

# NURBURGRING 3-HOURS



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My old friend Mauro Borella, who lives in Milan, Italy, has been racing for many years. I've been lucky to have shared one or two cars with him and always benefited from his calm demeanor and good racing advice.

Just recently, Mauro took part in the Nurburgring 3-hours in one of his racecars, a little Fiat-Abarth 1000 cc from the 1960s. Mauro has done this race several times now and is adept as a "giant killer" with the little Abarth. This year, Mauro shared the car with his usual co-driver but added a somewhat special "extra" co-driver, ex-Ferrari F1 and Sportscar driver, Arturo Merzario.



I can do no better than to use Mauro's own words to describe this race, so I've reproduced them here. Incidentally, Mauro has just written another book on the Porsche 911 family and launched that book recently in Milan, with Jurgen Barth as a featured guest. There is a link at the end of this feature, which will direct you to where you can find more information.

"Our race was held on the Friday (June 24) with about 180,000 spectators just before the start of the real "24 Hrs" Nurburgring race. It is called "The 24 Hrs Classic", and is held over 3 hours on both tracks reunited (Nordschleife + the "new" GP circuit), the same as is used for the real 24 Hours, for a total of 25 kms (15.5 miles) every lap. This is because in this way it is possible to use the new GP track, pit lane, fuel pumps and box facilities that are much better and more modern than the old ones. We (myself, Arturo Merzario and Arnaldo Pieraccini, an ex-works Abarth driver and now a renowned Abarth restorer) qualified 143rd overall out of 172 cars, and we finished 128th out of 172 finishers and first in Class (1000cc).



I had a problem on the pace lap as the gearbox linkage came loose, and I had to go back to the pits. In about 10 minutes the problem was fixed, but I lost almost a lap (our typical lap time was about 13 minutes; just to give you an idea, the quickest BMW M1s and 934/RSRs were doing 10 minutes, this shows how quick is the little Abarth!).

Luckily for us, it begun to rain heavily and so I started to gain positions again, passing Porsches and Jaguars easily. The Little Abarth with rain tires in the wet is almost incredible! There was the public going crazy when we were passing by, especially as Merzario was there. When Nicki Lauda had his fiery accident, Merzario actually saved Lauda's life, by going into the flames and pulling him out of the car. So he is still a star at the Nurburgring! If we had not had that pace lap gearbox problem, we could easily have been in the first 100 cars overall..."

See the link to the article on Mauro's book presentation, with lots of photos:  
<http://www.911carrera.it/news/porsche-911-1963-1998-il-nuovo-libro-di-mauro-borella/>



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