



CANADA'S COUNTERPOINT
TO PETER "PERFECT"
HAD THE GALL TO TAKE
HIS APPEAL OVER A MAJOR
AMERICAN SANCTIONING
BODY'S DECISION
ALL THE WAY TO FRANCE
—AND WON.

STORY BY **DAN PROUDFOOT**
LEAD PHOTO **WILLIAM GREEN MOTOR RACING LIBRARY**

Ludwig The Loud



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If Peter Gregg is remembered in racing circles as Peter Perfect, Ludwig Heimrath is known as Ludwig The Loud.



Whatever their alliterative personas, they didn't like each other. In fact, mutual distaste and singular determination fueled their epic 1977 Trans-Am confrontation, which ended with each claiming to have won the championship.

❖ Pivotaly, Ludwig seized on one of Peter's imperfections, believing modifications to his 934.5 made it too much of a 935, and he wouldn't let go. Heimrath told the world, loudly, that Gregg was a cheat. ❖ Such was Gregg's stature as North America's foremost Porsche entrant and driver that Heimrath's modest profile gained a hot neon glow for having the temerity, impertinence, and tenacity to refuse to accept losing to him. If American racing buffs of a certain age remember Heimrath as he turns 80, this is likely the reason why. ❖ We Canadians remember more. Heimrath raced for 19 years before 1977, and 23 more afterward. That Trans-Am season is but a small part of his story, albeit the centerpiece.

AMONG PORSCHE DRIVERS, Heimrath was the master of Mosport, eclipsing American aces Bob Holbert and Herb Swan in RS 60s and RS 61s in the track's early international events. Smooth and fearless, Heimrath drove into corners faster than most. He exited faster as well.

Was beating touring Yanks really a big deal? Well, yes it was. Did Americans not go bonkers after topping Canada and Russia in Olympic hockey in 1980, the Miracle on Ice? Chests do swell whenever underdogs topple overdogs, and American racing loomed as the big league as the Canadian sport evolved from airport circuits like Harewood Acres.

Dan Gurney, his sunny Californian counterpart in Porsche racing. Heimrath considered him a friend.

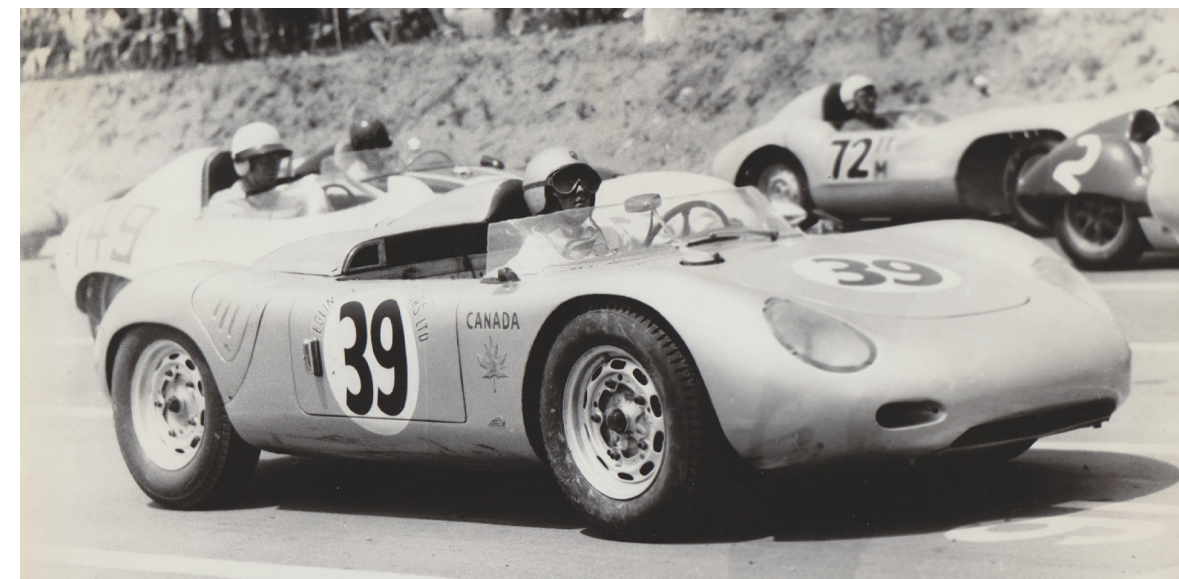
Heimrath told me to get lost the first time we met, in 1963. I'd turned up at his shop unannounced, a fan taking a day off from J-school hoping to hang out and witness the magic going into his Porsches. At 19, I hadn't stopped to think that Heimrath worked every day on customer cars, every night on his race car, and not at all on public relations.

