

# Le Mans (not just) for Dummies



## The Club Arnage Guide to the 24 hours of Le Mans 2016



[www.clubarnage.com](http://www.clubarnage.com)

## **“...you can’t finish 1-2-3 with only two cars!”**

*Ford Performance boss Dave Pericak’s reply when being asked about the 4 entries - everybody else turns up with 2 cars*

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## Foreword

**Wow**, the outlook on this year's race is exciting: We'll see 7 different manufacturers fighting it out in the top prototype and GT categories and also both privateer classes show some first class efforts, many of them capable of winning their class. What more could we ask for? In the last 30 years I've seen many grids, but only a handful match the current one. And to top it all: Thanks to the extra garages we'll see 60 cars this year – an increase by 4 cars . Or 7 cars, if you take the 2015 Nissan entries for what they actually were - a waste of space in the pit lane.

**LMP1:** The Volkswagen emissions scandal has taken its toll: Porsche cancelled both full season entries in the GTE Pro class of the WEC – but at least we'll see 2 factory GTEs from the US-team at Le Mans. Furthermore Porsche and Audi "agreed" to save some cost and will not field a 3rd LMP1 car which will put them on a level playing field with Toyota. This reduction to 2 cars each might actually add some extra excitement and different strategies to the Porsche-Audi-Toyota battle; especially the folks from Ingolstadt do know from 2011 how quick you can lose 2 cars.

The dress rehearsal at Spa, where all 3 manufacturers were dominating the race at some stage, has shown that the Toyota Team with its brand new car & engine is again able to match the pace of Audi and Porsche. While there's a lot of quality in LMP1 there's not much quantity left: We'll see just 6 cars competing for overall win in the top category, the 3 privateers with their non-hybrid, conventional AER engines play in a completely different league. However, Silverstone and Spa were proof that they do have a chance for a podium.

The performance explosion which we saw last year led to a further cut in fuel allowance as well as a limit in released hybrid power, another desperate attempt of the organizers to keep overall lap times on a level which is considered safe for the current track standard: 3:30 mins. As usual they will fail; I expect lap times to be pretty much on the same level as last year; and Neel Jani's stunning pole lap of 3:16, 887 mins. is not set in stone.

**Design & Liveries:** I'm aware that taste is something highly individual. Some things which please your eyes are seen as ugly by other people and vice versa. The current breed of LMP1 does definitely not please my eyes and the fact that the liveries of the 6 factory cars look very similar doesn't help either. Is there something in the regulations which says you're only allowed to use white, black, grey and red to paint an LMP1? OK, an engineer would reply that these cars are not designed to look nice.

**LMP2:** The last hurrah to the open top sports prototypes! Let's enjoy the variety of open and closed cars in LMP2 with 3 different engines (Nissan, HPD, Judd) for the last time, 2017 will be different. As far as the chassis is concerned this market is clearly dominated by French manufacturers OAK and Ligier, including the re-badged versions named Morgan and Alpine. Next year everyone will need to use the same engine (Gibson) and electronics (Cosworth) and select one of four chassis options.

**GTE Pro:** Racing road-derived GT cars at Le Mans instead of building super expensive Hybrid-prototypes, this concept currently lures more manufacturers to Le Mans than the LMP category: Ford, General Motors, Aston Martin, Porsche and Ferrari will all be there with works or semi-works teams. And all of these cars are looking much nicer than the current LMPs. The GTE Pro category with 14 cars has the best combination of quantity and quality of all classes – and most cars are potential winners. For the sake of competition: Why not write a rulebook which enables this class to compete with the prototypes and win the race overall? Anybody remember Le Mans 1995?

**Ford vs. Ferrari:** The return of this epic battle from the Sixties, even though not for overall win, is expected to be one of the highlights this year. Ford is really coming back in style to La Sarthe, there's nothing half-hearted about their effort. They've landed with an armada of 4 brand new shiny, Daytona- and Sebring-tested cars carrying the same starting numbers which they had 50 years ago. A dozen drivers were needed for this and winter time saw the US guys shopping big-time on the platinum GT drivers market. Being asked by a journalist why they send a 4-car armada while everybody else sends only 2 cars, Ford performance boss Dave Pericak clearly set the bar when he replied: "You can't finish 1-2-3 with only two cars!" However, old hands remember that 50 years ago they needed 3 years to win at Le Mans. Ferrari does also field a brand new GT car this year, the 488 GTE, and because of their convincing victories in the first 2 WEC rounds in Silverstone and Spa they are the top favorites in this class.

**Le Mans and Formula 1** – this is not a love affair. Despite all previous promises the F.I.A. once again allowed the F1 calendar to clash with Le Mans. The single seaters will be racing in Azerbaijan on the same week end, in a country with lots of motorsport tradition and a mega important market for all car manufacturers </irony>. Sorry Bernie, but most sports car fans will not care much – we are used to it from the many years when Le Mans clashed with the Canadian Grand Prix. The only ones who will be really annoyed are those F1 drivers and reserve drivers which were hoping for a gig in France – where each driver gets as much track time as during 5 or 6 Grand Prix together.

On behalf of Club Arnage, I wish all of you a great weekend in Le Mans!

Werner Kirchmann  
Editor


## Hall of fame

Welcome to the 11<sup>th</sup> 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. Up to now more than 50 people have been involved in the production of the CA Guides, wow!



### Our heroes of the 2016 edition

Very special thanks to Tony Light for supplying an enormous amount of information about teams and cars  
Kristof Vermeulen, David Cane and Tony Brown for their pictures from the test day  
Neil Dobson for his new circuit map  
Jason Gore, "Lorry" and Ian Selvage for their updates on various chapters  
And last not least Geoff Morgan for all the proof-reading!



**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](http://www.clubarnage.com)  
and help us by adding your stuff to our Wiki at  
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**Please support us to make this guide the ultimate  
compendium to the Le Mans Galaxy!**



**We believe this Guide is one of the best and most comprehensive available!**

**Please make a donation of at least €6 - the cost of a trackside beer and unparalleled value.**

All donations are voluntary and are in aid of the Deborah Dudley Memorial Fund and all the money is passed equally to our charities, the Motorsport Safety Fund and Worldwide Cancer Research.

**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](http://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](http://www.motorsportsafetyfund.com)

If you really feel that you want to download the guide first, please remember to make a donation before you use it. Once you have donated, you are welcome to come back and download again without limit. Donations are voluntary, but €6 is a small gesture for the work and dedication that has gone into making the guide. And if you donate, you will sleep better knowing that you've done the right thing.

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Thank you very much in advance

Club Arnage

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**15. January 2016: Club Arnage presents donation to the Motorsport Safety Fund**



Club Arnage took advantage of the Motorsport Safety Fund's annual Watkins Lecture to present the Fund with a cheque for £1200 for donations collected on their behalf.

Club Arnage was represented by Ian Selvage (aka "Aricus654") who presented the cheque to Ian Roberts, Chairman of the Motorsport Safety Fund. Also present were CA's Tristan Selvage (FezBoy) and the Fund's Dominic Ostrowski.

The Watkins Lecture, named after the late great Professor Sid Watkins took place on 15th January 2016 at the Autosport International Show at the NEC near Birmingham UK. The 2016 Watkins Lecture was given by the FIA President Jean Todt who, in conversation with the BBC's James Allen gave a fascinating account of his career at Peugeot, Ferrari and the FIA.

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

Initial version courtesy of Marcel ten Caat, Gabriel Portos and [www.planetlemans.com](http://www.planetlemans.com). All pictures are in the public domain except as noted otherwise.

### Once upon a time...



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

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

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

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

### The Bentley Boys

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



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

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

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

### After the war



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

communications became better and motor racing more popular.

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

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

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



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



## The catastrophe

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



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

The Belgian Oliver Gendebien would score the first of his four victories in 1958 driving on a mighty Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa (nicknamed redhead, due

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

## The Italian era

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

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

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

## The Ford – Ferrari battle

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

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



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

© Derek Appleyard

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

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

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

### Battle of the Titans – Ferrari vs. Porsche

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



1967: Downhill from Dunlop Bridge towards the Esses

© Derek Appleyard

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

## King Henri and the Matras

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



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

© Rupert Lowes

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

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

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

But there is always a revenge and after their 1977 disaster Alpine-Renault managed to get their win in 1978 with Jean-Pierre 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 Dalmás/Mark Blundell was the first '3.5L' car to win Le Mans, beating the Toyota TS010 and the number 2 Peugeot 905. For the 1993 race the ACO made the decision to allow GT cars back in the race for the first time since Group C was created. As a result many Porsche 911s and Venturi 500LMs were entered. The GT category in 1993 was won by Larbre Competition, putting their 2 Porsches in first and second.

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

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

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



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

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



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

© „Lorry“



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

© „Lorry“

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

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

### The new millennium – Audi!

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

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

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



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

© "Lorry"

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



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

© "Lorry"

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

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

### Diesel power

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

## **2012-15 The "World Endurance Championship" - WEC - a new era**

2012 saw the dawn of a new era in Le Mans history in more ways than one. The FIA World Endurance Championship came in as the new international series of endurance racing, featuring Le Mans as the headline event (but also featuring 6- and 12- hour races at tracks including Spa-Francorchamps and Silverstone), while a new rivalry between Audi and Toyota saw the first Le Mans victory for a hybrid car (after Audi had come with both hybrid and non-hybrid entries). In the top category of LMP1, the new hybrid rivalry between Audi and Toyota (and, from 2014, Porsche), continued over the next few years- while the FIA continued (and continues) to refine regulations to allow the maximum amounts of creativity and innovation.

2012 saw the debut of Toyota as LMP1 competitors, attempting to challenge the supremacy of Audi, but failing on their first attempt as Audi took the top three positions (with Rebellion Racing ahead of the fourth Audi, which had suffered an accident), while both of the Toyotas were unable to finish due to accidents. The top runners in GTE Pro and Am remained fairly close, so the class victory of AF Corse Ferrari was only four laps ahead of the 3rd placed Aston Martin, which itself finished only three laps ahead of the Labre Competition Chevrolet Corvette which won in the Am category, all proving that the GTE racing remained something worth watching.

The 2013 race was sadly overshadowed by the tragic death of Allan Simonsen, the popular GT driver who had been racing in an Aston Martin. Also noteworthy was five hours spent under the safety car, dismal rainy conditions and the possibility of Audi being defeated by Toyota; possibly aided by the weather, various accidents and safety cars, the Toyota seized second place, only one lap behind the winning Audi, and were able to secure fourth place as well, despite an accident. Meanwhile, only one lap ahead of an Aston Martin, Porsche took first and second in GTE Pro upon their return to Le Mans, ahead of their re-entry into the top class the following year.

It was in 2014 that Toyota came closest to victory (to date), against the ever-strong Audis and Porsche's first attempt at overall victory since 1998. With their outright speed, Toyota seemed destined to win (and even Porsche seemed in with a chance at times), but once again, Audi was dominant, taking the top two podium positions ahead of Toyota, who ultimately only managed third, despite frequently being fastest. The GTE race was close again, ending with a single lap between the winning AF Corse Ferrari and the second place Corvette, and a staggering twelve cars finishing within twelve laps of the winning GTE. Overall, this was a race that could certainly be regarded as a "classic".

It is the freedom of engineering that has come to define the modern era of Le Mans racing. Perhaps the greatest example of this is the entry of Nissan into LMP1 in 2015. After its short-lived 2014 Deltawing Garage 56 entry (the garage itself intended as a hub for innovation at Le Mans), Nissan entered into the top category in the following year. The design of the car was unique, with an almost unprecedented front engine, standing as perhaps the most ambitious attempt to optimise performance over the last few years- although in engineering terms, the 2015 entries by Audi, Toyota and Porsche were a world away from each other, each trying to find different methods of utilising the equally ambitious contemporary ACO rulebook. This ultimately resulted in a 2014 Toyota win in the WEC and a 2015 Le Mans race (and WEC) victory for Porsche (the first non-Audi Le Mans win since 2009).

It was in 2015 that Audi were finally beaten for the first time since 2009, but this was not by Toyota- it was Porsche that narrowly took victory (and second place) ahead of Audi, who were 2 laps behind the pace (and Toyota, at 8 laps behind the pace). The racing between Audi and Porsche had been close throughout, but Porsche managed to remain ahead for a number of hours until the end without major mishaps. The GTE-winning Corvette finished five laps ahead of the car second placed in GTE (SMP Ferrari), which, unusually, sat in the Am category! All proving that, even today, Le Mans is as unpredictable and exciting as ever...



### Overall winners since 1923

Year	Car	Drivers	Distance (km)
1923	Chenard & Walcker	André Lagaché (F), René Leonard (F)	2209
1924	Bentley 3-Litre	John Duff (GB), Francis Clement (GB)	2077
1925	La Lorraine	Gérard De Courcelles (F), André Rossignol (F)	2233
1926	La Lorraine	Robert Bloch (F), André Rossignol (F)	2552
1927	Bentley 3-Litre	Dudley Benjafield (GB), Sammy Davis (GB)	2369
1928	Bentley 4.5	Woolf Barnato (GB), Bernard Rubin (GB)	2669
1929	Bentley Speed Six	Woolf Barnato (GB), Sir Henry Birkin (GB)	2843
1930	Bentley Speed Six	Woolf Barnato (GB), Glen Kidston (GB)	2930
1931	Alfa Romeo 8C-2300sc	Earl Howe (GB), Sir Henry Birkin (GB)	3017
1932	Alfa Romeo 8C-2300sc	Raymond Sommer (F), Luigi Chinetti (I)	2954
1933	Alfa Romeo 8C-2300sc	Raymond Sommer (F), Tazio Nuvolari (I)	3144
1934	Alfa Romeo 8C-2300sc	Luigi Chinetti (I), Phillipe Etancelin (F)	2886
1935	Lagonda M45R	J.S. Hindmarsh (GB), Louis Fontes (RA)	3006
<b>1936</b>		<b>Race was cancelled</b>	
1937	Bugatti S7Gsc	Jean-Pierre Wimile (F), Robert Benoist (F)	3287
1938	Delhayé 135M	Eugène Chaboud (F), Jean Tremoulet (F)	3180
1939	Bugatti S7Gsc	Jean-Pierre Wimile (F), Pierre Veyron (F)	3354
<b>1940-1948</b>		<b>Races were cancelled</b>	
1949	Ferrari 166MM	Luigi Chinetti (USA), Lord Selsdon (GB)	3178
1950	Talbot-Lago	Louis Rosier (F), Jean-Louis Rosier (F)	3465
1951	Jaguar C-Type	Peter Walker (GB), Peter Whitehead (GB)	3611
1952	Mercedes-Benz 300SL	Hermann Lang (D), Fritz Reiss (D)	3733
1953	Jaguar C-Type	Tony Rolt (GB), Duncan Hamilton (GB)	4088
1954	Ferrari 375	Juan Froilan Gonzales (RA), Maurice Trintignant (F)	4061
1955	Jaguar D-Type	Mike Hawthorn (GB), Ivor Bueb (GB)	4135
1956	Jaguar D-Type	Ron Flockhart (GB), Ninian Sanderson (GB)	4034
1957	Jaguar D-Type	Ron Flockhart (GB), Ivor Bueb (GB)	4397
1958	Ferrari 250TR58	Olivier Gendebien (B), Phil Hill (USA)	4101
1959	Aston Martin DBR1	Carroll Shelby (USA), Roy Salvadori (GB)	4347
1960	Ferrari 250TR59/60	Olivier Gendebien (B), Paul Frère (B)	4217

<b>Year</b>	<b>Car</b>	<b>Drivers</b>	<b>Distance (km)</b>
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 Jaussaud (F), Didier Pironi (F)	5044
1979	Porsche 935	Klaus Ludwig (D), Bill Whittington (USA), Don Whittington (USA)	4173
1980	Rondeau-Ford M379B	Jean-Pierre Jausaud (F), Jean Rondeau (F)	4608
1981	Porsche 936-81	Jacky Ickx (B), Derek Bell (GB)	4825
1982	Porsche 956-82	Jacky Ickx (B), Derek Bell (GB)	4899
1983	Porsche 956-83	Vern Schuppan (AUS), Hurley Haywood (USA), Al Holbert (USA)	5047
1984	Porsche 956B	Klaus Ludwig (D), Henri Pescarolo (F)	4900
1985	Porsche 956B	Klaus Ludwig (D), Paolo Barilla (I), "John Winter" (D)	5088
1986	Porsche 962C	Derek Bell (GB), Hans Stuck (D), Al Holbert (USA)	4972
1987	Porsche 962C	Derek Bell (GB), Hans Stuck (D), Al Holbert (USA)	4971
1988	Jaguar XJR-9LM	Johnny Dumfries (GB), Jan Lammers (NL), Andy Wallace (GB)	5332
1989	Sauber-Mercedes C9	Jochen Mass (D), Stanley Dickens (S), Manuel Reuter (D)	5265
1990	Jaguar XJR-12	Martin Brundle (GB), John Nielsen (DK), Price Cobb (USA)	4882
1991	Mazda 787B	Johnny Herbert (GB), Bertrand Gachot (B), 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
2014	Audi R18 e-tron quattro	Marcel Fässler (CH), André Lotterer (DE), Benoît Tréluyer (FR)	5165
2015	Porsche 919 Hybrid	Earl Bamber (NZ), Nick Tandy (UK), Nico Hülkenberg (DE)	5383



## The “Circuit 24 Heures”

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

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

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

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



1923: The Pontlieue hairpin corner

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

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

The circuit was to stay with this layout until after the horrific 1955 accident when changes were made to the pit straight to widen it. This was costly, as it involved the moving of tonnes of earth and the creation of signalling pits at the exit of the Mulsanne corner, to prevent the drivers being distracted by pit boards. These changes made little difference to the general layout.

Until a few years ago it was still possible to see the remains of the signalling pits, last used in the mid 80s, just after the Mulsanne Corner.

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

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

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. However, worse was to come in 1990. The "Les Hunaudieres" 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 chute. 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 & the run-down towards the Esses  
© 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, that had over time become rundown replaced by a large modern plaza. Extra garages were also added at this time to allow for an increase in the number of starters in the race. The track re-profiling of Tertre Rouge to allow for the new Tram link was completed in time for the 2007 race. This has opened up the corner so the entry speed onto the straight have increased and provides an excellent vantage point. The cars now pass the another sign of progress, the new Le Mans FC stadium, modelled on the Bolton FC Reebok stadium in the United Kingdom, Le Mans twin town.

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 stabilised. 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. Also new kerbing at the final right-left of the two-part chicane before the start-finish straight was introduced to stop GTE drivers straightlining the second apex. 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 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.

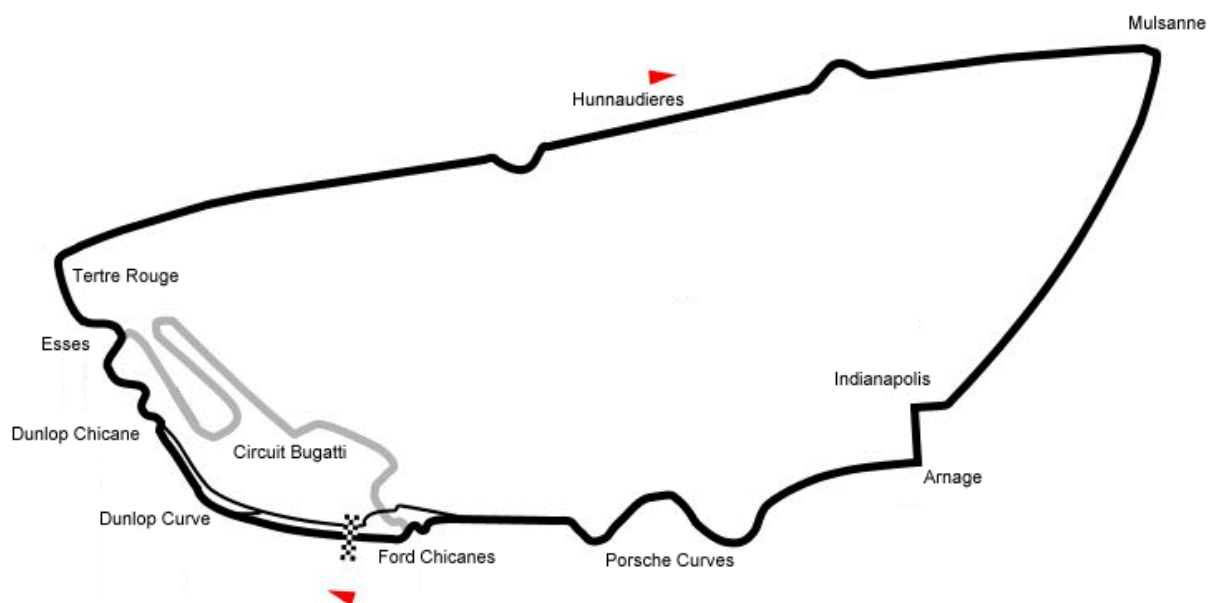
Changes in the last 2 years focused on the Porsche Curves. This iconic series of fast sweeping bends were introduced in 1972 and are considered by drivers one of the most challenging aspects of the circuit. The changes start on the outside of the tricky right hander that leads the cars into the complex and are not to the tarmac itself but consist of extended run-off and gravel trap. To accommodate these changes the banking has been moved backwards. New NASCAR style 'Safer' Tec Pro barriers have been introduced in an effort to improve safety.

