

Tom Drewer
Australian Racing Driver

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Drewer sets sights on Prototypes for 2010 after testing LMP Challenge car.



Caption: Left Drewer climbs into the Le Mans Challenge Car. Right: Drewer testing at the Road Atlanta circuit.

Australian racing driver Tom Drewer has his sights firmly set on a prototype drive for 2010 after testing the V8 powered Courage Oreca LMP Challenge car that will be competing in the American Le Mans Series next year.

Drewer is in discussions with his current team, Comprent Motor Sports about driving a Challenge car next year. However, the determined and ambitious Drewer has also confirmed he has been approached by multiple ALMS Prototype teams too.

"I've been really busy since Petit Le Mans. The following day I was invited to test the new LMP Challenge car, and the following week two LMP1 teams contacted me about the 2010 season after seeing me race during the Petit week. Since then I have been to Monterey for discussions with multiple other ALMS teams and I've just got back from a very serious meeting with one of those teams.

I have some fantastic backers from Australia, including John Trimble and Ubuntu Resort, and I'm currently seeking American partners solidify a prototype assault on the 2010 ALMS season. Offers of top-level drives mean I now really have something to offer those sponsors with the glamour, prestige and massive television exposure of the American Le Mans Series throughout the USA and the rest of the world.

The great thing is now high-level teams are calling me, rather than the other way around."

Following his test in the LMPC car Drewer feels he is ready to make transition to full-sized prototypes after driving in the IMSA Lites feeder category for the past two years.

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“Finally getting the chance to drive a big prototype was fantastic. I felt extremely comfortable in it. It’s really just like a big (IMSA) Lites 1 car. It was quite similar to my Ubuntu Resort Élan DP-02 in terms of how it responded and reacted, even the grip versus power. Obviously it just had much, much more of both.

In some ways it was actually easier to drive. I’m used to using a fair bit of muscle to turn the Élan DP-02 in, particularly as we generally run a reasonable amount of caster to cure bump-steer. The LMPC was very light on the steering and very direct. It was a case of telling myself to slow my hands down in the high-speed corners.

But where the LMPC just has it all over the Lites 1 car is the Carbon-Carbon brakes, and the power and noise of the big Corvette sourced V8. Every lap into turn 10a at Road Atlanta I felt I could brake later and later. The stopping power is awesome, and there is just nothing like the sound of a V8.

I really think the ALMS is on a winner with the LMPC. Everyone I speak to in racing always reminisces about the good old Can-Am days. Big loud V8s in beautiful, sleek racing cars. They have captured this with the LMPC. I think the American public will love them, and they’ll certainly relate to the powerplant. I can’t wait to get back in one or an out-right LMP car.

I’m determined to become Australia’s next Le Mans winner. The next David Brabham. I feel the last two years has prepared me well for an LMP or LMPC assault next year. I’m ready.”

Drewer won the 2008 IMSA Lites 2 Championship in his first year of competition in North America. He won ten from twelve races, all at circuits he had never driven on. This led to Australia’s *AutoAction* magazine proclaiming Drewer the ‘Best Overseas Rookie’ for 2008 and *Wheels* Magazine putting Drewer in their ‘Hot Half-Dozen Watchlist’.

Drewer’s performance in the faster Lites 1 category this year also captured the attention of Australia’s motor racing press. World famous cartoonist John ‘Stonie’ Stoneham penciling Drewer in as a future Le Mans 24 Hour winner in one of his cartoons after Drewer qualified on pole for the New Jersey round of the championship. Drewer finished his 2009 IMSA Lites campaign on a high, taking a podium (2nd place) for the second year in a row during the Petit Le Mans event held last month at Road Atlanta.

Further information follows. For more information or images:

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Further information:

Tom Drewer, aged 24, is an Australian driver who in his first year of North American competition dominated IMSA Lites 2 in 2008, taking the Championship with 11 pole positions, 10 wins, setting 5 lap records, all on unfamiliar circuits. This gave Tom back-to-back Championships across the Pacific after he took the Australian Thundersports Sports Car Championship for West Race Cars in 2007.

Tom's driving duties were split in 2007 with seats in both the Fujitsu V8 and V8 Giant Supercar Series, the feeder categories to Australia's premier motor racing series, V8 Supercars. Tom made his transition to cars in 2002, driving Formula Vees and winning the FVSA Drivers' Championship, after a stellar karting career beginning at age 7 and once backed by triple World Champion Nikki Lauda's airline, Lauda-Air.

Australia's *AutoAction* magazine has named Tom 'Best Overseas Rookie' in their annual awards while prestigious *Wheels* magazine has put Tom in their 'Hot Half Dozen Watch List' for 2009. Given his pace amongst the Lites 1's last year including a 2nd overall in Utah, Comprent also think he's one to watch this year as he tries for their second consecutive Lites 1 Championship.

IMSA Lites Presented by Frisby Performance Tire is the feeder category to the American Le Mans Series (ALMS), the premier prototype and GT endurance racing series in the world. Like the ALMS, IMSA Lites features three distinct classes of prototypes from global race-car constructors Élan Motorsport Technologies, West Race Cars and Van Diemen.

The series offers drivers from around the world the opportunity to showcase their talents in front of ALMS team bosses in a multi-class racing environment at famous and historic racing venues such as Sebring, Road America, Road Atlanta, Mosport and Laguna Seca.

Previous Lites 1 Champions Adam Pecorari and Gerardo Bonilla have gone on to drive in factory Le Mans Series Prototypes.

The Panoz Élan DP-02 Prototype is the official chassis of Lites 1. Built by Élan Motorsports Technologies it is a high-tech purpose-built sports car designed to develop advanced drivers with aspirations of graduating to the next level of professional racing.

The DP-02 features an FIA certified carbon-fibre monocoque chassis, 6-speed sequential 'no-lift shift' Hewland gearbox, tunnel-floor, and is powered by a 2.3 Litre, 4-cylinder Mazda MP2 racing engine supplied by Élan Power Products.

Top speed of an Élan DP-02 at most North American circuits is 170 mph, while their average speed is generally well over 110 mph, resulting in Lap times equally as fast or faster than ALMS GT2 cars.

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