

F3 Monaco magic

Formula 3 cars returned to the streets of Monaco earlier this month. And so did MARCUS PYE



Faggionato (left) and Pirro celebrate their success

MONACO F3 WINNERS PRE-84

1000cc - 1964-70

1964	Jackie Stewart (GB)	Cooper-BMC T72
1965	Peter Revson (USA)	Lotus-Ford 35
1966	Jean-Pierre Beltoise (F)	Matra-Ford MS5
1967	Henri Pescarolo (F)	Matra-Ford MS5
1968	Jean-Pierre Jaussaud (F)	Tecno-Ford 68
1969	Ronnie Peterson (S)	Tecno-Ford 69
1970	Tony Trimmer (GB)	Brabham-Ford BT28

1600cc - 1971-73

1971	Dave Walker (AUS)	Lotus-Ford t/c 69
1972	Patrick Depailler (F)	Alpine-Renault
1973	Jacques Laffite (F)	Martini-Renault MK12

2000cc - 1974-84

1974	Tom Pryce (GB)	March-Ford 743
1975	Renzo Zorzi (I)	GRD-Lancia 374
1976	Bruno Giacomelli (I)	March-Toyota 763
1977	Didier Pironi (F)	Martini-Toyota MK21
1978	Elio de Angelis (I)	Chevron-Toyota B38
1979	Alain Prost (F)	Martini-Renault MK27
1980	Mauro Baldi (I)	Martini-Toyota MK31
1981	Alain Ferte (F)	Martini-Alfa Romeo MK34
1982	Alain Ferte (F)	Martini-Alfa Romeo MK37
1983	Michel Ferte (F)	Martini-Alfa Romeo MK39
1984	Ivan Capelli (I)	Martini-Alfa Romeo MK42

MINI SCREAMERS 1000cc F3



Traber, Derossi and McMorran battle for lead

From the birth of one-litre Formula 3 in 1964 – as natural successor to Formula Junior – to the end of its two-litre ‘ground-effect’ epoch two decades later, the Monaco Grand Prix support race was the season’s blue-riband event. Motorsport’s glamour capital always drew a mega entry, of the magnitude that dozens of wannabes failed to qualify. And while future F1 champions and local aces excelled, the hard landscape of the principality’s streets wrought accident damage aplenty.

Whether psychology or excuse, allegations of ‘special’ tyres for favoured French teams tainted this period’s final years. The domination of Hugues de Chaunac’s super-professional Martini-equipped ORECA outfit – the best prepared, and funded, equipe in the land – was total. Yet strangely of all the era’s Monaco F3 *vainqueurs*, only the Ferte brothers – Alain and Michel, with three straight wins between them – failed to reach F1.

Today’s playing field is absolutely level, however, with Avon supplying control rubber to both the HSCC-aligned Classic F3 (1974-80) and French F3 Classic (’74-84) championships,

from which most of the entrants for the inaugural two-litre F3 races at this month’s seventh ACM GP Historique were drawn. The only technical changes in the French series demand that later ‘ground-effect’ cars are fitted with flat bottoms, as they were in front-line racing from ’85.

The faintest scent of a possible race in Monte Carlo first got prospectors buying cars about five years ago. Some – who had no intention of using their treasure in the interim – were sorely disappointed, but those who leapt onto the Classic F3 bandwagon early (Jackie Stewart’s Tyrrell F1 crew chief Roy Topp, champion club racer Tony Broster, and your scribe were centrally involved in founding the movement in 1986) and stuck with it have seen their cars gain cult status and value.

Their appeal is obvious, as time spent in Monaco’s pitlane or paddock attested. Faced with a massive initial application for the two-litre race – incorporating a class for the 1600cc F3 of 1971-73 – the ACM had difficulty selecting its entries on merit. In contrast with today’s virtual Dallara monopoly, the number of chassis marques competing back then

Smith in ex-de Angelis Chevron that won in 1978



improved the pathos. They got the mix pretty much right, although late (and lucrative) racehire deals rankle with some who were turned away.