Pit Lane & New Pit Garages: There will now be 60 pit garages - 4 new garages have been built for 2016 (with Optical Fibre now in all pits), equalling the largest entry ever (in 1950, 1951, 1953 & 1955) and the most since 1955, although in the Fifties teams shared pits and indeed there were no pit garages - only pit counters. Parc Fermé and Scrutineering will be moved to a new location under the Race Control building (where the current race medical centre is) in a two stage procedure over the next 2 years. A new medical centre will be constructed on the site of the TV compound. There will be fewer marshals in the pit lane as teams were concerned that it was getting too crowded.

### Major 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	8.510 miles - Modified Mulsanne corner
1987 - 1989	8.410 miles - Dunlop chicane installed
1990 - 2001	8.450 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

### The current track layout



## 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.

### LMP1 - Le Mans Prototypes Class 1: A new era - It's all about the energy consumed

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 radically changed in that the energy consumption of the engine becomes the key factor. Manufacturers can largely build what they want.



There are minimal restrictions on engine size number and turbo boost and in addition the regulations permit up to two energy recovery systems (ERS) per car. These systems recover what would otherwise have been lost energy and allow it to be used to power the car. However, what the regulations have done is give with one hand and take away with the other. Depending on the level of energy that a car can recover and use, it is placed into a category that determines how much fuel it is allowed to consume. Fuel flow meters measure the flow and relay the information back to the authorities. In simple terms, the new regulations challenges 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. This makes the challenge for the cars to be both fast and energy efficient.

Old hands among the fans remember that this concept is not really brand new: 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. From 2015, the differences between manufacturers and privateers has been abolished, and the class is now divided into LMP1 Hybrid (for cars with ERS) and LMP1 non Hybrid (for those without ERS).

Hybrid cars are categorised into four different performance classes, and a maximum amount of energy able to be used is defined for each of these classes. The energy chart below shows the amount of energy allocated to each power train concept, and the associated fuel flow allowed.

	LMP1	LMP1 Hybrid			
Energy recovery (Megajoule)	0	2	4	6	8
Minumim weight	850 kg	870 kg			
Max fuel flow Kg/h (petrol)	100.9	94.3	91.9	89.5	88.5
Max fuel flow Kg/h (diesel)	87.0	81.0	79.0	77.0	75.1



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 means that on-board loggers and computers constantly monitor the fuel flow and output of the energy recovery systems, and data is sent real-time to ACO computer equipment which flags any discrepancy to the stewards. What this means is that the teams monitor the car's fuel consumption and if it goes over that allowed in the their hybrid category, then the driver is instructed to recover the discrepancy, by for example, slowing down.



Today's LMP1 constructors have each taken a different view on what might be the best solution, so similarly to the old Group C we see a variety of extremely different engines and hybrid systems.

Toyota (8Mj category), after winning the the WEC in 2014 and having a very mixed 2015, Toyota have introduced an all new car and gone from 6Mj to 8mj and changed from a 3.4 ltr. V8 normally aspirated petrol engine to twin turbo 2.7 ltr V6 driving the rear wheels together with a hybrid system using energy recovery from the front axle, energy storage is now lithium ion instead of a supercapacitor and drive electric motors on the front and rear axles.

Audi (6Mj category), employ a 4.0 ltr. V6-Turbo Diesel together with a hybrid system recovering energy from the front axle together with lithium ion storage driving electric motors on the front axle.

Porsche (8Mj) have the smallest engine with a 2.0 Ltr. 4-cyl-Turbo petrol engine driving the rear axle in addition to a hybrid system recovering front axle and exhaust energy, which is stored using a lithium ion battery and drives electric motors on the front axle.

The ACO, in their perennial quest to have all cars in a given category going round the circuit with exactly the same lap times (fortunately they have not yet achieved this!!), have defined the principle of "Equivalence of Technology", and this gives them the ability to balance out the performance between the hybrids and non-hybrids by increasing the performance of the non-hybrids. This EoT is calculated on historical data collected from the fastest car(s) in each technology.

Manufactures must balance all the compromises in their design – the conventional fuel driveline together with the hybrid components including the systems to recover the energy, the storage, and the hybrid drive method and the overall impact these have on the car's weight as well as packaging and reliability. Conventional wisdom appears to suggest that the more hybrid capability a car has, the faster it is, despite the best intentions of the regulations. In addition, the more efficient the car is, the less refuelling it has to have, so the longer it can stay out on track.

2016 has seen minor changes for LMP1 and 2, many safety related, a few of which are aimed at slowing LMP1 cars and some are in preparation for major LMP2 changes in 2017.

## Key 2016 changes:

- the outlawing of elastic cords attached to the harness shoulder straps
- the number of rear "Rain/Fog" lamps doubled from two to four
- wheel attachments are also changing to a system which includes an automatic safety retain of the nut to prevent the wheel from coming off accidentally
- the minimum weight of the cars is up 5Kg to 875kg for LMP1 Hybrid and 855kg for LMP1
- a reduction in fuel tank sizes; petrol 62.5 litres with ERS (from 68.3), 67.4 litres with no ERS, Diesel 49.9 litres with ERS (from 54.2), 53.7 litres with no ERS
- a reduction of energy by 10Mj/lap, (representing a reduction of 7.5% for the faster cars)
- instantaneous fuel flow reduced by the same proportions
- ERS output limited to 300Kw for Le Mans
- additional head protection padding for the driver
- three different homologated bodywork iterations will be allowed during the season, reducing to two in 2017

The overall aim of the 2016 energy changes are to slow the LMP1 cars by as much as three and four seconds a lap at Le Mans in comparison to the times that we saw in 2015, however, it is likely that the three LMP1 hybrid manufacturers of Audi, Porsche and Toyota may be able to make up some or all of this time by June 2016.

## LMP2 - Affordable Competitive Prototype Racing

LMP2 aims to provide relatively affordable sports prototype racing. It is aimed at privateer teams and not manufactures and is becoming very popular. Manufacturers are actively 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."

Cars can be open or closed-cockpit designs, and must have fins on the rear bodywork, and have a space for a passenger seat, usually occupied by electronic devices and cooling equipment. Engines are production-based and can be petrol or diesel, either normally aspirated 5.0 ltr petrol or Turbo/ supercharged petrol: 3200cc 6 cylinders maximum.



LMP1 is reserved for professional drivers, and Bronze drivers are not eligible, however in LMP2 the emphasis is on amateur drivers and at least one member of driver crew must be a Silver or Bronze category driver. Open prototypes are still allowed in this class. LMP2 cars are also heavier than the faster LMP1 category, with a minimum weight of 900kg.

## LMP2 - Balance of Performance

The Balance of Performance exists to adjust the relative performance between different cars to maintain competitiveness - in other words, if your car performs consistently better than others in the class, your car will be slowed down by reducing engine power, having additional ballast or by reducing fuel tank size.



## 2016 Changes

Ahead of major changes being introduced in 2017 (an additional 150 hp and an anticipated four-second decrease in lap time at Le Mans and locked down until 2017), changes for 2016 are mainly limited to reducing cost.

The selling price of a new open car must now not exceed €388,500; for a closed car, the maximum figure is €463,500

The engine purchase price must not top €86,778, or its rebuilt price €40,500

If the engine is leased, the hourly operating cost must be no more than €1,402

## The GT cars

The Le Mans GTE class is for production-based cars. The car must have “an aptitude for sport with 2 doors, 2 or 2+2 seats, opened or closed, which can be used perfectly legally on the open road and available for sale.”



The ACO caters for both small and large manufacturers, and differentiates between them. Small manufacturers are those making less than 2000 per year, and one car per month. Their cars are eligible to race once 25 have been made. Large manufacturers must produce at least one car a week and their cars are eligible to race after 100 have been made.

The engine must be used in a production car; while this is usually the engine from the same model road car, the ACO can grant exceptions for the use of engines from other models. With exception for carbon cockpits (not attached to the suspension directly), exotic materials such as carbon fibre, titanium and magnesium are not allowed except for special parts like spoilers or wheels. Engine displacement is limited to 5.5L naturally aspirated or 4.0L turbo/supercharged. (The ACO has previously granted special waivers for Vipers to 8.0L.) The minimum weight is 1245 kg. Cars must have working lights and windshield wipers, in addition to rear-view cameras and use yellow headlights. Four-wheel drive is not allowed, however traction control is.

## GTE - Balance of Performance

As with LMP2 cars, to cope with the different makes and models, the Endurance Committee of the ACO uses the Balance of Performance (BoP) which allows changes to be implemented to cars through adjusting the weight, fuel tank sizes engine, aerodynamics and restrictors to ensure that competing cars are within the same performance envelope. As a result of the overwhelming performance of the new Ferrari 488 in the first 2 rounds of the WEC, competitors Ford and Aston Martin have received weight breaks of 20 kg while Ferrari has been given a 10kg increase in minimum weight.



## GTE Categories

GTE is divided into two categories: GTE-Pro and GTE-Am which for 2016 will have different technical specifications.

LMGTE-PRO - designed exclusively for professional drivers. Cars are current year, or updated to the current GTE Pro regulations.

LMGTE-AM - drivers must include amateurs, but can be backed up by up to one professional driver, so a Platinum or Gold driver can be included with one two Bronze or a Bronze and Silver in each line-up. Cars are at least one year old. This was designed to create a second-user market for GT cars. The crew is limited to only one professional driver. The timed laps in qualifying must be made by a bronze driver.

## Changes for 2016

2016 will be a transition period with the introduction of new regulations which apply only to LMGTE-Pro cars this year, before being extended to LMGTE-Am in 2017. The key objective of the new regulations is to increase the performance of the cars relative to the GT3 cars that they compete against in some race series, to reduce cost and improve safety of the cars. Safety is increased through the introduction of a driver escape hatch.



The ACO has introduced a new Balance of Performance envelope for 2016. Manufacturers are allowed to modify aspects of the previously highly regulated production-based aerodynamics in order to fit into the newly defined performance window. Together these changes are likely to result in approximately 20 horsepower increase and 15 kg weight reduction, and better aerodynamics resulting in a two-second per lap decrease in times at Le Mans.

On track, GTE-PRO cars are likely to be noticeable by changes brought about through the freedom of bodywork styling, and their stronger performance.

## 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 reloads at the timing line so it is basically the previous lap position that one is viewing.



## The 4 classes – overview

The following overview 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.lemans.org](http://www.lemans.org) website. All figures mentioned are maximum values, except the car's weight of course...



### LMP1

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 P1 Hybrid, max 5.5 litres for non-Hybrid  
Maximum fuel tank sizes: petrol 62.5 litres with ERS, 67.4 litres with no ERS, diesel 49.9 litres with ERS, 53.7 litres with no ERS.

Minimum weight of 870 kg for P1 Hybrid, 855 kg for P1  
Headlights with white beam  
Race numbers white digits on red background  
14" wheel width, 28" 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/supercharged (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, 2.05m width (excluding rear-view mirrors)  
90 litres fuel tank

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](http://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 , GTE-AM – orange and Innovative - Black. The actual numbers are in white on a background of these colours, with the official stickers above and below. They must also be lit so that they are visible in the dark. The entrants nationality flag moves to the front of the car for 2016.

### 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 take part in the Test Day or take an ACO-organized 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

All drivers have to do a minimum of 5 laps during night time qualifying sessions, at least one of which must be a complete lap (ie must cross start/finish line).

A driver is only allowed to drive a maximum of 4 hours within a 6 hours time frame (minus pit stop time)

New for 2016: All drivers must drive for a minimum of 6 hours.

### New in 2015 – Tyres

There is a limit on the number of dry-weather tires that can be used during race week:

	Sets allowed for free practice & qualifying	Sets allowed for the race
LMP1	7	12
LMP2	7	16
GTE-Pro	8	16
GTE-Am	8	16

An extra 2 sets are allowed for new tyre manufacturer.

There is no limit on the number of wets or intermediates.

Tyre-warmers can only be used in the area behind the pit garage - they are a definite no-no in the pits or on the pit apron.

### Test day

The Test Day on Sunday 5 June is mandatory for all Teams and new Drivers.

Up to 10 reserve cars and a second Innovation car will also be invited.

### Qualifying/Grid Position

The rules have changed again this year, and the French idiosyncrasies appear to have gone, although there are still waivers and dispensations. The grid is arranged in a 2 x 2 formation in order of the best times achieved by the fastest driver of each team during the qualifying practices. If a driver has not completed his mandatory 5 night laps, a waiver can be granted, but the car will start at the back of the grid.

### 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.

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.

Any person working on the pit apron - with the exception of the wheel-change crew - must now wear full fire protection clothing including fire-proof overalls, gloves, balaclava, goggles, long underwear, shoes and helmet - this includes the guy with the long pole and the car number on the end, windscreen cleaners and datalog collectors. For the 4 wheel changers the gloves, balaclava and goggles element of the dress code are recommended rather than mandatory.



## Safety Car/SLOW ZONES

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 35 numbered zones corresponding to the Post Marshal number at the entrance of the zone, the start of each zone corresponding to a main signaller 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 80kph, and overtaking is prohibited. The start of the Slow Zone itself is indicated by the same sized yellow board with SLOW and an encircled 80. There is a maximum speed of 80kph 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.

The Maximum speed limit in the Slow Zones remains at the 2015 speed of 80kph, from the 60kph speed when the system was introduced in 2014.

#### **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, gearbox casing and the differential casing cannot be changed during the race, although a second engine can be used for practice.

Reserve cars are not permitted, so if a car is totalled 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 cannot 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 price money**

2016: The entry fee for each car is €67,500, with €30,000 due in January for automatically selected cars, or a non-refundable deposit of €4,600 for entries seeking selection. Fees shown are exclusive of VAT.

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.

Platinum: Professional driver such as holders of a Formula 1 super license, former Le Mans winners or similar successful drivers.

Gold: Professional drivers who have scored a top-3 position in an international series, e.g. Formula Renault.

Silver: Amateur drivers who have scored at least 1 win in a national or international series.

Bronze: Amateur drivers holding an international “B” License but without the above mentioned success.

The above criteria is not set in stone, the race organizers always have the final say. Drivers which are younger than 30 years are rated minimum as “silver”. Drivers which are older than 55 years are rated 1 class lower than their experience shows, drivers older than 60 years even 2 classes lower.

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

LMP1: No “bronze” drivers allowed.

LMP2: A maximum of 1 “platinum” driver and there must be at least one “silver” or “bronze” driver in the team.

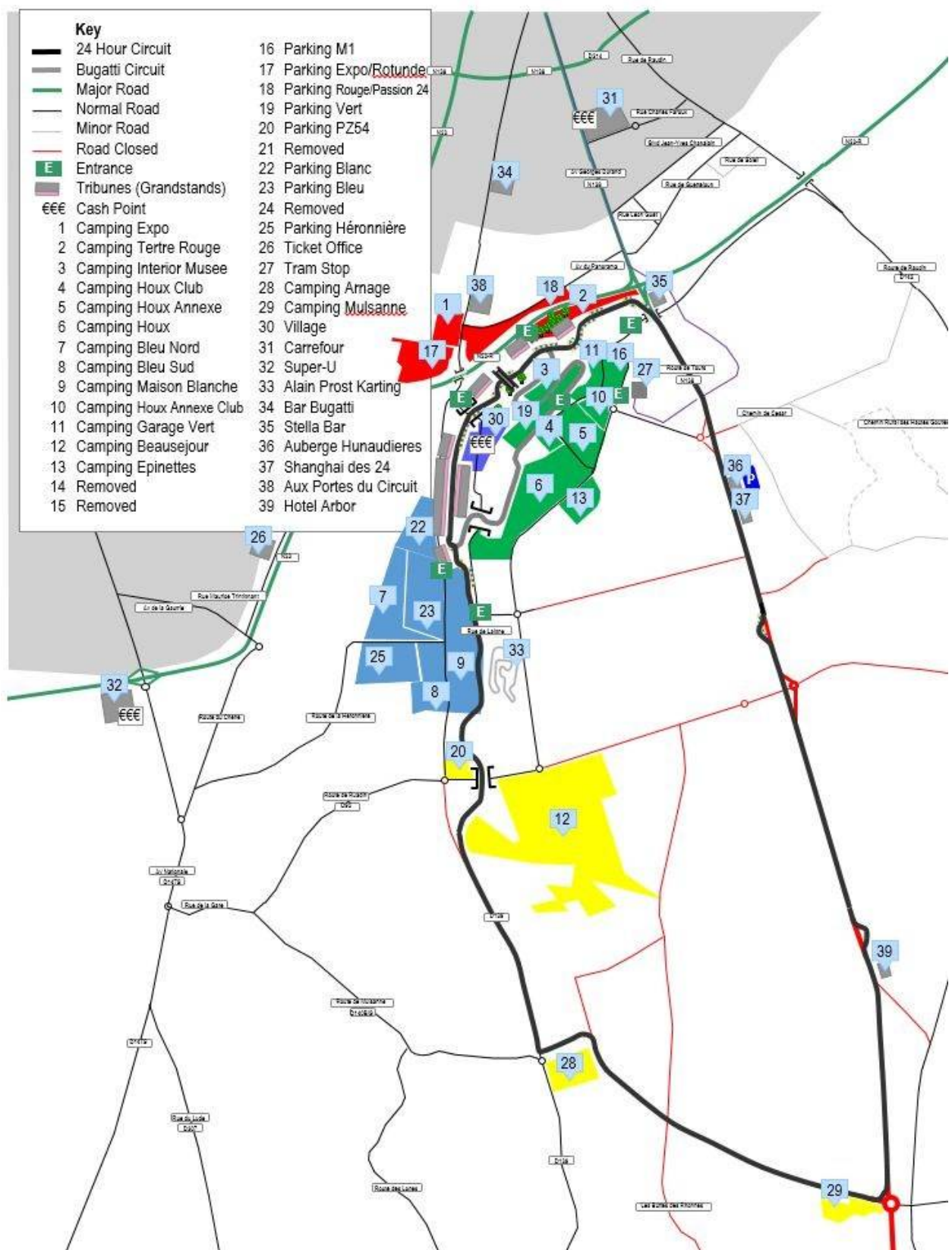
GTE PRO: No restrictions for the driver line up

GTE AM: Only one “platinum” or “gold” driver is allowed per car, minimum 1 “bronze” driver.

In case of a last minute driver change, e.g. at the beginning of a race weekend, the race stewards will categorize a driver. Not only experience, also the weight matters: If the average weight of all 3 drivers of each team is below 80 kg, appropriate extra weight will be added to the car. Starvation diets like in Formula 1 are not necessary!

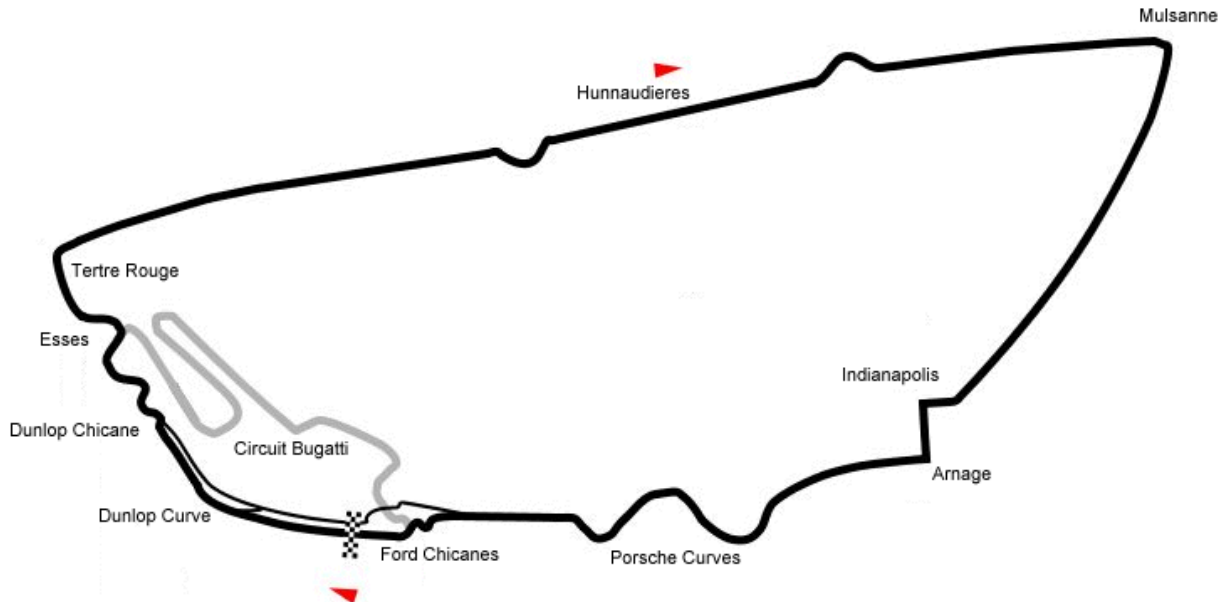


## Map of the circuit



## 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.

Usually **around a dozen big screens** will be installed for 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. They can be found in following locations:

- 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 Ford chicanes
- Level with of the starting line
- In the village by the Audi clock



**Grandstands:** These are referred to as tribunes at Le Mans. They are situated at the exit of the Ford Chicane, opposite and above the pitlane, at the exit of the Dunlop Chicane and The Esses outfield. It is worth noting that access to the tribunes is not restricted during Wednesday and Thursday's qualifying sessions; the separate tribune tickets become valid from Saturday morning. A grandstand seat will provide a guaranteed good view of the start and finish of the race and a place in the shade to regroup on Sunday morning, especially useful considering the temperature regularly gets into the 30s through June. However, if you prefer to sample the circuit in its entirety a seat in a tribune may not represent good value for money for you.





