

PICK of the LITER > Zappa Racing—A Family Affair

For any successful endeavor to persevere, we need to enlist our youth to carry its torch into the future. Vintage auto racing is no exception, as its own future can only be guaranteed by the constant inclusion of its seasoned population's sons, daughters and friends. It makes good sense, and heck, will undoubtedly help save the most endangered species of them all, the true family bond that's slowly disappearing between generations in our current society. I'm proud to say our PotL's, Pittsburghers Mike Zappa and his son Chris, are the antithesis of this corrosive trend, and they continue to demonstrate the positive impact of a close family relationship.

Like a common story played out thousands of times, Mike's interest in SCCA racing in the early '70s was soon replaced with the obligations of a career and raising a family. A few decades would pass before returning to Nelson Ledges to introduce Chris to sports car racing, and as it turned out, it also rekindled Mike's love

for the sport. In 1992, Mike purchased a Lotus 18 to run at the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, setting the foundation.

Adopting the black and gold pigment adorned by the Johnny Player Special, the Zappa stable of cars grew to include a Chevron, Lotus 31, Cortina, Lotus 23B and more. Affected by the racing bug as well, Chris obtained his competition license at 18, and both began racing together in 2001.

Today, Mike wheels an MGB, and Chris mashes the pedal on his Tuscan TVR and the father and son duo assist Boffo Motors in maintaining their racers. More importantly, as Mike chuckled, "with Chris earning a good living in the health insurance and financial investment arenas, he also shares in the expense."

Mike added, "let's not forget encouragement from my better half, Beth, and our daughter, Aynsley, and the well-appreciated wrenching skills of my childhood best friend, Regis and his son, Jordan," all collectively forming Zappa Racing—a true family affair. 🏁

