshals, pit lane marshals and there are many other roles. Their skills are crucial for the success of a race, because an exciting race can be destroyed by bad marshalling but it can also be made better and safer by good work from the marshals, even saving a driver's life. The set of skills which is required is large and the willingness to attend training on a regular basis is an important prerequisite. Training covers fire fighting, flagging, observing, radio communication and many other topics.



There are many types of jobs to be done at any race meeting, and Le Mans is no different. The one thing which is noticeable is that, obviously, officials can't be working for the whole 24 hours race plus the support event on the Saturday morning etc, so there would be enough for a minimum of 2 shifts, and the number is amazing, when you consider that the British Grand Prix at it's height required approximately 1500 people for the weekend (that's ALL jobs) so imagine how many for a circuit 3 times the size and a race meeting 4 times the length.

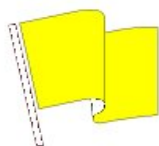
Some of the roles performed by the officials are:

Course/Flag/Observer, these are effectively the Race Directors 'ground troops'. These three will work together

on a post, the Course Marshal is the one you'll see going out to an incident and working trackside, and reporting back to the Observer, who will report to Race Control what has happened. This is rather basic, as the Flaggie will be there waving the Blue, and reacting to what is required at that moment.

Pits, these Marshals will observe and report on all pit lane behaviour and stops. To do that requires a knowledge of the rules and regulations, no mean feat when you consider that they need eyes everywhere and will need to react quickly, nimble feet are needed in the lane to see all, but avoid being in the way.

From the information flowing into Race Control from all the Marshal's post's it is then up to the Control room people to filter out any important information that the Race Director may need to know and act upon, for example the release of the Safety Car (there are 2 or 3 around the track) who will be informed where the Race leader is and will try to pick him up (sometimes easier said) and if the leader is mired in the SC pack, when to 'release' the cars between the SC and leader. To do that, the SC that has the Race Leader behind will 'wave by' any cars between him and the Leader, these cars will then proceed to the tail of the next queue. Once the cars are ordered, everyone is happy, the SC's will pull off, Green Flag will be shown to the Race Lead at the start line, and racing will re-commence. Following are the flags you'll see over the race weekend and their meaning.

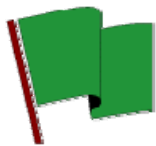


The solid yellow flag requires drivers to slow down due to a hazard on the track. A yellow flag displayed at the starter's stand or a marshal station indicates that there is a hazard downstream of the station. The manner of display depends on the location of the hazard:

- A single stationary flag denotes a hazard off the course
- A single waved flag denotes a hazard on the racing surface itself
- Two flags waved simultaneously denotes a hazard that wholly or partly blocks the racing surface. This informs the driver that there may be marshals on the track and to prepare to stop, if necessary.



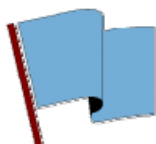
Red flags can only be waived upon instruction of the race director. When a race or a practice session is "red flagged" it is stopped due to some condition that has made the track unraceable. Typical conditions are accidents, weather problems or surface problems like too much oil or debris on the track. As soon as a red flag is shown, drivers must slow down and either stop or come back to the pits, overtaking is not permitted.



The green flag is quite similar to green traffic light and simply means “Go!”. It can be waved by the starter to indicate the beginning of a race or practice session. Most typically it will be waved after a caution to tell the drivers that the race has been restarted and to indicate that the racetrack is clear of any obstacles or debris.



The yellow / red flag is commonly known as the “oil flag”, this flag indicates that there is a problem with, or change in, the surface ahead, like oil or water on the track.



The blue flag indicates to the driver that there is a quicker car following and about to pass him:

- When held motionless, this is an indication to a driver that there is a faster car following closely behind, but not yet close enough for a pass.
- A waved blue flag indicates that the driver is about to be overtaken and should take care to permit the following vehicle a safe pass.



The black flag generally means that there has been an infraction of the rules and the driver, to whom that flag is shown must bring the car to the pits. It is usually displayed along with a pit board listing the driver's car number.



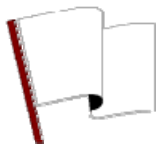
Without doubt the best know race flag, it is waved for all cars to indicate the finish of the race or a practice session.



Last warning to a driver before a black flag is shown to him, similar to the yellow card in football. It is usually displayed along with a pit board listing the driver's car number.



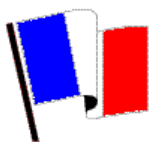
Black with an orange circle: information to a driver that his/her vehicle has a problem and that a pit stop must be made, is usually displayed along with a pit board listing the driver's car number.



Slow Vehicle on the track ahead, be it a car limping back to the pits, or during a caution period it could mean there is a breakdown truck on the track.



Not a flag, it's a board which will be shown together with the yellow flag to inform the drivers that a safety car is on the track.



The French flag, the Tricolore, is traditionally waived by a VIP at the starters post to get the race under way. In 2009, this duty was fulfilled by Fiat and Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo to signify 60 years since Ferrari's first victory at Le Mans.

Radio Le Mans – Tune in at 91.2 FM

Courtesy of John Hindhaugh

Radio Show Limited move into year 6 of the 'new' Radio Le Mans and most of the changes for this year concern the



service away from the track. Spectators at Le Mans for test day and race week will still be able to hear the popular mix of music, competitions and live commentary via FM transmitter. Further afield fans have even more to choose from to keep them entertained, both during the week of the race and the rest of the year. The portal to this information is the new look www.RadioLeMans.com.

RadioLeMans.com was re-launched in March 2008 and now boasts year-round audio streaming as well as an extensive free archive of ALMS, Le Mans and other endurance content. During three weeks in March the site attracted almost 100,000 visitors and that number was bettered in April thanks to some new, live, exclusive coverage of sportscar racing.

The classic Monza circuit was the first time the RSL team had attended a Le Mans Series race, indeed this was the first time that any commentators had been at a LMS venue for live coverage of the event. Bolstered by the new features, including video content from partner SpeedTV.com, April 1st to 28th saw over 236,000 visitors on the site.

Of course the biggest draw is still the Le Mans 24 Hours. In race week 2007 over 900,000 visitors found their way to www.radiolemans.com - adding that to our monthly numbers should mean that by the end of 2008 around 2 million people will have been exposed to the world of sportscar racing via www.radiolemans.com

This is all a far cry from the formative years of Radio Le Mans. Back then Radio Le Mans was only on air for a few days in June and existed (barely) from year to year and often scrambling for sponsors right up until (and sometimes during) race week. As early as the mid 80s the benefit of reaching spectators who didn't normally listen to commentary, or who were away from the core 'track-activity' times, was becoming clear. There were those who realized that appetites could be whetted by playing pre-recorded driver interviews early on raceday morning, and traffic news and other sports news round-ups could be provided at the end of the day as spectators made their way home. In 1986, Le Mans followed the trend and broadcast the French public address commentary on FM airwaves. This was pretty unadulterated stuff, with long periods of silence and the announcer often having to speak over background music. (Interestingly the French Service has never moved on – it's still just like that!) Fine for the locals but this wasn't helpful to the biggest single national group at the race – the British.

In 1987, spurred on by sportscar enthusiast Harry Turner, backed by Jaguar and produced by Studio 6 Marketing, a rather shabby caravan was brought from England and set up in the paddock with a radio transmitter and some dodgy phone lines to link the studio to the commentary booth in the tribune. Neville and Richard Hay provided the commentary assisted by Bob Constanduros from the pits. It's worth remembering that during the night the whole show shut down while a music loop was played.

In later years Haymarket's Autosport Magazine recognized the potential and provided some advertising for the station which enabled significantly more personnel to be brought on board

Over the years there have been numerous backers of the radio station with Unipart, Chrysler, BMW and Audi perhaps the most prominent. Haymarket's decision to bow out after the 2005 race saw Radio Show Limited – a company formed solely to ensure the continuation of the station – take over as rights holders. Radio Show Ltd continues to hold true to the tradition of Radio Le Mans whilst continuing to grow the audience and the fan base through the expansion of the website into a year-round resource.

For this year expect all the usual suspects: In essence the broadcast team remains very similar with regulars such as Paul Truswell, Graham Tyler along with USA's finest Charles Dressing and Jim Roller, all providing their usual brand of passion mixed with informative insight. Paul is famous for putting his bodily functions on hold for upwards of 30 hours (covering the build up and the race itself) as he never moves from his eyrie in the tribunes from the moment he arrives on Saturday morning until the end of the race. He manages this armed only with finger food, a blank exercise book, lots of pens and his encyclopaedic knowledge.

As usual the station will be on-air in the vicinity of the circuit, starting with the live coverage on Sunday with scrutineering.

2011 race week schedule

+ in red letters: other important events

Sunday 5th June	2.30 pm - 7.30 pm	Administrative Checks and Scrutineering in the centre of Le Mans, Place du Jacobins
Monday 6th June	9.30 am - 5.30 pm	Administrative Checks and Scrutineering in the centre of Le Mans, Place du Jacobins
Tuesday 7th June	5.00 pm - 6.30 pm	Drivers' Autograph sessions
	10.00 pm	Open air showing of the movie "Le Mans" (1970, with Steve McQueen) on a giant screen in the middle of the pits straight
Wednesday 8th June	4.00 pm - 8.00 pm	Free practice session 24h of Le Mans
	8.30 pm - 9.30 pm	Ferrari Challenge practice session
	<i>8:00 pm</i>	<i>Live Music concert on the stage near Dunlop Bridge: Raphael (French singer) and Sarah Bessie (French singer)</i>
	10.00 pm - midnight	Qualifying session 24h of Le Mans
Thursday 9th June	5.30 pm - 6.30 pm	Ferrari Challenge practice session
	7.00 pm - 9.00 pm	Qualifying session 24h of Le Mans
	<i>8:00 pm</i>	<i>Live Music concert on the stage near Dunlop Bridge: Julian Peretta (English pop-rock) and Mia Wallas (pop-rock band)</i>
	10.00 pm - midnight	Qualifying session 24h of Le Mans
Friday 10th June	10.00 am - 8.00 pm	Pit Walk
	11.00 am	„Ceremony of hands“ , Place St. Nicholas, Le Mans city centre
	6:00 pm - 08:00 pm	Drivers Parade in the city centre, for details please see the respective chapter in this guide
	<i>All day</i>	<i>“St. Saturnin Classic British Welcome”, see respective chapter in this guide</i>
	<i>All day - late night</i>	<i>Mad Friday at the Houx Annexe roundabout and other locations</i>
Saturday 11th June	9.00 am - 9.45 am	Warm-Up
	TBC	Le Mans Legends race
	TBC	Ferrari Challenge race
	12.30 pm - 1.45 pm	Drivers' Presentation
	2.22 pm	Beginning of starting procedure “24 Heures du Mans”
	3:00 pm	Start of the 79 th edition of the 24h of Le Mans
	<i>6:00 pm</i>	<i>F1 Canadian Grand Prix: Qualifying</i>
	<i>9:00 pm</i>	<i>Live Music concert on the stage near Dunlop Bridge: Razorlight (English rock) and Concrete Knives</i>
	<i>9:00 pm</i>	<i>Club Arnage Forum Gathering - see the respective chapter for directions</i>
Sunday 12th June	3:00 pm	Finish of the 79th edition of the 24h of Le Mans
	<i>5:00 pm</i>	<i>F1 Canadian Grand Prix: Race</i>

The 2011 entry list - introduction



The entry list of the 24 hours of Le Mans is limited to 56 cars, spread across the 4 classes LMP1, LMP2, LMGTE Pro and LMGTE Am. This number is not random; it's actually set by the number of pits available at the racetrack. Fortunately the pit lane had been extended in the last years: Until 2006 there were only 50 pits available, with the latest extension being build for the 2010 race the number of pits is now up to 56.

Until some years ago there was a pre-qualification weekend a couple of weeks prior to the race. All teams willing to participate had to show up at Le Mans, drive their qualification laps and with a few exceptions, e.g. the winner of the previous year, only the fastest cars were qualified for the race. This has

been changed to a system of "pre-selected" and "A.C.O.-selected" entries and the pre-qualification weekend became a compulsory test weekend for all participants. Due to the world economic crisis the test weekends 2009 and 2010 were cancelled, but this year saw the return of the test day on Sunday, 24th April 2011. Unlike in previous years, when the test day was compulsory for all participants, this year only new teams/cars/drivers had to show up and pay a juicy participation fee of 8.000 Euros.

So, how does it work nowadays? Up to 33 out of the 56 entries are pre-selected: If these teams apply for an entry, they will be accepted. **The list of the 33 pre-selected entries is compiled based on the results of the previous year:**

- 1st and 2nd at the 24 hours of Le Mans in each class (8 cars)
- 1st and 2nd in the Le Mans Series in each class (8 cars)
- 1st at the "Petit Le Mans" in each class (4 cars)
- 1st in the American Le Mans Series in each class (4 cars)
- 1st in the Asian Le Mans Series in each class (4 cars)
- 1st and 2nd in the FIA GT Championship GT1 and GT2 categories (4 cars)
- Winner of the Michelin Green X Challenge, a trophy for the LMS team with the most efficient fuel consumption (1 car)

LMS, ALMS and Asian Le Mans Series winners have to run the full season to get a pre-selected entry. This only applies if the entry is to the same class as it was pre-selected for. The privilege belongs to the team and is not related to a chassis or engine make.

The remaining 23 slots – or more, if a pre-selected entry is not taken - are given away at the organizers discretion. The following is a quote from the A.C.O. regulations about their guidelines for the selection procedure of the remaining entries:

- Teams that have competed in full in one or more of the Le Mans Series (ALMS, LMS, Asian Le Mans Series) will be given priority
- Entries from manufacturers have priority
- A maximum of two cars per competitor
- Fame of the competitor (manufacturer, factory-backed team, well-known private team, private team)
- Previous "24 Hours of Le Mans" races
- Competitors' record
- Quality of the cars
- Technical interest
- Relationship with the A.C.O. and its environment regarding legal and financial issues

When applying for an entry, each team has to nominate at least 1 driver per car who cannot be replaced (except in cases of force majeure). If such a nominated driver is withdrawn by the team, the withdrawal will lead to the driver being removed from the list of those who can be selected for the 2011 Le Mans 24 Hours - he/she cannot change to another team! The entry fee for the 2011 edition of the 24h of Le Mans is a stunning 42.000 Euros.

Overview – All 56 entries

No.	Team	Nat	Vehicle	Drivers
LMP1				
1	Audi Sport Team Joest	DE	Audi R18 TDI	Bernhard, Dumas, Rockenfeller
2	Audi Sport Team Joest	DE	Audi R18 TDI	Fässler, Lotterer, Tréluyer
3	Audi Sport North America	DE	Audi R18 TDI	Kristensen, Capello, McNish
5	Hope Racing	CH	Oreca 01 Hybrid	Zacchia, Lammers, Elgaard
7	Peugeot Sport Total	FR	Peugeot 908	Davidson, Gené, Wurz
8	Peugeot Sport Total	FR	Peugeot 908	Montagny, Sarrazin, Minassian
9	Team Peugeot Total	FR	Peugeot 908	Bourdais, Lamy, Pagnaud
10	Team Oreca Matmut	FR	Peugeot 908 HDI FAP	Lapierre, Duval, Panis
12	Rebellion Racing	CH	Lola B10/60 Toyota	Prost, Jani, Bleekemolen
13	Rebellion Racing	CH	Lola B10/60 Toyota	Belicchi, Boullion, Smith
15	OAK Racing	FR	OAK Pescarolo 01 Judd	Moreau, Ragues, Monteiro
16	Pescarolo Team	FR	Pescarolo 01 Judd	Collard, Tinseau, Jousse
20	Quifel ASM Team	PT	Zytek 09SC	Amaral, Pla, Hughes
22	Kronos Racing	BE	Lola-Aston Martin	Ickx, Martin, Leinders
24	OAK Racing	FR	OAK Pescarolo 01 Judd	Hein, Nicolet, Yvon
007	Aston Martin Racing	UK	Aston Martin AMR-One	Turner, Mücke, Klien
009	Aston Martin Racing	UK	Aston Martin AMR-One	Primat, Meyrick, Fernandez
LMP2				
26	SignaTech Nissan	FR	Oreca 03 Nissan	Mailleux, Ordoñez, Ayari
33	Level 5 Motorsports	US	Lola B11/80 HPD	Tucker, Bouchut, Barbosa
35	OAK Racing	FR	OAK Pescarolo Judd-BMW	Da Rocha, Lafargue, Barlesi
36	RML	UK	HPD ARX-01d	Erdos, Newton, Collins
39	PeCom Racing	AR	Lola B11/40 Judd-BMW	Compagnon, Russo, Kaffer
40	Race Performance	CH	Oreca 03 Judd-BMW	Frey, Meichtry, Rostan
41	Greaves Motorsport	UK	Zytek 07S NISMO	Lombard, Ojeh, Kimber-Smith
42	Strakka Racing	UK	HPD ARX-01d	Leventis, Watts, Kane
44	Extrême Limite AM Paris	FR	Norma M200P Judd-BMW	Rosier, Haezebrouck, De Fournoux
48	Team Oreca Matmut	FR	Oreca 03 NISMO	Prémat, Hallyday, Kraihamer
49	OAK Racing	FR	OAK Pescarolo Judd-BMW	Nakano, De Crem, Charouz
GTE Pro				
51	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F458 Italia	Fisichella, Bruni, Vilander
55	BMW Motorsport	DE	BMW M3 E92	Farfus, Müller, Werner
56	BMW Motorsport	DE	BMW M3 E92	Priaux, Müller, Hand
58	Luxury Racing	FR	Ferrari F458 Italia	Beltoise, Jakubowski, Deletraz
59	Luxury Racing	FR	Ferrari F458 Italia	Ortelli, Makowiecki, Melo
64	Lotus Jetalliance Racing	AT	Lotus Evora GT2	Hartshorne, Rich, Slingerland
65	Lotus Jetalliance Racing	AT	Lotus Evora GT2	Hirschi, Mowlem, Rossiter
66	JMW Motorsport	UK	Ferrari F458 Italia	Maassen, Bell, Sugden
71	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F458 Italia	Kauffman, Waltrip, Águas
73	Corvette Racing	US	Chevrolet Corvette C6 ZR1	Beretta, Milner, Garcia
74	Corvette Racing	US	Chevrolet Corvette C6 ZR1	Gavin, Magnussen, Westbrook
75	ProSpeed Competition	BE	Porsche 997 GT3 RSR	Holzer, Goossens, van Lagen
76	IMSA Performance Matmut	FR	Porsche 997 GT3 RSR	Narac, Armand, Pilet
77	Felbermayr Proton	DE	Porsche 997 GT3 RSR	Lieb, Lietz, Henzler
79	Jota Sport AMR	UK	Aston Martin Vantage	Dolan, Hancock, Buncombe
80	Flying Lizard Motorsports	US	Porsche 997 GT3 RSR	Bergmeister, Long, Luhr
88	Felbermayr Proton	DE	Porsche 997 GT3 RSR	Tandy, Al Faisal, Miller
89	Hankook Team Farnbacher	DE	Ferrari F458 Italia	Farnbacher, Simonsen, Keen
GTE Am				
50	Larbre Competition	FR	Chevrolet Corvette C6 ZR1	Bornhauser, Canal, Gardel
57	Krohn Racing	US	Ferrari F430	Krohn, Jönsson, Rugolo
60	Gulf AMR Middle East	UA	Aston Martin Vantage	Giroix, Goethe, Wainright
61	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F430	Cioci, Perazzini, Breslin
62	CRS Racing	UK	Ferrari F430	Ehret, Lynn, Wills
63	Proton Competition	DE	Porsche 997 GT3 RSR	Felbermayr, Felbermayr, Ried
68	Robertson Racing	US	Doran Ford GT	Robertson, Robertson, Murry
70	Larbre Competition	FR	Porsche 997 GT3 RSR	Bourret, Gibon, Belloc
81	Flying Lizard Motorsports	US	Porsche 997 GT3 RSR	Law, Neiman, Pumpelly
83	JMB Racing	MC	Ferrari F430	Rodrigues, Menahem, Marroc

1  **LMP1**

Team: Audi Sport Team Joest
Vehicle: Audi R18 TDI, 3.7 ltr. V6 cyl. Turbo Diesel, Michelin
Drivers: Timo Bernhard (DE), Romain Dumas (FR), Mike Rockenfeller (DE)



2  **LMP1**

Team: Audi Sport Team Joest
Vehicle: Audi R18 TDI, 3.7 ltr. V6 cyl. Turbo Diesel, Michelin
Drivers: Marcel Fässler (CH), André Lotterer (DE), Benoît Tréluyer (FR)



3  **LMP1**

Team: Audi Sport North America
Vehicle: Audi R18 TDI, 3.7 ltr. V6 cyl. Turbo Diesel, Michelin
Drivers: Tom Kristensen (DK), Dindo Capello (IT), Allan McNish (UK)



5  **LMP1**

Team: Hope Racing
Vehicle: Oreca 01 SwissHyTech Hybrid, 2.0-litre 4 cyl. Turbo, Michelin
Drivers: Steve Zacchia (CH), Jan Lammers (NL), Casper Elgaard (DK)



7 LMP1

Team: Peugeot Sport Total

Vehicle: Peugeot 908, 3.7-litre V8 cyl. Turbo Diesel, Michelin

Drivers: Anthony Davidson (UK), Marc Gené (ES), Alexander Wurz (AT)



8 LMP1

Team: Peugeot Sport Total

Vehicle: Peugeot 908, 3.7-litre V8 cyl. Turbo Diesel, Michelin

Drivers: Franck Montagny (FR), Stephane Sarrazin (FR), N. Minassian (FR)



9 LMP1

Team: Team Peugeot Total

Vehicle: Peugeot 908, 3.7-litre V8 cyl. Turbo Diesel, Michelin

Drivers: Sébastien Bourdais (FR), Pedro Lamy (PT), Simon Pagenaud (FR)



10 LMP1

Team: Team Oreca Matmut

Vehicle: Peugeot 908 HDi FAP, 5.5 ltr. V12 cyl. Turbo Diesel, Michelin

Drivers: Nicolas Lapierre (FR), Loïc Duval (FR), Olivier Panis (FR)



12  **LMP1**

Team: Rebellion Racing

Vehicle: Lola B10/60 Toyota, Toyota RV8KLM 3.4 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: Nicolas Prost (FR), Neel Jani (CH), Jeroen Bleekemolen (NL)



13  **LMP1**

Team: Rebellion Racing

Vehicle: Lola B10/60 Toyota, Toyota RV8KLM 3.4 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: Andrea Belicchi (IT), Jean-Christophe Boullion (FR), Guy Smith (UK)



15  **LMP1**

Team: OAK Racing

Vehicle: OAK Pescarolo 01 Judd, Judd DB 3.4 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

Drivers: Guillaume Moreau (FR), Pierre Ragues (FR), Tiago Monteiro (PT)



16  **LMP1**

Team: Pescarolo Team

Vehicle: Pescarolo 01 Judd, Judd GV 5.0 ltr. V10 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: Emmanuel Collard (FR), Christophe Tinseau (FR), Julien Jousse (FR)



20  **LMP1**

Team: Quifel ASM Team

Vehicle: Zytek 09SC, Zytek ZG348 3.4 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

Drivers: Miguel Amaral (PT), Olivier Pla (FR), Warren Hughes (UK)



22  **LMP1**

Team: Kronos Racing

Vehicle: : Lola-Aston Martin, 6 ltr. V12 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: Vanina Ickx (BE), Maxime Martin (BE), Bas Leinders (BE)



24  **LMP1**

Team: OAK Racing

Vehicle: OAK Pescarolo 01 Judd, Judd DB 3.4 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

Drivers: Richard Hein (MCO), Jacques Nicolet (FR), Jean-François Yvon (FR)



007  **LMP1**

Team: Aston Martin Racing

Vehicle: Aston Martin AMR-One, 2 ltr. 6 cyl. Turbo, Michelin

Drivers: Darren Turner (UK), Stefan Mücke (DE), Christian Klien (AT)



009  **LMP1**

Team: Aston Martin Racing
Vehicle: Aston Martin AMR-One, 2 ltr. 6 cyl. Turbo, Michelin
Drivers: Harold Primat (CH), Andy Meyrick (UK), Adrian Fernandez (MX)



26  **LMP2**

Team: SignaTech Nissan
Vehicle: Oreca 03 Nissan, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Franck Mailleux (FR), Lucas Ordoñez (ES), Soheil Ayari (FR)



33  **LMP2**

Team: Level 5 Motorsports
Vehicle: Lola B11/80 HPD, HPD 3.4 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Scott Tucker (US), Christophe Bouchut (FR), João Barbosa (PT)



35  **LMP2**

Team: OAK Racing
Vehicle: OAK Pescarolo 01, Judd BMW HK 3.6 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Frédéric Da Rocha (FR), Patrice Lafargue (FR), Andrea Barlesi (BE)



36  **LMP2**

Team: RML
Vehicle: HPD ARX-01d, HPD HR28TT 2.8 litre twin-turbo V6, Dunlop
Drivers: Thomas Erdos (BR), Mike Newton (UK), Ben Collins (UK)



39  **LMP2**

Team: PeCom Racing
Vehicle: Lola B11/40 Judd BMW, HK 3.6 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Luis Pérez Companc (AR), Matias Russo (AR), Pierre Kaffer (DE)



40  **LMP2**

Team: Race Performance
Vehicle: Oreca 03 Judd BMW, HK 3.6 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Michel Frey (CH), Ralph Meichtry (CH), Marc Rostan (FR)



41  **LMP2**

Team: Greaves Motorsport
Vehicle: Zytek 07S NISMO, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Olivier Lombard (FR), Karim Ojjeh (UA), Tom Kimber-Smith (UK)



42  **LMP2**

Team: Strakka Racing
Vehicle: HPD ARX-01d, HPD HR28TT 2.8 litre twin-turbo V6, Michelin
Drivers: Nick Leventis (UK), Danny Watts (UK), Jonny Kane (UK)



44  **LMP2**

Team: Extrême Limite AM Paris
Vehicle: Norma M200P Judd BMW, HK 3.6 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: F. Rosier (FR), P. Haezebrouck (FR), Jean-Rene De Fournoux (FR)



48  **LMP2**

Team: Team Oreca Matmut
Vehicle: Oreca 03 NISMO, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Alexandre Prémat (FR), David Hallyday (FR), Dominik Kraihamer (AT)



49  **LMP2**

Team: OAK Racing
Vehicle: OAK Pescarolo 01, Judd BMW HK 3.6 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Shinji Nakano (JP), Nicolas de Crem (BE), Jan Charouz (CZ)



51  **GTE Pro**

Team: AF Corse

Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: Giancarlo Fisichella (IT), Gianmaria Bruni (IT), Toni Vilander (FI)



55  **GTE Pro**

Team: BMW Motorsport

Vehicle: BMW M3 E92, 4.0 ltr. 6 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

Drivers: Augusto Farfus (BR), Jörg Müller (DE), Dirk Werner (DE)



56  **GTE Pro**

Team: BMW Motorsport

Vehicle: BMW M3 E92, 4.0 ltr. 6 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

Drivers: Andy Priaulx (UK), Dirk Müller (DE), Joey Hand (US)



58  **GTE Pro**

Team: Luxury Racing

Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: Anthony Beltoise (FR), F.Jakubowski (FR), Jean-Denis Deletraz (CH)



59  **GTE Pro**

Team: Luxury Racing
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Stéphane Ortelli (MC), Frédéric Makowiecki (FR), Jaime Melo (BR)



64  **GTE Pro**

Team: Lotus Jetalliance Racing
Vehicle: Lotus Evora GT2, 4.0 ltr. V6 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: John Hartshorne (UK), Martin Rich (UK), Oskar Slingerland (DE)



65  **GTE Pro**

Team: Lotus Jetalliance Racing
Vehicle: Lotus Evora GT2, 4.0 ltr. V6 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Jonathan Hirschi (CH), Johnny Mowlem (UK), James Rossiter (UK)



66  **GTE Pro**

Team: JMW Motorsport
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. Aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Xavier Maassen (NL), Rob Bell (UK), Tim Sugden (UK)



71 GTE Pro

Team: AF Corse

Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: Robert Kauffman (US), Michael Waltrip (US), Rui Águas (PT)



73 GTE Pro

Team: Corvette Racing

Vehicle: Chevrolet Corvette C6 ZR1, 7.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin

Drivers: Olivier Beretta (MC), Tommy Milner (US), Antonio Garcia (ES)



74 GTE Pro

Team: Corvette Racing

Vehicle: Chevrolet Corvette C6 ZR1, 7.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin

Drivers: Oliver Gavin (UK), Jan Magnussen (DK), Richard Westbrook (UK)



75 GTE Pro

Team: ProSpeed Competition

Vehicle: Porsche 997 GT3 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin

Drivers: Marco Holzer (DE), Marc Goossens (BE), Jaap van Lagen (NL)



76 GTE Pro

Team: IMSA Performance Matmut
Vehicle: Porsche 997 GT3 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Raymond Narac (FR), Nicolas Armindo (BE), Patrick Pilet (FR)



77 GTE Pro

Team: Felbermayr Proton
Vehicle: Porsche 997 GT3 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Marc Lieb (DE), Richard Lietz (AT), Wolf Henzler (DE)



79 GTE Pro

Team: Jota Sport AMR
Vehicle: Aston Martin Vantage, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Simon Dolan (UK), Sam Hancock (UK), Chris Buncombe (UK)



80 GTE Pro

Team: Flying Lizard Motorsports
Vehicle: Porsche 997 GT3 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Jörg Bergmeister (DE), Patrick Long (US), Lucas Luhr (DE)



88  **GTE Pro**

Team: Felbermayr Proton
Vehicle: Porsche 997 GT3 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Nick Tandy (UK), Abdulaziz Al Faisal (SAU), Bryce Miller (US)



89  **GTE Pro**

Team: Hankook Team Farnbacher
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. Aspirated, Hankook
Drivers: Dominik Farnbacher (DE), Allan Simonsen (DK), Leh Keen (US)



50  **GTE Am**

Team: Larbre Competition
Vehicle: Chevrolet Corvette C6 ZR1, 7.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin
Drivers: Patrick Bornhauser (UK), Julien Canal (FR), Gabriele Gardel (CH)



57  **GTE Am**

Team: Krohn Racing
Vehicle: Ferrari F430, 4.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin
Drivers: Tracy Krohn (US), Niclas Jönsson (SE), Michele Rugolo (IT)



60  **GTE Am**

Team: Gulf AMR Middle East
Vehicle: Aston Martin Vantage, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Fabien Giroix (FR), Roald Goethe (FR), Michael Wainright (UK)



61  **GTE Am**

Team: AF Corse
Vehicle: Ferrari F430, 4.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin
Drivers: Tom Marco Cioci (IT), P. Perazzini (UK), Seán Paul Breslin (IR)



62  **GTE Am**

Team: CRS Racing
Vehicle: Ferrari F430, 4.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin
Drivers: Pierre Ehret (DE), Shaun Lynn (UK), Roger Wills (AU)



63  **GTE Am**

Team: Proton Competition
Vehicle: Porsche 997 GT3 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: H. Felbermayr jun.(AT), H. Felbermayr sen.(AT), Christian Ried (DE)



68  **GTE Am**

Team: Robertson Racing
Vehicle: Doran Ford GT, 5.3 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: David Robertson (US), Andrea Robertson (US), David Murry (US)



70  **GTE Am**

Team: Larbre Competition
Vehicle: Porsche 997 GT3 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Christophe Bourret (AT), Pascal Gibon (FR), Jean-Philippe Belloc (FR)



81  **GTE Am**

Team: Flying Lizard Motorsports
Vehicle: Porsche 997 GT3 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Darren Law (US), Seth Neiman (US), Spencer Pumpelly (US)



83  **GTE Am**

Team: JMB Racing
Vehicle: Ferrari F430, 4.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin
Drivers: Marco M. Rodrigues (FR), J.-M. Menahem (FR), Nicolas Marroc (FR)



The support races

The schedule for the 2011 event lists 2 support races:

Le Mans Legends 1949 – 1965

Motor Racing Legends is perhaps best known for organising the historic support race at the Le Mans 24 Hours. Taking place on the Le Mans circuit just a few hours before the start of the modern 24-hour endurance race, the Le Mans Legend is a serious race - not a parade - for cars from a given era in Le Mans history. With classes based on engine size and the age of the car, there are battles for race honours right through the field.

In 2009, Le Mans and Le Mans-type cars from 1949 to 1965 returned to their spiritual home to do battle on the 8.5-mile circuit, on the Saturday morning of the Le Mans weekend. For 2010, Group C Racing put together a grid of fabulous Group C cars - always highly popular with spectators.

On Saturday, 11th June 2011, Motor Racing Legends will again be running cars from 1949 to 1965, due to the extreme popularity of this golden era - which covers everything from Aston Martin DB2, Austin-Healeys, C-type and D-type Jaguars, right through to the familiar archetypes of the 1960s: front and mid-engined Ferraris, Morgans and MGs. There will be former Le Mans driver legends on the grid – among others we will see Sir Stirling Moss in a silver colored Porsche RS61 from 1961

Class 1a: Sports Cars 1949 to 1953 up to 2000cc

Race No.	Entrant	Surname	Car Make	Model	Colour	CC	Year
19	David	Laing	HRG	Le Mans Lightweight	Green	1500	1947
20	Phil	Champion	Frazer Nash	Mille Miglia	Green	1971	1951
22	Bertrand	Leseur	Frazer Nash	Le Mans MkII Replica	Napier Green	1971	1952
23	Martin	Hunt	Frazer Nash	Le Mans Rep	Green	1991	1952

Class 1b: Sports Cars 1949 to 1953 over 2000cc

Race No.	Entrant	Surname	Car Make	Model	Colour	CC	Year
4	Patrick	Watts	Allard	J2	Black	5565	1951
17	Martin	Melling	Aston Martin	DB3	Black	2922	1952
24	Mark	Midgley	Aston Martin	DB3	Green	2922	1952
26	Nigel	Batchelor	Aston Martin	DB2/4	Blue	2922	1953
28	David	Wenman	Jaguar	C-type	Green	3442	1952
93	JD Classics		Jaguar	XK120	Metalic Bronze	3442	1950
121	Glynn	Allen	Aston Martin	DB2	Green	2580	1951

Class 2a: Sports Cars 1954 to 1958 up to 2000cc

Race No.	Entrant	Surname	Car Make	Model	Colour	CC	Year
1	Adrian	Hall	AC	Ace	Red	1971	1957
5	David	Cottingham	Ferrari	500 TRC	Yellow/Black	2000	1956
29	Keith	Ahlers	Morgan	Plus 4	Green	1998	1956
31	Cameron	Healy	Cooper	T39 Bobtail	Silver	1500	1956
32	James	Dixon	MGA	Twin Cam	Green	1762	1958
34	Brian	White	Triumph	TR2	Yellow	1991	1954
35	Fergus	MacLeod	Porsche	550A/1500RS	Silver	1498	1957
62	Timothy	Stamper	Triumph	TR2	Green	1991	1954

Class 2b: Sports Cars 1954 to 1958 over 2000cc

Race No.	Entrant	Surname	Car Make	Model	Colour	CC	Year
2	Stefan	Ziegler	Jaguar	D-type	Pastel Blue	3442	1955
6	Trade-Air Ltd		Jaguar	D-type Long Nose	BRG	3800	1955
37	Gregor	Fisken	Aston Martin	DBR1	Green	2992	1957
38	Roland	D'Ieteren	Maserati	450S	Red	4477	1957
49	Tony	Pickering	Jaguar	D-type	Green/Orange	3440	1955
61	Timothy	Rogers	Austin-Healey	100/6	Red	2912	1956
71	Gary	Pearson	Jaguar	D-type	BRG	3781	1955
117	JD Classics		Lister	Knobbly	Metallic Blue	3781	1958
127	David	Bennett	Aston Martin	DB3S	Green/Blue	2992	1956

Class 3a/4a: Grand Touring Cars 1959 to 1965 up to 2000cc

Race No.	Entrant	Surname	Car Make	Model	Colour	CC	Year
27	Scuderia del Portello		Alfa Romeo	TZ1	Red	1570	1965
46	Chris	Clegg	Austin-Healey	Sebring Sprite	Silver	1300	1960
52	François	Marbeck	Lotus	Elite 14	Green	1216	1961
53	Robert	Grant	TVR	Grantura MK III	Blue	1834	1963
57	Ten Tenths Ltd		Alfa Romeo	TZ1	Red	1598	1964
85	Stephen	Bond	Lotus	Elan 26R	Red	1598	1965

Class 3b: Grand Touring Cars 1959 to 1963 over 2000cc

Race No.	Entrant	Surname	Car Make	Model	Colour	CC	Year
18	Martin	Brewer	Aston Martin	Project 214 Continuation	Green	3996	1962
42	Chris	Scragg	Aston Martin	DB4GT Zagato	Silver	3670	1961
43	Peter	Thornton	Aston Martin	DB4GT	Green	3800	1960
48	Alain	Rueede	Chevrolet	Corvette	White/Blue	4637	1960
51	Tom	Alexander	Aston Martin	DB4GT	White	3670	1960
70	Gabriel	Kremer	Morgan	+4 Super Sports	Green/White	2188	1962
177	Gavin	Henderson	AC	Cobra	Blue	4727	1962
211	Christiaan	Van Lanschot	Austin Healey	3000	Green	2993	1960

Class 4b: Grand Touring Cars 1963 to 1965 over 2000cc

Race No.	Entrant	Surname	Car Make	Model	Colour	CC	Year
3	Alberto	Francioni	ISO Bizzarini	A3C Corsa	Red	5400	1965
11	Grahame	Bryant	AC	Cobra	Red/Gold	4700	1964
12	Kevin	Kivlochan	AC	Cobra MkII	White	4727	1964
30	Mark	Gibbon	Corvette	Stingray	Silver	5300	1963
50	Trade-Air Ltd		Jaguar	E-type	Red	3800	1963
54	Jan	Gijzen	Ferrari	275GTB	Red	3300	1966
56	Ludovic	Caron	AC	Cobra Coupe Daytona	Blue/White	4700	1963
58	Shaun	Lynn	Jaguar	E-type			
77	Joe	Twyman	Bizzarrini	5300GT Competizione	Blue	5300	1965
106	Paul		Shelby	Mustang 350GT	White	4727	1966



Le Mans Classic 2008: Mercedes Benz 300 SL 1955

© Deborah Dudley

Class 5a/6a: Sports Racing Cars 1959 to 1965 up to 2000cc

Race No.	Entrant	Surname	Car Make	Model	Colour	CC	Year
7	Stirling	Moss	Porsche	RS61	Silver	1755	1961
25	Dietrich	Hatlapa	Porsche	RS60	Silver	1750	1960
40	Harry	Leventis	Ferrari	206P	Red	1986	1964
171	Joe	Twyman	Lotus	15	Green	1960	1959

Class 5b/6b: Sports Racing Cars 1959 to 1965 over 2000cc

Race No.	Entrant	Surname	Car Make	Model	Colour	CC	Year
13	Jeremy	Cottingham	Ferrari	250LM	Red	3300	1965
21	David	Piper	Ferrari	Prototype 365 P2		4400	1964
33	Jon	Minshaw	Lister	Knobbly	Green	3800	1959
41	Bobby	Verdon-Roe	Ferrari	246S	Red	2394	1960
44	Julian	Bronson	Lister	Costin	Green/Yellow	3800	1959

Reserves: To be called up in the following order

Race No.	Entrant	Surname	Car Make	Model	Colour	CC	Year
59 (3a/4a)	John	Hitch	MG	B	Red/white	1840	1965
60 (3a/4a)	David	Cooke	Lotus	Elite	White	1220	1962
15 (5a/6a)	Quirina	Louwman	Lotus	15		1993	1959
36 (1a)	Richard	Thorne	Jowett	Jupiter	Le Mans Green	1500	1953

The Ferrari Challenge

The Ferrari Challenge is a single-marque motorsport championship that was created in 1993 for owners of the 348 Berlinetta who wanted to become involved in racing. It now encompasses three official championships in the United States, Italy, and Europe. Competitors from each series are brought together at the annual World Finals event. Since 2007, the Ferrari Challenge exclusively used the Ferrari F430 model, since beginning of this year there is also a Challenge version of the brand new Ferrari 458 Italia.