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

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







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

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

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



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

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

It is possible to get within a few feet of the action at the Auberge des Hunaudieres or Shanghai des 24 Heures restaurants situated a couple of hundred yards before the braking zone of the first chicane. The legendary Auberge des Hunaudieres used to offer dramatic trackside seats from where you could enjoy good food and drink. Unfortunately green covers attached to the catch fencing obscure the view (although if you are lucky they will have been eased down!) and getting a table can be problematic during track time as the restaurant tends to be taken over by corporate hospitality. However, there is still an open air public bar at the rear of the property; clamber up onto the benches for a glimpse of the cars going flat out down the Mulsanne. To get to Hunaudieres (and the Shanghai des 24 Heures) during track time refer to the circuit map and stick to the following instructions. Head South East on the N142 (Route du Mans) running parallel to the Mulsanne Straight. Turn right on to Chemin de Ceasar and you will enter the network of minor roads. The restaurant will be temporarily signposted and there will be French police or race officials willing to direct you. They may be blocking the final turning so you need to be ready to tell them you are eating at Hunaudieres and they will gladly let you through. Eventually you will end up in a field at the back of the restaurant where you can park for free. The less well known Hotel Arbor presents a better spectating opportunity. It sits alongside the Mulsanne straight on the circuit outfield only a couple of hundred yards after the second chicane. Parking is permitted in the hotel car park for a fee of 10 Euros per person. From there, the chicane can be found only

a short stroll away through the trees. This is an excellent spot to watch from, particularly as there never seems to be anybody else there! Parking is at the discretion of the hotel and information listed here is purely based on their setup in previous years.

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

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

**Porsche Curves:** The Porsche Curves are a series of sweeping corners starting where the racetrack curves to the right to leave the public road. An enclosure here called Porsche Exterior offers a view of the outside of this up hill corner and can be accessed from the road leading to the Beausejour campsite. Looking back up the road section of the circuit its possible to see almost as far as Arnage in the distance. There is also a viewing area on the inside of the circuit at the Porsche curves, accessed via the Beausejour campsite. For 2016 new run-offs at the entry to the Porsche Curves and at the final right-hander have been installed. Furthermore there are now new impact absorbing SAFER (Steel & Foam Energy Reduction) barriers on the outside of the first part of the double left at the beginning of the sequence.

**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.

### \*\*\* Stop press: New Spectator Zone at Arnage / Indianapolis \*\*\*

In 2015 the ACO and the local council finally approved the changes to the road at Arnage corner. There has been rapid work, which has affected the campsite, but for the locals and especially for race week it removes a large bottleneck. There is now a road that cuts through the old Indianapolis-Arnage banking. The result is that although the banking is split, it appears to be higher offering greater views and moving further round the inside of Indianapolis, giving more views down towards Mulsanne.

The stretch from just after Indianapolis to Arnage will now no longer be open as a public road during the rest of the year. This will have an impact on the viewing enclosure and campsite at Arnage, although there will be an enlarged viewing area at Indianapolis. The gravel trap at Arnage corner will also be increased in area, but most of the gravel run off on the inside of the circuit at Indianapolis will be replaced by tarmac.

**Latest update:** CA member Kristof Vermeulen sent a first report and some pictures of the new spectator zone at Arnage:



Above is the view from the Arnage corner. The final part of the straight before the right hand corner is now no longer a public road and will be used only at the 24 hours. At the end of the straight, there's still a bit of banking left. The view of the cars braking, going into the corner and heading off to the Porsche Curves is still intact.



When entering the new camping zone behind the roundabout, you'll see the new road on the left and the new banking at Indianapolis in the back. The old banking disappeared here, a small portion remains in the lefthander of Indy.





This is the new banking with the view on Indianapolis and the cars coming to you from Mulsanne (couldn't get a better picture, gates were closed). It runs all the way through to the entry of Indianapolis.



Above is the view of the new banking, as seen from the inside of the track.



And this is why Arnage will become "the place to be" at night. You'll see the cars coming out of Mulsanne, into Indianapolis and the lefthander into Arnage. This is going to be "fingerlicking good" and a serious upgrade for spectators !!!

## Le Mans History – 2015 – The big Nissan Disaster

When Toyota (2012) and Porsche (2014) joined the WEC it became quickly clear that their campaigns were well prepared and that they would be successful sooner or later. In both cases success came rather sooner. First Toyota won the WEC and became World champion in 2014 year, and then Porsche took both the Le Mans win and the championship in just their second year in the WEC.

When Nissan decided to join the game 2014 they promised that they would come up with something revolutionary and completely different than their competitors and announced to compete at the front of the field right from the beginning. Well, for sure they did it completely different...

Their first participation at Le Mans with the ZEOD saw them producing big amounts of media reports without doing much racing, the game was over after 5 laps. Ok, the ZEOD was a "Garage 56" project and just an intro, so everybody was waiting for their "real" LMP. When this thing was first presented in a TV spot during the US Superbowl 2014, it showed indeed a completely different approach – they'd built a front-engine, front-wheel-drive car and planned to race the complete WEC and come with 3 cars to the 24h of Le Mans 2015.

The start of the 2015 season saw a couple of slow test laps at Sebring after which they called off the WEC prologue test and the first 2 rounds at Silverstone and Spa. By mid-April they had done less than 4.000 km of testing and managed just one back-to-back stint. At Le Mans they couldn't even match the pace of most LMP2 cars; later on it became public that they never got their hybrid system up and running. The "performance" during the 24h of Le Mans needs no further commentary; enough has been said about this. The top management of Renault / Nissan had a review of what happened and found that all of it clearly spelled "disaster". After a last series of tests at the NOLA Motorsports Park in New Orleans in December 2015 the plug was pulled and these cars were never seen again on a race track.

The complete withdrawal of Nissan from the WEC three days before Christmas last year was no mega surprise – many engineers and fans doubted from the beginning that the front-engine concept of the Nismo LMGT-R would ever be successful. Their departure from the scene was a lot less shiny and polished than the start of the campaign 2 years ago: They didn't even publish a press release; just a message on the corporate website. On the same day around 40 employees of the US-based team, many of them had worked day and night at Le Mans, were sacked by e-mail when most of them were on Christmas holiday, a bitter aftertaste!

With a significant chunk of the corporate Nissan/Renault Motorsport budget being tied up in Formula 1 now, no one expects them back in the top category at La Sarthe in the near future.





## Waving the flags and 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 firefighting, flagging, observing, radio communication and many other topics.



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

Some of the roles performed by the officials are:

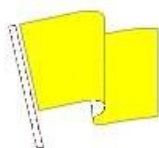
Course/Flag/Observer, these are effectively the Race Directors 'ground troops'. These three will work together on a post, the Course Marshal is the one you'll see going out to an incident

and working trackside, and reporting back to the Observer, who will report to Race Control what has happened. This is rather basic, as the Flaggie will be there waving the Blue, and reacting to what is required at that moment.

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

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

Following are the flags you'll see over the race weekend and their meaning.



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

A single stationary flag denotes a hazard off the course

A single waved flag denotes a hazard on the racing surface itself

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



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

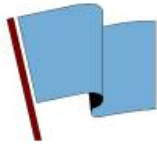


The green flag is quite similar to green traffic light and simply means "Go!". It can be waived by the starter to indicate the beginning of a race or practice session. Most typically it will be waved after a caution to tell the drivers that the race has been restarted and to indicate that the racetrack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



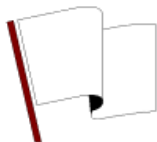
Without doubt the best known race flag, it is waved for all cars to indicate the finish of the race or a practice session.



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.



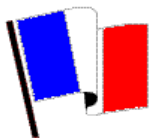
Black with an orange circle: information to a driver that his/her vehicle has a problem and that a pit stop must be made, is usually displayed along with a pit board listing the driver's car number.



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. William Clay (Bill) Ford Jr., Executive Chairman of Ford Motor Company, will be the honorary starter of the 83rd race in 2015.

### Code 80 (Full Course Yellow – FCY) comes to La Sarthe

In 2014 there was a new type of race neutralisation, Code 80. This has been seen under other names in other races, notably the Nurburg 24. It is a GPS based system that instantly advises the driver in car of Yellow Zone, at the same time the marshals will be waving their yellows, 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, reorganise, release) this allows a pause rather than a suspension to racing.

## 2015 Marshalling changes

For 2015 there was a shake up for the on track marshals. Gone was the Poste system and in are Secteurs. This all in the name of safety, although the ACO have intimated that the overall numbers required are the same, a lot of the roles we are used to seeing at a track have been changed. The secteurs will be as per the attached map, gone is the old numbering system, no longer will the British Poste be at Poste 106 for the week, instead they will be part of Sector 29, and like other secteurs, will cover a larger part of track.

Since the 2014 race the ACO/Le Mans have invested in many track modifications, and with that change has come a change to how the marshals operate. From 2015, marshals will now be placed differently, old hands may see that marshals are now in different positions to what they remember, this is due to an increase in the number of flag marshals at more points. Each flag signal will be repeated on both sides of the track, hopefully this'll ensure no signal is missed. The increase of flag points also means that any Code 80 called can be controlled easier, and smaller zones mean back to racing quicker.

What will be a significant, and major, change is in race neutralisation. After Max Bianchis terrible accident at Suzuka in 2014, gone are vehicle recoveries under yellow, Code 80 or Safety Car will be in place before anything happens – obviously this does not include urgent medical attention. This still means the marshals will be there first, but unlike now, there will be no crossing of the track to provide an initial assessment, but there will be no intervention until safe, and there will be more use of rapid intervention vehicles

## Intervening with a Hybrid

On the side of the car next to the door are two lights, Green and Red, which indicate the state of the hybrid system. The simplest piece of advice given to the marshals at Silverstone with regard to an HY car with a hybrid failure, was "Don't touch it until you have spoken to Race Control/the team" Although the posts were issued with rather thick and heavy rubber gloves, the first thing to do was to call it to Race Control, after that a team member would arrive to ensure integrity of the system. Obviously should the car be in an accident, the priority is the driver, and he is sat in an isolated cell. However, there may be a time when extracting the driver is needed, in which case, out come the 'Marigolds' - very Heavy Duty latex gloves and a careful approach is taken. I am a pit marshal, so I can't say for sure what would happen on course, but the golden rule is if in doubt, do not touch.

## 2016 race week schedule

+ in red letters: other events

+ in blue letters: Euro dates for the footie fans

<b>Sunday 12th June</b>	2.30 pm - 7.00 pm	Administrative Checks and Scrutineering in the centre of Le Mans, Place du Jacobins
	3.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Turkey - Croatia</i>
	6.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Poland - Northern Ireland</i>
	9.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Germany - Ukraine</i>
<b>Monday 13th June</b>	10.00 am - 6.00 pm	Administrative Checks and Scrutineering in the centre of Le Mans, Place du Jacobins
	3.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Spain - Czech Republic</i>
	6.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Republic of Ireland - Sweden</i>
	6.30 pm – 7.30 pm	„The winners' handprints“, Place St. Nicholas, Le Mans city centre
<b>Tuesday 14th June</b>	9.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Belgium - Italy</i>
	10.30 am – 10.45 am	Official photo of the drivers on the start-finish straight
	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Additional LM P1 Hybrid Scrutineering at the circuit
	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Scrutineering & Administrative Checking for “Road to Le Mans” teams at the Welcome Building
	5.00 pm - 6.30 pm	Drivers autograph session in the pit lane
	6.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Austria - Hungary</i>
<b>Wednesday 15th June</b>	9.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Portugal - Iceland</i>
	8.00 am – 3.00 pm	Pit Walk
	9:00 am – 12:00 am	Scrutineering & Administrative Checking for “Road to Le Mans” teams at the Welcome Building
	2.00 pm	“Americans at Le Mans” Exhibition opens in the Village
	3.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Russia - Slovakia</i>
	4.00 pm - 8.00 pm	Free practice session “24h of Le Mans”
	4.30 pm – 8.30 pm	Scrutineering & Administrative Checking for the “Ferrari Challenge Europe” teams
	6.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Romania - Switzerland</i>
	8.00 pm	<i>Live Music Concert on the stage at the foot of the Dunlop footbridge: Shake Shake Go + Naked (In a sphere)</i>
	8:30 pm – 9:30 pm	“Road to Le Mans” - Free Practice 1
	9.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: France - Albania</i>
	10.00 pm - midnight	Qualifying session “24h of Le Mans”
<b>Thursday 16th June</b>	9.00 am – 5.00 pm	“Arnage dans la Course” – a celebration of the life of Jean Rondeau with an exhibition of his cars and many others at Arnage (Place de l'Hôtel de Ville/Place François Mitterand)
	10.00 am – 10.45 am	Ferrari Challenge Europe - Free Practice 1
	11.30 am – 12.15 pm	Ferrari Challenge Europe - Free Practice 2
	2:30 pm – 3:30 pm	“Road to Le Mans” - Free Practice 2
	3.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: England - Wales</i>
	4.00 pm - 5.00 pm	Qualifying session “Ferrari Challenge Europe”
	6.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Ukraine - Northern Ireland</i>
	6:00 pm – 6.30 pm	Qualifying session “Road to Le Mans”
	7.00 pm - 9.00 pm	Qualifying session “24h of Le Mans”
	8.00 pm	<i>Live Music concert on the stage at the foot of the Dunlop footbridge: Julian Perretta + Retrospective</i>
	9:00 pm	<i>Club Arnage Forum Gathering at “Le Courbes” bar - see the respective chapter for directions</i>
	9.00 pm	<i>EURO 2016: Germany - Poland</i>
<b>Friday 17th June</b>	10.00 pm - midnight	Qualifying session “24h of Le Mans”
	9:00 am – 6:00 pm	<i>“St. Saturnin Classic British Welcome”, see respective chapter in this guide</i>
	9:00 am – 4.00 pm	Celebration of Ford's return at Mulsanne Corner, nearly 500 cars (Ford GT



		40s, Mustangs, Shelbys. Model T and others) will be displayed between Mulsanne corner and Indianapolis
	10.00 am - 8.00 pm	Pit Walk
	<i>3.00 pm</i>	<i>EURO 2016: Italy - Sweden</i>
	5:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Drivers Parade in the city centre, revised route this year, see the respective chapter for information
	<i>6.00 pm</i>	<i>EURO 2016: Czech Republic - Croatia</i>
	<i>9.00 pm</i>	<i>EURO 2016: Spain - Turkey</i>
<b>Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June</b>	9.00 am - 9.45 am	Warm-Up "24h of Le Mans"
	10.00 am – 10.50 am	Support Race "Ferrari Challenge Europe"
	11.10 am – 12:10 am	Support Race "Road to Le Mans"
	12.30 pm - 1.45 pm	Drivers' Presentation
	2:15 pm	National Anthem – "La Marseillaise"
	2.22 pm	Beginning of starting procedure "24 Heures du Mans"
	2:51 pm	French air patrol (Armée de l'Air) fly past
	2:52 pm	Start of the Formation Lap
	3:00 pm	Start of the 83 <sup>rd</sup> edition of the 24h of Le Mans, flagged off by Brad Pitt
	<i>3.00 pm</i>	<i>EURO 2016: Belgium - Republic of Ireland</i>
	<i>6.00 pm</i>	<i>EURO 2016: Iceland - Hungary</i>
	<i>8:00 pm</i>	<i>Live Music concert on the stage at the foot of the Dunlop footbridge: The Shoes (Live) + The Avenor (DJ Set) + Kazy Lambist + DJ Loran (Rock Pop Live)</i>
	<i>9.00 pm</i>	<i>EURO 2016: Portugal - Austria</i>
<b>Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June</b>	3:00 pm	Finish of the 83 <sup>rd</sup> edition of the 24h of Le Mans
	<i>9.00 pm</i>	<i>EURO 2016: Switzerland - France</i>
	<i>9.00 pm</i>	<i>EURO 2016: Russia - Wales</i>



## The 2016 entry list

Already in June 2015 the A.C.O. announced an increase to the number of entries from 56 to 58 for the 2016 race. In a second step an entry of 60 cars for 2017 was targeted. The construction work for the 4 additional garages began shortly after this announcement. By the time the entry list for applications closed on Monday, 25th January, 73 applications had been received. In a press conference on Friday, 5th February in Paris the A.C.O. announced the list of the 60(!) chosen entries + 10 reserve entries. Obviously the construction of the additional garages was ahead of schedule.

**WEC full season entries:** 32 full season original WEC entrants gained an entry (Manor entered their 2nd car later).

**Automatic invitations:** 14 teams had received automatic invitations based on their performance in the 2015 sportscar season. Three of these invitations were not claimed: SMP Racing in GTE Am, Team LNT in LM P2 and BMW Team Marc VDS in GTE Am.

The 60 entries are divided by classes as follows:

**LM P1:** 9 cars, 5 teams. Unfortunately the top class is the smallest class, but there are 3 manufacturers fighting for the overall win with 2 cars each: Audi and Toyota will field brand new constructions, and Porsche returns with an evolution of last year's winning 919.

**LM P2:** 23 cars, 20 teams. The prototype privateer class has the most entries. French constructors Oreca and OAK (Ligier) are dominating the scene with their chassis, while almost all engines come from Nissan, 20 out of 23 cars are powered by the Japanese 4.5 ltr. V8.

**LM GTE Pro:** 14 cars, 8 teams. The return of Ford will get this category a lot of attention this year. This class sees the most manufacturers: Ford, Ferrari, Porsche, Chevrolet and Aston Martin are sending works- and semi-works cars to La Sarthe to fight for glory in the GTE Pro category. This will be at least as exciting to watch as the fight for the overall win in LM P1.

**LM GTE Am:** 13 cars, 11 teams. In the class for second hand racing cars we will see Ferraris, Porsches, Aston Martins and Corvettes, all of them at least a year old.

**Innovation - Garage 56:** 1 car. Frédéric Sausset, who has all four limbs amputated, will drive a modified Morgan LM P2.

Retired race driver and 2-times Le Mans Winner Alex Wurz is the Grand Marshal of the 24h of Le Mans 2016. Among other duties he will have the privilege of driving the pace car in the formation lap leading to the start of the race.

Following Steve McQueen (1971), Alain Delon (1996) and Luc Besson (2002) in their role as honorary starter is another Hollywood VIP this year: Brad Pitt will be waving the flag at the start of the race. One may ask why - rumors are that it has something to do with a movie project about the famous Ford-Ferrari duel at Le Mans in the sixties.

## Overview – All 60 entries

No.	Team	Nat	Vehicle	Class	Drivers
1	Porsche Team	DE	Porsche 919 Hybrid	LM P1	Bernhard, Webber, Hartley
2	Porsche Team	DE	Porsche 919 Hybrid	LM P1	Dumas, Lieb, Jani
4	Team ByKolles	AT	CLM P1/01 - AER	LM P1	Trummer, Kaffer, Webb
5	Toyota Gazoo Racing	JP	Toyota TS 050 Hybrid	LM P1	Davidson, Buemi, Nakajima
6	Toyota Gazoo Racing	JP	Toyota TS 050 Hybrid	LM P1	Sarrazin, Conway, Kobayashi
7	Audi Sport Team Joest	DE	Audi R18 e-tron quattro	LM P1	Fässler, Lotterer, Tréluyer
8	Audi Sport Team Joest	DE	Audi R18 e-tron quattro	LM P1	di Grassi, Jarvis, Duval
12	Rebellion Racing	CH	Rebellion R-One - AER	LM P1	Prost, Heidfeld, Piquet Jnr
13	Rebellion Racing	CH	Rebellion R-One - AER	LM P1	Tuscher, Kraihamer, Imperatori
22	So24! by Lombard Racing	FR	Ligier JS P2 - Judd	LM P2	Capillaire, Maris, Coleman
23	Paris-Barthez Compétition	FR	Ligier JS P2 - Nissan	LM P2	Barthez, Chatin, Buret
25	Algarve Pro-Racing	PT	Ligier JS P2 - Nissan	LM P2	Hoy, Munemann, Pizzitola
26	G-Drive Racing	RU	Oreca 05 - Nissan	LM P2	Rusinov, Rast, Stevens
27	SMP Racing	RU	BR01 - Nissan	LM P2	Mediani, Markozov, Minassian
28	Pegasus Racing	DE	Morgan - Nissan	LM P2	Roussel, Taittinger, Striebig
30	Extreme Speed	US	Ligier JS P2 - Nissan	LM P2	Sharp, Brown, van Overbeek
31	Extreme Speed	US	Ligier JS P2 - Nissan	LM P2	Dalziel, Derani, Cumming
33	Eurasia Motorsports	PHL	Oreca 05 - Nissan	LM P2	Jin, Gommendy, de Bruijn
34	Race Performance	CH	Oreca 03R - Judd	LM P2	Leutwiler, Winslow, Nakano
35	Baxi DC Racing Alpine	CN	Alpine A460 - Nissan	LM P2	Cheng, Tung, Panciatici
36	SignaTech Alpine	FR	Alpine A460 - Nissan	LM P2	Menezes, Richelmi, Lapierre
37	SMP Racing	RU	BR01 - Nissan	LM P2	Petrov, Shaitar, Ladygin
38	G-Drive Racing	RU	Gibson 015S - Nissan	LM P2	Dolan, van der Garde, Dennis
40	Krohn Racing	US	Ligier JS P2 - Nissan	LM P2	Krohn, Jönsson, Barbosa
41	Greaves Motorsport	UK	Ligier JS P2 - Nissan	LM P2	Rojas, Canal, Berthon
42	Strakka Racing	UK	Gibson 015S - Nissan	LM P2	Leventis, Watts, Kane
43	RGR Sport by Morand	MX	Ligier JS P2 - Nissan	LM P2	González, Senna, Albuquerque
44	Manor Motorsport	UK	Oreca 05 - Nissan	LM P2	Graves, Rao, Merhi
46	Thiriet by TDS Racing	FR	Oreca 05 - Nissan	LM P2	Thiriet, Hirakawa, Beche
47	KCMG	HK	Oreca 05 - Nissan	LM P2	Matsuda, Bradley, Howson
48	Murphy Prototypes	IR	Oreca 03R - Nissan	LM P2	Keating, Bleekemolen, Goossens
49	Michael Shank Racing	US	Ligier JS P2 - Honda	LM P2	Pew, Negri, Vanthoor
50	Larbre Compétition	FR	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTE-Am	Yamagishi, Ragues, Catsburg
51	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE-Pro	Bruni, Calado, Guidi
55	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Cameron, Griffin, Scott
57	Team AAI	TW	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTE-Am	O'Connell, Patterson, Bryant
60	Formula Racing	DK	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Laursen, Nielsen, Mac
61	Clearwater Racing	SG	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Mok, Bell, Sawa
62	Scuderia Corsa	US	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Sweedler, Bell, Segal
63	Corvette Racing	US	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTE-Pro	Magnussen, García, R. Taylor
64	Corvette Racing	US	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTE-Pro	Gavin, Milner, J. Taylor
66	Chip Ganassi Team UK	US	Ford GT	GTE-Pro	Pla, Mücke, Johnson
67	Chip Ganassi Team UK	US	Ford GT	GTE-Pro	Franchitti, Priaulx, Tincknell
68	Chip Ganassi Team US	US	Ford GT	GTE-Pro	Hand, Müller, Bourdais
69	Chip Ganassi Team US	US	Ford GT	GTE-Pro	Briscoe, Westbrook, Dixon
71	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE-Pro	Rigon, Bird, Bertolini
77	Dempsey-Proton Racing	DE	Porsche 997	GTE-Pro	Lietz, Christensen, Eng
78	KCMG	HK	Porsche 997	GTE-Am	Ried, Henzler, Camathias
82	Risi Competizione	US	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE-Pro	Fisichella, Vilander, Malucelli
83	AF Corse	IT	Ferrari F458	GTE-Am	Perrodo, Collard, Águas
84	SRT41 by OAK Racing	FR	Morgan - Nissan	Garage 56	Sausset, Tinseau, Bouvet
86	Gulf Racing	UK	Porsche 997	GTE-Am	Wainwright, Carroll, Barker
88	Abu Dhabi-Proton Racing	DE	Porsche 997	GTE-Am	Al Qubaisi, Long, Heinemeier
89	Proton Competition	DE	Porsche 997	GTE-Am	Miller, Keen, MacNeil
91	Porsche Motorsport	US	Porsche 997	GTE-Pro	Pilet, Tandy, Estre
92	Porsche Motorsport	US	Porsche 997	GTE-Pro	Makowiecki, Bamber, Bergm.
95	Aston Martin Racing	UK	Aston Martin Vantage	GTE-Pro	Sørensen, Thiim, Turner
97	Aston Martin Racing	UK	Aston Martin Vantage	GTE-Pro	Stanaway, Adam, Rees
98	Aston Martin Racing	UK	Aston Martin Vantage	GTE-Am	Dalla Lana, Lamy, Lauda
99	Aston Martin Racing	UK	Aston Martin Vantage	GTE-Am	Howard, Griffin, Hirsch



