

Editorial

Owning a Race Car

by M.G. Lewis

It's too expensive! This is the first response everyone has when you mention owning a race car. It doesn't have to be that way and in a series of articles I will attempt to point out several affordable racing alternatives. This first article will focus on Improved Touring (IT) cars which are, in my opinion, the easiest and most economical way to go racing. In future articles I will cover Formula Ford, Formula 440, Formula Vee, Showroom Stock, and Spec Racers. In answering some of your questions and suggesting some affordable alternatives, I'm hoping to convince more of you to join me as a car owner. If our racing program is to grow, we must increase the percentage of privately owned cars.

The concept of an IT car is based on the idea that it should be an affordable dual purpose car. You should be able to drive an IT car to the track, have a great day racing and still be able to drive it to work Monday morning. I know you are thinking to yourself, this sounds great, but it doesn't really happen. I would remind you that the Porsche driven daily by Jack Roose won most of our early races. Bill Hill's RX7 is his only mean of transportation. The point is that IT cars can and should be street legal cars with very few modifications. Because they are so stock, they are reliable. It is not expensive to keep a street stock car running. Low initial cost and low operating costs combine to make IT racing affordable for everyone.

What about the maintenance? Who can fix my racer? IT cars are basically stock. If your local mechanic can keep the car you drive on the street running then he should be able to fix your racer. If you modify your car to the point that it needs a race mechanic then you are missing the point of IT racing. Stock cars seldom break and a well pre-

pared IT car should run all season without any major problems.

What if I crash or break the car? What if you crash or break the car you are renting? The answer is the same. You pay someone to repair the car. At least when you own the car you can decide how much you are willing to spend and when you are willing to spend it. You may even decide to do some of the work yourself. We still have not crashed a privately owned car in our SCCA races. Think about it!

Where do I keep the car when I'm not racing. Remember, an IT car should be street legal. Use it as a second car. Storage should not be a problem for a street legal car.

But aren't IT cars slow? Consider that at our last race the ITA RX7 qualified over a second faster than the Spec Racers and the RS cars are considerably faster.

What will I do with the car if I quit racing or if the SCCA racing ends? The answer is simple. Remove the rollcage and other safety equipment and sell it as a used car. All of the safety items required on an IT car are bolted in and can be easily removed. If you have a problem with commitment, IT racing is for you. The risk is very small.

In conclusion I would like to propose that several drivers should consider buying identical cars. If we all have the same kind of car and limit the modifications then there is no need for the cost to get out of hand. The drivers on the west coast are doing this with Mazda RX7's, and they tell me that the cost of a race ready car is under \$3000. How much did you spend racing last year? We can keep the cost low if we work together.

Next month - Formula Ford

Welcome Novices

The SCCA Hawaii Region would like to welcome December novices **Sven Hedin**, **Dwayne Hirata**, and **Kei Inuma** to SCCA Solo II racing. Congratulations to **Sven Hedin** for being the fastest novice and placing third with his Porsche 924 in B Stock.

