

THE FOOTMAN JAMES CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW

Birmingham or bust...

12-14 November. Birmingham, UK

Words: Keith Adams Photography: Gerard Hughes

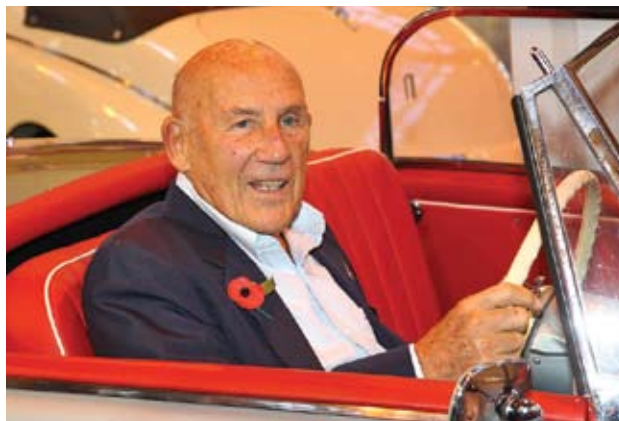
THE UK'S LARGEST indoor classic motor show once again attracted a huge audience. Proof, if any were needed, that the level of interest in the classic car scene in the UK and Europe is as healthy as ever.

Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre devotes five halls to the show – and during the three-day extravaganza, attendance was estimated at 46,000.

Shows like this aren't just about numbers; the cars and the personalities are what count. And with more than 200 clubs displaying around 1200 cars, there was a huge variety of metal to make sure classic fans weren't disappointed.

The Classic Motor Show's significance on the UK calendar was underlined by the quality of the exhibitors. The fact that the Bugatti Owners' Club, Maserati Club UK and Ferrari Owners' Club (right) laid on such impressive displays of supercars also emphasised how the NEC isn't only about bread 'n' butter classics.

Having said that, it's these cars that still manage to arouse the most interest during the weekend. The crowds around the Ford



Clockwise from above left
The crowds were healthy at the NEC Show, even on Friday; Sir Stirling Moss made a guest appearance; Ferrari Owners' Club starred F40 and Enzo.



Escorts and Capris, as well as the Rover SD1s and P6s, had to be seen to be believed. Sports cars also continue to prove eternally popular at the event, with the TVR, Gilbern and Fairthorpe stands attracting particular attention.

The Live Stage featured Mike Brewer of TV's *Wheeler Dealers*, in contrast to the serious business of the Meguiar's Club Showcase. The world-class concours was won by a 1963 Ferrari 250GT Berlinetta Lusso, which beat 16 entries in the Restoration Theatre.

TOUR OF ISTRIA

Kicks in the Balkans

5-7 November. Croatia

Words and photography: Daniel Tomicic

WITH SOME OF Europe's prettiest scenery, a favourable climate and uncrowded roads, the Balkan coast makes an ideal tour destination – even in November. And Istria, Mario Andretti's native land, is an undiscovered drivers' heaven. In two days of driving, the first classic Tour of Istria covered more than 500 miles of winding roads – and the Scuderia del Portello Alfa Romeo convoy was held up only three times.

The tour's drivers have participated in major events from the Monte Carlo Historique to the Nürburgring Oldtimer Grand Prix, but there was no time-keeping on this tour.

It began with a ferry crossing from the west coast of Croatia and on to a 1400m bridge to Rijeka, Croatia's biggest port – and the place where the Jankovits brothers built the unique Alfa 6C



2300-engined Aerospider in the 1930s.

The second day started with a photo session in front of the beautiful Belle Époque Villa Polesini in Porec, then the tour moved to the inland peaks, with a stage that took entrants over 1400m above sea level on the Ucka mountain pass. Rain and thick fog on steep 14% gradients made rear-wheel drive a lot of fun.

The tour ended in Motovun, Mario Andretti's birthplace. Before the event, the man himself said: 'I'm happy to see an event with classic cars touring through beautiful Istria. I'm certain everyone will enjoy their visit.'



Above and right
Uncrowded roads, stunning scenery and beautiful towns: Istria is an 'undiscovered drivers' heaven'.

'Rain and thick fog on steep 14% gradients made rear-wheel drive a lot of fun'