## #1 LM P1

**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)



The reigning FIA WEC drivers and team's champions return with an evolution of last year's LM winning car. They retain the same 90° 2.0 litre V4 turbo engine and double ERS from lithium ion batteries (and will have revised front suspension and aero) and continue to run in the 8mj class and with the same driver combinations. New FIA rules may minimize their refuelling advantage, which was worth about 3-5 seconds at each stop in 2015. Hartley finished 5th overall at Daytona in a Riley-Ford DP (with Andy Priaulx and Alex Wurz). The team will not run their third car, meaning last year's winning drivers who gave Porsche their 17th victory, won't return to the race to take up their automatic invitation. As there is a date clash with F1/GP2 at Baku this year, Nico Hülkenberg will be racing for Force India in Formula 1 in Azerbaijan, though Earl Bamber (#92) and Nick Tandy (#91) will race for Porsche in GTE Pro at Le Mans.

## #2 LM P1

**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)



This team was promoted to be winner of the first round of the WEC in Silverstone after the first place Audi #7 was disqualified and the sister car #1 had a horrible accident during the race. At Spa they finished 2nd after running with a malfunctioning hybrid system for most of the race. Other than that, this Porsche team had a difficult start to the season. Unlike last year they were consistently slower than the #1 sister car. Since the reason was never found, Dumas, Jani and Lieb got a brand new chassis for the 24h of Le Mans.

## #4 LM P1

**Team:** Team ByKolles

**Vehicle:** CLM P1/01 - AER P60 V6 cyl. twin-turbo, Michelin

**Drivers:** Simon Trummer (CH), Pierre Kaffer (DE), Oliver Webb (UK)



In 2015 the team showed a strong performance with 5 podiums and 2 wins in the LM P1 privateer class. They return with a new suspension, aero and an upgraded AER engine for 2016, and they also switched their tyre supplier from Michelin to Dunlop. Once again their only opponents are the Swiss Rebellion team with 2 cars. Kaffer and Trummer raced already last year for ByKolles, and Oliver Webb was hired in March to join them for this season. Webb won the ELMS in 2014, raced in the WEC in LMP2 in 2015 and won the Dubai 24 Hours.

**#5****LM P1****Team:** : Toyota Gazoo Racing**Vehicle:** Toyota TS 050, 2.4-litre V6 cyl. Turbo - Hybrid , Michelin**Drivers:** Anthony Davidson (UK), Sébastien Buemi (CH), Kazuki Nakajima (JP)

The 2014 FIA WEC champions returns with a brand chassis and a new 90 degree 2.4 litre V6 bi turbo THS-R engine car with direct injection for the first time and with a new raised nose. A lithium ion battery hybrid replaces their super capacitor system, the team keeps their double ERS configuration which retrieves energy from both axles, and they move up to the 8mj class. The team finished 6th at Silverstone after suffering a rear puncture which caused bodywork damage and destroyed a driveshaft. At Spa they initially finished 7th after an engine failure, reappearing to do the final lap on hybrid power only, however they were penalized 4 laps as Nakajima had not completed his minimum driving time so ended up in 8th place.

**#6****LM P1****Team:** : Toyota Gazoo Racing**Vehicle:** Toyota TS 050, 2.4-litre V6 cyl. Turbo - Hybrid , Michelin**Drivers:** Stéphane Sarrazin (FR), Mike Conway (UK), Kamui Kobayashi (JP)

Kobayashi will replace the "almost retired" Alexander Wurz (the 42 years old GPDA President), who is now a "Brand Ambassador" for Toyota and Grand Marshal at Le Mans this year (although he drove a CGR Riley-Ford DP at Daytona and finished 5th after overheating trouble and will be reserve driver & take part in the Test day at Le Mans). Kobayashi will continue to drive for the Sunoco Team Le Mans outfit in Super Formula in 2016. The Toyota features a new colour scheme of red, black and white replacing the former blue and white livery. This team finished 2nd at Silverstone but retired at Spa with engine electronics trouble and replacement of the nose.

**#7****LM P1****Team:** Audi Sport Team Joest**Vehicle:** Audi R18 e-tron quattro, 4.0 ltr. V6 cyl. Turbo Diesel - Hybrid, Michelin**Drivers:** Marcel Fässler (CH), Benoît Tréluyer (FR), André Lotterer (DE)

Audi has returned with a completely new car, with a distinctive high nose and with a new lithium ion battery hybrid single ERS (Samsung/LG) replacing the flywheel storage version and has moved up to the 6mj class. The 2012 & 2013 WEC champions retain the 120° V6 4.0 litre turbo diesel engine but with a new lighter 6 speed gearbox and the same driver combinations. The driver team of car #7 has already scored 3 overall wins at Le Mans, finishing last year in 3rd position.



## #8 LM P1

**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), Oliver Jarvis (UK), Loïc Duval (FR)



Audi will use the same driver combinations as last year but, as Porsche, will not field a third car in 2016. Di Grassi, Jarvis and Duval finished in 4th position last year. They scored their first win as a team in the second WEC round in Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium, when both cars from Porsche and Toyota and their team mates in the #7 sister car had problems.

## #12 LM P1

**Team:** Rebellion Racing

**Vehicle:** Rebellion R-One, AER P60 V6 cyl. twin-turbo, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Nicolas Prost (FR), Nick Heidfeld (DE), Nelson Piquet Jnr (BR)



The reigning FIA WEC LM P1 privateer team champions return with their Oreca-built car. Prost with Mathias Beche (driving #46 TDS Oreca P2 this year) was privateer drivers champion in 2015. Beche will return to the team for the last 6 rounds of the WEC after Le Mans. Bart Hayden's team change from Michelin to Dunlop tyres for 2016, the first time Dunlop have been involved in P1 since 2012, when it supplied Oak Racing. They have also reverted to an earlier specification of the AER engine after reliability woes in 2015. Brazilian driver Nelson Piquet Jnr is the reigning Formula E champion for China Racing. The team finished 4th at Silverstone after electrical problems in qualifying and were 4th again at Spa.

## #13 LM P1

**Team:** Rebellion Racing

**Vehicle:** Rebellion R-One, AER P60 V6 cyl. twin-turbo, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Mathéo Tuscher (CZ), D. Kraihamer (AT), Alexandre Imperatori (CH)



They were the 2015 LM P1 Privateer class winners at Le Mans. The team finished 3rd at Silverstone after electrical problems in qualifying – this was Rebellion's first podium in the WEC since Fuji in 2013. They made it again to the podium in Spa-Francorchamps where they scored another fine 3rd place. Looking back at all the reliability woes which the factory cars had in Spa and Silverstone they might be in for a surprise again!



## #22 LM P2

**Team:** So24! by Lombard Racing

**Vehicle:** Ligier JS P2, Judd HK 3.6 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Vincent Capillaire (FR), Erik Maris (FR), Jonathan Coleman (UK)



This is a new team set up this year by Olivier Lombard in association with Sarthe Objective 24! - an organisation promoting local businesses and drivers in the Sarthe region including the A.C.O.'s Driving School. Olivier Lombard has already raced 3 times at Le Mans and scored a P2 class win in a Zytek in 2011. Gentleman driver Capillaire will race here for the 3rd time, and Jonathan Coleman is a Rookie. The team finished 3rd overall in the ELMS at Silverstone and 11th at Imola.

## #23 LM P2

**Team:** Panis-Barthez Compétition

**Vehicle:** Ligier JS P2, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Fabien Barthez (FR), Paul Loup Chatin (FR), Timothé Buret (FR)



This is another new French Team which was set up by former French Formula 1 driver Olivier Panis and ex-Marseille and Manchester United goalkeeper Barthez, who was in the winning French team at the 1998 FIFA World Cup. They are also racing an LM P3 Ligier in the European Le Mans Series (ELMS) this year. Lead driver in the all-French squad is Paul Loup Chatin, who has the most experience in Le Mans prototype racing. In 2014 he became ELMS P2 Drivers Champion, and in 2015 he was part of the winning P2 team in Shanghai. For Barthez this will be his second participation at Le Mans, Timothé Buret is a Rookie. The team is supporting the French medical charity Mécénat Chirurgie Cardiaque.

## #25 LM P2

**Team:** Algarve Pro-Racing

**Vehicle:** Ligier JS P2, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Chris Hoy (UK), Michael Munemann (UK), Andrea Pizzitola (FR)



This entry was initially on the reserve list, but received an invitation on 22nd March, when TDS Racing withdrew its Aston Martin in the GTE-Am class. The most prominent driver of this squad is Sir Chris Hoy, an eleven-time world champion cyclist and Olympic medal winner. He retired in 2012 from cycling and has added 2 more wheels to his favourite sports. He won the P3 class in the ELMS in 2015. However, with Michael Munemann having been to Le Mans once and Hoy and Pizzitola being Rookies, this is probably one of the least experienced squads on the grid. Just recently they completed an 8 hour test "into the night" at Jerez, where Chris Hoy had his first experience in double stinting the Ligier JSP2/Nissan and driving in night conditions.

## #26 LM P2

**Team:** G-Drive Racing

**Vehicle:** Oreca 05, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Roman Rusinov (RU), René Rast (DE), Will Stevens (UK)



The reigning FIA WEC LM P2 champions G-Drive (with technical support from Oak Racing) used a Ligier JS P2 in 2015, driven by Rusinov, Julien Canal and Sam Bird. Rusinov is returning now as a full season WEC entry with the G-Drive sponsorship (Gazprom Neft) in a new Oreca without Oak Racing. Sam Hignett's Jota team have formed a new partnership with Arden and G-Drive in 2016 and will run this car in the WEC for the first time. For German driver René Rast this is a step down from last year, when he was a factory driver for Audi in LM P1 at Spa and Le Mans. But Audi only comes with 2 cars this year, which left Rast and his 2015 team mates Filipe Albuquerque and Marco Bonanomi without a drive. Ex-Manor-Marussia F1 pilot Will Stevens will be part of this team. They took pole position in LM P2 at Silverstone, and finished 3rd after a fuel pump problem and having to pit to change the nose after contact, and finished 5th at Spa after taking pole again but suffering 2 punctures.

## #27 LM P2

**Team:** SMP Racing

**Vehicle:** BR01, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Nicolas Minassian(FR), David Markozov (RU), Maurizio Mediani



SMP Racing were WEC GTE Am team and driver's champions in 2015 but have decided not to defend their title. Michail Aljoshin is racing in Indycar in 2016 for Schmidt Peterson Motorsports. The team (with Kirill Ladygin) raced in IMSA at Daytona, setting pole and finishing 9th in the P class. Minassian finished 4th overall at Sebring in the Dragonspeed Oreca. Minassian & Mediani finished 10th at Silverstone but with David Markozov and retired at Spa after damage to the radiator.

## #28 LM P2

**Team:** Pegasus Racing

**Vehicle:** Morgan, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** Léo Roussel (FR), Inès Taittinger (FR), Rémy Striebig (FR)



The Strasbourg-based squad, racing with a German licence, will tackle its fourth Le Mans 24 Hours. Inès Taittinger, a member of the famous champagne family, will be one of only two female racers this year. Both Taittinger and team mate Rémy Striebig are Rookies, the latter one at the advanced age of 57. Léo Roussel already started twice at Le Mans, his best finish being 18th in a P2 Morgan in 2014. They retired from the ELMS race at Silverstone after Roussel hit the pit wall at the start, and finished 12th at Imola after hitting the wall again.



## #30 LM P2

**Team:** Extreme Speed Motorsports  
**Vehicle:** Ligier JS P2, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop  
**Drivers:** Scott Sharp (US), Ed Brown (UK), Johannes van Overbeek (US)



The American team has agreed a relationship with Onroak Automotive and partly relocated to France and will use Nissan engines in 2016 instead of Honda in the WEC. Ed Brown is the CEO of Tequila Patrón, however as alcohol sponsorship is banned in France, the 2 cars will run in the livery of Paul Mitchell Systems owned by John Paul DeJoria, co-founder of Tequila Patrón. They also raced at the Daytona 24 Hours and Sebring 12 Hours in the IMSA series using the Honda 3.5 litre V6 bi-turbo engine (which is not allowed in the WEC - maximum of 3.2 litres for a turbo). The crew of Brown, Sharp & van Overbeek (with Pipo Derani) won overall at both races - the first team to do so since the Moretti/Dixon Ferrari in 1998. The team will enter one car in the other 2 NAEC races at Watkins Glen and Petit Le Mans later in the year. They finished 9th at Silverstone & 7th at Spa.

## #31 LM P2

**Team:** Extreme Speed Motorsports  
**Vehicle:** Ligier JS P2, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop  
**Drivers:** Ryan Dalziel(UK), Luís Felipe Derani (BR), Chris Cumming (CA)



Brazilian driver Derani raced at the Daytona 24 Hours and Sebring 12 Hours in the IMSA series with the crew of the #30 ESM and won both races. Ryan Dalziel won the 2015 Porsche Cup for most successful privateer driver and finished 3rd overall at Daytona, 5th at Sebring & 2nd at Laguna Seca in a Visit Florida.com Coyote Corvette DP. Chris Cumming finished 4th in a Starworks Oreca-Chevrolet PC at Daytona, after sustaining damage after being hit by the Deltawing. The team were 2nd in P2 at Silverstone and 2nd again at Spa.

## #33 LM P2

**Team:** Eurasia Motorsports  
**Vehicle:** Oreca 05, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop  
**Drivers:** Pu Jun Jin(CN), Tristan Gommendy (FR), Nick de Bruijn (NL)



The Philippines-based team was founded in 2003 but is new to La Sarthe. The Team scored numerous race victories or championship titles in the Asian Le Mans, Formula 3, V6 Asia, Formula BMW Pacific Series, Formula Pilota, Formula Masters China Series and the GT Asia Series. Mark Goddard's team will enter the new Asian LM Sprint cup in 2016, where they will offer rental drives. Drivers Pu Jun Jin and Nick de Bruijn are both rookies, but Platinum driver Tristan Gommendy brings in the experience of 6 starts at Le Mans. They have a new sponsorship link with Chinese company Le Sports TV.



## #34 LM P2

**Team:** Race Performance

**Vehicle:** Oreca 03R, Judd HK 3.6 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Nicolas Leutwiler (CH), James Winslow (UK), Shinji Nakano (JP)



The 2015/6 Asian LMS LM P2 champions received an automatic invitation - Leutwiler was the P2 drivers champion. The team is also racing a P3 Ligier in the ELMS this year. They will use again their well proven open top Oreca 03R and are one of only 2 teams which will be racing with the BMW derived Judd engine this year.

## #35 LM P2

**Team:** Baxi DC Racing Alpine

**Vehicle:** Alpine A460 (Oreca 05), Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** David Cheng (CN), Ho-Pin Tung (CN), Nelson Panciatici (FR)



The 2015/6 Asian LMS LM P3 champions competing in a Ligier JS P3 scored 4 wins in this series and received an automatic invitation for the 24h of Le Mans for the LM P2 class. They joined forces with the Signatech team which supplies personnel and logistics, and the "Alpine A460" is actually a rebadged Oreca 05. The team is owned by Chinese driver David Cheng and film star and stuntman Jackie Chan, who has announced to visit the team at Le Mans. This is the very first entry from the Chinese mainland. China, despite being a huge country, doesn't play much of a role in international motorsports, the only exceptions being in the former colony Hong Kong with teams like KCMG and Macao with its famous Formula 3 Grand Prix. The team finished 7th at Silverstone & retired at Spa after damage caused by a puncture.

## #36 LM P2

**Team:** SignaTech Alpine

**Vehicle:** Alpine A460 (Oreca 05), Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** G. Menezes (US), Stéphane Richelmi (MCO), Nicolas Lapierre (FR)



Philippe Sinault's team returns again with a re-badged Oreca in the WEC. The #36 car – the number which claimed back-to-back ELMS crowns in 2013 and 2014, as well as a top-three finish in the LMP2 class at Le Mans in 2014 – will be shared by three newcomers to the Alpine team. French all-rounder Nicolas Lapierre is the most experienced driver of this squad. He was racing in the LMP1 class for Oreca and Toyota with whom he won five WEC races. In 2015 he won in the LMP2 class at Le Mans. The team finished 4th at Silverstone but won its class at Spa – a first WEC win for Menezes & Richelmi.

## #37 LM P2

**Team:** SMP Racing

**Vehicle:** BR01, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Vitaly Petrov (RU), Viktor Shaitar (RU), Kirill Ladygin (RU)



Boris Rotenberg, the owner of the SMP Bank, has moved up from the ELMS and runs 2 cars in the WEC this year. Viktor Shaitar, together with Andrea Bertolini and Aleksey Basov, was the WEC GTE Am drivers champion in 2015. Former F1 Driver Mika Salo is the team's Sporting Director. Kirill Ladygin, together with the crew of #27 BR01, finished 9th at Daytona in the P class after setting the pole time but suffered from braking Problems. Viktor Shaitar raced a SMP Ferrari 488 at Daytona but did not finish. They finished 2nd in the ELMS round at Silverstone and 4th at Imola.

## #38 LM P2

**Team:** G-Drive Racing

**Vehicle:** Gibson 015S, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Simon Dolan (UK), Giedo van der Garde (NL), Jake Dennis (UK)



Jake Dennis is racing in GP3 for Arden this year. Dutch Driver van der Garde is, after his spectacular divorce from the F1 Sauber Team, trying to find a new home in the WEC. Both van der Garde and Dennis are rookies at Le Mans, Simon Dolan has participated 5 times here, and scored already 3 WEC P2 class wins (2012 Spa, 2014 Le Mans, 2015 Spa). Harry Tincknell raced with the team in the ELMS at Silverstone instead of Dennis and they were victorious and then finished 2nd at Imola.

## #40 LM P2

**Team:** Krohn Racing

**Vehicle:** Ligier JS P2, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** Tracy Krohn (US), Niclas Jönsson (SE), João Barbosa (PT)



American team owner and driver Tracy Krohn is 61 years old and is the oldest driver on the grid this year. The team is racing in the ELMS in 2016 in conjunction with Greaves Motorsport. Barbosa was the Prototype drivers champion in IMSA and the NAEC in 2015 for Action Express Racing in a Corvette DP, and finished 4th overall at Daytona in an Action Express Coyote Corvette DP. Krohn and Jönsson raced a Flying Lizard Audi R8 at Daytona but did not finish. The Team dropped the Judd engine which they used in 2015 for a Nissan V8. 2015 ELMS Champion Björn Wirdheim replaced Barbosa at the ELMS round in Silverstone, where they finished 4th and replaced the injured Krohn at Imola where they finished 6th.



