

USED Race Car Buyers Guide part 2

A Second Course In Reading Between The Lines Of The Classified Ads

By Steve Nickless

With indispensable assistance from
Marc Bahner, Bill Fickling, Mike Gue,
Vern Jaques, Hugh Kleinpeter, Austin Miller,
Paul Pfanner, David Phillips, Craig Richey,
Tom Rust and Bill Sowers

Well, that wasn't so bad. In fact, reaction to the first installment of this two-part "Used Race Car Buyers Guide" (*SportsCar*, April, '89) was quite delightful: several complimentary phone calls, a few letters and (so far, anyway) only two readers with major gripes. Happily, I learned from both of them. Picking out bargains in the used race car marketplace is still more black art than science, and it's an art form that changes weekly.

Undaunted, I have tried here in Part 2 to make some sense of the vintage scene for small formula cars and sports racers—a vibrant and rapidly growing slice of the historic road racing pie that is gaining stature quickly.

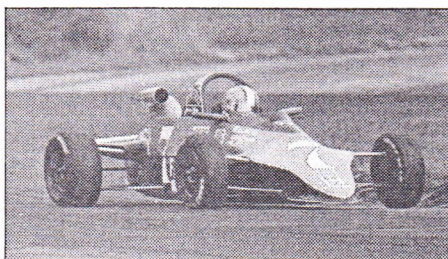
The new stature is bringing with it dramatically escalating prices, and therein lies the rub in getting down to specifics: The value of most of these cars is *soaring*. Formula B/Atlantic prices in particular are almost terrifying as the marketplace has quickly come to appreciate these machines. Match the history with the limited availability, and the fun in driving these cars still, and you have a situation rife for price escalation. Which is exactly what has happened.

Once again I must say I can't promise that this guide is completely accurate, but I do trust you'll enjoy shopping.

"NO MAN'S LAND" FORMULA FORD

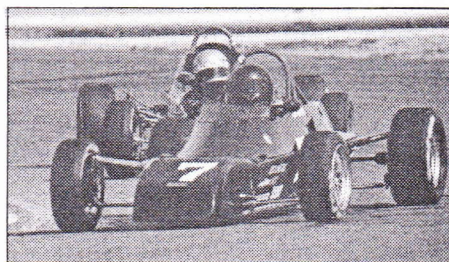
Sitting squarely between Spec Ford and the contemporary National FF scene are hundreds of terrific Formula Ford chassis with no place—yet—to play. I refer to a whole horde of advanced machinery assembled in the early '80s just before the Swift dropped in to spoil the party. With no place to race them, no one can criticize my opinions which are:

The Top Five

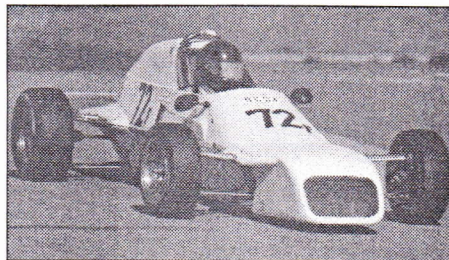


Reynard FF84

1 (tie)—Reynard FF82 (1982), FF83 (1983) and FF84 (1984)—Beautiful side-radiator cars, well-made and, sadly, front runners for far too short a period of time.

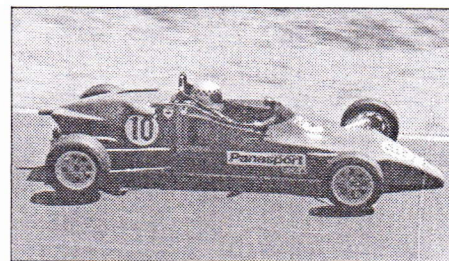


Van Diemen RF82

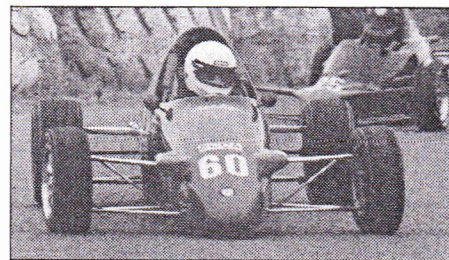


Van Diemen RF83

2 (tie)—Van Diemen RF82 (1982) and RF83 (1983)—Van Diemen was the center of attention in American FF racing from about 1978 on and these two chassis were arguably the firm's FF1600 high-water mark here. They won a lot of races, and are still good cars.

