



MARINELLI MOTORSPORT CELEBRATES 25 YEARS – LET'S MAKE THAT 26!

Paul Marinelli established his automotive aftermarket and motorsport public relations and marketing services company, Marinelli Motorsport Pty Ltd in Melbourne in February 1995.

As 2020 marked the company's 25th Anniversary, in being such a disrupted year there was no opportunity to mark this special milestone with any kind of significant celebration.

Now in the 26th year of operation, there is a much more positive outlook across both the aftermarket and motorsport industries. This makes 2021, the company's 26th Anniversary, a far better time to make some noise about this major achievement.

It all started for Marinelli after he became a radio announcer and reporter working with a number of Melbourne radio stations during the late 80's and early 90's. After being recruited by Melbourne all-sports formatted radio station 3UZ, Marinelli became the station's motorsport reporter, providing news bulletin and program updates from Australian and international motor racing events.

It was at the Australian motor racing events where racing team sponsors and suppliers would request Marinelli's assistance to promote their products to the trade and beyond. This identified a niche to combine automotive aftermarket and motor racing industry specialised PR services. The motorsport and writing experience gained from more than a decade as a journalist and the automotive aftermarket experience from the family business he grew up in.

Family patriarch Dino Marinelli owned and operated a busy European vehicle specialised sales and service business in Melbourne's Lygon Street across four decades. This saw Paul and his younger brother David in the workshop most weekends and school holidays, instilling a detailed technical understanding of car servicing, repairs and importantly, local and imported automotive parts.

The combination of Marinelli's media experience and the family business based automotive service and repair industry knowledge, combined with his passion for motorsport, saw him branch out on his own in February 1995.

"It was a very exciting time when I decided to set up my business" Marinelli stated.

"The Australian Grand Prix was just about to move across to Melbourne and with that came a significant amount of increased corporate interest in motorsport. The Australian Touring Car Championship also got its act together and successfully became V8 Supercars shortly after, having a similar effect.

"A number of the companies who sponsored my radio reports and program updates on 3UZ came along for the ride with me in my new business. They believed in my idea to provide motor racing reporting services to radio stations nationally, while also taking advantage of my PR services to promote their products directly to the trade and to consumers," he said.

Within one year, Marinelli Motorsport was supplying more than 25 national capital city and their regional affiliate radio stations with reports from the Australian Touring Car Championship, selected international Formula One, IndyCar and 500cc World Championship events and just about everything inbetween, including Nascar / Auscar, Super Tourers, Drag Racing and World Rally Championship events.

These media services along with his growing PR stable of automotive aftermarket clients shaped his one-man operation into a highly specialised automotive aftermarket and motor racing marketing consultancy, with word quickly spreading across both industries of the media coverage his clients were gaining.

The opportunity for Marinelli Motorsport to work with major motor racing categories and teams to handle their media communications came soon after. One of them was with champion V8 Supercar driver Glenn Seton and his Ford Credit Racing team for the 1996 season.



Marinelli joined forces with Australia's fastest motor racing category, Formula Holden in 1998. He was enamoured by these loud and powerful open wheelers and established relationships with many racing drivers, some of whom would progress to major success both locally and internationally.

"I'll never forget organising media interviews for then 15 year old Kiwi driver Scott Dixon (who went on to become a multiple Indy 500 and IndyCar Championship winner), along with the many other drivers who went on to find major success in Supercars and other international categories. It was a privilege to help promote them during their formative years and to watch their career progression in future years," Marinelli said.

"It was a fantastic series and we really managed to make an impact with the major media outlets as well. Getting the entire front page of the Herald Sun with an onboard Formula Holden shot on the Friday of the 1998 Australian Grand Prix was an incredible achievement," Marinelli stated.

Towards the end of the 2001 season, Marinelli was approached to assist the privateer Supercar team, Lansvale Racing at the Bathurst 1000. The greatest motor racing PR challenge Marinelli faced would come in late 2002 when he had been recommended to world leading motor racing engineering company, Prodrive, for a major PR consultancy role with their soon to be established Ford Performance Racing V8 Supercar team.

