



CORVAIR RACER UPDATE

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CORVAIR ALLEY NEWS, by Rick Norris



Rick Sez:

Looking at the latest (3-31-17) Mitty entry list I see there are about 25 cars under the Group2 heading. The normally-powered Corvairs are in Group 2, VP3 or Vintage Production 3 for a further breakdown of the class. In VP3 there are 15 registered and out of that number 9 of them are Porche 356's or "Bath Tub" style bodies with swing axle suspension. Several of these things are very fast. They have blown my doors off before but that in itself isn't saying much. Also in this class is a 64 Morgan. If it's the one I'm familiar with, it too is fast.

Among us Corvair drivers in VP3 we have Michael LeVeque, Jeff Rapp and yours truly. Mike Levine's V8 Vair runs in Group 5 as a VASR or Vintage A Sports Racer. James Reeve will not be attending this Mitty. See below.

Go here for Mitty entry list;

<http://hsrrace.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Mitty-POST-LIST-3.31.pdf>

James Sez:

Late yesterday Pat and I came to an astonishing realization. The Mitty CONFLICTS with my annual business convention that we exhibit at!!!! What an unbelievable oversight. Maybe it was just a case of wishful thinking on my part??? Oh well, Ya'll have a safe and FUN racing weekend. I'll be thinking of you.

Drive fast, James

Spotted in: Classic Motorsports Car Catcher: Corvair Racer

Date Mar 6, 2017 Written by Ed Higginbotham

Do you hate conforming to the preconceived stereotypes that the world constantly thrusts upon everyone? Do you want to go vintage racing? If your answer was “yes” to both questions, this 1966 Chevrolet Corvair might be just what you've been waiting for. It's being auctioned off now on bringatrailer.com.



(ED. It went to California)

Comment from TxCoyote Reader March 13, 2017 7:30 p.m. Sold for \$20k. Not a true period vintage car as it is a GT3 tube framed car but a really good car nonetheless.

Written by Tim Suddard from the Jan. 2008 issue Classic Motorsports

As I travel this big world of ours and visit events ranging from the Monterey Historics to the Goodwood Festival of Speed to the regional Triumph gathering I attended last weekend, I get to chat with a lot of readers. No matter what the initial topic, it usually doesn't take long for the conversation to come around to vintage racing. It seems that many of you are on the sidelines, watching these daring feats as fellow enthusiasts drive the wheels off of 50- and sometimes nearly 100-year-old cars. Is it as fun as it looks? How scary is it? Is it dangerous? Expensive?

Over the years I have put together a few thoughts - let's call them rules, if you will - about vintage racing. While many are discussed in this issue's cover story, I wanted to add some of my personal views on the subject. While it might sound

fairly easy to slap on some Weber carbs and a cam, add some bigger tires and a roll bar, and go racing in your MGB, it really isn't quite so simple.

First and foremost, vintage racing is wheel-to-wheel racing; as such, it is very intense and somewhat scary. A fast touring lap or even a driver's school is one thing, but when you come into Turn 1 at VIR three-wide for the first time in a pack of 20 snarling MGs and Triumphs, with everyone scrambling to hit their brakes at just the right time to make that right-hander, you quickly realize that vintage racing is as real as rain and can be very, very intimidating.

It's easy to get caught up in the whole situation and lose focus - your brain might even try to drive the car that you're following. (If you're wondering if that's even possible, ask the novice who rear-ended me at Mid-Ohio a few years back.) There is no real way to avoid those first-time jitters, but you can be better prepared for them.

Rule 1: Learn Your Car

If you are not already intimately familiar with your machine and don't know how to drive it at the limit, then you have no business being out there. Trying to find the edge of your car's friction circle in the heat of battle is a recipe for disaster. Know your car. Know its limits. Know when the brakes will start to fade and know exactly what it's going to do when you hit the brakes too late or get on the gas too early. The best way to acquire these skills is to start with autocross competition and then progress to a track day or on-track driving school, ideally one that features a small field.

Rule 2: Keep it Simple

I see so many racers head right for the engine compartment when building their cars, then get to the track and immediately start bragging about unobtainium pistons, dyno-tested horsepower, billet cranks and the like. These guys scare me.

If you are a regular reader of our publications, you know that we like big power as much as the next guy does - maybe even more - but you will also notice that we almost always start with safety gear and driver ergonomics before moving to chassis and brakes. I raced my Triumph TR3 for many years with a nearly stock, 110-horsepower engine. Sure, I never even got close to winning a race, but I was learning the game from the back of the pack. Believe it or not, once we installed a comfortable seat, the right Auto Meter gauges - ones that I could actually read in the heat of battle - and a dead pedal for my left foot, we started dropping two seconds per lap at our regular tracks.

Rule 3: Suspension Is Key

Once we had a comfortable cockpit, we then worked through our suspension and brake setups until we could reliably stop the old girl and get her through a corner with reasonable predictability. Real racers will call a good suspension horsepower for the turns. True, it's not as much fun to brag about shock valving and anti-roll bar rates, but they're what separate a winner from the rest of the pack.

