

STARTING LINE



Automobile Racing Club of Florida | ARCF.net

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ARCF Launch Party at Sebring

Wave the green flag - the Automobile Racing Club of Florida is off and running.

A motorhome encampment in the north paddock at this year's 12 Hours of Sebring served as the site for launching the newly revived Automobile Racing Club of Florida. A gathering of roughly 125 people celebrated the first ARCF Alumni Reunion on Saturday afternoon during the 12 Hour race. As intended the group was a mixture of former drivers, crew members, volunteers, officials and passionate fans. Everyone was excited about the rebirth of ARCF. The list of distinguished guests included 2024 Sebring Hall of Fame inductee Luigi Chinetti, former 12 Hours of Sebring winner Charles Mendez, David Cowart, Bob Leitzinger, Charlie Kemp, Alex Job and others.



Some of the ARCF Host Committee: Ford Heacock III, John Wallis, David Abell, Brent Lane and Win Stevens.

Many of the attendees took the occasion to demonstrate their support for the new ARCF by making a membership pledge. Membership levels are: \$100 for Sustaining Member, \$250 for Silver and \$500 for Gold. New members were gifted an appropriate amount of swag including a special

2024 ARCF collectors pin for Silver and Gold members.

Next year, the ARCF Alumni Reunion is planned to be significantly larger and more grand. It will be held on Friday evening, as a ticketed event, in the Sebring Hall of Fame building located in the main paddock area behind pit lane. ■



Former Can-Am and Sebring driver, Charlie Kemp (L), entertains Brent Lane (R) with past Sebring stories.



Kim Albritton, Patty Palmer & Polly Bryant Ujelton sharing early ARCF photos.



Charles Mendez, Luigi Chinetti, John Gorsline and David Cowart pose for photos.

Looking Back... By Ford Heacock III

As a Sebring native, I have fond memories of those early years when the community of Sebring was intimately engaged in hosting Alec Ulmann's ARCF and the Sebring 12 Hours of Endurance. Race week attracted the royalty of motorsports from around the world and our little town, centered in the orange grove region of central Florida, would be bubbling with excitement and pride. The community efforts were led by The Sebring Firemen's Race Committee which organized civic, church and social groups to supply the manpower required to host such a major event. I vividly recall that each February my Boy Scout troop would be busy prepping the circuit for the coming race. Alec Ulmann's currency to secure his labor force was race

tickets which flowed freely through the community and allowed many of the towns people to attend the race. It was the best of times.

The new ARCF hopes to celebrate the pride of those early years by hosting an annual reunion for Sebring's racing alumni. Additionally, ARCF plans to support the efforts of the Sebring Hall of Fame to establish a permanent race museum which will preserve the stories of how this little town came to host one of the most important automobile races in the world.

You can help ARCF fulfill its mission by becoming a paid member and/or by making a tax deductible gift to the Sebring Hall of Fame Museum Fund. Help us preserve Sebring Race History. ■



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My Favorite Car - Ferrari 195S

By Dan Andrews

I'm excited to begin a series of articles about my favorite cars from Sebring's past. I will start with the very first race in 1950 and progress through Sebring's history one year at a time in future ARCF newsletters.

As we look back at the first Sebring race in 1950, we see the beginnings of international sports car racing in this country. Although Sebring's first race was only 6 hours in length, the 1950 Sam Collier Memorial Sebring Grand Prix of Endurance was a significant event that laid the foundation for an incredible racing legacy. The first Sebring race was conducted using the FIA handicapping system known as the Index of Performance.

The winning car was a Crosley Hot Shot with a significant handicap advantage due to its small displacement engine.

My favorite car from that race is the Ferrari 195S entered by Briggs Cunningham for drivers Luigi Chinetti



Luigi Chinetti Sr. piloting the Ferrari 195S at Sebring in 1950.

Photo: IM/RRC Watkins Glen, NY

and Alfredo Momo. This team was loaded with pedigree and the grand touring coupe with its fabulous V-12 engine must have been an odds-on favorite. It had me hooked from the moment I first read about its history. I'm also a huge fan of Luigi Chinetti and his creation of the North American Racing Team (N.A.R.T.), a team that went on to have a storied history in American sports car racing.

The Ferrari 195S (car #17) fought valiantly throughout the race and finished in 7th place - some 15 laps ahead of the

little Crosley. If it weren't for a stubborn oil leak, causing frequent pit stops to add oil, car #17 could very well have changed Sebring history! Not to disrespect the Crosley, but a Ferrari victory with Chinetti and Momo driving would have been wildly popular in Europe.

