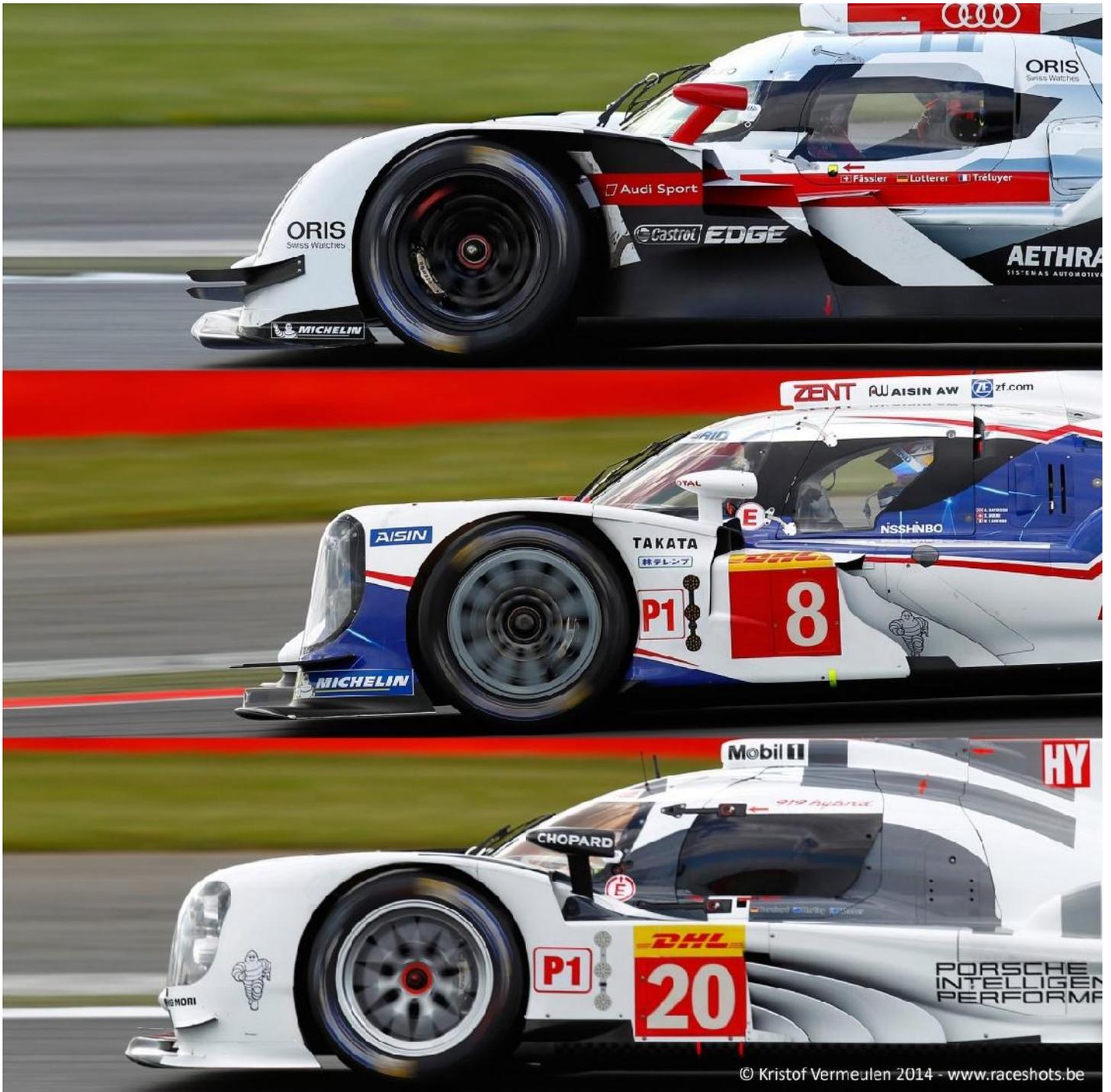


Le Mans (not just) for Dummies



The Club Arnage Guide to the 24 hours of Le Mans 2014



www.clubarnage.com

"There are two things no man will admit he cannot do well: drive and make love."

Sir Stirling Moss – he competed 10 times at Le Mans between 1951 and 1961

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Table of content

Foreword.....	4
Hall of fame.....	5
Call for Donations.....	6
The Race	
Le Mans (not just) for Dummies – A brief history.....	7
The “Circuit 24 Heures”.....	21
War of the classes.....	24
Sporting regulations.....	27
Driver Categories.....	29
Map of the circuit.....	30
Where to watch.....	31
Waving the flags and so much more – The marshals.....	35
Radio Le Mans – Tune in at 91.2 FM.....	37
Race week schedule.....	38
Entry list.....	39
The Support Races.....	55
Trivia and Fascinating Facts.....	56
<i>Le Mans Experience: The sock story.....</i>	<i>60</i>
Other activities in and around Le Mans	
Administrative Checking & Scrutineering.....	63
The “Ceremony of Hands”.....	65
The drivers parade.....	66
Club Arnage Forum Gathering at Le Mans.....	67
The Saint Saturnin Classic British Welcome.....	68
Helicopter flights.....	69
Mad Friday.....	70
The automobile museum.....	72
Useful stuff	
Transport in Le Mans	73
Shopping in Le Mans.....	76
The A.C.O. village.....	82
Golf Course.....	82
First aid – the Medical Center.....	82
Funfair.....	83
Banking services / ATMs at the circuit.....	83
Internet Access.....	83
Visitors with physical disabilities.....	83
<i>Le Mans Fans: Lawnmower man.....</i>	<i>85</i>
On the run - Escaping the traffic at the end of the race.....	87

Foreword

Porsche is back! The return of the most successful manufacturer in Le Mans history (16 overall wins) has been making the headlines for more than a year now. And they are back big time! Works assaults in both top categories LMP1-H and GTE Pro in the same year – I can't think of any other manufacturer having tried this before. Welcome back Zuffenhausen, we missed you! And a warm welcome back also to Mark Webber! His last appearance at Le Mans as a Mercedes flight captain is still remembered by many, and fans are eager to see what he can do 15 years later behind the wheel of a Porsche prototype – hopefully staying on track this time.

LMP1-H: In the top prototype category we'll see 2.0 litre V4 engines, 4.0 litre V6 Turbo Diesel and 3.8 V8 aspirated engines competing with each other – not since the glorious Group C days there has been such a variety on the grid. Toyota published more than 1.000 hp when they presented the TS 40; it's been a while since we last heard such figures at La Sarthe. Audi stepped back a little from the Hybrid hype, they are just using the bare minimum of megajoules required by the rulebook, and actually less than they did last year. Instead they have increased their conventional Diesel powerhouse from 3.7 to 4.0 litres. And Porsche? They do what they often did and understate: Compared to their competitors a 2.0 litre 4 cyl. engine sounds lawnmower-sized, but remember, already in the Group C days they usually had the smallest engine but the best overall package – and we all know what they achieved.

However, with all the focus on fuel efficiency, fuel flow meters, megajoules and energy recovery, let's hope there's still room for real racing in P1. Favourite? Definitely Toyota, their performance in the first 2 WEC rounds and at the test day was convincing. But Audi will not be easy to beat – and they have that 3rd car advantage. Porsche is in its first year and they are bringing the most complex car they've ever built to France – I do expect a respectable performance but I don't expect an outright win.

LMP1-L: After the withdrawal of the Lotus this will be a rather dull thing to watch with just the 2 Rebellions racing each other – or not. Should none of their brand new chassis make it to the finish line we might end up with an empty podium in this category.

LMP2: We can expect some real racing in this category: Thanks to additional (non-WEC) entries this class is reasonably stocked (18 cars) and there are at least half a dozen potential winners. Unfortunately the beautiful looking Strakka Dome coupe had to be withdrawn following a test accident in Belgium and sadly, for the first time in many years, there will be no Lola on the grid.

GTE: Porsche, Aston Martin, Corvette and once again plenty of Ferraris (14!). The usual suspects in both GT classes will most likely entertain us again with a thrilling battle. US engagement: The wonderful looking Vipers did not make it to our side of the pond this year (budget!) but the Pratt & Miller guys will be there as usual. Last year they were a little bit off the pace but with the new Corvette C7 additional serious competition in the Pro category can be expected.

Garage 56: This year we will see the return of the Deltawing, now with a roof, a hybrid powertrain and more electricity than anybody else: They hope to do at least one full lap per stint on electric power only. Although they will race outside the competition, this will for sure give them a lot of media attention. But many fans are a little bit disappointed with Nissan using Le Mans as a marketing tool without actually racing against competitors. The A.C.O. is thinking the same; reportedly they have told Nissan that that would only get Garage 56 this year on the condition of turning up with a P1 next year – which has been announced by Nissan just recently.

Championship: Audi arrives at Le Mans as the reigning WEC champion, but let's be honest: Who cares? Last year saw 8 championship rounds, most of them in the so called emerging markets (China, Brazil, Middle East) – but looking at trackside spectator figures and local media attention those markets don't seem to give a damn about it. This whole WEC thing is still about the mother of all sports car endurance races – Le Mans! In my opinion the rest is just a justification for the shareholders for the enormous budgets spent in the development of those cars by the P1 works teams.

The almost complete lack of American entries is a sad sign of the times – many fans fear that real sports car racing is going rapidly downhill in the U.S. since the death of the American Le Mans Series. A replacement for this seems to come from the other side of the planet, there's a lot of Russian and Chinese money on the grid this year.

Outlook 2015: Nissan has announced to show up in the LMP1-H class next year, so with Nissan and Toyota vs. Audi and Porsche, a Japanese – German battle with equal forces on both sides can be expected.

About this guide: Regular readers will notice that the section "Before you go" with information about campsites, ticket purchase and route descriptions is no longer a part of this print edition. We do still offer this information in the Club Arnage Wiki, but have restricted the information in this print edition to the stuff needed while being at the race track.

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

Werner Kirchmann
Editor

Hall of fame

Welcome to the 9th 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, and all text can be maintained directly on the internet. More than 50 people have been involved up to now in the production of the CA Guides, 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"; Allon Stokes; Graig; Anita Williams aka "Piglet"; Bas de Graf aka "Bas"; Andrew Hawley aka "Andy Zarse"; Calum Cousins aka "ccr32"; Chris Clark aka "Chris24"; Chris Howles; Chris Norris aka "dukla2000"; Christopher aka "Kpy"; clkgrlm1; Dave Davies aka "Grand Fromage"; Deborah Dudley aka "termietermite"; Ian Dudley aka "Mr. Termite"; Derek Appleyard aka "Delboy"; Ewan Dalton aka "ewan"; "Fagey"; "Fran"; Geoff Morgan aka "smokie"; Hansgerd Bramann aka "hgb"; Ian Swan; Jason Gore aka "Jason"; John Curtis; John Dickinson aka "6Euros"; John G; John Brooks; John Hindhaugh; JPS Beemer; Julian aka "Jules G"; Justin Moran; "Lorry"; "Lofty"; Kristof Vermeulen aka "Dottore"; "landman"; Marcel ten Caat; Marius van Herpen; Mark Every aka "jpchenet"; Mark Williams aka "mgmark"; "Martini"; "mwbennett"; Neil Dobson aka "Dobbo"; Nick Livingstone aka "nickliv"; Paul Richards aka "Risky"; Paul Robertson aka "Robbo"; "rdj-pics"; Rick Wilson aka "Mr. Rick"; "Rhino"; Rob Preston aka "RobP"; Robert Walsh aka "Pilgrim"; Rupert Lowes aka "Nordic"; Simon Lowes aka "SL"; "SmithA"; "Slash"; Steve Barnes aka "SJ"; Steve Brown aka "Steve Pyro"; "stu_mchugh"; Thierry Charge; Tony Brown aka "lynxd67"; Trevor aka "topcatz" and of course thanks to all Club Arnage moderators and administrators for keeping the CA forum up and running!



**YOU found outdated information in this guide?
YOU think things have changed?
YOU saw something that should be in this guide but it isn't?**

Then you're our man – or woman!

**Sign up at the Club Arnage forum at www.clubarnage.com
and help us by adding your stuff to our Wiki at
www.clubarnage.com/wiki.**

**Please support us to make this guide the ultimate
compendium to the Le Mans Galaxy!**

The Deborah Dudley Memorial Fund

A Call for Donations

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 the few who donated last year, but overall it was disappointing!

A trackside beer at Le Mans is €6, and we think the guide is worth at least one! Please don't be a cheap Charlie, it's all for a good cause!

Once again, our chosen charities are:

- **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 or Paypal 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, Sort Code: 60-03-27, A/c Number: 78121477, IBAN: GB31 NWBK 6003 2778 1214 77, 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. **Please ensure your payment via Paypal is marked as a Charitable Donation which will not attract any fees.**

Thank you very much in advance

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

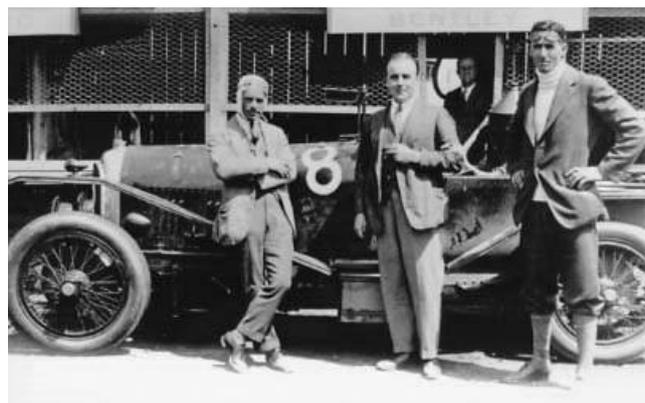
representative in France who committed a donation of 100.000 French Francs and established the triennial Rudge-Whitworth Trophy for the races of 1923-24-25.

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 were 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 Hunaudières 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 Jassaud 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 Dalmas/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 Dalmas/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.

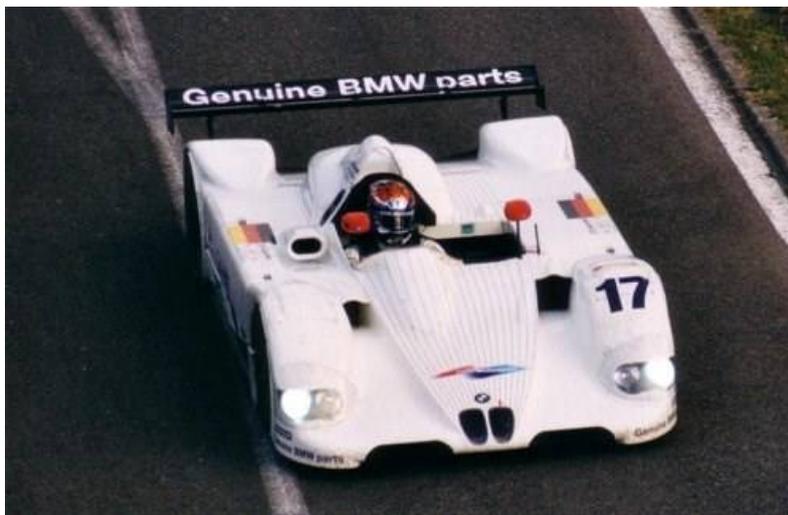
The 1997 race saw the same outcome as the 1996 race. The Joest Racing Porsche WSC-95 was not the fastest car out on the track, but mechanical problems for the Porsche 911 GT1s and McLaren F1 GTRs meant Joest Racing claimed his second ever back-to-back Le Mans victory with the same chassis. The drivers 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



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

© „Lorry“

LM and the American Panoz team send 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...



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/Montagny 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. Come June Peugeot were odds on favourites to take the win at Le Mans and on

race day four Peugeot 908's lined up against 3 Audi R15's. An assortment of petrol powered cars including Lolas, Zytexs, Oreca and the Prodrive Aston Martin were also entered but it was clear they still lagged behind the Diesels on pace.

The 3 factory 908's made good starts from the green flag and such was the pace of the leading trio of factory Peugeots they pulled out a lead of about one minute in the first hour. McNish was in the first of the Audis in 4th place having passed the privately run Oreca 908. But at about 7pm the lead Audi went for a trip in the gravel at a cost of 3 laps. The Peugeots could now ease the pace, something they looked very keen to do.

The damage to Peugeot's reliability seemed to have already been done with all 3 factory 908s and the privately run Peugeot 908 eventually retiring throughout Sunday (one suspension failure and three engine failures). En route to failure and as the situation became increasingly desperate the No.64 Corvette was sent into the barriers by the exuberant Davidson further adding to the embarrassment. Audi locked at the podium with a 1, 2, 3 finish for the Joest team. The petrol engine LMP1 race was won by Oreca and 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, with GT2 glory going to the Felbermayr Porsche.

2011 - Peugeot vs. Audi - 13.8 seconds

In the 79th running of the Le Mans 24 hour race the Audi vs. Peugeot rivalry was reignited again and was the focus of the majority visiting La Sarthe that weekend. The Sebring 12 hour earlier in the year hinted that the Peugeots had the upper hand but Le Mans very rarely follows the form book.

