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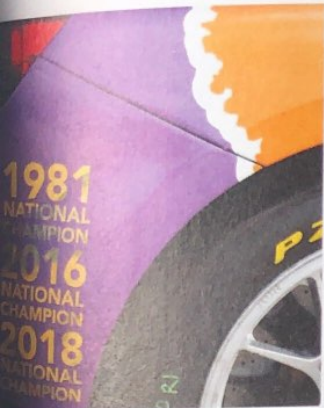
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CHOOSE YOUR SPEED IN SEBRING

HIGHLANDS COUNTY KNOWN FOR AUTO RACING, SODA FESTIVAL, HISTORIC INN, ORANGES

Written by: Audra Clemons



A snapshot of a spring weekend in Sebring, in Florida's Highlands County, at Sebring International Raceway: It hosted the North American series of Ferrari Challenge Trofeo Pirelli—for the second round of its seven-round 2019 circuit. During the weekend, 51 Ferraris screamed through the classic 3.74-mile, 17-turn course. The excitement started Friday, April 5, with practice sessions, followed by qualifying and racing action Saturday and Sunday.

Sebring holds a historic place in the lore—and heart—of international sports car racing. In 1952, the benchmark competition, 12 Hours of Sebring, was held on adjacent airfield runways. That competition catapulted Sebring International Raceway into the sports car limelight.

To this day, Sebring International Raceway is known for its rough, changeable concrete and flat surface that mimics Florida's topography. The track boasts two critical corners, turn 1 and turn 17, where drivers require precise navigation to maneuver them successfully. Basically, if there is a wreck, this is where it is going to happen.

Jeff Grossbard, spokesman for Ferrari North America, explains, "Drivers arrive at turn 17 in seventh gear and have to slow to fourth gear through a corner that has many correct lines. It also has some of the worst bumps on the circuit, making power application extremely difficult." There is no guessing as to why Sebring International Raceway's slogan is "Mind the Bumps."

After the race, the Ferrari VIP tent was filled with drivers, mechanics and family members. No detail was

left unattended. A disc jockey played beats, Prosecco was poured, food catered. Partners such as Misahara, a high-end jewelry line from Manhattan, had kiosks with items for sale. The Misahara logo is seen on many Ferraris—auto and jewelry clientele are likely the same.

Beyond racing, Highlands County is chock full of things to see and do. The Sebring Soda Festival, which offers family-friendly craft sodas from around the world, is held in the city's historic downtown simultaneously with Ferrari race weekend.

Chicanes, a restaurant known for its gourmet dining, is located off Highway 27 on Lake Jackson, inside the historic

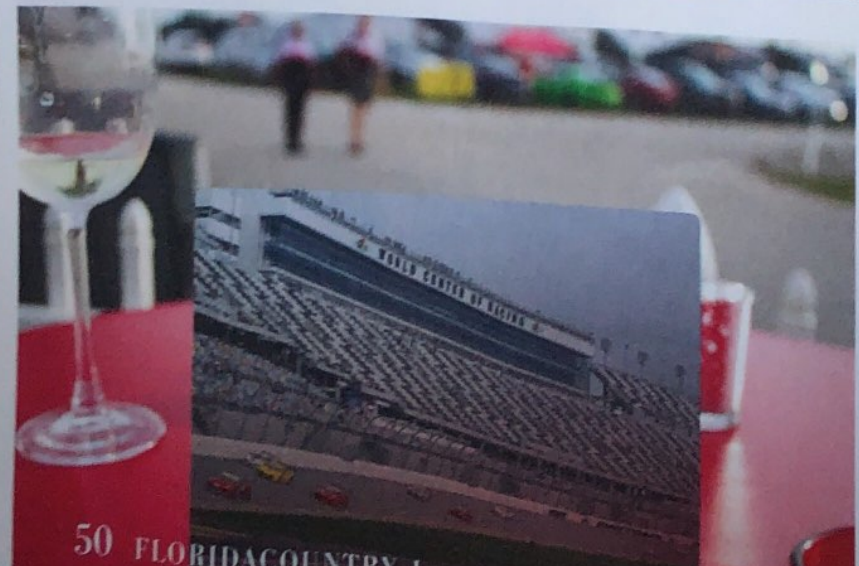
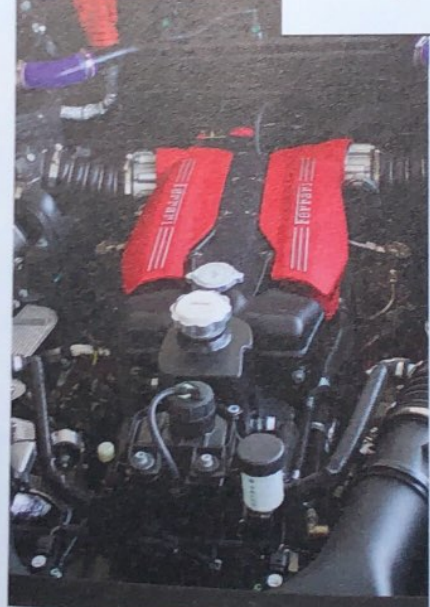


