

MATS magazine



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Nearly 500 visitors attended the grand opening of the new workshop.

INTRO MATS

Welcome to a new edition of the MATS magazine. After many positive reactions to our first issue, we've gathered more news for you. At the start of this season, we carried out extensive testing, and our cars already achieved some strong results in the opening rallies of 2026.

A particularly enjoyable moment was our collaboration with HBM, who visited our new workshop. I had the opportunity to passionately talk about Mijn Vette Bak, of course our beloved M3 E30. Be sure to check out the video via the QR code next to this.



On January 17th, 2026, we held the grand opening of our new workshop. Nearly 500 visitors came by to take a look. Everyone reacted with great enthusiasm. That gives me and the entire MATS team immense satisfaction.

The MATS #9 and #69 had a great outing in early February... flat-out action and testing in the forests of Rovaniemi. MATS #57 and #63 have also been tested and approved. In terms of sales, we have now reached order number MATS #76.

The STW project is very much alive and cars #64, #68, and #70 are nearly ready for delivery. Another exciting project we have been working on is the E30CS. Two units are completed, and we have started building the third and fourth car.

Enjoy reading our second MATS magazine. Your feedback is always welcome.





RACE RALLY TELEX

GRAND OPENING

On Saturday, January 17th, 2026, all suppliers, colleagues, customers, rally enthusiasts, etc. were invited to our new workshop.

After more than 5.5 years in Ekersrijt, we found a suitable building in Veghel at De Amert 700C. The move took place in early November with a full team effort. By mid-January, the time had come: the grand opening of the new workshop.

Many visitors were impressed by the size of our workshop. With a surface area of 2,500 square meters—three times the size of the workshop in Son—we can guarantee even better service for our customers.

Team MATS would like to thank everyone for their visit and the thoughtful gifts. On the next page, you can relive the event through the photo report by Luuk van Kaathoven. See you soon!

NEW M3 FOR BJORN SYX

Belgian driver Bjorn Syx, like Mats, has a soft spot for beautiful cars. Professionally, the man from Poperinge works with exclusive sportscars. In rallying, he has been competing for several years with a Toyota Yaris Rally2. Nevertheless, he recently ordered a new M3 (#66) from his friend Mats.



To be expected:
Bjorn Syx back in an M3

Bjorn Syx: "The M3 E30 is one of my favourite cars. The sound and its playful nature always stay with me. We achieved many great things with this type of car in the past, so we are really looking forward to the new one. We plan to compete in a few rallies in 2026, but it is still unclear when exactly. Mats might have the car ready by the end of April. There's no pressure, as we still have the Yaris to compete with."

ALSO MATS PERFORMANCE M CUP IN 2026

In 2026, MATS Performance will again be the title partner of the RACB M Cup, with events in Belgium and one in Luxembourg. At one point, the GTC Rally (Achtmaal) was considered for inclusion in the calendar, but that did not materialise. On the evening after the grand opening, the prize-giving ceremony of the past season also took place. Boudewijn Baertsoen and Hugo Van Opstal presented a review of 2025 and awarded all trophies to the winners. More information about the longest-running cup in Belgium can be found at www.m-cup.be.



From left to right, the top 3 drivers of the 2025 MATS Performance M Cup: Philip Lommers (3), Toby Vandenberghe (2), Franky Boulat (1). On the right: Peggy De Busser, winning co-driver of the M Cup.

LEGEND BOUCLES BASTOGNE

During the opening of the new workshop, it stood there: a brand-new M3 in bordeaux red with a well-known Red Bull livery. If that wasn't clear enough, the names on the side windows made it obvious who MATS #57 was built for.

During the *Tour de Corse Historique*, Mats suddenly received a call from Jos Verstappen asking if an M3 E30 was available. A few months later, he visited MATS with his co-driver Renaud Jamoul. They planned to compete in the Legend Boucles Bastogne, an iconic Belgian historic rally run on road tyres.

