

The Fun Begins Here

The Historics at Pitt Race kicks off a 10-day celebration of fun cars and fast times.

THE PITTSBURGH VINTAGE GRAND PRIX is celebrating 40 years since the first event at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's Schenley Park. A one-day event in 1983 has evolved into a 10-day celebration with numerous car shows and road rallies bracketed by two race weekends. The first weekend is known as the "Historics at Pitt-Race," and was added in 2004 when PVGP race director Mike Connolly thought the PVGP should consider racing at the new track in Beaver County located about 40 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. The new "BeaveRun" purpose-built track would allow cars that were too big and powerful to race on the streets

of Schenley Park. Nineteen years later, this world-class racing facility is known as the Pittsburgh International Race Complex or Pitt-Race, and the event features American muscle cars taking on the best of Europe's and Asia's sports cars. The PVGP and the Vintage Racer Group, with its focus on safety and the ability to run efficient races, combine efforts for the Historics weekend at Pitt-Race.

The July 15-17 event attracted 225 entries and was chosen for the annual Kastner Cup, drawing Triumphs from across the U.S. and Canada. The weather was typical of summer in western PA—hot and humid, with only a few showers on Saturday morning challenging drivers to a session in the wet.



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1 | David Di Cesar's '60 MGA shows the way for Lorne Fritz's '59 Triumph TR3, Emily Ryan's '75 Caldwell D-13 and Jason Di Cesar's '69 Beetle.

2 | An expected shower didn't dampen the enthusiasm of Michael Rowen in his '61 Aston Martin DB4.

3 | With eyes ahead toward the apex, Geoff Herald points his '62 MGB on a quick line.

4 | Kenny Williamson's '69 Nerus Silhouette leads the Medium Bore pack away at the wave of the green.

5 | Peter Dolan's '65 Shelby GT350 couldn't stay ahead of Christopher Turner's '74 Porsche 911 for long.

6 | Jan McCoy concentrates aboard this pretty '81 Gemini 81C Formula Ford.

7 | It's an MG T-Series battle with Michael Barstow's '53 TD leading Kurt Byrnes '51 TD, two of the oldest cars entered.

8 | Pat Darrow's '65 Triumph Spitfire takes a high line against the '64 Spitfire of Tim Slater.

This world-class Pitt-Race facility has undergone significant improvements and expansion over the last decade. In 2015, the south track extension lengthened the track to 2.8 miles with 18 corners. The highlight of the course is the T3-T5 section, a challenging left turn at the long straight that begins an 89-foot elevation drop into "Coyote Gulch," (reminiscent of the corkscrew at Monterey, CA) before making the 81-foot climb to the back straight. This signature section combined with several long straights and a series of esses provides plenty of passing opportunities and has become a favorite among racers.

For enthusiasts, the track has 400 acres of viewing opportunities, including "Spectator Hill," providing

plenty of tailgate parking and ample room to view the action.

The racing was divided into four groups for vintage and included feature races for the Kastner Cup Triumphs and Formula Ford Challenge Series. The small-bore group included the usual Midgets, Sprints and Formula Vees but was dominated by a trio of well-prepared Lotus 23 race cars—Joe Blacker, Darren Mann and Malcolm Ross racing well together at the front. Blacker and Ross took wins on Saturday, but Sunday's Trophy race was captured by Pittsburgh native Andrew Moore in his '64 Sprite—no stranger to the podium.

Pitt-Race is the perfect venue for the big-bore "ground pounders." This race is always a crowd favorite and



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In the Modern Histories Group, Christopher Evans charges down "Coyote Gulch" in his 2006 Chevy NASCAR Cup car.

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showcases American muscle like the Camaro and Mustang against the sports cars of Europe and the Datsuns of Japan. This year it was all Mustang, with Gary Moore setting the fast time in his '66 Shelby GT350. In Sunday's action-packed feature, Chris Turner in a '74 Porsche 911 and Moore battled door-to-door for most of the race but American muscle prevailed this year, with Moore taking the win.