This was an incredible opportunity to work with a brand new super team running three V8 Supercars, one of them being driven by the country's most famous racer, Craig Lowndes, along with old friend Glenn Seton and speedy newcomer, David Besnard. The next four years saw the FPR team face major challenges but Marinelli maintains that it was still an incredible experience to be a part of.

By the end of the 2007 season and after five years with FPR, an interesting call came from Supercars, seeking a new circuit commentator for the 2008 season.

"My first gig that season was at the Adelaide 500, alongside the world's most famous motor racing commentator, Murray Walker. I had to pinch myself several times that I was calling races with this man whom I had listened to commentating F1 in such an entertaining style since I was a kid," Marinelli said.

After commentating in Bahrain when the Supercars raced there in 2008, the organisers invited Marinelli back to call Formula One and Sportscar races at the venue and this continued across the next decade. From that came television race commentary work with ESPN Asia, India's STAR Network and the hosting of an international Formula One television program called GP Racing over a three year tenure.

The media communications and business side of Marinelli Motorsport continued strongly alongside all of this motor racing, with the company attracting a who's who of blue chip international automotive aftermarket PR clients over the years.

These included Monroe Australia, Dayco Australia, Hella Australia, ZF Asia Pacific, Schaeffler Asia Pacific, Bob Jane T-Marts, Coventry, Repco, GUD Group, Pennzoil, Holden Engine Company, SEW Eurodrive and several smaller companies, achieving extraordinary trade and consumer media coverage.

Another interesting facet to Marinelli's business portfolio includes athlete management. The highest profile of these was Supercar driver Mark Winterbottom, who joined forces with Marinelli from ►



Tickford Racing ran a Marinelli Motorsport sign at the Bathurst 1000 to mark the company's 25th Anniversary.



2009, after they had worked together at Ford Performance Racing.

This alliance resulted in several new major sponsorships, ambassadorships, major television appearances and perhaps the most exciting, helping to land the Supercar driver a cameo role in the blockbuster Disney Pixar animated film, Cars2.

Marinelli continues to manage the career of talented Supercar enduro, international GT / Sportscar and Porsche Carrera Cup driver David Russell and has played a smaller role in the careers of a number of other drivers through personal and team sponsorships.

In terms of highlights, Marinelli remembers his years working alongside one of Australia's most successful racing drivers and automotive aftermarket industry entrepreneurs, Bob Jane, as some of the fondest.



"Bob's talent as a champion racing driver was the stuff I grew up reading about and watching on TV," Marinelli said.

"Working with him across both his motorsport and automotive aftermarket businesses was mind-blowing. Bob's business acumen was truly incredible.

Marinelli's current client list includes Australia and the Asia Pacific's largest automotive aftermarket company, Bapcor Limited, world leading engine component manufacturer Dayco Australia and Australasia's largest automotive parts buying group Capricorn Limited, with motorsport involvements including a number of teams and drivers through sponsorships and marketing consultancies. Over the years this has included his former team FPR, now known as Tickford Racing. It was Tickford Racing who gave Marinelli the honour of marking his company's 25th Anniversary by running a sign on Cam Waters' pole position setting and second place finishing Mustang at the 2020 Bathurst 1000.

"Having a Marinelli Motorsport sign on such a fantastic car at Australia's greatest motor race to mark my 25th Anniversary was a wonderful gesture by Tickford, a team that despite the changes over the years, my company has been closely linked with for almost two decades," Marinelli said.

Now in its 26th year and still as strong as ever, Marinelli heads into the future where reliance on PR and marketing consultants remains stronger than ever.

"The media landscape has changed so much over the years. The demand for editorial content in line with the digital media explosion is greater than ever and with media organisations forced to reduce their journalistic resources, the reliance on quality PR content still remains very high.

It has been an amazing quarter century journey for Marinelli Motorsport, the little company born from the desire to combine passion into a career.

"Throughout this journey one factor has remained exactly the same, the hard work ethic that makes sure my clients get the service and the results they deserve all of the time, keeping them at the front of mind of their customers.

"That along with my fierce competitive spirit, which is probably a bi-product of chasing racing cars all over the world for so long!" Marinelli concluded.

For more details visit www.marinellipr.com.au