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Minutes With

Marcus Marshall

RLR was fortunate enough to recently watch a V8 Supercar race from the pits alongside professional motor racing driver Marcus Marshall, who drove in four events during the 2009 V8 Supercar Championship.

RLR: To date in your career you have raced in Formula Ford, Formula Renault, Formula Three, Formula Holden, Champcar, A1 Grand Prix, Carrera Cup, Supercup and V8 Supercars. Which of those cars have you enjoyed racing the most and why?

MM: Yes, I have been fortunate enough to drive some of the best race cars in the world. It is difficult to single out one as my favourite.

I really enjoyed driving in Formula Ford - the races are always very close and there is a lot of 'drafting' involved. You really learn race craft from driving in Formula Ford. Champcar was also awesome. The cars are extremely fast, have 900 horsepower and generate massive down force. Perhaps the wildest aspect of Champcar is the circuits. The majority of tracks are street circuits, such as San Jose, which has a railway line on the start finish straight and on the back straight. Every time I crossed the railway line the car would be completely airborne. Literally flying in a car at 250 kilometers per hour is an exhilarating experience! I also raced Champcar on oval

tracks. It's amazing to drive a car at full throttle for an entire lap at 360 kilometers per hour.

RLR: During this year's V8 Supercar event at Winton raceway, you set a new lap record. How did you do that in a 2008 car, when other teams were running 2009 cars?

MM: Before this year, Winton had been a bogie track for me in a V8 Supercar. So, I was not expecting a great result and I certainly didn't anticipate breaking the lap record.

We were 8th fastest in practice on Friday, where we used our soft tyres, so we had good pace. For Saturday's race, we qualified well [in 14th place], but I had that time taken off me because I crossed the bend line coming out of pit lane. That meant that we started from 20th on the grid for Saturday's race, so we decided to keep our soft tyres for Sunday's race. During Sunday's race, the car was a rocket. I was thrilled to break Jason Bright's 7 year old lap record and we finished 8th. That was a tremendous result for our team, which had only 5 people and no sponsor at the time. I can't wait to race at Winton again in a V8 Supercar!

RLR: What scares you more and why: driving in a motor race or driving with the public on a public road?

MM: That's an easy question to answer - driving on a public road is far scarier. A public road is a very dangerous place and should never be taken lightly. There are speed limits and other road laws for very good reasons.



RLR: You have previously driven in the V8 Supercars event at Bathurst and you plan to race there again this year as part of the Fujitsu series. Why do you think that Bathurst holds such a special place in the heart of Australian motor racing fans?

MM: I'm working very hard to secure a sponsor for this year's race at Bathurst. I have my fingers crossed because I have not missed a race there since 2000.

I am sure that there isn't one person in Australia who has not heard of the great race. It is a unique, brutal and awe-inspiring event. Bathurst is a place where, as a race driver, you can experience the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. The race lasts almost 7 hours, with two drivers for each car and it is the pinnacle of the Holden versus Ford rivalry. The track just has to be seen to be believed. The hills are so steep, with blind crests over the top of the mountain and the cars hit 300 kilometers per hour on Conrod Straight. All of those things, and, of course, the history of the event with iconic past champions such as Brock, Moffat, Richards and Skaife, give it so much character. Every year, more than 2.2 million people in Australia watch the race on television. Everyone has their own special memory of Bathurst.

RLR: What three things do you believe make the difference between being a great racing driver and being a champion racing driver?

MM: Determination, hunger and hard work. The driver who has the most determination, hunger and greatest work ethic will win.

RLR: As you know, we have previously spent 5 minutes with former V8 Supercar driver John Bowe. One of the questions we asked him, we would also like to ask you: why do you think that there has never been a female V8 Supercar series champion?

MM: A great question. I think that, to this point, female drivers haven't been given enough chances. We have Leanne Tander racing this year in V8 Supercars and she does a great job, but you need a lot of time in a V8 Supercar. No one can simply get into a V8 Supercar and be fast. Not even Michael Schumacher would be fast in a V8 Supercar without putting the time in. In my view, it takes between 3 and 5 years to get on top of a V8 Supercar and to have a chance to win the championship.

RLR: When you look back on your career after you retire (whenever that may be), what will you be most proud of?

MM: I'll be most proud of how I started my career - by working my butt off, buying a Formula Ford racecar and learning the hard way how to make a career out of being a racing driver. Deciding that this was the career for me was the best decision I ever made.

RLR: Thank you Marcus. It has been our pleasure to spend 5 minutes with you. We wish you every success in securing a drive at Bathurst this year and for 2010.