The little Crosley Hotshot, which was driven to and from the track, rightfully earned its place in the history books. As I tip my hat to the Crosley, my sentimental favorite is still the Ferrari driven by Luigi Chinetti and Alfredo Momo! ■

COREY BARRETTE TRACING HIS FATHER'S SEBRING JOURNEY

Bragging Rights

As a small boy Corey Barrette was fascinated by stories of his dad racing sports cars near their home in Danielson, CT. Ten podium finishes and three outright victories captured the admiration of young Corey as these stories were retold by family members and in racing photos.

At school, Corey held the trump card for bragging rights - his Dad was a Race Car Driver! ...And he had raced at Sebring in the famed 12 Hours of Endurance -



twice! Freddie Barrette had raced primarily in the northeast from 1955 until 1962 driving a Porsche 356 on the local circuits

of Thompson, Bridgehampton, Lime Rock and Watkins Glen. The highlight of his racing career was being able to race in the 12 Hours of Sebring with Filippo Theodoli in 1961 and 1962. Their privately entered Sunbeam Alpine finished well in 1961 and earned them an invite to join the factory team effort in 1962 where the duo



enjoyed another respectable finish. The Rootes Sunbeam team that year included notable drivers Ken Miles and Lew Spencer adding an exclamation point to the future stories Freddie's son would tell.

Corey Barrette never had a chance to see his father race. Freddie decided to stop racing two years ahead of his birth in 1964. In January of 2024, a Facebook posting on *Glory Days of Racing* caught Corey Barrette's attention. It was a photo of the 1962 Sunbeam Alpines racing at Sebring. That post soon led Corey to discover his father's race car from 1962 was going to be displayed at the 2024 Sebring Gallery of Legends.

He packed his bags and high-tailed-it to Sebring for a chance to connect with his father's past and bring those childhood stories to life. ■

ARCF Membership

ARCF is still in its infancy. We now have 151 honorary and paid members. When we first launched ARCF we granted 100 people "Honorary" membership in order to get things started. Those folks receive a membership pin and an invitation to ARCF events. It didn't take long to realize we would need a plan to collect dues, pledges and donations in order to fund our planned activities and help establish a future Sebring Race Museum. We have aligned with the Sebring Hall of Fame, Inc. (a 501c3 organization) in order for funds we receive to be tax deductible. We have created three principal membership tiers as follows:

- Sustaining Member**\$100/yr
- Silver Member**.....\$250/yr
- Gold Member** \$500/yr

Each level of membership receive a corresponding amounts of swag and some yet-to-be-defined "special privileges". For example Silver and Gold members also receive the annual membership pin - expected to hold value for collectors.

We encourage honorary members to consider upgrading their membership, but it is not required. [Click here](#) to download the ARCF Membership Application. Please forward the application to anyone who may have interest in preserving Sebring race history. ■



SEBRING LEGENDS

Did You Know?

By Doug Morton, *Sebring Historian*

A driver was handed a Coca-Cola while driving in the race!?!? Yes! It actually happened in 1957. The great Stirling Moss was driving the #20 Maserati 300S and, at close to 7 hours into the race, he was getting thirsty. The hairpin was a great place to see the drivers up close. Several



Stirling Moss snags a Coke during the 1957 Sebring race.

photographers, including Bernard Cahier, were hanging out taking pictures as the cars slowed for the sharp corner. As Moss made the turn, he saw the photographers had cold drinks so he signaled them that he was thirsty, probably in jest. On the next lap, Cahier decided to hand him a full bottle! As Moss drifted through the turn, Cahier handed it off. Moss bobbed it but got the 6oz bottle under control and away he went! Moss drank the Coke during the lap and as he made the turn at the hairpin next time by, he gently tossed it out on the grass and gave the guys a wave of thanks! Luckily for us, one of the photographers, Smith Peter Kerr III, had enough sense to document the exchange with a picture. If it wasn't for his photo, no doubt this would go down in Sebring history as an urban legend! ■

Celebrate the History of Sebring Racing – Join ARCF Today!

Help restore and preserve the rich history of sports car racing at Sebring. For membership information log on to ARCF.net or contact Ford Heacock III at Ford3@ARCF.net

Sebring in the Night

By Charles Mendez,
Former Sebring Promoter and 12-Hour Winner

My favorite memories of racing at Sebring were in the night-time hours. Prior to the banning of off-road motorcycles and campfires the infield reminded me of scenes from *Apocalypse Now*. When you turned off the front apron (turns 1 and 2), you quickly went from wide open and nearly flat out, down to a narrow two lane road leading to the Esses. Suddenly, you were engulfed in a mix of thick smoke, dust and low hanging fog which accompanied you through the hairpin and green park chicane. It was an intimidating and haunting place, then suddenly you exited the spectator areas for the openness of the ancient air field.