For the first time since 2006 Audi took the top spot in qualifying with the Joest team setting a faster lap time than the much larger capacity previous evolutions of the Audi. Signatech Nissan qualified first in LMP2 and the newly created LM GTE Pro and Am categories were headed by the factory BMW team M3 and AF Corse Ferrari 458 respectively. As in 2010 the race started with 4 Peugeots taking on 3 Audis in the feature LMP1 race with all 7 mixed up in the top 7 slots. Even before the first lap was completed both teams were aware of the ability of the Peugeot to run one lap longer on a tank of fuel than the Audi. Over the course of the 24 hours this could crucially mean 2-3 less stops for the Peugeot team with respect to the legendary efficiency in the pits of the Audi team.

Within the first hour the first major incident of the race took place. Allan McNish exited the pits and thought he had an opportunity to dive past one of his team-mates just after the Dunlop Bridge. Unfortunately the No.58 Ferrari was lurking on the other side of the Audi, unsighted by McNish, who collected the Ferrari on his trip to the gravel. The Ferrari was relatively unscathed and re-joined the race but McNish was sent flying into the catch fencing before finishing up on his roof. The car was destroyed and the crowd held its breath and then released a collective sigh of relief as McNish opened the door and walked away. A spectacular accident that 20 years ago may have had a much sadder ending. The safety car came out whilst the crash barriers were repaired and due to the length enabled the Audis to make back one of their pit stop deficits whilst retaining the lead.

8 hours later and the crowd were stunned by a copycat incident involving the No.1 Audi (driven by Mike Rockenfeller) at the time and the No.71 Ferrari. In the dead of night Rockenfeller appeared to misjudge the routine pass between the Mulsanne and Indianapolis corners. He careered off the track and smashed into the barriers, the video footage showing the Audi disintegrating into thousands of pieces. Again the pilot was able to walk away much to the credit of the safety technology of the modern race car. The resulting safety car came out for over 2 hours whilst the barriers were repaired, an indication of the massive forces in the shunt. The length of this safety car resulted in a Le Mans first where a replacement safety car was deployed as the first one ran low on fuel.

As the morning broke the remaining leading Audi and Peugeot pack were close together with the staggered fuel stops causing the lead to change on several occasions. The teams began work on a finish strategy to ensure they wouldn't be pitting with only a couple of laps to go. Spectator calculations seemed to think that in this case the Peugeot No.7 would benefit and take the win but Alex Wurz through a curve ball, hitting the barrier at Indianapolis and dropping back 3 laps. This epitomized the closing hours of what many are saying is the best end to a race in a long time. Audi had worked their pit stops to give themselves back the advantage but a fuel tank issue meant they couldn't use the full 65litre capacity and an unscheduled stop was forced. At the final stop Lotterer in the No.2 Audi took the time to put on new tyres as well as fuel. Pagenaud in the No.9 Peugeot only added fuel and both he and Lotterer emerged from the pits seconds apart with the Audi ahead. The tyres paid dividends as both cars hammered round the track in a desperate sprint to the finish line with Lotterer's Audi pulling clear by only 13.8 seconds from Pagenaud's Peugeot to take the victory with the final lap at full race speed as opposed to the usual processional luxury afforded to the leader. This marked Audi's tenth win at Le Sarthe and moves them clear into second of all time wins from Ferrari on 9 and behind Porsche on 16.

A dramatic end to the GTE Pro race saw the AF Corse Ferrari narrowly missing out on the class victory to the Corvette Racing C6 despite finishing on the same lap. Corvette wrapped up a successful 24 hours by winning the GTE Am class.

2012 - The first hybrid car wins

2012 was another landmark in the long history of this race. First of all Le Mans became part of a FIA sanctioned series again, the WEC - World Endurance Championship. Almost 20 years after the last world sports car championship went down the drain; a new attempt to promote this sport worldwide has been made. The series didn't really have a dream start, just weeks before the first round Peugeot decided to pull the plug on their endurance racing program. The A.C.O .then managed to convince Toyota to step in - they actually had planned 2012 just as a test year. Without any dress rehearsal the Japanese sent a 2 car team to La Sarthe and for the first time there was petrol vs. diesel powered race fought by 2 large manufacturers, both using hybrid systems. Toyota did well for a couple of hours and even led the race for a short time - but after they had lost both cars due to an accident and mechanical trouble the race soon became another clear run for Audi. However, the German team had been unsure if the conventional car or the hybrid system would perform better and had brought 4 cars, 2 conventional and 2 hybrids. In the end Le Mans saw another landmark victory with a hybrid car taking the overall win for the first time.

2013 - Hybrid battle overshadowed by tragedy

The 2013 24 hours had overtones of the previous year with Audi vs Toyota for overall honours and plucky private teams trying to keep in the same league, followed by a big grid of LM P2 competitors that were very closely matched. In GT it would be a battle between Aston Martin, Ferrari and the newly resurrected factory Porsche Team. Corvette were, as usual, heroically upbeat but on this occasion somewhat off the pace. The Vipers looked sexy but were more optimistic than confident.

The cloud that overshadowed the race was the tragic death of Allan Simonsen driving the number 95 Aston Martin, who just at dusk ran wide at the exit of Tertre Rouge and hit the barrier at considerable speed. The 34 year old Danish driver had a huge following in his homeland along with a sizeable fan base in UK. GT drivers don't always attract that type of admiration. Tributes poured in from people who had worked with him and raced against him and without exception they all talked of one the 'good guys' of racing. This sad event cast a massive shadow over the race.



© Dave Davies 2013

The fatal crash was not the only incident, often resulting in time consuming repairs to barriers. As a result the safety cars were deployed 11 times and the race cars spent a total of more than five hours ploughing steadily around behind them.

The expected Audi domination was spoilt by the Toyotas. They never looked likely to win outright but they gave Audi a serious run for their money as far as podium places were concerned. They didn't have the pace of the Audis but they were more economical and the weather seemed to suit them. It was the number 8 that squeezed onto the podium and knocked one of the Audis off the perch... it was a brilliant effort with the other Toyota coming 4th despite a big accident. The LM P2 honours went to the fast and reliable No 35 OAK Racing Morgan-Nissan followed by the 24 OAK Racing Morgan-Nissan.

Aston Martin arrived with big hopes of victory in both 'Pro' and 'Am' classes but sadly these plans were knocked sideways both emotionally and tactically. Porsche on the other hand were preparing for battle in LM P1 next year and

what better way than to run a pair of factory cars to get their act together. Initially it was thought the threat to Aston would come from the reliable, nimble and economical Ferraris but it never materialized. For Porsche this was surely a dress rehearsal for their return to LM P1 next year and a very good one it was too... the team functioned well and they got what they wanted, a 1st & 2nd in LM GTE Pro. Not bad for their return to the big time. Corvette kept their hand in with an 'old' car. The C7 could not arrive soon enough for them. Aston's misfortune was complete, and at the finish of terrible 24hrs for them, the No 76 IMSA Performance Matmut took the LM GT Am class.

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), Phillippe 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	Delhaye 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

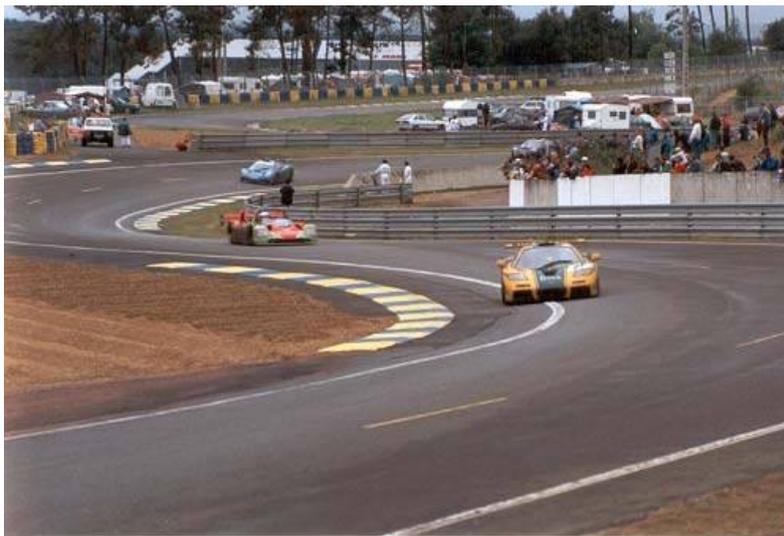


The Corvette team at the Administrative Checking & Scrutineering 2013

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Year	Car	Drivers	Distance (km)
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	Caroll 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
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 Jausaud (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), Volker Weidler (D)	4922
1992	Peugeot 905	Derek Warwick (GB), Yannick Dalmas (F), Mark Blundell (GB)	4787
1993	Peugeot 905B	Geoff Brabham (AUS), Eric Helary (F), Christophe Bouchut (F)	5100
1994	Dauer Porsche 962LM	Yannick Dalmas (F), Hurley Haywood (USA), Mauro Baldi (I)	4678
1995	McLaren F1 GTR	Yannick Dalmas (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 Dalmas (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	Audi R18 TDI	Marcel Fässler (CH), André Lotterer (DE), Benoît Tréluyer (FR)	4839
2012	Audi R18 e-tron quattro	Marcel Fässler (CH), André Lotterer (DE), Benoît Tréluyer (FR)	5151
2013	Audi R18 e-tron quattro	Allan McNish (GB), Tom Kristensen (DK), Loïc Duval (FR)	4743

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.



1995: The Esses

© Rupert Lowes

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).

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. 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.



1982: Dunlop Curve

© Rupert Lowes

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 went up by about 15 seconds. Whether the track is any safer with the chicanes is open to debate; true the top speeds of the cars were slowed by about 30 mph on the straight, but as a consequence higher down force set-ups were used then which has 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. 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.



1996: Dunlop Bridge

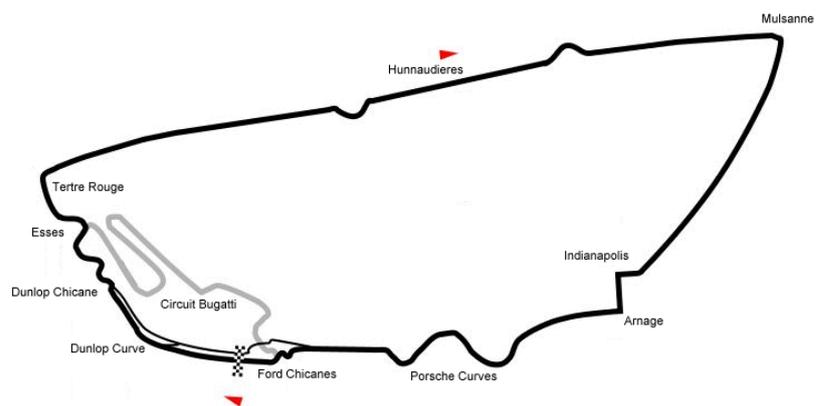
© Rupert Lowes

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, which 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 straights has 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.

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

For 2012 the run-off areas at Arnage corner were extended. Following the tragic accident of Allan Simonsen, for 2014 the A.C.O. did some additional safety related modifications to the circuit: At the Esses new kerbing was installed and the hard shoulders were stabilized. At the exit from Tertre Rouge two rows of tyres were added in front of the guardrail and Corvette corner got a new runoff area consisting of a gravel trap. More changes are probably 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. However, in recent years there has also been an effort to make the speed of the cars



2012: the current track layout

match the circuit standards. The technical rules were changed several times in the past by restricting engine size and adding extra weight to the cars. Target was to slow down cars to lap times of 3:30 mins; a time which is considered to be safe for the current track standards. But no matter how much they tried to slow the prototypes down, this mark was always beaten. For 2014 there are completely new regulations for the P1 cars in the book, basically limiting energy consumption by almost 30%, restricting tyre size and overall widths of the cars. Let's see what the new generation of P1 cars can do, but I bet they'll beat the 3:30 mark again.

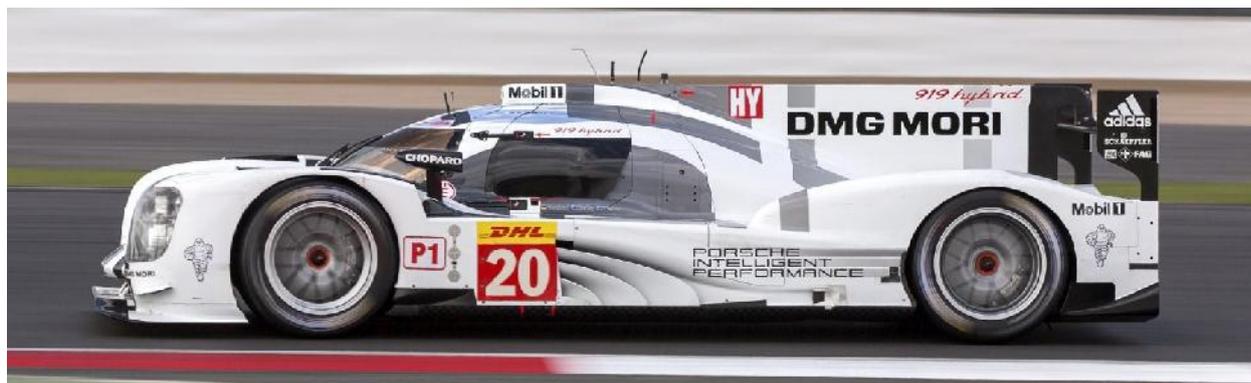
War of the classes

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 victor. The prototype classes - LMP1 and LMP2 - are for cars specially developed for the track only, and the GTE classes - GTE-PRO and GTE-AM - are essentially road cars modified for the track.

Le Mans Prototypes, a new era

For many years, in order to prevent excessive power development, the rule makers for Le Mans and almost every other motor race on the planet have restricted engine output by limiting the cubic capacity or the number of cylinders, by modifying the size of air restrictors or restricting turbo boost, thus limiting the amount of air (and thus fuel) which could be fed into the engine. From 2014 in the LMP1 category, these fundamentals will radically change in that the energy consumption of the engine becomes the key factor. There will be no more restrictions on engine size, cylinders or air restrictors, and turbo boost pressure limit is now 4 bar, compared to the previous limits of 2.8 bar for diesels and 2.5 bar for petrol.

In simple terms, the new regulations challenge entrants to make the best use of a prescribed amount of energy in order to cover the longest distance within a given time – such as 24 hours at Le Mans. Old hands among the fans remember that this concept is not really brand new: Already in the glorious days of Group C sports car racing there was a regulation which limited energy consumption, everyone got an allowance of 2,140 litres of petrol for the whole of the 24h of Le Mans. Engine constructors had complete freedom, in those days Porsche raced a 6 cyl. flat 3.0 litre Turbo, Jaguar used 7.0 litre V12 normally-aspirated engines, the folks at Mercedes built a 5.0 Litre V8 Turbo and Mazda used a rotary engine. Despite these very different concepts the performance of the competitors was close to each other, competition was fierce and the races were interesting to watch.



However, in the Group C days there were no energy recovery systems around and diesel was only used for team trucks, so this rather simple approach worked fine. The new 2014 regs allow engine constructors once again to build what they want, but the usage of energy recovery systems is now mandatory for the factory teams and energy consumption (both electricity and fuel) will be measured on a per-lap basis. For cost reasons privateers will still be allowed to race non-hybrid powertrains, but those have a limit of 5.5 litre engine capacity.

As a consequence the LMP1 class has been sub-divided into LMP1-L (L = light, for privateers only) and LMP1-H (H = Hybrid, for factory teams and privateers). An energy chart shows the amount of energy allocated to each power train concept, whether it is diesel or petrol. Hybrid systems are prescribed in four different performance classes, and a maximum amount of energy is defined for each of these classes.

	LMP1-L	LMP1-H Factory teams			
	Privateers only	Factory teams & Privateers			
Energy recovery (Megajoule)	0	2	4	6	8
Minimum weight	830 kg	870 kg			
Litres fuel per lap (petrol)	4.95	4.80	4.65	4.50	4.42
Litres fuel per lap (diesel)	3.99	3.93	3.81	3.68	3.56

What this boils down to is that entrants must have optimum control of the car's fuel consumption, be able to approach the permissible energy limit as closely as possible, and the drivers must exercise an efficient driving style. If the amount of energy available per lap is not fully consumed, it cannot be carried over to subsequent laps and will therefore be lost. Should the prescribed maximum levels be exceeded, the excess consumption must be compensated for within three laps, otherwise penalties like stop-and-go may be imposed.

So effectively, the manufacturer with the most efficient power train being driven by drivers with an efficient driving style will win the race.

All this will mean that on-board loggers and computers will constantly be monitoring the fuel flow and output of the energy recovery systems, and data will be sent real-time to ACO computer equipment which will flag any discrepancy to the stewards. Hopefully we will not experience more 'safety car' periods this year as the French attempt to resolve bugs in their computer systems during the race!!!

