

The Preservationist

The Member Newsletter of the Historic Race Circuits of Elkhart Lake Preservation Society
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HRC Holds 70th Anniversary Covid-19 Safe Event

On Thursday July 23rd HRC members gathered on the grounds of the Hollfelder



Start of the over 1500cc Novus race July 23, 1950.

car collection to celebrated the 70th Anniversary of the open road sports car races in Elkhart Lake held on July 23, 1950. Covid-19 social distancing requirements and available parking space limited attendance to seventy Members and no guests were allowed. To help keep the event safe, Road America donated hand sanitizer and face masks. The event was quickly sold out with a waiting list in the event of a cancellation.

Attending Members were invited to display their sports cars and other cars of interest and twenty-seven cars were arrayed in the parking area. The variety and



Cars on display for the event.



quality of cars adding greatly to the ambience of the evening. The cars were numbered and attendees were provided with ballots to vote for their favorite display car. The car

receiving the most votes would be recognized as “The People’s Choice”. The 1951 Jaguar XK120 OTS of Mike Froh and Susie White received the most votes and was.....



The 1951 Jaguar XK120 OTS “The People’s Choice”.

A complimentary Pig and Corn Roast was provided by HRC, safely prepared and served in the open and by “Three Guys and a Grill”. Adobe Road Winery donated the wines served at the event.



The complimentary Pig and Corn roast.

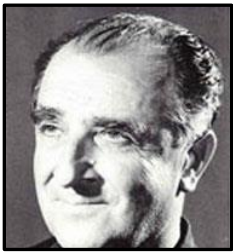
Limited size guided tours of the Hollfelder car collection were available and Members were amazed and thrilled by the beauty of the cars. Special thanks go to Tom and Bea Hollfelder for granting access to their collection and for hosting the event.

Note: Since it looks like the pandemic will still be with us for some time, HRC’s plans for the traditional September event in conjunction with the Elkhart Lake Vintage Festival are still uncertain. We’ll keep you posted as plans are developed.

More Less Well-Known Cars at Elkhart Lake

Editor's note: The 1950 regional open road races in Elkhart Lake were dominated by the well-known sports car marques of MG, Jaguar, Allard, Healey and Ferrari. When the races moved to the long circuit through the village and were sanctioned as national event, marques of less known makers began to appear. Over the three-year span of the road races at Elkhart Lake cars from more than twenty less well-known makers were raced. The English built Lea Francis was one of these and was covered in Volume 24, the 2014 Fall issue in of the Preservationist, after which the project was dropped. Beginning in this issue we pick up the project again with the two Nardi-Danese cars that were entered in Class 8 (50cc to 750cc) of the 1952 Kimberly Cup race; two quite different design that sprang from the fertile mind of Enrico Nardi.

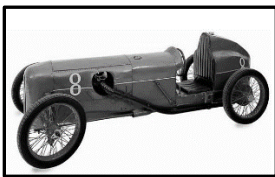
Nardi-Danese



Enrico Nardi

Enrico Nardi was born in 1907 at the dawn of the automobile age. A self-taught engineer he was possessed with great practical sense and a well-tuned intuition who applied his skills to anything and everything automotive. From 1929 to 1932 he was employed by Lancia as a mechanic, an engineer and later as a part time race driver becoming a close friend of owner Vincenzo Lancia.

Encouraged by Lancia, in 1932 Nardi joining with Augusto Monaco to build his first race car, the Nardi-Monaco “Chichibio”.



The 1932 Nardi Monaco “Chichibio”.

Front wheel driven by a J.A.P. (John Alfred Prestwich) 65 bhp, air cooled 998 cc motorcycle engine and weighing less than 700 pounds, it was capable of speeds over 100 mph and won a number of Italian hill climbs in the mid-1930s.

