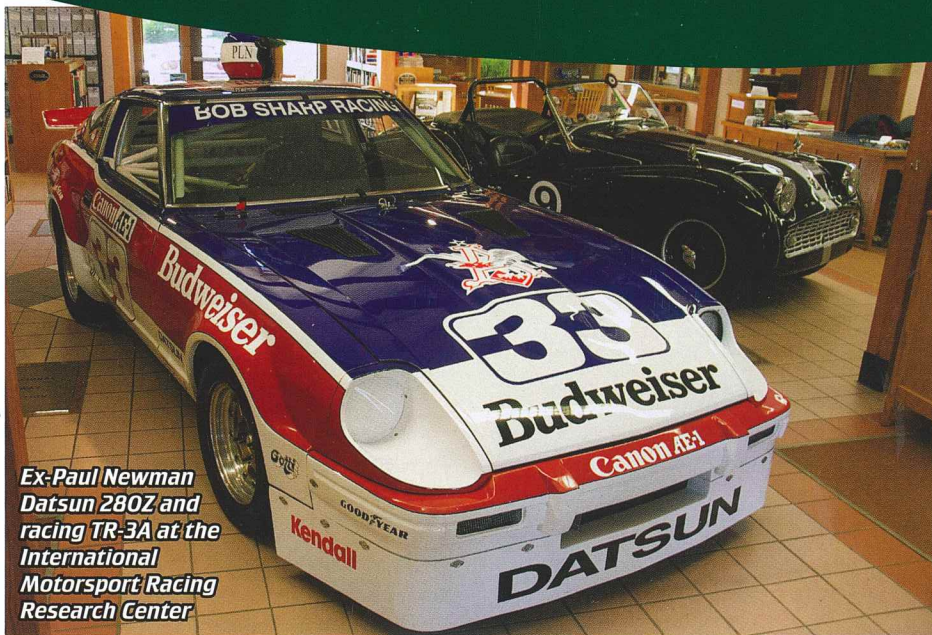


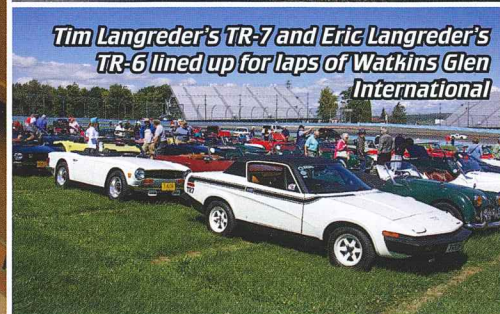
Watkins Glen Grand Prix 2019



Ex-Paul Newman Datsun 280Z and racing TR-3A at the International Motorsport Racing Research Center



Cars lined up at Chateau Lafayette Reneau for the all-Triumph driving tour



Tim Langreder's TR-7 and Eric Langreder's TR-6 lined up for laps of Watkins Glen International

By Tim Langreder

This year's Watkins Glen Grand Prix Festival proved to be quite an adventure, having learned standard transmission a year ago. With Triumph being the featured marque for this year, it felt like a party from the minute we rolled into town. Every other car was a sports car and half were Triumphs.

Registration filled up quickly, including a car show on Thursday and a Triumph-only driving tour taking place on Friday. Ten North Coast Triumph Association cars came, driven by Doug and Renee Karns (GT-6), Roger and Bev Mauter (Spitfire – graciously loaned by Doug and Renee), Eric Langreder (TR-6), Tim Langreder (TR-7), Mark and Cheryl Loughery (2000 sedan), Gary and Katie McClure (TR-6), Ron Chernicky (TR-2), Angel Mendoza and Robin Wiltshire-Seeley (Spitfire), Bob Held (TR-6), and Jerry Van Vlack (TR-4A). Jason and Kallie Sukey (GT-6) represented on track.

Thursday's weather was pleasant for the drive to Leavittsburg on Rt 5 to meet with Mauters and Karns. The route took us through Pennsylvania and into New York through increasingly hilly and scenic roads, forests, and farms for miles. The road was

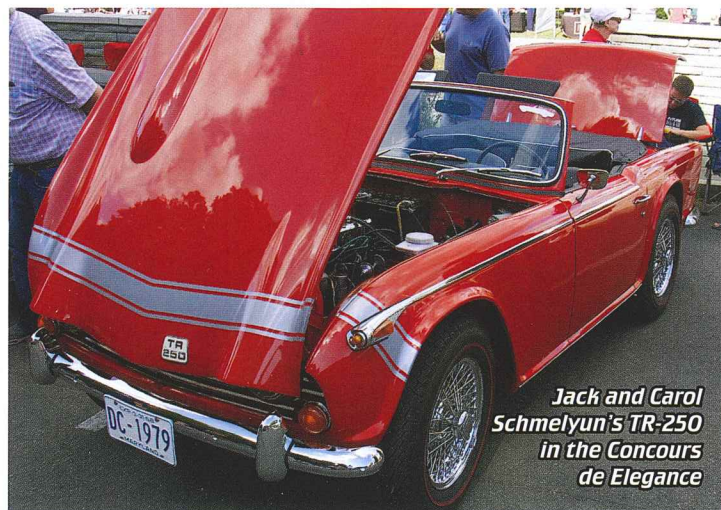
full of vintage cars heading to Watkins Glen including a TVR V8S convertible, a 2000, and a Datsun 510 wagon.

