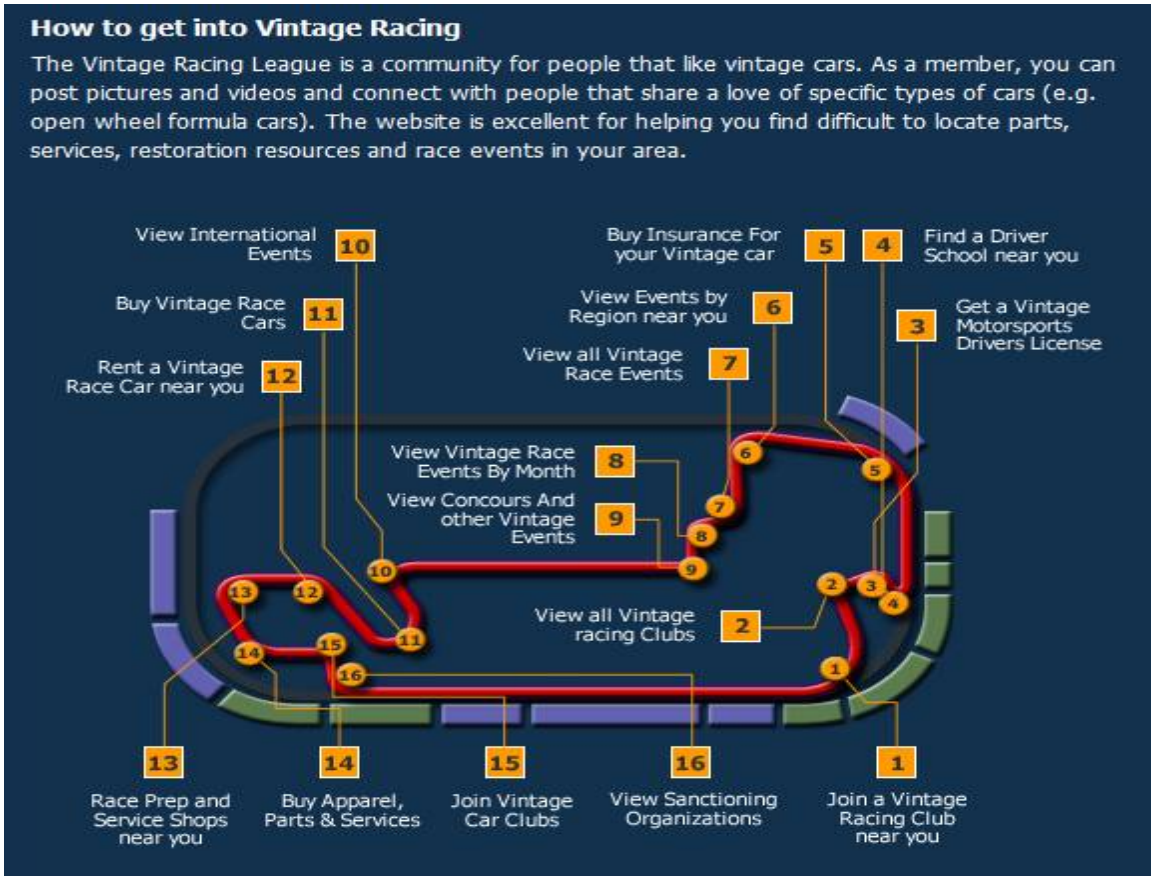




How to get into Vintage Racing



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The most compelling sport I've ever participated in is Vintage Racing. Participation (at any level) evokes passion, power, excitement and nostalgia. In what other sport will your fellow competitors stay up all night, lend you their equipment, parts and expertise, all to help fix your car so that you can compete against them the following day?

I have seen families nurture and teach life skills to children through the medium of Vintage Racing. I have seen men and women from 16 to 80 discover the camaraderie and excitement of participating in this great sport. Personally, it's the most exciting thing I've ever done!

This document was written to help a novice understand many of the elements and tasks required to get into Vintage Racing. The map on the cover page is based on the Road Course at the Indianapolis Speedway. The hyperlinked boxes at the 16 turns represent the tasks that must be undertaken to participate in Vintage Racing – see the map on the www.myvrl.com Home Page.



