

John O'Steen



John Osteen – A Racing Life

By John Osteen (as interviewed by Robin Hoffman)

Photos provided by John Osteen

John O'Steen has had 60+ race wins, 7 SCCA Division titles and the 1981 E Production National Championship. He was elected membership into the prestigious Road Racing Driver's Club in 2002.

John began racing career early – he bought a 1966 912 the day after he graduated from the University of Florida and drove it **fast** to his first job in Augusta GA. He fell in love with Porsches after driving through the Tennessee Mountains on his way to a friend's wedding. He started doing autocrosses with the Porsche Club in 1968 and has been a PCA member since 1969.

In 1968 He bought a stripped down 1959 Convertible D 356 on a trailer for \$1400 and took it to autocrosses and a SCCA driver's school. It was lightened and modified too much for SCCA regulations and couldn't be raced.

In 1969 he was able to buy a 1958 Speedster from a retiring doctor and won 2 races at Virginia International Raceway (VIR). He sold it a few years later to his cousin and then bought it back later after the car sat outside for 10 years. The late Kirk Stowers restored the Speedster to perfection and John still owns this car today.

John summarized his racing exploits focusing on Porsche except for Le Mans. He did drive other brands and prototypes from time to time including driving the factory 4 rotor GTO RX7 at Daytona and Sebring for two years. One of those years Brian Redman was his co-driver. He remembers the 70's as the most fun, although it's always more fun to win. He says, "It was lower key back then plus we all got along and helped each other out."

John's connection with PCA runs deep. He met his wife, Judi, at a St. Louis PCA Christmas party in 1973 and she became very involved in motorsports too. She worked the timing and scoring for races. She was on his crew during their 1981 E Production National Championship and she is in the photo to prove it!

John has been in some crashes as well! One memorable wreck happened at Daytona Speedway when the right rear tire blew in his 935 and he crashed head-on into the wall at 200 MPH just before turn 3! As he was not the only one who's tires could not withstand the speed and force at this location and crashed, Goodyear recommended the "Bus stop" be added before turn 3 to slow the cars. In another incident, his car spun 90 degrees into the guardrail at Mosport Raceway when the rear wing flew off. After this wreck he drove the team's spare car the very next day despite being very sore! Thank Heavens for good safety equipment!

John has placed in the prestigious Porsche Cup three times in his career – 15th in 1983, tied for 3rd in 1994 and 9th in 1999. The Porsche Cup is sponsored by the marque and honors the most outstanding private Porsche drivers of every season. He has been featured in racing magazines and the featured driver at the Amelia Island Concours.

While everyone has a “I sold it too soon story” – John’s may be the most painful one I have heard. He bought a 1957 335S Ferrari for \$2,000; sold it a few years later for \$4,375. Same car sold 2 years ago for a whooping \$36.5 MILLION dollars!

John spent several years driving full seasons while still working at Proctor & Gamble because of their understanding and flexible schedule and then 5 years working for Escort Radar Detectors. In 1991 he started own catalog business called “Frontgate” and then had even more flexibility. From 2000-2008 he didn’t go to a single race as watching a race isn’t the same as driving in the race. Since then he has driven in some of the Vintage events. His last race was in 2015 where he drove Larry Schumacher’s 911 Cup Car at the Mid Ohio track. John took 2nd place by a bumper! With pride he tells me that Larry and he were the oldest racecar drivers out there!

John is still active in the Space Coast PCA frequently coming out to the Vero Kaffeeklatsches and events. He has owned a LOT of Porsches over the years and currently drives his 2005 Carrera GT, 1958 Speedster, 1964 SC Cabriolet, and Cayman GT4. He says he has had a wonderful life with Porsches!

John O'Steen Racing Highlights

1969

Began racing in SCCA - 2 wins in Porsche Speedster 84430 (which he still has today)

1970-73, 76-82

Began racing in SCCA National races. Over 50 race wins, 7 Division titles and the 1981 E Production National Championship

1972

Asked by David Helmick to co-drive his new 911 GT in IMSA. With no crew but David and me, we managed 3 podiums in 5 starts.

1975

Driving a new 911RSR, and with an all volunteer crew, managed consistent top 5 finishes and 3 podiums. Ended up 5th in season points despite missing 3 races. Top 4 were Gregg, Haywood, Holbert and Stuck.

1977

A couple of DNF's in John Paul's RSR before deciding to leave team. Last minute drive in Busby 935 at Mid-Ohio, finished 3rd.

1983-84

Drove Akin/Coke 935 and 962. First in GTP at Sebring plus 4 other podiums in '83. Finished 5th in season points, 15th in Porsche Cup. Mid pack finishes in '84.

1984

1st in C2 class (3L prototype) in Le Mans 24hr. Lola/Mazda

1986-96

Multiple Escort/Firehawk endurance wins in 944S, T and 968. Drove for Hurst, Kelly Moss, Hawk Motorsports and Brumos.

1994

Drove Rohr Motorsports RSR in GT3 class. Multiple podiums and 3rd in season points. Tied for third in Porsche Cup.

1998-99

Drove with Larry Schumacher in GT2 911. Several wins in ALMS and USRRC. Finished 2nd in '98 ALMS points and was co-champion with Larry in the '99 USRRC GT2 championship. Tied with Larry for 9th in Porsche Cup.

2015

Drove in Larry Schumacher's 911 Cup Car in Mid Ohio - 2nd place by a hummer!