After checking in and cleaning the cars, we met up at the International Motor Racing Research Center. This year they had a really clean TR-3 outfitted for racing and the ex-Paul Newman Datsun 280Z in the foyer. The center also tailors several display cases of Triumph memorabilia and models. Then it was on to Smalley's Garage, where tech inspections had been done when the races were held on public roads, and still functions as a garage today. After, we went on to the Seneca Lodge for dinner.

The famous Lodge is a location where drivers and their teams would visit after racing all day. It could function as a museum as well as a restaurant. The bar's wall-to-wall décor was made of old winner's wreathes, team

stickers, banners, and photos of various visiting drivers. The parking lot had turned into a car show all its own. Jaguar, MG, Lotus, Datsun, and other European and Japanese sports cars along with many Triumphs. The rarity of the Loughery's 2000 and the quality of Mark's restoration drew a crowd.

Our first full day at Watkins Glen began early, grabbing a quick breakfast and travelling a few miles to Chateau LaFayette Reneau Winery on the eastern side of Seneca Lake for the Tour de Marque. After registering (and receiving our



Jack and Carol Schmelyun's TR-250 in the Concours de Elegance



Triumphs lined up for the Governor's Cup grid walk

complementary bottle of wine), we looked at the other cars participating in the driving tour. Once the driver's meeting had taken place, everyone went to their cars, started them up, and waited for the staff to release us. We knew we were rolling the dice by not having navigators, so all of our faith was placed in the lead two cars, both of whom overshot the first turn by miles. The route itself was well put together, covering winding and dipping roads that skirted farms and park lands.

The arrival time at Watkins Glen International was supposed to be 11:00am, so the track's address was plugged into the

phone's GPS, just in case. That moment came shortly before the other three cars in our group pulled into a gas station. Coincidentally, the GPS route ended up losing us only about 10 miles. We arrived at the track for a quick brunch and a driver's meeting before our laps of the 3.3-mile racetrack. Everyone was trying to keep up with the driver in front of them. I recalled Jackie Stewart's preferred approach of the esses, but the TR7 is not a Tyrrell F1 car. I saw the needle of my speedometer swing past 60mph at times. We were on the same path as numerous Formula One, Can-Am, and NASCAR greats. What history!

After the parade laps, we were led into downtown Watkins Glen for two laps of the old road course. This is the route used from 1948-1952 and winds a 6.6-mile loop with the start/finish line being on the main street through town. One of the most unique aspects of the GP Festival is the spectator attendance, doubling when the race cars come down from the track.

One benefit of taking part in the Tour de Marque this year was the Triumph car show at a lovely park in the older residential part of town. Walking downtown, we made our way along the line of vendors, including one with two



Joe Carr, Joe Huffaker Jr., John Mueller, owner Curt Johnston with the Huffaker TR-8



TR-4s of Paul Ricco and Tony Drews



Ron Chernicky's TR-2 among racing TR-3s



Jason Sukey's GT-6 and Marty Sukey's Spitfire

Italians. There is a small Concours event as part of the festival. Highlights from this year included an Aston Martin DB4, a twin-cam MGA, and a LeMans spec alloy.

Participants and spectators alike are able to get up close to the cars and talk with the drivers. The accessibility to the racecars and their crew is one of the things that make this event so different. After the show, following a brief ceremony, the race cars began their laps of the old course. It is one thing to walk up to the cars, but it is quite a sensory experience to have them drive past one by one, each with a unique sound.

Saturday began with a traditional breakfast at Burger King. We watched the various sports cars drive up and down Franklin Street. We spent a large part of Saturday walking through the paddock among the various crews. Perhaps the most impactful visit was with the Huffaker Engineering team, who had brought their D-Production title-winning TR-7 and TR-8

(effectively the last factory-sponsored SCCA Triumph built). The crew were very accommodating. Evidently their TR-7 was converted from the first TR-7 convertible in North America, but unfortunately, this car did not compete this weekend due to a failed water pump. Historically, their team was Joe Huffaker Jr., Joe Carr (one of the mechanics who initially helped build the TR-8) and John Mueller, driving the TR-8.

