

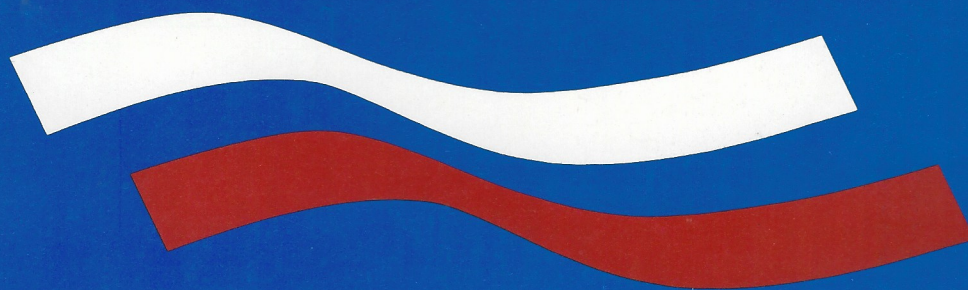
WORKING WOMAN

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WHAT WILL THE NEXT PRESIDENT DO FOR WOMEN?



WHEN JOB FANTASIES COME TRUE...

WHERE MARY CUNNINGHAM WENT WRONG

BEATING YOUR ENERGY CRISIS: FITNESS SPECIAL



AUTO *DRIVE LIKE THE PROS*

Race-car drivers, who steer around tight curves at terrifying speeds, weren't born knowing how to drive like that. Many learned their skills at professional racing schools that are open to anyone who wants to be a better driver. The techniques you learn just might save your life

BY GARY WITZENBURG

The traffic is dense, but moving quickly, as you make your way home. It's been a long yet satisfying day. Knowing you're well prepared for tomorrow's meeting, you can relax a bit tonight.

A pickup truck speeds by in the fast lane on your left, then brakes for a slower car ahead. As you draw alongside, it suddenly swerves toward you. To avoid a collision you instinctively jerk your wheel to the right and stand on the brakes. Suddenly you're skidding across three lanes of freeway traffic and off the road. Luckily, everyone manages to miss you, and the shoulder is wide. You slide to a stop a few inches short of the guardrail.

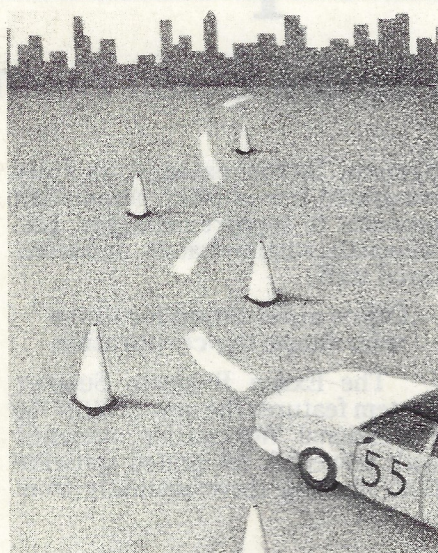
You sit paralyzed for a moment, heart pounding, pulse racing, as the dust settles around your car and traffic returns to its normal hectic pace. You feel like an idiot. You know you've just narrowly escaped a serious crash. You could have been hurt. Or killed.

What happened? You've always been a good driver, never been in an accident. You've driven this road for years, commuting to and from work. Why did you lose control? You think of the safety belt dangling unused beside you. You notice that your right leg muscles still are pushing hard against the brake pedal, and they're trembling uncontrollably. What separates the expert driver, one who calmly and automatically knows how to avoid such a situation, from the average driver, who winds up in the ditch—or worse? Experience? Certainly, but, when it comes to driving, experience is not always the best teacher. There are a lot of average, even bad, experienced drivers. Skillful drivers are trained, not born.

Yet when we reach the requisite age and slide behind a steering wheel, we're expected to know what we're doing. No wonder Americans still have so many accidents, despite what are probably the world's best roads, safest cars, lowest speed limits and strictest levels of enforcement. Almost anyone can teach the fundamentals of driving—the rules, the signs and how to operate the controls—but it takes an expert to teach skillful driving.

