

isn't room for customer teams and drivers. The WEC is planning to run ten events (up from six currently) and will need to use air freight to get the cars to the track. For that, they need one plane, and that plane can house 36 containers. That, and a limited number of garages at some circuits, such as Fuji in Japan, means that the grid will be limited. It is expected that there will be 18 prototypes for 2024, and a similar number of GT cars.

It's a big risk for the championship, one that IMSA in the U.S. is not willing to take. IMSA will allow LMP2 to be part of its grid when the new cars do eventually arrive. For the WEC, it means that Porsche will race in the only prototype class.

IN THE SPACE of eight years in the 1980s, Porsche built the ground-effect 956 and 962 race cars in high volume, transforming endurance

racing. Traditionally, manufacturers such as Ferrari, Porsche, Ford, Alfa Romeo, and Matra had built their front-running race cars in very small numbers, enough for factory teams to win world championship races and perhaps sell a few to wealthy customers. However, between 1982 and 1989, no fewer than 121 Group C and IMSA cars were constructed in Weissach, with the great majority sold to independent teams that dominated the World Championship and American series for the better part of the decade.

To this number we should add the 100 or so Porsches built on monocoques, some carbon or aluminum honeycomb, made by Fabcar, TCP, Advanced Engineering, GTi Engineering, Chapman, John Thompson, and more. It's an astonishing number, and the cars were competing in every part of the world.

This was a machine that set en-



tirely new standards in competition at Le Mans (six consecutive victories, two of them by Reinhold Joest's customer team), won 39 World Championship races, six World Championship titles, 55 IMSA victories and three IMSA titles. Keen followers of endurance racing keep track of these successes, which are now detailed in a new series of books written by Belgian writer

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Serge Vanboockryck and published by the British firm Porter Press.

What we have is an encyclopedia of the works cars (26 of them, plus two renumbered) in three weighty volumes, lavishly pictured and printed, detailing each and every one. Vanboockryck's research dates back to 1988. ("I wasn't interested in finishing.") Volume One, at 488 pages, covers the works years and events contested by the Porsche factory (and by the way, there is a previous two-volume set covering the nine works Porsche 956s that were not raced in the States). Volume 2, at 330 pages, details the history of Joest Racing with these Porsches that followed Porsche's withdrawal in 1988. Volume 3, the daddy of them all at 524 pages, details the complete history of the works cars, 19 of them, and biographies of the 22 drivers, from Jacky Ickx to Danny Sullivan, who were employed to drive them.

IN AUGUST, PORSCHE had several hundred Panameras and Macans idle on the Leipzig factory floor that were missing matrix headlights as the supply of components dried up. "Currently we have to retrofit vehicles again," Porsche production boss Albrecht Reimold told German publication *Automobilewoche*. The shortage of microchips is affecting the German automobile industry, which is expected to produce 700,000 fewer cars this year than planned, and as a result Porsche's sales declined by five percent in the first half of 2022. COVID and the resulting lockdowns in China, the war in Ukraine, and a reduction in gas supply from Russia are adding to the toll.

Reimold says that there is tension in the supply chain. "We have to be very vigilant. It is difficult to see when the situation will fundamentally improve." The situation also applies to semiconductors, where there is currently no relief in sight. This called for a strategic change.

"Thinking ahead, we need to standardize more in components to reduce complexity in the supply chains, which is very challenging, but still manageable. The chain always breaks at the weakest link," Reimold said. "Some areas are particularly dependent on gas, such as glass production." In turn, parts shortages are putting a financial squeeze on suppliers, some of whom are asking for a cash infusion. ●