Doug found the paddock area particularly interesting, picking up information from both the Huffaker crew and some of the TR-4 drivers, having recently acquired a TR-4A himself. The rest of our day was spent watching races. There are a lot of locations where you could get close to the track.

Our final day was spent watching racing from various points around the track. With their years of visiting Watkins Glen, Roger and Bev were excellent guides, pointing out locations with good track visibility. The highlights of the day were

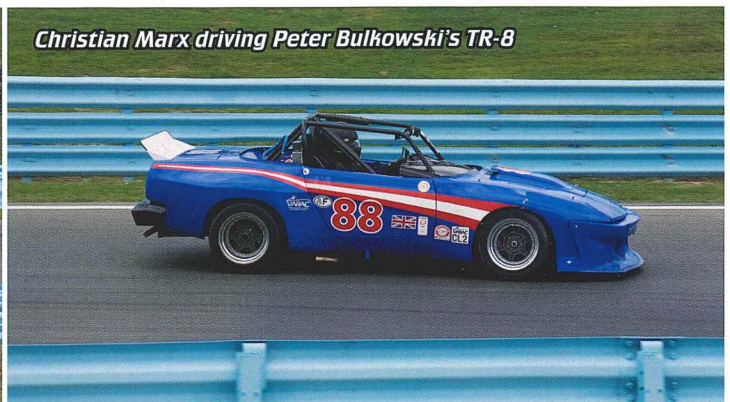
focused around the Triumph feature race. Before the race took place, the cars were lined up in the pit lane for a fan grid walk, providing yet another opportunity to be up close to the cars and talk with the drivers. All in all, 23 Triumphs took part in the race. What looked to be a potentially interesting battle for first between the Huffaker TR8 and Peter Bulkowski's TR-8 driven by Belgian vintage racer Christian Marx turned anticlimactic when Marx's car went out with a suspension issue. The second and third place cars of Henry Frye in his TR-250 and Bob Lang in his TR-6 managed to keep close throughout the race. John Mueller driving the Huffaker TR-8 ended up winning the Governor's Cup for the race.

As the remaining races were being run, the campsites were clearing out. Driving downtown for dinner, we were struck by how empty the town now seemed. There were still a few sports cars around, but most appeared to have left.

While at breakfast, we had a brief



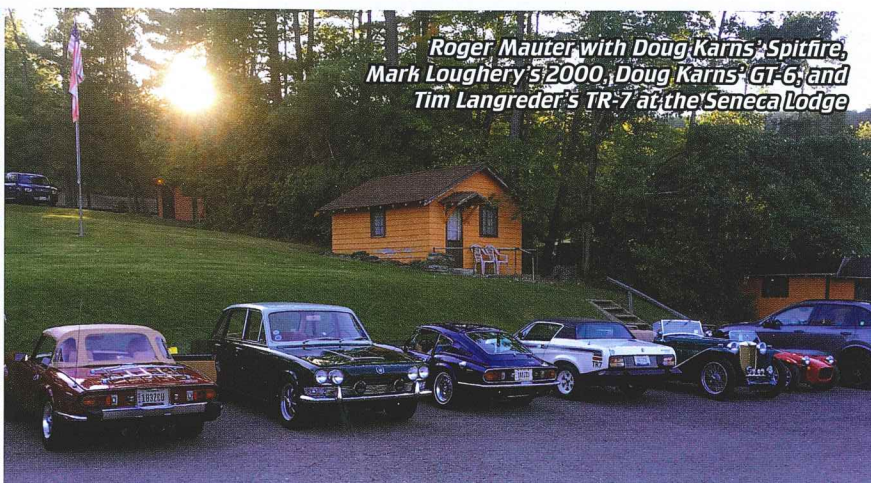
Henry Frye's TR-250 and Bob Lang's TR-6



Christian Marx driving Peter Bulkowski's TR-8



At the start of the laps of the old road course



Roger Mauter with Doug Karns' Spitfire, Mark Loughery's 2000, Doug Karns' GT-6, and Tim Langreder's TR-7 at the Seneca Lodge

conversation with a couple from Wisconsin who trailed their TR-4 race car for the weekend. They mentioned they were restoring a TR-4 road car and were planning on being at the Kastner Cup event at Mid-Ohio next year.

The extended weekend at Watkins Glen marked several milestones for me. I added significant time behind the wheel, putting over 1,000 miles on the car over seven days, and the car turned 40,000 miles while we were doing our paced laps of the Watkins Glen International. After all the

years of being a passenger, it was fulfilling to drive my own car throughout the event. Special thanks need to be given to Doug and Renee for loaning Roger and Bev their Spitfire, as Roger's TR-6 had a mechanical issue preventing them from using it for the long weekend. 🏁



Tim Langreder sitting in Mike Harmuth's Spitfire