

THE RSRSPA EXPERIENCE



ULTIMATE CIRCUIT SESSION

Content by KuhenKV. Edited by Douglas R. Tan. Images by Konstantinos Sidiras of RSRNurburg.

Trackdays - the play day for petrolheads - have always been assumed as the opportunity to go balls out around a circuit until tyres, brakes or stomach contents (in no particular order) are destroyed or exhumed. It's as if trackdays were almost built up to be nothing more than punching bag sessions for frustrated enthusiasts, who are traumatized DAILY with road-hogging motorists, speed cams, potholes and speed humps (cue scraping front lip spoilers). Besides being the automotive equivalent of a Prozac pill, a trackday is where you take the opportunity to hone your driving skills. With the safety of a closed loop track and the peace of mind knowing nothing is coming the other way, unless someone decides to become the next Face-Tube sensation, this is the time where you really get to know your true driving capabilities and improve on them.



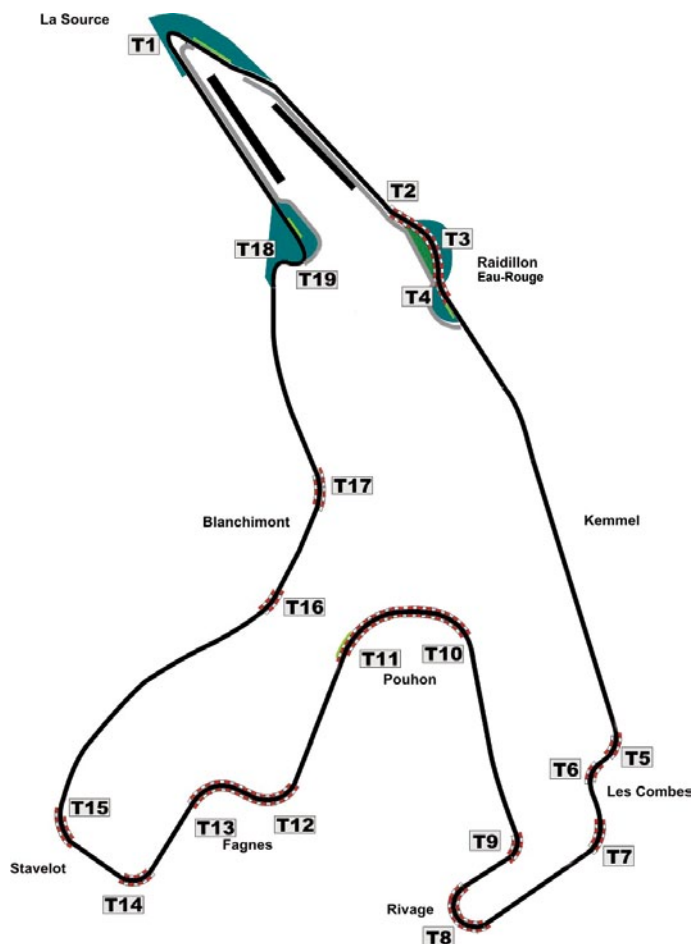
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RSRNurburg's sister company, RSRSpa's "Premium Trackday" is designed to deliver precisely that, with the Circuit de Spa Francorchamp as its training ground. Spa, as it's more casually known, is often regarded as one of the most challenging race tracks on the planet, this side of the Nurburgring.

The Spa course has been altered on many occasions in the past and began life as a 15-kilometre long circuit. Revisions have been ongoing since the end of World War II, even through the '80s, '90s and 2000s, so it has this sense of history and heritage. Just being here instils you with a romance that few other tracks possess. The most significant alteration arrived in 1979, which saw the circuit being shortened to 7 km, and it eventually culminated in the present configuration. Proper race cars achieve speeds in excess of 330 km/h here, although it may not boast the average 241 km/h speed that it used to during its earlier years. Erratic weather has also been a part of Spa's reputation, where it's common for the course to be simultaneously dry and wet in different sectors. Spa puts up a solid





case at being the most demanding of driver skill compared to any other track in the world, I can personally testify to this, which is largely due to the Eau Rouge and Blanchimont corners, both of which need to be taken flat out to maintain properly fast speeds onto the straights that come immediately after.

