



Lime Rock Park Celebrates A Hot 50th
(Part of our race weekend coverage on TheRaceSite.com)

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Early this morning, on the way to our favorite race track, Lime Rock Park, we had an upstate New York radio station on in the car and we heard something we really did not want to hear. The station's weatherman called for a high of 93 degrees in the Hudson Valley, the geographic area located 'next door' to the Berkshire mountains that surround this beautiful venue. But, while the popular vernacular of today's society may consider something 'hot' to be something desired, we hold quite the opposite opinion when the something is temperature. Man, it's hot here at LRP today!



We strolled through the paddock early this morning looking to cover some ground before Mother Sun covered everything with her burning rays. We almost made it back to the cool confines of the media center before it got too hot. Almost. But we did cool down again eventually and that could only mean one thing, it was time to put on the photo vest, the over the shoulder pocket vest, the long pants, and all our camera equipment, and head back out into the late morning sun.

(Note to LRP management: You won't have to water the lawn today. We released enough water through our sweat glands to saturate the soil to a depth of 2 inches!)

As we write this we are sitting comfortably once again in the new and improved media accommodations provided us by LRP Chief Marketing Officer Maria Jannace and Marketing and PR Manager Renea Topp, and the rest of the LRP management and marketing team. And once again, tireless Dick Madden is working in the media center, attending to the various details that support the steady flow of information to media personnel who, like us, enjoy coming back here to beat the heat. Many thanks for the new 'cooler' accommodations!

This weekend marks the start of the 50th anniversary year for this intoxicatingly attractive facility. In 1955 a man named Jim Vaill - prodded by members of the SCCA - decided to fire up a bulldozer and cut a race track out of his father's gravel pit. He and his friends had been

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zipping around, stirring up gravel dust in an MG-TC and the SCCA people thought he might let them use □his race track' too.

Vaill thought about it and decided it might be a good idea to upgrade his □race track' so he went to the town and received permission to go ahead and build what no one knew was destined to become a Mecca for sportscar fans for five decades to come. And the upgrades have continued here at the □Road Racing Center of the East' ever since.

Some of the most notable changes this season include additional paving in areas of the paddock (upper and lower paddock) that were previously dirt and grass. New fencing has been erected to protect sensitive areas of the track - although some of the fencing has produced challenges for photographers. Areas of the infield, and along the hillsides opposite □No Name Straight', have been cleared of large weeds and underbrush, opening up whole new vistas for viewing the on track action. All told, this old gal is starting to look young and fresh and positively radiant. Then again, we always thought she looked good so maybe we are a bit prejudiced.

Looking Ahead To Completing A Century Of Racing At LRP

Maria Jannace and LRP Chief Executive Office Georgia Blades, with the support of track owner Skip Barber, seem determined to position this circuit for continued growth. No, not the growth of the track from its diminutive 1.53 mile length, but rather the expansion of opportunities for fans and media alike to come here to be entertained.

In a release provided us today, the new LRP management team made a few points that suggest the best is yet to come. "The 2007 season promises to be a revival of Lime Rock Park's glory days. Using the cues from the past, we are looking ahead to build another strong and successful fifty years of racing."

One more dynamic element of the plan is the involvement of the local community in the whole □Lime Rock experience'. In the midway there is a wide area where local merchants can display their wares for sale. We happen to think this is a great way to build a positive rapport with the townspeople, and it encourages race fans that come to the area to consider frequenting local merchants while they are in town. What a smart way to connect with your neighbors!

And who knows, maybe one day the ban on Sunday racing will be lifted. After all, it was a small group of Vaill's neighbors who, 50 years ago, led a "well financed" legal effort to keep the track from ever opening. A sympathetic judge ruled the track could go ahead as planned but could not hold races on Sundays, and had to wrap up each day's activities by 6:00 PM. The track has worked within those restrictive parameters since 1959. Perhaps, by bringing the locals into the □experience' the time for a release from those constraints is just around the corner? We can only hope so.

Finally, did we mention how hot it was here today?