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2000-2008

Didn't go to a single race.

2009-11

Did a few vintage events



Le Mans 1984









Porsche 911 GT2

Enquirer Magazine

Sunday, December 2, 1984


LIFE IN THE FAST LANE





Moonbeams

NOVEMBER 1970

A black and white photograph of a man in a lab coat and sunglasses, working with a glassblowing tool. The man is looking down at the tool, which is emitting a bright light. The background is dark and industrial.

MVL'S MASTER
GLASSBLOWERS

. . . SEE PAGE 11

For a guy who used to race boats in his high school days in Miami, Fla., Augusta plant's John O'Steen has found the switch to road racing much more satisfying—and rewarding.

As a rookie on the national sports car racing circuit this year, John wound up as the Southeastern Regional champion in the E Production Class, sponsored by the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA). John, a 26-year-old project engineer at our Augusta plant, was graduated in 1967 from the University of Florida with a degree in mechanical engineering and a major in internal combustion engines.

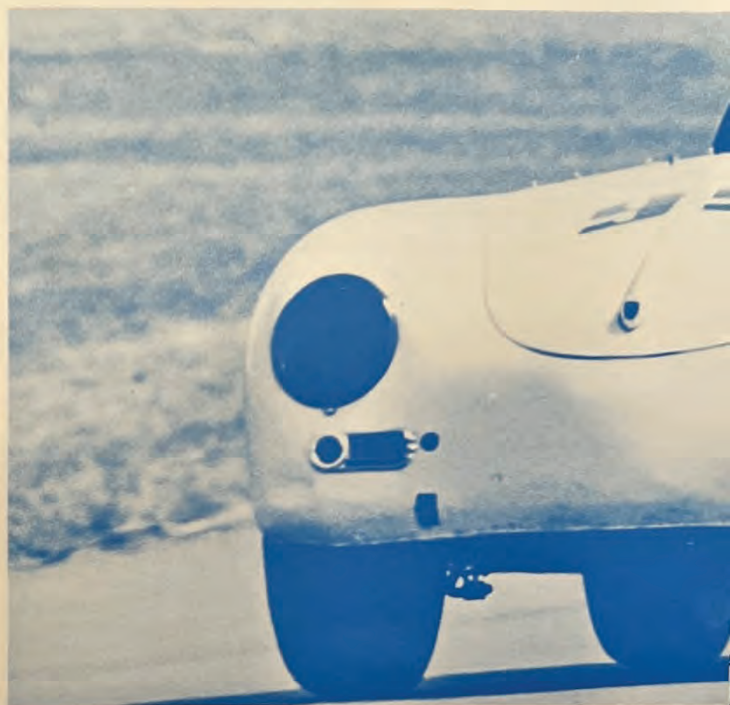
He came to work for P&G at Augusta three years ago and bought his first sports car, a Porsche, that first year. "I drove it mostly in local sports car club rallies and auto crosses," John says.

He bought another Porsche in 1968 and attended the 1969 driver's schools in Florida and Virginia. As a result, he obtained his novice permit, which enabled him to enter in two regional races. Upon successful completion of these races, he received his regional driver's license, and later a national competition license. In 1968 he entered his Porsche in seven races, finishing first twice, second twice and third twice. Last winter John purchased his third Porsche—an "old" 1958 Speedster, one of the most competitive race car models of its class. John outfits his cars with new Porsche engines, which require extensive modifications to become competitive. This is when he puts his training and knowledge about internal combustion engines to good use. He generally carries a spare engine to the track and has three transmissions with different gear ratios available to meet varying conditions on the tracks.

A lot of work goes into preparing the car for its grueling performance the day of the race. John goes through his Porsche's suspension and braking system and partially takes apart the engine to check it before it runs on the track in competition. A fellow racing enthusiast, Joe Mellen, helps John with this important pre-race maintenance work. The two are partners in a part-time business venture in Augusta which helps to pay some of the high expenses involved in sports car racing. It's called Checkpoint Engineering, a shop which services sports cars exclusively. About half of the Porsches in the city are serviced at this shop.

This season, John has raced as far north as Lexington, O., as far west as Lake Charles, La., and as far south as Daytona, Fla., with many other stops in between. His racing involves about a dozen week ends a year, with most of the rest of his spare time devoted to testing and modifying his sports cars,

John, right, washes down his Porsche before an Atlanta race. Two of his friends, Joe Mellen, left, and Keith Murdock lend a hand.



doing maintenance work and making other routine checks that are necessary.

An extraordinary finish this year enabled John to wrest the Southeastern Region championship from perennial winner Dr. David Helmick in the E Production Class. Dr. Helmick, an eight-year veteran of sports car racing, has won the Southeastern title for the past four years. In his last six races for

At the Savannah International Raceway, John poses in his Porsche just before the start of the Sunday feature race.



