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MODENA CENTO ORE



Photo Courtesy Canossa Events

Modena Cento Ore

Anniversary Edition

Way back in April, when the Modena Cento Ore was postponed to 11-15 October, it seemed like an impossible dream, but the persistence of Luigi Orlandini and his team paid off when a reduced grid of 24 cars in the competition section and nine regularity competitors, as compared to the usual hundred cars, lined up in Rome to celebrate the 20th anniversary of this popular event. With Porsches and Ford Escorts predominating in the H and I categories, the small pre-'66 class featured the Ferrari 212 Export of Martin and Andreas Halusa, which sadly retired before the finish, the stunning 250 SWB Ferrari SEFAC of Swiss couple Arnold and Melanie Meier, and Adrian Beecroft's Aston Martin DB4GT.

Crews gathered at Villa Borghese in the centre of Rome for scrutineering and then set out for an early evening parade through the city centre, taking in all the monuments and tourist attractions the eternal city has to offer, with some racing cars suffering from being forced to run at such a slow pace.

The following day, crews drove to Perugia via two runs over the classic hillclimb Rieti Terminillo, steep, but fast if you have the horsepower. Kevin and Lee Jones from GTO Engineering finished the day in the overall lead in their Ford Escort RS 1600, after Philip Lawrence Kadoorie and Daniel Wells, who won the first stage in their Dansport Porsche Carrera RS, suffered a one-minute penalty for early arrival at the time control. Belgians Glenn Janssens and Tom de Geetere were 16 seconds behind the Escort in their Tuthill Porsche 911 SC. First period F car was Roddie Feilden's Shelby Mustang, co-driven by Simon Jeffries and the Meier Ferrari was the first Period E car.

The following day, the cars paraded through some of the hilltop towns that characterise this part of central Italy on their way to Florence, with a stop for racing at the Magione circuit on the programme. With so few cars they all shared a common grid. The Jones Escort won the race, with rally specialists Andrew Siddall and Sebastian Perez crossing the line only .02 of a second behind them in their RS 1800 Escort. The Kadoorie Porsche had made much progress but was penalised again for early arrival, ending the day in sixth place. On the move were Swiss crew Thomas Kern and Stephan Peyer in their Period F Jaguar E-type. With good times on the day's three hillclimbs, and a sixth place finish at Magione they ended the leg in fourth place overall amongst much newer cars. Both Feilden and Jones (*see inset*) struck trouble on stage 5 and were given maximum times.

As always on the Cento Ore, there is racing and there is enjoying the sights of Italy, and before the final drive into Florence crews paused for drinks in Arezzo under the Logge del Vasari in Piazza Grande. A downpour of rain, culminating in a rainbow, accompanied the crews on the drive to Florence. Janssens and De Geetere arrived at the top of the leaderboard in the Piazza Ognissanti, with Siddall and Perez less than 2 seconds behind. Richard Evans and John Faux arrived a day late in their



Photos Courtesy Canossa Events

The anniversary event started with a tour of Rome



The cars line up at Imola for the last race of the event with Janssens' Porsche up front



The Kadoorie Porsche continued its winning ways over the stages, but was clearly too far behind to be able to catch up

Iso Rivolta IR 300, having repaired the clutch that failed during the parade in Rome.

In the regularity section German crew Stephan Rohleder and Nadia Hahn led in their Porsche 911 2.4T by a tiny margin.

The following day was just as much of a challenge for organisers as it was for the competitors. First test of the day was on the beautiful Mugello circuit just outside of Florence, where, as the cars lined up on the grid, the rain started. This soon turned into a storm that brought out the safety car. The race was able to resume after a few laps, and amongst various spins and offs, which happily didn't lead to any damage, Kadoorie's Porsche proved the most agile in the conditions, with Sidall up next followed by Janssens. The Iso Rivolta showed what it was made of by coming fifth, and Roddy Feilden somehow managed to tiptoe his big Mustang to the line in sixth place ahead of Kern's E-type to capture period F honours.

Two stages in the wet over Passo del Gigo and Cornacchiaia rounded off the day without change in the leaderboard. It was all change, however, for the organisers, when new rules governing distancing and gatherings were published 24 hours before. The Gala Soirée at Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, planned for that evening, had to be re-routed to the Ballroom of the St. Regis and they were also working on changing the final prizegiving ceremony from the Military Academy of Modena to the Enzo Ferrari Museum.

In the difficult conditions Ian Dalglish raised his game in his Ford Escort RS 1600, and Louise and Jason Kennedy punched above their weight in their Lancia Aurelia B20, one of the oldest cars on the grid.