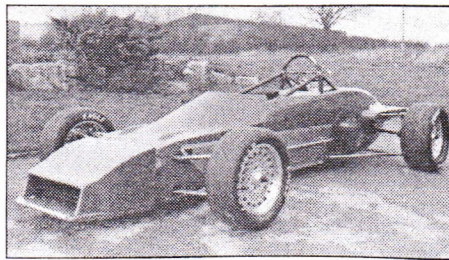


Crossle 55F



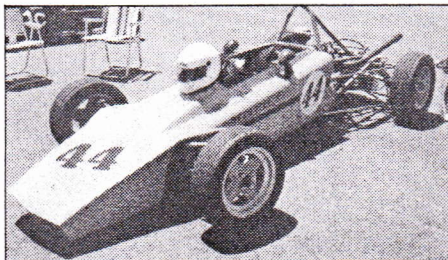
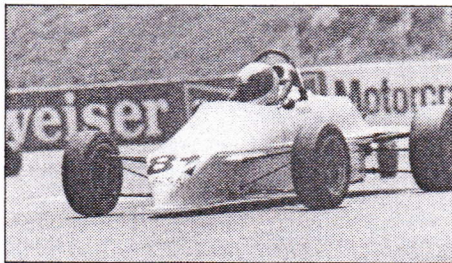
Crossle 60F

3 (tie)—Crossle 55F (1983-'84), 60F (1985) and 62F (1986)—The 55F made up for the disappointment of the 50 and they can be had quite reasonably; the 60F and 62F, meanwhile, started the firm down another design road which might have led to the top again had the Swift not appeared.



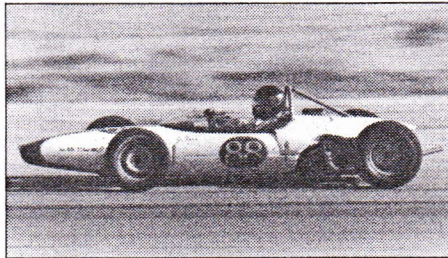
4 (tie)—Lola T-640 (1980-'81), T-642 (1982-'83) and T-644 (1984-'85)—Good cars which improved dramatically from the good

T-640 to the great T-644 but all are vastly underrated.

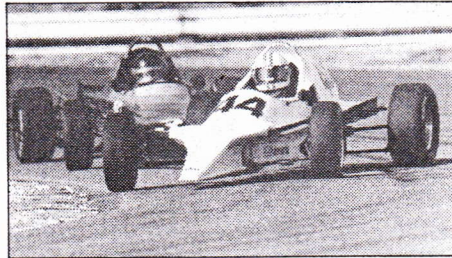


Lotus 61M

5 (tie)—Mondiale M84S (1984) and M85S (1985)—Ex-Crossle man Leslie Drysdale has a good business building school cars and Saab-powered single-seaters. His FF1600s deserve closer scrutiny here in the U.S.

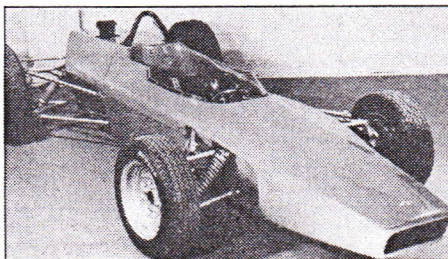


Lotus 51



Sleeper: The Runoffs-winning Vikings that engine tuner Arnie Loyning built garnered a lot of acclaim but perhaps not enough attention. They are much more advanced than your average homebuilt and extremely potent.

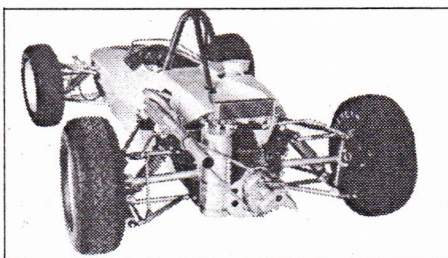
perhaps, the Dave Baldwin/Martin Waide-designed 69 which was the last Lotus production racing car. The additional bonus is that there is an active Lotus register and that many of the major components, body panels, etc., are available.



