



**ash automobilia**

**ash - through the esses**

**Through The Esses –  
Experienced Racing Great Creates Great Racing Experience**

**03/06/12 © Andrew S. Hartwell**

***This first appeared on [www.dailysportscar.com](http://www.dailysportscar.com)***

***T“The hard part was always getting the opportunities in the first place.”***

– David Murry, commenting on the difficulties faced by racers looking for their next ride.



David Murry is generally considered to be one of the great drivers in modern day sports car racing, having run in - and won in - numerous race cars and race series from American Le Mans to GRAND-AM Rolex to Continental Tire Sportscar Challenge (KONI Challenge) to SPEED World Challenge and the former Firestone Firehawk Series. He has been a Porsche factory driver and piloted many 911 variants. His wheel time has also been spent in a BMW M3 GTR, a FORD GT, a Riley & Scott MKII open top prototype, a Porsche LMP, a Porsche 968, Formula Fords, NASCAR Winston Cup, and more.

Murry knows how to drive to win, having taken championship titles in the Firehawk and World Challenge series, along with numerous podium finishes, and he has long been considered a significant factor in races at as many tracks as you can name. Virginia International Raceway, Lime Rock Park, Sebring, Road Atlanta, Watkins Glen, Laguna Seca, New Jersey Motorsports Park and Le Mans are just some of the circuits he has conquered at speed.

For all his success, and given his good-natured approach to dealing with the myriad number of personalities that inhabit the sport of racing, you might think his days are filled with offers to drive race cars. You would be wrong...for even the best drivers face their toughest challenges off the track. They are always in competition for the sponsor dollars that will help them win a ride. Those dollars – already not in plentiful supply in good times - diminish greatly in numbers during tough economic times. These are tough economic times.

Attempts to land sponsors can be as grueling an experience as to make winning the 24 Hours of Le Mans pedaling a Schwinn bicycle seem a simpler task to accomplish. If you think pedaling that bike is hard, try paying your bills with money you don't know if you will have in your account when the check comes due. No, racing isn't the best way to establish a secure economic footing for life in the real world. There needs to

**ash “Through The Esses” - Copyright Andrew S. Hartwell**

be something more in the way of income generation and, if a person is resourceful enough, opportunities can be created that will keep the money stream flowing.

Outside of being an active professional racer, Murry has logged many hours coaching other would be racers in the art of apex management. It is one way he has been able to stabilize his own income stream. A short time back though, he found another even better way to boost his earnings doing something that allows him to remain close to the sport even when he isn't driving to win.

Murry created 'David Murry Track Days' (DMTD). It is his business and not something he does as an employee working for a race team or manufacturer. He told us how the idea for DMTD came about and how this business works and what it means to him and his family.

"I was up at Watkins Glen a few years ago and Mark Taylor was up there too running a track day event called Group 52. I was there to coach someone in that group. I got to know Mark fairly well then. And previously, I was coaching someone in another track group called TrackMasters. They even asked me if I wanted to open a TrackMasters South operation, bringing their track day program to people for whom the tracks in the Northeast would not be convenient to get to. But the timing was wrong.



"I was naturally focused on my racing then, and you generally can't find the time or energy to take away from landing a ride and being at your best to divert your attention to some other effort. In addition, their approach to providing track time simply wasn't profitable and it would not have made sense for me to get involved."

Always looking ahead, as racers do, David eventually decided it was getting near the time to give serious consideration to what he might do after seeing his last checkered flag as a professional driver. With the excellent vision he possessed as a racer he looked for a purposeful way to continue being involved in the sport in a role that capitalized on his experience and his outgoing personality.

It seems he has found it.

"Mark Taylor and I discussed ideas for how we could build a business – a profitable partnership – that could provide track time to race teams and vintage racers and others who simply wanted to drive their race cars on historic race tracks, while keeping the costs low and making the experience one the participants would really enjoy. From that initial conversation, the DMTD Company was created.

"Mark brought his experience with track rentals and event organization to the table while I brought the coaching and racing credentials to create a national brand, if you will, using my name."

Murry and Taylor set about creating an environment where anyone with a race car and some established driving experience could enjoy virtually unlimited track time at a very reasonable cost. They reached out to Virginia International Raceway and created the first DMTD event.

“Synergy Racing is based at VIR so we decided to talk with them about getting our new business off the ground. They, and the VIR team, worked with us and we held our first event there four years ago. Mark and I started by tying in with Synergy, utilizing them for track support. In the past Synergy had in place something called the “Fall Fling” which they no longer did.