Exiting the spectator zone led to the two bisecting WWII-era concrete runways, built for B-17s. This was a different kind of nightmare. Racing on the long straights at night, at speeds of 200 mph, required alert navigation skills. If you were off the designated racing line you could easily find yourself mowing heavy weeds growing from the cracks in the concrete or simply plowing through adjoining fields. It was a lonely place at night, and scary as hell, especially when incoming planes were landing right next

to the racing lane. The 90 degree right hander at the end of the first straight, if missed, would send you hunting for the racing surface or waiting for another car, which hopefully was on course, to try to follow back onto the race track.



I truly loved racing at Sebring during the night. By late afternoon the setting sun would be staring blindingly in your eyes on the second (west-bound) back straight. This was your last opportunity to memorize key braking points, turn in points and track conditions because once darkness fell you were on your own. My advice to drivers of all skill levels who were new to Sebring was to only look for what you need to see and not waste your visual and mental abilities trying to see what is unnecessary. ■

SEBRING SPOTLIGHT



OSCA MT4 1500

The 1954 12 Hours of Sebring was won by Stirling Moss and Bill Lloyd in this OSCA MT4 1500 entered by Briggs Cunningham. The duo outlasted the much bigger and faster teams of Aston Martin and Lancia to claim the overall victory. Here is Scott George from the Revs Institute pushing the OSCA toward the Gallery of Legends display at this year's 12 Hours of Sebring. ■



1963 12 HOURS OF SEBRING



This is just before the start of 1963 12 Hours of Sebring. The main subject is the #26 Ferrari 250 GTO, driven by Carlo Abate & Juan-Manuel Bordeu to 5th overall. There were six Ferrari 250 GTOs entered in the race that year. It appears the pit marshals were checking out the grid to make sure all entries were ready to go. The #27 Ferrari Dino 268 SP sits in the middle. A Ferrari 250P, driven by John Surtees and Lodovico Scarfiotti, took the overall victory as Ferrari claimed the top six positions. ■

TECH INSPECTION - 1965

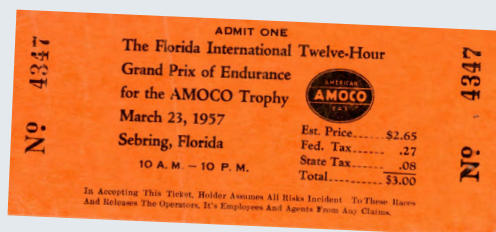


From 1964 through the early 70's, tech inspection was held downtown in front of the firehouse. This really brought out the Sebring community, especially the high school kids, to get up close and personal with the cars. This picture was taken of one of the first GT-40's to ever race at Sebring. The #11 was driven by Ken Miles and Bruce McLaren to 2nd overall, 4 laps behind the winning Chaparral. It was the beginning of Ford's dominance at Sebring over the next couple years. ■

A Priceless Ticket From 1957

By Doug Morton, *Sebring Historian*

As a Sebring memorabilia collector, I find that some of the hardest pieces to obtain are unused paper tickets from the 1950's. When you entered the front gate, your ticket was torn in half and you kept the stub as proof of purchase. Most were thrown away after the race. Some of the stubs were kept as souvenirs. Whole tickets are as rare as hen's teeth! I was lucky to find this one. They also had similar tickets, but



months back in 2018 when they had the 1957 Corvette SS on display, along with memorabilia from 1957 race. ■

of different colors, for Thursday and Friday practice and the stubs for those were stapled on top of this Saturday ticket. It appears that the owner didn't make it for the 12 Hours on Saturday so it was left fairly pristine. This ticket was on loan to the Revs Institute for several

1972 FERRARI 512S

The Auriana Collection in Greenwich, CT provided this fabulous 1972 Ferrari 512S for display in the Gallery of Legends at this year's 12 Hours of Sebring. The car was displayed to honor the North American Racing Team induction into the Sebring Hall of Fame. Luigi Chinetti Jr. was on hand to accept the honors.

This NART Ferrari 512 S Spyder (chassis #1006) was driven by

Sam Posey, Ronnie Bucknum and Bert Everett in the 1970 12 Hours of Sebring. Unfortunately, a loss of oil pressure caused an early retirement. ■



Congratulations to IMSA and Sebring International Raceway for an incredible 72nd running of the 12 Hours of Sebring in 2024. Louis Deletraz, driving the No. 40 Acura entered by WTR Andretti, made a late-race pass on Sebastien Bourdais to claim the overall victory which he shared with teammates Jordan Taylor and Colton Herta. ■



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The Automobile Racing Club of Florida is a division of The Sebring Hall of Fame (a 501c3 organization). Its mission is to host the annual Homecoming Reunion for Sebring Alumni and help raise funds for a future museum which will tell the history of how Sebring, an unlikely little citrus town in central Florida, came to play host to one of the world's most important international automobile races.