After the death of Lancia in 1937, Nardi moved to the fledgling Scuderia Ferrari, then still a race team and not a car manufacturer in its own right. He was the co-driver for the first Ferrari racer in the 1940 Mille Miglia and was instrumental in

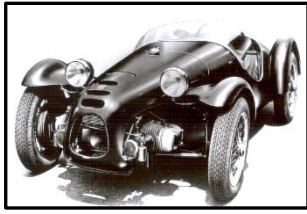
the engineering of the Tipo 125C, the first car to bear the Ferrari makers badge.

In 1947, Nardi left Ferrari to form “Nardi-Danese” with race car driver Renato Danese, initially producing performance enhancing aftermarket engine parts and accessories. The firm’s logo and later its car badge was the familiar “ND”. Although Danese left the firm in 1951 and the name was changed to Nardi & Company, the “ND” badge endured.



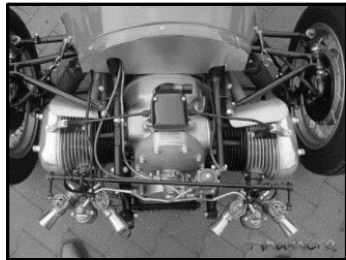
While continuing the aftermarket engine parts and accessories business, starting in 1948, the firm began building a series of one-of and low-production, small-displacement sports cars, largely for competition, and compact sedans for road use. The cars were assembled individually rather than manufactured on production lines, using modified frames, suspensions and running gear of other higher volume car builders. Engines from BMW, Panhard, Fiat, Lancia and (*unlikely as it may seem*) Crosley, were used. Competition car engines were tuned to full race configuration using Nardi aftermarket engine components. Coachwork for the cars was sourced with local coach builders.

The ND 750-BMW - The firm's first design was the light weight ND 750-BMW. The bodywork was neat and simple and most people thought very attractive. What really set the car apart from its competition was the engine. It was



The ND 750-BMW

powered by a modified two-cylinder opposed BMW R75M OHV 750cc air cooled motorcycle engine mounted forward of the

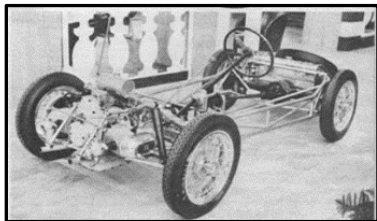


The modified front mounted R75M motorcycle engine.

front axle. Nardi designed and installed unique cylinder heads with carburetors facing forward and tuning the engine from the factory 26 bhp to 50 bhp for competition. The

five speed BMW gearbox was retained and the drive was to the rear wheels by way of a propeller shaft and live axle.

The chassis while not a true space frame was of a strong tubular design using short tubes between two



The ND 750-BMW chassis with the front mounted BMW engine.

main beams. The front suspension was by transverse leaf independently sprung and the rear suspension was by quarter semi-elliptical torque arms. The brakes were of hydraulic drum design. The car was available as either a single seater or a two-place racer with open or enclosed engine cowling and occasionally with a single centered head light.

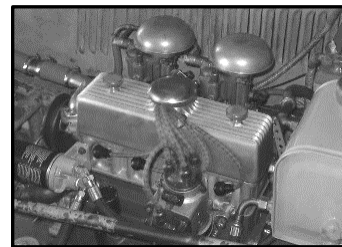
Weighing just 700 lbs. the car's bhp to weight ratio was 1:14. The combination of the powerful modified BMW engine and the car's light weight made the 750-BMW quite competitive in its class.

The ND 750-Crosley Spyder - Following on the success of the ND 750-BMW, Nardi introduced sports racer powered by a Panhard 740cc air cooled two-cylinder boxer engine with elegant coach work attributed to Pietro Frua at the 1950



The Frua bodied ND 750-Spyder.