Intensive testing as preparation



Given the strong competition - with top Belgian and international drivers eager to add the *Legends* to their record - extensive testing was carried out beforehand. During the pre-event test, it quickly became clear that working with Jos is very enjoyable. He understands the technical side perfectly. Exchanging ideas to reach a good setup is then very rewarding. The cooperation with co-driver Renaud Jamoul was also excellent.

Jos Verstappen will participate in Corsica with his MATS #57. Scan the QR-code for test footage on the circuit of Meppen.



RESULTS

- 1 LEFEBVRE Stéphane
MALFOY Andy
BMW M3
- 2 FRANCOIS Frédéric
PENNOY Jérémy
Ford Escort RS2000 MKII
- 3 PIROT Loïc
BODET Jean-Baptiste
Triumph TR8
- 4 INCARDONA Sébastien
POES Christophe
BMW M3
- 8 BREITTMAYER Emile
PREVOT Stéphane
BMW M3
- 9 VERSTAPPEN Jos
JAMOUL Renaud
BMW M3
- 47 REYNTIENS William
MAWET Andy
BMW M3 E30



Sébastien Incardona drove to a nice P4 overall.

Everything ready until...

The *Legends* consists of two rally days. Saturday's stages can be recce'd. Sunday's stages can only be driven using the organiser's pacenotes or notes created from onboard footage. There is no reconnaissance, and Sunday's stages are mainly gravel.

After a setback on SS1, the Verstappen-Jamoul crew started from 53rd position. With a fastest time on SS2, their charge through the field immediately began. Before the end of day one, they had fought back to an impressive P9 overall.

Three cars in the top 10

On Sunday, the rally came to an early end. During the second stage, an accident occurred in which a spectator lost their life. The rally was immediately cancelled, and the remaining three stages were not run.

It was a tragic ending to this edition of the *Legends*. We extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of the victim.

That an M3 can win the *Legends* was proven by former Belgian champion Stéphane Lefebvre.

The MATS team guided Verstappen-Jamoul to P9 overall. Two other MATS cars also finished in the top 10: Breittmayer-Prévot finished P8 and Incardona-Poes ended P4, just off the podium. Reyntiens-Mawet finished in 47th position overall.



Breittmayer-Prévot on P8

COSTA BRAVA RALLY

PJ Maeyaert started Rally Costa Brava as the kick-off of his FIA EHRC campaign. At the last minute, he was joined by Martin McCormack. The Irish delegation included Donagh Kelly, Michael Cullen, and Patrick "Paddy" Shovlin.

In addition to the five cars in our own service, there were two other cars built in our workshop running with their own service crews: Ernie Graham and Gauthier Gheysen.

"Go to Spain, the weather is nice there"... not quite. Rain and very heavy downpours made it difficult to compete against the 4WD cars. With former WRC driver Latvala (Toyota Celica) on the entry list, it was clear who the man to beat was. The Finn took the lead from SS1 and never looked back.

The merging of different classes created a somewhat distorted overall classification. However, there were definitely strong results for Team MATS in class J2C, with a full M3 podium.

Despite significant damage, team MATS brought Paddy Shovlin's car to the finish. Unfortunately, his teammate Michael Cullen ended up in the ravine at SS 10.



Martin Marty McCormack, co-driven by James Morgan, did not start well on the opening stage Thursday evening but gradually fought his way back into the rally. After a strong final day, he finished - despite a puncture and a small kiss with a guardrail - in P3 overall, P2 in pre-1992 and took victory in class J2C.

The Maeyaert-Dewulf duo returned to Costa Brava after their debut in 2025. The Belgians drove a very strong rally without a single issue and finished just off the overall podium in P4. Lombardo's Porsche passed them at the very last moment on the final (dry) day. Nevertheless, it was a successful start for the Belgians in the FIA EHRC championship, which is their main focus this season, with Rallye d'Antibes and their home

rally Ypres still to come. The third M3 in the top 10 was driven by Donagh Kelly and co-driver Rory Kennedy, who also secured third place in class. In Ralysprint Navarcles, a test event on the Saturday before Costa Brava, the duo achieved an excellent P2 overall.