## #41 LM P2

**Team:** Greaves Motorsport

**Vehicle:** Ligier JS P2, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Memo Rojas (MX), Julien Canal (FR), Nathanael Berthon (FR)



The 2015 ELMS P2 champions, gaining an automatic invitation, continue in ELMS after their move to the WEC did not come to fruition this year. They finished 8th overall at Silverstone after transmission problems and 8th again at Imola after a puncture. Mexican driver Memo Rojas finished 4th in GTLM at Daytona in a Scuderia Corsa Ferrari F488. Julien Canal is the current holder of the WEC P2 trophy for drivers (together with Roman Rusinov and Sam Bird).

## #42 LM P2

**Team:** Strakka Racing

**Vehicle:** Gibson 015S, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Nick Leventis (UK), Danny Watts (UK), Jonny Kane (UK)



WEC regulars Strakka Racing return with their Gibson 015S with the same driver line-up as last season. It seemed like they might step up to LMP1 in a revised Dome chassis, but it's LMP2 again for them this season. They had a second car on the reserve list but this was withdrawn in March. This will be the last time we'll see this car racing at Le Mans, as in 2017 only closed cockpit prototypes will be allowed. The team finished 5th at Silverstone but retired at Spa with engine trouble.

## #43 LM P2

**Team:** RGR Sport by Morand

**Vehicle:** Ligier JS P2, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Ricardo González (MX), Bruno Senna (BR), Filipe Albuquerque (PT)



Mexican Ricardo Gonzalez's new-founded RGR Sport by Morand will field a Ligier JS/P2 with a stellar driver line-up : Ricardo Gonzalez himself, Bruno Senna and Filipe Albuquerque. This is a very ambitious new entry which immediately wants to fight for the championship and victory at Le Mans. Ricardo González, through his company Invicta, is the promoter of the new WEC Mexico City race this September. Filipe Albuquerque finished 4th overall at Daytona in an Action Express Coyote Corvette DP. The team won P2 at Silverstone, and finished 4th at Spa.



## #44 LM P2

**Team:** Manor Motorsport

**Vehicle:** Oreca 05, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Tor Graves (TH), Matt Rao (UK), Roberto Merhi (ES)



This is a new project run by ex Manor Formula 1 principals John Booth and Graeme Lowdon, with 2 cars in the WEC in 2016. We will only see one of the cars in Le Mans, because the second one was entered in the WEC after the deadline for the Le Mans entry list. This car (then driven by Thor Graves, Will Stevens and James Jakes) retired with engine trouble at Silverstone & finished 8th at Spa after brake problems.

## #46 LM P2

**Team:** Thiriet by TDS Racing

**Vehicle:** Oreca 05, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Pierre Thiriet (FR), Ry Hiramakawa (JP), Mathias Beche (CH)



Racing in the ELMS again this year, TDS (Top Drive Services) may also race in some of the NAEC rounds in IMSA (but did not race at Daytona or Sebring) and have entered into an alliance with Rebellion Timepieces. Mathis Beche with Nico Prost was WEC P1 Privateer champion in 2015. The team run by Xavier Combet & Jacques Morello has also entered a GTE Am Aston Martin Vantage (#59). 21 years old Ry Hiramakawa is actually a member of the Toyota junior driver programme and has been placed at TDS by Toyota to give him some prototype experience. In Japan he's currently racing his third season in the Super-GT series.

## #47 LM P2

**Team:** KCMG

**Vehicle:** Oreca 05, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Tsugio Matsuda (JP), Richard Bradley (UK), Matthew Howson (UK)



2015 Le Mans LM P2 class winners and last year, the first Hong Kong team to win at the race, received an automatic entry. The team did not return to the WEC in P2 after being dismayed about the sanctions given out after the on track battles with the G-Drive team last year, so Le Mans will be the only P2 outing in 2016. However, they have entered a Porsche 991 in GTE Am in the WEC this year. Richard Bradley drove the second Manor Oreca at Silverstone finishing 6th.

## #48 LM P2

**Team:** Murphy Prototypes

**Vehicle:** Oreca 03R, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Ben Keating (US), Jeroen Bleekemolen (NL), Marc Goossens (BE)



The Murphy Prototypes Oreca 03/Nissan will be driven at Le Mans by Ben Keating, Jeroen Bleekemolen and Marc Goossens. Keating competes in the WeatherTech Sportscar Challenge with a Dodge Viper and made his debut last year at Le Mans. He was hoping for a new invite at Le Mans, but they were placed 7th on the reserve list, so chances to run the Riley Viper at Le Mans became pretty tight. The collaboration between Murphy and Riley in LMP3 (Murphy racing the Riley-Ave2 with factory support) opened the door for Keating to compete again at Le Mans. He is joined by Jeroen Bleekemolen and Marc Goossens, both adding lots of experience to the team. Keating will make his debut in a prototype, and completed some extensive testing ahead of the Le Mans race.

## #49 LM P2

**Team:** Michael Shank Racing

**Vehicle:** Ligier JS P2, Honda HR28TT 2.8 ltr. V6 cyl. Twin-Turbo, Dunlop

**Drivers:** John Pew (US), Oswaldo Negri (BR), Laurens Vanthoor (BE)



This team currently runs the full season in IMSA. John Pew won the 2015 Jim Trueman Award for best semi-pro driver in IMSA Prototypes leading to the invitation in P2. At Daytona, Pew and Negri together with Olivier Pla qualified 3rd but they did not finish after engine failure in the 10th hour. They are the only P2 team racing a Honda engine this year. Pew and Negri will be joined by Laurens Vanthoor. The Belgian raced at Le Mans last year in the Honda-Ligier of OAK Racing and won the 24 Hours of the Nürburgring.

## #50 GTE Am

**Team:** Larbre Compétition

**Vehicle:** Chevrolet Corvette C7, 7.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin

**Drivers:** Yutaka Yamagishi (JP), Pierre Ragues (FR), Nick Catsburg (NL)



Team Manager Jack Leconte hopes to move up to the GTE Pro class in 2017 with an additional Corvette. Originally Italian Paolo Ruberti was scheduled to drive this car, but an accident at Hockenheim which resulted in fractures prevented him from doing this. The team scored 2 podiums in its class, with 3rd places at the WEC rounds at Silverstone & Spa. They experienced a major setback when just a couple of days prior to the test day their lead driver Paolo Ruberti suffered a fracture in an accident at Hockenheim and had to be replaced.



## #51 GTE Pro

**Team:** AF Corse

**Vehicle:** Ferrari 488 GTE, 3.9 ltr. V8 cyl. Bi-Turbo, Michelin

**Drivers:** Gianmaria Bruni (IT), J. Calado (UK), Alessandro Pier Guidi (IT)



The older normally aspirated F458 is replaced by the new bi-turbo F488 this year in GTE Pro in the WEC. Bruni and Calado raced a SMP Ferrari 488 at Daytona but did not finish. Bruni & Calado finished 2nd in the WEC round at Silverstone after having to serve a penalty of 3 minutes for an engine change. In the last WEC round in Spa-Francorchamps disaster struck, when they were close to a sure class win but with less than 10 minutes to go the engine failed.

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## #55 GTE Am

**Team:** AF Corse

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

**Drivers:** Duncan Russel Cameron (UK), M. Griffin (IR), Aaron Scott (UK)



Compared to Le Mans 2015, there is one change to the driver squad this year: Aaron Scott will replace Alex Mortimer. The team is running 2 Ferraris in the ELMS - at Silverstone (#51) for Piergiuseppe Perazzini, Marco Cioci and Rui Águas, where they finished 7th in GTE & then 7th again at the ELMS race in Imola. The second car (#55) for Cameron, Griffin & Scott finished 4th at Silverstone and then 6th at Imola.

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## #57 GTE Am

**Team:** Team AAI

**Vehicle:** Chevrolet Corvette C7.R, 6.0 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** Johnny O'Connell (US), Mark Patterson (ZA), Oliver Bryant (UK)



The team received two automatic invitations last year after their success in the 2014 Asian Le Mans Series - both cars were classified finishers in the race. They switched from Porsche to Chevrolet for this season and are racing the exact chassis which won the GTE-Pro class at Le Mans last year in the hands of the factory team. For GM factory driver Johnny O'Connell this will be his 15th start at the 24h. He has scored already four class wins and five further podium finishes at Le Mans. Team mate Oliver Bryant is a rookie at Le Mans.



## #60 GTE Am

**Team:** Formula Racing

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

**Drivers:** Johnny Laursen (DK), Christina Nielsen (DK), Mikkel Mac (DK)



The 2015 ELMS GTE champions received an automatic invitation for the GTE Am class and are sending an all-Danish squad to France. Nielsen finished 7th in GTD at Daytona in a Scuderia Corsa Ferrari 458, with Jeff Segal and at Sebring in a Ferrari 488 won the class with Segal - the first lady class winner at Sebring since Liz Halliday in 2006 and the first international win for the new 488. She then finished 2nd at Laguna Seca. The team finished 5th in GTE in the ELMS at Silverstone but missed the race at Imola after a crash for Nielsen in practice meant the car could not be repaired. Christina Nielsen will be one of two female Drivers on the grid this year - there were none in 2015. This crew has the least experience at Le Mans, all drivers are rookies.

## #61 GTE Am

**Team:** Clearwater Racing

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

**Drivers:** Weng Sun Mok (SG), Rob Bell (UK), Keita Sawa (JP)



The 2015/6 Asian LMS GT champions, competing in a McLaren 650S GT3, gained an automatic invitation in GTE Am and compete with assistance from AF Corse. Driver Weng Sun Mok is also the team owner. British driver Rob Bell arrives with the experience of 7 starts at Le Mans, with his best finish being two 23rd place in 2007 (Panoz) and 2009 (Ferrari). His team mates are both rookies at Le Mans.

## #62 GTE Am

**Team:** Scuderia Corsa

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

**Drivers:** Bill Sweedler (US), Townsend Bell (US), Jeff Segal (US)



A.C.O./IMSA "at-large" invitation for 2016, will race with assistance from Kessel Racing. Finished 3rd in GTE Am last year. Sweedler and Bell were GT Daytona driver's champions in IMSA in 2015, Sweedler winning the Bob Akin award for best nonprofessional driver in GTs in IMSA in 2015, leading to the GTE Am invitation. Eric Bachelart has joined the team as Managing Director. Bell and Sweedler finished 15th in GTD at Daytona in an O'Gara Motorsport (who have since withdrawn from IMSA) Lamborghini, with Huracán and Segal 7th in GTD in a Ferrari 458. The team are running a Ferrari F488 in GTD & GTLM in IMSA this year.

## #63 GTE Pro

**Team:** Corvette Racing

**Vehicle:** Chevrolet Corvette C7, 5.5.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin

**Drivers:** Jan Magnussen (DK), Antonio García (ES), Ricky Taylor (US)



The Pratt & Miller squad, still led by Doug Fehan, returns with an updated C7.R embracing the new safety features and with a larger rear diffuser and rear wing. García and Magnussen won the GTLM class in the 2015 NAEC. The Taylor brothers finished 2nd overall at Daytona in a Wayne Taylor Racing Dallara Corvette DP, where Garcia and Magnussen finished 2nd in GTLM with Mike Rockenfeller.

## #64 GTE Pro

**Team:** Corvette Racing

**Vehicle:** Chevrolet Corvette C7, 5.5.0 ltr. V8 cyl., Michelin

**Drivers:** Oliver Gavin (UK), Tommy Milner (US), Jordan Taylor (US)



Le Mans 2015 began with a disaster, when sister car #63 was totalled during practice and could not participate in the race. However, the sole surviving works Corvette with this driver squad took the class win in GTE pro and received an automatic invitation. Aside from Le Mans this car is a full season IMSA entry. Gavin and Milner with Marcel Fässler won GTLM at Daytona in a Corvette by 0.034 of a second from their team mates! Jordan Taylor suffered from inhaling exhaust gases when finishing 2nd overall at Daytona. Gavin & Milner finished 2nd at Long Beach after Milner, when leading, was hit by Makowiecki with 2 minutes to go, and then 7th at Laguna Seca.

## #66 GTE Pro

**Team:** Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK

**Vehicle:** Ford GT, 3.5 ltr. V6 cyl. turbo, Michelin

**Drivers:** Olivier Pla (FR), Stefan Mücke (DE), Billy Johnson (US)



Ford has entered two cars in the WEC, under the management of team principal George Howard Chappell, formerly of Prodrive and Aston Martin. The numbering of the cars commemorates Ford's 4 successes at Le Mans from 1966 to 1969. Drivers Stefan Mücke and Olivier Pla both have a lot of experience at Le Mans. They have both been here since 2008, Mücke racing GTE Aston Martins for the last 8 years, while Pla was driving in both prototype classes. Billy Johnson is new to this track, currently he is racing a Shelby-Mustang in the US Sportscar Challenge. This car finished in 5th position in the first WEC round in Silverstone. In Belgium at the second round disaster struck: following a flat tyre Stefan Mücke had a horrible high speed shunt at Raidillon in which he was fortunate to suffer only minor bruises.



## #67 GTE Pro

**Team:** Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK

**Vehicle:** Ford GT, 3.5 ltr. V6 cyl. turbo, Michelin

**Drivers:** Marino Franchitti (UK), Andy Priaulx (UK), Harry Tincknell (UK)



Franchitti and Priaulx are the regular drivers for the full WEC season on this car, and Tincknell has joined them for Le Mans. Last year he was part of the Nissan effort. Andy Priaulx finished 5th overall at Daytona in a Riley-Ford DP, together with Brendan Hartley and Alex Wurz. The team finished in 4th position in the first WEC round in Silverstone and made it to the podium with a fine 2nd place at the WEC round in Spa Francorchamps.

## #68 GTE Pro

**Team:** Ford Chip Ganassi Team US

**Vehicle:** Ford GT, 3.5 ltr. V6 cyl. turbo, Michelin

**Drivers:** Joey Hand (US), Dirk Müller (DE), Sébastien Bourdais (FR)



With the new twin turbo V6 car at Ford people hope to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their first win in 1966, with two cars running in the IMSA WeatherTech SCC run by Chip Ganassi Racing with Félix Sabates. Team principle Chip Ganassi raced at Le Mans in 1987 in a Kouros Sauber C9 but retired with gearbox trouble. Local hero Sébastien Bourdais, who was born in Le Mans, is racing again in Indycar this year for KVSH Racing. The team finished 7th in GTLM at Daytona after gearbox and electrical problems and 8th at Sebring after Müller aquaplaned into the barriers requiring extensive repairs. Hand & Müller finished 8th at Long Beach & 6th at Laguna Seca.

## #69 GTE Pro

**Team:** Ford Chip Ganassi Team US

**Vehicle:** Ford GT, 3.5 ltr. V6 cyl. turbo, Michelin

**Drivers:** Ryan Briscoe (AU), Richard Westbrook (UK), Scott Dixon (NZ)



Scott Dixon is also racing in Indycar this year for Ganassi Racing. Briscoe and Westbrook finished 9th in at Daytona in the GTLM class after gearbox and electrical problems. The team wrote history when Briscoe and Westbrook drove the car to Victory Lane at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca last month, scoring the very first win from the new Ford GT. At Le Mans they will be supported by Scott Dixon, the reigning IndyCar champion, who raced the CGR Riley-Ford DP in its final appearance at Daytona and finished 7th in the P class. Despite his long term record as an endurance racing driver (2006 & 2015 Daytona 24 Hours winner) he is a rookie at Le Mans.



## #71 GTE Pro

**Team:** AF Corse

**Vehicle:** Ferrari 488 GTE, 3.9 ltr. V8 cyl. Bi-Turbo, Michelin

**Drivers:** Davide Rigon (IT), Sam Bird (UK), Andrea Bertolini (IT)



Sam Bird joins the team from G-Drive (where he won the P2 drivers title in 2015) replacing Toni Vilander in the WEC, who joins the Risi Competizione Ferrari team in IMSA for this year. Davide Rigon finished 6th in GTLM at Daytona in a Risi Ferrari 488. The #71 was the most successful GTE car in the current WEC season. First Rigon and Bird won in Silverstone and as a consequence of the misfortune of their sister car #51 they also took the class win in Spa Francorchamps.

## #77 GTE Pro

**Team:** Dempsey – Proton Racing

**Vehicle:** Porsche 911 RSR (2016), 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** Richard Lietz (AT), Michael Christensen (DK), Philipp Eng (AT)



The reigning FIA WEC GTE Pro team champions will return to the WEC under the Proton Competition banner in 2016. Team co-owner Patrick Dempsey announced on the Dempsey Racing website that he won't return to the racetrack in 2016. Dempsey says: "My motorsports journey has been a rewarding one and allowed me to meet so many interesting people. While the focus so often is the performance of the car, in reality it is all the various personalities, from team mates to competitors to officials to fans that I remember the most... At this point in my life, after an amazing season thanks to my friends at Porsche and TAG Heuer, I need to take a step back and focus on both my family and my acting career". Dempsey Proton Racing will continue, racing a Porsche 911 RSR in the WEC this season, driven by Richard Lietz and Michael Christensen. Philipp Eng will join the team at Le Mans. Dempsey hopes his schedule will permit him to enjoy some race weekends as a team owner.

## #78 GTE Am

**Team:** KCMG

**Vehicle:** Porsche 911 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** Christian Ried (DE), Wolf Henzler (DE), Joël Camathias (CH)



KCMG transferred from LM P2 to the GTE Am category in the WEC this year. The team were 4th at Silverstone after suspension problems & 4th again at Spa. German driver Christian Ried arrives with the experience of 6 starts at Le Mans, his best finish being a 21st place in 2014 in a Porsche. He won already 3 WEC GTE Am Races (2012 in Bahrain, São Paulo, Sebring) and scored 2 GTE Am pole positions.

## #82 GTE Pro

**Team:** Risi Competizione

**Vehicle:** Ferrari 488 GTE, 3.9 ltr. V8 cyl. Bi-Turbo, Michelin

**Drivers:** Giancarlo Fisichella (IT), Toni Vilander (FI), Matteo Malucelli (IT)



This is one of the brand new Ferrari 488 entries and the driver team with its experience is definitely among the favourites for a class win. Former Formula 1 ace Fisichella together with Toni Vilander has already scored 2 class wins in the GTE Pro category in 2012 and 2014 at Le Mans. This year the team finished 6th in GTLM at Daytona & 4th at Sebring. Fisichella & Vilander finished 3rd at Long Beach & 5th at Laguna Seca.

## #83 GTE Am

**Team:** AF Corse

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

**Drivers:** François Perrodo (FR), Emmanuel Collard (FR), Rui Águas (PT)



Platinum driver Emmanuel Collard will be on the grid for the 22nd time at Le Mans. The team won the GTE Am class at Silverstone and finished 2nd at Spa after 2 drive through penalties. Rui Águas raced an AF Corse 458 in the ELMS at Silverstone finishing 7th in GTE.

## #84 Innovation

**Team:** SRT41 by OAK Racing

**Vehicle:** Morgan, Nissan VK45 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** Frédéric Sausset (FR), Christophe Tinseau (FR), J. B. Bouvet (FR)



Frédéric Sausset, a Quadruple amputee after a serious illness in 2012, revives Garage 56 for this year and has been competing regularly with Christophe Tinseau in the V de V series in a CN Ligier JS 53 Evo 2. The team will be backed by Audi Sport (the team was originally going to use an Audi engine), Axa Insurance and Oak Racing in this innovative project devoted to helping people with reduced mobility. The Morgan (adapted from the P2 winning car from 2013) features a throttle and braking system which Sausset can control with his thighs, while steering is achieved by attaching his right limb to the steering wheel, but the car can be driven normally by his co-drivers, Tinseau who is also his coach and Bouvet.



## #86 GTE Am

**Team:** Gulf Racing

**Vehicle:** Porsche 911 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** Mike Wainwright (UK), Adam Carroll (UK), Ben Barker (UK)



ELMS regulars Gulf Racing UK have stepped up to the WEC this year. They retired at Silverstone after being hit by Hartley's #1 Porsche & finished 5th at Spa. This is the only car at Le Mans which is racing in the famous blue/orange Gulf livery this year.

## #88 GTE Am

**Team:** Abu Dhabi-Proton Racing

**Vehicle:** Porsche 911 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** K. Al Qubaisi (UAE), P.Long (US), D. Heinemeier Hansson (DK)



The German squad, led by Team Boss Christian Riedt, hopes for a better result than last year, when they had to retire the car after just 44 laps. New behind the wheel are Patrick Long and David Heinemeier Hansson. Long finished 2nd in the GTD class at Daytona in a Black Swan Racing Porsche 991. Heinemeier Hansson is for the 5th time at Le Mans, with a GTE Am class win 2014 under his belt. The team took pole position in GTE Am at Silverstone, where they finished 5th after suspension problems and at Spa they finished 6th after being hit by a P2 car.

## #89 GTE Am

**Team:** Proton Competition

**Vehicle:** Porsche 911 RSR, 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** Marc Miller (US), Leh Keen (US), Cooper MacNeil (US)



Another Porsche entry with an all-American driver squad from the well experienced Proton crew: Cooper McNeil finished 9th in GTD at Daytona & 5th at Sebring in an Alex Job Racing Porsche 911. McNeil & Lee Keen finished 8th at Laguna Seca. Marc Miller comes with the experience of one start at Le Mans, MacNeil and Keen have had 2.