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This document is a guide only. Every participant will have their unique perspective on how they want to engage with the sport based on financial, time, car preferences and skill level constraints.

Turn 1 – Join a Vintage Racing Club near you:

The “Vintage Racing Clubs, Locations and Events” map on the www.myvrl.com Home Page shows the location of the 27 US based Vintage Racing clubs. The club details can be obtained directly from the clubs (the club logos are hyperlinked to their respective home pages) or from the Vintage Motorsport Council at www.v-m-c.org. In the UK, the Motor Sports Association is recognized as the sole motor sport governing body by the FIA, see www.msauk.org. The MSA has club information on over 800 clubs. The FIA provides oversight for a variety of European and world-wide Motor Sports organizations including Formula 1. The FIA website can be seen at www.fia.com.



In the US, 9 of the Vintage Racing Clubs are run on a for-profit basis and 18 are run on a not-for-profit basis. Each club has different rules governing the types and age of cars that are allowed to run in the club. *Be sure to speak to an officer at the club you want to join about any car that you own or want to buy to make sure it is eligible to run with their club.



Turn 2 – View all Vintage Racing clubs:

An estimated 10 million people own vintage cars world-wide, 4 million in the US. Today, less than 30,000 in the US race Vintage cars. Vintage Racing is a well kept secret. The clubs in the US stage approximately 170 Vintage Racing events each year. Several of these are considered “premium” events; e.g. The Monterey Historics, the Brian Redman Challenge at Road America, the Gold Cup at Virginia International Raceway and the “Mitty” at Road Atlanta.

In the UK and Europe, the Goodwood Revival is the Vintage Racing event and Monte Carlo hosts a bi-annual event. Each spring, Motorsports magazines (e.g. Vintage Motorsports Magazine www.vintagemotorsport.com and Victory Lane www.victorylane.com) publish a Vintage Racing event schedule.

All the US Vintage Racing clubs can be seen at www.v-m-c.org; in the UK at www.msauk.org; and, in Europe and world-wide, www.fia.com.



Turn 3 - Get a Vintage Motorsports Drivers License

Various entities issue Vintage Racing drivers licenses; (e.g. VMC, SCCA, MSA, FIA and individual clubs). Each club (and event) has their unique licensing requirements. Check with the clubs (and/or events) that you intend to race with before getting a license. All license issuing authorities require a doctor’s examination as a pre-condition for issuing a license. The examination is simple and checks for blood pressure, mobility, sight, and reactions. For Vintage Racing, the examination is required every two years. For other more intense forms of motor racing, there is an annual examination.

Examination forms can be obtained from the geographically appropriate licensing authority website or from your chosen Vintage Racing club. Schedule a Doctor’s appointment and get the Doctor to

sign the completed examination form at the conclusion of the examination. Submit the completed for to your chosen licensing authority together with the appropriate fee.



Turn 4 - Find a Driver School near you

We highly recommend going to a professional Driving School prior to driving a vintage race car. Although many of these cars are 25+ years old, driven properly, they can still achieve modern race car speeds. Professional schools are numerous and can be found at major race tracks throughout the world. In the US, the two foremost schools are the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving www.bondurant.com and Skip Barber www.skipbarber.com.



Most Vintage Racing clubs have a spring and fall Driving School program for new members. Many of the clubs require participation in these schools as a condition of being allowed to race in the club, regardless of your racing experience.

A comprehensive list of the world's auto racing tracks can be seen at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_auto_racing_tracks. Contact the General Manager at the track nearest you for their Driving School recommendation.



Turn 5 – Buy Insurance for your Vintage car

There are dozens of Insurance companies that sell insurance for Vintage cars. The variety and nature of coverage varies by firm. Generally, most Vintage car insurers will insure your car(s) for an agreed amount in the event of a loss. Insist upon this provision as a condition of insurance. Losses are limited to theft and accidents driving the car to and from the track. They do not cover damage incurred on the track. The world-wide leader in Vintage car insurance is Hagerty - www.hagerty.com. Other reputable Vintage car insurers include Grundy – www.grundy.com and others (see MyVRL).



Turn 6 – View Events by Region near you

The Vintage Racing League has created a social network for people that love racing and vintage cars – www.myvrl.com. MyVRL has an Events section that lists all Vintage racing events by month and location.



