

All the highlights of 2017 Jaguar Simola Hillclimb

The 8th running Jaguar Simola Hillclimb attracted an estimated 15,000 spectators over the duration of the weekend, who were treated to a top lineup of cars. The driver lineup included multiple circuit racing and rally champions, motoring celebrities, as well as guest drivers from the US.



The 2017 Hillclimb saw records broken in the three new categories of the competition - the Road and Super Cars; Single Seaters and Sports Cars; and Modified Saloon Cars. The end-product is the heightened allure of individual King of the Hill titles and unique Jody trophies for the three respective winners.

Single Seaters and Sports Cars

Andre Bezuidenhout powered his rare 1989 Dallara F189 Formula 1 car to victory, breaking Franco Scribante's existing 2016 lap record of 38.646 seconds by almost a full second.



Bezuidenhout produced a masterful display of driving experience and commitment to conquer the King of the Hill challenge by blitzing the 1.9km Hillclimb course in an astonishing new official lap record of 37.695 seconds. That equates to an

average speed of 181.456 km/h, from a standing start, up the Simola Hill.

Outgoing champion Franco Scribante did his utmost to secure his third King of the Hill title in the 1972 Chevron B26, but it was not to be as his best time for the weekend was 39.387 seconds during qualifying. His Class Final run was 0.218 seconds slower, and he wrapped up his Single Seater and Sports Car Top 10 Shoot Out in second place on 39.754 seconds.

Robert Wolk was third on the podium, completing the run in 39.807 seconds in the Formula Renault V6.

Modified Saloon Cars

The Modified Saloon Car category saw an all-out battle between two former champions – the 2011 winner Wilhelm Baard and 2015 title-holder Des Gutzeit – both driving Nissan GT-Rs.

Baard ultimately emerged victorious in the 2014 R35 GT-R. He decimated Gutzeit's King of the Hill record for road-based racing cars and – for the first time in this category – broke the 40-second barrier with a scintillating time of 39.892 seconds in this nail-biting Top 10 Shoot Out.

Baard paid tribute to the event organisers: “We have to take our hats off to Ian Shrosbree and his entire team for putting this Hillclimb together, and making it the pinnacle of motorsport in South Africa. The changes implemented this year with different categories worked very well, and it's time that we see more manufacturers joining the event on the track into the future.”



Gutzeit pushed to the absolute limits in the search for glory in his 1992 R32 GT-R, but his best time of 40.114 seconds was

only good enough for second place this time around – despite it trouncing his own 2015 record of 40.148 seconds.

Anton Cronje completed the podium with third place his 2013 Subaru Impreza WRX, finishing in 40.754 seconds.

Road and Super Cars

The Road and Super Car category saw a tussle develop between the two latest-specification 2017 Nissan GT-Rs of Reghard Roets and outgoing champion Jaki Scheckter, along with the two Jaguar F-TYPE SVR entries of American racing ace Randy Pobst and Jaguar's Dawie Olivier.

These top four contenders were in a class of their own throughout the weekend, with victory eventually going to Roets in the NXGen-prepared car – which was a remarkable feat for his debut outing.

Despite having a scare on Saturday when he damaged the rear suspension, the team repaired the car overnight and Roets re-joined the action on Sunday. He ultimately set the fastest lap ever in a road-legal car of 44.766 seconds to earn this King of the Hill title for 2017.

Special Jaguar guest driver and multiple US racing champion Randy Pobst came into second place in the Top 10 Shoot Out with a time of 44.999 seconds in the F-TYPE SVR Coupe.



Said Pobst: "It took me a while to figure out the ideal settings for the sophisticated electronics of the F-TYPE SVR to achieve the best times, but I found the best setup for the final three runs and I'm really happy with the results.

With Pobst locking out second place and finishing as the fastest Jaguar competitor, this relegated Scheckter to the third step of the podium, achieving a time of 45.171 seconds. Dawie Olivier had brought the all-new Jaguar F-TYPE SVR Convertible home in fourth place on 45.286 seconds.

Spirit of Dave Charlton Award

As one of the most legendary names in motorsport that won six consecutive South African championships, as well as a team owner and manager responsible for bringing numerous championship-winning drivers to the fore over the past 40-odd years, Peter Kaye-Eddie was awarded the Spirit of Dave Charlton floating trophy at the 2017 Jaguar Simola Hillclimb.

The announcement, which recognised his exceptional commitment to motorsport, was made at the prize-giving for this year's event.

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