"Ludwig was absolutely single-minded," says Ruth Bartels, a stalwart of Toronto's *Deutscher Automobil Club* from the early 1960s. "He just didn't have time for anything other

[with Gregg]...couldn't stand that arrogant personality."

If arrogance were like aikido, a martial art, Gregg and Heimrath appeared to be tenth-degree black belts. They started even in many ways.

Porsche sent ten 934.5s to North America for 1977. Gregg bought the second, serial number 930 770 0952. Heimrath's 934.5 was 930 770 0958. Significantly, Gregg also bought a 935. Each owned fabled Porsche dealerships, Gregg's in Jacksonville, Florida and Heimrath's in Toronto, Ontario. Each had contributed greatly to the ascent of Porsche in their respective countries by taking championships, Gregg in 911s, Heimrath in



Heimrath won the 1961 Canadian championship in the Eglinton-Caledonia RS 60 (left), earning a seat in a factory 718/2 in a non-points Formula 1 race at Pau, France, in April 1962 (below).

Heimrath believed he could beat anybody. And for a time, it seemed he might. Four years after beginning in a Volkswagen Beetle, he was in Formula 1, racing a Porsche 718/2 at Pau, France, as his reward for winning the 1961 Canadian championship. He was both legend and national standard for generations of Canadian drivers up to and including Scott Goodyear and Paul Tracy.

None of that made him easy to like. Combative to the point of hostility, focused beyond sociability, and possessing a hair-trigger temper, he seemed the north polar opposite to

than his racing and his business. He was a DAC member, yes, but he didn't come out to meetings or events. Everyone referred to him as 'Heimrath,' never 'Ludwig.' He already was an icon, never one of the gang."

"THERE WERE NO AIRS about Ludwig," reflects Hurley Haywood when asked about the Heimrath he met in the 1970s. "He was never afraid or shy to give you his views on life. He hated Peter, but he liked me. We often had dinner and talked about business and racing. He couldn't even stand being in the same room



PHOTOS COURTESY HEIMRATH COLLECTION



“Gregg’s is the most illegal car I’ve ever seen,” remarked Heimrath to a reporter... Gregg reveled in the fuss.



an RS 60. Both were well connected in Zuffenhausen and Weissach.

They came from different planets, though. Gregg was a Harvard graduate (English) and former Navy intelligence officer. Heimrath picked his English up with a master’s degree in four-letter inflection in the shop at Volkswagen Canada after immigrating from Germany. Gregg was polished. Aggravating that, he seemed privileged. Only 25 years old when he purchased the well-established Brundage Motors, his ambitions were well funded. Heimrath progressed from foreman at VW Canada’s engine rebuilding department to running his own shop, which was authorized for Porsche warranty work.

Gregg bought a 904 GTS a year after getting his start in a Corvette, and co-drove a Ferrari 250 at Sebring. Heimrath’s second step was more typical—from VW Beetle to 356 Super 90 on Ontario’s airport circuits. Sheer speed in a tryout in an RS 60 won him the seat in which he earned 1961’s Canadian championship and a shot at Formula 1.

By 1977, Gregg was a three-time Daytona 24 winner, four-time IMSA GTO champion, and two-time Trans-Am titlist. There was no question

that his move from IMSA Camel GT to SCCA Trans-Am competition for the 1977 season was a major coup for the SCCA as it attempted to reboot interest in its pro road-racing series. Heimrath’s calling card? His first Trans-Am victory, at Mosport in 1976, ahead of Al Holbert and George Follmer. The Henninger Carrera RSR he drove that day was recently on display at the Porsche Museum.

THE MOOD WAS SOUR in the paddock even before a wheel turned at the 1977 Trans-Am season opener at Seattle International Raceway. Peter Gregg’s 934.5 was the issue. Everyone knew IMSA officials had sent Gregg home from Road Atlanta a month earlier because his Porsche’s forward bodywork had been altered. Word was SCCA officials told him they were fine with his mods.

