

Season Review 2009

Nigel Greensall.com



Professional Racing Driver and Coach

So what did 2009 hold for Nigel Greensall? A quiet year really - 35 races in 9 countries with 13 podiums, 11 fastest laps, 3 lap records, an amazing Porsche 962 race at Sebring and ice karting success near Monaco!

Included in the long list of cars that Nigel had the pleasure of racing in 2009 were Ligier, Norma, a variety Radicals, Porsche GT3, Chevron B36, an LMP2 and the ever favourite Funcup.

The 2009 season kicked off in January with a month of extreme contrasts – ice karting in the snowy mountains of Isola and a 24 hour race in the desert heat of Dubai.



Nigel partnered David Moran in a sprint buggy in the icy cold temperatures of the Isola 2000 resort in France. Against 26 competitors and after 6 heats and a final, they went on to take the second place trophy.

The ice was definitely more successful than the desert though, with the Chad Racing Porsche GT3 not reaching the end of the Dubai 24 hour race. Nigel recalls the most exciting moment of the race:

“I was flat in out in sixth gear down the pit straight when the driver’s door fell off. My co-drivers for the weekend had asked for improved for driver cooling, but I hadn’t expected the team to take this approach!”

Any chance of a top 10 result was ruined later in the race, when a rear wheel fell off with John Hartshorne at the wheel, shortly after a pit stop.

Dubai became the subject of a more successful story later in the year though, when Nigel was invited to fly across on a regular basis to provide tuition for several drivers, including the champion of the Gulfsport Series.

Two fabulous days followed at the spectacular Ascari resort in Spain, with Nigel providing tuition to Belgian and Middle Eastern customers once again, one of whom went on to win the Radical Championship in the SR3 class later that year



Following a test at Snetterton in March, Nigel raced the Radical LMP2 in the Le Mans Series at Barcelona early April, after being hired by car owner Tim Greaves. Nigel set the car’s fastest lap in the race and helped get the car to its fourth place finish, which was the car’s best result of the season.

The LMP2 team were also awarded the Michelin Green Challenge trophy, meaning an unexpected podium visit. Podiums were a real feature of that weekend, with Nigel and Australian co-driver Cameron Macdonald also achieving a pole position and two podiums in the Radical European Masters series.





April also featured fabulous racing at the high tech Paul Ricard circuit, in the 6 hour VdeV prototype race alongside Dirk de Groof, the two achieving a class podium. Nigel also had a successful qualifying during the same weekend in the historic VdeV championship. Richard Bryan flew over from the States and invited Nigel to race alongside him in the Chevron B36 that famously raced at Le Mans in the 1970s. Nigel said:

“It is always such a pleasure driving with Richard, particularly at Paul Ricard in his Chevron. We were thrilled to qualify unexpectedly on the front row of the grid in glorious sunshine. Unfortunately with torrential rain on race day and only having 10 year old wet tyres, the decision was taken not to start the race.”

Following on from the theme of famous cars, Nigel provided tuition for Ian Simmonds in his F1 Tyrrell 012 to help prepare Ian for his Historic Formula 1 debut. Ian’s 1983 race car is of the same type that won Tyrrell’s last Grand Prix and Nigel seemed well placed to provide tuition, having previously won 10 times driving Tyrrell’s in EuroBOSS



Having previously held the outright lap record at Brands Hatch Indy Circuit in a Formula 1 Tyrrell, Nigel reached an even greater accomplishment in June, by achieving the Funcup lap record at the same circuit in a petrol-engine car, beating the diesel Funcups which are usually much quicker. Nigel said:

“I was over the moon to get the lap record and particularly delighted for JPR Motorsport and their hard working crew.”

Leading on from Funcup success in the UK, next up was the infamous 25 hour Funcup race, taking place at Spa in July. In one of the most spectacular sights of the year, around 180 Funcups started the event – a mixture of petrol and diesel race cars, as well as the much-talked-about two seaters. It is seemingly the only event in the world where members of the public can choose to be a passenger during the race! Speaking of one of his favourite events of the year, Nigel said:



“My co-drivers were from Belgium, Abu Dhabi and the UK and all 3 were my pupils. After an eventful race which eventually led to us changing the gearbox, we achieved an amazing 100th place!

After winning the VdeV championship in 2005 and a variety of races since, it looked like success would follow again on Nigel’s return to VdeV at one of his favourite circuits in August. Cameron Macdonald partnered Nigel at Dijon in a Norma, where they fought their way through the field climbing up to second place. They were on the verge of a victory when the fuel pump failed, costing them 5 laps and eventually leading to a ninth place classification. Later in the season the boys turned their fortunes around, taking a well-deserved win at Dijon in the Radical European Series in an SR8.

The global travels continued in September with an invitation to test some American muscle cars in the sunshine of Daytona Speedway in Florida. Testing two of Richard and Benton Bryan's race cars - an Argo Group C and a Corvette Trans Am - was the closest Nigel got to 200mph in 2009.



Nigel recalls:

"This was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the year, on my favourite circuit in the most amazing cars. Cruising around the banking at 196mph while slip streaming the Lola and Dallara Prototypes was just so much fun!"

Nigel had his first experience of Valentino Rossi's home circuit of Misano in November, during the Funcup World Cup finals. After being the fastest petrol Funcup in practice, the MTE prepared car suffered gearbox problems, costing Nigel and his co-drivers any chance of a podium result.

There was a return to Paul Ricard later on in November for a sunny weekend in the south of France, when Nigel treated



his brother Graham to a day of driving in a Juno sports car. Graham had a fabulous day and said:

"I'd previously visited the circuit in the 70s to see the French Grand Prix so was very excited to return and have the opportunity of driving. It was a dream come true and I can't wait to see what I get for my next birthday!"



Continuing with the winter sunshine theme, Nigel was thrilled to race a Porsche 962 at Sebring in early December, having watched the incredible 962s at Le Mans for many years. The car lived up to its reputation, with the result of two podiums and a fastest lap being the icing on the cake.

Leaving behind the sunshine trail, the final stop was the snow of Bruntingthorpe for two days of fun and intensive car control tuition for some of Nigel's regular customers.

So what was Nigel's summary of the season?

"The highs of '09 included Daytona banking in the sunshine, a great mix of fabulous co-drivers and as always, fun in Funcups. And as ever with motorsport there were no lows! 2009 is now making way for a new year of adventures."

Roll on 2010..