

DANICA, LOOK OUT: KATHERINE LEGGE HAS WON 3 TIMES THIS YEAR
IN OPEN-WHEEL RACES. PLUS: 5 MORE FAST WOMEN TO WATCH

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| OFFSIDE UNDO | **DUTCH MANDEL**

Our Time to Rule Is Nigh!

MAYBE IT IS PREMATURE TO DISCUSS such things, but we of the *Scuderia Pelotas Rossa* racing team feel confident we'll dominate this year's Red Bull-sponsored human-powered drag race series.

Okay, okay. So it is a one-race series. But who among us doesn't have their heart speed up at the thought of a winner-take-all shot at the gold? We're Americans, damn it, and going flat out, *pelotas* to the wall, is what we do.

To remind you, *Scuderia Pelotas Rossa* is an amalgam of the finest (or most twisted) minds assembled in short order to create a human-powered dragster for the Red Bull Dragsterday event coming to Detroit Sept. 10. (Check out redbulldragsterday.com for more information.)

AutoWeek and ASC, the folks who know how to take tops off cars—like a million already—or put tops on cars—like the Dodge Viper and Chevy SSR—and who create car magic from thin air, have joined us against 32 other teams for this event.

Please know that while feigning altruism as our *raison d'être* might earn us a spot on *Oprah*, altruism does not drive us. We believe human-powered drag racing might be the NASCAR of the green generation. We want in on the ground floor, to be founding champions. Ego drives us.

Sure, we recruited the best and the brightest, the whiz kids of pedal power. While Lance is spending quality time with Sheryl after conquering France, we signed on even bigger names from the pro ranks: Whit Bazemore, full-time bike enthusiast and sometime Dodge Funny Car drag racer extraordinaire, anchors the team. His wife, Michelle (herself an accomplished pedal-er), is on board, too. The newest member of the super *SPR* team is another ace, Brian Adams, whose exploits around Michigan and the Midwest region are legion. Some of those exploits even involve a bicycle.

What is a team without hospitality? There exist few better suppliers of said

devices than Airstream, whose president *hisownself* committed a mobile twin-level sweet suite, a model dubbed Skydeck. This coach is made for just such event hostility: Touch a button and in 30 seconds the roof, accessed by a spiral staircase from inside,

transforms into an observation deck complete with stereo, umbrellas, cooler and grill. Its interior is loaded with the amenities our team must have, including big-screen televisions, ice makers and froufrou drink blenders. This is not taking things to the extreme; it's just being armed for a fight.

I'd like to tell you about the incredible vehicle that ASC is in the throes of crafting, but I am sworn not to say a word. I can say no expense has been spared. The design and build teams have spent countless hours in wind tunnels, have run fluid dynamics computations, and have a stereolithography machine forming parts 24/7. Without giving away too much, we have secured several yards of pure virgin carbon fiber and a fresh batch of unobtainium mined from Peru

for this build, so if something goes wrong it will be a poor fabricating engineer who blames his hammer....

A final element will separate us from the also-rans: our executive chef. Jimmy Schmidt, one-time food editor at speed for *AutoWeek* and current purveyor of all things good to eat at Detroit's famous Rattlesnake Club, is the team's vittle maestro. As you may recall, Jimmy spent the last several years mixing tasty and healthful concoctions for the Corvette Racing endurance team over at Le Mans. We're not saying that since Jimmy started with the Chevy team it has been undefeated, which it has, but we know there is something special in that "Jimmy Juice" potion that he makes all team members drink.

And that's no bull. —dmandel@crain.com



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