



ash - through the esses

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Through The Esses - BGB Motorsports -Competitive Customers Wanted

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John Tecce is the Team Director for BGB Motorsports, a Daytona Beach, Florida based Motorsports operation that competes in the Grand Am Cup series. They run a pair of Porsche 996's in the GS class, finishing the season opening Grand Am Cup 200 at Daytona in 5th place. Guy Cosmo and Mark Plummer are the co-drivers for the team's lead car, the #38 Porsche. Through eight of the eleven races on the 2005 schedule, the team is in 19th place in the overall GS class team standings.



But Tecce has no intention of staying out of the top ten for long. We talked with him recently about BGB and he made it clear the business of BGB Motorsports is all about putting forth a competitive and noticeable effort on the track and in the paddock every time. It is his hope that by demonstrating that BGB is a professional, talented and committed racing organization, he will attract clients who will choose BGB over another race services provider.

"BGB has existed in various forms since 2001. We started as Team Spartanburg and then progressed to Duane Neyer Motorsports. We had a bunch of wins with BMW Z3 Coupes, developing those cars very well, and we had a lot of fun with them.

"We are looking to create an operation that has the potential to be a platform for taking care of customers who want to race professionally in what is one of the most competitive series out there.

"When you get started in Grand Am Cup you look around and you can't help but notice the bigger teams and the guys who are successful. You certainly can't help but notice the RaceSite.com guys because they have been around for years, so you try and mirror their business model in a way. We at BGB are committed to functioning as a preferred customer team as well."

Building a name for yourself takes time as does the ability to be competitive on a consistent basis. Tecce told us what is on the table for next season.

"In 2006 we expect to run three cars, one of which will be a new 2005 Ford Racing FR500C Mustang. This year we ran the #38 car as the 'team' car with Guy and Mark driving. We did that because we realized that, in order to generate customer relationships you have to show that your cars are competitive. Guy and Mark have done a lot for BGB. They brought immediate recognition to the team, and told people that we were serious about being competitive in our class. We want people to recognize the level of preparation and support we bring to our customers and we will work as hard as or harder than anyone to deliver a competitive car.

"I'd love to tell you exactly what our 2006 plans are but there are still some variables in play. We had a customer run with us at the Glen this year. He tried his hand with a couple of other teams in different cars but didn't know exactly what he wanted to drive, just that he wanted it to be a Grand Am Cup car. He owns and races a Shelby GT350 in Vintage Racing and he loves the big front engine, rear wheel drive cars. He said he cared about running with a team that he can have fun with, but one that also knows what it takes to prepare a competitive effort.

"He said he wanted to work with us going forward, but he really wanted to run in a new Mustang. While we have worked hard to develop the Porsche, we can understand his desire as the Mustang has finished at or near the top of almost every race this season. We see this as an opportunity for BGB to expand our business by getting a Mustang for him to drive. We will get one, see what it is about and get it ready for him to race competitively next season, with a debut of the car at VIR for the Grand Am Cup finale. That is the kind of flexible and professional effort we want people to know BGB as. People who are easy to work with - and make it easy to have a great business relationship in Motorsports - are hard to come by. If BGB needs to take care of its customers by developing the Mustang we are not at all adverse to that. We welcome the challenge.

"We will prep and maintain the car for Jim Bosler, who will own the car and run it for half a dozen races next year. Jim has a great relationship with Mike Fitzgerald and they will run together in the car. So the plan right now is to run the Mustang and two super competitive Porsche 996's. The next few months though are critical as I'd like to first see how the rules pan out. The 996 platform has been so competitive in GS since 2003, that the rules this year have kept a tight leash on its performance. I don't think anyone expected the Mustangs to be as competitive as they have been, in their first season. Next year's hot car could be something else. I'd also like to see what changes are made for the 997 platform as well."

"Engineering the Mustang won't be simple, but the task will be easier for us than most because I feel we have the right people working together. When you have the right mix of guys that have been around Motorsports as long as they have and that have worked together as long as our guys have, you're blessed. They have complementary attitudes, so they almost function as one. The majority of our guys have been together since 2003 and we're additionally blessed because most of them are from the Deland / Daytona area so we're around each other a lot.

"Quinn Conda oversees all the technical aspects related to the cars. He has spent time as an engineer and a motor builder. He has a long history in Trans Am, most recently with the Rocketsports effort. When we're not racing, he's brought in to run Paul Gentilozzi's car. He's more than a crew chief really because he takes care of pretty much everything during the race weekends. This makes my life easier because there are a lot of the business aspects of running the BGB Motorsports operation that I need to tend to during the race weekend. "

We wondered who was the owner or primary benefactor behind the BGB operation. We learned that BGB is a team effort in every sense of the word.

"BGB is owned by most of us collectively. We are making this business run by investing our time, money, talent and hands-on experience to what needs to be done. We are working to make it a growing business that offers real value to our customers. On a day to day basis, Quinn and I, along with three full time mechanics are in the shop every day."

Working together doesn't always mean the team members enjoy an always tension-free work environment. But no one is ever seriously at risk for more than an ego bruising.

"It's funny at times. We joke that we could film something similar to Orange County Choppers in our shop. Garry Wilkinson, who also drives the truck and his 17 year old son Danny both work in the shop. It would be funny to film some of the antics but I don't think that most of it would be suitable for some viewers. I'm just kidding!"

This season, BGB Motorsports campaigned the #38 car with Cosmo and Plummer as co-drivers. Tecce told us how the pair came to be a part of the BGB scene.