## #91 GTE Pro

**Team:** Porsche Motorsport North America

**Vehicle:** Porsche 911 RSR (2016), 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** Patrick Pilet (FR), Nick Tandy (UK), Kévin Estre (FR)



The 911 remains little changed from 2015 apart from side plates, a bigger rear wing mounted further back and the new safety features. Due to having a rear engine the rear diffuser is only minimally larger, although the car features a 100mm front splitter. Full season entrants in IMSA for Porsche North America/CORE Autosport, Manthey Racing will return to run the team for Le Mans. Pilet is the reigning IMSA GTLM drivers champion. The team finished 8th in GTLM at Daytona. For driver Nick Tandy, as well as for his colleague Earl Bamber in the sister car #92, this drive is a step down compared to 2015 when they scored an overall win in the LM P1 class. However, since Porsche will not enter a third car in LM P1 this year, it's GT racing again for Bamber and Tandy.

## #92 GTE Pro

**Team:** Porsche Motorsport North America

**Vehicle:** Porsche 911 RSR (2016), 4.0 ltr. flat-6 cyl. Aspirated, Michelin

**Drivers:** Frédéric Makowiecki (FR), Earl Bamber (NZ), J. Bergmeister (DE)



Full season entrants in IMSA for Porsche North America/CORE Autosport @COREautosport. Bamber, Makowiecki and Michael Christensen finished 3rd in GTLM at Daytona & Sebring, Bergmeister raced a Park Place Porsche 911 and finished 18th in GTD but retired at Sebring after driveshaft problems & finished 11th at Laguna Seca. Bamber & Makowiecki retired at Long Beach after Makowiecki hit Milner's Corvette, and finished 3rd at Laguna Seca.

## #95 GTE Pro

**Team:** Aston Martin Racing

**Vehicle:** Aston Martin Vantage GTE, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Marco Sørensen (DK), Nicki Thiim (DK), Darren Turner (UK)



Aston Martin returns with a reduced two car entry in GTE Pro in the WEC this year, with a new deal with Total Oil replacing Gulf and Paul Howarth becoming Team Principal. The Prodrive-run Vantage has been updated with the new safety features and much larger front and rear diffusers and rear wing, and is likely to be replaced by the new DB11 in 2017/8, featuring a new 4.0 litre V8 bi-turbo. All the new safety features were tested when Nicki Thiim had a heavy accident in the WEC round at Spa!

## #97 GTE Pro

**Team:** Aston Martin Racing

**Vehicle:** Aston Martin Vantage GTE, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Richie Stanaway (NZ), Jonny Adam (UK), Fernando Rees (BR)



Jonny Adam is a rookie at Le Mans but won the Sunoco Whelen Challenge in 2015 and raced at Daytona in an Action Express Coyote Chevrolet DP and finished 6th overall. Richie Stanaway finished 4th in GTD at Daytona. The team had mixed results in the current WEC season. The first round in Silverstone ended with an engine failure, this was followed by a fine 2nd place at the second round in Spa-Francorchamps.

## #98 GTE Am

**Team:** Aston Martin Racing

**Vehicle:** Aston Martin Vantage GTE, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Paul Dalla Lana (CA), Pedro Lamy (PT), Mathias Lauda (AT)



Lots of drama for this squad in 2015: they lost an almost sure class win in the GTE Am class at Le Mans, when car owner and Driver Paul Dalla Lana crashed into the barriers at the Ford chicane with just one hour to go to the finish. The team (with Richie Stanaway) finished in 4th Position in the GTD class at Daytona this year. Last year Pedro Lamy set the pole time in GTE Am in 2015 with 3:55.102. The team were 2nd at Silverstone, and set pole and won at the WEC round in Spa.

## #99 GTE Am

**Team:** Beachdean Aston Martin Racing

**Vehicle:** Aston Martin Vantage GTE, 4.5 ltr. V8 cyl. aspirated, Dunlop

**Drivers:** Andrew Howard (UK), Liam Griffin (UK), Gary Hirsch (CH)



The British GT3 champions in 2015 will race in the ELMS full time this year, after making their debut in the final round at Estoril in 2015. Andrew Howard is the owner of Beechdean Dairies Ltd and also Chairman of Wycombe Wanderers FC. He will make his debut at Le Mans at the age of 52. The team was supported by Darren Turner in the ELMS round at Silverstone, where they won their class. They then finished 5th at Imola.

## The support races

### Ferrari Challenge Europe - Round 3

This is a seven round series (2 races at each round except Le Mans) with four classes (the Trofeo Pirelli Pro, Trofeo Pirelli Am & the Coppa Shell, and including the Coppa Gentlemen for drivers over 55 and a Ladies Cup) It features up to 50 of the Ferrari F458 Italia EVO model (V8 - 4.5 litres). There are also Ferrari Challenge North American & Asian Pacific Series, and all 3 series come together for the World Finale at Daytona from 1st to 4th December 2016. The race at Le Mans will last 45 minutes. The minimum weight of the cars is 1,383 Kgs, fuel tank capacity is 86 litres, and the cars will run with white number panels and headlamps, and Pirelli tyres. No "gold" or "platinum" drivers are allowed.

#### Schedule

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 10:00 – 10.45: Free practice 1

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 11:30 – 12.15: Free practice 2

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 16:00 – 17.00: Qualifying

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 10:05 – 10:50: Race

#### Entry List

<b>Trofeo Pro</b> # 1 Björn Grossmann (DEU) # 9 Marcello Puglisi (ITA) # 27 Alessandro Vezzoni (ITA) # 37 Ján Daniš (SVK) # 50 David Gostner (ITA) # 55 Matteo "Babalus" Santoponte (ITA) # 91 Philipp Baron (AUT)	<b>Coppa Shell (GE = Coppa Gentlemen)</b> # 102 GE Claudio Schiavoni (ITA) # 106 Alexander West (SWE) # 109 Leonardo Baccarelli (ITA) # 111 Holger Harmsen (DEU) # 112 GE Rick Lovat (CAN) # 116 GE Jean-Claude Saada (USA) # 127 Tommy Lindroth (SWE) # 128 Christian Kinch (SWE) # 131 GE Kriton Lendoudis (GRE) # 133 Murat Ruhi Çuhadaroglu (TUR) # 144 Vladimir Hladik (CZE) # 150 Gary Kondakov (RUS) # 151 Thomas Löfflad (DEU) # 154 GE Michael Luzich (USA) # 152 GE Renato di Amato (ITA) # 157 Tani Hanna (LEB) # 160 Wayne Marrs (GBR/ENG) # 161 GE Thomas Gostner (ITA) # 166 GE Daniel Kuenzli (CHE) # 177 GE Fons Scheltema (NDL) # 179 J.W.Roberts (USA) # 181 GE Erich Prinoth (ITA) # 193 GE Al Hegyi (USA) # 195 GE Christian Hobohm (SWE) # 198 Eric Cheung (CAN) # 199 GE Ingvar Mattsson (SWE)
<b>Trofeo Am</b> # 13 Martin Nelson (SWE) # 32 Andreas Segler (DEU) # 41 Frederic Jean Marie Fangio (FRA) # 42 Galip Atar (TUR) # 44 Jens Liebhauser (AUT) # 59 John Farano (CAN) # 67 James Fischer (CHE) # 71 Roman Yakuskin (RUS) # 74 Andrea Marco Benenati (ITA) # 87 Peter Knoflach (CHE) # 92 Sam Smeeth # 94 Guiseppe Ramelli (ITA) # 97 Tomasso Rocca (ITA)	
<b>Coppa Shell - Ladies Cup</b> # 108 Deborah Mayer (FRA) # 173 Corinna Gostner (ITA) # 183 Manuela Gostner (ITA)	

### Michelin GT3 Le Mans Cup - Round 2 - "The Road to Le Mans"

This is a new A.C.O./Le Mans Endurance Management series for GT3 cars which supports 5 ELMS rounds with 2 hour races. The winning GT3 car of the 2016 series will receive an automatic entry in GTE Am for the 2017 LM 24 Hour race.

At Le Mans the race will also include full season LM P3s from the ELMS and Asian Le Mans Series. The race at Le Mans ("The Road to Le Mans") will be 60 minutes long and will include a mandatory pit stop of 2 minutes. Some regulations:

Bronze drivers only allowed to take part in qualifying

In GT3 there can be 1 driver (Bronze) or 2 drivers (one Bronze driver and one Bronze, Silver or Gold) - no Platinum drivers allowed

In P3 there can be 1 driver (Bronze) or 2 drivers (one Bronze and one Bronze or Silver) - no Gold or Platinum drivers allowed

A maximum of 45 cars will be allowed to take part (39 have been entered).



This race has attracted some prominent “senior” drivers: The former Le Mans winners Jan Lammers and Martin Brundle will both be behind the wheel of an LMP3.

### Schedule

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 20:30 – 21:30: Free Practice 1  
 Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 14:30 – 15:30: Free Practice 2  
 Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 18:00 – 18:30: Qualifying  
 Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 11:10 – 12:10 Race

### Entry List

#	Team	Nat	Car	Driver 1	Driver 2
2	UNITED AUTOSPORT	USA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Martin BRUNDLE	Christian ENGLAND
3	UNITED AUTOSPORT	USA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	TBA	TBA
6	360 RACING	GBR	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Terrence	James SWIFT
7	SCUDERIA VILLORBA	ITA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Roberto LACORTE	Giorgio SERNAGIOTTO
9	RACING TEAM HOLLAND	NLD	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Jan LAMMERS	B. VAN ORANJE-
10	RACE PERFORMANCE	CHE	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Marcello	TBA
11	BY SPEED FACTORY	SPA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Rebecca JACKSON	Jesus FUSTER
15	DUQUEINE ENGINEERING	FRA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	TBA	TBA
16	DUQUEINE ENGINEERING	FRA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	TBA	TBA
17	DUQUEINE ENGINEERING	FRA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	TBA	TBA
18	M RACING - YMR	FRA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Yann EHRLACHER	TBA
23	N'RACE	FRA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Jordan PERROY	Yves PROVINS
24	OAK RACING	FRA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Jacques NICOLET	TBC
31	GRAFF RACING	FRA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Paul PETIT	Jean Claude POIRIER
32	LAWRENCE TOMLINSON	GBR	GINETTA P3-15 - NISSAN	Lawrence	TBC
35	OAK RACING	FRA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Pierre NICOLET	TBC
48	PS RACING LTD	FIN	ADESS 03-NISSAN	Angelo NEGRO	TBC
61	GRAFF RACING	FRA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	James WINSLOW	Dean KOUTSOUMIDIS
76	MURPHY	IRL	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Tony AVE	Doug PETERSON
77	GRAFF RACING	FRA	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	John FALB	TBA
85	DC RACING	CHN	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	Thomas LAURENT	Alexandre COUGNAUD
99	WINEURASIA LIMITED	HKG	LIGIER JSP3 - NISSAN	William LOK	TBA
5	FFF RACING TEAM by	CHN	LAMBORGHINI HURACAN	Fu SONGYANG	Andrea CALDARELLI
8	SCUDERIA VILLORBA	ITA	FERRARI F458 ITALIA GT3	Cédric MEZARD	Steeve HIESSE
14	AF CORSE	ITA	FERRARI F458 ITALIA GT3	Pierre-Marie DE	Rui AGUAS
19	TOCKWITH	GBR	AUDI R8 LMS	Nigel MOORE	Phillip HANSON
22	TF SPORT	GBR	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE	Andrew JARMAN	Devon MODELL
25	FF CORSE	GBR	FERRARI F488	Ivor DUNBAR	Johnny MOWLEM
26	CLASSIC & MODERN	FRA	FERRARI F458 ITALIA GT3	Nicolas MISSLIN	Matthieu VAXIVIERE
34	TF SPORT	GBR	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE	Salih YOLUC	Euan HANKEY
37	IDEC SPORT RACING	FRA	MERCEDES AMG GT3	Patrice LAFARGUE	Paul LAFARGUE
44	DKR ENGINEERING	LUX	BMW Z4 GT3	Jan STORM	Niels BOUWHUIS
50	TEAM LARBRE	FRA	MERCEDES AMG GT3	Christian	Franck LABESCAT
51	AF CORSE	ITA	FERRARI F488	Thomas FLOHR	Francesco
55	FFF RACING TEAM by	CHN	MC LAREN 650S	Hiroshi	Adrian QUAIFE-HOBBS
57	AF CORSE	ITA	FERRARI F488	TBA	TBA
66	BARWELL MOTORSPORT	GBR	LAMBORGHINI HURACAN	Mark POOLE	Richard ABRA
71	AF CORSE	ITA	FERRARI F458 ITALIA GT3	Mads RASMUSSEN	Felipe BARREIROS
88	MENTOS RACING	NLD	PORSCHE 911 GT3 R	Egidio PERFETTI	Klaus BACHLER

## Le Mans History 1990 - Banditti of the Plains

Courtesy of John Brooks (all pictures) and Kerry Morse (text. This story originated from [www.doubledclutch.com](http://www.doubledclutch.com).



As promised in the last post, I have a story to tell regarding chassis 288 from Tom Walkinshaw Racing, it was put together by Kerry Morse a few years back when we ran SportsCarPros together. Typical of Kerry's work, it is too good to molder in the archives of a dormant website. Why now? Well the car was one of the stars of the Retromobile on the Hall & Hall stand, more on that topic later. Kerry and I both have a personal connection to the story and 288. I was shooting with Keith and Mark Sutton at the time and had introduced them to Castrol, which led to work with Jaguar and Silk Cut, so we were busy at Le Mans in 1990. If you have five minutes visit their archive [HERE](#) you will soon lose an hour or two with all the amazing photography. It is with their permission that I use these images. Kerry's connection is that he arranged the purchase of this car for a client a few years back. Plus we both hold Tony Dowe in high regard, this is really his tale.....

**John Brooks, February 2013**

There are winners and there are WINNERS. Tony Dowe obviously belongs to that second group of selected individuals. John Brooks and I want to thank Tony for all his efforts over the years of getting great performances from the teams he has been involved with. He makes our job a lot more interesting. What was it that mean old Ron Dennis once said to a gathered group of hacks. I think it was something along the lines of "We make the history, you only report it". Tony Dowe has made and continues to make history.

**Kerry Morse, February 2005**



## What it takes... Tony Dowe on winning at Le Mans with Jaguar

I worked for Tom Walkinshaw Racing from 1987 until 1998 as Managing Director of TWR USA. During this period one of my "duties" was to supply a couple of cars as part of the massive TWR/Jaguar effort at Le Mans. Unfortunately it was always made clear, never by Tom Walkinshaw of course, that the "American" cars were only there to support the real effort that was run from Kiddlington. Obviously this became a bit "second hand" and so after being the supporting act in 1988 and 1989 I gave some serious thought as to how to:

- a) Win the race
- b) Circumvent the restrictions placed on my U.S. team because of the supporting role we were expected to play.

### The Rules of the Game

Let me say here that you should only undertake such an action if you're sure that you can carry it off! Because to achieve anything less than the win is to open one's self up for a very long period looking for a new job! Of course, if you win, then most of your sins are forgiven!

I always felt that TWR USA were a better race team than the UK team for no other reason than by the time Le Mans came around we had done a 24 hour race, a 12 hour race and a couple of sprint races. The Group "C" team had probably only done a single race and some testing. We were very sharp by 1990. We had finished 1st and 2nd at the Daytona 24 Hours that year, 1990, and had had such a better team we had each car race each other the whole 24 hours. It was a fantastic race.

TWR USA also had a couple of very good engineers, Ian Reed, recently head of development at Penske, and Dave Benbow, recently with Prodrive. Ian and Dave were very good in their respective areas. Both were and are lateral thinkers and complemented each other very well. Ian was, as now, very good with the suspension and we were running dampers, for example, that were much ahead of the ones used by the UK team. We had briefly used a pair on the rear of the car in 1989 when Davy Jones led the race in the early stages. The biggest problem that had to be overcome was that, along with most of the other team cars, we were only allowed a single engine for both practice and the race. The only team car that had a qualifying engine was the one that was led by Martin Brundle.



As we were now running the V-6 turbo cars on a regular basis in the IMSA series, we were able to take one of our V-12 cars out of the mix and prepare it with a lot of love and care. We used chassis 288, which had won our first ever IMSA race in the USA back at the 1988 Daytona 24 Hours. The lead mechanic was Winston Bush, still in Indianapolis, and he did a super job of building a car to the exact same specification as the UK cars!



## Dowe Chemicals

Now we get to the interesting bit!

The week before we had to leave for Le Mans we were racing at Lime Rock Park. Super place and made better when John Nielsen and Price Cobb won with a turbo car for the first time, exactly a year after we had debut of the first TWR Jaguar turbo. There to see the car win was the head of TWR engines, Allen Scott. Allen is now back in New Zealand enjoying his retirement and rallying a Mazda. After the race we had a super night at a very nice local restaurant run by an English guy called Terry. Lots of drink, etc. After the meal I took Allen to one side and asked him why “my” car could not have a qualifying engine for Le Mans? Allen, now very “mellow” told me to use common sense, “It’s just not going to happen”.

I then asked what would happen if we had a mis-fire at the end of qualifying that could not be found. Allen said, “obviously there would be spare engines for such an eventuality.” Allen was booked on a flight from Kennedy the next morning back to the UK. I then played the trump card. I produced an envelope from inside my jacket and told Allen that inside was a ticket for the next morning’s Concorde flight to London. It was his if he found a problem with our engine after Le Mans qualifying. After a moment of hesitation Allen looked around and then took the envelope and put it in his jacket pocket. The game was on! Only Ian Reed was aware of what I was planning. And he was like a kid when I told him the bait had been taken. The now finished “vanilla” 288 chassis was sent to the UK for painting and, I suppose inspection to see that we had built the car to the decreed spec.



We then set about putting together a “care package” of our IMSA “goodies” for fitting when we got to Le Mans. We had different roll bars, front and rear. Different shock absorbers front and rear. But the biggest item were some very special one piece (Billet) brake calipers that Ian had designed and we had built here in Atlanta. They were made to accept a much thicker brake pad than standard, Performance Friction made the pads for us. So now we could also go further than the UK cousins without a pad change. We had also had

“Rabbit” (A legendary fabricator who still lives in the Georgia mountains) build us some really trick pad changing tools. The gearbox was built with a limited slip differential. This was quite different from the UK cars because the thinking was that with a “spool” fitted if a drive shaft failed you could get back to the pits! Well, unbeknown to the guys in England, we had Kenny Hill of Metalore (they now make most of the F1 world’s hubs/drive shafts and axles) make us some super strong F1 type drive shafts.

## Can you hear me Major Tom?

One further item that would prove very useful was the use of the American radios. Every year we had gone to Le Mans the circuit length meant that the European radios supplied by a guy called “Crackly Ken”. They usually gave up when the cars left the pits! The last thing that we had changed at TWR USA was the rear wing. With the additions of the chicanes along the Mulsanne straight, Le Mans was now the same aero level as Daytona, things were just going our way.

## Lock, stock and two smoking barrels...

So now the fun started.

We started practice with “just a few bits” changed, radios etc, so there was not much notice taken of what we were doing. There was a bit more interest when the brakes went on and the roll bars were changed, but at the early morning meetings the comments were mainly directed towards us in the manner of “So what silly things have the you Americans changed now?”

Roger Silman, the UK Team Manager, was more concerned with why Jan Lammers could not match Brundle’s practice times. He did not like drivers, or anyone else for that matter, to think for themselves about how the race should be run. I’m sure that Tom had some idea of what we were doing as he was a regular visitor to IMSA races and was aware of our development items, but he never said anything to me about what we were up to.



Our driver lineup was pretty good, "Big" John Nielsen, Price Cobb and Eliseo Salazar. Obviously John and Price knew what we had fitted and were very happy because it brought the car to the same specification as they had been used to racing. Unfortunately after the end of practice, guess what? Allan Scott found the "misfire" and we had to change engines! Another hurdle crossed, because if Allan had gone back on the "deal" then the whole plan would have probably sunk out of sight!

Friday's pre race preparation brought to light another small problem. The gearbox "dog rings" were being used by one of the drivers in a way

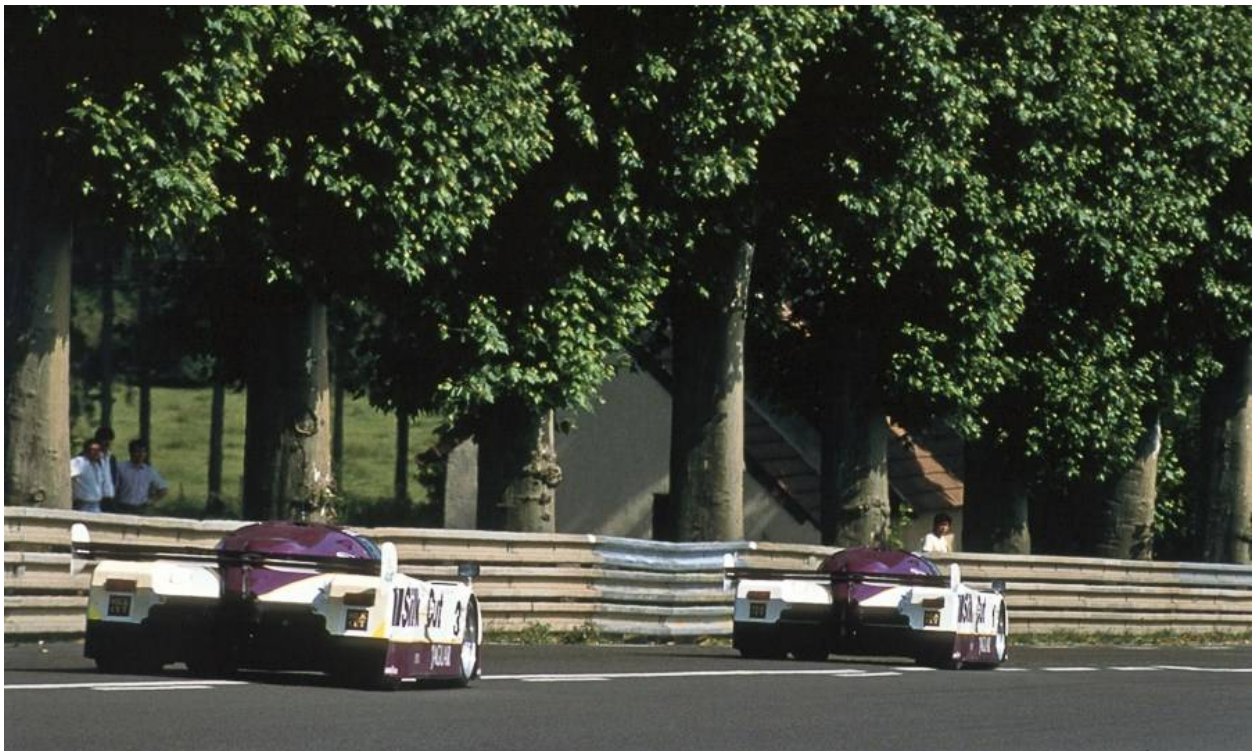
that was too heavy on the gear changes. As we had lots of experience of John and Price it was obvious that Eliseo was the problem. I went and found Julian Randles, then of Spice Engineering, who Eliseo drove for sometimes in IMSA and had a "discussion" about his experiences with Eliseo and his use of the gearbox. Julian confirmed that Eliseo's style of gear changing was quite heavy on the dog rings. I had a long day of thinking about how to deal with this problem, and it was a problem, because with a dog box we were going to probably lose 3rd and maybe 4th gear if history was any guide.