Le Mans Classic 2008: Grid

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Le Mans trivia and milestones

- You can tell which month the Le Mans 24H race is in just by knowing it is the weekend of 11th & 12th. June starts on a different day of the week from all of the other months and in 2011 it is the only month with a weekend of 11th & 12th.
- Graham Hill is the only person to have won Le Mans, the F1 Championship and the Indy 500.
- The youngest overall winner was Austrian Alex Wurz who won in 1996 at the age of 21 together with his teammates Davy Jones and Manuel Reuter in a Joest Porsche.
- Jean Rondeau is the only constructor-driver to win Le Mans outright.
- The earliest town twinning in Europe was between Le Mans and Paderborn in 836.
- Le Mans is also twinned with Bolton - United Kingdom, Haouza - Western Sahara, Rostov-on-Don - Russia, Suzuka - Japan, Volos - Greece, Xianyang - China and Alexandria - Egypt
- Mario Andretti is the only driver who competed at Le Mans in 4 decades - his first appearance in 1966 in a Ford GT, his last in the year 2000 in a Panoz sports prototype.
- The Andretti clan was the first family to send its 3rd generation to Le Mans: Besides Mario, his son Michael and nephew John who all started previously at Le Mans, in 2010 Mario's grandson Marco was in an LMP1 Lola.
- Four times overall winner Henri Pescarolo participated 33 times and holds the record for the most Le Mans appearances.
- The female driver with the most Le Mans participations is French Anne-Charlotte Verney with 10 appearances between 1974 and 1983
- Danish driver Tom Kristensen holds the record for the most overall wins as a driver - he won the race 8 times between 1997 and 2008. Next in the list is Belgian Jacky Ickx with 6 wins between 1969 and 1982.
- The most successful manufacturer is Porsche with 16 overall victories.
- The top speed record at Le Mans is held by the French Welter Racing team, their Peugeot-powered prototype reached a recorded speed of 404 km/h (251 mph) down the Hunaudières straight in the 1988 race.
- A new all time distance record was set in 2010, the winning Audi R15 covered a distance of 5410 km, the previous record of 5335 km was already 40 years old.
- The first Japanese manufacturer to win the race was Mazda in 1991. This was also the first, and up to now only victory of a car powered by a rotary engine.



Scrutineering at Le Mans 2010: The Rebellion Racing driver squad, from left to right: Marco Andretti, Nicolas Prost, Neel Jani, Guy Smith, Andrea Belicchi, Jean Christophe Boullion

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Milestones

1925: This was the first year of the Le Mans-style start in which, at the drop of the French flag, the drivers would run to their cars and have to start them up before they could actually start racing. Début for Chrysler.

1926: Début for future winners Peugeot

1927: The race is commonly remembered for the infamous White House crash, which involved all three of the widely-tipped Bentley team's entries, this caused the retirement of two of them. The race was eventually won by the third which, although badly damaged, was able to be repaired by drivers Benjafield and Davis

1928: Team Aston Martin first appearance at La Sarthe

1929: Race won by Bentley who also finished 2nd 3rd and 4th. The winning car driven by the most successful driver ever at Le Mans, Woolf Banarto, 3 entries, 3 wins 100% strike rate

1930: The pairing of Odette Siko and Marguerite Mareuse would go in history as the first women to compete and finish in the race. The Winning Bentley being the same car that was victorious in 1929 Just 18 cars made the start. Début for Mercedes Benz.

1931: First victory for Alfa Romeo. Last Chrysler entry until the Vipers appeared.

1932: Introduction of the Esses, Tetre Rouge and Dunlop Curve, shortening the circuit to 13.5 km. Winner Raymond Sommer drove some 20 hrs as his co-driver was taken ill.

1933: The first and second placed Alfa Romeo's separated by just 9.5 seconds after 24 hours. The Alfa team were managed by Enzo Ferrari.

1934: Luigi Chinetti's second victory at Le Mans was notable for his outstanding driving and his pit crew's ability to produce chewing gum on demand to stem the flow of fuel from a fractured petrol tank. Driving an Alfa 8c 2300 with Philip Etancelin.

1935: Three MG's were entered and driven by 6 ladies, 2 per car all three cars finished the 24 hours. All but 6 of the 28 finishers were British.

1936: Race was cancelled because of the great depression in France

1937: Last outing for Chenard et Walcker, winners of the first ever Le Mans race. Total race distance exceeded 2000 miles (2044)

1938: The leading Alfa broke down with the finish almost in sight, it's lead at the time was over 100 miles but thus handed the win to Delahaye

1939: Last race before WWII. Racing would not return for 9 years. Début for BMW who won the up to 2000CC class

1949: This race featured the début of Ferrari as a car maker in his own right, who won with their 166LM, driver Chinetti racing for 22 hrs after Selsdon fell ill. It also featured the first diesel engined car (Deletréz) and the first rear engined car, the Renault 4CV.

1950: Débuts for Fangio and Cadillac at Le Mans. The race was won by father and son team Rosier, Father Louis driving for all but 20 minutes. Dunlop bridge first constructed. 1st Le Mans that no Bentley had taken the start.

1951: Débuts for Porsche and Lancia. Despite around 16 hours of rain during the race it was won by Jaguar at an average of just over 150 km/h. The fastest lap was by Stirling Moss at almost 170km/h

1952: The race was almost won by "Levegh" in his Talbot who drove single-handed for over 22½ hours before the car broke a crankshaft. The winning Mercedes was the first ever closed in car to win.

1953: Début for Disc brakes. Rules changed to prevent a driver racing over 18 hours. A total of 19 makes were entered with 50 out of the 60 cars being "works" backed. The winning C type was the first to average over 100mph.

1954: Maserati teams car transporter crashed en-route to the circuit preventing them for taking the start. Rain in the last 2 hours led to an exciting finish between Jag and Ferrari, the Ferrari just winning by 2½ miles.

1955: Year of the deadly crash that launched a car into the crowd killing 88+ people. This resulted in major work to the start and pit area as well as moving the Dunlop bridge and building signalling pits out at Mulsanne, all at great cost to the ACO. A total ban on motor sports was imposed in many countries, Racing is still banned in Switzerland.

1956: Race was run in July for only the 2nd time to allow for building works on the circuit and construction of the new pit complex that would last until 1991.

1957: The winning Jaguar spent just over 13 minutes in the pits during the race. The cars only unscheduled stop being to replace a light bulb. This would be the last Le Mans for Jaguar for 31 years.

1958: First ever driver wins for Belgium and USA. A rain soaked race saw only 17 finishers out of 55 starters. The winning Ferrari was 100 miles clear of the 2nd placed Jag

1959: Aston Martins first and so far only win. Débuts for Jim Clark and SAAB with a couple of 2 stroke 93's. Just 13 finishers out of 55 due to the fast race pace and the heat.

1960: 13 Ferraris started 6 finished. Winner Paul Frere was also a successful rower winning 3 Belgium championships

1961: A battle between the Scuderia Ferrari and the similar NART Ferrari driven by the Rodrigaz brothers lasted for 22 hrs before the NART car cried enough, the cars were just 2½ seconds apart after 15 hours racing. Morgan were refused an entry as their car looked to "old fashioned"

1962: Début for E type Jaguar. The race was between the same four drivers as 1961 with the same end result. Morgan were allowed to race despite the car still looking old fashioned, going on to win the 2lt. class.

1963: First victory for a mid engined car (Ferrari) and 1st all Italian car and drivers victory. Début for a turbine car. Also the prototype GT40. Ferrari's filled the first 6 places.

1964: The start of something? The Ford GT's leading at the start before all retiring allowing another Ferrari 1-2-3. Porsches finishing 7th and 8th

1965: Last of 9 on the trot wins for Ferrari the NART entered 250LM and driven by Rindt and Gregory took an unexpected win thanks to the faster Fords and Scuderia team breaking. Only 2nd time a closed coupé had won (1952 the first)

1966: Ford take a 1-2-3 in the closest ever finish, although stage managed and in spite of an impressive 3 car crash during the night. First V8 engined car to win. Début for future race winners Henri Pescarolo, Jackie Ickx and Porsche 911

1967: First and only victory for an all American car and drivers (Ford/Gurney/Foyt). A special bubble was installed in the GT40 roof to accommodate 6'-3" Dan Gurney. Reportedly responsible for starting the now traditional spraying of the victory Champagne. Début for the Gulf racing colours.

1968: The race was held in September due to student protests and worker strikes in France. Début for French ex men's skier Bob Wollek. The Ford Chicane was opened. Fast Porsches 1-2-3-4 in the early stages dropped out to let Ford take a hatrick of wins.

1969: Last "Le Mans start" with the drivers running (or walking) to their cars for the start. Crash barriers installed along the Mulsanne. The 1st and 2nd places separated by 120m at the finish with the winning Ford (chassis no 1075) just ahead of the Porsche 908.

1970: A Porsche 908 was used as a camera car for the 1970 film "Le Mans" during the race. Début for future winner Derek Bell. A Porsche won every class. Just 7 cars finished out of 51 starters, 2 Ferraris and 5 Porsches

1971: A massive 5335km covered by the winning Porsche 917 during the race, a record that stood until 2010. The lap record of 3.13.90 still stands (and always will as the track has changed). Début for the Ford Cosworth DFV engine at Le Mans. Out of 49 cars 33 were from Porsche

1972: Porsche curves and the second Ford chicane constructed. Winner Graham Hill (with Pescarolo) became the only driver ever to win the F1 crown, Indy 500 and Le Mans. Débuts for Jochen Mass and Hans Stuck.

1973: The Sigma was entered with a rotary Mazda engine, a first for this type of engine as well as the first Japanese car to qualify.

1974: Début for Mazda and Jean Rondeau. Retirement from sports car racing for previous winners Ferrari and Matra. Début for Yojiro Terada 1st of 29 races.

1975: First victory for the Ickx/Bell partnership (Mirage). Début for Datsun and Alain de Cadenet. Le Mans was excluded from the World Championship for makes by the CSI for changing the fuel consumption rules.

1976: Regulation changes and a potential shortage of cars the ACO invited IMSA and NASCAR from the USA, 2 NASCAR's started. Gulf team boss John Wyer was apparently heard to say, "I doubt that they would be very fast on the straight and very much doubt they will manage to stop at the end of it." 1st race since 1949 there was no Ferrari entered. First win for a turbo charged car

1977: The winning Porsche 936 almost lost having blown a piston, but so great was the lead the car sat in the pit for over an hour, the cylinder was disconnected and the smoking car finished the last lap on 5 cylinders. The car was in 41st place 18hrs before. Début for Tom Walkinshaw.

1978: First win for Renault who then retired from Le Mans and went to F1. Début for Hawaiian Tropic who sponsored a race car.

1979: Almost a Hollywood ending with actor Paul Newman finishing 2nd overall. The top 3 Porsche 935 cars were derived from the 911, by then a 15 year old design (They are still racing today).

1980: Jean Ronreau (with Jaussaud) piloted a car bearing his own name to victory, for the first and only time. Beating the favoured Porsche in an exciting rain soaked race.

1981: Début for Tiff Needel, Emanuele Pirro, Eddie Jordan, and Cale Yarborough of NASCAR fame. Won by Ickx/Bell in a Porsche 14 laps clear of the Rondeau, no pit stop by the Porsche exceeded 4 minutes. Kremer entered a Porsche 917 10 years after the last 917 entry

1982: A formation finish for the début Porsche 956 finishing in numerical order 1,2 & 3. A return to the top tier for Aston Martin (7th) and début for Courage racing team. Ford powered 16 of the 28 starters but Porsche derived cars won all the classes.

1983: 17 seconds between the first 2 Porsches at the end, the smoking and slowing no3 car just limping over the line from Ickx/Bell's similar car. Porsche's filled the top 8 spots. Début for Mario Andretti who finished 3rd and Jan Lammers (8th). Many sleepless nights thanks to Mazda introducing their 717 Gp C2 car.

1984: Return of Jaguar to GpC with Group 44 racing. Boycotted by the "Works" Porsche team, however the top 7 cars at the finish were Porsche's. Pescarolo's 4th victory.

1985: Mercedes returned after 30 years. Won by the Joest "New Man" Porsche the same chassis (117) as 1984. Porsche were 1-2-3-4-5.

1986: Despite factory supported teams from Jaguar, Nissan, Toyota and Mercedes Benz works Porsche could not be caught, Derek Bells 4th win and the first without Ickx.

1987: An incorrect micro chip in the Porsche 962's almost cost them dear several cars including 2 of the 3 factory cars retiring with burnt pistons in the first few hours. But Derek Bell's Porsche survived to win, the last of his 5 wins 20 laps clear at the end. Début for Martin Brundle. Début first year for Radio Le Mans

1988: The little WM team wrote history by clocking 407km/h (253mph) in the race. Mercedes withdrew over concerns with their tyres. Jaguar XJ's took the win. Mario, Mike and John Andretti competed in a "family" Porsche.

1989: Won by Mercedes no.63, this was the highest race number ever to win, prior to this win the highest victorious race number was 23. Début for Andy Wallace.

1990: First race with 2 chicanes on the Mulsanne. The 2nd placed Brun Porsche (Brun/Pareja/Larrauri) retiring with 15 minutes left to run let Jaguar take a 1-2 finish. The factory Nissan's (Blundell) set a Mulsanne speed record of 227mph during qualifying and 6 seconds clear of the 2nd placed qualifier. Blundell also becoming the youngest driver to achieve pole.

1991: New pit complex saw in the new 3.5 l rules, however all teams bar Peugeot ran their old GpC cars. Won by the screaming rotary engined bright green and orange Mazda 787B which took full advantage to the rules, becoming the first and only Japanese and non-piston car to win. The 3 victorious drivers of Herbert/Gachot/Weidler were all ex F1 and with former winner J. Ickx as team manager.

1992: 3.5l rules gave Peugeot their first win. Just 28 starters, the smallest since the 1930's, just 50% finished.

1993: A Peugeot 1-2-3 from Toyota in 4-5-6, Début for David Coulthard and Eddie Irvine.

1994: Regulation changes meant race cars had to be derived from road cars, Porsche used a Dauer car, itself derived from the racing 962 to win. The 2nd placed Toyota carried Roland Ratzenberger's name as a driver in tribute after he was killed the month before. Derek Bell announced his retirement

1995: A rain soaked race won by McLaren thanks to JJ Lehto's high speed wet weather night driving and good reliability, Mario Andretti had to settle for 2nd place with team mate Wollek they were less than a lap behind, the closest they have both been to victory. Derek Bell announced his retirement again.

1996: Derek Bell finished 6th in his last Le Mans. All round balloonist, flier and adventurer Steve Fossett raced a Kremer Porsche. The winning Joest Porsche chassis had previously qualified at Le Mans as a Jaguar and raced as a Mazda.

1997: Won by Joest using the same chassis as 1996 (WSC95) the 2nd time Joest achieved this and only the 4th time ever. Début for Panoz, Saleen and Tom Kristensen with his 1st win. Return of Ferrari with the 333SP.

1998: Return of BMW with an F1 Williams designed car. Porsche announce their retirement from sportcar racing

1999: Début for Audi with 4 cars. Mercedes withdrew after flying cars in practice and the race. The race winning BMW team withdrew from sportscars to go into F1 as did Toyota. Début for Jan Magnussen and Racing for Holland. Last time driving at Le Mans for Pescarolo.

2000: Début for Cadillac and Corvette C5. 1st win for Audi finishing 1-2-3. Last Le Mans for Mario Andretti and Bob Wollek, who sadly died in 2001

2001: Return of MG and Bentley who finished 3rd behind 2 Audi's. Début for French ski star Luc Alphand.

2002: Three wins 3 years in a row for Biela/Kristensen/Pirro and Audi. Filming took place onboard 2 cars for the forthcoming French Michael Valliant film.

2003: Bentley 1st after a gap of over 70 years. Return of TVR after 41 years and début for Spyker

2004: Tom Kristensen takes his 5th straight win in an Audi and his 6th in total, Last race for the Dodge Vipers

2005: Number 7 for Tom, his 6th in a row. Aston Martin return with the DB9

2006: First ever win for a diesel powered car, an Audi. The first time since 1991 that a Porsche or Porsche powered car has not won at least 1 class. A GT1 Corvette finishes 4th overall.

2007: Diesel powered Peugeot return to challenge Audi and lose. Aston Martin challenge Corvette and win.

2008: Last race for Yojiro Terada (29 in total) with a 35th placing in a Courage.

2009: A troubled Lamborghini lasts 1 race lap before retiring.

2010: Distance record set by a Porsche 917 in 1971 is broken at last by the 1st 2nd and 3rd Audi's. The 1971 lap record still stands.



The test day at Le Mans 2011

© Deborah Dudley

In Memoriam - Bob Wollek Remembered

Courtesy of www.dailysportscar.com, Michael Cotton (Text) and John Brooks (Photographs)

Ten years ago a shock-wave went through the paddock at Sebring. The rumour was already buzzing before Bob Dickinson called a press conference at 6 pm on Friday March 16. Something had happened to Bob Wollek, and it wasn't good.



We heard the dreadful news that he had gone for a cycle ride up Highway 98, and had been struck in the back by an RV (recreation vehicle) some six miles from the track. He sustained a fatal blow to the head from the extended exterior mirror, a bizarre accident to befall a man who had been racing at the top level for more than 30 years.

We oldies can't go to Sebring without remembering that day. Jean-Marc Teissèdre, contributor to Auto Hebdo and one of Bob's closest friends, each year goes to the spot where he died and reverently puts a bottle of Alsace wine into the grass, saying a prayer.

"Brilliant Bob" as we called him was 57 years old, probably in his final year as a professional racing driver. He had driven Porsches throughout his career, mostly but not exclusively, winning the prestigious Porsche Cup no fewer than seven times (with Kremer Racing in 1976, '77 and '78), with the Kremer brothers again in 1981 and then with Joest Racing in 1982 and 1983, and once more with Joest in 1989.



©John Brooks, 1981



©John Brooks, 1988

By his own admission Bob was not quite as quick as his younger rivals but said he polished his technique in slow corners to such effect that he could match their lap times over a distance. Ten years ago he practiced, and was to have raced the Petersen Motorsports White Lightning Porsche 911 GT3RS with Johnny Mowlem, for whom he had great respect, and Michael Petersen. Of course, the car was withdrawn from the race.



©John Brooks, 1998

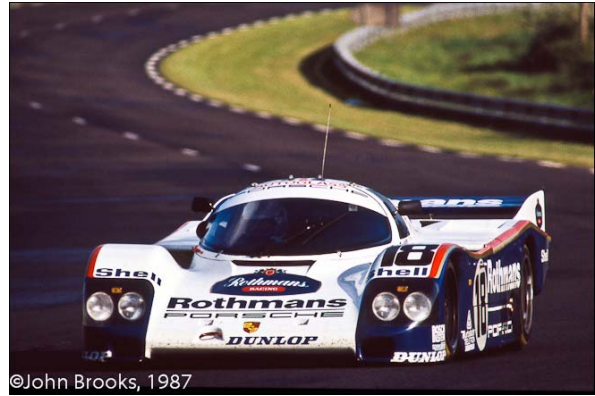


©John Brooks, 1998

I have no pleasure in remembering that I was almost the last person Bob spoke to in the paddock at around 3 pm, after Friday practice. I was looking in at the new V8 powered BMW M3 GTRs run by Team Schnitzer and Tom Milner's Team PTG, these entered in the GT2 category prior to homologation (which never happened).



©John Brooks, 1984



©John Brooks, 1987

"Are they going to homologate these things?" asked Bob, coming alongside me. That was the general idea, I said. "S**t, we'll never be able to compete when they get these things sorted out" he responded, then walked away to change into lycra and mount his bicycle for a training ride. It was his way of keeping fit. He even cycled from home, in Strasbourg, to Le Mans each year to participate in the 24-Hours, an event which he came tantalisingly close to winning several times during his 30 appearances.

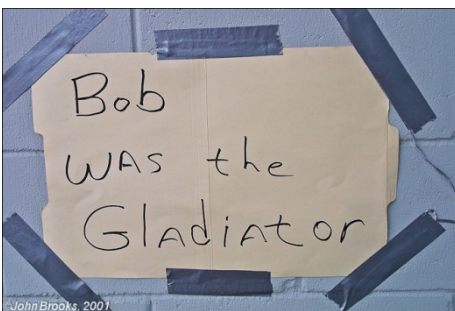


©John Brooks, 1982



©John Brooks, 1983

Bob would probably have retired at the end of 2001, having reached an agreement with Porsche AG to become an 'ambassador', with the status enjoyed by Walter Röhrl. Bob was Bob, not Robert as many people supposed. Strasbourg was in German occupied Alsace when he was born in November 1943. "My father wanted to call me Bob, but the Commandant objected. He said it was an American name and he didn't like it, but father went ahead anyway" Bob once told me.



©John Brooks, 2001

Bob was somewhat taciturn with people he didn't know very well, but opened up like a good friend when he relaxed. He only once 'left' Porsche properly when he signed a contract with Lancia for the 1984 and 1985 seasons, a fruitless exercise which netted him just one World Championship victory, at Spa, when the event was curtailed following the death of Stefan Bellof. No joy that day, for sure. "I'll say one thing about Cesare Fiorio" [Lancia Martini's team director] he liked to say. "He is consistent. Every damned decision he ever makes is wrong!"

Norbert Singer was reluctant to name Porsche's 'best' driver, or his favorite, in a list extending nearly 40 years from Jo Siffert to Marc Lieb, but I got the impression that Bob really was his favorite, having good technical knowledge. "I met him at a party in the early 1970s when he

was racing for Matra" said the legendary engineer. "We talked about cars in a general way. I met him later when he drove 935s for customers, and he joined the factory team to drive the 936, 956 and 962, the GT1, and eventually the 911 GT3. So I worked with him right up to the day he died. He could analyze a car within a very few laps, even not going very fast. When he had set up a car then the other drivers could often go faster than before."

John Brooks has been an ever present at Le Mans since the early Group C days and, since then, has established himself as one of the world's leading sportscar racing photographers. He's available for hire and reward on five00mm@gmail.com or catch up with more of his excellent work at www.doubleddeclutch.com or www.johnbrooksphoto.com

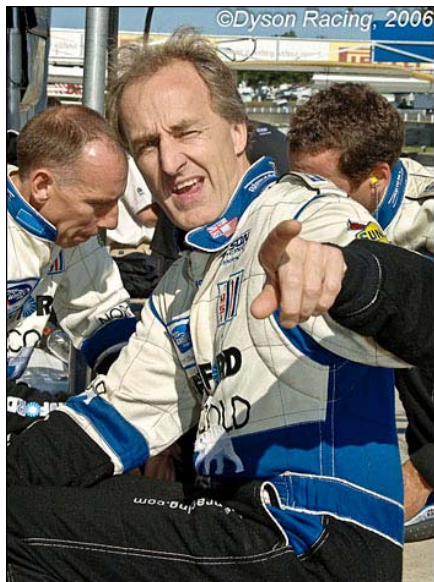
Sweet 16 – Mike Cotton Interviews James Weaver

Courtesy of www.dailysportscar.com, Mike Cotton (Text) and John Brooks (Photographs)

Part One – From Teaboy To Dyson #1

As the dust settles on the 2011 Sebring 12 Hours, it's hard to believe that already five editions have passed since one of its greatest characters last took part. As a special treat for our readers, however, Michael Cotton sat down for a lengthy chat with James Weaver recently, to look back on a long and fascinating career. John Brooks complements the words with pictures from his own extensive archive.

"But why?" That was the question everyone asked when James Weaver announced his retirement from sports car racing at the end of the 2006 season. He got out of the Dyson Racing team's Lola AER, with his signature number 16 on the doors, after claiming sixth place at Laguna Seca, and told the world that he would race no more. The six-foot Englishman was driving as fast as ever, finishing runner-up in the American Le Mans Series to Allan McNish and Dindo Capello in the Champion Racing Audi, having claimed two pole positions and a fastest lap from Audi's vaunted prototypes.



James' wife Sylvia and his two daughters Camilla and Jemima were half a world away from the Californian track, and after a rewarding 20-year career driving for Rob Dyson, criss-crossing the Atlantic too many times to remember, James decided that, at the age of 52, it was time to spend more time with his family. A cliché in political terms, maybe, but with three decades of race driving, 100 victories and no fewer than five titles to his credit, he decided it was time to quit, and four years on he has no regrets.

"It was the right time to stop" James decided. "My hearing was getting really bad, but I noticed that occasionally I was starting to have to think twice when recalling detail, like all the corner exit rpm's, so I knew that things were starting to slip. Rob had been incredibly generous to me and I didn't want to put him in the position where he had to say anything to me, so I thought it best to stop, hopefully before I reached my sell-by date."

In that 30 year career James firmly established himself as one of Britain's great sports car drivers of the modern era, up there with Derek Bell, Allan McNish, Vic Elford, Brian Redman, Andy Wallace and Ollie Gavin, despite never winning at Le Mans (he was second with Richard Lloyd's Canon Porsche team in 1985 "and it went downhill from there"), nor Sebring, and achieving just one victory in the Daytona 24-hour race. Nor did he ever have a full factory contract. Rather, it was the variety of wins that forged his reputation, whether with Eddie Jordan's Formula 3 team in the 1982 European Formula 3 Championship, winning Can-Am, Grand-Am and IMSA titles in Dyson Racing's Porsche, Riley & Scott and MG-Lola machines, or the BPR Global Endurance Series title in 1996 with Ray Bellm in Bellm's McLaren F1 GTR.

He was the best in the business at setting-up race cars, an acknowledged master of the qualifying shoot-out, the ultimate overtaker and a safe pair of hands, with no major shunts worth remembering. Not bad, for a man who surveyed the scene at the end of 1985 and decided to offer himself as a number 2 driver, to any team that would offer him a living as a race driver. "I wasn't doing much in 1985, a bit of Group C in Japan, so the Le Mans offer from Richard Lloyd came out of the blue. At the time I decided that my best chance of making a career for myself was as a number two sports car driver because everyone wanted to be a number one, and nobody wanted to be a number two so I thought I could carve out a niche for myself in this role." America beckoned, James became one of Britain's great exports and he never looked back.

As will become clear in this interview, James holds pungent views on safety and ecology issues, opinions that would have made him a soul-mate of the late Denis Jenkinson. He believes that the legislations to slow the cars down, make them quieter and more economical, are taking the spectacle out of sports car racing, and I swear I could hear Jenks chuckle when he asked "If the ACO want to make the cars more economical, why don't they just run the race for 22 hours? And why the ACO think it's a good idea to make the cars so slow is hard to imagine. Something is clearly wrong when you can walk into a showroom and buy several road cars that will out-accelerate a state of the art Le Mans car. More thought is required."

And as for safety, well, just don't get James going on the subject! "You can't mountaineer on a flat surface, it's called going for a walk, and you can't motor race surrounded by acres of gravel. There has to be some element of risk. I mean, you can't go bullfighting with your local cow, can you? It's got to have horns!

"Safety implies the removal of risk or danger, which is ridiculous because that is at the very heart of the sport. Whilst I believe that 'safety' is completely the wrong word to use, I am absolutely in favour of doing everything possible to minimise the potential consequences of the risk. For example, I had my own seat belts, gloves and balaclavas made to my own specification. Once tyre pressure sensors became available I wouldn't race at Le Mans without having it in my contract that these were installed.

"In a road car, I wouldn't even put it into gear without fastening my seat belt. Despite that I must have driven millions of miles and never needed to use it, so it clearly is not a 'safety device'. To me, its role is to reduce the consequences of an accident and to reduce the risk of personal injury, so it is more like an insurance as it hasn't made anything safer, just potentially reduced the consequences of an accident."

Tea boy makes good

Born in London in March 1955, James left school with 10 good O-levels and being interested in the technical side, went to work for the Hawker-Siddeley aircraft company's design department at Hatfield. Just prior to this, though, he had secured a holiday job with David Lazenby's Hawke racing car concern in Ware, Hertfordshire, and the contrasts between the two were night and day. "I found the job at Hawker Siddeley to be so boring I couldn't stand it, whereas working for David Lazenby was instant gratification! At Hawker Siddeley you might be working on an undercarriage which would turn up five years later on aeroplane. I lasted two months, maybe three, then David gave me a full time job building Formula Fords.



©John Brooks, 1983

"David was genius, no question. He was Jim Clark's crew chief when he won at Indianapolis, he was a fantastic designer, engineer, mechanic, and a generous person too. He even let me build my own car. Every time someone crashed I piled all the bits up in a corner and after a year I had almost enough bits to make a car. All I needed was the front part of the chassis, and David remembered that he had left the chassis of a Super Vee in the outside toilets at his previous workshop at the North Weald airfield. It was still there, so we bunged it in a van and took it back to the workshop, where I cut off the front part, welded it on to the engine bay that we had salvaged from a customer's written-off chassis and that was my first car, a Hawke DL11. We had to shot blast it for obvious reasons, and it was a fantastic car!

At the age of 19 James Weaver embarked on his first season of racing in the Formula Ford category, with the willing help of David Lazenby and the generous support of the Scholar engine company. Four happy seasons went by gathering plenty of experience, but no titles, until Mike Keegan bought the Hawke company and moved it to Southend, hoping to work up to a Formula One car for his son, Rupert. At that, James went to work first for Scorpion Racing and then for Howden Ganley's Tiga racing car company in Reading, working in the glass-fibre shop and generally making himself useful. The New Zealander was generous, too, in supporting James in building and racing a Tiga Formula Ford and in this, he was runner-up in the 1979 British Formula Ford championship. "But for an accident at Mallory Park, I should have walked it" he remembers.

James gave Tiga's new SC80 Sport 2000 its race debut at Donington and even without a test he put it on pole position, and it was this diminutive sports car that he raced in 1980 under the Scorpion Racing banner, for Mike Eastick. Another good season, another 'nearly' shot for the title, finishing second to Ian Taylor. It was quite a jump from Sports 2000 to Formula 3 but James made the transition in 1981 in a Tiga run by Tim Schenken with backing from Richard Tyzak and Joe Chamberlain. "I started the first race of the year alongside Jonathan Palmer, who was on pole at Silverstone, but I didn't do very well and went steadily backwards, until the middle of the year when I managed to win at Snetterton, to everyone's surprise including my own."

That was a typical, self-deprecating remark from James, whose wicked but harmless humour would delight Rob Dyson, an Anglophile, in years to come. He had talent, though, and it was recognised by the Irish bank clerk, Eddie Jordan, who arrived in England to get involved in racing, and in an inspired move did a deal with Yokohama tyres to run a Formula 3 car for James in 1982.

The car was a Ralt RT3 powered by the Novamotor engine, and James took this to three victories in the European F3 Championship, and to fourth place in the series. "But that was because of the Yokohama tyres, which were fantastic" says James, again ducking the credit.



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©John Brooks, 1983

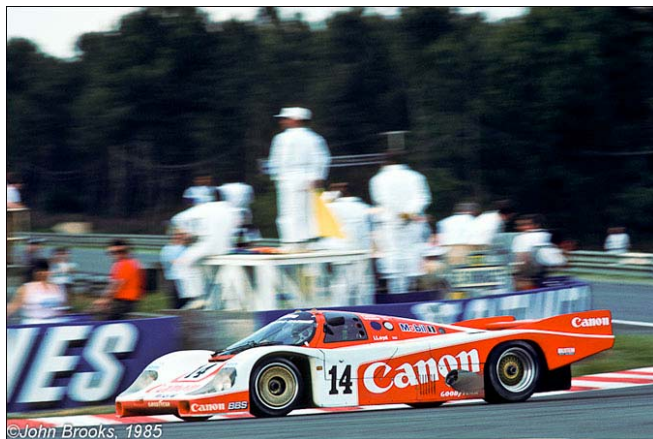


©John Brooks, 1983

The first “out of the blue” invitation to race at Le Mans came in 1983 from Formula 3 team owner Alan Docking, who needed a third driver at Le Mans for the Mazda 717C Group C Junior that he managed for Mazdaspeed. James partnered Steve Soper and Jeff Allam, two who had already made their names in international racing, and apart from a misfire that was only cured on Sunday afternoon the Japanese car ran well, finishing second in class and 18th overall. “We ran for 18 hours on the first set of tyres, the ones we’d used in qualifying. The car looked like a suet pudding and it only had about 300 horsepower, but it did 192 mph on the Mulsanne Straight and made an unbelievable noise. It was hideous!”

James had an on-and-off career in the British Touring Car Championship in the 1980s. A BMW deal with CC Developments (Peter Cook and Dave Clark) in 1984 led to him being invited to join the Schnitzer team for the Spa 24-Hours, partnering Hans Stuck and Dieter Quester. That should have been a podium, maybe a win, had Quester not dropped the 635 CSL into a gravel bed and had to dig it out by hand!

You sense that even now, James’ career had not properly taken off. In 1985 he was working for Adrian Reynard, he says as “the tea boy” taking cups of tea to Andy Wallace while he was building his successful Formula 3 car. Then came the second “out of the blue”, a call from Richard Lloyd to drive his GTi Engineering Porsche 956 at Le Mans with Jonathan Palmer. Jan Lammers had defected from the team, and probably Palmer put James’ name forward as they had already formed a lasting friendship.



©John Brooks, 1985

The red and white liveried Canon Porsche battled away for hour after hour against the Joest Racing team’s yellow, New Man sponsored Porsche 956, leaving the factory’s Rothmans-Porsche team struggling in their wake. The scales tilted to the Joest team when the Canon Porsche was delayed by a Motronic fault and finished three laps down, but four laps ahead of Derek Bell’s Rothmans Porsche.

That was the nearest James got to winning, but his first ‘factory’ drive came a year later when he joined the Nismo Nissan team at Le Mans, paired with Masahiro Hasemi and Takao Wada. The team was managed by Keith Greene (who had managed Lloyd’s Porsche the previous year) and the car was a potential winner, a March 86G designed by Gordon Coppuck, powered by an Electramotive V6 twin-turbo

engine. “The car was fantastic” James recalls. “It had monster download, good brakes, it steered well and it was the best car by miles. But the trip to Le Mans was a pain in the arse!”

Funny lot, the Japanese. The first time James went out in qualifying the engine wouldn’t rev past 4,000 rpm. The mechanics had set the rev-limiter at that mark, on purpose. The next time there was no boost pressure. That was no mistake, either. “Keith then had the boost set at the right level, leaned in and put the control knob in his top pocket. Then I went out and did a couple of good laps, and handed the car to Hasemi.” But before he got in, one of the mechanics went head-first into the foot well with a mole-grip wrench, to turn the boost control rod at floor level. “Keith pulled him out by his heels and slung him over the pit wall! The whole race went like that and we spent too much time in the pits.” Nismo, in fact, parked the car on the pit-lane for an hour or so while the safety car was circulating, after Jo Gartner’s fatal accident, giving the car a first-class service. Result, 16th and 82 laps behind the winning Porsche, but still the best-placed Japanese entered car, and that seemed like a result to Nismo.



©John Brooks, 1986



Crossing the Atlantic

Now 30 years of age, and on the brink of international recognition, James needed to make a career move. Ruling out 'tea boy at Reynard' he put it about that he would be prepared to sign for a good sportscar team that needed a number two driver. Bert Baldwin, Yokohama's motorsport manager, heard the call and connected James to Bob Akin, the wealthy owner-driver of the Coca Cola sponsored Porsche 962 in the States. The two gelled straight away, and they finished fourth in their first race at Riverside, in April 1986. This was followed-up with a fourth at Watkins Glen, ninth at Columbus and fourth again in the Daytona 3-Hours. "At the end of the season Bob was giving up racing and he asked Rob [Dyson] if he would look after me." Rob had just bought a race computer off Richard Lloyd, new technology in those days, and it was operated by Dewey Smith who along with Pat Smith, Rob's crew chief, had noticed that James was doing a good job.

James' first race with Dyson Racing was at Road Atlanta, with Price Cobb in the team's Porsche 962, and this resulted in a victory ("thanks to Price, I hasten to add").

In his younger days James had been a fan of Pedro Rodriguez, and recalled that his Porsche 917 raced as number 16 in the Mexican's last completed event, the Austrian 1,000 Kms in 1971. By coincidence the winning Dyson Porsche was also carrying the number 16 and James took this as a lucky omen, and claimed the number for the rest of his racing career. So, if you wanted to know which car James Weaver was driving in America, just look for the number 16!

His admiration for Price Cobb is generous. "He was fantastic, blisteringly fast and my job was to back him up as best I could. He would tell me everything I needed to know, he never held any information back, and one day I asked him what would happen if I went faster than him. 'That's OK' he said, 'We will go faster in the race and I will just get to go faster again'. Price was a real class act."

This was a very happy time for James, who fell in love with the American way of racing. "It was so much fun, with such nice people. They are serious about their racing, of course, but out of the cars they are all so friendly. A lot of people went over from Europe and thought they'd do really well, Jaguar included, but they never won a championship, did they?"

"My favourite race is was invariably the one I was at. Looking back objectively, Lime Rock is a great little track; it's Dyson's home track and we always enjoyed the whole atmosphere. We used to stay at Rob's farmhouse, it was beautiful countryside, lovely people, what more could you want? I loved Watkins Glen, the old Atlanta track before they messed it up, and Mosport is my favourite track of all time.

"Mosport comes in for criticism and I know there is a debate about safety, but how often do you actually go off the track? Hardly ever! If you think about it, you drive around on the road with seat belts and ABS brakes, but how often do you use them? If you look at the risks, logically, unless you have a brake failure or a massive car failure, which is pretty unlikely, you'll stay on the track." Here again, James warms to the theme of safety, a subject to which he has given considerable, constructive thought. His comprehensive views on safety, car and circuit design, are published as a separate article.

Not all sports car drivers are as accomplished as James, have enjoyed the same safety record, and it's for those who are shall we say, less fortunate or less skilled, to avail themselves of



the safety features. At the start of his relationship with Rob Dyson he said he would give him a million dollars credit in the bank, "and when you do that much damage to my equipment, you're fired. He said that to Andy [Wallace] as well. I said 'Rob, won't that take me quite a bit of time?' Not necessarily, he replied. Drake Olson did it in two weekends. He smashed up one Porsche 962 and it wasn't immediately repairable so we rang up Weissach and ordered another one, and the first time out he smashed that one as well. He used up all his credit in two weekends!"



There was a blot on James's record in the IMSA Camel GT Championship, an incident at Del Mar in 1990 when he accidentally-on-purpose ran off the track and smashed a noise meter. It could have been very funny, but not for the guy who was checking the readings, at a safe distance. The fairground track was close to urban development and noise was a hot topic. The Dyson Porsche 962 failed the noise test in qualifying, all because the exhaust pipes exit at the sides and blast the meter in a way that rear exhausts do not.

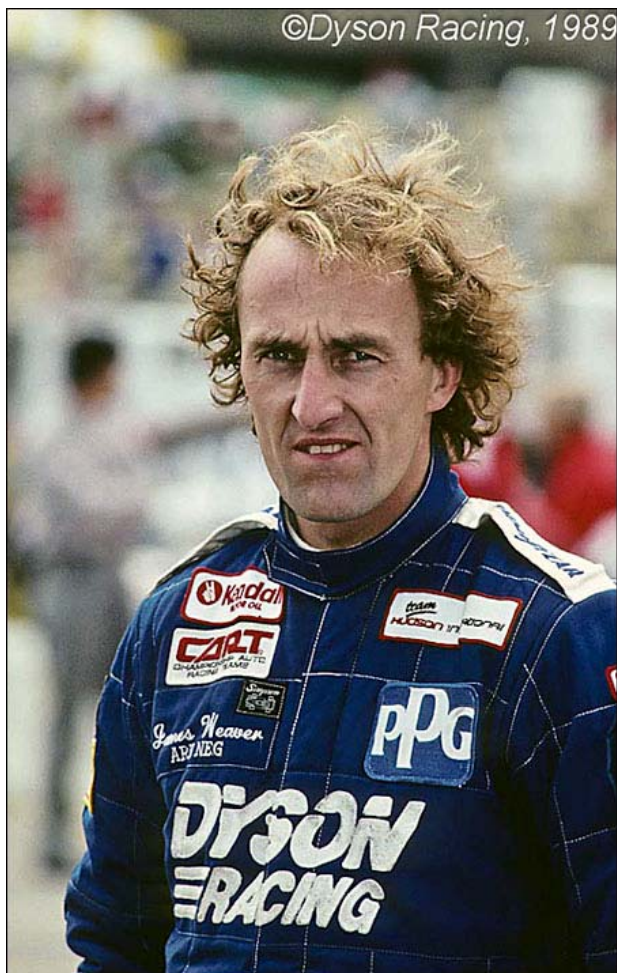
"The organisers told us we should start, and everything would be fine in the race. We went straight into the lead and then they started black-flagging me. I thought that if I ran over the meter they'd stop black flagging me, but unfortunately I ran over it at 100 miles an hour. What I didn't realise was that the meter was being operated by Bob Rogers, an ex aircraft carrier admiral, a top bloke who had seen death and destruction everywhere without getting hurt. The meter took off at 100 miles an hour but unfortunately it was connected to the monitor by a cable which nearly took the poor bloke's head off!"



