

Wow! Well June was a fantastic month on the vintage racing circuit! I was lucky enough to attend both the VIR Gold Cup Historic Races at Virginia International Raceway and VARAC's own 25th International Vintage Festival at our home track of Mosport. Cars, cars, cars – over 200 entries at both events. Beautifully restored, beautifully prepared, but mostly – beautifully raced!

VARAC's festival this year honoured Canadian-built racecars, both on and off the track. Saldlers, KIKIs, Ferretts, Chinooks, an Altona, Astur, Vay CC and so many more. (Check out the festival coverage and



pictures at www.varac.ca) VIR's Gold Cup featured "Women in Racing" this year. (Hence I felt compelled to make the 14-hour tow to their wonderful track and facility!) It was an absolute pleasure and honour to meet and talk racing with Denise McCluggage (Grand Marshall for the weekend), Donna Mae Mims, Suzy Dietrich, Audrey Zavodsky and Divina Galica. The final feature race had 17 women drivers and a whole variety of vintage cars from every era! (Pictures are posted at www.virclub.com)

And at every Vintage event – what are you bound to find? Datsuns, Datsun, Datsuns everywhere! Jonathon Brett and I raced our 240z's at the Vintage Festival, along with quite a few Datsun 510s! At VIR I found what appeared to be virtually identical Z cars from a distance – but were actually drastically different when you took a closer look. Alan Giles took his 1978 Datsun Z to the extreme – serious engine mods, fibreglass body,

lots of suspension details – whereas Mike Unger prides himself on his beautifully kept 'stock' racing Z – purebred, simple, and fast! I got to know Alan and Mike over the weekend – if it weren't for them (and some great help from Blake Nancarrow, my Toronto cohort in crime) my car never would have made it to the final feature race! Both are fantastic mechanics for their Z cars, extremely accomplished drivers, and prime examples of the great kinship always found between Z owners. I had a chance to interview Alan and Mike – this month I'll include my chat with Mike. Stayed tuned (no pun intended) for our next Zedline issue to read Alan's interview – check out and compare the details on their Z cars!

Name: Mike Unger

Occupation: Research Professor at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, College of William and Mary. He's an Environmental Chemist that studies the fate and effects of pollution.

Hometown: Gloucester Point, Virginia



DD: Hi Mike and welcome to Tracksid! How long have you been racing?

MU: I started auto-crossing a Datsun 2000 in the early 90's. Progressed to track driving schools etc and finally started racing in the late 90's. Both vintage and SCCA club racing.



by Diane Dale



DD: How did you get into it?

MU: Whoops. See above. Started by auto crossing and going to driving schools. I eventually became a driving instructor. I also crewed quit a bit for other racers over the years. This helped a bunch. Knowing what to expect at the track before you go racing is very valuable. I also recommend getting track time at high performance driving schools. Learning to drive the car on track before you go racing is a real advantage. You can concentrate on the racing while other competitors are learning about the dynamics of car control.

DD: What is your current racecar? (Year/Model etc.)

MU: 1972 Datsun 240Z. It is prepared to the 1972 SCCA C Production specifications for vintage racing.

DD: What are your Z car's specifications in the following areas; are they any configurations you'd recommend, stock vs. modified, specific enhancements/preparations that really worked for you, or any that you wish you hadn't done?

MU: My car is pretty much to the SCCA rulebook for 1972. It really is very close to a stock configuration as required by the rules. For me, the fun is getting the most out of the car as it is. The original brakes and bias ply race tires are a particular challenge! I think learning to not overdrive the car is making me a better driver. The basic 240Z is an amazingly good racecar once you get it set up.

DD: Suspension?

MU: Coil over suspension, camber plates and larger stock style sway bars. Double adjustable shocks. Pick-up points are stock. Stock control arms etc.

DD: Tires/Wheels?

MU: 14 x 7 Panasport wheels and Hoosier 225 x 50 x 14 street TD bias ply tires.

DD: Brakes?

MU: Stock calipers and drum rears. Carbon metallic or ceramic linings.

DD: Engine?

MU: Engine bored 0.040, 2438cc, high compression pistons, stock diameter valves, extensive head work. Competition oil pan with external oil pick-up. Datsun 5 speed direct drive transmission

DD: Carburetors?

MU: 44 mm Mikuni, taper bored and modified on factory competition manifold

DD: Body?

MU: Stock, all steel original bodywork, lexan rear window

DD: Interior?