Lola T200

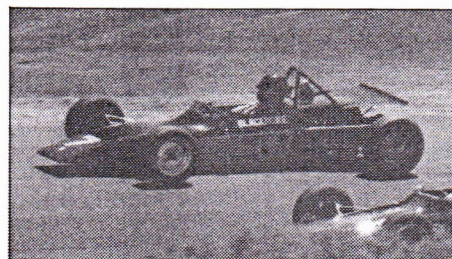
VINTAGE FORD

Another rapidly-growing arena in which one can play with Formula Fords. Here, though, is nothing for lovers of modern technology: There are few rocker arms, side radiators, and inboard brakes or suspensions to be found in this group. Instead, in Vintage Ford (which, depending upon the area and the sanctioning body, is generally pre-'73), beauty and simplicity is the thing and competitiveness is not really an issue. One of the most interesting areas of common ground is treaded radial spec tires—tires just like the ones the British cars were designed around.



Lola T202

The Top Five



Lotus 69

1 (tie)—Lotus 69 (1971-'72), 61MX (1972), 61M (1970-'72), 61 (1969), 51C (1969), 51B (1968) and 51/31 (1967)—Money spent on a Lotus Formula Ford will be easily recovered. All of these cars are rolling gold mines, especially,

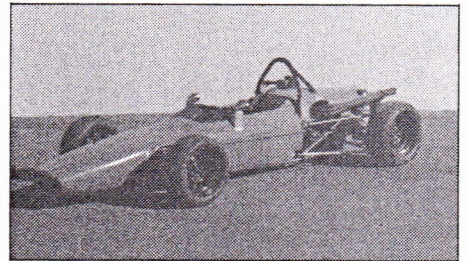
2 (tie)—Lola T-200 (1969-'70), T-202 (1971) and T-204 (1972)—They'll hold their value just because they're Lolas, but they were fast in the right hands in their day. Fit, finish and workmanship were far better than on most cars of the era. As with Lotus, there is an active owners register and reproduction pieces are being made.



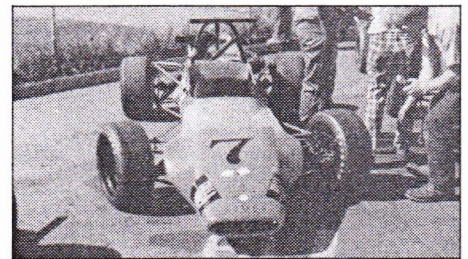
Crossle 16F

3 (tie)—Crossle 16F (1968-'70) and 20F (1971-'72)—Beautiful, sturdy, utterly conventional

cars. Parts today are in good supply, and since the Crossle badge just doesn't have the mystique of a Lotus or Lola, you don't have to be quite so careful with them: These are the ones to buy if you want a lot of track time!

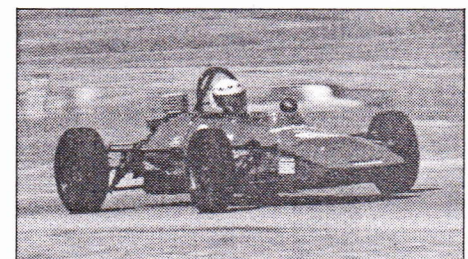


4 (tie)—Merlyn Mk11 (1968) and Mk11A (1968-'69)—There's so much FF history associated with these cars: Tim Schenken won an incredible number of races with a Mk11 in '68 and was soon into F1; James Hunt drove one, Jody Scheckter drove one...

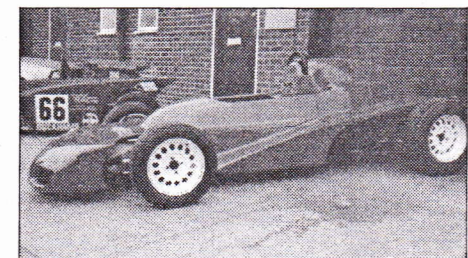


5 (tie)—Caldwell D9 (1969) and D9B (1970-'71)—The first U.S. National Championship-winning car, and the first successful American marque in the Formula, these cars are good values. And they're a lot like the Merlyn Mk11.

Sleeper(s): A sextet of Vintage Ford sleepers for your consideration:



Elden PH8



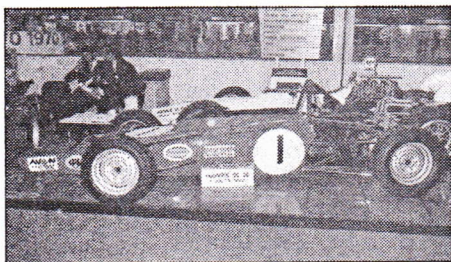
Elden PH10A Falconer

The Elden PH8 (1970-'72) and the first PH10A (1972) were quite quick in their day, driven in England by the likes of Tony Brise and Danny Sullivan. The Falconer-bodied 10A is especially desirable as it won the FF World Championship in 1972 with Johnny Gerber at the wheel. More recently, a PH8 won the Vintage class at the 20th Anniversary FF Festival. Parts are still available from the factory.