The Dyson Porsche was disqualified immediately and after the race the police turned up intending to arrest James, take him away in cuffs. "Rob wasn't at the race for some reason but luckily Bob Akin was, and he took charge of the situation. Everyone was jumping up and down, things were getting very nasty, but Bob managed to calm everyone down. He was a smooth operator, he did a wonderful job." The disqualification cost James the well-endowed Porsche Cup that year, to his regret. "Bernd Schneider won the cup for the Kremers when they found some club race he could enter and win in Outer Mongolia, but that's racing, isn't it?"

A string of wins and good placings rewarded James in 1987 and 1988, with Cobb and with team owner Rob Dyson, but the partnership was broken when Cobb was offered a drive in TWR Jaguars in 1989.

"I became the number one driver at Dyson Racing, although that had never been my intention." The Electramotive Nissans and Gurney Toyota Eagles were cleaning up as the Porsches aged, and Dyson Racing made a sideways step into single-seater racing, the CART Champcar series with a Lola. They entered just four races with nothing better to show than 11th place for James at Long Beach. Dyson: "It was a learning experience. It is always good to expose the team to new disciplines, but we found ourselves on the outside looking in."



©Dyson Racing, 1989

This was a low-key season for James in the States, so he returned to Britain to pick up the British Touring Car Championship in a BMW M3 run by David Richards at Prodrive. It was a good season, James finishing runner-up to John Cleland's Vauxhall, and winner of the Class B division. Three years later he again contested the BTCC in a Janspeed managed Nissan Primera, the worst experience of his entire career. "It was hideous, I hated every minute of it. Absolute misery!" Apart from rare appearances in Europe, by invitation, and notably with Ray Bellm in the 1996 BPR Global Endurance series, James concentrated on America, always with Dyson Racing.

Dyson was faithful to Porsches even though they lacked pace, and James won at Tampa in 1990 against all the odds.

Rather frustrated, Dyson again undertook a single-seater programme in 1993, running a Lola Buick for James in the Indy Lights championship. As before, it was not a success. The team ran six races only with a best result of fifth. "Some of the Lights teams were creative in their rules interpretations" said Dyson. "It is always educational to run different series but with the emergence of IMSA's World Sports Cars category we went back to sports cars."

For the 1994 season Dyson Racing bought a Spice and installed a Ferrari 348 engine which made a lovely noise, but wasn't the quickest combination.



©Dyson Racing, 1990



©Dyson Racing, 1994

James drove this in eight of the nine races in the inaugural season, with a best result of third at Indianapolis, but his best result was second place at Sebring, the one that Dyson didn't contest, in the Auto Toy Stores Spice Chevrolet with Wallace and Derek Bell.

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Administrative Checking & Scrutineering

Le Mans lasts much longer than just 24 hours, from a spectator's point of view it is actually a full week which offers lots of events which are worth a watch. The traditional opening of the race week used to be the Monday prior to the race when the administrative checking & scrutineering started, this is already a major event in its own right. In a move to attract more spectators, it has recently been brought forward to the Sunday. Some people see this scrutineering, which is basically a technical inspection of the cars, driver's suits and helmets more as a ceremony than a function. It is to be held in the "Place Centrale des Jacobins," below the cathedral. Parking is much more restricted than it has been in the past so if in doubt, leave your car at the circuit and take the tram. It is this unique event which gets everyone in the mood, ok, some team bosses and drivers are probably not happy that they have to drag everything including themselves into central Le Mans, but for the race fans it is well worth a visit, at least once. One after another, the teams are certified to run according to the A.C.O.'s regulations, see below for a detailed schedule when each team is being checked:

Sunday, 5th June 2011, 2:30 pm – 7.00 pm

Admin.	Technical	No.	Team	Class	Car
14:30	15:00	16	PESCAROLO TEAM	LM P1	PESCAROLO JUDD
14:45	15:15	51	AF CORSE	LM GTE Pro	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
15:00	15:30	71	AF CORSE	LM GTE Pro	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
15:15	15:45	61	AF CORSE	LM GTE Am	FERRARI F430
15:30	16:00	39	PECOM RACING	LM P2	LOLA B11/40-JUDD BMW
15:45	16:15	48	TEAM ORECA MATMUT	LM P2	ORECA 03-NISSAN
16:00	16:30	10	TEAM ORECA MATMUT	LM P1	PEUGEOT 908 HDI-FAP
16:10	16:40	007	ASTON MARTIN RACING	LM P1	ASTON MARTIN AMR-ONE
16:20	16:50	009	ASTON MARTIN RACING	LM P1	ASTON MARTIN AMR-ONE
16:30	17:00	42	STRAKKA RACING	LM P2	HPD ARX 01 D
16:40	17:10	15	OAK RACING	LM P1	OAK PESCAROLO - JUDD
16:50	17:20	24	OAK RACING	LM P1	OAK PESCAROLO - JUDD
17:00	17:30	35	OAK RACING	LM P2	OAK PESCAROLO - JUDD BMW
17:10	17:40	49	OAK RACING	LM P2	OAK PESCAROLO - JUDD BMW
17:20	17:50	63	PROTON COMPETITION	LM GTE Am	PORSCHE 911 RSR (997)
17:30	18:00	58	LUXURY RACING	LM GTE Pro	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
17:40	18:10	59	LUXURY RACING	LM GTE Pro	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
17:50	18:20	64	LOTUS JETALLIANCE	LM GTE Pro	LOTUS EVORA
18:00	18:30	65	LOTUS JETALLIANCE	LM GTE Pro	LOTUS EVORA
18:10	18:40	77	TEAM FELBERMAYR-PROTON	LM GTE Pro	PORSCHE 911 RSR (997)
18:20	18:50	88	TEAM FELBERMAYR-PROTON	LM GTE Pro	PORSCHE 911 RSR (997)



Monday, 6th June 2011, 9:30 am – 7.00 pm

Admin.	Technical	No.	Team	Class	Car
09:30	10:00	83	JMB RACING	LM GTE Am	FERRARI F430
09:45	10:15	60	GULF AMR MIDDLE EAST	LM GTE Am	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE
10:00	10:30	66	JMW MOTORSPORT	LM GTE Pro	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
10:15	10:45	89	HANKOOK - TEAM FARNBACHER	LM GTE Pro	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
10:30	11:00	44	EXTREME LIMITE AM PARIS	LM P2	NORMA M200P - JUDD BMW
10:45	11:15	36	RML	LM P2	HPD ARX 01 D
11:00	11:30	57	KROHN RACING	LM GTE Am	FERRARI F430
11:10	11:40	62	CRS RACING	LM GTE Am	FERRARI F430
11:20	11:50	5	HOPE RACING	LM P1	ORECA SWISS HY TECH-HYBRID
11:30	12:00	12	REBELLION RACING	LM P1	LOLA B 10/60 COUPE-TOYOTA
11:40	12:10	13	REBELLION RACING	LM P1	LOLA B 10/60 COUPE-TOYOTA
11:50	12:20	20	QUIFEL - ASM TEAM	LM P1	ZYTEK 09 SC
12:00	12:30	76	IMSA PERFORMANCE MATMUT	LM GTE Pro	PORSCHE 911 RSR (997)
13:30	14:00	40	RACE PERFORMANCE	LM P2	ORECA 03-JUDD BMW
13:40	14:10	41	GREAVES MOTORSPORT	LM P2	ZYTEK NISSAN
13:50	14:20	80	FLYING LIZARD MOTORSPORTS	LM GTE Pro	PORSCHE 911 RSR (997)
14:00	14:30	81	FLYING LIZARD MOTORSPORTS	LM GTE Am	PORSCHE 911 RSR (997)
14:10	14:40	70	LARBRE COMPETITION	LM GTE Am	PORSCHE 911 RSR (997)
14:20	14:50	50	LARBRE COMPETITION	LM GTE Am	CORVETTE C6-ZR1
14:30	15:00	68	ROBERTSON RACING	LM GTE Am	FORD GT-DORAN
14:40	15:10	26	SIGNATECH NISSAN	LM P2	ORECA 03-NISSAN
14:50	15:20	33	LEVEL 5 MOTORSPORTS	LM P2	LOLA COUPE-HPD
15:00	15:30	22	KRONOS RACING	LM P1	LOLA ASTON MARTIN
15:10	15:40	7	PEUGEOT SPORT TOTAL	LM P1	PEUGEOT 908
15:20	15:50	8	PEUGEOT SPORT TOTAL	LM P1	PEUGEOT 908
15:30	16:00	9	TEAM PEUGEOT TOTAL	LM P1	PEUGEOT 908
15:40	16:10	75	PROSPEED COMPETITION	LM GTE Pro	PORSCHE 911 RSR (997)
15:50	16:20	73	CORVETTE RACING	LM GTE Pro	CHEVROLET CORVETTE C6 ZR1
16:00	16:30	74	CORVETTE RACING	LM GTE Pro	CHEVROLET CORVETTE C6 ZR1
16:10	16:40	79	JOTA	LM GTE Pro	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE
16:20	16:50	1	AUDI SPORT TEAM JOEST	LM P1	AUDI R18 TDI
16:30	17:00	2	AUDI SPORT TEAM JOEST	LM P1	AUDI R18 TDI
16:40	17:10	3	AUDI SPORT NORTH AMERICA	LM P1	AUDI R18 TDI
16:50	17:20	55	BMW MOTORSPORT	LM GTE Pro	BMW M3
17:00	17:30	56	BMW MOTORSPORT	LM GTE Pro	BMW M3



The Ceremony of hands

Le Mans is a city which is proud of its racing heritage and its rightful place at the centre of Sports Car Racing throughout the world. No visitor to the city can fail to miss the monument to the 24-hour- race in the Place St Nicholas in the centre of town, and its surrounding bronze paving slabs commemorating all the recent LM winning teams – plus individual ones for Le Mans legends like Jacky Ickx, Derek Bell and Henri Pescarolo. Each year, at eleven o'clock on the morning of the day before the race, the three winning drivers from the previous year, gather along with members of the press and public, and local luminaries, for the “Ceremony of Hands”. A bronze plaque is unveiled with the names of all three drivers and an impression of their hands. One of the lower-key, and least well-publicized events of the week, it is nevertheless a “must visit” for anybody who has not done it before as it gives a good opportunity to get up close and personal with the top three drivers, and to join the city in celebrating its place at the centre of the sport.



Scrutineering at Le Mans 2010: The KSM Lola Judd on its way to the technical inspection

© Deborah Dudley

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It's much better to take a bus or the tram from the circuit and to walk the rest. For details about the tram please see our chapter "Transport in Le Mans". There is a website about this event at <http://www.grande-parade-des-pilotes.com>.



The Saint Saturnin Classic British Welcome

(Courtesy of www.classicbw.org)

The village of Saint Saturnin is situated on the main Northern entry to Le Mans, about fifteen minutes from the Circuit. Because of the tremendous popularity of the Le Mans 24 Hour Race with the British and other Nationalities arriving in classic and sports cars, the event, held in the grounds of the Val de Vray has become a highlight of the Le Mans week and amazingly, celebrates its own tenth birthday this year. The objective of the St Saturnin Classic British Welcome is to provide a rendezvous and relaxing welcome point for those arriving, or those already in Le Mans, to take a breather from the Circuit and or the City.

The organisers of the now familiar and very popular Classic British Welcome are pleased to announce that their partners for 2011 are the Jaguar Drivers' Club, the Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club and Amicale Jaguar de France who will be along to help CBW celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Jaguar E-Type.

Each year the event is themed on a specific marque, former years have included Jaguar, Porsche, Lotus, Aston Martin, Healey, Ferrari, Morgan, Corvette and Guests of Honour have included Jan Lammers, Derek Bell, Sir Stirling Moss, Johnny Herbert, Paul Frère, Michael Salmon and Jean Bloxham, Yves Courage. For the 2011 edition the Guest of Honour will be the grand-homme of French sportscar racing - Henri Pescarolo. Within the site there will be restaurants, bars, picnic areas, boutiques, an exhibition of the featured marque, plus models, photographs, ACO Ticket Office, an air conditioned cinema, free car wash, Meguiars Car Care, live music and lots more!

A collection of Jaguar "E" Types will depart in convoy towards late afternoon to join the City Centre "Grande Parade" accompanied by a "squadron" of Harley Davidsons! The event, with free entrance and parking, is held all day Friday 10th June (09h00 to 18h00) Average figures for visitors are about 5,000 and classic and sports cars around 1000.

The history of the Jaguar E-type

March 1961, at the Expo Centre Geneva; before the assembled press, cameras and the public Jaguar unveiled a car that was to become mythical – the E-type. Available both as a roadster and a coupe, and at a very affordable price (less than £2,000). This was half the price of an equivalent car such as a Ferrari or Aston Martin at the time and the world was taken aback – the style, the comfort, the torque and a reasonable fuel consumption at around 23mpg but it was the performance that really astounded people – less than 7 seconds to 60mph and an incredible top speed of 150mph. Immediately, Jaguar were inundated with orders, and to be able to get one at short notice one had to be really someone, be it a star of screen or stage, a famous driver, or a public personality, exactly the same as at the launch of the XK120. But what is the history of this mythical car, voted by the public time and again as the most desired of cars of all time?

In the 1950s Jaguar raced at Le Mans, first with the C-type winning in 1951 and 1953 and then the D-type, winning three years in a row in 1955, 56 and 57. But time passed and the D-type was outclassed by more modern cars, Jaguar having dropped out of racing following the fire at the factory in 1957. But they were already developing the E-type and the link between the D and the E was one prototype, E2A. She had the same fin as the D-type, but underneath had the independent suspension that was to be in every E-type. E2A raced, unsuccessfully sadly, at Le Mans in 1960 wearing the Cunningham colours, white with two blue stripes. Between 1961 and 1974 Jaguar made 72,000 E-types, most of which were exported to the USA. The first were the 3.8 litre, followed in 1964 by the 4.2 litre and finally in 1961 by the all alloy engined 5.3 litre V12.

Postal address: Association Saint Saturnin Classic British Welcome, Centre du Val de Vray- Rue de l'Eglise, F-72650 Saint Saturnin, France. Or contact direct: John Curtis, Email: info@classicbw.org, Phone: +33-(0)243 890 483
GPS position: Latitude 48°03'42.09" N, Longitude 0°09'19.17" E



Club Arnage Forum Gathering

The traditional CA gathering in the race village will be on **Saturday, 11th June, start around 9:00 pm**. Location is the area around the “**Courbe**” Bar – or the “Restaurant de la Courbe Dunlop”, that’s how it is officially called. This place is on the inside of the pit exit towards the Dunlop chicane and offers the advantage to meet and see the race at the same time.

How to get there: Coming through the main entrance just go into the tunnel in front of you which leads to the inside of the track. Exiting the tunnel just turn left. The “Courbe” Bar it is the bright red building by the track side, watch out for groups of people in CA T-Shirts. It’s a public gathering in a public place, so non-CA members are of course welcome. To all CA-members: Please wear your CA t-shirt! Some comments about previous gatherings:

- “Great to meet all of you at the Poo Bar gathering and put some faces to the names.”
- “Does anyone remember one of the first of our gatherings at the poo bar, about ten years ago I think when the official dress code was tea towels on the head... Ah, happy days.”
- “I laughed at the Poo bar when someone started changing people's 2004 CA t shirts to 2005 with a permanent marker...”
- “Of course I never saw the old Poo Bar, but the party at the new one was awesome. It was indeed everything I expected and then some... The Poo Bar experience was one of the main factors for my decision for going to Le Mans and it did not let me down.”
- “The hangover I woke up with on Sunday Morning felt like I had passed to the other side. Still, it was worth it, what a great night.”



Helicopter flights



Le Mans Airport is directly opposite the circuit, so not surprisingly there is the option of booking a helicopter flight around the circuit. One of the companies operating there in 2011 is "Baptême Hélicoptère", website: <http://www.sport-decouverte.com/bapteme-air-helicoptere-24h00-le-mans.html>. Reservations for the 10 minute, 95,- € flight can be made on their website, although in the past this didn't seem to be necessary. Several CA members reported that they just walked up, paid their money and got their flight without having to wait. Cruising at 200ft and just over 100 mph gives a different perspective of the circuit and race.

Views are good and it isn't necessary to all charge for the seats by the pilot. The flight enables you to see all the circuit and all the track campsites, it is easy to spot you own tent and any of your group lounging around having a cold one.

Cars slip by underneath as they are travelling much quicker. It might be wise to take the flight early on during the race, as by Sunday morning half the field could be retired, particularly if there are specific cars you would like to see around the circuit.

The aircraft seat between four to five passengers at a time, you can let the ground crew know how many are in your group and they will make sure you are together. The flights operate over the early part of the Qualifying sessions on Wednesday and Thursday and throughout Saturday and Sunday. In the past the ticket office and take off point have been almost in front of the main A.C.O. HQ building. There are some signs for directions but look out for helicopter activity and a hole in the airfields concrete panelled fence and people heading towards the flight ticket portacabins.

There are two pay windows, one with a long queue, non-French speakers and one with a short queue, French speakers.

Next is the security check and after that you get directed to one of the tents to await your flight departure. It is all very straight forward and well organized.

Mad Friday

The Friday before race day is traditionally known as “Mad Friday”. Various activities take place in the Le Mans area on the Friday, such as the Ceremony of Hands in the Place St Nicholas at 11am, the Classic British Welcome at lunchtime in St. Saturnin, the open pitlane and the Drivers Parade through Le Mans town centre on Friday evening, starting at the Place des Jacobins. It is however, the day when there are no practice or qualifying sessions on the track, and so the parts of the track that are made up of public roads are open all day and exotic cars, as well as vans, push bikes and all sorts of home made contraptions, including a motorised bed and a pirate ship, can be seen driving around the area.



Areas such as the Hunaudières straight and Indianapolis are lined with spectators all hoping to catch a glimpse of a Ferrari Enzo, McLaren F1 or Lamborghini Murcielago speeding past. It is a unique experience that should not be missed. Where else can you see so many exotic cars for free?

For those looking to drive their own cars around the public roads, you should be aware that the Gendarmes are not particularly happy about this, and very often will have speed traps set up to catch you. If you want to put your foot down, your best chance might be to do so in the very early hours of the morning, but even then it can't be guaranteed that you won't get caught.

In years gone by, the road between the Maison Blanche and Bleu camp sites has been used as an unofficial drag strip, with many cars performing wheel spins on demand and spinning doughnuts. In the last few years however the local police have also cut down on this. As one of the moderators of the Club Arnage forum can testify, they will even confiscate your bottle of water if they see you pouring it under the wheels of a car to create some tyre smoke! Of course, a certain amount of it does still go on, and the roads will be lined on Friday afternoon and evening by people encouraging the drivers to show what their cars can do. It has also become common practice for the spectators to arm themselves with high powered water pistols and any cars that don't “perform” for the crowd are likely to get sprayed with water.

Similar activities take place at the roundabout near the back end of Houx Annexe campsite. This generally consists of cars driving round the roundabout several times at high speed, sliding round the corners before shooting off on one of the exit roads. Again, large crowds gather around, and on, the roundabout armed with Super Soakers.

Whilst most of this is carried out in a friendly manner, there is (as with any large gathering of people these days) an unfortunate yob element who now frequent the festivities. For some reason, these morons think it is “fun” to put beer, or indeed urine, into their water pistols and spray the cars with it. They also seem to think that if a car doesn't perform a burn out for them even though they have a police car in front of them that it is acceptable to empty the contents of their super soaker all over the leather interior of a Ferrari Spider, or indeed any other car that had its roof down or windows open. Others think it is fun to spray the windscreen of a car while it is sliding on two wheels around the Houx Annexe roundabout to obscure the driver's vision. On other occasions things have been thrown at cars, including stones and bottles, and people have been seen to punch or kick vehicles as they pass.

Mad Friday is a day that should be enjoyed by everyone, whether driving their pride and joy around the circuit, or simply sitting in a café watching the cars go by while enjoying a cold drink. It shouldn't be allowed to be ruined by the minority who think vandalising and abusing someone else's property is acceptable.



If you do participate as a driver, enjoy the French roads, drive within your limits, respect other road users and spectators and watch out for those speeding fines; but be aware that there may unfortunately be a minor element who think that your pride and joy is nothing more than a target for their stupidity and that you may need to protect it accordingly. If you go to watch the cars, please show them and their drivers some respect, keep a safe distance from where the vehicles are likely to speed/slide, cheer and clap the cars that entertain you and make it obvious to any hooligan elements you may see that their behaviour is not acceptable.



Most of all enjoy yourself and don't ruin the enjoyment of others!

Please Note: In 2006, the local Police were seen to drive along the line of spectators spraying CS gas out of a slightly open door to disperse the crowd when they believed things had got out of hand. They will probably be ready to do the same again this year if things go too far and this could simply ruin it for everyone.



Pit Walk

Not too many years ago the Friday pit walk was an opportunity to get very close to the cars, mechanics and other team members. Slowly this intimacy is vanishing and the hoards of fans who descend on the pit lane mean there are now barrier ropes a meter or two in front of each pit, a (poorly policed) separate path for disabled access and a huge scrum 10 or more deep around any pit with anything slightly interesting. Unsurprisingly some teams have also taken to selling merchandise at sometimes inflated prices! Nevertheless with perseverance and good humour there are chances to see things that are not visible from the grandstands.

Paintwork. The sponsors logos are mostly stickers now, look close to see how thick stickers are or how they are faired in. Sharp, thick edges create drag and slow it down.

Smart thinking. At the Audi pit a few years ago they had a stack of flat aluminium plates with a 45degree angle each end. When they had a pit stop practice they used these to put spare tyres on during pit stops so they don't roll away. That year Peugeot lost time by tyres rolling away at pitstops. Less time in the pits is good.

Deception. In 2009 Audi had wraps on their rear spoilers. Rumour was that Peugeot were requesting disqualification until they thrashed the R15s anyway.

Pit organisation. May not be set up for the race (on Friday) but things like the spare parts, how easily available are they? If your car blows a front tyre you want front body work, suspension and floor to hand and not in the truck.

Team Karma. If there is mad panic in the pits on Friday then it doesn't look good. More haste less speed. A panicking mechanic could easily break something when a cool head is best.

Speak to the "guards" at the rope of each garage. CA member experience: *"We asked each of them what their role was in the team - we spoke to Chamberlain's Tyre man, someone who did transport, and at the last, we got the Bentley Project Director, with whom we had quite an interesting chat, given that neither of us were particularly clued up on anything"*. Would be interesting to know where the Red Bull, Mazda and Toyota folk are spending their time!

Bodywork. Panel fit on cars. Aero is very important, the panel fit on cars is something to look for. Big gaps and panels not flush looks bad as air will leak out and slow car down. Also means car build and set up has not been done to high standard. For example there was one car which had panel fixings which pushed the floor down and meant the front bodywork did not sit flush with sidepods meaning you have disturbed airflow, the floor was not flat either having a bulge from the fixing pushing down. Minor points but they all add up to lost top speed and downforce.

Dodgy repairs. When the bodywork is laid out at the front look for repairs done. If it has a really bad wet layup repair on it then it carries extra weight. If there are riveted repairs then it is not as strong so could flex under load. Also see if on any repairs there are multiple layers of paint, this adds weight and could affect fit of panels.

Spares. Teams usually have all their bodywork in the pits on Friday and should be fitting them to check they are interchangeable. Bad news to find in the race you replace some bodywork only to find the fitting is wrong. Should all fit the same otherwise we are back to the drag and slower car again.



Engineering design. Harder to spot: Does the car have fuel pumps and filters easily accessible so they can be replaced in seconds not minutes? Ditto batteries. *Hand throttles:* Know a good story of one team who didn't have a hand throttle because they thought the engine management would keep the engine ticking over to get back to the pits. It didn't and they lost a lot of time.

Practice. Always good to see them practice. They are only allowed one air gun so they need practice to make sure the car is in the pits for the shortest length of time. Also drivers help each other into the car. They have to change seats and adjust and tighten belts so they need to practice as well.

Freebies. Less likely each year.

The automobile museum

Just a short hop away from the main entrance of the track this museum is well worth a visit. It was founded in 1961; a new building was constructed in 1991 with app. 4.000 m² of exhibition space, a restaurant with about 100 places and a souvenir shop. There are about 200 cars on display, not surprisingly with a focus on former Le Mans participants but also some other interesting historic automobiles. Some people use a rainy day to visit it but it can be also very attractive on a very hot day; it's air-conditioned and has proper toilets. Some examples of cars which are on display are: A Martini colored Porsche 917 Langheck from 1971, a Bentley Speed 8 from 2003, the 1924 winning Bentley 3 Litre, the 1974 winning Matra 670 B, a group C Mazda and a Silk Cut Jaguar. **The museum has recently been refurbished – a report for the next edition of this guide is welcome!**



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F-72100 Le Mans
Phone : +33-(0)2- 43 72 72 24
Fax : +33-(0)2- 43 85 38 96
E-mail: contact@lemusee24h.com
<http://www.lemusee24h.com/>

Opening hours

June – August:
Mo – Su: 10.00 am – 6.00 pm
March – May and Oct. – Dec.
11.00 am – 5.00 pm

Extended opening hours during
the race week

Tickets

Adults: 8 €
Adolescents (10 - 18 years): 6 €
Children (less 10 years): free
Discounts for groups and for
A.C.O. members are available



Ten Years After....

Courtesy of www.dailysportscar.com and John Brooks

Looking at the commemorative stickers displayed on the Audis at the Le Mans Test Day prodded me to recall that ten years have flown by since the dreadful news came through of Michele Alboreto's fatal accident while testing at Lausitzring.



Michele had been a familiar name to me during his single seater career, back then I did follow Formula One. Of course his exploits in the Martini Lancia team coincided with my first trackside passes, which is where some of this material comes from.



He raced the exotic Italian prototypes from 1980 to 1983, ending up somewhat frustrated by the reliability issues that plagued the elegant Lancia LC2/83.



©Sutton Images, 1997



©John Brooks, 1998

So he turned his back on that aspect of the sport and concentrated on F1. His record, 194 Grand Prix starts for seven teams, the last win by an Italian in a Ferrari and just failing to beat Alain Prost to the World Championship in 1985, give an indication of the talent that Michele brought to the job in hand.



©John Brooks, 2001

After his retirement from Grand Prix circus Michele spent a short time racing in IRL but eventually he came back to sportscars, racing the Joest WRC at Le Mans in 1996 and 1997.

The second year saw him take victory with newcomer, Tom Kristensen and former F1 Ferrari Team mate, Stefan Johansson. The following year Porsche AG recruited him to spearhead the LMP aspect of their 50th Birthday Le Mans challenge but the "improvements" to the double winner did not work out.

In 1999 Alboreto was recruited by Audi as part of their new endurance sportscar programme, which really kicked into gear in 2000 when the Audi R8 appeared at Sebring. Michele got back on the top step of the podium at the 2000 Petit Le Mans, taking the R8 to a win with Dindo Capello and Allan McNish. He enjoyed his final triumph, at the Sebring 12 Hours the following year, once again in an R8, with Dindo and also Laurent Aiello.

A month later came a tyre failure while testing straight line speed, the Audi vaulted the Armco, killing the popular Italian instantly.

I had not known Michele when he raced in the Lancias, low life like me did not speak to Grand Prix drivers. However I did get to meet him in when he drove for Audi and I recall one evening in particular. For some reason back then the ALMS held a number of races at Rovals, road courses fashioned inside the banked oval tracks that were the stomping ground for NASCAR and IRL.



©John Brooks, 2001



©John Brooks, 2000



It was one of many attempts to take sportscar racing to previously uncharted territory, the results are almost always the same. The last of these 'events' was held in the first week of March 2001 at Texas Motor Speedway. The Australian Grand Prix was also running that evening (time zones are a wonderful thing), so we all got in our rental cars and drove 20 miles (all journeys in Dallas are 20 miles or more) to a sports bar where the Grand Prix was being televised.

I had just acquired my first digital camera; it was powerful Juju back then, the ability to see your work instantaneously, no waiting for the film processors to do their work. Instant gratification, how 21st Century?

I was sitting with Dindo and Michele watching another dull Schumacher/Ferrari procession when I piped up.

"Dindo, did you damage the car today, during Qualifying?"

"What do you mean, damage?" said the completely innocent Italian, butter would not melt.

"When you hit the chicane and scattered the poles"

"No, that was not me"

"Well, how do you explain this?"

I flicked the back of the camera to show cart wheeling poles from the chicane that Dindo had driven over. It was a magic show that Michele had been keenly observing as Dindo squirmed, his mistake now public.

Michele seized the moment, grabbed the camera and got all the Audi crew to see the evidence of his friend's indiscretion. I recall it cost Dindo a round of drinks. From that point on Michele and I got on like a house on fire.

Six weeks later and he was gone.

Rest in Peace, Michele. 1956 to 2001.

John Brooks



John Brooks has been an ever present at Le Mans since the early Group C days and, since then, has established himself as one of the world's leading sportscar racing photographers. As you can see he can write a bit too! He's available for hire and reward on five00mm@gmail.com or catch up with more of his excellent work at www.doubledclutch.com or www.johnbrooksphoto.com

Sweet 16 – Mike Cotton Interviews James Weaver

Continued from page 69...

Courtesy of www.dailysportscar.com, Mike Cotton (Text) and John Brooks (Photographs)

Part Two – The life of Riley



The Spice was a nice car but it wasn't a match for the new Ferrari 333 SP, a thoroughbred which had dominated the 'sprint' races in 1994. Bob Riley had helped the team to develop the Spice but he was itching to make his own car. "I don't want to sell you parts, I want to sell you a car" he told Rob Dyson. He and longtime crew chief Pat Smith went to Riley's workshop in Indianapolis, looked carefully at the drawings and ordered two, so launching the car that raced as the Riley & Scott Mk3, and became the most successful machine of its era.

James was the leader of the Dyson Racing team that netted 36 wins with the Riley & Scott in the next seven years, including two in the Daytona 24-Hours. The chassis that won the Daytona enduro twice covered 53,000 race miles, and was described by Rob as "a magnificent car to drive, beautifully balanced, very stout, very forgiving, an

easy car to drive fast." In number 16, James won no fewer than five World Sports Car races in 1995 alone at Road Atlanta (a solo drive), at Watkins Glen with Butch Leitzinger, at Sears Point (solo), at Mosport with Andy Wallace, and at New Orleans (solo). Even so, he missed the title by two points to Fermin Velez, who won three and was consistently on the podium with Andy Evans in the Scandia Racing Ferrari.

Rob himself drove in the endurance races and his driver lineup comprised Weaver, Leitzinger, Wallace, and John Paul Junior. In all James won 17 races in the Riley & Scott, despite majoring his 1996 season with Ray Bellm in Europe, and with the David Price Racing Panoz team in 1997. Even in 1997, though, James earned four outright wins in the World Sports Car championship, including the Daytona 24-Hours, and was on the podium four more times, to finish third in the championship to Butch Leitzinger and Elliott Forbes-Robinson, making it a clean sweep for Dyson's team.

"The Riley & Scott must be my favourite racing car" says James. "It won in World Sports Cars, was the Intrepid in 1989, won in Can-Am and won in Grand-Am. All the same car, it's an extraordinary record. I don't think that Bob Riley has ever had the credit he deserves for producing such a wonderful machine. It's a fabulous car to drive, reliable, fast, brilliant in every way. It was great in the wet, had bags of download but the only negative was that it had quite a bit of drag and wasn't all that quick up the straights. It would have had too much drag for Le Mans but on the American circuits it was dynamite, fantastic over the bumps, everywhere in fact."

James even puts the Riley ahead of the Porsche 962. "The Porsche had a great reputation, it was a very good car, but if you take the emotion out of it, just compare car A and car B, in a blind test, then the Riley & Scott would be the winner. The Porsche is one of the all-time great cars and in my opinion the Riley was better."

To wrap up James's many successes with the Dyson Racing Riley & Scotts, he won the USRRC's Can-Am championship in 1989 with six straight victories and three seconds, and was also



second in the International Sports Racing Series at Kyalami. He won the Grand-Am Championship in 2000 and again in 2001, the first time with four victories and four more podia, in 2001 with five victories, including two 1-2 results with Butch Leitzinger.



©John Brooks, 1999



©John Brooks, 2001

Added to that, James was sixth at Sebring and third in Mid-Ohio in the still-young American Le Mans Series, still in the same R&S. And in 2002 Rob's son, Chris, was mentored by James and won five Grand-Am races in his rookie year, to finish second in the series, James third with three victories.

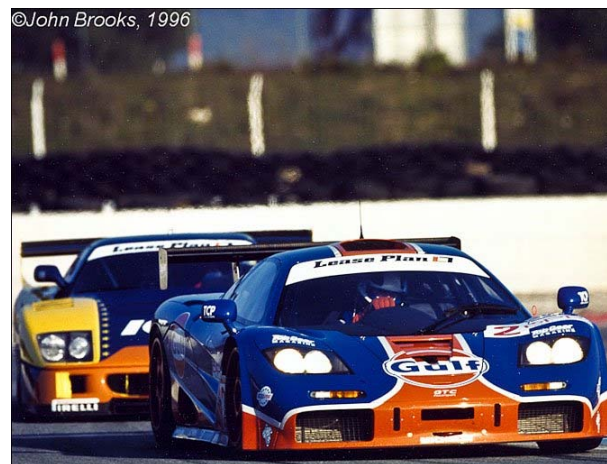
Disappointments at Le Mans

James returned to Le Mans in the last five years of the 20th century, recording just one finish and four disappointing retirements. He joined Richard Piper and Tiff Needell in Piper's Jaguar XJ220, and ex TWR team car, in 1995, but it failed to go the distance.

He had a full season with Ray Bellm in 1996 in the Gulf sponsored McLaren F1 GTR, winning five rounds of the BPR Global Endurance championship and sharing the title with Bellm.



©John Brooks, 1996



©John Brooks, 1996

JJ Lehto, Le Mans winner in 1995 and star of the McLaren lineup, joined the team at Le Mans in '96 and all three drivers performed brilliantly, taking the fight to the trio of new Porsche GT1-96 and running as high as third overall at midday on Sunday, behind the winning Joest Porsche WSC and one of the GT1s from Zuffenhausen. The race was dry and run at a record speed, and one by one the McLarens cracked up, Bellm's being the last to suffer from a broken gearbox and losing 20 laps in the pits. Ninth overall, and fifth in GT1, was a very poor reward for all the effort that went into the team.

"The McLaren was a nice car to drive, but the engine was relatively heavy" James remembers. "There was always the feeling that it was going to overtake you under braking. Apart from the nervousness under braking it was a pleasure to drive. It only weighed about 1,100 kg and you have to remember it was a road car, and as such it was superb. To put that into perspective a new Ferrari or McLaren is 1,300 kg plus, and if the F1 GTR had a purpose built engine like the new McLaren, it would be close to 1,000 kg. It was fun just to sit in it, drive down the pit-lane, open the door, blip the throttle, it was a bit of theatre really. Ray never said we shouldn't damage the car, but it was such a gorgeous car that you didn't want to damage it."

James is full of praise for Michael Caine, who he said out-operated everyone else on the track "like a military operation. All the politics, with arguments over the Porsche GT1, made me realise that racing in Europe was not as good as racing in America." Rival entrant David Price, he said, ran an equally effective team with but with more laissez-faire with endless banter and good humour, and it was for Price that James drove in 1997, in the 'factory supported' Panoz team.



The Adrian Reynard designed Panoz GTR, with its Ford V8 position described as “front mid-engine” had its share of teething troubles in the inaugural FIA GT Championship and rarely got a look-in against the hard-charging Mercedes and McLarens. James and Andy Wallace picked up ninth places at Spa and at Donington Park, failed to go the distance at Le Mans (engine failure on Sunday morning), and then James asked to be released from his contract as the deafening noise from the exhaust pipes, exiting beside the cockpit, was affecting his hearing. “Dave was very understanding about it” he says. David Brabham was also seriously bothered by the noise level but stayed the course, and he

and Perry McCarthy gave Don Panoz a huge reward by claiming third place at Sebring in October, the marque’s first podium.

James drove for the Porsche factory just once, at Le Mans in 1998, in one of the Joest Porsche WSC sports cars, but this was “a bit of a disaster” because the two Joest entries were absorbed into Porsche’s five-car team, a real “win or bust” effort from the factory in their 50th anniversary year.

Allan McNish achieved his first Le Mans victory in the GT1-98, with Yannick Dalmas and Stephane Ortelli, but the Joest sports cars did not handle well and were not fast enough, either, as a factory dictat had them re-engineered with the GT1 car’s engine, gearbox and suspension which completely spoiled the handling. “All the geometry was wrong” says James. “The first gearbox broke in qualifying, and in the race we weren’t going all that great, fifth or sixth or something. Then David Murry [the American Porsche driver] got it all wrong at one of the chicanes and backed it into the hedge.” Repairs were carried out and James took the wheel, only to hear “a huge bang” behind him approaching the Indianapolis corner. “It was pitch black and it felt like I’d hit something, but I couldn’t see anything in the mirrors. I waggled the steering wheel and everything seemed to be alright, but when I went past the pits they rang up and said ‘your tail has fallen off’. Oh, so that’s what it was!” In fact it was the engine cover, luckily clearing the rear wing, but all the mounts had been ripped out of the body so the car had to be retired.

James’ last appearance at Le Mans was in 1999 when he drove the Audi R9C, the coupe body style GT1 car designed and built in Norfolk. Andy Wallace had plenty to say about the car in his recent interview on this site, so suffice it to say that it showed lots of promise, never fulfilled, and retired with a gearbox failure. “The Audi was a nice car” says James. “It had low drag and low downforce but it didn’t cool very well, and when they sorted out the cooling it lost some straight-line speed. It was a fantastic looking car but the lower front wishbone was rather flexible so when you went on the brakes the front tended to wander around a bit. The gearbox was dodgy but apart from that, it was fine!”



The lid remains ajar on the topic of James’ withdrawal from the Bentley team in 2002.

The terms of his withdrawal, on the eve of the test weekend in April, were to do with the lack of tyre pressure sensors, which James had written into his contract. “They were promised but they never materialised. The technology was there and to go and race without them is barking mad. I regret that Richard and I argued over it, it is my biggest regret in racing. There were enough unanswered questions that it didn’t seem very sensible for me to drive the car. I think they did a good job getting everything sorted because in the race the car ran fine.” For the record, Wallace, Butch Leitzinger and stand-in Eric van de Poele finished fourth overall, laying the groundwork for the Bentley win in 2003. “I have never been particularly keen on Le Mans” says James, wrapping up his interest in the event.

Lola takes on Audi

The Riley marque had been at the forefront in Grand-Am racing throughout the past decade but the old warrior was showing its age in the American Le Mans Series when pitted against the Audi R8s run under the Audi Sport North America banner by Joest and Champion. Late in the 2002 season Rob Dyson made a complete switch, buying a Lola EX257-MG to compete in the LMP2 category.

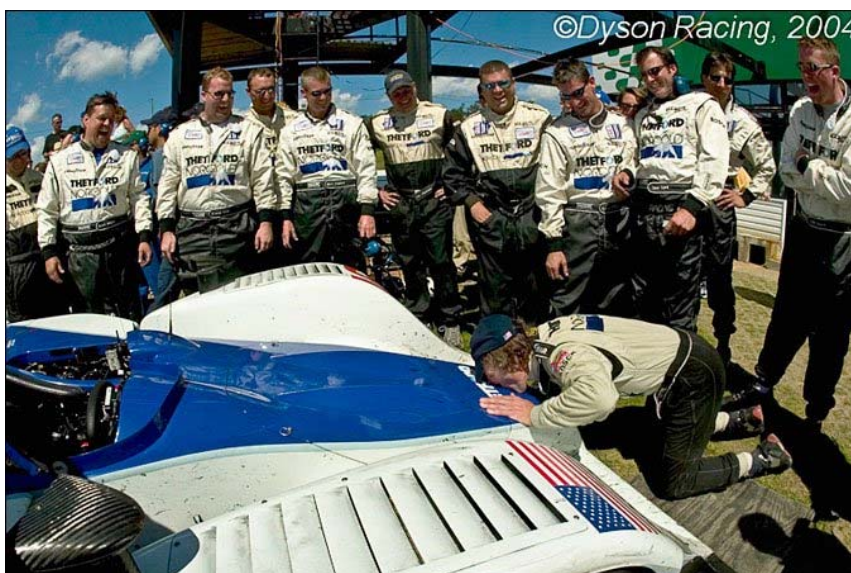


©Dyson Racing, 2003



©Dyson Racing, 2003

It was an inspired choice as Chris Dyson was able to win the ALMS LMP2 title in 2003 with four class wins, including at the Sebring 12-Hours, teamed with Andy Wallace. James and Butch Leitzinger scored an historic victory at



©Dyson Racing, 2004

California's Infineon Raceway in July when they took overall victory ahead of the Audis, Dyson and Wallace following to make it a class 1-2.