To put things into perspective, the Eau-Rouge corner is where modern Formula 1 cars experience the most amount of force on its tires, according to Ferrari. Also, the ultimate record holder for the Nurburgring Nordschleife - Stefan Bellof – tragically lost his life here on the 1st of September 1985. Sir Jackie Stewart himself has stated that it's always the high speed turns that truly separate the men from the boys, and Spa's riddled with many demanding ones.

RSRSpa's Premium Trackday doesn't only provide the opportunity to drive the RSR fleet on this magnificent circuit, but also to master it from the ground up, step by step, with the aid of a highly qualified team. After all, we are the

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Official Driving Academy of the circuit! A typical Premium Trackday starts off with a full safety briefing and a theoretical session on how to take each corner, with breakdowns on which gear and what speed. After that a track walk session takes place, where participants are taken out to familiarize themselves with the different sections of the track. Each section is detailed by RSR instructors on how to enter, and how to use visual markers when out on a solo run. Once the track walk is completed and everyone's back in the pits, the drivers then head out on track-in sessions.

The most common assumption one takes about driving with an instructor is that it's like driving with your mother-in-law (bless them). The reality of the matter is most race instructors are seasoned professionals and are accustomed to effective driving and at

considerable speeds, therefore the last thing they want is to ride shotgun with self-proclaimed "Drift Kings". What they do want is to teach good car control and good speed, which is precisely what track day participants walk away with if they extend enough attention to the guidance of a driving instructor. Vehicle limitations, best lines, braking points, and potential hazards are all things better pointed out than learnt by trial and error, and for a track like Spa-Francorchamps, it can mean the difference between having fun and playing Russian roulette with 98 Octane fuel. Plus the thrill of chasing that perfect racing line will force you over the course of the day to focus on getting the braking points, turn-ins, and apexes as accurate as possible, which subconsciously sharpens driving ability.

Besides the ability to live out your fantasy of

being a race driver on a circuit, RSRSpa Premium Trackday is a perfect way to meet other like-minded enthusiasts. It becomes like a meet at the golf club, with a lot more exhaust noise. And with RSR's recent tie-ups with brands like Nissan Germany, BRM watches and LePlan wines, the ambiance in the reception of a Premium Trackday is more akin to that of a hotel ballroom rather than a grease-filled pit box from the 1970's, although for some enthusiasts, the latter is more desirable! The cars that some of the participants bring out to play with are downright impressive. You get everything from Lamborghini's, Ferrari's, Audi's, Nissan GTR's, Porsche's and the like; but the crème de la crème will have to be the no-holds-barred race cars, all of which make the most hair-raising noises coming into La Source – the tightest corner of the circuit - spitting flames in most cases.



Beyond the varying degree of skills and cars, it's almost guaranteed that the fastest drivers on any given track day will be piloted by two drivers - Ron Simons, CEO of RSRNurburg and Sabine Schmitz, the Queen of the 'Ring. Hot Taxi Laps by both of them are offered during RSR Spa Premium Trackday sessions, for those who are willing to endure the 2 and a half minutes of terror in the passenger seat. Your choice of roller coaster includes the Lotus 2-Eleven, Larea GT1 or in Sabine's case, her personal 911 GT3 RS. And let me tell you, witnessing these folks dance their cars on the limit is pure magic.

All in all, the RSRSpa Premium Trackday simply isn't your average trackday. I mean, how could it be when you're driving on one of the most legendary circuits on the planet. If you're a true driving enthusiast and are in the position to make the trip over, you really should, everything else that comes with the experience is a bonus. More details at www.rsrspa.com. ■

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