Due to a misjudgement of the treacherous slippery conditions, Patrick Paddy Shovlin went straight into a rock wall. The mechanics repaired the car in 39 minutes, allowing Paddy to still finish the rally in P17.

Gauthier Gheysen was arguably the strongest performer... until he ripped the front off his M3 on SS9 and ended up in the retirement park.



PJ Maeyaert started his FIA EHRC campaign with a very nice P4 overall.

Donagh Kelly - P10 overall and P8 in pré-1992 - completed the MATS-podium in J2C-class.

Michael Cullen was extremely unlucky and crashed for the first time in 40 years of motorsport.

On SS10, his M3 went over the guardrail down a steep drop. A small tree prevented the car from ending up further down in the water. Both Michael and co-driver Lorcan Moore escaped unharmed from the heavily damaged M3.

Franklin and an acrobatic Spiderman Matthi handled the difficult recovery of the car in the dark...

Once that was done, parc fermé opened and the journey back to the Netherlands could begin.

With three damaged cars, there is once again plenty of work in the workshop to get everything back in top condition.

Marty McCormack (right) and co James Morgan (left) shared the podium with Latvala-Hussi, the team to beat in pré-1992.



RESULTS FIA EHRC PRE-1992

- 1 LATVALA Jari-Matti - HUSSI Janni - Toyota Celica ST185
- 2 LOMBARDO Angelo - CONSIGLIO Roberto - Porsche
- 3 MCCORMACK Martin - MORGAN James - BMW M3
- 4 MAEYAERT PJ - DEWULF Yves - BMW M3
- 8 KELLY Donagh - KENNEDY Rory - BMW M3
- 17 SHOVLIN Paddy - MCCAY John - BMW M3

ACCIDENT	CULLEN Michael - MOORE Lorcan - BMW M3
ACCIDENT	GHEYSEN Gauthier - LEON Thierry - BMW M3
DNF	GRAHAM Ernie - GRAHAM Anna - BMW M3



SPOTLIGHT ROMAIN CHAQUI

Since 2022, Romain has been a fixture at team MATS. He is often present at major international competitions. The fact that he speaks French is, of course, very useful for our French teams and in competitions where French is the official language.



LAST PICTURE ON YOUR SMARTPHONE

What is your job title?

I am a freelance mechanic who works exclusively in motorsport, mainly rally but also on the track.

Where do you live?

Truchtersheim, near Strasbourg (France)

Coffee or tea? Coffee

What is a quality you're proud of?

My determination to have been able to turn my passion into my profession for over 20 years.

What always makes you happy?

Deborah, my partner.

Morning or evening person?

Evening person

What do you most enjoy doing on a day off?

Enjoying time at home, good food, laughing with my wife, assembling a scale model to expand the collection, playing with our cats, before I go back to work...

What don't most people know about you?

That I am actually living my second life. After a rather sudden and unexpected health problem, everything almost came to a standstill. I am doing well now, but it has changed my perspective and lifestyle.

Do you have a life motto or quote that suits you?

It is important to have at least one! I often say: *on y arrive toujours*, we always manage.

What's the last photo you took on your phone?

Yan et Robin, my nephews earning their third star in ski lessons.

Which emoji do you use most often?



What's your best and/or least favorite rally memory?

The best years were with Michel Enjolras Sport, the man who gave me the opportunity to do this work. Building cars from scratch, he let us do unthinkable things. The worst was Le Touquet 2005 with the 208 T16 Sainteloc, my first rally as a freelancer. Engine change after the test drive, hospitalization for my shattered big toe, the weather, gearbox change during my very first service. Anyone who knows this car will understand...

What's still on your bucket list?