Today's constructors seem to have a very different view on what might be the best solution, so similar to the old Group C we will see a variety of extremely different engines: Toyota will use a 3.4 ltr. V8 normally aspirated petrol engine, Audi a 4.0 ltr. V6-Turbodiesel and once again Porsche will have smallest engine with a 2.0 ltr. 4-cyl-Turbo petrol engine.

Other significant changes: for the first time since 1999, the maximum width of P1 cars has been reduced from 2 to 1.9 metres. The wheels are also significantly slimmer. The minimum weight of the cars has been reduced to 870 kg for LMP1-H and 830 kg for LMP1-L.

The seating position of the driver is now more upright, and their angle of forward vision has been enlarged, while cutouts at the rear ends of the fenders optimize lateral vision. Passive safety has also been improved in that the monocoque must cater for higher loads, and special exterior layers provide protection against the intrusion of sharp foreign objects. Wheel tethers help prevent wheels from separating from the suspension in accidents, and P1 cars will be equipped with crash-boxes to better absorb energy in rear-end shunts.

In the "small" prototype category LMP2, the rules essentially remain unchanged for 2014, allowing competitors to continue racing their existing chassis; however cars conforming to the 2014 specification can also be entered. Open prototypes are still allowed in this class and manufacturers are discouraged – "The ACO do not wish to encourage the Manufacturers to invest in LMP2 in any developments which improve the performance of the cars. The main objectives for these cars must be reliability, safety and a low maintenance cost." Also the rules for the LMP2 engines remain unchanged, and for cost reasons, these need to be based on production engines.

The GT cars

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 turbo charged engines. Fuel capacity is limited to approx. 90 litres, but this can vary depending on the latest balance of performance regulations. These cars are based almost totally on the old GT2 specification, with a few minor changes (i.e. 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 - designed more especially for professionals where up-to-date models are used as the basis for the race car.

LMGTE-AM - 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.

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
- LMGTE-Pro: green lights
- LMGTE-Am: 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. The complete rulebook can be downloaded from the www.24h-lemans.com website. All figures mentioned are maximum values, except the car's weight of course...



LMP1-H LMP1-L

- Closed roof sports cars with room for 2 seats
- 4.65 m length, between 1.8 to 1.9 m width, 1.05 m height
- Engine size is free for LMP1-H, max 5.5 litres for LMP1-L
- 64.4 litres fuel tank for petrol engines, 53.3 litres for diesel
- Headlights with white beam
- Race numbers white digits on red background
- 16" wheel width, 28.5" diameter
- Bronze drivers are not accepted.



LMP2

- 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 (or 1.05 for 2014-spec cars)
- 75 litres fuel tank
- Headlights with white beam
- Race numbers white digits on blue background
- 14" wheel width, 28" diameter
- Must include a minimum of one Silver or Bronze driver



LMGTE-PRO

- "Professional" GTE sports cars
- 5.5 ltr. atmo engine or 4 ltr. Turbo
- Minimum weight 1245Kg
- 4.8m length, 2.00 m width
- Approx. 90 litres fuel tank, amount can vary
- Headlights with yellow beam
- Race numbers white digits on green background
- 14" wheel width, 28" diameter
- Carbon brake discs
- The driver line up is free



LMGTE-AM

- "Amateur" GTE sports cars
- Specification same as GTE-PRO
- The car must be at least one year old
- Race numbers white digits on orange background
- At least one bronze and one silver or bronze rated driver in the team, only one professional driver from Platinum or Gold class

Sporting regulations

The full regulations (see www.24h-lemans.com) cover everything from what can be done where and when, the penalties for infringement, to what patches must be worn by drivers and mechanics on their worksuits. These rules now cover all races in the WEC Championship, with differences for Le Mans. 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 some of the rules.

Race Numbers

- All race numbers displayed on the car (side and front) must be in the ‘class’ colours 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.
- Any other camera can only be used on the test day and the free practice session on Wednesday.

Drivers

- Drivers are placed into one of 4 categories - Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze depending on their experience and ability. See separate section in this guide for details
- To be accepted, a driver must be on the ACOs list of confirmed drivers. If they are not, they can a)take part in the Test Day or b)take an ACO-organised half-day training course to gain a certificate of competence.
- A maximum of 3 drivers is allowed for each car. Drivers are not allowed to change to another car during the race, even within the same team
- In order to qualify, each driver must achieve a lap time at least equal to 120% of the average of the 3 best laps set by 3 cars of different makes, and at least equal to 110% of the best time achieved by the fastest car in each of the classes LMP1, LMP2 and GTE Pro. In GTE AM, the CAR must meet these criteria - ie any and only one of the drivers need to meet them. 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
- Minimum drive time - For LM P2 and GTE Am categories, a driver is not permitted to drive less than 4 hours

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.
- In P1 and GTE Pro, the start driver must be nominated at scrutineering. In P2 and GTE AM, the driver who set the fastest time in qualifying must start the race.
- If a car can’t make it to the starting grid, it is allowed to start from the pits. It has 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), and the car cannot be jacked up. An exception to this is in P1 - if the fuel-flow meter is defective, another mechanic can change the meter at the same time.
- 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.
- 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 may 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!! Penalty for this in 2012 was a 3 minutes Stop-and-Go.

Safety Car/SLOW ZONES *New in 2014**

- When it is decreed necessary by the race director, safety cars are deployed. There are three safety cars located around the circuit, and when directed, they are deployed immediately ie they do not wait for a particular car (eg race leader), and all usual safety car rules apply – the main one being no overtaking. There is nothing new in this procedure, but obviously the experiences of the past few years, where many hours of the race were conducted under safety car rules, has forced a new concept to be adopted – Slow Zones.
- The circuit is divided into 21 numbered zones corresponding to the Post Marshal number at the entrance of the zone, the start of each zone corresponding to a main signaler post. When a particular zone of the circuit is deemed to be a Slow Zone due to on-track activity (medical, Armco repairs), then the previous zone becomes a slowing down zone. The start of this zone will be indicated by a large yellow sign (1.2m x .6m) saying NEXT SLOW. Drivers must slow down in this zone to a maximum of 60kph, and overtaking is prohibited. The start of the Slow Zone itself is indicated by the same sized yellow board with SLOW and an encircled 60. There is a maximum speed of 60kph in the Slow Zone and again, overtaking is not allowed. The end of the Slow Zone is situated at the start of the next physical zone, and is indicated by a green light and green flags. If necessary, the Slow Zone can be lengthened to include more than one physical zone.

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 whilst in motion in the pit lane
- One of the silliest rules and difficult to enforce at night time: cars are not allowed to cross the white lines marking the race track or use the kerbs

Repairs

- Chassis, engine block, gearbox casing and the differential casing cannot be changed
- Reserve cars are not permitted, so if a car is totaled during practice or warm up, it is out!

Time penalties

- If you have been a naughty boy (or girl) the race marshals will show you the black flag and give you a timed "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.
- Penalties can not be taken when the safety cars are deployed, or when a 'Slow Zone' has been activated.

Withdrawal

- The pit curtain must be lowered during the race when the team declares a withdrawal of his car. So if the garage door is down, the car is out!

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.
- At 75% of race distance, all cars must have travelled a minimum of 50% of the leading car's distance
- It is forbidden to stop on the circuit to wait for the chequered flag, and the last lap must be covered in 6 minutes or less
- At the end of the race, all cars with the exception of the overall winner must go to the Parc Fermé, and they may be checked. The winning car is parked beneath the podium for the duration of the trophy presentations and afterwards pushed to the Parc Fermé.

Entry fees and prize money

- 2014: The entry fee for each car is €50,000 excluding VAT, with a non-refundable deposit of €4,600 to be paid in January. This deposit is payable (AND non-refundable!) for all cars, including those ones on the Reserve list, whether they race or not. Prize money: €40,000 (1st), €25,000 (2nd), €20,000 (3rd), €15,000 (4th), €12,000 (5th), then €10,000 for each class winner. Keep in mind that a set of tyres for an LMP2 car is about €2,000 and you know that this prize money doesn't really save your day as a team owner.

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, since 2011 this system also applies 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 (“silver” or “bronze”) in the driver squad.
- GTE PRO: No restrictions for the driver line up
- 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! 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
- Has won the Le Mans race outright
- 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

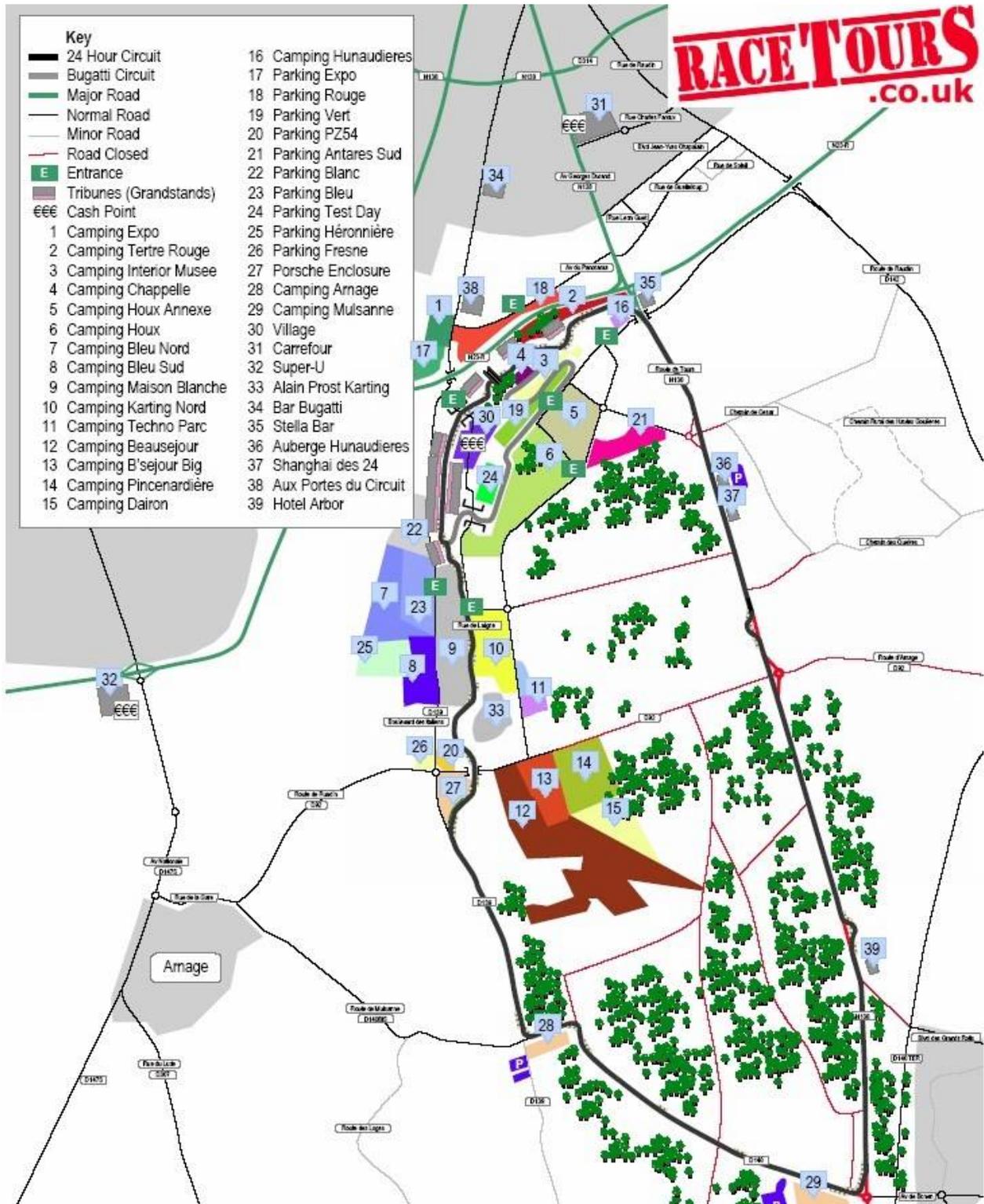
All race drivers who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- 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
- Do not meet the above criteria but are seen as “silver” race driver by the sporting committee

Bronze

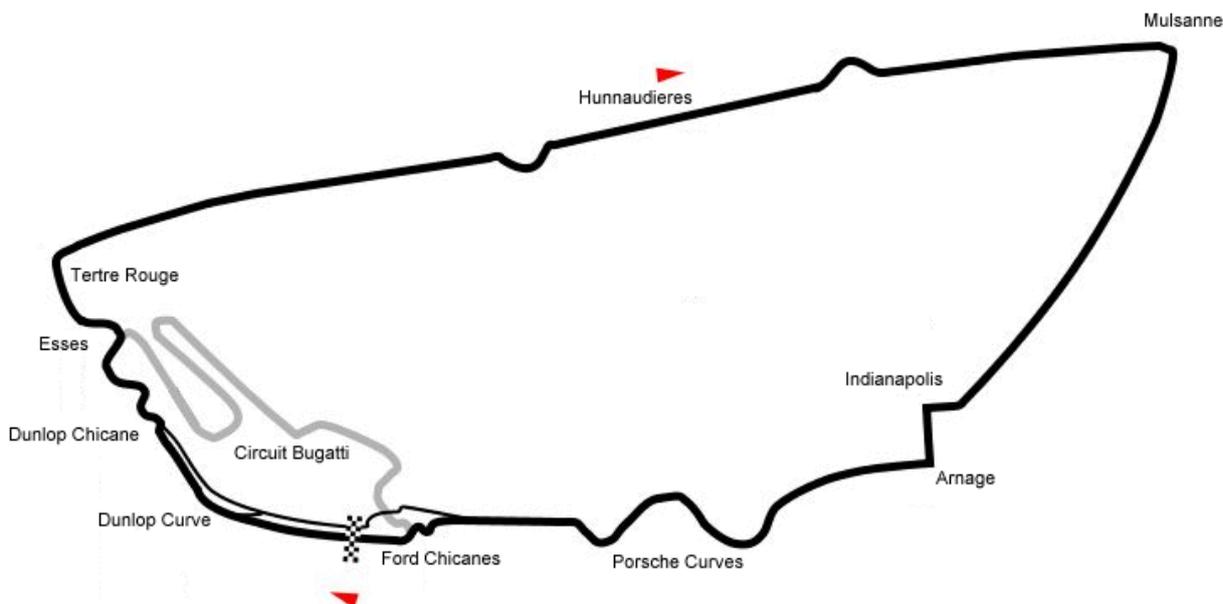
- Amateur driver. Any driver holding an International B license without a significant record of achievement in motor sport.

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 2014 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 breaking 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 2014.

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 uphill corner and can be accessed from the road leading to the Beausejour campsite. Looking back up the road section of the circuit it is 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:

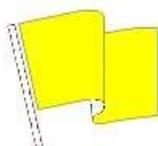
Course/Flag/Observer, these are effectively the Race Directors 'ground troops'. These three will work together on a post, the Course Marshal is the one you'll see going out to an incident

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.



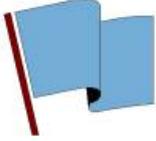
Red flags can only be waved upon instruction of the race director. When a race or a practice session is "red flagged" it is stopped due to some condition that has made the track unraceable. Typical conditions are accidents, weather problems or surface problems like too much oil or debris on the track. 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 waived 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.



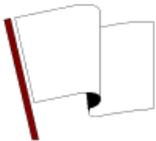
Without doubt the best know race flag, it is waved for all cars to indicate the finish of the race or a practice session.



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.



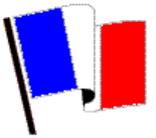
Black with an orange circle: information to a driver that his/her vehicle has a problem and that a pit stop must be made, is usually displayed along with a pit board listing the driver's car number.



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.

Code 80 comes to La Sarthe

For 2014 there is a new type of race neutralization, Code 80. This has been seen under other names in other races, notably the Nürburg 24. It is a GPS based system that instantly advises the driver in car of a Full Course Yellow, at the same time the marshals will be waving their yellows and holding out an “FCY” board, result is an 'instant Safety Car'. The field reduce their speed to 80kph and become essentially their own SC, no catching the car in front, this way the marshals can get to work and clear an incident much more quickly. Upon removal of the hold, the driver is instantly back to racing, no need to wait to pass a point on the track. The idea of this is to prevent losing time behind the Safety Car (deploy, catch the leader, pace, reorganize, release) this allows a pause rather than a suspension to racing. At the time of writing, the implementation is still unconfirmed.

Radio Le Mans – Tune in at 91.2 FM

Courtesy of John Hindhaugh

Radio Show Limited move into year 7 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.