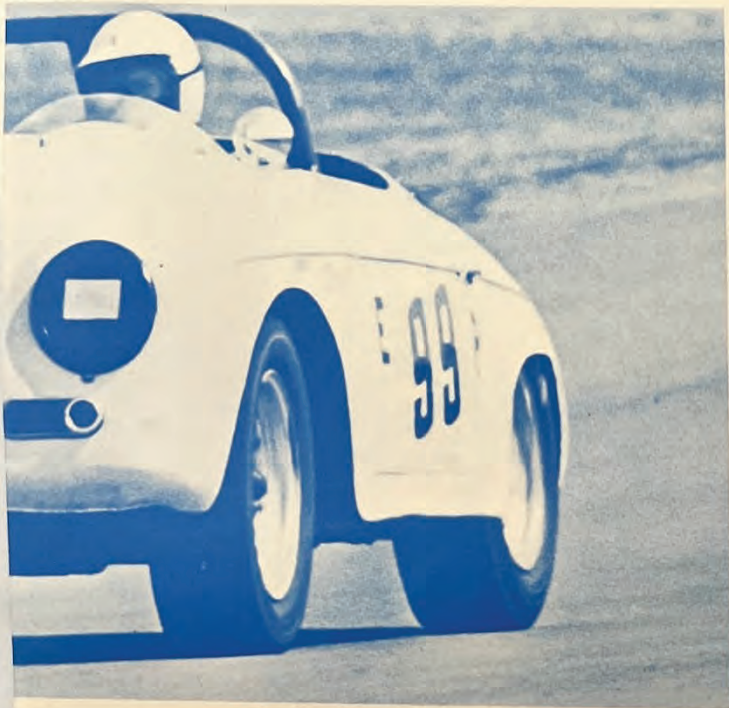
John O'Steen

Augusta Project Engineer

Late Season Victor

ins Racing Title

lies His Porsche to
SCCA's E Production Class



1970, John has recorded three wins and two second-place finishes to vault into the regional points leadership. Over Thanksgiving week end he will enter the American Road Race of Champions (ARRC) to be held at the new Road Atlanta track to determine the various individual national championships. This was John's major goal for the year: to win the Southeastern title in his class and earn the right to

compete in the nationals at Atlanta. Just last August, John put on a stirring performance at the new Atlanta track by lapping all but one car in winning his race handily.

John recalls that he first got interested in racing when he was an eighth grader in Miami, Fla. The ocean provided a natural racing environment for John and his young friends and they made the most of it. John bought a hydroplane in high school and raced it for a while. Annual trips during his high school days to Sebring, Fla., to attend the 12-hour endurance race introduced him to the world of sports cars, as did his association with his college roommate who happened to own a Jaguar. At this point, John was associated indirectly with sports cars, but still not a bona-fide enthusiast in them. Near the end of his graduation from the University of Florida, John's Pontiac GTO caught fire and sustained extensive damage, so he decided to sell it and buy a Porsche that he had his eye on. It was the real start of his now totally absorbing pastime with sports cars.

Although racing sports cars is an expensive and time-consuming hobby, John enjoys it thoroughly. "Road racing is the most demanding sport I know of," says John. "It requires complete concentration while you are on the track. Split-second judgments and decisions have to be made continuously. These decisions then have to be translated into smooth reactions by the driver.

"In addition to involving all areas of automotive performance, such as handling, acceleration and braking, road racing is probably more dependent on the driver than any other form of racing. One of the most important aspects—besides individual driving ability—is which driver can out-think the other," he adds.

The tremendous challenge offered by road racing appeals to John. The "total commitment" aspect of the sport fascinates him, as well.

John appears to have met the challenge quite well. Considering the fact that he's only been racing sports cars for two years, and has been on the national circuit less than a year, it's amazing that he could win a regional championship so soon. The nationals later this month could bring even more honors.

"Road racing involves the total car and the total driver. That, plus plenty of hard work, a good car, driving ability and a lot of money to support the hobby are what it takes to be a driving champion," John philosophizes.

John O'Steen should know. He is one.

John does most of the repair and modification work on his racing car in his workshop, shown in the photo below.



His racing car rig secured, John gets ready to leave the Augusta plant to compete in a week-end race at Daytona, Fla., International Raceway.



