

DESTINATION LE MANS

THE NEWSLETTER OF AUSTRALIAN RACING DRIVER **TOM DREWER** | ISSUE 01 2010



Australian Formula 3

A quick trip back home to drive an F3.

I woke up to the sound of my phone Sunday morning at Virginia International Raceway. I was a guest of APR Volkswagen whom I'd driven for two weeks prior. It was my father; "How quickly can you get back to Atlanta? You better make it quick because you have to book a flight back to Australia. You're racing an F3 car back here next weekend."

Long time family friend and Aussie motorsport legend Ian Richards had asked me to race one of his R-Tek

Motorsport Dallara-Spiess cars in the Australian F3 Championship at the famed Phillip Island circuit.

As a side-note, Phillip Island is the closest I think we (in Australia) have too many of the circuits in the United States. Its super-fast, flowing and requires big balls.

In fact I have quite a family connection with Ian and R-Tek. 'Richo' built my father's Australian F2 car, one of four cars he built of his own design from the ground up. In fact Ian is one of the few people to win a national championship in a car of his own make.

Ian was also responsible for fitting me in my first racing car, a Formula

Vee. I can still remember his dry humour as he moved the pedals back towards me so I could reach; "Oh well, TD, we know one thing; you'll be a foot further away from the accident."

The next few days were a blur. Sunday night I convinced Stephen Hooks, APR team owner to give me the last seat on his private jet so I could make it back to Atlanta in time (thank you Stephen). I booked my flight back home in the early hours of Monday morning, while washing and packing all night. By Monday night I was en-route to Australia. By Wednesday night I had arrived in Melbourne and by Thursday night I was at Phillip Island.

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Inside line

Focused and inspired.

2010 has always been set to be a transition year after my two year 'American apprenticeship', winning the 2008 ISMA Prototype Lites 2 Championship and moving up to Lites 1 in 2009. I am focused on preparing myself for professional

endurance sportscar racing and making the transition from the feeder categories to the highest levels of professional sportscar racing.

Although I haven't spent much time on the track this year I have been making much progress and I've achieved a lot.

Last month I drove in my first pro drive with the American Grand-Am

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Aussie F3 (continued...)

The weekend was always going to be a tough ask. I had never even sat in an F3 before, and I hadn't driven a downforce car since I tested the Le Mans Challenge Car in October last year. And the field is full of exceptionally good talent, with Ben Barker from the UK and New Zealand prodigy Mitch Evans amongst an experienced local line-up.

We made a steady progression throughout practice and over the entire weekend albeit a small spin in qualifying that limited my starting position to seventh.

Unfortunately the shift-cut lever worked itself loose in the final race. This was a bit frustrating because I had found some time in the car, but I lost my gain in the long left-hander coming onto the straight as it was almost impossible to hold the

steering wheel while finding the shift-cut and shifting at the same time.

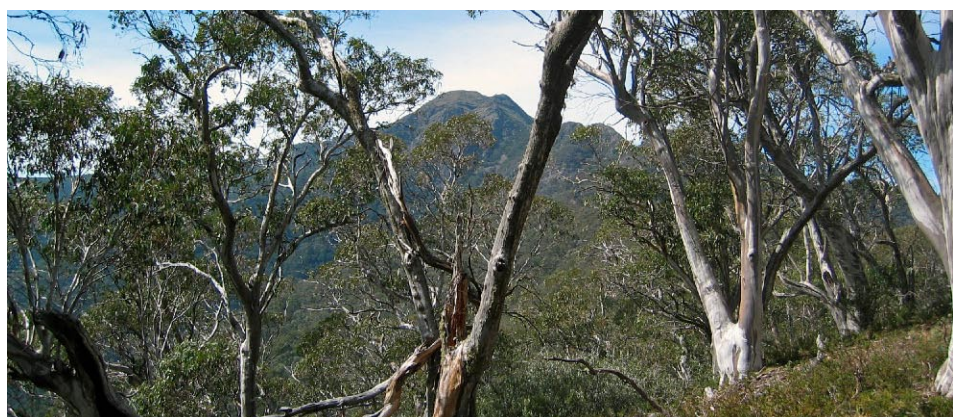
In any event we finished 2nd in National class and 7th outright and it was a great weekend, particularly to drive for Ian, Simon and Meryl and a great way to give something back to long time supporter John Trimble and the Daily Planet. I really must also thank James Rosenberg from Gawler Farm Machinery, whose support also made the drive happen.

Off the track

On top of the world, or at least Mt Buller.

While back home, my girlfriend Sarah and I hiked to the summit of Mt Buller, one of Australia's alpine ski-resort peaks, as part of my fitness training.

The trek was a rather steep 1,100ft climb over 8km, making it around a 16km round-trip. A good suggested pace is 4 hours up and 3 hours down. We made it up in exactly 3 and down in just over 2, which I think would please my trainer Gary.



It was amazing to see the transition in flora as we trekked higher and higher. You could literally see one species stop and another one start as the climate changed.

While the snow season is just around the corner, the top of the mountain was bare, although we

did find some small patches of ice at the very tip of the summit.

Victoria is such a beautiful part of Australia. The Victorian Alps are spectacular with the scenery changing from bushland, to lush farming land to what almost looks like tropical rainforest.

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Inside line (continued...)



Continental Tire Series after being invited by the factory backed APR Tuned Volkswagen DriverGear team to make the world debut of the new Mk6 Volkswagen GTI. In fact I made history by taking the first ever racing laps in an Mk6 GTI anywhere in the world.

Behind the scenes I am making good progress on broadening my American contacts and reaching out to potential American backers. Gaining US based sponsorship is one of my biggest focuses this year.

One of the things that has kept me so positive and focused this year is an impromptu motivational speech from reigning Le Mans 24 Hour Champion (and an absolute hero of mine), David Brabham at Sebring 12 Hour. I caught up with Brabs in the Patron tent while catching up with another friend of mine, Le Mans driver Dominik Farnbacher.

While celebrating Brabs' podium in the Highcroft LMP2, we got into a deep discussion about mental preparation, staying focused and positive. David Brabham is an amazing mentor to have and his words were extremely insightful and empowering.

The progression and continued success in his career is particularly motivating to me, as is the success of Mark Webber. Both Brabs and Webber continue to get better and better, year after year. Just when you think they've reached the height of their career they continue to raise the bar.

It is also inspiring to see the success of all the Australian drivers on the world stage. It is a great time to be overseas, particularly in the USA with Will Power and Ryan Briscoe dominating IndyCar.

I am very proud to be one of the few Australians to win a national American Championship and win at famous circuits such as Sebring, Laguna Seca and Road Atlanta. Just as my fellow Australians I have that 'never say die attitude', I am focused, and I'm constantly pushing. I can't wait to chalk up a few more wins flying the Australian flag.

Paddock talk

Spreading rumours on the new Panoz Abruzzi.

Recently Panoz Auto officially announced that it is building a new car, called the Abruzzi. Thanks to friend Dan Panoz, I have been lucky enough to see the progression of the design from day one.

The design team have done an amazing job. All I can say is all the internet images are wrong. Below is the official tease photo which is accurate. All I'll add is there's no doubt this car is a Panoz and it looks awesome with the shape paying homage to the racing heritage of the brand which includes the Sebring and Le Mans winning Esperante and the famed 'batmobile'.



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