

Christian Morici and his '71 Lotus 69 Formula Ford currently holds the track record.



Bucket List Bash

Taking it to the mean streets of Pittsburgh's Schenley Park.

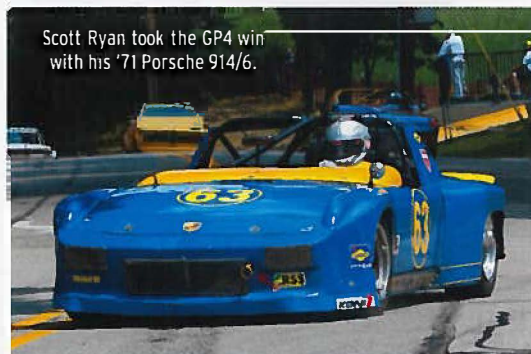
STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL STOLER

The Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix has been taking place every summer since 1983. For the vintage racer, it is the equivalent of "Christmas in July." The anticipation builds all year and climaxes with the street races held in Schenley Park, this time over the July 14-15 weekend. This popular vintage street race is on the bucket list for many drivers. The PVGP is a unique event in so many ways. It isn't a purpose-built track, it only happens once a year and for the most part, it's an all-volunteer effort. Just like a Christmas merchant, the men and women of the PVGP begin planning for the following year's event within days of the last checkered flag.

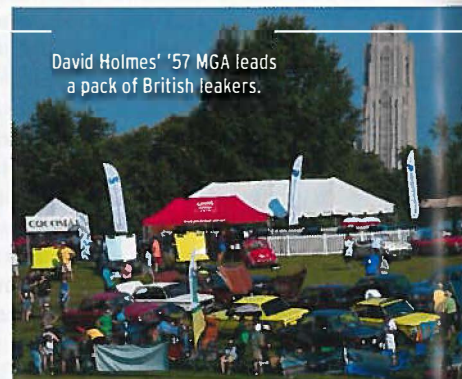
The temporary circuit at Schenley Park is a 20-turn 2.3-mile course that winds through the park and loosely follows the perimeter of "Panther Hollow." The course includes a hay bale chicane that slows the cars a bit before they head across the Panther Hollow Bridge. Significant elevation changes, manhole covers and those stone



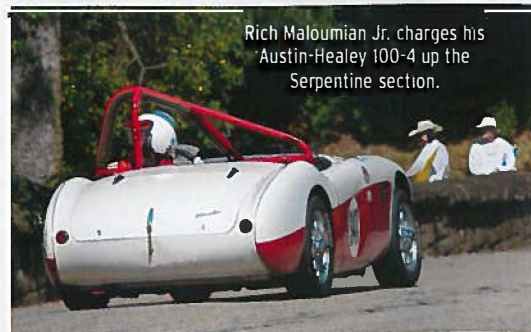
Jim Dolan's '72 Triumph GT6 is an original Group 4 car and was ideal for this tight circuit.



Scott Ryan took the GP4 win with his '71 Porsche 914/6.



David Holmes' '57 MGA leads a pack of British leakers.



Rich Maloumian Jr. charges his Austin-Healey 100-4 up the Serpentine section.





Bill Auberlen's reaction after his first trip around Schenley in the GTLM car.

walls along the iconic Serpentine Drive make this a course like no other.

The best places for spectator viewing can be found along the snow fences erected along the sweeping turns that parallel the Bob O'Connor Golf Course, which is also the site of the International Car Show with nearly 3,000 cars on display. The paddock area at Pittsburgh is located along Prospect Drive and provides plenty of shade to escape the summer sun. A roving tech inspection takes place on Friday as well as a mandatory track walk for first-timers. Friday evening kicks off the weekend with a parade of vintage cars that leave the paddock, wind through the Squirrel Hill neighborhood to a car show and driver's reception on Forbes Avenue.

This was a special year for the PVGP, which is a charity event that raises money for the Autism Society of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Valley School. 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the popular BMW 2002 and the Bavarian automaker was the honored marque this year. Pittsburgh was selected by the BMW Car Club of America as the site of the BMW Oktoberfest, a week-long celebration of all things BMW. The weekend drew 750 BMW cars to "German Hill" overlooking Turn 13. On Saturday, a BMW Marque of Year race was held and 30 BMW 2002 models took the green flag. The eight-lap race was captured by Perry Genova in his '70 model, which returned back to the BMW CCA Foundation Museum in Greer, North Carolina after the event.

The moment that most spectators will remember from this year's fun was the sight



Alan Harriman's '51 MG TD Special slices through the hay bale chicanes.



Stefan Vapaa gets all he can from his '68 Saab Sonett.