REMARKABLE PEOPLE, UNCOMMON ENDEAVORS

WINTER 1988

Pursuits

BOUND

FOR THE

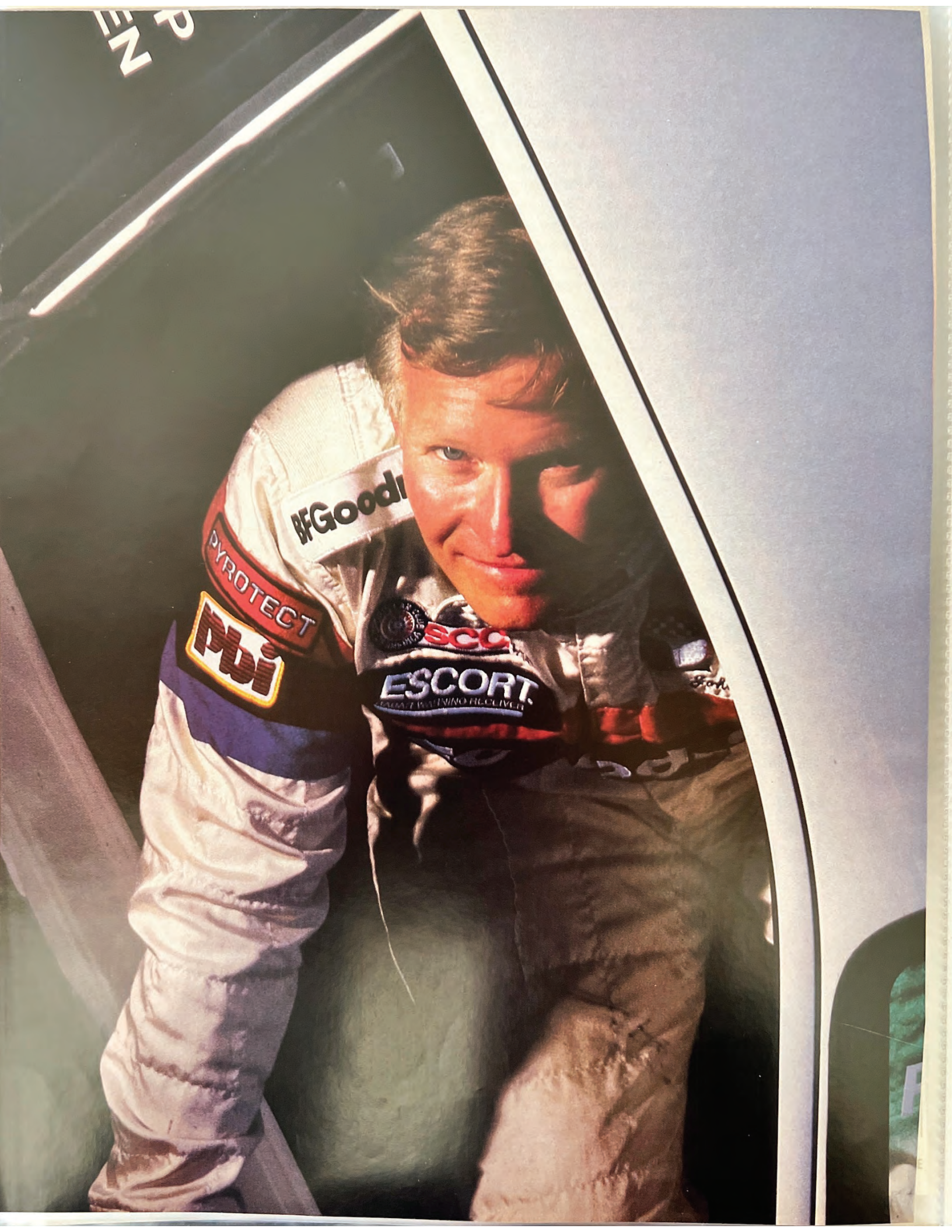
TOP

*Developer
Dick Bass Scales
The World's
Highest Peaks*

ALSO INSIDE:

Coach
Roy Simmons:
An Artist on and
Off the Field

Eugene Lang
Keeps a Promise
To Harlem Kids



DRIVING

A Passion

John O'Steen can't get enough of life in the fast lane. After a hard week's work as the president of a small business, he unwinds by roaring down raceways at 150 miles per hour.

Article by
BILL THOMAS

Photograph by
Hans Neleman

On a hot Friday afternoon in August 1987, John O'Steen arrives late, as usual, at Toronto's Mosport Park racetrack for the Escort 24 Hours endurance auto race. The next day, as part of a five-man relay team, he is scheduled to drive the two Porsches entered by Rick Hurst Racing.

Most of the other drivers have been sweating out a week of qualifying rounds, working through some of their tensions on the two-and-a-half-mile track, so they already feel at home on every turn and straightaway. But O'Steen, the full-time president of radar-detector manufacturer Cincinnati Microwave Inc., isn't worried. He's used to being a little out of sync. In his 19 years of amateur racing, his busy work schedule has prevented him from ever making it to the track more than a day or so before race time.

But this weekend, as on virtually every other race weekend in his career, O'Steen stands among the top drivers in the running. In 1981 he won a national championship in the Sports Car Club of America, and in 1984 he and two co-drivers won their class at the famed 24 Hours of LeMans. He had proved his abilities to the Hurst team a few weeks earlier on July 18 when he and another Hurst driver, Kees Nierop, won their class in a six-hour race in Brainerd, Minnesota. Before that, in Portland, Oregon, O'Steen and team member Bob Strange finished second overall. Those two races, like the Escort 24 Hours, are part of the seven-race Escort Endurance Championship, held at tracks through-

"For me, the attraction of racing is not the speed. It's pitting yourself against others and pitting yourself against yourself. Winning is the payoff."

out North America during the summer.

O'Steen the race driver exists in a gray area between professional and amateur. Unlike most professionals, he drives only a few weekends a year. Yet unlike many amateurs, O'Steen doesn't pay for the privilege of driving a race car. Hurst Racing and other teams invite O'Steen to race. They cover his expenses and give him a share of any money the teams win. Usually it doesn't amount to much. In fact "the money matters not at all," says O'Steen.

The Escort 24 Hours is an especially grueling race, with four different types, or classes, of cars competing simultaneously. A car's speed capability defines its class in racing. Cars in the Super Sports (SS) class, composed of Corvettes and Porsche 944 Turbos, can outrun the field. The Grand Touring (GT) class cars, including non-turbo-charged Porsche 944's, Ford Mustangs, and the occasional Nissan 300ZX or Toyota Supra, race close behind the SS cars. Following them are two slower classes, named simply A (Mitsubishis and Mazdas) and B (Hondas and Volkswagens). All are showroom stock—cars in original factory condition with no special racing modifications other than the addition of such safety equipment as roll cages or factory options.

As a group, the colorful 50-car field will make quite a sight as faster cars jockey for position around the slower ones.

O'Steen's interest in auto racing stems from the when, as a young man, he watched Steve McQueen in the classic racing film *LeMans*.

"I've always been very competitive, whether playing Parcheesi or racing cars. For me, the attraction of racing is not the speed. It's pitting yourself against others and pitting yourself against yourself. Winning is the payoff."

