




The Adelaide **MOTORSPORT** **FESTIVAL** *RETURNS*

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One of Australia's most unique motorsport events has made a triumphant return after a three-year absence.



The 2023 Adelaide Motorsport Festival took place March 25 and 26 to the delight of large crowds eager to relive the memories of the cars and drivers that competed at the Adelaide Grand Prix the city hosted from 1985 to 1995.

Using a shortened 1.6-kilometre version of the original Adelaide Parklands Street Circuit contained within the Victoria Park precinct, this bumper two-day festival had no actual races. Instead, it consists of nonstop on-track sprint sessions and demonstrations of all manner of historic racing machines linked to those magical Adelaide Grand Prix years.

This motorsport event was established in 2014 and hosted 1,800 spectators that year. Within four years it grew to attract thousands of spectators before sudden state government funding cuts abruptly ended it. Following a pre-election commitment made to restore both this event and the Adelaide 500 Supercar race, both were immediately reinstated by the newly elected Premier, Peter Malinauskas, upon his appointment to the state's top office in March 2022.

The official start of the festival on Friday evening saw a multimillion-dollar parade of cars and motorbikes that headed from Victoria Park to East Terrace, driving along the original Adelaide Grand Prix street circuit layout. Once parked-up at East Terrace, drivers including ex-Formula One stars Stefan Johansson and David Brabham were joined by Supercar stars Craig Lowndes, Tim Slade, Todd Hazelwood and many more who mingled with the big crowd.

Highlights of Saturday included a world first, with two generations of Brabhams driving Sir Jack Brabham's 1966 Formula One World Championship winning Brabham BT19 for the first time at the same event. Sir Jack Brabham's son David and grandson Sam both drove the BT19 in a special demonstration run.

This was the Australian-designed and Australian-built car with its locally designed and manufactured Repco engine that took on the world and won the Formula One Drivers and Constructors World Championships in the hands of Sir Jack Brabham in 1966. This was the last, and most likely only, time a driver has won the Formula One world title in a car of his own construction.

The Adelaide event also celebrated the history of the Brabham team, commemorating the team's 30-year history in Formula One, 30 years since the team's closure and the 40th anniversary of its last Formula One Drivers' Championship victory by Brazilian driver Nelson Piquet in 1983.

The last Brabham Formula One car to score a Formula One podium, the 1989 Brabham BT58 Judd and the last ever Brabham Grand Prix car, the 1992 Brabham BT60B, were also on the track in Adelaide for the first time during the festival.

Other highlights included Swedish star Stefan Johansson getting back behind the wheel of the 1985 Ferrari 156/85, the Australian debut of the Rodin FZED, the first appearance of a modern IndyCar on the streets of Adelaide, the unveiling of the Airspeeder Mk4 aerial racer, Hayden Paddon demonstrating his spectacular and revolutionary Hyundai Kona EV rally car, driver signings and car launches, along with a rare appearance of Aston Martin's incredible Valhalla concept car.

The major highlight of the 2023 Adelaide Motorsport Festival was the appearance of Alfa Romeo Formula One driver Valtteri Bottas on Sunday. Bottas thrilled crowds with some exciting laps, slips and slides on the damp track, piloting both an '80s era Alfa Romeo GTV Group A Touring Car and the 2016 Bathurst 1000 winning Holden VF Commodore V8 Supercar.

Clearly an Aussie fan favourite (due in part to his efforts to grow a true Aussie mullet), Bottas delighted thousands of fans in his interview and signing session just one week before he heads to Melbourne to compete in the Australian Grand Prix.

The Adelaide Motorsport Festival is a must-attend event for any motor racing fan who remembers the glory years of Australia's first world championship Grand Prix events with the cars and drivers that took part across all categories. It offers unrestricted access to the cars in a family-friendly event, with car clubs from all over the country showcasing their finest cars throughout the event as well.

Take a look for yourself at adelaidemotorsportfestival.com.au