Skip Barber, Bob Bondurant, Jacques Couture, Bertil Roos and Bill Scott are such experts. All are either active or former top-rung racers, and all run first-rate driving schools. If their names are not household words, it's only because their specialty is European-style road racing, arguably the most sophisticated of all motor sports. (Road racing receives less news coverage in this country than oval-track competitions like the Indianapolis 500 do, and its twists and turns require a different set of driving skills.)

If you have no intention of signing up for the



Monaco Grand Prix, why should you go to a driving school for auto racers? Simply because that's where the best instructors are, where you can practice until you're too pooped to turn the wheel, and where you can hone the crucial driving skills that could save your life.

SKILLS AND THRILLS

A growing number of women are attending these schools. Some have racing ambitions, but most are there to improve their everyday driving skills and for the sheer thrill of it. Skip Barber says some 10 percent of his students are women, and he recently held a special school for a group of ten professional women at Lime Rock Park in Connecticut. Their occupations were diverse: graphic designer, professional skater, corporate payroll supervisor, sales forecaster, entrepreneur. And an assistant professor of nursing, who says she enrolled because "the best insurance" she could have for her beloved Porsche was learning to drive it "the best that it could be driven." Bondurant reports an even higher 15 percent female students, while Couture claims three woman graduates each week (of about 30) spread among his four locations.

One woman at the Bertil Roos school this spring, a 31-year-old dietician (and racing fan) from Connecticut, said she was there "to learn how to react in emergencies, to become a safer highway driver, and to better understand what's involved in racing." And Jeanette "J.J." Ebaugh, who is cable TV magnate Ted Turner's personal air pilot, feels that attending Couture's school at Laguna Seca, California, in 1980 tremendously improved her street driving, awareness and car control. "I'm sure I've avoided several potential accidents as a result," she says. Ebaugh, also an author and a competitive sailor, has studied under both

Barber and Jacques Couture at the Jim Russell British School of Motor Racing since then and now races her own Formula Ford when she can find the time.

Barber's operation is the most unusual in that it travels to tracks in Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Georgia and Florida. If you live in the East, Southeast or Midwest, chances are Barber's school will be somewhere nearby during the next year. He founded it in 1975 after a 15-year driving career that included three Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) National Championships.

Aside from some special corporate programs (training a company's on-the-road sales force, for example), Barber offers only competition courses (with an emphasis on racing skills), all taught in the school's Formula Ford racing cars. These are four-cylinder Ford-powered single-seaters that resemble scaled-down Grand Prix or Indianapolis cars; they're strong, reliable, fast (yet surprisingly safe) and all-around excellent trainers. Courses start with a \$325 one-day introduction to racing and extend to a full-blown racing series (\$1,545) for those who want to compete without investing in a car and equipment of their own. WORKING WOMAN contributing editor Janet Guthrie, the only woman ever to qualify for (and finish) the Indy 500, is a Skip Barber Racing School graduate.

Bob Bondurant, who has taught a number of celebrities, heads the professional driving school that's probably the best one for beginners. It's at Sears Point International Raceway, a half-hour north of San Francisco. Bondurant, a one-time World Manufacturer's Championship and Formula One driver, founded his school after retiring from full-time competition in 1968. His training aids include a greased pad for skid-control practice and an "accident simulator," a three-lane "freeway" that teaches you to steer around a sudden obstruction rather than lock your brakes and skid into it. Competition courses are taught in the school's new Ford Escorts, Mustangs and Formula Fords, and students can use their own cars or rent a car from the Bondurant school for the advanced highway and high-performance driving courses.

EUROPEAN FINESSE

Jacques Couture, a former Canadian Road Racing Champion, studied at the Taruffi racing school in Italy and the Jim Russell school in England before bringing Russell's name and teaching methods to North America 16 years ago. Now known as the Jim Russell British School of Motor Racing (JRBSMR), Couture's organization graduated some 800 students in 1982 from facilities at Le Circuit

AUTO

Mont Tremblant in Quebec, Canada; Riverside International Raceway in Riverside, California; and Laguna Seca Raceway near Monterey, California. A fourth operation at North Carolina's Charlotte Motor Speedway opened early last year. Like Barber, Couture offers competition training in Formula Fords; he may introduce advanced racing and highway classes. There's a season-long racing series available to Couture's three-day-school graduates at each location except Charlotte, culminating in a fall championship at one of the California tracks.