Clearly O'Steen likes being a winner at whatever he does. He proudly points out that his company, which makes radar detectors, the Escort and Passport radar detectors, were named in a recent *Money* magazine as two of the "99 things that Americans make." (Although Cincinnati Microwave sponsors the Endurance Championship, O'Steen does not accept racing sponsorship from the company.)

O'Steen enjoys the challenge of building a business, but he finds that racing provides something extra. "Racing gives me instant feedback. If I lie up, I know it immediately."

"It's a physical sport," he adds. "It requires eyesight and good coordination." It also demands intense concentration. "When I get back to work Monday, I might be physically tired, but mentally fresh," says O'Steen.

As he sits in the team trailer, surrounded by suits, tires, and scattered engine parts, O'Steen reminisces about his first races 20 years earlier. In



For several hours before race time, the activity is intense around the Rick Hurst team's Porsche that John O'Steen will drive. The team tackles such final details as fueling, checking tire pressure, and wiring the radio receiver.

out of college with a mechanical-engineering degree, he went to work at Procter & Gamble's Augusta, Georgia, plant and joined a club that ran Sunday autocrosses—amateur races around pylons in empty shopping-center parking lots. Two years later he attended a racing school sanctioned by the Sports Car Club of America, which met on weekends at an old World War II airbase in Sanford, Florida.

"I already had a driver's suit, a helmet, and an old Porsche 912. I

think I paid a \$50 entry fee. It was really quite a bargain." Completing the course enabled him to move up from autocrosses to amateur races sanctioned by the club. O'Steen won the club's Southeastern division every year from 1970 to 1973 and finished as high as fourth in the national championships.

"At the time, I was making about \$12,000 a year and was spending every

penny I had on racing," he recalls. "I lived in an apartment with no furniture except a bed." He hoarded his vacation time from Procter & Gamble so that he could tow his car to the track on Thursday, practice on Friday, and qualify on Saturday for Sunday's race. On Monday it was back to the office.

In 1973, Procter & Gamble promoted O'Steen to packaging-department manager in St. Louis and then transferred him to the company's headquarters in Cincinnati in 1976. There he and his wife, Judi, whom he had married in 1975, began to pursue a more "normal" existence—he even sold his race car and his Porsche street car to help make a down payment on a house. But domestic tranquillity was short-lived. Six months after selling his cars, O'Steen realized he couldn't live without racing. He bought a 1957 Porsche Speedster and returned to the track.

The mid-1970s proved tough for O'Steen's racing career. He failed to make the national finals between 1975 and 1978. Then in 1979 he qualified for the nationals but finished second. Finally, in 1981, he broke his losing streak, winning the Sports Car Club of



©1987 SIDELL TILGHMAN (2)

The essence of endurance racing: As day drags into night, O'Steen and his team members continue their laps without mishap.

A Roster of Racing Terms

A class. Cars in the A-class category are slower than second-ranked GT cars. In the Escort Endurance Championship, A-class cars are generally Mazdas and Mitsubishi's.

Autocross races. Also called solo races, these amateur competitions are run around pylons in empty parking lots and are usually the first step in a race driver's career.

B class. Made up of Volkswagens and Hondas, this is the slowest category of car entered in the Escort Endurance Championship.

Camel GT. The International Motor Sports Association sanctions this series of races. Cars competing in the series are highly modified for racing and have more powerful engines than cars categorized as showroom stock. The cars are almost always raced by professional drivers.

Endurance racing. In an endurance race, the winning car is the one that goes the farthest in a set period of time, usually from three to 24 hours. Endurance racing differs from sprint racing, in which the winning car is the one that travels a given distance—usually a number of laps around a track—the fastest.

Escort Endurance Championship. Cincinnati Microwave Inc., an Ohio manufacturer of radar-warning devices, sponsors this series of seven racing events. Sanctioned by the Sports Car Club of America, the races are held during the summer on tracks throughout North America and are six, 12, and 24 hours long. In the series, drivers accumulate points based on where they finish in individual races, and at the end of the year, the driver with the most points in each class is named champion.

GT. Non-turbo-charged Porsche 944's, Ford Mustangs, and Toyota Supras make up the Grand Touring (GT) class, which is ranked as the second-fastest category in the Escort Endurance Championship.

Paddock. This is the area of a track where racing teams prepare their cars for competition.

Pit row. Each racing team has its own section, called the pit row, beside the racetrack. It is there that racing crews make mechanical adjustments and refuel their teams cars during pit stops.

Qualifying round. This set of races is usually held a day or two before an actual race so that drivers can establish starting positions for—or qualify—their cars.

Racing classes. A confusing array of mechanical attributes distinguishes types of race cars. A car's weight, size, and engine displacement usually determine its class. Several classes can fall within a given category of racing, and different classes may enter the same race. In the race, however, cars normally compete only against cars of the same class.

Showroom stock. Cars in this category are raced in original showroom condition except for modifications made for driver safety. In essence, these cars are the same as those displayed at an automobile dealership, though "factory options," which can enhance racing performance, are often allowed.

SS. Corvettes and Porsche 944 Turbos make up the Super Sports (SS) class, the fastest category of race car in the Escort Endurance Championship.

Early in his career
O'Steen spent every
penny he earned on
racing. "I lived in an
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America's national championship for E Production cars, a racing class of older, modified sports cars.