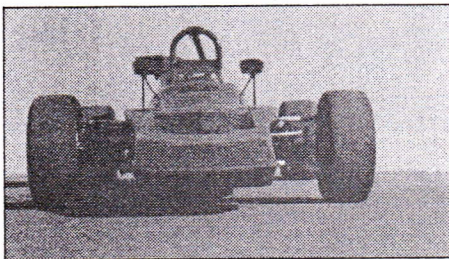
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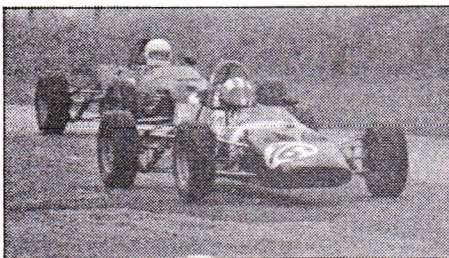
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Ex-Lotus man David Lazenby's Hawke DL2 (1969), DL2A (1970) and DL2B (1971) were exceptionally quick cars, both in Britain and in the U.S.;



March's 709 (1970), 719 (1971), 729 (1972) and 739 (1973) were all heavy and surprisingly unsuccessful, but are valuable today because of the badge;

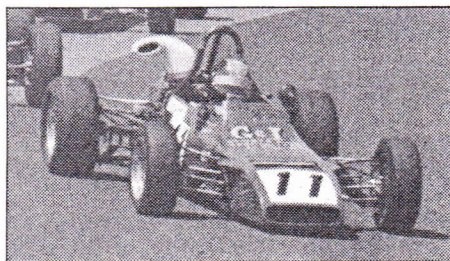


The Royale RP3 (1970) and RP3A (1971-'72) went well here—Bill Scott made them fly—and they can be found at reasonable prices. Pieces are available from Fulmar Competition Services in England;



Titan Mk4

The Titan Mk4 (1969) stands out as one of the most attractive cars of the era; and the Titan Mk6-series cars, meanwhile, are probably the fastest cars available for the Vintage FF class;



Winkelmann's splendid WDF1 (1969), WDF2 (1970), WDF3 (1971) and WDF4 (1972-'73) are all exceptionally rapid and can be found here in vast numbers.

Marque Registers

The growing popularity of Vintage Racing has led to the establishment of a handful of loosely structured "owners clubs" more commonly known as Marque Registers. Following are the names and addresses for those of which we are aware.

The Elden Register, 13 Morning View, Irvine, CA 92715.

The Lola T-200 Series Register, Wm. P. Fornwalt, president, 103 Dartmouth Ave., Johnstown, PA 15905.

Lotus FF Register, Vern Jaques, 1129 Monserat Ave., Chula Vista, CA 92011.

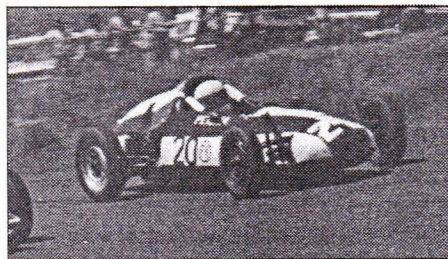
Titan Register, Joe Markusic, 660 Tibbetts Wick Road, Girard, OH 44420.

There is also the **Vintage Formula Car Association**, the contact for which is Vern Jaques, 1129 Monserat Ave., Chula Vista, CA 92011. We encourage anyone with any interest in owning or racing one of these cars to contact the appropriate person.

VINTAGE FORMULA VEE

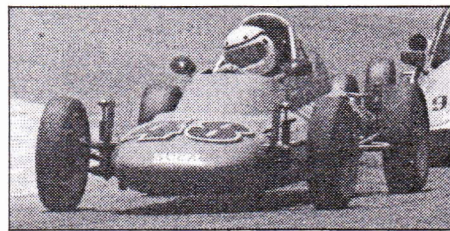
Formula Vee has not exactly caught on like wildfire in vintage circles and the reason is not a lack of cars, exactly, it's more like...well, snobbishness. Vees aren't very sexy even today; in the beginning they were simply dreadful to look at but no one cared because the racing was so close and so much fun. So it is that Vintage Formula Vee will win out in the end....