George Follmer, defending Trans-Am champion, threatened to leave the series. His scowl only intensified after qualifying. Gregg’s 934.5 lapped the course *1.2 seconds* faster than Follmer’s Vasek Polak 934.5, and 1.8 seconds better than Heimrath’s.

“Gregg’s is the most illegal car I’ve ever seen,” remarked Heimrath to a reporter. Follmer said that Porsche

had refused to fill his order for certain engine and drivetrain parts that Gregg was believed to be running, citing their illegality. But John Timanus, the SCCA’s technical director, told reporters that the Brumos 934.5 “complies with the rules.”

Gregg reveled in the fuss.

“I think George has gone downhill as a driver,” said Gregg of the one-time F1 racer. “He doesn’t race enough to keep up his skills. It may be a question of age. What is George, in his mid-forties?” Follmer had turned 43 that past January. Gregg, himself 37, routinely played mind games with his fastest rivals.

“I was his biggest enemy from day one,” says Heimrath today. “He’d walk down the pit lane saying crazy things. I laughed at him. He couldn’t touch me. I was no nobody.”

GREGG WON THE POLE BUT DIDN’T get past the start/finish line. Greg Pickett’s Chevy Monza, which started the race next to Gregg, slammed into the Porsche, something to do with putting the power down as rain fell. Heimrath went on to win.

With the front-row cars gone, the fast Canadian had minded his rain tires and overtook Monte Shelton’s

934.5 and finally Follmer’s. Heimrath’s tires came into question, which only fed his budding paranoia that the SCCA was against him.

“Goodyear only had rain tires for Peter Gregg, so we ended up with a mix of Goodyears and Firestones,” relates Auguste Lecourt, Heimrath’s mechanic that day. “The series wanted to disqualify us—until Goodyear stepped up and said they couldn’t provide us with a full set.”

BY LATE SUMMER, Gregg had three wins, Heimrath one. The Brumos driver was fastest by far, qualifying on the pole in eight of his ten starts. Even so, Heimrath led in points and grit. Sure that the SCCA was against him, unsure of Porsche’s support, paranoia fed his resolve.

“Ludwig was always a bit jealous of the relationship Peter had with the factory,” recalls Haywood. “Peter and Al Holbert were kind of the chosen guys. I really don’t know the relationship Jo Hoppen had with Ludwig, but I don’t think it was good.”

It was a key relationship, as Hoppen headed up Porsche’s racing efforts in North America. Then came the race at Mosport on August 20, a six-hour race Heimrath refused to

lose. It would change everything.

As the teams set up for practice, Heimrath’s son, Ludwig Jr., viewed the Brumos Porsche 934.5 with its wheels off. “I was a goofy kid, just hanging around,” he says, speaking today from his All-Composite Inc. firm in Spanaway, Washington. “But I knew what I was looking at.”

“I drooled when I saw the axle shafts on Peter’s car. Big titanium chunks...awesome.” They were 917 style, off the 935,” continues Heimrath Jr., a 20-year-old engineering student at the time but a driver destined to race in the Indianapolis 500. “The problem was you couldn’t run these driveshafts on a 934.5. It required taking a torch and cutting an arc out of the car’s understructure. We pointed it out to our guys. The reaction was, ‘Are they forfeiting the Trans-Am to go for the overall win?’”

It was a reasonable question, as Trans-Am cars would be racing with World Manufacturers Championship cars at Mosport that weekend. Le Mans champion Jacky Ickx took the pole in a Martini 935, ahead of Follmer in another 935 and Ronnie Peterson in a BMW 320i Turbo.

Gregg qualified fourth overall and first in Trans-Am, with a lap time 1.7

Gregg was fastest by far in successive weekends at Seattle and Westwood, B.C. (above, left), but Heimrath won the Seattle season opener. Hurley Haywood, seen here chatting with Heimrath (above, middle), took the T-A category of the Watkins Glen six hours. At Mosport’s six hours, the David Hobbs/Ronnie Peterson BMW leads Shelton, Heimrath (above, right).



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In Canada, Heimrath.
In the United States,
Gregg.

seconds better than Heimrath's. The latter complained loudly that Gregg's 934.5 was too much a 935. For the first time all year, he was heard.