O'Steen says that in 1982 he went on to win almost every race of the season. After that, he began devoting all his racing time to a more advanced circuit known as the Camel GT Series, finishing fifth overall in the series in 1983.

That year, B.F. Goodrich offered O'Steen a lead seat on a team that raced in the United States, Europe, South Africa, Japan, and Australia—a shot at a professional racing career. But the schedule meant that he would have to quit his Procter & Gamble job.

"I was 39 years old at the time. I had never considered racing full time," he says. O'Steen finally turned the offer down, deciding that the total racing compensation would not match his salary.

Then a turn in O'Steen's career path cemented his decision not to try his hand at pro racing. In 1984 Jim Jaeger, the co-founder of Cincinnati Microwave, of-

fered him the position of senior vice-president of operations. When O'Steen was promoted to president of the company in 1985, his race schedule dropped to current five or six a year, but he says he would not consider giving up the sport that has consumed free time for almost all his adult life.

On the morning of the Escort race, O'Steen is a picture of nonchalance. He had fallen asleep at 12:30 a.m. the night before, after the entire team had stayed at the Holiday Inn in nearby Oshawa to eat and watch *Crocodile Dundee* on television. This morning he eats his usual breakfast—"just some fruit"—and arrives at the track at 10 a.m., ready to race and around until about 3 p.m., when, as second driver, he will take over the second of the two Porsches that he had entered. The first had been clipped by another car and had smashed into a concrete wall during a qualifying round. The driver emerged unhurt, but the

Gentlemen, Start Your Engines

Okay, so maybe you *have* pushed your car through some fast laps on the country roads just outside of town. But do you really have what it takes to compete with professional drivers on a racetrack, where speeds hit 150 miles per hour down the straightaways?

Dozens of professional racing schools around the country would like to give you the chance to test your racing mettle—for a price, of course. Three of the largest and best known are the Skip Barber Racing School, based in Canaan, Connecticut; the Jim Russell School in Monterey, California; and the Bob Bondurant School of High-Performance Driving in Sonoma, California.

Skip Barber, the nation's largest racing-school program, offers three-day courses at 14 tracks around the country. For \$1,350 novice drivers can race a Formula Ford car that resembles a miniature Indianapolis 500 racer. "We provide the cars, the uniform, and the helmet," says Ron Meade, the school's marketing director.

During the course, drivers learn the fundamentals of racing: cornering, braking into turns, and vehicle dynamics. Completion of the course certifies beginners to drive in races sanctioned by the Sports Car Club of America—the largest amateur racing organization—and the International Motor Sports Association, which sponsors races that cater primarily to professionals.

At Skip Barber, beginning drivers who have received their certification can return for advanced courses, called "lapping days," in which they "hone their racing skills and develop more confidence," says

Meade. Then comes the school's Formula Ford race series, where people can drive under conditions similar to actual competition. If they have some talent, they might then start to think about driving a Camel GT race or another series.

About a third of Skip Barber's drivers go into racing careers. The school's curriculum is the same for the person out for a weekend lark as it is for someone planning to race professionally.

The Jim Russell School, which is affiliated with the Sports Car Club of America, offers essentially the same racing regimen and certification as Skip Barber, though the Russell school's courses are taught on only two tracks, both in California. Russell also stages a racing series in Pro Mazda cars for its students.

The Bob Bondurant School offers racing instruction and teaches defensive-driving skills. The latter include "offensive" techniques such as terrorist and antiskidnapping techniques. A four-day course costs \$1,995 and is taught only at Sears Point International Raceway in Sonoma. It boasts a 3-to-1 student-teacher ratio and claims to provide more concentrated instruction than most other schools.

According to the Sports Car Club's communications manager, John Claggett, "Professional drivers recommend both competitive and defensive training."

For more information contact the Skip Barber Racing School, 203-824-0771, the Jim Russell School, 800-821-8755, or the Bob Bondurant School of High-Performance Driving, 707-938-4741.



BRIAN A'HARA

was too heavily damaged to race.

As race time draws near, the intensity level picks up around the remaining Hurst car. The crew takes care of last-minute details: fueling, checking tire pressure, wiring the two-way radio receivers and transmitters. Then at about 12:15 Rick Hurst himself shows up and attacks whatever small jobs need doing—anything to help in his team's hour of need. The drivers have almost no role in the preparation. Hurst clearly has not hired them for their mechanical ability. He wants fast drivers who can bring the cars back in one piece.

Because of his qualifying time the day before, Hurst driver Kees Nierop begins the race at 1 p.m. in front of all the other GT-class cars, though about a dozen faster SS cars—mostly Corvettes—are in front of him. Nierop cruises along uneventfully for his two-hour run, trading first place in the GT class back and forth with a yellow Mustang. As planned, O'Steen takes over at 3 p.m.

Like Nierop, O'Steen turns in an unexciting run, just holding his own. "That's the way you want it to be," says O'Steen. "The race is won by minimizing risk on the track and minimizing time in the pit."

As the race drags on, some crew members try to catch a little shut-eye, lying down on a dirty mat in the corner of the team's pit area with jackets thrown over their heads in a futile attempt to block out the roar of engines 20 yards away. O'Steen sums up the less-than-glamorous nature of auto racing: "Brief bursts of excitement followed by long periods of boredom."

