

# ALLEN BERG

■ Le Mans 24 Hours ■ June 16-17, 1990 ■ Porsche 962C ■ Racing for a rock legend



Berg steered the RLR Porsche 962 to 11th

**A WEEK BEFORE** the race I got a call from Eddie Jordan, who had run me in British Formula 3, saying that Richard Lloyd Racing may have a spot open at Le Mans because one of its slated drivers, John Paul Jr, might not get let into France after legal problems in the States.

So I went over and the car I was hoping to drive was a Porsche 962 owned by Nick Mason. Richard told me they couldn't get John and that I could drive as long I was on the pace in practice.

While I was waiting for my turn in the car a fellow walked up and we started talking. He said: "I'm Nick." I was expecting a rock legend with long hair and groupies. Instead I found a gentleman.

My co-drivers were John Watson and Bruno Giacomelli. John was a nice guy and Bruno had a superb sense of humour; he was teaching me to swear in Italian! We didn't have luxurious motorhomes either – it was like in *Le Mans* with Steve McQueen when everyone had their own small camper.

When I got my chance to drive

**"After the race, Nick Mason said, 'Leave it dirty, I'm going to put it in my collection.' It's still there..."**

the car it felt like a tank compared to a single-seater and the gearbox was very heavy, but it had impressive power on the straights, where the crown in the road could easily make you shift lanes.


Once we started the race the car just ran and ran. The only problem we had was with a wheel bearing

in the middle of the night.

When I pitted after my last stint, somebody opened the door and said: "Bruno doesn't want to do his last stint." So I carried on. When I next came in it was: "John doesn't want to do his last stint either." So I finished the race, 11th. When I asked for some water, they chucked

a bucket over me, shut the door and sent me back out!

Jaguar dominated that year and there were 250,000 drunk Brits at the circuit. Near the end they started jumping the fences and swarming onto the track, so everybody had to bring their speeds right down.

After the race I was standing beside Nick and the mechanics got some buckets to wash the car. He said: "No, leave it dirty. I'm going to put it into my collection." So the car was taken back to England. It did that one race at Le Mans and then it was retired.  Allen Berg was talking to Tim Swietochowski

## IN PROFILE



**AFTER IMPRESSING** in Formula Ford and Atlantic, Allen Berg won the Tasman Formula Pacific title in 1983 and claimed the runner-up spot in British F3 a year later. He started nine grands prix for Osella in '86 with a best finish of 12th in the German GP at Hockenheim. After F1 he raced in sportscars, Trans-Am and the DTM before settling in Mexico, where he claimed titles in F2 in '93 and Formula de los Americas (Pan-American Indy Lights) in '01. He has since returned to his native Canada to run a racing school.

**NEXT WEEK**

**Paul RADISICH**