Canadian officials ordered Gregg to add ballast to compensate for the contentious 934.5's front-end modifications, which were described as the removal of bumper brackets. Heimrath saw it differently, and still vehemently states that a tube-frame structure was good for 200 pounds of weight savings.

Other issues in Heimrath's protest included chassis carving that facilitated titanium chunks that had migrated from the 935 that Gregg bought along with his 934.5.

ASKED FOR HIS SIDE OF IT, retired Brumos crew chief Jack Atkinson is clear on the matter. "The only protest with any merit was the removal of the brackets. Race stewards allowed us to run without them with a twelve-pound penalty," says Atkinson. "We not only won the Trans-Am, but were also first overall. Guess that really upset Ludwig."

As for the axle shafts, Atkinson insists they were free. As for the tube frame? "No tube frame. We never modified the Porsche chassis. We

did a lot of suspension work that we finally got right with the 1979 car—it was a real rocket ship."

The disputes that followed were much more intense than the race itself. After the world championship 935s faltered, Gregg and co-driver Bob Wollek cruised to victory three laps ahead of Heimrath, who shared his 934.5 with Paul Miller. Gilles Villeneuve and Eddie Cheever finished third in a BMW 320i, and first among world championship entries.

Gregg, however, was in for a surprise. The following Tuesday night, the Canadian Automobile Sport Clubs—the country's motorsport governing body—ruled that Brumos' 934.5 had been modified illegally. With its disqualification, Heimrath and Miller were named the winners.

The Sports Car Club of America demurred, saying it had no voice in the CASC's hearing. It insisted that the Trans-Am was its series, and that Gregg had met its regulations. From this moment on, through two more races at Road America and one at Mont-Tremblant, the Trans-Am series dissolved into a kind of Abbott and Costello routine. Who's first in Trans-Am points? In Canada, Heimrath. In the United States, Gregg.



ANY PROFESSIONAL ROAD RACER is likely to remember at least one meal at Siebkens Resort at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, enjoyed in the afterglow of a particularly fast Sunday at Road America, the most spectacular circuit in the land. For Heimrath, that dinner came on September 10, 1977.

After three months of inhaling Brumos' turbocharged byproducts, Heimrath had finally turned the tables on Gregg. His face still lights up when he remembers that weekend in Elkhart Lake.

"We took the skin off him, really took the skin off," says Heimrath excitedly. "I was hitting 209 mph on the back straight. I never had a car like that before, okay?"

In the first of two 80-mile sprints, with each race counting for full championship points, his MacEachern Deep Steam 934.5 rocketed past Gregg on the first lap and eased beyond the horizon. In Saturday's race, he won by 36.2 seconds. On Sunday, he led 16 of 20 laps with ease before his turbo failed. Still, there could be no question about the skinning.

For Heimrath, such moments in the sun were rare in the U.S. The thin crowd at Road America that weekend witnessed what had made him

legendary to Canadians—his speed, his readiness to extend his equipment, and his resolve in the face of forces he perceived to be working against him unfairly. Perhaps he wasn't entirely wrong on that last point.

Back to that Sunday night meal. After Gregg left his table, everyone knew where he went. "In those days, the one public telephone was upstairs in the hallway by the men's room, and you could hear him on the phone yelling," says team sponsor, manager, and executive chore master Bill MacEachern. "Ludwig said, 'Billy, go up to the can and listen to what he's saying.' I couldn't make out the words, but my impression was he was letting someone at Porsche know exactly how he felt."

Back at the dinner table, Heimrath's merriment was fed by an earlier call, this one from Porsche. A friend in the racing department had telephoned Heimrath to discuss a mistake. The turbo six designated for Gregg for Road America had been shipped to Heimrath, while the one earmarked for Heimrath had been sent to Gregg. Heimrath had, of course, passed the intelligence on to chief mechanic Auguste Lecourt, Bill MacEachern, and Bill's



son, Brian MacEachern, a full-time volunteer mechanic. Heimrath tells the story to this day.

Or was the difference at Road America not in the engines, but simply that Heimrath dialed up his turbo boost sky high, as Gregg suggested in post-race interviews? Lecourt insists that optimal gear ratios made the real difference: "We weren't even running maximum boost."

