

The Preservationist

The Member Newsletter of the Elkhart Lake Historic Race Circuits Preservation Society
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Fall Dinner Social Draws Record Attendance



Society member and guests gather at Siebkens for the Fall Dinner-Social (Photo by Tim Kemmis)

HRC closed out the 2012 season with the fall Dinner-Social held on September 6th at Siebkens. The date was exactly sixty years to the day from the start of the last races run on the open roads around Elkhart Lake. Eighty-three members and guests were in attendance, a record for the fall event.

The program featured Burdette “Berdie” Martin Jr., former Chief Steward of the SCCA’s two



The Pontiac Firebird pace car from the Trans-Am series on display for everyone to see and admire. (Photo by Tim Kemmis)

most successful racing series, the Can-Am and the Trans-Am, during their glory years as well as of the United States Grand Prix. Martin is a previous recipient of the SCCA’s highest honor, the Woolf Barnato Award.

Berdie regaled the crowd with stories of his early racing years in and around Chicago, how he met Ann, his wife of many years (*sadly now departed*), in Elkhart Lake in front of Swartz’s, his close association with Carl Hass and his many experiences around the world of automobile racing.



Burdette “Berdie” Martin holding the audience in rapt attention. (Photo by Tim Kemmis)

Although the program ran a little long, Berdie was just getting started when we had to call time and clear the room so Siebkens could set up for another event. We all agreed that we should invite Berdie back again next year for “Berdie Martin - Part II”.

Color Photographs Donated to Preservation Society Archives

Charl “Chuck” Green donated his father’s collection of forty eight color photographs from the 1952 events. Chuck’s father, Charl H. Green Jr. was a participant in the Elkhart Lake Rallye of that year, driving from Birmingham, Michigan to Elkhart Lake in an MG-TD. Chuck and son Adam retraced the original rallye route as closely as (*continued. On page 2 Column 1*)

modern roads would allow traveling from the Detroit area to Fort Wayne, IN, to Chicago and then to Elkhart Lake. We were pleased to have them attend the Dinner Social and thank them for the contribution to the Preservation Society archives.



The HRG of Jack Wherry in front of the Tydol gas station then located on Rhine Street where the post office now stands. (From the collection of Charl Green)

The Society's archives now contain over two hundred and fifty images from the 1950 – 1952 era as well as nearly one hundred images from the 2006 Dedication Ceremony and the 2010 60th Anniversary celebration. We are constantly searching for new images to expand the collection and additional donations are always welcome.

Siata and the 1952 Kimberly Cup Race

Unless you are a died-in-the-wool Italian sports car fan you are probably not familiar with the Siata marque or the role of Siata cars in the Elkhart Lake Open Road Races.



Siata (*Societa Italiana Auto Trasformazioni Accessoria*) was founded in 1926 by amateur racecar driver Giorgio Ambrosini. Originally a tuning shop, Siata sold performance parts to modify and tune cars

manufactured by Fiat. After World War II, the company entered the Italian sports cars market under the Siata brand.

Production of the Siata's first wholly original design, the Siata Amica, began in 1948 and continued through 1952. The Amica was powered by a Fiat 500cc engine capable of producing 22 horsepower with an optional 750cc unit producing 25 horsepower.

Following the Amica, in 1951 Siata introduced the 300BC Barchetta Sport Spider. The Barchetta Sport Spider was designed by Mario Revelli de Beaumont and built by Nuccio **Bertone** and Rocco **Motto**. Around 50 production models were created and predominantly featured either a 750 cc Crosley or 1,100 cc Fiat engine.



A beautifully restored Siata 300BC at Palm Springs

The Kimberly Cup Connection – There were four Siata 300BC's entered in the 1952 Kimberly Cup Race, more than any other marque with the exception of MG. The entrants were Tony Pompeo, #48 from New York, NY by way of Italy; Max Goldmann, #52 from Ann Arbor, MI; Ed Glowacke, #64 from Birmingham, MI; and Jack Horner, #80 from Glenshaw, PA. Although we have no clear record of the engine displacement for their cars, it seems likely that all were 1,100 cc Fiat engines as all were entered in Class VI. Unfortunately for the Siata drivers all four failed to finish and it was another Italian car, the OSCA of Bill Spear that captured the race. *(continued on page 3 column 1)*

Dinner-Social Programs For 2013



The #64 Siata of Ed Glowacke awaiting the start of the Kimberly Cup Race.

Siata went on to introduce the 208s in 1953 featuring Fiat's 2.0 liter 8V engine that rose to prominence after actor and race car driver Steve McQueen purchased model BS523 from Los Angeles based Siata importer Ernie McCaffe in the mid 1950s. McQueen reportedly re-badged the car with Ferrari emblems and dubbed it his "Little Ferrari".



A pristine restored Siata 208s at Pebble Beach.

In 1970 Siata was sold to ORSA (Officina Realizzazioni Sarde Automobili), which moved it to an assembly plant near Cagliari, where it remained in business until 1973. When the oil crisis of that period curtailed the sales of sports cars in Italy, ORSA was forced into bankruptcy and sadly Siata was no more.

The Society has now been holding Dinner-Socials for five years. In that time Dinner-Socials have been held at Siebkens, Road America, Victorian Village, The Osthoff and the Lake Street Café. We have enjoyed a total for fourteen programs at these locations some perhaps better than others, but all memorable.

Who can forget John Fitch at the Fall 2010 Sixtieth Anniversary Celebration Dinner recalling his experiences here in 1951 and 1952, Brian Redman and David Hobbs regaling us with stories of their racing careers at the Summer Dinner in 2011 or Augie Pabst and Bill Wuesthoff at the Summer Dinner in 2012. There of course were many more.... Tim Kemmis on the history of the Kimberly M199 Ferrari; the "Stevens Boys" on the history of Brooks Stevens' involvement in racing history; Tom Stephani and the fascinating story of Nicky Chevrolet and Tom Hollfelder covering the storied history of his Chaparral I. Conrad Borrows brought us film and DVD footage of the history and feel of the historic circuits in the 2009 Summer program and Jim Jeffords entertained us with fascinating excerpts from his racing career in the Fall of 2011. There were more... all entertaining and all to the great credit of Program Chairman, Clyde Morter.

Now We Need A Little Help -As many of you must appreciate, it is not easy to come up with new programs year after year so the Preservation Society Board would like a little help for 2013. Please let us know what you would like to hear about and who you would like to hear from. You can e-mail your thoughts and ideas to historiucracecircuits@gmail.com or contact any member of the Board of Directors; George Bruggenthies, John Calhoun, Spencer Chapple, Tom Hollfelder, Clyde Morter or Mark Pfaller.