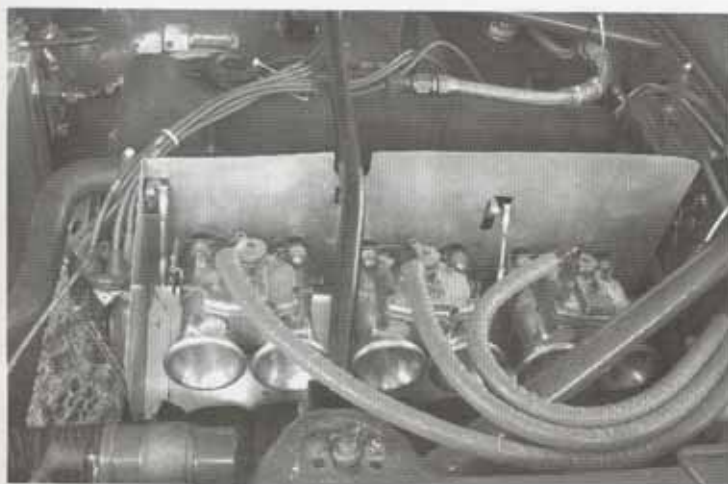
MU: stock style dash with racing gauges, Kirkey road race seat

DD: Roll Cage?

MU: SCCA production legal cage 1.5" x 0.095" tubing. Bracing through dash to front towers.

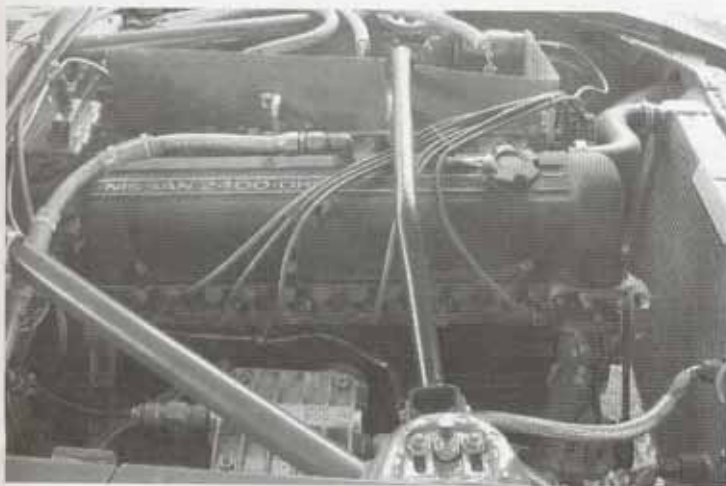
DD: Other?

MU: 15-gallon aluminum fuel cell, fire system, accusump.



DD: What racecars have been in your past?

MU: I actually have several Datsuns. I also race a 1968 Datsun 2000 roadster in SCCA E production class. I have a 1968 Datsun 510 vintage car in need of restoration and I occasionally race my friend's vintage Datsun 510 I helped to restore. It is prepared to the SCCA 2.5L Trans Am rules. The 510's are fun racecars too.



DD: And in the future?

MU: Well, I really love driving the 240Z in vintage races. I've raced it in SCCA in ITS and EP. It's the most fun as a vintage CP car. I hope to race my SCCA EP roadster actively in 2005. If I can ever finish my projects, I hope to restore and vintage race a 2L roadster I found that was prepared by Bob Sharp's shop for a privateer racing in the late 60's. It should make an interesting vintage car. I'd love to have a tube frame 350Z some day to race in SCCA but I don't see that happening on my budget.

DD: What motivates you to race?

MU: It's fun! I build my own cars/engines so I enjoy the whole process. Beating Porsche's isn't bad either...

DD: Why the passion for Z cars?

MU: It's such a great design. It looks good. It handles great and the engine is very responsive. The car is pretty slippery too and carries good speed down the straights. Great car for draft passes, it's just stopping that's a challenge! The 240Z really makes a great racecar.

DD: What's your favourite Z car, and why?

MU: Hmmm, I'm pretty biased here, as I like old cars. Speaking as a racer, the 240Z. To me it's the simplest and best interpretation of what the Z is all about. I really like the Datsun roadster too, which was actually the first Fairlady. I owned my first roadster in 1975!

DD: Tell us about some events that you have been involved in that you've felt were significant or just plain fun or memorable?

MU: I love racing at the Glen, VIR and Summit Point. I really enjoy the Gold Cup races at VIR. It's a great atmosphere. I think one of the most memorable races for me was seeing you come back from adversity at VIR this year and win the women's race! It was gratifying to see everyone pitch in to get your Z going and then see you do so well. Great job!



DD: Wow! Thanks Mike! And what about your racing plans for 2004? Where can we find you the rest of this season?

MU: I hope to make the final three SVRA races, the Glen, Summit Point and VIR. Looking forward to seeing you at the Glen!

DD: Thanks so much Mike – congratulations on such a great job with your Z. I'm definitely looking forward to our next event together at the Zippo Grand Prix. Many Z cars will be out in full force, it's going to be a blast!

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