Even so, Lecourt maintains that any engine intended for Gregg came with an advantage. He wasn't alone in believing that Gregg was being rewarded for his many prior championships, for scoring the 911's first

Heimrath knew the secret to Mosport's off-camber Turn 2 (above, left). Onto Gregg's secrets as well, he protested Gregg following qualifying. At the Glen (above, right), time in the pits dropped Gregg to third. At Road America (above), Gregg found no answers for Heimrath's speed.

Opposite: While drivers Jochen Mass and Jacky Ickx won the World Manufacturers for Makes by three laps at Watkins Glen in their Martini 935, Heimrath finished eighth overall and sixth in Trans-Am with turbo trouble. He was ready to win at Road America.

major overall win at Daytona in 1973, and for selling so many cars at his dealership. Many also thought the SCCA was allowing Gregg to skirt the rules, having designated him the star around whom its Trans-Am success would be rebuilt.

Atkinson takes a different view via email: "As long as our competition thought we were getting something special from Porsche, we had the unfair advantage."

A GREATER, PIVOTAL MYSTERY remained. At Mosport, Gregg had been disqualified by Canadian officials three days after he won the six-hour race on August 20. But the SCCA continued to list Gregg as the winner.

Each national authority adjusted its points standings accordingly, so the leader of the Trans-Am varied according to which side of the 49th parallel the points were reckoned. At season end, Canadian headlines would proclaim Heimrath champion while American media celebrated Gregg's third Trans-Am title.

Porsche's commemorative poster saluted Gregg's Trans-Am championship, leaving little doubt that the factory supported the American driver and the SCCA. The January 1978 issue of *Panorama* reported Gregg's achievement without going so far as to mention the dispute.

It wasn't over, though.

The FIA, the international motorsport authority, recognized the CASC for enforcing its rules at the Canadian race, and announced a hearing in Paris on December 7. Heimrath brought a young lawyer, Wayne Summerville, son of the late mayor of Toronto and a keen race fan who had purchased a 911 Turbo from Heimrath. Gregg represented himself. A problem for Gregg: Summerville spoke French, and he did not.

Worse, Lecourt had read that any interpretation of the rules hinged on the wording in the French edition of the FIA's rulebook—not any translations. In French, it was clear that a car's chassis could not be cut and material could not be removed.

The hearing took all day. The ruling of the FIA Court of Appeals, consisting of twelve judges, was announced shortly after 7:30 pm, in favor of the CASC and Heimrath.

"We won because Bob Hanna, president of the CASC, was so good on the technical points—and spoke a little French," says Summerville. "Honestly, I don't remember the details beyond the issue that Gregg had cut something away from the underside of the car. What I do remember is Peter Gregg coming up to me saying, 'The mistake I made is not having you as my lawyer.'"

Recognition of Heimrath as the champion was turned away at the U.S. border. "They have no more right to dictate the championship than they would to dictate the outcome of the Chicago Bears-New York Giants football game this Sunday," said Burdette Martin, SCCA's director of professional racing, to the *Toronto Star* upon hearing the FIA's verdict. "There is no way we would allow (the FIA) to dictate the winner of the Trans-Am championship. The Trans-Am is not an FIA championship."

Several months would pass before Martin and the SCCA caved. In April, a press release from the SCCA named Heimrath as the defending champion. *National Speed Sport News* carried the story on May 10. From that point, word spread. *Panorama* informed PCA members in its July 1978 issue: "Ludwig Heimrath Named 1977 Trans-Am Champion."

Haywood may be the last denier. "I don't know. Was Ludwig recognized as champion in the SCCA record book?" he asks, mischievously. "I don't think so. If you're not in the record book, are you really champion?" In fact, the 1978 SCCA record book listed Gregg, not Heimrath, as 1977's champion. Whether that's due to an early press date or Martin's intransigence, later SCCA record books list Heimrath, as does the current Trans-Am media guide.

Younger racing scholars have no reason to know there was any doubt.

PETER GREGG DIED of a self-inflicted gunshot three years later. After leaving the Trans-Am, he took his fifth and sixth IMSA GTO titles, and the Daytona 24 for the fourth time. His immense will to win was frustrated by double vision caused by a road crash in France prior to Le Mans in 1980. After struggling with bipolar syndrome on the way to his many championships, it was too much.