Most Vintage Racing clubs have a list of events on their websites. See the previous section (Turn 2) for a guide to the location of the Vintage Racing clubs.

Turn 7 – View all Vintage Race Events

The Vintage Racing League has created a list of all the Vintage Racing events by geographic location and by month. See the map on www.myvrl.com for US and International locations and events.

Turn 8 – View Vintage Racing events by Month

See the Events section at www.myvrl.com for a comprehensive list of Vintage race events, by month.

Turn 9 – View Concours and other Vintage events

Not all Vintage events involve racing. The Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance is the world's premiere Concours event, staged on the 18th fairway of Pebble Beach Golf Course each August.



A list of the non-racing Vintage, Auction and Concours events can be seen at www.myvrl.com. We encourage local vintage car organizations to attend Vintage Racing events.

Turn 10 – View International Events

There are multiple International Vintage Racing events, the most notable being the Goodwood Revival, staged in West Sussex, UK each September – www.goodwood.co.uk. The more prestigious of the International events are by “invitation only”. Owning the right car is a prerequisite to an invitation to participate.



Seek professional help before setting your heart on participating in a specific event. Attend the event and talk to owners and the companies that maintain the cars that most interest you. Learn about the cars and most importantly, which service providers provide the most flawless experience for the owners.

Turn 11 – Buy Vintage Race cars

This can be one of the most perilous components of this sport. You cannot spend too much time getting this right. The insights below have all been learned the hard way.....

Everyone has their own individual preferences about the car(s) they'd like to race. We encourage you to visit Vintage Race events and talk to the owners of the cars you'd like to own and race before you buy!!



Ask the current owners about the total cost of ownership of the car including the replacement cost for tires, gearboxes and engines. Ask them for recommendations as to the best local resource for taking care

of your selected car marque. Become an “expert” in the car’s history. Research everything you can about the number and type of cars made in your selected marque – before you buy.



If you are just entering Vintage Racing and you are not inclined to work on the cars yourself, seek a firm that will provide a turnkey experience for you. You want them to store the car for you, transport the car to and from the track for events and provide track-side support during an event. Visit service providers at the track and talk to their customers. Get a detailed description of the costs involved for repair, transportation and trackside support.

The average Vintage Racing club stages 6-8 events annually. Make sure that you understand the likely cost of not only purchasing the car, but the total cost of campaigning the car for 6-8 events per season.

Different cars require different budgets. A good vintage Formula Ford can be purchased for \$20,000 - \$30,000. A rebuilt engine will cost \$6,000+ and a set of new tires for a race weekend will be \$1,000+

High end vintage Formula 1 cars can cost \$200,000+ and rebuilt engines \$80,000+. Make sure that you have the appropriate budget to support the car you intent to purchase.

There are a variety of Sports cars that are great fun to Vintage race. These cars can vary in cost from \$15,000 to millions for a vintage Ferrari, Alfa Romeo etc.

There are many websites and Vintage car magazines that list vintage race cars for sale. Examples include:

www.racecarsdirect.com

www.race-cars.com

www.ebay.com
www.vintagemotorsport.com
www.victorylane.com

Before you purchase a car, enlist the services of an expert. Experts can be the Presidents of the Car Marque you have selected, they can be the Technical Director of your Vintage Race club and/or they can be the owner of the Track Support business you intend to utilize.



Whenever you buy a car, learn all about its history from its previous owner. Ask about accidents, repairs and when the engine and gearbox were last rebuilt. Check all the bearing and hym joints on the car. Make sure the seat belts are up to date and confirm to your selected Vintage Race club requirements. Ask about spares and additional sets of wheels, including rain tires.

The more educated you are before you buy; the less likely you are to be disappointed after your purchase. I personally recommend paying a fair price for an expertly rebuilt car. This is especially true for faster cars. The cost of a comprehensive restoration will frequently outpace the resale value of the car. Better to enjoy someone else's restoration experience.

Turn 12 – Rent a Vintage Race car near you

This is an excellent idea before you buy a car. Renting an open and a closed wheel car before you buy will generally point you down the open wheel or closed wheel road. Open wheel cars (think F1) are built low to the ground and the driver is exposed to the elements. The driving sensation can be very intense due to the proximity to the ground and fellow racers. Closed wheel cars include Saloon, Sports and Sedan racers (think Le Mans, Austin Healey, Porsche, Mustang, Corvette).

