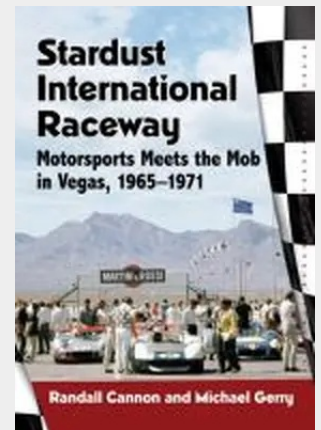


Stardust International Raceway

By the mid-20th century, professional motorsports established itself as one of America's modern pastimes. Auto racing also found its way to fabulous Las Vegas in the 1950's. Motorsports played its first Vegas hand in 1954 at a bankrupt horse track, fully beset by gamblers and racketeers. Moving in 1958 to rustic nearby Henderson, auto racing became enmeshed with gamblers and government, and the apparent hooks of organized crime. In 1965, the racing game moved to Stardust International Raceway. Stardust was constructed with real grandstands, permanent sanitary facilities, and air-conditioned timing towers. Stardust would host the biggest racing names of the 1960's; Mario Andretti, Parnelli Jones, John Surtees, Bobby Unser, Dan Gurney, Mark Donohue, Bruce McLaren, Denis Hulme, Tom McEwen, and Don Garlits among them. Stardust International Raceway also had another side, cloaked in shadow. Borne by a notorious racketeer, the alleged overlords of organized crime appeared to lurk behind the veil of the racing plant. Stardust Raceway also ran parallel with convergences of the 1960's; secret wiretaps, casino skimming, Howard Hughes, the seeds of Watergate. Stardust was a race track like no other, documented in the auto racing monthlies, the national news dailies...and the files of the FBI.



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