DOSSIER

MALLOCK SPORTS-RACING CARS

At first glance, a spaceframe chassis, a front-mounted engine and a live rear axle may not seem the most obvious recipe for a successful racecar of the 1990s. However, the latest in the long and distinguished line of Mallock sports-racers achieves lap times that can astonish the proponents of modern racecar theory. The on-track performance of the successful, pullrod-suspended Mk30PR is a solid testament to the

ARTHURIAN LEGEND

By DAVE HANCOCK

Major Arthur Mallock started competing after World War 2 in a modified Austin Seven. More Austin Seven based Specials followed until, in 1958, he built his first motorsports chassis from scratch. At the time, Arthur was frustrated by fellow competitors who were buying Lotus Mk11 cars, which sported wind-tunnel developed, all-enveloping bodies. However, he had a successful season in which he won the Ford Championship of Ireland, despite strong competition from Lotus 11s. So Arthur advertised replicas of his car with the catchline, "U2 can have a chassis like mine." The name stuck. For many years until the late 1960s, Mallock racecars were always referred to as U2s.

Having sold his first car, Arthur was able to finance the construction of U2 Mk2 – the first production racecar. This was a Formula Junior design which was successful in 1960. More recently, it secured the European Historic Formula Junior Championship on two occasions.

In 1962-63, Arthur won the 750 Motor Club's 1172 Formula Championship, for cars fitted with a Ford 1172cc sidevalve engine. His chassis were straightforward spaceframe designs constructed from steel tube. They had the advantages over the opposition of light weight and effective suspension geometry.

Thirty years later, at the age of 75, 'The Major' was still designing racecars that possessed these same advantages – an active race engineer to the last. While independent rear suspension, mid-mounted engines and monocoque construction became almost universally accepted as the norm, Arthur Mallock continued to refine his basic layout.

In the latest car, a Vauxhall engine replaces the Ford unit, and the suspension system is much more sophisticated. The chassis is a hybrid spaceframe construction from steel tube and stressed aluminium panels. The live rear axle is retained because Arthur claimed it to be superior to an independent setup in many respects. By careful design, he minimised the various limitations of the live axle.

The extent of development and the level of performance are reflected in the fact that the latest Mallock Mk30PR can produce lap times on a par with those set by Formula Vauxhall single-seaters, or within 2sec of those achieved in the British Formula 3 series.

Mallock Racing, the company Arthur founded, is arguably one of the oldest producers of racecars in the world. Over 200 cars have been built and most years have been marked with the introduction of a new design. Over the years, Mallock cars have won championships in many different circuit racing, hillclimbing and sprinting formulae. In 1993, the Vauxhall Supersports title was secured for the fourth year in succession.

Arthur's son, Ray, entered the business in the 1970s and won 22 Clubmans category races from 23 starts in a U2 Mk11 which he retains to this day. Ray went on to set up his own motorsports company, which prepares and runs the Ecurie Ecosse Vauxhall Cavalier FIA Class 2 Touring Cars in the British Touring Car Championship.

The day-to-day running of Mallock Racing is handled by Ray's brother, Richard, and his wife, Sue. Richard won the Clubmans championship in 1973 driving a U2 Mk12. Arthur was free to concentrate on what he enjoyed doing, which was thinking about problems...

At the time of his sad death, Arthur was working on the theory and practice of dampers under race conditions. He had no desire to produce a monocoque car with a mid-engine, but was looking forward to designing a road car. ■

Steve Jenkins in his Mallock Mk30PR – effectively the works development chassis – before the radical colour scheme shown overleaf.