Competitors awoke in Florence with the goal of arriving in the Piazza Roma in Modena now firmly in sight. But first two more hillclimbs awaited and the best treat was reserved for last, a race on the circuit of Imola. The day offered, wet, dry, dusty and leafy conditions. The Kadoorie Porsche continued its winning ways, but was clearly too far behind to be able to catch up, while Janssens' Porsche enjoyed a comfortable cushion to Sidall's Escort. Dalglish, with Gordon McCulloch, continued to make impressive progress, but they too were far behind in 12th place going into the Imola race. Kevin and Lee Jones were back in their Escort, performing well on the stages, but way behind in the overall rankings. >>



Glenn Janssens and Tom de Geetere celebrate overall victory



Arnold Maeier's stunning SWB SEFAC finished ninth and second in Period E

Though socially distanced, there was still elegant dining in Florence





Usually run in high summer, this time it was against an autumn backdrop that Andrew Siddall and Sebastian Perez drove through the landscapes of Umbria and Tuscany to second place

Period F winners and a fine fourth overall, Thomas Kern and Stephan Peyer enjoy some of Italy's cultural heritage, an intrinsic part of the Cento Ore



So it was Glenn Janssens and Tom de Geetere that rolled into Modena as overall winners of the 20th anniversary edition of the Cento Ore. Though they only won one stage outright, their consistency while all around them faltered, paid off. They were followed by Andrew Siddall and Sebastian Perez, with Philip Kadoorie and Daniel Wells on the third step of the podium, all three cars in the G/I categories. Period F winner, and an excellent fourth overall was the Swiss Scuderia Apax Jaguar E-type of Thomas Kern and Stephan Peyer. Louise and Jason Kennedy captured the Period E Trophy and the Index of Performance award.

Stephan Rohleder and Nadia Hahn maintained their lead in the Regularity section in their Porsche 911.

Competitors, many of whom had braved quarantine and logistic restrictions to get there, were grateful to Orlandini and his team that the event took place at all. They had seen an autumn Italy, with the leaves turning red and gold and the sun lying low, in stark contrast to the usual mid-summer date. Canossa Events CEO Orlandini summed it up, "There is no doubt that this was the most difficult edition from an organisational point of view. I have my team to thank for their commitment and for their prompt action when faced with the never-ending changes in the regulations, as well as the authorities for their advice and support. But the biggest thanks of all go to all the participants who decided to come and join us on our 20th anniversary".

Mechanical Miracles

Kevin and Lee Jones of GTO Engineering had an eventful Cento Ore. Transporting 17 cars to Rome and providing full support for nine of them, including Ford Escorts, a 308 Ferrari, a Vauxhall Magnum, they also ran a Ford Escort for themselves and began by leading the event. In first place after the race at Magione on the second day, their back axle seized on the way to the next stage, sending them tumbling down the order.

This was the stage that claimed the Escort of Stephen Andrews and Andy Stokes, with an engine fire, its driver Steve, an ex-fireman! Once he had completed his risk assessment forms in triplicate, handed out high-viz jackets to everyone and moved people behind the safety tape, he skilfully put out the fire single handed. However an identical engine fire in the Ben Gill/Dave Didcock Escort, also run by GTO Engineering, not a mile further up the same stage was a more terminal issue. Both crew members have signed up for fireman lessons!

Once their axle was repaired, the Joneses continued, but they were in for more trouble at Mugello the next day. "I am 12th on the grid after the axle fail... No problem," recounts Kevin, "I have bald tyres, but it's bone dry so that's ok. We do the formation lap and it starts to rain. All 30+ cars were on dry tyres. This will be interesting. After the first lap I find myself in third overall, with just the two powerful 911s of Kadoorie and Janssens in front. Yellow flags, course car... Someone is off. Its Neil McMahon's Escort in the gravel. The race restarts and once again I momentarily find myself in the lead, only for Seb Perez to kerb hop and slam into the rear of my car, spinning me off into the wall."

"The lads all piled in to put my car back together, Perez's team offering their assistance, such is the "family" spirit that the organiser Luigi talks about. We change all the steering and some suspension parts and miss the next stage, but we are going again."

"The next stage we tackle is a fantastic stage," he continues, "dry, but slippery, the second one wet, so the wet tyres we had on were saved on the first stage, coming second with a conservative run. The next stage was full throttle and half-way through the stage the unthinkable happened. I shout to Lee "steering jammed." His immediate reply was "3 right into 4 left, fast exit." A few corners later we slide into a ditch directly behind Neil McMahon who had fallen off on the same corner. Somehow we were still second on the stage, losing at least 15 seconds between both hiccups."

After a slow drive to Imola, very nervous of the sticking steering, the GTO boys jumped on the car once again and immediately found the issue, a bush in the steering rack had broken and fallen between the teeth, jamming it. Imola was uneventful, with Jones finishing second to Kadoorie's 911. Sadly it saw the end of Neil McMahon and Tom Grogan's tour, with an engine failure just before the end of the race.

Reward for the Jones' tenacity came in the form of the Technical Miracle trophy, awarded by the organiser.