Following Historic F1 and F2

competitors’ lead, many of the F3 cars have been returned to their original liveries, a sensational bonus for their owner/drivers and class historians. Elio de Angelis’s 1978 Monaco-winning Chevron B38 (owned by Briton Paul Smith) was on track with period rivals wearing the warpaint of Michele Alboreto, Philippe Alliot, Paul Belmondo, Teo Fabi, the Fertes, Patrick Neve, Anders Olofsson, Nigel Mansell, Riccardo Patrese, Alain Prost, Tom Pryce, Jean-Louis Schlesser, Siegfried Stohr, Danny Sullivan, Derek Warwick and Renzo Zorzi (a fluke winner in ’75). And almost all were correct...

Absolutely the real deal was Emanuele Pirro, who never won in Monaco, but has subsequently forged a marvellous career in sports

prototypes. He won the race this time, driving his old Martini-Toyota MK31 restored by Ombra Racing and run by Mario Crugnola. Experts rated the aero package as imaginative, but Pirro shook off the best of the Ralt RT3s (Monegasque Marc Faggionato’s) in a performance of pure passion and quality.

Fellow Italian Valerio Leone was best of the Pre-’81 brigade until his ex-Fabi March 783 came to grief in a lairy contretemps with Tom Powell’s ex-Chris Skeaping Chevron B20 – which fulfilled the prophecy that the 1600cc cars would be too slow for the company (only Monaco-based Briton Peter Dunn and his March 733 looked really on it in a group replete with Ensign, GRD and Lotus machinery).

Period F3 racer Richard Trott didn’t go to Monaco in his youth, but the double British FF2000 champion enjoyed a superb weekend, winning the Euroiset-backed Pre-’81 split in his ex-Stohr Chevron. He fought off Marcus Mussa (ex-Sullivan Modus) and hard-charging Dane Palle Ringstrom (ex-Herve Regout March 753) to finish fifth overall.

“Monaco was a fantastic experience,

not just for me but also for my family and friends,” says Trott. “One of the magical things about the track is that spectators are so close to the cars. I’ve always suffered from motion sickness, which comes on with concentration, so I popped a lot of tablets but thoroughly enjoyed the weekend.”

Storming along behind them on a super-impressive single-seater debut was Monaco resident Grant Tromans, the former TVR Tuscan ace driving the ex-Schlesser Martini MK34 that finished third there in 1981. Having arrived with very little running behind him in the PromotaSport-rebuilt car, due to Alfa Romeo engine dramas, his was a remarkable result. “I just concentrated on keeping it tidy and loved every second of it,” said the Brit.

Period winners Sir Jackie Stewart, Jean-Pierre Beltoise, Tony Trimmer, Bruno Giacomelli and Alain Prost were among many onlookers. Their enthusiasm for history, and the spirit of the competitors, will hopefully ensure that the two junior formula races will become permanent fixtures on the GP Historique bill. What price a formalised European challenge series for the cars in the interim? ☘

FORTY YEARS after his victory in Monaco’s final contemporary 1000cc F3 feature, Tony Trimmer’s hopes of rejoining the fray were thwarted: “Matthew Watts kindly offered me another Brabham BT28 and an engine to build, and the organisers held a place open, but the cost of the entry – almost £4000 – and logistics were ultimately prohibitive.”

The ACM’s espousal of the class was always going to be the catalyst for its wholesale revival, and the distinctive scream of predominantly Ford MAE-powered cars, in numbers unseen since their heyday, was a glorious Sunday morning wake-up call.

Engine reliability is an issue unless they are properly warmed up. A green-flag-lap blow-up robbed the field of its only Matra, and there were pools of water under most cars when the start was

delayed further. Once under way, however, the race was one of the event’s best.

Britons fared well. Moscow-based Ulsterman Paul McMorran finished third, behind Brabham-mounted Christian Traber and Chevron pedaller Francois Derossi in his unique Crossle 17F after a gearbox malady dropped him out of the lead dice: “It rained overnight, which helped me, but what an experience! A podium finish was beyond my wildest dreams.”

In company that included period F3 racers Ferdinand Gustafsson (Brabham BT15), Rene Ligonnet (Chevron B15) and Hermann Unold (Tecno), Historic F1 veteran Richard Eyre wound up fifth in his ex-Jolly Club Chevron B15, a basket case last autumn. “I’d always wanted to race at Monaco, and after one test at Brands Hatch I’m delighted with the result,” he said.