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Donington joins festival line-up

THE NEWLY REJUVENATED Donington Park circuit will run its own three-day historic festival on April 30 – May 2 in 2011. Owner Kevin Wheatcroft has joined forces with Duncan Wiltshire's respected Motor Racing Legends organisation, which runs the Le Mans Legend support races before the annual 24-Hours epic.

Expect to see the full range of MRL grids, including the Stirling Moss Trophy for pre-1961 sports cars and sports racers, Royal Automobile Club Woodcote Trophy for pre-1956 post-war sports racers and the Pre-War Sports Car Series.

Duncan Wiltshire doesn't quote specific events, but he must surely be targeting the Silverstone Classic, with its controversial line-up of after-race music events and celebrity races, when he says: 'This will be a truly prestigious annual event, inviting only the very best race series and the highest calibre cars and drivers. We aim to delight serious historic motor sport fans, and the owners of the most original, most fascinating and most important cars, by focusing on the pure motor racing experience – over and above any add-on attractions.'

Family effort nets Historic F1 title

MARCH 761 DRIVER Peter Meyrick snatched the FIA Historic Formula One Championship honours in a nail-biting finish at the Algarve Historic Festival, with a little help from his son Andy.

Meyrick Sr went in to the seventh and final event tied on 46 points with reigning champion Bobby Verdon-Roe (1982 McLaren MP4/1B), having won Class B at every round of the season thus far, but finished second in class to championship debutant Michael Lyons, who was driving his father Frank's 1977 Hesketh 308e.

Verdon-Roe had to settle for third place overall (and third in Class C), one place behind the 1982 Arrows A5 of Meyrick Jr, who also took a point away for the fastest lap of the race.

Meyrick finished the season with 52 points to Verdon-Roe's 50, with Algarve race winning 1981 Williams FW07C driver Katsu Kubota just a single point further back in third. The 1976 Cosworth DFV powered March is now for sale – see www.speedmastercars.com



Champion Peter Meyrick in the March 761



Simon Kidston

Reflecting on the highs and lows of 2010

IT'S BEEN A TIME for reflection recently in a month of ups and downs. Highlights would have to include the Uniques concours held in Florence – one of the world's most beautiful cities and, to my mind, the perfect backdrop for a classic car, preferably Italian. Don't you find that, just as historic racers look at odds when driven by someone in a full face helmet and modern Nomex, the most beautiful coachbuilt automobiles look a bit lost in a modern landscape? It's like showing *Gone with the Wind* in a 3D multiplex cinema in Milton Keynes. I went along as a private entrant with a Bugatti Atalante. When you're not involved professionally it's rather refreshing to sit back and relax, especially when you know there's absolutely no risk of winning anything (sightseeing is much more interesting than polishing).

An altogether simpler pleasure has been driving with the family during the school half term, which, as any parent will tell you, is sacrosanct time. After years of faithfulness to the three pointed star for my daily transport, I've bid farewell to one of my all-time favourite drives, the Black Series CLK (my osteopath won't shed any tears) making way for my first BMW – the final M6 delivered to Switzerland, liveried in a very purposeful matt battleship grey and on loan from friends in high places (ie Munich). Like most men, reading the instruction manual would be a sign of defeat, but I'm learning from an 8- and 11-year-old how all the hi-tech stuff works. It's a hit with the kids and every petrol station attendant, and with a 500bhp V10 which happily wails to 8000rpm, the old man is rather enjoying it too.

Lows? Well, the sale of the James Bond Aston Martin DB5 in London last week could hardly have attracted more media coverage – you'd have to have been living in a cave not to have heard about it. Forget the fact that underneath it's just a scruffy old DB5 with a few screen props crudely bolted on; it's a pop culture icon. Since the only other DB5 to feature in *Goldfinger* mysteriously disappeared from a Florida hangar back in 1997 (its insurers speculate it's currently at the bottom of the ocean), you'd have expected fierce bidding from around the world on the night. The outcome? £2.9 million wasn't a bad return on the £5000 the vendor paid for it back in 1969, but somehow just two bids seemed a rather sad end to 41 years of faithful custodianship, never mind the pre-sale speculation that it might fetch three times that. With due respect to Messrs Hirst, Emin et al, what else comes close as a symbol of Cool Britannia? Our loss, Cincinnati's gain...

And finally, a few days ago, one of the great personalities of the classic motoring scene said goodbye. Gino Macaluso's life revolved around time, and he managed to fill his with enough exploits for a book. The 1972 European Rally Champion at the wheel of a Fiat 124 Abarth, he later went into wristwatch distribution, taking over the venerable manufacturer Girard Perregaux in 1992 and turning it into one of the most coveted brands in the industry. He also presided over Club Italia, the Italian Motorsport Federation and the FIA Karting Commission, served on the FIA World Council and, in his spare time, put together probably the world's greatest rally car collection. What struck me, though, is that he was unfailingly humble, softly spoken and never too busy for a chat; a friend to many and a thoroughly decent chap. Ciao, Gino.

Simon Kidston lives and works in a world filled with the finest classics. In between acting as a consultant to collectors and performing as the multi-lingual presenter at top European events, Geneva-based Simon (www.kidston.com) finds time to enjoy his own cars, including a Porsche 911 Carrera 2.7 RS and a Lamborghini Miura SV.