



Ford GT: How Ford Silenced the Critics, Humbled Ferrari and Conquered Le Mans

By Preston Lerner

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Winner of the Motor Press Guild's 2016 Dean Batchelor Award for Excellence in Automotive Journalism

In 1963, Enzo Ferrari let it be known that he might be willing to sell his firm. Ford Motor Company, looking to upgrade its image, sent emissaries to Italy to arrange a corporate marriage between the two automakers. But after laborious negotiations, Ferrari got cold feet, and Ford was left standing at the altar. Henry Ford II - the autocratic CEO known as the Deuce - took the rebuff as a personal insult. "If that's the way he wants it, we'll go out and whip his ass," he growled. Thus began the biggest and most expensive assault on Le Mans the sport had ever seen.

Because support for program came from the top of the corporate totem pole, Ford lavished unprecedented resources on the groundbreaking Ford GT. Only the best would do - the best drivers, the best designers, the best engineers, the best team managers. The cast of characters included legends such as Carroll Shelby, Dan Gurney, Phil Remington, Ken Miles, John Wyer, A.J. Foyt, John Holman, Bruce McLaren, Eric Broadley and Phil Hill. Ford GTs finished 1-2-3 at Le Mans in 1966 and followed up that win with an even-more-dominant all-American victory the next year. Ford GT40s also won Le Mans in 1968 and 1969. By the time the Deuce retired from sports car racing, he had indeed whipped Ferrari's ass. In so doing, Ford also established the template that's been used ever since by just about every manufacturer that's created a big-time factory racing program.

Ford GT: How Ford Silenced the Critics, Humbled Ferrari and Conquered Le Mans celebrates the 50th anniversary of Ford's historic sweep of the podium in 1966. Author Preston Lerner details the program's progress from ground zero to the pinnacle of the motorsports world. The book covers the personalities and the politics as well as the technical nuances of the bad-boy V-8-powered prototypes that changed the face of road racing. Meanwhile, Shelby American and Ford Motor Company photographer Dave Friedman's iconic images bring the cars and the people who raced them to life.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The book deserves a spot on the bookshelf. ... That Lerner attempted to craft a narrative for what might be considered, for lack of a better term, 'real history' is evident throughout. It is thoughtful and nuanced in its interpretations, the material gathered while conducting research marshaled so as to allow the reader to follow Lerner's line of inquiry and thinking regarding several of the issues and controversies regarding Ford's aims at Le Mans. ... An excellent book and highly recommended." - **Don Capps, speedreaders.info**

"You may have heard the legend, but in *Ford GT*, veteran automotive journalist Preston Lerner captures every detail of Enzo Ferrari's refusal of a buyout offer from Henry Ford II and how the spurned titan of American industry brought all of Ford Motor Company's resources to bear against the Italian racing team at its then-marquee event, the 24 Hours of Le Mans." - **Dan Carney, Maxim.com**

"The book takes you through eight chapters, each one a segment of the Ford GT program's timeline. Starting with May 1963 and the initial development of the program, through to Ford's last Le Mans win in 1967. The writing is captivating and the images alone - in both color and black & white - are worth the price of this book. An epilogue details the upcoming Le Mans contender, Ford's 2017 GT. A section with full race results is included as well for those that really like to pore over race details." - **Mark Houlahan, Tech Editor, Mustang Monthly**

"Preston, a talented writer and eminently trustworthy historian, not only brings new light to familiar elements of the story but he also addresses and answers many of the rumors and legends from Ford's effort at Le Mans: What caused Enzo Ferrari to go back on his offer to sell his company to Ford? Did Ford really fly windshields to France on passenger flights? How did the "squadron finish" in 1966 happen and what were its effects? What did it all cost?" - **Randy Leffingwell, Road Scholars Magazine**

"Long-time magazine writer Preston Lerner read the available source material, then successfully pulled together the significant skeins of this complex tale into a dynamic narrative. Lively and engaging, written in a contemporary voice, *Ford GT* reads like a 50,000-word magazine article, complete with multiple sidebars that provide deeper shades of meaning." - **Mark Ewing, Forbes.com**

"The detail Lerner manages to cram into the prose without slowing it down shows a journalist at his best. That he has such a great story to tell makes it even more fun to read. It's a ripping yarn indeed, well told."