Looking to establish a product that car owners would want to buy, Murry and Taylor decided they needed to offer something the other track day companies didn't offer.

“What we wanted to do with DMTD was find a niche offering that no one else provided. With other events that are open to people with a wide range of driving experience, people in each experience group really only get a short amount of track time each day. What we do is offer an open track from morning to evening, with a break for lunch, so people can take their cars out and run them as much as they want to. The difference is, our program isn't open to just anyone with a car to run.



“We can handle about 60 cars without compromising the amount of quality track time our customers get. The variety of cars is tremendous as we have had a ton of Porsche 911's, a 962, Mazda Miata's, Daytona Prototypes and much more. We are able to manage this because we look for quality people that are good in traffic and understand how traffic works. We ask that passing take place in the corners with a point by but on the straight no point by is necessary. But there is so much track time that we rarely have too many cars running at once. You can still go out and do some fast laps. If you come up on a much slower car just be patient through the corners and then pass and continue having a great run.

“Remember too, that we are not conducting races. This is an opportunity to get out on track a lot and just drive to enjoy driving and have fun. We do get full professional race teams that come out to do testing for races, but they aren't racing when they are here. We keep the rules simple and we just outline what is expected – and how to best drive the circuit – in a short classroom session. Once that is done, everyone is welcome to start up and run.

“We put the onus on the drivers to pay attention to what needs to be done and keep a mature attitude about it. They know what to do and we provide the environment for them to enjoy their cars at speed.”

Any businessman will tell you that starting up a new venture requires time to both build a customer base and deliver a profit. It also takes experience to learn what the customer wants. Murry has learned those facts of the matter first hand.

“We had our first DMTD event at VIR in the fall and while we started to build the business, we were really just breaking even. My wife, Trudi, made the suggestion that we should run a second event at VIR in the spring too. We set up an event for April 2011 and we sold out! We figured out that people who want to do track events will make plans for the start of the year so they don't have to worry about having blown their budget or damaged their cars by the time fall comes. They could make plans over the winter and when spring arrived they would be ready to go.



“We ran our second fall event the following year and it grew again, but it was not as successful as the spring event. But we plan to continue to do this twice a year again each year. As the brand grows, we are looking to expand the tracks we stage events at and hopefully get people to come back again and again because they prefer our format, and because they can get to run on several established race tracks. In addition to our two events at VIR, last year we did a July event at New Jersey Motorsports Park and we are hoping to be able to hold a spring event in April at the new Atlanta Motorsports Park currently under construction.”

We asked Murry what a typical DMTD event consists of, other than just providing track time.

“I am there at each event and available to each person to answer questions or look at their on track videos. We loan a camera out, if they need one, and put it in the car for them to go out and run for 10 or 15 minutes. When they come back in we can go over the video together and evaluate how well they did.

“In addition, besides Mark Taylor and me, we have a great support team on site at the event. Joe Hullett, who owns his own company called Digital Competition Systems, is a guru with racing electronics. Joe is on site too and he offers his help to anyone who has electrical problems with their cars. He will fix their problem for free and help them get back on the track to enjoy as much time behind the wheel as possible. Joe can update old data software too so his skills are another part of the draw that brings people to sign up for a DMTD event.

“We also have TPC Racing with Mike Levitas at our VIR and New Jersey events. They are our track support team. If someone has technical questions about how their car is performing – be it bouncing around or acting up in some way – Mike can help them sort it out. When we run an event at Atlanta Motorsports Park, Kinetic Motorsports will be there to provide the same kind of support.

“We really feel we offer something that no one else offers. At just \$699 most people will agree this is a great deal. If I am asked to travel somewhere to provide coaching, it costs \$1,500 a day plus expenses. For \$699 they get track time for two days and I am available to provide assistance the entire time.”

How does Murry make a profit offering such an agreeable rate? The key is in volume and working with the track to maximize customer access to the track’s amenities.

“We can do it because we bring those 50 or 60 people together at one time with one fixed cost to us to use the track. And at places like VIR, we encourage our customers to enjoy lunch and dinner at the restaurant