When you enroll in a Driving School, ask if they teach in the type of car you favor. Ask your local Vintage Racing club whether they can recommend a firm that rents cars at the track during Vintage Race events.



Renting a car before you buy it is also a great way to ease into the ownership of a specific car. Borrowing a car from a friend to “try” is a bad idea and usually ends badly. It is always appropriate to pay for anything you break during the drive.

Turn 13 – Race Prep and Service Shops near you

If you are not committed to maintaining every aspect of the car’s operation personally, the relationship that you develop with the person that takes care of your car(s) will be the most critical you form in Vintage Racing.

In selecting a Service Provider, make sure that they are experts at maintaining the type of car(s) you intend to campaign and that they have experience with the clubs and events you select.

Always obtain a written estimate of any costs before work is started and ask the owner to notify you of any unexpected increase in the estimate once work is underway – before they initiate the new work.

Each club is usually familiar with “trusted” service providers to the club’s members. Talk to several of the service provider’s customers about their experiences before you commit your car to their care.

A list of Service Providers can be seen in the Central Market section of www.myvrl.com.

Turn 14 – Buy Apparel, Parts & Services

Now that you've purchased a car, you need to buy the safety apparel and equipment to keep you safe and comfortable while driving the car.

There are many excellent race suit manufacturers that make an effort to fit a race suit to your frame. Take advantage of these "bespoke" manufacturers and do not shop for "bargains" in this category.

Buy a Hans Safety device to use with your Helmet. From personal experience, this device is worth its weight in gold. Do not race without one!!!

Comfortable gloves and shoes are a must. You should also spend a great deal of time ensuring that your driver seat and seat belts are perfectly sized for you to operate at peak comfort while driving.

If you live in a hot climate and you've chosen to race a closed wheel car, explore the viability of installing a "cool suit" device in your car.

A comprehensive list of Apparel, Parts and Service Providers are shown in the Central market section of www.myvrl.com.

Turn 15 – Join Vintage Racing Clubs

When you join a Vintage Racing club, look for and befriend a mentor. There are many nuances to being a member of any club – Vintage Racing is no different.

Look for well liked individuals that tend to be the front runners of the Group that you have chosen to race with. Most are always willing to share the experiences that allowed them to become competent racers. They can also be great resources to help you find parts and/or repair your car when the inevitable breakdown occurs during an event.

Be respectful of the club's rules governing car preparation and behavior on the track. When we race Vintage cars, there is no touching, "rubbing" or contact allowed on the track. Any sort of contact during a race is going to be dealt with by the Race Event Chief Steward, and will likely result in one or both of the participants in the infraction out of the event for the weekend.

If you are highly aggressive and/or think that bumping is part of racing, Vintage Racing is not for you.

A comprehensive list of Vintage racing organizations can be found on the Home Page and in the Groups section of www.myvrl.com.

Turn 16 – View Sanctioning Organizations

The organization and staging of every motor sport event is governed by a Sanctioning Body. It is worthwhile to study the rules and regulations of the Sanctioning Body that governs the events that you chose. A partial list of Sanctioning Bodies can be found by following Lonk#16 on the www.myvrl.com "How to get into Vintage Racing" map.

Conclusion

The majority of us grew up liking cars. The majority of us never got to pursue racing as a career. Participation in Vintage Racing can be the most exciting and worthwhile experience you'll have in any sport.

I've seen families use Vintage Racing to mentor sons and daughters and I've seen businesses use Vintage racing to create unique experiences for employees and customers.

The Vintage Racing League created the www.myvrl.com Social Network to help vintage car enthusiasts find and communicate with each other globally. Please join www.myvrl.com and ask your friends to join.



The Author, Stephen Page is the Founder & Chairman of the Vintage Racing League, the world's largest Social Network for people that love racing and Vintage cars - see www.myvrl.com. Stephen races open wheel formula cars with CVAR, the Vintage Racing club located in the Southwest, USA. He is supported in his passion by his patient wife Kathi. You can email Stephen at spage@thevrl.com