"It was towards the end of the '03 season that Guy Cosmo and Mark Plummer came together with BGB. They met in 2003, at VIR. I used to see Guy's name on internet web sites or see him being interviewed on TV, after Star Mazda races. He seemed like some guy that could have grown up down the street from me, even though he grew up on Long Island and I grew up in the Philadelphia area. We have since become great friends. He first came to us through a relationship with Duane Neyer. When a business conflict for one of our renters arose at Mt Tremblant, Guy was there with a DP team and we decided to put him in as a replacement. Being the professional racer that he is, he did a great job for us and delivered us our first win for the 2003 season. When we had a similar situation at VIR the following race we used him again, but this time we teamed him with Mark and the two of them just ran away with it, in the sister car to the car that Guy won with. This is something else that BGB believes in. We only run two equally competitive cars, or if it's three, then it's three equal cars. There aren't any A or B cars. No customer will want to run with you if they don't think they're getting the same equipment as the next guy and that's very important to us."

"Mark and his father were customers of ours who ran a few select races with us in 2003. But it got to the point where Mark had done really well in spec racers and wanted to try his hand at Grand Am Cup. He was just 20 when we teamed him up with Guy for the 2004 season and the two of them have just been a tremendous match. It was one of those things where Mark was trying to see if he could do well in sportscar racing and we lucked out as he and Guy just generated a good dynamic. While the two have slightly different driving styles, they function quite well together."

With Cosmo and Plummer putting BGB on the racing map, Tecce is looking to build on their talent.

"We are looking to generate a lot of interest for potential customers who want to run a season long effort in one of our Porsches. As long as BGB has existed, Guy and Mark have existed and I want to do everything in my power to keep them together. They add a real dynamic to the race weekend. They are good guys who get along with everybody. Mark is like everybody's kid brother and the guys on the team love him."

Anyone in the racing game will tell you nothing goes further towards making you competitive than having money to spend. Sponsorship is the key and Tecce is looking to put his Grand Am Cup team at the head of the line for sponsor dollars.

"We just had our second race in a row with a sponsor with Red Capital Group, a large provider of equity and mortgage financing, based in Columbus, Ohio. They were with us at the Mid-Ohio race and I think they enjoyed themselves quite a bit. We would love to repeat that weekend for them, or other sponsors, as we feel that a race weekend is a great place to entertain clients or employees. At Barber Motorsports Park we were joined by Intown Suites, the largest owner and operator of economy extended stay hotels. It's a local market for them, as their headquarters are in nearby Atlanta. These events are attended by employees, clients and even spouses and their children. I wish someone had taken me to sportscar races when I was a kid because there is so much going on and so much more to experience than just watching it on TV. I think our sponsors would feel the same way once they spent time with us on a race weekend.

"People are still trying to figure out how to raise sponsorship in the Grand Am Cup series. There simply hasn't been the kind of considerable sponsorship that you see in the Rolex Series or other major racing series. We are trying to create a formula that demonstrates to potential sponsors why racing with us adds value to their company and provides them with a service they can't get elsewhere."

Since Tecce mentioned 'other series' it led us to ask why he chose Grand Am Cup over the many other series choices out there, including the GT class in the Rolex Series.

"We have been in Grand Am Cup since 2001. It is something we are learning how to exist in and it is

something that I want us to perfect. Grand Am has picked up in popularity tremendously over the last two years. I have to say that if Grand Am gets any bigger we'll have to race every weekend of the year and then we'll be in real trouble! I can see its growth though when I have friends calling me that weren't previously interested in the series. They all have the same comment...they can't get over the car count and the close racing. Grand Am Cup in particular has gained huge momentum, because a lot of the fans are watching because they're supporters of the make and model of the car. With other racing, most are watching to support their driver; these guys are car enthusiasts and they're supporting the cars.

"One other reason why a lot of the competitors like their home to be with Grand Am Cup is the people in the GAC paddock. These are guys that you see almost 12 weekends per year that you've been through a lot with. You enter the paddock at 7:00 AM and you might see someone that just spent all night replacing a motor. The next weekend, that same guy might be helping you do the same thing. It's nice when you can just spend time shooting the breeze with your competitors, drivers and crew. They're all just great guys who share the same passion for racing.

"One benefit of being so close to the Grand Am offices in Daytona is that I get to interact with the sanctioning body outside of race weekends. The races can be a stressful place. I don't feel like I'm bothering them when I stop by the office to drop off paperwork and say hello. It's nice to be there, especially when you're not there because you were sent to the principal's office!"

Tecce is expecting the future for BGB to be as bright as the reflection of a winning driver's smile as seen on the side of a bright and shiny silver cup - the kind they give race winners while standing on a podium.

"I don't know how I can adequately sum up what BGB has become. We started as a bunch of guys who shared a passion for Motorsports that couldn't be ignored. Now we have become a living and breathing Motorsports operation. We're actually closing this week on the acquisition of our existing race shop, and expanding it into a 2nd phase. I've gotten several calls from other competitors that like the idea of having shop space with other race teams and being located 18 miles from Grand Am headquarters and the Grand Am's "home track", Daytona International Speedway. We love being in Grand Am Cup. We love the diversity among the GS & ST classes, and we enjoy being aligned with the Rolex Series at so many races. The venues are fantastic and the word on the street is that more of our favorite tracks are being added. We are working hard to create a name for ourselves and Grand AM is a great place for us to be to do just that."