"We had the best car that weekend, no question" says James. "We started from pole position ahead of the Audis and I was running third to Johnny Herbert and Marco Werner. They were having pick-up problems with their Michelin tyres. We were on Goodyears and we didn't have any pickup, so we managed to get by them near the end and win the race. It was a case of everything being right for us on the day." The Lola was down to the 675 kg minimum weight, "nimble and frisky, with a short wheelbase",

and is actually one of James' favourite race cars along with the Riley, and his early mounts including the Hawke DL11, the Tiga Formula Ford and the Sports 2000.

Dyson moved the two Lola-MGs up into the LMP1 class in 2004, getting more power from the four-cylinder MG turbo engines with bigger restrictors to compensate for the extra weight. James and Butch had another outright win at Mosport and seven more podium results in nine races, finishing up second in the ALMS driver championship.

Remaining faithful to Lola, Dyson invested in two of the B06/10 chassis for the 2006 season, and AER's powerful and reliable V8 twin-turbo engine. "The engine had very good top end performance and good driveability, but it needed more mid-range punch off the corners. Unfortunately Dyson Racing ran it for just one year. If some of the developments made on the (AER) Mazda engine had been applied to the V8 it would have had outrageous performance off the corners and even more top end, and I am sure it would have kept the diesels honest."

Outright wins eluded the team but they enjoyed a string of solid performances: three pole positions, two fastest laps and eight podium results made the team the most successful challenger, by far, to the Audis, and James was again runner-up in the ALMS driver championship.

And then it was time to say goodbye to America, or rather au revoir as he continues to work as Dyson Racing's representative in England, liaising with Lola and AER, who make the Mazda engines. A 20-year career with one privately owned team says volumes both for the driver and for the owner. James and Andy Wallace, and Ollie Gavin, can ham it up like the Marx brothers "and Rob is literally shaking with laughter, asking how you guys can be so rude to each other." But that's the peculiar style of English humour which chimes well in America. Long may it last.

Michael Cotton

Transport in Le Mans

Public transport –trams, buses and taxis – works quite well in Le Mans. The former special bus services from the track to the town centre have been suspended; all traffic from the track to the city will be handled by the tram service instead.

The Tram

This runs from Antares, inside the full circuit and quite close to Houx Annexe, and goes through Le Mans city centre, passing under the Mulsanne Straight and heading right past Carrefour on the way. A new tunnel takes passengers direct from Garage Vert on the Bugatti circuit, to the terminus. It passes close to the Tertre Rouge bar, but sadly there is no convenient stop nearby. The tram stops on the North side of the railway station, where a major interchange is being constructed. After arriving in the city centre – Place de la Republique - all trams continue on to Universite, which is on the west side of the city. Trams run fairly frequently, typically every 12 minutes to/from Antares. A more frequent service is promised during the race and at other peak times, including Friday afternoon and evening, for the Drivers' Parade.

The trams tend to do quite well compared to cars in the traffic – which has been slowed down by numerous traffic light junctions to protect trams and cars from each other – so for sightseeing in Le Mans it has a lot to recommend it. It is also excellent value for money, especially if you use the park and ride at Antares. Currently 3.65 euros will buy a day's relatively secure parking, plus a return ticket to Le Mans each for as many occupants as there are in your car! Using the tram for shopping at Carrefour is feasible, and wheeled luggage is allowed on board, but do not expect the tram to be empty when you board for the trip back to the circuit – the service is very popular with locals. If you use the tram, remember that on the return trip to the circuit you want a tram bound for Antares – NOT Espal, which is the other branch of the service, and terminates a long way from the circuit.

At Antares, the car park is barrier controlled, and on approaching the barrier to enter, the ticket seller in the big booth will offer you the bargain tickets quoted above. After parking, walk across to the tram station, where a tram will usually be waiting. After joining the tram you must "composte" your ticket. This has nothing to do with last week's cabbage leaves, but requires you to enter your ticket in the machine near the door in the tram, which validates it. Do this every time you join a tram. When rejoining your car after the trip, the car park exit barrier will lift automatically when you approach.

If you elect not to use the park and ride, then ticket purchase takes place from a machine on the tram station platform – the same rules about validating tickets apply, of course. The tram line is UNIVERSITE – ANTARES, prices: 2,70 € for a return ticket, 3,90 € for a day pass and 10,50 for a 3 day pass. Tickets are sold from automatic machines at stops, at Setram agencies and from the bus coinductors.

Sunday 5th and Monday 6th June

- University to Antares/Circuit des 24 Heures: From 1:30 pm – 7:00 pm: One tram every 15 minutes
- Antares/Circuit des 24 Heures to University: From 1:30 pm – 7:00 pm: One tram every 15 minutes

Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th June (Practice Sessions)

- University to Antares/Circuit des 24 Heures Up until 10.00 pm : One tram every 10 minutes. After 10.00 pm: One tram every 12 minutes. Last departure from University at 01.20 am
- Antares/Circuit des 24 Heures to University Up until 10:00 pm : One tram every 10 minutes. After 10:00 pm: One tram every 12 minutes. Last tram from University at 01.00 am

Friday 10th June (Drivers Parade)

- University to Antares/Circuit des 24 heures Up until 9.00 pm: One tram every 6 minutes. After 9.00 pm: One tram every 8 minutes. Last tram from University 02.12 am
- Antares/Circuit 24 heures to University Up until 9.00 pm : One tram every 6 minutes. After 9.00 pm: One tram every 8 minutes Last departure from Antares at 01.15 am

Saturday 11th June

- University to Antares/Circuit des 24 heures. Up until 11.00 am : One tram every 13 minutes. Between 11.00 am and 4.00 pm: One tram every 7 minutes Between 4:00 pm and 4.00 am: One tram every 13 minutes
- Antares/Circuit des 24 heures to University: Up until 10.00 am: A tram every 13 minutes Between 10.00 am and 2.30 pm: A tram every 7 minutes Between 2.30 pm and 01.00 am: A tram every 13 minutes

Sunday 12th June

- University to Antares/Circuit des 24 heures.: Between 04.00 am and 09.00 am : A tram every 35 minutes Between 09.00 am and 12.00 am : A tram every 13 minutes Between 12.00 am and 6.00 pm: A tram every 7 minutes Between 6:00 pm and 9.00 pm: A tram every 13 minutes Between 9.00 pm and 00.50 am: A tram every 35 minutes
- Antares/Circuit des 24 heures to University : Between 01.00 am and 03.00 am: A tram every 20 minutes Between 03.00 am and 08.00 am: A tram every 35 minutes Between 08.00 am and 10.30 am: A tram every 13 minutes Between 10.30 am and 5.30 pm: A tram every 7 minutes Between 5.30 pm and 8.30 pm: A tram every 13 minutes Between 8.30 pm and 11.50 pm: A tram every 35 minutes



Partial map of the new tram

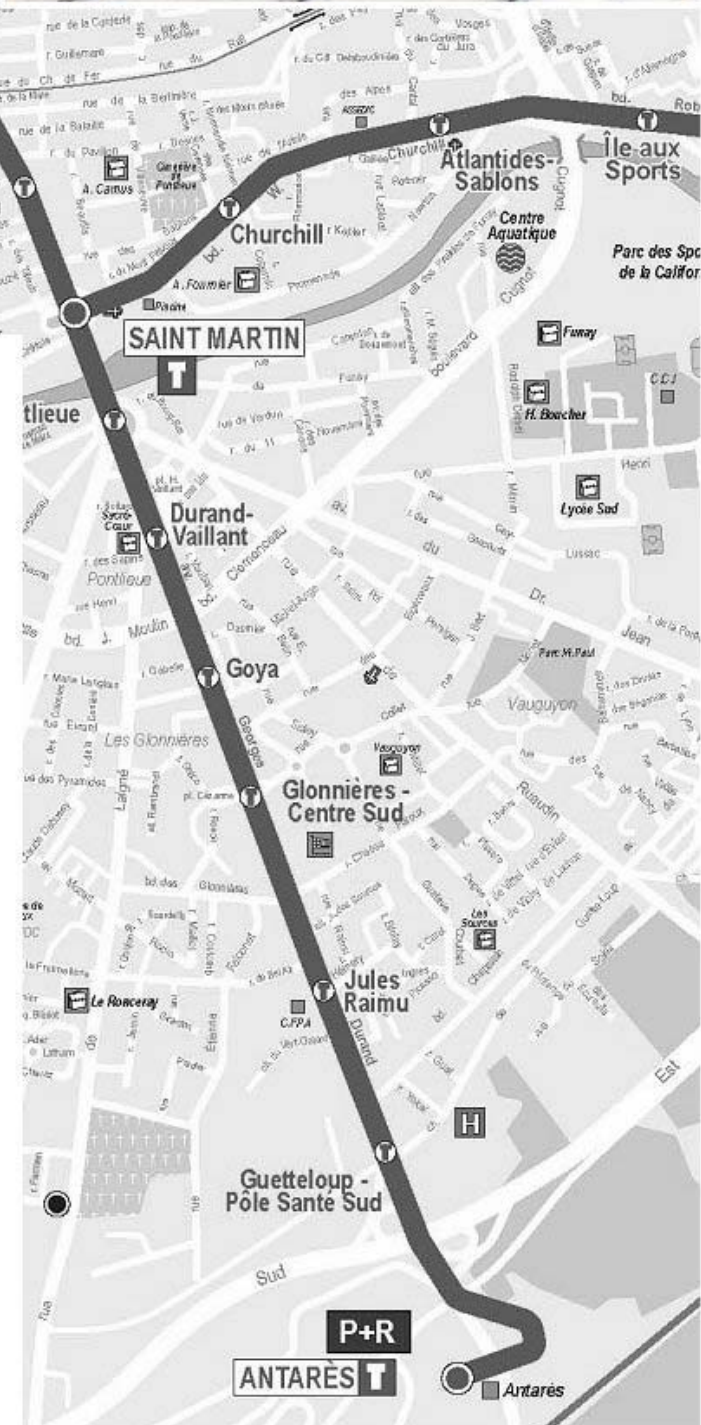
Some important tram stations:

ANTARES is the closest station to the circuit, it's actually inside the race track.

REPUBLIQUE is the best choice for visiting the drivers parade and the scrutineering.

GLONNIERES - CENTRE SUD is your exit to the big Carrefour supermarket, see the shopping chapter in this guide.

GARES is the French word for station, so if you need to catch a train leave there.



Taxi

- Radio Taxi du Mans : +33 (0) 2 43 24 92 92
- Taxis Station Gare : +33 (0) 2 43 24 99 99
- Le Mans Taxi Radio : +33 (0) 2 43 82 07 07

Taxi's are usually waiting opposite the main entrance to the circuit near the museum for customers. Permanent taxi ranks can be found at various points throughout Le Mans, e.g. Place de la République, Centre Hospitalier, Gare Nord et Sud, Sablons (Place du Marché) and at Pontlieue.

By bicycle

If you can handle the transport, a bicycle is a nice thing to have. You can whizz from Tertre Rouge to Arnage village and Arnage corner via the Esses, the Village and points in between. That way you can see loads of action and get up to the shops for fresh bread on the Sunday morning. You will also have no traffic problems.

In 2010 there were bicycles for rent at the Antares Tram terminus for €10/day. Do note though, that after dark, a high visibility jacket is required by law. Failure to wear one can be punishable by a fine.

Navettes/Shuttle buses

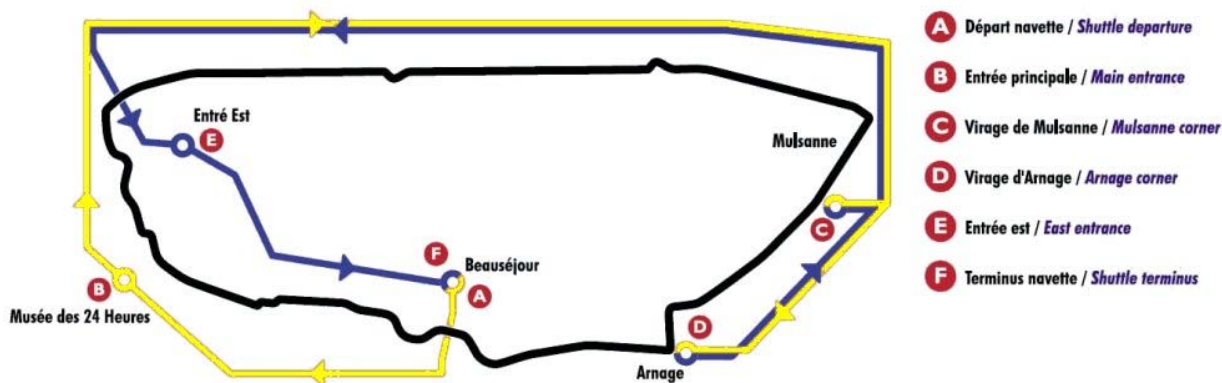
This A.C.O. service has increased over the years to provide free (to those with Enceinte Generale) transport around the circuit. These buses can be great way to get around the circuit but they have also become more chaotic with the bus-stop at Mulsanne corner becoming rather agitated after midnight due to buses arriving with few or no empty seats to take away folks waiting and buses after lunch on Sunday taking several hours to go nowhere in the traffic jams.

In 2010 the A.C.O implemented a new routing system with two navette routes. The Orange "A" route runs between the South Entrance (the tram terminus near Antares) and Beausejour with a stop at Technoparc. The Blue "B" route runs between the North Entrance and Arnage/Mulsanne viewing areas with a stop near the Porsche viewing area.

In 2010 the A route ran

- Wednesday and Thursday 15:00 to 00:30
- Saturday 09:00 to 01:30
- Sunday 09:00 to 16:30

The B route ran non-stop from Saturday 14:00 through Sunday 18:00.



8 little passenger "trains" will run as follows (free of charge):

1. North Entrance to Maison Blanche
- 2,3. P13/ Paddock/ Village
4. Beausejour
- 5,6. Virage Porsche, Technopark roundabout
7. Antares, Technopark Roundabout
8. Maison Blanche/Virage Porsche (exterior)

On Wednesday and Thursday only trains 5 & 6 run, 15:00 to midnight. On Saturday all trains run 09:30 to 02:00 and on Sunday from 09:00 till 15:00.

Left something at home? - Shopping in Le Mans

Just in case you've had no time to prepare properly for Le Mans, don't worry. It's no problem to arrive with just your brain and a valid credit card.

All the supermarkets mentioned here have cash machines so they are a good place to get enough readyies to keep you going at the circuit, which is a notoriously difficult place to get cash. Some of them have petrol stations on their premises and are also a good place to top up on fuel as they are undoubtedly the cheapest places for petrol. All petrol stations accept foreign plastic now, so don't worry, even out of hours, and you will find that many supermarkets are changing to plastic only with no booth any more. Carrefour Market at Mulsanne changed recently. In most of the large supermarkets in France now, when you use plastic, you will be offered the option to pay for your goods in either "Livres Sterling" or Euros. It may be better to opt to pay in Sterling as you won't be charged by your bank for the exchange. On the other hand, based on the enthusiasm of retailers to select the Sterling option **without** your permission it may be more to the advantage of their card processor. If you are planning to take wine back to the UK with you, it is best to stock up early as some supermarkets run out of the most popular brands (such as JP Chenet) by the Monday after the race. These branded wines are nothing like as popular amongst the locals as they are with the Brits, so they don't carry such large stocks as you may find at their counterparts at the channel ports. If you haven't got enough room in your car, you can ask at the "Acceuil" (Help) desk, if they would be willing to reserve some for you ("Je peux le reserver?").

Buying cold Beer: Just be aware that due to extremely high turnover some supermarkets will run out of beer and ice at some point during race week, this has happened regularly in the past, some comments about this:

- *"Auchan ..., as when I arrived Monday morning on the way home, there was virtually no beer left."*
- *"...the same with Carrefour - I went in on the Monday before the race to find none of my usual brew..."*
- *"...from Tuesday on, Carrefour had big loads of beer right at the entrance. So don't got here on Mondays, but it's ok later on in the week."*

Another thing to be aware of is that French supermarkets don't give out carrier bags, so it's a good idea to take some shopping bags or boxes with you.

Information for vegetarians



During race week the whole city of Le Mans joins in – and many shop windows are decorated. There is even a prize for the shopkeeper with the best display.

reported that Super U does have a specialist food section that has Soya Milk.

Vegetarian food is virtually unknown in France, but soya (or soja as it is there) is readily available, so really it is up to you to your ingenuity to cook for yourselves. You can usually find out the ingredients on items as many are multi-language. However some are not - learn French!

You can find pre-packed Salads in Auchan and Carrefour and probably LeClerc and Champion as well. These can be pretty good - with cheese and egg options. Also there are usually other pre-pack salad ingredients that you can make a meal of. Of course there is French bread. You can just fill up on a baguette and cream cheese. It has been

Portable BBQs are plentiful in the supermarkets - if you can find anything to cook. If you are bringing your stuff with you, be aware how hot it can be at that time of year. Without a fridge, food might NOT last, even with portable car-fridges.

About French opening times

Monday to Saturday is the norm; details for the shops mentioned below are given there. Do not count on open supermarkets on Sunday, some comments: Sunday opening is rare, and it is only the smaller ones that you'll find serving on a Sunday morning and then only up until noon. Moncé en Belin, Ruaudin, Savignon l'Eveque are three places where you'll get the basics. Note that departure day this year (Monday after the race) is a public holiday. The big supermarkets will probably be open but don't rely on much beyond that. Stock up for your return earlier in the week if possible.

- *"Carrefour, Super U, Auchan etc are very rarely open on Sundays. The only supermarkets you will find open (usually from 9.30 to 12.00) are in the small villages - Shopi in Savigne l'Eveque is the nearest that I know of - and they are generally closed on Monday mornings to compensate. It's still a proper day off here, don't you know!"*
- *"Can confirm that Carrefour and Super U were both closed on the Sunday. The petrol station opposite Carrefour was open on Sunday as was the one in Arnage village. Both sell bread, water, crisps etc. Don't think they stay open late though."*
- *"The Champion at Moncé en Belin - not far south of Arnage - is open every Sunday morning."*

Local markets

If you're driving in on Monday, check out Mamers for a great street market (cheese man likes to practice his English so will set you up with the best smelly stuff to put in your tent to keep the thieves out – and he'll let you sample it first) It is a good place for a short stop and is just about 40 mins north of the great City of Le Mans and a good alternative route if you come off the motorway at Alençon. Also, Bonnetable has a market Tuesdays. The biggest problem with both of these is that they interrupt the serious business of scrutineering. The usual big street markets in Le Mans (Jacobins) tend to get interrupted by something else that's going on there...

Other market days in the Sarthe are: Mondays: La Ferté Bernard, Mamers. Tuesdays : Beaumont, Bonnetable, Bouloire, Ecommoy, Loué. Wednesdays: Ballon, Le Grand Lucé, Sillé le Guillaume. Thursdays: Conlie, Le Lude, Marolles le Braults, La Suze sur Sarthe, Tuffé. Fridays: Malicorne, Pontvallée, Vibraye. Saturdays (well, if you're around the previous weekend): Allonnes, Brulon, Fresnay sur Sarthe and Montfort le Gésnois.

If you are looking for something with a real local flavour, try the famous "Rillettes du Mans" – available in most supermarkets but best bought from a butcher in the town or one of the local villages. This dish, which is a kind of cross between pâté and potted pork, can be a little off-putting to look at as it tends to be preserved by a thick layer of fat – but don't worry, just scrape this off and enjoy the delicious stuff underneath!



If you're looking for something to take back with you to appease families and partners back home, Rillettes are also often sold in nice decorated pots which make a lovely present for carnivores. Other things worth looking out for are "Confit de Canard" (preserved duck legs, in tins), cheese of course (try Liverot, Chaumes and Munster if you're into truly smelly delights) and Saumur

for the drinkers, a great-value sparkling wine from the Loire Valley.

Your mum or a favourite aunty might also appreciate some Alençon lace. Also, try Malicorne, the centre of the Sarthe's pottery industry. And of course, there are always loads of shops at the circuit for petrolheads.

For those wanting a day out away from Le Mans, there is also an excellent shop at the Manoir de Courboyer, the headquarters of the Perche National Park which sells a large range of local and regional products. It also boasts a nice restaurant, good walking, and a typical local manor house to look around.

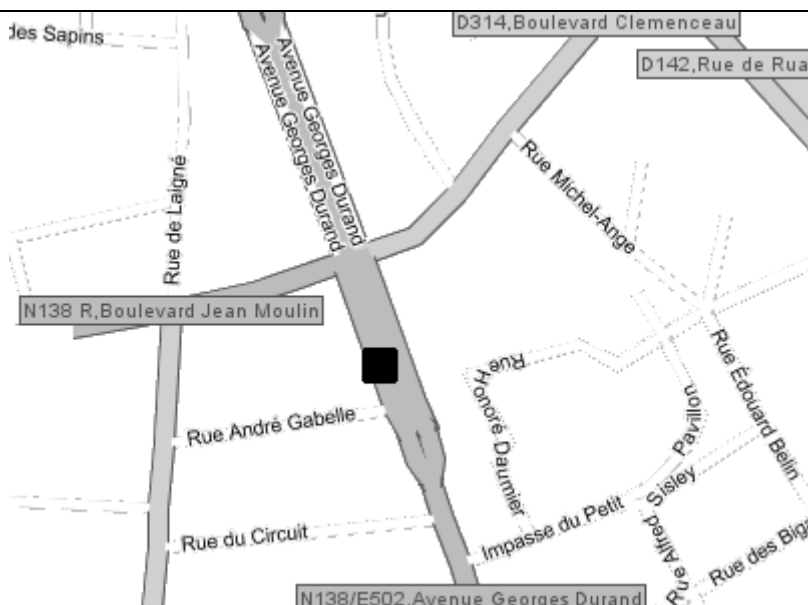
For UK visitors: Cigarettes are slightly cheaper in France but don't forget, you cannot buy these in supermarkets (or their surrounding malls). They should be purchased at a Tabac (often attached to a bar) - these are distinguished by their famous red lozenge sign with white writing. After a huge increase in tax in recent years, the government has recently seen fit to reduce the price slightly and they're still cheaper than the UK. For english brands such as Bensons or Superkings the best chance you'll have will be at the tabac opposite the tills in Carrefour. It's one of the biggest in La Sarthe.

Addresses

Carrefour

309, Avenue Georges Durand
F-72019 Le Mans
Phone: +33-(0)2 43615656
Monday-Friday: 8:30 am – 9:30 pm
Saturday: 8:30 am – 9:00 pm

App. 2 miles away from the race track, large supermarket and lots of shops nearby, from toothbrush to tent you can get everything you need. There's also a gas station nearby.



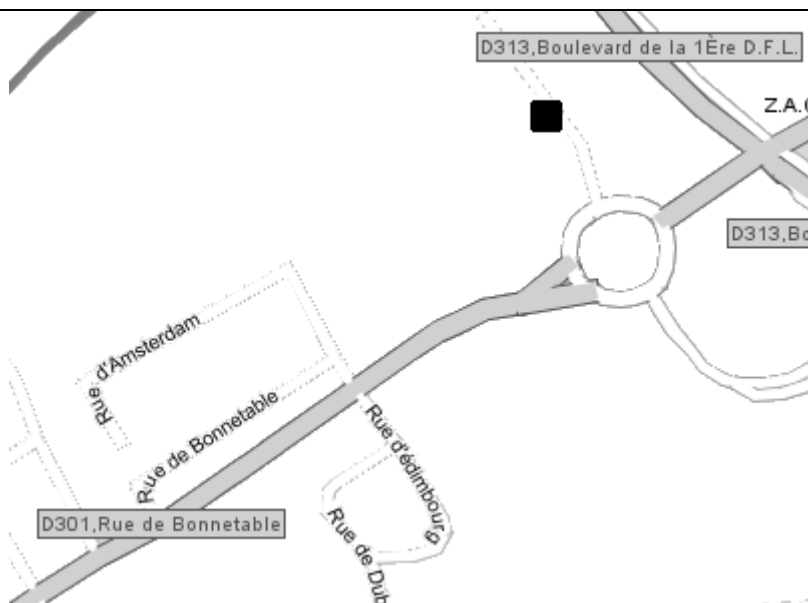
How to get there:

- **By car from the Maison Blanche side of the track:** Follow the road up towards the main entrance (track on right hand side). At lights outside main entrance, go straight ahead going under the dual carriageway. About 50 yds after bridge turn first right into Avenue du Panorama. Continue to end and turn left at T junction. Follow road up “Avenue George Durand” and Carrefour and the Centre Commercial Sud is on the righthand side.
- **By car from the Houx Annexe side:** Head towards Tertre Rouge corner. Just before you go under the bridge where the track joins the N138 (Mulsanne Straight), turn right up the slip road (this is just past the entrance to the Tertre rouge viewing area). At the top (N138) turn left and follow road up “Avenue George Durand” and Carrefour and the Centre Commercial Sud is on the right. This way is not available during track times so it keep it easy use the Maison Blanche route.
- **By public transport:** Use the new tram, see the chapter “Transport in Le Mans” in this guide for details.

LeClerc

Route de Bonnetable
F-72016 Le Mans Cedex
Phone: +33-(0)2 43746000
Monday-Friday: 9:00 am – 9:00 pm
Saturday: 8:30 am – 9:00 pm

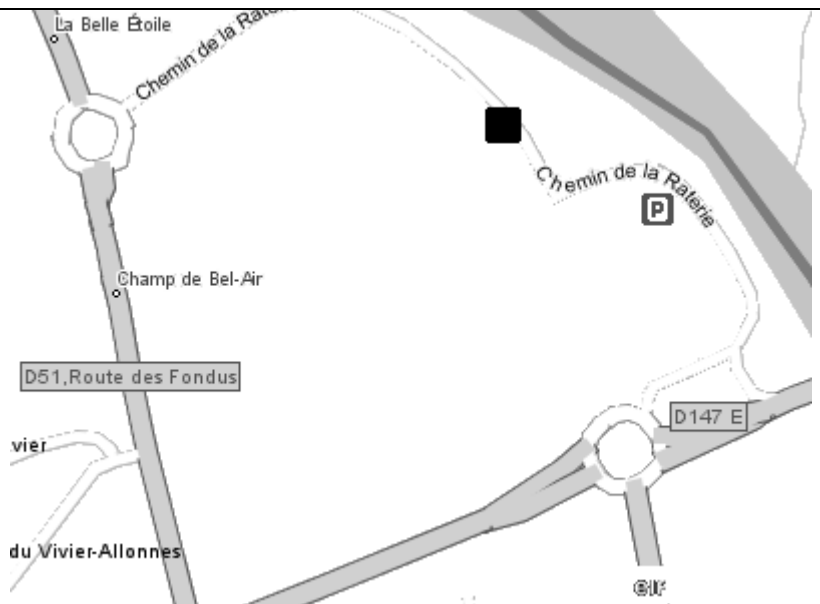
Large French supermarket chain, also good for cheap garden furniture and pool and camping equipment, app 10 km away from the circuit



LeClerc (Allones)

Route de la Souze
F-72700 Allones
Phone: +33-(0)2 43394041
Monday-Friday: 9:00 am – 9:00 pm
Saturday: 8:30 am – 9:00 pm

Large French supermarket chain, app 8 km away from the circuit. It is to be found by heading into town from Arnage on the dual carriageway through the industrial area. at the end of the dual carriageway, with a big tower in front of you, turn left towards Allones. The supermarket is to be found on your right after crossing a bridge



Super U at Arnage

Centre commercial Rive Sud -
Boulevard Pierre Lefauchaux
F-72230 Arnage
Phone: +33-(0)2 43 21 22 23
Monday-Thursday & Saturday:
9:00 am – 7:30 pm
Friday: 9:00 am – 8:00 pm

Large supermarket with a nice coffee shop/restaurant and a good loo



Draught beer equipment (cooling and system) can be hired at:

Le Palais de la Biere

ZAC du Vivier
F-72700 Allones
Tel.: +33-(0)2 43 80 88 65

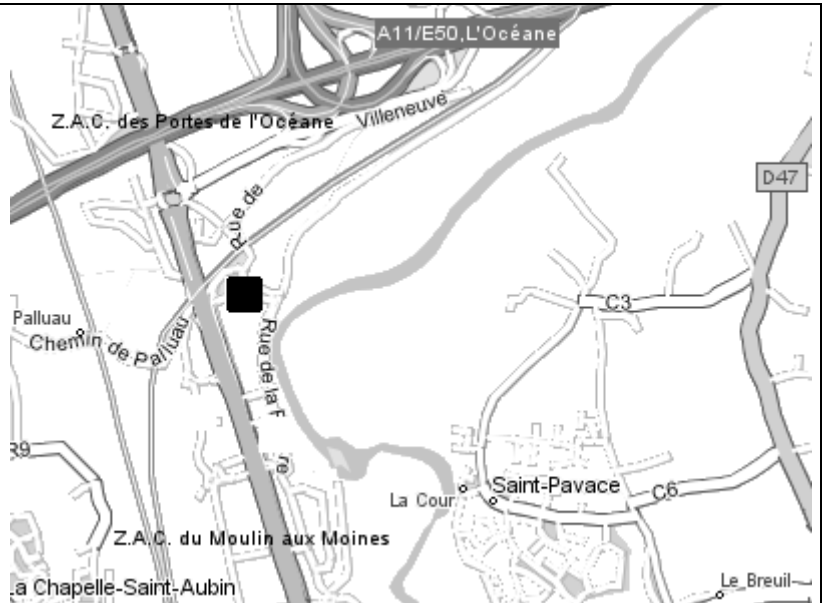
Draught beer equipment (cooling and system) can be hired here. According to reports from CA members they have more than 200 sorts of beer for sale. Someone spoke to them in August 2005 "... appears around €93 for a 30l barrel and all the kit". It's next to the big LeClerc Superstore. After crossing the bridge do not go into Leclerc but carry straight on to the next traffic lights, then turn right. The shop is called V & B (vin et bieres) and is on the next corner on the left. The beer selection is truly amazing.



Auchan

ZAC du Moulin aux Moines
F-72650 La Chapelle St. Aubin
Phone : +33-(0)2 43 83 13 00
Monday-Friday: 9:00 am – 8:00 pm

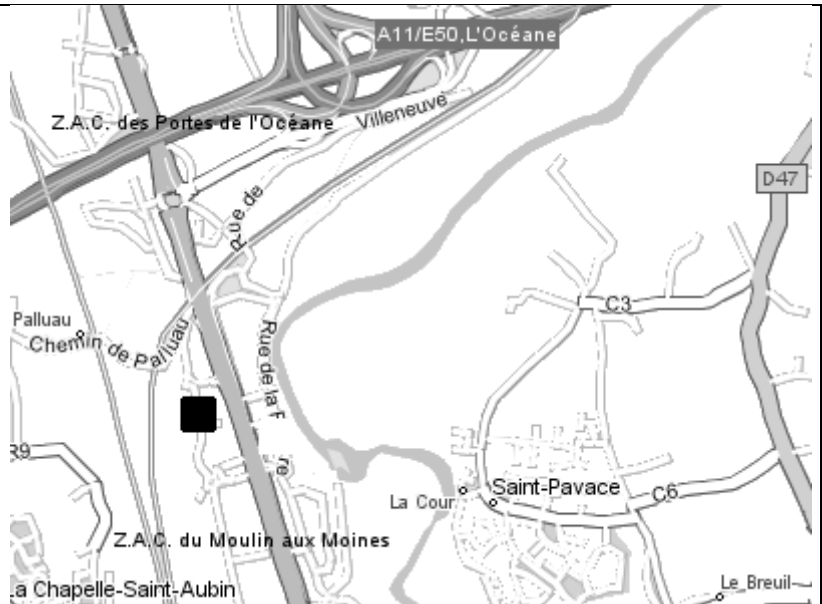
Supermarket, one CA member wrote:
"We tend to use the Auchan on the other side of town as its a meeting place en route, and we buy samples of wine which if we like we stock up on.
... with simple carparks and no magical mystery tour to get in or out"



Decathlon

Zon d'activités Auchan Nord
Route Nationale 138
La Chapelle Saint Aubin
F-72650 La Chapelle Saint Aubin
Phone : +33-(0)2 43 77 08 08
Fax: +33-(0)2 43 87 05 55
Monday-Saturday: 9:00 am – 8:00 pm

Bicycles, sports gear, camping gear
This is on the west side of N138, app
12 km away from the circuit



Decathlon

Parc d'activité des Hunaudières
F-72230 Ruaudin
Phone: +33-(0)2 43 50 05 50
Fax: +33-(0)2 43 50 05 59
Monday-Saturday: 9:00 am – 8:00 pm

Bicycles, sports gear, camping gear,
app 3 km away from the circuit on the
N138



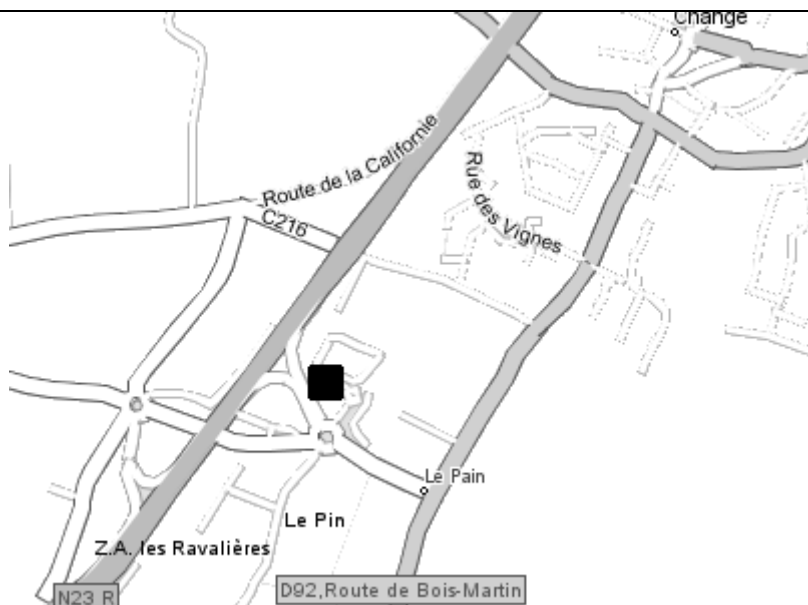
Super-U

F-72560 Change
Phone: +33-(0)2 43 78 30 10

Monday-Thursday & Saturday:
9:00 am – 7:30 pm

Friday: 9:00 am – 8:00 pm

Take the N23, it's app. 8 km away from
the circuit and relatively easy to get to
from camp sites like Maison Blanche
and Expo.



Fireworks, costumes and decoration

L'Arlequin, ZAC Hunaudières, F-72230 Ruaudin, Phone: +33-(0)2 43 28 29 15, Fax : +33-(0)2 43 87 62 98, E-Mail :
info@arlequin-lemans.fr, Website : www.arlequin-lemans.fr, Tuesday-Saturday: 9:30 am– 12:30 pm and 2:00 pm –
7:00 pm

Camera Repairs

Didier Faugas, 10 Place de la Republique, Phone: +33-(0)2 43 24 28 12

Highly recommended by a CA member: *"We've spent half the national debt with Faugas and he's done a couple of repairs for us and is extremely reasonable. Not to mention very knowledgeable to boot."*

Family Village

This shopping centre, half way down the Mulsanne Straight, opened in 2009 and includes everything from Opticians to electrical goods and two restaurants. It is to be extended in 2011/12 to include a new Auchan supermarket and a lot more restaurants and shops.

Bars & Restaurants

Aux Portes du Circuit: This can be found 300 yards into town from the main entrance, directly opposite Expo campsite. It is also known as "Jeannine's" to some CA members as the place is managed by the lovely lady Mme. Jeannine Belnou. Usually a lots of race fans are hanging around there (inside and outside) and are waiting for some burn-outs to happen on the street in front of it. This is unfortunately often interrupted by the police. Although this is a bar and restaurant, it has been reported that there will be no food served during the race, just drinks.



Restaurant Auberge des Hunaudieres: Situated approx 500 yards before the first of the chicanes on the Mulsanne straight, this legendary restaurant used to offer dramatic trackside seats from which you could enjoy good food and drink. Unfortunately the view is now obscured by green covers attached to the catch fencing. You will also be lucky to eat there during racing week as the restaurant is usually taken over by corporate hospitality. However, there is still an open air public bar to the rear of the building. Clamber up onto the benches for a glimpse of the cars going flat out down the Mulsanne. It's even possible to walk right up to the catch fencing and armco due to the questionable security! To get to Les Hunaudieres and the Shanghai des 24 Heures head South East on the N142 (Route du Mans) running parallel to the Mulsanne Straight. Take one of the right turnings heading towards the circuit and you will enter the network of one way roads. The restaurant will be signposted and there will be French police or race officials willing to direct you. Eventually you will end up in a field at the back of the restaurant where you can park for free. Phone: +33-(0)2-43 84 98 14



Restaurant Auberge des Hunaudieres



Restaurant Shanghai des 24 Heures

Restaurant Shanghai des 24 Heures: This Chinese restaurant, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Cheung is open throughout the race week and serves affordable food of a decent standard, like Lemon Chicken, Pork with satay sauce, Shrimps with black mushroom and of course the inevitable spring rolls. A typical main course is about 12 Euros. Although you can't see the cars from the window seats, due to the same green covers found at Les Hunaudieres, the track is only 20 feet away so you can certainly hear them! The friendly staff even has 24 Hour memorabilia to give away, an added bonus! There is no need to book but it will be busy on Saturday evening. Consequently it's best to head here on Wednesday or Thursday night in between the evening's practice sessions. Capacity is about 120 seats in 3 rooms. To get there see the directions to Restaurant Les Hunaudieres, it is app. 50 yards down from there. Phone: +33-(0)2-43 84 14 72

Brasserie "Le Welcome" and Restaurant Panoramic: Circuit des 24 heures, both in the Village. Reservations can be made by phone 01 55 60 22 90 and allegedly via e-mail. Contact@concept-restauration.com. Mega-pricey, Le Welcome has dishes from €49 and Panoramic has a €98 menu a head but surely the best placed restaurant in LM. You can't miss it as it overhangs the start-finish straight...

Bar au Bugatti: This is a typical French Sports bar that serves light food throughout the day, it has also been described as a “good watering hole”. The walls are adorned with photographs and memorabilia of the race, making this a relaxing and cultural way to start your day. It's definitely worth stopping by here for breakfast or a coffee. To get to Bar Bugatti head north from the main circuit entrance and museum on “Rue de Laigne”. The bar is approximately 1 mile down the road on your right, within close proximity of the Expo campsite, on the same road as the restaurant “Aux Portes du Circuit”.



Bar Brasserie La Borne 24H: This is not so well known but has been highly recommended by one CA member. How to get there: Half way down the Mulsanne straight is the big hardware store, Do-It-All style called Leroy Merlin, on the right at the big roundabout. There are signs to this restaurant if you turn in and it is in an industrial unit. From the circuit entrance go past Maison Blanche to the roundabout, left towards the Karting circuit, straight on under the circuit until you come to a roundabout and left and left again. The food has been described as good value for money, they also have inexpensive wine. Please note: This place is probably closed during practice and the race itself, as it is in one of the one of the inaccessible areas then, so it is just an option for the rest of the race week.

Bar Restaurant “Le Tertre Rouge”: Also called “Stella Bar” by many CA members: This lively bar is located at the exit of the Tertre Rouge corner, outside of the circuit confines. It is within easy reach of the Houx Annexe campsite and the Tertre Rouge viewing enclosure. The bar sells, as you would expect, Stella Artois almost exclusively. It will be busy from Wednesday night onwards, but the crowds are friendly and sociable. You will find the Stella Bar where the road to the Houx Annexe campsite passes underneath the Mulsanne straight. A change of ownership will happen after the 2010 race, so let's see if this legendary place will change.



Information for vegetarians

Tricky! This is France - so you will not have much luck trying to find anything marked as "Veggie option" on the menu at restaurants. Announcing you are vegetarian and asking what they have will normally result in the waiters throwing their hands up in the air, asking "You don't eat meat? How do you eat?" and *if* you are lucky, a green salad for starter, followed by a green salad for main course (and they are *not* imaginative with green salads...) If you go for one of the usual safe bets in the UK (Curry and Chinese) you will find in France they have added extras such as bacon bits added which were not mentioned on the menu!

So, eating out in France, what you *can* do...

