



photo by Tim Rideout

#14 Tim Covert, 1965 Moodini SR, has racked up three class wins this summer.

Still Running Great at Age 48

Tim Covert's 1965 Moodini SR

— story by Bob Capps

When Tim Covert fired up the engine in his 1965 Moodini SR at VSCDA's 2013 season-opener at GingerMan Raceway in South Haven, Michigan, it marked the 48th year of competition for this historic car.

The car was designed and built in 1965 by Dave Moothart, a resident of Waterford, Michigan. How the Moodini came into being is an interesting story. In 1961, Dave purchased a TR-3, equipped with a roll bar, and began competing in weekend races at nearby Waterford Hills Raceway. Replacing the TR-3 with an Austin Healey 100-6, Dave moved on to SCCA Regional and National competition running in the E Production class.

The Moodini story started in 1962 when Dave purchased a Lotus 11 Le Mans which he ran in G Modified. He sold the Lotus in 1964, but went on to compete in the Road America 500 at Elkhart Lake in a Lotus 23 with co-driver Ed Cicotte. On Lap 7, Ken Miles, driving the factory Cobra, punted Dave into the embankment at Canada Corner damaging the car. The car was towed back to Dave's garage, where it became both the template and inspiration for the Moodini.

Design and construction started in 1965. It would be called "The Moodini," the "Moo" from the Moothart's last name and the "Dini" from the car's first engine, a Renault Gordini. Moothart's goal was to have a car capable of beating the Lotus 23s. The car had some interesting features. They made their own

molds and cast the rear uprights and wheel hubs from aluminum while the steering arms were fabricated from aluminum. The front wheel hubs and brake rotor design is very similar to what you would see on a contemporary race car. The suspension was designed on Ford's main frame computer by Dave's brother Denny, who was working for Bob Riley at the time. This was all pretty advanced stuff for a 1965 home-built race car. The car ran its first race at Road America in June of 1966 and captured its first win at Waterford Hills in September of 1966.

There were a variety of engines powering the car during its 48 years of racing. The original engine was a 1300 cc Renault Gordini. In 1969 a 1300 cc Alfa Giulietta engine was installed. This lasted until 1972 when a 1300 cc Alfa Twin Plug was dropped in. Next came a 1300 cc Cosworth BD series in 1973 followed by a Ford 2 Litre engine. Today the car is powered by a modified 137 HP 1600 cc cross-flow Formula Ford engine. In the 1970s, Dave changed the body style from the Lotus 23 and went with the aerodynamic style of the Bobsy SR-6.

The car has been actively raced in SCCA, WHRRI, SVRA and VSCDA by a noteworthy group of owner/drivers starting off with Dave

Moothart, then in the capable hands of Bob Schneider, Bill Hallendahl, Paul Cowan and Tim Covert. It has run in 86 SCCA National races and qualified for SCCA's National Championships five times (1967, 1972, 1974, 1975 and 1976) and won its class at the 1972 June Sprints. At Blackhawk Farms in 1974, it out-qualified Bobby Rahal in Jim Trueman's Bobsy SR-6



photo by Bob Capps

The 1965 Moodini SR, a brainchild of Michigan driver and designer David Moothart.

About this year's GingerMan race. Covert qualified 7th and finished 2nd overall and 1st in the Class C feature race. Then there was another class win at Waterford's Vintage weekend, followed three weeks later by a class win at VSCDA's event at Grattan.

What more can you say other than 48 years old and still racking up wins. We should all be so lucky when we're in our middle ages. ❏