

# Book Reviews for Porschephiles

by Bruce Herrington, Orange Coast Region

## DESIGN AND BEHAVIOUR OF THE RACING CAR

by Stirling Moss and Laurence Pomeroy (photos by Louis Klemantaski)

published in 1963 by William Kimber and Co, Ltd, London, England

Once considered a classic, comprehensive reference for detailed specifications of various racing cars (successful and otherwise) this book provides a fascinating inside look at (mostly British) race cars of the '50s. If you have or are susceptible to any interest in such cars, this book gives some amazingly complete tables of construction/set-up specifications and performance results. This reviewer knows of no other tome that deals with such esoteric data as reliability by make/year or by track/year. True, the statistical period, ranging from (in some cases) back to 1914 and forward to 1963, has no direct relation to modern race cars. None the less, the analysis of the data significance can be fascinating to those intellectually inclined motor racing enthusiasts.

*Design and Behaviour of the Racing Car* is an old fashioned book, mostly text on non-glossy pages, with pen and ink sketches, cutaways and engineering drawings in the text. There are black & white plates interspersed at various stages through the book, but no color pictures. Though it deals with the design-engineering of racing cars (mostly open wheel, but not all Formula 1), and contains a plethora of tables and a few graphs, it does not read like an engineering text book. It is not a *how to* guide to designing race cars as much as an analysis of *what was*, tied to the story of the resulting effects as reported by the driver. It really is Stirling's book about his racing experiences and impressions. Pomeroy just provides *the rest of the story*.

Stirling Moss is usually not considered a significant author, but he has written/co-written a dozen books over the years, this being one of his last. In it he describes (in a very readable, conversational first person style) the experiences he has had with dozens of different racing cars starting with his very first racer — the very first car made by John Cooper in 1948. The final car described was a Lotus Climax in 1961. In-between came cars from ERA, HWM, Maserati and Mercedes, among others.

As a book on race car performance *Design and Behaviour of the Racing Car* contains the obligatory discussion of oversteer versus understeer, including separate explanations by Pomeroy and Denis Jenkinson.

Alternating with Moss' chapters are equally readable chapters by Pomeroy discussing the engineering factors that gave the race cars the characteristics that Moss described. At the time this book was written, Laurence Pomeroy had over 20 years experience as Technical Editor of *The Motor*, and a two volume tome on the Grand Prix car to his credit.

To one familiar with the basics of current race car design and suspension tuning, some of the early 1950s technology presented in this book seems rather, well, quaint. There is one discussion of moving transmissions to the rear of the car, integrated with the differential, to improve car stability by increasing the polar moment of inertia. No thought seems to have been given to the weight distribution effects of such a layout, or how that could have affected stability. There

is Porsche content in that several references are made to Porsche's trailing arm design and synchromesh.

*Design and Behaviour of the Racing Car* is a much more readable book than the name might suggest. The in-cockpit sensations and experiences described by Moss will appeal to any racing buff and comprise virtually half of the book. The engineering discussions by Pomeroy reflect his 20 years of writing for a popular magazine, so that he can even make a discussion of how the number of cylinders affect piston area in designing a new engine — fascinating to read. There are twelve chapters with operatic names related to Moss' career, from Overture through Intermezzo to Finale. Included are 25 B&W glossy pictures in six groups and 42 line drawings. There are 286 hard bound, 6x9-1/4 inch pages. Currently available used for around \$60, at <http://amazonbooks.com> (search for: *stirling moss and laurence pomeroy*).

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