Pizza/Italian places are good. There are a couple in Le Mans which we go to almost every year. We were joined in an Italian restaurant one year by the (sadly now departed) Michele Alboreto, which was rather nice. We've gone back every year since - but no more (recognizable) drivers yet. **Crepe's** are also a reasonable place to be able to get veggie fare without actually offending anyone by announcing you are veggie. Asking for a veggie dish ("repas vegetarian" or "sans viande"), and explaining you are *vegetarien* will normally get you the dish you require, even if you do get a sad shake of the head from the waiter... It is worth saying you are veggie, as otherwise you are likely to get the thing turn up with some other meat instead - e.g. they think you just did not want the pork so they substituted beef!

Vegetarian food at the circuit: There are restaurants, but only one has a pizza, and you will wonder why you are paying so much for a frozen pizza. In the ACO Members enclosure you can sometimes find cheese pizzas as well. but not often; and you have to be a member, or a guest of one to get in. Cheese baguettes are available, but often they are gone almost straight away. Of course no-one buys them as there is no meat in them So they sell out of the stock they have really quickly...

Hot items around the track are normally limited to Frites, and Chevre-chaud which is a half baguette with melted goats cheese on it - rather nice. Sometimes this comes as a panini style thing. So the options for veggies are rather limited, you might end up on a bit of a cheese-fest, but it's only for a few days.

Restaurant La Boule d'Or

41 Avenue François Mitterrand
F- 72230 Mulsanne
Phone: +33-(0)2 43 42 00 45
Fax: +33-(0)2 43 42 54 90
Website: <http://labouledor.com>

To get there, turn in the direction of Tours (south) at Mulsanne roundabout, overall is is about 500 metres away from Mulsanne corner at the racetrack. Excellent food, good beer, this has been highly recommended. As a specialty they promote their "choucroute de la mer", a mixed seafood plate. There is also a bar and a tobacco shop included. One CA member persuaded them to put fish & chips on the menu for raceweek, comments on the quality of this for next years edition would be nice.



Following a change of ownership in 2009, this restaurant has gone from strength to strength, serving as many as 140 meals each lunchtime even out of season. During race periods things change of course, but always good food to be found.

New Brasserie: A new Brasserie has opened opposite Decathlon on the Mulsanne straight. Serves good food and is open early to late, although not sure about during race week since this is the first year.

Restaurant les Ecuries: Behind Family Village is a service road which parallels the Mulsanne. On this road can be found a superb restaurant called Les Ecuries. out of race week, Saturday night is jazz night, and a damned good evening it is too. 02 43 85 74 09 Just look for the roundabout with the wooden horses on.

Arnage

Next to the fountain in the middle of the roundabout (which is normally turned off during race week) is a bar/cigarette shop with plenty of tables outside. Well known already to many since lots of people have been soaked enough times as they pass! Dead opposite on the corner is the Harlequin, a very good place to eat especially lunch times. Not expensive with the usual fixed price menu and a few tables to sit outside and a big outside eatery behind.



Auberge de Matfeux, Arnage: For those who don't mind paying dear and love a superb wine list, then L'Auberge de Matfeux is for you. To be found on the left going south from the centre of Arnage. Spend as much as you want, especially on the wine list! It used to be Michelin starred, but not having the means to eat there I'm not sure if it still is. 02 43 21 10 71

Auberges des Blés d'Or, Ruaudin: For an gastronomic experience you will never better at the price, a little known secret (until now that is!) is to be found at Ruaudin, called the Auberge des Blés d'Or. We use it sparingly so as not to tire of the excellent food. It is usually by reservation, and in the evenings is open Friday/Sunday but all lunchtimes. However, they can cater for largish numbers having a large room used for weddings etc. No english spoken but if you really love to eat your food in style, properly served, excellently cooked, and at a price that will astound you, then call 02 43 75 79 33 and make a reservation. I guarantee you will not come away unhappy. Count on 100 euros per couple including an aperitif, the menu, and a good bottle of wine. Also open lunchtimes and again superb food at 20 euros a head, drinks excluded.

Le Belinois, Moncé en Belin: Another restaurant worth considering is at Moncé en Belin, south west of the circuit, called Le Belinois. 02 43 42 01 18 is the number.

The Queensland: To be found next to the church centre of Mulsanne. Pizzas and lunch menu. Open until late usually during race week.



Le Mans Classic 2008 – A Cadillac Sedan 1950 on the grid

© Deborah Dudley

Le Mans City Centre

Just in case you want to combine a visit at the Drivers' Parade on Friday with a pub crawl – rumours say that some CA members do so – here's a fine collection of bars, all within walking distance from the Place de la République



1. Brasserie Le Berry
2. Café Le Moderne
3. Café Leffe
4. Brasserie Le Scarron
5. Bar Le Venezia
6. The Pub Crawl
7. Le Mini Bar
8. Bar Le Zoo
9. Rey Gin's Bar



Café Leffe
11 Place de la République
Phone: +33 (0) 2 43 28 08 35



Brasserie Le Berry
29 Place de la République
Phone: +33 (0)2 43 28 46 07



Rey Gin's Bar
40 Rue du Port
Phone: +33 (0)2 43 24 08 29



Le Mini Bar
32 Rue du Port
Phone: +33 (0)2 43 28 25 99



Café Le Moderne
36 Place de la République
Phone: +33 (0)2 43 28 40 88



Brasserie Le Scarron
36 Place de la République
Phone: +33 (0)2 43 28 43 22



Bar Le Venezia
41 Place de la République
Phone: +33 (0)2 43 93 55 34



Bar Le Zoo
38 Rue du Port
Phone: +33 (0) 2 43 24 15 89



The Pub Crawl
9 Rue Victor Bonhomme
Phone: +33 (0)2 43 87 02 84

The A.C.O. village

With its numerous bars, food outlets and shops, the A.C.O. village represents the hub of the circuit. 'Le Village' sprawls from the Dunlop Chicane and the furthest reaches of the Interior Musée campsite, down towards the pit straight, where it peters out into a maze of team hospitality tents which fill the paddock area behind the pit lane. At its centre is the main square which is served by a giant TV screen, showing live streaming of the race. Here you will find the majority of the modern permanent structures which house toilet facilities, retailers and hospitality suites. Food and drink is expensive wherever you go around the circuit but not extortionate. The Village is no exception, and you will find a good variety including fast food, basic sit down meals, crêpe stalls and bars which serve beer, brandy and champagne in abundance. This place really comes alive during the race and at night the atmosphere is friendly and inviting, encouraging you to stay up to the wee hours and follow the race for as long as you can keep your eyes open!



Around twenty signs in Michelin colours have been erected to make it easier to find your way around, in addition to more of the traditional plans of the circuit on the "Decaux" boards.

Golf Course

There is a 18 hole course at the bottom of the Mulsanne Straight, not surprisingly it's called "Golf des 24 Heures". Drive down Mulsanne Straight, turn right at the Mulsanne Corner roundabout and turn first right in to Golf Club. The club house is the building on the inside of Mulsanne corner.

Golf des 24 Heures
Phone: +33 (0)2 43 42 00 36, +33-(0)2-43 42 00 10 (Clubhouse),
Fax: +33 (0)2 43 42 21 31
E-Mail: golfdes24heures.lemans@club-internet.fr
Website: <http://golfdes24heures.free.fr>

First aid – the Medical Center

Sometimes bad luck hits and you might be in need of a doctor. The Medical Centre is near to the old Motor Museum building. Plenty of doctors and nurses are on duty there and usually you will find someone who speaks also English or German. The author of these lines brought a mate of him there some years ago and these people did a great job. They were very friendly and helpful and there is probably a lot of volunteer work involved, so full kudos to these people! A new purpose built medical centre was opened in May this year, which replaces the old pre-fabs so it should be even better equipped now.

There are also a few paramedic vans posted around the circuit - ask for "poste de secours" or "poste medicale". In '09, there was one in the car park next to the Bleu Nord campsite, just opposite the circuit entrance. The paramedics were extremely helpful when we needed some assistance - they were glad of something to do. Nb - if you need treatment make sure you can show them any drugs that you are taking already (legal or illegal).

Karting

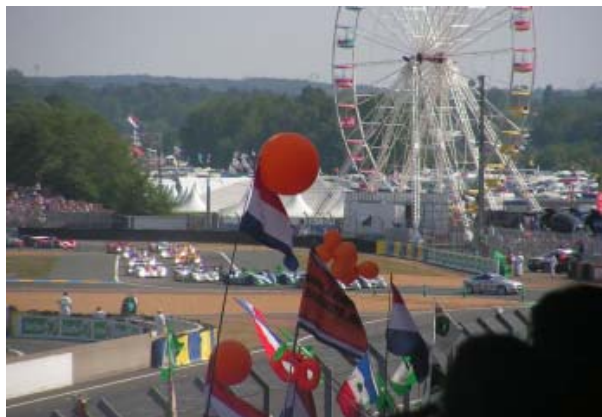
Circuit "Alain Prost", Route du chemin aux boeufs, F-72100 Le Mans, Phone: +33 (0)2 43 21 32 97,
Fax: +33 (0) 2 43 21 32 99, Website: <http://www.circuitalainprost.com>

The kart track or 'Circuit de Alain Prost' sits adjacent to the Karting Nord campsite at the Porsche Curves section of the circuit. It operates on a pay as you race basis, costing approximately 20 Euros for 10 minutes free racing. Opening times vary year to year but generally it operates from 10:00 – 17:00 Friday through to Sunday.

They use various track iterations but even the smallest circuit offers an exciting challenge. The standard varies wildly which lends itself to many a racing incident! This is definitely worth a visit and surprisingly quiet; sometimes you don't have to wait more than 20 minutes to get a race.

Funfair

The funfair has been a permanent fixture at Le Mans for many years. In particular, the big wheel at night is an iconic image. It used to be found sprawling across the infield and outfield between the Dunlop Chicane and the Esses but in recent years it has inexplicably down sized and relocated in part to the south of the pit lane heading out towards the Maison Blanche campsite. It has been moved again this year to the outside of the circuit, beyond the Dunlop Bridge on the way to Tertre Rouge. The big wheel at least seems to have survived and is worth a ride during Saturday night when you will have a panoramic view of the race.



Banking services / ATMs at the circuit

There are 3 ATMs at the circuit. One is located near the center of the village, next to the Racing Legends stand, as you come from the new tunnel it is on the left as you enter the new village area, the second is at the opposite end of the same row of buildings, on the way to the "Restaurant du Balcon", the third is by pedestrian entrance E3 (from Parking Blanc.)

Wi-Fi Hotspots

A free wireless internet access point is available at the McDonalds on the Mulsanne straight (1st chicane), actually all McDonalds branches in Le Mans seem to offer this service. A commercial hotspot seems to be available at the racetrack, a search on the internet found this company: Neuf Telecom, Rue des Raineries, Le Mans, Phone +33-(0)2-43402510. According to www.jiwire.com there is now a free Wi-Fi connection at Arnage airport. This appears to be provided by Orange and runs on 802.11b. If this proves to be accurate then those campers on Bleu Nord might be able to access this hotspot. Should you stumble across other Wi-Fi hotspots this year, please drop us a mail.

Visitors with physical disabilities

A first-hand report by Deborah Dudley

From the A.C.O. website: *"People with a physical handicap of 80% or above will be granted free entrance to the circuit on the presentation of their disability certificate. The accompanying person must normally pay for their 'General Enclosure' ticket. A 'disabled reception' has been put in place near to the 'Conciergerie' and the 'Porte des Italiens' (In the stands area), 'Tribune Dunlop', 'Musée' and 'P5' (Village). These points have been added to the permanent buildings: 'P16', the stands situated above the team garages, the race control centre, the A.C.O. stand, 'Houx' and 'Maison Blanche.'*

That's it for the official version!

In reality, the situation is both better and worse. Following a car smash in 2008, I have now had the opportunity to sample the A.C.O.'s disabled facilities at first hand. There's no doubt that you're better off with a helper (or preferably two given that we're talking, in my case, about nearly 40 hours without sleep here), mainly because the surfaces at Le Mans are poorly suited to the average wheelchair. Every bit of gravel or broken beer-bottle conspires to make your passage around the circuit a nightmare and a trip out to Tertre Rouge, Arnage or Mulsanne is virtually impossible although some of my fellow wheelchair users have driven round to TR during qualifying without being challenged. Whatever, you can still have a good time.

If you make it to scrutineering, for example, wheelchair users and their helpers get the best view in the house, under the press stand in front of the square where the teams and their cars pose for photographs. Many of the drivers are extremely affable (others less so!) and chatty. One of the highlights of the week for me and well worth turning up early in the week to catch.



Wheelchair access at the Tertre Rouge tunnel

Once at the circuit, blue badge holders can park within the confines, alongside the wall behind the grandstands. You need to stop just by the main entrance and go to the little office next to the turnstiles. With typical forethought, there is a big step into this office, but the staff are very helpful so if you have no helper with you, just knock on the door and the staff will come out and do the paperwork for you. Just show your blue badge, give them your registration number and you will get a parking ticket. Without a blue badge it is possible to blag your way into the circuit on practice days (smile, point to the wheelchair, and look a bit distressed) but it's hard to imagine this being possible on Saturday or Sunday. Thus it's a long and tedious push from whatever campsite you are on to the circuit if you are not registered disabled.

Once parked, it's a quick trip to the South end of the Maison Blanche grandstand where a ramp leads up to a truly excellent viewing area (one of the few perks of being in a chair with wheels on.) There are also ramps leading to a purpose designed viewing area below the yellow concrete grandstand opposite the pit exit, but the downside is that you are below the catch fencing so it's rubbish for photography. But is under cover and has a great view of the approach to the Dunlop bridge. This has become a favourite of mine in the early hours of the morning.

If you're alone, there is a disabled person's Concierge - I have never found out where they are based because since this was added, I have always found that one of the helpers tends to find me, and they are a great help in showing you around, pushing you up ramps, and explaining the best places to go. As well as the two stands listed, there are - according to the ACO, also places to watch in the Pits grandstand and at Race Control, but I've yet to find these. If you should do so, please let me know for next year's guide.

A.C.O. members have the added problem of needing to get their wristbands from the horribly-placed new members area up by La Chapelle. Without my galant helper the first year, I would have been well and truly stuffed in this respect. However, having had one dreadful experience with this, I went to the ACO truck just by the tunnel exit in the village and they were able to provide me with a wristband which saved a lot of hassle. If in doubt, ask - many of the ACO staff and helpers speak French. If you have seats in the ACO grandstand then in theory, disabled people can get in via a lift and the staff were, as ever, eager and willing to help. However, when I did ask I was taken up to the top (nice view and all, no doubt) where, unless one had a helper to go and get some assistance from the staff, one was stuck, as the lift had no call button on the exit side! Goodness knows what you're supposed to do if you need the loo..... or a drink.... or to go home again...

On the plus side, the disabled loos are good, easy to access, and these days available all around the circuit. There are even disabled-accessible showers in the lavatory block behind the pits grandstand. The tramway system makes direct access between the circuit and the city of Le Mans a piece of cake, although the downside is that you can't get from corner to corner very well. However, it's one of the easier ways to get to Tertre Rouge as it's ramps all the way (although some are pretty steep and hard work in hot weather). The little trains are an option for those with limited mobility but not for those unable to tackle a step or two.

The A.C.O. is doing its best to accommodate people with disabilities but ultimately this is a motor racing circuit and, let's face it, it's huge and in many ways has out of date facilities. Whatever, you can still have a good time and one thing I felt the first time I had to do this was that at the end of the race that I had done it - I watched 22 out of 24 hours of the race - I breathed in the atmosphere and I felt the real LM buzz. What more can you ask?

Reflections of a Le Mans marshal

Text and pictures from CA member Gordon Whitworth aka "gordonwr"

When it was suggested I write an article for the Club Arnage 2011 Guide I thought where do I start?

I decided to start at the beginning at the first race I can remember which was the 1961 Oulton Park Gold Cup won by Stirling Moss in the 4wd Ferguson P99 Climax F1 car. Prior to that I had been cycling to Oulton on a few occasions as a young boy from Chester until I realised that hitch-hiking was much quicker and less of an effort ! Among other races were the 1963 Grand Prix at Silverstone, hitch- hiking there as well, also to Aintree in 1964 for the Aintree 200. At Aintree I remember that Jim Clark wrecked his Lotus after going off into a building that had been demolished in the saloon car race by the mini driven by Cristabel Carlisle!

The next race I have vivid memories of was the 1968 BOAC 500 at Brands Hatch This ended as one of the saddest days of my life as on that day Jim Clark was to have been driving the Ford 3L prototype which was not ready in time. On that day May 7th he was with the Lotus F2 team at Hockenheim where he lost his life in the trees alongside the circuit. We heard the news whilst at the circuit, where I'd never known such a reaction before as an unbelievable eerie hush developed over the circuit. I'm still getting emotional now as I type this, as we couldn't take it in. To me he was certainly the greatest driver I have ever seen, or am likely to see.

I was then posted to Germany as a member of Her Majestys Armed Forces, but before I could take advantage of my circumstances I was posted to Libya, before the madman took over in 1969 as Idris was then King. No more motor sport that year until 1969 when we went to Zandvoort for the Grand Prix, held on a Saturday due to local restrictions.

In 1970 we were able to take in the German G P held at Hockenheim for the first time and witnessed a fantastic battle between the Ferrari of Jacky Ickx and the Lotus of Jochen Rindt, sadly his last victory before losing his life at Monza and becoming the only posthumous World Champion. I was not to go back there until the Grand Prix last year, 40 years on. Also that year we took in the 1000km races at the Ring and Spa. At the Ring victory went to Vic Elford and Kurt Ahrens in a Porsche 908/3, where we were at the Flugplatz, an awesome place to see the cars airborne!! Spa saw us in the pits and I had a fabulous experience before the race, as I stood between five Ferrari 512s when the engines were being warmed up prior to going out onto the circuit, the race won by Jo Siffert and Brian Redman in a Porsche 917. We also went to the French Grand Prix at Clermont Ferrand that year where I was thrown out of the paddock by the same Gendarme three times!! I was still on the pit wall for the finish though! That was an 1800 mile round trip for us over the weekend but we didn't get back till late Monday, which didn't go down to well with the Army!

In 1971 we were back at the ring for both the 1000k race and the Grand Prix that lasted for all of 12 laps and a Tyrell 1-2. Also at Spa for both races, the G P without the McLarens that had been withdrawn following the loss of Bruce McLaren whilst testing a Can Am car at Goodwood two weeks prior. Pedro Rodriguez taking victory in the BRM. The 1000k race at Spa saw Derrick Bell set what must be the fastest lap on the old circuit at over 160mph, and taking the Stavelot banked corner at over 180mph (have a look at the corner it's still there). The cars at that time also went from Les Combes to La Source in top gear for over 8 miles with only the bravest taking the Masta Kink (still there) flat out!

There was then a gap in my motor sport ventures due to getting married, and I think I got off on the wrong foot as the first day of the honeymoon was spent at Thruxton watching a F2 race ! Anyway after the divorce things got back on track marshalling at Oulton, Mallory, Donnington etc., also the RAC Rally and hillclimbs at Loton Park. As a Loton marshal we also had responsibility for the F1 weighbridge during practice for G Ps at Silverstone and Donnington, where in 1993 we were in the pit lane when Ayrton Senna set the fastest ever lap by driving flat out through the pit lane (no speed limits then!).



Classic Le Mans 2010



The marshals push a car into the safety area



Jaguar #22 is out

Having gone back to Spa in 1991 we also went to have a look at Nivelles and Zolder when I met Zolders chief marshal at the time Tony Jaenen who invited us to marshal at the 24hr race and also the GP in 1992. Many years later I will again be marshalling at Spa for the 20th year in succession, despite missing the two GP s that didn't take place when I worked at the 1000k races instead.

1994 was another low point as I was at Silverstone for the 1000k race on 30 April when we heard about the loss of Roland Ratzenberger at Imola, to be followed the next day by the news of Ayrtons demise. A lot of us knew him to speak to and were asked if we wanted to marshal for the race on Monday. As far as I know we all carried on in memory of them. In more up to date times I seem to have followed "Schumi " around as I was at his first two GPs, his first win, and his seventh championship when I was alongside the car when he parked it. I must mention that fantastic circuit at Monza, an awesome place as I did 3 GPs 1991,1994,and 1998,. The marshals lunch pack is amazing, enough to last all day including a bottle of wine! If not enough at the lunch break a van brings hot pasta meals around, they really look after the marshals there.



So to Le Mans which came to me very late on, no idea why but my first was 1998 and every one since! As a specy for a few years until my friends I work with in Belgium persuaded me to marshal with them which I've done for the last 5 years. Always at post 31(not the 31st post but 3.1 km from the start) it's on the Mulsanne near to the tram terminus, where they're flat out timed at 185mph. Standing at the armco you can feel the pull as they try to suck you into the track! We tend to get the cars that get it wrong at Tetre Rouge, they end up at our post as did Franck Montagny last year with only two hours to go whilst leading the race in his Peugeot. I did manage some photos of him looking rather sorry for himself.

At Le Mans we need to be on post for practice and qualifying on the Wed and Thurs nights, then again for the Sat morning warm up and the support races. For the 24hr race we marshal in three teams working four hours on and eight hours off. We then divide into two teams with about six in each team so that we have visibility of the flag post above and below us. Two on the flags and four to deal with any incidents, the two flag marshals face each other so that the guy using the blue flag facing the traffic can give adequate prior warning to the yellow flag marshal who's looking down the track of impending doom that could be on its way! During daylight we use the full set of flags and during the hours of darkness the only warnings usually given are by a set of lights we have alongside the track, normally a yellow static or flashing, so a little less work to do at night time. On the post with us we have a full medical team and doctors, an extraction team, and fire trucks all ready to move at a moment's notice in case of any incidents further down the track.



Le Mans 2008: Action at post 31



Amanda Stretton in the Chamberlain Lola comes to a halt

Yes, I'll be back there this year arriving on Sunday 5th so if you pass by on your way down the Mulsanne we're opposite the big Decathlon store and the Leader Price supermarket stop and have a chat. We've got our own camp site, peaceful with no drunks or pikeys to bother us.

Looking forward to another fabulous week at La Sarthe. See you there !!

How to get tickets

General information

There are basically two ways to book tickets – either via the A.C.O. directly or through a ticket agency. For campsite tickets and for grandstand tickets the rule is to book as early as possible! Most people make their booking immediately after returning from Le Mans for the next year and most campsites are sold out months, sometimes a full year in advance.

Booking tickets with the ACO

You can order tickets direct from the A.C.O. either by phone, or by using their on-line booking system <http://www.lemans.org/fr/billetterie>. This was completely re-vamped in 2010 with the result being total chaos out of which only a few forum members ended up with what they wanted, but - with luck - things will be better next time around. We certainly hope so! There is, in theory at least, priority for ACO members but again, the system was less than perfect. We live in hope. If in doubt, contact: Automobile Club de l'Ouest (A.C.O.) - Service Réservations Circuit des 24 heures du Mans 72019 Le Mans Cedex 2 France Phone: +33 (0)892 69 72 24 Fax : +33 (0)2 43 84 47 13 E-mail : ticket@lemans.org.

Booking for the following year

The booking office and on-line reservations should open for 2012 some time towards the end of this year. Keep an eye out on the CA forum or ACO website for the dates to give yourself a chance of getting what you want. But this is getting more like the Lottery every year so get in quick. To be confident of getting what you want you might prefer to pay a bit more and use ticket agencies.

Ticket Agencies

There are also a number of agencies who sell race, travel and package tickets. The prices are generally higher and in most cases you cannot buy campsite tickets only but have to buy general entrance tickets with a surcharge as well. But they do have the advantage of guaranteeing you a grandstand seat and for many campsites, ticket agencies will be the only option in the future, as the A.C.O. has announced to sell certain campsites only via agencies in the future. If you are just after "Enceinte Generale" tickets, you do not need the agencies or the A.C.O. booking office, it is much easier and cheaper to buy on the gate and they are never sold out.

- www.racetours.co.uk (Campsite **only** orders possible, no need to buy general entrance tickets)
- www.teamlangoustine.com (Campsite **only** orders possible, no need to buy general entrance tickets)
- www.justtickets.co.uk
- www.1st-tickets.co.uk
- www.pageandmoy.com
- www.selectmotorracing.com (Also offer complete bus tours from London)
- www.ticket-finders.com
- www.airtrack.co.uk
- www.continentalcartours.co.uk
- www.ticketplus.com (Netherlands)

Types of tickets: The pictures below show some 2010 tickets. The A.C.O. has changed the design of the tickets several times in the past, so don't be confused if the ones you have bought look different.



"Enceinte Generale" (General Entrance)

Really all you need, everything else is an optional add-on. These are readily available on the gate so advance purchase above face value has little to recommend it. The price of tickets includes entry to pre-qualifying, scrutineering, both practice days and the big one, so at 65 euros (or less for A.C.O. members) they are undoubtedly the best value motor race event tickets on the planet. Take a bivvy and a sleeping bag and you can kip anywhere on the circuit.



“Tribune” (Grandstand)

These resemble the “Enceinte Generale” tickets so be careful not to mix them up. The contremarque system applies here too so don't forget to get your piece of card each time you leave your grandstand. All the grandstands are open to all comers during practice (except the members' where you will need a membership card). Seat numbers: All the grandstands on the outside of the circuit are lowest numbers on your left as you face them; the pits grandstand (inside) is numbered with the lowest on your right as you face it.



“Aire d'Accueil” - Campsite ticket

These are bar-coded and may be scanned as you enter and exit your site. You will probably also be asked to show your Enceinte Generale ticket when you enter some campsites, typically those with direct access to the circuit, such as Maison Blanche. A plastic stick-on holder is provided for your windscreen, into which the ticket slots. Don't ask me what motorcyclist should do...



“Parc Voiture” (Car park ticket)

These are handy for folks with accommodation away from the General Enclosure of the circuit, e.g. Mulsanne, Arnage or further afield. It enables you to get to the main viewing areas under your own steam. The car park tickets are bar-coded and may be scanned as you enter and exit your site. You can enter and exit the car park as often as you like - once you park there you are required to leave the ticket visible behind your windscreen.

Ticket holders and lanyards

Some sort of ticket holder with a lanyard to hang it round your neck is a must at LM. Tickets are 130x75mm with the tear-off strips folded over. You can buy these at the A.C.O. shop, but they are also often a “freebie” with LM's local newspapers – Le Maine and Ouest France.

Getting rid of excess tickets

In case you have booked too many tickets – maybe someone in your group has dropped out – there is at least one option to get rid of them: The CA forum has a “Sell or Swap” area where you can post your tickets. This is not the place for profiteering and the forum is moderated: You are expected to sell your tickets at face value (or the agency price you paid for it) + postage.

Attention: In previous years it was possible to return tickets for sale at the Rotunda (A.C.O. Booking office) during race week - obviously this option was found to be too customer-friendly, they don't do this anymore!!!

A.C.O. Membership

“Is It Worth It??” - Every year this question is asked on CA regarding the membership of the A.C.O. This section provides details of the benefits of membership.

There are three levels of membership: Passion 24, Passion 24 VIP and Passion 24 Gold.

Also offered is a breakdown option (cost €25) similar to those offered by the RAC and other motoring organisations, but these are not really relevant to non-French residents. Most people will have arranged their own breakdown insurance which includes repatriation of the broken vehicle to their country of origin.

Other special benefits are offered, at a cost of €24, for those travelling to the circuit in a car at least 30 years old, or for 'exceptional' cars as judged by the ACO.

Some of the items from the 'Passion Collection' can be collected at any time during race week, from the ACO. All other items are sent by post 3 months or so after the race.

There are other (mainly irrelevant) benefits, eg 3 free 20-minute sessions on the Bugatti circuit, but only for ACO licensed drivers, and obviously outside race week.

Passion 24 Membership (Cost €39)

1. Aimed primarily at fans who cannot attend La Sarthe
2. Access to the Members' enclosure
3. Unique access to live updates on the website during the race and all LMS, ALMS and Asian series races
4. Access to classifications via SMS Text Messages (min 26 texts) throughout the race
5. The Passion 24 collection consisting of the Official Poster, Entry List, Results, Photos of the winners, etc
6. Use of the ACO Grandstand. Two tickets per member for Tribunes 17 and 18.
7. 10% reduction on all items in the official 24 Heures shop

Passion 24 VIP Membership (Cost €98)

All the benefits of Passion 24 membership, plus:

1. Up to 6 General Admission tickets at approx 25% discount (2010: 49 € instead of 65 €). Discount is also available on tickets for The Classic, 24 Heures Moto and French Moto GP
2. Up to 6 Camping tickets at 10% discount (approx) – Actual discount amount depends on the camp site
3. 15% discount on any and all products on sale in the ACO shop
4. 20% discount on sessions on the karting circuit.
5. Free admission to the paddock at The Classic
6. Special members' enclosure at scrutineering - a special members' bar, with a (admittedly tiny) viewing point next to the press stand - good for taking pictures.
7. Access to the Passion 24 campsite and parking area.
8. **Priority booking for Campsite and Grandstand tickets from 2011**

Passion 24 Gold Membership (Cost €235)

All the benefits of Passion 24 VIP membership plus:

1. 30% discount on Pitwalk Pass (saving €141)
2. 10 free minutes on the karting circuit
3. The official book of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, updated every year. "A luxury work of reference" – includes some 800 photos and over 250 pages in full colour. It recounts the whole story of the race: entrants, technical, practices, detailed results
4. The official film of the race – on DVD
5. Photo report of the race – unpublished photos from the ACO taken by professionals – on CD-ROM

Priority Booking

The ACO's first attempt at priority booking for the 2011 race turned out to be a disaster. Basically, members were allowed exclusive use of a new on-line booking system for a period of time, but the system was full of bugs and the tickets on offer were very limited. Attempts to contact the sales office for clarification/booking were also unfruitful as they were inundated with calls about the malfunction of the on-line system.

However, if the problems are resolved, and a more comprehensive catalogue of tickets are offered, then this system will certainly be of benefit. But, and this is a big 'but', as the ticket agencies still appear to get top priority, the full range of tickets (especially camping tickets) may not be offered, and the benefit may only be realized if you happen to want some of that limited range of tickets. Don't hold your breath!!

Is It Worth It?

The costs of the various classes of membership are given above. From the writer's perspective – it is worth it from a financial point of view for the Passion 24 VIP package. Last year (2009), the saving on 6 general entry tickets (€90) all but covered the cost of membership. The savings on campsite tickets (€48) meant that an overall saving of over €40 was made, and all the other benefits were also available. It may well be worth it just to take advantage of the priority booking benefit - but this can not be determined until more information about the system is revealed by the ACO. A race-goer may feel that the other benefits make membership worthwhile, even if full use of the ticket discount is not taken. I make no recommendations, just stating the facts. It's your choice!

What to take and what to leave behind

Staying at the campsites around the race track for several days requires some planning and equipment. Approaches to this topic are different: Some people do it basic with just a small tent and a sleeping bag, but the trend in the last years was more towards luxury setups with mobile bars, fridges, swimming pools, draught beer equipment and others. This chapter is a collection of what some CA Members have taken with them in the past and it can help you to compile your own equipment list. The list is by no means complete, essentials like underwear and trousers are not listed and the food & drinks of course will depend entirely on your individual taste.



As far as clothes are concerned, just be prepared for everything! Race week is always in summer in the middle of June and the last 20 years have seen some incredibly hot weekends with 35+ degrees Celsius, but it can also be quite miserable with just 10-15 degrees at night and plenty of rain, sometimes both within just a couple of days. Take it easy, if you've forgotten something at home you can still stock up using the local supermarkets and shops, see the respective chapter of this guide for addresses.

Essential

- Valid Passport
- Tickets you already have (ferry, aire accueil, enceinte generale, tribunes etc)
- Cash Euros and/or a valid credit card
- Your brain
- Solid common sense and a joyous spirit
- Something to sleep in: tent, caravan, mobile home
- Sleeping bag
- This guide

Important

- Valid EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) and/or travel insurance
- Folding chairs and table
- TV and mobile satellite dish, every 2 years the race week overlaps with the footie world cup or European cup
- Generator with extension lead and gang socket
- Chain and padlocks - to prevent some itinerant low life stealing the genny.
- Hose and fittings to divert water to your campsite and to damp down the dusty tracks on some campsites
- Cable ties and speed tape in case something moves and it shouldn't
- Pocket FM radio with earphones to listen to Radio Le Mans
- Extra tent pegs, on some campsites the ground is rock solid
- Mallet for tent pegs - don't use the bottom of a glass bottle, one CA member still has scars...
- Tape & poles to rope off your pitch
- Tent Light
- Water Holder
- Rucksack to carry beer/camera/phone/binoculars/condoms etc around the circuit
- Club Arnage T-Shirt and stickers

Food & drinks & kitchen utensils

- Big BBQ and charcoal
- Cookers & fuel
- Draught beer system including cooling and carbon gas container for the professional beer drinkers
- You favourite English, Italian, German or whatever food & beverages in case you can't handle the French stuff
- Some fruit, after several days' diet of burger meat, bacon and other BBQ items you may see people fighting for an apple...
- Tooth picks, in case your BBQ meat is a little tough...
- Bottle Opener
- Bread Knife
- Plastic Bags
- Plastic Cups
- Glasses
- Mug
- Lighter
- Matches
- Cool Box
- Skewers for BBQ kebabs
- kitchen foil for lining the BBQ
- A melon (for filling with vodka)
- Sauce/Frying Pans
- Cocktail Sticks
- Knife/Fork/Spoon Set, Can Opener

Other useful stuff

- Sun Screen and/or wide brimmed hat, it can get very hot, and under canvas, there is little or no respite, Sun-tan lotion
- Toilet Paper, the public loos are sometimes out-of-stock...
- Large can of deodorant and wet wipes – showers are few and far between
- Hangover pills, more hangover pills and a hammer to bash your thumb with so the pain in your head goes away
- Immodium
- Binoculars
- Ear plugs/defenders if you want to sleep
- Swimming trunks, useful if you go for a shower and a good cr*p (not necessarily in that order).
- Bum bag to carry around money, credit cards, keys and more condoms
- Ticket holder thingy for round your neck
- Autosport Le Mans guide available on the Thursday prior to race week
- Long range water pump guns, have some fun with your campsite neighbors
- Megaphone
- Lighter
- Mobile phone & charger & phone car plug
- First Aid Kit
- Penknife, Torch, Table Lamp, Batteries
- Camera/Film
- Alarm Clock
- Playing Cards
- Tel No/Addresses
- Sewing Kit
- Talcum Powder, nothing worse than chaffing nuts at Tertre Rouge at 3.00 am
- Whitewall tire - for burning on Sunday night
- Fireworks, buy big, big bangers
- Some helmets for the fallout of other people's fireworks
- Bicycle, if you've got enough space for it, great to cruise between different parts of the race track, e.g. to Arnage

Leave behind

- Impatience and bad temper, don't ruin everyone's week by being miserable all the time
- Expensive clothes and shoes
- Little children
- The desire to sleep
- Any hang-ups
- Sweetcorn - not good when the queue for the bogs is a mile long
- Any thought of remaining sober



Le Mans 1999: The Mercedes-Benz CLR driven by Christophe Bouchut, Nick Heidfeld and Peter Dumbreck. Scotsman Dumbreck was the flight captain of this car in the infamous Hunnaudieres Airshow when the Mercedes flipped several times © "Lorry"

France and the French – Instructions for use



The Le Mans 24 hours may seem like a home from home to Brits but there's no getting away from the fact that it's a different country and that the race is organised and run by the French. To some this is a major irritation, but it all adds to the holiday flavour and a few tips about how to get along with the local populace never go amiss.

Remember, contrary to some beliefs, the French are by their very nature, an incredibly polite nation (outside Paris, that is). It is, for instance, considered incredibly rude not to say "hello" when you enter a French shop, go up to a bar, arrive at the circuit ticket barrier, pay your Autoroute toll at the booth or even to the concierges outside the loos!

This is probably the root of so many misconceptions which some Brits hold about their counterparts across the channel. If you don't say hello, they think *you* are the rude one and will respond appropriately. Those in the service industry consider themselves to be in an important business and do not take well to being ignored or treated like imbeciles.

So, a few basic rules when you meet a French person for the first time: Smile, say "bonjour" (this can be changed to "bon après-midi" after lunch or "bonsoir" in the evenings) and look them in the eye when you talk to them, and if you don't speak French, say so (Pardon, je ne parle pas français) don't just speak English and hope that they do. And don't forget to say goodbye when you leave. It's also customary to greet fellow shoppers/drinkers when you enter and leave, with a quick "bonjour/ au revoir messieurs, dames" (depending on their sex!)

You will be amazed at how much more pleasant the French seem if you do this!

Shaking hands

The French shake hands with everybody they meet. Should you break down, for instance, it is customary to shake the hand of the guy who turns up with the tow truck. If some kind person stops to offer you help, shake their hand. If you bump into somebody you've met before and who recognises you, shake their hand. You will be amazed what dividends this can pay!

If you know somebody well enough to "bisou" (peck on the cheek) then remember the custom is *four* in the Sarthe – 2 on each side. This can make encounters with very large groups of friends extremely long-winded!

English	French
Good day, hello	Bonjour
Good afternoon	Bon après-midi
Good evening	Bonsoir
Have a good evening	Bonne soirée
Goodnight/ sleep well	Bonne nuit
Goodbye	Au revoir
Sir	Monsieur
Sirs	Messieurs
Madam	Madame
Ladies	Mesdames
Ladies and gentlemen	Messieurs, dames
Enjoy your meal	Bon appétit
Cheers	Santé (a vôtre santé)
I don't speak French	Je ne parle pas français
Sorry	Pardon
Please	S'il vous plait
Can you help me?	Vous pouvez m'aider ?

Note: NEVER use Mademoiselle to somebody you don't know, this is considered rude, no matter how old you think she is, except for children and then "petit" (for a boy) or "petite" for a girl is better.

In the bar or café

Say hello and greet other drinkers when you come in! There are two types of service in French bars. If you buy at the bar, you will pay less but you should then remain standing up or at a bar stool (if there are any!) When you sit at a table you can expect to be served. Do not be tempted to refer to male staff as “garçon” – this literally means boy and is as derogatory in French these days as it is in English, refer to them as “monsieur” or “madame” according to their sex.

English	French
A beer	Une bière (grande for large, demi for 33cl and galopat for 25 cl – the latter probably isn't of much interest here!)
Draught – as in beer, not a cold wind!	Pression
Wine	Vin
Glass	Un verre
A glass of wine	Un verre de vin
The bill	L'addition
Water	L'eau (plat = still; gazeuse = fizzy)
Jug	Un pichet
Ashtray	Un cendrier
Bottle	Une bouteille
To eat	Manger
Black coffee	Un café
Large coffee with milk	Un grand crème
A light (for smokers)	Du feu

You will probably be asked which beer you want, as most bars sell several, they invariably then turn up in the correct “corporate” glass with a matching coaster! If you don't mind just say “n'importe” – it's not important.

Beverages: The French just cannot make tea, and that's a fact. A tea bag on a string and a cup of luke warm water is the best you can expect, so avoid it like the plague. If you are desperate, thé citron (lemon tea) is by far your best bet. When ordering coffee, you will get black unless you specify. The closest thing to a cup of coffee with milk is “le grand crème”, which in fact rarely turns up with cream as its name might suggest – more often it's milk, probably in a little jug.



© Craig Antill

You will normally pay for your drinks all together just before you leave, except when it's really busy such as on Mad Friday or during scrutineering. The bill is “l'addition”, so just say “l'addition s'il vous plaît” when you are about to go. A 10% tip is a good idea, even if the bill says it is “service compris.” Emptying your pockets of the little bronze “centimes” – as the French still refer to them - (1c, 2c and 5c coins) is also considered an insult – round up to the nearest 10 cents. It's quite OK just to leave the correct money on the table and leave, but be sure to say goodbye, so that nobody thinks you are trying to leave without paying; or you can pay at the bar – you are not expected to wait until your server turns up again.

Most bars sell a small range of snacks and sandwiches but by no means all. You can ask “on peut manger ici?” (Can one eat here?) Many bars not selling food allow you to eat your own, but do buy all your drinks there if you try this, and take any resulting litter with you. Say goodbye when you leave – *please* do not leave the French with a poor impression of the English abroad – especially if you are wearing a Club Arnage T-shirt!

A note on smoking: In France, as in the UK, smoking is now banned in all enclosed public places, even bars with who sell tobacco. Although rumours abound about this new law being generally flouted, this is not the writer's experience.

In the restaurant

Self-service restaurants are rare in France – apart from the big chains like Flunch. When you arrive, wait to be seated by the owner/manager/waiter. You should explain how many there are in your party by saying : Je suis seul (I am on my own) or, “nous sommes deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, sept, huit, neuf, dix” and so on – literally, we are two, three, four, etc.

