

By Deryck Graham

220km/h - 70m Visibility and Still Smiling PCWA Members Visit Spa



Play time in the water. Sabine, a 997 GT3 RS Gen 2, just before the sling through Eau Rouge dip.

Twenty years ago as I was lapping Barbagallos and seeing the same corner every 70 seconds I thought this was the only race track "in the world". Wow the world has opened up a lot in that time!

On the recent PCWA European Driving Tour 2015 many of us experienced something truly religious – we got to drive on the famous Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps, located in the Ardennes forests next to the picture perfect little town of Malmedy.

Voted by the top Formula 1 drivers as their favourite track, the Spa Circuit is famous not just for the fact that is 7.04km of incredible straights and hill climbs, or that it winds through amazing forest but for a dip named Eau Rouge.

Sitting at the end of a long descending straight skirted by pavilions, it is like being shot down a Luke Skywalker-like cavern to then be slung out of this amazing positive G-loaded corner that propels you up the hill to one of the fastest straights in the Formula 1 circuit. Are you getting this? When done right, it is the most amazing high – both thrilling and nurturing at the same time. When not done right, it is a negative camber nightmare!

The intrepid PCWA team members – Andy Stack, Allan Guelfi, Kirsty Garmonsway, Rick Smith, David Blainey, Michael Broughton, Barry Elmslie and Rodger Greville – chose a wonderfully wet day to race their Renault Sport Meganas along with me in Sabine but still there were incredible smiles all around. The team at RSR were at their best – organized, professional, informative and most importantly genuinely passionate and supportive of the

day's motorsport. Each of the intrepid drivers got between 30 minutes to an hour's training by a professional race driver before being let loose on the track for 270km of track time.

Apart from Eau Rouge, the moment that is still etched into my being is doing 220km/h down Kemmel Straight in torrential rain with only 70 metres of visibility, just seeing the brake lights of the cars in front and only knowing the Les Combes corner was coming because of some count down signs on the side of the road. 150, 100, 50 metres – here we go again.....

If you ever want to do this yourself, you can visit RSRNurburg.com and tell them you are from PCWA or contact

Ray Shepherdson on ray@rsrnurburg.com. They will look after you. Enjoy!

Thanks to all who attended for a lifetime of memories!

Cheers

Deryck

President's Note: Thanks very much to Deryck & Grace for hosting this stellar event. Every single PCWA member who attended could only rave about this wonderful trip into the car lovers paradise that is Europe. Thanks also for the excellent presentation at our November club meeting! So on to the next one then!



People from left to right. Kathy Stack, Kirsty Garmonsway, Barry Elmslie, Rick Smith, Allan Guelfi, Andy Stack, Ray Shepherdson, R