Lots! Professionally, the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Personally, watching erupting volcanoes, because I am fascinated by them.

FAVORITS

Film - series - actor:
Usual Suspect,
Breaking Bad & Brad Pitt

Music:
Goodbye stranger
(Supertramp) a song that makes me smile and think of Déborah

Food:
A special dish with sausage,
known from the island of
Réunion

Drink:
Mild blackcurrant syrup &
Amaretto Cola like Mats

SPOTLIGHT DONAGH KELLY

In this section, you might find out something new... or did you already know where Donagh Kelly was born? And that our Irish star won the West Cork Rally five times in a row while still dreaming of the Manx Rally in an M3? Check out this short but powerful spotlight.

What is your job title?

What do you do?
CEO

Where do you live?

Donegal (Ireland)

Coffee or tea?

Coffee

What is a quality you're proud of?

Leadership

What always makes you happy?

Guinness

Morning person or evening person?

Evening person

What do you most enjoy doing on a day off?

Going out on my boat

What don't most people know about you?

I was born in a Austin Mini

Do you have a life motto or quote that suits you?

We are lucky guys

What's the last photo you took on your phone?

Old Girona on Sunday after Rally Costa Brava

Which emoji do you use most often?



What's your best and/or least favorite rally memory?

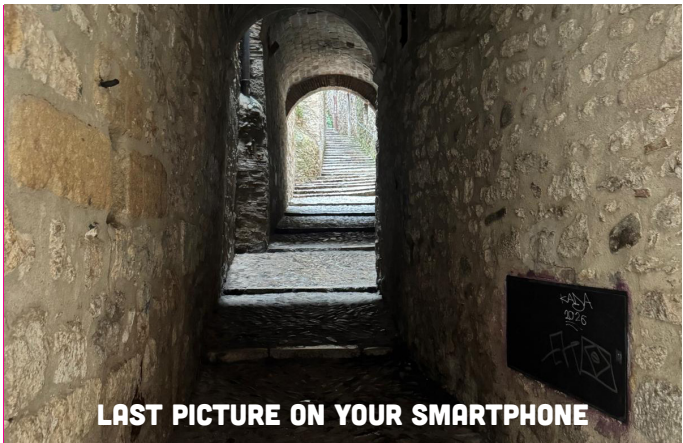
Winning West Cork five times in a row

What's still on your bucket list?

Manx Rally in M3



Donagh Kelly (right in the photo) won last year's Killarney Rally in a MATS M3.



LAST PICTURE ON YOUR SMARTPHONE

FAVORITS

Film: Shawshank Redemption

Music: Elvis

Food: Italian

Drink: Guinness

INSIDE THE WORKSHOP

In this section, we highlight ongoing projects, new developments and specific upgrades that may be of interest. During the grand opening, you could already catch a glimpse of the E36 STW. In addition, there is also news from Drenth Gearboxes and we introduce HBM Machines.



Jenna de Jong: At **HBM Machines**, we have a clear mission: to create a platform where everyone with a passion for engineering feels at home. Through our YouTube channel, we show how versatile and accessible technology can be from wrenching to building and everything in between.

Our collaboration with MATS by fits perfectly with that vision. Mats is the ideal example of someone who turned his hobby into a profession. Day in, day out, he is involved in motorsport and automotive engineering, driven by pure passion and craftsmanship. That energy is contagious and makes technology tangible.

Together, we bring those worlds together: inspiring content, practical knowledge and the right tools. We equip Mats' workshop with tools and machinery so he can work under the best possible conditions and take his projects to the next level.

With a strong focus on durability and affordability, we ensure that everyone can get started, regar-

dless of skill level or experience. And just like at MATS, service is our top priority because proper support makes all the difference.

With this collaboration, we don't just want to show what's possible, but above all inspire people to get started themselves. Because you learn technology by doing and that starts with enthusiasm.

