

□ Most people involved in motorsport competition are either good drivers or good mechanics.

However, Toronto's Eppie Wietzes is one exception. Wietzes is one of those rare types who excels as both a driver and a racing mechanic. Born in Holland 29 years ago, Wietzes came to Canada in 1950 and his background indicates why he is rated highly as a driver and mechanic.

At 16 years old Eppie started working in a service garage along with his father, Jan. In 1951 they moved into the service station business and just recently Eppie, his brother Bert and father Jan opened a new Rootes Motors dealership on Yonge Street North in Toronto. Actually the Wietzes are known as one of the oldest Rootes Service outlets in Toronto.

While Eppie had been involved with cars most of his life it wasn't until seven years ago that he moved into the world of racing. He had done some drag racing on a small scale, but he really became a 'bug' after attending a sports car race at Harewood Acres as a spectator.

For the next four years fans were treated to the spectacular sight of a quick Morris Minor nipping at the heels of Jaguars. It was this particular car that brought forth Eppie's great talent as both a driver and mechanic. In fact the preparation of that car was so well-perfected than even today it becomes a prime topic when discussing past performances.

Wietzes next step was into an Alpine which he raced for two years. This car later became the property of CT&T's Diana Carter.

While Wietzes record book is not

overflowing with victories, he has gained a solid reputation as a good consistent driver. Partnering with Craig Fisher last year, Wietzes won the Sundown Grand Prix in a great display of driving the Mustang GT which was without brakes for the last two hours of this six-hour grind.

Of course, strong performances in GT cars is not a new experience for Wietzes. He has always been



Eppie Wietzes

able to place high in most of his races and for two years he held the lap record for GT cars at Mosport Park. In 1963 he was the fourth fastest qualifier for a Watkins Glen GT race. In the 1963 Canadian GP he again showed his ability to turn in a consistent drive completing 94 of the 100 lap event.

As a result of injuries received from an accident in 1963 at West-

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wood, Wietzes didn't race during the 1964 season.

Then in 1965 Eppie became a popular figure on the Canadian scene driving the Mustang GT for Comstock.

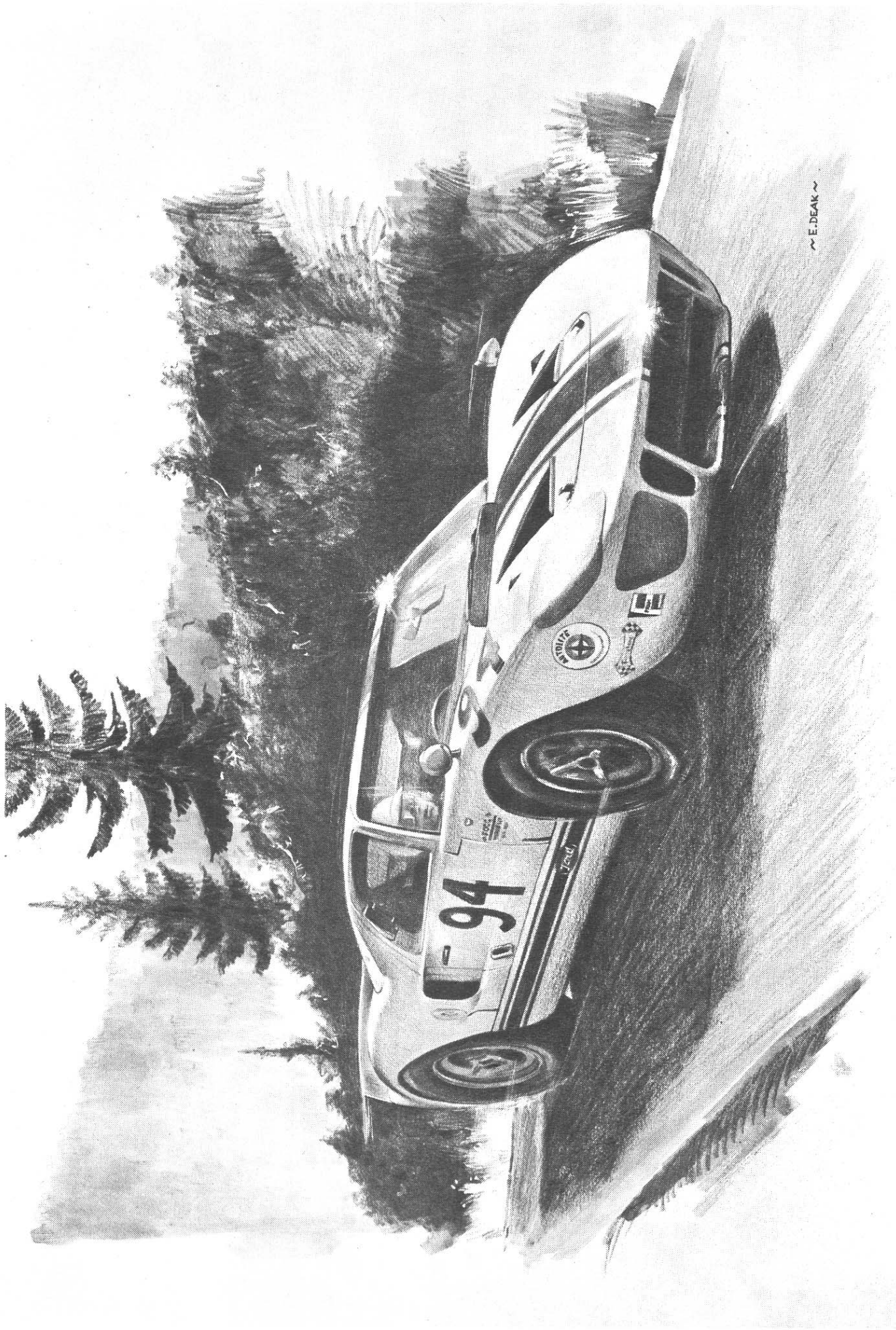
As mentioned before Eppie is a consistent driver, but his biggest test is yet to come. For this year's Sebring 12-hour he will team with Craig Fisher in a Ford GT.

This is a big step for Canadian motorsport and the duo's performance at Sebring could lead to much bigger things such as a chance in the Le Mans 24-hour clash.

Married with two children, Eppie spends much of his time working on his own business. He enjoys no hobbies, but on Sundays, away from his business, he finds time to take his five-year-old boy, Michael around vacant parking lots in a home built Go-Kart.

Chances are there will be another racing driver/mechanic from the Wietzes family.





GT-40 BY ED DEAK