2014 race week schedule

+ in blue letters: FIFA *Worldcup* dates

+ in red letters: other events

Sunday 8th June	2.30 pm - 7.00 pm	Administrative Checks and Scrutineering in the centre of Le Mans, Place du Jacobins
Monday 9th June	10.00 am - 6.00 pm	Administrative Checks and Scrutineering in the centre of Le Mans, Place du Jacobins
	6.30 pm – 7.30 pm	„The winners' handprints“ , Place St. Nicholas, Le Mans city centre
Tuesday 10th June	10.30 am – 10.45 am	Official photo of the drivers on the start-finish straight
	5.00 pm - 6.30 pm	Drivers autograph session in the pit lane
Wednesday 11th June	8.00 am – 3.00 pm	Pit Walk
	4.00 pm - 8.00 pm	Free practice session 24h of Le Mans
		Free practice session Porsche Carrera Cup France
	<i>8:00 pm</i>	<i>Live Music concert on the stage near Dunlop Bridge: Medi</i>
	<i>9:00 pm</i>	<i>Live Music concert on the stage near Dunlop Bridge: Hollysiz</i>
	10.00 pm - midnight	Qualifying session 24h of Le Mans
Thursday 12th June	8.00 am – 3.00 pm	Pit Walk
	4.00 pm - 5.00 pm	Le Mans Legend Group C Qualifying Practice Session
	5.30 pm – 6.30 pm	Qualifying session Porsche Carrera Cup France
	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: Charivari</i>
	<i>9:00 pm</i>	<i>Live Music concert on the stage near Dunlop Bridge: Renan Luce</i>
	<i>10:00 pm</i>	<i>FIFA Worldcup: Brazil - Croatia</i>
	10.00 pm - midnight	Qualifying session 24h of Le Mans
Friday 13th June	10.00 am - 8.00 pm	Pit Walk
	5:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Drivers Parade in the city centre
	<i>6:00 pm</i>	<i>FIFA Worldcup: Mexico - Cameroun</i>
	<i>9:00 pm</i>	<i>FIFA Worldcup: Spain - Netherlands</i>
	<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>
	<i>Midnight</i>	<i>FIFA Worldcup: Chile - Australia</i>
Saturday 14th June	9.00 am - 9.45 am	Warm-Up
	TBA	Support Race: Porsche Carrera Cup France
	10.00 am – 10.50 am	Support Race: Le Mans Legend Group C
	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 82 nd edition of the 24h of Le Mans
	<i>6:00 pm</i>	<i>FIFA Worldcup: Columbia - Greece</i>
	<i>8:00 pm</i>	<i>Live Music concert on the stage near Dunlop Bridge: Noa Moon</i>
	<i>9:00 pm</i>	<i>FIFA Worldcup: Uruguay – Costa Rica</i>
	<i>9:00 pm</i>	<i>Live Music concert on the stage near Dunlop Bridge: Alpha Blondy</i>
	<i>9:00 pm</i>	<i>Club Arnage Forum Gathering at “Le Courbes” bar - see the respective chapter for directions</i>
	<i>Midnight</i>	<i>FIFA Worldcup: England – Italy (will be shown on a giant screen near the stage at Dunlop Bridge after the last concert)</i>
Sunday 15th June	<i>3:00 am</i>	<i>FIFA Worldcup: Ivory Coast - Japan</i>
	3:00 pm	Finish of the 82 nd edition of the 24h of Le Mans
	<i>6:00 pm</i>	<i>FIFA Worldcup: Swiss - Ecuador</i>
	<i>9:00 pm</i>	<i>FIFA Worldcup: France - Honduras</i>

The 2014 entry list - introduction

The entry list for the 24 Hours of Le Mans is limited to 56 cars (the highest ever number of starters was 60 in the early fifties but teams shared pit garages in those days), spread across the four classes LM P1, LMP2, LMGTE Pro, LMGTE Am and one pit garage saved for an entry showing new or interesting technologies. This number is set by the number of current pits available at the circuit. All teams that entered the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) for the full season are automatically given entries for the 2014 Le Mans 24 Hours.

Since 1959 bar a few years, there was a pre-qualification weekend before the race (even on a couple of occasions a qualifying race). All teams seeking 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's race, only the fastest cars were able to qualify for the race. This has recently been changed to a system of "pre-selected" or "A.C.O.-selected" entries and the pre-qualification weekend has become a compulsory test weekend for all participants.

Due to the world economic crisis, the test weekends in 2009 and 2010 were cancelled, but 2011 saw the return of the test day. All new or "rookie" drivers must complete their 10 test laps by the end of the test day to qualify for the race. The A.C.O. reserves the right to refuse permission for a driver to race if they consider their performance inadequate but this very rarely happens.

Besides the WEC full season entries there are several other teams which will be given automatic entries by the A.C.O.: if these teams apply for an entry and pay their deposit by a set date (28th January this year), they will be accepted. The list of these additional pre-selected entries is compiled based on results from the previous year. As automatic entries are granted to teams (and are not related to chassis or engine make), the teams are allowed to change their cars from the previous year to the next, but are not allowed to change their category. However, automatic invitations in the two LMGTE categories are able to be swapped between the two based on the driver line-ups chosen by these teams. For 2014, on December 20th the A.C.O. announced that 13 teams received automatic entries:

- Audi Sport Team Joest – the winner of the LM P1 class of the 2013 24 Hours.
- OAK Racing - the winner of the LM P2 class of the 2013 24 Hours.
- Porsche AG Team Manthey – the winner of the LMGTE Pro class of the 2013 24 Hours.
- IMSA Performance Matmut – the winner of the LMGTE Am class of the 2013 24 Hours.
- Signatech Alpine – the winner of the LMP class of the European Le Mans Series.
- Ram Racing – the winner of the LMGTE class of the European Le Mans Series.
- Proton Competition – second in the LMGTE class of the European Le Mans Series.
- Muscle Milk Pickett Racing – winner of the "at large" entry from the LMP class of the American Le Mans Series (*The team did not take up the entry*).
- Risi Competizione – winner of the "at large" entry from the GTE class of the American Le Mans Series (The team only received an entry as 5th reserve which they chose not to take up).
- Team Endurance Challenge – winner of the FLM class in the European Le Mans Series (The team did not take up the entry).
- OAK Racing – the winner in the LMP class of the Asian Le Mans Series.
- AF Corse – the winner in the LM GTE class of the Asian Le Mans Series.
- Craft Racing – second in the LM GTE class of the Asian Le Mans Series (The team took up their entry but subsequently withdrew).

If a pre-selected entry is not taken or there are any spaces available once all the WEC competitors are taken into account, the remainder of the entries is given away at the A.C.O.'s discretion. The following is a quotation from the A.C.O. Regulations about their guidelines for the selection procedure for the remaining entries:

- Teams that have completed in full in one or more of the Le Mans Series (E.L.M.S., Asian Le Mans Series, TudorUnited SportsCar Championship) will be given priority.
- Entries from major manufacturers will have priority.
- A maximum of two cars per competing team.

Pre-selected or not, everyone needs to pay the entry fee which is a juicy 13.500 € per vehicle for the test day and 50.000 € for the race in 2014.

Overview – All 56 entries

No.	Team	Nat	Vehicle	Class	Drivers
0	Nissan Motorsports	JP	Nissan Zeod RC	CDNT	Ordonez, Reip, Motoyama
1	Audi Sport Team Joest	DE	Audi R18 e-tron quattro	LMP1-H	di Grassi, Kristensen, Duval,
2	Audi Sport Team Joest	DE	Audi R18 e-tron quattro	LMP1-H	Fässler, Lotterer, Tréluyer
3	Audi Sport Team Joest	DE	Audi R18 e-tron quattro	LMP1-H	Jarvis, Bonanomi, Albuquerque
7	Toyota Racing	JP	Toyota TS 040 Hybrid	LMP1-H	Wurz, Sarrazin, Nakajima
8	Toyota Racing	JP	Toyota TS 040 Hybrid	LMP1-H	Davidson, Buemi, Lapierre
12	Rebellion Racing	CH	Rebellion-Toyota	LMP1-L	Prost, Heidfeld, Beche
13	Rebellion Racing	CH	Rebellion-Toyota	LMP1-L	Belicchi, Kraihamer, Leimer
14	Porsche Team	DE	Porsche 919 Hybrid	LMP1-H	Dumas, Lieb, Jani
20	Porsche Team	DE	Porsche 919 Hybrid	LMP1-H	Bernhard, Webber, Hartley
22	Millennium Racing	UE	Oreca - Nissan	LMP2	Giroix, Martin, Oliver Turvey
24	Sebastien Loeb Racing	FR	Oreca - Nissan	LMP2	Rast, Charouz, Capillaire
26	G-Drive Racing	RU	Morgan - Nissan	LMP2	Rusinov, Pla, Canal
27	SMP Racing	RU	Oreca - Nissan	LMP2	Zlobin, Ladygin, Salo
29	Pegasus Racing	DE	Morgan - Nissan	LMP2	Schell, Leutwiller, Raffin
33	OAK Racing - Team Asia	FR	Ligier JS P2 - HPD	LMP2	Cheng, Tung, Fong
34	Race Performance	CH	Oreca - Judd	LMP2	Frey, Maillieux, Lancaster
35	OAK Racing	FR	Morgan - Nissan	LMP2	Brundle, Mardenborough, Shulzhitsky
36	SignaTech Alpine	FR	Alpine - Nissan	LMP2	Chatin, Panciatici, Webb
37	SMP Racing	RU	Oreca - Nissan	LMP2	Ladygin, Minassian, Mediani
38	Jota	UK	Zytek - Nissan	LMP2	Dolan, Tinknell, Gené
41	Greaves Motorsport	UK	Zytek - Nissan	LMP2	Munemann, Latif, Winslow
42	Caterham Racing	MY	Zytek - Nissan	LMP2	Kimber-Smith, Dyson, McMurry
43	Morand Racing	CH	Morgan - Judd	LMP2	Klien, Hirsch, Brandela
46	Thiriet by TDS Racing	FR	Ligier JS P2 Nissan	LMP2	Thiriet, Badey, Gommendy
47	KCMG	CN	Oreca - Nissan	LMP2	Howson, Bradley, Imperatori
48	Murphy Prototypes	IR	Oreca - Nissan	LMP2	Berthon, Gonzalez, Chandhok
50	Larbre Compétition	FR	Morgan-Judd	LMP2	Ragues, Taylor, Ihara
51	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F458	GTE-Pro	Fisichella, Bruni, Vilander
52	RAM Racing	UK	Ferrari F458	GTE-Pro	Mowlem, Patterson, Archie Hamilton
53	RAM Racing	UK	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Griffin, Parente, Leo
57	Krohn Racing	US	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Krohn, Jönsson, Collins
58	Team Sofrev	RU	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Barthez, Pons, Ayari
60	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Mann, Casè, Giammaria
61	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Companc, Cioci, Venturi
62	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Malegol, Bachelier, Blank
66	JMW Motorsport	UK	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Al-Faisal, Neiman, Pumpelly
67	IMSA Performance M.	FR	Porsche 997	GTE-Am	Maris, Merlin, Helary
70	Team Taisan	JP	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Rossiter, Ehret, Rich
71	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F458	GTE-Pro	Rigon, Calado, Beretta
72	SMP Racing	RU	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Bertonini, Shaitar, Basov
73	Corvette Racing	US	Chevrolet Corvette	GTE-Pro	García, Magnussen, Taylor
74	Corvette Racing	US	Chevrolet Corvette	GTE-Pro	Gavin, Westbrook, Milner
75	ProSpeed Competition	BE	Porsche 997	GTE-Am	Perrodo, Collard, Vaxiviere
76	IMSA Performance M.	FR	Porsche 997	GTE-Am	Narac, Armindo, Hallyday
77	Dempsey-Proton	US	Porsche 997	GTE-Am	Dempsey, Foster, Long
79	ProSpeed Competition	BE	Porsche 997	GTE-Am	MacNeil, Curtis, Bleekemolen
81	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Wyatt, Rugolo, Bird
88	Proton Competition	DE	Porsche 997	GTE-Am	Ried, Bachler, Al Qubaisi
90	8 Star Motorsports	US	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Montecalvo, Roda, Ruberti
91	Porsche AG - Manthey	DE	Porsche 997	GTE-Pro	Bergmeister, Pilet, Tandy
92	Porsche AG - Manthey	DE	Porsche 997	GTE-Pro	Holzer, Makowiecki, Lietz
95	Aston Martin Racing	UK	Aston Martin Vantage	GTE-Am	Poulsen, Heinemeier Hansson, Thiim
97	Aston Martin Racing	UK	Aston Martin Vantage	GTE-Pro	Senna, Mücke, Turner
98	Aston Martin Racing	UK	Aston Martin Vantage	GTE-Am	Dalla Lana, Lamy, Nygaard
99	Aston Martin Racing	UK	Aston Martin Vantage	GTE-Pro	MacDowall, O'Young, Rees

0



Innovation

Team: Nissan Motorsport Global

Vehicle: Nissan Zeod RC, 1.5-liter 3-cyl. Turbo - Hybrid, Michelin

Drivers: Lucas Ordenez (ES), Wolfgang Reip (BE), Satoshi Motoyama (JP)



1



LMP1-H

Team: Audi Sport Team Joest

Vehicle: Audi R18 e-tron quattro, 4.0 ltr. V6 cyl. Turbo Diesel - Hybrid, Michelin

Drivers: Lucas di Grassi (BR), Tom Kristensen (DK), Loic Duval (FR)



2



LMP1-H

Team: Audi Sport Team Joest

Vehicle: Audi R18 e-tron quattro, 4.0 ltr. V6 cyl. Turbo Diesel - Hybrid, Michelin

Drivers: Marcel Fässler (CH), André Lotterer (DE), Benoît Tréluyer (FR)



3



LMP1-H

Team: Audi Sport Team Joest

Vehicle: Audi R18 e-tron quattro, 4.0 ltr. V6 cyl. Turbo Diesel - Hybrid, Michelin

Drivers: Oliver Jarvis (GB), Marco Bonanomi (IT), Filipe Albuquerque (PT)



7  **LMP1-H**

Team: Toyota Racing
Vehicle: Toyota TS 040, 3.4-litre V8 cyl. aspirated – Hybrid, Michelin
Drivers: Alexander Wurz (AT), Stephane Sarrazin (FR), Kazuki Nakajima (JP)



8  **LMP1-H**

Team: Toyota Racing
Vehicle: Toyota TS 040, 3.4-litre V8 cyl. aspirated – Hybrid, Michelin
Drivers: Anthony Davidson (UK), Sebastien Buemi (CH), Nicolas Lapierre (FR)



12  **LMP1-L**

Team: Rebellion Racing
Vehicle: Rebellion R-One, Toyota RV8KLM 3.4 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Nicolas Prost (FR), Nick Heidfeld (DE), Mathias Beche (CH)



13  **LMP1-L**

Team: Rebellion Racing
Vehicle: Rebellion R-One, Toyota RV8KLM 3.4 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Andrea Belicchi (IT), Dominik Kraihamer (AT), Fabio Leimer (CH)



14  **LMP1-H**

Team: Porsche Team
Vehicle: Porsche 919 Hybrid, 2.0-litre V4 cyl. Turbo - Hybrid, Michelin
Drivers: Romain Dumas (FR), Marc Lieb (DE), Neel Jani (CH)



20  **LMP1-H**

Team: Porsche Team
Vehicle: Porsche 919 Hybrid, 2.0-litre V4 cyl. Turbo - Hybrid, Michelin
Drivers: Timo Bernhard (DE), Mark Webber (AU), Brendon Hartley (NZ)



22  **LMP2**

Team: Millennium Racing
Vehicle: Oreca 03, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Fabien Giroix (FR), John Martin (AU), Oliver Turvey (UK)

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24  **LMP2**

Team: Sebastien Loeb Racing
Vehicle: Oreca 03, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Rene Rast (DE), Jan Charouz (CZ), Vincent Capillaire (FR)



26  LMP2

Team: G-Drive Racing
Vehicle: Morgan, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Roman Rusinov (RU), Olivier Pla (FR), Julien Canal (FR)



27  LMP2

Team: SMP Racing
Vehicle: Oreca 03, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Sergey Zlobin (RU), Anton Ladygin (RU), Mika Salo (FI)



29  LMP2

Team: Pegasus Racing
Vehicle: Morgan, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Julien Schell (FR), Nicolas Leutwiller (CH), Stéphane Raffin (FR)



33  LMP2

Team: OAK Racing – Team Asia
Vehicle: Ligier JS P2, HPD 2.8 ltr. V6 cyl. turbo, Michelin
Drivers: David Cheng (CN), Ho-Pin Tung (CN), Adderly Fong (CN)



34 LMP2

Team: Race Performance
Vehicle: Oreca 03, Judd HK 3.6 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Michel Frey (CH), Franck Mailleux (FR), Jon Lancaster (GB)



35 LMP2

Team: OAK Racing
Vehicle: Morgan, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Alex Brundle (UK), Jann Mardenborough (UK), Mark Shulzhitskiy (RU)



36 LMP2

Team: SignaTech Alpine
Vehicle: Alpine A450, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Paul Loup Chatin (FR), Nelson Panciatici (FR), Oliver Webb (UK)



37 LMP2

Team: SMP Racing
Vehicle: Oreca 03, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Kirrill Ladygin (RU), Nicolas Minassian (FR), Maurizio Mediani (IT)



38  **LMP2**

Team: Jota
Vehicle: Zytek ZS11N, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Simon Dolan (UK), Harry Tinknell (UK), Marc Gené (ES)



41  **LMP2**

Team: Greaves Motorsport
Vehicle: Zytek ZS11N, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Michael Munemann (UK), Alessandro Latif (UK), James Winslow (UK)



