

# Vern Schuppan

**Born in Australia, Vern Schuppan won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1983 and was part of the Porsche works team until 1988.**

Full of hope and optimism, Vern Schuppan went to England in 1969 at the age of 26 to become a racing driver. In 1970, he visited the 1,000 kilometre race at Brands Hatch, where he admired the driving skills of Jo Siffert and Pedro Rodriguez in their Porsche 917. 'Their performance in the rain was very impressive,' noted Schuppan. 'I wonder if I will ever drive a 917?' In 1972, Schuppan joined John Wyer's Gulf team, but he was already using the Mirage Ford at this point. It was not until 2012 that his great wish came true: as a 69-year-old racing veteran, Schuppan finally had the opportunity to drive a Porsche 917 at the Le Mans Classic.

In the early years of his career, Schuppan competed in some Formula One races for smaller teams like BRM, Ensign, Embassy Hill and Surtees. In the United States, he came third in the Indianapolis 500 in 1981. In the same year, Porsche required him to race in Le Mans, where he took 12th place after some engine problems in the Porsche 936.

Racing manager Peter Falk was looking for drivers 'with brains' for the new Group C and its fuel consumption regulations – men with a consistent and gentle style. Schuppan was one of those up for selection, and in 1982 he finished second at the side of Jochen Mass when the Porsche 956 made its debut at Le Mans. With his friendly nature, the Australian was a very good fit for the team, but he had to make space for the faster Stefan Bellof during the 1983 season. He returned to the Porsche team for Le Mans, expressing his thanks by taking overall victory in 1983 together with Al Holbert and Hurley Haywood. He also competed in Le Mans from 1985 to 1988 as a Porsche works driver, but he never saw the chequered flag. 'I'm proud of my career,' says Vern Schuppan. 'I had a pretty good time in the world of motor racing.'