

VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY – SEPTEMBER 27TH TO 30TH, 2007



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The eagle has landed - The Jägermeister RSR, ready to fly with Predator's assistance.
[Photo: Author's collection.]

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George Tuma's (ex-Jack Boxstrom) Aston Martin DB4.
[Photo: Author's collection.]

Wednesday, September 26th saw me flying to Raleigh, North Carolina for an SVRA meeting at VIR (Virginia International Raceway). George Tuma and I were entered by Predator Performance to drive George's Jagermeister Porsche RSR and his latest acquisition through us, a racing Aston Martin DB4 that had been the pride and joy of Jack Boxstrom for many years.



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Intrepid Porsche racer, Scotty Pheil.
[Photo: Author's collection.]



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Nick "At Nite" Curto at work, burning the midnight oil.
[Photo: Author's collection.]

Having settled into my hotel in Danville, I set off next morning bright and early for the track and, after a twenty minute drive through magnificent Virginia countryside, found the track and paddock where David Hinton, Scotty Pheil and Nick “At Nite” Curto were preparing the cars. They were also looking after Farrell Preston’s indecently quick, now well-developed TVR Griffiths and his little Genie with a BMC engine from 1964. Byron Defoor’s 1969 Porsche 911S was also there and we had taken the precaution (never having raced at Virginia before) of doing the track day on Thursday in order to learn the track, which turned out to be a very good decision.



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George Tuma and David Hinton relaxing before the fray.
[Photo: Author's collection.]



Farrell Preston suits up.
[Photo: Author's collection.]



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Nick and Scotty, prepared for action.
[Photo: Author's collection.]

And what a track! 3.27 miles in length, it swoops up and down through several elevation changes with a challenging set of fast and slow corners, the Esses and two long straights to boot. The downhill sweeps to the double right hander leading onto the pit straight are particularly daunting, as it's one thing to unleash circa 300 horsepower in a 911RSR uphill, but quite another to do the same thing going downhill. My first



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George prepares to go and race at VIR.
[Photo: Author's collection.]

indication of just how fast Virginia is was when Byron came flying past me towards the Oak Tree corner which, if not taken on the right line, sends you off into the countryside, just when you need to start accelerating up the long back straight. This was something that I managed to do at least twice but, just as I fishtailed back onto the track each time, the words of Nick Faure, a noted Porsche 911 racer from England would come back to me: “Just remember, when it really gets out of shape, just let the steering wheel go and the 911 will correct itself faster than you can...” Thanks, Nick, you are right!



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One of my personal favorites, a Lola T332.
[Photo: Author's collection.]

I was told that, from the turn just before the intimidating Esses down to Oak Tree bend, Butch Leitzinger had taken a Champ car along that stretch in top gear, flat out. Made me feel quite overawed (and somewhat ill) to even think about that but, certainly, VIR is a circuit to rival Spa-Francorchamps in Europe any time.

George and I got accustomed to the track quite quickly and thought we were doing okay at lap times around 2.17, until George put Scotty Pheil into the cockpit of the orange RSR. On his first flying lap, Nick, who was timing Scotty called out: “Boys, Scotty just raised the bar” and, indeed, Scotty had just done a 2:09.7! On his third lap, he did a 2:7.9 and then came in to tell us that the RSR handled really well and to tell us the correct gears we should be in, plus some advice on the right lines to take. Quite quickly thereafter, both George and I got down into the 15s and, on the last day, each



George and Scotty with the Aston Martin.
[Photo: Author's collection.]



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Doug Narviz crouches beside the twin RSR to "ours" (both built by Gordon Friedman at VIR).
[Photo: Author's collection.]

of us did a 12 but quite where we get the remaining 4 seconds from, I'm really not sure, though I've watched the Youtube video of "Fast Phil" Currin taking a 510 cubic inch engined Dodge Charger round VIR and think I can spot a couple of seconds we could pick up. Certainly, even though Scotty has raced at VIR many times, he should have been a professional driver.

Whilst George and I were discussing where we could go faster, we were joined by Doug Narviz, who was ecstatic to see the Jagermeister RSR out on the same track as him. Doug was running the sister car to our RSR, both of them having been built up at the same time by Gordon Friedman of Autometrics. They both have 3.6-liter engines, "ours" on street injection, Doug's on 50mm PMO carburetors. I had a good dice with Doug on Friday during qualifying and, though he could out accelerate me along the straights, I could out-brake him at the end, so our times were comparable.



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The engine bay of Doug Narviz' RSR.
[Photo: Author's collection.]

After the RSR, the Aston came as a complete culture shock. Remind yourselves that this was a car built in 1961 to a late 1950's design and is heavy! The straight six 3.7-liter engine, featuring twin overhead camshafts and triple Weber carburetors, delivered lots of torque but had a mysterious misfire, which refused all efforts to cure it until, on David's advice, I tracked down and asked engine guru, Ted Wenz. Ted immediately said: "Fuel pressure should be not more than 3.5 PSI, has it got a rev limiter?" When I confirmed that it had, Ted said: "Take the chip out and try it." Eureka! He was absolutely right. Thanks, Ted.

Once cured, the Aston engine powered the car along well but the brakes took a mighty heave to make it stop. In my race on Sunday morning, I had a great dice with an MGB and, towards the last few laps found myself thinking: "This guy behind is waiting for me



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Your author tries to stay ahead of a very keenly driven MGB.
[Photo: Author's collection.]

to cook the brakes on this thing.” Luckily, they lasted well and I was able to hold him off and afterwards he came around to tell me how much he’d enjoyed the race. I wearily told him that I had too but another few laps would have seen me exhausted, as both steering and brakes are heavy! However, it is very "chuckable" and great fun.

We had a great weekend; George and I drove the RSR in the one-hour Enduro on Friday and did just fine, finishing well up and George placed fourth overall and was on the podium in Sunday’s dash race in the RSR (all in front of his family and invited friends), whilst I won my class in the Aston in the morning. The day before, I’d had a great start to my dash race in the RSR, which included the best rolling start I’ve ever

made (assisted by the Porsche to my right in the second corner spinning off and inconveniencing all behind me!), and then chased a rapid yellow “Kelly Girl” Camaro until he waved me by. After that it was all a bit lonely for the last three laps. Yawn, got another class podium. (Watch out! Pride comes before....)



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Believe it or not, this car was raced and was not slow! It also just happens to be the owner's daily driver. [Photo: Author's collection.]

A word about the Jagermeister RSR Clone that George bought through us. After his last race, he said: “What a car! Handles great, goes well, great brakes.” I couldn't agree more.



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These Ford Escorts with Cosworth BDA engines, gave the meeting a very British feel. [Photo: Author's collection.]



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Your author gets to grips with Oak Tree Corner in the Jagermeister RSR.
[Photo: Courtesy of F & S Enterprises.]

And suddenly...it was all over and time to head back home, feeling pretty tired but well satisfied.

Next stop is "Rennsport 2007" at Daytona, where I'm due to drive the green 935 we have for sale in the exhibition. We shall also be displaying the Carrera RSR Prototype, chassis number 911 360 0001 and Peter Gregg's 1974 IMSA Championship-winning RSR, chassis number 911 460 9054. Should be interesting!



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Oak Tree Corner again but this time the author is driving George Tuma's Aston Martin DB4.
[Photo: Courtesy of F & S Enterprises.]



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David, Nick and Scotty relax after a successful weekend at VIR.
[Photo: Author's collection.]

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