I went to dinner with Tom, his lady Martine, and a guy from Jaguar who I honestly can't remember who he was. During dinner I told Tom of my concerns and suggested that it might be a good strategy if I kept Eliseo out of the car for as long as possible in order to keep a seat free should one of the other "favourite" drivers had a problem. Tom agreed and so at our race morning briefing I told the drivers that we were going to use "Big John" and Price through the evening and night until Sunday morning, when Eliseo would be "fresh" for the remainder of the race.

### Sex Pistols and the holiday on the grid

Race day: Just as we parked the car on the "dummy" grid, JJ found a small fuel leak from one of the fuel pump unions... Now, as it is today, there can be no work done on the car on the dummy grid. So what were we to do?

Well one of our XJR-12 design features was that the whole fuel system, pumps, filters etc, were mounted in the left-hand side pod on quick release clips. So it would only take moments to change them. The problem was how to make the change with the whole ACO "police" walking up and down the grid!



Fortunately we had made some very nice mock leather "pouches" to protect the spare pump assemblies in. While the whole team posed in front of the car with, what else, the Hawaiian Tropic girls, JJ slid inside and changed the leaking pump assembly for a new one! Honestly! I think that in another life JJ would have made a great David Copperfield.



## The numbers added up for a very Goodyear...

The race its-self was quite easy.

One of the big race advantages we had was that having run at Daytona we knew that the “standard” 480 compound rear Goodyear tires would not double stint on the Jaguars at Le Mans. So back in February at Daytona we had run a much harder 600 compound tire during the heat of the day. When we arrived at Le Mans I found that Goodyear Europe had no 600 compound tires available! Our tire guy for this event was the great American Airlines guy, Kenny Szymanski. I called back to the States and had 10 sets of 600 compound tires shipped in without anyone knowing, thanks to Ken Moore of Rapid Movements. Kenny S. did his bit by removing the tire coding from each tire and hiding the tires inside the old pit tunnels.

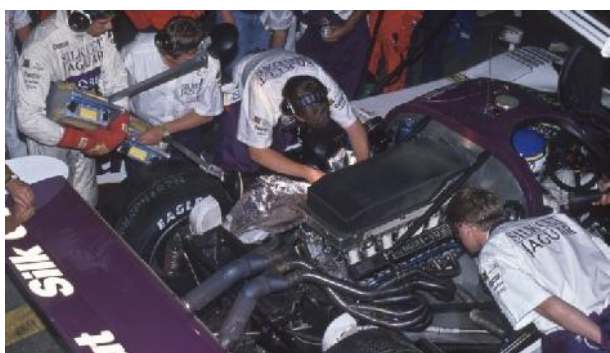


When we started double stinting the tires and beating the UK team “hands down” in the pits, I had a very “uptight” meeting with Tom as to what was going on!!! I had to come clean as to what was going on and we were forced into giving some of our rear tires to Brundle’s car. All of this while trying to run the race! One of the other “fun” bits happened around 10:00 PM. A car had caught fire at the Porsche curves and the ACO had put out the Safety Car. John Nielsen had just been in for fuel a couple of laps earlier and he called in and told me it would take a bit of time to clean up. Just like we would over here. Good US radios at work. I called him straight into the pits to top off the fuel, as you would! Boy, did that

move unleash a load of trouble. I had Tom right in my face about giving up track position. Obviously the UK team cars continued running around under a caution flag while we topped off the car, so they then had to pit under a green when we went back to racing! About an hour later we went into the lead after everyone else had had to pit for fuel, etc under a green. This was a lead we never gave up.

## Big Bad John

The next bit of drama was that Price was slowly dehydrating, remember, these cars had no power steering, little ventilation and no drink bottles, and over 5000 lbs. of downforce in those days. So during the middle of the night we had to ask “Big John” to triple stint (!!) while Price recovered. A star then, still a star now. Then the Brundle car, which had been fighting a slow water leak, finally called it a day. Tom came and asked me if I thought the car would be able to last until the finish (!) You can imagine my reply.



TW took Eliseo off our team and told him he was not going to drive and he was putting Brundle in instead. You can imagine how heartbroken Eliseo was with this decision. So around 8:00 am Brundle got in the car.

## The Mechanics of the Isle of Sodor

The only thing we now had to deal with was the 3rd gear had decided it had enough of the chicanes and gave up. This meant that the drivers had to change from 2nd to 4th, not a great problem, but enough to get some very dirty looks from TW! The final drama was a couple of stops from the end we had a scheduled brake pad change and JJ (John Jackson, our regular chief mechanic, ex Williams F1) found a couple of caliper pistons leaking! So we had to change one of our mega expensive calipers. Now they were a bit tight on the studs, so Pete “Hodge” (Peter Hodgkinson, a New Zealander and now the new car build manager at BAR) took a very big hammer to our beautiful machined caliper to quickly remove it! Job done and not too much time lost.



Then politics started to take over. The “Management” wanted to have the UK team suddenly involved so they would look part of the effort. No way.

### The Day of the Jackal

So we won. Very satisfying.



Mike Dale, then MD of Jaguar North America and a true racer, had supported us all the way and was terrific as the laps wound down. Our car was the only chassis that had won both the 24 hours of Daytona and Le Mans as far as I'm aware of. Now it was lots of celebrating. I remember taking TW back to the airport and he told me I had “done good” I then had to find my way back to the chateau where we were staying. Now that was a trip. I was so tired, and a bit the worse for Champagne. I can't remember how many times I went off the road. And all the while driving Tom's personal Jaguar.

The next morning we went back to the circuit to see the car and it was very emotional for us when we untapped the engine cover and lifted the rear deck off. Never lifted it in the whole race. A couple of weeks later the whole team who had been at Le Mans went to New Jersey and had dinner with Mike Dale and Bob Burden, another super Jaguar person, in a small restaurant a few miles from the Jaguar Headquarters. Very nice.

There are very few people that knew of the lengths that we had all gone to get this result, so this is the first time I've told the whole story. Thanks to all of the “villains” that took part, it is something to tell the kids when you grow up. I hope that we will be forgiven, but only ever do this if you are sure you're going to win.

## 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 race week used to be the Monday prior to the race when the administrative checking & scrutineering started, which 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 held in the "Place de la République". As parking is much more restricted than previously it is best to leave your car at the circuit and take the tram. See the chapter "Transportation in Le Mans" for information about the tram route.

Some team bosses and drivers are probably not happy that they have to drag everything including themselves into central Le Mans but it is this unique event which gets everyone in the mood, and 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, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 2.00 pm – 6.00 pm

#	Team	Car	Admin. Checks	Scrutineering
22	SO24 ! BY LOMBARD RACING	LIGIER JS P2 - JUDD	14.00	14.30
23	PANIS BARTHEZ	LIGIER JS P2 - NISSAN	14.10	14.40
1	PORSCHE TEAM	PORSCHE 919 HYBRID	14.20	14.50
2	PORSCHE TEAM	PORSCHE 919 HYBRID	14.30	15.00
35	BAXI DC RACING ALPINE	ALPINE A460 - NISSAN	14.40	15.10
36	SIGNATECH ALPINE	ALPINE A460 - NISSAN	14.50	15.20
84	SRT41 BY OAK RACING	MORGAN LMP2 - NISSAN	15.00	15.30
91	PORSCHE MOTORSPORT	PORSCHE 911 RSR (2016)	15.10	15.40
92	PORSCHE MOTORSPORT	PORSCHE 911 RSR (2016)	15.20	15.50
50	LARBRE COMPETITION	CHEVROLET CORVETTE C7-	15.30	16.00
41	GREAVES MOTORSPORT	LIGIER JS P2 - NISSAN	15.40	16.10
28	PEGASUS RACING	MORGAN - NISSAN	15.50	16.20
5	TOYOTA GAZOO RACING	TOYOTA TS050 - HYBRID	16.00	16.30
6	TOYOTA GAZOO RACING	TOYOTA TS050 - HYBRID	16.10	16.40
26	G-DRIVE RACING	ORECA 05 - NISSAN	16.20	16.50
38	G-DRIVE RACING	GIBSON 015S - NISSAN	16.30	17.00
66	FORD CHIP GANASSI TEAM UK	FORD GT	16.40	17.10
67	FORD CHIP GANASSI TEAM UK	FORD GT	16.50	17.20
68	FORD CHIP GANASSI TEAM	FORD GT	17.00	17.30
69	FORD CHIP GANASSI TEAM	FORD GT	17.10	17.40
46	THIRIET BY TDS RACING	ORECA 05 - NISSAN	17.20	17.50
48	MURPHY PROTOTYPES	ORECA 03R - NISSAN	17.30	18.00

### Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 9.30 am – 5.00 pm

#	Team	Car	Admin. Checks	Scrutineering
57	TEAM AAI	CHEVROLET CORVETTE C7-	9.30	10.00
60	FORMULA RACING	FERRARI 458 ITALIA	9.40	10.10
61	CLEARWATER RACING	FERRARI 458 ITALIA	9.50	10.20
55	AF CORSE	FERRARI 458 ITALIA	10.00	10.30
83	AF CORSE	FERRARI 458 ITALIA	10.10	10.40
51	AF CORSE	FERRARI 488 GTE	10.20	10.50
71	AF CORSE	FERRARI 488 GTE	10.30	11.00
27	SMP RACING	BR01 - NISSAN	10.40	11.10
37	SMP RACING	BR01 - NISSAN	10.50	11.20
12	REBELLION RACING	REBELLION R-ONE - AER	11.00	11.30
13	REBELLION RACING	REBELLION R-ONE - AER	11.10	11.40
77	DEMPSEY-PROTON RACING	PORSCHE 911 RSR (2016)	11.20	11.50
88	ABU DHABI-PROTON RACING	PORSCHE 911 RSR	11.30	12.00
89	PROTON COMPETITION	PORSCHE 911 RSR	11.40	12.10
78	KCMG	PORSCHE 911 RSR	11.50	12.20
47	KCMG	ORECA 05 - NISSAN	12.00	12.30
33	EURASIA MOTORSPORT	ORECA 05 - NISSAN	13.00	13.30
4	BYKOLLES RACING TEAM	CLM P1/01 - AER	13.10	13.40
98	ASTON MARTIN RACING	ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE	13.20	13.50
99	ASTON MARTIN RACING	ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE	13.30	14.00
95	ASTON MARTIN RACING	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE	13.40	14.10
97	ASTON MARTIN RACING	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE	13.50	14.20
86	GULF RACING UK	PORSCHE 911 RSR	14.00	14.30

7	AUDI SPORT TEAM JOEST	AUDI R18	14.10	14.40
8	AUDI SPORT TEAM JOEST	AUDI R18	14.20	14.50
42	STRAKKA RACING	GIBSON 015S - NISSAN	14.30	15.00
44	MANOR	ORECA 05 - NISSAN	14.40	15.10

#	Team	Car	Admin. Checks	Scrutineering
25	ALGARVE PRO RACING	LIGIER JS P2 - NISSAN	14.50	15.30
82	RISI COMPETIZIONE	FERRARI 488 GTE	15.00	15.40
62	SCUDERIA CORSA	FERRARI 458 ITALIA	15.10	15.50
63	CORVETTE RACING - GM	CHEVROLET CORVETTE	15.30	16.00
64	CORVETTE RACING - GM	CHEVROLET CORVETTE	15.40	16.10
40	KROHN RACING	LIGIER JS P2 - NISSAN	15.50	16.20
49	MICHAEL SHANK RACING	LIGIER JS P2 - HONDA	16.00	16.30
30	EXTREME SPEED	LIGIER JS P2 - NISSAN	16.10	16.40
31	EXTREME SPEED	LIGIER JS P2 - NISSAN	16.20	16.50
43	RGR SPORT BY MORAND	LIGIER JS P2 - NISSAN	16.30	17.00
34	RACE PERFORMANCE	ORECA 03R - JUDD	16.40	17.10

## Club Arnage Forum Gathering

The traditional CA gathering in the race village will be on **Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> 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 track action 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 so the newbies can find us!





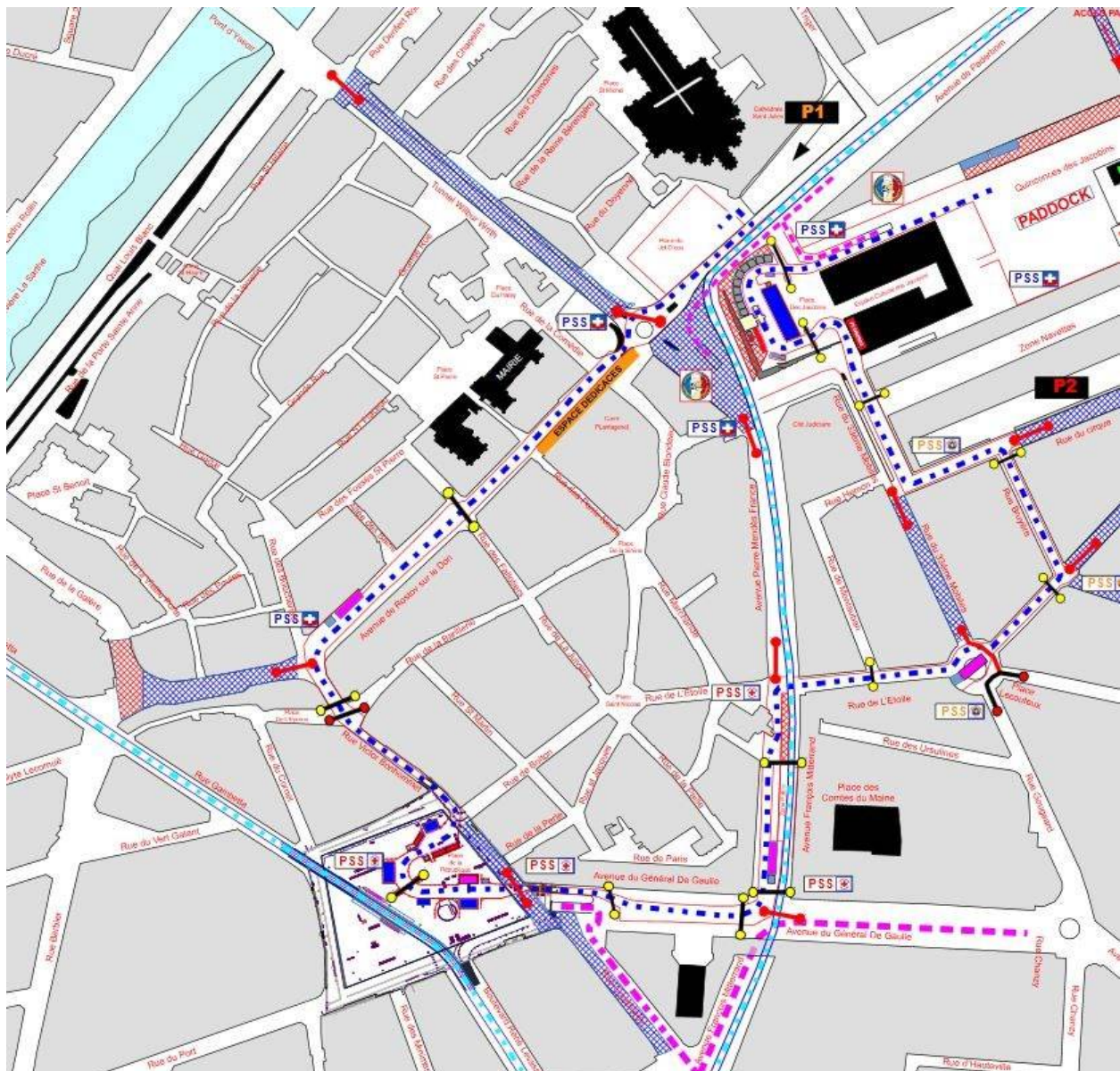
## The Drivers Parade

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 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 2016 will be held in Le Mans city centre on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016 from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm.**

**Do not plan to go there by car! Take the tram 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 blue dotted line in the map below shows the route of the driver parade 2016, see the cathedral on top for orientation.



## Le Mans History – Graveyard Shift at Le Mans 1974

*Recollections of La Sarthe by Michael Keyser, see his site [www.autosportsltd.com](http://www.autosportsltd.com)*

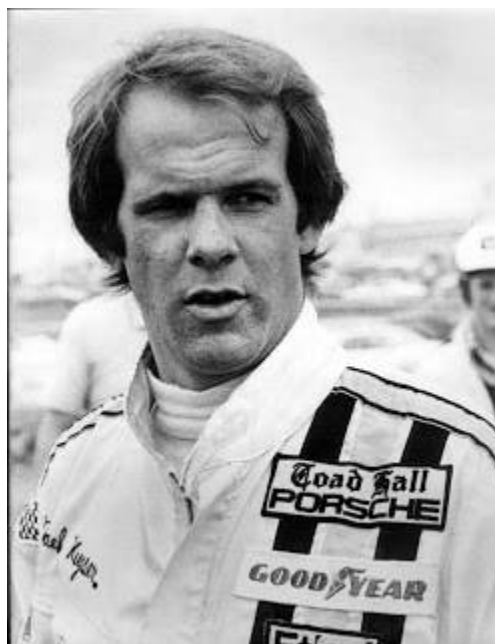
This is written at 2 A.M. on October 10, five days after my 68th birthday. I can't sleep, so I write. My mind throws me back forty-one years to Le Mans. Same time, different date and place.

I'd entered my Toad Hall Porsche RSR #73 with co-drivers Paul Blancpain and Milt Minter. I won't go into details of how it all happened, because there's no time. Milt is coming in and I'm waiting in the pits. Paul is back in the caravan. It's just stopped raining and the asphalt is beginning to dry.

We had problems early on. I started. The clutch began slipping a few laps in. We had to pull the engine and replace a seal. Now we're in the hunt, class-wise. It's my day in the barrel. An old joke. Ask me to tell it someday.

Before I know it, I'm in the car. Belts tightened, I'm off. We have a radio, a Motorola, but it only works sporadically. We ran a line to an antenna on the top of the pits. How I activated the thing I can't remember. A button on the steering wheel? Regardless, it's useless.

I join the scrum. Cars flash past as I climb through the Dunlop curve, crest the rise under the Dunlop Bridge and dive towards the Esses. I do a lap and all seems in order. The engine is pulling strong and the brakes work. The car handles well. What more can you ask? I love my RSR. My small band of brothers in the signaling pits at Mulsanne gives me a thumbs up as I accelerate past. I wave. Fast forward.



Michael Keyser



Toad Hall Porsche RSR #73

I pass the pits and steel myself for the Dunlop Bend. No silly back and forth like now. The car grips the curve and I pop over the rise. A slight stomach in the mouth feeling, then a drop down toward the Esses again. I've passed a car or two and been passed. On to Tertre Rouge, a slightly off camber right hander. Down the shute and onto the Mulsanne.



I shift into 4th, then 5th and settle in for the long ride. Time to relax, sort of. I pass the restaurant on the left. A blur of faces under umbrellas behind the guard rail. The road is straight but far from flat. The undulations throw me up and down as I approach top speed. Maybe 160.



**Michael Keyser and Milt Minter**

There's a breeze that moves me a little to the right when I pass an opening in the trees. So I keep to the left. No cars ahead, but in my mirror I see lights, approaching fast, and the feared right-hand bend is approaching, taken flat out. I pull to the right. You DO NOT want to be on the outside through the bend. Let the fast cars take THAT line.

They pass me..1-2-3 in the bend. I refer to my notes 41 years later. It's a Matra MS670C, a Mirage GR7 and the Martini RSR. ZAP, ZAP, ZAP. They lead me over the hump, now gone, and as they approach Mulsanne corner, dart left and right, hunting and pecking for an advantage. Their problem. I'm down to 2nd and out of Mulsanne. A glance at the signaling pits as the leaders? Race into the distance. I pass a small prototype limping along with a problem. Not mine.



Through the first fast sweeper, then on to the second where Jo left us two years ago. I came on the mayhem in another Porsche then, but don't think of it now. More work to do. Into Indianapolis, then a short squirt to Arnage.

Up through the fast sweeping section to the Porsche curves. In previous years I'd be facing White House. Gone, but not forgotten. Now I really have to pay attention. A series of fast off- camber curves. Better get it right. Then down to the old Ford Chicane. One lap down, how many to go?