Heimrath raced on for another 23 years. With three wins, he finished third in 1978's Trans-Am. He seemed to be leaning toward retirement after campaigning a 924 and 944 in the Trans-Am. When he and his son co-drove a Kremer 956 to fourth overall in Mosport's World Championship of Makes 1000-km in 1985—their best result in several major races—many saw it as a fine way to end a career.

Then Heimrath got motivated all over again when the Rothmans-Porsche Challenge was announced for 1986. Canada's fastest young drivers were flocking to the series. At 52, Heimrath was Sly Stallone playing Rocky one more time. He never won, but running as close to the front as he did, more Canadians got to know him than ever before. The series was televised nationally; viewers new to the sport heard of his past glories as they marveled at his present commitment. Even his opponents watched in wonder.

"He was like a fighter behind the wheel," recalls three-time Rothmans champion Richard Spenard. "As he's turning one way, his head is going the other way—he's just completely physically into it like nobody else. He was a hero of mine when I was younger, and here I was racing him. I couldn't believe how he didn't blip the throttle for downshifts."

In deep, deep fields were Scott Goodyear and Paul Tracy, on their way to becoming Indy stars. Bill Adam, Kees Nierop, and Rick Bye were future Porsche stalwarts. Ron Fellows would become a leading Chevrolet shoe at Le Mans and Nascar road circuits. Heimrath qualified as high as third (in the inaugural se-

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ries race at Mosport) and finished sixth in four races.

"He was a bugger to pass," says a smiling Goodyear. "He definitely had something extra, a motor that would go. He'd play chicken with you, make abrupt moves across you, roll over and squeeze you. He was in the group of the roughest drivers to pass. But you know what? I learned a ton from him. It prepared me for the European style of racing."

Goodyear, 1988's Turbo Cup winner and later a three-time runner-up in the Indy 500, got his first coaching from Heimrath earlier. "When I was a kid getting going in Formula Ford, I arranged to meet Ludwig hoping he could give me some advice," he says. "I walk into his dealership showroom and I could hear voices, Ludwig's loud. He was tearing a strip off a customer, and when I came around the corner and he saw me, his voice changed, and he said, 'Oh, just a minute, Scott, I'll be right with you,' before continuing to rip the customer. And he was very helpful with his advice."

Heimrath was famous for not suffering fools gladly, including his own paying customers. Race officials were similarly on guard: If the legality of a Heimrath car came into ques-

tion, he might implode, explode, or appeal to a higher authority.

At Shannonville Motorsport Park during 1988's Turbo Cup, Heimrath was fast like never before in practice. Other drivers couldn't figure it out—until his 944's wheels failed to drop when the car was placed on jackstands. Excluded from the results, Heimrath threatened to leave the series and skipped the next race. He repeated that sequence in 1990, the final year of the Turbo Cup.

Asked now about cheating, Heimrath's eyes open wide. *Never!* It is worth remembering, however, that he told reporters in 1977 he never blamed Gregg for cheating. He blamed the SCCA for not responding.

Heimrath's rage against authority, whether for failing to enforce the rules or for enforcing them against his cars, drained his pleasure in his final decade of racing. In 1994, he won the hard-fought Valvoline Touring Car Championship in a 968 he ranks high among cars he loved to race. In 1997, he was GT2 champion in the Canadian GT Cup Challenge, third in 1998, and second in 1999.

On October 1, 2000, he finally declared he'd had enough.

"I lost interest," says Heimrath

Recognition of Heimrath as the champion was turned away at the U.S. border.



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PHOTO PORSCHÉ ARCHIVE

lap the track in his 911 Turbo.

Billy Smilovsky, a former Heimrath Racing crew chief, invites his Engineered Automotive tuning clients, and Heimrath is one of the gang. He remains a legend, too. He was inducted into the Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame in 2000. In 2013, he was Grand Marshal of the Canadian Historic Grand Prix.

His wife, Brigitte, is still by his side. Always has been. When asked

tracing the fast line that to him has become an ancient path. A BMW M3 plummets behind us, then a Cayman race car. My stopwatch catches a lap time of 1:36.5.

