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Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix
Pitt Race & Schenley Park, Pittsburgh, Pa. / July 25-Aug. 4

PITT SPECIAL

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The big news leading into the 2024 Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix was a scheduling modification moving the 10-day celebration a few weeks later than the normal mid-July date, thus avoiding conflict with other races in the area. The change seemed to work for organizers, bumping entries significantly for the Histories at Pittsburgh International Race Complex, July 25-28.

The kickoff weekend at Pitt Race is a more traditional vintage race event, accommodating cars not quite suited for racing on the streets of Schenley Park. The weekend also served as the 60th GT40 Reunion, with nearly 100 famed sports cars flocking the paddock and eight entries participating in on-track activities.

The crown jewel of the motorsports festival is still undoubtedly the Schenley Park vintage races that are held the following weekend. The 2.3-mile circuit features 22 turns and a fair bit of treachery. Organizers

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TIM WOODRUFF

have made the track as safe as possible over the years, but the public roads within the 456-acre park still have stone walls and trees to contend with if things go awry.

The uniqueness is certainly what drew 1974 BMW 2002 racer Tim Woodruff from Houston, Texas, to his first PVGP. Well, that and hearing a longtime friend and PVGP regular rave about the event for years.

“The first weekend at Pitt Race, and [the car] ran fine initially,” Woodruff recalled. “Then I heard a rattling noise. I’m just like,

‘Man, I’m a long way from home and my transmission sounds like it’s broken.’ Within minutes I had three people helping me dismantle my car and I had another guy on the phone calling to see if he could help me find a transmission. That’s just amazing to me.”

Car fixed, it was time to put rubber on the Schenley Park Race Circuit.

“It was so nerve-wracking, so hair-raising, but so exhilarating at the same time,” said Woodruff. “It was so fun, too. I was really just trying to understand where the line is, because the grip level changes like six or seven times in one lap.”

The skies opened during Saturday’s qualifying sessions and the tricky circuit became even more delicate for drivers. Woodruff saw it as a unique opportunity.

“It was a benefit that we had rain because it took me completely out of race mode. I went into learn mode trying to understand the track.”



MAIN Vintage Indy returned to the streets of Schenley Park, giving spectators a unique experience to take in Indy car history. **LEFT** Abigail Patterson in her Austin Healey Sprite. Her grandfather, Alan Patterson, co-founded the event in 1983. **ABOVE** Tim Woodruff had a successful first PVGP in his BMW 2002 and can't wait to return.

It must have helped because, when race day came, Woodruff moved up seven spots, finishing mid-pack and hungry for more.

"That's the bad part; I have a taste for it," he admitted. "So you know what's gonna happen next year when we start to put our budget together for where I'm racing... Pittsburgh is top of the list."

Another big mover on race day was Gary Drea. Representing the PVGP's featured marque for 2024, Mini, Drea narrowly missed the podium for the Small Bore race, carving his way from 10th to fourth in his 1966 Mini Cooper S. Andrew Moore won the race after

qualifying third in his '64 Austin Healy Sprite.

In the Sports Racer and Formula group, Stewart Bartley maneuvered his way from 11th to fifth aboard his 1972 Crosslé 20F, but it

was Joey Bojalad who took the win in his 1960 Elva Mk VI/1500. Bojalad also stood on the top step in the Axis vs. Allies race that served as the finale for the event. 🏆

RIGHT Rob Brownlee-Tomasso and his 1958 MGA navigate the crest at Pitt Race International during the first of two race weekends on the PVGP agenda.