But on this weekend, at least, O'Steen has the novelty of a magazine writer following him around, and with his next turn at the wheel not scheduled until late in the evening, O'Steen has time to discuss some of the hardships of his sport. "Racing takes up an incredible amount of time. It especially did when I was doing all the work on my car. And it takes a lot of money. A lot of guys who have gotten into racing have found the time and money pressures to be too much. I'm sure it has broken up families."

O'Steen minimizes the most obvious drawback of racing: the specter of a horrible crash. There's a certain amount of danger, he admits, but he has never been seriously injured in a race. As for how racing affects his family, O'Steen says, "My wife's been supportive. I wouldn't say she *likes* racing, but before we had kids, she went to all the races and did timing and scoring for the team. Now her job is pretty demanding so it's a lot harder for her to make it to races." Judi, the vice-president of finance for the Cincinnati-based health-services company Omnicare, O'Steen, and their two sons, David, 8, and Patrick, 3, usually combine one racing weekend a year with a vacation. This year they

paired a race at Sebring, Florida, with a trip to Walt Disney World.

Throughout the night the Hurst team continues its laps around the track without mishap. Nightfall reduces the spectators' ability to see the race, which in the darkness becomes an endless series of passing headlights. A gentle rain begins falling at about 4 a.m. Then, as the cloudy night sky grows lighter, the results of the battles waged in the darkness become ap-



John O'Steen is proud to be the driving force behind the Escort and Passport radar detectors, which were recently named two of the 99 products that Americans make best.

parent. Many of the cars are bashed and dented. Some of them lack windows, which, in the rain, poses special problems for the drivers. Others make sickly growling noises and backfire as their drivers decelerate into turns. One Corvette has no hood and circles the track with its engine exposed like a battle scar.

The remaining Hurst Porsche, though dirty, exhibits no signs of the struggle, but it has lost ground. By mid-morning it's obvious that it will lose first place in the GT class to the yellow Mustang.

There will be no celebrations for the Hurst team this weekend. When the race is over, O'Steen heads for the team trailer alone. The rain is now coming down in sheets. O'Steen quickly outlines his plans for his next race weekend, this time at Road Atlanta. "Thursday is a nontest day with nothing happening. For me to go down to Atlanta on Wednesday would be impossible. I can't afford to be away from work. But I know the Atlanta track extremely well. I can show up on Friday." Late again, as usual. ■

BILL THOMAS is a freelance writer who lives in Galveston, Texas. He is a former editor of *Best of Business Quarterly* and *Top Line* magazines.

May 1990

"The performance of these talented drivers has kept Porsche in a strong second spot..."



Akin-White and Kelly Moss Teams Continue Porsche Firehawk Success

Strong efforts by Akin-White Racing drivers Bob and Bobby Akin (far l. and r.) and Kelly Moss Racing competitors John O'Steen and Jeff Purner (far r. and l.), are keeping the Porsche 944 S2 in the thick of the 1990 IMSA Firestone Firehawk Endurance Championship for street stock cars.

Together with James Weaver, the father and son Akin driving duo finished just 21 seconds behind the winner in the June 2 Mid-Ohio 6 hour Firehawk race. The team had earlier set a race lap record in the contest and led for 45 laps.

Purner and O'Steen teamed with fellow Kelly Moss drivers Tom Rathbun and Bill Cooper to tally another runner-up Porsche 944 S2

finish the following weekend in the Watkins Glen 24 Hour Firehawk event. In addition, Purner established a race lap record around the famed 3.377 Watkins Glen course while helping the Kelly Moss Porsche entry to lead 196 of the contest's 453 laps.

The performance of these talented drivers, who have led more laps so far in 1990 than all other Firehawk teams combined, has kept Porsche in a strong second spot in the 1990 Firehawk Grand Sports Manufacturers Championship. It has also moved Purner, Bobby Akin, Bob Akin, and O'Steen to third, fourth, seventh, and eighth, respectively, in this year's Firehawk Grand Sports Drivers Championship.

"Finch was a formidable winner in his 1990 season-opening race."

Finch Begins Quest For Third-Straight SCCA GT2 Title

Porsche 944 S2 race driver David Finch of Ann Arbor, Mich., began his challenge for a third SCCA GT2 National Championship with a victory in the famed June Sprints SCCA National road races at Elkhart Lake, Wis.

Driving the same RAETECH-prepared Porsche he piloted to back-to-back victories in the 1988-89 SCCA GT2 National Championship Runoffs at Road Atlanta, Finch was a formidable winner in his 1990 season-opening race. As defending National Champion, he needs just two more starts to qualify for the Oct. 12-14

Runoffs in Georgia. Between now and then, Finch plans to update the Porsche that has already set GT2 qualifying and race records at every track where it has competed.