What a beauty—David Allison's '60 Lotus 18. Looks like fun!

and sounds of a Team RLL IMSA Z4 GTLM race car doing an exhibition run around the course. It was driven by none other than Bill Auberlen, the BMW North American Brand Ambassador and this year's Honorary Race Director at Schenley Park. Prior to his laps with the Z4, he was a passenger in the BMW "Ring Taxi" piloted by PVGP fixture, Mike Renner. Bill described his passenger experience as a bit "terrifying," and how unusual it was to see sidewalks, hay bales, stone walls and telephone poles along the course. His experience was much better

behind the wheel of his Z4, indicating that he "took it easy on the first lap and after that it was off to the races!" He commented that during his first lap, it became obvious why so many drivers return to this event each year. "Very challenging, but so much fun" is how he describes a lap at Schenley Park. Auberlen enjoyed doing some charity laps for the PVGP during the lunch hour, giving a few fans the ride of a lifetime. While retirement from racing isn't anytime soon, Auberlen said he would definitely consider vintage racing someday.



PICK OF THE LITER

1938 BMW 328 S/N 85406

The on-track action got underway Saturday with practice and qualifying races that set the grid for Sunday's feature races. There were some short warm-up sessions on Sunday morning and the action began at noon. Racing is divided into five race groups and the first race of the day is the Prewar and Production Under 1.0 L group and included a number of amazing cars including the '29 Ford Speedster of Lamar Beck, a '39 MG TB Special of Frank Mount and the '38 BMW 328 of John Romano. This race included an impressive number of MG TDs and the sight of these cars racing for the lead took you back to what it must have been like on the streets of Watkins Glen or Elkhart Lake in the old days.

When the checker waved, it was Michael Barstow in his '53 MG TD taking the win over Kurt Byrnes in a '51 MG TD with Steve Konsin rounding out the podium in a '53 version. Charlie Dolan took the Group 2 Prod Under 1.5L win in a '57 MGA, Rudy Glarner drove a '74 BMW 2002 to a win in Group 3 for Sports Cars under 2.0L. Group 4 for Sports Cars over 2.0L was a battle between the Porsche 914/6s of Scott Ryan and Gary Schultz, with Ryan taking the win in his '71 model.

Christian Morici turned the fastest lap of the weekend and took the Group 5 win for Vintage Sports Racers and open wheel, with a lap time of 2.09.192.

The last race of the day, the "Axis vs. Allies" was an exciting one. Joey Bojalad,

The beautiful white 1938 BMW 328 that raced with Group 1 at Schenley Park is owned by John Romano of Duxbury, MA. It was only Romano's second time out with the BMW after a shakedown weekend with the VSCCA Spring Sprints at Lime Rock back in May. Romano has been a competitor at Pittsburgh a number of times and describes the event as "fabulous for drivers and spectators, alike."

The car was titled in 1938 and delivered to the Helm Glockler dealership in Frankfurt, Germany May 12, 1939. It passed through a number of owners before Dr. Fred Simeone acquired it in the 1970s. As part of his collection, it was one of the initial exhibits when the Simeone Foundation Automotive Museum opened in Philadelphia in 2008.

Romano purchased the car 2010 at auction and his intention was to make the conversion to a race car. For a few years Romano enjoyed keeping it in street trim and driving in and around the streets of Duxbury. When he was ready to make the conversion, he

who had just finished 2nd in the Group 5 race, started last and worked his way through the field to take the win for the Allies in his '60 Elva MkVI prototype.

"Overall, it was a spectacular weekend," commented PVGP executive director, Dan DelBianco. "Great racing, good weather both days and a full show field of cars." On the race side, PVGP competition director John Bechtol was very pleased with the

sought out the folks at KTR racing for the conversion that would become a four-year frame off restoration.

The engine was sent to England and there was an extensive research and hunt for authentic parts. Romano described how the most tedious part of the restoration was working with the wood subframe. That work required the services of an antique furniture restorer and took more than a year to complete.

The BMW 328 sports car was designed by Fritz Fiedler as a high-performance roadster and was considered a great car both on and off the track. The roadster benefitted from lightweight design, ideal weight distribution, an aerodynamic body and a strong 1971cc inline 6-cylinder engine that produced about 80hp.

Only 464 BMW 328s were produced between the years of 1936-40 (405 complete cars and 59 bare chassis) and this model remains a highly desired Bimmer for collectors.

The next stop for Romano and his BMW 328 will be the Lime Rock Historic Festival 36 Aug. 30-Sept. 3. 🏁

record turnout and the variety of cars. He was happy with the coordination of efforts between the PVGP and the Steel City Region of the SCCA and credited them for a smooth-running, safe event that produced great racing.

The planning is already underway for next year's event. If you happen to have a bucket list, make sure to add the PVGP to it! 🏁