FLORIDA EXCURSIONS



Green
Mother, Leona, of Gramma as the grandchildren called her. She was a
morse woman. She was always doing something for the community
extra in the afternoon or just in the rest of my eye. She was a
were not to disturb her. She loved her afternoon nap and she
cream. She always drank coffee out of a thin china cup with a
up in the morning with breakfast on the table, and she was always
right. She seldom sat down at the table, and she was always
getting something or serving. She loved to cook and she was
she did not easily let anyone else in it. Of course, she was always
for more than two people to work in it. She always had a
She loved classical music and had a beautiful approach to it.
the fruit business, and at different times worked at the
and wrote for the Avon Park Sun, the local newspaper. She
was an excellent typist and made sure we all had a high class
learned to use the computer in her 90s as she was an excellent
started the rentals and this was a source of income for her. She
build a room or fix a roof. We laughed at her time as she would
would take the leftover paint and mix it all together and whatever
out to be what she used to paint. She never missed a thing and
and wrote her family history, as well as the history of Avon Park
Church history. She loved to research and she was a great person
When she was writing the history of Avon Park, she was always
the dining room table covered with her writing and research notes
more. She knew hundreds and hundreds of people. She was a
She had a special way of making you feel special when you were
She loved her family dearly. She was a devoted Christian and she
accordingly. She lived a hard life, but was able to keep an organized
was an expert seamstress and made all of our clothes. She
sewed with her left hand and did most everything else with her
would tackle any piece of furniture and reupholster it. She had a
Hammer and tacks. The word "can't" just wasn't in her vocabulary.

Above, Maxwell Groves entices visitors to explore its historical country store in Avon Park. Photos below are from the North American series of Ferrari Challenge Trofeo Pirelli held in spring in Sebring.



Inn on the Lakes Resort. The walls of the restaurant are lined with vintage black-and-white photos that reveal stories of race cars and drivers past.

The photos spill over into an opulent hotel lobby, which ascends to 155 recently redesigned chic rooms. The Inn is a stunner and a fantastic place for overnight stays.

A visit to the heartland isn't complete without freshly squeezed orange juice. Just a few miles from Sebring, Maxwell Groves entices visitors to explore its historical country store in Avon Park. The family owned-and-operated orange business has been in Highlands County since the 1930s.

The store is like walking into a sweet slice of history. Upon entry, visitors are encouraged to sign a guestbook—resting beside a family photo album, where Mamma and Big Daddy share three generations of their lives.

It's almost like being a guest in their home, where freshly squeezed orange juice, dairy-free orange ice cream and Orange Sunshine wine samples are offered to customers as they peruse the store. If this ain't Southern hospitality at its finest, then I don't know what is.

Audra Clemons has more than 15 years' experience as an international publicist and freelance writer. Motherhood keeps her busy raising twin girls, and loving every minute! Her client and writing portfolio can be viewed on AudraClemons.com

”

BEYOND RACING, Highlands County is chock full of things to see and do.



Clockwise from top left are a bracelet by Misahara; oranges at Maxwell Groves; artist James R. Hahn's Sebring centennial mural; and the Inn on the Lakes Resort's Bougainvillea Room.

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