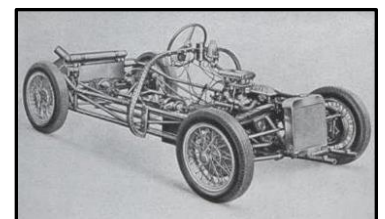
Paris Auto Show. Stanley Arnolt, the North American distributor for Nardi, fell in love with the basic car but, not caring for the air cooled Panhard engine, asked Nardi to build two cars for import powered by race tuned Crosley engines. The Crosley engine was a water cooled, 747.41 cc, OHV, four-cylinder engine that Nardi tuned from the factory 27.5 bhp to 42 bhp using Nardi aftermarket competition crank and cam



The Crosley engine with twin Solex carburetors and Nardi designed valve cover.

shafts raising the compression ratio to 9.2:1. The factory valve cover was replaced by one of Nardi's design to make room for the high lift cam and a Nardi custom manifold was installed mounting twin Solex carburetors. The cars were designated ND 750-Crosley Spydres.

Drive was to the rear wheels through a four-speed gear box with synchromesh in second, third and high. The Nardi Crosley-Spyder's frame and running gear was a version of the ND 750-BMW modified to handle the Frua body work and the Crosley engine. The tubular chassis employed the same welded straight tubes of small diameter that provided extremely strong and light weight construction. Front suspension was independent by transverse leaf and rear



The Crosley Spyder frame and running gear.

suspension was to a floating axel with quarter-elliptical leaf springs.

The Spyder was heavier than the ND 750-BMW by a little over 100 lbs. and the tuned Crosley engine was lower in bhp yielding a power to weight ratio of 1:17. Although the 750-BMW had the advantage here, the chassis design and the relocation of the center of gravity gave the 750-Crosley Spyder remarkable road-adhering and corner characteristics.

Nardi continued to build a variety of race cars including a Formula II Grand Prix car

and the strange looking “Bisiluro” entered in



The Nardi “Bisiluro.”

the 1955 Le Mans endurance race. The car retired after just five laps. Following the failure of the “Bisiluro” at Le Mans, Nardi’s car

building era drew to a close. The firm instead concentrated on its aftermarket performance enhancing completion parts and on its expensive and elegant Nardi laminated walnut wood rimmed aluminum steering wheels.

The Nardi-Danese Owner/Drivers at Elkhart Lake

Paul Gougelman raced from 1952 to 1957 competing in 24 races. During his career he had only one class win and two podium finishes. His first race was at Vero Beach in March 1952 driving a Jaguar XK120. Soon after the Vero Beach races, he purchased an ND 750-BMW; a single seat version with an enclosed engine cowling and no head light. His first race in the car appears to have been at Elkhart Lake in Class 8 of the 1952 Kimberly Cup race where he lost a wheel and was forced to retire. His best finish was in 1953 at Wilmot Hills where he finished 1st in Class. After the 1954 season he sold the ND 750-BMW and raced thereafter in a variety of cars from other makers. His last race was at the 1957 R/A 500-mile endurance race back in a Jaguar XK120 sharing the driving with car owner Howard Quick.



Paul Gougelman in his ND 750-BMW at the turn onto on CTYA in the 1952 Kimberly Cup race.

Kurt Hildebrand raced from 1950 to 1955 competing in 12 races. Like many Chicago Region members, his first race was at Studebaker in June 1950 driving an MG-TC. He was one of the few who raced at Elkhart Lake in all three years. In 1950 in a Triumph (*probably an 1800*) in the over 1500 cc novice event. In 1951 driving a Class 6 VW-Special in the Main Event. In 1952 he raced an ND 750-Crosley Spyder in Class 8 of the Kimberly Cup race. Sadly, again failing to



Hildebrand's ND 750-Crosley Spyder at Elkhart Lake in the 1952 Kimberly Cup race.

finish. In 1953 he appears to have switched to a Class G Nardi Spyder powered by a Fiat engine that competed in Class G. His best finish was in the Fiat

powered car at the November 1953 Orange Empire Nationals where he finished 1st in Class and 6th overall. His last race was in the 1955 at the Glendale Nationals where he again failed to finish.

Author’s Note: The information contained in Nardi’s and other historical records is sometimes conflicting. In such cases, the author has used what seems to have been the most likely scenario.