Rule 4: Add Power When Ready

I didn't start winning anything until we put together a big-time, 140-horsepower engine. However, by then I was so familiar with the car and the other drivers that I felt comfortable running with the faster front group.



A little side note about the guys at the fast end of the field: They know what they are doing and expect the same from you. Despite beliefs to the contrary, vintage racing is real racing. Yeah, we might be running 50-year-old cars and we might not have huge sponsorship commitments, but many of us are running our wheels off. We're out there to win, not just show off our cars at speed.

Rule 5: Manage Your Fear

When people ask me if I'm scared to race, I quickly answer yes. It is my contention that driving an old car at high speeds is scary. If that doesn't scare you, even a little bit, then there is something very, very wrong with you.

That doesn't mean that all fear is healthy. You have to learn how to make it work for you. Sure, fear can eat you up, but if it's managed correctly, it can instead help you make smart decisions that make you a better driver.

Unfortunately, all the sensible things I say to myself on the way to the track or when I am sitting in the paddock are all pretty much thrown out the window in the heat of battle.

Rule 6: Enjoy the Moment

When it comes right down to it, there is no more exhilarating feeling and no purer form of concentration than when you are reeling in that guy in front of you or holding off another competitor as the checker approaches.

Believe me, everything else becomes secondary. You don't think about that fight you had with your wife the night before, or wonder how you are going to come up with the money for your kids' next semester of college. You focus only on the sounds of that wailing engine, the other competitors, and the corner workers urging you on to victory - and that total release is why we do it. It's also why you might just want to give vintage racing a shot yourself.

The Don Eichstaedt Corvair, One of the Most Historical Corvair Racecars Ever

Swiped from a post by: Ryan Counterman. Date: March 25, 2012

Last fall, I added the Don Eichstaedt Corvair Racecar to my collection. This car has been owned by fellow club member Dan Konkle for the past several decades. He has done a good job of collecting some of the history on this famous Corvair racecar.

The history: The Corvair was ordered new by Don's brother, who worked for the Chevrolet Central Office and was delivered through Gene Hamilton Chevrolet in Warren, Michigan. It was ordered as a Corsa coupe, with 140 HP, 4 speed, and possibly quick steering. Don was an engineer for Chevy, and had many friends in different departments, and they were able to put together a race motor for it early in '65.

The first race Don entered the car in was the Sebring 3 hour Sedan race. After preparing the 140 for the race and bringing the car to Florida, they were told the car needed to have the 180 HP turbocharged motor in order to compete. A call back home to GM and new cylinder heads and all the turbo "fixins" were on the way. The race went okay, although the turbo seized up toward the end of the race. He finished first in class and 14th overall. The rest of 1965 was spent racing in various SCCA events, around Eastern Michigan.

In summary of 1965, he raced 20 races, had ten 1st places, five 2nd places, and five DNF's.

In 1966 they took the car back to Sebring for the famous Trans-Am series, but DNF'd due to a broken input shaft. More SCCA racing through 1966, racing 11 races; Four 1st; two 2nd; and one 3rd.

1967 had 5 races, and in 1968 Don sold the car. The car wore number 8 for that first Sebring race, after that Don changed it to number 65 which it still wears today. Dan Konkle has been successfully racing the car for a long time.

I plan on doing the same, keeping the history safe, and using the car for what it was bought new for in 1965. Going fast! I will be doing a lot of autocrossing with it this summer. In the future I may return the car to its original Glacier Gray Color, and add the white horizontal stripe seen in the pictures.

The Fisher Body ID plate shows it to be a very early 1965 build: September 3rd week in 1964. Body #303 in Willow Run Michigan. It is a Corsa Coupe, 'which means it was built with back up lights, but the usual practice for building any race car is to take all the street extras out to "add lightness" so out goes the headliner, carpet, spare tire, b/u lights, heater, radio, seats, seat belts, etc.

Paint Code W-W is Glacier Gray which is metallic Silver paint. Trim code 795 is Slate vinyl interior with Silver paint. Accessory codes show 2L 4 speed (because of b/u light wiring and 4P is the Comfort & Convenience group A. A very rare heater delete would have code H after the L in the ACC line. It indeed is a very important part of Corvair Competition history as it pre-dates and may have inspired Don Yenke's racers!

As displayed at the 2016 Road America vintage race



As a curtain-raiser to their 1965 12-hour race the Sebring, Florida, organizers staged a three-hour race for Group 2 FIA sedans. The race attracted international attention with a factory team of five BMW sedans, two of which surrounded a 1965 Corvair Corsa Sport Coupe on the starting grid.

110



Corvair Racer Update is published by the Performance Corvair Group (PCG). We accept articles of interest to Corvair owners who are interested in extracting high performance from their classic Corvair cars and trucks. Classified advertising is available free of charge to all persons. Commercial advertising is also available on a fee basis. For details, email our club President. Email address shown in the Officers section on the back page of this newsletter.

PCG is one of the many regional chapters of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA), a non-profit organization that was incorporated to satisfy the common needs of individuals interested in the preservation, restoration, and operation of the Chevrolet Corvair. Membership is free of charge. To join, please use the handy form on our website:

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