The Top Five



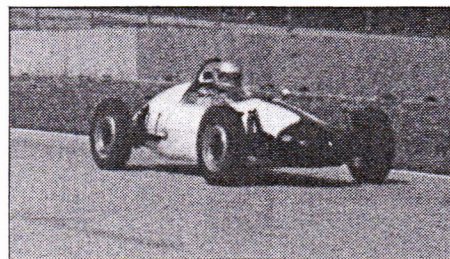
1—"Petunia" (1965?)—The top pick in Vintage Formula Vee isn't a range of cars but rather one particular car—a FormCar—with a history. It's been owned for the last few years by preparation wizard Bob Cornish.

2—Autodynamics—Ray Caldwell started building Vees in his basement in the early '60s and over the next decade carved out a production empire in the sailing town of Marblehead, Mass. AD is a standout marque.



3—Zink—Another early contributor to Vee's exceptional growth, Ed Zink's cars propelled many a young driver toward stardom. Another standout marque.

4—Beach—Still another American Formula Vee success story. Floridian Gene Beach built several cars that went on to acquire the history that will make them important in Vintage circles.



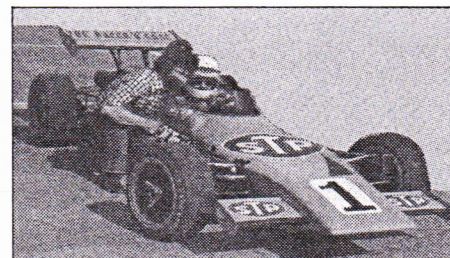
5—Formcar—Particularly significant from a historical perspective; it'll be wonderful to see packs of Formcars rushing (herding? waddling? crawling?) for a corner, wheel-to-wheel once again when Vintage Vee takes off....

Sleeper: A sleeper here is a tough call: Jerry Mong's Bobsys, John Mills' Lynxes and Ray Caldwell's D-13s seem more a part of the modern era than the Vintage scene even though all are now made technically eligible by their age. Gotta think about this some more.

VINTAGE FORMULA ATLANTIC

This is a very popular class with many vintage groups around the country, and the reasons are obvious: The old FB cars are lovely and they sound great. In addition, many come with a "history." In the late '60s and very early '70s, our Formula 1 heroes raced all the time, every weekend, even in the junior formulas like Formula 2. These are the cars they raced.

The Top Five



Lotus 69

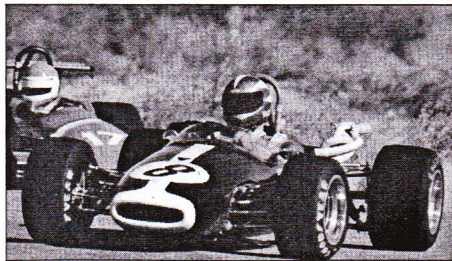
1 (tie)—Lotus (any and all)—Lotus FB cars of all descriptions and all conditions are selling at simply unbelievable prices these days. The Lotus badge is simply magic. And the FB/FF Lotus 69, remember, was Lotus' last production race car.

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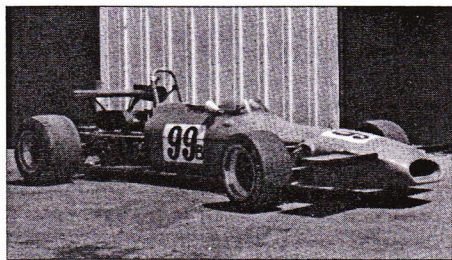
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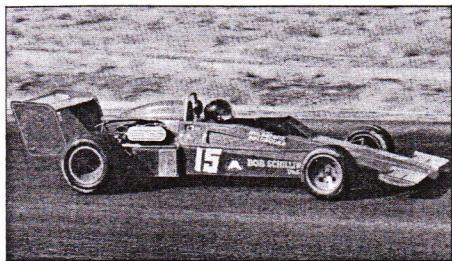
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Brabham BT-21