Do not expect the world's fastest service when you dine in France. Eating is the be-all and end-all of life here and meals are expected to be lingered over and savoured. They are the centre of France's culture and its social and family life. Enjoy it – try not to get too uptight if things seem slow. If you are in a hurry, then go to Flunch or another self-service eatery such as La Brioché D'Orée. If you have no choice, then explain to the waiter at the beginning of the meal, that you are in a hurry “je suis (I am) “nous sommes” (we are) “pressés” (pushed for time).

In Le Mans itself, you will usually find that menus are provided in English as well as French during the race season and even so, there is not enough space here to translate the names of all the dishes you might come across. If you're concerned about what you might end up eating, the best thing is to carry a small pocket dictionary. If you are not fussy, then as a general rule it is best to go for the “plat du jour” (dish of the day) the “suggestion du chef” (chef's suggestion) or “spécialité de la maison” (the speciality of the house.) The first two will invariably provide the best value. The “menu du jour” (menu of the day) usually includes a starter – often of the help yourself variety from a cold buffet – and a pudding, and quite often a cheaper option where you can choose one or the other.



The famous “Hawaiian Tropic” Girls

© Steve Brown



Nice try, boys!

© Steve Brown

If you order steak, you will be asked how you like it cooked – “comme cuisson?” Bleu = blue, saignante = rare (literally – bleeding); à point = medium; bien cuit = well cooked. Be warned – the French (quite rightly, imho,) believe that an overcooked steak is a ruined steak, so you're best advised to go for a more cooked option than you would in the UK. Equally, with duck and lamb, you may be asked how you like it cooked – the options here are “rosé” (pink) or bien cuit, as for steaks. And for omelettes – “baveuse” means runny!

In cheaper restaurants, it is customary to re-use the same cutlery for you starter (entrée) and main course (le plat) – if you're having cheese, you should hang onto it for this too. In France, cheese is always served between the main and dessert courses – as they believe it is better to eat all the savoury courses together before moving on to something sweet. When you have eaten enough, you should place your cutlery apart, with the knife and fork on opposite sides of the plate – if you leave them together - as is done in the UK – they will not think you have finished! You might be asked “vous avez terminé?” which means “have you finished?”

A word about bread. This turns up with every meal, regardless; the French do not see the necessity for butter, so just put it on the mat or tablecloth alongside their meal, which is why you won't get a side plate. If you do want butter, you have to ask for it. “Du beurre, s'il vous plaît”.

You should also be able to assume that you will automatically get a jug of tap water with any meal. If you don't and you want some, just ask for a “pichet” or “carafe d'eau” and it will be provided, free of charge. It's customary to leave a tip of between 10 and 15%, even if it is specified that service is included. You can usually pay with a UK credit or debit card these days in most restaurants – but don't forget your PIN number – you will need it.

Loos: Most public loos are looked after by a concierge whose responsibility it is to keep them clean. At the circuit, they also keep the stash of loo paper on the table outside with them – so don't forget to help yourself *before* you go in or things could get unpleasant! They expect to be tipped (30 centimes is about right) but on the up-side also expect to be told if there is a problem. So, if you find that the previous occupant has left his or her dinner behind, then you will cause no offence by mentioning this!

La bureaucratie!

Bureaucracy is a way of life in France and you'll encounter it wherever you go; it's hard to get away from!

The supposed idea that the French don't queue, is a very bizarre one. In fact, why queue once, when you could do it twice? Even in supposed quick service places (Flunch is a good example), you will be expected to line up once at the till to order your meal, and again in a line to pick up your chosen dish.



© Craig Antill

Anybody who has booked tickets for LM via the ACO will understand this well. First apply for your tickets, then wait to see if your form has been received. Then after your acknowledgement has arrived, wait a few months to see if you've been allocated tickets. Wait again to see if your confirmation has been received, then hang around again for a few months in the hope that your tickets have finally arrived. Simple, eh?

It's easier to do than to say, but the only way to deal with it is with a lot of patience. There is just no future in getting annoyed; you just have to go with the flow. The locals are on the receiving end of this every day of their lives and have been brought up with it so just cannot understand the impatient foreigner who gets hot under the collar about it. Be polite, smile, and get over it. Then have a good moan about it to your mates afterwards.

Driving in France – general information, rules & regulations, preparations

We spend many thousands of hours migrating to our favourite motor sport destination each year and the journey need not be a chore. With a bit of forethought and some help from our Club Arnage chums, it can be part of the whole Le Mans experience, something to look forward to and savour. A break in the journey at a favourite village cafe for omelet jambon and a carafe of traditionnelle du cidre or an al-fresco picnic all add to our memories of another historic Vingt Quatre Heures du Mans.

Driving in France is almost the same as in the UK; the most obvious difference being that you drive on the right in France! The road network is well developed and easily understood with nearly a million kilometers of road, of which 8,000 kilometers are motorway. Roads are significantly free of traffic in comparison to the UK, although congestion can occur during holidays and rush hour. The Route National and country roads (prefixed with RN, N or D for the smaller roads) hark back to a time gone-by with tree lined roads sweeping through the beautiful French countryside. They can be a genuine pleasure and unless you are in a rush or time is of a premium they are the route of choice.

Detailed below are documents that are needed, check-lists, and some of the more important driving rules and regulations.

Preparation

Time spent here can make all the difference to help smooth your Le Mans experience.

Vehicle Preparation:

- Make sure your vehicle is roadworthy with all lights functioning
- Check brakes, pads
- Check fluid levels for brakes, oil, coolant & windscreen washer
- Check tyres are correctly inflated with at least 2mm tread depth, not forgetting the spare
- Clean windscreens not only for seeing through but for your camping permit, ACO membership decal and Club Arnage banners.
- Headlamp beams need to be adjusted for right-hand driving.

Journey Preparation: Pick a time to travel so that you arrive during daylight and your campsite is open, this is especially true before the night qualifying sessions have begun. Some of the campsites may not be open 24hrs a day until Wednesday. Sunday makes a good day to travel as the roads are quiet, commercial vehicles are prohibited and the driving and navigation is easier. Prepare your itinerary in advance, use the attached route guides, internet route planners and take a good selection of road maps. Michelin, Cartes IGN and Bison Fute produce good quality maps. It

is worth looking out for the Bison Fute maps and their "itineraire bis" alternative routes network road signs, these will get you around busy sections of road. Motorway routes to Le Mans are served by "Autoroutes à Peage" This means a toll is charged and it can vary depending on the motorway. Emergency orange telephones are located every 2km, parking and resting areas every 10 or 20km, and motorway service stations approximately every 40km. In case of a breakdown, only the Police or the official breakdown service operating in that area can be called and you cannot use your own breakdown organisation other than to act for you.

24 Hour Radio Information: English language bulletins are available on the hour and half-an-hour on 107.7 fm.

Documentation:

- Full UK driving license.
- Certificate of motor insurance valid for France (aka Green Card in the old days). Most UK insurance policies only cover you for third party in Europe: you need to upgrade to get a green card if you want your fully comp UK policy to be extended. Costs for this are around £20 for a week and could save a lot of expense if you have an accident (or your car gets keyed). Different insurers might have different cover of course, but it's something worth checking.
- Your insurance company should be able to issue a "European Accident Statement" form as well, otherwise download from http://www.france-property-and-information.com/france_car_accident.htm
- Vehicle registration document V5.
- MOT certificate if applicable.
- Breakdown Insurance
- Maps - see "Journey preparation" paragraph above
- Letter of authority giving you permission to drive the vehicle in France if you are not the owner
- Plus photo-copies in case of loss or confiscation.

Essential Vehicle Accessories:

- Spare set of keys
- High visibility vest(s): must be accessible from inside car, legal minimum 1 for driver, ideally 1 for each passenger as well
- An international distinguishing sign plate, GB badge or sticker should be displayed near to the rear vehicle registration plate.
- A red breakdown warning triangle is highly recommended, it becomes compulsory if your vehicle hazard flashers are not working. It is compulsory for cars towing a trailer or trailer. It should be placed 30 metres behind the vehicle and visible from 100 metres.
- Spare bulbs and fuses are needed, plus the tools to make the repair. You may incur a fine if unable to change a defective light.
- Jump leads – in case you flatten your car battery
- If it should move and it doesn't: WD 40
- If it moves and it shouldn't: Duck tape
- First-aid kit and fire extinguisher are recommended.
- SatNav - check has map of France.
- Car Rug
- Screen Blinds
- Steering Lock
- Cigar lighter Ext
- Tools

Traffic Rules and Regulations

- While driving in France remember to drive on the right.
- You can't drive on a provisional license.
- Seat belts need to be worn at all times.
- Stopping on open roads is not allowed unless the vehicle is parked off the road.
- Stop signs mean stop at road junctions. Creeping slowly forward will not do and is heavily penalised.
- Overtaking along a road with a solid centre line is heavily penalised.
- Under 18s cannot drive in France, regardless of their UK license
- Radar detectors are illegal in France whether in use or not. If caught with one in your car, you are liable to a prison sentence, a fine, confiscation of the device and the vehicle. Please make sure radar detectors are removed from your car before making the journey.
- Use full dipped headlights as in the UK in poor visibility and at night. Sidelights only when the car is stationary. It is illegal to drive on side (parking) lights.
- Urban speed limits start at the city or town sign; which is a white name panel with a red border, and ends where the name panel has a black diagonal line through it.

Vehicle Speed Limits:

Speed Limits kph/mph	Motorway with tolls	Dual Carriageway & motorways without tolls	Open Road	Town
Clear Weather Conditions	130/81	110/68	90/65	50/31
Wet Roads	110/68	100/62	80/50	50/31
Foggy Conditions with Visibility less than 50m	50/31	50/31	50/31	50/31

Cars towing a caravan: If the weight of the trailer exceeds that of the car, the speed limits are lower: 65km/h if the excess is less than 30%, or 45km/h if the excess is more than 30%.

Speeding Fines:

- More than 50km/hr court attendance, maximum fine 1500 euros
- 20 - 40km/hr court attendance, maximum fine 750 euros
- Speeding, average fine 135 euros

Motorcycles:

- Motorcycles over 125cc must use dipped headlights at all times.
- Drivers and passengers must wear crash helmets.

Accidents: If you need the emergency services use one of the free orange emergency telephones, the Police must also be informed. Follow the instructions provided by your insurance company, they normally provide a 'European Accident Statement' form for these purposes (see documentation check list above) that must be jointly completed AND signed by both parties within 24 hours of the accident.

Emergency Telephone Numbers:

- Ambulance - 15
- Police - 17
- Fire Service - 18
- All Three Services - 112

The Serious Bit: It goes without saying that the Gendarmes have a high profile during race week and whilst a certain amount of good humour and high jinks are tolerated, only a certain amount is accepted. So beware! Traffic offences are subject to on-the-spot fines, driving license confiscation and worse. Ensure an official receipt is given by the officer collecting the fine. The down side is unless you can pay the fine or there is another driver in the vehicle this could be the end of your Le Mans adventure. Your vehicle may be impounded and sold. The police may take you to a cash point if you can convince them you have enough funds to meet the fine. I've seen a complete crocodile of Ferrari's pulled over for speeding and one poor individual taken to the cash point to obtain the money for the fine! Speed limits are implemented rigorously. Fixed or mobile speed cameras and radar traps are commonplace. The Gendarmes are creative in road enforcement placement and are not required to be visible, expect speed traps to be in side roads, or hidden by a hedge. Following a recent increase in the annual road death figures, the government has put extra pressure on the law enforcement agencies to up the ante with regard to catching offenders. There are many new, and draconian, measures in the pipeline but meantime, the gendarmes are charged with catching those who break the current laws - don't let that be you!

Drink Drive Fines: There are strict drink driving laws, blood alcohol levels are lower than the UK (0.5 mg/ml rather than 0.8 mg/ml). Expect random breath tests during race week. Penalties range from fines of 135 euros to 4,500 euros, and imprisonment. If you have caused an accident while drunk, penalties range from 30,000 euros and 2 years imprisonment to 150,000 euros and 10 years imprisonment.

Road Signs

French road signposting is very good, once understood, with place names used instead of road numbers. When using a French road map, you may assume that any place-name in BOLD CAPITALS will be signposted from a great distance. When approaching a town or village a common sign to see is TOUTES DIRECTIONS (ALL DIRECTIONS). It is normally used for diverting traffic around a town or village; follow this sign unless this town is your destination. A variation is AUTRES DIRECTIONS (OTHER DIRECTIONS). This will always appear with a second sign indicating a specific place. So for instance if you see ROUEN plus AUTRES DIRECTIONS, unless ROUEN is on your route, follow the AUTRES DIRECTIONS (other directions) sign and further along you will see directions for your route or destination.

Priorité à Droite - In spite of there being many more give way signs than in the past, the general rule (especially, but by no means always, on rural roads - however main they may seem) is still to "give way to the right". A black cross of the "X" variety in a red triangle (often with a white post with a red ring on the corner of the junction) means you MUST

give way to the right. Ignorance of this regulation cuts no ice with the local farmer when he drives his C15 into the side of your pride and joy. It's his right of way and he knows it!

Useful Road Sign Translations

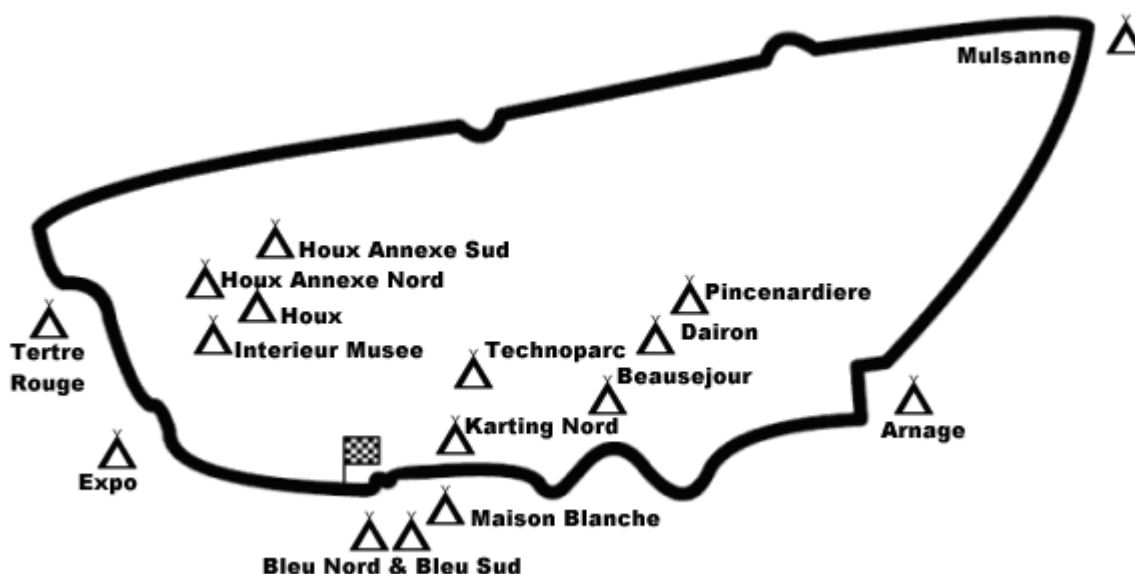
Toutes Directions	All Directions
Autres Directions	Other Directions
Cédez Le Passage	Give Way
Chaussee deformer	Uneven Road/Temporary Surface
Deviation	Diversion
Gravillions	Loose Chippings
Passage Protégé	Your Right of Way
Peage	Toll
Priorite Pietons	Give Way to Pedestrians
Rappel	Reminder
Rids de Poules	Potholes
Sortie	Exit
Vous n'avez pas la Priorite	Give Way

Breaking down: No matter how well prepared your car is, this happens! If you do happen to breakdown, pull over onto the hard shoulder, switch on your vehicles hazard warning lights, put on your high viz jacket and position a red warning triangle 30 metres behind your vehicle. Free orange emergency telephones are located every 2km along all autoroutes. There are regular autoroute road patrols. Be aware that roadside assistance, per se, does not really exist in France. Even if you are covered by a European breakdown policy, the chances are that you will be towed to the nearest garage, rather than having the problem (however minor) sorted on the roadside. Although the cost of the tow itself will probably be covered under your policy, be aware that some smaller local garages may ask you to pay, and claim the costs back once you return to the UK (this has happened to the writer!)

English	French
Car	La voiture; l'auto; la bagnole (slang)
Broken down	En panne
My car is broken down	Ma voiture est en panne
Engine	Le moteur
Gearbox	La boite de vitesse
Tyre	Le pneu
Clutch	L'embrayage
Brakes	Les freins
Hose	Le tuyau
Oil	L'huile
Petrol	Essence
Unleaded	sans plomb 98 or 95 or eurostar 95
Diesel	Gazole
4* fuel	Super
Exhaust	L'échappement
Exhaust pipe	Le pot d'échappement
Steering	La direction
Headlight	Le phare
Windscreen	Le pare-brise

In case of breakdowns, spectators can call the A.C.O.'s breakdown service, phone +33 (0)2 43 50 50 50

The campsites at Le Mans - General Information



Out of the 250,000 fans that make the annual pilgrimage to the great race, more than 50,000 of them make use of one of the official ACO campsites. The following section provides details of most campsites, where they can be found, the atmosphere of each and some of the pro's and cons.

Please note: There have been a lot of changes to the trackside campsites in **recent years**, some campsites have been reduced in size (Houx Annexe and Maison Blanche), new ones have appeared (Dairon, Pincenardiere) and others disappeared (Hunaudieres). There have also been last minute surprises – in 2008 it was only as the tickets were sent out that people realized that Camping Houx Annexe had been divided into 2 parts. All of this makes it extremely difficult to provide you with an accurate picture, **don't take the information in this chapter for granted!**

In the official documents of the ACO, most campsites are described as "Lay By", which is a poor babelfish-style translation of the word "Aire" – a rest stop or campsite without permanent facilities - usually a field(s) with portable toilets / showers. Pitches are marked on almost all campsites now, the campsites Houx, Houx Annexe, Maison Blanche, Bleu Nord and Karting Nord have numbered pitches. On most other sites you can arrive and choose any place you want, or are allocated to a pitch by the security personnel. The current rule is that you need one ticket for each vehicle regardless of how many people/tents are in it. There is also a rule that **your space is limited to 35 m² including the place for your vehicle, e.g. 5x7 meters.**

Campsite tickets: These should be booked well in advance; please have a look at the chapter "Tickets" in this guide for the booking procedure. Campsite ticket prices in 2011 are in the range from 32 € to 260 €, depending on location, facilities and services offered. **The campsite tickets are officially valid during race week from Monday 9:00 am to Sunday evening**, but many people stay until Monday morning - or have to stay, depending on their alcohol level after the race!

Campsites without numbered pitches: Each campsite has areas that are better than others, e.g. it's a good idea not to pitch too near to the road to avoid being covered with dust. It's also a good idea not to set up your tent too close to trees or you'll have loads of people walking past to go for a slash. So, if you're picky, and need some shade or access to water supply nearby, it's best to arrive Wednesday or Thursday at the latest. Quite often, people arriving after about Thursday lunchtime cannot find any space, even though they have a valid ticket. They are then diverted to other campsites by the organizers. Mostly to the Beausejour campsite, which usually has spare space and which is probably the best bet if you arrive without any campsite ticket at all.

Facilities: Most showers & toilets are serviced by local people. It is polite to leave a tip when using the facilities but not mandatory. Towards the end of the week some of the toilet facilities become less pleasant and a supply of your own toilet paper is a good idea.

Refreshments: In hot weather the campsite cafés run out of water pretty quickly. Make sure you have enough when waking up with a hangover.

Campsite etiquette:

- Have a chat with your campsite neighbours before setting up a noisy generator alongside their pitch – offering cold beer or some electricity for their cooling devices will usually ensure acceptance.
- Setting up your tent close to a generator is entirely your fault - you have no reason to complain about noise if the genny was there first!
- It has happened that people can't find space on a campsite despite having a ticket - often caused by groups fencing off inappropriately large areas! Setting up a fence to keep some room for your mates is OK but this should be within the limits of the campsite passes your group has bought. A campsite pass gives you 35 square meters, so if you think you'll need an area of 700 square meters just buy 20 tickets! On sites with marked and numbered pitches, this is of course is not an issue.
- Please collect your rubbish. If the trash bins are full – no problem, just stuff it in a bag and put it beside the bin, it will be collected.
- OK, its party time, but the volume of your stereo should still be reasonable. No one in his right mind can seriously complain about loud music at the Le Mans campsites, say until 1 or 2 am, but playing the national anthem full throttle at 5 am in the morning is not cool!
- Be careful with your fireworks, and especially take care that your rockets don't detonate in other people's tents.
- Any time CA members show up at your site you should offer them cold beer immediately!



Swimming pool ban:

Due to a record low rainfall, water restrictions were in force in this part of France in 2006, e.g. a hosepipe ban for private households. Quite understandably the A.C.O. had to ban the use of swimming pools on the campsites as a consequence. Since then the organizers decided to ban swimming pools completely, most likely to reduce the water usage, so it's best you leave your paddling pools at home.

For 2010 the ticket brochure of the ACO listed 15 different campsites: Arnage, Beausejour, Bleu Nord, Bleu Sud, Dairon, Expo, Garage Vert, Houx, Houx Annexe, Interieur Musee, Karting Nord, Maison Blanche, Mulsanne, Pincenardiére and Tertre Rouge. Although Heronnière is listed as a car park see comments below in Bleu section. Karting Sud is still on the map as a site for buses, but the online ticket office doesn't list it.

The official A.C.O. campsites

Campsite Arnage

Arnage is one of the 2 ACO camp-sites remote from the main race village. It is about a 10 minute cycle ride to Arnage village, and when the track is not in use, a similar distance to Mulsanne village along the track itself. The site spans the area between Indianapolis and Arnage corners, but there is no race view possible from your tent due to banking for general spectators between the site and the track. You do need a spectator ticket to get from the campsite to the track side: the standard "Enceinte Generale" works fine but there is also a discounted ticket available that allows spectator entrance to only the Mulsanne and Arnage viewing areas (and not the main village or grandstand areas).



Campsite Arnage entrance



Campsite Arnage

The campsite is a large, mostly flat rectangular field providing about 250 pitches and edged on the south side by a predominantly birch coppice which provides some shade from the midday sun. The ground is pretty soft and somewhat marshy in places, obviously dependent on recent rainfall. Facilities are minimal: there is 1 tap available near the spectator area. However, there are obviously full facilities for the track side catering vendors (water, electricity) and a couple of the more enterprising regulars tap into these. Inside the campsite itself there are no ablutions, however in the spectator viewing area the Shitehouse family have a small 'emplacement a virage Arnage' that was plumbed in on Wednesday evening, and (new for 2008) a shower block portacabin was functioning on Thursday. The track side catering facilities are only active during qualifying sessions and the race – Friday morning you have to sort out your own "pick-me-ups".



Campsite Arnage



Campsite Arnage water standpipe

Arnage officially opens on Wednesday at 9am – no earlier nights can be purchased. By 3pm on Wednesday the hardy regulars have taken their places but the site was only about 25% full (2008). New for 2009 the site was pegged out into 5*7m (unnumbered) pitches by Tuesday evening and indeed early arrivals were possible. Arnage is pretty cosmopolitan – a mix of large motor homes, caravans and tents from car and bike folk. A numberplate audit on Thursday morning revealed the French were the largest group, closely followed by the Brits and Germans with cameo roles for Belgium, Denmark, Dutchies, Norway & a sole Swiss. There are quite a few folk who use it for dormitory purposes: Frenchies from 100km or so away who pitch their tent on Wednesday and only sleep in it on Saturday.



On Friday morning the Gendarmerie close the public road corner that goes to/from Indianapolis to prevent Mad Friday circuits of the public part of the track. In general getting around on a bicycle is easy although the road to Arnage village can get busy, and the road to Mulsanne or Maison Blanche is occasionally in use by some very fancy Audis & Peugeots. During the race itself the Navette stop (see left picture) is right at the entrance to the site so getting around to Mulsanne & the main village is possible: hitching at the exit of the public car park is also easy.

- Ticket: 32 €
- 1 water tap
- Temporary toilets & showers in adjacent spectator viewing area (and more taps)
- For cars and camper vans

A recent comment (2009):

Arnage was fine, although still needed lump hammer and 6 inch nails instead of tent pegs! However 1 accessible toilet, 2 ladies loos, 1 gents toilet and 2 urinals for whole of campsite AND viewing area was woefully inadequate, (although kept reasonably clean it has to be said). Mini-shower block (3 tiny cubicles) was impressive though, hot water throughout the weekend. Usual dodgy characters appeared post race, but enough people were still around to ensure they were limited to wandering around the rubbish piles.

Campsite Beausejour

Entrance: The roundabout at the junction of Chemain Aux Boeufs and D92 Route de Tours. GPS Co-ordinates (WGS84) N 47°56.19', E 0°12.93'.

Over the last 4 years, the organisation has changed considerably and mostly for the better. There are two pitch sizes available 35m² (7m x 5m) @ 49€ and 105m² (7m x 15m) @ 147€. For the first time in 2009, the site was open from Monday instead of Wednesday. The toilet and shower blocks were brought into service from Monday onwards as required as the site filled up.

They were kept in good order by Veolia attendants with toilet roll and hot water always available. This was a definite improvement on previous years. It is still worth having your own supply of 'Andrex' just in case! The pitch layout sizes were arbitrarily applied by a 'security' person pacing out and knocking in stakes. They had once again improved their PR skills and were more amiable in 2009. As always speaking a little French helps the situation.

It is still beneficial to arrive as early in the week as possible to secure a decent pitch. Happily you no longer get people who have paid for 2 pitches marking out an area the size of Southampton leaving little space for legitimate pitch holders arriving on Thursday or Friday.

There hadn't been the prolonged period of rain before the event like in 2008 so the ground was fairly firm throughout. The deep ruts of previous years were thankfully absent and the terrain manageable.

It is a good walk to and from the main circuit via Chemain Aux Boeufs. In fact if you are camped at the back of BSJ, when you reach the campsite entrance, you are only half way to the circuit! Luckily, towards the weekend there is a little 'Toytown' train that runs between the campsite and the circuit entrance at Technoparc.

It is though within easy walking distance of Arnage village where there are shops and restaurants and the Friday afternoon 'Parade'. Worth a visit as long as the boys don't get too silly. The campsite now has it's own viewing area on the inside of the Porsche Curves. This has to be one of the best views anywhere on the circuit. It's prime for photographs as you are on the inside of a curve so the choice of optimum angle is endless. There was a 'Burger Van' at the foot of the banking in 2009 which appeared to do sterling service. The usual 6 Euros for a 440ml 'pint'.



Beausejour



Beausejour



Beausejour



Beausejour

- Ticket: 49 € for 35 sqm, 147 € for 105 sqm pitches – the latter is not a discount!
- For cars and camper vans
- Temporary shower & toilet blocks

There is an extra area within Beausejour with 105 m² pitches reserved for larger parties, e.g. people arriving in a large coach, allowing 3 cars or 2 campervans (<7m) or one really big motor home (<12m).

Campsites Bleu Sud and Bleu Nord – Parking Heronniere

Camping Bleu is located just outside the circuit opposite the Maison Blanche entrance. Entry to Bleu Sud and Bleu Nord is on the junction of Boulevard des Italiens and Route de la Heronniere. Camping Bleu is divided into two main areas:

Bleu Sud: This is the smaller part of Bleu and is next to Boulevard des Italiens, running alongside the road where “Mad Friday” activities have tended to take place. The site is mostly grass and is generally flat and quite good for getting tent pegs in.

There are one or two areas of slab concrete and a gravel road runs right around the site which can kick up a lot of dust in a dry year. There are a few big trees for shade. In 2008 pitches were numbered and pegged out, but this was not consistently enforced.

There is one toilet block, in 2008 there were no showers but according to the latest brochure for 2009 showers will be available now. Water standpipes (7 x double taps) are located running down through the centre of the site. The taps are on timers where you press the tap and get a measured amount of water. There is no opportunity to attach hoses to the standpipes, unless you bring a plumbing tool kit!

In 2008 a large area at one end of Bleu Sud was fenced off for the Lotus 7 Club. They had a self contained encampment with their own showers, toilets, music and catering facilities.



Bleu Sud entrance



Water standpipes on Bleu Sud

Bleu Nord: This is a very large site located between Parking Bleu and the perimeter of the Airport. The site is grassed but there are some big pot holes and dips that make some of the pitches difficult to use and hazardous walking back to your tent in the dark.

The ground is generally good for tent pegging, but some areas are very sandy and don't hold well. There are a few trees alongside the road, but the majority of the site is wide open. In 2008 pitches were numbered and marked and this was generally enforced (once the Controle had got the hang of the numbering system and their map). Most of the site is set out in double rows with access roads in between, so there is not so much opportunity for large groups to set up a block area.

Shower and toilet facilities are very limited for the number of people on the site and later in the week you can expect queues to be pretty constant. One toilet block (no showers) is located near the entrance at Route de la Heronniere.. This block was not open in the early part of the week. The second toilet block (plus 10 shower units) could be found towards the middle of the site with one water standpipe.



Bleu Nord



Bleu Nord



Bleu Nord



Bleu Nord

Both Sud and Nord are very open sites and the lack of security and theft from tents and pitches have been a big problem over the last couple of years. On the upside, access to and from the sites is generally good throughout the week, apart from leading up to the start of the race and shortly after the finish. You might want to take care in this area on Mad Friday when it is possible to find yourself swept up in the burn out activities, whether you want to or not! Route de la Heronniere acts as a short cut to Arnage village and the Super U. This road was closed to cars during the race, but could still be used on foot or bicycle (2.4km/1.5 miles approx Bleu to Super U).

Bleu attracts a very international crowd with race fans from all continent and set ups ranging from the highly sophisticated to the French family sleeping in their old Renault estate. The atmosphere is pretty relaxed and easy going. In the past it has not tended to be particularly noisy but all that has changed a little since it became be the main site for the Club Arnage crowd in 2009.

Parking Heronniere: This is a small field behind Bleu Sud and although it is officially designated as a car park it seems to have evolved into a bit of an overflow area for Bleu or an unofficial campsite in its own right. There are no facilities at all in this field.

CA Forum comments about Bleu Nord and Bleu Sud:

- 2008: "We didn't have any problems on BN, except for a minor one on arrival where our 2 adjacent pitches were actually on opposite sides of the gravel track, at a diagonal as well! However we luckily sorted this as the ACO had done exactly the same with the English family next to us, so we just swapped. Our pitch was therefore just south of the toilet block beside the 1st-for-tickets enclosure (Blue MG ZT and Clio Williams parked up). About 20M from the 6 foot beer pyramid. So just watched the toilet and shower queues ebb and flow. Note for anyone arriving early next year in this area (R 14 place 76) water and electricity are available if you are quick."
- 2008: "Bleu Nord is similarly well laid out and marked up with little pegs confirming each pitch number. Unfortunately the girl on the gate had only been given half the map so couldn't tell them where their pitches were, but they've found them now!.."
- 2007: "... An overpopulated sandy field far too close to the extremely busy airport with no facilities and even less appeal than camping down stream from a cow byre. But that's only my opinion and I don't want to influence anyone."
- 2007: 'Stayed at BN last year and really struggled to get a tent peg in the ground'

- 2007: *"Bleu Sud, we've been on there for the last 3 years. We have had no problems finding a good sized pitch on the overflow, arriving on Thursday afternoon, Friday is a different matter. Security wise we have had no problems apart from the Sunday evening pikey invasion, but the benefit of Blue is that you can be down the back roads and away straight after the champers. We have never had a traffic jam yet! Getting in and out during the race is a doddle too. It's a longer walk back to the tribunes etc. but a walk through the white car park is no hardship, loads of tasty motors to keep you happy...The site has a good atmosphere, not too rowdy, just right and getting a bit of kip is just about possible without earplugs"*



Bleu Sud



Bleu Sud



Bleu Nord

- Ticket: 59 €
- Temporary showers & toilet blocks
- For cars and camper vans
- Numbered pitches

Campsite Dairon

This is one of 2 brand new campsites which have been established for 2008 inside the track. Facilities seem to be rather basic, no showers. Its location on the map shows that with an estimated 30 minutes walk, it's quite a hike to the start/finish area and the village. The nearest viewing area, which is the Porsche Curves section, seems to be about 15-20 minutes walk away. Reports about this campsite are of course not yet available, so if you stay there, some comments for next year's edition of this guide would be appreciated.

- Ticket: 49 €
- Toilets
- For cars and campervans

Campsite Expo

This is one of the smaller sites, and is outside the circuit, but just a few minutes walk to the main entrance and the automobile museum. On first view, this place does not look very charming, but it has definitely a few advantages. There are lots of cattle sheds on this field, in which many people pitch and which can be a big bonus when it rains

heavily (dry dining area, dry tents) or when it is extremely hot (shade). Another bonus is that there are high fences all around and no pedestrian through traffic, therefore security can be rated more highly than at other campsites. Much of the ground is concrete and even in the non-concrete areas, trying to get tent pegs in the ground is a challenge. Some people take a cordless power hammer drill to start the holes for the pegs. It's easy to find and access by car, as it's near the main entrance, but you can expect some traffic jams around the entrance during the weekend. Facilities like toilets and showers are sufficient and generally kept very clean. Water supply is good and it's worth taking some cable and French adapters with you, as with a little bit of luck you might be able to tap some electricity.



CA Forum comments about Expo:

- 2006: "We like it as it is close to the pub, not far from main gate, close to the fair etc. We normally try and get a run of the pens. The big advantage being is you can put a ruddy great padlock on them and feel your kit is slightly more secure than in a tent. Also good for keeping dry. We even rigged a shower up in one of them. After the first time, we left the tent pegs at home and brought a pack of 6 inch nails and a lump hammer & never looked back."

In the last couple of years the largest part of it – the field between the 2 cowshed blocks - see the aerial view above - was booked by a Danish tour group with several hundred people, lots of noise and their own, grim looking security force. Opposite this campsite there is the bar/restaurant "Aux Portes du Circuit" (also known as "Janine's" to some CA members), a popular hang-out for many race fans who sip their cold beer on the outside terrace and watch the burnouts on the street in front of the restaurant.

- Ticket: 57 €
- Power points - designed only for organized and pre-arranged group tours but many people just hijack them
- Permanent toilet block.
- Permanent covered outside wash basins.
- For cars and campervans

Campsite Garage Vert

Has appeared between Houx Annexe and Parking Vert and provides standard 35m2 non-numbered pitches for cars, motorbikes & campervans

- Ticket: 89 €

Campsite Houx

Situated south east of the main village and inside the circuit, Camping Houx provides one of the quieter camping areas as well as one of the more attractive. It's just a 10 minute walk from the Village via a footbridge over the permanent Bugatti circuit - this will bring you out in the western corner of the site. Camping is on numbered plots, which prevents campers from cordoning off vast areas of space as seen on many of the other sites. Most of the site is set within tall pine trees that provide a degree of protection from the sun (or rain!). The western side of the site is open fields and is more exposed. The site tends to attract a quieter, more mature crowd. One major downside of Houx is that the size of the pitches is strictly limited to app. 35 sqm. These are all marked out and are only big enough for a decent size frame tent plus the car, or one medium size motor home. There is a good covering of grass across the site and the ground will take a tent peg easily. The big advantage is that you don't need to worry about finding a place when arriving late, e.g. on Saturday, as you have a reserved pitch. The quickest walking route from Houx to the circuit is back up to the village and onto the pit straight or Dunlop Chicane. Alternatively, exit the campsite via its North Easterly gate and stride out across and beyond Houx Annexe. You will find yourself at the Esses or Tertre Rouge within 15 minutes.



CA member's comments on Houx:

- 2006: "We stayed on Houx a couple of years back as we couldn't arrive until Friday so it was good to know we had a guaranteed pitch. The showers and loos are excellent. With only an AH Sprite and a two man tent the pitch size was more than enough. My only beef was that some people spilled off their pitches and blocked the 'alleys' between pitches so you couldn't get your car out / in if you wanted to."
- 2007: "lots of the pitches have trees in them and if you get one it's very difficult to get a car and your tent on the pitch"

Access by car: Houx is easy to navigate to and from by car, as it is served by the roads that make up the circuit's infrastructure. As such they won't be clogged up with through traffic. The only issue is during Friday afternoon and evening when the Houx Annexe roundabout that lies on one of Houx's main access routes becomes swamped with inebriated race fans baying for burning rubber and tyre smoke. There is an alternative route out via Karting Nord.

- Ticket: 87 €
- Electricity – French plug so UK Adapters are required.
- Permanent shower and toilet block
- Permanent covered outside wash basins
- For cars and campervans
- Numbered pitches
- Campsite café serving hot and cold food as well as alcohol and soft drinks, located in the centre of the site

Campsites Houx Annexe



Situated to the Eastern side of Camping Houx, and also inside the circuit, the Annexe has only its name in common with Camping Houx. This site is a 15 minute walk from the Village via the northern loop of the Bugatti circuit or the Esses corner. The corner at Tertre Rouge can be reached in 10 minutes, with the Esses complex accessible in only 5. The Mulsanne straight stretches out beyond the trees to the East of the site and although concealed from view it provides a cacophony of noise! This is arguably the most noisy and rowdy campsite for would be campers. If fireworks, sound systems and general party time are what you want, then Houx Annexe is for you! Expect little sleep, dust everywhere (when hot) and a thoroughly

diverse mix of people and nationalities. Friday night at Le Mans in general is not for the faint hearted - this is even truer on Houx Annexe. As well as the sound systems that go well into the night/morning there is also the roundabout

burnout session to the South East corner of the site where all are welcome to perform burnouts, doughnuts and anything else that takes your fancy - see the "Mad Friday" chapter of this guide for more details about this.

As a result of a football stadium building project and a new tram station Houx Annexe is much smaller now compared to previous years, when it was the largest campsite. For a few years the site was divided into 2 areas, Houx Annexe Nord and Houx Annexe Sud but for 2009 it became a single site with numbered pitches, and it remains the same for 2010.

The Tram station is on the verge of the site and provides a fast and cheap route straight into the centre of the city.

CA Forum comments on Houx Annexe:

- 2006: "It's inside the circuit and close to the 'village', grandstands, Tertre Rouge/Stella Bar, museum, Esses, fun fair, there's decent toilets, water standpipes and we have great bonfires!"
- 2006: "Houx Annexe for us, clean bogs, good showers, numbered spaces, electric hook up, shop / bar and if you're lucky to get a pitch amongst the trees you get shade as well."
- 2007: "...there is one small drawback. Those bloody great pine cones (they are about the size of a cola can) have the habit of falling out of the trees quite regularly at that time of year, and the trees are quite high (no, not from the strange tobacco some people smoke, I mean high as in tall). So, if you have a decent motor or value your paintwork, be VERY careful where you actually park it."
- 2008: "This year, we arrived at around 3am again on Wednesday, missing the road at first and without any signs we asked the Houx security were HA is. "A droite". Without any checks whether we have Nord or Sud, whether we pitch up 7x5 or 10x10m and without anyone controlling the setups it was great fun like BSJ '06 or Spa-Francorchamps. Seen many Nord tickets on the Sud part, btw, so there was no organisation at all, no pitches marked at all, nothing. And the atmosphere was stunning"

Access by car: This site is easy to navigate to and from by car, as it is served by the roads that make up the circuit's infrastructure. As such they won't be clogged up with through traffic. The Carrefour supermarket is within easy access via the N138

- Ticket: 57 €
- Temporary shower & toilet blocks situated at the north, west and south sides of the site.
- Temporary café serving hot and cold food and beverages.
- Regular visits from the mobile baguette and croissant van.

Campsite Interior Musee



Interieur Musee is the strip which runs inside the 'Bugatti Loop' i.e. on the side of the unused (during the 24 hour race) Bugatti circuit. Originally there were 2 bridges which crossed the circuit and Interieur Musee lies between. These bridges were replaced in 2005 by 2 tunnels when a great deal of earth moving took place. It seems that future works will see Interieur Musee disappear from the available camping in 2008. Indeed for 2007 some CA members booked camping there only to be told later that there would be no camping available in 2007. After much protesting, a limited number of camping spots were made available. Advantages of this site are being very close to the action; you can be trackside within 1 minute, in the village within 5

minutes or in the pits within 10 minutes and you are able to get in and out of circuit by car pretty easily. This site has a good bunch of regulars and has been described as very free and easy going, with no allocated spaces. There's room for your party tent and you can always meet others who pass by/stop for a chat on their way to the circuit. Drawbacks are the dust - better to camp away from the vehicle/pedestrian thoroughfares and the noise - it bothers some, but others find it a part of the fun, and it's not as loud as at La Chapelle or some of the other sites. As in many other places the ground is very hard, 6 inch nails as tent pegs have been recommended.