42  **LMP2**

Team: Caterham Racing
Vehicle: Zytek ZS11N, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Tom Kimber-Smith (UK), Chris Dyson (US), Matt McMurry (US)



43  **LMP2**

Team: Newblood by Morand Racing
Vehicle: Morgan, Judd HK 3.6 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Christian Klien (AT), Gary Hirsch (CH), Romain Brandela (FR)



46  **LMP2**

Team: Thiriet by TDS Racing
Vehicle: Ligier JS P2, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Pierre Thiriet (FR), Ludovic Badey (FR), Tristan Gommendy (FR)



47  **LMP2**

Team: KCMG
Vehicle: Oreca 03, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Matthew Howson (UK), Richard Bradley (UK), A. Imperatori (CH)



48  **LMP2**

Team: Murphy Prototypes
Vehicle: Oreca 03, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Nathanaël Berthon (FR), Rodolfo Gonzalez (VZ), Karun Chandhok (IN)



50  **LMP2**

Team: Larbre Compétition
Vehicle: Morgan, Judd HK 3.6 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Pierre Ragues (FR), Ricky Taylor (US), Keiko Ihara (JP)



51 GTE Pro

Team: AF Corse
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Giancarlo Fisichella (IT), Gianmaria Bruni (IT), Toni Vilander (FI)



52 GTE Pro

Team: RAM Racing
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Johnny Mowlem (UK), Mark Patterson (US), Archie Hamilton (UK)



53 GTE Am

Team: RAM Racing
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Matt Griffin (IR), Álvaro Parente (P), Federico Leo (IT)



57 GTE Am

Team: Krohn Racing
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Tracy Krohn (US), Niclas Jönsson (SE), Ben Collins (UK)



58  **GTE Am**

Team: Team Sofrev
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Fabien Barthez (FR), Anthony Pons (FR), Soheil Ayari (FR)



60  **GTE Am**

Team: AF Corse
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Peter Ashley Mann (US), Lorenzo Casè (IT), Raffaele Giammaria (IT)



61  **GTE Am**

Team: AF Corse
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Luis Perez Companc (AR), Marco Cioci (IT), Mirko Venturi (IT)



62  **GTE Am**

Team: AF Corse
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Yannik Malegol (FR), Jean-Marc Bachelier (FR), Howard Blank (US)



66 GTE Am

Team: JMW Motorsport
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Abdulaziz Al-Faisal (SA), Seth Neiman (US), Spencer Pumpelly (US)



67 GTE Am

Team: IMSA Performance Matmut
Vehicle: Porsche 997, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Eric Maris (FR), Jean-Marc Merlin (FR), Eric Helary (FR)



70 GTE Am

Team: Team Taisan
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: James Rossiter (UK), Pierre Ehret (DE), Martin Rich (UK)



71 GTE Pro

Team: AF Corse
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Davide Rigon (IT), James Calado (UK), Olivier Beretta (MC)



72 GTE Am

Team: SMP Racing
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Andrea Bertolini (IT), Victor Shaitar (RU), Aleksey Basov (RU)



73 GTE Pro

Team: Corvette Racing
Vehicle: Chevrolet Corvette C7, 7.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin
Drivers: Jan Magnussen (DK), Antonio Garcia (ES), Jordan Taylor (US)



74 GTE Pro

Team: Corvette Racing
Vehicle: Chevrolet Corvette C7, 7.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin
Drivers: Oliver Gavin (UK), Tommy Milner (US), Richard Westbrook (UK)



75 GTE Am

Team: ProSpeed Competition
Vehicle: Porsche 997, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Francois Perrodo (FR), Emmanuel Collard (FR), M. Vaxiviere (FR)



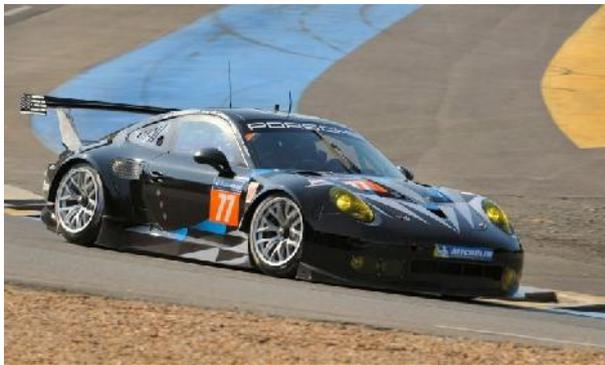
76  **GTE Am**

Team: IMSA Performance Matmut
Vehicle: Porsche 997, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Raymond Narac (FR), Nicolas Armindo (FR), David Hallyday (FR)



77  **GTE Am**

Team: Dempsey - Proton
Vehicle: Porsche 997, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Patrick Dempsey (US), Joe Foster (US), Patrick Long (US)



79  **GTE Am**

Team: ProSpeed Competition
Vehicle: Porsche 997, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Cooper MacNeil (US), Bret Curtis (US), Jeroen Bleekemolen (NL)

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81  **GTE Am**

Team: AF Corse
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin
Drivers: Stephen Wyatt (US), Michele Rugolo (IT), Sam Bird (UK)



88 GTE Am

Team: Proton Competition
Vehicle: Porsche 997, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Christian Ried (DE), Klaus Bachler (AU), Khaled Al Qubaisi (UE)



90 GTE Am

Team: 8 Star Motorsports
Vehicle: Ferrari F458 Italia GTC, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. Aspirated, Dunlop
Drivers: Frankie Montecalvo (US), Gianluca Roda (IT), Paolo Ruberti (IT)



91 GTE Pro

Team: Porsche AG Team Manthey
Vehicle: Porsche 997, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Patrick Pilet (FR), Jörg Bergmeister (DE), Nick Tandy (UK)



92 GTE Pro

Team: Porsche AG Team Manthey
Vehicle: Porsche 997, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. , Michelin
Drivers: Marco Holzer (DE), Frédéric Makowiecki (FR), Richard Lietz (AU)



95  **GTE Am**

Team: Aston Martin Racing

Vehicle Vehicle: Aston Martin Vantage GT2, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: K. Poulsen (DK), David Heinemeier Hansson (DK), Nicki Thiim (DK)



97  **GTE Pro**

Team: Aston Martin Racing

Vehicle Vehicle: Aston Martin Vantage GT2, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: Darren Turner (UK), Stefan Mücke (DE), Bruno Senna (BR)



98  **GTE Am**

Team: Aston Martin Racing

Vehicle Vehicle: Aston Martin Vantage GT2, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: Paul Dalla Lana (US), Pedro Lamy (PT), Christoffer Nygaard (DK)



99  **GTE Pro**

Team: Aston Martin Racing

Vehicle Vehicle: Aston Martin Vantage GT2, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

Drivers: Alex MacDowall (UK), Darryl O'Young (HK), Fernando Rees (BR)



The support races

Le Mans Legends - Group C

Every two years a race is reserved for the mind-blowing Group C prototype car which shone at Le Mans during the 80's and early 90's and on Saturday morning, 14th June 2014 the limited entry of 30 cars will set off for a 10 lap blast around the legendary 8.47 miles of the Circuit de la Sarthe. The race will also see the return of 5-time winner Derek Bell MBE, currently celebrating 50 years in motorsport, who be sharing Mark Sumpter's FAT-liveried Porsche 962. Other cars of interest include the championship-leading 1989 Mercedes C11 driven by Bob Berridge, the 1989/90 Mazda 767B, 1982 Rothmans Porsche 956, 1991 Silk Cut Jaguar XJR14, Spices and many more classic cars.

The Schedule

- Thursday 12th June 2014 - 1 hour qualifying practice session
- Saturday 14th June 2014 - 10 lap / 45 minute race + 2 minute compulsory pitstop

Class	Race No.	Name	Nationality	Car	CC	Year
1	2	Shaun Lynn	GB	Mercedes C11	5000	1990
1	5	Peter Harburg	AUS	Porsche 962	3200	1988
1	4	Roger Willis	NZ	Lancia LC2	3500	1983
1	7	Manuel Monterio	FR	Porsche 962	3000	1990
1	9	Kriton Lendoudis	GRC	Porsche 956	2700	1982
1	11	Henrik Lindberg	DNK	Porsche	3000	1989
1	12	Russell Kempnich	AUS	Porsche 956	2649	1984
1	14	Tommy Dreelan	GB	Porsche 962	3200	1988
1	15	Adrian Watt	GB	Spice SE89	6133	1989
1	16	Zak Brown	GB	Porsche 962	2800	1986
1	17	Christophe D'Ansembourg	GB	Porsche 962	3200	1990
1	18	Paul Whight	GB	Aston Martin AMR1	6300	1989
1	21	Paul Stubber	AUS	Lola T711	6000	1984
1	25	Katsu Kubota / Joaquin Folch	JPN	Nissan R90CK	3500	1990
1	31	Gareth Evans / Bob Berridge	GB	Mercedes C11	5000	1989
1	51	Stephane Verbeeck	BEL	Porsche 962	3000	1990
1	60	Eric Rickenbacher	CHE	Cheetah	3500	1990
1	77	Max Werner / Moritz Werner	DEU	Mazda 767B	2400	1989
1	84	Stefano Rosina	ITA	Nissan NPTi90	3000	1990
2	111	Mike Donovan	GB	Spice SE88	3900	1988
2	116	Pierre-Francois Rousselot	FR	Spice SE89	3300	1989
2	170	Aaron Scott	GB	Spice SE86	3300	1986
3	3	Richard Eyre	GB	Jaguar XJR16	3000	1991
3	6	Mark Sumpter / Derek Bell	GB	Porsche 962	3200	1989
3	8	Bob Berridge / Gareth Evans	GB	Jaguar XJR14	3500	1991
3	29	Frank Lyons / Michael Lyons	GB	Gebhardt C91	3500	1992
3	38	Peter Garrod	GB	Jaguar XJR12D	7400	1991

Porsche Carrera Cup France

The French Porsche Carrera Cup will provide an exceptional race as a curtain-raiser to the Le Mans 24 Hours. This event coincides with the Stuttgart make's return to the LM P1 category. This year the cars will be the new Porsche 991 GT3 Cup cars, a 460Hp 3.8 litre flat-six engined technological jewel that's quicker than the previous evolutions. The event on the Le Mans 24-Hours circuit will be the highlight of the 2014 season. While no points will be scored in the overall classification, Le Mans will be THE race of the year for all the drivers and teams in the French Porsche Carrera Cup. They won't be alone as they will be up against their counterparts in the British Porsche Carrera Cup.

The Schedule

- Wednesday 11th June 2014 - Free Practice
- Thursday 12th June 2014 - Qualifying
- Saturday 14th June 2014 - Race

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 9 times between 1997 and 2013. 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 most successful team is Team Joest from Germany with 13 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.



Le Mans 1986 – when t-cars were still around...

© Werner Kirchmann

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 (Delettrez) 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 Jochian 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 Yojira 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. Début for Andy Wallace.

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.

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.

2011: The 13.8 seconds difference between the winning Audi and the seconds placed Peugeot is the second closest finish of all times, only 1969 saw a closer finish.

2012: For the first time ever a hybrid car wins the race – the Audi R18 e-tron quattro.

2013: With a total of more than 11 breaks and 5 hours leading the field the pace cars set an unwanted record.



Le Mans 1988: Working in a tent...

© Werner Kirchmann

Le Mans Experience: The Sock Story – Different countries, Different toilets

Courtesy of Paul H.

Well, it all started with the choice of campsite I suppose. Expo. Opposite the pub, and just down the road from the main entrance and grandstand. It was my first time at Le Mans, the atmosphere was great during qualifying, and I was really looking forward to watching the start from Tertre Rouge, one of the best places to watch it from according to Skipper.

We arrived on Wednesday afternoon, pitched the tents, got some food down our necks and proceeded to drink beer. After 8 or 9 of those crappy little French bottles, it was time to drop some off at the urinals, so I wandered off to the nearby toilet block. There was some strange French woman sitting outside with a plastic tin full of change, and a retard grin on her face. Must be a janitor type person I guessed, whilst noting the size of her arse, and figuring a massive dose of gene therapy would be the only way to breed it out of her family. I bet the midwife slapped her mother instead of the baby when she was born. Anyway, in I went. No urinals to be seen. Must have to piss in the bogs then, I guessed as I swung the door open on the first trap.

“Some c**t has nicked the bog” was my first thought. Closer inspection however revealed a shower tray type thing with a 5 or 6 inch hole towards the back, and some moldings towards the front on each side.



Slowly it dawned on me. These were the infamous “long drop” toilets that I had heard old people in pubs talking about when discussing their trips to “the continent” when they were young. Apparently you have to squat like a homesick Muslim whilst trying to aim your turd down the hole, simultaneously doing your very best to not to piss on the shorts you didn’t have the foresight to remove.

‘Well, I’m f****d if I’m pissing in that’ I thought to myself, even though the previous tenant had done a fine job of pissing all over the entire apparatus, (probably in an effort to wash some of the s**t off of it, in my considered opinion) so I moved on to the next door in search of a proper bog. No such luck and a cursory inspection of all the other cubicles revealed that they were all long drops. Never being one to

duck a challenge, I decided to have a piss in the last cubicle, being careful to adopt the Gallic custom of pissing all over it. No point in going abroad and not absorbing the local culture in my view.

Once relieved, I sauntered out of the toilet block, and even said “Bonjour Monsieur” in my most fluent French to the woman sitting outside, doing my bit for Anglo-French relations. She gave me a funny look, but I think it may have just been her face, as she looked like she had fallen out of the ugly tree and hit every branch on the way down. I made a mental note not to s**t in that particular toilet block under any circumstances.

Thursday and Friday passed rather quickly, I think we went go-karting on Thursday, Friday night we had quite a few beers, and a really good barbeque, plenty of food. Skipper didn’t eat any of the spicy red sausages, so I had his share. There were even quite a few of the red sausages left over when everyone had finished eating, so I polished them off as I get hungry after a few pints. Not a lot of the people who had been to le Mans before ate the red sausages. Odd that, they were really tasty.

Saturday morning I woke up with butterflies in my stomach. Must be the excitement of being race day. We did breakfast, and went for a drive up the Mulsanne straight, which was quite good. We got back to the campsite at around 1pm, and settled down for a couple of pints before the planned 2:30 walk up to Tetre Rouge. The butterflies in my stomach had developed, and I was beginning to wonder if I might need a turd, as I hadn’t had one since Tuesday.

2:30 pm arrived, and I came to the conclusion that I actually did need a dump, but was forced to bake it for a while as everybody was getting ready to go to the track, and there was no way I was going to crap in the campsite toilets. No problem I thought, I’ll drop the kids off at the pool after watching the start, there was bound to be plenty of toilets at a place as famous as le Mans, and with any luck, they wouldn’t be long drops.

We set off at around 3:15. My a**e was starting to get a bit twitchy, and was informing me that a long greasy turd would be forthcoming in approximately one hour, come what may. No problem, I thought : race starts at 4pm, we will watch ten laps or so, then we would wander off to a trackside bar, I would have a pint or two, then go to the toilets and unleash the beast, so to speak.

This turned out to be wishful thinking.

We made it to Tetre Rouge, and by five to four, I was developing an urgent knocking at the back door. Mr. Brown and his children, wanted out, and he was letting me know in no uncertain terms. As this was my first Le Mans, I was

determined not to miss the start, and sent a message to the back door, informing it as to who was in charge. The contractions miraculously stopped, and thankfully nobody was aware of my predicament, the blazing sun giving me a perfect excuse for sweating like a c**t and not moving a lot.

A helicopter flew overhead, in line with the cars on the parade lap. Absolutely amazing, couldn't wait for the cars to come round on the first hot lap. Unfortunately this surge of enthusiasm seemed to motivate the Manitou trapped within my bowels, causing it to surge towards the exit gate at top speed. Mission Control sent an urgent message to the sphincter, which slammed itself shut with only milliseconds to spare. A gust of fetid air managed to escape just before the doors slammed shut. Luckily a Panoz was going past at the time, hiding the noise of the fart, while the smell blended in nicely with rural France. Urban France too for that matter, but that is beside the point. At this point my brain went into survival mode, and I revised my original estimate down from ten laps and a couple of pints down to five laps and no pints. I was in serious and terminal danger of sh****ng myself, and thirty degree heat at le Mans while wearing shorts was neither the time nor the place to do it in public for the first time since the age of six.

Thankfully 4 o'clock came, the race started, and all the cars came blasting past us. I managed to get seven or eight really good photos of the wire fence by the time they all went past for the first time. Unfortunately this lack of concentration on the major issue of the day had encouraged the beast within me, and it had now produced its "get out of jail free card" and was heading for the gate with renewed vigor.

"er, just going for a s**t, see you at the bar !" I shouted to the rest of our group. Nobody heard, as the leaders were just coming round for lap two.