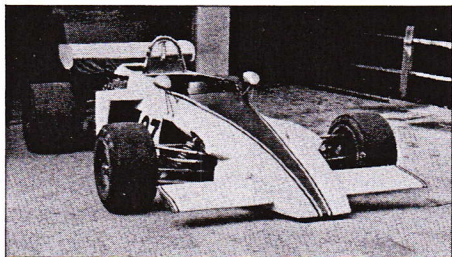
Brabham BT-29



Brabham BT-40

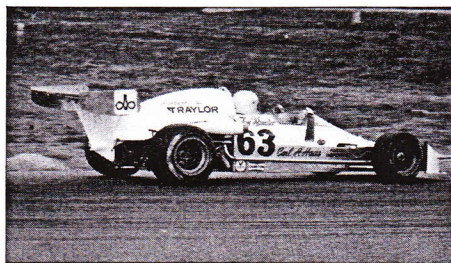
2 (tie)—**Brabham (all tubeframe)**—To quote Marc Bahner: "Tubeframe Brabhams are a no-lose situation." Look at the prices; he's not kidding. Meanwhile, buyers are just waking up to the monocoque BT38s and BT40s—the latter Gordon Murray's first Brabham.

3 (tie)—**Any other tubeframe Formula 2/Formula B car (even if they were turkeys in their day)**—Prices being what they are, the rule is if you like the looks of it and can afford it, hey, enjoy. Chevrons are the standout in the tubeframe group, their success in the vintage market really buoyed by the prices of the tremendously popular Chevron sports racers.

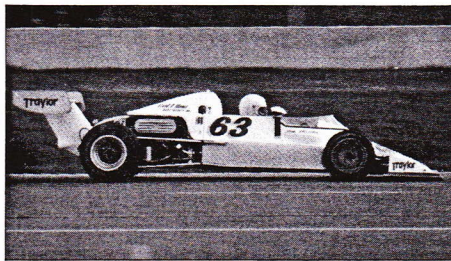


March 722

4 (tie)—**March 712 (1971) and 722 (1972)**—Bahner again: "The earlier the March, the better. These cars are gorgeous. Side radiators and better monocoques than any of the later Marches. You can still afford 'em and you can't miss."

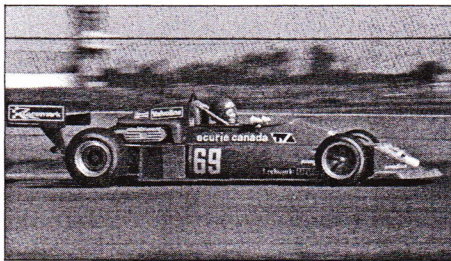


Lola T-360



Lola T-460

5 (tie)—**Lola T-360 (1974-'75), T-460 (1976)**—Very pretty cars and nicely made. Not particularly popular in their day but Tom Klausler gave them a good ride, didn't he? Today there's gold in them thar Lola badges. Buy now and hold till they're vintage-eligible.



March 76B

Sleeper: Here's a "sleeper" courtesy of Marc Bahner: "I'd say the March 76B and 77B would be the most reasonable of all. Once you get beyond the ex-Villeneuve notion—there are at least 27 ex-Villeneuve cars out there!—you see that these cars are readily available, parts are everywhere and, with the March name, they're just on the verge of becoming valuable. There are no mysteries about these cars. BDAs are becoming available, too, and I'd say these cars are a good investment."

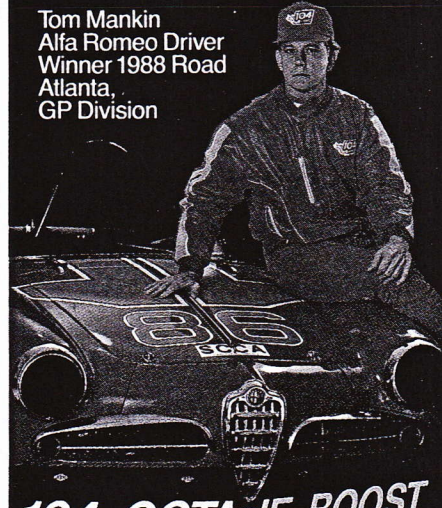
VINTAGE FORMULA SUPER VEE

This class really hasn't taken off anywhere—at least, I didn't stumble across much enthusiasm for it in my research—but when it does (as, sometime, it will) look for the best values behind Lola badges, find an Argo if you can and keep an eye out for some interesting off-brands. (Who's got Dennis Firestone's March and/or Tom Bagley's Zink?)

This concludes SportsCar's two-part feature entitled The Used Race Car Buyers Guide. See the April issue for the first installment, which focused on contemporary and spec race cars. We hope the information will prove useful.

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Tom Mankin
Alfa Romeo Driver
Winner 1988 Road
Atlanta,
GP Division



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