

TINY MILANO

By raycer27



As time flies by doing this website, there hasn't been 1 week that hasn't produced photos, films or information thanks to all of you out there and this past week was no different. I was able to contact Tiny Milano, driver of the black and red 27 A. Tiny's home base was Yonkers New York (still is) and he would tow his car to P'ville every Sunday to run with the South Jersey rednecks as some people called us and he flat towed that car until 1971, making the 5 hour round trip every week until he could afford a trailer.

Tiny was 16 when he got involved with racing in 1950, he and his brother went to a track in Danbury Connecticut called Bloomer's Farm. The guy that owned the property took a bulldozer, made a ¼ mile oval and where the hill was, that became the "grandstand" and he charged a dollar admission fee to come in and watch the races.



Then they went to Victory Speedway, Peaksville Speedway and Candle Light Stadium in Bridgeport Conn. which were asphalt tracks.

In 1952 Tiny went in the army until 1955 and when he got out, he just started all over again because all the tracks were still available to run on except for Bloomer's Farm which had closed. He started running Weissglass Speedway and ran there for 5 or 6 years and at the same time he was also running Ft. Dix and Nazareth. Tiny ran dirt and asphalt and did well at both as a lot of guys did back in the 50's and early 60's.



That's when I asked him what prompted him to run Pleasantville, he said he met Benny DeLacassia at some

race track and suggested he come down and run P'ville and in Tiny's words, "he loved P'ville" even with the long commute and he said it was difficult to accept when our track closed because he *really* liked coming down here.

I had an opportunity to talk to George LeBlanc, who also ran at Weissglass Speedway and knows Tiny real well and he said he was a fan favorite, especially where the kids were concerned. George said in an article that he wrote that the kid's favorite had to be Tiny Milano because of his good looking cars and whitewall tires that were spotless at the beginning of the night. During intermission when the cars were lined up for the feature, the fans were able to go on the track and present their favorite driver with a model they had built for them and get a picture taken with him next to the car. George thinks that Tiny holds the record for the most models made for him at Weissglass Speedway!



I asked Tiny how the whitewall tires came about and he said that a friend of his in Connecticut had a tire factory so he sent his tires to his friend and duplicated the tires and made them whitewalls.



Tiny was a very well liked driver at Pleasantville and got along great with most of us rednecks, but the guy he really befriended was Benny De Lacassia. There were a few times that Tiny got wrecked that he wondered how he was going to get home when Benny and some of his friends and some crews helped put the car on 4 wheels, remember, Tiny had a 2 ½

hour drive back to New York, flat towing the car.

He says he doesn't remember who half the guys were that helped; only that a few times he wrecked really bad and guys went home to get parts for his car so he could get home.

Tiny also won the Sportsmanship Award at Pleasantville which was voted on by the drivers who he competed against. He told me that was one of the nicest things that ever happened to him. As popular as he was at his home track or any other he never got an award like that and I think he felt that was the local drivers' way of accepting Tiny and showing their respect for him, because he was always labeled as "The Visitor" in our local paper and he covets that trophy.

His son Louis, who started at an early age, was Tiny's mechanic. When he was 6 yrs. old Tiny laid all the wrenches and sockets out on the floor, explained to him what they were, and told him when he could give his dad the tool that he asked for, he would be a regular crew member and be allowed to be in the garage with his dad. He said he sat there for an hour and half and was able to get most of what Tiny asked him for. It must've worked out ok, because his son got a Jr. Mechanic Award from the track for his efforts. (See photo inset)



When Louis was 10 years old, he was changing the oil and filter, spark plugs and later on when Tiny got weight scales, he learned how to adjust the weight on the car. Tiny's brother, Thomas, Mike LaRusso, Ronnie Bloomer and Anthony Mattiaccio also were part of his crew. Then Tiny lost Louis as his crew chief when he went off to college when he was 18 years old. The rest of his crew were dedicated enough to stay with Tiny, but when some of the wives and girlfriends put pressure on a couple of the guys on the crew, a few of the guys backed off spending all their time on the cars. Like I have said before it takes a very special woman to stay totally committed to their husbands and boy friends who are involved in our sport.



Tiny related to me, "That all the good times and memories; the friendships he made along the way, the fans that supported him at his local track, the pictures of the kids that made the models for him and everything that any fan gave him, he still has today and no amount of money could make up for that."

It's really ironic the different turns in life that we take, some chosen, some not.

Tiny and I never had any problems with each other, on or off the track. I just knew of him because we raced at the same track, so here it is many years later; we've talked a few times over this past month and we just picked up where we left off some 40 years ago. I'm sorry that we never developed a closer bond when we were racing, but I'll take the friendship that we're developing at the present time.

Every year George LeBlanc throws reunion party in his backyard for all of the old timers that ran at Weissglass. His museum is also on the property along with a few cars he restored.

Tiny still lives in Yonkers with his wife Mary who does all the decorating to Tiny's den where he keeps all his memorabilia and keeps everything in order and he told me he's thinking of going back to racing as a spectator. I'm trying to get him to come down for the Pumpkin Run at Flemings in November, were still workin' on that.

For more on Tiny, go to the driver's section on our site and watch his slide show.



Ed note: I wish to thank George LeBlanc who has the Weissglass Speedway museum and website for his input and photos. We have access to his site on our links page.