

RACERS' RIDES

Sport Trucks for the Sport's Stars

By Barri Denison

TOM KENDALL

It looks like Tom Kendall is back on track—1992 marked the 26-year-old Chevy GTP driver's comeback tour.

Until June of 1991, Tom Kendall was on a roll—careerwise, that is. It was his rookie GTP season, and he had done quite well: He won three pole positions, finished five times in the top five, and took home NBC-TV's Triple Crown trophy for most points in three selected races. Not to mention the six-time champion was also subbing for the injured Kyle Petty in NASCAR Winston Cup and was running well in IROC.

But on June 30, 1991, Kendall's career came to a screeching halt. When the left-rear-wheel hub on his EDS

up and ready to race. And he managed to shave two seconds off the course record in his EDS Chevy GTP to qualify third. A faulty water pump parked him at halfway on race day. When he won a well-deserved Second Place at Road Atlanta, it was apparent that Kendall was up to speed once again. When he, Robby Gordon, and Wally Dallenbach, Jr., won the 24 Hours Of Daytona recently, it drove the point home. With a bright future ahead of him, you can count on seeing a lot more of Tom Kendall on the racing circuit.

So now for that burning, important question: What does this IMSA GTU and 1990 SCCA Trans-Am champ drive when he's not on the track (no fair lookin' at the picture...)? Answer: Kendall races around town in none other than a Chevy Astro mini-van (bet you guessed way wrong...).

But California Street Rods (CSR) in

inch Budnik billet wheels with nothing less than Goodyear's new GSC tires. Since Kendall wanted "all the ugly stuff removed," CSR got rid of all the nameplates and the body rubstrip, smoothed the bumpers, and tucked up the platform trailer hitch so the opening comes through the notch in the center of the bumper. All of that adds up to the clean look that Kendall was after. A rad sound system and a cellular phone for conducting racing business make the Astro a perfect ride for Kendall when he's not feeling the need for speed. And when he is, we imagine his options are endless....

DON PRUDHOMME

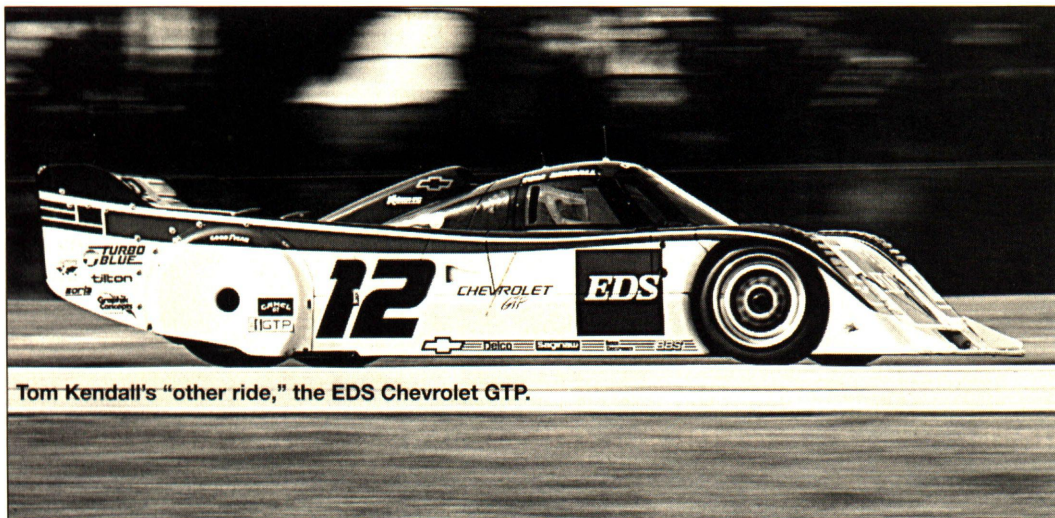
Veteran racer Don "The Snake" Prudhomme doesn't ask for much—just the 1993 Winston Championship. And odds are that he'll get it.

It all started way back in 1960 when the 20 year old burst on the drag racing scene with a Top Fuel victory at Bakersfield, California, "Smokers March Meet." And, well, the rest is history.

In 1965, Prudhomme was the first NHRA driver ever to win both the Internationals and the U.S. Nationals in one season, and just two years later he won the Spring Nationals in Bristol, Tennessee.

In 1969, he won the U.S. Nationals, and in 1970 he took back-to-back Top Fuel titles at the U.S. Nationals.

In 1973, Prudhomme parked his Top Fuel Dragster in favor of a Funny Car, and—big surprise—he won the Funny



Tom Kendall's "other ride," the EDS Chevrolet GTP.

Chevy GTP broke in a race at Watkins Glen, New York, he had a head-on, 140-mph crash that left him with two broken legs and ankles. But this is a man who's not used to being defeated—Kendall showed up at the Miami Grand Prix the following February 23, suited

Huntington Beach, California, turned this Chevy Astro into a suitable cruiser for Kendall, and although subtle, the custom touches were just the ticket for a would-be ho-hum mini-van. CSR staffers lowered the Astro and gave it a slight rake, then added some trick 16-

Kendall's a happy camper with his around-town ride—a Chevy Astro mini-van.