- **American Car Collector**

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- **CheatSheet.com**

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"lavish... The smell of the pages is soon displaced by the smell of the pitlane. A fitting tribute for a gold anniversary of a legen - **Classic Car Weekly (UK)**

"The story, so eloquently told by Preston Lerner in the pages of *FORD GT: How Ford Silenced the Critics, Humbled Ferrari and Conquered Le Mans* reads like a script for a Hollywood movie."

- **Examiner.com**

"... a new book that should be on any Christmas shopping list that includes a car enthusiast. Long-time magazine writer Preston Lerner ...pulled together the significant skeins of this complex tale into a dynamic narrative."

- **Forbes.com**

"This year will likely see no end of authorship of articles and books on the Total Performance era, but this volume, with its first-person perspective, stands alone - **Hemmings Motor News**

"The writing is captivating and the images alone - in both color and black & white - are worth the price of this book." - **HotRod.com**

"A fascinating new book documents Ford's attack on Le Mans 50 years ago - **Maxim.com**

"If you buy just one GT40 book, make it this one. - **Octane (UK)**

"This book captures the drama and action of the era with a concise narrative, insightful interviews with the people that were there, and photographs that draw the reader in for probably the best look they'll ever get at large-displacement racing in the '60s - **Petrolicious.com**

"*Ford GT - How Ford Silenced the Critics, Humbled Ferrari and Conquered Le Mans* provides an excellent blend of narrative with deep levels of technical detail, rendering it accessible to the casual motorsport fan but still interesting enough for the true enthusiast."

- **PistonHeads.com**

"If you're intrigued about Ford's campaign to beat Ferrari at Le Mans in the mid-1960's, this is the book you've been waiting for. We're happy to have it on our shelf - **Shelby American Automobile Club**

"Lerner is an inspired writer, a wordsmith who never muddles a thought with a cliché, just his original storytelling. The period photography is stunning, soulful and each photo a complete story, with excellent captioning - **The San Diego Union-Tribune**

"The details of this drama are well told and extremely well illustrated in the book, and much, much more dramatic than this summary. This is the inside stuff as told to the author by those who were there. A highly recommended book to read and enjoy the grand images never before seen in a book - **Victory Lane**

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'Awash with photos, accompanied by copious captions, this is probably the definitive book on Ford's great gamble... Well written and of high quality, this is a superb book that should not be missed'

`Epic. A well-researched and beautifully-related tale of just how many years of slog and how many millions of corporate dollars it took to become an overnight success. A wonderful title, highly recommended.'

"This book captures the drama and action of the era with a concise narrative, insightful interviews with the people that were there, and photographs that draw the reader in for probably the best look they'll ever get at large-displacement racing in the '60s." - *Petrolicious.com*

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About the Author

Preston Lerner, a contributing editor at Road & Track, has written about motorsports for publications ranging from Wired to Sports Illustrated to The New York Times Magazine. Lerner is the author of Scarab: Race Log of the All-American Specials, 1957 to 1965, and the co-author of Winning: The Racing Life of Paul Newman and History's Greatest Automotive Mysteries, Myths, and Rumors Revealed. **Dave Friedman** was Shelby American's official photographer in the 1960s, accompanying the team to races all around the world. He is a longtime motorsports and film-still photographer and the author of several motor racing books, as well as a photography contributor to dozens more. Friedman lives in Newport Beach, California.

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James Shaw:

The ability that you get from Ford GT: How Ford Silenced the Critics, Humbled Ferrari and Conquered Le Mans could be the more deep you searching the information that hide within the words the more you get interested in reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to understand but Ford GT: How Ford Silenced the Critics, Humbled Ferrari and Conquered Le Mans giving you thrill feeling of reading. The article writer conveys their point in a number of way that can be understood simply by anyone who read that because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. This particular book also makes your personal vocabulary increase well. It is therefore easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We propose you for having this specific Ford GT: How Ford Silenced the Critics, Humbled Ferrari and Conquered Le Mans instantly.

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