I strode off purposefully towards the Dunlop Bridge, confident of coming across a toilet block within five minutes. Ten yards later the demon turd made its presence felt again, and again I slammed my a***hole shut, hoping that I hadn't beheaded the f***er in the process. Drastic times mean drastic measures, and I was forced to walk like Charlie Chaplin to keep the beast at bay. By this time I was sweating like Michael Jackson at a Primary School swimming gala, and was receiving some strange looks. F**k 'em, I was on a mission, and they were probably all French anyway.

Somehow I made it to the Dunlop Bridge without shitting myself, and spotted what looked like a small toilet block in the not too far distance. I grabbed my shorts, pushed my a**e cheeks together with some authority, and headed for the turd oasis.

As I got closer, there appeared to be a rather long queue outside it. A quick mental calculation of a maximum of two toilets inside, a thirty person queue outside it at 5 minutes average per dump would give me 45 minute wait. There was no choice, I had to head for the s****ers behind the main grandstand, from memory they were about 100 yards long, and would have a quick turnaround time. Charlie Chaplin took charge again, and off I went.

I arrived about fifteen minutes later, sweat pouring off me, and not sure if I had done a certain percentage of poo in my pants already. The queue wasn't too bad, and it was moving forward at about one person every two minutes. After a while I got to the entrance, and saw another French woman with a bowl of change, and little mounds of two or three sheets of pink toilet paper on her desk. I figured she was selling posh toilet paper so the women could pat their delicate little beavers dry after a dainty girly pee, and that there would be some industrial waxy type paper in the men's for some serious a**e wiping. I smiled condescendingly on my way past. She smiled back, obviously noticing the six inch steps I was taking, the grey face, and the rapist-like sweating going on. B**ch.

The mental release of being in close proximity to a porcelain palace was having a detrimental effect on my ability to control the leviathan and potentially prize winning poo. I had a tortoise head that was more like an ostrich head, and it felt like it had Arnold Schwarzenegger's neck muscles. There were seven people in front of me, and by my calculations of previous s**t/p**s ratios and timings, I had 8.4 minutes to go. Time stood still for what seemed like half an hour, but I suddenly found myself at the front of the queue. Ominously, I was starting to develop cramp in my left a**e cheek, and my right leg was starting to tremble uncontrollably. A door opened about halfway down, and a skinny French twat staggered out. The gene pool was obviously somewhat silted up when he was conceived.

Released from the starting blocks, I headed towards the cubicle like Ian Dury on speed. A five millisecond scan of the facilities revealed a proper toilet, no toilet seat though, and porcelain covered in the statutory French piss. Instantaneously I formed a plan of action: turn round, bolt the door, shorts down, and hover six inches above the bog.

I tentatively relaxed my a**e muscles for the first time in approximately two hours, and felt a vacuum forming in my chest as the mother and father of all turds headed south and out quicker than Nelson Mandela on release day, and almost as smelly. After a couple of feet of steaming coil had fallen out, my a**e closed with a loud fart of satisfaction, and all the stress and tension drained from my body. I smiled and awarded myself three pints of beer over and above what I felt capable of potentially drinking at any point during the next day, just like any proud father would. Mission accomplished, I looked around for the industrial toilet paper.

There were no toilet roll holders on the wall. There were no toilet rolls stacked nicely on the cistern. There was no toilet paper on the floor behind the bowl. There was a waste paper basket in the corner. Closer inspection revealed that it contained used pink toilet paper.

F**k.

I was faced with three options. 1: Not wipe my a**e and wander around in the blazing sun back to the tent to get toilet paper, 2: Not wipe my a**e, go to the back of the queue, queue up again and buy some pink toilet paper on the way past from the smirking inbred Frenchwoman, or 3: Improvise.

It was quite tricky getting my trainers off, then my socks, without standing on the piss on the floor in my socks and then bare feet with my shorts around my knees, but somehow I made it.

I pulled the first sock onto my hand, then pulled it tight up to my elbow, and held it there with my spare hand. The sweat in the sock from the two hour route march was particularly unpleasant so I ignored it. I then gave a gentle wipe to the overworked and stressed chocolate starfish with sock number one. When the first pass was complete, I rotated the sock through 180 degrees, then repeated the process more vigorously, and then did the same with sock number two. Pity I wasn't born with four feet.

I met up with everybody at a bar on the other side of the fairground. Generally they were rolling around like schoolgirls when they found out where my socks were. I wish it was the end of the story.

The rushed a**e wiping with the socks had not entirely polished my ring to its normal standards, and I was beginning to think that maybe in the same way Scrapie jumped species from sheep and manifested itself as BSE in cows, I feared that I had developed "Athletes A**e" as there was a certain degree of itchiness going on. When we got back to camp at around six, I got my roll of as yet unused Andrex out of the bag and headed for the toilet block.

The swamp monster had been replaced by a younger version with an excellent pair of tits, but the leggings made her a**e look like God had once stuffed a duvet into a pillow case, then replicated it in a human being just for a laugh. Must have been the other one's daughter. "Bon Nuit" I said cheerily as I went in for a minor bum wiping session. She gave me a funny look, so I made a mental note to check for s**t on the back of my legs.

Minor bum wiping session my a**e. Now I know why Andrex put toilet paper on rolls rather than socks. Whilst socks feel nice and soft on your feet, wiping them across you're a**ehole four times in anger removes approximately thirty layers of skin from it. My f**king a**ehole was in tatters. The Andrex wasn't sure if it was mopping up a s**t or a period, and I was beginning to wonder myself. Beats me how poofers go on with all those funny condoms they stick up their a**s. Anyway, half a roll of Andrex later, the old ring piece was polished to an acceptable standard, so I lobbed the rest of the roll down the hole in the long drop, as statistically I wasn't due for another dump until Thursday. Whilst doing so, I noted that the cubicle and toilet were remarkably clean. The janitor totty must have cleaned it just before I arrived. "Must remember to compliment her on the way out" I thought idly to myself. I flushed the toilet, and just made it out before the overflow got to the door. Janitor totty fluttered her eyelids at me, "la merdes sont tres bon" I remarked to her in perfect French. She looked at me oddly. Bugger, I had forgotten to check for s**t on the back of my legs.

Turdwise, the rest of the trip went without a hitch, although the Athletes A**e didn't dissipate. Luckily the girlfriend at the time insisted on giving me thrush twice or so a week, so when I got home I went hunting for her Canasten cream (found it right next to her anti-blowjob pills), applied it to the affected area and it cleared up in a couple of days.

So, advice to people who go to le Mans for the first time:

1. If you eat the spicy red sausages, make sure you eat one Immodium per red sausage without fail
2. If you need a dump, go for one immediately. There will never be a better time.
3. Never wipe you're a**e with your socks. Try your tee shirt instead, or:
4. Carry some toilet paper with you whenever you go to the track. At worst you won't use it, at best you will go home with the same number of clothes you came with and you're a**ehole in one piece.
5. Use the cripple toilets wherever possible. They are pretty spacious and you don't face butt the door when attempting to remove or replace your shorts.

Your second best option is to use the women's toilets, as they tend not to piss all over the seats.

Third best is the pub opposite the expo campsite (BYO toilet paper) or Carre Four/ Macdonalds (BYO noseclip).

Fourth best is the toilets anywhere. Except Expo

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 de la République". 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 regulations, see below for a detailed schedule when each team is being checked:

Sunday, 8th June 2014, 2.30 pm – 7.00 pm

From	To	Car #	Team	Nat	Class	Car
14:30	15:00	35	OAK RACING	FRA	LM P2	LIGIER - NISSAN
14:45	15:15	33	OAK RACING TEAM ASIA	FRA	LM P2	LIGIER JS P2 - HPD
15:00	15:30	26	G-DRIVE RACING	RUS	LM P2	MORGAN - NISSAN
15:15	15:45	20	PORSCHE TEAM	DEU	LM P1 - H	PORSCHE 919 HYBRID
15:30	16:00	14	PORSCHE TEAM	DEU	LM P1 - H	PORSCHE 919 HYBRID
15:40	16:10	46	THIRIET BY TDS RACING	FRA	LM P2	LIGIER JS P2 - NISSAN
15:50	16:20	52	RAM RACING	GBR	LM GTE Pro	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
16:00	16:30	53	RAM RACING	GBR	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
16:10	16:40	88	PROTON COMPETITION	DEU	LM GTE Am	PORSCHE 911 RSR
16:20	16:50	77	DEMPSEY PROTON	USA	LM GTE Am	PORSCHE 911 RSR
16:30	17:00	66	JMW MOTORSPORT	GBR	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
16:40	17:10	24	SEBASTIEN LOEB RACING	FRA	LM P2	ORECA 03 - NISSAN
16:50	17:20	36	SIGNATECH ALPINE	FRA	LM P2	ALPINE A450 - NISSAN
17:00	17:30	50	LARBRE COMPETITION	FRA	LM P2	MORGAN - JUDD
17:10	17:40	43	NEWBLOOD BY MORAND RACING	CHE	LM P2	MORGAN - JUDD
17:20	17:50	7	TOYOTA RACING	JPN	LM P1 - H	TOYOTA TS 040 - HYBRID
17:30	18:00	8	TOYOTA RACING	JPN	LM P1 - H	TOYOTA TS 040 - HYBRID
17:40	18:10	29	PEGASUS RACING	DEU	LM P2	MORGAN - NISSAN
17:50	18:20	58	TEAM SOFREV ASP	FRA	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
18:00	18:30	91	PORSCHE TEAM MANTHEY	DEU	LM GTE Pro	PORSCHE 911 RSR
18:10	18:40	92	PORSCHE TEAM MANTHEY	DEU	LM GTE Pro	PORSCHE 911 RSR
18:20	18:50	0	NISSAN MOTORSPORT GLOBAL	JPN	Innovation	NISSAN ZEOD RC - HYBRID



The Audi team at the Administrative Checking & Scrutineering 2013

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Monday, 9th June 2014, 10.00 am – 6.00 pm

From	To	Car #	Team	Nat	Class	Car
10:00	10:30	27	SMP RACING	RUS	LM P2	ORECA 03 - NISSAN
10:15	10:45	37	SMP RACING	RUS	LM P2	ORECA 03 - NISSAN
10:30	11:00	72	SMP RACING	RUS	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
10:40	11:10	90	8 STAR MOTORSPORTS	USA	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
10:50	11:20	51	AF CORSE	ITA	LM GTE Pro	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
11:00	11:30	71	AF CORSE	ITA	LM GTE Pro	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
11:10	11:40	60	AF CORSE	ITA	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
11:20	11:50	61	AF CORSE	ITA	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
11:30	12:00	62	AF CORSE	ITA	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
11:40	12:10	81	AF CORSE	ITA	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
11:50	12:20	47	KCMG	HKG	LM P2	ORECA 03 - NISSAN
12:00	12:30	38	JOTA SPORT	GBR	LM P2	ZYTEK Z11SN - NISSAN
13:30	14:00	12	REBELLION RACING	CHE	LM P1 - L	REBELLION R-ONE TOYOTA
13:40	14:10	13	REBELLION RACING	CHE	LM P1 - L	REBELLION R-ONE TOYOTA
13:50	14:20	97	ASTON MARTIN RACING	GBR	LM GTE Pro	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE V8
14:00	14:30	99	ASTON MARTIN RACING	GBR	LM GTE Pro	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE V8
14:10	14:40	95	ASTON MARTIN RACING	GBR	LM GTE Am	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE V8
14:20	14:50	98	ASTON MARTIN RACING	GBR	LM GTE Am	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE V8
14:30	15:00	67	IMSA PERFORMANCE MATMUT	FRA	LM GTE Am	PORSCHE 911 RSR
14:40	15:10	76	IMSA PERFORMANCE MATMUT	FRA	LM GTE Am	PORSCHE 911 RSR
14:50	15:20	48	MURPHY PROTOTYPES	IRL	LM P2	ORECA 03 - NISSAN
15:00	15:30	57	KROHN RACING	USA	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
15:10	15:40	1	AUDI SPORT TEAM JOEST	DEU	LM P1 - H	AUDI R18 E-TRON QUATTRO
15:20	15:50	2	AUDI SPORT TEAM JOEST	DEU	LM P1 - H	AUDI R18 E-TRON QUATTRO
15:30	16:00	3	AUDI SPORT TEAM JOEST	DEU	LM P1 - H	AUDI R18 E-TRON QUATTRO
15:40	16:10	75	PROSPEED COMPETITION	BEL	LM GTE Am	PORSCHE 911 RSR
15:50	16:20	79	PROSPEED COMPETITION	BEL	LM GTE Am	PORSCHE 911 RSR
16:00	16:30	70	TEAM TAISAN	JPN	LM GTE Am	FERRARI 458 ITALIA
16:10	16:40	34	RACE PERFORMANCE	CHE	LM P2	ORECA 03 - JUDD
16:20	16:50	22	MILLENIUM RACING	ARE	LM P2	ORECA 03 - NISSAN
16:30	17:00	41	GREAVES MOTORSPORT	GBR	LM P2	ZYTEK Z11SN - NISSAN
16:40	17:10	42	CATERHAM RACING	MYS	LM P2	ZYTEK Z11SN - NISSAN
16:50	17:20	73	CORVETTE RACING	USA	LM GTE Pro	CHEVROLET CORVETTE C7
17:00	17:30	74	CORVETTE RACING	USA	LM GTE Pro	CHEVROLET CORVETTE C7



Scrutineering 2013

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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”.



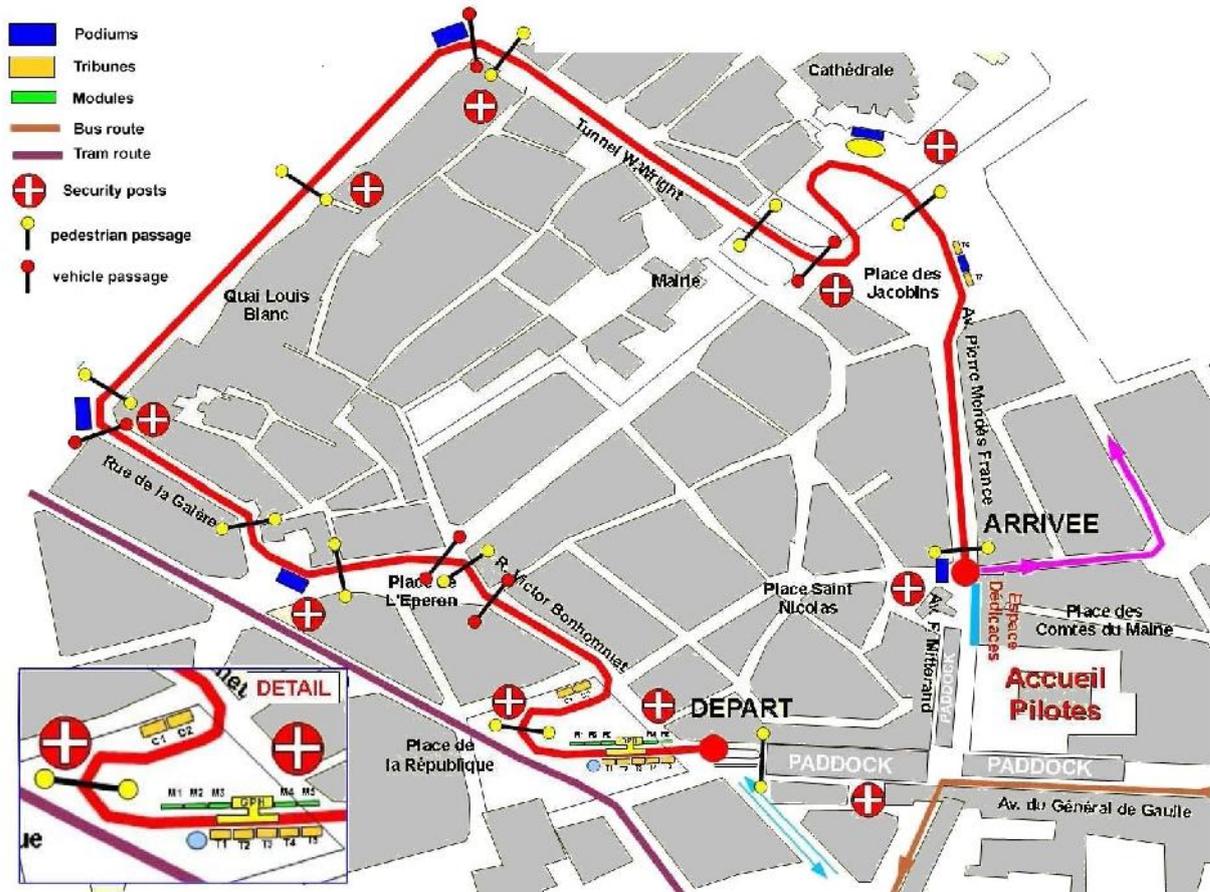
A bronze plaque is unveiled with the names of all three drivers and an impression of their hands. One of the lower-key, and least well-publicized events of the week, it is nevertheless a “must visit” for anybody who has not done it before as it gives a good opportunity to get up close and personal with the top three drivers, and to join the city in celebrating its place at the centre of the sport. This year the ceremony will be held on Monday, 9th June 2014 from 6.30 pm – 7.30 pm at the Place St. Nicholas, Le Mans city centre.



