



GUY COSMO'S

BY AVA ROOSEVELT

Guy Cosmo, former co-driver of Tequila Patron's Extreme Speed Motorsports' Honda Performance Development ARX-03b LMP2, now with Level 5 Motorsports, at the American Le Mans Series Northeast Grand Prix at Lime Rock Park, shares his passion for racing with Ava Roosevelt.

My anticipation to witness the famed American Le Mans Series Northeast Grand Prix this year ran deeply in my veins as we picked up our press passes. As a result of the merger between Grand-Am and the ALMS series, the now official name, United Sports Car Racing, will commence new branding with Rolex 24 at Daytona in 2014.

It has been 17 months since the Palm Beach debut of *The Racing Heart*, where Guy Cosmo, in his Tequila Patron's Ferrari 458 GT, flanked by Badgley Mishka's attired models, stopped traffic on Worth Avenue. My novel has become the mascot of the racing and the modeling world all at once and hence our friendship was forged. To follow Guy Cosmo's career will make your head spin. I decided to watch him race live at the Lime Rock Park in Connecticut.

Should you visit the Lime Rock Park, don't be misled by the tamed appearance of this world-famous racetrack. Unlike the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the race is only 2:45 minutes long, but is notorious for its speed and challenging turns, baffling even the most seasoned professional drivers. Lime Rock's history, with its famed contestants, such as Newman, Andretti, Penske, Posey and McNish, is deeply imbedded in memories of the fans, participants and members of the Drivers Club – founded by Skip Barber, champion driver and creator of the 'single most successful racing and driving school in the world.'

"Lime Rock Park is not a track that just anyone can start lapping quickly if they've not been here before. It's nuanced. It's subtle... where you find the speed is not obvious. It can take drivers years to figure Lime Rock out without coaching," said Barber.

My insatiable curiosity and the love of the sport keeps me following the racing season, as I want to understand why these fearless



NEED FOR SPEED!





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men, often married with children, would want to risk their lives in sleek, aerodynamic mechanical bullets, and spend millions of dollars doing so.

I thought I knew a thing or two about racing. After all, I wrote a book set at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Sadly, I was quite mistaken, as for the life of me, I could not figure out who actually won the North-east Grand Prix in LMP2 class with only two teams participating. The points were applied after the race. Level 5 kept the 1st and 3rd position but lost the points. Extreme Speed Motorsports got first place championship points – but, oddly in my point of view – not the winning title. Confused? Don't be. I asked Guy if he felt Extreme Speed Motorsports was robbed of a win at Lime Rock this year.

“I do, but as they say, ‘that's racing’ and these things happen,” Guy said. “Ultimately, we were granted 1st place points for the race, and at the end of the day, winning the annual championship is our main concern.”

BORN TO RACE

Guy's father got him started in racing in go-karts on Long Island when he was 11 years old. He made it to the World Championships of karting in France when he graduated from high school.

“Sports car racing is unique in that it's all based around endurance racing,” Guy explained. “The races range anywhere from three to 12 and even 24 hours long, so it's very exciting. Lime Rock is a legendary, unique road racing circuit because it's only 1.5 miles long and has only 1 left-hand turn. Despite its ‘small’ nature, it generates some of the highest average race speeds in our circuit.”

To the dread of every driver's loved ones, Guy experienced a serious accident in 2012's race in his Ferrari 458 GT at Lime Rock. Yet, it didn't impact his need for speed.

“Crashes in racing are simply par for the course,” Guy said. “We repair the car, get back on track and get right back to racing at 100 percent.”

Guy was initially prompted to drive for Tequila Patron and Extreme Speed Motorsports by Ed Brown and Scott Sharp. Now, three years later, Extreme Speed Motorsports is transitioning from GT to LMP2. “Although we found success in that ultra-competitive category, it's very difficult to keep up with the factory efforts from both a technical and financial aspect. By switching to P2, we will get a head start on learning these new cars and gaining valuable experience to be strong for 2014.”

THE RACER'S EDGE

When put in two identical cars what makes one driver better than the other?

“That's a question that could take all day to answer, but ultimately it all comes down to skill. The driver is the only thing that slows the car down. The driver who slows it the least – wins. That's certainly an oversimplified answer, but it is the reality. Determining how ‘little’ to slow down for corners, how a driver creates the inputs to the car's controls (steering, pedals), his finesse, accuracy, feel for grip, ability to read the chassis, engine, tires, track, conditions, retain information, give proper feedback to steer the team and car's setup in the right direction... his realization of speed and determination to always strive for more – more speed, more performance, a better handling car, a better strategy... all these things combined, and many more still, are what set drivers apart.” ●