Rivaling Bondurant's programs are those of Swede Bertil Roos, who teaches at Pocono International Raceway in eastern Pennsylvania. Roos, an active driver with six major championships to his credit, lacks Bondurant's accident simulator and skid pad but has an invention of his own that he considers better—a skill-testing "slidecar." The slidecar, a Saab 900 sedan, has its rear wheels rigged to steer independently of the front ones when cornering, making a 35 mph lap of the track feel like a drive on sheer ice. It's great for car-control

practice and improving your concentration, and once you've mastered it you should be ready for most anything. Roos's Precision School offers a one-day advanced racing slidecar course for \$350 and two days of highway training (in your own car) for \$450.

Roos's separate racing school conducts competition courses in Volvos and winged Formula "Super" Fords of his own design. A dedicated instructor, Roos does most of the teaching himself and has excellent textbooks and a strong belief in "dual" instruction (the instructor rides with you and you with him) in street cars before putting students on their own in single-seat racers.

Smallest of the five is the Bill Scott Racing School at Summit Point Raceway, West Virginia, about 70 miles northwest of the Baltimore/Washington area. Scott, a two-time Formula Super Vee champion, founded the school eight years ago. He offers one-day highway and weekend "Solo I" (one-at-a-time, against-the-clock competition) schools using the student's own cars, starting at \$75. He also has beginning and advanced racing courses in

the school's Datsuns and Formula Fords, and a growing number of corporate programs in heavy-duty, police-type Chevrolet Malibus. Road racer Lyn St. James is a Bill Scott Racing School graduate.

All these schools promise to make you a better driver. They'll teach you to sit correctly (upright and firm against the seat from thighs to shoulders); properly place your hands on the wheel (at three and nine o'clock); to brake, shift and turn (smoothly and precisely, without upsetting the car's suspension); to feel and react to what the car is doing under you (read the signals coming through the seat and wheel); to catch and recover from skids (steer the way the back end is going, then quickly back to straight ahead); and much more. One thing is certain: The first accident you *don't* have will more than pay for the training that taught you to avoid it. ■

Gary Witzenburg is a former auto engineer who writes about cars for Playboy, Motor Trend and other magazines. A part-time racer for 18 years, he has trained at all five of these driving schools.

LEARNING FROM THE PROS

School	Location	Course	Days	Cost	Schedule
Skip Barber Racing School Route 7 Canaan, CT 06018 203-824-0771	Various (East, Southeast and Midwest)	Competition	3	\$ 975	Year-round
		Competition	5	1,675	
		Advanced racing	2	950	
		Introduction	1	325	
		Lapping day	1	375	
		Race weekend	2	795	
Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving Highways 37 & 121 Sonoma, CA 95476 707-938-4741	Sears Point International Raceway, Sonoma, CA	Competition	4	1,500	Year-round
		Advanced road racing	1	450	
		Advanced road racing	2	900	
		Advanced road racing	3	1,350	
		Advanced street & highway driving	1	250	
		Highway performance*	2	550	
Jim Russell British School of Motor Racing 22255 Eucalyptus Avenue Riverside, CA 92508 714-656-3576	Mt. Tremblant, Quebec, Canada; Riverside Raceway, Riverside, CA; Laguna Seca Raceway, Monterey, CA; Charlotte Motor Speedway, Harrisburg, NC	Competition	3	1,050	February–December in US; May–October in Canada
		Lapping day	2	775	
				(825 in Canada)	
		Race weekend	2	800	
		Festival championship	4	1,200	
Bertil Roos School of Motor Racing/Precision School of Advanced Driving PO Box 221 Blakeslee, PA 18610 717-646-7227	Pocono International Raceway, Blakeslee, PA	Competition	3	995	April–October
		Introduction	1	325	
		Advanced highway	2	450	
		Advanced racing (slidecar)	1	350	
Bill Scott Racing School PO Box 190 Summit Point, WV 25446 44-725-6512	Summit Point Raceway, Summit Point, WV	Competition	2	825	February–December
		Advanced competition	1	400	
				(550 with Bill Scott)	
		Highway	1	245	
		Solo I*	1	75	
			2	125	

*For these courses you use your own car or a rented one. Most schools also offer corporate and chauffeur courses; call for details.