But now the fog rolls in.





On the Mulsanne, it comes and goes. One lap it's there. The next it's gone. It moves like a white demon up from the banks of the Sarthe. Do I brake and knock off speed or chance it and keep a foot to the floor. Is it twenty feet or five hundred yards? Some laps it hovers twenty feet above, making my speed more pronounced. The next it's gone. Moved on to the countryside with the sleeping cows, goats, and pigs. I wish I were them, sort of.

Two hours and I'm due to come in. BOX they tell me at Mulsanne. A Matra passes with a scream. I'm ready. Enough, for now. I unbuckle my belts as I come down pit lane. A coffee, a hot crepe and a girlfriend await. The crew is poised, and Paul is there. A tall fellow. Good guy. Seppi's business

partner. Jo was my hero. And Pedro. Two years gone.

A few more stints. In one I make a misstep drifting into the gray and kiss the Armco a glancing blow in the Porsche curves. "They always pick up speed when you hit the grass," Jackie Oliver once said. So true. The same as I did two years ago. Déjà vu. You idiot. I limp to the pits with a flat tire and broken wheel. Again we finish, but back in the field. 20th according to the record.

I'm at the wheel on the last lap. Hey, it's my car. A line of waving flags from the corner workers. Thanks, I signal back. Is that a tear? Again I've cheated death. Some haven't....



## 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, and 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 and Corvette, and Guests of Honour 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, an ACO Ticket Office, an air conditioned cinema, a free car wash, live music and lots more! The event, with free entrance and parking, is held from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016. Average figures for visitors are about 5,000 and classic and sports cars around 1000.

Address: Association Saint Saturnin Classic British Welcome, Centre du Val de Vray- Rue de l'Eglise, F-72650 Saint Saturnin, France. GPS position: Latitude 48°03'42.09" N, Longitude 0°09'19.17" E

Website [www.classicbw.org](http://www.classicbw.org).

**Theme 2016** : For the first time the Saint-Saturnin Classic British Welcome will have the French marque « **Alpine** » as a theme. VIP visitors will be Jean-Pierre Jaussaud (who won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1978 and 1980) and Mauro Bianchi who drove for Alpine at Le Mans in 1968.

## The winners' handprints

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 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.

In 2016 the ceremony will be held on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> June from 6.00 pm – 6.30 pm at the Place St. Nicholas, Le Mans city centre.

## 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 took a mate of his 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! There are also paramedic vans posted around the circuit - ask for "poste de secours" or "poste medicale".

## The "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.

## 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.)

## The Museum

Just a short hop away from the main entrance of the track, the museum is well worth a visit. It was founded in 1961, and a new building was constructed in 1991 with about 4.000 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space, a restaurant with about 100 places and a souvenir shop. There are around 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.

### Address:

Le musée des 24 heures  
9 Place Luigi Chinetti  
F-72100 Le Mans  
Phone : +33-(0)2- 43 72 72 24  
Fax : +33-(0)2- 43 85 38 96

### Tickets

Adults: 8,50 €  
Adolescents (10 - 18 years): 6 €  
Children (less 10 years): free  
Discounts for groups and for A.C.O. members are available

### Hour and admission during race week 2016:

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June: 10.00 am to 7.00 pm (last entrance at 6.00 pm), cafeteria from 11.00 am to 6.00 pm  
Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June: 10.00 am to 7.00 pm (last entrance at 6.00 pm), cafeteria from 11.00 am to 6.00 pm  
Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June: 10.00 am to 10.00 pm (last entrance at 9.00 pm), cafeteria from 10.00 am to 8.00 pm  
Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June: 10.00 am to 10.00 pm (last entrance at 9.00 pm), cafeteria from 10.00 am to 8.00 pm  
Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June: 10.00 am to 7.00 pm (last entrance at 6.00 pm), cafeteria from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm  
Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June: 10.00 am to 00.00 pm (last entrance at 11.00 pm) , cafeteria from 10.00 am to 11.00 pm  
Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June: 10.00 am to 7.00 pm (last entrance at 6.00 pm), cafeteria from 11.00 am to 6.00 pm

## Radio Le Mans



Radio Le Mans is an English-language Radio Station which was initially launched by a group of British motorsport enthusiasts. 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. Back then Radio Le Mans was only on air for a few days in June and existed (barely) from year to year, often scrambling for sponsors right up until (and sometimes during) race week. The old hands among race fans for sure remember the sponsoring by a company named "Jiffy Condoms" at the beginning of the nineties, resulting in quite a few jokes by the radio commentators: "Have a stiffy, grab a Jiffy!"

Nowadays Radio Le Mans is a professional operation and has expanded into a year-round resource and is broadcasting many races. As usual the station will be on-air in the vicinity of the circuit, starting with the live coverage on Sunday with scrutineering. During race week they provide a good mix of music and live commentary via FM transmitter. Tune in at 91.2 FM.

## Internet Access

**Wi-Fi Hotspots:** A free wireless internet access point is available at the McDonalds on the Mulsanne straight (1st chicane) - all McDonalds branches in Le Mans seem to offer this service. Should you stumble across other Wi-Fi hotspots this year, please 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. 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.



## 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; and all traffic from the track to the city is handled by the tram service instead.

### The Tram

There are currently 3 tram lines, but only one (T1) is really relevant for the race visitor.

**T1 - University to Antares/MMArena:** This is the line which most people will need. It runs from Antares, inside the race 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.

#### Important stops

- Antarès/MMArena – this is the stop inside the circuit
- Glonieres / Centre Sud – get off here if you need to do some shopping in the big Carrefour-complex
- Gares – This is the main railway station
- Republique – Get off here to visit the scrutineering or 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 approx.4 € 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 T1 - UNIVERSITE – ANTARES, prices: 2,90 € for a return ticket, 4,00 € for a day pass and 10,00 € for a 3-day-pass. Tickets are sold from automatic machines at stops, at Setram agencies and from the bus conductors.

### Special services for the race week 2016:

#### Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June /Scrutineering in the city centre)

T1 and T2: One tram every 12 minutes from 1.00 pm to 7:00 pm

#### Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June (Practice Sessions)

T1: One tram every 10 minutes. Last departure from University at 01.45 am, from Antarès/MMArena at 01:00 am

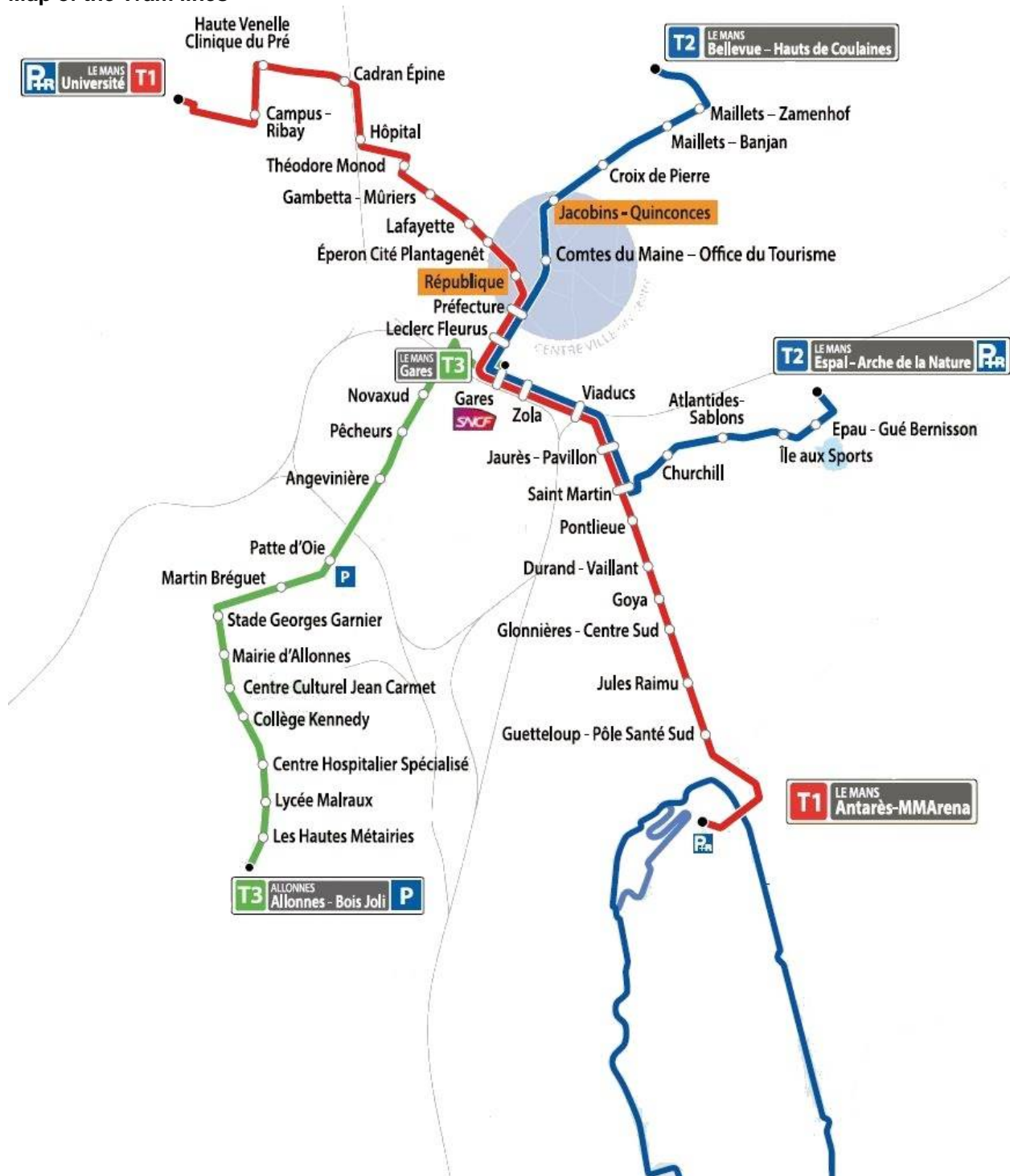
#### Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June (Drivers Parade)

T1: one tram every 9 minutes. from 6.00 am to 9.00 am, every 6 minutes from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm, every 9 minutes from 3.00 pm to 11.00 pm, every 12 minutes from 11.00 pm to 3.00 am, every 30 minutes from 3.00 am to 7.00 am.

#### Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June and Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> June (Race)

T1: 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

## Map of the Tram lines



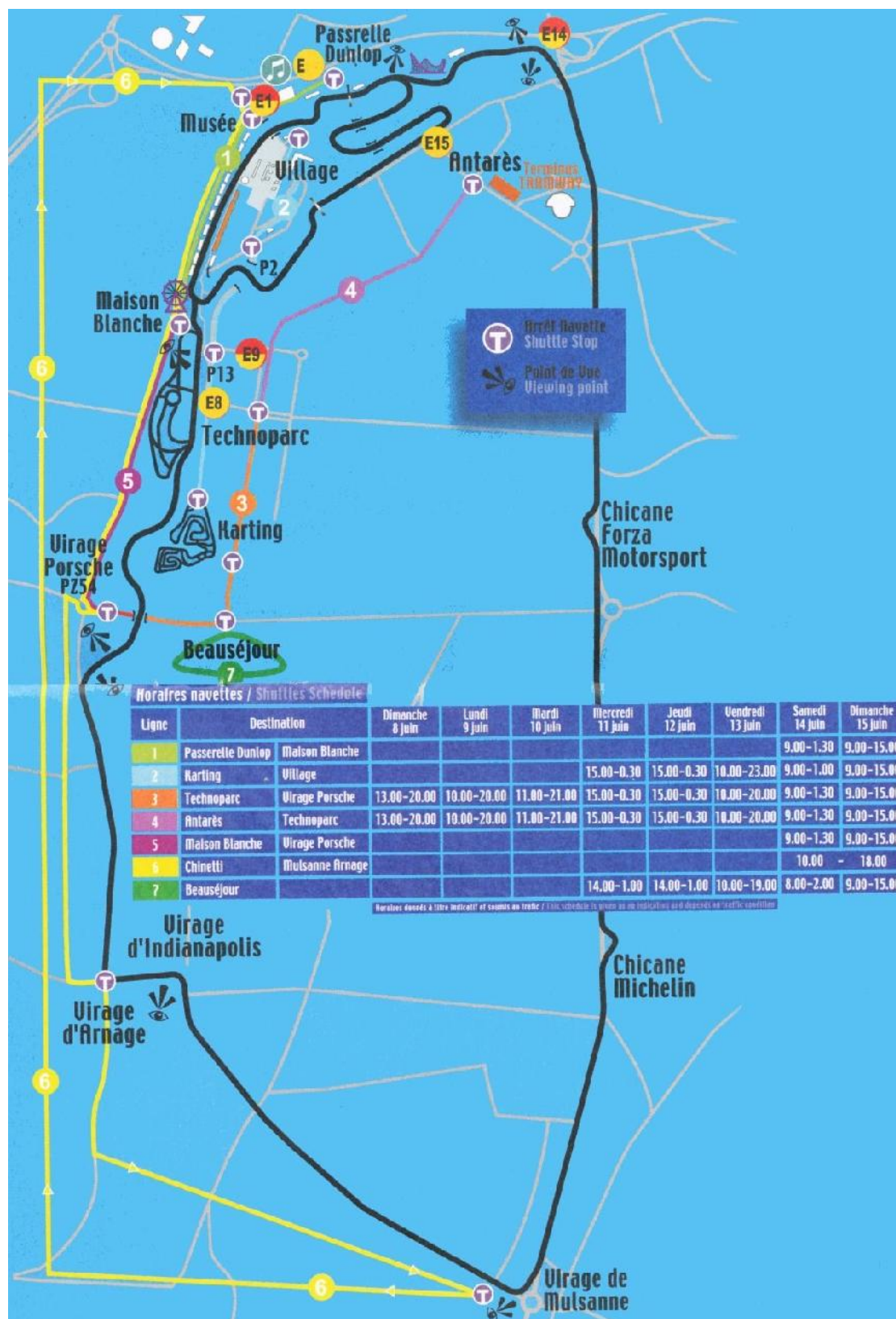
## Taxi

Radio Taxi Le Mans 24/24 7/7 - Tel : 02 43 24 92 92  
 Accueil assur taxi (AAT) - Tel : 06 63 11 79 10  
 Taxi radio - Tel : 02 43 82 07 07  
 ABC taxi - Tel : 02 43 42 42 42  
 Taxis alliance - Tel: 02 43 21 23 05  
 Central Taxis - Tel : 02 43 88 88 88

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.

## Navettes/Shuttle buses

This A.C.O. service has increased over the years to provide free transport around the circuit to those with Enceinte Generale tickets. These buses/little trains can be a 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 2014 the routes were the following, expect similar schedules and routes for 2016:

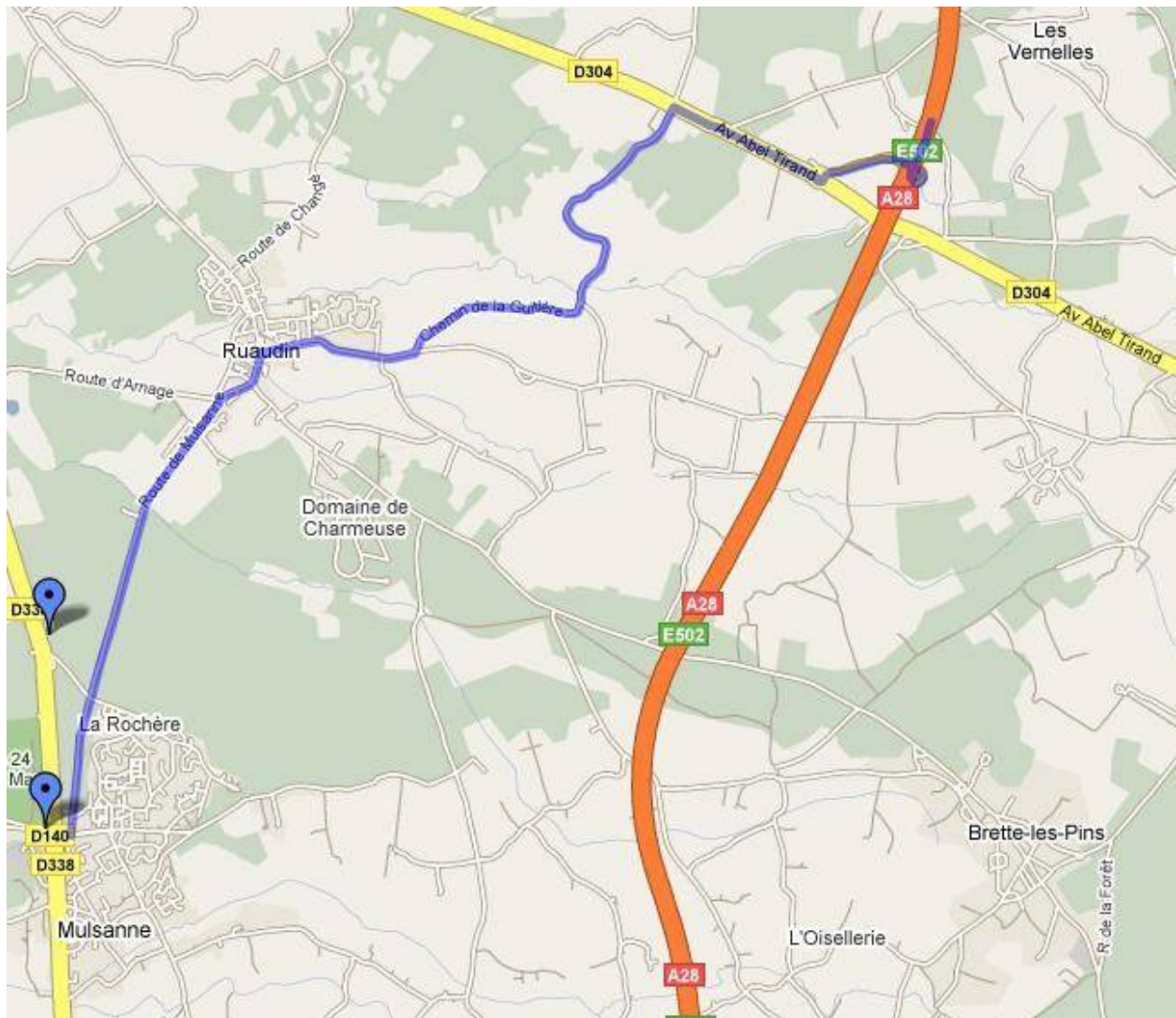




## On the run - Escaping the traffic at the end of the race

*A first-hand escape plan from Neil Dobson*

Those who have tried a quick getaway at the end of the race know that the traffic at the end of the race can be a nightmare. I have tried and tested a route for avoiding traffic, although it does involve watching the end of the race from Mulsanne. Before the end of the race (a good two hours before) you need to move your car up to Mulsanne. I would recommend parking in Mulsanne village somewhere (rather than the official Mulsanne enclosure car park) or at Hotel Arbor on the Mulsanne straight. Watch the end of the race from Mulsanne/Hotel Arbor and head back to your car. The map below shows Mulsanne corner at the bottom left (bordering the golf course) and in the top right hand corner the D304 joining the A28. This is the junction that you need to get to. Simply follow the escape route marked on the map!



From Mulsanne village take the Route de Mulsanne North. Route de Mulsanne runs off Avenue de Bonen and the turn to get onto it is between the roundabout and the Champion supermarket. Follow Route de Mulsanne towards the village of 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'Eveque. This will take you out of the village. After 0.8 Km you will see a fork going off to your right. Ignore this and continue for another 0.2 Km and take a left turn onto Chemin de la Guiltiere. This road snakes its way through the fields for approx 2 Km until you arrive at a t-junction with the D304 (top right of the map below). Turn right and in approx 1 Km you will arrive at the roundabout where you can filter onto the N28 and happily whiz up to the A11 that will take you across the top of Le Mans, safely away from all the congestion. Hooray!

We encountered absolutely no traffic when leaving from Hotel Arbor in '08. You might encounter a little bit of traffic in Mulsanne village itself but I very much doubt it. The whole East side of the circuit is deserted during the race when compared to the Western side of the circuit.

*An alternative way of escaping the traffic is suggested by CA Member Ian Salvage:*

If like me you like to watch the finish at the start/finish line and then join the crowds watching prize giving, you might find this a better route away at the end of the race. Getting out of the many campsites can be fraught with delays, especially when many multiple campsites feed into a single exit.

An alternative is to pack up and move your car out of the campsites, but instead of Mulsanne, I suggest moving it a couple of hours before the end to the Carrefour Hypermarket car park situated on Avenue Georges Durand . The supermarket is closed on Sundays; however the petrol station there is open as is the covered car park, where you can leave your car. (You could leave it beside the road if you are worried about car park clamping, but this, to my knowledge, is not a disease that has spread to Le Mans.)

The Carrefour is a couple of stops up from the circuit, but it's only a few hundred metres south to Tetre Rouge and an entrance to the circuit, so an easy walk. After the finish and prize giving, you can meander up over the Dunlop bridge and out of the circuit and back to your car, perhaps taking a coffee and slice of cake at the patisserie Bouvet Jean-Marie just before the Carrefour. Remembering that the main traffic delays are to the west of Le Mans, travel south and east.

I would suggest travelling south along Avenue Georges Durrand/D338 until the junction with the D323 ring road which you can take going east (unless like me you want a drive up the Mulsanne Straight on the D338 which should be open by then). Drive 8km along the A323 before taking the A28/A11 to Paris/Rouen/Nantes/Rennes/Tours and then join the A28/E502 still signposted Paris/Rouen..... After 5km take the A11 signposted Rouen/Caen/Alencon and away.