DRENTH UPDATE GETRAG 265

Drenth—our trusted gearbox partner—has planned an update to the shifting system and the input shaft. Both updates focus on improved integration, ergonomics, reliability and reduced service costs. The update will be available from the second quarter of 2026.

For this update, the entire gear lever assembly has been redesigned. This results in several very interesting improvements. By making detailed adjustments to the aluminium shift block and extending the shift linkage by 5 mm, the complete gearbox now fits better in the chassis. As a result of the modification, the gear lever is tilted 5 degrees backwards. These detailed changes provide the following advantages:

- improved ergonomic reach of 5th gear
- reduced risk of mis-shifting thanks to better ergonomics
- easier disassembly and servicing due to a reduced number of components
- improved positioning of the gearbox within the chassis
- better fitment of the original rubber gaiter

Input shaft update

Previously, the input shaft was manufactured as a single piece (shaft and gear combined). In the update, these are split into two separate components. The advantage is reduced service costs for the customer. During maintenance, only the worn component needs to be replaced. The input shaft update will be available by the end of Q2 2026.

The adjusted ergonomics minimize the risk of mis-shifting.



MEET THE E36 STW

The most eye-catching car at the grand opening was undoubtedly the E36 STW, an original example from 1993/1995 that was brought back to life in the MATS workshop with the professional support of various partners.

Mats VD Brand: In December 2024, we purchased the E36 STW together with Michael Cullen. It is a 100% original car—the sand, dirt and even the smell of sweat from 1995 were still present! We made the purchase because there is growing interest in circuit racing and because the FIA is increasingly moving towards championships featuring classes like STW. The car spent a long time at Matter for various bodywork repairs. In September 2025, it returned to our workshop and we started the rebuild. The technical aspect fascinates me enormously. The E36 is a relatively heavy car, yet it only weighs 1,040 kg. Everything has been thought through: the engine position, the differential, the seating position...Our mechanic Franklin invested an incredible amount of time into the STW, something both he and our company can be very proud of. After 700 working hours, we now have a stunning E36 STW that immediately set impressive lap times during its rollout at Circuit Zolder on March 12—without any issues.



A challenging rebuild

It was a huge challenge to bring the E36 back to its original glory. The damaged gearbox was a rare unit used only in Japan. Fortunately, Drenth was able to fully rebuild it to as-new condition. The Penske dampers are no longer produced as of 2026. AST/Moton provided a solution as a new partner. Thanks to their historic relationship with BMW, we were able to develop a very high-quality damper setup.



All carbon components were ei-

In 1992, BMW withdrew from the Deutsche Tourenwagen Meisterschaft (DTM) because the championship moved to more expensive Class 1 touring cars. The STW - Super Touren Wagen - emerged as a new touring car category and was raced in Germany between 1994 and 1999.



The first-generation STW used a lot of technology, including an engine derived from the M3 E30 DTM, but reduced to 2.0 litres. This created an additional challenge in terms of electronics. The original ECU no longer worked and was only used in Japan. We therefore opted for a modern ECU combined with a new wiring loom, while retaining the original sensors to stay as close to original as possible.

ther remanufactured or reproduced. The fuel tank—identical to the original—was reproduced with new certification. The carbon tank protection and the refuelling system in the boot were reused. All other components were revised, replaced or cleaned.

After completing this first STW, three more are already waiting in line. The collection has expanded, as we have acquired six original cars with the intention of restoring them to original, as-new condition.

These cars are intended for sale, but there are also plans to build replicas, as original cars carry a relatively high price tag.



FEEDBACK APP

Do you have a text or report for the next MATS magazine? A suggestion for an article in our next issue? Or would you like to see someone featured in the next issue? Would you simply like to let us know what you think of this magazine? Scan the code and WhatsApp your feedback.



I WANT THIS

This magazine is available (digitally) in Dutch, English, and French. Have you seen it somewhere and would you like to receive it? Let us know via the QR code on the left.