CA Forum comments on Interior Musee:

- 2007: "I think it's a great spot providing you pitch up at the far end. To do this you need to get there by Wednesday. People generally turn off to go over the bridge before they get anywhere near our tent. One year we pitched closer to the entrance and hated it. Loads of people walking past and our tent got raided."

- 2006: *"Great to be near the action, but lots of "passers by" are all seemingly quite happy to barge past your cars and walk through your gazebo to cut the corner"*
- 2005: *"The atmosphere is great. As for the "visitors", it depends where you pitch. If you can get right up the far end (as we always try to do), you generally are left alone."*

Facilities: Used to be just a couple of taps and a portacabin with 'squat and thrusts' and washbasins. These are now defunct and since 2006, new good quality portacabin showers, washbasins and toilets are within 1 minute in La Chapelle (under the tunnel and close to Dunlop Bridge). Also the new toilet/shower facilities within the village are only a short stroll.

- Ticket: 87 €
- For cars and campervans

Campsite Karting Nord



Situated to the south of the village and directly adjacent to the circuit, Karting Nord offers some of the best viewing from any of the official campsites. Prime lots are along the fence that separates the site from the track. Motor home owners often get to the site on the Monday to ensure a prime spot so that they can watch the race from their deckchairs on top of their vehicles while sipping beer. Ear plugs are obligatory!

A lot of organized bus tours from Denmark have used this site in recent years. It is a 20 minute walk from the Village via a tunnel that takes you underneath the permanent Bugatti Circuit. The site lies on the circuit infield at the exit of the Porsche Curves. The ground on Karting Nord is of variable quality; the few areas under the shade of the trees will take a tent peg easily but the majority of the site is made up of slightly harder soil, meaning hardened tent pegs and a substantial mallet are a benefit.

In 2008 the pitches were marked with white paint & yellow flags. Numbers started by the Go-kart-circuit, letters started at the track.

CA forum comments about Karting Nord:

- 2008: *"KN was actually quite well organised with ACO bods on bikes taking people to their pitches. There were some stupidly marked ones (with a tree, stump or lake in the middle of them) and a few people we saw complained and got re-allocated"*
- 2008: *"...the lower down the field you get, the worse ground conditions are if it rains like it did in 2007. Plus immediately after the race, it's gridlocked for a long time"*
- 2005: *"...is full of 'organized' Danes, but you can camp close to the track if you have a small tent and vehicle and can then get amongst the trees and camper homes."*
- 2007: *"Good shade under the trees and just a short walk to the track at Porsche Curves (there is also a small section where you can film/photograph without bloody catch fencing. Its also interesting to note that at this point you do not have to have a ticket to view the circuit if on foot, just head towards Karting Alan Prost and watch from the car park, so take note all you cheapskates!). Lacks the atmosphere of other sites, but plenty of space.... Ground is as hard as nails, heavy duty tent pegs are required and putting up your fences will be hard work. Was easy to get in and out of during race."*
- 2007: *"... is a campsite that is near the exit to the Porsche curves as you head down towards the pits. Hence you can see the cars from your campsite. Makes finding out who is still in the race on the Sunday easy (i.e. if you are too hung over to work a radio). The toilets and showers are the same as on any other site, usually a queue, normally not much hot water, reasonably clean ... It is quite an international site with a good mix of Danes / Brits and others."*



Access by car: Access in and out of the site is easy as the site is served by one of the roads that make up the circuit's infrastructure meaning it won't get clogged with through traffic. The quickest way to leave the circuit is by heading south and under the track but as this route can get clogged at busy times you may want to consider heading north via Houx Annexe.



- Ticket: 79 €, 10 € for extra nights, numbered pitches
- Some power points
- For cars and campervans
- Temporary shower and toilet blocks.
- Permanent covered outside wash basins.
- Track view
- Campsite café serving hot and cold food as well as alcohol and soft drinks

Campsite Maison Blanche

A large site opposite the Ford chicanes, which many CA members have chosen as their favourite. From Maison Blanche, the Village may be reached on foot in only 5 minutes via a pedestrian underpass that comes out under the shadow of the media centre and the first of the pit lane buildings. The eastern edge of the campsite actually borders the circuit at the exit of the Porsche Curves, and runs along the circuit's final straight and down to the Ford Chicanes. This means that the racing (and associated noise!) is only a stone's throw away from the prime spots, and can be viewable from the comfort of your pitch. Some fans have set up large installations there in the past, e.g. the "Drinking for Holland" megacentre in 2006. There are well maintained tarmac roads criss-crossing Maison Blanche, providing

good access to the large grassy areas that make up the rest of the site. The ground is flat and well suited for pitching tents, gazebos and anything else. This site recently been reduced in size.



Access by car: Getting around by car can sometimes be problematic as, at peak times, such as Saturday morning, when the traffic often comes to a standstill outside the narrow entrance to the site.

This site is technically inside the track so you have to show your entry ticket to get out and back in. If you walk in via the main gate you can walk all the way down the grandstands and into Maison Blanche without showing your ticket again.

- Ticket: 87 € for 35 sqm pitch, 260 € for 105 sqm pitch
- A permanent toilet block at the vehicular entrance as well as a number of temporary toilet and shower blocks
- Cars and campervans
- Numbered pitches
- Track view

Campsite Mulsanne

The site is located quite a distance from the grandstands and the village, which is probably the reason why it is among the cheapest campsites. A free shuttle bus operates to the main areas of the circuit, but this usually stops between from around 23.00 Saturday to 07.00 Sunday, so be careful not to be stranded away from your tent and belongings for the whole of Saturday night! A recent report listed pros like good ground & natural shade, and proximity to Mulsanne and the typical camper seems to be mixed European – probably more Euro than Brits.



Campsite Mulsanne



Campsite Mulsanne – Trackside view

It is a great spot to watch the race with Mulsanne corner at one end of the site. If you have transport (car, motorbike) you can access the village/pits area, getting around during the race itself reportedly easy. Getting away after the race is also not difficult, just travel south to Ecommoy to hit the Peage. There are good shopping facilities, a Champion supermarket is just 50 yards away from the site.

Camping: Good ground and lots of trees for some respite from the sun or rain. Early arrivals get closest to the track. This site is not massively busy, so late arrivals will find a spot. No marked pitches as yet. There are a lot of non-campers around because the viewing area is in the campsite. Mix of tents & caravans/motorhomes.

The facilities have been described as good, there are portacabin bogs in traditional British style!. Good showers with plenty of hot water. Queues not so bad, because it's not a huge site. Careful planning/timing will ensure no queuing. Toilets and showers are cleaned regularly. There's also an open drain for those wanting to dispose of 'stuff' from caravans/campers.



Campsite Mulsanne



Trackside View from Mulsanne

CA forum comments about Mulsanne:

- **2008:** "Security - OK (it seems) before & during, once the race has finished, it's probably more accessible than those sites inside the circuit. Gendarmes patrol on Mulsanne corner itself & on race day 1 of the 3 entrances is closed. A couple of pikies were chased off after the race – standard stuff. (Be aware of the fact that there is a large turnover of people during the race, because it's a viewing area as well) & we had a rule that at least one of our crew had to be 'on-pitch' at any given time.)"
- **2008:** "Atmosphere: Pretty quiet. For those who want a party site or access to the pits & village, I wouldn't bother. Having previously stayed on KN, I'd say it was a lot quieter than that. That said, you don't get all the go-peds etc, so if you want somewhere 'less active' – it's good. If you aren't bothered about being at the heart of the action, it's OK. We ended up there last year because we had to, having previously stayed on KN – we'll be back on Mulsanne in 2009."

There is a large mound right up in the corner of the race track which is higher than the fence so if you are into your photography it's a good spot. There is also a Newspaper stand for the local French rag.

- Ticket: 32 €
- For cars and campervans
- Toilets, shower unit, but only 1 water tap on the site
- Refreshments

Campsite Pincenardiere

This is one of 2 brand new campsites which have been established for 2008 inside the track. Facilities seem to be rather basic, no showers. Its location on the map shows that with an estimated 30 minutes / 3-4 km it's quite a hike to the start/finish area and the village. The nearest viewing area, which is the Porsche Curves section, seems to be about 15-20 minutes walk away. Reports about this campsite are of course not yet available, so if you stay there, some comments for next year's edition of this guide would be appreciated.

- Ticket: 51 €
- Toilets, Showers
- For cars and campervans

Campsite Tetre Rouge



Other campsites offer a wild atmosphere, unlimited space for massive groups, or non-stop partying. Tetre Rouge's charms are more sedate and relaxed - a calm retreat beside the storm being unleashed on the track literally metres away. It's been described as "noisy" in the previous CA reviews. It isn't, although the proximity of the track does mean it isn't quiet either. Campers are mainly small groups of Brits and French.

Tetre Rouge is one of the smallest campsites, with no more than 350 unreserved pitches. These are now marked out standard-sized areas, although the wooden pegs and barrier tape used for this are quickly scavenged for firewood. Most locations are fairly flat and grassed, with a few concreted areas ideal for motor homes. Unlike many other sites, there are mature pine trees throughout most of the site so there's a fair amount of shade.

There are no refreshment outlets on site, but there is a bar and concession stands within staggering distance of the site entrance, and the Stella Bar is close by. Security is pretty good, with a high wire fence surrounding the whole site and friendly staff on permanent duty.

Turning right out of the main exit (or use the side exit when open) brings you to the Museum, and 10 minutes the village and tribunes. In the other direction, Tetre Rouge corner, the tram stop to get into Le Mans, and the Stella bar are less than 5 minutes away. Those feeling lazy need go no further than the spectator banking overlooking the Esses right in front of the campsite, complete with a big screen opposite.



There's a second entrance at the Western end of the site (pedestrian only) open during peak times only.

Three toilet & shower 'portacabins' are kept clean usually with hot water for showers. Queues aren't massive, even at the busiest times. Water standpipes are located near each of the toilet blocks, and have standard threaded tap fittings. In 2008 there were just 3 electric hook-up points across the entire site, you'll need to come with plenty of extension cables and extension blocks if you want juice on tap.

Access: For first-timers, getting to Tetre Rouge campsite can be "interesting". Follow the ACO's coloured direction signs by all means, but the real secret is knowing that the entrance is accessed from the D338 (the old N138) at the junction with the D323 - this is literally at the very apex of Tetre Rouge

corner and the start of the Mulsanne straight. The entrance is in the shadow of the D323 flyover. This is also a pedestrian entrance to the circuit, so it's busy with race-goers during practice sessions and the race itself. Important: You need general race entrance tickets for all car occupants before you arrive at the campsite, even if you arrive early in the week: If you're lucky, the ticket booth next to the entrance will be open. Beyond the gate, a newly tarmaced lane winds pleasantly down the side of the track. Ignore the gated entrances that you reach first at the bottom of a short hill - these are private camping enclosures for race marshals. Instead, drive up the hill and behind a grandstand that's in front of you, and you soon come to Tetre Rouge campsite entrance on your right. Tickets will need to be shown again here, and don't forget to collect a counter-mark-ticket when you leave the campsite.

- Ticket: 87 €
- Track view
- Showers & Toilets
- For cars and campervans

Alternative campsites

In case you don't get any tickets for the trackside campsites or you want to camp away from the noise and are willing to commute a little bit, there are some alternative sites not too far from the circuit. For a complete overview a look at www.lescampingsdefrance.com could be useful. The following campsites have been used by CA members in the past:

Le Bounty

Etang des Cheres, F-72220 Teloche, Phone: +33 (0)2392 460 948 (John), E-mail: info@carpbookings.co.uk
Website: www.bountylemans.com

Just off the N138, app. 4 km south of Mulsanne. Facilities: Clubhouse Restaurant & Bar, 1664 on draft (English Ale London Pride on hand pump over race events), covered lakeside terraces, large lakeside marque, lakeside camping, 6 caravan pitches with power hook ups, parking for camper vans, large secure hard standing car park, new toilets & showers with 24 hour constants hot water. Refurbished this year with "ladies only" facilities like shower, loo and new for 2010 washroom/changing room with UK 13amp power socket. Large wide screen Satellite TV showing the 24 hour race (and other sporting events) & Live Radio Le Mans outside on the terrace. A CA member who stayed there commented:

"Well, we stayed at the Auberge le Bounty this year. Very nice place ... Food was great, and there was a nice little bar. Made a nice change from the campsite melee ... Recommended to anyone who wants a little more peace with shuttle bus service to and from the circuit."



For 2011 they offer various packages: a 3 night/4 day package is £ 205 per person, a 4 night/5 day package is £ 235 per person. This comes with a full English breakfast help yourself to toast, juice, tea, evening meal and sweet, one evening a b-b-q without a burger in sight! Guest can use a the free ample shuttle transport (runs Thursday to Sunday), extra days camping can be booked for free (ask them for details). Tent hire per person complete with air bed, camping fees are charged per person whether using single or multi person tents, caravans or campers (small extra charge for electric hook up). The place is under English ownership - owned by Steve and John - and managed by Karen & Dene, the latter is a former Michelin * chef. Full details of those packages can be found on their website. They also cater for fishermen. The place has been recommended be several CA members with good, down to earth British cooking. They cover the MotoGP, The 24 Hour and the Classic under Fat Fish Motor Sport.

Camping du Houssay – The “Spay” campsite

F-72700 Spay, Phone: +33-(0)2 43 21 16 58 or 33, Fax: +33-(0)2 43 21 69 95

Website: www.ville-spay.fr (in French, follow the link to „camping“), 92 places open from 1st April – 31st October

Getting there: It's about 15 km away from the circuit. To get to the Spay campsite from the circuit pass by the entrance to Maison Blanche heading towards Arnage. At the roundabout turn right, follow the road across the railway line and into the centre of Arnage coming out at the “fountain roundabout”. Turn left at the “fountain roundabout” and follow this road out of the village crossing over two more roundabouts. Continue out of the village for a couple of kilometres to a big crossroads with a signpost indicating a right turn to Spay. Turn right; follow this road under the motorway bridge then a sharp right turn then a narrow single lane bridge over the river. After the bridge you will see a sports centre on the right, the entrance to the campsite is immediately after the sports centre on the right.



As you pull into the campsite, stop at the building on the right which is reception. The manageress speaks no English or other languages, only French, but she is very friendly and tries very hard to help. You will need your passport, a means of paying and a deposit in cash (app. 20 €) for the electronic passkey which operates the vehicle gate at the entrance to the campsite. The price per night is app. 7 – 8 € per person and 2 – 3 € for electricity. The site varies as to whether they allocate you a pitch or let you go off and choose. It is understood that an overflow field is used for the 24 hour car race. The main campsite is a horseshoe shape around the lake in the middle. Pitches are of a good size, and the site is very peaceful although there is

some road noise from the adjacent main road.

Facilities: Main Campsite – there is an electricity supply to each pitch which takes a standard camping “blue” Euro plug (not a two pin plug as used on Houx). Power is usually within four or five metres of each pitch. It is not known whether there is an electricity supply to the overflow field. There is a fairly new central block that provides toilets, showers, washing up sinks and laundry sinks. There is no toilet roll provided so take your own. The facilities were all cleaned regularly to a very good standard. There is plenty of hot water in the showers, the washing up sinks and the laundry sinks. There is very little shade, there are a couple of trees but they do not provide much effective shade.

Local village – it is a nice walk (around a kilometre) to Spay village where you will find a bakery (nice chocolate croissants), butchers, pharmacy, bar, café and a small supermarket that has most things you might need.

Booking: In previous years the advertised telephone numbers and fax numbers have been for the Mayor's office and messages left do not appear to get through. It is also difficult to phone unless your French is pretty good!

From experience it has not been necessary to book in advance, however for the 24 Hours it's probably sensible to try.



Le Val de Sarthe

Rue Abreuvoir, F-72170 Beaumont sur Sarthe, Phone +33(0)2 43 97 01 93
E-Mail: beaumont-sur-sarthe@wanadoo.fr



A pleasant municipal site in the centre of the small town of Beaumont sur Sarthe, located about 20 kilometres from the northern edge of Le Mans along the N138 (D338). The pitches are a good size and marked out with hedges. Some of the pitches are well shaded, others in the open. The sanitary facilities are reportedly the best encountered anywhere. The site is adjacent to the River Sarthe, and is very tranquil.

There is a municipal swimming pool located at the entrance to the site, and the centre of the village with cafés, bars and small supermarket is only a few minutes walk. Access for large campers is a bit tricky but manageable (one CA member got in with a car and 7m caravan). A reservation is recommended.



- 73 pitches, hot and cold water, electricity, washing machines, reception open from 10.00 am – 8.00 pm
- Fees (2006): Car, large caravan, one person, electric hook-up -6.35 € per night.

Camping Municipal Le Porte Liberge

Rue du Port Liberge, F-72500 Vaas, Phone: +33-(0)2 43 46 70 29, Fax +33-(0)2 43 46 17 75,
E-mail: mairie.vaas@wanadoo.fr

A small campsite located in a village at the banks of a river, 33 pitches, electricity, children's playground It's approximately 20 km away from the circuit.

Camping Municipal Écommoy

F-72220 Écommoy, Phone: +33(0)2 43 42 14 14, E-mail: mairieecommoy@wanadoo.fr

Écommoy is situated 10 kilometres south of Mulsanne on the D338 (the Tours road). The campsite is a municipal one, well signposted to the left as you enter Écommoy (going south). It has 60 pitches, and is on slightly rising ground, but the pitches are level. The ground is mainly grassed but with slightly sandy areas. Part of the site has marked pitches bound by hedges, whilst other areas are free-format. Most of the pitches are well-shaded. There is a barrier across the entrance operated by a card-key, which you are supplied with after paying. The sanitary block has everything you would wish for, and although it is not new, is kept very clean and tidy. There is also a swimming pool (open air in summer) opposite the site entrance. The site is only a short walk to the centre of the village which has all the usual offerings of a French village – shops, bars etc. Some Le Mans regulars use this site for the duration rather than the ACO sites – it is only a short hop from there to the circuit, and the fees are very cheap. One CA member reported that they do not take reservations.

Camping Le Vieux Moulin

F-72190 Neuville-sur-Sarthe, Phone: +33 (0)2 43 25 31 82, Fax: +33 (0)2 43 25 38 11
E-mail: christopher.dean@tiscali.fr, Website: www.lemanscamping.net

This is a large campsite just 8 miles north of Le Mans. Reports on the web say that this campsite is managed by some Brits and comments found were very positive. Reportedly they are running their own shuttle bus to and from the circuit. There are approximately 100 pitches, some chalets to rent and the usual facilities like water, electricity, sanitary blocks and laundry. They've also got an outdoor swimming pool, mini golf and a children's playground. If you plan to stay there, it's worth having a closer look at their website (in English and French language); there's a detailed access map, prices, a lot of other information and an online booking form.

How to get there: It is 8 miles north of Le Mans on the D338 at "Saint Saturnin". By motorway via A11/A81 and A28 take exit N°7, direction Sillé le Guillaume. At the Saint Saturnin traffic lights, just follow the road signs.

Chateau de Chanteloup

F-72460 Sille-Le-Philippe, Phone: +33 (0)2 43 27 51 07, Fax: +33 (0)2 43 89 05 05
E-mail: chanteloup.souffront@wanadoo.fr, Website: www.chateau-de-chanteloup.com

They offer lodging in an old French castle and a campsite at reasonable rates, have a look at their website for detailed information and online booking.

How to get there: It's about 25 km away from the circuit, by the A11 motorway take the gate N°6 "*Le Mans Centre Tours*", then direction "*Le Mans Centre*" and "*Savigné l'Evêque*" (D 301); from "Le Mans", direction "*Bonnetable*" (D 301).

Municipal Camping Site "Le Port"

La Suze sur Sarthe, Phone: +33 (0)2 43 77 30 49, E-mail: marie.la-suze-sur-sarthe@wanadoo.fr

A really nice picturesque site with 108 pitches at the side of La Sarthe River, only 200m from town centre and 10 miles from circuit. The site offers calm and rest, with municipal swimming pool, tennis, table tennis and snack bar. If you want a good clean site with a bit of comfort and a toilet with paper, this is a site with a strong recommendation.

One CA member has stayed there the last 10 years, the agency Just Tickets also used it, but it is still quieter and cleaner than some track options - 3 shower blocks. The town has a nice village square, an excellent Super U and a couple of bars, not to mention rail station. Camp site does not have its own web site but does have a warden on site. It has a security fence and barrier system, but closes to car access after 10pm, so after qualification you have to park on the car park outside. All pitches have electric hook ups if required, essential for electric coolers and beers. Rates and a full list of facilities can be found at the following URL:

Internet: <http://www.francecamping.com/camping-fiche.php?id=4360®ion=Pays%20de%20Loire>.

Campsite Security – Be Aware!!!

Previous editions of this guide have stated that Le Mans campsites are generally pretty safe places to be and that campers tend to keep an eye out for one another. That remains true but, after the 2007 race it became clear that there had been a significant increase in the confirmed reports from people who had valuables stolen, or where attempts had been made to do so from them on a number of the campsites. So, to give you a better chance of keeping your valuables safe and, importantly knowing what to do if you do suffer from a theft, we've added some more detailed information to the guide. The guidance applies all the time you are there, but in particular at the really busy times, when the campsites are full on the Friday through to the Sunday when the general public are milling all around everywhere as well.

Before you go



Have a written list to take with you of any useful phone numbers and contacts you might need to cancel bank cards, credit cards, or traveller's cheques that you have taken with you. Include contacts for breakdown organisations and car dealerships in case your car is damaged, and your mobile phone provider, in case that gets taken. Have a copy of that list available to someone at home who can do the contacting for you if necessary. We haven't provided a full list here, as the details would be incomplete or soon out of date, and it is your responsibility to know them anyway, but the more popular banks and other locations are listed at the bottom of this section. For UK citizens, the loss of a passport isn't a huge drama, but it could well be for others trying to leave France and return to their country - so it is worth having

the necessary phone numbers for local embassy/consular staff (who'll probably be in Paris) and your country of residence's immigration services on the list as well.

Basic Precautions

- Bring as few valuables and documents as possible with you – OK, you need your camera and/or camcorder but expensive watches and jewellery aren't really essential during race week.
- Keep your cash, passports, bank cards, wallets & cameras with you or leave them securely locked in your car out of sight when away from the campsite. Never leave them in your tent.
- Some theft attempts have been made while people have been asleep in their tent. Don't leave valuables - or bags containing them - close to the tent entrance. Locate them so that anyone has to climb over a bundle of stuff and on top of you to get at anything, which will wake you up, no matter how heavy a sleeper you are or how much beer you have consumed. Other ideas are to put car keys and other valuables in a small tobacco tin or plastic box, big enough to protect and not to press any central locking buttons by accident, then stash the box with you in your sleeping bag, or put them in a money belt and wear it.
- Make sure your car or bike is properly secured before leaving for the racetrack or turning in for the night.
- If you are using a generator it's a good idea to use a heavy-duty motorcycle chain & lock to secure it, alternatively store it in the boot or van when not in use.
- If you are bringing mini-motos, bicycles and the like, then secure them properly.
- If you are camping in a large group, get organized - if someone is always on site, then the risk of theft is much lower.

Some other recommendations from CA members:

- *"You may whinge at this but, I keep keys/passports/wallets etc within my shorts or trousers at all times and I sleep in them. Too pi**ed to take them off in the tent. They are changed the next day and if able to be 'recycled' will be worn again."*
- *"I've used a little padlock on the inside of the tent zips in the past - I wonder if even a bit of coat hanger wire bent through the fly screen zips would be enough deterrent to the casual thief (i.e. can't unzip the zips quickly, so move on)"*
- *"Better perimeter protection - we used tape which was pegged to the ground this year, just to mark out the area for our group who were arriving at different times. Picket posts and plastic fencing (like at DfH's site) would make it more awkward/difficult to gain casual access/egress to/from the group's area without arousing suspicion or tripping over it, particularly in the dark."*
- *"Loud portable alarms that can be fixed so that they are triggered by the opening of tent flaps or doors, or the movement of items such as bags or keys. There are plenty of these around on the market for around a fiver each, which can be fixed in place so that the movement of a zip, bag, door or key bunch would trigger them. Similarly, there are wireless infra-red sensors that can be linked to an alarm sounder, although these may be more subject to triggering by drunken members of the group pitching back into the site late at night."*

What to do when the worst has happened



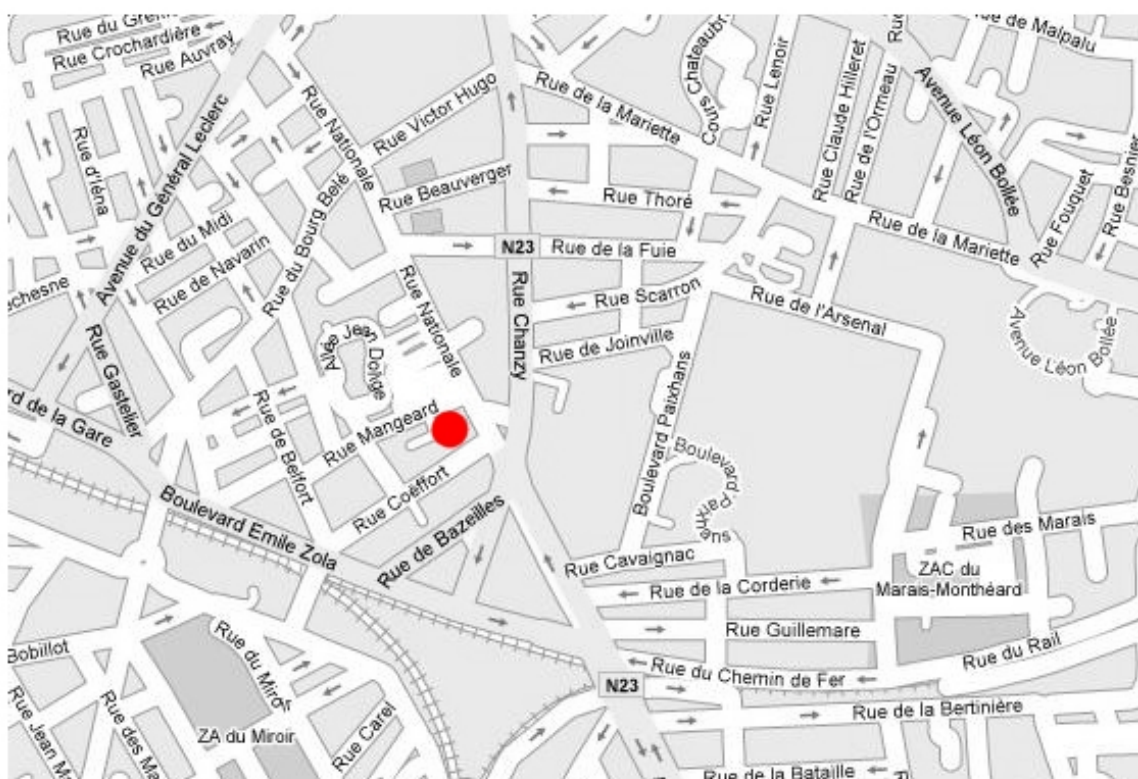
If you catch a thief in the act, some people might be tempted to dish out punishment on the spot – up to you, but anything you do is at your own risk and remember that the thief might be armed, have a bundle of mates, or you might just get yourself into more trouble with the law. So be careful, but shout and scream about it so that everyone else in the vicinity is aware of what is going on! If you are lucky, such as being nearby a public road, there might even be a proper policeman around who should take an interest; some people have tried to involve the campsite security people but they are often not willing to get involved, as their job seems to be to administer pitches and check for valid tickets.

If the theft has happened when you have been away or asleep, once you have got over being angry and wound up over it, then think calmly and list everything that has been taken. Then do a quick search around the area of the tent and ask neighbours if anyone has seen anything: the thief will often take a bag, rifle

through it to find what he wants and then dump what he doesn't want within a hundred metres of the tent. Make the necessary calls to cancel missing bank cards, credit cards and travellers cheques - from your mobile if you have still got it, from a payphone if you have the cash, or by asking if someone can lend you a phone so that you can call the other person that you left a copy of the list with – then you only need to make one international call instead of several.

Then go and report it to the police - they need to be aware of the level of thefts going on, and you will need the paperwork that they will give you to help you get back to your country of residence and with making any insurance claim! This does not mean just talking to the local policeman on traffic duty, the CRS riot squad van, the local gendarmerie or someone in the ACO. You must go to the Commissariat de Police in the centre of Le Mans:

Commissariat de Police, 6 Rue Coëffort , P.O. Box 554, 72017 Le Mans Cedex, Phone +33 (0)2 43 61 68 00



You then tell them what has happened and they give you a nicely stamped official declaration of loss form.

For UK citizens, although the official advice is that you must report the theft of a passport to the FCO and/or local embassy for them to issue you with temporary travel documents, this would mean travelling to Paris, waiting until the office opens on Monday and sorting it out from there. This may need to be done if you are travelling by air, but for car travellers, when this has happened to Le Mans goers in the past, the police declaration form and a combination of explaining the loss at the ferry check and answering the questions of the nice immigration people at Dover,

Portsmouth or the like has worked well. Last but not least, the most important advice - **Don't get paranoid**. Overall, the majority of campers still enjoy a trouble-free weekend.

Some Useful UK Numbers from France

Identity and Passport Service +44 20 7008 1500

Banks

Lloyds TSB +44 1702 278 270 (or +44 2392 652 222 for those with Sentinel Card protection)

and +44 1273 571 600 for travellers cheques

NATWEST +44 142 370 0545

HSBC +44 1442 422 929

Barclays +44 1604 230 230

Bank of Scotland and Halifax 08457 20 30 99 – no overseas number provided, so try dropping the 0 off the front and adding +44

Abbey + 441908 237963

Nationwide + 44 1268 567214

Credit Cards

Visa 0800-90-1179 (freecall French number)

Mastercard 0800-90-1387 (freecall French number)

American Express +44 (0)1273 696 933

Maestro – contact the issuing bank

Post-race security on campsites

A few weeks prior to the race in 2009, a CA member sent an e-mail to the A.C.O about this topic:

Good afternoon,

I have 15 tickets for Camping Bleu Nord for the 24h du Mans this year, and will be camping with a large group as we have done for several years. Last year, when we returned to our camp site on Sunday after the finish of the race, a lot of our camping equipment had been stolen – and many other people near us had items stolen from their camp sites. Groups who were not camping, were driving around in their cars and vans, stealing from wherever they wanted. Some even were caught and, I believe, the police were called.

Security is quite good for several days before the race, and during the race: access marshals will only allow vehicles into the camp site if they are displaying a camping pass. Last year, however, any vehicle was allowed into the camp site as soon as the race finished, and this allowed a lot of theft from the camp sites of people who were staying on Sunday night.

I would like to request that this year, the access marshals should only allow vehicles displaying a camping permit, to access the camping site on Sunday afternoon/night.

Could you please let me know if this is the plan?

Thanks

The answer of the A.C.O. was not very comforting:

Dear Sir,

The 24 Heures campsites are extremely vast and despite the presence of security personnel who patrol these areas, together with controllers checking access points, we are unable to guarantee that there will be no thefts, in view of the large number of tents, campers and caravans on the sites.

We advise all those who camp under tents to lock away their belongings inside the boots of their vehicles, so as not to offer any temptation to ill-intentioned people.

Once the race has finished, a lot of the controllers are deployed by the traffic police. This would explain why you did not find so many controllers situated around the camping areas.

Yours faithfully.

Getting there

Whilst the majority takes a car to Le Mans it's possible to do the weekend using a combination of planes, trains and buses. French public transport can be punctual and good value.

To Le Mans by air

Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG) is the nearest major international airport to Le Mans, it's about 20 miles north of Paris. It has 3 terminals and a railway station served by the French high speed train TGV, more details further below. The other Paris airport is **Orly**, whilst it is located closer to Le Mans it does not have a direct TGV link. There is a direct coach link between the airports at a cost of about 16 euros. Alternatively Orly also has a train station for access to Paris city centre.

Nantes Airport (NTE) is also a possibility if you can fly www.ryanair.com. From Nantes a hire car or train (TGV) is possible. This is only 121 miles by road.

Le Mans Airport: If money is not a problem, there is one other way to Le Mans, shortest journey time of all and just a walk over the street to the circuit. You'd need to hire a private plane as there aren't (currently) any scheduled flights. A quick search found the following <http://www.mayfairdove.co.uk/> not to Le Mans but to Paris for £1500 day return, so Le Mans for £5-6000 looks possible.

From the Paris airports to Le Mans by car: Its also easy to pick up a car and drive to the circuit. No full details here as the routes offered by www.theaa.com or www.rac.com give accurate directions and will be updated. The distance to Arnage is 151 miles. If you arrive at Orly then you have an advantage of being at least 20 minutes closer and with less traffic to contend with, from there it's about 127 miles to Arnage. A few points on driving to the circuit:

- Don't miss the turns as it is difficult to re join the motorway, especially don't miss one of the first turns and end up heading into Paris - a very bad move.
- Depending on the time of day the routes around Paris can be very busy and come to a standstill allow extra time for your journey.
- If there happened to be a public transport strike (as in 2003) the roads will be solid.
- Fill up the car with fuel before dropping it off as the hire companies normally expect a full tank or they may charge far more to fill it themselves. There is at least one station at CDG airport.

By train from Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport to Le Mans: Train tickets should be booked in advance, this can be done online at www.sncf.fr, they have an English language version of their website. The airport station is AEROPORT CDG 2 TGV, the station at Le Mans is called LE MANS GARE. If you book more than a month in advance there is a discount. Tickets will be delivered to your home. Another option is to use [raileurope](http://www.raileurope.co.uk) at www.raileurope.co.uk, there you can book 3 months in advance. The SNCF French Railways station at Paris-Charles-de Gaulle is located in Terminal 2:



- Level 1 : Platforms for TGV, Thalys, Mainline and RER B regional express trains
- Level 2 : SNCF French Railways station, Relay (books, magazines & tobacco etc); booking office & info; bar with food; toilets
- Level 3 : Hotel Sheraton Business Center
- Level 4 : Moving walkways for accessing Terminals 2C, 2D, 2E and 2F
- Level 5 : Departure level for Taxis and Hotel shuttles

In your arrivals terminal, take a look at the times of TGV, Thalys, Mainline and RER B regional express trains shown on the information screens. These screens are located opposite the exits from the baggage claim areas in Terminal 2 (A, B, C, D, E and F). Moving from one Terminal to the next is easy since the introduction of the CDGVAL subway, e.g. the trip from Terminal 1 to Terminal 2 takes 8 minutes. You also need to validate your ticket with a punch machine ("Composter") located at the escalators above the platform. Locate the approximate place to stand by checking the monitors on the platform against your seat number.

If you miss your booked TGV, don't panic, you can exchange your ticket for one on the following TGV. The exchange will cost the difference between the price of the original ticket & the price of the ticket on the day plus a handling fee (approx 30 EURO). Also, don't worry, they do speak English.

Train schedule from Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport to Le Mans (Subject to change, please check at www.sncf.fr for the latest schedule): Dep. 10:28 – Arr. 12:07; Dep. 13:16 – Arr. 14:51; Dep. 15:42 – Arr. 17:22; Dep. 18:25 – Arr. 20:08; Dep. 20:34 – Arr. 22:20;

To reach the SNCF French Railways station in Paris city centre:

- From Terminal 1: Take the Aéroports de Paris subway CDGVAL. Stop at "Terminal 2 Gare" and follow the signs for "Paris par train" (Paris by train) or stop at "Terminal 3 / Roissy-Charles de Gaulle" to use RERB to Paris.
- From Terminal 2: Follow the signs for "Paris par train" (Paris by train) using the moving walkway. An easy 10 minute walk from Terminal 2A/Terminal 2B.
- From Terminal 3: Take the footpath (about a 250 meter walk) and follow the signs for "Paris par train" (Paris by train). Use RERB to Paris or use the Aéroports de Paris subway CDGVAL and stop at "Terminal 2 Gare".

Trains to "Gare du Nord" depart every 10 to 15 minutes between 0500 & 0000, travel time is approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Current fares are 8.50 EUR.

From Le Mans railway station to the racetrack: Please see the chapter "Transport in le Mans" in this guide



From the UK to Le Mans by train: From the UK it's possible to get the Eurostar to Paris, then a TGV to Le Mans. However it means changing stations. www.eurostar.co.uk will provide the itinerary and prices. This is probably the quickest route from central London. It is actually possible to change in either Lille or Paris. The Eurostar website did not give up the route details easily so make sure you get the right connection. The Lille station is LILLE EUROPE not just Lille if you enter it into the SNCF website. So it should only be a platform change. The change in Paris requires a station change so either using the Metro, RTE (suburban service), or taking the time above ground and sightseeing. You would arrive at "Gare du Nord" and need to get to "Gare Montparnasse" allowing an hour by Metro.

Channel Crossings

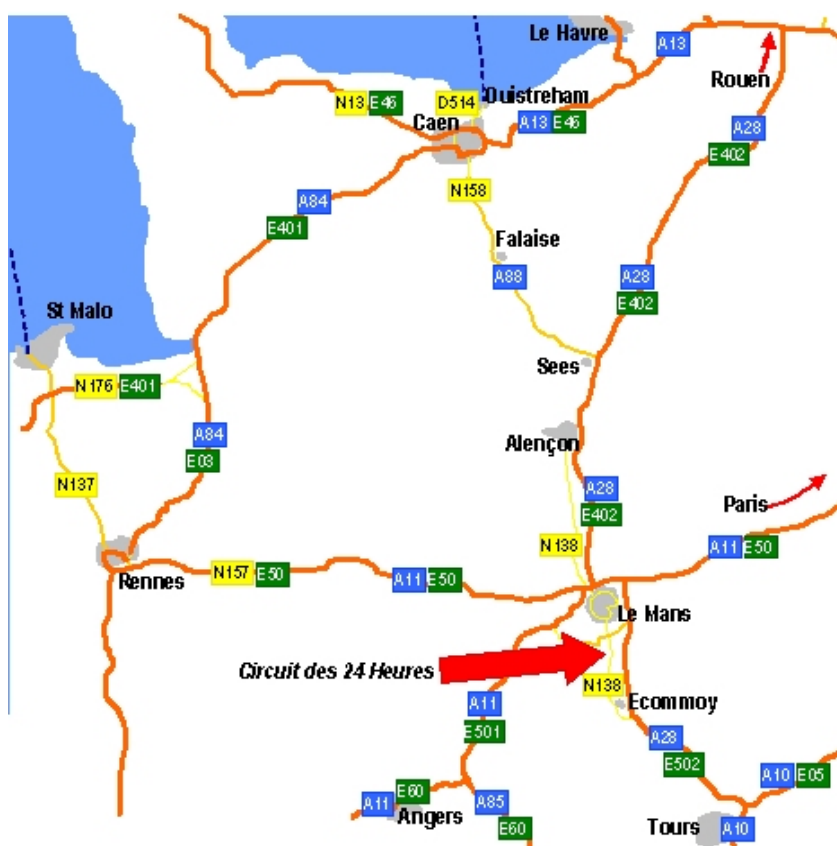
Port	Route	Duration	Crossings per day	Company	Web Address
Dover	Dunkerque	2 hours	12	Norfolk Line	www.norfolkline.com
Dover	Boulogne-sur-Mer	1:45h	6	LD Lines	www.ldlines.co.uk
Dover	Calais	1:00h	15	Sea France	www.seafrance.com
Dover	Calais	1:00h	25	P & O Ferries	www.poferries.com
Folkestone	Calais	0:35h	25	Euro Tunnel	www.eurotunnel.com
Hull	Zeebrugge	14h	1 overnight	P & O Ferries	www.poferries.com
Newhaven	Dieppe	4:00h	3	Transmanche Ferries	www.transmancheferries.co.uk
Newhaven	Le Havre	5:00h	1	LD Lines	www.ldlines.co.uk
Portsmouth	Caen	3:45h or 5:45h	4	Brittany Ferries	www.brittany-ferries.co.uk
Portsmouth	Cherbourg	3:00h	2	Brittany Ferries	www.brittany-ferries.co.uk
Portsmouth	St Malo	10:45h	1	Brittany Ferries	www.brittany-ferries.co.uk
Portsmouth	Le Havre	8:00h	1	LD Lines	www.ldlines.co.uk
Poole	Cherbourg	2:15h or 4:30h	3	Brittany Ferries	www.brittany-ferries.co.uk
Plymouth	Roscoff	6:00h	3	Brittany Ferries	www.brittany-ferries.co.uk

From the UK ports to Le Mans by car

Over the next few pages, route directions from all of the channel ports are listed, they use the most direct and quickest roads. Terminating at the Centre des expositions, where tickets are collected, and it is also close to the circuit main entrance. The following table gives an overview of distances and toll costs (according to viamichelin.com) from the ferry ports to the circuit and approximate journey times.

