

Autoweek lists: Let the debate begin

Check out these lists of top picks in the car world



Among racing legend Mario Andretti's favorite cars is the Lotus 79, in which he won the Formula One world championship.

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Often we here at *Autoweek* find ourselves debating about what is best: What's the best car? What's the coolest feature? Which company makes the hottest powertrain?

So we figured, let's get them down on paper so you know where our water-cooler debates sometimes head. And just to make it more interesting, we asked automotive experts for their opinions: race-car driver Mario Andretti on his favorite cars, vintage-car expert Gordon McCall on his. Even Imre Molnar of Detroit's College for Creative Studies weighed in.

These lists are by no means definitive. In fact, we want them to spark even more conversation among you. Enjoy!

The lists:

[Mario Andretti's favorite race cars](#)

Racer's Line

Mario Andretti may be the world's greatest race-car driver. He won in nearly every series in which he drove, at virtually every level of motorsports, since he arrived in America from his native Italy at age 15. His wins include the Indianapolis 500, the Daytona 500, the Formula One World Championship and the Pikes Peak Hill Climb. He won the IndyCar national championship four times and was a three-time winner at Sebring. We asked Andretti to name his favorite cars, racing or otherwise.

1957 Chevrolet Bel Air two-door hardtop

"First car that my dad bought, two years after we arrived in this country. It was for [my brother] Aldo and me to share, and we were kings of the block. Nobody could beat us light to light. It had a 283 engine with dual quads. I wanted to put fuel injection on it, but we couldn't afford it."

1965 Brawner-Hawk Ford

"The Brawner was my rookie year and I had never driven a rear-engine car. I won Phoenix and Trenton in the roadster and was apprehensive at Indy because the [Brawner] arrived late. We had one day to go through a driver's test, but I felt really at home immediately. I finished third [in the race], but I continued and won my first race at Raceway Park. I won the national championship. The car was revised, and we won another national championship in 1966. It was a car that I totally understood."

1972 Ferrari Daytona

"It was the first exotic car I happened to own. I was at the [Ferrari] factory, and I see this Daytona at the end of the production line. I said I want one of those, but they couldn't give it to me because Fiat had just bought the company. I offered \$10,000 for one, and the next day back in the States, I got a telex saying they had accepted my offer. The car retailed for \$28,000. It had the 12-cylinder engine and the first with magnesium wheels. It was red, of course. My wife loved that car."

1978 Lotus 79-Cosworth

"The Lotus 78 was really the beginning of the development of ground effects. Obviously, I had phenomenal success with that except [for] some reliability problems with the engines. The Lotus 79 was the next step. It felt like no other race car felt. Whenever everything was right, no one could beat me."

1987 Lola-Ilmor Chevy

"I really felt I had that car exactly the way I wanted it. I dominated Indy--not just race day but every single day that I was on the track. All but the last 23 laps."

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