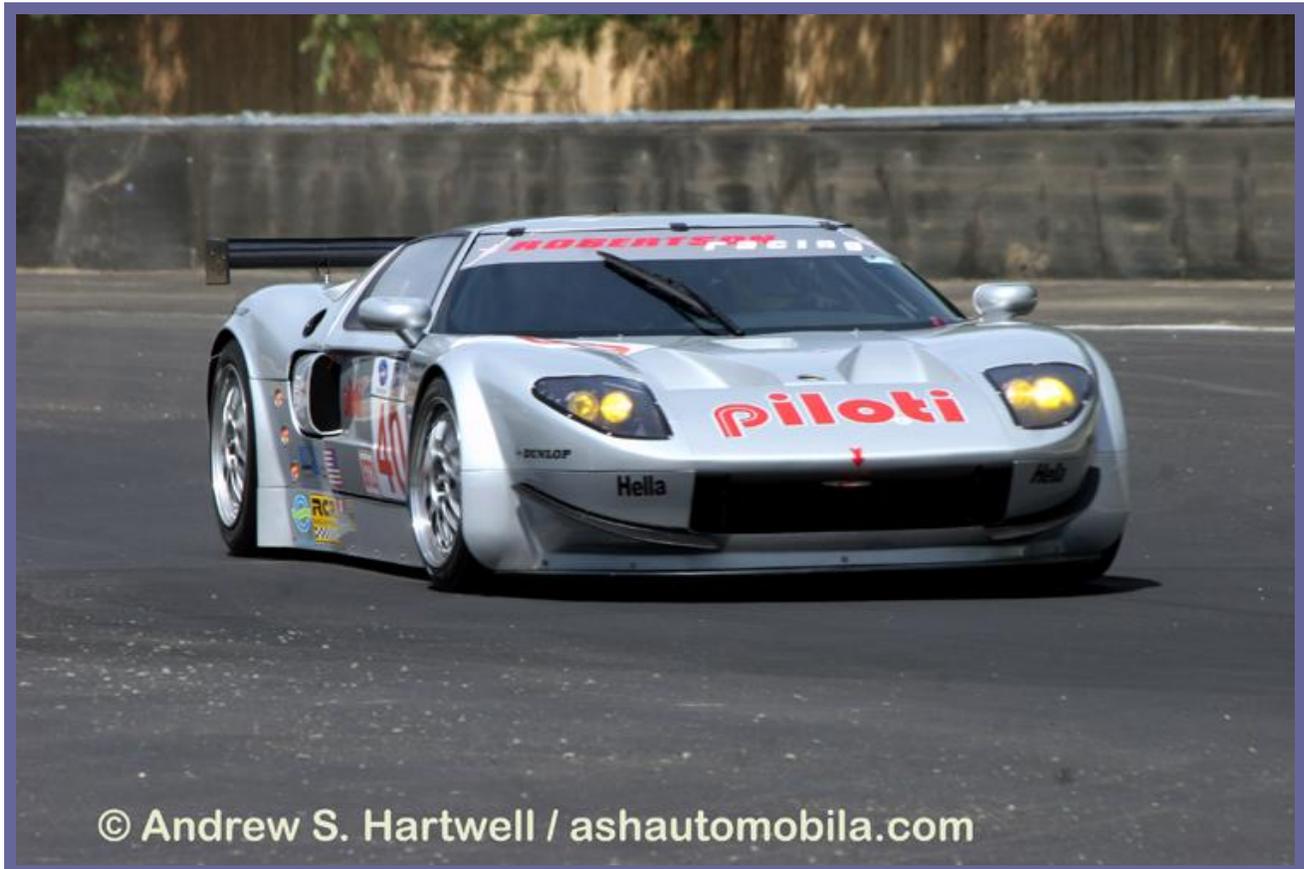
at the track and we invite them to book rooms at the track hotel and take advantage of all the conveniences the facility offers. The track wins big because, instead of having one team and a handful of people, they get 50, 60 or 100 people who will need a place to eat and sleep.”

Murry feels the formula for success is there and he cites one example of how, by expanding into other tracks as he has done with the New Jersey and Atlanta locations, his company can anticipate growth by providing experienced drivers with new venues to explore.

“The guy who runs the PCA (Porsche Club of America) events at Watkins Glen came down to our VIR event. He then went back to the members of the Niagara Region of the PCA and got 20 of them to sign up for our next VIR event. It was a cool deal that was great for us but even more so, the PCA guys got to run on a new track and they got to travel and spend time there with their buddies. We all went to the Oak Tree Tavern for dinner and everyone bonded and had a great time!”

Having a great time – and a first place finish - is something Murry always looked to achieve in a race car. With DMTD he is now having a great time helping others enjoy the sport of racing as much as he does. And it doesn't hurt that he can do that while keeping the income stream flowing.

“I love this business! It is something that I am building and I am an active part of it all, not just the name on the door. I am really enjoying this. You start building a bond with the people who come to our events and it is like having another family.”



© Andrew S. Hartwell / [ashautomobila.com](http://ashautomobila.com)