Ferry Port	Total Distance km (m)	Motorway/Express km(m)	Peage Tolls in Euros	Time
Dunkerque	480 (300)	468 (295)	26.70	5.0+
Calais	440 (274)	415 (258)	26.70	4.5+
Boulogne-sur-mer	408 (253)	383 (238)	26.70	4.0+
Dieppe	287 (178)	259 (161)	19.40	3.0+
Le Havre	257 (157)	230 (143)	24.40	2.5+
Ouistreham	190 (118)	111 (69)	10.50	2.5+
Cherbourg	300 (186)	210 (130)	10.50	3.5+
St Malo	237 (147)	217 (135)	9.90	2.5+
Roscoff	380 (235)	343 (214)	9.90	4.5+

From the northern ferry ports the route is either via Rouen or by-passes it. The whole route (except the bit through Rouen!) is autoroute since the latest section of the A28 was opened. Going via Paris is an option; although, it is not for the faint hearted, you really need an encyclopaedic knowledge of the road system or a very good sat-nav. Also the Paris Peripherique is similar to the M25 and at times is a slow moving car park. If going straight to a "camp-site" which in ACO terminology is known as an "Aire d'Accueil" or if just "parking the car" which in ACO terminology is "Parking" look out for the appropriate coloured route sign as you near the circuit. Your ticket will clearly show the route to be followed. For example, Camping at Beausejour, you will need to follow "Itineraire Jaune" or "Parking Jaune", this is more relevant when the circuit is "live" and the one way system is in operation. There are a number of useful maps which show the one-way system, either look here or use the official programme.



From Dunkerque Ferry Terminal To Le Mans Circuit Via Rouen A28

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From the ferry terminal take the D916, Rue de Lille and the Route de Bergues for 3km.	
2	Turn right onto the A16/E402 for 150km	CALAIS, LILLE, DUNKERQUE, PETITE SYNTHE, DUNKERQUE LES PORTS, CAR FERRY
3	Passing Calais; Speed Camera after junction 46 near CALAIS; Speed Camera after junction 39 near WISSANT; Passing BOULOGNE-SUR-MER; Passing LE TOUQUET-PARIS-PLAGE	
4	Approaching Abbeville exit Junction 23 from A16 onto A28/E402 for 100km	LE TREPORT, ROUEN, LE HAVRE
5	Passing ABBEVILLE, Passing BLANGY-SUR –BRESELE, Passing NEUFCHATEL-EN-BRAY	
6	Approaching ROUEN; There is a service Area just after Junction 12 and before ROUEN, might be worth a stop! The road number changes from the A28 to N28	
7	Getting across Rouen can be a bit tense. Using this route, you follow a single road and at junctions go straight across, don't turn off. Signs to be followed if see are AUTRES DIRECTIONS or LE MANS or CAENS.	AUTRES DIRECTIONS or LE MANS or CAENS
8	Descend into Rouen along the N28 and enter the Tunnel de la Grand Mare, there is a speed camera just before the entrance.	
9	Go through the tunnel and stay on the N28. Passing the Gare Rouen-Martinville station on your left, cross the River Seine, using the Pont Mathilde. Continue, eventually reaching the junction with the N138 and go straight across.	
10	The road becoming the N338 watch out for the speed camera a short distance along.	ELBEUF, LE MANS, PETIT-QUEVILLY-AUTRES QUARTIERS, GRAND-QUEVILLY
11	After a few km's the road rejoins the N138, continue for 5 km	LE HAVRE, CAEN, ELBEUF, LE MANS, GRAND-COURONNE
12	Join the A13 for 13km	BOURG-ACHARD, PONT-AUDEMER, FECAMP, LE HAVRE, CAEN
13	Approaching Bourg-Achard take the new junction from A13 onto A28/E402 for 180km	TOURS, LE MANS
14	Around 30 km from Bourg-Achard you will pass over the new bridges at Brionne VIADUC du BEC & VIADUC du RISLIE	
15	Approaching LE MANS Exit Junction 22 from A28/E402 onto A11/E501 for 13km	COULAINES, LE MANS Z.I. NORD, LE MANS-CENTRE, LE MANS-UNIVERSITE, NANTES, RENNES
16	Exit junction 9 from A11/E501 onto N226 for 12km	LE MANS-SUD, TOURS, LE MANS-ZONE-INDUSTRIELLE SUD, ALLONNES
17	Take N23r (in effect a continuation of the N226) for 3km for CENTRE DES EXPOSITIONS for ticket collection or continue along N23r for 24 Le Mans circuit main entrance.	

From Calais Ferry Terminal To Le Mans Circuit Via Rouen A28

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From the ferry terminal take the exit road for 3km towards the A16/E402	
2	Turn onto A16/E402 for 110km	TUNNEL-SOUS-LA-MANCHE, BOULOGNE, ROUEN, MARQUISE, GARE T.G.V
3	Join "Dunkerque ferry terminal to Le Mans circuit via Rouen A28" route at Step 2	



From Calais Channel Tunnel Terminal To Le Mans Circuit Via Rouen A28

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From tunnel terminal take the exit road for 3km towards A16/E402	
2	Turn onto A16/E402 for 103km	BOULOGNE, ROUEN, PARIS
3	Join "Dunkerque ferry terminal to Le Mans circuit via Rouen A28" route at Step 2	

From Boulogne-sur-mer Ferry Port To Le Mans Circuit Via Rouen A28

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From ferry terminal take the exit road for 10km towards the A16/E402	
2	Turn onto the A16/E402 for 70km	BOULOGNE, CALAIS, TOUQUET (LE), ABBEVILLE, AMIENS, PARIS
3	Join "Dunkerque ferry terminal to Le Mans circuit via Rouen A28" route at Step 2	

From Dieppe Ferry Port To Le Mans Circuit Via Rouen A28

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From the ferry terminal take the exit road for 8km. Beware speed camera. Turn left onto the D915 for 37km, passing by Arques-la-Bataille, Les Grandes-Ventes and Pommereval.	
2	Turn right onto the A28/E402.	ROUEN
3	Join "Dunkerque ferry terminal to Le Mans circuit via Rouen A28" route at Step 6	

From Dieppe Ferry Port To Le Mans Circuit By-Passing Rouen

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From the ferry terminal take the exit road for 2km, turn right onto the D925 towards Dieppe. Beware speed camera. Continue out of Dieppe eventually joining the N27 for 30km	ROUEN
2	Beyond Totes and the end of the N27 turn right onto the A29/E44	LE HAVRE, CAEN
3	Join "Alternative Route for by-passing Rouen" at step 6	

Alternative Route For By-passing Rouen - When using the Dunkerque Ferry Terminal To Le Mans Circuit route

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	Using Dunkerque to Le Mans circuit via Rouen A28 pick-up route from step 5	
2	Pass Neufchatel-en-Bray junction 9, A28/402	LE PUCHEL, ROUEN, LE HAVRE
3	Exit at Junction 11 from A28 onto A29/E44 for 34km	LE HAVRE, CAEN
4	Exit at Junction 9 onto the N29 towards Yvetot for 5km	YVETOT, CANY-BARNVILLE, SAINT-VALERY-EN-CAUX
5	Approaching Yvetot take the N15/E44 and by-pass Yvetot by following signs Toutes Directions - Or Signposted	FECAMP, LE HAVRE, YVETOT, PONT BROTONNE
6	Once Yvetot has been passed take the D131 for 5km merging into the D490 passing over the Pont Brotonne and towards Bourg Achard for 15km.	
7	The D940 merges into the D313 for 12km following signs for A13 and join for 2km	ELBEUF, ROUEN, PARIS, CAEN
8	Exit at the next junction onto A28/E402 for 180km	ALENCON, LE MANS
9	Join "Dunkerque ferry terminal to Le Mans circuit via Rouen A28 route" at Step 13	

From Le Havre Ferry Port To Le Mans Circuit

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From the ferry terminal take the N15 for 7km. Beware speed camera.	ROUEN-SUD, PARIS, PONT DE TANCARVILLE
2	Turn onto the A131/E05 for 18km	
3	Leave the A131/E05 and turn onto the N182 to cross the River Seine	PONT DE TANCARVILLE, BOLBEC
4	Join the A131/E05 for 16km	ROUEN, PARIS, EVEREUX, QUILLEBEUF-SUR-SEINE, PONT-AUDEMER
5	Join the A13/E05/E46 for 16km	MAISON-BRULEE, ELBEUF, ROUEN, EVEREUX, PARIS
6	Approaching Bourg-Achard take the new junction from A13 onto A28/E402 for 180km	ALENCON, LE MANS
7	Join "Dunkerque ferry terminal to Le Mans circuit via Rouen A28" route at Step 13	

From Ouistream Ferry Port to Le Mans Circuit

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From the ferry terminal take the D84 then D514 for 7km	CAENS
2	Close to Benouville, continue along the D514 towards Ranville	RANVILLE, PEGASUS BRIDGE
3	Once over the canal and river, turn right onto the D223 for 3km	COLOBELLES
4	Join the D513 for 3km	
5	Turn left onto the D403 for 3km	PERIPHERIQUE-SUD
6	Join the N814, PERIPHERIQUE-SUD, for 4km	PERIPHERIQUE, ALENCON, RENNES, CHERBOURG
7	Exit junction 13 from N814, and turn left onto the N158 for 80km	ALENCON, LE MANS, FALAISE, ARGENTAN
8	Close to Sees, turn onto the D238, and N138 for 4km	A28, ROUEN, ALENCON, LE MANS
9	Turn onto the A28 for 70km	ALENCON, LE MANS
10	Join "Dunkerque ferry terminal to Le Mans circuit via Rouen A28" route at Step 15	

From Cherbourg Ferry Port to Le mans Circuit

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From the ferry terminal take the exit road N132 which merges into the N13/E46 for 120km	SAINT LO, CAEN, ISIGNY-SUR-MER, CARENTAN, COUTANCES
2	Passing VALOGNES; Passing STE MARIE-EGLISE; Passing CARENTAN; Passing BAYEUX; Speed Camera East of Bayeux near Loucelles	
3	Join the N814, PERIPHERIQUE-SUD, FOR 12km	PERIPHERIQUE-SUD, PARIS, CAEN, LA MADELEINE
4	Exit junction 13 from N814, and turn right onto the N158 for 80km	ALENCON, LE MANS, FALAISE, ARGENTAN
5	Join "Dunkerque ferry terminal to Le Mans circuit via Rouen A28" route at Step 15	

From Saint Malo Ferry Port to Le Mans Circuit

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From the ferry terminal take the N137 for 70km	DOL-DE-BRETAGNE, DINAN, RENNES
2	Approaching Rennes turn left onto the N136	FOUGERES, MAUREPAS
3	Exit junction 1 from N136, and turn left onto the N157 for 40km, signposted - Speed Camera near Noyal-sur-Vilaine	LAVAL, LE MANS, NOYAL-SUR-VILAINE, VITRE
4	West of Laval join the A81/E50 for 95km	LE MANS, MAYENNE
5	Approaching LE MANS; Exit from A81/E50 onto A11/E501 for 11km	LE MANS-OUEST, LE MANS-CENTRE, LE MANS- ZONE INDUSTRIELLE-SUD, ANGERS, NANTES
6	Exit junction 9 from A11/E501 onto N226 for 12km	LE MANS-SUD, TOURS, LE MANS-ZONE-INDUSTRIELLE SUD, ALLONNES
7	Take N23r (in effect a continuation of the N226) for 3km for CENTRE DES EXPOSITIONS for ticket collection or continue along N23r for 24 Le Mans circuit main entrance.	

From Roscoff Ferry Port to Le Mans Circuit

Step	Directions	Route Sign
1	From the ferry terminal take the D58 for 24km	SAINT-POL-DE-LEON, MORLAIX
2	Approaching Morlaix turn left onto the N12/E50 for 185km	GUINGAMP, SAINT-BRIEUC, RENNES
3	Approaching Rennes turn right onto the N136 for 16km	ROCADE NORD, CAEN, LE MANS
4	Exit junction 1 from N136, and turn right onto the N157 for 40km, signposted, Speed Camera near Noyal-sur-Vilaine	LAVAL, LE MANS, NOYAL-SUR-VILAINE, VITRE
5	West of Laval join the A81/E50 for 95km	LE MANS, MAYENNE
6	Approaching LE MANS; Exit from A81/E50 onto A11/E501 for 11km	LE MANS-OUEST, LE MANS-CENTRE, LE MANS-ZONE INDUSTRIELLE-SUD, ANGERS, NANTES
7	Exit junction 9 from A11/E501 onto N226 for 12km	LE MANS-SUD, TOURS, LE MANS-ZONE-INDUSTRIELLE SUD, ALLONNES
8	Take N23r (in effect a continuation of the N226) for 3km for CENTRE DES EXPOSITIONS for ticket collection or continue along N23r for 24 Le Mans circuit main entrance.	

Boulogne to Le Mans - A pretty route for sports cars – Avoid big towns and boring roads

Town	Directions	Miles	Cum. Miles
Boulogne			
	From the port, follow directions to Abbeville (A16 motorway). Just prior to the motorway junction, is an E Leclerc hypermarket – a good fuel stop. Then on to the motorway, through the toll plaza and over the viaducts. This part of the journey is over a fast, relatively quiet toll motorway. It is a good psychological boost to eat up a few miles into France before lunch time. Alternatively, if you have plenty of time and fancy a more sedate start to your journey; take the near parallel D940 out of Boulogne down the coast towards Le Touquet, then Berck, Le Crotoy and then the D40 towards the A28 at Abbeville to continue the route below.	54	
Abbeville			54
	Just before Abbeville, exit at junction 23 to the A28 motorway towards Rouen, paying at the toll plaza. At junction 3, leave the motorway and continue on the route national - D925 - D928(N28) There now follows a lovely tree lined stretch of road with good straights and long bends through a number of small villages. This road parallels the motorway and crosses and re-crosses it occasionally. Foucarmont has a subtle one way system that can catch out the unwary.	32	
Neufchatel			86
	Just before Neufchatel, the road again crosses the motorway and then heads downhill in a nice twisty section into a valley and the town of Neufchatel. Here is a good stop for an early lunch. Park in the square by the church. Look out for other groups of Brits in little sports cars. Around the church and square are a number of quality cafes - bistros with the usual French fare - plat de jour. When you've filled up on Croc Monsieur and Leffe, continue towards St Martin Osmonville - D928	17	
A28 junction 12			103
	Even though the roads through Rouen have been improved, any way of skirting the main centre can be a challenge. To continue the 'pretty route' theme with the minimum of drama, this is what I suggest. Rejoin the A28 motorway at junction 12. I suggest stopping at Quincampoix rest area for a comfort break and to 'regroup' prior to attacking Rouen.	17	
Rouen			120
	Continue into Rouen, down into the tunnel. Now pay attention. BEFORE you cross the River Seine, turn off the motorway onto the N14 / N15 towards the airport. This is a tricky junction with traffic lights, watch out for battered Renaults trying to push into your lane. At the fork in the road, head right downhill on the N15. Big clue – the River Seine will be on your right – you are on the east bank.	15	
Rouen			135
	At a roundabout, continue right on the D7 towards Cleon. This will shortly become a duel carriageway and pass under the A13 motorway. There are now many traffic lights – easy to split up your group. Follow the D7 towards Elbeuf, crossing the River Seine.	15	

Elbeuf			150
	Drive thorough Elbeuf town and up the hill, heading towards Verneuil, the road becoming the D840. This next stretch again follows the French tradition of long, empty, tree lined straight roads – great for care free, top down motoring. Either follow the le Neubourg, Conches and Breteuil bypasses or pass through the villages (taking in a bit of the local culture / more wine and beer) continuing on the - D84	42	
Verneuil			192
	Follow the 'ring road' and join the N12 towards Mortagne, this road has a number of dual carriageway stretches – great for convoy photos. Approaching Mortagne, follow the centre ville signs and directions to Belleme (D930 / D912 / D938).	24	
Mortagne			216
	As before, Mortagne has a main square and a labyrinth of one way lanes. Just keep and eye out for signs and directions. Above all, follow your heart as Le Mans is just over the horizon. Continue on the D938 to Belleme.	12	
Belleme			228
	Yet more tree lined vistas as your approach this small town. Continue on the D938 / D301 through St Cosme en Vairais to Bonnetable.	16	
Bonnetable			244
	On the Bonnetable bypass, look out for signs to the Super U. This is a convenient fuel stop and, perhaps, a place to stock up on provisions and beer for your first night under canvas. Continue on the D301 to Savigne.	10	
Savigne l'Eveque			254
	You're getting excited now. Turn left on the D20bis. Continue, shortly, the road parallels a motorway. Follow signs towards Change and join the N23 dual carriageway. Leave the N23 at either the N138 (for a clockwise tour of the public road sections of the 24 Hour circuit) or the next junction on (D139) and follow the loop road to the main entrance of the circuit. For Maison Blanche campsite – follow signs to Camping / Parking Blanc.	11	
Le Mans			265
	You've arrived, set your camp up, met old friends and are on your way to the Stella Bar for a well earned cold Leffe. Have a great time, see some of the racing and soak up the atmosphere – you'll be back next year. As a challenge, now try this route in reverse, back to Boulogne. We'll see you on the way.		

Advice when using the tunnel

- Number plate recognition software is now being used so the automatic kiosks do not require you to use your plastic unless you have not given them the correct registration number.
- The customs at Calais are now outside the shopping area so you complete all the formalities before getting the chance to shop and/or buy food.



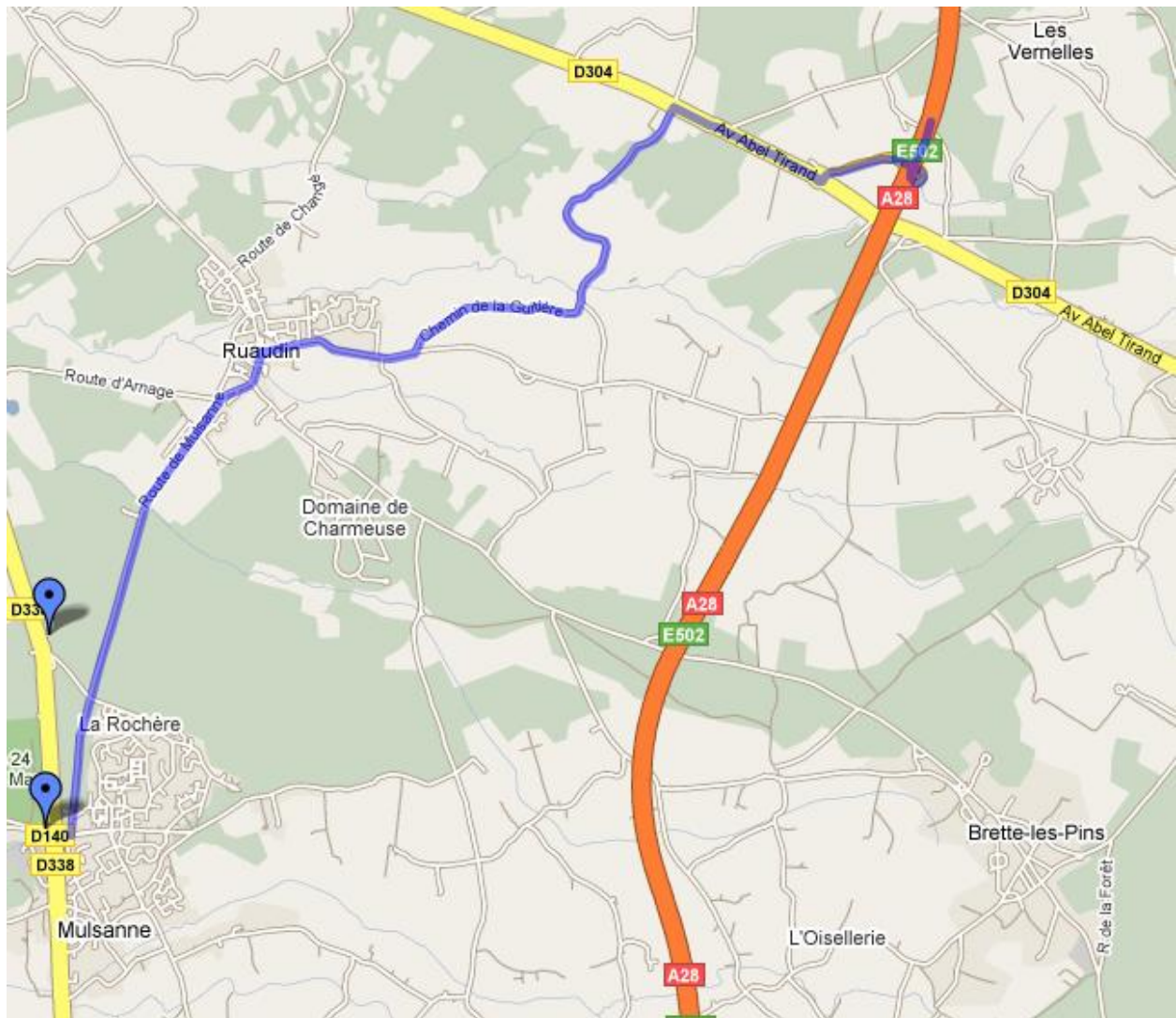
Le Mans 2010 – Waiting for the start

© Deborah Dudley

On the run - Escaping the traffic at the end of the race

A first-hand-guideline from Neil Dobson, www.racetours.co.uk

Those who have tried a quick getaway at the end of the race know that the traffic at the end of the race can be a nightmare. I have tried and tested a route for avoiding traffic although it does involve watching the end of the race from Mulsanne. Before the end of the race (a good two hours before) you need to move your car up to Mulsanne. I would recommend parking in Mulsanne village somewhere (rather than the official Mulsanne enclosure car park) or at Hotel Arbor on the Mulsanne straight. Watch the end of the race from Mulsanne/Hotel Arbor and head back to your car. The map below shows Mulsanne corner at the bottom left (bordering the golf course) and in the top right hand corner the D304 joining the A28. This is the junction that you need to get to. Simply follow the escape route marked on the map!



From Mulsanne village take the Route de Mulsanne North. Route de Mulsanne runs off Avenue de Bonen and the turn to get onto it is between the roundabout and the Champion supermarket. Follow Route de Mulsanne towards the village of Ruadun (passing on your left the track that leads down to Hotel Arbor and the 2nd chicane). As you approach the village turn right at the first roundabout onto Rue du Vieil Hetre. This is the main road through the village. Follow for 0.5 Km and take the third turn on the right onto Route de Parigne-l'Eveque. This will take you out of the village. After 0.8 Km you will see a fork going off to your right. Ignore this and continue for another 0.2 Km and take a left turn onto Chemin de la Guiltiere. This road snakes its way through the fields for approx 2 Km until you arrive at a t-junction with the D304 (top right of the map below). Turn right and in approx 1 Km you will arrive at the roundabout where you can filter onto the N28 and happily whiz up to the A11 that will take you across the top of Le Mans, safely away from all the congestion. Hooray!

We encountered absolutely no traffic when leaving from Hotel Arbor in '08. You might encounter a little bit of traffic in Mulsanne village itself but I very much doubt it. The whole East side of the circuit is deserted during the race when compared to the Western side of the circuit.

Media coverage - Following the race from home

So you can't go, for whatever reasons, don't dwell on it, stick the tent up in the garden, and make the most of the weekend. It's weird, but although you lose out on the 'atmosphere' by watching a race on the TV / WWW, you inevitably get better coverage, particularly with a large circuit like LM, as you simply can't be in 2 places at once. Basically (and I can only really speak for the UK, as far as TV goes, but the internet should work everywhere) you've got a few choices.

TV

The race will again be on **Eurosport** this year, including Wednesday night practice session and Thursday night qualifying. You can get Eurosport coverage online now (see below) Otherwise it's Sky / Cable subscription time. Eurosport will be showing the race in its entirety with a bit of channel hopping required between Eurosport and Eurosport2, with Eurosport HD carrying much of the action with a few interruptions. In the USA it is believed **SpeedTV** will show 4 hours at the start, followed by a break of 6 hours (but available on speedtv.com), followed by the remainder of the race. For those of you who live in or near Bolton (England, twinned with Le Mans) head over to Bolton town hall for the **Bolton Le Mans Motorsport Festival**. In 2010 they had a large outdoor screen showing the race live but it is not mentioned in their 2011 schedule. More details at www.boltonlemansmotorsport.com

Radio Le Mans: In 2009 listeners in North America could tune in to the race on Sirius XM satellite radio, XM channel 243 and Sirius channels 113 and 126 - presume there will be something similar this year.

Internet

If you've got a reasonable quality broadband connection, you can follow the race from home quite well, without having to hand over any money to the notoriously thin skinned thieving Australian stitch up merchant / legitimate media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, you just need to plan ahead a bit. Obviously if you are streaming video be aware of your ISP download limits.

- **Radio Le Mans** Hindy et al will keep you up to date with it all, as it happens, and is as invaluable at home as it is at the circuit. You can listen online <http://www.radiolemans.com> then click on the 'listen live' button. They have live uninterrupted (apart from adverts) coverage of all practice sessions and the race. Also they are a very good source of info for further locations for obtaining streaming coverage / live timing. ***This is the first choice for following the race, everything else comes second.*** Don't forget to send your regards to the luckier CA members.
- **The A.C.O.** The Official website <http://www.lemans.org> will have a free real-time classification table. Again in 2011 the basic A.C.O. Passion 24 membership (€39) is specifically aimed at providing info for folk unable to get to the track. Membership includes at least 26 SMS hourly bulletins to your mobile and web access that is based around a real-time classification table together with a live radio feed, downloadable photos and access to video clips. <http://www.passion-24.org/html/passion.asp>
- **PLANETLEMANS** <http://www.planetlemans.com> – The team will cover the race and qualifying live minute by minute in their online reports.
- **Speed onboard pass** This may require you to sign up, but it is free. <http://gms.speedtv.com/ONLINE/You> should also be able to get live timing from Speed without having to shell out to the A.C.O. (See below)
- **Flying Lizards** Their website <http://www.lizardms.com/index.htm> offers live broadcast of the team radio during the race.
- **Eurosport:** You can now get Eurosport coverage on your PC for £3.99 a month (You can cancel this at any time. – And there's no need to take out a years sub) <http://video.eurosport.co.uk/eurosport-player/teaser.shtml>.
- **Daily Sports Car** There may be a free sub to <http://www.dailysportscar.com> too. Listen out on RLM for any details.
- **TVU – wheels – speed** - Download the free player from the tvu networks, <http://www.tvunetworks.com> and install the free player. Then you can open the player, and select the 'sport' tab. Scroll down and you'll find the 'wheels' channel. 2007 was pretty good. But it's American, and they sometimes clog up the streaming video with Nascar. Yee- Haw. Wear a silly hat and marry your cousin etc.
- **Twitter** will no doubt 'trend' towards La Sarthe over 11 and 12 June. If you are so-minded then you can follow @AllanMcNish, @GUYSMITH16, @olivergavin, #m24, #lemans et al in the twittersphere.
- The larger **Le Mans forums** (Or should that be fora?) These will be populated by those like yourself, the fractious, grumpy staybehinds.
 - www.clubarnage.com
 - www.beermountain.com
 - www.pistonheads.com etc.

I hope you all have as good a time as possible. You'll be there in spirit.

Le Mans related web sites and forums

Congratulations, you've made it to the last chapter of this guide. OK, this is a print publication, but since you have downloaded it from the web we assume you're able to handle a web browser. There are plenty of web sites where you can glean loads of additional information or join in the chat with fellow Le Mans enthusiasts; here is a selection of CA members' favourites. We have checked every single website mentioned below at the time of writing, but websites come and go, so some of the URLs might not be valid any more when you read this. Unless stated otherwise, all websites are in English language.

Official Le Mans websites

- www.lemans.org French or <http://www.lemans.org/en/> English– The A.C.O.'s own official website, in French and English. Also it contains a large archive of teams and results etc from past years.
- www.lemans-series.com – Official website of the Le Mans Series, with news, results a photo library and live timing.
- www.americanlemans.com – The American Le Mans Series, probably the best sports car race series in the world. Founded 1999 by American Don Panoz, 10 races are planned for 2010 with the 12 hours of Sebring and Petit Le Mans being the most famous ones.

Teams and manufacturers

- www.lizardms.com – Flying Lizard Motorsports, based in California, U.S.A., regular ALMS and Le Mans participants with their Porsche in GT2 class.
- www.corvetteracing.com – Corvette Racing, they run the General Motors factory team at Le Mans and they do it very successful: 3 class wins in a row (2004-2006)!
- www.highcroftracing.com - A very successful American sports car racing team, regular participants in the ALMS, they run LMP1 prototypes. They have recently withdrawn from the 2011 event
- www.radicalextremesportscars.com – You need a prototype chassis for the LMS or ALMS? Take out your credit card and order here.
- www.welterracing.fr – Welter Racing Salini, a small French team, regular participants at Le Mans in the LMP2 class, they almost won their class in 2002. The team is planning to participate in the LMP1 class with a diesel engine in 2011. (in French)
- www.championracing.net – The Champion Racing Team from the U.S., 2005 ALMS winners.
- www.seikelracing.com – Seikel Motorsport, a German sports car racing team, almost won their class (GT2) in 2006, kept the lead for about 20 hours but with one hour to go the gearbox shifter of their Porsche caused trouble.
- www.pescarolo.com – The team of local hero Henri Pescarolo and somehow also the French National Team at Le Mans. Winning team of the LMS and second place overall at the 24 hours of Le Mans in 2006. Sadly the team withdrew it's entry for the 2010 edition of the race. but now back in 2011 (in French language).
- www.oreca-racing.com – The French Team Oreca, regular Le Mans and LMS participants. (in English and French language).
- www.draysonstracing.com - Lord Drayson's team from 2010
- www.rebellion-racing.com – Swiss racing team, participating with 2 cars in LMP1 this year.
- www.saleen.com – Californian sports car manufacturer, a Saleen S7R finished 11th overall in the 2006 edition of the 24 hours of Le Mans and won its class in 2010
- www.racingforholland.com – The team of 1988 Le Mans winner Jan Lammers, regular participant at Le Mans and in the LMS (in English and Dutch language).
- www.strakkaracing.com – UK team based near Silverstone contesting LMP2 with a Ginetta-Zytek.
- www.dome.co.jp – Dome, a Japanese manufacturer of prototype chassis (in Japanese and English language).
- www.creationsport.net – Creation, LMP racing team from the U.K.
- www.joest-racing.de – They have run the Audi factory team at Le Mans in the last years, with 9 overall wins at Le Mans since 1984 and 4 ALMS championships in a row probably the most successful sports car team ever. (In German and English language).
- www.peugeot-sport.com – The 2009 Le Mans 24h winners. (in French and English language).
- www.oak-racing.com – Now named OAK Racing, the team runs a pair of LMP2 Pescarolo-Judds both in LMS and at Le Mans this year (in French and English language).
- www.rml-adgroup.com – Team RML winners of the LMP2 class in 2005 and 2006.
- www.larbre-competition.com – French team which runs a Corvette in the Le Mans 24h.
- www.jloc-net.com – website of the Japanese Lamborghini owners club, ran a Murcielago at Le Mans in 2009 (in English and Japanese language).
- www.astonmartinracing.com – The Aston Martin factory team website.
- www.afcorse.it – Italian GT2-team, fielding Ferraris 458 in GTE class.
- www.spykersquadron.com – Dutch GT2-team contested LMS and Le Mans previously with the Spyker C8 Laviolette, very informative website with pictures and video.
- www.bmw-motorsport.com - Two BMW M3 GTE's will take part this year.
- www.kronosracing.com - Racing a Lola Aston Martin in GT1
- www.tencargarage.com/le_mans_24_hours/index.php = Hope racing with legend Jan Lammers driving
- www.racealliance.at/2index.php - Racing a 2 car Lotus team for 2011.

Drivers

- www.tomkristensen.com – The website of the Danish driver Tom Kristensen, record 7-times winner of the 24 hours of Le Mans (in Danish and English language).
- www.andywallace.com – Andy Wallace, winner of the 24 hours in 1988.
- www.janmagnussen.com – Jan Magnussen, Danish driver, 3-times Le Mans class winner with Corvette Racing (in Danish, some parts in English language).
- www.frank-biela.de – German driver Frank Biela, 5-times Le Mans winner, got also famous in 2003 when he managed to run out of fuel on the race track during the 24 hours of Le Mans (in German language).
- www.allanmcnish.com – Scotsman Allan McNish, 2-time winner of the 24 hours of Le Mans, 3-times ALMS champion.
- www.pirro.com - Emanuele Pirro from Italy, 5-times Le Mans winner driving for Audi (in English and Italian language).
- www.marco-werner.de – German Marco Werner, 2008 ALMS Champion and 3-times Le Mans winner (in German and English language).
- www.nigelmansell.co.uk - Nigel Mansell, F1 and IndyCar champion.
- www.hansstuck.com – Hans-Joachim “Striezel” Stuck, 2-times Le Mans winner (in German and English).
- www.olivergavin.com – Oliver Gavin from the U.K., 4-times Le Mans class winner with Corvette Racing.
- www.manucollard.com – Emmanuel Collard, 2nd place in 2005 with Team Pescarolo (in French language).
- www.davidbrabham.com – David Brabham, ALMS regular and 2007 and 2008 Le Mans class winner.
- www.sjvaxjo.com - Stefan Johansson from Sweden, Le Mans and Sebring winner 1997.
- www.johnnyherbert.co.uk – Johnny Herbert, 1991 Le Mans winner.
- www.guysmith.com - Guy Smith, ALMS regular and 2003 Le Mans winner.
- www.sebastien-bourdais.com – Sébastien Bourdais, born in Le Mans, several participations with the Pescarolo team, will race for Peugeot again this year (in French and English language).
- www.dindocapello.com – Rinaldo “Dindo” Capello, 3-times Le Mans winner (in English and Italian language).
- www.nicolasminassian.com – Nicolas Minassian, Le Mans regular, Pescarolo, Creation and Peugeot driver.
- www.stephane-sarrazin.com – Stephane Sarrazin, Le Mans regular, Aston Martin, now Peugeot driver.
- www.romaindumas.com – Romain Dumas, Porsche and Audi works driver.(English and French).
- www.olivier-panis.com - Olivier Panis, former F1 driver this year in the Oreca Peugeot (in French language).
- www.alexwurz.com – Alex Wurz, 1996 Le Mans winner (in English and German language).
- www.haroldprimat.com - Harold Primat, (in English, French and German).
- www.jorg-muller.com - Jörg Muller. (in German language).
- www.andypriaux.com - Andy Priaux, 3 time FIA WTCC champion.
- www.giancarlofisichella.com - Giancarlo Fisichella, Formula 1 winner.
- www.jean-alesi.com - Jean Alesi, ex Formula 1 and DTM driver (in French language).
- www.marc-lieb.de - Marc Lieb, 2005 GT2 class winner with T.W.A.T.S. sponsored BAM!/Alex Job Racing Porsche 911 and regularly wears the T.W.A.T.S. team shirt on the start line!!

Le Mans fan-sites and sports car news sites

- www.clubarnage.com - Of course, this is where you downloaded this guide from! OK, the website itself isn't up-to-date but the forum will save your day. Lively discussions about Le Mans all year round!
- www.drinkingforholland.com - In effect, CA's sister site in Holland – we have so much in common! Has a forum and a guestbook (in Dutch and English language).
- www.dailysportscar.com - A commercial site with some of the most up-to-date info' around. Includes a free forum which is very knowledgeable and technical.
- www.sportscar-racing.com – News about sports car racing, also a forum.
- www.pistonheads.com - A huge site with some LM sections. Forum becomes more active as the race approaches.
- www.lemans24.piczo.com - A nice personal site from one of CA's regulars.
- www.planetlemans.com – Dutch website publishing the latest sports car racing news.
- www.racingsportscars.com - An ambitious project pulling together sports car photographs across the years. Wonderful for research.
- www.sniffpetrol.com - The pit lane jostling of motoring, very funny.
- www.ten-tenths.com- Large and active forum site with specialist Sportscar/GT and Le Mans sub-forums.
- www.beermountain.com - The name of this site doesn't quite tell it all but you get the picture. Good info for campers at LM, including campsite maps.
- www.gt-eins.at - Large German sports car-site with forum (in German language).
- www.lemanszone.de - fan website from CA forum member Werner (in German language).
- www.project-lemans.de - regular news about endurance racing (in German language).
- www.sebringfans.com - Although mainly a forum about the Le Mans counterpart across the pond, a must for all US sports car fans.
- www.endurance-info.com - Large and comprehensive news, info and forum site (in French language).
- www.larrylemans.co.uk – UK fan site.
- www.porscheurvepirates.co.uk – Another UK fan website.
- www.24h-le-mans.dk – Danish fan website (in Danish and English language).
- www.aysedasi.co.uk – Ayse's Le Mans enthusiast site since 2001. Pictures, news, entry list - excellent site.
- www.blokesatlemans.co.uk– Le Mans veterans, funny, with lots of good pictures.
- www.teamjpc.co.uk – in association with “tropicoma”.

- www.the-twats.com - the yellow shirt brigade from the UK.
- www.maisonblanche.co.uk - Rick Wilson's site with news and history of the Le Mans 24 hours.

Organized race tours and ticket agencies for the 24 hours of Le Mans

- www.racetours.co.uk – CA member Neil aka Dobbo is organizing tours to the 24 hours of Le Mans.
- www.teamlangoustine.com – Team Langoustine, a company put together by motor sports fans for motor sport fans. Le Mans 24h specialists since 1989 with first hand experience of the circuit and its facilities. Have private facilities inside the circuit at Tertre Rouge and a dedicated campsite near Tertre Rouge.
- www.clubmotorsport.org.uk - UK based site.
- www.motorracinginternational.uk.com - UK based site.
- www.gptours.com - US based site.
- www.speedchills.com – UK based.
- www.grandstandmotorsports.co.uk – UK based.
- www.whiterabbitracing.co.uk – UK based, have a dedicated campsite at Beausejour.
- www.mc-travel-events.de – German motorsport travel company (in French, German and English language).
- www.airtrack.co.uk – they are running their own, exclusive VIP-campsite at Le Mans.

Car owners clubs

- www.porscheclubgb.com – Porsche Club Great Britain - they organize annual tours for their members to the 24 hours of Le Mans.
- www.porscheclubgbforum.com – Forum of the Porsche GB Club, has a Le Mans sub-forum.
- www.mscc.uk.com – Morgan Sports Car Club.
- www.cobraclub.com – Forums of the UK Cobra Replica Club.
- www.xpowerforums.com - an enthusiasts website dedicated to the products of MG & XPower following the split from BMW in the Spring of 2000.
- www.tvr-car-club.co.uk – The UK TVR car club, many of their members travel to Le Mans each year.

2011 Le Mans Series (LMS) race circuits

- www.lemans-series.com Website for the series
- www.spa-francorchamps.be – Spa Francorchamps in Belgium (in French, Dutch and English language).
- www.circuitpaulricard.com – French circuit Paul Ricard (in German and English language).
- www.silverstone.co.uk – Silverstone track, England.
- www.circuito-estoril.pt/pt - Estoril - Portugal
- www.autodromolimola.com - Imola – Italy

2011 American Le Mans Series (ALMS) race circuits

- www.sebringraceway.com – Sebring, Florida.
- www.gplb.com – Long Beach, California.
- www.limerock.com – Lime Rock, Connecticut.
- www.midohio.com - Lexington, Ohio.
- www.roadamerica.com – Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin.
- www.mosport.com – Mosport, Ontario, Canada.
- www.roadatlanta.com – Road Atlanta, Georgia.
- www.laguna-seca.com – Laguna Seca, Monterey, California.
- www.baltimoregrandprix.com - Baltimore

Other Le Mans related sites

- www.classicbw.org – About the Saint Saturnin Classic British Welcome (in English and French Language).
- www.lemans-racing.com – Website of French magazine (in French language).
- www.motorracinglegends.com – Usually the organisers of the Le Mans support races with historic cars.
- www.grande-parade-des-pilotes.com – About the drivers parade which is held on Friday 18.00h until 20.00h prior to the race in the centre of Le Mans.
- www.mulsannescorner.com – A great site about sports prototypes, very detailed, very technical. If you want to look up e.g. the specs of the 1989 Aston Martin Group C, here you can find them.
- www.jacky-ickx-fan.net – Great website on one of Le Mans greatest drivers, 6-times winner Jacky Ickx.
- www.24h-en-piste.com – Lots of news, facts, history and photos (French language).
- www.formula2.net – All Le Mans 24h results from 1923 until now.
- www.lemansdriver.fr – Drive yourself on the Bugatti or Maison Blanche circuit (French language).
- www.groupecracing.com – The cars of one of the greatest eras in sports car racing, support race in 2010.
- www.popemobile.co.uk – Former RAF mobile Control Tower, a regular visitor to Le Mans 24h.