Test day at Le Mans 2012: The Boutsen Ginion Racing Oreca Nissan on its way to the technical inspection

© Deborah Dudley

The Drivers Parade



On Friday evening before the race, many people head for the centre of town to the “Parade des Pilots”; that’s the Drivers Parade for those of you who don’t speak French. This is a unique event full of atmosphere which fills the centre with usually more than 100.000 people. All the drivers are parading around in historic open top cars, there are marching bands and of course parades of beautiful girls. The parade is rather informal, laid back and also a brilliant opportunity to get drivers’ autographs. **The annual driver’s parade 2014 will be held in Le Mans city centre on Friday, 13th June from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm.**

Do not plan to go there by car! Take the tram or a bus instead when going from the circuit into town!

For details about the tram please see our chapter “Transport in Le Mans”. There is also a website about this event at <http://www.grande-parade-des-pilotes.com>.



The drivers parade from a race drivers perspective – a first-hand comment from Stefan Johansson:

“Friday is a day off, apart from the parade. THE PARADE!!! This is another tradition that now has become a huge event. It starts at 6pm at the Jacobin Square again, and goes through the entire downtown area of the city, with probably more than 100.000 people lined along the fences on the road.”

“Each driver team is being driven by a chauffeur in an open top historic car of some description. The start of the run is from a podium and there’s generally a long wait as each team is being interviewed at the podium. So, as you can imagine, a 1920’s shitbox with an open top on idle is not necessarily the most efficient thing when it comes to emissions so most drivers are close to passing out at this stage...The good thing is that we have another three hours of this to look forward to...Seriously, most of the drivers including myself are completely nacios by the end of the parade...”

Club Arnage Forum Gathering

The traditional CA gathering in the race village will be on **Saturday, 14th 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:



CA Gathering at Le Mans 2005...

© Werner Kirchmann

The Saint Saturnin Classic British Welcome

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. 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.

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 Honor have included Jan Lammers, Derek Bell, Sir Stirling Moss, Johnny Herbert, Paul Frère, Michael Salmon, Jean Bloxham and Yves Courage. 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, live music and lots more!

The event, with free entrance and parking, is held all day Friday 13th June 2014 from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm. Average figures for visitors are about 5,000 and classic and sports cars around 1000.

Saint Saturnin Classic British Welcome 2014

Not surprisingly this year's theme will be Porsche, with former Porsche works driver and Le Mans winner Jürgen Barth being the guest of honor.

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, website www.classicbw.org.



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. In the past years there have been several companies operating those flights, all of them followed more or less the same routine. Expect to pay approx. 100 € for a 10-minute flight. Reservations don'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 Annex 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 and don't ruin the enjoyment of others!

Please Note: In the past 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.



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!**



Address:	Opening hours	Tickets
Le musée des 24 heures Place Luigi Chinetti, F-72100 Le Mans Phone : +33-(0)2- 43 72 72 24 Fax : +33-(0)2- 43 85 38 96 E-mail: contact.lemusee24h@cg72.fr http://www.lemusee24h.com/ GPS: 47.9561393 – 0.2074816	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	Adults: 8,50 € Adolescents (9 - 18 years): 6 € Children (less 9 years): free Discounts for groups and for A.C.O. members are available



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: 2,80 € for a return ticket, 4,00 € for a day pass and 12,00 € for 10 rides. Tickets are sold from automatic machines at stops, at Setram agencies and from the bus conductors.

Sunday 8th and Monday 8th June

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

Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th June (Practice Sessions)

- University to Antarès/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
- Antarès/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 13th June (Drivers Parade)

- University to Antarès/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
- Antarès/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 Antarès at 01.15 am

Saturday 14th June

- University to Antarès/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 15th June

- University to Antarès/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

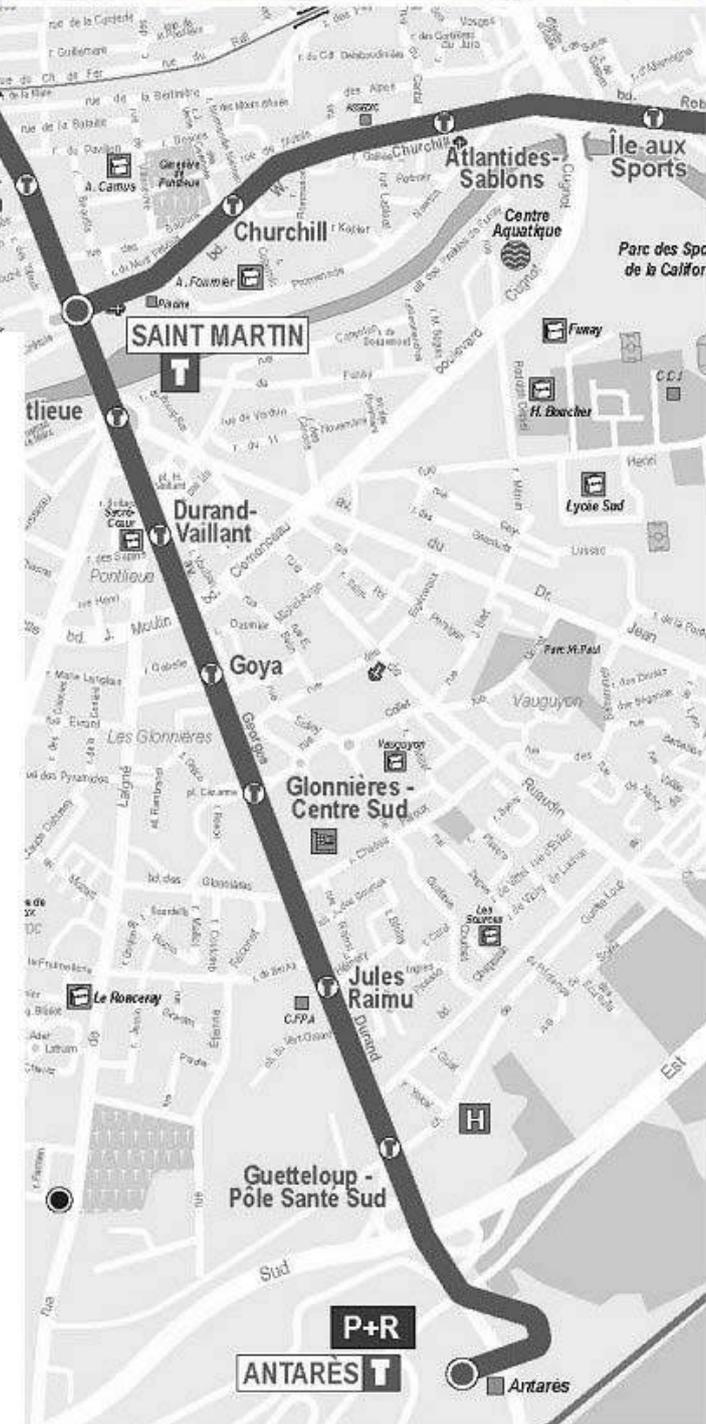
Some important tram stations:

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 Terre 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

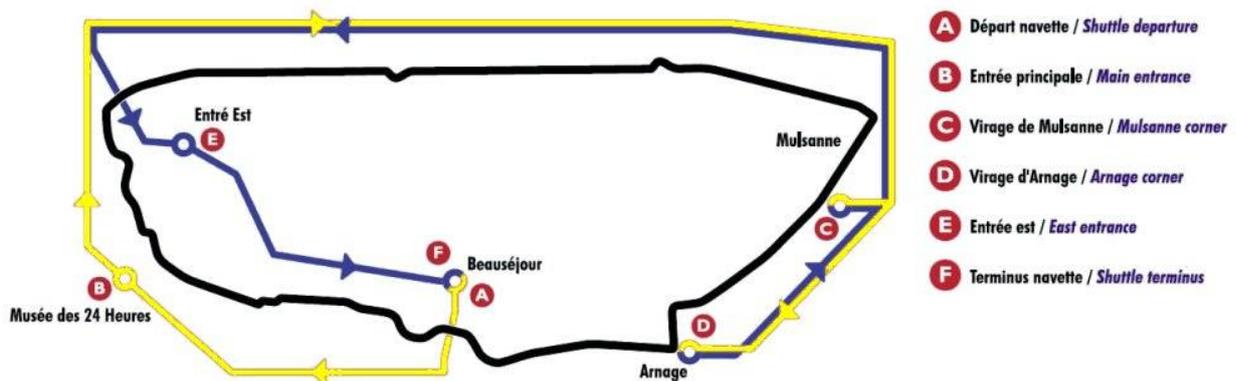
This A.C.O. service has increased over the years to provide free (to those with Enceinte Generale) transport around the circuit. These buses can be great way to get around the circuit but they have also become more chaotic with the bus-stop at Mulsanne corner becoming rather agitated after midnight due 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.

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 reported that Super U does have

a specialist food section that has Soya Milk.

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.

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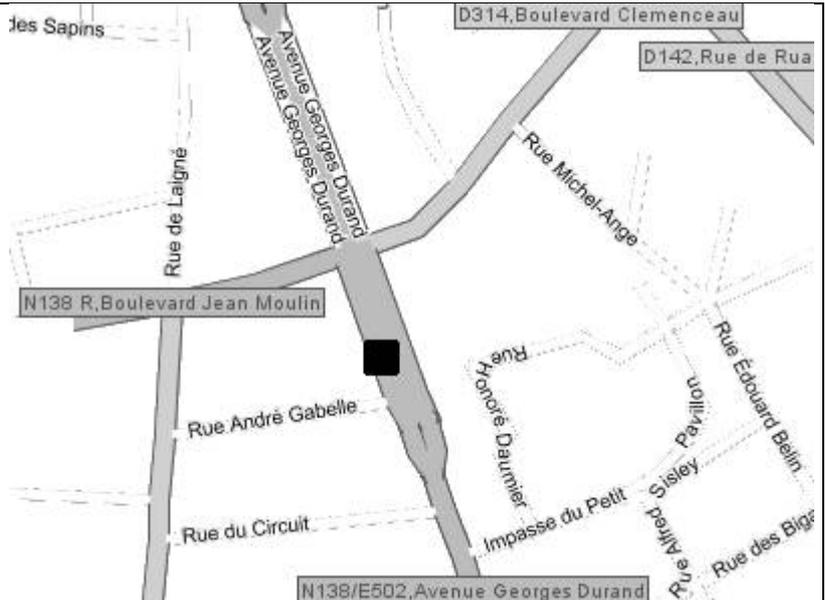
For UK visitors: Cigarettes are slightly cheaper in France but don't forget, you cannot buy these in supermarkets (or their surrounding malls). They should be purchased at a Tabac (often attached to a bar) - these are distinguished by their famous red lozenge sign with white writing. After a huge increase 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 Bensen's 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.



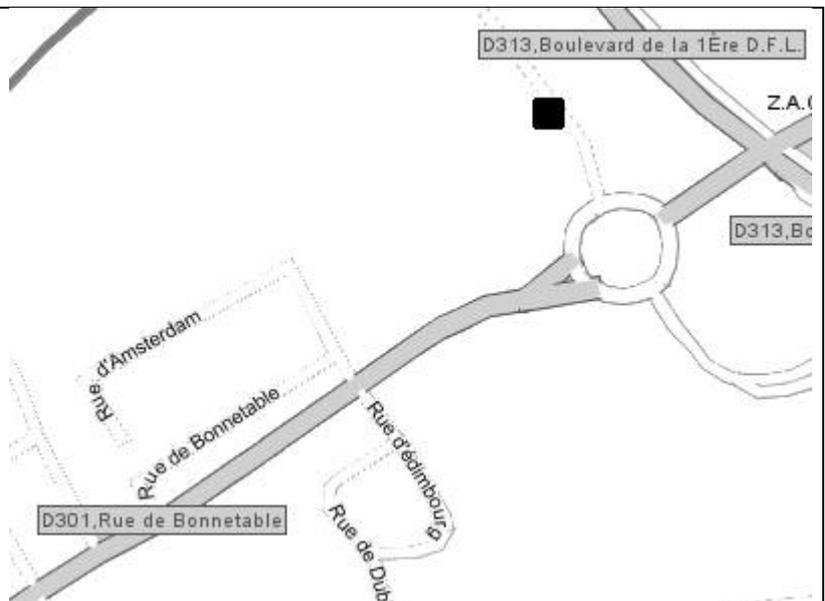
How to get there:

- **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 Tetre 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

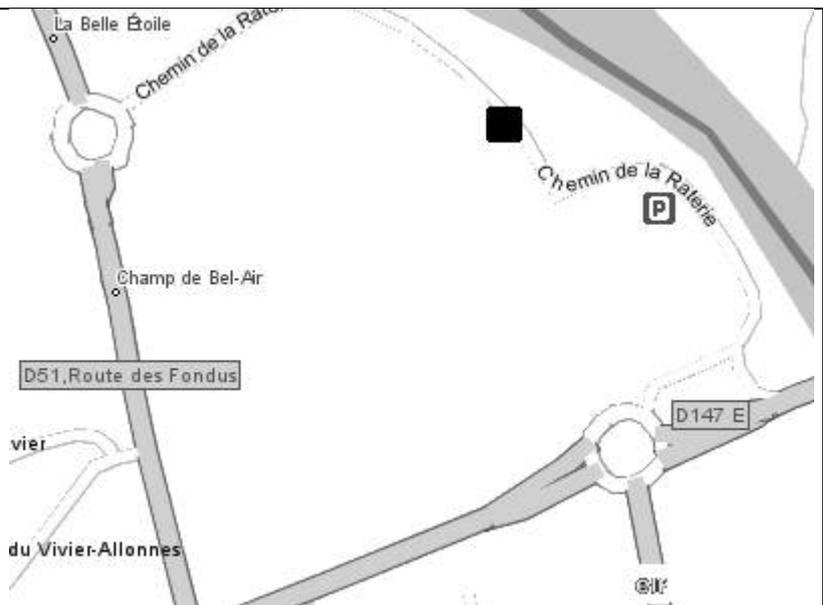
Large French supermarket chain, also good for cheap garden furniture and pool and camping equipment, app 10 km away from the circuit



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

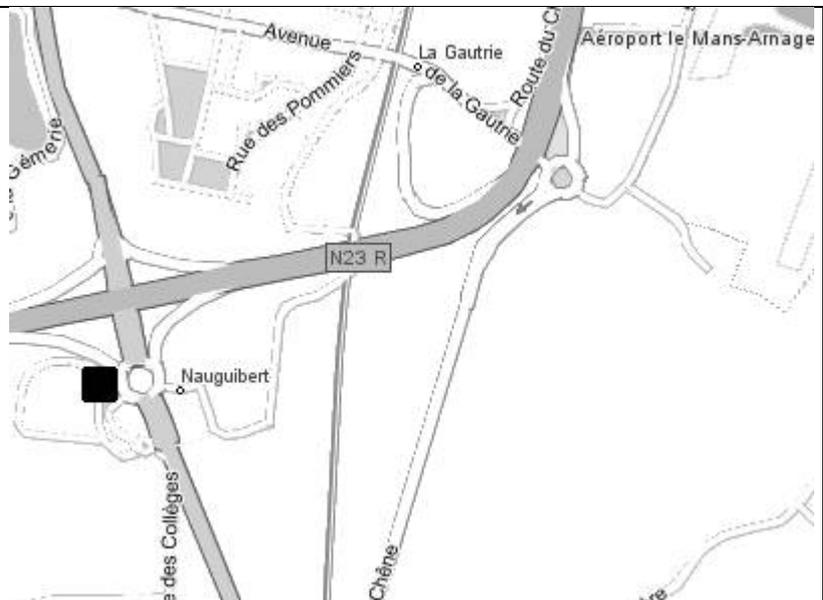
Large French supermarket chain, app 8 km away from the circuit. It is to be found by heading into town from Arnage on the dual carriageway through the industrial area. at the end of the dual carriageway, with a big tower in front of you, turn left towards Allones. The supermarket is to be found on your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

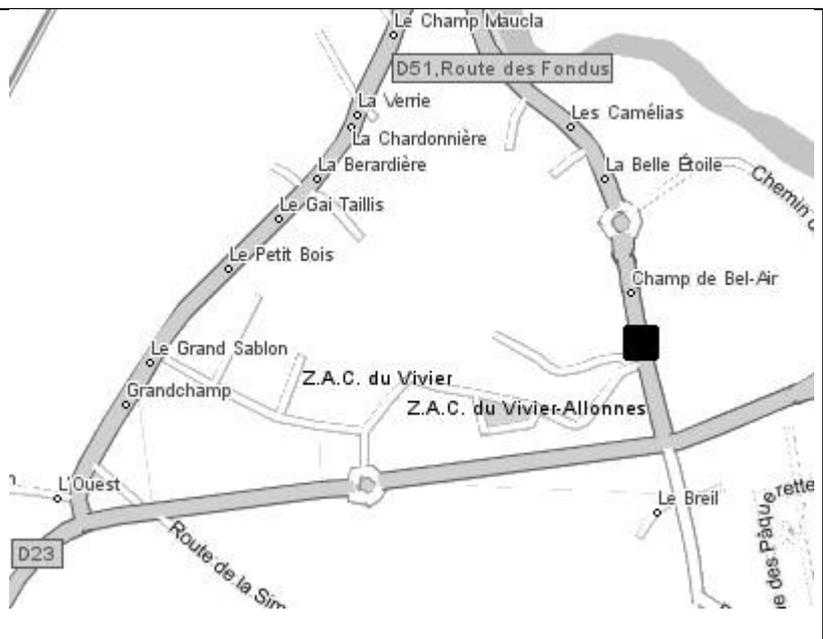


Draught beer equipment (cooling and system) can be hired at:

Le Palais de la Biere

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

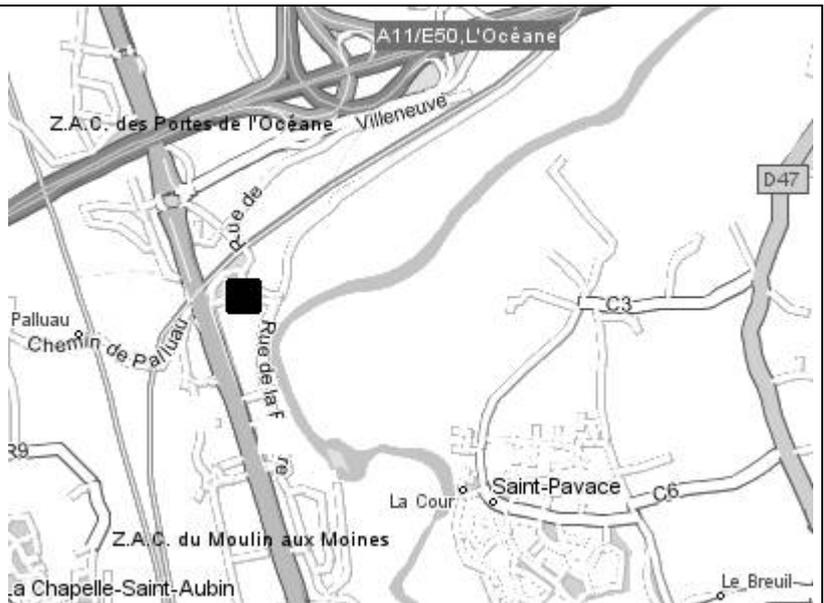
Draught beer equipment (cooling and system) can be hired here. According to reports from CA members they have more than 200 sorts of beer for sale. Someone spoke to them in August 2005 "... appears around €93 for a 30l barrel and all the kit". It's next to the big LeClerc Superstore. After crossing the 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

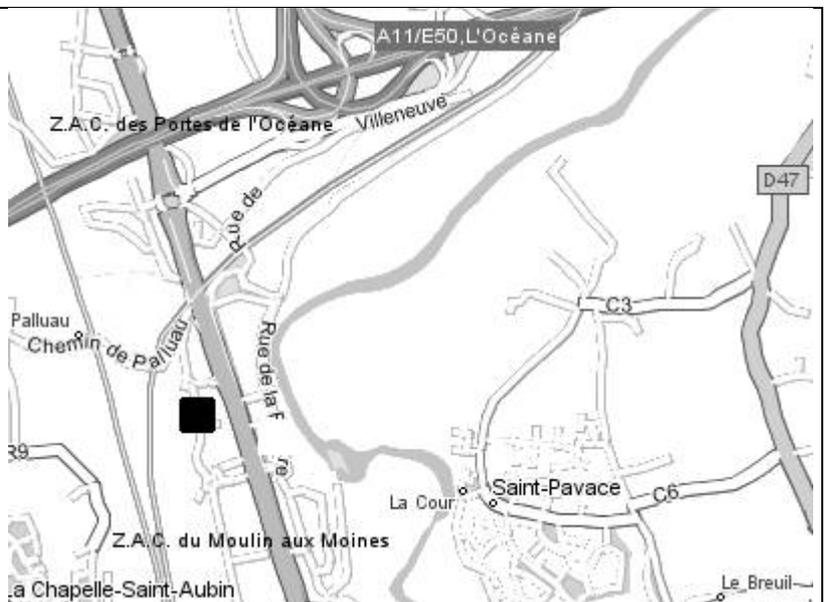
Supermarket, one CA member wrote:
"We tend to use the Auchan on the other side of town as its a meeting place en route, and we buy samples of wine which if we like we stock up on. ... with simple carparks and no magical mystery tour to get in or out"



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



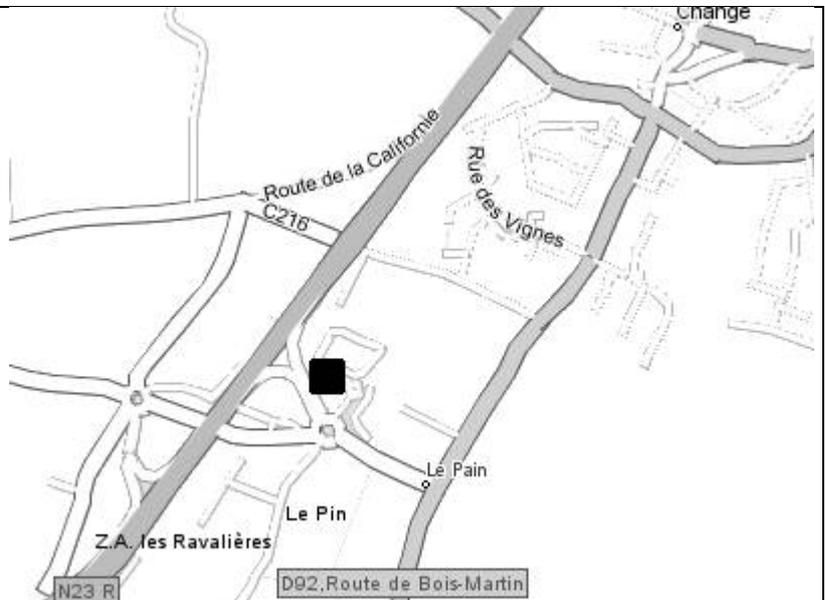
Super-U

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.

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).

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.)

Internet Access

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 update this page or drop us a mail.

French Data SIM Card offers in the UK: There are several offers on the web for Pay-Monthly data SIM cards for use whilst in France, e.g. at <http://www.0044.co.uk/france/data-sim-card-pay-monthly.htm#tabs>.

Data SIM Card offers in France: There is a SFR store next to the Carrefour and where you can buy such cards, see http://www.sfr.fr/mobile/offres-detail/pass_internet_3g_plus?vue=000mg0. In 2011 a USB stick with a SIM to access the internet cost 9.90 € for 3 days, you could recharge those for 9.00 € for another 2 days unlimited internet access. There are also good PAYG offers from Leclerc and Auchan supermarkets and from Orange. An overview about other options can be found at <http://prepaidwithdata.wikia.com/wiki/France>. However, please note that French internet is very regulated and you must produce proof of identity and address to sign up in France. We're not aware how these companies react to overseas visitors so any feedback on this aspect would be most welcome.

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?

Le Mans Fans: Lawnmower Man

Forum nick names for the Club Arnage forum can be freely chosen, as far as this is concerned, the Club Arnage forum is no different than the rests of the forum world. While some nick names are topic related, i.e. "jimclark", others are obvious and give leads to the user's origin, like "Canada Phil" or "Norway Nick", there are some nick names where there's a story behind it...

By Tom Dawes

At the 2013 Le Mans Werner asked me what is the story behind my forum nick name "Lawnmower Man". The answer could be given in one sentence. However, Canada Phil has always told me "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story". So here goes and this how I remember things.

It all started in May 1980 at the 6 hour race at Silverstone. What a cracking race won by Alan de Cadenet and Desiré Wilson despite going through the chicane and incurring a one lap penalty. On the way home we decided we simply had to go to Le Mans to support them six weeks later. Not knowing anything about how to get to Le Mans or what we needed I borrowed a tent, a sleeping bag and a camp stove. We packed my Cortina Estate with the borrowed equipment along with some tinned food and Pot Noodle. Just in case it rained I also packed the nylon Anorak I used when walking the dogs. We set off from the office on the Thursday evening driving from Birmingham to Southampton via Reading to pick up my pals sister-in-law, stopping for our last decent meal at The Cowheards. Boarded the Ferry, not only was it crowded with those making the trip but also a bunch of uncontrolled French School kids. We fixed that by drinking the duty frees we had bought. So with next to no Sleep and a pretty good hangover we thrashed it down to Le Mans.

The weather was not that good but on race day we woke to what looked like a very pleasant day. Needless to say just before the start of the Race the heavens opened with rain the like I have rarely seen and despite my Anorak which was close to useless I was soaked right through. By 18:00 I'd dried out only to get soaked again at 20:00 this was the weather pattern for the rest of the event. Keeping abreast of the positions was difficult to say the least. Just the English update at 20 past the hour and of course you only caught bits of it since it was drowned out by the cars going by. When 16:00 on the Sunday arrived I at least knew that the No. 17 Rondeau had won but as for the rest we weren't 100% sure. We hammered it back to Cherbourg for the midnight Ferry. During the crossing we agreed we would have to do it again but next time we would do it properly.

It was not until the following Thursday that I realized that we had seen more than just Rondeau win but we had witnessed the first win by a driver/constructor. So we had witnessed something rather special.

I couldn't make the 1981 race as my funds wouldn't run to both the British GP and Le Mans, oh, how foolish I was in those days. It was absolute agony not being able to follow the race.

The trip in 1982 was much better. Arriving on the Wednesday we were able to find our way around the circuit to the Cafe along the Mulsanne straight and of course Mulsanne and Arnage corners. But also we met a few people that showed us around or told the places we could go. To top it off we saw what was the most impressive win I've ever seen with the Works Porsche completely bowing away the opposition.

The 1983 trip saw the complete dominance of the Race by Porsche with Porsche taking in 9 out of the top finishers. So each trip seemed to have something special, I was completely hooked.

Over the next few years I met a good number of interesting people and groups. It became apparent that one needed to do something different. The race as a concept is really quite outrageous and I think that filtered through to the crowd. One year on the Houx campsite I met up with some Dutch guys from Rotterdam who decided they needed some sort of light to be able to find their way home to the tent so they "borrowed" a buoy complete with flashing light from the harbor. Great idea and it was heavy enough that the Pikeys wouldn't nick it and the battery would last the week. Obviously there were the blow up women exhibited in various ways, some more obscene than others. But of course from time to time one would come across more "original" ideas such as a paddling pool with gold fish or pitches adorned with signs liberated on the trip down. Then of course there were the groups that would have very elaborate setups that we have become familiar with.

These were pretty much things that I simply couldn't do travelling to the race by myself or with a girl friend there is a limit to how much you can fit into a Vectra or Laguna particularly when your tent is a four men frame tent that takes up most of the boot space. In 2004 my tent succumbed to the trauma of the annual trip south so was left for the pikies on the Beausejour campsite.

The following year I bought a modern tent that only took a fraction of the space. The group I was making the trip with all threw a few quid in a hat and we bought a generator and a drink cooler. One of my pals had given me an old Microwave oven that worked but the display did not work. So since I had a genny I thought I'd take it along with some old light bulbs and CDs for a bit of amusement. Whilst I would not be the first person to take a microwave I thought I'm likely to be the first to cook CDs and Light bulbs in one on BSJ. I also threw in an old light fitting.

So having packed the car for my trip I found I still had room to spare in the car. I had moved house over the winter to a house with a larger garden, so my mower needed to be updated to something with a bit more power. The old electric mower lay forlorn in the corner of the shed waiting to be taken to the tip. It had served me well over the years. So I thought "You know that would fit in the remaining space and stop everything rattling about and what a good send off it would be to take it down to the Beausejour campsite for one last Grass Attack before leaving it for the pikies". This would also have the added bonus of making our pitch the best looking pitch on the whole campsite. So in it went.

Having arrived on Beausejour and unpacked I seemed to get rather too involved with watching cars and visiting friends; I kinda didn't get around to doing anything with the mower. What happened next is best described in a Club Arnage forum thread titled "Tropicoma". But here's my account: It was Friday morning I knew I'd be far too busy on Saturday and Sunday to mow the grass so though I'd better get started. I took out the mower, plugged it in and started to mow the rather long grass. After a few seconds there was frantic activity from the neighboring pitches with people photographing my activities. I felt that was rather strange I'd been mowing lawns back in Blighty for many years but no one ever photographed me before. I thought that was most bizarre; then I remembered I was in Le Mans and so that means it's Mad Friday.

Having provided so much amusement I felt I could not leave the trusty mower to the certain doom of pikey hell I packed away the mower and returned it to the rightful place in the corner of the shed. The mower made two more trips to Le Sarthe, one to the Maison Blanche campsite the following year, but there was not really much grass to mow on our pitch and another to the Bleu Nord campsite. Unfortunately the mower has now gone the way of the ex, but writing this has rekindled my desire to mow a field in France. So keep an eye open for the return of Lawnmower Man!



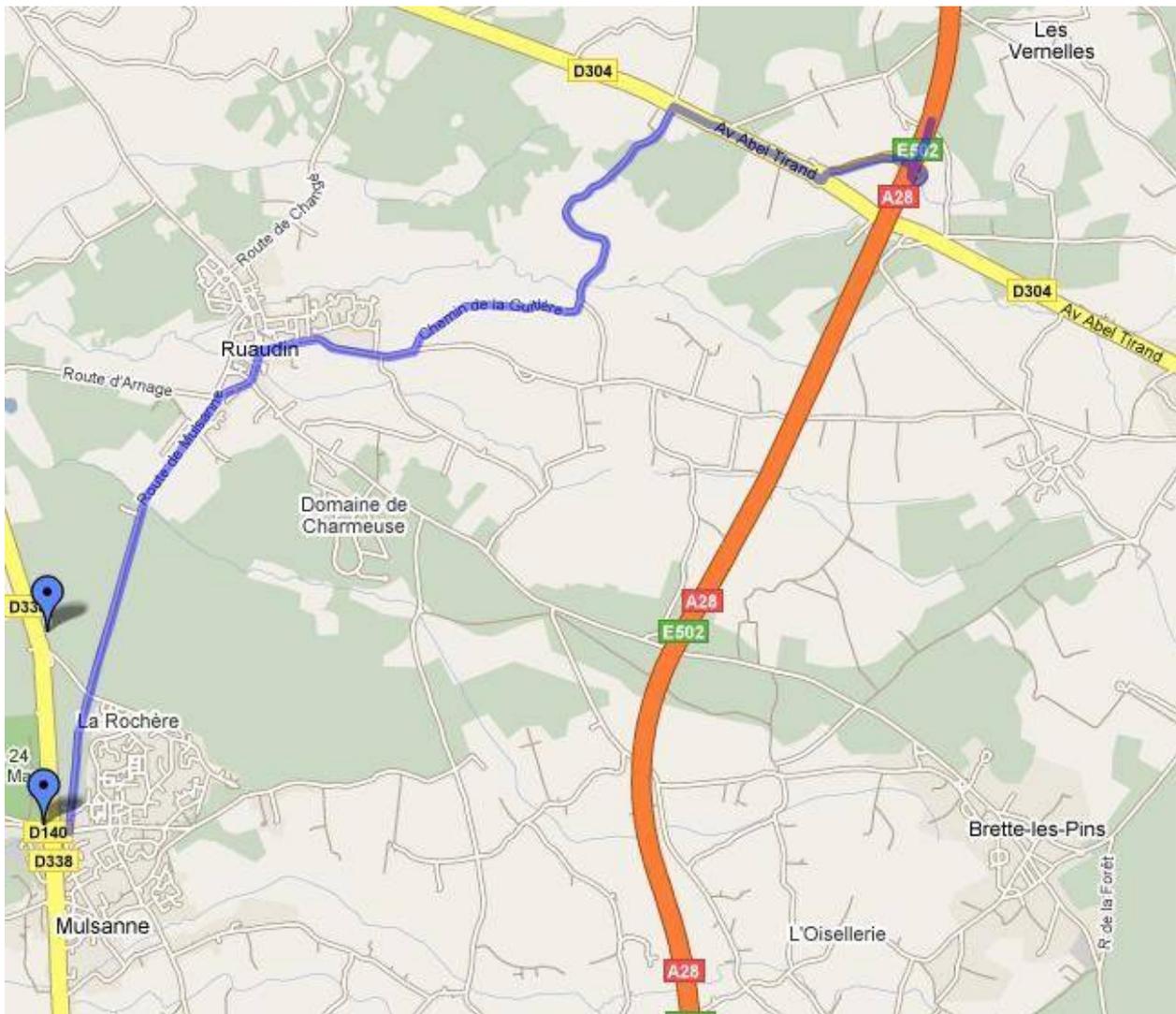
Le Mans 2009 – Elvis does the pit walk...

© Werner Kirchmann

On the run - Escaping the traffic at the end of the race

A first-hand escape plan 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 a 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 Ruadin (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'Evêque. 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 Guiltière. 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.