That's faster, I note, than Heimrath's 1:37.0 lap here in his RS 60 some 50 years ago, which qualified him first in class for a Player's 200 race. Chuck Daigh, Jim Hall, Dan Gurney, and Roger Penske finished that race first through fourth in newer

Porsche's turbo 924 (above) was not Heimrath's favorite. At age 52, he took on the kids in the Rothmans Porsche series (right). At age 60, he won the Valvoline Touring Car Championship in a 968 (below) that is among his favorite race cars.



PHOTOS GRIDWORK PHOTOGRAPHY



about the most significant people in his career, Heimrath mentions her first, even before Auguste Lecourt: "First your wife, because if she is not with you in your racing, you have a problem. She always came to the track. She never asked for attention, but her support was 100%."

If you want to ride with Heimrath, get on the list. All spots were taken the first time I asked; it's well known he doesn't just drive around. His Turbo sounds like no other on the track, with F-18 aural impact as he gets on it out of Turn 2. "It's a new exhaust system from Weissach," he says later, in a tone that intimates not another exists. "I still talk to Norbert Singer. You know he's officially retired (as the racing department's top engineer), but he's there."

When my turn comes up, my first impression is...total calm. Heimrath works hard at the wheel, like a boxer sparring, as Richard Spenard had said. But he's so at ease, so relaxed,

cars, but Heimrath was fifth ahead of Bob Holbert, Herb Swan, and Chuck Stoddard in trailing RS 61s.

Heimrath isn't into nostalgia. He is here and now. Unaware he was being timed, his reaction is immediate: "I think I can do 1:34, to be honest, without you in the car and if I worked the tire pressures. On slicks, I would go flat out over Turn 4 (a blind corner diving downhill). And I would not shift down for Turn 3—it's two-tenths of a second per shift. On the back straight, the boost only shows 15 pounds. It should be 22. I don't know why. We're looking into that, but it's 100 horsepower."

Heimrath visualizes a 1:31. Maybe he'll do it next month, or next year. He can't imagine anyone with as many laps at Mosport. "All those six-hour races, 24-hour races, the big races, the regionals, and still going," he says. He'll turn 80 on his next birthday, August 11, with no thought of stopping any time soon. ●

today. "I was sick of the CASC or the SCCA running my life. Every time I came to the track, the officials and organizers gave me such a headache. A guy from Ottawa came up to me at the last race, asked about buying the car. He wrote the check right there. And that was it."

SOME SAY LUDWIG THE LOUD has mellowed out. He's known to laugh a lot. Only rarely does he snap into incandescent rage. Unchanged is his taste for speed. Once a month, he returns to Mosport, currently named Canadian Tire Motorsport Park, to

Undeniably Ludwig

At 43 years old, Ludwig Heimrath was like a racing tire that appeared anything but fresh—but in fact had gone through just enough heat cycles to run its strongest. Thus his resolve in the face of Peter Gregg's dominating speed through the 1977 Trans-Am championship. Consider these snapshots from a very thick album:

ERNST PIÉCH, Ferdinand Porsche's grandson, remembers when Heimrath began racing in 1958 with an unfair advantage thanks to a conversation they had.

"I was sent to Canada by my future father-in-law, Heinz Nordhoff, to see Volkswagen in another part of the world and to learn English," recounts Piéch in an email exchange with colleague Karl Ludvigsen kindly serving as intermediary. "Heimrath at this time was working in the shop at Volkswagen Canada's headquarters. When I told him about my 1.5-liter Volkswagen in Austria, he had to order a 356 Porsche crankshaft and he built a Volkswagen Super engine (like mine).

"With this car, he was winning a lot of races," continues Piéch. "The cylinder heads lasted only one or two races because they got too hot, (so) he changed to a bigger 356 oil cooler. From the outside, this engine still appeared to be an original VW engine. The car was so successful because of the enormous torque in very low-speed acceleration."

Heimrath remembers winning every race, but swears he had no clue "Ernie"—as he still calls Ernst—was a member of The Family and the older brother of 917 creator, Audi Quattro visionary, and Volkswagen empire builder Ferdinand Piéch.

MOSPORT opened for business in May 1961. Heimrath dominated his sports-car race there in a 356 Super 90 until rolling it in Turn 5. Dave Cook, organizer for the Oakville-Trafalgar Light Car Club, asked what he was thinking while upside down.

"He looked at me in total surprise, having heard a question probably no one had ever asked him before, and replied, 'I was downshifting for maximum power when I landed.'" Never at a loss for words, this Heimrath.

