

# TH TOUR DE CORSE HISTORIQUE DU 05 AU 12 OCTOBRE 2024

PRESS RELEASE • 15 May 2024



## RENOWNED DRIVERS

As we await June and the publication of the first entry list, the Tour de Corse Historique reveals the identities of four illustrious drivers expected at the starting line in Porto-Vecchio on October 5, 2024.

### Bruno Saby - The unconditional

After several participations in regularity, Bruno Saby is tempted this year by a return to competition (VHC). Well-advised by François Delecour, the French driver has set his sights on a Subaru Legacy identical to the one driven by Markku Alén, Ari Vatanen, and Colin McRae in the early 1990s. The timing looks to be tight for the Evocars garage in charge of rebuilding the car, which is not expected to be driven until September.

Although he admits that he's not sure what he's aiming for, Bruno Saby isn't in need of adding another line to his already impressive record, having already won the French Rally Championship in 1981 (Renault 5 Turbo), a victory in the 1986 Tour of Corsica (Peugeot 205 T16) and the 1988 Monte Carlo (Lancia Delta HF 4WD), two French Cross-Country Rally Championship titles in 1990 and 1991 (Lancia Delta Integrale 16V), a victory in the 1993 Paris-Dakar (Mitsubishi Pajero) and a Rally-Raid World Cup in 2005 (Volkswagen Touareg).

After driving at the highest level for 40 years, Bruno Saby is now dedicated to raising funds for an anti-cancer charity.



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## John Buffum - American hero

There is no age limit to discovering Corsica. American rally legend John Buffum has waited 81 years!

As a young adult, the Connecticut native (Northeast USA) didn't dream of oval circuits, but of dusty tracks and snowy passes. He crossed the Atlantic to fulfill his passion, finishing 12<sup>th</sup> at the 1969 Monte-Carlo Rally in a Porsche 911 and becoming the first - and to date the only - driver from his country to win a round of the European Championship, in an Audi Quattro (ADAC-Sachs 1983, then Rally Cyprus 1984). Behind the wheel of the German Group B car, John Buffum also won Pikes Peak twice in the «Unlimited» category and set a new record for the climb in 1983 (broken by Michèle Mouton the following year). Equally spectacular, the American has won 11 titles and 120 victories in his national SCCA championship! An excellent driver and manager, he has also managed a number of big names like Apollo 12 astronaut Pete Conrad, Paul Newman, Ken Block, and Travis Pastrana.

John Buffum will discover Corsica at the wheel of a 1980 Ford Escort RS 2000 MK II entered in regularity (VHRS).



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## Tom Pieri - The next generation

A young rally hopeful at the wheel of a classic car... It's an unusual approach! Proof of his love for the discipline, Tom Pieri will be at the start of the Tour de Corse Historique for the second time, driving a BMW M3 E30, a car he had on a poster in his room when he was a child.

Tom Pieri, 25, began his career five years ago, sharing the wheel of a Citroën AX with a childhood friend. It was the Rallye Jeunes detection operation that truly launched his ascent in the sport, opening the doors to the French Championship, which he contested for the first time in 2020 in a Ford Fiesta R2T. Winner of the Clio Junior Trophy in 2022, he is competing this year in the World Rally Championship with a three-round program in a Renault Clio Rally 3. For his first event in Portugal in early May, he made a mark by setting three fastest times in the WRC3 category. The next events will be in Sardinia at the end of the month, followed by Finland in early August.

At the wheel of the BMW M3 owned by his friend Philippe Fertoret and prepared by EvoRace, Tom Pieri will undoubtedly be a serious contender for the final victory in the Tour de Corse Historique in competition (VHC). But no matter the result, it is mainly with his slides that he will delight the public as well as the 30,000 fans who follow him daily on Instagram!



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## Alain Oreille - The reference

In the entire history of rallying, Alain Oreille remains the only driver to have won a WRC event driving a production Group N car. It was in 1989 on the tracks of Bandama, Ivory Coast, with a Renault 5 GT Turbo. This success was accompanied by a World Champion title in Group N the same year, including a class win at the Tour de Corse. Loyal to Renault from 1984 to 1996, Alain Oreille participated in every campaign, from the R11 Turbo to the Mégane Maxi, through the Clio Williams and the R5 Turbo - a limited series of which bears his name.

Three decades later, the French driver has not lost his touch, nor his legendary generosity. Having spent nearly his entire career driving front-wheel-drive cars, he now enjoys rear-wheel drives, alongside his wife Sylvie. Twice 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2014 and 2015 in an Opel Ascona 400, the couple won the Tour de Corse Historique in 2020 and 2022 in a 300hp Porsche 911 Carrera RS 3.0 prepared by the Joffroy family.

It's with this same car that the crew is presenting itself as a serious contender for victory in 2024, although Alain Oreille admits that his main pleasure lies in *"re-running the old special stages and remembering a time when the rally was on a human scale"*.



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