

Herbert Müller – the fast semi-professional from Switzerland

Herbert Müller did not force himself into the spotlight, so he was often underestimated. Two victories at the Targa Florio and two second places in Le Mans proved his calibre.

In the racing scene, people liked to give Müller the affectionate name 'Stumpen Herbie'. The reason for this is that friends and colleagues assumed the Swiss driver always had a cigar in his mouth unless he was racing a car. Another characteristic feature of Müller was his red hair and crew cut. After 1972, he grew a full beard in an attempt to cover up the scars he sustained during a fire accident on the Nürburgring in 1972. The family man and passionate pianist was not a full-time professional racer. Instead, he managed a metal processing company and a garage in Reinach, Switzerland. Here, a town square was named after Herbert Müller in 2011.

In 1961, Müller began competing in car races, securing success on both circuits and mountains. His outstanding victories were first places at the Targa Florio in 1966 with Willy Mairesse in a private Porsche 906 and in 1973 with Gijs van Lennep, driving a works 911 Carrera RSR. With a Porsche 917 and Richard Attwood as his partner, he finished second in Le Mans in 1971 as well as another second place in 1974 with van Lennep in a Porsche 911 Carrera RSR Turbo. His own private racing team, Herbert Müller Racing, won the Interserie three times between 1974 and 1976, twice in a Porsche 917/30. For a certain period, he competed in up to 20 races a year in Europe and the USA. Müller also used his own Ferrari 512M on many occasions.

After 1977, Herbert Müller was in the racing cockpit less often. He did take part in the 1,000 kilometre race at the Nürburgring in 1980, however. A year later at the 1,000 kilometre race, Müller stood in for Rolf Stommelen, who was prevented from competing, sharing a Porsche 908/03 with Siegfried Brunn. Before the race started, he told the press that this race would be the end of his career. On the 13th lap, Müller came off the track and crashed into a Porsche 935 that was parked in front of the safety barriers. Müller died before both cars went up in flames.