Don "The Snake" Prudhomme and his GMC Typhoon. Does it measure up to any of his Skoal Bandit Racing rides? It just might!

A.J. Foyt leans on his Chevy 1-ton dualie, flanked by an '89 Lola on the right and a Frank Kurtis-built Offenhauser four-cylinder-powered Midget on the left.

A.J. FOYT ENTERPRISES





Here's Prudhomme in his Top Fuel Dragster, constructed by Snake Racing/Don Prudhomme.

Car U.S. Nationals that year. Two years and many wins later, he became the first drag racer to win seven of eight National titles, and he also took the NHRA Winston World Championship First Place trophy for the second time.

You may have noticed by now that there's one word that's always associated with Prudhomme, and that word is win. Throughout the '70s and '80s he wowed the racing community with his extraordinary talent and tenacity. And when he joined forces with Skoal Bandit Racing in 1986, his winning streak continued.

When Prudhomme switched to Top Fuel in 1990, he had a minor setback with two blowovers at Bakersfield and Montreal, but that just made him more determined than ever. Three victories at the Spring Nationals, Keystone Nationals, and the Chief Auto Parts Nationals made 1991 a great year. And three more wins in 1992—bringing his total to a burning 46 victories—makes it look like the decade will be shaping up favorably.

These days, when Prudhomme's Granada Hills, California, neighbors see him on the streets, it's a safe bet that he's driving his GMC Typhoon. Not just a Jimmy anymore, this all-wheel-drive, Mitsubishi-turbocharged road rocket propels him in style. And four-wheel antilock brakes and major suspension and interior upgrades have turned an ordinary workhorse into a Clydesdale. We all know about the engine—this innocuous-looking truck's 262-cubic-inch V6 can run 0 to 60 in 6.5 seconds, which puts the word *sport* in sport/utility. Prudhomme has kept his Typhoon stock—after all, what more could he possibly want from his daily

driver? It's a civilized street-legal vehicle that's caught the same racing fever he has, and it's a perfect match.

A.J. FOYT

If it has an engine, A.J. Foyt has most likely driven it. And competed in it. And won in it.

He's the first four-time winner of the Indy 500 in history, and he reigns as IndyCar racing's only seven-time national champion. But that's not all: Foyt holds other records for the 500, including consecutive starts (32), most years leading the race, most laps, and most races qualified for. No stranger to other races, he's won the Daytona 500 NASCAR race and The 24 Hours of LeMans, too. He has won more than \$2 million at Indianapolis, and he is, quite simply, the sport's winningest driver ever with 67 career wins.

In 1956, the legendary racer began his brilliant career in a Midget. He won the National Championship series and the Stock Car division title. It was all



Foyt's "signature," the deletion of the "3" from the 3500 designation on the Chevy. Gee, could he possibly be referring to the Indy 500?

uphill from there. Foyt went on to win the Music 500 at Pocono (making him the first driver to win the 500-miler three times), the \$25,000 True Value Pacesetter Award, and three Stock Car division titles. When, after his 35th start at Indy last year, Foyt announced his retirement, there was some doubt as to how long that will last. Naturally, a comeback is hopefully anticipated by his legions of fans.

Last August, Indianapolis Motor Speedway hosted an unusual event: the auctioning off of A.J. Foyt's "personal" effects: a career's worth of memorabilia, including trophies and pieces of shattered cars, as well as his '77 Indy-winning Coyote Ford, an entire shop's worth of equipment, and more parts than you've probably seen in one place in a long time. The announcement of an auction started gossip buzzing, and speculation ran the gamut from Foyt was broke to he was just plain nuts. According to him, he "didn't have the staff or room to take care of the equipment properly," and that was the only reason behind the sale. He wanted other people to enjoy what would have been sitting around collecting dust had he kept it all.

The highlight of the auction had to be the sale of Foyt's personal race cars: The lineup included two '77 Coyotes, a Dan Gurney-driven Lotus from the '64 500, an Offy Midget, an '84 Ferrari 512 Boxer, a '71 Chevy custom coupe Impala, a '76 Eldorado convertible, a quarter Midget replica of Foyt's '61 Indy 500 winner, and his '92 Winston Cup Lumina. Everyone ended up happy: Foyt cleaned house, tons of fans got that illustrious piece of racing history they've always wanted, and proceeds went to both the race team and charity.

So, you might ask yourself, what does a guy who's driven almost everything on the face of the earth use for an everyday ride? A sport truck, of course. His late-model 1-ton 454 big-block Chevy dualie is the perfect truck for Foyt—for work or play. Weld aluminum wheels and a billet-grille insert provide a sporty look, and Foyt removed the "3" from the 3500 designation so that it now reads 500. Is this perhaps a gentle reminder of his Indy days? Aside from the grille and wheels, the dualie is basically stock, which goes to show that what's good enough for Chevrolet is good enough for A.J. Foyt. Looks like Chevrolet is a winner, too. ■