LeMans 1984

Mazda Lola T-616

1st Group C2 No68

3rd Group C2 No67

Drivers:

Drivers:

Yoshimi Katayama

Jim Busby

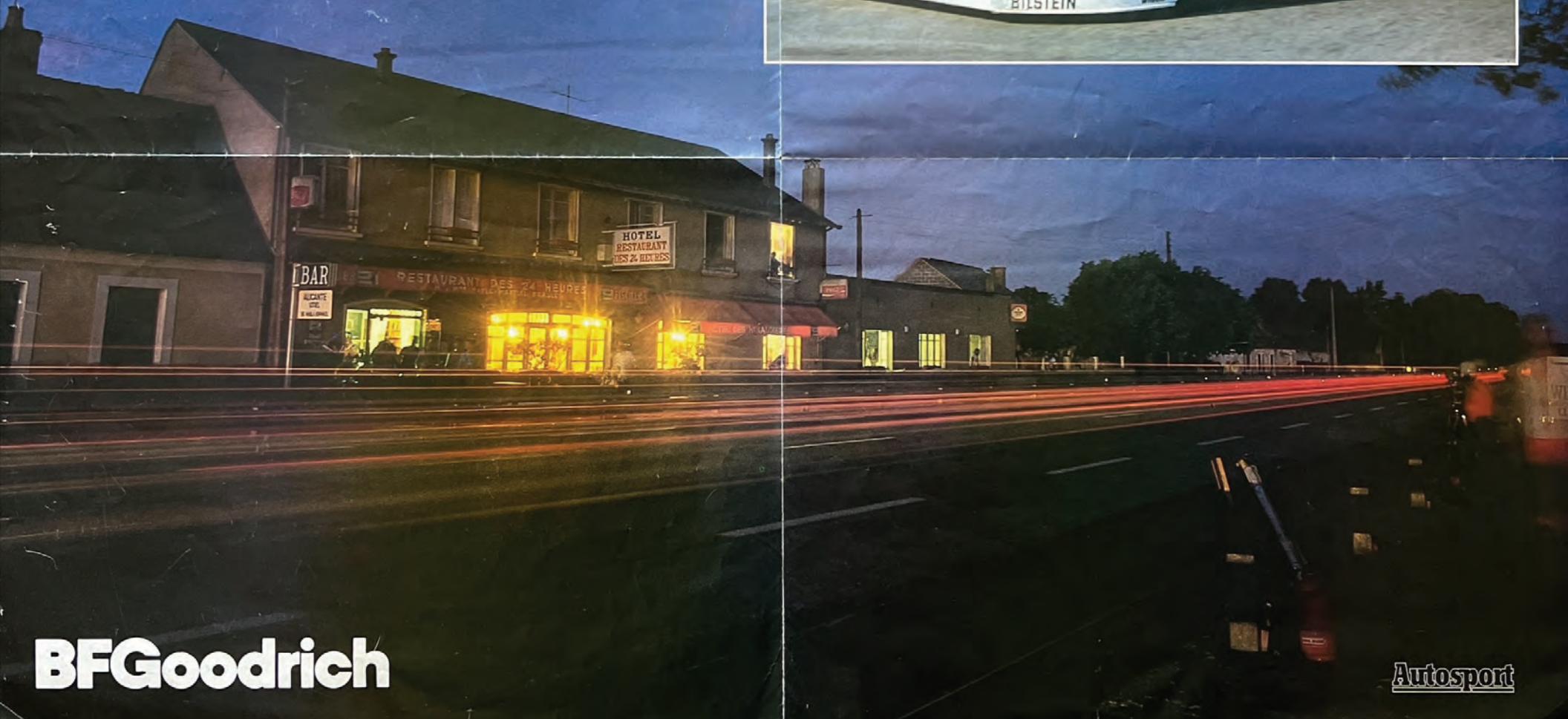
John Morton

Rick Knoop

John O'Steen

Bob Hayje

Tyres: BF Goodrich Experimental T/A Radials





John O'Steen

A lot of people thought John O'Steen should have gotten the 1975 Most Improved Driver Award, but it wasn't much of a surprise when he didn't because people have been overlooking how good John is since 1969, the year he started racing. O'Steen has been almost exclusively a Porsche racer since then, and has won several club titles in his Speedster. When he got the drive in John Graves' Carrera, he also became an immediate factor in professional events, and has been for three years. Perhaps that's why the 32-year-old Florissant, Mo. resident didn't get the award. How do you hand out a Most Improved title to someone who's always been that good? O'Steen, who makes his living as Packaging Manager for Proctor and Gamble's St. Louis plant, and his new wife Judi will be asking that question as he tries to win the Camel Championship in 1976.



JOHN O'STEEN



Brian Redman

The most internationally famous of the Camel GT pilots is former Formula 1 World Championship driver Brian Redman. Winner of the title "Nicest Man in Road Racing", Brian has also won the SCCA-USAC Formula 5000 title the last two years and will be forever remembered as the winner of the historic inaugural Long Beach Grand Prix in 1975. From Gargrave, England, Redman gave up F-1 and World Manufacturer's Championship endurance racing (where he once led Porsche to the title) because he didn't like the pressure. He has found a niche for himself in American racing, and the Americans are terribly pleased to have him. Driving for the factory BMW team in the Camel Series last year, Redman helped win Sebring and made a spectacular drive to second place at Riverside. Teaming in BMWs with Peter Gregg this year, it is difficult to imagine Redman not being in contention for the Camel GT title at the end of 1976. Added to what will probably be his third straight F-5000 title, that will make 38-year-old Redman and his wife Marion oversupplied with dollars again this year.

The Top Drivers



ESCORT

DOMINANT
PIZZA

Enjoy

Coca-Cola

5

DOMINANT
PIZZA

GOODYEAR

paradyne
HUBBON
WIRE

GOODYEAR

RED LINE OIL

EBS
BOSCH

















John Gifteen



John Bickerton

944S
WINS
CLASS





SEBRING
'83

FIRST
PLACE

- GTP -

CAMEL GT
12 HOURS
OF
SEBRING



GT Series
12 Second Place
CAMEL GT





Ray Baldino
MASTER PHOTOGRAPHER