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John Romano ...the Real "Unfair Advantage"

John Romano is a "man in the middle". Just a little past the point in his life where he can race against professional drivers and a little too young to have seen many of the cars he has driven used in their prime.



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He loves vintage race cars and vintage racing and he has a twenty year advantage in eyesight, reflexes, and the dire experiences that racing has thrown at both his cars and most of his competitors. John Romano has the real "Unfair Advantage".

But he has also paid his dues. He ran first in the Jim Russell and then a Skip Barber *arrive and drive* race series and did well enough to want to continue. But he already had a career in medicine and he took five years off competitive driving to get himself established. When he came back to the track, the opportunity was in vintage racing.

John has always been smitten by old sports cars. At one point he owned a '58 Austin-Healey 100/6 for which he paid \$250. Not deterred even by this experience, he determined to go vintage racing in another English car, an Aston Martin DB-3S. In the early to mid fifties the factory built 21 of these open racers and sold 10 of them to privateers. In 1954, a factory Aston, driven by Peter Collins and Paul Frere (Of Road & Track fame) finished second at LeMans. Aston Martin historian Nick Candee has driven a DB-3S and describes it as beautiful, very fast and extremely well mannered. John raced chassis #113, at Goodwood and the Coys Festival, two huge British vintage events, and continues to campaign this beautiful car.

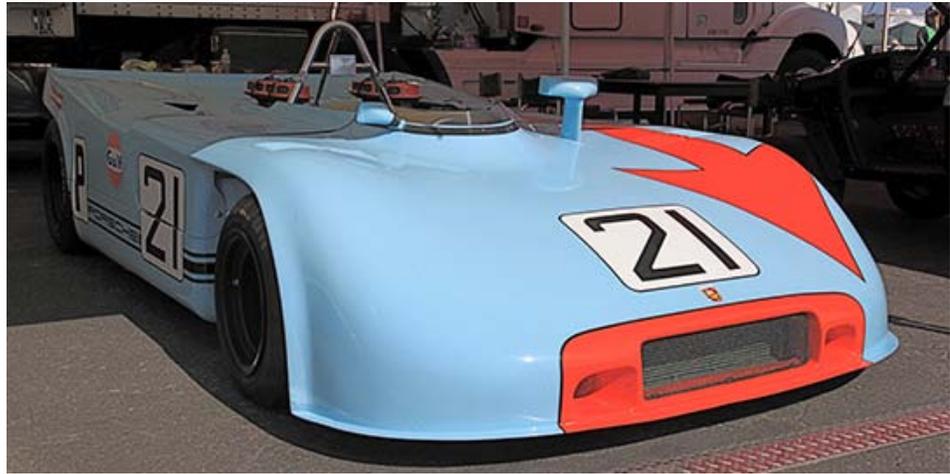
Alex Finnegan, at Paul Russell & Co. in Essex Mass., helps enthusiasts find special cars. In 2006 he helped John purchase a Ferrari 250 SWB race car that had been converted to street use. The car had finished 7th at Sebring in 1960 and John undertook to bring it back to race specs. When he talks about these older race cars you quickly realize that he cares about these very special cars and the racing history that they represent.



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Today he is driving his other race car, a Porsche 908/3. This is a light open car sporting the Gulf Racing colors of the sixties and powered by a 3 Liter engine. This would be a fast car in a modern race and John finishes 9th in a race that was lead by three professional drivers and was won by LeMans winner Brian Redman. Of the 28 cars that finished, John's was the last car not lapped.



Photo ©2009 Dennis Gray

John obviously has talent and is gaining experience. Fortunately, because of his age, he has a great future in vintage racing. But there must be moments when he thinks, like most other vintage racers who are good, if only...

But then, that is why there is vintage racing.

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