The Histories at Pitt-Race has been a regular stop for the Formula Ford Challenge Series and drew a variety of open-wheel racers, including an '81 Gemini 81C that was built in Pittsburgh. Brothers Paul and Jeff Rieffle built Gemini Formula Fords on the 5th floor of the "Duquesne Brewery" building located on the southside of Pittsburgh in the early '80s. The partially assembled cars had to be "stood up" in the freight service elevator to get them out of the building! The Gemini raced here is owned by Bob Albert and was driven by Jan McCoy. Dan Pyanowski and his Crossle 30F set the fast time in qualifying and captured the FFCS feature race on Saturday. Pyanowski was challenged on Sunday, falling to 5th at the start with Mike Wirrick (Zink 10C) and Vaughan Glace ('82 LeGrand) battling for the top spot. The 30-minute race allowed Pyanowski ample time to find his way back to the front, completing the weekend sweep.

The Kastner Cup is an annual event that takes place at a different track each year. The Triumph-only race honors the legendary R.W. "Kas" Kastner, a legend in the world of Triumph racing. The Kastner Cup last visited PVGP in 2018 and, before his passing last year, Kas always selected the recipient of the award based on track performance, car presentation and enthusiasm for vintage racing. Bob Johns, factory driver for Triumph in the '50s and VTR/British Sports Car Hall of Famer was named 2022 Kastner Cup Grand Marshal and selected this year's champion, Henry Frye. Frye races a well-prepared TR250 and is a consistent front-runner. Frye commented: "Having my name on this list of the best Triumph vintage racers feels like a crowning achievement of my racing exploits. Being selected by Grand Marshal Bob Johns among a fine field of drivers is the ultimate compliment." The Kastner Cup feature race win went to Chris Marx in his quick '80 TR8 over Sam Halkias' beautiful '71 TR6 Paul Newman tribute car.

The Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix has been a charity event since the beginning, raising funds for individuals with autism and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Since 1983, the PVGP has donated more than \$6 million to the Autism Society of Pittsburgh and the Merakey Allegheny Valley School. 🏆

PICK OF THE LITER

1979 Huffaker Triumph TR7

BACK IN 1979 AT THE SCCA RUNOFFS at Road Atlanta, this Joe Huffaker-prepared TR7 was the class of the D-Production field, driven by Lee Mueller.

Huffaker Engineering campaigned the Triumph TR7 and TR8 under contract to the Jaguar Rover Triumph Group (JRT). In July, the SCCA disqualified the TR8, due to a lack of cars produced to meet SCCA rules. JRT then had a TR7 shipped to Huffaker in early August to continue the chase for the 1979 D-Production National Championship. In just two short months, Joe Huffaker Jr. and Joe Carr completed the transformation.

In early October, the TR7 arrived at Road Atlanta just in time for practice. Disaster struck with a crash, forcing the team to make rush repairs. In the championship race, Mueller and the TR7 took the early lead and took the win. After the 1980 Runoffs, it was sold at season end, campaigned in SCCA until 1985.

The car was stored for 28 years by Joe Carr until it was repurchased by Huffaker Engineering in 2013. A complete restoration was started but customer projects took priority, halting progress until the car was purchased by current owners Curt and Debbie Johnston, who also restored the Huffaker TR8.

Johnston's aim was to recognize the history of the wedge cars by recreating the 1980 Huffaker Race Team, including the team members. The beautifully restored TR7 made its debut at the 2020 Vintage Grand Prix of Ohio—with Joe Huffaker Jr. driving and Joe Carr as lead mechanic, the same two men who built the car in 1979. The engine is the original Huffaker race-prepared stock TR7 motor fitted with dual Webers. It produces approximately 185hp at 7,200rpm.

At the 2021 Kastner Cup Reunion Race held at Portland International Raceway, Huffaker Jr. won the pole with Curt Johnston driving the TR7 to the feature win the following day. 🏆



This 1 of 1 factory-sponsored Huffaker Triumph TR7 is impeccably restored to its 1979 Runoffs-winning livery.