A month later, the Player's 200 was the track's first international race. Stirling Moss won it in a Lotus 19 ahead of Porsche factory drivers Jo Bonnier and Olivier Gendebien in RS 61s. Heimrath came fourth in the Eglinton-Caledonia RS 60.

FORMULA 1 at Pau, France, spring of 1962. The pinnacle of road racing, then as now. As Canadian champion, with Player's tobacco influence, Heimrath finds himself at the wheel of a Porsche System Engineering-entered 718/2. It's a non-points race, but an opportunity all the same.

Jimmy Clark qualifies on pole in a Lotus, Ricardo Rodriguez second in a Ferrari. Factory Porsche driver Jo Bonnier manages third. Heimrath is twelfth but ahead of Porsche regular Heinz Schiller and hopeful, as his right front brake is no longer



GRIDWORK PHOTOGRAPHY

Some say Ludwig the Loud has mellowed out. He's known to laugh a lot. Only rarely does he snap into incandescent rage. Unchanged is his taste for speed.



PHOTOS COURTESY HEIMRATH COLLECTION

grabbing as it had in practice. "In the race, I was running tenth when the steel ring within the aluminum drum cracked, stopping that wheel instantly," recalls Heimrath. "I rolled end-over-end—I thought I was never going to stop. Jack Brabham came over later and said, 'I can't believe you're alive.' Porsche came up with the idea of me driving two weeks later at Zandvoort and I said, 'With the same drum brakes? No, I'd rather decline.'"

500, a race Heimrath didn't enter. He did contest five USAC races in 1970 and three in 1971. Finishing tenth at Trenton with no sponsors knocking on the door, Heimrath was done.

"The money just wasn't there to be competitive," he recalls. Somehow, he found money to get back to racing a Porsche.

HEIMRATH'S RENAISSANCE BEGAN WITH his return to Porsche. "Ludwig bought, through the factory, a year-old 911S I'd been looking after in France," explains Auguste Lecourt, who moved to Canada with the car and became Heimrath's trump card as his mechanic in 1973, later rejoining him for the 1977 Trans-Am series.

"He bought it unseen, and when he asked Jürgen Barth about a mechanic, Porsche called me," remembers Lecourt, who for many years has run his own shop, Auguste Automobile Service in St. Catharines, Ontario. "I flew over in March and we had three weeks to get it ready for American racing.

"That 911S was a very, very good car," recalls Lecourt. "Milt Minter co-drove once and he said no way it was 2.5 liters, (that) it was a 3.0, at least 2.8. It was, in fact, 2.5. We were protested race after race in the States on the size of the engine, the size of the fuel tank. You don't beat the Americans on their own turf."

Heimrath capped 1973 with four consecutive IMSA GTU wins—but still finished behind Gregg. In 1974, he raced an RSR, taking second overall at Lime Rock as Gregg won. In 1975, he scored third at Mosport and Road America in another RSR. His Trans-Am breakthrough win came at Mosport in 1976. —DP

Heimrath's Formula 1 experience came to a cartwheeling conclusion. He remembers future world champion Jack Brabham saying he was surprised that he had survived.

BY 1970, HEIMRATH WAS DESPERATE.

He'd gone from winning his second Canadian championship in 1964—in the country's leading team's Cooper Monaco Ford—to spending years as an underfunded and uncelebrated independent.

In the Comstock Cooper, he was competitive—a fourth at Watkins Glen behind Jim Hall, Roger Penske, and Charlie Hayes in 1964 makes the case—but in his own McLarens in the Can-Am and the USRRC, he found only frustration. That's when he identified the USAC Champ Car series as a means to making a living. If he could do well, a U.S. sponsor would come calling.

In 1969, Heimrath purchased an Eisert Chevrolet Champ Car—the wrong Champ Car, as it turns out. In his first year, he won \$5,439 with a best finish of eighth at Seattle behind winner Mario Andretti. The latter would also win that year's Indy

Heimrath's first Trans-Am win came in 1976 at Mosport in the Henninger brewery-sponsored RSR. With a fifth at Road America and sevenths at Watkins Glen and Road Atlanta, Heimrath decided that 1977 would be his year.



PHOTO DALE VON TREBRA