



DTM

Charly Lamm turns 60: “I don’t regret a single second of what I have experienced in motor racing.”

Munich (DE), 19th May 2015. Charly Lamm seemed destined to follow his older half-brothers Josef and Herbert Schnitzer into motorsport. BMW and Schnitzer Motorsport have enjoyed a successful partnership on the racetrack since the 1960s. However, the man who now leads BMW Team Schnitzer in the DTM then went his own way. Driven by passion, meticulousness and a desire to discover the world. Today Charly Lamm celebrates his 60th birthday.

Mr Lamm, we could start by asking you for your best memories. We are not going to, however. Instead, we would like to know when you might have regretted getting involved in motorsport?

Charly Lamm: “I don’t regret a single second of what I have experienced in motor racing. Not at all. However, there have obviously been some moments I would have preferred to be a bit different. When I was 14, I was employed by the team to do all the cleaning jobs. Preparing the magnesium racing wheels, in particular, was an incredibly tedious task. My school friends were out playing football, while I was in the garage. As a teenager, that is definitely enough to put you in a bit of a sulk. However, it was only ever for a short time.”

Later on, motorsport took you all over the world...

Lamm: “Exactly, and that is when the fantastic side of this job begins. Our home town of Freilassing is a quiet place. However, it soon became clear to me that our racing team would offer me the opportunity to get out, discover new places and broaden my horizon. This prospect really excited me, and has dominated the pace of my life ever since my youth. When we were racing in America or Asia later on, I often spent another week with my rucksack on my back, doing a bit of travelling. I was very lucky in that sense.”

So, motorsport is about more than just a desire to stand on the top step of the podium?

Lamm: “The drive and desire to win is always there, and is a very central impetus. That goes for the mechanics, engineers and me as team manager. However, I have always tried to look at the bigger picture. Maybe that is because I did not initially do my learning as a technician, but was able to bring other strengths into the equation. I could use my knowledge of languages at the racetrack, my ability with figures as a timekeeper, or my organisational talent. Only over the course of

Motorsport

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the years did I pick up elements of engineering and take on responsibility. It was the other way round for my twin brother Dieter: right from the outset he was more interested in the manual and technical side of things. We always shared the immense joy of winning a race.”

When did you get your first win as team boss?

Lamm: “1976 in the World Sportscar Championship with the BMW 3.5 CSL Coupé. Josef and Herbert were busy with Formula 2 and the DRM, so I took sole responsibility for the first time at our race in Spielberg. There was a crash in the first practice session, after which the team rebuilt our BMW Coupé in two nights – Dieter Quester and Gunnar Nilsson claimed the victory. It was an incredible experience. I knew straight away: I wanted to experience that feeling again and again.”

Despite all the stresses and strains of motorsport in your early years, you were a very good student and successfully completed your studies as an industrial engineer. Are you an intellectual?

Lamm: “No, certainly not. However, I have always approached things in my life with either my head or my heart. You obviously need to use your head in school, at university and on the pit wall. However, you also always need a big portion of heart in motorsport. This mixture is what I really like about my job.”

Can you give us an example of when you have to use your heart?

Lamm: “The way I deal with the drivers. There are some who say that I attach too much importance to understanding them better and getting to know their special needs in the cockpit and their mentality. However, I still stand by this approach today, even in the world of data analysis and simulation. As a team, we prepare a car that has to be competitive. The driver is then the deciding factor in achieving success with that car. That is why this relationship has always been, and remains, particularly important to me.”

And here comes that question: what is your best motorsport memory?

Lamm: “There are an awful lot of highlights. Victory in Le Mans with the BMW V12 LMR, the wins at the 24-hour classics at the Nürburgring and in Spa-Francorchamps with BMW and, of course, our DTM titles in 1989 and 2012. Then there have also been a lot of successes in individual races, which have also made me very proud. However, my first trip to the touring car race in Macau was certainly particularly special. I flew to Hong Kong in a cargo plane with the racing cars in 1980. Then we won the race with Hans-Joachim Stuck and the BMW

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320 Group 5. That was simply incredible. Afterwards, my now wife and I travelled from Macau to the Philippines to explore the country.”

Because there is sometimes more to life than winning...

Lamm: “Exactly.”

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